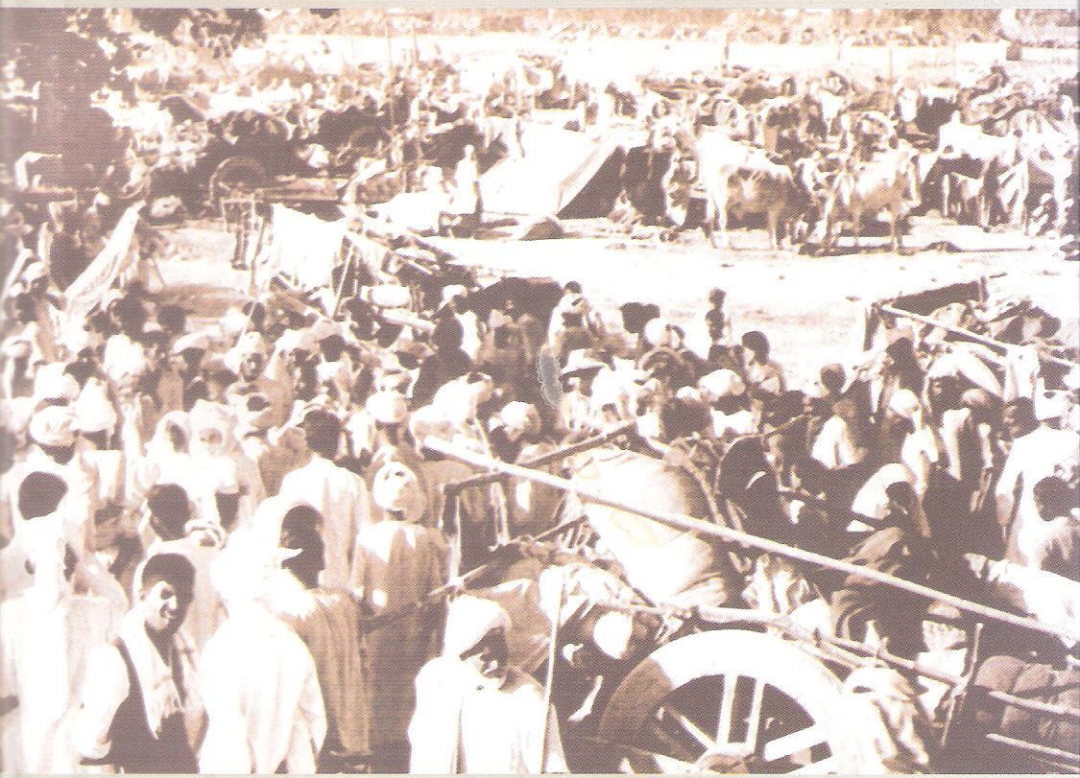
PARTITION
and the Making of the MOHAJIR MINDSET

A Narrative



Brigadier
A. R. Siddiqi

OXFORD

PAKISTAN 60 years 1947–2007

PARTITON
AND
THE MAKING OF
THE MQHAJHIR MINDSET

A NARRATIVE

BRIGADIER
ABDUL RAHMAN SIDDIQI

FOREWORD BY
DR MANZOOR AHMAD

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Aa. Siadiqi

PROLOGUE

Delhi...

CITY of the Red Fort and the Jam'a Masjid-the two sole Surviving symbols of imperial glory and religious devotion; of ancient ruins and tombs of Maratha depredations (l660s) and Nadir Shah's qatl-e-aam (mass slaughter, in 1739); of the Afghan invasion (Ahmad Shah Abdali's in l76l); of the post-revolt, September 1857 public hangings, cold-blooded murder of princes, and the reign of terror unleashed by the red-coated (Lal Kurri) British tommies gone berserk inside the walled city.

Of princes turned paupers; Sulis and wily custodians of mazars; lawyers and litigants; tradesmen and loose tongued karkhantdars dice and chess-players, heavyweight Wrestlers and featherweight mock, tiddi pehelwans and knife-wielding scoundrels and bullies; aphrodisiac-hawking quacks; street jugglers and tight-rope-Walking acrobats.

Of three types of Women of easy virtue: the dera darni courtesans making a living through mujras or as kept Women, the so-called 'privates' plying their trade from their own quarters, and the Takka- hais' (penny-worth bazaar prostitutes) soliciting from open shop fronts and balconies; opium eaters and b/rang drinkers; God-fearing, honest folks and thugs; poets and puppeteers; story-tellers and mimics; qawwals and stree-singers, Rajasthani toy Sarong! players and the young and robust Singhi walians, women with conch shells applying leeches to draw bad blood.

The hateful, heartless city of the 1947 holocaust., The city of gloom and bloom; of death and rebirth...

1
CHASING BUTTERFLIES

‘Literature and butterflies are the two sweetest
passions known to man.’

-Vladimir Nabokov

**‘He strode rapidly across the hotel, seeming to be
in pursuit of his monocle, which kept darting away
in front of him like a butterfly.**

-Marcel Proust

can hardly recall anything better than noon in the midst of Delhi’s winter, bright, crisp and bracing, the biting cold kissed by the gentlest touch of the sun gave a feeling of joyful bliss and vigour.

Beyond the four walls of our ancestral home and the narrow, damp, smelly lanes, all the way to and back from the house, the winter sun shone warm and bright, and inside the sprawling Company Gardens it might have been jannat (paradise) itself. In the middle of the gardens was a small flower patch enclosed by a sannatha (hedgerow), and in the middle of that was a raised platform, a chabutra, approached by red-gravel pathways. From the platform one had a bird`s eye view of the rest of the garden. Almost facing the enclosed garden was a rather secluded part of the park with a big, shady moolsri tree and a small mosque in its shadow. Next to the mosque was a well, the popular adda (rendezvous) of the charsias, the pot-smokers and the bhang drinkers. They had red, blood-shot, upturned eyes and would stare at passers-by with a strange look that frightened me.

Butterflies of innumerable shades and colours would flutter over and around the chabutra. I was often lucky enough to be the only one in the garden when it was closed to the general public, because my father happened to be a municipal commissioner and the old mali was aware of that. I loved chasing butterflies and found it most exciting. The only

bad part was that when I actually caught one, its colour would rub off and stain my hands, then it would flap its beautiful wings, spread them out' and become still.

One butterfly with bright blue wings speckled with gold attracted me enormously that particular noon as it flipped and flapped from one flowering-plant to another. I chased it, trying to catch it and to hold it in the hollow of my palm as softly as I could lest it be crushed. But it would escape my loose grip and vanish into thin air, much to my annoyance and despair. Oh, how I loved the butterfly and yearned to hold it and caress it, and how it would dodge me and melt away every time Without leaving a trace. That fruitless chase of the butterfly haunted me for years. It must do so still, or how else would I be able to recall it when layer upon layer of images and thoughts, mixed together over the years, have produced a baffling mosaic of the real and the unreal-the unreal always dominant?

So there I was-chasing butterflies without either catching one or crushing one soon after catching it. Where do the butterflies nest? All birds, I knew, ma-de their own nests-the pigeons, the sparrows, the eagles, the crows, the koels-each and everyone of them. The kites would often nest in the top boughs of the Gular tree in a corner of the lower courtyard of our house. They could be such a nuisance when their huge droppings hit you suddenly on the top of your head, spluttering all over your face.

I had never seen a butterfly nest. Far from nesting, they would hardly stay on the same bough or flower for a second or two before flitting off to another, and yet another. Where they did feed their young ones? How did they come to have such a wealth of colours? No two butterflies looked the same to me. The commonest variety was a rich yellow, dotted profusely with black and gray; but even they would have different shades-light, medium and dark.

The script of my Quran primer, the Baghdadi Qaida, solid black and so closely juxtaposed as to leave little space between two lines, reminded me of butterflies in its sheer elusiveness. No matter how hard I would move up and down, repeating the text as spelt out by the ustani-ji (a veritable man of a woman in looks, with a deeply masculine voice), the script, just like the butterflies escaped me.

The Baghdad Qaida filled me with a strange sense of Wonder; of awe and puzzlement. What did the word ‘Baghdad’ mean? Where was Baghdad? I only knew of Baghdad from the popular fairy tale ‘Baghdad

ka Chor' (The Thief of Baghdad, as I came to learn being its English equivalent). '

In the pictorial pages of my Urdu primer, the sketch of Zal Pehelwan-Zal the Wrestler (for z)-fascinated me more than any other single word or picture. With three dots on top of it, the letter itself looked so weighty and impressive. And the drawing of Zal with his heavy gnrz (mace) on his shoulder mesmerized. me beyond words. I would keep looking at it, almost hypnotized. The sheer outlandishness of Zal captured my childish 'fancy and made me dream of some strange land with strange people like Zal Pehelwan.

My English primer, even on its cover page, carried the picture of a king in full royal regalia. Now who was the king and whose king was he? And where was the seat of his kingdom? 1 was told that he ruled from a place far-off, beyond the seven seas, a place called Wilayat. His name was 'Jarazj Punjum'-George V. It was all very strange and fascinating.

Just the same, we all seemed to like the king, didn't we? Every storyteller in the family would always open the story with the legend 'Hamara tumhara khuda badshah khud ka banaya Rasul badshah' (Allah alone is our king, yours and mine, and the Prophet [PBUH] is the king crowned by Allah). But who was this king, 'Jaraj Punjum"? And what did he have to do with us in Delhi? 'Not every question has an answer, and a child must not ask too many questions," is how 1 was told off by everybody.

My first Urdu storybook was an abridged version of Mir Amman's 'Qissa Chhar Darwesh' (The Legend of the Four Dervishes) Now who might these Darwesh have been and where was the country called Yemen? Mother hadn't a clue about Yemen. It might have been somewhere beyond Koh-e-Quaf But where was Koh-eQuaf what did it really mean and look like? The land of fairies, of course!

Over time, Tilsme Hoshruba, Laila-Majnoon, Hatim Tai, Shirin-Farhad, Yousuf Zulaikha and their like opened the doors of my perception beyond the four corners of the mohallah and the city, all the way to a sort of never-never land. Then came films like Baghdad ka Chor, Hoor-e-Yemen, Lal-e-Yemen, Hatim Tai, and quite a few others in that class bearing such fancy names and titles as to stir my imagination and transport me mentally to distant places.

Nearer home we had a whole pantheon of Hindu gods and goddesses-Ram, Lachman, Sita, Krishna, Hanuman, Ganesh, Shankar, Parvati, Kali, Gauri and many others. Who were all these, and what

did they have to do with me, with us Muslims? We Watched the Ram-Leela pageant every year. It would be such fun-all those costumed characters astride glittering, decorated bullock-chariots, with heavily-powdered and painted faces cast in a divine matrix. They were Ram, Sita, and Lachman and the huge effigy of Ravan, the villain of the piece, burnt to ashes in the mighty blaze of a roaring fire at the end of the three-day festival.

And then there was Divali, the festival of light, and Holi, a riot of watercolours and vermillion powder sprayed and spattered on one another in a melee of sportive rumpus. We enjoyed Ram-Leela and Divali for all the pageantry, fun, and spectacle they offered. Nothing, however, could be more annoying than becoming involved in a free-for-all of coloured water and powder.

'Madhukar Sham, hamare chor mathe tilka, naina kajravi, natkhat Nanand Kishore, Madhukar….' Sang K.L. Saigal the movie virtuoso, inthe inimitable timbre of his golden voice. 'Bindraban main kabhi, ne aiye, murli bajani, na gawwai charane. Bindraban main sang another movie 'matinee idol', Surendra, in a rich, resonant bass. Muchas I liked and loved the songs and the singers, I failed to get into their spirit.

Kashi so close and yet so far away: K'aaba so far away
And yet so close. Something so fanciful and yet so real!

There was a gentleman in our mohallah, a Haji, who Wore a beard, had a shaved upper lip, and dressed like an Arab. He always carried a long rosary, and was forever counting the beads and reciting something under his breath. We all called him 'Ibn-e-Arabi", another exotic name I hardly 'understood but much fancied. After I had finished reading the Quran by rote, my mother Wanted me to memorize it and become a hajizf-a singular distinction for a young man. I tried hard but could not go beyond the first sipara of Alhamd Sharif 'May be Allah has not destined you to be a hafiz mother lamented one day in utter despair, 'so do what you Want, go to school."

I was eleven when I first started school in the Ajmeri Gate Anglo-Arabic High School, but later I moved to the Darya Ganj Anglo-Arabic which is where I remained until matriculation. A Turkish cap was the regulation headgear of the school, although until then I had rarely Worn a Turkish cap because We had our own community headgear-a round, hard cap bound with embroidered tusser (rawsilk). School regulations,

however, would not permit the use of anything other than the Turkish cap. A cotton sherwani was generally worn through summer while in winters the Turkish coat was the regulation dress, worn almost like a military uniform.

On my way to school, I would pass the]am'a Masjid-perhaps the busiest and Iiveliest spot in the city. The surrounding area might have been a small world of its own, famous for what it offered: the spiciest and tastiest food in Delhi-seekh kebab and kalejee (goat's liver) tikkas, haleem and fried fish, and hot kachoris and malai ke barafi besides a variety of breads and savouries Facing the main eastern entrance of the mosque was a sprawling, open ground dotted with all kinds of odds and ends for sale. At one place sat a sleepy old man, a jumble of old quilted, khaki, conical caps laid out before him. Those were said to be caps that had been worn by Indian sepoys during the First World War. I wondered what sort of a War it was and against Whom? Why was it called a world war and what were Indian sepoys doing in a world war? The caps were so old that dust would rise from them even as you picked one up to try on. I would have loved to buy myself one, if only to make mother jump in mock fright or natural disapproval. For the same price, half an anna or so (four pies to an anna and sixty-four pies to the Indian rupee of the day), I could buy myself one of my favourite savouries, a whole spit of spicy seekh kebabs or kalejee tikkas. So why bother with a dusty old joker's cap? Just the same, the cap would invoke images of strange places far away from home.

Beyond the open ground was the garden with the bronze statue of 'Edbed' (Edward VII) astride a steel horse. Edward's Park, called Yadgar' (Memorial), was one of Delhi`s favourite haunts for an evening walk or a friendly rendezvous. But I was perplexed about this king "Edbed'-who was hc and what was his statue doing in the city? There were two other statues I had seen, the 'Malka ka Buut' in the Malka ka Bagh (Queen's Gardens) facing the municipality building-Queen victoria's image sculpted in marble (unlike the bronze statue of Edward VII) and the statue in 'Nikulsun' Garden. This too was a mystery: for who was 'Nikulsun'? Years later I would learn that Nicholson was a soldier who led the Indian and British fauj against the baghi sepoys-mutineers-during the Ghaddar of l857 and was killed in action. Yet another stranger from that far-off Wilayat that lay across the seven seas.

Amongst the host of vendors milling in the makeshift bazaar around the Jam'a Masjid, the one who attracted me most was the 'Istambuli'

sherbetwalla. He had a highly-polished, cylindrical metal jug strapped to his back and brass bowls in his hand. In a loud, powerful voice, he would chant ‘Istambuli Sherbet and chime brass bowls to attract customers. When dispensing the sherbet, he would bend his back to pour it from the nozzle attached to the cylinder. The richly-coloured liquid would pour gently into the brass bowl expertly placed right under the nozzle.

Istanbul, Turkuy-I had heard a lot about Turkey and its ruler, Ataturk. I had heard my grandfather chant, ‘Turkey zindabad! Ataturk zindabad” But what did we have to do with Turkey and where was Turkey anyway? The Turkish caliph, I was told, was the ‘king’ of the Muslim world. If so, who then was ‘Jaraj Punjum’? Wasn’t he the king of India? Didn’t my English primer carry his picture on the cover? It was all so puzzling.

Over time, I would come to hear of the two Khairi brothers who had been in Istanbul at the time of Jange-i-Azeem (The Great War). What was the Jang-i-Azeem all about and what were these two brothers doing there? I often heard my schoolmasters talk admiringly of them, saying, that they had been great freedom lighters. But freedom from whom? Why, of course, the British. Well then, who were the British and what were they doing in Delhi?

Except for arithmetic and geometry, my course books were full of stories and accounts of many ‘foreigners’ Even in my science books I would come across names and inventions such as ‘David sahib ka safety lamp’, Sir Ishque (Isaac) Newton, ‘Watt sahib ka steam engine’ and so on but we knew little or nothing about important or influential Indian personalities.

At one time, a number of maulanans had declared British India the land of apostasy, of kufr, and thus unfit and unholy for the good Muslim to live in. It was said that in so oppressive and tyrannical circumstances as the rule of the pig-eating, wine-drinking kafir angraiz, it was the bounden duty of every good Muslim either to stand and right or to emigrate. This prompted Indian Muslims in their hundreds to make a beeline for Afghanistan, and while a handful of them somehow managed to cross the border, most of them were thrown back by the Afghan frontier guards.

Who were we after all-Indians, Arabs, Iranians, Afghans? We all spoke Urdu but regarded Arabic and Persian as the hallmark of real learning and scholarship. That was in spite of the popular idiom, ‘Parhi Farsi, becha tel’ (Learn Persian and sell oil). Even the qawwals' would

begin their performance with some Persian poetry (of Amir Khusro's, as I was to learn later). 'Karma Kardi, Ilahi Zinda-bashi' (May you live long for your generosity).

As for Arabic, not many (in truth, hardly any) would attempt to speak the language, considering that mastering the Quranic text by rote was enough. Urdu, poor thing, was neither here nor there. Even the legal language was Persian. Once while giving the receipt for my share of the rent of our ancestral waqf-ul-aulad (trust for legitimate heirs in perpetuity) my uncle dictated the opening sentence in Persian, as follows: 'B'ais-i-tahrir anke man" (The reason for writing is...). In time I learnt, much to my surprise, that even the great Ghalib ranked his Urdu poetry second to his Persian poetry. He liked people to read his Farsi in order to truly appreciate his poetry.

I was in the Eighth grade when I first heard of Mr Jinnah and Pakistan. He was due to arrive in Delhi to a huge welcome by the Muslims. We were all so excited and went to the railway station in droves to see the great man. But what was Pakistan all about? Some new Islamic state Mr Jinnah and his Muslim League were trying to create. It was all very puzzling yet so exciting. On the day of Mr Jinnah's arrival, some ten or twelve of us trudged from school all the way to the station. In fact the whole city seemed headed for the railway station, most of them on foot, quite a few on bicycles, and a handful in tODg£1S. One had to muscle one's way through the crowd congregating and converging inside and outside the railway station. We pushed our way through to the platform (without a platform ticket), which was a veritable sea of humanity, and a rough one, too. Presently we saw the train snaking towards the platform. There was such a hustle and bustle, pulling and pushing, that I all but lost my balance and could have easily fallen had I not been supported by my friends. As the train came to a stop, the crowd rushed forward. They were all roaring 'Mr Jinnah Zindabad; Shahinshah-e-Pakistan. Zindabad" We were beside ourselves with excitement. Luckily, however, before the melee could turn into an unruly mob, the door of Mr Jinnah's compartment opened and there he stood, tall and stately and with so powerful an air of authority about him as to strike us all dumb. 'Assalam Alaikum,' he greeted the crowd in a powerful voice that belied his fragile frame. The crowd returned his greeting with a resounding, 'Walekum Assalam' before bursting madly into 'Zindabad slogans. With a gentle sweep of his right hand he hushed the crowd. 'Patience,' he said, 'patience, and God be with you."

Members of the reception committee moved towards Mr Jinnah's compartment to help him alight. 'Please make Way for Jinnah Sahib to get through," they announced. And in an extraordinary display of discipline, the crowd split into two rows to make a wide enough corridor for their leader to pass through. As Mr Jinnah made his way with a slow and steady step, the crowd again broke into a loud chorus of 'Pakistan Zindabad! Mr Jinnah Zindabad!.

Pakistan, what and where? Was it to be outside Delhi and outside Hindustan? None of us knew exactly what it meant but the name itself was so fascinating that it conjured visions of a land of virtue, of piety and purity-»a real citadel of Islam, a country where the Indian Muslims could regain the glory of their great forebears, the Sultans and the Mughals.

My own vision of Pakistan was of a place with an exotic skyline of green, shiny, tiled domes, pigeons flying everywhere, and a cool breeze gently blowing to make one feel as light as a bird. Was Mr Jinnah a rival and an opponent of Gandhi-ji ? I would not know until I heard someone sing: 'Jab Quaid-i-Azam zinda hai, Gandhi ki tammana kaun kare' (While Quaid-i-Azam is there, why should one yearn for Gandhi). After M1'Jinnah's triumphant arrival in Delhi, he came to be addressed as the Quaid-i-Azam out of deep feelings of love and respect-a title quite outside our everyday Urdu vocabulary, and yet so gripping, just like the Baghdad Qaida. Whether or not one quite understood the meaning of those exotic expressions, 'Pakistan' and 'Quaid-i-Azam', they were fascinating just the same-the sheer magic of the strange and the distant!

Jinnah seemed to have cast so powerful a spell on all of us, young and old, that we talked of little else except him and his wonderland of Pakistan; an absolute jannat that no-one had ever seen but everyone could imagine.

In November 1938, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the ruler of Turkey and a hero for the rest of the Muslim world, died. A pall of gloom fell across the city. 'What will happen to us now'?' everybody wondered. But what did we have to do with the ruler of a land as distant and strange as Turkey? The city buzzed with remarks like: 'His death has made us orphans. Now who will we look up to for inspiration and strength? He was our only hope against the Angraiz Like others, I too felt quite lost and wondered what would happen to us after Ataturk. Perhaps our only salvation after a calamity like that would be to step up efforts to attain Pakistan at any cost.

As for Delhi, well, what was so special about it? lt was a city of graves and shrines surrounded by ancient ruins, and there was a strange air of despair, of death and temporariness and the glory that had been. Until we heard of Jinnah and his Pakistan, we had rarely, if ever, tallied about the future. Nani (maternal grandmother) would generally talk of the golden age of the Malika (Queen Victoria) and reminisce: 'For as little as a pice one could have two square meals and for as much as an anna or two, a respectable change of clothes. It was then so safe and secure that a person could go out with a pot of gold and none would dare touch him."

Grandmother (she would have been over 70 in the early l930s) would relate stories of the Gander. She was just a baby when the great calamity struck the city but was full of stories of the day and age, some from her own experience and the rest from what she had heard from her mother.

Kiya taj, kia takht	What of the Crown and the Royal Throne,
Kia Badshah, kia Malika	Of the King and the Queen,
Kia Shehzade	The Princes
Kia Asharaf- Sab ka	And the elite? All
Saab khatam hoker reh gae	And everything perished.

She would heave a deep sigh at the end of each of her sad tales. 'Array baita, ham kia aur hamari bisat kia? Yeh dunya hai hi bari zalim, aj kuch or kal kuch" (My son, what are we and what is our worth? This world is so cruel and capricious. Today one thing, tomorrow another.)

Dunya dil lagane ki jaga nahin hai	The world is not the place to lose hai, one's heart to,
Ye Ibrat ke jagah hai tamasha nahi hai	It's no tamasha but a place for penance hai and prayer.

Grandmother had a gift for telling a story and embellishing it with suitable verse. Mother had none of that. Her view of the temporariness of the world was expressed in a single sentence: Dunya se kia laina? Allah wahan ki bahari dai (What's there to gain from the world? May Allah grant us the blessings of the Hereafter.)

As for my father, Sheikh Mohammad Siddiq, he had been a successful civil lawyer who died, at the age of 42, after a long fight against TB. His untimely death left us at the mercy of our grandfather and uncles.

I could not quite understand this lack of interest in the real world and the strange fascination for the next, Wherever that Was. In any case, what was Wrong with the world around me and what would the next World be like? The springtime and blessings of the yonder-'Beyond the Horizon' (Wahan-the title of one of V. Shantararm's movies) - held such a strong fascination, such a powerful appeal for most of us that we cared little for the World around us. This fascination for the next World Was soon to be diverted to the single entity 'Pakistani Ataturk was dead and so was the Khilafat movement, and the Muslims were now trapped in India. Afghanistan had already slammed its doors shut on the Indian Muslims, and in any case, the young Afghan king, Zahir Shah, was not a patch on Ataturk. Muslim India stood on the brink of a dark and bottomless abyss, and but for Jinnah and Pakistan, We might all have hurtled quite unstoppably into this abyss.

I was fifteen and just reaching puberty when War broke out in 1939. The 'Hindu` Congress opposed India's participation in the war; Jinnah's Muslim League supported it. The 'Hindu' Congress boycotted the war, and its provincial ministers resigned en bloc. Jinnah ordered a celebration of what he called 'Deliverance Day' for all Muslims to mark the end of the tyrannical provincial ministries of the Congress Party under whose rule Indian Muslims had had a bitter taste of Hindu communalism. It was an hour of triumph for Muslim India. Arid now that the Congress ministries had resigned, the road to Pakistan would not be so hard. One November morning therefore, we all trooped out from school on our Way to the Company Gardens to celebrate Deliverance Day under the auspices of the Delhi branch of the Muslim League, and all the way we chanted our favourite slogans of 'Mr Jinnah Zindabad, Pakistan ZfndciI9od'. We were all so full of a sense of vigour and good cheer.

As We passed through Thandi Sarak, the sprawling, red-stone Wall of the Red Fort was to my right. To whom did the Red Fort belong after the collapse of the Mughal Empire? Who else but the British! But once the British were gone, as indeed they had to be sooner or later, the Fort, together with the Jam'a Masjid and all the rest of the Muslim architectural masterpieces, must; return to the rightful heirs of the great builders, the Indian Muslims, and their 'Promised Land', Pakistan. I

tried to imagine when the Red Fort and Jam-a-Masjid would be ours- Pakistan's- the thought galvanized my youthful mind with visions of an emerald-domed Pakistan with sprawling gardens lined from one end to another with tall palms.

Khuld mai har darkhat ke pattaun per hai likha
La ilaha Illallah, Kalima la ilaha….

(On the leaves of every tree in paradise is written the Kalima la ilaha...)

These were lines from a popular qawwali But how wonderful it would be to see the leaves of every tree inscribed with the Kalima! We made it to the Company Gardens, each with his own enchanting vision of Pakistan and Jinnah, the 'True Deliverer A handbill circulated by some votaries of Jinnah carried in bold letters the slogan: Lo, charkhe chharum se kessiah utar aiye (Behold the Messiah descending from the Fourth Heaven). The rest of day at the Company Gardens was more like a school picnic than anything else. Although we had expected some Muslim League leaders to come and speak to us, hardly anyone actually turned up, Despite this 'Deliverance Day' ended unlike any other day in as much as we returned home with our hearts 'tired with new hope and faith in the future of Muslim India.

The war had been raging for barely a year when the British appeared to have all but lost it. And once the war was lost, the British would have no leg to stand on in India. The Muslims would have their Pakistan, and all would be milk and honey: a veritable heaven on earth. What could possibly be wrong with something as just and simple as the demand for Pakistan? If two brothers or two families for one reason or another could not live together in the same place or the same house, was it not best to part ways and leave each other alone? As mother would put it, 'Tum wahan khush, hum yahan khush, Thandi hawa ati rahe!' (You be happy there and we here. That's all! Let at cool breeze keep blowing).

Our Urdu teacher, Maulvi Kafil Ahmad, did not agree with that. He would say:

The partition of a whole country as big as India is no joke. It's not the same as two brothers or families dividing up their ancestral home and parting ways. It would be sheer disaster. A Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan in one and the same land? Impossible! It would be like two rival forces living

in the same fort, two swords in the same scabbard! A separate Pakistan would still be in India. It can't move out of its physical boundaries. Kafil Sahib was such a killjoy, such a cynic. He would talk of the absolute need for Hindu-Muslim unity for the good of both, and for the good of India as a whole. The very idea of Pakistan, he argued, much to our anger, was nothing but the culmination of the old and dirty game of the Angraiz to divide and rule.

ln the meantime, however, Gandhiji went on the warpath against the British with his Quit India Movement. His War cry 'Karege ya Marenge' (Do or Die), was in open contradiction of his philosophy of non-violence and passive resistance. The British came down heavily on Gandhi, arresting him and the top Congress leadership and banning the Congress party. With the Congress leadership in jail and the Congress party banned, Jinnah and his Muslim League now monopolized the political playground. Through the melting mists on the political horizon, the emerging outline of Pakistan was not hard to see. Jinnah had come to Delhi to stay and lead the movement for Pakistan from there.

As a ninth grader, _I was elected an office bearer of the Delhi Muslim Students' Federation Council (1939-40). It was truly a great honour and my best chance to work for Pakistan. Delhi, the city where I had been born, and where my family and birradri (known as the Qaum Punjabi Saudagaran) had lived for at least three hundred years, now appeared strange and alien to me. What was a mere city, after all, compared to a Whole country? Apart from some casual acquaintances, I had but few Hindu friends until then, unlike my father, who must have had quite a few, as during the Divali and Dusserah festivals we received gifts of mithai (sweetmeats) from his Hindu friends and clients. We loved the Hindu sweetmeats and enjoyed them heartily.

How could we have anything to do with Hindus? Had we not seen a Hindu halwae turn his face and look the other way while handing us the sweetmeats we bought from him? How insulting and utterly disgraceful! We had experienced and resented these Hindu practices before, but as the demand for Pakistan gained momentum, what had previously been dismissed as mere trivialities became sober arguments in favour of the establishment of Pakistan.

Not long after I joined 'the Muslim Students' Federation, I was informed that I was to be in a group photograph of the local councilors along with Mr M. A. Jinnah and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan. I had

seen Mr Jinnah more than once before, but only as a bystander and from a distance. Excited beyond words, I reported to Ajmeri Gate Anglo-Arabic School, the venue for the group photo. There were all the others too, mostly senior collegiates. Mr Jinnah, along with the Nawabzada, arrived on time. He was so slim, tall, and handsome, and dressed in a light grey double-breasted suit. Some of the seniors moved up to welcome the guests while the juniors lined up a little way behind for a handshake and a brief introduction to the two leaders of Muslim India. I can still recall how my heart thumped as the leader came closer but before we could greet him, Jinnah addressed us with a resounding ‘Assalam Alaikum There was such force and power in his voice as to strike us momentarily dumb but we gathered our wits and replied ‘Walekum Assalam, Quaid-i-Azam’ A faint, gentle smile played upon his lips as he approached us for a handshake. His hands were warm and soft and yet so strong; their touch remains palpable even today.

We then organized ourselves for the photograph. I was placed at the end of the second row. The photograph taken, we gathered around 'the two leaders. It was 11Ot easy for me to follow Jinnah’s ‘English- English’-something quite different from our own native-school- English. He spoke briefly but emphatically about the ‘Hindu Congress’ before bidding us ‘Khuda Hafiz’ and walking out of the school main gate. His car was parked on the school driveway and his driver, Muhammad Hanif, stood by the open car door to let the great leader and his trusted lieutenant get in. Hanif happened to be living with his family just next door to our house. Jinnah turned round to bid another resounding ‘Khuda Hajiz’ before iinally getting into the car.

Our journey to Pakistan had begun. The days ahead were full of tensions and turmoil. News from the war 'front varied from bad to indifferent. The British had managed to contain the advance of the Japanese, but the Japanese were still in control of Burma and almost all of the Far East. With the Congress leadership still in jail, and the Congress itself outlawed, the All-India Muslim League under Jinnah’s dynamic leadership grew from strength to strength. I matriculated in 1941 and joined the Anglo-Arabic College, but I had to leave after the summer vacation since my grandfather refused to pay the college fee and mother was in no position to meet the expense. For want of an alternative, I joined the Madrasah-i-Aaliya Fathepuri to obtain an honours degree in Persian (Munshi Fazil) from the Punjab University.

The Sufi poetry of Hafiz, Fareeduddin Attar, Khayyam, and Naziri imbued my youthful mind with images of the transience of this world.

The world was like a caravanserai and we were all like so many musafirs (wayfarers), staying overnight and departing the next morning for a destination unknown. The poetry both enthused and depressed rne-it was all about transition, exodus, hijrat, whether it be from this place to another or from this world to the next. (Oh, sparrow, the house belongs neither to me nor to you; it's just a one-night layover!) I mused that if death was the ultimate and inescapable end of life, then why all the fuss and the pursuit of worldly things? (Awwal fana, Akhir Fana - death the only fact of life, the first and the last).

What helped me through this period of wilderness was my contact with some old college friends. They were all so full of hope and confidence about Pakistan. 'The Congress is finished. We will get our Pakistan sooner than you imagine. The only thing is that you must get back to college somehow,' they would say. And in spite of the growing hold of the Sufi poetry of farm and the transience of the world, the vision of Pakistan, the land of our dreams, electrified me with a new zest for life. In the meantime things at home were also looking better. I had come of age to gain my title to the ancestral property by way of my share of the monthly rent. Educationally, too, I got a double boost, having passed both my Munshi Fazil from the Punjab University and the intermediate examination from the Allahabad board of intermediate examination, which allowed matriculates to appear as private candidates.

Early in 1943, I was back to the Anglo-Arabic College for my BA degree, full of new life and energy. The college had become the hub of the Pakistan movement, and we all talked of Pakistan, the land where everything would be pure and beautiful: no Hindu pani but Muslim pant, no Hindu halwais turning their faces while serving Muslims, no chiming of the temple bells as prayers were offered in the mosque next door, no Hindu-Muslim riots, no Hindi of Gandhiji and no singing of the Bande Matram. Pakistan would be our land of milk and honey where it would be Eid by day and Shab-e-Barat by night. There were dissident voices, however.

There were some crackpots who argued against the very concept of Pakistan, describing it as the product of the British policy of Divide and Rule. They argued that it would be more of a destructive than a constructive development: the break-up of one India more than the creation of a physically viable Pakistan. Much of their arguments would either go above my head or leave me angry and frustrated. I would ask myself if these people were not mere Congress ke pitthu

(stooges). They were not only against the Muslim League and Pakistan but also against Islam. How could Islam remain safe in a Hindu- majority India? It was all right under the British, but once they left, the Hindus were not going to spare the Muslims. They would exact revenge for a thousand years of slavery under the Muslims. Once in power they would not wait to settle all their old scores.

The good news was that the Quaid was going to be the chief guest at the college annual dinner sometime in December, just about a month away. We all eagerly looked forward to the event. The bad news was that, although I was the newly-elected secretary of the college union, I, along with the vice-president, my friend Mohammad Arif, and the rest of our cabinet, were debarred from all college functions and activities because of a protest demonstration we had staged against some major administrative changes in the college. To our deep despair and frustration, an ad hoc reception committee was formed to receive the Quaid, and we had to swallow a bitter pill to make the visit go off smoothly. I watched the Quaid arrive to be welcomed by Professor Abdussamad, the teacher-president of the college union, and the 'stooges' of his ad hoc committee. We (Arif, the vice-president, the rest of our debarred cabinet, and I) watched the proceedings with pain. 'Rascals', I said under my breath as I heard Professor Abdussamad introduce his team to the Quaid.

The Quaid`s address was most inspiring. 'From now on, Pakistan and Pakistan alone should be the sole demand and destiny of Muslim India. It's our Article of Faith." 'Article of Faith'-what a beautiful expression, and how very meaningful and profound: the argument to end all arguments! Islam and Pakistan would be one and the same. No Pakistan, no Islam. India would be Kufristan where Muslims would not be able to live as the Faithful, as true, practicing Mussulmans.

The functions and the dinner went off extremely well. Although we could have created no end of trouble, and some of the toughs amongst us were all for it, that was simply out of the question with the Quaid there as our guest. As dinner and the after-dinner proceedings ended and the Quaid stood up to leave, I quietly slipped away from the hall and posted myself in a dark corner near the door. After some ten long minutes, the Quaid, followed by Professor Abdussamad and the reception committee, emerged. With rare, unsuspected agility, 1 leapt out from my corner and greeted the Quaid with a loud 'Assalum Alaikum, Quaid-i-Azam', taking everybody, including perhaps the Quaid, by surprise. 'Walekum Assalam, young man' the Quaid

responded readily, extending his right hand for a handshake. ‘Have I seen you before?’ he asked. ‘Yes, sir, the group photograph’ and then, lost for words and beside myself with excitement, I yelled, ‘Pakistan, our Article of Faith, Pakistan. The Quaid smiled gently, and moving on said, ‘Keep it up, young manl’ All this While the anger Written on the faces of Professor Abdussamad and his ‘stooges" was worth watching; they all looked so pitifully, so comically stupid. I thought Professor Abdussamad might have even made some sort of a threatening gesture to teach me a lesson.

I must have been the happiest man in the World at that moment. Thence forward my Pakistan dream became my only ‘Article of Faith’, my only pledge to live and die for it. I seemed to hold my blue-and- gold butterfly gently in the soft-padded cushion of my palm. The butterfly would vigorously fan and flap its bright wings and yet not fly away. Instead, it seemed to enjoy the warmth of my palm and liked to stay there vibrating with new life. The padded bed of my palm might have been the bud of a flower.

Much to my surprise and relief, no disciplinary action was taken against me for my daring and impudent behaviour, either by Professor Abdussamad or by any other college authority. I became a sort of a hero to my own friends and associates and quite a few others in the college. ‘It served them right. This is how it ought to have been. Who are they to monopolize the Quaid? He belongs to all of us. He is the sole leader of Muslim India; and his Pakistan is an Article of Faith for all of us!’

A week or two later, I was summoned by Professor Abdussamad to see him in his office. ‘It was coming after all. I seem to have had it.’ At the appointed time, I presented myself before Professor Abdussamad. We exchanged our ‘salaams’ and then, Without another Word, he held out a piece of paper. ‘Read it,” he said in an uncharacteristically gentle voice. It was a letter, which I happened to be holding upside down. As soon I put it right way up, I saw the Quaid’s famous monogram embossed in the top left corner. A letter from Mr Jinnah? I could hardly believe my eyes. I read the few lines in appreciation of the function so well-arranged in his honour and then the sentence asking Professor Abdussamad to convey his best Wishes to the ‘young man’ at the exit. Could that really be me? I wondered. ‘Well,’ Professor Abdussamad said, ‘it really doesn’t rnatter who the young man might actually have been. But since you were probably the last person he met I thought I

should do the Quaid's bidding. Thank you. You may go." That was the end of the matter.

Time flies! And it did Hy faster than it normally Would. I graduated from the Anglo-Arabic College in I9-45 and joined St Stephen's for my Master's in history. In the politically rarefied air of St Stephen's there wasn't much talk of Pakistan, and the little that we did hear was confined only to some four or live of us-Gulzar Ahmad Khan, Ali Mohtasham, Abu Mohammad Mukhtar Mirza, and one or two others.

Our history teacher, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dr lshtiaq Hussain Qureshi, was quite a political activist, unflinchingly committed to the Pakistan movement, although he saw the emergence of Pakistan neither as a parting of the ways nor exactly as a partition of the country-it would be more of the a 'political redefinition' of India than anything else. The making of Pakistan was, to his mind, the best way for the two largest communities of the subcontinent, the Hindus and the Muslims, to live in peace and harmony and according to their own rights. It was also the best way to rid India of the communal bitterness and animus so sedulously engineered by the British. 'It's my belief and faith,' he would say, 'that once the majority community accedes to the Muslim demand for Pakistan, without reservations and with an open mind, all the pieces will fall into their right places' He neither foresaw nor subscribed to the fear of mass migration in the Wake of the emergence of Pakistan (he avoided use of the Word 'Partition' as far as he could). 'I see no earthly reason Why a Dehli walla should be forced to migrate to Lahore and vice versa. And, as far as the move from one place to another, one province or city to another is concerned, isn't that perfectly normal if not exactly routine`?'

The year 1946 turned out to be a watershed (one with a deadly certainty, too) in the affairs of the country. The simple 'political redefinition' of the subcontinent turned into a demand for two separate and not particularly friendly states of Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. In April of that year, all the newly-elected Muslim legislators held a convention at the Anglo-Arabic College, my alma mater, to voice and affirm their demand for one Pakistan comprising the Muslim-majority provinces of the Punjab, the NWFP, Sindh, and Balochistan to the north-west, and Bengal to the north-east. The original Lahore Resolution had envisaged the creation of two sovereign, independent states in these areas.

Ali Mohtasham, Abu Muhammad Mukhtar, and I bicycled all the Way from St Stephen's to the Anglo-Arabic College to see, Welcome,

and serve the galaxy of Muslim leadership from all across the country attending the map-changing conclave. It was April, just the beginning of summer, but unusually hot for that time of year. We manned the cold water filter to dispense water to the thirsty members of the legislative assembly (MLAS).

Outside the college assembly hall, we all waited impatiently for the Quaid and Liaquat Ali Khan to arrive. A number of slogan-chanting enthusiasts in tow, they arrived exactly on time. The Quaid was visibly thinner than when I had last seen him at the college dinner in December 1944. His face bore a strange mixture of physical exhaustion and a beaming expression of triumph and fulfilment.

He had summoned all the Muslim League MLAS elected in the 1945-6 elections to re-affirm and formalize their demand for Pakistan. The two leaders were welcomed by a reception committee especially formed for the occasion. After an exchange of warm greetings and energetic handshakes, the two leaders were escorted into the assembly hall. The doors of the hall were shut as we stayed back at our place next to the water filter.

I don't recall exactly how long the crucial session lasted but it must have been several hours. In the meantime, however, guests would come out for a smoke or a drink of water or looking for the toilet. They looked so happy, like people at the end of a good day's work. Every time they came for a drink of water they would pat us vigorously on the back. 'Young man, you will have your Pakistan sooner than you can imagine' Pakistan-a dream about to come true! And that filled us with an overpowering feeling of pride, of sheer elation and ecstasy. The bright blue-and-gold butterfly would soon be ours, alive and fluttering without struggling to fly away.

At the end of the historic conference, we had another close view of the Quaid and the awe-inspiring assemblage of Muslim leaders. We all knew Liaquat rather well. He was a most amiable man, and had never been too busy to have a word with us. At one point we found him Way behind the Quaid and rushed to get a word from him about the convention. His relaxed face beamed with a broad smile. 'Well, get yourselves ready to serve Pakistan. You are Pakistan's future. Pull up your socks if you really want to serve Pakistan and build it up."

Well, welll In the months that followed there was such a head- spinning rush of events-the arrival of the British Cabinet Mission; hectic talks; acceptance of the Mission Plan by the Quaid; Nehru's impetuosity in imposing his own interpretation of the Plan; the Quaid's

furious reaction and rejection of the Plan, calling upon the League to observe 16 August 1946 as a Direct Action Day and asking all Muslim holders of official honours and awards to renounce them; then the horrific Calcutta killings; the formation of an interim government with Nehru as the prime minister; the Muslim League's decision to join the interim government after initially boycotting it, to Cobble together an overly 'tense and practically unworkable coalition.

That was followed by the historic visit of the Congress and the League to London in December I946 to sort matters out once and for all. And finally victory When, like a great general, the Quaid led Muslim India to its cherished goal of Pakistan. Who else could have turned into reality what had looked like little more than a pipe dream not so long before? The highway to Pakistan had been paved and no power on earth could now block it.

Things changed dramatically for me as the new year, 1947, was rung in. In March of that year the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, was unceremoniously sacked and Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten was appointed as Viceroy- designate. The change-over was so abrupt and hasty that Her Majesty's Government did not even wait for Wavell to depart with due protocol and panache before the new Viceroy arrived. Thus, for the first time in viceregal history, the outgoing viceroy was there to receive his replacement. Mountbatten came armed with plenipotentiary powers to effect the transfer of power in double-quick time.

The same month I appeared for my MA (Final) in March I947 and fared pretty well in the examination. I got through with some distinction as one of the top ten. We had come such a long way since the dark and depressing years of the early 40s that it felt as though they might never have happened. Shortly after the announcement of the results, I called on the redoubtable editor of the daily Dawn, Mr Altaf Hussain, at his Sujhan Singh Park apartment-without an appointment. Telephones were rare and addressing a formal request by post would have been both cumbersome and generally unreliable. At Mr Hussain's apartment I rang the doorbell, and a young man about my age, may be a little younger, opened the door to me. 'Yes', he asked, 'What can I do for you?' 'To see Altaf Sahib, if I may.' I hastened to introduce myself to the young man, who was named Ajmal. He showed me in. 'Let me go and see if Father has time to see you. Ajmal went into the next room while I stood waiting, tense and nervous. It was hardly a minute or two before Mr Hussain himself, the Quaid's right-hand man, appeared, dressed casually in a shirt over a tehmad. From behind his thick

glasses, his fiery eyes seemed to fix the onlooker to the spot even at the first contact. ‘So you have done your MA in history. Good! Can you Write?’ I nodded, speechless. Then, without another word, he scribbled a letter to the news editor, Mr Mehmood Hossain. ‘You are appointed as an unpaid junior sub-editor. You should go and see Mr Hossain for further instructions. Well, good-bye and good luck.

End of crucial interview! I should have been the happiest man on God’s good earth. A sub-editor on Dawn! A dream come true. I reported to Mr Mehmood Hossain the next day and found him an extremely kind person. I handed him the letter, be read it, and told me to come and join the next day. From my sub-editorial desk on Dawn I would be able to Watch and follow the fateful developments taking place across the political horizon' much more closely and intelligently than as an outsider.

The Viceroy announced the Partition Plan on 3 June 1947. The decision to advance the date of the transfer of power from June 1948 to 14 August 1947 was in itself as impetuous as it was mystifying. Much to our deep disappointment and shock, what the Plan offered was what the Quaid called a ‘moth-eaten, truncated’ Pakistan based on partitioning Bengal and the Punjab, the two largest and most advanced Muslim-majority provinces.

On which side of the divide would Delhi be, though? We believed that in all fairness it ought to become the joint capital of both countries, for it was utterly inconceivable to have a Pakistan without Delhi and its Dehliwallas, but who or what was a Dehliwalla? Hindu or Muslim, or the Delhi Punjabi Saudagars, or indeed all the Punjabi, Bengali, and Madrasi babes at the Secretariat? Delhi was not an ethnic entity like Calcutta or Lahore: it had been India’s melting pot, the centre of imperial power, the hub and prism of Indian culture since time irnmemorial.

For once We were apprehensive about the future. One of my Muslim friends, Warsi, (if memory serves me right, a card-carrying member of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh [RSSS]) had been brutally frank about what he called ‘the Wages of Partition ‘As you sow, so shall you reap. You wanted to have your bloody Pakistan, so have it and get out of Delhi. You just can’t have your cake and eat it, you bloody fools!’ Much as we all liked to dismiss Warsi’s perorations as those of one opposed to Jinnah, the Muslim League, and Pakistan, he did frighten us nevertheless.

Were we then quite irreversibly destined to take the road to ‘hijrat’? Well, Lahore was there, and what a beautiful city it was! I had lost my heart to it even on my first visit there. And what was Delhi anyway? The city of despair, and for all the graves and ruins strung around it, it might have been a leaf out of an ancient scripture turned yellow with age. It was a dead city already. I wondered if I had ever really liked the city From Shidipura, our community graveyard to the west, all the way to the Qutub Minar, it was just a weird collection of so many graves, tombs, shrines, and a motley crowd of ex-princes, royal offspring on the dole, layabouts, pigeon- and kite-fliers, karkhanadars, and vagabonds; it was a warren of narrow stinking lanes only 6 or 7 feet wide, crawling with sweeper-women with bulging head-loads of night-soil. What was so special about the city? I rarely found those ‘picture-like’ faces or sights portrayed by the poet laureate Ustad Zauq in the city’s kuchas, or alleys.

Just the same, the mere thought of leaving the city for good was like a stab in my heart. At the India Coffee House, New Delhi, our daily haunt, I had heated arguments with a group of Hindu friends. Modest and quite on the defensive before the Partition Plan, they were becoming increasingly assertive, even aggressive. They would taunt me, saying ‘So your Mr Jinnah had to eat his words and accept his moth-eaten and truncated Pakistan? Why‘?’ ‘You just wait and see. Just wait and see. Nobody can beat Mr Jinnah on the political chessboard I would snap back, but with diminishing conviction in my voice. Facts were facts and there could be no getting away from them. After all the sound and fury of the Pakistan movement, all we had was the ‘moth-eaten’ (krim-khurda) Pakistan. The blue-and-gold butterfly was crushed in my clenched list even as I caught it, after a long and hectic chase.

However, just as we were beginning to succumb to despairing second thoughts, Jinnah demanded a land corridor between the two far-flung wings of Pakistan ‘You see, there is no one to beat the Quaid at the political chessboard I would proudly tell the Hindus. The Quaid’s demand was like a bombshell; everyone was stunned, especially my Hindu companions. ‘But how on earth can you demand a land route through India, or for that matter any foreign country? they would retort.

Their instant reaction to the Quaid’s demarche, even if impulsive, did seem to make a lot of sense, so I decided to seek an answer from Dr Qureshi and took the first bus to the university. I was lucky to find him in his office. ‘May I come in, Sir?’ ‘Why, yes of course. Do come

in. Now what brings you here'?' he asked as he offered me a seat. Without beating about the bush, I asked what the Quaid might have meant by demanding a land corridor via India between the two wings of Pakistan. 'Could such a thing be possible at all, sir, once the subcontinent stood divided and India and Pakistan emerged as two foreign countries? The squint in the Doctor's eyes seemed to become more prominent as he stared at me through his powerful glasses, a smile suddenly appearing and playing around his mouth. 'Oh that! Well, I see no problem at all. You see, international law provides for the Right of Sealed Wagons. This implies that Pakistan's rolling-stock, duly sealed and padlocked, will have the right to unhindered free passage between the eastern and western wings' Right of Sealed Wagons-what an exquisite, exotic expression of which hardly anybody, certainly not I, had ever heard. You see, Jinnah never spoke off the cuff on matters of such importance. There was nothing he would not know and understand about international law. Besides, he meant every word of what he said.

The problem agitating my youthful mind thus solved, I could not wait to take Doctor Sahib's leave, dash to the bus stop just outside the university gate, and board the next bus for New Delhi. I got off at the Odeon and rushed to the Coffee House.

Right of Sealed Wagons! Eureka, that's it! Now let me see how my Hindu companions react. I was almost out of breath as I entered the smoke-filled Coffee House, rich with the enticing aroma of freshly- roasted coffee. My friends were in their usual corner.

'Well, well, here comes the hero, Mr Jinnah's grapevine. Now What's the big news? You look so full of it, so very excited."

'Just wait and-see. Let me first order coffee and sandwiches. For all!'

'Well, well...hurry. Hail the hero!'

'You see, I have quite a bombshell to stun you all.' Then I went on to tell them about the Right of Sealed Wagons! To be sure, nobody had ever heard of that. 'Is that right'?' they asked incredulously. 'Well, that's the international law. The same for all free countries-there isn't a choice in this matter,' I replied triumphantly, leaving the others to bite their lips.

On 3 June, together with the rest of the family I listened to the speeches of the Viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and the Defence Minister Sardar Baldev Singh, broadcast live over All-India

Radio. I sat hypnotized until jolted by a resonant chant of ‘Pakistan Paindabad’ by the Quaid. Nehru’s ‘Jai Hind’ was in a relatively muted key.

India stood divided after a freedom struggle unprecedented in contemporary history and with an outcome most strange: a country carved _up before it was even liberated. Even Gandhi, the apostle of unity, had agreed to the vivisection of Mother India.

All party men. None Indian.

The announcement of the Partition Plan on 3 June by Lord Mountbatten triggered a frenzied chain of events that left us thoroughly confused, disturbed, and scared. At our sub-editor’s desk in the Dawn newsroom, teleprinters were churning out ream upon ream of paper with shocking news of the outbreak of fierce communal violence in the Punjab. My seniors on the shift passed a good deal of the stuff on to me to ‘sub’, caption, and write up the `intro’. i found the exercise strangely exciting but deeply disturbing. If such was the beginning, Where, when, and how was it going to end? We would often discuss this as We worked. Our news editor, Mr Mehrnood Hossain, a Bengali gentleman, would give one consistent answer: ‘Well, what else would you expect when a whole subcontinent gets butchered? What else?" Hussain, no less pro-Pakistan than the rest of us, was having second thoughts after the announcement of the 3 June Plan based on the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. ‘What’s Eastern Bengal without Calcutta? Little more than a body without a soul!’ he would grumble. He now had a bone to pick with the editor, Mr Altaf Hussain, also a Bengali, but one too committed to Pakistan to permit any second thought about its rationale. ‘There is no end of trouble in store. What happens in the Punjab today will happen to Bengal and elsewhere tomorrow. Too terrifying even to think, about,” Hossain Sahib would predict darkly.

About the end of June, hordes of refugees, mostly Sikhs from the Punjab, started pouring into Delhi. You could see them all over the city, looking so fierce and angry. They would glare at anyone who might be a Muslim with eyes full of hate. The Sikhs, even normally, aroused some fear, or at least plain curiosity, in the average onlooker, what with their rough, hirsute appearance and, their ‘Five Ks’ – Khes, kara, kanga, kaccha and kirpan. In the fast-deteriorating law and order situation after the announcement of the 3 June Plan, the Sikhs came to be looked upon with much dread.

Delhi had no place on the map of Pakistan. It would continue to be the capital of independent India»-Pakistan's neighbour now, which threatened to be more hostile than friendly in the aftermath of Partition and the communal carnage in the Punjab and elsewhere. The Dehliwallas fell under a pall of gloom. Most despairing were those Who had earlier gone around thumping their chests and proudly challenging any 'mother's son' to try and take Delhi from its Dehliwallas. 'Delhi hamari purkhun ki Zamin (Delhi, the land of our ancestors and kings) must stay with us: Pakistan or no Pakistan' 'But now it was too late. The die had been cast and there would be no second chance.

Later in June, Jinnah convened a grand assembly of Muslim League legislators and the general body, at the Imperial Hotel in New Delhi to have the 3 June Plan formally approved. I followed proceedings from our favourite hang-out, the India Coffee House. My friends on the reporting side would come for a coffee-break every now and then and tell us what was going on in the convention hall of the Imperial. There had been a certain amount of pandemonium at the meeting: Maulana Hasrat Mohani, a stormy Muslim politician and an accomplished poet, together with Justice Lari, Nawab Ismail Khan, and quite a few others, had asked Jinnah who had authorized him to accept the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, in truth his own 'moth-eaten and truncated' Pakistan, and at one point there was something like an attempted murderous attack on the person of the Quaid, which led to quite a rumpus. At the end of the day, however, the Partition Plan was unanimously accepted. The Wheel had turned and could not now be turned back; it had to move on inexorably, regardless of the bumpy road ahead.

At the Dawn office, almost all of us at the news desk were gloomy and disturbed, but Mr Altaf Hussain and his favourite editorial assistant, Mohammad Ahmad Zuberi, might have been on top of the world. They were blissfully oblivious of the fact that barely a month hence they would be foreigners in Delhi, the capital of a sovereign, independent India.

In Bazaar Ballimaranan our own Haveli Hissamuddin Haider, everybody was deeply disturbed. 'Allah alone knows what lies in store for us and for the rest of the city. But it all looks so ominous.'

Come August and both Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan would fly to Pakistan in the Viceroy's special aeroplane.

The city was now overflowing with Sikh and Hindu sharmarthis (refugees). Every day, trainloads of them would arrive from the Punjab

carrying their dead and wounded lying cheek-by-jowl with the survivors. News from the Punjab was alarming. The Sikhs and the Hindus in East Punjab, where they were in the majority, were on the rampage, massacring, raping, and looting Muslims in reprisal for attacks on their kinsfolk in West Punjab. The solution to the Hindu- Muslim problem was thus being written in the blood of both communities.

Even before they had actually come into being as sovereign states, the people of the two countries were already at daggers drawn., One shuddered to think what horrors might happen between the first act and the final curtain in the script of this real-life drama. After Jinnah and Liaquat left, we would be on our own, retreating like disorderly elements of a beaten army without their commander.

The area around the railway station (the Company Gardens, Wavell Canteen, etc.) had become a ramshaekle tented village swarming with Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus. They stalked up and down the rest of the old city between the Red Fort and the Fathepuri Mosque carrying naked kirpans, eyeing Muslim shops and property to grab. It was just a question of time before it would all be theirs, the spoils of a bloody war they had won at horrendous cost.

I went through my shifts at the Dawn news desk as best as I could in spite of the trouble around. Mother, frightened like everybody else, was deeply worried for my youngest sister, Saeeda, nearly 14. All the stories of young girls being kidnapped, raped and murdered horrified her. Night curfew, from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., was routinely enforced. Barely half the Muslim-owned shops in Ballimaran and Chandni Chowk would be open. With luck, only a handful of customers would drop by, otherwise there was complete silence disturbed only by the Sikhs tramping up and down the bazaars earmarking their targets of opportunity.

The inmates of Haveli Hissamuddin Haider, overwhelmingly Delhi- Punjab Saudagaran, sheltered within the four walls of the mohallah. Some enterprising Saudagar boys procured abundant supplies of surplus war rations (disposal ka mal), canned and packaged, and offered it for sale at a price of their choosing from a chain of improvised kiosks. There was everything and anything from egg powder, the single most popular food item in demand, to dry biscuits (army issue), macaroni, and tinned fruit. Fresh vegetables and mutton would also be available during extended curfew breaks. The news from the city suburbs-Sabzi Mandi, Karol Bagh, and Pahaar Ganj-was going from

bad to worse. The Bandhani greengrocers of Sabzi Mandi were putting up a gallant resistance against the Sikh and Hindu looters, but for how long without the police and the army?

What with the fear of sudden raids by the hooligans out on the rampage and the chilling nightly chorus of 'Han har Mahadev' issuing forth from the nearby Haveli Haider Quli, hardly anybody would ever suggest venturing out of the mohallah. It was about the safest Muslim locality, at the city centre and close to the Municipal Committee and the kotwali. The fear of impending danger notwithstanding, the question was, where else in the world could a Dehliwalla go, leaving a city where the bones of his ancestors lay buried? Where on earth?

The first bomb blast occurred at the beginning of September, inside the Fathepuri Mosque during Juma prayers. it shook us all badly. The very earth of the city, it seemed, was getting narrower and the sky above further away for the old Dehliwallas. They were beginning to have agonizing second thoughts about the future. However, most of them would still hearten themselves with the hope that all would soon be normal and they could live happily ever after. After just a few days of relative peace and sanity, news came of the wholesale looting and killing of the Muslims of Sabzi Mandi and Karol Bagh, extinguishing all hope for the safety of Muslim life and honour. From the rooftop of our house we could see the skyline westward, and it was red. The ring of Ere was getting closer and closer.

Around the second week of September, our area of Old Delhi was like a besieged fortress, with tongues of lire leaping all around. It would not be long before the blaze exploded and reduced everything to ashes. We were all anxiously waiting for Mahatama Gandhi, still in Calcutta, to come to Delhi and save whatever was left of the predominantly Muslim areas around Chandni Chowk and the Jarn'a Masjid. The Indian army deployed around the area acted more or less as mute spectators as hooligans looted and ransacked Muslim houses and shops. We had lost all faith in both the sincerity and the will of the local authorities and Deputy Commissioner Randhawa-to control the situation. Curfew hours were used by armed groups to loot and plunder and kill.

One day in the third week of September, the area of the Phatak in Baradari Nawab Wazir Khan Habash Khan-the second largest hub of the Delhi Punjab Saudagarans-was attacked in broad daylight by Hindus and Sikhs, who forced people out of their homes to seek shelter in Ballirnaran and Haveli Hassamuddin. The journey between Phatak

and Ballirnaran, a distance of half a mile or so, might have been the passage through hell itself. They entered the mohallah in droves, their faces bleached white with horror, screaming and Weeping-wonmen unveiled, not only Without their burqas but even without their dupattas, young girls with little to cover them, old men, fathers and grandfathers, completely broken in body and spirit, their beards soaked in tears.

At the end of the daily meeting of the M0h.alZal1 Committee at the main mosque in the mohallah that evening, an old man stood up and recited, 'Inna lillah-i-wa-inna-ilaihi-rajioon.' (We are all from Allah and to Him We return). Others repeated the verse, softly at first than louder raising it to the level of a crescendo.

From then onward each was on his own and free to ensure his and his family's safety and welfare, the way he thought best. The collective pledge to sink or swim together, to hold fast to the rope of Allah and never to leave one's home and city, no longer held good. They dispersed with their heads down, still reciting 'Inna lillah … Inna lillah … sub kuch khatam ho gaya. Sub kuch khatam hogaya. (Everything is gone, all finished! Allah's name alone remains. All else perishes).

The phantom road to Pakistan lay ahead and open whoever entered.

NOTE

l. Interview with Doon Campbell of Reuters, 17 May 1947.

2

LAHORE: ‘IT IS ALL BY GOD’S GRACE’

ON 9 October 1947, a neighbour drove me to the Safdar Jang airport from where I was to take a chartered (pooled) DC-3 flight to Lahore. This was to be my first-ever journey by air and I was the iirst in the family to leave for Lahore and Pakistan, the city and the country of our dreams. As the plane took off and circled over Delhi I could see the Jam`a Masjid and the Red Fort standing out in the city’s deserted landscape. There was hardly any sign of the busy and bustling outdoor life for which Delhi was noted.

Armed with a letter of introduction from our kind news editor, Mehmood Hossain, addressed personally to Mian Iftikharuddin, owner of The Pakistan Times, I felt confident that a job was waiting for me on the staff of the paper. I cannot recall any strong feelings or emotions of grief or sorrow associated with bidding farewell to my city and home. We had practically disowned the city after the announcement of the 3 June Plan. On I5 August, Delhi became the capital of a free “Hindu” India as opposed to a ‘Muslim’ Pakistan. What would be the point of mourning the loss of something lost for ever?

After a few hours of flying through a clear, cloudless October sky, the plane made a smooth landing at the Walton Airport at about 1:00 p,m. Not far from the tarmac I could see what looked like a basti (hamlet) of shelterless people, men, women, and children, who quite obviously were refugees from eastern Punjab. As I waited for my luggage to arrive-a tin trunk and one or two canvas bags-I walked up to the makeshift bamboo and coir-matting huts for a closer view. My first personal contact with the physical reality of Pakistan was like a stab in the heart, a painful twist of the dagger- hardly a promising beginning. But what else or better could one expect after all the carnage, loot, and plunder in the Punjab?

The baggage arrived shortly, intact and with nothing missing. A bus pulled up almost simultaneously to carry us to the city. While we boarded the bus, our baggage was loaded on the vehicle’s roof. All the way from Walton to the city, a distance of about 10 miles or so, was an unbroken vista of desolation dotted with rows of refugees heading for the city with headloads of their pitiful belongings. Some were on bullock-carts while others were riding donkeys bareback. It was all so depressing. After about half an hour, the bus stopped at Faletti’s Hotel. Although I had been to Lahore once before, I had not been to Faletti‘s, a place noted for being the preferred lodgings of most visiting League leaders, the Quaid himself included, and where meetings of the League working committee would also be held.

I took a tonga from the nearby stand just outside the hotel, and asked the tongawalla ‘Dekho bhai, Delhi House jante ho?’ (Look brother, do you know Where Delhi House is?) He mumbled something in Punjabi which I didn’t understand and so he asked politely, ‘Hindustan se aiyo ho ji'?’ (Have you come from Hindustan?) I replied in the affirmative. ‘Oh, Dilli? So Dilli bhi gaye?’ (So We have also lost Delhi?) He took a deep sigh and went on to ask, ‘You mean Delhi House, the same old shop at the end of the Mall’ I said: ‘Yes, yes, the very same place!’

The tongawalla would not allow me to touch my baggage and insisted on loading it himself. He got on the tonga, gently whipped the horse, Wheeled the vehicle around, and drove on. We Went past the statue of Queen Victoria in front of the imposing building of the Punjab Assembly and presently hit the Mall. The Mall was as beautiful as ever. Bathed in the gentle light of an October afternoon sun, it might well have been a piece of heaven on earth. However, except for the odd car, tonga or pedestrian, it looked so desolate that it shattered my ecstatic memories of the gay and lively city I had seen during my first visit. The shops on both sides of the beautiful, tree-lined avenue were closed. ‘Bohot bura hua babuji!, (This is bad news) the tongawalla said as he drove on. Then he asked me about the safety and well-being of the rest of my family. ‘Thank God, everybody is okay and should soon be in Pakistan,” I said: ‘Allah bohot bara hai,’ (God is Great) he said. After about a ten-minute ride he reined in the horse and stopped the tonga. ‘There is your Delhi House’

As I looked to my right, I saw the shop sign. It was open, to my unspeakable relief. I thanked the rongawalla and asked him, ‘How

much, bhai‘?’ ‘Na babuji, na, tusi panahgir ho.” (No, you are a refugee).

Panahgir! A Word I had never heard before, at least not as applicable to me. Much as I insisted, he refused to take his fare, and then, to my considerable embarrassment, he proceeded to off-load the luggage and ask me if it Was to be taken inside. As I tried to thank him, he embraced me quite emotionally, ‘Rab rakha’ (God be with you) he said in Punjabi and drove off. The very appearance of the tonga pulling up in front of the shop and someone getting off brought Bhai Abdul Khaliq, a distant relation, to the door. He recognized me at once, asked me to come in, and proceeded to help me with the baggage. Even though I protested and Wanted to handle it myself, he insisted on giving me a hand. We entered the shop and placed the luggage in a corner, away from the _entrance. ‘Abba Abdul Rahman’ Bhai Abdul Khaliq said, addressing the gentleman seated on a cushioned floor seat. The old man glanced over his gold-rimmed half-glasses to take a good look at me. ‘Assalom Alekum, Haji Sahib’ I hastened to greet him.

‘Waalekum Assalam’ the old man responded. enunciating every syllable of each Word as was his Wont. ‘Coming all the way from Delhi‘?’ he inquired.

‘Ji, Haji Sahib’ I replied.

‘By train?’ he asked.

‘No, by air,’ I offered.

“What about the rest of the family, mother, brothers, sisters?" he inquired.

‘They are still at home, but should be here soon,” I replied.

‘Idhar koi thekana nahin?’ (Do you have a place to stay here‘?), the old man asked.

‘Not exactly, but I’ll had one,” I replied with a confidence that I didn’t exactly feel.

Bhai Abdul Khaliq stood by. He looked somewhat embarrassed. After a brief pause, I gathered enough courage to address the venerable old man.

‘Haji Sahib, I have only a tin trunk and a couple of bags which I would like to leave here if you’d permit.”

The old man gave me a penetrating, quizzical look. ‘Well, Well, that’s all 1'ight` he muttered. Koi jokham ka mal tu nahin?’ (Is there anything risky, anything valuable? Anything to declare?)

‘Jakham‘?’ I asked, somewhat puzzled. ‘.Jakham’-now what on earth- was that? I wondered to myself. The old man could see my predicament.

‘I mean any jewellery, gold, silver. You know what I mean.” ‘Nothing of that kind, Sir, Nothing whatever. Only some books and clothes,’ I assured him.

Bhai Abdul Khaliq, who had been quiet so far, broke his silence. ‘Abba (Father),’ he said, ‘how can one even think of gold and silver in a situation like his? They have fled for dear life...poor fellows!’ The old man looked away and started counting a bundle of currency notes on hand. He had the most amusing way of doing it, like snapping one’s lingers, turning each note up to ensure that no two of them were stuck together.

I had had nothing to eat except for a snack served during the flight and was famished. Bhai Abdul Khaliq could see that from my gaunt face. Although it was too late for lunch, he motioned me to follow him inside the shop. Up the flight of wooden stairs there was a sort of attic attached to the residential apartment further inside. He asked me to have a seat as he Went inside the residential quarters to bring some food. He returned shortly with some curry and chapatti, apologizing for the meagre fare and inviting me to have a bite. Without standing on any further formality, I pounced on the curry and chapatti and made a clean job of it in no time. The food was as delicious as home-cooked food always is-but on that day, 9 October 1947, my first in Lahore, Pakistan, it had never tasted better.

‘Now where do you go from here? I’m sorry, we have some relations staying with us and are pretty full already, other wise’ Bhtti Abdul Khaliq started to explain.

‘It’s all right, Bltaf Sahib, I understand all that. Besides, I have friends here. There should be no problem, I hope’

My heart brimming with feelings of gratitude and a silent prayer for the long life of Bhai Abdul Khaliq, I took leave and went down the wooden fight of stairs to find my way out. Luckily, the old man was dozing and so I was saved the ordeal of having another encounter with him.

Haji Abdul Shakoor was the elder brother of Abba jan, my khalu (maternal uncle), and the only near relation we had in Lahore. He was a real man of the world with an entrepreneurial spirit-hence his odyssey from Delhi to Lahore, one which few Dehliwallas would have dared to undertake. For most of them, the next destination of choice

for business and residence would be Calcutta because of the status it enjoyed as the old capital of India. Lahore, in spite of being geographically so close to Delhi, was little fancied-the habitat of a language and a people much admired for their physical robustness, little for their lack of sophistication.

Haji Abdul Shakoor's decision to settle permanently in Lahore had caused as much surprise as approbation, but time had validated the soundness of his decision. He set up his shop on Lahore's prestigious Mall, the shopping hub of the British gentry (Anarkali drew the bulk of its clientele from the 'natives'). He named his shop 'Delhi House' not only out of attachment to his ancestral city but also to serve as a mark of distinction in the heart of Lahore-Punjab's capital city and a source of great and endless pride for the Punjabis.

Delhi House grew from strength to strength. It was placed on the approved list of business houses for the bulk supply of groceries, fresh fruit, vegetables' and all the imported jams and jellies-Chivers, S&W, etc.-to the Lat (Lord) Sahib's house. Not long afterwards the firm got the much-coveted parchment: 'By appointment to His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab." For loyal services rendered to the British during the Second World War, Haji Sahib was awarded the much- aspired-to title of 'Khan Sahib Thereafter his name on his personal letterhead appeared as 'Haji Sahib Khan Sahib Abdul Shakoor Sahib'. His detractors, though, would ridicule him by referring to him as 'Delhi House Sahib', 'Mall Sahib' or 'Lahore Sahib' .... At the time of Partition, when Delhi was being ransackcd and the Dehliwallas were being uprooted from their hearth and home, Haji Abdul Shakoor sat pretty in the safety of Delhi House Lahore, congratulating himself on his prescient decision to leave a city that he had forecast one would have to migrate from in circumstances of extreme turbulence and chaos.

I left the shop feeling a lot better and revived. After a long time, I had the freedom of the road and enjoyed it. It had been almost five weeks since I had last Walked along the main bazaar beyond the Warren of back alleys in Delhi. And in Lahore I had no fear whatever of some Hindu or Sikh suddenly materializing to fix me with bloodshot eyes or stab me in the back. I was a free man in Lahore, it was my city. To hell with Delhi-a city that had turned its back on us, which owed allegiance to none! The October afternoon air was crisp and bracing. Just a few steps from Dehli House, I bumped into a group of some five or six persons, all Dehliwallas. We recognized one another at once.

‘You too, babu ji? one of them exclaimed excitedly in Punjabi, ‘you too trapped in this diyar-e-ghair (land of the foreigner) of tusi-musi (you and me?)

‘But now it’s ours, and no longer diyar-i-ghair,’ I said.

‘That’s. what you think, brother. Just wait and see. During the three long Weeks We have been here, we have come to know better,” he countered.

‘Must you be always so cynical? One of them interrupted somewhat irritably, ‘can’t you see he has just arrived? Give him time to catch his breath.”

‘Never mind,’ the busybody responded somewhat sheepishly, ‘it was just a joke. What’s done is done. There’s no going back’

Then they went on to ask me about my family and if I had any relations and place to stay in Lahore. I enquired about my friend Naqi and Where I might be able to find him. ‘You mean Ustad Naqi, the ericketer. Well, he should be here any moment. We meet here every evening between maghrib and isha for a chat and raaat ka khana (dinner).’ He had hardly finished when I saw Naqi appear from a street corner and make for the group with a brisk step. ‘Abdul Rahman, is that really you‘?’ Naqi yelled as soon as he saw me, and broke into a run. It was such a relief to find an old friend, and one as close and intimate as Naqi, in this diyar-i-ghair. We embraced each other warmly and after the usual questions about the rest of the family, he asked me if I had a place to say. ‘Don’t worry if you don’t have one. Come along and stay with me. I’m staying at the Punjab University Observatory We can find you a charpoy. That’s all you need for the time being’ I told him that I was expecting Bhai Usman (my elder brother) to join me in Lahore, and that We would stay in a house attached to the Delhi Muslim Hotel, a property owned by his in-laws. ‘That’s line! Now let’s first have food and then we’ll go to the Observatory and spend the rest of the night talking.”

We all adjourned to a hotel nearby, along Purani Anarkali. ‘The best place to eat in the world,” Naqi said. The Waiter, with a greasy napkin thrown over his shoulder, came as soon as We had seated ourselves. ‘Qorma, maghaz, kofta, keema, kebab...` he rattled in one breath. ‘Everything Today it’s on me in honour of my old friend Naqi announced. ‘Well, well...he surely is in funds? someone remarked.

The food was served promptly. Everything tasted delicious, and I ate to my heart’s content. Naqi paid. ‘Now let`s have a paan We had a paan each from a nearby paanwalla and then sat on the extended

Wooden plank of a closed shop to smoke our cigarettes, chew our paan, and talk. Our sense of relief at making it to Pakistan notwithstanding, none of us felt quite at ease in the new surroundings. We were worried about failing to get jobs or some suitable small business and hoped to find Work in Pakistan as soon as circumstances would permit. The 'locals' 'by and large' had been kind, if not exactly hospitable by way of offering anything substantial like food and shelter. The fact was that they were a different breed of people, with a different language and way of living. The consensus was that Lahore would not be the ideal place for us to stay and we would all have to move down to Karachi, the capital city, sooner or later.

'It's very strange," one of the party spoke out of turn 'I hardly ever cared for Delhi while living there. Now I dream of it day and night. Funny, isn't it?' `

'Forget it, year. How long will we keep harping on the same theme. "Hai Dilli, waai Dilli'. Bhar main jai aisi Dilli (let Delhi to the blazes!) Delhi is not in Pakistan. It's in India-that's all! Bhar main jai Dilli It's time to say to hell with Delhi'-someone responded in disgust.

After a good hour or so Naqi and I took leave of the party and started off for the Observatory. There was no electricity there, and only one or two hurricane lanterns dimly lit the verandha. A single string charpoy lay there. Naqi shouted for the chowkidar and a sleepy old man came presently rubbing his eyes.

'Ji'?' the chowkidar asked.

'Well, don't you see We have a guest to sleep the night here? Chacha, go and find a manjhi for him," Naqi ordered the old man.

'Manjhi...what's that'?' I queried.

Naqi returned laughingly, 'Charpoy, you fool, what else? While in Punjab do as the Punjabis do and speak with them in their own language. Your Delhi Urdu would pass for nothing here."

The chowkidar brought the manjhi, dragging it all the way with a jarring, rasping sound. 'As Well as the Punjabis Naqi said, 'you'll have to put up With the mosquitoes here. This place is full them. They bite and suck your blood, but you get used to them, too. After all the bloodshed, what's a mosquito bite?' And sure enough, my ears were soon buzzing with the loud ping-ping of the mosquitoes and my face stinging with their bites. No matter how vigorously I flailed my hands and arms to shoo them off, they would come crowding thick and fast to deafen my ears and sting my face.

Naqi asked ifI had anything in mind or in hand by Way of a job. I told him about the letter I was carrying for Mian Iftikharuddin. ‘Oh, the minister for refugee rehabilitation. That’s good. Mind you, there is hardly any special feeling or love for the Urdu-speaking Dehliwallas. A Punjabi from East Punjab is in a different class altogether. The moment he uses his tusi-musi (you and me) he is accepted as one of them. Just the same, you must go and see him. If you like I can take you to his Aikman Road kothi’

I listened to him half asleep and half awake, but all the time fighting off the invading mosquitoes. We got up early in the morning when the old chowkidar brought us a most welcome cup of steaming tea. After we had shaved and Washed, Naqi said We would go for breakfast to the Nagina Bakery in Neela Gumbad. He suggested that after breakfast I might as Well meet Babu Abdussalam, BA, someone from our mohallah in Delhi and a senior office-bearer of the Delhi Muslim League who had assumed the leadership of the Delhi refugees in Lahore. I had a glass of hot milk and a buttered bun for breakfast, which made me feel good and strong. Presently We saw Babu Abdussalam, BA, (always to be used in full) just outside the bakery and stood up immediately. Naqi paid the bill and we walked out. Babu Abdus Salam, BA, recognized me at once and asked when I had arrived. Without another Word, he brought out a form from a file cover he was carrying and asked me to fill it in and sign. It had the letterhead of ‘Dilli Refugee Organization’ of which he was the president. ‘Forget about everything. Let first things come lirst. This form will help you to have a Hindu evacuee house or shop allotted to you.’

I completed the form on the spot and handed it back to the gentleman. ‘Well, nice to have met you, Abdul Rahman. I hope you will hear the good news soon. I must say “Khuda Hafiz’ now. There is such a lot of work waiting for me.” He shook hands with both of us and left. ‘Is this what Pakistan is all about?’ I asked Naqi. ‘What else‘?’ he returned testily, ‘What else, my dear? Shouldn’t we have food and shelter as much here in Lahore as in Delhi? What is life all about‘?’ Naqi’s brusque reply shut me up. Truth speaks louder than hopes. We had the whole day to ourselves and Naqi offered to take me round the Hindu areas of the walled city to let me see things for myself.

And so we went round the city-the Shah Alami, Bhati, Lahori, and Delhi Gates. ‘You see all these houses with padlocks and with a government seal? These are abandoned Hindu and Sikh houses-all up for grabs. Those with their doors open and without padlocks and the

inscription ‘Hara min Fez!-i-Rabbi’ [all by the Grace of Allah] are the Hindu and Sikh houses already allotted or forcibly occupied by Muslims, both locals and refugees.

I don’t quite recall how many such signs we encountered during the day but there must have been hundreds, inscribed outside houses and shops. Property-hunters like us were out looking for the right place to earmark so that we might apply for its to be allotted to us. Quite a few would even wrestle with the lock hoping it might yield to pressure. It had been a strangely distressing sight. ‘My goodness’ I began, and had barely uttered the two words when Naqi snapped, ‘What goodness, my dear fellow? Get yourself an allotment order and that’s all there is to life, that’s what goodness is all about.’

My first full day in Lahore had been quite an eye-opener. The fond vision of green domes and pigeons flying around vanished into thin air. In the meantime, mosquitoes had feasted on my face so ravenously that it was red and swollen.

A couple of days later, Bhai (Usman, my elder brother) flew into Lahore, job in hand as the correspondent of Globe, a British news agency. He had brought the keys to the Delhi Muslim Hotel annexe, a small house with a courtyard but no running water, that was for the private use of the owners. He asked me about my job and my meeting with Mian Iftikharuddin_ I told him that I intended to go and see him the next day.

Around 9 a.m. the next day I reported to Mian Sahib is palatial kothi on Aikman Road. There were quite a few others with papers in hand, among them Shakoor Ahsan, our Persian professor at the Anglo-Arabic College. After a good half hour Mian Sahib appeared on the porch, a lighted cigarette in a holder clenched between his teeth. He was elegantly dressed in a sherwani, buttoned all the way up to the throat and crisply starched white chooridards. He was short by Punjabi standards (5 feet 6‘1/2 inches or so as best I can recall), walked with a brisk step, and was sharp and alive like an electric wire.

No sooner did he come to the lawn facing the porch than the waiting supplicants surrounded him. Like me, most of them had envelopes in their hands, while others hoped to have a word or two. Behind the minister stood a handsome young man, perhaps his aide or assi_stant. I waited patiently for my turn to get close to Mian Sahib to present my letter. After the usual ‘Assalaam Alaikum’ I handed it to him and he brusquely asked what it was all about. I told him that it was a letter from Mr Mehmood Hossain. news editor of Dawn, Delhi. ‘Well, if is

about a job, you had better go and see Faiz Sahib, the editor of The Pakistan Times he told me abruptly, nevertheless taking the letter and passing it to the young man behind him. I later learnt that the young man Was his PRO, Jehangir A. Khan, and We were to become, life-long friends.

That Mian Sahib did not so much as open a letter ` addressed personally to him disappointed me bitterly. So Naqi was right. Full of self-pity, I now understood that this was so because I was an Urdu- speaking Dehliwalla and not a Punjabi from East Punjab. The next day I went to see Faiz Sahib, who was not a complete stranger to me. Besides reading his verse, I had also seen him at least once when he came to the Anglo-Arabic College as a military public relations officer in a major’s uniform. His oflice was located in the elegant C&MG (The Civil and Military Gazette) building on the Mall (long since demolished and converted into a shopping mall).

As I entered his office, I could barely see the outline of his face through the thick smoke of his lighted cigarette. He was as busy as the editor of a daily newspaper would be. As I salaamed him he asked me to have a seat, then looked at me quizzically without actually uttering a word. I hastened to introduce myself and tell him of my meeting with Mian Iftikharuddin and his advice to see him. Faiz Sahib said, ‘Sorry, We are already over staffed He did, however, advise me to go and see Mr Muhammad Sarfraz, director of news, at Radio Pakistan. I reported to Sarfraz. Sahib after a day or two. He was a charming person, his face lit up with what looked like a perpetual smile. ‘Yes, what can I do for you?’ he asked after offering me a seat. I told him about my meetings with Mian Iftikharuddin and Faiz Sahib. ‘You see,” the gentleman said ‘We are a government organization. So when we do have a vacancy in our news department we shall place an advertisement in the Press and you would be most welcome to apply. I am sure we can always find a place for someone as qualified as you are. Well, good luck’ And that was the end of the interview.

The small amount of cash-some forty to fifty rupees-that I had on me was fast running out. Usman would ask me practically every day about the balance in hand and tell me to do something about it for he himself was getting short of funds and could ill-afford to look after both of us. I-le had been busy with his own affairs, setting up his office, making contacts in press circles, and recruiting subscribers to his news agency. We would have our dinner together at one of the restaurants; he paid the bill and did not look too happy about it.

About a week or two later, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who was staying in Lahore along with Liaquat Ali Khan, came to the University Ground to address a public meeting. I joined the huge crowd gathered to listen to the Quaid for the first time since the establishment of Pakistan. As the Quaid arrived, the air was filled with loud chants of 'Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad! Pakistan Zindabad' The Quaid looked completely different from when I saw him in Delhi earlier. He had lost even more weight and looked weak and frail. His pre-Partition sherwani-chooridar combination had given way to sherwani and Punjabi-style shalwar.

I had mixed feelings when I saw him-of elation and yet a sort of alienation. In the materially changed post-Partition setting of the Punjab, he appeared to have lost at least some of the absolute power he had enjoyed as the undisputed leader of 'Muslim' India. After all, wasn't he a refugee, too, like me and all the others driven into Pakistan in the aftermath of the bloody riots following Partition? Here, severed from his main power base in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Bombay. The Delhi-UPwallas adored and admired him, despite his laboured Urdu.

The Quaid made a passionate speech in the midst of the usual 'Zindabc1d' chants from the audience. To my ears, however, they seemed to lack something of the force and the vigour that one heard during his pre-Partition speeches. Already disabused of our rosy visions of Pakistan, most of us refugees were preoccupied as much with the safety and security of near and dear ones still trapped in India as with our own future in Pakistan. The Quaid himself sounded more like one soliciting support rather than demanding action to make the dream of Pakistan as a heaven-on-earth come true. I have the entire printed text of his speech to hand, but here I hark back only to my own impressions and recollections of his speech. His use of terms like 'mujahids' and 'tenets of the Holy Quran' and his description of Pakistan as the 'bulwark of Islam' prompted many of us to exchange cynical glances. However, he would not utter a single word about the war raging in Kashmir ever since the tribal invasion of the state in the aftermath of Maharaja Hari Singh acceding to India on 27 October and the Poonch massacre irrespective of the wishes of the great majority of his Muslim population. If I recall correctly, some voices were raised asking the Quaid to speak about Kashmir, but without eliciting any kind of response. As soon as he ended the speech, security guards threw a protective ring around him and escorted him all the way to his waiting

Wooden plank of a closed shop to smoke our cigarettes, chew our paan, and talk. Our sense of relief at making it to Pakistan notwithstanding, none of us felt quite at ease in the new surroundings. We were worried about failing to get jobs or some suitable small business and hoped to find Work in Pakistan as soon as circumstances would permit. The 'locals' 'by and large' had been kind, if not exactly hospitable by way of offering anything substantial like food and shelter. The fact was that they were a different breed of people, with a different language and way of living. The consensus was that Lahore would not be the ideal place for us to stay and we would all have to move down to Karachi, the capital city, sooner or later.

'It's very strange," one of the party spoke out of turn 'I hardly ever cared for Delhi while living there. Now I dream of it day and night. Funny, isn't it?' `

'Forget it, year. How long will we keep harping on the same theme. "Hai Dilli, waai Dilli'. Bhar main jai aisi Dilli (let Delhi to the blazes!) Delhi is not in Pakistan. It's in India-that's all! Bhar main jai Dilli It's time to say to hell with Delhi'-someone responded in disgust.

After a good hour or so Naqi and I took leave of the party and started off for the Observatory. There was no electricity there, and only one or two hurricane lanterns dimly lit the verandha. A single string charpoy lay there. Naqi shouted for the chowkidar and a sleepy old man came presently rubbing his eyes.

'Ji'?' the chowkidar asked.

'Well, don't you see We have a guest to sleep the night here? Chacha, go and find a manjhi for him," Naqi ordered the old man.

'Manjhi...what's that'?' I queried.

Naqi returned laughingly, 'Charpoy, you fool, what else? While in Punjab do as the Punjabis do and speak with them in their own language. Your Delhi Urdu would pass for nothing here."

The chowkidar brought the manjhi, dragging it all the way with a jarring, rasping sound. 'As Well as the Punjabis Naqi said, 'you'll have to put up With the mosquitoes here. This place is full them. They bite and suck your blood, but you get used to them, too. After all the bloodshed, what's a mosquito bite?' And sure enough, my ears were soon buzzing with the loud ping-ping of the mosquitoes and my face stinging with their bites. No matter how vigorously I flailed my hands and arms to shoo them off, they would come crowding thick and fast to deafen my ears and sting my face.

car. Never before had I seen a Quaid audience in such a morose and dispirited mood.

As we dispersed, I ran into some of my friends, Akbar Mirza, Tufail Ahmad Khan, and Iftikhar Ahmad. Except for Tufail, teaching political Science as a part-time lecturer at the Dayal Singh College, we were all gentleman of leisure and still looking for jobs. Iftikhar lodged at the YMCA where We would meet and talk every day. Akbar Mirza was from Lucknow, Tufail Ahmad Khan from Bihar, and Iftikhar from Rampur, the latter full of typical Rampuri-style fulsome ribaldry and vulgarisms. He would never, even by accident, refer to J innah as the Quaid-i-Azam, and instead called him ‘Jinnah’ with an expletive added before and after for good measure. He held him and him alone responsible for the calamity that had befallen the Indian Muslims and all the mayhem and massacre accompanying what he called the ‘sheer butchery’ of Muslim India. It was pointless trying to interrupt him, least of all disagree with him, when he was in full flow and spewing invective. Akbar Mirza, the handsomest of us all and a virtual paragon of Lucknavi language and culture, would nevertheless throw in an odd word or two to infuriate Iftikhar to the point where he would almost start frothing at the mouth. Tufail Ahmad Khan, a socialist and an intellectual, argued that while there was nothing wrong with the original concept of Pakistan based on an undivided Punjab and Bengal, it lost its rationale both in content and form once Jinnah accepted what he himself had denounced as a ‘truncated, moth-eaten, mutilated and divided’ Pakistan.

I would argue passionately for Pakistan even though my enthusiasm had been steadily on the wane. Actually, it would wax and wane according to my job prospects. I asked Tufail Ahmad to have me appointed as a junior lecturer at the Dayal Singh Where Professor Abid Ali Abid was the principal. He promised to try but nothing came of it. I met Dr Omar Hayat Malik of the Islamia College and Professor Ahmad Shah Bokhari, principal of Government College. Both Dr Malik and Professor Bokhari were most kind. Dr Malik even promised to find a situation in a month or two, while Professor Bokhari said more or less what Muhammad Sarfraz of the Pakistan Broadcasting Service (PBS) had said earlier: like the PBS, Government College was a government organization where all vacancies were filled after due public notification.

Thoroughly frustrated and disappointed in all the promised openings, I addressed a handwritten letter to F.W. Bustin, Esquire, editor of The

Civil and Military Gazette (C&MG). A Whole Week passed while I waited in vain for an answer. ‘Come what may, I must go and see the editor myself,’ I said to myself one day, and walked over to the C&MG office, pipe in hand and dressed in my usual sherwani. I Wrote a chit and gave it to the peon to pass on to the editor. He promptly returned to tell me that I could go and see the Sahib. Still holding my pipe, I entered the editor’s room to find myself face-to-face with a dour-looking Scotsman in his late -40s or early 50s. I was very worked up, nervous as Well as peeved because the editor had failed to acknowledgemy letter. ‘Yes, Mr Siddiqi, what can I do for you‘?’ Bustin asked looking at the slip of paper I had sent in. I managed to blubber something by Way of a complaint for his lack of courtesy in failing to acknowledge my letter.

‘What letter, Mr Siddiqiff’

I hastened to tell him about the letter had written him about a Week ago. The look of puzzlement that had briefly darkened his face gave way to a playful glint in his eyes, and from the pile of papers in his correspondence tray he pulled one out and held it up for me to see.

‘You see, Mr Siddiqi, you didn’t even sign your letter,” he said. I was speechless.

‘I am so sorry, sir,” I managed to mumble as I took the letter from him and signed it with the pen he thoughtfully passed to me.

‘Well, Mr Siddiqi, for the moment I am afraid we are overstaffed here in Lahore. We may, however, try and accommodate you as most of our Hindu staff is likely to leave for India in due course.”

‘But sir,’ I put in, ‘I am very, very hard pressed. Please be so kind and do something for me.’

He gave me a long, kindly look, almost like an old friend. ‘Have you done any reporting'?’

‘No sir, only a desk job on the Delhi Dawn, just as I mentioned in my letter’

'He thought for a While, then asked me if I’d like to go Peshawar as their special representative in NWFP. ‘Peshawar he said, ‘is a newsman’s paradise because of all the important events taking place there. I know you have no reporting experience, but your academic qualifications look fairly sound. So let’s see how it works out. You will o on three months’ probation.” He asked me about the last salary I had drawn at Dawn. I lied and quoted Rs 200 instead of the Rs 150 that I had actually been drawing. Without asking me another question, he scribbled something on a piece of paper. ‘Did you say Rs 200? Well

then Rs 200 is your basic pay, Rs 90, dearness allowance, and Rs 50, special conveyance allowance. That would be Rs 340 per month. Think it over. Take your time and come back to me when you have made up your mind.’

I could hardly believe my ears when he quoted the figure of Rs 340 per month; it was beyond my wildest dreams. I thanked him and asked, ‘Well, sir, when would you like me to leave‘?’ ‘Whenever you are ready, there is absolutely no hurry,” he replied.

I left the editor’s office feeling like a new man, reinvigorated and full of hope, my faith in Pakistan renewed. I almost hated Iftikhar for his anti-Pakistan and anti-Quaid views. Would the C&MG miracle be possible at all without Pakistan? Impossible! I had found my place in the new world of great promise and hope-Pakistan, our beloved ‘Land of the Pure’. I could not wait to break the news to Usman more to his utter surprise than joy. ‘The princely sum of Rs 340 per month! Congratulations! Reporting is going to be a tough job. It will be interesting to see how well you handle it.’ I invited him to lunch at the Hotel Majestic in Anarkali to have our fill of everything on the menu.

Lahore, up till then a strange and alien city, suddenly looked as good and friendly and intimate as Delhi. It was early November and there could be hardly anything to match the sheer beauty and the comforting warmth of a Lahore November. Bathed in gentle sunlight, the city looked like something out of a fairytale. However, the vision of Peshawar, city of the ferocious Pathans, and of my job as a reporter, was rather daunting. I did not even know the difference between a story and a news story, but I was faced with Hobson’s choice: take it or leave it. I had to make good or else suffer for the rest of my life. I reported back to Bustin after a couple of days to give him my consent. He told me to come back the next day to collect my letter of appointment. Along with the appointment letter, an advance for second- class rail fare to Peshawar, and daily allowance for a week, Bustin gave me two letters, one addressed to a Mr AK. Kuraishi, director information, NWFP, and the other to Shaikh Sanaullah, editor of the weekly Khyber Mail. These two gentlemen, he said, should be able to put me through my paces as a reporter.

The news of my appointment as C&MG’s special correspondent in NWFP took the Lahore journalistic circles by storm. I happened to meet Mian Muhammad Shah, Mumtaz Ahmad Khan, K.U. Faridi, and some others, and they all congratulated me on my appointment. Faridi

of the United Press of India (UPI) had been a schoolmaster in his native Rampur and a stringer for the UPI at the time of Partition. Since he was coming to Pakistan anyway, UPI appointed him as their resident editor in Lahore. He must have been in his late 40s or early 505, and always wore a faded, well-worn brocade sherwani and a Rampuri-style deep maroon velvet cap. On the eve of my departure for Peshawar, he invited me to drinks at the Stiffles to celebrate my posting as C&MG's special correspondent. After a drink or two, he started humming something that sounded like Amir Khusru's mandha before bursting into tears. 'Phans gaye, bhayyia, buri tarah phas gaaye,' (We are trapped, brother, badly trapped) he said as he sobbed. 'Well, what had to be, had to be. What can one do to reverse one's cruel fate'?' I said as I tried to explain the futility of remorse. He soon controlled himself and apologized for creating a scene. 'Bhayyia you are young. You have a whole life ahead of you. You are already off to a good start. But what about old fogies like us? We have had it. It's not going to be easy to mix with these Punjabis. No matter how good and kind, as they indeed are, we can never be one of them just as they can't be one of us." 'Well, one must either swim with the tide or sink] I replied. At the end of the evening, Faridi Sahib apologized for his emotional outburst. Bidding me 'Kkuda Hafiz', he asked me to look around to see if I could find some subscribers for his news agency. The next day (13 November) I boarded the train for Peshawar.

3

PESHAWAR: THE STORYTELLERS' B AZAAR !

MY mental picture of Pathans was drawn from the Pathan fruit-vendors, bakers of Peshawari or Qandhari nans, and moneylenders in Delhi.

The fruit market in Delhi was monopolized by the Pathans, Their shops were located outside the Fathepuri masjid. With row upon row of all kinds of fruit piled high at the shop fronts, theirs were the best- looking outlets in Chandni Chowk. Just around the corner from the mosque were the Pathan cookhouses specializing in the oblong, conical Qandhari nans' and Peshawari kebabs. The fruit-vendors were also the best-dressed salesmen and looked resplendent in their traditional costumes of light blue turbans and Velvet waistcoats fringed with gold thread and mirror work. The bakers wore a sort of working dress-a grey maziri long shirt and shalwar and a Pathan round cap pushed way to the back of their head to show a wealth of thickly-oiled hair. The Pathan moneylenders were known for lending money at high interest rates-and insisting on prompt repayment on the due date. The dismal picture was nevertheless brightened by the striking image of Khan Abdul Ghani Khan, a member of the legislative assembly who would come to Delhi to attend assembly sessions. I saw him first at an inter-collegiate debate at the Hindu College and, like everybody else in the audience, was at once charmed by his personality. A more handsome, more elegant person would be hard to come by. His peaches-and-cream, clean-shaven face, high-crested, sky-blue Pathan turban and cultured demeanour somehow made me think of Dorian Gray, the hero of one of my favourite novels. When Abdul Ghani rose to sum up the debate, his choice of words and articulation were as superb and elegant as his personality.

A host of mixed images of the land and of the people I was going to live with for at least the next three months assailed my mind as the

train headed for Peshawar. Sitting opposite me was an elderly gentleman eyeing me rather closely, making me feel quite uneasy. A sort of paranoia gripped me. No matter how hard I tried to concentrate on the novel I was reading (To Beg I am Ashamed by Sheila Cousins), that feeling of uneasiness would not leave me. After a while the gentlemen broke the silence and asked me if I was a refugee. 'Yes sir' I answered nervously. 'From Delhi, I suppose'?' 'Yes sir, but how did you know that?" I asked. 'By your dress, young man-your sherwani and Aligarh style pyjamas. Have you any relations in Peshawar? I said no and told him about my assignment as C&MG's special correspondent. 'Wonderfuh wonderful. Peshawar is the best place for a young reporter." At Gujranwala station he ordered tea and cakes for both us. He was from Swat state, but he said that he would stay overnight in Peshawar and take the bus back home the next morning. As We talked, I realized that he was not too pleased with Partition, amongst several other reasons because of the sheer incompatibility and incongruence of the language and culture of Muslims on both sides of the divide. 'Religion is important, but not all that important. We don't live by religion alone. There are so many other factors too-language, culture, local customs, dress, and even food. Look, I have been to Delhi and UP several times and know what I am talking about. What is common between the delicately minced and marinated Delhi shami kebab fried in banaspati or desi ghee and Peshawar's roughly chopped and spiced chapli kebabs deep fried in thick beef fat? Could the two ever mix together? Yes, only when they are as they should be." And then to my utter shock and surprise he said, After all, who is Mr Jinnah? Who is Mr Liaquat Ali Khan? Refugees like yourself, aren't they? What are they doing here in the land of the Punjabis and Pathans? Do they want to convert us to their way of life and thinking or reconvert us to Islam? Are they here to re-invent Islam for us?'

He wouldn't wait for my answer and went on speaking. 'Mr Jinnah just doesn't realize what damage he might have already done to his own dear Pakistan by dismissing the duly elected, majority government of Dr Khan Sahib by just snapping his lingers. The Khan Brothers are no joke. They are at the heart of Frontier politics. They would not support Partition-Partition, mind you, not exactly Pakistan-was to save Muslim India as an organic whole. Now what about all the Muslims left behind in India at the mercy of the Hindu Congress? He stopped abruptly but after a brief pause he said, 'You are still too young to understand, but you must know all this as a responsible journalist.

have you a place to stay in Peshawar? It will be about 10 p.m. by the time we arrive. If you don`t have a place to stay, I'd suggest the Sabri Hotel in the Qissa khawani. That's where I am going to spend the night."

This was a relief for I really had no idea where to stay for the night, and the company of the kindly gentleman, my fellow-traveller, would be such a source of strength. The rest of the journey passed off quietly until the train steamed into Peshawar Cantonment Station on time. As it came to a stop, I collected my baggage-the same old tin trunk, a couple of bags, and a newly-acquired holdall. The Swati gentleman did the same, and we both got off the train. After having our tickets punched by the ticket-checker at the platform gate, We Went out to Where a number of r0ngc1.r stood by Waiting for passengers. The Swati gentleman hailed a tonga, spoke to the tongawalla in Pashto (a language that I had heard Pathan moneylenders use amongst themselves in Delhi), settled the fare, and loaded the baggage before boarding the carriage.

Off we rode to the Qissakhawani. The very name stirred a host of fanciful images, all drawn from tales like Alif Laila, Tilsm-i-Hoshruba, Qissa Hatim Tai, etc. The sound of ear-piercing songs played on the gramophone stabbed the otherwise stock-still air of the Qissakhawani. The dimly-lit bazaar was deserted at that late hour of a chilly November night. The tonga pulled up at the mouth of a narrow lane. A boy in his teens came running to help us with the luggage and carry it to the hotel. The hotel was brilliantly lit and the appetizing smell of food permeated the air. The Swati gentleman tipped the young loader and exchanged loud greetings with the hotel-keeper, but except for the 'Assalam Alaikum' I hardly understood any part of his conversation. 'Here is our young guest, a Hindustani from Delhi. He is here to stay for the night. Do please look after him," the Swati gentleman said in Urdu. 'Awwal daudai' (food first), the hotel manager said. Promptly we were served with hot Peshawari nans, long chappli kebab, and some curry. It was all delicious and I ate ravenously. The Swati gentleman paid for the food and we retired to a sort of shared bedroom with string charpoys laid end-to-end.

After a good night's rest, I got up around eight in the morning. The Swati gentleman was already up and about, dressed and ready to leave. Breakfast consisted of freshly-baked traits and tea, after which the Swati gentleman ordered two tongas, his to go to the bus stand and

mine to the NWFP secretariat to report to A.K. Kuraishi, Esq. He bade me 'Khuda Hafiz' and told me to take care of myself.

It was a chilly morning. The Qissakhawani bazaar presented a strangely mystifying picture of an Arabian Nights souk but with blanket-covered Pathans minding their stores, on their way to work, or simply loitering about staring at things and people. The shops had piles of dried and fresh fruits, karakuli caps and skins, pugrees, and kullahs all neatly displayed in the front of the shops, much in the same way as the Pathan fruit-vendors of Chandni Chowk around the Fathepuri mosque displayed their wares.

As the tonga moved on I saw an assortment of faces-Afghan, Uzbek, and Tajik-with an array of guns, pistols, and daggers neatly laid out for sale on carpets. There were customers and the usual seller- buyer haggling. Much to my horror, one of them pointed a gun upwards and tired it with a loud bang. 'Allah Almighty, where am I? What sin have I committed to deserve this kind of exile in the land of the wild, gun-toting Pathans'?` I prayed silently. Nobody else, however, seemed to have either heard the bang or bothered about it. They took it stoically, almost routinely. Outside a number of tea shops, I saw people drawing deeply at hand-held small hookahs. 'Smoking hookah. so early in the morning," I blurted out in spite of myself, completely bewildered. 'Charsayas (pot smokers) one and al1,' the tongawalla returned, 'They see no difference between night and dayf Alongside the hookah shops there were shops of raw tobacco and niswar, their wares piled high. 'Niswar and the Pathan are inseparable' the tongawalla said in his guttural, heavily-accented, but perfectly intelligible Urdu.

'Just arrived from Hindustan, saab (sahib)?' the tongawalla queried. 'What a pity saab! Idhar ka dunya udhar or udhar ka idhar ho gaya. (things are all topsy turvy) What a joke. 'Yes, you are right," I replied, eager to end the conversation. Presently the tonga pulled up before a colonial-style brick building and the tongawalla announced, 'Well, there you are, math." He helped offload my baggage, salaammed me loudly as I paid him off, and said, 'Khuda pai aman!' wishing me good-bye in Pashto in an accent that I could easily follow. I left my baggage in a corner of the entrance to have it picked up later after I my meeting with Kuraishi Sahib. The compound was verdant With potted and planted chrysanthemums. It was so calm and quiet and soothing. In one secluded corner a Pathan sat smoking permeating the air with the acrid smell of raw tobacco. Kuraishi Sahib's office was

directly ahead, at the end of the compound, with his nameplate on the door to guide me.

I walked over to the office, opened the door, and held it open while asking, 'May I come in sir?" 'Oh, is that you, Mr Siddiqi? Welcome. Your editor spoke to me about you." A handsome man in his late 30s with light-grey eyes and hair turning prematurely grey, K'uraishi Sahib rose from his chair to receive me. After a warm handshake he asked me to have a seat, tapped the knob of the office dome-shaped bell to summon an old, Weather-beaten Pathari worker, and asked me whether I had any baggage. I told him that I did indeed and that I had dumped it at the entrance. 'Subj Ali' Kaka," he addressed the old Pathan, apparently his peon [official clerk], and asked him to put my baggage in the boot of his car. He tapped the silver-domed bell again, this time to summon a young man whom he asked to bring tea and biscuits. Then suddenly turning to me he said, 'What would you prefer to have, kawah or normal tea'?` 'Normal tea, sir' I replied. Kuraishi Sahib went on to ask me all about my academic qualifications and professional experience. I told him I had no reporting experience and that it was a matter of concern for me. 'Never mind," Kuraishi Sahib reassured me, 'I had much the same feeling when I filed my first story. It's perfectly natural with the first effort. Try and overcome your anxiety and fears. I'm sure you will do very well as a reporter." Then he said that he had made a reservation for me in the local dak bungalow but that the accommodation would only be available after a few days. 'In the meantime he said, 'I am sending a press party to the advance headquarters of the Azad Kashmir Forces. I suggest you might as well join. lt will be a valuable experience for you." Kuraishi Sahib had himself been a war correspondent during the Second World War and had made quite a name for himself, as much for his professional competence as for the fact that he was the only Muslim journalist reporting for Reuters from the War front in Italy.

I accepted Kuraishi Sahib's offer Without another thought. He said, 'Good For now you come along with me to my house for lunch, stay there for the night, and leave for Kashmir tomorrow' Around this time a gentleman entered the office. Of short stature but extremely fair complexioned he walked with a bouncing step. He exchanged greetings With Kuraishi Sahib, who hastened to introduce me to Mr Mufti, chief of the Associated Press of Pakistan in Peshawar. 'He will be of immense help to you, both professionally and as a friend, Mr Siddiqi, the C&MG man assigned to Peshawar' Mufti Sahib embraced me after

the brief, formal introduction. ‘Welcome, welcome,” he said ebulliently, ‘Peshawar is truly a paradise on earth, the centre of the universe. And don’t you worry about anything at all; we are here to look after you.” We had two or three servings of tea and biscuits before Kuraishi Sahib went off to see the chief minister, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, saying he would be back well before lunch. In the meantime, Mufti Sahib kept me company and told me quite a few things about the life of a reporter in the Frontier. He talked about Khan Abdul Qayyum and his unremitting hostility towards the Khan brothers-Dr Khan Sahib and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the ‘Frontier Gandhi`-and said that they were like two swords which cannot be kept in the same scabbard. Mufti Sahib briefed me about the people of the Frontier, explaining that they were much like the tough people one saw in American films of the Wild West-rough but extremely hospitable, and frank to a fault. He said that as a person Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan was a thorough gentleman, but as a politician he was absolutely uncompromising and unrelenting. hence his troubled relationship with the Khan brothers.

Kuraishi Sahib returned after a while and asked both of us to join him for lunch at his house. An extremely hospitable host, he told me quite a few things about the basics of good reporting, explaining that reports should always be objective, factual, and clearly written, that the use of adjectives should be restricted to places where they were absolutely necessary, and to avoid as far as possible words such as ‘most’, ‘very’, ‘extremely’, etc.

I spent a most comfortable day and night at his Racecourse bungalow. The next day, 15 November 1947, I joined a party of Peshawar editors, all senior people in their 40s and early 505, bound for Kashmir. They were all kind and affectionate; two of them had been active in the Khilafat movement of the early 1920s, had been to Delhi several times, loved the city and regretted its loss to the Muslims. ‘What’s Pakistan without Delhi? A body without a soul,’ they lamented. They expressed concern about my family, their safety and whereabouts, and wondered where we intended to settle in Pakistan. Peshawar might have been the best place and the most hospitable city in all Pakistan, but life for a non-Pashto-speaking-Hindustani was not going to be as easy there as elsewhere, especially Karachi.

Our journey from Peshawar all the way to Abbottabad was like a dream. We stopped for refreshments at a dak bungalow on the River Attock. In the midst of the surrounding low hills the river looked like a span of molten silver under the afternoon sun. It was so enchanting,

so breathtakingly beautiful. The Frontier province ended beyond the Attock Bridge and we were now in the Punjab. ‘Is Abbottabad then part of Punjabi” I asked. ‘No, it’s very much part of the Frontier. That was the British way, shifting places from one province to another for administrative and strategic reasons’

Around sundown we were in Haripur. The small tea shops and cookhouses I saw along the way fascinated me. We made Abhottabad a couple of hours later and spent the night at the official bungalow of the deputy commissioner, a most cultured and courteous gentleman. He fed us well on the traditional Pathan nans, chappli kebabs, rice, and spinach curry. After dinner he escorted us to a room where mattresses and blankets were spread on the floor. ‘Sorry-', we don’t have enough charpoys for all of you. You have to sleep on the floor,” he apologized as he bade us good-night.

We were to leave for Garhi Habibullah early next morning and then onward to the headquarters of the mysterious, almost mythical General Tariq, commander of the Azad Kashmir Forces. My fellow travelers woke up at the crack of dawn for their fajr prayers. By the time I got up they had all washed and changed. I went through my morning routine as hurriedly as I could and was ready for breakfast by 7:30 Succulent, Juicy omelettes served with freshly fried parathas dripping with ghee and steaming tea, thick with cream-a more substantial and delicious breakfast would be hard to imagine. We all had our fill, picked up our things, and moved out to find the deputy commissioner at the gate waiting to bid us ‘Khuda Hafiz’ and a safe journey. He spoke in Pashto to his Pathan guests and English to me. ‘So you are from Delhi. What a great city, and what a loss to us all!" he said while patting me gently on the shoulder.

We resumed our journey through low, green hills all the way to Garhi Habibullah. We stopped for lunch at the guest-house of the TB Sanatorium and then Went round the sanatorium to see and cheer up the patients. We were to transfer from our coach into army jeeps for our onward journey to Uri, the advance headquarters of the Azad Kashmir forces. The jeeps arrived late and it was almost sunset when we started. After the withdrawal of the bulk of the tribal lashkars, the war in Kashmir continued with sustained and fierce encounters between the regular armies of India and Pakistan.

The drive from Garhi Habibullah to Uri was uphill, and it was getting darker by the minute. As I looked down from the plastic windscreen of my front seat I could see deep ravines picked out by the

hashing headlights of the van. Tall fir and poplar trees covered the steep mountainsides all the way up to the top. The route became increasingly narrow as we drove up and my heart would miss a beat at every sharp turning, fearing a sudden tumble down the ravine. The army driver negotiated the turnings with remarkable skill. It was pitch dark inside the vehicle, and while 'I could not see my friends, I could hear them snoring loudly. We finally made it to the headquarters of 'General Tariq'-the late Brigadier Muhammad Akbar Khan, holder of the Distinguished Service Order (DSG), as I was to learn later. An impressive-looking man, he loomed larger than life against the pale, spluttering light of a hurricane lantern. He responded politely to my naive questions about jihad, tribal lashkars, etc. The bunkered setting, the sound of sporadic tire, above all the personality of the man, fascinated me. Hot tea, served in enamel mugs, had never tasted better. Having spent an hour or so, we were told to get back to Garhi Habibullah before dawn to avoid the risk of an Indian air strike; we drove back down in army jeeps to where our coach stood by. We had breakfast there and went on to Abbottabad, where we had a lunch break, before setting out on the final leg of our journey back to Peshawar. We made Peshawar by evening and I moved to my room at the dak bungalow the same night.

After a good night's rest, I reported to Kuraishi Sahib's office the next morning to brief him about our trip and the meeting with General Tariq at his headquarters. 'Sounds good, now get on with your story and let me see how well you do it." I wrote up my story starting with the sentence: "'We stick to our guns," says the commander of the Azad Kashmir forces." Kuraishi Sahib liked my intro and said, 'You should do well as a war correspondent. But please learn typing. Handwritten stuff won't do.' He made a few minor changes, then told me to make the corrections and tile it. l walked over to the telegraph office armed with my telegraphic authority which was immediately accepted by the Anglo-Indian supervisor, much to my joy. 'Would you like to make it BGQ or BG X Q'?' he asked. 'Whichever is quicken' I answered, as yet unaware of the difference. I-Ie noticed my predicament and suggested BG X Q. That whole day and night I kept worrying about the fate of my First story. ,

The C&MG, along with other Lahore papers, would arrive in Peshawar late the next evening by the Khyber Mail and would be distributed the following morning. 1 could hardly wait for the next morning and went to the railway station to find bundles of newspaper

already offloaded and dumped on the platform. The newsagent was there to take delivery and I asked him for a copy of the C&MG. ‘First thing tomorrow morning he said briefly. But after I introduced myself, he relented, opened a bundle and gave me a copy of’ the paper. To my huge delight I found the story splashed right on the front page, headlined “We stick to our guns,” says commander of the Azad Kashmir forces.” ‘You see, you see, it’s right here,’ I exclaimed as I held out the paper to the newsagent, thanking him profusely. ‘Dera aala dei he said in Pashto, swiftly followed by, ‘Bahu Khud’, (very good) realizing that I was from Hindustan. I took the copy back to my room and looked at it again and again. The byline ‘From our own correspondent’ cast a magic spell on me. The word ‘own’ indicated a special kind of kinship and made me feel as important and happy as any young reporter would be to see his first story in print. Thenceforward my one-and-a-half-year-stint in NWFP is a stream of images and recollections like a series of picture frames.

I had little to boast of in my performance as a professional reporter, being pitifully short on spot-coverage and missing practically every major event of the day, though I compensated not too badly for that by some in-depth analyses, diarized versions of events, weekly newsletters, and articles. I focused mainly on Afghanistan, the Kashmir jihad, and tribal affairs, and on personalities like the Faqir of Lpi, Pir Sahib Manki Sharif, Mullah Turangzai, etc., whose very names held a strange fascination for me. In addition, Irelied on the odd exclusive interview with provincial ministers and visiting dignitaries, mainly ambassadors from Islamic countries.

Prominent among my framed images are Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, Dr Khan Sahib, Mian Ziauddin, Mian Jaffer Sahib, Pir SahibManki Sharif, I-‘ir Sahib Zakori Sharif, Wazirzada Gul Muhammad of Bannu, Khan Damsaz Khan also of Bannu, Lala Totu Ram, the one and only Hindu member of the assembly, Khan Faqira Khan Jadoon of Abbottabad, Mullah Sahib of Shorbazaar, the visiting cleric from Kabul, etc. I also had the opportunity to meet the Quaid-i-Azam and Liaquat All Khan on their iirst visit to the NWFP as the governor-general and prime minister of Pakistan respectively.

Apart from the people, places like Shab Qadar, Michfini, Chamkani, Daroush, Tirah, and Garwakhet (the hideout of the legendary Faqir of Lpi) conjured up images of a primeval, archetypal land ‘Beyond the Horizon’, translated into Urdu as ‘Wahan’ in the coloured publicity poster for one of V. Shantaram’s earlier films. I felt like Alice in

Wonderland--it had been a giant leap from Delhi. There l was in Peshawar, capital city of the ‘wild’ North-West Frontier, among a people speaking a different language, wearing different dress, distinguished by a different complexion and physical features, and eating food that was cooked differently even if with more or less the same ingredients. They were on the whole a kindly, affectionate, and hospitable lot. I liked Pashto better than Punjabi in spite of its pronounced harshness and heavy intonation. Unlike Punjabi, which sounded to me like a corruption of Urdu, Pashto has a character of its own in spite of coming down heavily on a stranger’s ears. Since l was in Peshawar to stay, I tried to pick up some Pashto words used in everyday language. I could ask for directions from a passer-by in four different languages-English, Urdu, Pashto, and Persian-which became a matter of some youthful pride for me.

Amongst the Frontier leaders, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, Dr Khan Sahib, Mian Jaffar Shah, Khan Muhammad Ibrahim Jhaghra, Ghuiam Muhammad Lundkhawar, and Kazi Ataullah impressed me more than others. Qayyum Khan was a strange mixture of unabashed tyranny with a generous amount of human kindness. More than a reporter for Pakistan’s then most important English-language daily, he treated me like a son or a nephew. He had my friend, Afzaal Mehmood, another refugee from India, inducted into the provincial 'service as a Prosecuting Deputy Superintendent of the Police. Unforgiving to his enemies, to the Khan brothers in particular, he was always kind to friends' and to strangers like myself. He lived frugally and his lunch and dinner would be a two-dish affair, a curry and dal, with rice added to it every now and then. He loved fresh fruit, especially oranges which he would consume by the dozen. He was a fiery orator who cast a magic spell on his audience. Bald, tall, and heavy, with a robust, pinkish face, dressed in a lounge suit set off by a tightly knotted tie and a rumpled shirt collar, he stood like a colossus and could speak for hours if he chose to. His loud and commanding voice reached the last man in the audience unaided by a public address system.

Dr Khan Sahib combined an immense, almost inexhaustible sense of humour with the best qualities of a seasoned statesman. A committed Indian nationalist and a Congressite like his brother Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the ‘Frontier Gandhi’ and Baccha Khan of Frontier folklore, Dr Khan Sahib would not allow politics to affect his natural humanism and eclectic idealism. During breaks in the assembly sessions he would often chat with me on the lush green lawns of the

assembly building. He would hardly say a word against Pakistan now that it was a fact of life. When relaxed and with little to do, he would ask me and others around to join him for a drink of his favourite namkeen lassi which he light-heartedly called Indian beer. Always dressed in a khaddar sherwani, with a woollen shawl added during winter, Dr Khan was the living picture of one who had led a 'full life and continued to enjoy it without regret. He would invariably refer to the Quaid as 'our head of state', but never uttered a word of complaint against the dismissal of his majority government by the governor- general. .

Mian Jaffar Shah, once a committed Congressite and a fellow-traveller of the Khan Brothers, followed the opportunistic train like most politicians. He sported a Maulana Azad-style goatee, liked good food, and enjoyed a good joke. He 'would often invite us to a chappli kebab treat at a wayside shop a couple of miles from Islamia College along the Jamrud Road. He joined the Muslim League during the Quaid's Frontier visit and accepted the portfolio for education in the Qayyum cabinet. Khan Ghulam Muhammad Khan Lundkhawar was a compulsive maverick and a sworn enemy in his opposition to Qayyum He showed great courage as an opposition leader until, banished from the province, he settled in Lahore. He would often tell ribald tales about his personal experiences with Qayyum Khan as his cellmate in prison. Ghulam Muhammad Jhaghra, a thorough gentleman, stuck firmly to his course as a Muslim Leaguer. Ataullah .Ian was patience itself. I-le rose to be the- leader of the opposition in the provincial assembly and remained a committed lieutenant to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Always looking for odd bits of 'exclusives' and hardly ever finding any, I once got hold of advance information about Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's planned visit to Karachi to attend the constituent assembly session. He was to take the Pak Airways flight to Karachi that day about noon, so I went to the airport and found the Karachi-bound aeroplane being serviced by the" ground staff. Much to my joy, there was no other reporter around to compromise the exclusivity of the story. I asked someone about Baccha Khan and was told that he was likely to arrive any minute. Sure enough, I saw him appear at the departure gate followed by the sherwani-clad Kazi Ataullah, by then the leader of the opposition in the provincial assembly. The two strode slowly towards the aeroplane. It was the first time that I had so close a view of the 'Frontier Gandhii He was tall and thin and had an enigmatic, almost mysterious, air. As they approached the aircraft, I

greeted them. Ataullah recognized me at once and asked if I was also going to Karachi. 'No, sir," I said, I am here to interview Khan Sahib." 'Oh, I see. But Khan Sahib does not grant interviews just like that. Did you make a prior appointment? Ataullah responded. I apologized and begged him to let me have just a few words with Khan Sahib. He whispered something into the Khan's ears and the latter nodded in agreement.

'Do you know Pashto'?' Kazi Ataullah asked. I expressed my regrets 'You might as well learn it now that you are here to stay," he advised and then continued, 'Well, what are your questions? Please be very brief. He has about live minutes before boarding." My mind suddenly went blank and I had no idea where and how to start. 'Well'?' Kazi Ataullah prompted, noticing my predicament. 'Well,_ sir,' I started haltingly and then, gathering my wits as best as I could, 'What role is Khan Sahib going to play in service to Pakistani" 'Whatever role a good Pakistani is supposed to play, what else?' Kazi Ataullah answered, Woefully unsure of myself and my question, I blurted out, 'Sin is Khan Sahib loyal to Pakistan'?' Kazi Ataullah turned livid in the face. He whispered something into Abdul Ghaffafs ear and the latter muttered back. 'What do you mean by asking a question like that? Hasn't Khan Sahib already taken his oath of allegiance and loyalty to Pakistan as a member of the constituent assembly? Go ask your prime minister." I felt like vermin as Abdul Ghaffar glared down at me before turning to board the place. His eyes held such a piercing look, but whether it was mockery or irony or contempt I still don't know. Whatever it was, it left me in a daze, rooted to the spot.

After the Khan had boarded the plane Kazi Ataullah turned back to me. 'You should never have put such a question to him! He has already taken an oath of loyalty and allegiance to Pakistan as a member of the constituent assembly. What more do you and your prime minister want from a great son of the soil? You know how your prime minister greeted the Khan as he first entered the House'?' He went on to remind me of the couplet Prime Minister Liaquat All was reported to have recited as he saw Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan enter the House:

Na tum badle, na ham badle, Na dilki arzoo badli Main kafse aitbar-e-inqilab asman karlun	Neither you nor have I changed How then could I ever trust the ever revolving, ever-changing heavens!

Kazi Ataullah rounded this up by saying, 'The trouble with you folks from India is that you try to act more Catholic than the Pope. You forget that you are basically asylum-seekers-refugees.'

While the encounter with the two Pathans touched me to the quick, it helped me mature mentally sooner than I would otherwise have done. Kazi Ataullah's truth and his blunt way of putting it across made me accept the stark reality of my being in the land of the Pathans, the land of their fathers and forefathers till as far back as history could recall.

Amongst the many friends I was to make in the days to come were Mehmood Nizami, Sajjad Sartvar Niazi, Ansar Nasri, Nurul Hassan Hashmy, Majid Mufti and some others whose names I now forget-all from Radio Pakistan, Peshawar. They were all much older but very friendly; Ansar Nasri was a vintage Dehliwalla.

Except for Sajjad Sarwar Niazi, none of them could speak Pashto, and to that extent they shared a sort of a kinship with me. They would otherwise speak Punjabi in spite of being perfectly at home in Urdu. The typical Delhi 'aap-janab', 'aadab arz' would come in handy only as an object of light banter. The pre-Partition status of Urdu as the main language of northern India might have been a thing of the past.

After my encounter with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, my introduction to Muhammad Hussain Ata, a blue-blooded Pathan intellectual and a card-carrying member of the Communist Party, reminded me of the truth about my being the wrong man in the wrong place, an Urdu- speaking refugee in the land of the Pathans. Atta lived in a beautiful evacuee apartment right in the middle of Saddar Bazaar. He was handsome and had a perpetual smile with a cultivated hint of cynicism to enhance its intellectual impact. Ata and l were to stay lifelong friends despite our widely divergent ways. He stayed his course firmly as a political activist while I joined the army as a PRO and stayed clear of politics.

Ata was running what he called a commune in his Saddar apartment. It was actually a sort of a mess where Ata and some of his friends like Baqi Siddiqi, Shourat Bokhari, and a few others would gather for lunch or tea and have animated discussions on the present and future of Pakistan. Partition had no logic or rationale for them; it was like the Gift of the Magi in one of O. Henry's stories, in which the heroine (Della) sells her hair to buy her husband (Jim) a strap for his wristwatch while Jim sells his watch to buy her a comb-they viewed Partition as a similar 'gift' from the departing British. They would say: 'Partition

was nothing but a licence for endless chaos. It was a mad cartographers idea of drawing lines with Hindu-Muslim blood'.

Much of what Ata and his Marxist friends said both depressed and frightened me. What were they really up to-a bloody revolution? Didn't we have enough blood still flowing in the immediate aftermath of Partition? 'Just wait and see," Ata would return with his uncertain half-smile, 'as yet it's only the thin end of the wedge' His one consistent advice to me was: 'Quit journalism. It's neither here nor there, little more than a pen-pusher's pot-boiler, good for little else. Join the army, or else stay a damned refugee for the rest of your life. The army and the army alone can help you get out of your refugee trap and mindset." 'Me and the army, but how?" I would query. 'By hook or by crook!' he would reply and then remind me of my friend Major Khalid Ali, a refugee and journalist like me but who had joined the army. 'You must do the same or live to regret it for the rest of your life,' he would say. But l would question his advice because, frankly, I had never thought of the army as a career. 'Look, my dear friend, in a country like Pakistan with uncertain borders, a crazy geography, and an absolutely impossible ethnic milieu, with the refugee element thrown in like a visitation from high heaven, the army alone can make or break things. Just wait and see,' he would warn.

Not long afterwards, I was advised by Kuraishi and Mufti Sahib not to get too close to Ata as he was a 'marked man' and the CID was after him. 'You'd better be careful. You know he is a pukka Surkha (Red) and a marked man." Much to my relief, Ata himself asked me one day to stop seeing him for a while because he feared that he was soon going to be in trouble, thus saving me cooling off.

There had been no news whatsoever of my mother and the rest of the family. My youngest and oldest sisters and the latter's family were still in Delhi. On 30 January 1948 the shocking news of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination had me worried sick about the safety of my kin in India. To my immense relief, however, almost simultaneously we learnt that the assassin was a Hindu: all hell would have broken loose had he been a Muslim. About a week later l received a telegram (or it may have been a letter) telling me that mother and the rest of the family had arrived safely in Karachi via Bombay. On the fateful day of Mahatma Gandhi 's cold-blooded murder they had actually been in Bombay waiting for a flight to Karachi.

Much as I would have liked to take the first train to Karachi, I could not, in view of the impending visit of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan

sometime around the end of January or beginning of February. That was to be my first major assignment as a reporter and I could not possibly miss it. Liaquat Ali Khan, accompanied by Begum Liaquat, arrived as scheduled to a warm welcome at Peshawar airport early in February. He had a busy programme waiting for him. Along with other colleagues from the press and Radio Pakistan, I saw him at the airport, but my first face-to-face encounter with him was on board the aircraft

on our way to Waziristan. After take-off, just as the aircraft leveled off and the 'Fasten Seat Belt' sign was switched off, the prime minister stood up to look around and say hello to the journalists in his entourage. He recognized me at once. 'What are you doing here?" he asked with his perpetual smile. I told him that I was assigned as the C&MG's special correspondent in Peshawar. 'Excellent he said, 'I am sure you will do well. What about the rest of the family? Are they all here or still in Delhi?' I told him about their safe arrival in Karachi via Bombay. 'Thank God," he said and moved on to meet others.

My coverage of the prime minister's. visit was just about average, restricted mainly to his statements and lacking the in-depth analysis and comment expected of me as a special correspondent. More than the professional work, I enjoyed all the lunches and receptions that went with the visit. Although he carried himself with the grace and dignity becoming to a prime minister, the man who really dominated the show was the NWFP premier, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan. Head and shoulders above Liaquat Ali Khan in physique, he acted as a bridge between the Urdu-speaking prime minister and the Pashto-speaking Pathans Also on hand to help the Urdu-speaking prime minister converse with the Pathans were the Governor, Sir George Cunningham, and the Political Agent, the handsome Sahibzada Khurshid with his bushy moustache. What would the prime minister have done without an Urdu-Pashto interpreter? It was one thing to exchange greetings and pleasantries in Urdu with his Pathan, particularly tribal, interlocutors, but quite another to have a serious discussion with them, handicapped as he was by his inability to speak Pashto.

At the height of the Pakistan Movement, Urdu was recognized as the common language of Muslim India-a concept without a country, essentially, a political abstraction without an exact definition. But now that Pakistan was a reality, the pre-Partition dream of Pakistan as the home of Muslim India had started to dissipate. Liaquat Ali Khan's only strength, his only appeal vis-a-vis his Pashto-speaking interlocutors, was grounded in just two Words: 'Islam" and 'jihad'. His constant

theme and recurring reference was that Pakistan was a ‘laboratory’ where modern Islam could be shaped to serve as a role model for the rest of the Islamic ummah. He would draw the loudest applause only when he mentioned Islam and the ummah.

In April, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah came to Peshawar on his first (and last) visit as Governor-General of Pakistan. He looked considerably weaker than when I last saw him in Lahore in October 1947. He walked with a slow but measured step, and the new Frontier Governor, Sir Ambrose Dundas, stayed discreetly alongside him in case he needed support. The governor had quite obviously been fully briefed about the physical condition of his guest. Except for a few quiet lunches, the Quaid had a packed programme which included driving in a motorcade through the Khyber Agency right up to the Pakistan-Afghan border at Torkham, and flying visits to Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. Together with Mufti Sahib and some other journalist friends sharing the same table at a Peshawar Club garden party, I had the honour of shaking hands with him, the third time I had enjoyed this privilege. Warm as ever, the grip of his hand was not as firm as before (or so I imagined). I donft think he recognized me, or perhaps he just elected to pass on after a brief handshake.

During his Week-long stay in the NWFP, I found that the Quaid concentrated on more or less the same Islamic theme that I had heard in his first public appearance in Lahore in October l947. Instead of addressing his audience as Pakistanis, he would address them as Muslims or ‘Mussalmansi At the Islamia College, Peshawar, he told the students: ‘Remember We are building up a state which is going to play its full part in the destinies of the whole Islamic World.” While addressing a tribal jfrga at Government House, Peshawar, he said: ‘I want every Mussalman to do his utmost and help me and support me in creating complete solidarity among Mussalmans, and I am confident that you will not lag behind any other individual or part of Pakistan. We Mussalmans believe in one God, one book-the Holy Quran-and one Prophet. So we must stand united as one nation...’

What was he actually driving at? What was he trying to prove by addressing Muslims only? What about the non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan? Was Pakistan an independent and sovereign state in its own right or was it ‘Islamistan’ without Well-defined borders? These were some of the points raised by foreign correspondents, mainly British, who were covering the trip. Among them was also a Srinagar-based Indian (Hindu), journalist, GK. Reddy. He had sought shelter in

Pakistan along with his employer, Abdul Rahman Mittha, in the aftermath of the tribal invasion of Srinagar. Reddy was a bright, young, tongue-in-cheek Madrasi journalist monitoring the Quaid's visit as a guest of Qayyum Khan. He had become quite close to me since I was an 'ex-Indian' like himself and would often taunt me with a cutting remark. 'So what exactly are you, Siddiqi? A Persian, an Egyptian, a Turk, a pan-Islamist, or simply a Pakistani? The fact is that we are both refugees for the present. Maybe we'll both go back to India one day. Who knows?"

Qayyum Khan eclipsed Jinnah not only physically but also as the man on the spot, virtually in command and leading the boss throughout his itinerary and in his meetings with the Pathans. It was quite obvious that the Quaid would not do anything without a nod from Qayyum. Evidently handicapped by ill health, his ignorance of Pathan ways, customs, and language forced him to lean heavily on his Frontier satrap. All the British governors had at least a working knowledge of Pashto while some of them, like Roose Keppel., used it with native fluency. The Quaid spoke English with the odd Urdu word or expression thrown in occasionally, more to amuse his Pathan audience than to drive home a point. How could a man from Karachi, shorn of the imperial trappings and physique of the former viceroys, ever establish his, and the centre's, writ in the land of the Pathans?

The Quaid's Frontier visit over, I applied for a month's leave to go to Karachi to see my mother and the rest of the family recently arrived from India. The leave was granted with effect from l May 1948. On my way to Karachi, I broke my journey at Lahore to see Usman and spend a few days with him. Bustin was not too unhappy with my performance. He advised me, however, to improve the quality and frequency of my spot-coverage. 'Hot news is what really matters. The rest is important, real special correspondent`s stuff, but no substitute for news as it occurs' Bustin was one of a kind, both a gentleman and a hard-boiled professional. He had been on the C&MG's editorial staff for over a quarter of a century, working his way up step by step to the top job.

Usman's office-cum-residence at Number 3, Dayal Singh Mansion was the favourite rendezvous of select Lahori intellectuals like Maulana Chiragh Hassan Hasrat, Abdullah Butt, Abdullah Malik, Hameed Akhtar, and Bari Aligue, while occasionally Faiz Sahib, Dr Tasir, Hamid Mehmood, Hamid Nizami, and others would also come for a cup of tea or a Sundowner. Hasrat Sahib, with Sindbad lahazi as his

pseudonym, was renowned for his diction; he was a thorough gentleman and the finest newspaper columnist I have ever known. By May 1948, Lahore had emerged as the hub of Pakistani politics. Although Karachi was the seat of the central government, Lahore led the national scene thanks to its absolute dominance in both civilian and military establishments. Despite that, there was a strong undercurrent of resentment and dissatisfaction because the high offices of prime minister (Liaquat Ali Khan) and Governor-General (M. A. Jinnah) were both held by non-Punjabis. That was hardly the reward for the sufferings that the Punjab-its land wantonly partitioned and its people indiscriminately butchered and massively uprooted-had undergone.

Liaquat Ali Khan was, of course, a natural and constant target of attack, but even his wife Raana was Widely ridiculed and singled out for her Indian-style attire, especially her gharara suits. The nickname ‘tilyar’ (brain-fever bird) for non-Punjabi, Urdu-speaking refugees had gained wide currency in the city. Although apparently well received, refugees were still considered aliens regardless of the loud talk about fraternal Islamic ties and brotherhood. One of the three major pre-Partition hubs of Urdu-speakers after Delhi and Lucknow, and easily the largest publication centre in the subcontinent of leading Urdu literary journals, Lahore was slowly relapsing into its parochial Punjabi matrix. No better or worse than the Pathans, Sindbis, or Balochis in their assertion of, and attachment to, provincial sentiment, the Punjabis were singled out for the sheer power and authority they enjoyed over others. That was one of the paradoxes of the very constitutional structure of Pakistan: the Bengali majority sidelined by the Punjabis and Balochis, together representing the bulk of Pakistan’s landmass, the latter the most backward and underdeveloped region in Pakistan’s economic, educational, and political landscape.

4

KARACHI: ELPHINSTONE STREET

DURING the train journey to Karachi, which lasted a day and a night, I had fond dreams of the city. I had been there once before Partition and admired it for its wide roads and superb sanitation. Chandni Chowk, the pride of old Delhi, might have been little more than a sidestreet of Karachi's spacious boulevard, the Bunder Road, which went all the way to Ketnari, the port district of the city. Karachi was ours, the capital of our beloved Pakistan, and my home since the arrival of my family to settle there permanently.

The train arrived at the city station, our second-class compartment choked with the dust blown into it during the long journey through the desert of the southern Punjab and northern Sindh. Intent on giving my family a surprise, I had chosen not to inform anybody about my arrival. A swarm of railway coolies surrounded my compartment and I hailed one to carry my luggage. The coolie took my ticket and surrendered it to the ticket-checker at the out gate. When I asked the coolie to call for a tonga, he said, 'There are no tongas in Karachi, saab, only ghora garries." He called for a buggy to come alongside. 'Where do you wish to go saab'?' 'Rattan Talao, flat number ..., ' I replied. The coolie settled the fare for me and loaded the baggage. He salaamed me and I gave him a rupee without asking 'how much?' He salaamed me once again and also prayed for my long life, happiness, and prosperity. It was not difficult to see from his language and behaviour that he was alone, and like me, from across the border. I got into the victoria, and settled comfortably into a well-upholstered seat.

The journey homeward from the railway station was exciting for all the new places, people, and things that I was seeing. A cool breeze blew in my face, unlike Lahore's hot summer wind. After about a 15-20 minute ride, we entered a street off the main Frere Road. The coachman pulled up the reins to slow down. 'Here we are, saab. This is Rattan Talao. Now where exactly is your apartment? he asked. I told the number, which he repeated uncertainly and then asked for more

directions-much to my own embarrassment. As I was looking around for someone to help me, I saw an old neighbour from our mohallah in Delhi. He was carrying a shopping hamper, just as in Delhi when going to the bazaar to buy fresh meat and vegetables. We recognized and greeted each other enthusiastically and jumped out of the victoria to embrace him. We both mumbled a few words about each other's welfare. 'Is this your first time in Karachi? In that case, if you're looking for your house, it's right there," he said pointing to the penthouse of an apartment building with red tiles on t.0p. 'Your family is right at the top, on the sixth floor...well, my dear friend, welcome to Karachi. Hope to see you again."

'Thank God, saab,' the victoriawalla said, 'for Karachi is quite like a jungle; if you ever miss the right place once, you may never find it again." I paid him off, apparently to his satisfaction. He parked his carriage in a corner and offered to help me carry my luggage. 'It's quite a climb, saab. The top floor is always the best, airy and free from street noises, but it's a hard climb all the way up. Well, never mind. You're a young man and I'm not too old either. We can manage it quite well between us."

We were soon at the sixth floor to find two flats facing each other without name or address plate. I asked the coachman to dump the stuff, thanked him for his help, gave him a tip, and let him go, In the meantime, to my huge relief and joy, I had heard the voice of either my mother or sister from one of the Hats. I knocked at the door. 'Who?' came from inside. 'Hu, hu, ho-hum, khee-ki, khee-ki...', I answered, mimicking the mysterious caller outside our house in Delhi whom my mother believed was a ghost. The 'ghost' would come to our doorway on the long, cold winter nights, call out: 'Apa, aiye Apa, ' (sister, oh sister) and when mother asked, 'Who'?` he would respond with his weird laugh, and disappeared.

'Array, it is none but my own Abdul Rahman," mother yelled as she flung the door open. And there I was, to the huge surprise and joy of everyone-mother, my maternal aunt, my eldest and youngest sisters, and our maid, Hajra ki Maa, who had been with us in Delhi since God knows when. It was a happy and emotional family reunion, made many times more intense by my unexpected arrival. There were warm embraces, much rambling, and unrestrained talk about how, where, and what everybody had been up to. 'Thank God, we are all well and safe here. But there is hardly a day when I don't dream of the old house. If I only had a pair of wings, I would fly back to Delhi," mother said all

in one breath. My aunt sighed and said, ‘We all will one day, inshaallah.

I came to love Karachi for its vast urban landscape with such rich and colourful vistas, and for the cool sea breeze that blew all the time.In the next two or three days, I met' practically all my friends from Delhi either by the wayside or by arrangement. Nearly all those I met seemed to be doing well, some in their own businesses, some as government employees, and others as gentlemen of leisure in occupation of evacuee houses and shops.

One Tullan, a karkhanadar from the seedy backyard of our mohallah, Kupoanwallan (maker of skin oil-jars) had had Karachi’s only open-air cinema, the Mayfair on Victoria Road, allotted to him and was said to be flourishing. When I first saw him he was sitting cross-legged on a bench outside the Mayfair with a cigarette in his cupped hands, inhaling deeply and releasing clouds of smoke from nose and mouth. I recognized him the moment I saw him. "Assalam Alaikum, Bhai Tullan,’ I greeted him. He responded with a grin, ‘You mean Sheikh Muhammad Taqi, proprietor of the cinema’ ‘I am really sorry Sheikh Sahib, really sorry,’ I replied. ‘That’s all right. It’s all by God’s infinite mercy and kindness.”

In due course, I found that Bhai Tullan was not the only person ‘risen from the dead’. There were many others-Hanif, the mohallalh hajjam (barber), was now Sayed Muhammad Hanif; Chamma, the son of Shamman halwai, renamed himself Sheikh Muhammad Ishaque and owned a pastry shop on Burns Road; Insha-ur-Rahman, a compounder at Dr Hashmi’s clinic, was now a doctor in his own right; the wasiqua nwais (property deeds draftsman) a lawyer or a legal advisor, and so on. There were several others, essentially good and well-to-do people, who had fallen on lean days. Idrees, the son of the pesh Imam of our mohallah’s main mosque, had become a procurer, reputedly of his own sisters and nieces; one of my own seniors at school and college stood around the Paradise cinema begging; while a respectable Sheikh Sahib, again from our mohallah., had become a raving lunatic. Fate has whimsical ways of punishing and patronizing people. Much to my utter shock and horror, I found Sadiq Ali, the film star and a favourite of Sohrab Modi, seated outside a prior: shop in front of the Capitol Cinema blankly staring at the passers-by. From Pukar onwards, Sadiq Ali was cast in a supporting role in almost all of Modi’s movies. He was loved and admired for his role in Phir Mileage his last film, as the violin-playing hero. Now he looked pitifully sick and dumb-struck, like one

paralysed. He had indeed been paralysed, and was living in a jhuggi off the charity of friends.

On the whole Karachi might have been a leaf from Delhi or Lucknow-the same language, the same dress, and the same paan-chewing good Samaritans. However, I hardly saw anyone spitting IZJCICIFI on the roadside. They would either sit and swallow it slowly or look for an open drain or a rubbish dump in which to spit the juice. While the elderly still dressed in their well-worn ,sherwani (actually wearing them out), the younger lot had switched over to shirt-and-trousers. The elegant Elphinstone Street, popularly called Elli and a paragon of quasi-colonial architecture, was the city's most popular rendezvous A leisurely walk up and down Elfi was the best way to come across old friends and acquaintances, greeting them with 'Adaab, adaab arz' I suppose there were more 'Adaab-arz' greetings than 'Assalam Alaikum, the style adopted through the later stages of the Pakistan movement in Delhi. After several months up in the 'wild' north, I loved Karachi: almost a rebirth of Delhi, only better, if only for the many old friends that I met in so limited an area. Between the Bunder Road and Marriot Road shopping areas and Saddar, one would find almost everyone one might have known or cared for. The men from Delhi and UP had turned the city into a replica of their native Delhi and Lucknow.

Unlike Peshawar and other cities in the Frontier, where one could tell a Pathan a mile away from his dress and distinct ethnic features, in Karachi one could hardly tell a Sindhi from a UP-Dehliwalla. First of all there were not that many Sindhis in the hub of the city's fashionable areas, and secondly, dressed as they would be in western-style fashion like the rest, it would be hard to tell them apart in acrowd. The Delhiites and UPites flooding the city were divided into three broad categories; the first was the 'Elfi set', mostly occupants (ailottees) of posh apartments like Fort Mansion, Ilaco House, etc., around the Saddar area and of the spacious bungalows around E.I. Lines, Soldier Bazaar, the Garden Area, Jamshed Road, Aamil Colony, etc; the second set were occupants of flats on Frere and Burns Road, Rattan Talao, Bunder Road, etc.; and at the bottom were those still looking for a shelter, living in makeshift thatched huts.

Those in the first category treated the city more or less as their beep dado ki jagir (ancestral property) looking down upon the locals (Sindhis) as second-class citizens. With the Punjabis, however, they intermingled like milk and honey, mostly because of the shared

snobbish attitude towards Sindhis. The flatwallas of Burns Road (pronounced ‘Buns` by the Urdu-speaking refugees) and Frere (Ffia) Road had created a little Delhi and Lucknow of their own. In just a matter of months, hotels and restaurants sprang up Specializing in Delhi Hikari, gala (threaded) seekh kebab, shahi halleem, Lucknow balai, reshmi kebab and a large variety of breads from chapati and roghni nan to 'paratha.s', taftaans, sheermals, and baqar khanis.

A Karachiite Hindu returning to his native city would have hardly recognized it-before Partition, Parsis and Sihdh Hindus had dominated the landscape and native Sindhi Muslims, emigre traders, and entrepreneurs from Bombay and Delhi formed just a handful of the local population.

Amongst the locals, the tough, curly-haired, Mekranis dominated the tinsel and red-light districts of the city. Some of them also plied victorias as a family profession. The Delhi-UP elite of the city kept a distance from the Mekranis and their abominable distorted Urdu poured forth like hot oil into the ears of the Delhi-Lucknow ahle zaban, standing out amoung the Mekrani’s conversation were to expressions ‘aane dos’ (let it come) and ‘jaane dos’ (Let it go); these had a. certain irresistible appeal, and would soon become a part of the local jagged of the UP-Dehliwallas.

Karachi excelled Lahore in the number and quality of hotels, restaurants, night-clubs, bars, and cinemas. The Palace Hotel, the quintessence of colonial architecture, the Central, the North-Western,and the Palm Grove, to name just a few (the Metropole and the Beach Luxury were still under construction), were some of the city’s best hotels. Paradise, Palace, Regal, Capitol, and Nishat Cinema hedges were known for their style and for screening the choicest Hollywood and Indian films. Amongst the restaurants, Cafe Grand Frederick’s Cafeteria along Preedy Street, Firdous, and the India (later Eastern and Zelin’s) Coffee House occupied pride of place. The Victoria Cafe, an excellent eatery owned by one of my own friends from Delhi, also turned into a popular spot for its excellent ‘home-eooked’, vintage Delhi dishes. Mushtaq Ahmad, the owner-manager, thought of the ingenious method of reducing full plates to half plates and serving them as full plates at half price to add to the variety of the fare at he extra cost.

Situated at the intersection of Victoria Road and Preedy Street, the Coffee House was, of course, the hub of the city’s intellectuals, students, politicians, and gentlemen-at-large, all coffee-lovers. One

could sit there over a cup of coffee for hours without any objection from the staff. lt was there that the UP-Dehliwallas and the Sindhis mixed freely and interacted. My Sindhi friends were quite peeved and disquieted over the superior airs the Delhi-UPwallas were in the habit of assuming. 'They would do well to realize that they are refugees after all and can never be superior to the true sons of the soil-the real, vintage Sindhis," my Sindhi friends would complain. The peremptory and unceremonious dismissal of the Sindh premier MA. Khuro by the Governor-General (the Quaid-i-Azam), the merger of Karachi into the federal territory, and the refugee 'invasion' of the city were some of the matters highly resented by the Sindhis. For them, Pakistan was little more than a Punjabi-refugee dominion with all others-Balochis, Bengalis, Sindhis, and Pathans-reduced to the status of second-class citizens. The Sindhis seemed quite uninterested in the Kashmir issue-one of my close Sindhi friends would often taunt me as a 'boot-licker' of the Punjabis, (the Word 'chamcha' had not come into usage yet).

Karachi was a truly cosmopolitan city, unlike Peshawar and Lahore, yet even there a palpable sentiment existed against the Punjabi-refugee combine (gath-jaur) and my Sindhi friends would be brutally frank about it. 'The Punjabis they would lament, 'have usurped all our best barrage lands while you makkars (termites) have occupied Karachi together with your Punjabi masters. Tell us, how long would it take a makkar to eat a whole maund of wood?' That was with reference to the riddle which ran thus: Ek man ka lakkar, uspe betha makkar; ratti, ratti roz; khai, to kitne din main khae ga? (How long would it take for a termite perched on a mamund of wood, eating it up gram by gram every day, to eat the whole pile?) The riddle was used as a sort of a mathematical conversion table to familiarize young beginners with units of Weights and measures comprising rattis, mashas, talas, chitanks, seers, and maunds (8 rattis to a masha, 12 mashas to a tola, 5 tola to a 16 chitanks to a seer and 40 seers to a maund).

'But that would be in the case of a tiny insect. In the case of something as big as a man, the years would automatically he reduced to months, and months to weeks and days. With so many man-sized ants like you, it would only be a matter of a few years before the woodpile of Sindh was completely eaten away." Even if only by way of a joke, it would still carry the Sindhi ire against the refugees.

From the very first day, settled in Karachi, the UP-Dehliwallas, especially the lawyers and political activists, came to regard themselves

as the true. heirs to the ‘throne’ of Pakistan. They thought of themselves as the only legitimate successors to the Quaid and Liaquat-especially the latter. The typical ‘Aligarh types’ would boast endlessly of their role in the Pakistan Movement and proclaim themselves the architects of Pakistan. They seemed to entertain little or no doubt that, as the only true Pakistanis and ones who were above all parochialism, they and they alone, would turn Pakistan into a ‘bulwark of Islam’ and a model for the rest of the ummah to emulate.

Having known the Punjab rather well and actually lived in the Frontier, I found their political naivety utterly ridiculous. Most of them had hardly ever gone beyond Hyderabad, another mohajir stronghold in the province, and had little feel for, or knowledge of, which way the wind was blowing at the provincial level. ‘Pakistan’ might have started as an abstraction, but the :live provinces had emerged as a hard, historical reality soon after Independence. They were not merely administrative divisions, but solid ethnic, cultural, and linguistic entities with deep roots in an ancient past.

To the handful of refugee sceptics-a few intellectuals, professionals, civil servants, and tradesmen-Pakistan, in real terms, would be little more than a one-day honeymoon. For them, it would and must come to an end because it was a hurriedly-cobbled conglomerate of live disparate and divergent provinces, each with its own distinct ethnicity, language, and culture, which made it more a Tower of Babel than a cradle of Pakistani nationalism. The UP-Delhi mohajir mindset had drawn its strength and bearings from lands that were the hub of the pre-Partition language, culture, and politics of Muslim India, but which were now not part of Pakistan. They seemed still to be living in their pre-Partition fools’ paradise. ‘Muslim India’ was no more than a semantic concoction to enthuse the people by its alluring sound; to the leaders, :it came in handy as a poetic expression to be bandied about without being explained. The geographical bounds of ‘Muslim India’ had Delhi and Lucknow as its epicentres and the rest of the Urdu-speaking areas like Bihar and Hyderabad (Deccan) as its colonies. The Muslim-majority areas of north-western and eastern India were bundled into Muslim India as a temporising political ploy; the disparate ethnic stock of those areas accepted it for much the same reason.

I left Karachi with a heavy heart after a three-week stay that ended on a highly emotional note. My mother, sisters, aunt, and the rest of the family bade me a tearful farewell. Mother, `quite adept at

memorizing verses, recited the following verse in a tear-choked voice:

Jao sidharo mari jan	Farewell, my dear
Tumpe khuda ki hu aman	May Allah protect you
Bichre hoi milangay phr	We might meet again
Qismat ne gar miladya	Fate willing

l too felt like crying but fought back my tears. It was the first time since Delhi, over a year ago, that I had experienced an emotional leave-taking like that. Karachi was no Delhi; it was not, as it were, the ‘bone yard of our ancestors’, yet as home to family and friends, it was a second Delhi.

5

PESHAWAR-RAWALPINDI-ARMY: SHIFTING SANDS

BACK in Peshawar, except for shifting quarters from the dak bungalow to a flat off Saddar Bazaar, life went on much the same as before. The flat had been allotted to an old friend from Delhi, Afzal Mahmood. Professionally, it was business as usual-daily visits to Kuraishi Sahib's information directorate to pick up news, attending press conferences by Qayyum Khan or one of his cabinet ministers, or meeting visiting foreign correspondents, mainly British, from Karachi or London. Except for odd newsbreaks, few and far between, it was a fairly uneventful, almost clerical routine. I owed most of my major newsbreaks to a regular scrutiny of the two Persian-language Kabul dailies, Artis and Islah. My knowledge of Persian was helpful in gleaning news on Pak-Afghan relations, which were still far from normal. The Kabul-sponsored irredentist Pashtunistan movement had, from day one, generated a lot of bitterness between the two Islamic neighbours. Kabul had also started to challenge the status of the Durand Line soon after the British left, laying claim to all the trans-lndus territory right up to Attock. Every now and then I would come across a juicy bit of news by way of yet another threat, yet another hostile statement from Kabul, translate it into English and file it-for the item to invariably hit the front page.

Next to Afghanistan, my news coverage focused on Kashmir. Any statement from a tribal chief on the Kashmir jihad and their resolve to fight to the bitter end would come in handy, especially in the absence of hard news. My pieces were either 'taken' or 'killed' on an almost fifty-fry basis. The shortfall in spot coverage was, up to a point, made up for by my newsletters and articles.

With time, much of the Pathan consideration, concern, sympathy, and hospitality (mezbani) initially extended to the mohajirs all but disappeared. I seemed to have lost my special status as a hapless,

uprooted Hindustani or an overnight guest in transit. I was now there to stay, and everybody could see that. Accepted as a Pakistani and a fellow citizen, I was yet a stranger, a non-Pathan Hindustani. Human kindness is no substitute for co-ethnicity, generational co-habitation, a common language, and a shared cultural milieu. Could Islam alone serve as the basis of a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural state like Pakistan? Hardly-and certainly not for long! A Pakistani Pathan was much closer to an Afghan Pathan than he was to an Urdu-speaking fellow citizen, because the Pathans as a people shared the same language, the same dress, and the same customs. At the border at Torkham, my Pathan friends discoursed freely in Pashto with the Afghan sentry on the other side of the barrier, making it hard to believe that these were citizens of two countries in a state of high diplomatic tension. On the other hand, on such occasions I felt like a perfect stranger.

The question that agitated my youthful mind (I was only 23 years of age) was where I stood between two Pathans, even though one was a citizen of an openly hostile Afghanistan and the other from a reactive Pakistan. Wasn't I more or less the proverbial fly in the ointment, a stranger amidst a friendly, intimate gathering of cross-border friends? Except for participating in a sterile debate on Pashtunistan or Kashmir, what else I could do to enliven the company by way of a shared joke or a story? Nothing at all! In serious debate, my strong pro-Pakistan views only made me sound more royal than the king-in other Words, little more than a fool.

Regardless of their fierce dedication to Islamic jihad and a perpetual war against kttfr (infidelity), I found the average Pathan secular in his way of life. Although the Pathans Were, by and large, feared and shunned by Dehliwallas like me, once amongst them I saw their other side-kind, benign, and exceptionally hospitable. But I had very little to share with them. It was their land and for them to decide when to be kind and when to be not-so-kind or plainly unkind; it was their choice either to embrace me or to cut me dead.

On ll September 1948, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah died. Would Pakistan survive after its founder had gone? Who would project Islam as the sole bastion of Pakistan as firmly (even if not always as convincingly) as the Quaid had done? Liaquat, his most trusted lieutenant, was still there, but he was a through-and-through UPwalla; Pakistan would never be same after the Quaid. The Indian invasion and

occupation of the princely state of Hyderabad, ruled by a Muslim ruler, was another terrible shock that coincided with the Qt1aid's death.

I had never felt at home in Peshawar and remained out of tune with local customs and mores, thus, I now Wanted to quit at the first available opportunity. Karachi, the city I loved as my natural first choice, would be out of the question because my paper's Karachi edition was already adequately staffed. Rawalpindi, my third love after Karachi and Lahore, looked like my best bet. What with a ceasefire in Kashmir, the impending arrival of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP), and the transfer of the ministry of Kashmir affairs under Nawab Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani to Rawalpindi, I had my mind set on 'Pindi'. -

During my next annual month's leave, in January 1949, I spent a week in Lahore with Usman, who was by now well settled in his office-cum-residence apartment at 3, Dayal Singh Mansion in the heart of the beautiful, tree-lined Mall Road. Usman and his Punjabi friends got along very well together. The two Abdullahs Butt and Malik-like Hameed Akhtar and others, treated Usman with a peculiar kind of light-hearted chumminess that was more a social relationship than any real intimacy. They liked him for a certain talent he had for mimicry and jolly bantr, and above all for the excellent rendezvous his apartment offered. The true Lahoris would hardly ever miss a chance to have a dig at us, however. 'What are you two brothers exactly anyway? Dehliwallas or Delhi Punjabi Saudagars or what? Adha teetar, adha batair, (half partridge, half quail)!'Guffaws?

I would join their invariably lively and enjoyable beer parties whenever I happened to be in Lahore. After a couple of drinks, the Punjabis would invariably drift into their native Punjabi and even make fun of the Urdu 'aap-janab'-the language of pure pretence and sycophancy, unlike Punjabi, the language of transparency and masculinity!

The only person who would not speak so much as a word of Punjabi was Maulana Chiragh Hassan Hasrat.

Next door to Usman lived our old friend K.U. (Kifiatullah) Faridi, a schoolmaster-turned-journalist from Rampur. Faridi would be welcomed as a casual visitor in spite of his invariably vulgar behavior when drunk, amusing only once in a while. I-le couldn't hold his drink and would be 'out' in no time. Once he was 'out', he would stop at nothing, from singing in his hoarse voice to mimicking certain sounds and motions associated with pillow talk and bedroom intimacy. When

slightly high, he would recite a naughty verse or two-from classical Urdu poetry-to enliven the company. His practical jokes were enjoyed only when others too had reached his state of inebriation and abandon, which was rare. 'Do you think I like doing all that, and that I don't realize what I am really up to? Most of the time I do it on purpose, just to humour our Punjabi friends. You see, a refugee is, after all, a refugee, no matter Where and how Well-placed he might be,' he would often remark in private.

This time round I found Lahore coming into its own, now more a Punjabi city rather than the 'heart of Pakistan', the social and cultural hub of the country. The intellectuals gathering at Lorang's Restaurant for their evening tea, writers, lawyers and journalists, were quite blunt about the increasing hold and domination of the refugee leadership at the centre. It was not hard to see that even at the federal level Pakistan was losing much of its administrative and unitary cohesion in the absence of a federal framework to sustain a stable constitutional structure for inter-provincial co-operation and co-existence. Even the four provinces of West Pakistan, parts of an integral, organic, geographical whole, continued in their pre-Partition parochial mould. Sindh, Balochistan, and the NWFP would refuse to accept the hegemony which Punjab enjoyed by virtue of the number of Punjabis in the civil-military establishment. Educationally, economically, and socially, Punjab also stood Way ahead of its sister provinces.

As for East Bengal (East Pakistan after Partition), it was like an amputated limb, a thing quite apart, despite its absolute majority in population. At the centre, its representation was utterly inadequate-virtually next to nothing considering its demographic Weight and contribution to the national exchequer through the export of jute, the largest single foreign exchange earner in the formative years of Pakistan. Bengalis were easily the most disadvantaged in higher bureaucratic echelons. Even the refugees enjoyed a share at the centre that Was much larger than their number justified, partly because they had in their ranks a fair number of pre-Partition ICS (Indian Civil Service) and IPS (Indian Police Service) officers recognized for their seniority, experience, and ability, but more because of their ability to mix Well with the Punjabis, unlike the Bengalis who were different in every Way from the West Pakistanis.

Nevertheless, Lahore emerged as the centre of an increasingly unfriendly anti-mohajir sentiment. On the other hand, the refugees from eastern Punjab easily assimilated with their co-ethnic and co-lingual

Punjabis in west Punjab, now a part of Pakistan. Karachi remained as preponderantly a mohajir city as ever except for a certain growing sense of disillusionment amongst the mohajirs themselves. They were beginning to realize that, no _matter how well they did culturally, economically, and socially, Karachi would not be the same as their native Delhi or Lucknow. The initial euphoria of finding a heaven-on- earth in 'Karachi and the satisfaction of being culturally centre-stage was slowly being diluted by the hard realities of life.

Strangely enough, the cold and cultivated indifference of the mohajir officialdom towards the rank-and-tile mohajirs had deepened. Unlike others-the Punjabis and Pathans who would go out of their way to help their own people-mohajir officials would turn up their noses and go strictly by the book, showing ‘no fav0urs’. A Punjabi junior officer, even a clerk, was more helpful and co-operative to a Punjabi looking for a favour than his mohajir counterpart would be to a 'mohajir in need. There was no such thing as ‘bhai-bandi’ or ‘bhai-biradri’ in the mohajir manual of friendly, bureaucratic conduct. What good was a mohajir official to a co-mohajir supplicant if he refused to extend any sympathy and help? That was especially true of Karachi, where more than a smattering of mohajirs happened to be in government service in different cadres from the highest level of a federal secretary to the lowest post of an office clerk. But that was true only for the first few years after independence when Karachi was a predominantly mohajir city.

I had enjoyed my three weeks there. Back in Lahore, I called on Bustin, collected my transfer letter, and reported to Rawalpindi on my next assignment. Compared to Peshawar, I found Pindi socially more alive and interesting. It was like a set straight out of Bhowani Juncion, a popular Hollywood movie of the mid-1950s. The Anglo-Indian community of the North-Western Railways (NWR) and the Post and Telegraph (P&T) Departments made up the social landscape of the cantonment and added a lot of colour. For us the ‘Barra Rawalpindi Club was like the Forbidden City but the ‘Chord Departmental (largely Anglo-Indian) Club more than made amends. It would leave its doors open to casuals like us with a minimum of social standing, education, and the ability to converse freely in English.

The presence of young Anglo-Indian ladies made an evening walk along Edwards Road and the Mall a real treat. These ladies would generally keep their noses in the air and avoid any contact with Pakistanis but once they got to know you, you could be friends within

accepted limits of decent social behaviour. Intimacy would be out of the question except in cases, few and far between, of emotional involvement or a real prospect of marriage.

Next to the Anglo-Indian community were the British senior officers-generals and brigadiers riding or walking along the Mall or browsing at the London Book Company. My standing as the special representative of the C&MG, the only British-edited daily in Pakistan, helped me in getting to know the British top brass better than others in the profession. The picture of Major General Hutton, chief of the general staff, riding his horse on the brown track by the ’Pindi Club stays fresh in my mind. In his early forties, Hutton was chubby and cheerful, with a remarkably fresh face and shining blue eyes. He would not hesitate to greet you as he passed by astride his impressive charger. General Gracey, the British commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army, was not as much of an outdoor man as Hutton. One did, however, often come across him with Lady Gracey in cinemas. I remember enjoying watching two films- The Scarlet Pimpernel and the Reign of Terror- while .these two also happened to be present. Both these films were shown at the Capitol cinema near the Metropole Hotel.

Lieutenant-General Sir Ross McCay, chief of staff (COS), was more of a stay-at-home type and could be seen with a pair of garden shears trimming the hedge around his official residence on Jehlum Road- today’s Army House. An Australian, he did not have the same interest in Pakistan or the Pakistanis as the British had. The Co1nmander-in-Chief lived in a mansion next to the Murree Brewery.

Life in ’Pindi was not bad at all. I found it easier to interact with my Punjabi friends in the civil and military establishments. I could manage my Punjabi friends fairly well-even if more as a listener than a speaker; the Punjabi spoken in cities might have been little more than a countrified version of Urdu. With time, the sense of alienation between the locals and non-locals seemed to dissipate, and ’Pindi’s social climate helped and furthered the process of my naturalization. But deep in the recesses of my subconscious mind something weighed heavily, a grinding feeling of alienation that surfaced when two or more locals would meet, speak their native Punjabi and talk of their own people, their home-towns and villages, leaving me wondering about my own roots. Yes, I lived better in Pakistan than I had in my native Delhi but was that enough to compensate for the loss of the city of my birth? Would I ever bc able to relate to ’Pindi and Lahore and Jehlum in the same way as a Punjabi did, or to Peshawar and Kohat as a Pathan

did? Karachi and Hyderabad might have been different-the mohajir ostensibly dominated these cities, but the Sindhis regarded them as usurpers, occupiers, and interlopers.

l happened to meet a Bengali, Lieutenant-Colonel Osmany, in Ravvalpindi. Short and dark like most Bengalis, Osmany had an impressive bearing. He sported an impressive, bushy moustache and kept up a brisk pace as he talked. There was another Bengali, a Colonel Wasiuddin, who was much more reserved, not easy to mix with, and who kept his distance from a newspaper reporter like myself. Our casual encounters at receptions and parties would hardly ever go beyond a hello and a few standard pleasantries. Unlike him, Osmany was most forthcoming and frank in expressing his views, impressions, and feelings about things and persons. A devotee of the Quaid-i-Azam and one who, as a young student, had made a contribution the Pakistan movement, he was bitterly critical of the Punjabis. 'The Quaid's one monumental mistake, call it a sin of commission if you like, was that he ignored Bengal and the Bengalis as the majority component of Pakistan," Osmany would argue vehemently. He would have had the Quaid move the national capital to Dhaka, the capital city of the majority province. 'As it is," he would go on, 'Karachi is not in the Punjab and yet it's under complete Punjabi domination. As for you bloody UP-Dehliwallas, you're neither here nor there; neither in hell nor in heaven, only suspended between the two. You may be dominating the highest echelons of the civil service for the time being, but for how long? Your second and third generation will not be there to take over and you will have no say in the affairs of this country."

Osmany's sentiment against the Punjabis was absolute. As an officer in the Royal Pakistan Army Service Corps, Osmany was posted at the Supply and Transport Directorate of the GHQ. Subsequently, he opted for the infantry, dropped his rank of acting lieutenant-colonel for the substantive rank of major, and was posted to an infantry regiment, probably the First East Bengal (or was it Punjab?) Years later, he was promoted to full colonel, appointed deputy director of military operations, and finally retired from that post.

In May l949, the C&MG was banned by the central government for three months. The paper had published a news agency story datelined New Delhi about the impending partition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The story caused much resentment, quite noticeably more in professional press circles than among the public. Practically all the major dailies, from Karachi's Dawn and Lahores The Pakistan Times

to Dhaka's Pazkistan Observer, urged the government to ban the paper for gravely compromising and harming the Kashmir cause. The editor, FW. Bustin, agreed to publish an unqualified apology on the front page of the C&MG for three days running, but even that did not satisfy his critics. The government acceded to their demands and the newspaper was banned for three months. The hue and cry was actually more the result of a calculated conspiracy against the only English-language paper in non-Pakistani hands than about the publication of a rogue story.

The three-month ban on the C&MG was a dark day in the history of Pakistani journalism and government-press relations. The paper would never recover from the loss of circulation and goodwill it suffered as a result. The British staff soon quit the paper, which was placed under the control of one Khawaja Nazir Ahmad, an Ahmadi of the Lahore school who was an attorney of Seth Dalmia, an Indian, who held controlling shares in the publication. Things changed drastically in the staffing and editorial policies of the newspaper, and I found working conditions in the paper increasingly difficult. One Maulvi Yakub Khan replaced W.T. Vanter as the senior assistant editor. Once or twice I got a letter from him reflecting critically on my coverage-a new and depressing experience for me. My detailed feature on Madame Azuri-a dancer of all-India fame, settled in Rawalpindi with her Muslim husband-brought a stinker from the Maulvi Sahib. He reprimanded me for writing about 'prostitutes' and warned me bluntly against repeating such stories in the future.

The letter worried me deeply. I took the next train to Lahore and reported to Bustin without an appointment. He was not at all surprised to see the state I was in. 'I know what brings you here." I know the entire story. Maulvi Sahib showed me the letter before mailing.

'What then must I do, Sir`?' I interrupted impatiently. Bustin told me to calm down and not to worry too much. 'You go back to your base and resume your work. I'll see nothing happens to you while Fm here. Only Fm not sure how long I shall be here myself. In the meantime, if you find an opening elsewhere, don't say no to it. I believe Col. Shahbaz is looking for one or two new officers for his directorate. If you like, I can put in a word for you when I meet him next...' Col. Shahbaz (Director Inter-Services Public Relations [ISPR]) and Bustin were good friends and keen bridge players. They met for a round or two at the Gymkhana whenever Col. Shahbaz happened to be in Lahore, which was quite often.

Not long afterwards, as I was having a cup of tea with Colonel Shahbaz Khan at his office, he 'looked at me somewhat curiously, I thought. And then, without beating about the bush, he said, ‘How about putting on uniform? Your editor seems to like you. He thinks you might do well as an army PRO. Wel1?’ I knew Bustin was planning to speak to the Colonel, but I could hardly believe it had happened so quickly; ‘Think it over and let me know in a day or two. We’re in a bit of a hurry’

I took my leave wondering what to do. Much as I loved my job as a journalist, job insecurity had been haunting me ever since Maulvi Yakub’s letter and Bustin’s advice not to say no to a fresh opening. I spent two days thinking hard. My Peshawar friend Muhammad Hussain’s idea about the army being the best place for a refugee like myself helped me a great deal in making up my mind about Colonel Shahbaz’s offer. I reported to him after two days to accept his offer. Shahbaz was pleased. He said I would receive a formal call-up order within a week or so. And that was that. Four or live days later I received a letter from the Adjutant-Genera1`s Branch requiring me to report to GHQ for an interview.

I reported for the interview on the due date. Besides the president of the board, one Brigadier Hill, acting adjutant-general, there were two others, namely Colonel Shahbaz Khan and Lt.-Col M.A.G. Osmany. The two questions Brigadier Hill put to me were: ‘What brought you to Pakistan'?` and ‘How strong is your love for Pakistan and your commitment to serve it‘?’ I replied, ‘Sin I know the price of freedoml’ The answer brought suppressed smiles to the faces of the interviewers. Colonel Shahbaz put certain questions about my professional work and Osmany asked something concerning my academic background. He was quite sorry that I had never been to the Aligarh Muslim University in India. ‘You don`t know what you have missed...fo1‘ all times to come,’ he said.

A week or so after the interview, I got a letter directing me to report to the staff surgeon at the Combined Military Hospital for a medical examination. The test passed off satisfactorily and I was informed that I had been duly selected for the job. I was assigned to the Royal Pakistan Army Service Corps (RPASC) for my basic military training as a second lieutenant, to be promoted to captain on completion of my training. I had to kit myself out, complete with the RPASC badges of rank, service insignia, beret cap and all, at my own expense. My kit

allowance was to be reimbursed along with my first pay and emoluments on completion of my basic training.

I was due to report to the RPASC centre, Chaklala, on il July 1950. Major Khalid Ali, my old friend and now superior officer, invited me to spend the night at his house on Jehlum Road, an annexe attached to the official residence of the army COS, Lieutenant-General Sir Ross McCay. The RPASC centre at Chaklala was about 15 minutes drive from Khalid's house. I shifted to Khalid's place in the afternoon with my meagre baggage, a tin trunk and a few small bags. Khalid welcomed me with a smile and told me light-heartedly how to behave with a superior officer. 'Welcome to the club, Second-Lieutenant Siddiqi, and be very, very careful. You are where angels might fear to tread!' he said with a broad smile.

Second-Lieutenant Siddiqi? Good Lord! Was that really me? All sorts of shadowy images from Kafka's Metamorphosis assailed my youthful mind. I did not know whether to scream or laugh. Until the other day, Khalid was just a dear friend, but now he was my superior officer and I'd have to salute him every time he passed me by. Was I dreaming or was this real? Why did I allow myself to get into this mess? Might it not have been better to have waited a little longer for another opening in the profession itself?

My mind was like a hornet's nest, with the venomous, spiteful monsters attacking me with razor-like stings. Khalid could see the dark shadows hovering across my face. 'Well, this is it, my dear Siddiqi. There'fs no getting away from it, so take it in your stride' Then, with a sudden impish glint in his eyes, he yelled, 'Surprise surprise, guess who's here?' and Muhammad Hussain Ata emerged from one of the rooms. 'Array!' I yelled, beside myself with excitement, for he was the last person I expected to see in the house of a serving army major. Muhammad Hussain had been underground for quite some time after a raid on the offices of the Pakistan Communist Party. The police were after him and it took real guts on Khalid's part to let him stay as a guest in his official accommodation, which was adjacent to the residence of the Army Chief of Staff.

Ata wore his eternal half-smile on his handsome face. We rushed to embrace each other and stood, backslapping each other for quite a while. 'Fm so glad] he said, 'you're going to be where you ought to have been. Mark my words, the army is the only place for a Hindustani deserter like you. Native provincial pride and prejudice will almost invariably outweigh patriotic rubbish that can never make up for your

lack of a territorial base in Pakistan like a Pathan or a Punjabi, or a Sindhi, Baloch or Bengali,'each with a home province of his own. No matter how you look at it, Pakistan is still a grand abstraction, a non-existential, surrealistic entity, you know what I mean? The uniform alone can give you a real place and standing in Pakistan's crazy milieu.

Ata was in really high spirits and in full flow. His views about the role and importance of the military establishment in what he called the 'crazily cobbled' state of Pakistan were unusually firm and definitive. 'The army," he argued, 'will be the life and death of Pakistan in the absence of stable political parties or groups at the national level. Even the communist party has failed. In a way I'm glad the government banned it before it withered away and died a natural death. The army will be calling the shots and work its Way through to absolute power- by persuasion if possible, but by force if necessary'

'The Kashmir war," he would say, 'is going to be the bane of Pakistan's civil society and a boon for the military. Just mark my words and wait and see for yourself. Democracy can never strike roots in a Pakistan aspiring to serve as the laboratory for a modern Islamic state on the British colonial pattern. It would be like mixing oil with water' Then with his characteristic half-smile, he would continue, 'As for you Hindustanis, the only Way you can stay in the mainstream of Pakistan politics and government is by grooming yourselves as a sort of a balancing force in the bewildering, multi-ethnic mélange of Pakistan, even if only from the sidelines'

My last night as a civilian was spent under the roof of a serving major in the company of Ata, a dyed-in-the-wool communist. Early the next morning, 11 July 1950 a three-ton truck reported at 0600 hours sharp. Khalid helped me put on my uniform. He didn't quite know where to put the red lanyard, whether around the left or the right shoulder, and finding the correct angle at which to wear the beret also took quite an effort. Every time he tried to fix the badge and pull the beret down to the correct angle, it would recoil and end up looking like the top of a cloth cap. The few minutes taken in getting me into uniform-from head to toe-seemed like eternity itself. The driver honked a couple of times to make us hurry.

Dressed, for better or worse, I embraced Khalid, my eyes brimming with tears. Ata also got up to wish me luck. 'Be brave' he said 'I'm sure you 'Won't live' to regret this day. Remember, it's now that life begins for you. Be careful, and the very best luck and success to you.'

Fifteen or twenty minutes later, l was at the RPASC centre, a typical colonial-style barrack, austere, stern, and spotlessly clean-even the tree-trunks were freshly white-washed. The driver escorted me to the office of the adjutant, Lieutenant Amir. A chick screened the door. I raised the corner of the chick, peeped in, and asked if I could enter. 'Please do, Lieutenant Siddiqi, Fm glad you made it on time." As bespectacled Lieutenant Amir rose from his chair, I realized that he was a tall man, and somewhat grim-lookinG but with a face that lit up with a toothy, friendly grin. 'Do I look all right, sir? I asked nervously. Amir grinned broadly. 'Just wait and see what the colonel has to say about it. Let me go and see if he is ready to see you." Without another word he walked towards the inter-connecting door. 'March him in! I heard the colonel tell Amir in a typical British accent. Amir returned, looked at me critically from top to toe, set my beret, still somewhat. askew, right and quickly showed me how to come to attention and salute. Then he marched me into the commandant's office, to bring me face-to-face with a. strikingly smart officer in his late 30s or early 405. He was lean and wiry, pulsating with energy, and rising from his seat for a handshake said, 'Welcome to the club, Mr Siddiqi. I think you could do with a haircut." Then turning to Lieutenant Amir, he said, 'Amir, we're not to make a soldier out of him. Just lick him into shape well enough to be Worthy of his uniform and rank. That'd be all!' He was Colonel Daly, an Irish officer, as I was soon to learn.

Amir marched me back to his office, treated me to a cup of tea and biscuits, and gave me my detailed training programme. I was placed under the charge of a subedanniajor who would be my chief instructor. For about a month or more I went through the mil] under the vigilant gaze and guidance of the subedar-major. Every now and then Colonel Daly, accompanied by Lieutenant Amir, would come to see for himself how my training was proceeding. 'Longest way up and the shortest way down; always remember that," he would tell me every time he saw me salute, apparently not quite to his satisfaction. For his part, my instructor saw to it that I went through my 'crash' programme to the finish: drill, with and without arms, target shooting with a .303 bolt action rifle, removing the pin from a hand grenade before lobbing it, marching in quick and slow times, climbing a tree while armed. clearing a water obstacle Tarzan-like with a rope, etc. No matter how hard I tried to perfect the correct way to present arms, I failed to come up to his level of perfection. Colonel Daly didn't feel so strongly about it. 'Saab,' he would tell the subedar-major, 'this is no PMA (the

Pakistan Military Academy) and he isn't a cadet being groomed for a permanent commission in the army. You've done your best to help him through his paces and he, for his part, looks better than the scruffy civilian he was and will be for the rest of his life. Well done, Saab!'

On the day I completed training I was promoted to the rank of captain, reported to the ISPR for further orders, and proceeded to Lahore to take charge as the press liaison officer (PLO). Major-General Muhammad Azam Khan, who was then the general officer commanding (GOC) Lahore, had been known to me since my days in Rawalpindi, where he had been the station commander as a superseded brigadier. He was promoted major~ general in the aftermath of the Jang Shahi air crash of November 1947 that killed two senior officers, Maj-Gen. Iftikhar Khan and Brigadier Sher Khan, already approved for promotion to major-general. Maj.-Gen. Iftikhar was designated to take over as the first Pakistani army chief. That fatal air crash paved the way to future success for both Azam and Maj.-Gen. Ayub, then GOC, 14 Infantry Division, Dhaka. Azam retired in a three-star slot as governor of East Pakistan and Ayub abdicated as iield-marshal and president of Pakistan in 1969. I reported to Azam the day after I took over as PLO (Lahore). He was glad to see me in uniform and received me with much warmth. He talked to me briefly, shook my hand, and wished me farewell. Early the next day one Lt.-Col. Yahya, GSO-1, then a young man still in his early thirties with prematurely greying hair, called me on telephone: 'Well, Siddiqi he said in a deep throaty voice, 'now that you are in uniform and an officer you should know how to behave as an officer and according to your rank?

'Yes sir," I replied rather nervously.
'Did you call on the GOC yesterday? Did you?' he demanded.
'Yes sir," I answered, unsure of what was to follow.
'You know, you were not supposed to call on him directly. You are not a press reporter now. Next time you call on the GOC, do it through the proper channels, that is through your next superior officer-the GSO-2 (Ops) or the GSO-(1). In your case, however, and in view of the special nature of your job, you may report to me directly in connection with your official duties. Remember never to bypass the proper channels. Well, that's all for now?

'Never bypass the proper channels'-my first major lesson as an army officer that I was never to forget for the rest of almost a quarter century's service in the army. Azam and Yahya would remain two of my closet superiors in the army. Yayha was soon promoted to brigadier

and posted out of Lahore to assume command of an active brigade. I happened to be the first to break the news to him, to his utter surprise. 'Are you playing games with me? Is this one of your press canards'?' he snapped. 'How could I be playing games with you, sir? This is straight from the horse's mouth. GHQ wants me to write up your life sketch for a press release," I hastened to explain. 'Good heavens! I was not expecting this. Well, thank you just the same,' he said. From that day onwards, Yahya was like an elder brother to me. He kept moving up the army ladder till he made it right to the top.

'Out of Civvy Street and into the army is something akin to a sheep getting into a wolf's clothing. You look pathetically like a civilian in uniform and as pathetically like a soldier in civvies,' was how one of my friends would taunt me. I enjoyed the remark. Much as I tried to take care of my turnout and behave like an army officer, I was still regarded as a pressman in uniform-a sort of an outsider on extra regimental employment (ERE), a PTC (Pakistan Temporary Commissioned Officer). I was respected for my academic qualifications but derided for my babu-English. I was often told: 'Your English is too stilted, too verbose for lively mess banter. But you'll be all right soon. When in Rome, do as the Romans do.'

Professionally, life was much the same as that of a journalist except that it was desk-bound and required observing regular office hours, from 0730 to 1400 hours. Apart from compulsory organized games, volleyball in my case, there was nothing by way of the physical activity associated with unit life. I was in charge of my own small unit, with a number of civilian assistants and a peon. My office and residence were located in the Nedous Hotel facing the sprawling Lawrence Gardens (today's Jinnah Gardens). It was the most ideal location one could imagine. I had a three-ton truck for transport, which would shuttle me between my office and the divisional headquarters in the cantonment. General Azam was most kind, almost like a father to me. Somewhat ill-at-ease to begin with, I soon took Well to my army life.

Writing press notes and releases was routine stuff, not half as interesting as writing up news stories, each with a different message and angle. The writing of them bored me stiff, and then there Was the procedure involved in getting them approved by a senior staff officer or the GOC himself, each with his own pet notion about a word or a phrase. Correct idioms or phrases were likely to be dismissed as 'bloody baba-English," and 'ought' and 'should' were practically

banned and replaced with “must” and ‘would’. It was annoying in the beginning, but in due course I settled down to the routine.

One day the GOC personally called me on the phone. ‘Siddiqi he said, ‘we are going to Sialkot tomorrow morning. Report to HQ at 0900 hours sharp. Okay/‘?’ ‘Yes sir!’ I answered and reported to the headquarter at 0845 hours. At 0900 sharp, the general came out of his office and was pleased to see me. ‘Well, let’s get cracking.” His two-starred staff car (a black Humber Hawk?) gleamed in the mid-morning sunlight. The uniformed driver stood to attention holding the door for the general to get in. I went round to the other door, opened it, and got into the car to sit next to the general.

Lahore to Sialkot was a good two-hour drive-quite a test of nerves for me, sitting next to a general. Soon after we started, the general opened his briefcase, put on his reading glasses, and started to go through the tiles he was carrying. He did not take long to dispose of them. ‘How about some tea?` he asked, as he unscrewed the cap of his thermos flask. ‘Yes sir, thank you sir!’ He poured the tea into two paper cups and handed one to me. The tea was hot and liberally sugared, and as we slowly sipped it he asked me a number of questions about my family. He was sorry to learn that I had lost my father as a child of nine and was glad to know that the rest of my family was now reasonably well settled in Karachi. He had had, before Partition, a brief tour of duty at the GHQ in New Delhi and loved that city. ‘It was truly the principal seat of Muslim culture, art, and architecture. But we had to sacrifice it for the sake of freedom. I know what it means to lose for ever the place of one’s birth, no matter how big or small. You might be missing Delhi, but now that you are in the army you must never allow yourself to feel like a refugee, for there are no refugees in the army. The army is where you belong. It’s your home, your country, the only thing you live and die for. Nothing is more ruinous than this bloody refugee mentality. Remembering one’s old home is not the same as shedding tears over its loss. Pakistan and the Pakistan Army alone are what matter to us. All the rest is bloody nonsense, sheer rubbish’ Affectionate and forthcoming, Azam went on pontificating about one’s duty as a soldier, even more so as a pressman in uniform: ‘What you can do to serve the Pakistan Army is to project its correct image in ways even I as GOC can’t do.` In due course I learnt that his wife, Qudsia, was from the princely state of Hyderabad (Deccan) and so a sort of a ‘double refugee? The Hyderabadis were particularly distrusted in the army. Under the first Pakistani commander-in-chief, General

Muhammad Ayub Khan, officers from Hyderabad Deccan were discriminated against for promotion beyond the rank of a major.

Sialkot was en féte with the centenary celebration of one of the Punjab regiments (16 Punjab?) and a number of retired British officers had come to participate in their regimental reunion. Brigadier Muhammad Akbar Khan, DSO, was station commander, Sialkot. I had met Akbar as a reporter twice before, first at his headquarters in Uri in the thick of the Kashmir war in November 1947, and later in Kohat when he was commanding a brigade. I had also met his wife Nasim Akbar Khan, whom my friend Muhammad Hussain Ata had described as a 'friend and a sympathizer' on a number of occasions.

We stayed overnight at Sialkot for the reunion banquet and reception. I met Mrs Akbar Khan at the reception; she was most happy to see me in uniform and asked me to join her for a cup of tea at the station commander's house the next day. That was indeed a rare honour for a newly-commissioned junior officer and I accepted readily. I called at the station commander's house at 1700 hours the next day and was shown into the drawing room by an orderly. It was drab, sparsely furnished with standard Military Engineering Service (MES) furniture relieved only by the many military insignias and trophies and the brigadier's own photographs in silver frames. In spite of its meager furnishing and drapery, the room had a severe military elegance characteristic of the British home décor and style. I sat tensely on the edge of my sofa-chair waiting for the begum .sahiba to come.

She arrived soon enough, dressed in a typical Punjabi shalwar kameez outfit. Of medium height, Begum Nasim Akbar Khan was fair, her face framed by thick black curly hair. She had a noticeably narrow mouth and thin lips rather closely pressed, which gave one the impression that she was a woman with great ambition and resolve. I jumped out of my seat to greet her nervously with an 'Assalam Alaekum She returned the greeting with a thin but friendly smile and asked me to sit down. 'Well, how are you?' she asked 'Good to see you in uniform. It suits you. You should be very proud of your uniform' A uniformed orderly, a lance-naik, brought a tray with tea, a plain sponge-cake, and sandwiches. He waited to serve, but Begum Nasim asked him to leave and poured herself. 'Two spoonfuls for you, is that right?' she asked. 'Yes madam, thank you!' 'Please help yourself," she invited me to the cake and sandwiches as she handed over my cup.

As l sipped tea and helped myself liberally she asked me about my family background, education, and life as a journalist. 'Weren't you the

one who interviewed Akbar at his headquarters in Uri? Well, that was a good story. I had been following some of your stuff in the C&MG. Your coverage of Kashmir and Afghanistan was good, better than most of the other stuff. That should come in handy in your new career as a military PRO." Then she went on to ask me quite bluntly about the ceasefire in Kashmir. 'Don"t you think it was totally wrong and mistimed? It robbed us of the victory just around the corner. Kashmir would have been ours if only your Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan had not lost his nerve." Her emphasis on 'your" prime minister was significantly noticeable. 'A refugee minister, even one as mature and able as Liaquat, just cannot understand and appreciate the ups-and-downs of war and the command and control structures of the army. He almost ruined the good work of Akbar and his boys. How can a refugee prime minister and defence minister be expected to know anything about a predominantly Punjabi-Pathan fighting outfit like the Pakistan Army?" I must have looked very blank or worried because she quickly added: 'Please don't misunderstand me. I am all for refugees, especially for the younger lot like yourself. You are closest to us Punjabis in language and culture. You will change, naturalize in due course and be one of us, but, can you say the same about grown-up, hardened refugees like Liaquat? He and his Objectives Resolution-a bloody clean-shaven mullah"

Then with an apology or two thrown in during the course of her monologue, she spoke about the golden days ahead. 'Pakistan is a great country. It must either live up to the heights of greatness or perish. It should either move and move fast or stagnate until it ceases to be and the army, and the army alone, is its best chance; the rest is all rubbish. The politicians are a bunch of rascals, a mafia of robber-barons. Mark my Words. Remember, you PR boys, being better educated and informed can serve the army and the country perhaps even better than professional soldiers." As she bade me 'Khuda Hafiz' at the end of her lecture, she asked if I was 'mobile'. I said, 'Yes madam, thank you very much indeed." She walked me to the porch and bade me good-bye once again.

My encounter with Begum Nasim Akbar Khan left me thoroughly puzzled and somewhat apprehensive. What might she have been up to? What was she trying to tell me? She Wouldn't have said all that just for me to keep it to myself. Imagine a senior brigadier's wife talking so frankly with a puny little captain like-myself. It felt like a ton of bricks weighing upon my chest. And it could mean any amount

of fuss and trouble for me. I decided to hold the whole thing close to my chest and not breathe a word about it to anybody. Naturally non-secretive and outspoken, I would have to fight hard to keep my mouth tightly shut.

On our way back to Lahore, much to my horror, Azam asked me about my meeting with Begum Nasim Akbar Khan. 'Yes sir," I said, 'she was kind enough to ask me over for a cup of tea." 'Oh yes," Azam responded, 'she is a line lady, but somewhat odd. She has her own pet ideas about men and matters. The lady Wives of great soldiers like Akbar Khan are generally like that. They tend to behave grandly, don't they?' And that was where, to my huge relief, the matter ended.

But not long afterwards we heard the earth-shaking news of an attempted coup detat masterminded and led by Major-General Muhammad Akbar Khan, the very same officer I had known as a brigadier. A coup just a few months after the appointment of the first Pakistani, General Muhammad Ayub Khan, as the commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army-so what perceived or real link could the 'Pindi conspiracy have had with the refugee factor? Ayub was a blue-blooded Pathan and a true son of the soil. He did, however, have a double stigma attached to him as a protege of the British as well as of Liaquat Ali Khan. Akbar Khan blamed Liaquat for his decision to accept the ceasefire and Ayub for enforcing it as the commander-in-chief. Ayub had a poor War record and had little to qualify him for the top army job except for his impressive, soldierly bearing. Liaquat was blamed first tor appointing Ayub as commander-in-chief on the advice of General Gracey, his outgoing British predecessor, and then for accepting the ceasefire under pressure from the British high command of the Pakistan Army-Generals Gracey, McCay, Hutton, Loftus Tottenham-thus putting the Kashmir issue on hold for ever.

On 16 October 1951, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, the last of the refugee 'Mohicans', was assassinated in Rawalpindi, the seat of the General Headquarters. I-lis murder marked the beginning of a sharp decline in the role and influence of refugees in the upper echelons of national politics and administration. Governor-General Khawaja Nazimuddin, a Bengali and a thorough gentleman of the old school, took over as prime minister, much against his own wishes. He would have preferred to stay on as the Governor-General but bowed to the pressure brought to bear upon him by Khawaja Shahabuddin, his younger brother and a federal minister.

Shahabuddin was just the opposite of Nazimuddin, in appearance as well as character. He was ambitious and a master of the politics of manipulation and opportunism. Nazimuddin`s fall began the day he assumed the prime ministerial portfolio, for he had never quite been up to the tricks required for the job. An aristocrat by birth and a selfless worker for the Muslim League, he was essentially an easygoing and trusting gentleman who had neither the stature of a high-profile statesman nor the opportunistic, pragmatic skills of a politician. Unlike the high office of a constitutional head of state that was tailor-made for him, the prime ministerial chair was too high for his short legs. In the Words of one political wiseacre, 'his legs did not touch the floor below, which left him in a state of suspended animation.

In March 1953, Lahore was placed under martial law. The GOC of the Lahore-based 10 Infantry Division, Major-General Muhammad Azam Khan, a close confidant of Ayub and his hand-picked nominee, was appointed martial law administrator. Lahore was the army's first intrusive foray into civil affairs under Ayub, who was, as we were to learn later, also an obsessive Bengali-baiter. Azam used the local martial law as a trial run for deeper penetration by the army into national affairs later.

In April 1953, Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin was uncerernoniously dismissed even though his budget had been passed and he enjoyed an absolute majority in the House. He was replaced by Mohammad Ali Bogra, recalled from Washington where he had been posted as Pakistani Ambassador. Bogra, a Bengali and leader of the opposition in the East Bengal assembly in the early '50s, had been assigned to Washington as a political nominee.

The military establishment emerged as the strongest single institution, not only at the national level but also internationally as an ally of Western powers (the Anglo-American bloc) under the umbrella of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Baghdad Pact-subsequently the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). West Pakistan, the Sparta of Pakistan, was now dead set against the Athens of East Pakistan-the former all military, the latter all politics. In the first general elections in East Pakistan, in May 1954, the combined opposition parties under the sobriquet of Jugtu (United) Front made a clean sweep of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), deepening the divide between the two wings. The centre would not accept the popular verdict in East Pakistan and proceeded to dismiss the non-Muslim League Jugtu Front ministry under the dynamic Maulvi Fazlul Haque.

President's (the centre, in other words West. Pakistan) rule was imposed in East Pakistan and the defence secretary, Major-General lskander Mirza, was appointed governor.

The virtual annihilation of the PML in East Pakistan and the weakening of its hold in West Pakistan because of an erosion of the political process, seriously weakened the role of the predominantly pro-Muslim League refugee community in national affairs. Notwithstanding the fact that the PML was now internally hollow and that it was increasingly irrelevant in the context of an emerging provincial/parochial pattern, it remained the only nationalist party and thus had a place in its ranks for refugees. Ethnically driven and provincially-oriented Pathan, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Baloch platforms offered them little or no room at all: with their ignorance of the local languages, idioms, and customs, the refugees could play only second fiddle in a predominantly provincial/parochial set-up, while the Bengalis would welcome them to their ranks more in quest of allies in West Pakistan against the Punjabi-Pathan conglomerate than out of any love for them.

The collapse of the PML as a pillar of strength for the refugees substantially reduced their proactive profile in national politics. They would now figure as a small minority in the overall national milieu. For better or worse, the PML was the refugees' only connecting link between the sons of the soil and themselves. Their loss of political clout at the national level all but pushed the refugees out of the national mainstream. Somewhat paradoxically, it also strained Punjabi-refugee collaborative ties instead of reinforcing them.

The imposition of President's rule in East Pakistan conceded absolute executive authority to the predominant Punjabi civil and military bureaucracies_ Karachi, then the national capital, emerged as the epicentre of all power and authority after the newly-lit flame of resurgent nationalist politics in Dhaka was snuffed out. Barely six months later Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the constituent assembly together with the government headed by Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra-his own protege. The assembly, a sovereign body, had been entrusted with the dual task of framing the constitution and acting as the legislature. It had almost completed the task of framing the still-born 1954 constitution when the Punjabi governor-general dissolved it through an ex cathedral. edict. The governor-general's demarche proved to be a stunning blow to a political

process that had been just breaking out of its congenital state of stagnation.

Dismissed Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra was told to head the new cabinet featuring the army chief, General Ayub Khan, as defence minister, which post he assumed without relinquishing his army job. In mystical parlance, the ‘drop’ of civilian power drained into the military ‘mainstream’ to attain the ultimate stage and status of ‘fana (non-being for ever).

After Governor-General Ghulam Mohammad’s fiat of October 1954, the proclamation of martial law by his successor, President lskandar Mirza, in October 1958, and the appointment of Ayub Khan as the chief martial law administrator, the civil authority was little more than a clipped pigeon: it could flap its wings but did not have the strength to fly. Martial law made short Work of even the little authority that the civilians still enjoyed in higher bureaucratic cehelons. Practically all senior refugee civil servants were retired compulsorily (i.e. sacked) from their jobs in the federal secretariat. The refugees as a class and a community were left with little say except as hangers-on of the Punjabi-Pathan establishment, as public servants or disadvantaged private entrepreneurs. They were thus unable to compete with the sons of the soil in official patronage and help.

Ayub’s next step in driving the refugees out of the national mainstream was to move the national capital from Karachi to Islamabad. The publicly-stated reasons in support of the move were Karachi's unnerving tropical weather and the corrupting influence and power of the business class which was mainly dominated by refugees. However, the driving force behind Ayub’s decision was to locate the national capital close to his army headquarters, from where he believed he would be able to personally monitor and control the armed forces.

Those who suffered worst as a result of the move were the refugee petty officials who formed a sizeable portion of the clerical cadre of the federal government. They had made Karachi their home and had settled there permanently with their relations. In addition, the cost of living in Karachi was by far the lowest in the country, besides which the refugees had played a major role in developing colonies for themselves in and around the city, e. g. Gizri’s Delhi Colony, Pir llahi Balish Colony, Lalu Khet (Liaquatabad), Federal B Area, Nazimabad, etc. They belonged to the city as much as the city belonged to them. The shifting of the capital meant loss of jobs for some and exile or forced transfers for those lucky enough to have retained their jobs.

Until then they had lived under a sort of delusion as true heirs to the state of Pakistan, as its real builders and the custodians of its language and culture. They felt like hapless sons disinherited by an angry and unjust father. Henceforth they Would have to look after themselves, alone and unaided. The link between them and the state appeared to have snapped.

6

DHAKA: THE OTHER!

ONE of my closest friends during those wild. days in Lahore was a Bengali bureaucrat from the prestigious Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP). When the initials 'CSP' were appended to an individual's name, they guaranteed him a place of unquestioned authority in the highest bureaucratic echelons and a much coveted status in elite social circles. AKM Ahsan, CSP, was under-secretary (home) in the Punjab government. Unlike the average Bengali, Ahsan was tall, fair, and slim with thick, weli-groomed, wavy hair framing a broad forehead. He towered over some of his Punjabi friends and colleagues, making them look small and pale against his fair, finely-featured handsome face. He had also been endowed with a vibrant voice, that a rich tenor could carry a tune beautifully. One of his favourite songs was a cinematic hit by Shanishad Begum: 'Bari mushkil se dil ke beqararri ko karrar aiya, keh jis zalim ne tarpaya usi pe mujhko pyar aiya' (After much effort my restless heart came to rest; yet I love the tyrant who tortured me so much). His other favourite was a true classical song which he would render with so much passion and feeling that he would fascinate, almost hypnotize, his listeners. The opening Words were: 'Peelay, peelay, hari nam ka piyala, bin piye tu kia jane ga, eska bhaid nirala, peelay, peelay hari nam ka pialay (Drink up the cupful of divine (Hari Nam] wine; for how else would you know its mystery. So drink it up, drink it up). After a few drinks, Ahsan would let himself go and sing with an abandon and passion rarely found even in skilled virtuosi.

Ahsan was my first textbook introduction to East Pakistan, to its ilora and fauna, lakes and meadows, its rivers and boat bhatiali song and knee-deep paddy fields and the well-rounded, doe-eyed women. He hailed from a Syed family of Chittagong, had passed the highly competitive civil service examination with distinction, and was assigned some of the choicest posts as a civil servant. After a year or so as under-secretary in the Punjab secretariat, Ahsan was promoted

and appointed deputy-commissioner Gujrat-a city situated in the rich agricultural heartland of feudal Punjab Where the appointment carried as much authority as social status. A just and competent administrator, he also carved out a place of great distinction in social circles. He retained his love for Lahore and would go there for his weekends and holidays.

As part of his training as a civil servant assigned to the Punjab, and with his natural gift for picking up languages, he acquired a measure of proficiency in Punjabi that enabled him to mix well with his Punjabi friends and share with them a joke or two. A more popular, more sociable, and a friendlier Bengali civil servant would have been hard to come by. When alone with me, he would often taunt me about my place in Punjabi (or Pakistani) civil society as an Urdu-speaking refugee. 'You are a square peg in a round hole. What exactly are you in Pakistan's national milieu? Neither fish nor fowl nor even a good red herring." He would laugh at me with a mixture of sincerity and mockery and say: 'Abu, my dear Captain Siddiqi, except for your place in the army you are hardly anybody in Pakistan's parochial, tribal, feudal, ethnically-and linguistically-driven society. A Punjabi is a Punjabi, the lord and master not only in his own province but of the whole country. The Pathans, Balochis, Sindhis, and Bengalis like myself all have a focus standi and a firm base in their respective provinces. Where on earth do you belong? And who are you anyway? Stooges of the Punjabis! That`s all. What else?"

Then came the news of language riots in Dhaka in February 1952, which engaged Ahsan and hurt him deeply. 'You Urdu-speaking aliens, you are a curse for us all. Your cultural obsession oiled the wheels of Partition and now, in your state of refugee hood, you are taking revenge for the loss of your cultural moorings. No matter how disadvantaged we Bengalis might be against the West Pakistanis, the Punjabis and Pathans in particular, We still have East Bengal to go back to. As for you bloody custodians of the language and culture of Muslim India, Where on earth would you go? You and your cultural arrogance and squeamishness! Abu, you are for ever damned." These, as best as I can recall, were Ahsan's sentiments in the course of our many intimate conversations. The peremptory and unceremonious dismissal of the Bengali Prime Minister, Khawaja Nazimuddin, in April 1953 when martial law was imposed in Lahore, frustrated and infuriated the East Pakistanis beyond Words. Discreet and muted until then, they came out in the open against the Punjabi, West-Pakistani civil-military axis. To

them, it might have been the end of Pakistani nationalism, in fact of a united Pakistan.

Concurrently with Naziamuddin's ouster came the news of the bloody Bengali-Bihari riots at the Adamjee Jute Mills in Dhaka, and then, just a year later, the Jugtu Front ministry-formed after its sweeping victory in the i954 provincial elections-was dismissed and President's rule imposed in East Pakistan. Bengalis in West Pakistan felt completely isolated. Since there were barely a handful of Bengali bureaucrats in West Pakistan or elsewhere in any important positions, their sense of alienation deepened. Dejected and angry, they would fume: 'We might as well be joining the ranks of refugees in West Pakistan. If our prime minister is not safe at the centre and our elected premier can be disgracefully dismissed and humiliated in his own home by a demented Punjabi head of state, what does Pakistan have to offer us?`

The dismissal of the constituent assembly along with yet another Bengali prime minister, Muhammad Ali Bogra, was a further blow to Bengali sentiment and their place in the scheme of things. This was followed by Bogra's reappointment as prime minister of Pakistan and the reconstitution of his cabinet with the army chief, General Muhammad Ayub Khan, as the defence minister, in effect his watchdog. Always at the centre of power, the army now emerged as the most dominant single force in the country. The fusion of the two vital portfolios in a single individual ripped off the thin veil of civilian supremacy that had so far stayed in place, even if only artificially.

Thenceforward it was the army. and the army alone, that called the shots, and civilian regimes aequiesced without resistance. The advent of US military aid and Pakistan's entry into the Baghdad Pact and the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) not only enhanced the military`s professional strength but also ensured that it was a force to reckon with in the running of the country`s national and foreign affairs. For all practical purposes, foreign policy was subordinated to the demands and requirements of the military establishment, while national security was militarized to exclude civilian leadership in any meaningful sense.

1 first went to Dhaka towards the end of 1957 to look after the PR side of the army's 'Operation Close Door' that had been launched in July of that year to prevent the large-scale cross-border smuggling of Pakistani raw materials like jute, rice, and fish that was costing Pakistan heavily in terms of foreign exchange. Besides outright smuggling, under-invoicing of imports, over-invoicing of exports, and the

unrestricted use of the chit-hand! system did much to damage Pakistan's economy. Major-General Umrao Khan, GOC 14 Division, was placed in command of the operation with full power and authority.

I travelled widely across the province in the course of my duties and interacted with a wide cross-section of Bengalis-in the Press, among the bureaucracy, and plain common folk. Dhaka reminded me irresistibly of my hometown, Delhi. While there could be no comparison with Delhi in urban richness and development, the natural landscape, flora, and fauna looked and felt closer to Delhi's than that of any other city in West Pakistan. The gull mohar, neem and tamarind trees, the open nullahs, pools covered with green foliage, and above all the Burhi Ganga River made me feel at one with my surroundings, the relative strangeness of the people and my total unfamiliarity with the language notwithstanding.

As one in uniform on assignment with the Dhaka-based 14 Infantry Division and attached to the GOC, I was looked upon as part of the ruling military establishment and treated with a respect and courtesy that exceeded what was shown to me in Lahore under the l953 martial law. An operation in aid of civil power is nothing short of martial law and thus the GOC, Maj.-Gen. Mohammad Umrao Khan, was invested with absolute authority, much as a martial law administrator would be. For all practical purposes he had under his command the entire civilian machinery, and enjoyed and exercised full control over it.

The Bengalis, by and large, did not seem to shun or dislike the army in spite of the absolute dominance of 'outsider' Punjabis and Pathans in its rank and tile. That was mainly at the level of the general public. However, Bengali bureaucrats, especially those in relatively senior cadres, did have problems with the officer class, mainly majors and captains and those of equivalent rank in the navy and the air force. One naval lieutenant physically beat the Bengali deputy-commissioner of Barisal, a career CSP officer, and got away with a minor reprimand. There were several other similar cases.

I found that civil society in Dhaka was divided into three distinct strata-the true sons of the soil, or the thoroughbred Bengalis; Urdu-speaking settlers, mainly Biharis with a smattering of Delhi-UPWallas; and the local Bengali bureaucracy. Unlike the West Pakistani Urdu-speakers who refused to learn local languages and adopt native customs and cultures, most Biharis of East Pakistan learnt Bengali and could speak it with almost native fluency. They also adopted the Bengali dress, wearing the long khaddar kurta-pyjamas in public and a

coloured, checked loin-cloth at home. But they betrayed a strange reluctance to accept the Bengalis as their peers and, even though permanently settled in East Pakistan, they preferred to look on Karachi as their home.

As for the vintage UP-Dehliwallas, they adhered tenaciously to their traditional culture, language, dress, and dietary habits. The staple Bengali rice-and-fish dishes and the way these were marinated, cooked, served, and eaten, were not for them. As the self-styled true custodians of the language and culture of Muslim India, they tended to shun Bengali ways and dismissed them as rustic and uncivilized. They would want the Bengalis to attend their own literary symposia and mushairas (poetry-reading sessions) Without caring to join the Bengalis in their own cultural events. Unlike the average, unsmiling Bengali bureaucrat, the Bengali public had no reservations about mixing and socializing with the Urdu-speaking non-Bengalis.

What really annoyed the Bengali elite was the pernicious posturing of the UP-Dehliwallas as custodians of Pakistan's ideology. 'Now what on earth was Pakistan's ideology all about?" a Bengali might ask. 'There are more Bengalis in Pakistan than Punjabis and Pathans and their stooges, the Urdu-speaking UP-Dehliwallas. These stooges forget that they are basically asylum-seekers, bloody deserters, just refugees, and they pretend and actually claim to be better Pakistanis than the true sons of the soil like the Sindhis and Balochis. What the hell! They had better stay within limits and not over-reach themselves by trying to look taller than they actually are. You know what happens to someone trying to look larger than life? He is like the stupid frog that inhaled more and more deeply to gain in size and look like a bull and ended up bursting with at bang. That was the thrust of our conversation with the Bengalis in intimate gatherings.

Ironically, and no less interestingly, the Biharis, non-Bengali settlers in Dhaka, refused to accept their essential refugee status. The Bengalis simply abhorred them for their assumed cultural superiority and for the way they looked to Karachi as their real sanctuary, as their Mecca and Medina. 'You bloody UP-Dehliwallas, peddlars of Pakistan's ideology and thekedars of Pakistan's integrity, at least have some redeeming features as custodians of your own émigré culture, or whatever goes for that, unlike these Biharis, who are mere imitators' the Bengalis would fume.

My two-week stay in East Pakistan turned out to be a real eye-opener. It introduced me to a new dimension of Pakistan's inherent

contradictions and deep-rooted divergences as a nation. Whereas migrants from India we; undoubtedly refugees, a Punjabi or a Pathan was as much an alien in Bengal, and a Bengali no less, perhaps more, in West Pakistan. Inter-provincial alienation at the national level was an absolute fact of life: a state of refugee hood even for the true sons of the soil-masters in their own provinces, their own home base, but little better than aliens elsewhere in the country.

The Bengali-non-Bengali (East-West Pakistani) divide may have been huge but it was not unique. Each, as a whole and a single unit, had a state or a province of its own. The Sindhis, Punjabis, Pathans, and Balochis had problems to contend with, but they were firmly secure in their own home base. A refugee, though, remained a refugee everywhere-a Pakistani within a loose national framework, but one without a native base of his own. Even in cities like Karachi and Lahore, migrants from India who spoke the mohajir language and continued with the mohajir way of life were treated essentially as aliens. As for their so-called sacrifice for the Pakistan movement, their principal motivation, the driving force behind that, had been their mistaken belief that they were the custodians of Delhi’s Lal Qila, Jam’a Masjid and the Qutub Minar, and all the lost cultural baggage that went with Delhi and Lucknow. They were truly the jokers in the pack.

It was some comfort to me, at least at the sub-conscious level, to find the Bengalis, Pakista11’s majority community, as poorly placed vis-a-vis the Pun jabis and Pathans as the Dehliwallas. On my return to Lahore, I met my old friend Ahsan, now deputy commissioner of Gujrat. I taunted him with my version of Bengali parochialism, and their distrust and disdain of the world outside their ‘golden Bengali I recited a verse I had read somewhere, much to Ahsan’s annoyance. It ran as follows:

Jikhane Bengali, Ukhanai	Where there might be a Bengali, there
Maa’ Kali	would be the (Mother goddess) Kali
Ukhanii pantha boli	There would be the Bengali language
Shikhani dala dali	And conspiracies

Ahsan retorted: ‘We might indeed be parochial like everybody else in Pakistan-the Sindhis, Baloehis, Punjabis, and Pathans-but you rotten, landless vagabonds are neither here nor there, neither in heaven nor in hell.” Then, returning to his characteristic friendly tone, he said, ‘Look, Abu, fool that you are, try not to be a bloody fool. You might

be able to please your Punjabi friends with your stupid gimmicks but nobody is going to love you for that."

Between July 1957 and October 1958, when Ayub Khan placed the Country under martial law, I made several visits to East Pakistan. I loved Dhaka for its greenery and the Bengalis for their simplicity of dress and mannerism-none of the typical Punjabi ostentation, the Pathan's overweening pride in his ethnic excellence, the Sindhi's belief in his superior cultural mores, and the Balochi's status as one of the world's most hallowed and ancient races. I liked the Bengali women, too. They exuded a charm all their own, and were often more compellingly attractive than the generally fairer-complexioned West Pakistani Women.

In time I made many friends in Dhaka's press, public, and social circles. Passionately polemical and argumentative as Bengalis generally are, they betrayed none of the authoritative tone of their West Pakistani counterparts. They rather looked to the refugee community of West Pakistan to play a constructive role in bringing about greater national integration, if only they could rise above their sense of cultural superiority. Much to my surprise and consolation, however, I found little trace of the anti-Pakistan sentiment they were generally blamed for in West Pakistan. Their principal grievance against the West Pakistanis, in particular the Punjabis, was the latter's tendency to regard them as Hindus, dismissing their culture as predominantly Indian. 'Would you dismiss Rabindra Nath Tagore simply because he is a Hindu and refuse to recognize his works for their universality? Would you? Well, even if We forget about Tagore and his great Writings for a moment simply because of religion, what about Qazi Nazrul Islam? He is a Mussalman and one as good or as bad as any. Now how many Punjabis and Urdu-speaking refugees can claim to know of him, let alone read and enjoy his works'?' the Bengalis would argue.

Ayub's martial law silenced all the political babble and dissent and paradoxically had a calming effect on the mounting East-West polarization. Both wings accepted it as an act of fate and thought it would be a leveller of the East-West disequilibrium. It was hoped that the army might succeed where the politicians had failed miserably, and give the Bengalis their due in the country's politics, economy, and development. They were even pleased, perhaps sadistically, at the abrogation of the 1956 constitution (Pakistan's first in the nine years since its emergence) which had arbitrarily reduced their 56 per cent majority to parity with West Pakistan's 44 per cent-a cruel mockery

of the very basis of democracy! The Bengali sentiment would be expressed thus: 'How many sacrifices would you Punjabis and you stooges want us to make before you destroy the very foundation of our nationhood? So let it come to martial law. Who cares? There might indeed be more hope for a radical change by going to such extreme measures as martial law instead of all this stupid, bureaucratic, civilian dilly-dallying and procrastination. A few mistakes by the army is all it will take to put. an end to this stalemate, this endless status quo. For something as rotten as Pakistan's body politic, surgery alone is the answer. Amputate to heal!'

The initial euphoria soon gave way to new and deeper tensions. While there had never been any doubt about the absolute predominance of the army in national affairs, Ayub's martial law gave it an institutional basis within a constitutional framework. In a landmark judgement, Mr Muhammad Munir, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, ruled that a successful revolution (coup) was a 'law creating fact, a fait accompli,' legitimizing Ayub's coup d"etat and establishing the precedent for army rule at the discretion and initiative of the army chief. The Chief Justice invoked thc doctrine of 'legal positivism' as enunciated by Hans Kelsen to dismiss the famous Dosso Case challenging the legality of martial law (see Appendix 5).

The mohajirs (the word was now in common usage) of West Pakistan were by and large happy with Ayub'S tour de force. Habitual lovers of tamasha, both on and off stage, they were as thrilled with the military takeover as they would have been witnessing a ceremonial military parade. Gher phook, tamasha dekh (set the house on tire and Watch the display) and 'Paisa phenk tamasha dekh' (Pay up and enjoy the show) were two of the mohajirs' favourite proverbs. ln the generally monotonous, unvaried course of their existence. anything for ar change, even an earthquake or an epidemic, a scandal, a theft, or a murder Would be a source of excitement. Action-packed movies would bring them flocking to the local cinemas for Agha Hashar"s "Saeda Hawas' and 'Khoon ka Khoon' or to the visiting Russian circus for breathtaking aerobatics. And here was a real life tamasha, a man on horseback (akin to Kamal Ataturk or Anwar Pasha) taking the country over in a single brave act to leave the world completely stunned. And what a truly handsome and dashing man Ayub was-tall and fair like an Angraiz, a replica of Prithviraj Kapoor in Sohrab Modi's great spectacular Sikandar-i-Azfam he looked like a man with a mission compared to the

civilian politicians always up to their cheap antics and monkey tricks.

Mohajirs had at least one reason to feel indebted to Ayub's martial law regime: the linal settlement of their claims for property left in India against the property left in Pakistan by Hindu migrants. Quite apart from the pre-Partition romanticism associated with their cherished dream of making Pakistan the future cradle of their elitist language and culture, it now became a question of life and death for them to ensure Pakistan's continued existence; for where else would they go should Pakistan cease to be? Which province would accept them as a citizen outside a united Pakistanis constitutional framework? Pakistan was their only option for survival. The compelling needs and demands of survival tied them more firmly to Pakistan's apron strings than any patriotic duty. It was the only place under the sun where they could live as bona tide citizens of a country. Physical resettlement always proved stronger than the vision of cultural revival from one's roots.

Alas! The rnohajir euphoria was not destined to last long for shortly afterwards the government announced its decision to shift the capital from Karachi to Islamabad. The mohajirs and the Bengalis were stunned. While the mohajirs had re-created their Delhi and Lucknow in Karachi, the Bengalis loved it for the job opportunities it provided, at least for those who could afford a lower-deck ticket on a merchant ship from Chittagong to Karachi. Furthermore. Karachi did not have the claustrophobic, parochial ambience and constraints generally associated with Lahore and Peshawar. Karachi's weather was temperate, almost similar to that of Dhaka and Chittagong, whereas Islamabad was known for its harsh summers and freezing winters. For the Bengalis, the journey by air or by sea to Karachi involved no transfers and thus made it convenient and economical.

Mohajir admiration for Ayub as the "dashing man on horseback' turned to disgust as soon as the shifting process from Karachi to a place as far off Islamabad got underway. After all, what was Islamabad if not a part of the Punjab? In the thirteen or fourteen years since Independence, the mohajirs had settled down well enough in Karachi and were forgetting their ancestral homes across the border. The re-creation of things past had more than made up for lost homes and towns: replicas of their beloved kuchas, galis, and mohallas in Nazimabad, Liaquatabad, Pir Ilahi Baksh, and Delhi colonies characterized the new settlements around the city.

In time, they buried their near and dear ones in their own community graveyards. Proverbially at least, an ancestral. graveyard serves as perhaps the strongest single bond between the living and the dead. ‚Ayub's snap decision to shift the capital city Without regard for the feelings of the Karachiwallas, predominantly mohajirs, thus came a rude reminder to them that they were essentially people Without a land. It was as great a blow as the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan in Rawalpindi-and now the national capital was moving to the very city where the first prime minister (a refugee) had been martyred. It was like rubbing salt in their Wounds. The demise of Karachi as the national capital left the refugees groping in the dark. Karachi was still theirs, but not in the same way as before. It was like a peacock shorn of its proud plumage, a gypsy camp without a hub or a campfire.

The shifting of the capital from Karachi Was seen by some as a rude gesture to the memory of the Father of the Nation. He had handpicked Karachi to serve as the federal capital and, after Pakistan, it was the Quaid's only other gift to the nation. Karachi stood out in the Quaid`s memorabilia as the symbol of national integration, a point from Where a sea and air link bridging Pakistan's two distant wings could be established, and from there to the rest of the world beyond. If a symbol as real and meaningful as the national capital could be disregarded at the whim of a military dictator, of' what value would the Quaid's remaining legacy be- and what value would his motto of Unity, Faith, Discipline have for the people? None!

Pakistan would not be same once Karachi had been shorn of its status as the federal capital by a military ruler. The bona fide, vintage mohajirs were just beginning to strike roots in Karachi. The Bengalis flocking to the city for jobs and resettlement found themselves trapped as strange bedfellows with the mohajirs. Whereas the mohajirs felt like those twice orphaned, the Bengal is resented the fact that such at major change with far-reaching national ramifications had been brought about with no one so much as bothering to ask their opinion. They saw it as yet another violation of their democratic rights and grumbled: 'What good is it being the majority community if we are to be driven like a herd of sheep?'

It was in adversity that the two disgruntled communities found themselves sharing the same 'insult to their standing and status as citizens of Pakistan. 'It's the military-and the Punjabi-Pathan coterie that forms its main body-which rules the roost; the rest of us are not

much better than a helpless riayah with no rights. The letter 'P' in Pakistan stands practically for the Punjabi-Pathan duumvirate.

Karachi, just beginning to emerge as the crucible, the melting pot of Pakistan's diverse and mutually exclusive and varied elements, was unravelled by the abrupt shifting of the capital. The question now was: who is not a refugee in Pakistan and removed from the power centre besides those in the Punjabi-Pathan mainstream? What did the bona fide mohajir and the Bengali living in West Pakistan have to share with the rest of their countrymen? The state of refugeehood was all-pervasive and all-embracing, as true of Bengalis living in West Pakistan as of Sindhis and Balochis living in the Punjab and NWFP As for the mohajirs from Muslim India, they were outsiders wherever they might happen to be. After the loss of its status as the national capital, Karachi emerged as a multi-ethnic menagerie with birds of all feathers gathered together. The cementing bond and the integrating force that Karachi's status as the national capital had provided were gone forever.

The promulgation of a one-man constitution in 1962 by Ayub Khan, now self-promoted to the rank of held-marshal, was based on a hugely curtailed electoral college of 80,000 so-called Basic Democrats, which concentrated all power and patronage in the hands of a single individual who was a Pathan. It inhibited the incubating inter-Wing (Bengali-non-Bengali) and the intra-Wing (Sindhi, Punjabi, Pathan, Balochi, and mohajir) process of national integration, no matter how painfully slow that had been. A single (Western) Wing's domination of national affairs emerged as the one brutal reality, challenging the future evolution of Pakistan as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-linguistic nation in a common matrix. Eighty thousand 'elected' Basic Democrats- 40,000 from each Wing-made an absolute mockery of democracy in a country of no less than 100 million.

The first elections under Ayub Khan's 1962 constitution, held during December 1964 and January 1965, widened the mohajir-Ayub divide, The mohajirs of Karachi, smarting under the hurt caused by the shifting of the capital, voted massively for Fatima Jinnah, sister of the Quaid-i-Azam. The Bengalis likewise, supported Miss Jinnah. Overall, Ayub Khan won the elections by hook or by crook, but lost in Karachi and barely made the post in East Pakistan by the narrowest margin 51-52 per cent. Ayub's defeat in Karachi, the mohajir stronghold, reinforced his congenital distrust of the community. It turned him implacably against them.

No less a person than Ayub's own son, Gohar Ayub, a retired army captain. staged a massive city-Wide rally against the mohajirs and their favoured candidate, Miss Jinnah Led by Gohar Ayub, perched on the top of a truck and followed by a caravan of colour fully painted Pathan buses and lorries, the rally brought out their deep anti-mohajir sentiment. The mohajir proto-image of Ayub Khan as their dashing man-on-the-horseback was shattered. While the mohajirs were publicly abused in their own city, the Bengalis got away with their electoral betrayal of Ayub Without a scratch. Both. Ayub's own distrust of the Bengalis, and the collective hostility of the West Pakistanis towards them, not only remained in place, but was now stronger than before. The inter-wing divide continued to Widen in spite of the economic development, a fair share of it in East Pakistan, under Ayub's economic miracle. Without a sound political base, however, the improvements fell far short of the aspirations of the Bengalis in terms of social justice, general Wealth, job opportunities, and above all, in the denial of a fair deal proportionate to their status as a majority community. The more largesse Ayub gave the Bengalis, the greater would be their demand for more. lt was hardly a sop to their deep-rooted grievance that the lion's share of the development pie was still unjustly served to the West Pakistanis at the cost of the Bengalis in East Pakistan.

A couple of months after the elections came the first unconfirmed reports about some forward movement of Pakistani forces to the disputed border areas, mostly unmarked, o1°tbe"Rann of Kutch in Sindh. A full-scale border War began in the second half of May, with Pakistan gaining some vital ground in the area. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson intervened to arrange a ceasefire towards the end of May. The cessation of hostilities in Kutch, instead of ensuring peace, led to a heightening of tensions, massing ot' troops, violations of the ceasefire line in Kashmir, and eventually to the Indian invasion of Punjab on 6 September l965. The first India-Pakistan general war in 1965 proved for the time it lasted, a leveller of the mohajir/non-mohajir devide in a peculiar sort of way. There was an upsurge of patriotic fervor never before seen in the country. The mohajirs and the Bengalis rivaled, even excelled, the Pathans and the Punjabis as frontline soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Relative to their size in terms of percentages, the mohajirs and the Bengalis, accounting for hardly 10 per cent of the total forces actively committed to battle operations, out performed the Punjabis and Pathans in certain sectors. Both in the quality of their operational performance and in the number of casualties, killed and wounded they

outdid the scions of the so-called martial races. The first East Bengal Regiment (Senior Tigers), deployed south of Lahore at the sensitive Bedian-Kasur sector, Won by far the largest number of gallantry awards ranging from the Sitara-i-Iurr'at to mentions-in-despatches, commendation certificates, and lrntiazi Sanads.

However, each reacted in their own way to their battlefield performance. The Bengalis were mighty pleased and felt justified in looking at their performance as a jaw-breaking riposte to the swashbuckling scions of the martial races who had dismissed them as unfit for active service. Thenceforward the Bengalis would look them straight in the eye and ensure that they (the Bengalis) were not the first to blink. The stigma of Plassey, long unfairly attached to the Bengali soldiery, had ended once and for all.

Th Urdu-speaking mohajirs, for their-part, found their patriotic zeal and sentiment touching mystical heights. Their resurgent patriotism touched the fringe of poetic frenzy integral to their romantic, fantasizing psyche. Quite a few of them in the army and the air force 'embraced martyrdom' and were posthumously decorated. Many more earned the proud prefix of 'Ghazi-survivor of a holy war-alive to wage another war in the path of Allah and their country. An Urdu speaking East Pakistani fighter pilot of the Pakistan Air Force, Squadron Leader Mehboob Alam (nicknamed 'Peanut' for his diminutive physique) had the highest number of kills' to his credit, destroying the largest number of enemy intruders in aerial combat. Flight Lieutenant (Butch) Alauddin Ahmad, another Bengali officer, besides scoring many kills, plunged his F-86 into an indian ammunition train to blow it up. An act of extreme courage and sacrifice Worthy of a kamikaze pilot.

Both in and out of the armed forces, the mohajir community as a whole rose to unprecedented heights of patriotism, devotion to duty, and absolute commitment to Pakistan. Tn Karachi, the mohajirs showed an exemplary sense of discipline and duty as responsible citizens-not one electric bulb, not a single candle would be alight during the nightly blackouts Poets and musicians flew on the Wings of poetry. One of the most popular war songs was composed and put to music by Jamiluddin A'ali, a vintage Dehliwalla.

Ai watan ke sajele jawanaun	Oh you, the flower of the nation's youth
Meri naghme tumhare liye hen	All my songs are dedicated to you

Never before or after the 1965 war was the mohajirs' love for Pakistan, and the native Pakistanis' acceptance of them as true Pakistanis, so unreservedly strong. The stigma of aliens, worse still of 'Hindustani' attached to them in one Way or another, gave way to a new post-war status as proud Pakistanis.

Tuberculosis, James Joyce said in his Ulysses, 'retires to return'. In more or less similar manner, the unfriendly feeling for the mohajir would return subtly but inexorably in West Pakistan. As for the Bengalis, growing scepticism and misgivings about their alleged penchant for mutinous behaviour and conspiratorial conduct, together with their unexpectedly courageous performance in combat, was cause for much concern, for the West Pakistan civil-military establishment. Thought to be tired with burgeoning military ambition, the Bengalis were now considered more of a threat than an asset to national defence. The apprehensions of West Pakistan notwithstanding, the men and officers of the East Bengal Regiment behaved in the best traditions of patriotic and professional soldiers-there was no nonsense of any kind.

Not so their seniors at GHQ or other staff appointments. Foremost amongst them was none other than Colonel Mohammad Ataul Ghani Osmany, urging the battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel ATK Haque, to recommend more of his men for gallantry awards. 'These bloody Punjabis and Pathans are getting away with their piece of the cake without rendering even half the sacrifices that the Bengalis offered or achieving anything in comparison," was how Osmany put it, but no matter how passionately, even aggressively, Osmany pressed for more gallantry awards, Haque's stock reply was that merit and merit alone served as the basis of his recommendations, and he was not prepared to deviate from this principle.

Politically, however, the 1965 war created a galloping sense of alienation amongst the Bengalis. All through the pre-War crises (Rann of Kutch in April-May, general mobilization in July-August, 'Gibraltar' early in August, and 'Grand Slam' on 31 August), and during the actual War (6-23 September 1965), East Pakistan had stood completely isolated from the West and exposed to any adventurism and aggressive moves by India. What good were Pakistan's armed forces if they could not aid East Pakistan in a life or death contingency? The military, the greatest single guarantor of national security, became the source of runaway East-West alienation. Bengalis in both wings felt they were

being driven out of the national mainstream and into a state of refugeehood.

Less than four months after the signing of the Tashkent Declaration, the so-called Six-Point Manifesto of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's Awami League shook the already weakened pillars of inter-wing integration. Mujib`s manifesto, coming as it did against the backdrop of the post- war mood in East Pakistan, was ostensibly a quest for greater provincial autonomy but in fact it was virtually a demand for quasi-independence. It also denoted a vote of no-confidence inthe competence of the armed forces and the political will of the West Pakistani military leadership to ensure the defence of the eastern wing. Henceforth, the Bengali sense of alienation developed into a separatist movement that continued to gain momentum and reached its traumatic finale in 1971 with the rending asunder of Pakistan. The mounting separatist sentiment in East Pakistan also widened the Bengali-Bihari divide, the latter still focusing their gaze on Karachi rather than on Dhaka. This was a most unfortunate development that was to culminate in Bengali hatred and frenzy against the Biharis in the aftermath of the break-up of the country in December l97l. But for the moment, the Bengali-Bihari antagonism compounded the refugee problem, putting yet another spoke in the wheel of national integration. The growing ethnic-Bengali support for Mujib's six-point manifesto and the Bihari stance served to fuel the anti-West Pakistan sentiment and deepen the Bengalis` distrust of the Biharis.

As the post-war euphoria subsided in West Pakistan, anti-West Wing sentiment spread in East Pakistan like an epidemic. Without a comprehensive constitutional framework and strong economic base, the 1965 war fuel_1ed a movement for full provincial autonomy just short of complete independence. Thus in a strange way, the War, instead of acting as a unifying force, led to a further widening of the inter-wing gulf.

7

THE STATE OF REFUGEEHOOD: THE BIHARI SYNDROME

‘All my strength, all my talent will dry up without Russia...’

-Fyodor M. Dostoevsky

In a brief study of Dostoevsky, William Habben said that,

> it was his conviction that man’s spiritual catastrophe would be inescapable when he loses his ties with the soil, the people and the humanity ‘Where he came into being. Alienation from God would be the logical Consequence of such a detachment. This absence of faith results in a revolt against God’s moral law and in man’s arrogant claim to rule his own destiny.

IN West Pakistan, the Urdu-speaking mohajir community was beginning to get somewhat closer to the Bengalis in shared feelings of alienation, a sense of being the ‘others` vis-a-vis: the sons of the soil. However, they could share only a limited amount of political space with the Bengalis to offset their disadvantage as a permanent minority because their jeena-mama, their life and death, would be with the West Pakistanis, mainly the Punjabis. Relations with the Bangalis would at best serve as a political ploy, not as a substitute for the absolute compulsions dictated by the necessity to co-exist with the West Pakistanis. Except for common nationality and a joint commitment to the integrity and security of the country, the West Pakistan-based Urdu-speaking mohajirs had little to share with the Bengalis and vice versa. As for the Biharis in East Pakistan, they were a divided lot in mind and spirit. Unlike the mohajirs in West Pakistan, they spoke, dressed, ate, and behaved like the Bengalis, yet they looked to West Pakistan as their homeland.

it was one thing to share with the Bengalis an unfriendly sentiment against West Pakistani domination but quite another to have much else to do with them-mohajir commitment to Pakistan could not be anything but absolute for reasons of their own survival. Sheikh Mujibur Rehrnan's six-point manifesto ignited inter-Wing polarization and turned it into a blazing inferno, sparks from which would soon light a consuming tire in the shape of the Agartala Conspiracy-a covert plan allegedly spearheaded by Mujibur Rehman which, in collusion with India, purported to seek the separation of East Pakistan from the main body politic of the country.

While the mohajir identity dilemma deepened it was not similar to the Bengali alienation from the centre through the post-1965 war period. Unlike the mohajirs, the Bengalis had not only their own language, culture, and ethnicity, but above all, their own land. The mohajirs had to make do with what they had in West Pakistan. The harder they tried to assimilate with their Punjabi half-brothers, the further and more remote they got from the others-the Sindhis, Balochis, and Pathans, especially the Sindhis, in whose land the great bulk of the mohajirs had settled.

Ever obliging, almost kowtowing to the Punjabis, the mohajirs did not mix Well with the Sindhis-something that common sense should have dictated they should do, if for no other reason than that they were co-inhabitants of the same province. The mohajirs tended to assume airs for their over-rated cultural superiority, foolishly forgetting that Karachi was no Delhi and Hyderabad (Deccan) no Lucknow or Patna. One tragic and ill-serving flaw in the psyche of some pre-Partition Indian Muslims was their propensity to conjure up dreamland in countries as far and distant as Samarkand and Bukhara, which they considered 'home'. This was particularly true of the Urdu-speakers of UP and Delhi, forever dreaming of 'far pavilions' and lofty castles suspended miraculously in thin air. Sindh, as the Babu! Islam, was just one such dreamland, the exclusive and unshared domain of the dreamer. But the Sindh in which the mohajirs now lived was no dream, it was a physical reality; only a dreamer would still dream of it, as indeed of the rest of Pakistan, as his sole heritage.

However, Where the Urdu-speaking people of the so-called Ganga-Yamuna belt differed from their fellow-Muslims in other parts of India was the absence of a base. Theirs was purely a cultural and linguistic milieu Without a geo-physical and ethnological base, a soul Without a body. Furthermore, unlike their north-Western counterparts debouching

into India on the crest of wave-upon-wave of Muslim invaders from Central Asia, the great bulk of Muslims in the Ganga-Yamuna belt were native to the subcontinent. Their conversion fired them with the zeal of the convert. The Central Asian conquerors came with their ethnic historiography and genealogy and preserved them jealously. They were Afghans, Mughals, Turkomans, and Iranians-descendants of conquering races. The Muslims of the Ganga-Yamuna belt, on the other hand, paraded Islam as their sole badge of identity. Islam alone was their flagship, their one and only impregnable fortress in the Indian Darul Harb, the Land of War.

Through many centuries of co-existence and interaction with the Hindus, the Muslims of the Ganga-Yamuna belt had evolved a cultural, linguistic, and dietary mix which was an exotic patchwork of Hindu-Muslim India. Over the years, the matrix assumed an all-India complexion vis-a-vis the essentially local-provincial cultures and languages. For the Muslim converts, without a common ethno-geographical background, their expanding cultural foundation made up to a very large extent for their lack of ethnic moorings.

In the pre-1947 undivided India, the Ganga-Yamuna cultural milieu was accepted as a shared value, almost a national heritage, and a hallmark of common identity. It served as practically the sole basis of the Pakistan movement, seeking and striving to preserve the Urdu-sherwani-pyjama culture. Islam per se came only second to the language-and-dress culture and its predominantly recognized form in the Indian environment. As understood and practised in Muslim India, Islam, mainly of the Hanafi School, was a re-interpretation or distillation of the ecstatic Sufi-Bhakti lore and vastly different from its orthodox, Arabian original.

While Sufism thrived and was spreading throughout the subcontinent, it split roughly into three main streams: devotional/doctrinal, popular/fetishist, and scholastic/Islamic-sharia-oriented (Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, Sheikh Ali Hajveri aka Data Ganj Baksh). The following devotional (mainly Chistia) stream had its base in and around the Indo-Gangetic plain whereas the popular/fetishist had its base in north-western and north-eastern India-Hazrat Nizamudtlin Auliya. Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi. and others. In the Punjab, dissenters like Sain Bulleh Shah, Sultan Babu, Madhu Lal Hussain, and Hazrat Nurpur Shahan dominated the popular/fetishist school.

The Chisti tradition of santa (qawwali music)--ecstatic, heterodox, and liberated-wove subtly into the Ganga-Yamuna culture to become an integral part of its vibrant and colourful fabric. Partition, however, left almost all the Chistia-dominated Sufi rarfqas on the wrong side of the border, like the rest of the Urdu-sherwani-pyjama cultural matrix. The mohajirs were thus left not only without their cultural props but also Without their spiritual moorings.

Until Ayub's martial law and the i965 War, when euphoric patriotic fervour generated a transient sense of organic fusion, the mohajirs lorded it over the cultural landscape of Pakistan-or simply deluded themselves into believing that they did-despite the divisions caused by Ayub's decision to shift the capital from Karachi to Islamabad. The war turned out to be Ayub's Waterloo-his standing and calibre as a national leader was adversely impacted by his image as a failed military commander and strategic planner. Having added a plume of military feathers to their hat in the 1965 War, the Bengalis had become politically more aggressive. Firmly anchored to their territorial base, they upped the political ante on th basis of Mujib's six points. But the mohajirs, second to none in their battlefield performance also, had neither the ethnic leadership nor a territorial homeland like the Punjabis, Pathans, and Bengalis. The Baloch and the Sindhis (as distinct from the old Baloch and the latter-day Sindh Regiment, largely officered and manned by non-Baloch and non-Sindhis) had had little to do with the war. The Sindhis were only peripherally involved, with a number of the Hurs followers of Pir Pagara, Sindhis all, scouting for the army in desert operations and being paid for their services on a daily basis.

The advent of television in the mid '60s acted as an unlikely divisive medium, inhibiting the evolution of a homogenous, Urdu-sherwani based 'national' culture because of the emerging profusion of local dress, languages, etiquettes, customs, etc. While this would have been healthy and normal in any diverse, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic society, the rise of the provincial pulls and patterns submerged the contours of national culture in its formative phase. In popular entertainment, especially dance and music, the Luddi, bhangra, jugni, the Sindhi jhoomar, and the Pathan zakhme dil all but replaced the thumris, dadras, khayal, and ghazals. Next to the performing arts, dress-the single most distinctive hallmark of national identity-gave way to the flowing, Wide-bottomed, long kurta-shalwar ensemble. The Jinnah or karakuli cap, the standard national headdress, gave Way to

the Sindhi arch-shaped topee, the Pathan-Baloch woollen cap, and the Punjabi high-pug or turrah, or no head dress at all. It is not that native sartorial material, cuts, and designs had not existed before-the distinctive Punjabi, Pathan, Balochi, and Sindhi styles were not new-but they had mainly been worn and used in an ethnic and localized context. TV projection of these regional styles, however, resulted in the gradual eclipse of the rather artificial s]ierwc1ni`-pygiama-Jinnah cap ensemble as the country's national dress. That ensemble had served the country's emerging national identity in two important ways. Firstly, it had superimposed a homogenized image on local, ethnic projections to create a sort of unity in diversity, no matter how flippant. Secondly, and more importantly, it had served as a sort of distinction between Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India. The Jinnah cap of Pakistan and the Gandhi cap of India distinguished the one from the other at a glance, The TV-generated muddle of five distinctive cultural and sartorial models retarded, if not exactly reversed, the process of cultivating a distinctive national image.

Despite unmistakable local shades and diversities, the intra-provincial matrix in West Pakistan had developed an underlying homogeneity stemming from a common soil and drawing strength, more or less, from common traditional and historical roots. Not so in the case of East Pakistan, which had a strong linguistic and cultural base of its own with little or no commonality with those of (West) Pakistan.

Except for certain programmes on the national hook-up, mainly news broadcasts and coverage of national functions, Dhaka TV used Bengali as the principal medium of expression and projected Bengali music and culture. In fairness to the Bengalis, however, it must be conceded that, despite their absolute devotion to their own performing arts, they produced some of the finest Urdu ghazal singers: Firdousi Khanum, Shehnaz Begum, Runa Laila, and others. The Bengalis should also be given full credit for accepting and singing the national anthem composed in an outrageously outlandish, Persianized mode and idiom. Expressions like 'jan-i-istaqlal (soul of the future) were unfamiliar even to the Urdu-speaking West Pakistanis, let alone the Bengalis!

All but out of the national mainstream in the aftermath of the shifting of the capital and a dramatic rise in inter-wing and Bengalim non-Bengali polarization, the mohajirs withdrew into themselves as angry and frustrated introverts. Their fond dream of ruling or dominating the cultural and political landscape of Pakistan dissipated.

After Gohar Ayub's post-election road-show and the post-War upsurge of provincial pulls and patterns, they started to adopt a more pragmatic approach and shed their fancy cultural notions. Their congenital psyche impelled them to have either the Whole of what they believed was theirs or none of it:

Donttlehan daike wu samjhe yeh	By giving away the two worlds, He (God)
Khush raha	Believed man would be happy
You appari hai Sharm keh Takrar kia harain!	Only courtesy would not permit us to say noi

Not that every mohajir had read or enjoyed Ghalib, but this great poet's immortal verse truly reflects the psyche of Dehliwalla mohajirs. They had in Pakistan the country they had dreamed about after striving relentlessly to turn their dream into a reality, and loved the country they believed they had brought into being. But was it what they really wanted? Was Pakistan a dream come true, or was their dream shattered before reaching its grand finale?

Caught in the middle of inter-Wing polarization, the mohajirs discreetly distanced themselves from the Bengalis Without exactly identifying themselves with West Pakistan and stood emotionally and mentally isolated. Their only satisfaction might have been that in the mounting tension between the West Pakistani establishment and the Bengalis, they could stay on the sidelines and watch the tamasha Without becoming involved in the mess. Their state of refugeehood, for once, became a safe haven and sanctuary for them.

Jubke du muzion main hu khat-phat	When two monsters happen to be locked in battle,
Apni tu fikr kr jhat pat	One should hasten to ensure one's own safety

The West Pakistani-Bengali polarization reached its high-Water mark in 1967 after the disclosure of the Agartala Conspiracy. Allegedly led by the Awami League leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, the conspiracy itself and the subsequent trial of the accused by a special court led to a rapid widening of the East-West divide. In the meantime, a countywide mass movement was launched against Ayub, who quickly

buckled under the pressure and convened an all-parties round table conference to hammer out a compromise in February 1969. Ayub also agreed to invite Mujib, who was to be released on parole. Mujib accepted the invitation and was all set to commence his journey when one of his co-accused, Air Force Sergeant Zahoorul I-haq, was shot dead in the army camp where he was being held. The incident triggered mass fury and increasing pressure on Mujib to go to West Pakistan only as a free man and not on parole. Mujib was left with the option of either declining Ayub's invitation or attending the conference as a free man. He opted forthe latter. The conspiracy trial had to be abandoned in a state of utter chaos: the trial judge, a retired chief justice of Pakistan, Justice S.A. Rahman, was mobbed by a hostile, slogan-chanting crowd outside the court, and had to run barefoot for his life. In strong symbolism as much as in reflecting stark reality, the disorderly retreat of the trial judge delivered a severe blow to the unity of the country and the dignity of the highest level of judiciary.

Mujib, armed with his six-point agenda, came to the round table conference as a free man, The conference failed, but it served as Mujib's best window of opportunity for projecting his party's programme and pressing for its acceptance without compromise. Thenceforward Pakistan was on a fateful journey from one crisis to another, each deeper and more intractable than the one before. Caught in the welter of rival ethno-lingual conflicts, the mohajirs-the UP-Delhi variety-in West Pakistan and the Biharis in East lined themselves up behind the centre, which for all practical purposes meant the Punjab. They had recognized the harsh truth that when in Pakistan, do as the Pakistanis (i.e. Punjabis) do.

Faced with the stark question of physical survival, concerns for language and culture were relegated to a lower order. Between the Bengalis and the West Pakistanis, the rnohajirs' only choice, beyond a transient and expedient phase, lay overwhelmingly in supporting the latter. The illusionary hope of the mohajirs serving as a bridge between East and West on the basis of one Pakistani language and culture had vanished into thin air after the shifting of the capital and the rapid provincialization of the national landscape. The move also added enormously to the power of the army and further inhibited the democratic process still muddling through Ayub's mock 'basic democracy Ayub's publicity blitz code named 'Ten Golden Years' or the 'Decade of Development' (1958-68) shattered irreparably whatever was left of his image as a national leader because it tended to highlight

the glaring inter-Wing economic and social disparities rather than the reforms launched to right the wrongs done to East Pakistan since Independence. lt also struck at the roots of the Wilting plant of inter-wing (national) integration. The crest of the ideological Islamic wave broke against the shore of political and economic realities, to disintegrate and disappear into the ocean of secular and mundane truths.

Things thereafter moved at a hectic pace, culminating in the abdication of Ayub after a general mutiny in East Pakistan and Widespread anti-Ayub protests in West Pakistan. On 25 March 1971, Ayub threw in the towel and handed the country over to the army chief, General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan. Off to a promising start as an "interim" arrangement to clean up the administration and hold elections on the basis of universal adult franchise, Yahya failed to stay his course. He quietly dropped the prefix "interim" attached to his government and sought to perpetuate himself in absolute power. Friendly to the Bengalis, Yahya recognized and restored the majority of the Bengalis that had been reduced from 56 to 50 per cent under the 1956 constitution, doubled their representation in the armed forces, and allocated a number of senior, federal secretary-level posts to the Bengalis Remarkably free from provincial prejudice, Yahya had a soft spot for the mohajirs too. After the break-up of One Unit in West Pakistan and the restoration of the four provinces-Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and NWFP-to their original status, he was for granting federal status to Karachi outside the provincial ambit of Sindh province. On a personal level, he loved the city as a vacation resort, and his friend Rear Admiral U.A. Saied, then Chairman of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, built a beach hut at Sandspit Where he could relax. Staff studies carried out at the chief martial law administrator's headquarters recommended that Karachi be given the status of a federal territory, virtually a second capital but the matter was later dropped.

Yahya Khan held general elections in December 1970, the first ever in the country's history on the basis of adult franchise and universally acclaimed as fair and impartial. After the elections, the country entered a period of turbulent, traumatic, and earth-shaking events leading to mutiny, military action and civil war in East Pakistan, and ultimately a War with India that ended in surrender and the break-up of the country. The mohajirs joined the West Pakistanis in gauging up against the Bengalis, as much for their own survival as out of contrived

patriotism. The Biharis of East Pakistan, victims of Bengalis fury in the aftermath of the military action, also sought refuge under the wing of the army. The accumulated and unresolved incompatibilities between their Urdu-based language and culture and the native Bengali milieu surfaced with a vengeance to goad the Biharis to prove their absolute loyalty to the centre. It remains a moot point whether the Biharis' support for the army was because of the imperatives of survival or due to their innate distrust of the Bengalis and their congenital belief in the essential inferiority of the Bengaii language and culture. Either way, the Bengali-Bihari fusion was for ever damned.

In the aftermath of the military crackdown (Operation Searchlight-midnight, 25 March 1971) and the turbulent days of civil war between the West Pakistan civil-military establishment on one side and the Mukti Bahini guerrillas and the Bengali civilians on the other, the Biharis acted as a second- and third-line force to secure the army's rear. The army itself, committed operationally all along the 1400-mile land-riverine front and engaged in containing the ever-mounting cross-border raids and incursions by the Indians, was left with little time or resources to ensure the safety of the infrastructure-roads, bridges, culverts, power stations, telephone lines, and rail communications.

The young Al-Bader and Al-Shams volunteers acted in support of the army with scant regard for their personal safety. East Pakistan might have been their home as much as the Bengalis' but when the Bengalis were up in arms against the "Punjabi" army, the Biharis were actively collaborating with the "invading" force. The Bihari dilemma arose from the inbred Bengali distrust of Biharis as a community, even of those who had refused to support the army. Except for the young and highly-motivated volunteers on guard duty, older home-bound family members, especially Women, were exposed to Bengali revenge. The Bihari support for the army was total despite the risks they ran throughout the crisis and beyond. They Were, in effect, double hostages-of the native Bengalis on the one hand, and on the other of the army, that was merely using them against the Bengalis and had no particular love for them. Throughout the almost quarter-century of their co-existence with the Bengalis in East Pakistan they had been widely distrusted by the latter for their support of the Punjabi-Pathan dominated establishment at the centre. After the elections of 1970, the Biharis rallied round the centre like people shipwrecked on a remote island.

They had high hopes of the army eventually triumphing over the Bengali ‘miscreants ‘How can anybody even dream of ever humbling a force as strong as the Pakistan army, which even India would had hard to face?" my Bihari friends would ask me in the course of informal conversations. ‘It would be nothing less than suicidal They did, however, have lurking fears about the army either quitting half-way through its own accord or being forced to surrender in the face of resistance from the Bengali guerrillas in concert with an onslaught from the Indian army. Everybody could see that the Indian army was waiting to jump into the fray and turn the tables on Pakistan. They were as afraid, and not unnaturally either, of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman ever coming to power. The majority of them were generally supposed to have either abstained from voting in the general elections or to have deliberately marked their ballot incorrectly. How many of them actually voted against l\/Iujib’s Awami League-as indeed quite a few must have done-is not known. The secrecy of the ballot would not permit an exact reckoning of who voted for or against a certain party or individual. Nevertheless, by the number of Biharis actually seen and signed-in at the polling booths, one could guess which way the Bihari vote went or whether it was exercised at all.

Mujib had largely himself to blame for the post-election chain of crises arising from his own deep-seated hatred and narrow-minded prejudice against the West Pakistanis. He would rather be the king of a predominantly Bengali East Pakistan (Bangladesh) than the emperor of Pakistan-such was the measure of Mujib as a man and a politician. Why would he decline the president’s invitation to visit Islamabad? The president had virtually accepted him as the presumptive prime minister of Pakistan without actually naming him. Why wouldn’t he cultivate leaders of the relatively smaller parties of West Pakistan, especially the Council Muslim League and the National Awami Party of Balochistan and NWFP, even the religious parties like the]amiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) and the Iamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP)-all anti-PPP? Why couldn’t he be more balanced and discreet in his dealings with the leader of Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), Zulfikar Ali Bhutto? After all, Bhutto and the PPP had emerged as the strongest political force in West Pakistan. However, Mujib showed no breadth of vision or measure of statesmanship as leader of the country’s largest majority party. Despite its sweeping majority, the Awami League did not qualify as a national party in any sense since its vote-bank and support remained confined solely to East Pakistan.

The Biharis would privately curse Mujib and publicly pray for the success of the army, for the army was their sole support. The mohajirs of West Pakistan had been even more staunch and vociferous in their support of the army. For them it was not a question just of survival but also of their strong sense of kinship to it. The army was theirs- speaking the same language, wearing the same dress while off-duty, eating the same kinds of food, and nurturing the same cultural values at the national level (local disparities apart), and above all, sharing the same piece of territory. Every West Pakistani was a Pakistani in body and soul, unshaken in the belief that Pakistan was there to stay even without East Pakistan. In any case, East Pakistan would have to leave the main body sooner or later.

Thus the mohajirs could have their cake and eat it, but for the Biharis it was the last throw of the dice, absolutely their last chance to survive as Pakistanis or lose their national identity for ever. Whether as part of Pakistan within a loose confederation or as citizens of an independent Bangladesh, the Biharis would not form more than a fraction of the total population. Either Way they would be at the mercy of the majority, in a state of complete alienation, virtual subjugation, and undisguised hostility.

After nine long months of bitter strife and civil war in East Pakistan, the Pakistan forces surrendered to the Indian Army on 16 December 1971. The country broke up and Bangladesh emerged out of the debris of East Pakistan. The bulk of the West Pakistani civilians Who were in East Pakistan at the time of the surrender were taken to India to be incarcerated in camps along with the military POWs. The great majority of the Biharis were left in Bangladesh to fend for themselves, stateless people in their own country and homes. To some extent they were in an even worse situation than the Palestinians who were driven out of their hearths and homes after the emergence of Israel: the few who elected to stay in the state of Israel were given Israeli citizenship, while many of those uprooted found asylum in fraternal Arab countries. A Palestinian remained a Palestinian whether in Palestine or elsewhere. When Jordan’s Arab Legion annexed the West Bank, the Palestinians enjoyed Jordanian citizenship and travelled on Jordanian passports without surrendering their national identity. Abandoned by Pakistan and targeted by Bangladesh as traitors, the Biharis had the worst of both worlds. Within a Week or so of the birth of Bangladesh, a Mukti Bahini commander, Brigadier Abdul Kadir (Tiger) Siddiqui, made a gory public tamasha of revenge killings at Dhaka’s Paltan Maidan. He

collected all the Biharis he could and mercilessly bayoneted them in full view of the world media. The rump Pakistan showed little sympathy for the Biharis, all bona fide and patriotic citizens, and did nothing for their repatriation. The Bangladesh government treated them as aliens and collaborators of the defeated Pakistan Army. Theirs has been the most miserable lot imaginable: citizens denationalized, rendered homeless in their own country, and Without recognized refugee status.

A bizarre triangular circus followed: the Bangladesh government refused to grant the Biharis Bangladesh nationality, the Biharis insisted on retaining their Pakistani citizenship while Pakistan dithered., refusing to go beyond lip-service. Successive Pakistan governments would promise to arrange their repatriation as Pakistani nationals, but except for a handful repatriated in the mid-'90s under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the majority continued to rot in their Bangladesh ghettoes. A few thousand live in Karachi, mostly as illegal immigrants. The irony is that while Bangladesh refuses to recognize them as either aliens or refugees, Pakistan does nothing to arrange their repatriation while never actually denying their status, in principle, as Pakistani citizens. Pakistani Biharis who collaborated actively with the Pakistan army and the martial law administration during the civil War (March-December 1971) and are still living have experienced more than their due share of suffering in Bangladesh. It is time for the governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan to act and bring their long ordeal to an end. As for the post-Pakistan Biharis, born and bred in Bangladesh with no foreign links, historical, emotional, or political, they should be recognized and accepted as Bangladeshi nationals to end their identity crisis once and for all.

Pakistan's reluctance to accept the Biharis as its own nationals is a gross violation of their constitutional rights. The Biharis' support of the Pakistan army and administration was an act of patriotism. While the revanchist fury of the Bangladeshis against the Biharis could be explained, the inability of the Pakistanis to accept the Biharis as fellow citizens remains a constitutional aberration without precedent. It could only be explained in the context of the mounting ethno-lingual divide in Pakistan between native sons-of-the-soil and the mohajirs. If some two to three million Pashto-speaking Afghan refugees could be accepted virtually as Pakistani nationals, then why not the Biharis, who are still branded as Pakistanis by the Bangladesh government? Why should they be condemned to a miserable state of unrecognized

refugeehood for acting as loyal and patriotic Pakistanis through the country’s Worst-ever crisis?

8

MOHAJIRISM: THE MQM IN PAKISTAN

Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water,
Jack fell down and broke his crown and J ill came tumbling after.

THE reasons why the appellation of ‘mohajir’ applied mainly to the Urdu-speaking refugees in West Pakistan and not to the Biharis in East Pakistan were fairly simple even if not so easy to see. The Biharis, the great majority of them at any rate, migrated to East Pakistan after the Bihar riots of 1946. Of those who later opted for Pakistan, a substantial number, employees of East India Railways, were duly accommodated in the vacancies caused by the migration of the Hindu staff; others with the requisite educational qualifications were absorbed as teachers at the primary and middle levels, still others, artisans, electricians, motor mechanics, etc.,-those equipped with basic technical skills, found jobs as daily wage-earners.

Bihar had had its share of communal rioting though not as widespread as that witnessed in the Punjab, Delhi, and elsewhere in the heartland of Muslim India where mohajirs were driven out of their homes at the point of Sikh kirpans and Hindu swords. Within the space of only a few months, about a million people, on both sides of the divide, were put to the sword, burnt alive, tortured, raped, and deprived of all their worldly belongings. They came to the promised land torn and broken in body and soul but still hoping for a secure future. Treated and accepted as refugees at the outset, they earned a variety of brand names -panahgir, mohajr, tilyar, makkar, Hindustani -each carrying a different shade of commiseration or pity or scorn if only by way of a joke. The Word ‘mohajir’, initially in limited usage, attained Wide currency after the separation of East Pakistan.

The loss of the country’s eastern wing was the end of Pakistan as envisaged and created by its architect, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali

Jinnah. It also sounded the death-knell of the two-nation theory in its pristine, pre-Partition sense and form. That Bangladesh chose to retain its Muslim (as opposed to Islamic) identity rather than rejoin Hindu West Bengal did not disprove the death of the two-nation theory. The Bangladeshi decision to stay out of India demonstrated the triumph of aggressive Bengali nationalism. They had never stopped nursing bitter memories of the annulment of the partition of Bengal in l9ll by King George V during his historic visit to India. As the majority community in united Bengal, the Muslims had never accepted the hegemony of the Hindu minority that existed in practically every sphere of life. They would rather rule in a divided Bengal than be ruled by the Hindu minority in a united Bengal. Hence their vote for the partition of their beloved land into two halves: they refused to join New Delhi (India) in spite of geographical contiguity and opted for distant Karachi hoping to have their status accepted as the majority community in an independent and sovereign country.

The loss of East Pakistan was at once good news and bad news. It was good riddance in as much as the people of the rump Pakistan would be untrammelled by the confounding, almost insoluble problems of East Pakistan and the endless rancour and grievances of the Bengalis against the Punjabis and Pathans. That was one side of the emerging national mindset. The other was one of deep despair and frustration with the forces of disintegration that were raising their ugly heads from the depths of hopelessness. Bhutto's Punjabi-Sindhi-dominated government never felt quite comfortable with the National Awami Party-Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam (NAP-JUI) governments in the NWFP and Balochistan. Bhutto was not the one to settle for half the cake if he could pick up and get away with the whole, so the two non-PPP provincial governments were a thorn in his side.

Right through the East Pakistan crisis, both the NAP and JUI, together with a number of the smaller parties of West Pakistan-the Council Muslim League, Jarniat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP), Tehrik-if lstiqlal etc.-had supported the Awami League as the majority party of Pakistan. Their leaders had gone to Dhaka in anticipation of the inaugural session of the national assembly scheduled for 3 March 1971 in spite of Bhutto's boycott of the session and his threat that anybody going to Dhaka would do so on a one-way ticket and should not dare return to West Pakistan. Bhutto's boycott of the national assembly, followed by the military crackdown, triggered a vicious chain of crises leading to the break-up of the country.

In Sindh, Bhutto's home province, where Mumtaz Ali Bhutto (his 'talented' cousin) was governor, the mohajir community's dominance in Karachi and other urban centres was irksome. The two Bhuttos viewed the mohajirs as essentially an anti-Sindhi force. Mumtaz Bhutto was a man in a hurry to save the Sindhi language and culture from the insidious influence and growing domination of the Urdu-speaking Inohajirs. In late 1972 he replaced Urdu with Sindhi at the primary level in schools, triggering widespread commotion amongst the Urdu-spealting mohajirs in Karachi, Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Sukkur, and Mirpur Khas; inohajir-dominated areas were soon ablaze with mass demonstrations and protest rallies. Karachi's Burns Road, in the city centre, and the townships of Nazimabad, Liaquatabad (Lalukhet), and Federal B Area were strung with banners proclaiming the death of Urdu.

Urdu ka janaza hai,	Let Urdu's funeral procession
bari dhum se nikle	Proceed with pomp and circumstance

Mumtaz Bhutto was furious. Police action to break up the mass rallies by Urdu-speaking mohajirs turned the largely slogan-chanting road-shows into violent protest marches that were soon beyond the capacity of the police to control. The army had to he called in and mohajir areas were put under duslk-to-dawn curfew.

The language riots of February 1972 in Sindh were strongly reminiscent of the language riots in Dhaka of February l952. The Shaheed Minar (Martyrs' Monument), raised in memory of those who died during the Dhaka riots, would stand as an epitaph for a united Pakistan. Bengali resentment over attempts to impose Urdu language and culture had triggered the movement for full provincial autonomy, which led to complete independence nineteen years later. The language riots in urban Sindh laid the foundations of mohajirism as a distinctive non-Sindhi, if not exactly anti-Sindhi, force to be reckoned with in provincial affairs. The word 'mohajir', until then used loosely for refugees, emerged as a Well-defined political term applicable to Urdu-speaking migrants only. Thus Urdu, the recognized national language of Pakistan, came to be associated with the ethnic group branded as mohajirs. The term would henceforth be applicable to Urdu-speakers only. The Bohras, Memons, Aga Khanis, and other non-Urdu-speaking communities who were also not ethnic Sindhis refused to be categorized as mohajirs.

Deploying the army to quell the first civilian disturbances after East Pakistan augured ill for the Bhutto government. General Tikka Khan, the army chief and a Bhutto protege, asked me-his director of Inter-Services Public Relations-to go to Karachi, see things for myself, and report back to him. This was the Bhutto government's first failure in controlling civilian disturbances-strikes by some police and air force personnel before the Karachi disturbances were essentially administrative matters, quite distinct from a public protest over something as important as the status of the national language, and with a provincial ethno-political dimension as well.

The then army chief, Lt.-Gen. Gul Hassan Khan, had regretted his inability to spare troops, still deployed in forward areas, in aid of the civil power. An infuriated Bhutto summarily retired General Gul on 2 March 1972. General Tikka Khan, earlier superseded for the top slot, was appointed army chief and in October 1972, troops were deployed under him in Karachi to quell the language riots.

In Pakistan, the army is repeatedly called out in aid of the civil power, invariably at the cost of institutional strength and resilience of the civil authority; in addition, it reflects poorly on the administrations ability to manage crises. Every time the army is summoned to deal with civilian strife it takes away a slice of civilian authority. Bhutto's use of the army to deal with the language crisis was like using a drug to ease the pain without curing the malady. The army was called out on three separate occasions within a matter of just eight or nine months - in Peshawar, Hyderabad, and Karachi-which showed that Bhutto was becoming addicted to using the army for quick fixes. As regards the mohajirs, the language disturbances were brought under control by the army after a spell of violence, but the entire episode left a dark shadow on relations between the mohajirs and Bhutto right up to the end of his regime.

Instead of recognizing the harm already inflicted on the credibility and authority of his government by the frequent use of the army to quell civilian disturbances, Bhutto went on to order a military crackdown in Balochistan. A sworn enemy of the NAP-JUI coalition in Balochistan, he used the army to destabilize it by contriving situations. The language crisis in Karachi was still not quite under control when he launched the army against the Marris in the Pat Feeder Area, a Punjabi settlement in Balochistan, and against the Bugtis in Quetta. Salim Bugti, son of Sardar (Chief) Akbar Bugti, was said to be advancing at the head of a big tribal Iashkar 'capture' Quetta. The

drought-stricken Marris, many women and children amongst them, were congregating in the Pat Feeder Area for subsistence, though it was put out that they were there to loot and plunder the Punjabi settlers. Bhutto's impetuous, vengeful acts would culminate in the dismissal of the NAP-JUI coalition in Balochistan and the resignation of their government in the NWFP. Deploying the army in Balochistan touched off what turned out to be longest-lasting insurgency in Pakistan—from 1972 through to July 1977, when Bhutto's government was toppled in a coup by his own army chief, General Mohammad Ziaul Haq.

Reverting to the language riots and their fallout, the mohajirs' sense of alienation had been incubating ever since the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951 and deepened after the capital was moved to Islamabad in 1959. The anti-Fatima Jinnah and anti-mohajir demonstrations of January 1965 only made it worse, and the brutal suppression of the ethno-lingual movement of October 1972 accentuated it. The loss of East Pakistan and the travails of the Biharis and their virtual excommunication afterwards bred a great deal of scepticism and fear amongst the mohajirs about their own status and future in Pakistan. Now that East Pakistan Was gone and the Biharis abandoned, what guarantee was there of a secure future for the mohajirs in Pakistan? While there was East Pakistan, its majority had acted as a balancing force to offset the bureaucratic-military dominance of the West, but now the mohajirs were on their own. Unlike the helpless Biharis, however, the mohajirs` existential reality embraced all the vital features of Pakistan's art, culture, language, and politics. They could not by any means be dismissed as just a parochial ethnic group outside the national mainstream. No matter how deeply-wedded ethnic Pakistanis (provincials) might have been to their various provincial mores, they yet remained an integral part of the overarching pre-Partition Urdu-mohajir milieu, Muslim India. Unlike the Biharis, the mohajirs continued to be a national force, a factor that could not be discounted despite the sudden invasion of provincial languages and culture in Pakistan.

What the mohajirs needed most was a strong and stable political platform from which to project the mohajir point of view and perspective as an organized, proactive, political group. So far they had aligned themselves broadly with the Karachi-based but nationally organized Jamat-e-lslami (II) and Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP). Both were religion-oriented parties. The JI, politically by far the best organized party, had a strong following with a large vote-bank and

committed support within and outside its own rank and file. The JUP, with a much smaller organizational base and less public support, drew all its strength from its chief, Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani (Siddiqui). He and his life-long deputy, Shah Faridul Haque, were the body and soul of the party. Neither party, however, had had much to show in the general elections of December 1970, more conspicuously in the case of the JI which failed despite its strong organizational base. It had put up party candidates in both wings to contest the elections and vigorously campaigned for them. Its chief, the widely-respected Islamic scholar and historian Maulana Abul Aala Maududi, was hooted down at a public rally during a post~election visit to Dhaka and narrowly escaped an attack. Of all the religious (but politically secularist) parties, the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) fared better in the elections than all others in that category and formed coalition governments in Balochistan and NWFP along with the National Awami Party (NAP)

Bhutto's six years in power were a period of considerable national turbulence. His arrogance and political stubbornness in dealing with the opposition, hasty economic reforms, impetuous diplomacy (quitting the Commonwealth), nuclear hobnobbing, and, last but not least, a tragic flaw inherent in his personality-his penchant for personal vendetta-created a crisis beyond his capacity to control. Driven to desperation, he ordered early elections in March 1977. All the opposition parties forged a united front under the umbrella of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) to contest the elections against Bhutto's PPP. The mohajir student community of Karachi, under its leader, Altaf Hussain, joined hands with the JI in the anti-PPP electoral campaign. Young, well-led, and fiercely motivated, the mohajir boys worked day and night for the PNA throughout the election campaign and during the post-election mass movement against rigged voting. Nothing like the PNA movement, with its countrywide sweep and huge public support, had ever been seen in Pakistan before. Bhutto's administrative civil and military apparatus collapsed completely in the face of the massive ,movement and his government was overthrown in a bloodless military coup on 5 July l977.

Regardless of the negative outcome of the PNA movement, there was no denying or belittling the contribution of the mohajirs in its decisive finale, even if it was one that was unintended. Political parties and all political activity were banned. Bhutto was arrested and then released, but was later indicted in a murder case. Following a long trial, he was found guilty and hanged (4 April 1979). The JI joined hands

with the military government and saw two of its senior members inducted as federal ministers in Ziaul Haq's cabinet. This sudden post-election volte-face by the JI left its young mohajir volunteers high and dry and utterly frustrated. Hardly a word of appreciation for all their good Work and services during the electoral campaign! They lost all hope for a just and fair deal from the JI, until then the principal political platform of Sindh's strong mohajir community.

After Partition, the mohajirs had been confronted with a difficult choice: whether to retain their identity as a distinct ethno-cultural group or to merge with the true sons of the soil, those born and bred in Pakistan over generations. The mohajirs were overwhelmingly predisposed to retaining their identity for Whatever it was worth. While the second alternative would have been the Wiser and more practical choice, to them it appeared neither desirable nor compatible with their pre-Partition status as standard-bearers of the language and culture of Muslim India. Whatever little hope of national integration there might have been before the break-up of the country was no more. The inability-in truth, refusal-of Pakistan to recognize the Biharis as its citizens in spite of their proclaimed loyalty to the country had smashed all mohajir hopes for a square deal in the rump Pakistan.

The ethno-language movement of 1972 notwithstanding, the two had, however, accepted each other as an existential reality. The mohajirs were there to stay, not just as migrants but as an integral part of the emerging middle class of urban Sindh, mainly Karachi and Hyderabad. Except for the inevitable anomalies of language and culture, the bulk of the mohajirs had settled well and either had lower-level government jobs 'or were small-time professionals (mainly lawyers and doctors), artisans (goldsmiths, silversmiths, tailors, embroiders, block-printers), owners of small convenience stores. Only a handful of mohajirs could be classed as captains of industry. The emerging industrial class was dominated by the non-Urdu-speaking Memons and Bohras, and the Punjabis. The mohajirs, especially the Delhi Punjabi Saudagars, had virtually monopolized the retail trade market at Marriot Road. Although successful businessmen, they lacked entrepreneurial skills and abilities, were not risk-takers, and dealt only in sikkh-band-imported and patented 'Made in England' sort of merchandise. Next to their thriving retail business they would invest their money in real estate-quite a few of them disdained working for a living and depended on monthly rentals from their properties, taking pride in their status as landlords.

Altaf Hussain, the emerging leader of the mohajir student community, strongly resented the JI's opportunistic policies. Already mistrustful of their political aims and religious orientation, Altaf Hussain and his associates walked out on the JI. Together they created an exclusively mohajir, secularist organ, the All-Pakistan Mohajir Student Organization (APMSO) (launched on ll June 1978), to project the aims and safeguard the aspirations of the mohajir student community. It was off to a proactive, aggressive start against the various ethnic-Punjabi, Pathan, Sindhi, and Balochi-factions dominating Karachi University. These factions had monopolized various facilities of the University on the basis of their party strength rather than on merit, and also privileges such as hostel accommodation, award of scholarships, fee concessions etc. Admission to the University and its affiliated institutions, e. g., the NED University of Engineering and Technology, Urdu Science College, etc., had become their exclusive preserve. It was alleged that teachers were threatened to allow prior access to examination papers and re-mark answer books.

The first serious challenge to APMSO, involving an armed clash, came from the]I`s student wing, the Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba (IIT), on the occasion of annual admissions to the University. APMSO had put up its own stall, just like all the others, to assist its members with admissions. The UT reacted aggressively, repeatedly trying to break into APMSO's turf and challenging their monopoly of the mohajir students. However, instead of disrupting APMSO's ranks, the IJT's violent behaviour and hostility only reinforced its resolve to stay on and fight back: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It stole much of the thunder from the UT`s motorcycle-mounted 'Thunder Squad' and quickly re-established the stalls vandalized by the IJT. In no time at all, APMSO broke the stranglehold of the IJT, resisting its strong-arm tactics and ensuring that it never went for another's groups's throat as it had done in the past. APMSO's standing as the second strongest student group, aspiring to, anti fast approaching, a leading position, was unquestionably established.

Taking a leaf from the IJT's organizational book, APMSO strengthened itself, first to rival and then to surpass the UT as the most well-knit group in Karachi's student community. It perfected a two-pronged tactic--one devoted to constitutional and peaceful means, the other, proactive and aggressive, designed to return violence for violence and to win at all costs. APMSO also extended its parameters beyond the University into the wider domain of public life to act as the strong

arm of the party, in much the same way as the UT did for the JI. The MQM targeted the mohajir middle class to create a large base strong enough for the extension of its operations.

APMSO perceived a threat to its emerging prominence as much from the co-ethnic IJT as from the Balochis, Sindhis, Punjabis, and Pathans. APMSO and its rivals were inimical and hostile as all aspired to the' same turf to the exclusion of others. APMSO projected an all-mohajir character and orientation and would settle for nothing less than the entire mohajir-student turf. The IIT, despite the backing of the JI's national base and organization, had to Withdraw and cede ground wholly to APMSO. Unlike APMSO, which was a purely mohajir outfit, the IIT had a fair representation of non-mohajirs (mainly Punjabis) in its ranks, although the great majority of its members were Urdu-speaking students. Its approach to the mohajir student community was predominantly political, in conformity with the orientation of its parent organization, the JI.

Encouraged by the success of APMSO, Altaf Hussain launched the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) on 18 March 1984, perhaps after an assenting nod from the army or on his own initiative, to act as the political sword-arrn of APMSO. According to the Karachi weekly Takber, of 27 June i992, General Mohammad Ziaul Haq, when asked by the editor, Maulana Salahuddin, whether he was the 'real founder' of the MQM, admitted: 'Yes I did not quite realize the serious consequences of my decision."

On 31 December 1985, martial law was lifted to pave the way for the revival of political activity. During l985, the party had consolidated and organized its cadres on a sectoral basis. By 1986 the MQM could boast of a Well-disciplined and fiercely-dedicated party structure which, though relatively small, could rival the much older and larger parties, especially the Jamaat lslami and Jamiat-e-Ulerna-e-Islam with their traditional vote bank in urban Sindh, mainly Karachi and Hyderabad. On 8 August 1986, the MQM organized its first mammoth gathering, supposedly the largest ever, at Karachi's Nishtar Park. The meeting, a thumping success, brought the mohajirs into the political arena as a distinct and separate entity. The adoption of the prefix 'mohajir' tended to drive in into and out of national politics almost simultaneously, for it looked and acted more like a guild than a political party. with an agenda meant for its ethnic constituents only.

After the success of Karachi, the MQM organized an equally big rally and public meeting in Hyderabad on 3] October 1986. On the

way to Hyderabad from Karachi, the MQM motorcade was attacked at Sohrab Goth, the notorious hub of Karachi's drugs mafia. The ensuing violence resulted in the killing and wounding of a number of MQM workers. Altaf Hussain and some of his senior colleagues were arrested.

Following the Sohrab Goth incident, in December 1986, the Sindh Government launched 'Operation Clean-up' against the Sohrab Goth drugs mafia. On 13 December. even as the operation was under way, the Pathans of the drugs mafia raided the mohajir settlements of Orangi, Qasba, and Aligarh colonies in a 'massive exercise of bridle or revenge killing, for the Sohrab Goth incident. Mohajir houses and shops were looted and burnt in a frenzy of planned and targeted violence. The mayhem continued for a full day and night before police and para-military forces finally intervened. The Aligarh and Orangi Town ethnic clashes were the worst ever in Karachi, almost reminiscent of the Bihari ordeal in Dhaka following the military surrender in 1971. Indeed, i986 turned out to be the deadliest year for mohajir-nnon-mohajir (mainly Pathan) ethnic violence. Since the MQM had not been directly involved in the gory proceedings, the Pathan fury was not directed against the MQM per se but was a manifestation of the mounting sentiment against the mohajir community as a whole. Pathan leaders like Begum Wali Khan (Wife of the ANP chief, Khan Abdul Wali Khan), Haji Ghulam Ahmad Bilour, Dr Yakub (a member of the NWFP assembly), and others issued strongly-worded statements condemning 'Operation Clean-up' and threatening the mohajir community with perilous consequences. Thus even the opening chapter of the MQM story was Written in blood. Lines were drawn between the mohajirs and the Pathans of Karachi for a prolonged stand-off and periodic violent clashes (see, the author's Mrnircrjfr, Azad Publication, Lahore, 1997).

In 1987, the MQM contested the non-party local bodies elections under the amended 1973 Constitution, adopting the banner of 'Haq Parasi' (Truth Worshippers) and selecting a kite (kite-flying was, and remains, the mohajirs` favourite sport) as its election symbol. It swept the polls with a thumping majority in Karachi and Hyderabad.

Regarding the mohajir-military nexus alluded to above, APMSO did seem to have a kind of Working relationship with the army and Altaf Hussain and his associates had been noted for their friendly ties with Karachi`s deputy chief martial law administrator and intelligence boss. Major-General Mohammad Afzal Khan. APMSO, and later the MQM.

did appear to hold out the promise and the potential to act as a counter force to Bhutto's PPP. Rooted in Sindh, the MQM dipped quite substantially into the PPP's vote-bank in the province's main urban centres of Karachi and Hyderabad. Besides depleting the PPP vote-bank, the MQM almost completely wiped out the Ji and JUP from their traditional electoral strongholds. The army was looking for a spoiler in the electoral game and the MQM seemed eminently poised to tit the bill. One might conjecture on the nature and degree of the MQM's understanding with the military in its formative years, but to all appearances it did enjoy a smooth and friction-free relationship with the army.

The mohajirs' deepening sense of alienation ever since the language riots was compounded by the massive bloodbath of December 1986. In a press statement carried in the Star, Karachi on 12 February 1987, on 'The Genesis of Mohajir Nationality', Altaf Hussain referred to the bloodbath in Orangi Town, Qasbah, and Aligarh Colonies in these words: 'Such a brutality will go down in the nation's history as the worst case of carnage and blood bath His pointed use of the term 'mohajir nationality' would in conceptual terms form the basis of rnohajirism or state of refugeehood, steeled by the resolve to convert it into nationhood.

Deeply shocked by the plight of the Biharis, the mohajirs positioned themselves resolutely against any such contingency ever overtaking them. The assertion, increasingly voiced by ethnic Punjabis, Pathans, Sindbis and Baloch, that Pakistan had four distinct nationalities within a federal framework provided impetus to the MQM's perception of the mohajirs as a separate entity. Up to this point, MQM had been a sort of a bull in Pakistani's political china shop. Mohajirism, until then a mere abstraction, acquired a concrete status within the conceptual and political framework of the MQM. However, the MQM would not officially adopt or endorse the term in its party manifesto and literature.

Within less than a year of its inception, the MQM would not only catch up with the mainstream parties but surpass them in organizational discipline and cohesiveness. Its mass appeal remained unquestioned in urban Sindh but was restricted to the mohajir community. The MQM now emerged as the only party, apart from the II, that was organizationally well-knit, functionally efficient, and unflinchingly committed to its ideology. Unlike the J I, the MQM was unapologetically secularist and, much like the ethnic and regionally-based Sindhi (Jeeay

Sindh), Frontier (ANP), and Baloch (BNP) parties, was driven by ethno-culturism rather than religion.

ln the party-based general elections of November 1988, the MQM emerged as the second largest party in Sindh after the mainstream PPP. At the national level, it put up candidates for the national assembly and won all the seats that it contested. The PPP, with the largest number of seats in the provincial as we-ll as the national assemblies, formed governments in Sindh and at the centre; Benazir Bhutto was elected prime minister of Pakistan. She succeeded in cobbling together a government in her home province with the MQM as the PPP's coalition partner, but it was an uneasy alliance right from the beginning. Eventually there was a clash of the titans-Benazir and Altaf both being uncompromisingly egocentric-and the partnership collapsed, leading to an enduring state of hostility between the two party chiefs and their parties also. More unfortunately and tellingly, between the ethnic Sindhis and the non-Sindhi mohajirs.

In August 1990, Benazir's government was dismissed by President Ghulam lshaq Khan. Elections held in November were won by the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI), the largest single alliance of political parties, under the leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif. He became prime minister at the head of a coalition government with the MQM as a major partner. The two successive party-based elections of 1988 and 1990 encouraged the MQM leadership to venture into the larger sphere of national politics. in a press statement released in March 1992, the party chairman, Azim Tariq, for the iirst time publicly suggested renaming the party as 'Muttahida Qaumi (United National) Movement? The new title was formally adopted tive years later in July 1997, But it did not in any significant Way or manner change or enlarge the ethnic base of the party, which remained restricted to the mohajir community.

The lV/IQM's aspiration to have the mohajirs recognized as the fifth nationality of Pakistan brought it into direct conflict with all other parties. Furthermore, its demand for a mohajir saber): (province) in Sindh, besides being totally unacceptable to the Sindhis, was hardly consistent with the contemplated change from 'mohajir' to 'muttahida' What sort of an 'ittehad', or unity, was the NIQM aiming for while demanding the creation oi' a separate mohajir subah? Such a plan, if ever implemented, could only be at the cost of the historical unity of the province and would mean partition of the province into Sindhi and mohajir areas. Furthermore, wouldn't the transition from mohajir to

muttahida mean a paradigm shift in the party's foundational charter? The move split the party into pro- and anti-Altaf groups. Two of the party's stalwarts and Altaf Hussain's closet associates, Amir Khan and Afaq Ahmad, along with a number of like-minded friends, defected and left the country, remaining in self-exile for a long period. Nothing, however, would deflect Altaf Hussain from his chosen course. From the realms of mohajir realpolitik he jumped to the higher domain of trans-ethnic politics. He went on to enunciate his political philosophy based on the twin pillars of Practalism and Realism- in plain language, readjusting one's sights according to the changing circumstance and expediency or, if you like, opportunism or surrender to expediency at the cost of party principles and ideology. The desire and ambition to break out of the narrow straits of the mohajir cause and break into the wider stream of national politics was a natural consequence of the MQM's thumping electoral victories. Behind that was also the congenitally trans-territorial mohajir passion while remaining fiercely protective and jealously possessive of his ethno-cultural turf with little or no concern for physical realities. The concept of 'son of the soil' was all but foreign to the mohajir vision-one of the principal reasons why, knowing full well that their home provinces would not form a part of Pakistan, they yet plunged themselves body and soul int.o the Pakistan movement. This is, however, only a loose (even rhetorical, if you will), not a scientific definition of the mohajir psyche.

The emergence of the 'Muttahida' sought to raise the party above the mohajir status without materially changing the image of the party. But a chameleon remains a chameleon no matter how many different colours it might assume. In material, political, and parochial terms, the mohajirs were still viewed as Hindustanis no matter how hard they tried to be accepted as one of the indigenous peoples of Pakistan. A single column in the passport or other official documents detailing not only their own but also their fathers' country of birth was enough to betray them as foreigners in Pakistan.

The MQM's sentimental journey from 'm0hajfr' to 'muttahida' not only failed to establish its credentials as a national party but also drove a wedge into the monolithic structure of the organization. The dissidents and the pro-Altaf loyalists were soon at daggers drawn, giving both the civil and the military authorities their best chance to break into the party echelons and bite into the steel frame of its authoritarian structure. A turf war began between the mainstream MQM led by Altaf Hussain and the breakaway faction of Amir and Afaq, now organized as

'Haqiqi', or 'the genuine' MQM_ In April 1992, the army launched an operation to curb factional violence. In open support of the breakaway Haqiqi faction, the main target of the army operation was the mainstream MQM. The headquarters of the MQM at 'Nine-Zero' in Azizabad, a mohajir stronghold in Karachi, and all its party offices in Landhi, Korangi, Malir, Liaquatabad, N azimabad, etc., were raided and ransacked. 'Torture cells' were unearthed at a number of the MQM centres, and so many cases were registered against the party leadership for murder, extortion, torture, car-jacking, and a broad range of anti-State activities as to leave little room for escape or reprieve. As a result, most party activists went underground.

This was the first open encounter between the army and the mainstream MQM. The manner in which the Sindh Rangers, operating under the overall command of Commander 5 Corps, rushed in to support the anti-Altaf breakaway faction left no doubt about which side they were on. Here the army slipped up badly in their strategic design to decimate the growing mohajir power under the banner of the MQM. Their tactical (operational) handling of the exercise was so markedly slipshod and haphazardly executed that it only exposed the design of the authorities to create a law and order situation to justify deployment of the army, crush the MQM, and destroy its leadership.

Altaf Hussain migrated to England in i992 to stay in London and lead the party from there. Between 1989 and 1999, the MQM had been in and out of government. However, Benazir Bhutto's second term as prime minister (l993~l996), was the most turbulent for the mohajir community. Whether in or out of the MQM, the mohajirs were identified with the party as a body. The turf war in Karachi between the rival groups of the l\/[QM-Muttahida and Haqiqi-raged with fresh ferocity, holding the city hostage.

The law-enforcing authorities fully exploited the battles raging between the two factions of the MQM. Areas like Landhi, Korangi, Malir, Shah Faisal Colony, etc., which were dominated by the Haqiqis, were designated 'no-go' areas and declared off-limits to the Muttahida. Regardless of who was right or wrong, mohajirs were shedding mohajir blood, maiming and murdering one another in a war of implacable vendetta.

The plight of the mohajirs during Benazir's two terms (1988-90 and 1993-96) was easily the most pathetic. Her first term saw the massacre and displacement of the mohajirs in Hyderabad-the mohajir colony of Pucca Qila was targeted jointly by the police and rangers, and their

homes raided and demolished. The inmates, old and young, men and women, were thrown out into the streets and left there until the army intervened. Her second term turned red with mohajir blood as a result of the intra-mohajir turf war. This allowed the use of state power to ostensibly disengage the two; but in reality to break the power and structural homogeneity of the Muttahida.

Yet there was no breaking the collective cohesion of the Muttahida despite the overt use of state power in support of the Haqiqis. Neither was there any weakening of the command, control, and authority that the party supremo Altaf Hussain wielded over the rank and lile of the party. His frequent addresses via satellite telephone from his office-in-exile in London drew large crowds who would display rare discipline and listen with rapt attention to the words of their leader. Such was the spell Altaf Hussain cast on his listeners that they remained fully responsive to the substantive parts of the address. Altaf would interrupt his discourse every now and then to throw a rhetorical question and pause, waiting for the audience to respond. They would invariably voice their agreement and thunder back in unison, 'Jee bhai sahab' endorsing everything their leader said.

The Altaf Hussain phenomenon and charisma was (and remains) something unique and special to the psyche of Ganga-Yamuna mohajirs Theirs had been an essentially patriarchal society where the elder male or the buzurg of the family, be he the father, uncle, or barra bhai (elder brother), ruled the roost. This was equally true of most subcontinental societies. However, what differentiated the mohajir family culture from others had been a subtle interplay and cross-fertilization of something as narrow as an essentially family model and broad as the urbane cultural mainstream. The patriarchal pattern was normal, perhaps even more dominant, in Punjabi, Pathan, Sindhi, or Balochi families, but hardly as highly-nuanced culturally as in the Ganga-Yamuna model, possibly due to over-urbanization of the Ganga-Yamuna areas and their proximity to Delhi and Lucknow, the widely-recognized centres of the language and culture of pre-Partition Muslim India. A good deal of exhibitionism, snobbery, arrogance, and even hypocrisy did indeed go with the kind of over-sophistication that became the hallmark of the decadent Ganga-Yamuna language and culture.

The intense emotions over the death of a paterfamilias in Satyajit Ray's classic film 'Shatranj ke Khilari' tellingly portrayed the element of mock-sentimentalism associated with the Ganga-Yamuna culture. The son, easily in his late forties, makes quite a scene by giving himself

up to loud wailing, so loud as to sound theatrical and rehearsed rather than genuine and heartfelt, over the death of his old father. His shallow litany of 'Abbu-jani, Abu-jani...(beloved father)' left one (myself in this case) with a suppressed smile on the lips.

Reverting to the magic Altaf Hussain exercises over the mohajir mind. while all of a piece with the sub-cultural paradigm of the Punjabi, Pathan, Balochi, and Sindhi versions, the mohajir, much like is pre-Partition forebear, stays a hero-worshipper mainly for want of a spirit of collective kinship based on tribal identity (as opposed to national) language and home- grown culture. Altaf Hussain emerged on the public stage as the guardian angel of mohajir language, dress, and culture. Born and bred in Karachi, he had developed his own notions of the mohajir way of life. The bulk of the MQM, drawn from mohajir youth in their late teens or early twenties, had only as much of a mental image and awareness of mohajir culture as they had seen in their Pakistani homes and families, and by the time they were developing sense enough to distinguish between the language, dress and culture of their families and that of the Punjabis and Pathans next door, their own parents themselves had all but departed from their traditional mores. The Urdu language, for example, had changed almost beyond recognition, in accent and idiom, as early as in the first ten to twelve years of Pakistan's existence. Since the overwhelming majority of the rnohajirs had settled permanently in Karachi, the issue of a mohajir language and culture mainly concerned them; mohajirs outside Karachi and urban Sindh would not be nearly so concerned with such issues.

Apart from the creolized, caricature-d Karachi-Urdu the MQM-wallas spoke, even the dress they adopted was at best a grotesque version of the authentic sherwani-kurta-payjama ensemble. The traditional, almost compulsory, headgear of the Delhi-UP wallas, a Turkish or 'Jinnah' cap or cotton Rampuri topee, all but disappeared. They opted for non-glossy, beige or fawn raw silk as material for their dress and the boat-shaped salime shahi joti, plain or embroidered, as their footwear. Party men were free to choose between a clean shave and a trimmed beard, but most of the top party leadership would sport a bushy moustache like their supreme leader.

The mohajir youth were attracted to Altaf like a swarm of moths to a lamp, hovering and buzzing around him unafraid of getting singed or burnt. Theirs was a fatal attraction to their leader. His word was law, and with a single wave of the hand he could turn an ecstatic, raucous crowd to stone, then revive them back to their ecstatic state with

another. He was reverentially addressed as 'Pir Sahab' and his image and likeness was seen on flowerpots and other objects. To them, his was the same Messianic image as that of Jinnah, and before him of the All Brothers, in inspiration if not in sweep.

As a typical construct of the mohajir persona, Altaf Hussain's image failed to stir and capture the fancy of the non-mohajir Sindhis and others-the reason why his transition from 'mohajir' to 'muttahida' turned out to be initially stillborn. Instead of lending a Wider dimension to the party, Muttahida served to underscore its essentially parochial, ethno-cultural ethos hardly impressing or impacting the ethnic Sindhi masses. It was quite evident from the outset that the MQM would probably never be able to rival or even catch up with mainstream national parties like the Muslim League, the PPP, the Jl, and others, so of what use would it be to the non-mohajirs? Little or nothing!

More importantly, what good has the MQM done for the mohajir community itself despite its solid and unbreakable vote-bank? In areas-cities, districts, and townships-under its domination, the mohajirs do enjoy ay measure of authority and respect that was unavailable to them before the emergence of the party. Much of it, however, has been at the cost of the relative (in certain cases even complete) loss of authority and respect in non-MQM ('no-go') areas dominated by the Haqiqis. The concept of mohajirisrn used to be an emotionally and intellectually charged driving force, even inspirational and dynamic, no matter how obscure and abstract. The MQM pushed it into a mundane political slot with all the distortions of expediency and opportunism germane to party politics. From an essentially poetic vision, it turned into a cult of explosive violence and militancy inconsistent with the physical and mental make-up of the people of the Ganga-Yamuna belt.

Now, in the third decade since its emergence, the MQM can boast only of a strong phalanx of toughs, armed and unafraid to use force, individually when necessary and collectively under orders of the party high command. The mohajir youth today is an angry young man who, like Zorba the Greek in Nikos Kazantzakis' novel, is ready to rob and steal and get by force what he is denied as a citizen. He is no longer the meek scholar on the way to school or college with a load of books under his arm or placidly sitting in a chair as a petty clerk in a government office, but a rough rider on a motor bike-often armed. In spite of the complete metamorphosis in mind and body, dressed and speaking like his Punjabi or Pathan neighbour, he remains a mohajir

and an ‘outsideri He bears his crosses as an MQM activist. Whatever respect or consideration he enjoys as a fellow citizen, in most cases it is more out of awe than fellowship. One could also say the same about others, the Sindhi riffs-it-vis' the Punjabi and the Balochi vs. the Pathan, but they all have their own turf, their home province to go back to and their own people ready to welcome the prodigal. To use a Balochi political expression, a Balochi is the ‘master of the land’, which illustrates the point better than any argument can. The rnohajir, on the contrary, will forever remain a mohajir, and has only himself to thank for this persistent state of alienation. He remained alienated initially because he wished to underline his cultural primacy and carried the flag of the language and culture of Muslim India, and subsequently because he refused to blend with the culture and language of his adopted province, his permanent habitat.

The MQM’s role in giving the mohaiirs a distinctive identity and re-defining their political status may have been commendable, but it made them a thing apart from the rest of their fellow countrymen. They were branded as ‘Urdu-speaking, which had the effect of reducing the status of the national language to the language of a minority. The characteristic mohajir dress introduced and adopted by the MQM was ridiculed as ‘fancy dress’; it failed to catch on and indeed Went out of vogue over time-even the top party leadership returned to shirt and trousers for their day-to-day wear, bare-headed except for the occasional use of the sequined Sindhi arch-fronted topee.

There is no belittling the MQM’s role in giving the mohajirs (mainly, almost wholly, of urban Sindh) a distinctive and formidable identity. What remains open to question, however, is how much of the M[QM’s political assertiveness and consolidation of its vote-bank was to the advantage of the mohajir community in general. Are they now viewed and accepted as true sons of the soil and bona hde provincials, or are they still considered a community apart, outside the national mainstream?

The MQM’s demand for a separate mohajir province is virtually a thing of the past now, though it generated much heat and raw passion during the early ’90s. An officially-inspired vililication campaign was launched to paint the MQM with the lurid coat of separatisin, much as was done with the Awami League in the pre-1971 era. A sketch-map of a mohajir state called ‘Jinnahpur’ was circulated as evidence of the MQM’s vision of a separate mohajir state with Karachi as its capital city. The map and all else proved to be completely bogus. The MQM

rejected it out of hand as part of the government's sedulously-engineered campaign to vilify it. Even the name 'Jinnahpur' was nothing less than an insult to the intelligence of the Urdu-speaking mohajir, for no Urdu-speaking mohajir would adopt such a grotesque name for his state. Had such a plan existed, it could have been 'Jinnahabad` or simply 'Mohajir Suba', but never 'Jinnahpur.

The `90s under Benazir and Nawaz Sharif had been testing times for the mohajir community. The raging turf wars between the Muttahida and the Haqiqis did a lot of damage to the mohajir image and status, recognized as they were to be Pakistan's largest civilized and educated middle class. The minority Haqiqi enjoyd full support of the government to put the majority Muttahida and with that the mohajir community at a considerable disadvantage, both socially and politically, in spite of the latter`s unquestionable political power and ascendancy.

The situation lasted until the civilian regime of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was overthrown in yet another military coup in Pakistan's chequered history by his own army chief, General Pervez Musharraf (12 October 1999). Born in Delhi in the mid-19405, Musharraf hails from a mohajir family. By upbringing and education, as a boy and a youth, hc has been as much a son of the soil as a Punjabi or Sindhi, but a mohajir nevertheless as the son and grandson of a Delhi mohajir. Musharraf speaks Urdu with a heavy Punjabi accent but has rarely been heard using Punjabi in everyday conversation.

Until the elections of 2002, the MQM had a somewhat tense relationship with Musharraf`s regime, but after its impressive performance in the general elections of November that year, it was much sought after as a coalition partner in a hung parliament where no party enjoyed absolute majority. Initially inclined towards joining the ranks of the opposition, the MQM subsequently made its peace with the army and joined the government both at the centre and in the province. Election results did little to smooth its passage from 'Mohajir' to 'Muttahida' because, except for a single Sindhi candidate. none of its non-mohajir candidates returned on the party ticket Its attempts to forge a united front of new (mohajir) and old (ethnic) Sindhis against non-Sindhis (Punjabis/Pathans) all but lizzied out when confronted with some hard political and physical realities.

The mohajirs as a class had hardly ever treated the Sindhis as their cultural equals and the Sindhis saw them, as they saw the Punjabi and other settlers, as interlopers and intruders in their home province. Noted for their ingratiating, almost sycophantic attitudes towards the Punjabis,

the mohajirs were largely distrusted by the Sindhis, Even at a glance, the negative impact of the paradigm shift from Mohajir to Muttahida was not hard to see. The MQM compromised its mohajir motif and message without widening its nationalist base, for it remained a party of the mohajirs and for the mohajirs. The image of the party as a nuclear family did, however, split for good. The rival faction (Haqiqi) hastened to monopolize and exploit the inohajir name and essence to their advantage in the ensuing semantic muddle and hoisted the flag of mohajirism with the claim to be its sole bearer. The mohajirs of the Haqiqi faction could novv boast of their undiminished and absolute commitment to the rnohajir cause vis-d-vis the renegade Muttahida. The use of identical initials by both factions also caused a good deal of confusion. The mainstream MQM was obliged to add 'Altaf' to be known as MQM (Altaf), while the breakaway faction suffixed theirs with 'Haqiqif The suffix was subsequently dropped as 'Muttahida' obtained Wide currency and thus replaced MQM (Altaf).

Whichever way one looks at it, the splitting of the party and its fall-out on the mohajir community had a depressing effect. It was a pathological manifestation of the mohajir psyche anchored to narrow and self-centred individualism. Even in a group like the MQM, the urge to deflect from the set course was as strong as ever_ It would rarely be overcome by persuasion and had to be completely destroyed by force, hence the not-infrequent use of force to rein in or liquidate dissenters Within the ranks of the party, whether Altaf 's or the Haqiqis.

Another facet of the rnohajir psyche is his propensity for hero-Worship and unqualified submission to the will of the leader. His loyalty to the leader--while it lasts-is absolute and unquestioned. However, its tolerance span and intensity is variable and open to a paradigm shift, from absolute loyalty and commitment to a sudden volte-face leading to outright rebellion-the revolt of the Haqiqis stemmed more from a personality clash with Altaf than from principled opposition to his ideology.

Paradigmatically, the inohajir psyche may be said to have four facets: idealization, ideology, idealization, and iconoclasm-conceptualize, formulate, worship, and demolish. Theirs is essentially a poetic vision, little related to physical reality. Their dedicated, almost blind, support for Pakistan makes an excellent case study of their passage from idealization to iconoclasm. But Altaf Hussain's MQM and his demand for a Separate mohajir Province hardly compares with Muslim India's demand for the creation of Pakistan-a state outside

their physical environs. Whether Altaf's party politics and orientation is for a greater and a united Pakistan or a loosely confederated union remains open to interpretation. The Muttahida's publicly stated position, however, is supportive of a confederated Pakistan based on full provincial autonomy while the centre retains only defence, foreign affairs, communications, and a common currency.

The inohajirs of urban Sindh-mainly of Karachi and Hyderabad-may Well be likened to the Jill of the nursery rhyme quoted at the beginning of the chapter: Jill (mohajirs in Pakistan) comes tumbling after Jack (the Biharis of East Pakistan) has fallen down and broken his crown. The Biharis have already 'broken their crown' and stay headless in a state of suspended animation. They are disowned by Pakistan as its erstwhile citizens and denounced by Bangladesh as erstwhile Pakistan collaborators. They rot in Bangladeshi reservations: they can neither return to Pakistan as Pakistanis nor stay in Bangladesh as Bangladeshis. They have neither a valid, recognized refugee status nor citizenship. One wonders if they could be recognized as stateless people and given asylum in any number of 'fraternal' Muslim states, as was given to the Palestinians.

The plight of the Biharis, of a people disowned by their mother country and denationalized by the country of their domicile, remains agonizingly unique in the annals of human refugeehood. There are some half a million Biharis living in the squalor of Bangladeshi reservations. Every new government that comes to power in Pakistan promises repatriation but, except once, under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, nothing has ever been done in practice to resettie them in Pakistan. Some areas were earmarked in the Sheikhupura. Mian Chunnu, and Faisalabad districtsof the Punjab for the resettling of the Biharis, but the few hundreds or thousands who actually came left their new homes for Karachi. Punjab's climate and culture would hardly suit the Biharis and besides, nearly all their Bengali and Bihari kinsmen were resident in Karachi so it was but natural for them to relocate to that city. it was only in the sea of humanity that resides in the megalopolis of Karachi that the Biharis could merge naturally without making waves. in spite of the occasional heated debate in the national assembly about their repatriation, the Biharis continue to rot in Bangladeshi camps.

That was all about 'Jack', the Biharis, 'falling down and breaking their crown'. 'Jill', the mnohajir community of Pakistan, would soon 'come tumbling after". The Muttahida and the Haqiqis remain at

daggers drawn with each other. The main body of the mohajirs, save those in business or professions, have been virtually ghettoized. Neither the MQM`s solid vote-bank nor the Haqiqi's active collaboration with the government through testing times for the MQM (1992-2000) did anything to help the mohajir youth with jobs or higher education. Altaf Hussain now lives in London as a British citizen. The day he got his British passport, he had himself proudly photographed with passport in hand. His charisrna and power remain absolutely undiminished. He lords it over the affairs of the party like a supreme commander and none, not even elected party members of the provincial and national assemblies, dare act or utter a Word against his diktat. His Word is law. How could someone like him, without the vital attributes of a public hero, rule the roost for so long and from such a distance? This unusual phenomenon could be the subject of an excellent and interesting case-study by political scientists and historians. The rise of the MQM under Altaf Hussain and the absolute command and control a single individual exerts over a people known for their dissident and fissiparous tendencies is the stuff that doctoral theses are made of.

Now what is mohajirism in the context of 'refugees in Pakistani? ls it a state of migration and displacement as much as a state of mind '? Could this affect or afflict people even in their own home countries? Is it a forward movement and a quest for fresh pastures or simply the result of emotional maladjustment and dissatisfaction with one's native environment? The very word mohajir and its historical rationale originates in the journey of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), accompanied by his family and some devoted followers, from his native Mecca to Medina. This exodus was both a protest against, and an escape from, the tyranny of the kuffar-e-Mecca those people of Mecca who had refused to embrace Islam. In the context of Islam, the term hijrat, (departure) has come to denote holy migration from one's ancestral land to a strange and foreign territory.

Can the exodus of Muslims to Pakistan from Muslim-minority areas of pre-Partition India in the aftermath of the bloodbath preceding and following Partition be rightly called hijrat? Perhaps so, in the sense that people from both sides fled from tyranny and persecution. However, the migration had little in common with the circumstances or the ideological motivation pertaining to the Prophet's hijrat. The Indian Muslims' mass migration was a thoroughly chaotic and desperate flight for physical survival which had little to do with pursuing a higher aim. The exodus was almost Wholly unanticipated, like a blaa-e-asmani, a

calamity descending from the heavens. Human displacement as massive and sudden as that which overtook the Pakistan-bound Indian Muslims remains practically Without a known parallel.

Strictly speaking, the exodus was not really a cross-border movement of a set of people migrating to a foreign country. First, the borders had yet to be drawn on the ground and second, people on both sides of the undemarcated divide were all still Indians, and as such moving from one part of the country to the other; in fact, to their own homeland, to a country of their own making. They could be classified as refugees only in the narrow sense in that they sought sanctuary and refuge in Pakistan. Many of them thought they had come temporarily and would return to their homes once the storm blew over; they had no intention of staying on in Pakistan as refugees as a class distinct and apart from the locals.

The locals did play the role of the Ansar-e-Medina in the best Islamic tradition. They soon started to lose patience as well as the resources to stand by them. The mohajir-Ansar bond weakened with the growing realization that the refugees were there to stay.

Until the separation of East Pakistan, refugee-non-refugee sentiment in West Pakistan was basically a societal issue involving tensions between one group of citizens and another, After the break-up, however, this tension eventually gave rise to the demand for the recognition of mohajirs as a separate nationality. The emergence of the MQM in 1986 and its rise as a united, close-knit, and Well-led party, fired With the spirit to stand up and fight for mohajir rights as a separate entity, embodied all the mohajir frustration, anger, and despair that had built up over the years. Within just a couple of years of its creation, the MQM emerged as the second-largest party in Sindh in terms of its vote-bank. Its impressive victories in the first party-based elections in November 1988 strengthened its electoral base and improved its standing as a political force to be reckoned with by larger parties looking for coalition partners.

After so many years in and out of power, it is now time for the MQM high command to make a balance sheet of the gains and losses they have brought to the mohajir community as a whole. It is also time for them to evaluate critically how the party's aggressive political activism has impacted the mohajir youth. As regards first generation refugees, most of them are either dead or gone, or have attained the age of superannuation and thus have little active contribution to make except as armchair thinkers and theoreticians, such as the author

himself. What weight, value, and relevance such writings and formulations might have for practical party politics is for the party activists and leadership to assess, though armchair theorizing is a valuable guide to the party in smoothing the rough edges of party politics, and more importantly, should help to inculcate a sense of pride as opposed to testy arrogance, and respect as opposed to insolence in the party's rank and file.

Today the MQM is more feared than loved, regarded as a stark reality rather then a true friend of the mohajirs. Its partnership in the provincial and the central governments and the reversal of its anti-army stance since the ham-handed Operation Clean-up in 1992 are happy developments. Nevertheless, deep-seated distrust of the MQM's exclusivity outside the national mainstream and its one-time demand for a mohajir province continue to impact adversely on the party's image. It was only political expediency that led Musharraf's quasi-civilian government to induct the MQM as a coalition partner. Time alone will tell whether this improvised partnership, cobbled together for the sake of pragmatism, also denotes a sincere change of heart. The MQM's transition from 'Mohajir' to 'Muttahida', even if it was a change in name only, does underscore the diminishing value of the term 'mohajir' in practical politics. It is worth noting that the party has quietly distanced itself from the demand for a mohajir province without actually formally dropping it.

After over three years in the government and having had the foretaste of state power, the MQM has softened its role as a pressure group in the opposition. ln the middle of 2006 the screws on the party were tightened by President Pervez Musharraf after Rabita Committee members of the party declined to meet him in Islamabad. The party has since withdrawn its vociferous opposition to the controversial Kalabagh Dam and critical interest in the affairs of Balochistan.

What is a Pakistani mohajir outside the state of refugeehood? Is he a Sindhi, Baloch, Punjabi, or Pathan, or is he simply an outsider, one who is just a 'rogue` individual?

Notwithstanding all the loud talk about the inviolable bonds of Islamic fraternity-the sheet-anchor of Pakistan's ideology-Pakistan remains a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual society deeply steeped in provincial modes and mores. The 'state of being a rogue' in the present context refers to an émigré who is increasingly subjected to social isolation and ethno-cultural alienation even when he is a fully-fledged and bona fide member of that same society. The substitution of

the eponym ‘Mohajir’ for ‘Muttahida’ has undermined the assertion, delineation, and recognition of the mohajir community as the fifth nationality in Pakistan’s provincial mosaic. It has denied the sole rationale for the genesis of the MQM and its very mison detre. A logical progression in the MQM`s bumpy ride from ‘Mohajir’ to ‘Muttahida’ should have included the formal renunciation of its demand for a inohajir province and the shedding of all the associated, distinctive mohajir baggage, real or symbolic, like language, dress, culture, etc. In other Words, to merge into the national mainstream like a drop in the ocean:

Ishrat e qarra hai	The ecstatic fulfilment of the drop
daryq main fana ho jana	ls to become one with the river and be no more

-Ghalib

There are several vital questions that the mohajirs must answer for themselves. The first concerns the concept of mohajir identity, i.e, considering themselves a distinctive group half a century after the establishment of Pakistan. Who, after all, is a mohajir and, Whatever the answer to this might be, can he now be rightly denned as such? Secondly, are the mohajirs a single, Well-delined entity or are they a motley group consisting mainly of the children and grandchildren of emigres from India? Thirdly, is the word mohajir a loose generic term applicable only to migrants from the UP-Delhi (the so-called Urdu/Hindi belt of undivided India) or is it an omnibus expression equally applicable to those from Eastern Punjab. Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai)? Fourthly, would even the Karachi/Hyderabad-based migrants feel happy and comfortable being classified as ‘rnohajir’? Fifthly, would it be right to assume that the term mohajir, although in common usage, is increasingly becoming associated with drop-outs and non-achievers rather than with those who are successful? Sixthly, has the nostalgia underlying the mohajir psyche all but given way, either to selective (or total) amnesia or to a relatively more sober and conscious version of past events that are now part of history? Seventhly, what in real terms does the MQM have to show for nearly two decades of political acstivism?-Can it really boast of raising a new and dynamic generation of mohajir youth fit to meet the challenges of a highly competitive World as skilled professionals and educated individuals?

In the first decade following Independence, the mohajir youth of Karachi, as indeed elsewhere in Pakistan's major cities, was noted for his good education and civil conduct. This continued to be the case until about the time that the capital was shifted to Islamabad in l96O, thus reducing the status of Karachi, the mohajir city, to that of a provincial metropolis. By that time Karachi had developed the character of a national capital and had started to mirror the national language, dress, custom, and culture. The emerging common cultural milieu was predominantly an adaptation of the pre-Partition culture of Muslim Indians to Pakistan's characteristic demography, geography, and provincial mores. The mohajirs, in spite of the many underlying local versus non-local frictions, were by and large a respected community. Their youth, both boys and girls, had equal access to the job market and were the preferred choice in matrimonial alliances.

All that is now a distant dream. The very word mohajir is today little more than an anachronism, even a swearword in political polemic. For the mohajirs, the state of refugeehood has degenerated into a 'state of being a rogue`. Isn't that agonizingly true of the Biharis in Bangladesh? How much longer the Biharis choose or are forced to stay in that state of being a 'rogue' is anybody's guess. Even as a political gambit, the term mohajir has lost significance and relevance: hence the MQM's decision to replace 'Mohajir' with 'Muttahidal The mohajirs share physical and political space with the original inhabitants of the provinces and accordingly must call themselves Sindhis, Punjabis, Pathans, or Baloch. Outside their provincial milieu and habitat they drift inexorably into the state of being a 'rogue', neither owning anyone nor owned by others. Despite the undisputed status of Urdu as the national language, it is now widely spoken the way the Punjabis, Sindbis, Baloch and the Pathans do. There is no such thing now as Urdu-i-Momalla--the chaste language of the court, of kings, nawabs, and poets, and of the former elite of Delhi and Lucknow.

The myth of the mohajir is already too overworked, overdrawn, and overplayed and has become tiresome. If it is not abandoned firmly and finally, the mohajirs will be leaping out of the frying pan into the fire-from a 'state of refugeehood' into that I'd call a 'state of roguehoodi 'Muttahida' remains a mohajir outfit in substance and essence; a mere change of name is immaterial unless it is backed by substantive action, which means there must be the resolve to appear and act like others, as citizens of the same state.

9
EPILOGUE:
THE SONG OF THE REED!

IN his epic 'Mathnwai', Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-73) portrays the overpowering sentiment of alienation in the song of the reed-of a stem severed from the bamboo tree and turned into a flute:

Bishnu az nai chhun shikayatt me khud	Listen to the doleful song of the flute
Waz judahi-ha, hikayat me kunad	Ever since severed from the held of bamboo
Kaz Naustan chun mara be-bureband	My wailing leaves
Uz nafiram mard-o-zen naliband	Men and Women crying

With a life spanning over eight decades, I find myself involved with each and yet a part of none-hence my perennial state of refugeehood. When I first opened my eyes to the world around me, there was no electricity in the house. I was six years old in i930 and loved the candles and the oil lamps that were lit after sunset. The municipality lamplighter, carrying a step ladder under one arm, would eome without fail every evening before sunset to light up the street lanterns. It was so much fun to see him cleanse the lampshades ot' overnight soot, change the Wick, and light the lamps.

Except for the electrification of our house and the rest of the street sometime in 1931, it might still have been the age of Queen Victoria. My riani, maternal grandmother, was full of stories of the munificence, the bliss and glory, of the Malika's (Queen Victoria's) reign. 'Oh how truly blessed and tranquil were those times! she would reminiscence. 'The wolf and the lamb Would drink off the same river bank, and a silver rupee was worth more than the weight of the silver it contained.

There were indeed rich and poor as per God's eternal design, but the rich would not boast of their riches and the poor would not go hungry' She often recounted the old adage, 'Wah bhooka uthatha hai, bhooka sulata nahin (He [God] wakes us all hungry but does not put us to sleep hungry). The dignity of the safaid-posh (respectable people who do not exhibit their poverty) was scrupulously maintained.'

The gold asharfi with Queen Victoria's profile engraved on one side still circulated and treasured as legal tender, was also a precious gift given to loved ones on special occasions-to bridal couples, the first-born male child, or at the Bismillah ceremony of a boy or a girl starting his or her Quran primer, the Baghdadf Qaida. It was also crafted into gold ornaments, especially necklaces and bracelets.

The Victorian age thus merged subtly into the first quarter of the twentieth century, leaving me and others of my generation suspended between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We lived in one part of the haveli built by my great grandfather Haji Qutubuddin in the 18505, around the time of the Ghadar. Once a single unit, the haveli was divided into four sections occupied by my own family, my grandfather, and two aunts and their families. The lifestyle-food, dress, customs, family, and societal mores-was much as it had been during the times of the queen. Occasions of joy and sorrow like births, marriages, and deaths were observed and celebrated in much the same way as they had been a century earlier.

As the tide of war swelled, so did Hindu-Muslim hatred and violence. The Muslims refused to live under a brute Hindu majority once the British left. They demanded Pakistan and would settle for nothing less. There were already quite a few enthusiasts amongst us who used 'Pakistani as a suffix to their names. 'Laika rehange Pakistan, buttke rehaga Hindustan' (We shall have Pakistan and get India partitioned at any cost) was the popular battle-cry. If anyone dared ask what Pakistan was all about, he was promptly told to shut up, 'Let Pakistan first come through. Then we shall see what it's all about."

What had sounded like a mere slogan became a reality within a matter of months. We had hardly completed our bumpy transition into the twentieth century and started to recognize it as our own when we found ourselves on the verge of yet another journey; a journey into the unknown. In spite of the alluring vision of Pakistan as a born-again Turkey, the seat of the caliphate and Muslim glory, few believed that the making of the new country would mean bidding farewell to Delhi for ever. 'What did one have to do with the other after all? Which

mother's son can force us to leave Delhi where the bones of our ancestors lie buried? Delhi is Delhi; the city of Dehliwallas, forever and ever."

But then the vicious circle of Hindu-Muslim violence and riots started, triggeredby the Great Calcutta killings of August 19416. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell, had proceeded to form an interim government with Jawaharlal Nehru as the prime minister Without consulting the Muslim League. Jinnah, the committed votary of the rule of law in politics, and the Muslim League, felt badly let down and betrayed, and announced that 16 August was to be observed as 'Direct Action Day' to protest against the viceregal diktat. Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, the Muslim League premier of Bengal, the largest Muslim province in undivided India, responded promptly to Jinnah's call, ordering party Workers to stage a protest rally. It turned into a communal holocaust.

A year after the 16 August holocaust, India stood divided. The invasion of Delhi by Sikh and Hindu refugees from the Muslim-majority West Punjab served to uproot the Dehliwallas who landed in Pakistan to sing dolefully about their displacement like Rumi's severed reed.

Rumi's song serves as a nostalgic dirge for the loss of a vital limb, a realization that it can never again be a part of the Whole. Nostalgia can be overwhelmingly painful, yet it is little more than a poetic vision and the remembrance of things past.

There is hardly a choice between returning to what was and staying with what is and being content with what the present offers.

Would I Want to go back to Delhi to live there in our old house, in the old golf and the old mohallah? Never! For every time I go to Delhi I find myself a complete stranger in a city that was once mine. My sense of alienation is infinitely deeper than that of an ordinary visitor. I spent the most formative years of my adolescence and early youth in this very city. Would I like to go back to my youth and the vision of an uncertain future, of the ups-and-downs of an unchartered life? Would I like to go back to the ordeal of Partition and forced exile? Nostalgia is a pull to the past and stays only at the level of the subconscious. The conscious mind rejects it as an unwanted, unwholesome burden. Over time, memories get blurred and the present drives the past into limbo, changing it into a sort of shadowdom, that swarms With dark, nondescript, silhouetted images creeping about I like so many baby reptiles just hatched.

My nostalgia would only be the scar of the wound of forced migration long since healed. This is not to deny my pernicious and inherent state of refugeehood. Transiting through the spider's web of two centuries in spirit, I belong to none. I was born in that state, and must live and die in that state, unable to own and afraid of being disowned. I am obliged to live in a state without any choices.

I have many good friends amongst the Punjabis, Pathans, Sindhis, and Balochis. I lived in the Punjab and Frontier for a quarter of a century as an army officer and a civilian, and since my retirement from the army I have lived in Karachi (Sindh) together with my family. I have many friends in Balochistan and have travelled widely across its dauntingly fascinating landscape of rugged mountain passes and valleys. These are all parts of my country.

The Punjabis and Pathans make excellent friends. The Sindhis are shy and reserved, somewhat distant, not out of any animus or ill-feeling but because, despite being the true sons of the soil, they have been driven into a state of refugeehood in their own homeland. Their beloved city of Karachi, the jewel in the Sindhi crown, has been swamped by Pathans, Punjabis, and Mohajirs. All their cultural symbols and icons, their language, their ecstatic Suli lore and poetry, stand relegated to the background even in their own province.

More than half a century after the founding of Pakistan, I still wonder if it is a nation-state or just a grouping of four disparate provinces. East Pakistan separated, leaving the rump Pakistan with barely 44 per cent of its original population. The number of Muslims in India equals, perhaps exceeds, the number of Muslims in Pakistan. Thus, the entire Muslim population of the subcontinent stands divided into three almost equal segments-India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh- each under a different national flag. How should one look at Pakistan and its status as the promised homeland of the Muslims of the entire Indian subcontinent? Was the emergence of India and Pakistan the making of two sovereign and independent states or the unmaking of a hallowed geographical entity named 'India'-an expression that goes as far back as recorded history?

Regional polarization in a democratic, pluralistic, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural India was addressed there sooner than in Pakistan even though the latter is founded on the monolithic and monotheistic pillar of Islam. Has Pakistan succeeded in achieving national integration as an Islamic state? Are we a pluralistic or a divided polity? I don't have the answers.

I find a Sindhi, Pathan, Punjabi, or Baloch as much an alien as an Urdu-speaking mohajir. The Islamic bond simply melts away without shared ethno-lingual attachment and the resulting fellow-feeling. Thus, Pathans communicate more naturally with Afghans as do Pakistani Punjabis with Indian Sikhs and Hindus from East Punjab. This leaves the Urdu-speaking mohajir the odd man out.

Unlike the Punjabis and Sindhis, the Pathans, especially the people of Peshawar, are multi»lingual_ They speak Hindko, a local dialect derived from Punjabi and Pashto with equal ease and fluency. However, hardly any Punjabi, Sindhi, or mohajir either knows or cares to learn Pashto. As for English, it remains, a status symbol and the dream language of everyone aspiring to higher positions in the public and private sectors.

The written language in the Punjab is entirely Urdu in spite of a renascent sentiment to introduce Punjabi as the official language of the province. More people speak Punjabi now than before. While there is no getting rid of Urdu as the most. advanced language and lingua franca of the subcontinent, there is growing resistance to the current Widespread use of the language. A Balochi Sardar might take a vow of silence in respect of Urdu and not speak it for a year or so. He rejects Urdu as the monopoly of the hegemonic Punjabis and the ancestral property- baap dada ki virasat of the cultural imperialists, the Urdu-speaking mohajirs.

When asked why he chose Urdu as his preferred medium of literary expression as opposed to Punjabi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Pakistan's best- known and admired Urdu poet after Mohammad Iqbal, said, 'Look, I adopted Urdu hoping one day my compositions might be nearly as good as those of Ghalib's without, of course, ever being as good. But never even near that of [the Punjabi poet] Waris Shah even if I had a second span of life...'

The poet-philosopher of Pakistan and the subcontinent's greatest Urdu-Persian poet of the twentieth century, Muhammad Iqbal, hardly ever spoke Urdu at home. shortly before his death, he asked one of his friends to recite from the Punjabi Sufi poet Bulleh Shah. One of Iqbal's most insightful biographers, Iqbal Singh, gives the following graphic account of the request the poet made t.o Diwan Ali. 'Iqbal requested Diwali Ali to recite some Punjabi verse to make his last journey joyful. Divvan Ali rendered soulfully some verses of the Punjabi Sufi poet Bulleh Shah. The verses moved Iqbal deeply and tears streamed down his cheeks..."

Today, many diehard Punjabis even question the moral right of non- Punjabi-speaking people to live in the province. And yet, the Punjab is home to masses of Urdu-language publications and newspapers even though Urdu 'is viewed and treated as a ‘mohajir’ language. Meanwhile, unlike Sindhi and Pashto scripts and texts, which are widely used among Sindbis and Pathans, Punjabi script remains practically unknown in the Punjab.

The above might at best be a prosaic, soulless précis of the Song of the Reed. The reed-turned-liute must not grieve nor suffer a sense of deprivation. It should, in fact, be grateful to the flute-maker for giving life to a dead bamboo stem, now vibrant with the song of life in all its myriad moods and feelings. Would it want to return to its existence as a dumb bamboo stem? Never!

Yet it is little more than the severed limb of a whole bamboo plant. It can’t grow, it can’t. proliferate, and it can’t ramify. It can only sing to make others weep or sway in ecstasy. It has no life of its own. It must depend on men and women who have the power to breathe life into it or take the breath out of it. It is just dead wood without the life- giving breath of the flute-player. It plays what the flute player chooses: it is a medium echoing its master’s message.

In the third century of my psychic being and eight long decades of physical existence, I might well be like the reed cut asunder from the giant bamboo plant that is rooted in history. Unlike the reed, however, I can call and play my tunes. By no means dumb, I am only dumbstruck by sheer disbelief and bewilderment at what I see around me. All the magic of the century: my transistor radio, TV, computer, mobile phone, refrigerator, air conditioner, life-saving medicines, tranquillizers, my painkillers and the giant airliners up in the air, the masses of automobiles on the road. Also the real-time images and vignettes of war and hunger, of cold-blooded killings of men, women, and children in Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Kashmir-to name just few. And images of suicide bombers and demented rulers with absolute power waging wars on a mere whim.

The memory of the municipal lamp-lighter climbing up his step ladder comes-back palpably warm and alive. But I would hate to see the fluorescent streetlight outside my own house replaced with a kerosene lantern. I shudder to think of the venerable Hakim sahib who would treat acute appendicitis with a heavy dose of rhubarb to cause instant death, prescribe his magic potions and herbal concoctions for typhoid, and lance a cancerous tumour with an unsterilized knife-all

remedies from the ancestral pharmacopoeia handed down from father to son through generations.

That was indeed my World at one time! But it is dead and gone. And thank goodness for that. Remembering it is not missing it. I remember a good deal of my history lessons, too, but what impact do they have on my, practical life today? None; just as remembering my World of yesteryears has no effect on my life now.

I feel much like the character from a Louis de Funes film who, after a long Rip Van Winkle-like slumber, wakes up to find himself in a world he fails to recognize. The TV, the radio, and rows of cars on broad and well-paved roads leave him totally stunned. Of his neighbours, the familiar faces on the high-street, the language spoken, the clothes Worn, the greetings exchanged, the familiar baker and barber, the teahouse and the tobacconist round the corner, he finds none. A whole new generation of people and styles has come into being. He does not recognize anyone nor is he recognized. Like Lazarus, he yearns to return to his crypt, to his grave. What is a World without familiar faces and landmarks around? A howling Wilderness!

Of my own peers. Those still living have little time for family and friends. I have no one now to Whom I can turn to authenticate a certain word or an idiom or to recall and describe in vivid detail some past event. I laugh at my own image in the mirror. I hear the image taunting me, ‘And what might you be doing here, old man?’

Ha! Ha!! Ha!!!

The mirror cracked and with that
The reflection and the vision of the butterfly!

Ab main hun aur matami ek Shahre Arzaoo
Toura jo tune aina tamsal daar Tha!

Here I am to mourn the loss of the City of Hope
And rage over your smashing the mirror of my dreams!

(Ghalib)

NOTE

l. Iqbal Singh, The Ardenr Pilgrim, An Introduction to the Lge and Work of Muhammad Iqbal, Urdu transl. by Naimullah Malik, published by OUP, Karachi, 2003; p. 149.

APPENDIX 1

Excerpts from the Quaid-i-Azam's Statements bearing on Partition

They (Hindus) want to substitute Hindu Imperialism and Hindu Raj for British Imperialism. Very few foreigners can understand that a hundred million Muslims can never agree to the demands of the Hindu Congress, which will mean that a hundred million Muslims will be transferred from the British Raj and the British Imperialism to the Hindu Raj and the Hindu Imperialism of the Brahmin-Bania combination, which will have a perennial Hindu caste majority, if all India is united and a so-called parliamentary, democratic constitution is introduced into the country.

If such an attempt succeeds, then a hundred million Muslims will revolt at their being sacrificed and let down by the British government, who will be committing the grossest breach of faith with the Muslims because of their solemn declarations and pledges which they have given them, that they will be not be coerced in any way, nor could any constitution be forced upon them by the British government.

Interview in The News Chronicle, London, 14 October 1944

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The League was willing to co-operate with the constitution-making machinery proposed in the scheme outlined by the Mission, in the hope that it would ultimately result in the establishment of a completely sovereign Pakistan.

The All-India Muslim League 'Working Committee Announcement on the Cabinet Mission Plan, 6 June 1946

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New Delhi: 'I am going to Pakistan as a citizen of Hindustan and I am going because the people of Pakistan have given me the opportunity to serve them," said Mr Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Governor General-designate of

Pakistan, addressing a meeting of the Muslim League members of the Indian Constituent Assembly, says the New Delhi correspondent of the 'Daily Worker' London in his despatch.

Mr Jinnah said that the League flag henceforward would be the Hag of one political party of India whereas the flag adopted by the Constituent Assembly with full concurrence of its League members would be the national Hag of Hindustan, the flag of both Hindus and Muslims and hence it was the duty of Muslims that they should unfurl this Hag on August 15.

All should participate in August 15 Celebrations': Quaid-i-Azam's address to League members of the Indian Constituent Assembly, 1 August 1947, The Daily Worker, London.

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I bid farewell to the citizens of Delhi, amongst whom I have many friends of all communities, and I earnestly appeal to everyone to live in this great and historic city with peace. The past must be buried and let us start afresh as two independent sovereign states of Hindustan and Pakistan.

7 August 1947, Statement on the eve of his departure for Karachi from New Delhi, Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-43, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 22.

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I know there are people who do not quite agree with the division of India and the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Much has been said against it. But now that it has been accepted, it is the duty of everyone of us to loyally abide by it...

...One can quite understand the feeling that exists between the two communities wherever one community is in majority and the other is in minority...

...Any idea of a united India could never have Worked .... May be that View is correct; maybe it is not; that remains to be seen. ...All the same, in this division it was impossible to avoid the question of minorities being in one Dominion or the other. Now that Was unavoidable.

11 August 1947, Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Karachi, Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-1948, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 27.

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Speaking in the Central Legislative Assembly on 7 February 1935, on Constitutional reforms, Jinnah said “religion is merely a matter between man and God’ But was separate electorates ‘a question of religion purely? ...No, Sir, this is a question of minorities and it is a political issue’ It concerned the organization of a polity.

On I February 1943, now the Quaid-i-Azam, he repeated that ‘religion is strictly a matter between God and man.” He advocated the establishment of Pakistan as a Muslim, but not Islamic, State, as a counterpoise because, in his opinion, federal ideas had failed; including the Cabinet Mission’s Plan (19-46). But he did not move one bit in his convictions. ‘Religion _ .is the personal faith of each individual] he told the Constituent Assembly on ll August 1947. As for Qadianis he told a Kashmiri journalist on 24 May 1944 that he appealed to them ‘not to raise any sectarian issues’

He said ‘any Muslim, irrespective of his creed or sect’ could join the Muslim League if he adopted its policy and programme. It was not a far cry from his exhortation in the Central Assembly in 1925 ‘for God’s sake do not import the discussion of communal matters into this House and degrade this Assembly’ A.G. Noorani, ‘Jinnah and the Muslim League’, Dawn Supplement, One Hundred Years of the Muslim League 1906-2006, 30 December 2006.

APPENDIX 2

Message sent by M. A. Jinnah to the Refugees on the Occasion of a Tour of the Riot-affected Areas in Karachi

I quite understand the feeling of the Muslim refugees and those who have suffered, and they have my fullest sympathy, but they must restrain themselves and act as responsible men, and not abuse the hospitality that has been extended to them and forget all that is being done for them to make their lot happier. I once more want to impress upon all Muslims that they should fully co-operate with the Government and the officials in protecting their Hindu neighbours against these lawless elements, fifth-columnists and the cliques who are responsible for creating these disturbances, and restore trust and confidence among all the communities. Pakistan must be governed through the properly constituted Government, and not by cliques, or fifth-columnists, or a mob, and the Pakistan Government is going to take the severest possible measures against the offenders, and they shall be dealt with sternly and ruthlessly. I fully sympathize with the Hindus, many of whom have been misled by propaganda that is being carried on to pull them out of Sind, with an ulterior motive, and as a result many innocent Hindus have seriously suffered. With regard to this unfortunate trouble, it is not yet known who was responsible for bringing the Sikhs to Karachi and arranging to lodge them at the Gurdwara Without informing the District Magistrate, Sind, or any Sind Authority or Police; this is a matter which requires thorough investigation. At present it seems somewhat mysterious, but it is going to be fully investigated'

9 January 1948, Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-1948, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 92.

APPENDIX 3

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, President/Prime Minister (1971-77) on Pakistan's 'Bangladeshization'

'Pakistan is decomposing very fast. In Europe there is Balkanization. Here it would be 'Bangladeshizationi The process is in motion. Thanks to Zia's follies it has been accelerated. If I am not a part of Pakistan, in that case Sindh is not a part of Pakistan. My roots in the soil of this land are very deep, much deeper than of those who came across the border due to disturbances or fear of disturbances. My genesis to political fame is written in my Star...

'The longer martial law remains, the shorter will be the remaining life of Pakistan. Sindh will say Khuda Hajiz [goodbye] to Pakistan before Balochistan and NWFP The Indians made two leaders select the Janata Prime Minister, one was Jai Parlrash Narain and the other was a Sindhi, Acharya Kripalani. Also (L.K.) Advani is very powerful. The dream of their life is to get back to Sindh, the Sindh of Shah Abdul Latif and the Karachi Port, the exploited and raped Sindh. The Sindh of the Sufis. The Hindus of Sindh always considered "Sufism" to be a bridge between the Hindus and the Muslims'.

Stanley Wolpert, Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His LM: and Times, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 326-7.

APPENDIX 4

Doctrine of Legal Positivism Legitimizing Ayub's Coup

When Martial Law was proclaimed on 7 October 1958, after abrogating the constitution of 1956, President lskander Mirza, on the 10th , promulgated the Laws (Continuance in Force) Order, 81958, empowering all the courts in existence .immediately before the proclamation, to continue in being and exercise their powers and jurisdiction subject to any order of the President or regulation made by the Chief Martial Law Administrator.

While the Laws (Continuance in Force) Order, 1958, was operating under the umbrella of Martial Law, a criminal appeal in the case of Dosso came up for hearing on I3 and 14 October 1958, before the Supreme Court of Pakistan. In that case, a constitutional point was raised as to whether or not all proceedings for the enforcement of fundamental rights pending before the superior courts including the Supreme Court between the Proclamation and the Promulgation of the Laws (Continuance in Force) Order, 1958, had abated. The answer was obviously in the affirmative.

Justice Munir applied the doctrine of 'legal positivism' as propounded by Hans Kelsen and held that a successful revolution by itself was a law-creating organ.

Kelsen's says:

From a juristic point of view, the decisive criterion of a revolution is that the order in force is overthrown and replaced by a new order in a way which the former had not itself anticipated. Usually, the new men whom a revolution brings to power annul only the constitution and certain laws of paramount political significance, putting other norms in their place. A great part of the old legal order remains valid also within the frame of the new order. But the phrase 'remains valid', does not give an adequate description of the phenomenon. It is only the contents of these norms that remain the same, not the reason of their validity. They are no longer valid by virtue of having been created in the way the old constitution prescribed. That constitution is no longer in force; it is replaced by a new constitution' which is not the result of a constitutional alteration of the former. If laws which are introduced under the old constitution continue to be valid under the new

APPENDIX 5

Partition and the Making of South Asian Boundaries

Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,
Having never set eyes on this land he was called to partition
Between two peoples fanatically at odds,
With their different diets and incompatible gods.
'Time,` they had briefed him in London, 'is short. It`s too late
For mutual reconciliation or rational debate:
The only solution now lies in separation.
The Viceroy thinks, as you will see from his letter,
That the less you are seen in his company the better,
So we've arranged to provide you with other accommodation.
We can give you four judges, two Moslem and two Hindu,
To consult with, but the tina] decision must rest with you.'
Shut up in a lonely mansion, with police night and day
Patrolling the gardens to keep assassins away.
He got down to work, to the task of settling the fate
Of millions. The maps at his disposal were out of date
And the Census Returns almost certainly incorrect,
But there was no time to check them. no time to inspect
Contested areas. The weather was frightfully hot,
And a bout of dysentery kept him constantly on the trot,
But in seven Weeks it was done, the frontiers decided.
A continent for better or worse divided.
The next day he sailed for England, where he quickly forgot
The case, as a good lawyer must. Return he would not.
Afraid. as he told his Club, that he might get shot.

W. H. Auden, 'Partition Collected Poems S03-4
(1907-1973)

constitution, this is possible only because validity has expressly or tacitly been vested in them by the new constitution.

Syed Sami Ahmad, History of Pakistan and Role of the Army, Karachi: Royal Book Company, 2004, pp. 260-261.

Burhi Ganga	A tributary of the Dhaleswari, the Burhi Ganga ('Old Ganges'), flows past Dhaka and joins the Meghna River above Munshiganj
Barra	Big
Charpoys/Manjhi	A bed consisting of a frame strung with ropes
Chik	A kind of screen-blind made of finely-split bamboo
Chota	Small
Chowk	A crossing of roads; a market; a centre; a square
Chowkidar	Watchman; guard
Dark Bangalow	A travellers resting-house
Dussehra	A major Indian (Hindu) festival celebrating victory of the forces of Good over Evil
Fauj	Army
Gali	An alley
Ghaddar	The war of independence of 1853 fought by the Indians against the British
Halwai	A sweetmeat seller
Har Har Mahadev	Hail lord Shiva (Hindu god of destruction)
Hijrat	Immigration
Hookah	Hubble-bubble; a pipe with a long flexible tube connected to a container where the smoke is cooled by passing through water
Jai Hind	Victory to Hindustan
Jhuggi	Slum
Jigra	A tribal assembly of elders who take decisions by consensus
Kalam	Composition
Karkhanadar	Member of a class of power order artisans
Kesh, kara, kanga, kaccha and kirpan	uncut hair, a steel bracelet, a wooden comb, short breeches/cotton underwear, knife/sword
Khuda Hafiz	May God be your Protector

GLOSSARY

Adab arz hai	'Regards' a very formal, secular form of greeting
ahle zaban	The custodians of the language
alhamd sharg	Sura Fatehac First sura of the Quran
Angrafz	An Englishman
Ansar-e-Madina	Muslims of Madina who accommodated the migrating Muslims from Makkah
apa	An elder sister
array	Hey!
Ashrafi	A gold coin
Assalam Alaikum	Peace be on you
Baap dada ki virasat	Legacy
Baba/babaji	Babu often refers to a clerk/bureaucrat/semi-anglicized intellectual; ji is a simply a suffix often added to denote a tone of respect. Babuji is generally used as a mode of polite address
Bab-ul-Islam	Gateway to Islam
Badla	Revenge; exchange; lieu
Baamash	Vagabond; of an evil profession
Banda marram (also Vande Mararam)	Hail to the Mother (land) [i.e. India)
Begum sahiba	Respectful address for a lady
Bhai-bandi	Friendship
Bhai-biradari	Brotherhood
Bhanghra, Luddi	Punjabi folk dances
Bhar	Furnace; a large oven
Bhayyia	Brother

Kothi	Bungalow
Kotvali	The central/main police station
Kucha/koocha	A narrow street; a lane
Lashkar	Army
Lutial/lora	A small. usually spherical water vessel of brass or copper
Mali	Gardener
Mclich	An unclean person or race
Mazar	Mausoleum
Millat	Nation
Mohallah	Neighbourhood
Mujahid	Warrior
Niswar	Snuff
Nullah	Dry watercourse; gully; stream
Paindabad	Long live
Pani	Water
Pukka	Definite; firm; solid
Qaum	Nation
Qawwali	Devotional music of the Chishti Sufis of the Indian subcontinent
Ram Raj	Divine Raj; Kingdom of Ram (Hindu god)
Riayah	Subjects; common people; the public
Shah-e-Barat	Muslim religious rite observed by reciting extra prayers on the night of 15 Shaban ofthe Hegira calendar. Although not strictly according to Islamic norms, the night is also celebrated with the illumination of houses and streets
Shahinshah-e-Pakistan	Emperor of Pakistan
Surkha	A derogatory term for Progressive Writers
Tamasha	Spectacle
Tariqa	Way, path or method. A school of Sufism

Thekedar	A contractor
Thumri, Khyal	Musical forms/styles
Ummah	Community or Nation. It is commonly used to mean the collective nation of Islamic states
Walekum Assalam	Peace be on you too
Wilayat	A foreign country
Zindabad	Long live

INDEX

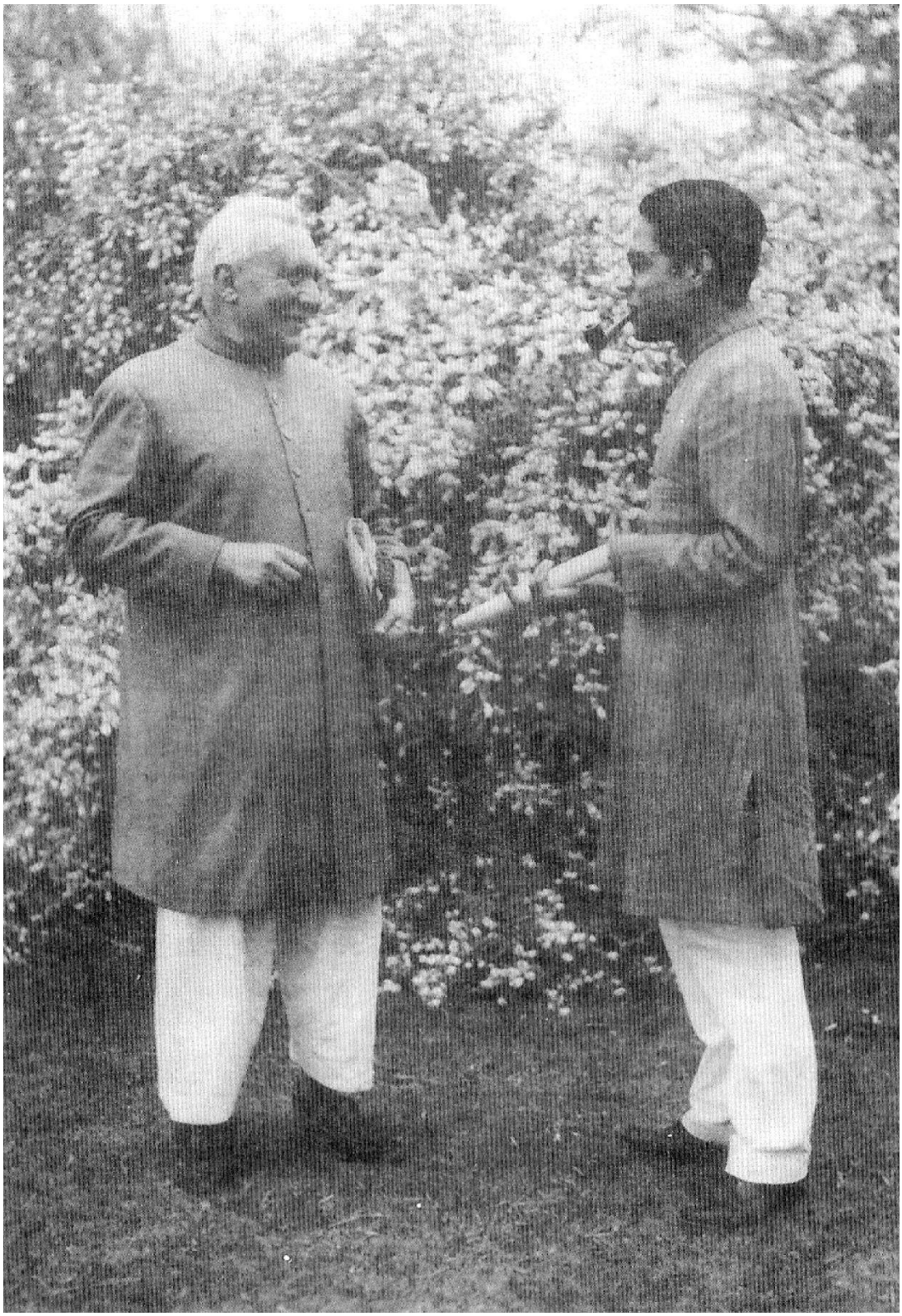
FOREWORD

THIS is not an autobiography in the strict sense of the term, but it certainly is a story of a living and pulsating mind, a story of the yearnings of a people, a quest for at promised paradise Where people of the same ilk would live together in peace and harmony, free from strife and turmoil. Only A.R. Siddiqi could have Written it because he belongs to the same milieu, can empathize with the mohajir mindset, and has the perspicacity to analyze the phenomenon, enabling him to make plausible predictions for the future of the community.

The book, is an insightful social analysis of the mohajir mind, surprisingly pleasant to read, occasionally nostalgic but never apologetic or repentant. Though critical of the romanticism of the pre-Partition Indian Muslims, especially those living in UP, he is never defensive of their behaviour or of the vision of their leaders. One can read it as a story of a sensitive and perceptive mind, but it is also an analytical study of a collective mind.

The author is a little sentimental about his memories of growing up in the Waning period of the British Raj and the life he lived in and around Delhi. Dread of Hindu domination if and when the imperial power decided to leave India; a vague but all-pervading sentimental attachment to Islam; a romantic idealization of past glories, and dreams of a country where everything would be hunky-glory, with no strife or conflicts but a 'fraternity of well-meaning, sacrificing, pious Muslims, were elements of the dream world named Pakistan. ‘Muslim Nationhood’ was a magic wand; wave it and lo and behold. The dream would come true.

In October 1947, Siddiqi came to Lahore from Delhi. The semantic shift created its own constructs of reality, very different from the dreams of a ‘Di!1Tiwcz£a’. Siddiqi had lived in the Hindu-Muslim cultural mix of northern India., Where the manifestly separate identities of the two cultures simmered in their respective stews of romantic idealism, one wishing to regain the past glory, a ‘Ram raj, the other to repossess the Lal Qila (Red Fort, Delhi). The idea that the separate identity of the Muslims had to be preserved in an independent India, was adopted by Siddiqi with enthusiasm and zeal. Eventually, this idea mutated into



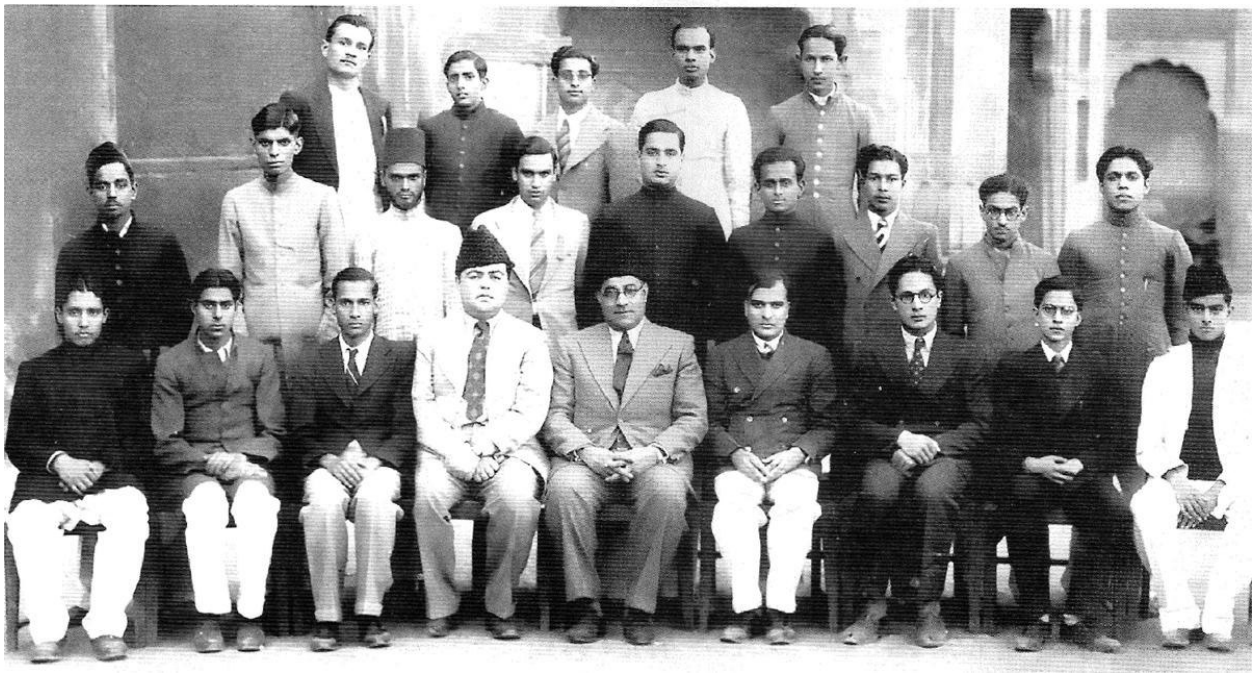
Dr. Khan Sahib pre-partition Congress (Frontier) premier and post-partition opposition leader of the NWFP Assembly in intimate Conversation with the author on the Assembly lawn, (1948).

Garden Party at Beadon Club, Delhi, in honour of guests from Lahore (Circa 1920s). Picture reflects a cross-section of the Delhi Punjabi Saudagar community. Author's father (the late Sheikh Mohammad Siddiq Advocate) Stands third from the left in the second row.

Group photograph of the Delhi Muslim Students Federation Council, 1939-40 with the Quaid and Nawbzada Liaquat Ali Khan. Author stands second from the right in the middle row. (Venue Anglo-Arabic College, Delhi). The late M. H. Askari stands lirst on the left in the second row.

Delhi Muslim Students Federation

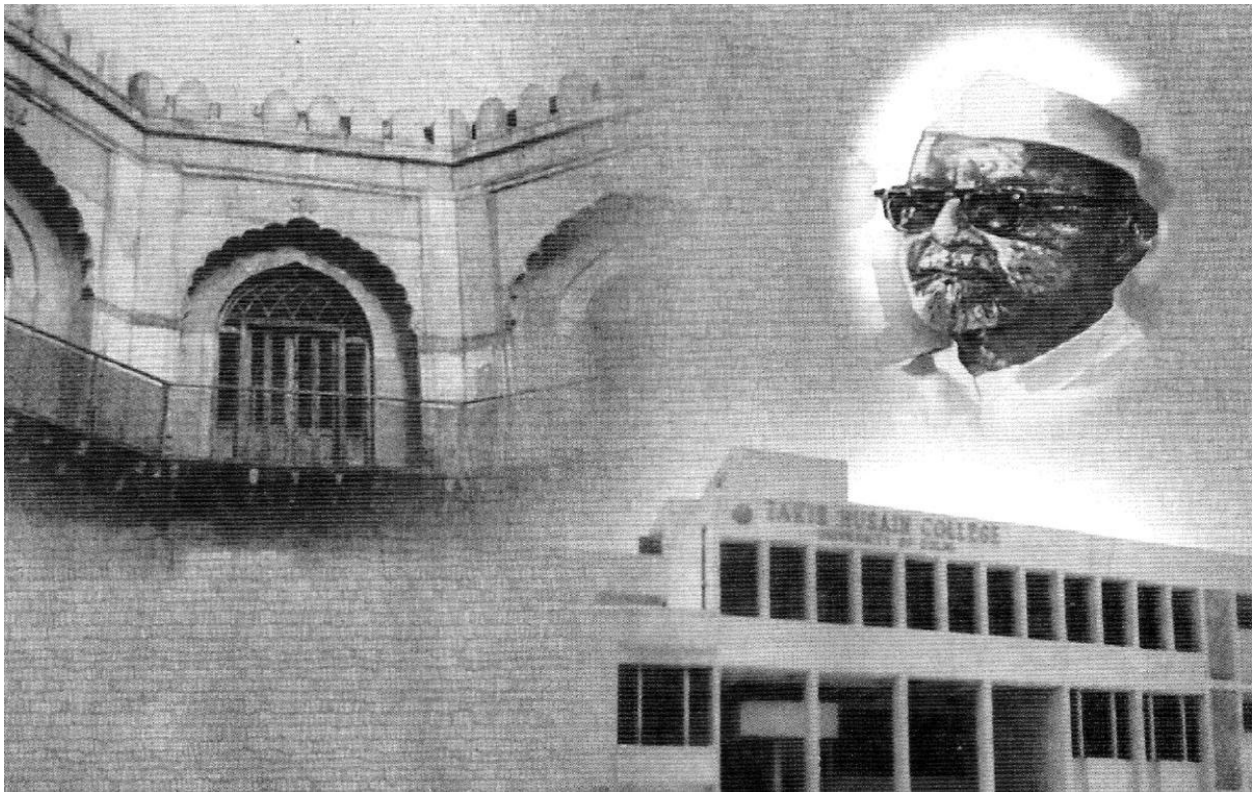
Council 1940 - 41



Group Photograph of the Delhi Muslim Students Federation Council 1940-41 with Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and Qazi Mohammad Isa. Author Stands extreme right, middle row. (Venue Anglo-Arabic College, Delhi).

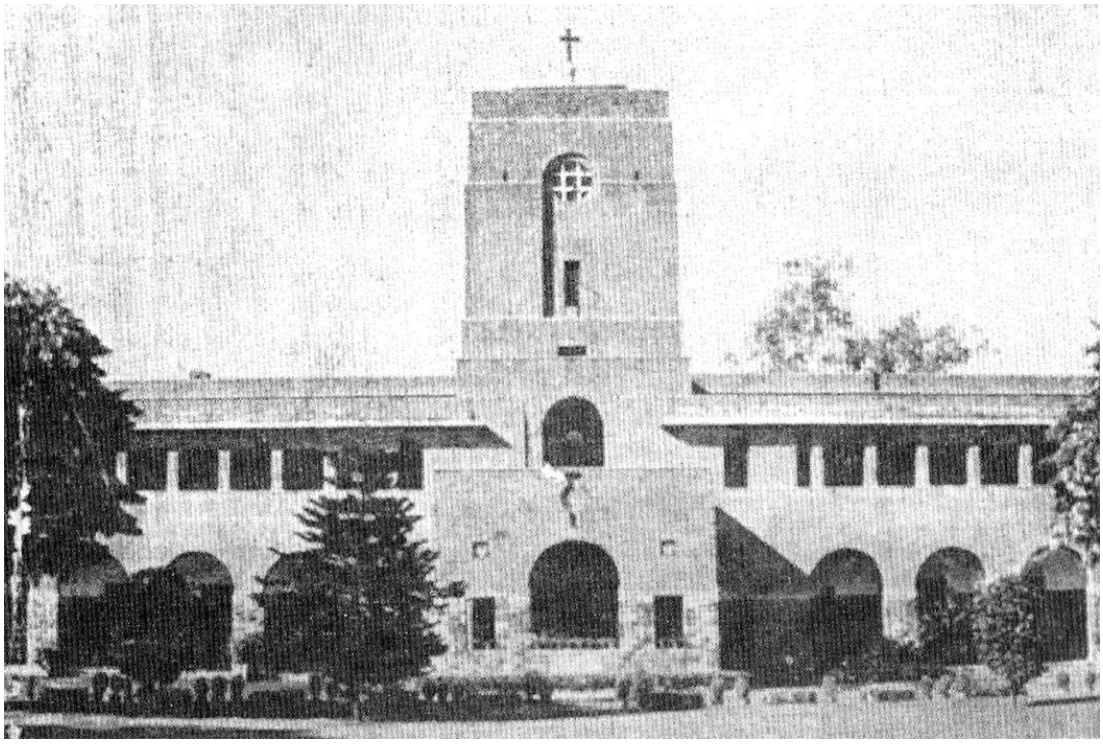
The author as a young newsman.

The author with his elder brother, veteran Pakistan journalist and writer, Osman Siddiqi in Delhi. Osman Siddiqi is now settled in Canada.



Former Anglo-Arabic College. First established towards the close of the 18th Century and named Madrasa Ghaziuddin. the college, like the city where it stands, has been through a cycle of Change from the original madrasa lo Anglo-Arabic College, to Delhi College and today's Zakir Hussain College shifted to new, drab premises. (Inset Dr, Zakir Hussain)

Field-Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan Shakes hands with the author (1961).



Front wew of St. Stephens whure the author obtained his master's degree after graduating from the Anglo-Arabic College.

Squadron Commander debriefs the author on a tactical map about a tank operation in Chawinda (1965) war.

the demand for a separate state for the ‘pure’ people who were living amongst a feculent people (a feeling mutually shared by Hindus and Muslims) who were dal eating, using a lutia instead of iota, thinking cow urine to be pure, and the Muslim a malech-these-became potent arguments for the establishment of Pakistan.

Having studied at the Anglo-Arabic College, a breeding ground for young stalwarts eager to achieve their promised land, Siddiqi joined St. Stepherfs College, Where Dr IH. Qureshi, the history professor and Dean of Arts, was romanticizing a Pakistan in which perfect harmony would reign between all communities The dream of Pakistan was eventually realized sooner rather than later, as Jinnah had promised.

On 9 October 1947, Siddiqi was driven out of the streets of Dilli where he used to chase butterflies, to a World Where, very soon, his butterflies started shedding their colours and became moth-like-in a moth-eaten Pakistan.

Siddiqi was lucky to have had arrangements in hand to settle in Pakistan. The Quaid-i-Azam addressed a Lahore crowd clad in shalwar and Sherwani, having shed his chooridar and sherwani, himself a refugee in Pakistan ‘cut asunder from his main power base in India’, as Siddiqi observes. He found himself in a whirling melee of cultures, Pathan, Punjabi, Sindhi, Makrani, and, of course, his own. All of sudden things had changed. The one had splintered into many, each piece having a claim to an identity of its own. It was not one in many, but many in one. Who knows? Siddiqi’s joining the army may have been due to his yearning for the one however coerced that oneness; but still he found himself alienated.

The Mohajirs in India developed a ‘Ganga-Yamuna’ culture and a folk Islam, both shared with others, and they believed that this mix was the quintessence of what they would find in Pakistan. Of course they found people in Pakistan with a common religion, but so they would if they had gone to Turkey or Indonesia. The saints and the qawwalis at Nizamuddin were similar, but not the same, as those found at Bhit Shah; nor were the khyal and thumri the same as bhanghra and Iuddi. They did find the substance of their identity, but not the saliencc of their culture. They tried, in the beginning, to identify themselves with the Bengalis as having a common ‘other’, i.e. Punjabis. But soon there appeared a clash in the substance of their identity. Is it Islam (culture) or ethnicity? They had to distance themselves from the Bengalis but could not identify with the locals in Sindh where they were concentrated. Very soon language riots made the cultural split more

pronounced. The culture which was the basis of their nationhood and for which they were striving to find a homeland had become a chimera. The mohajirs could neither meld nor merge. They conflicted with all the communities, one after another, and gradually lost their competitive edge for providing high quality human resources for business management and governance, Wittingly or unwittingly they became prey 'to power politics and whatever efficacy they possessed in determining the course of events became proportionate to their nuisance value rather than anything else. They are now feared rather than loved.

Musing in his solitude Siddiqi remembers ‘the song of Rumi’s severed reed as a nostalgic dirge…. there is hardly any choice between a return to what had been and to stay with what is there.” The questions in Siddiqi’s mind still demand answers. Regional polarization in a democratic, pluralistic, multiethnic, multicultural India can be understood better than in at Pakistan based on the unifying factor of Islam. Has Pakistan succeeded in achieving a degree of national integration as an Islamic state? Can it be achieved by social engineering from the top? If so, would the mohajirs face the same dilemmas as they once did in India? Has Pakistan to invent an other to make it one nation, or has a plurality of ‘nations’ to learn to live together with all the differences that exist? Time will tell.

Dr Manzoor Ahmad
Karachi

PREFACE*

‘I have loved justice and hated iniquity;
Therefore I die in exile’.

-Pope Gregory VII (1020-85)

An autobiographical narrative has the distinct advantage of originality because it is drawn overwhelmingly from the author`s personal experiences and perceptions. It must also suffer from a certain element of subjectivity and personal prejudice because the latter is so deeply embedded as to be near impossible to avoid. My narrative is no exception to the rule. However, since this account is based on the Wide and varied interaction I had with the civil and military segments of society during my long career as a journalist, an army man, a writer and a traveller, it has a fair degree of objectivity and balance, and the Hair of a shared experience.

Now what is a mohajir mindset? Has it been a constant, endemic condition or is it a post-Partition phenomenon? Furthermore. is it a shared and common heritage of Muslim India a whole, or predominantly a mental state of Urdu-Speaking Indian Muslims, mainly of Delhi and Oudh? What was it that pushed people of the so-called Ganga-Yamuna belt into the vanguard of the Pakistan movement even when they knew full well that their part of the world would not be integral to the territorial framework of the Promised Land? Unlike the Bengalis, Punjabis, Pathans, Sindhis, and Balochis, firmly anchored to their lands and ethno-lingual moulds, the people of the Ganga-Yamuna belt had an haute language-cultural matrix with no real ethnic basis. They were recognized and valued as true inheritors of the Mughal culture, of which the Urdu language was the finest fllower, not for their ethnic lineaments.

"While the individuaIs personalities named in the narrative are all real, authentic words attributed to them are based on memory and hence quotable only with reference to the narrative.

Although Urdu is rooted in Indian soil, it was ranked well below the two recognized prime languages of the subcontinent-Persian, which Was admired for its great literature, and Arabic, venerated for being the language of the divine text revealed in the Holy Quran. Ghalib was plainly apologetic about the relative poverty of his Urdu verse as compared to his Persian compositions:

Farsi bin ra babine	For all the colourful images*
Naqsh-hai rangarang	see my Persian verse
Bugzar uz majomua' Urdu	skip my bland Urdu verse!
Ke be-range man ast	

This admiration for Persian, rated as the epitome of literary excellence and elitism, reflected the Urdu-speaker's love for the exotic and cultivated indifference, even distaste, for his native Urdu. Urdu poetry tellingly portrays the deep sense of alienation that the people of the Ganga-Yamuna belt felt towards their native habitat, describing their watan and its environs as pardes. An excerpt from Hali's epic Mussadas poignantly illustrates this feeling:

Wuh deen ju bari shan se nikla the watan se	The religion which once emerged from its watan (native land) with such pomp and circumstance
Pardes main wuh aaj gharibul-ghuraba hai	Most distant of the strangers

Compared to the Hejaz, the birthplace of Islam, India was seen as a foreign land in Hali's politico-poetic vision of the country. In the Words of Ayesha Jalal, 'Hali`s Shikwa-i-Hind had come to haunt Indian Muslims with a vengeance." Hali's idiom and symbolism became the currency of literary expression. Even Allama Iqbal, the European orientation of his philosophy and thought notwithstanding, would invoke the Hejaz and Qafla-e-Hejaz, in his patriotic verse which was tired more by his love for Islam than by love for his native land. His epic poetic works Zarb-e-Kaleem and Baal-e-Jibree! pulsate with his love and his vibrant vision of a dynamic, living Islam.

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*English translation of Urdu and Persian couplets are by this author.

ensuing domination of the state apparatus by the mohajir community. Jinnah, of course, had an unquestioned status above all reproach. But not Liaquat Ali Khan, a refugee inspite of being a Punjabi by birth. (Born in the Karnal district by the Punjab l October 1896).

As for Bengal, Pakistan's demographic monster, the less said about it the better. Bengalis were even more "other" than the Urdu-speaking mohajirs, who were at least more or less the same in looks and bearing. Bengal was like an inflamed appendix that would require surgical intervention sooner or later. The Bengalis, men and women, were 'Hinduized', their language was written in the Hindi script. And Tagore's Geeta anjali rather than lqbal's Bring-e-Dara or Baal-e-Jibreel their poetic lore. Their women applied the Hindu hindi and wore the Hindu sari as their normal, daily dress. The Punjab viewed the Bengali majority as the largest single threat to its own military-bureaucratic power in a federal Pakistan. Most Bengali leaders at the centre were seen more as a cartoonist's delight than a source of pride for the nation. They were ridiculed and mimicked for their peculiar Urdu-English accent, short stature, and chooridars draped tightly over spindly shins.

In Pakistan's multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-tribal complex, the mohajirs soon recognized the absurdity of their self-image as the only real Pakistanis. Allergic to the Punjabis initially, they found in them their only natural allies, their only kinsmen in language and culture despite the jarring peculiarities of the Punjabis' accent and idiom. Not only the Punjabis: the Dchlavis would similarly mock the Luckhnavis for their cosmetic accent. The Luckhnavis would promptly pay back in the same coin, and then both together would make fun of the Biharis and Hyderabadis for their accents. The Punjabis, however, found in the mohajirs their cultural cousins in the crosscurrents ol' a nascent Pakistan. ln times to come, the Punjabi-mohajir nexus would be branded the Punjabi-mohajir gath-jaur (collaboration). The mohajirs thus found a place in the national mainstream even though it was in the role of a minor partner.

All the others in the national melange, Bengalis, Sindhis, Balochis and Pathans, chose to go their own ways and were left to stew in their own parochial juices. As Indian academic Tanveer Fazal puts it: 'This disjuncture between culture and power led the Sindhis, the Balochis and the Pakistan to assert their distinctiveness demanding the distribution of power over cultures."

Kia nahin koi Ghaznavi kargahi hayat main	Is there no Ghaznavi [Mahmood of Ghazna, AD 998-1030] in life's battlefield?
Baithe hain kab se muntazar ahle-harm ke samnath	For how long will the idols of somnath [the historic Hindu temple ransacked by Ghaznavi] wait for the idol-breakers?
Qafla-e-Hejaz main ek Hussain bhi nanhi	[Alas!] There is not a single Hussain [the martyr of Kerbala] in the caravan of Hejaz
Garche hai tabdar abhi gesu-i-Dajla o Farat	Although the Tigris and Euphrates are still making Waves

His poetic hymn to the grandeur of Hamm-e-Qurtaba (Cordoba) underscores the source of his poetic inspiration outside his own native India and the powerful longing to return to ancient glory.

Significantly, hardly any other language or dialect of Muslim India thematically reflects nostalgia as strongly as Urdu. The state of 'refugeehood', of 'mohajirism and alienation remains the one dominant theme of Urdu language and literature, especially its poetry. From Nazir's Banjara Nama (Song of the Gypsy) to Hali's Mussadas and Iqbal's glorification of Samarqand and Bukhara, it portrays a transnational, trans-territorial state of mind focused on things and people of another land and stock. Iqbal glorified the 'Mard-i-Kohistani' (man of the mountains) and 'Banda-e-Sehrahi' (denizen of the desert) as closest to nature and the guardians of its goal: 'Qudrat ke maqasid ki karta hei ya nigehbani yeh Mard-e-Kohistani, yeh Bnd-e-shehrani.' He would rarely invoke the memory or the image of the Sultans and the Mughals as part of ancient glory. Even his religious-mystical lexicon would rarely recall such hallowed names as Nizamuddin Aulia of Delhi or Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, the great Sufi saints of Muslim India. Urdu would seem to be afflicted with an inborn distaste for the native land and people and an irrepressible, infantile Wish to reach for the moon. All other images and icons it would superciliously leave to the lesser vehicles of expression, the local dialects and vernaculars. Even Iqbal, the doyen of dynamic Urdu poetry, which he retrieved from the narrow confines of Delhi's koochas and Lucknow's vastly enlarged chowk, hardly ever mentions Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai of Sindh, Khushhal Khan Khattak of the Frontier or

Sultan Bahu and Bullch Shah of his native Punjab. Instead, he leaves them to the local vernaculars. Even the great Punjabi poet Waris Shah was left unsung because Iqbal's chaste Urdu had little space for the locals and the provincials.

Urdu's fascination with the exotic and the foreign or wilayati imagery and idiom encouraged the bulk of Urdu-speaking Muslim India to dream of distant lands outside their own earthly abode in Hindustan. They envisioned something like St. Augustine's (AD 345-430) City of God-a place without borders Where godliness and virtue would reign supreme. This is not to deny the political rationale and imperatives of the Muslim demand for a land of their own, free from the brute Hindu majority, but the stark reality was that the Utopia they yearned for would not be part of that land. Despite this, they threw themselves headlong into the struggle to attain their Promised Land. They also beguiled themselves into believing that they would be able to live happily ever after on both sides of the divide. The fond dream of the Promised Land did come true but only in nightmarish circumstances of extreme violence, widespread death, destruction and displacement. It might well have been a Qayamar-e-Stigliru or the Minor Doomsday.

The mass migration of the Muslim minority from India-~especially of the Urdu-speaking UP-Dehliwallas' with no ethnic base in Pakistan-could hardly be called a diaspora. It was, by and large, a disorderly flight, a desperate race for life. The communal holocaust accompanying Partition had been least anticipated in its sheer ferocity and stark inhumanity.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the poet of the day, described the dawn of freedom as: 'Yeh dagh-dagh-ujla yeh shab-e-guzida sahar (spotted, murky light and a night-bitten morn).' From their ancestral homeland, now turned enemy territory, droves of Indian Muslims came to Pakistan, the Promised Land that was now a country with defined geographical borders. The Punjabis of East Punjab were those Worst affected because of the partition of their beloved Punjab. Bengal was also bifurcated but without suffering a fraction of the holocaust that the Punjab suffered. Other parts of Muslim India, mainly Delhi, UP, CP, and Bihar, were also assailed by communal violence, uprooting tens of thousands and driving them into Pakistan. The Punjabis from East Punjab poured into West Punjab and easily assimilated with the locals-many of them their cousins and kinsfolk, speaking the same language and wearing the same dress. At the eastern

end of the spectrum, there were fewer Bengali Muslims moving from western to eastern Bengal. Biharis, mostly middle-class railwaymen and skilled workers who migrated from their Hindu-majority province to Muslim East Bengal, and who generally spoke and dressed like the Bengalis and had similar features, had little difficulty in merging into the socio-ethno-lingual milieu of their chosen land.

The people of the Ganga-Yamuna belt were ill at ease in Punjab's ethno-lingual milieu and thus made a beeline for the country's capital, Karachi, and other parts of urban Sindh. As refugees in Pakistan, they came 'under suspicion in India and (Were) unwelcome in Pakistan." In India they were viewed as potential Pakistanis (enemies), in Pakistan as Hindustanis-friendly and loyal, but aliens nevertheless.

Zahid-e-tang nazar ne mujhe kafir jana	The narrow-minded bigoted mullah views me as a sinner
Aur kafir yeh samajhta hai mussalman han mein	And the kafir (unbeliever) thinks I am a Mussalman

Neither here nor there-caught in a state of suspended animation.

Pakistan might have been little more than an abstraction at birth, but the provinces which constituted its national territory were time-honoured entities rooted in history. The heritage of a shared language and culture which provides the basis for the tradition and creation of a common homeland had been pushed a long Way, beyond the frontiers of Pakistan. Except for Islam, the Bengalis, who were some 56 per cent of Pakistan`s population, had little to share with their West Pakistani compatriots, while the Balochis, Sindhis, Punjabis and Pathans of West Pakistan spoke their own languages and lived in their own territories. They remained true sons of the soil as much after as before the emergence of Pakistan.

The mohajirs were the only Pakistanis Without. a territorial base of their own. By far the most advanced and urbanized single group, they flaunted their cultural primacy in Pakistan's emerging national manage. They viewed themselves as the only 'true' Pakistanis, dismissing the natives as rustics They failed to recognize that, their proven credentials as true soldiers of the Pakistan movement notwithstanding, they stood 'demobilized` after the battle for Pakistan had ended and with that had lost their soldierly role and status. They were essentially refugees, aliens, ' guests' at best, and were expected to behave as such.

After a brief' spurt of violence between emigrating Sindhi Hindus and non-Sindhi Muslim refugees newly arrived in Karachi (9 January 1948), the Father of the Nation had to remind the Muslim immigrants ‘not to abuse the hospitality that has been extended to them’ (see Appendix 2). The beginning of the identity crisis! Who were they after all-refugees, ‘guests’, or Pakistanis in the fullest sense of the term? Was Pakistan a state or a nation? Twenty-seven years after the emergence of Pakistan, when Khan Abdul Wall Khan was asked whether he was a Muslim, a Pakistani, or a Pathan, he replied that he was ‘a 6,000-year-old Pakhtoon, a 1,000-year-old Muslim and a twenty-seven-year-old Pakistani. In Pakistan, provincialism was not just the “poison in body politic’ as the Father of the Nation would put it, but also the potion that nourished and protected the historical heritage and identity of its territorial constituents. In India it might have been the same between the Madrasis and the Bengalis, the Punjabis and the Assamese (and so on), but only under the overarching umbrella of Indian nationalism. Jinnah warned Pakistanis that they would ‘never be able to weld themselves, galvanize themselves into a real and true nation until they throw of the poison of provincialism.

That was how it would be in spite of his earnest desire and sustained effort to see Pakistan grow into an organic, national whole that had risen above fissiparous provincialism. His idea of Pakistani nationalism was not only at odds with hard provincial realities but also in conflict with his larger vision of Pakistan as the focal point of the Islamic ummah.

The hope of projecting IUU million Indian Muslims as one nation under the magic spell of the Pakistan Movement was shattered on first contact with the harsh realities of provincialism The emergence of the state of Pakistan saw the melting away of incipient nationalism, or nationhood, among Indian Muslims, and what had been a supreme achievement in reality was only a partial success. Worse still, it became the precursor of yet another challenge to Muslim nationalism soon after the first had been partly resolved.

The Pashtunistan movement in the NWFP and rumblings of an independent Balochistan with its epicentre in the recalcitrant princely state of Kalat threatened the constitutional integrity of the new state even on day one. Sindh was groaning under the mounting Weight of an unchecked influx of refugees. The Punjab, central to Pakistan’s integrity, felt aggrieved at having been relegated to a provincial backwater as a result of Karachi becoming the national capital and the

The ‘ethno-nationalists’ remained...resilient to any effort at any subsumption in any larger collectivity. With their cultural affiliations anchored in language and territory, their narratives refute any validity to the state defined categories. Pakistan, Islam, Urdu and Punjab are enmeshed in each other and designed to obliterate their cultural specificities. This invariably leads to a division of the deterministic role of religion.5

Of the expedient role of religion in Indian politics, Barbara D. Metcalfe, in her introduction to Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani’s Composite Nationalism and Islam (‘Muttahida Quamiat our Islam quotes a passage from Richard M. Eaton`s The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier l204-1960: “No Muslim monarch had a programme of conversion; all politics were based on networks of loyalty in which religion was irrelevant; all rulers, Hindus and Muslims, selectively looted or destroyed temples and other religious sites of political opponents and then patronized them during settled conditions.” In Maulana Madani’s own view, the nation and its embodiment, the state, had nothing to do with religion. At a political meeting in Delhi in December 1937 he stated: ‘In the current age, nations (qaumeen') are based on homelands (auttan, plural of watan) not religion’ People outside their own homeland are recognized as Indians, Pakistanis or Bangladeshis and not as Muslims or Hindus.

Madani (l879-1957) engaged Allama Iqbal in an animated debate over the nature and definition of millar and quam. He refuted Iqbal’s formulation that Islamic miller and qaum were one and the same thing and was of the View that -qaum or qaumiyat merged into millat to create an organic whole called millat-i-I Said Iqbal:

Fard qaim rabte millat se hai tanha kuch nahin	An individual is established by his link to the nation, isolated he is nothing
Mauj hai darya mein or bairune darya kuch nahin	A Wave is at home in the river outside the river it is nothing

Madani questioned the organic oneness of the millat which in his view is divided and has various segments attributed to different aqwan (nations)-‘The millat-e-Ibrahim, the millat-e-Waheda is divided into different aqwan on the same basis that divided Qaum-e-Aus, Qatm-e-Khazraj, Qaum-e-Quresh, Qaun-e-Ansar, Qaum-i-Mohajirin, Qoum-e-

Sufiya, Qaum-e-Turk, Qaum -e-Afghan, Qaum -e-Kunjra, Qaum-e-Qasai, etc.' Amongst Pakistan's regionally-demarcated and ethnically-defined groups, the mohajirs were the only community Without a territorial base. They could only draw their title to the land and the country in religious-rhetorical terms on the strength of Iqba1's poetic formulation that all God's good earth is their land and country:

Har mulk mulk-e-mast' Every land is ours as it is our Lord's
Keh mulke Khuda-e-mast

For the true sons of the soil, the mohajirs may have been their erstwhile partners in the Pakistan movement, but now they were little more than outsiders, if not exactly aliens. Emotional and fraternal associations apart, they might nevertheless have been people from another planet with little to share with their hosts by Way of language, customs, dress, and food. The Frontier's traditional cuisine, the chappali kebab.s', might have been anathema to vintage Dehlavis just as nihari, a tearjerker and a tongue-burner, was for the Pathans. The Balochi sajji and the special, non-curried koftas of Quetta's Lal Kebabi did have the charm of the exotic (By appointment to His Excellency the Governor-General of Pakistan, Khawaja Nazimuddin) but were not quite up to the culinary standards of the snobbish mohajirs. Lahore's standard doodh aur khajla breakfast was admired more as fun-food than a delicacy; the Punjab's creamy, frothy lassi was greatly fancied but the tall metal beakers in which it was served would leave the patron Wondering whether it was a jugful or a glassful.

It is well worth noting that in various speeches and statements even as late as two years after the adoption of the Lahore resolution, Jinnah continued to use the term 'Muslim India' rather than Pakistan. In his message on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr in 1942, he said: 'Muslim India is destined to play as a powerful factor in the Worldwide struggle (the Second World War) that is going on as well as in the future and post-war peace and settlement of the world Thus, while Muslim India might have appeared as a nation without a state, it eventually became a state without a nation, a territorial grouping of many sub-nationalities, each with a distinctive ethno-cultural-lingual identity, and all of them ill at ease under the clipped Wings of a fledgling state.

East Bengal asserted the autonomy of its language in open defiance of the Quaid's declaration that Urdu, and Urdu alone, would be the

official language of Pakistan. That was the beginning of the countdown to the break-up of the country less than twenty-five years later. The dismissal_ of Bengali Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin in April 1953 sowed the first seeds of interprovincial distrust. This was followed by such rapid and dramatic developments as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in October 1954 by Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad, and the adoption of the 1956 Constitution in March of that year, its abrogation two years later. and the proclamation of martial law by President lskandar Mirza on October 1958.

On 27 October, the Army Chief and Chief Martial Administrator, General Mohammad Ayub Khan, showed lskandar Mirza the door and assumed the presidency himself. He gave the nation the 1962 Constitution based on his Basic Democracy system and an electoral college of 80,000 Basic Democrats-40,000 from each wing. Armed with military power and electoral legitimacy, no matter how questionable, Ayub ruled practically unopposed until the elections of 1964-5 which, through massive bureaucratic manipulation, he won, but in doing so lost the trust of the people.

That was in January 1965. In May of that year he played his military card to wash off the shame and the stigma of a Pyrrhic electoral victory. He launched a limited military operation in the Rann of Kutch, a vast, sandy hollow with roughly marked borders. He won the battle that would lead to a general war with India which ended in a tame draw. East Pakistan was left alone to fend for itself throughout the course of the pre-war tensions and the actual hostilities that lasted from 6 to 21 September 1965.

Compounded by the physically unbridgeable geographical divide between the two wings, these events inexorably pushed the country towards its eventual break-up in 1971. West Pakistan, too, was grappling with its own fissiparous challenges, i.e. Pathan-Balochi separatism. under the Afghanistan-aided Pakhtunistan movement, the festering Kashmir dispute, the standing military threat from India, etc. The Punjabi-mohajir compact remained in tact in spite of the mohajir quietly mocking the Punjabi ways and manners and the Punjabi innately mistrusting the mohajir as essentially ‘the other’ in the country.

The Bengalis in West Pakistan were, barring the few government employees at the centre and in Karachi, mostly domestic servants and daily wage earners who felt little better than the mohajirs. Over time they would ghettoize themselves in Karachi in colonies like Bengali

Para. Even the national capital, Karachi, was a warren of colonies set up on an ethnic and community bases or past neighbourly links, with settlements like Delhi Colony, Punjab Colony, Kutchi Memon Society, Sindhi Muslim Society, Aligarh Colony, Delhi Mercantile Society, and so on, mushrooming all over the city. While there was nothing startling about the emergence of such colonies and societies, it did seem to clash with the pristine vision of Pakistan as the 'land of the pure' and of Islamic brotherhood untainted by any kind of narrow ethnic or sectarian sentiment.

The mohajirs, on the whole, flourished in Karachi, dominating it culturally and commercially alongside the Punjabis but having little to do with the Sindhis. The Sindhis for their part suffered the Punjabis, if only as the most powerful and dominant group in the country, but viewed the Urdu-speaking refugees as interlopers and collaborators-chamchas of the Punjabis. These two communities controlled large segments of the commercial, social, and residential landscape of urban Sindh, much to the chagrin of the Sindhis.

Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination in October 1951 was the lirst stone cast at the glasshouse of the mohajirs` self-image as sole standard-bearers of Pakistani language and culture. Thereafter things would never be the same for them. The shifting of the capital from Karachi to Islamabad in 1959 Linder Ayub's martial law was literally akin to the earth slipping from under their feet. For them it represented the end of the 'inceptual phase' of Pakistan, the beginning of the end of their self-assumed cultural supremacy and domination, of state authority and decision-making in cahoots with the Punjabis on the basis of 'scriptural Islam and the language."

The mohajirs continued to cling to the apron strings of the Punjabis even after the shifting of the national capital and the consequent eclipse of their largely illusory status in the Urdu-based, Punjabi-supported Pakistani national. Over time, however, the Punjabis would have a diminishing need for the Karachiite mohajirs, especially after the national capital was moved to the Punjab. The Eengalis, too, felt driven further from the centre of power when it moved from Karachi, to remote Islamabad. Thus the mohajirs` sense of deprivation together with the Bengalis' aggravated sense of alienation threw a spanner into the works of Pakistan's nascent national unity. The ten 'golden` years of Ayub's rule were marked by an economic boom Weighted heavily in favour of the western wing and a rapid erosion of the tenuous political links that held together the two

geographically non-contiguous and in many ways very dissimilar wings of the country. On 25 March 1969, the army chief, General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, took over the reins of power from Ayub Khan and imposed martial law. However, Yahya went on to hold general elections in 1970, the first ever on the basis of universal adult franchise. These elections threw up two majority parties-the Awami League (AL) in East Pakistan and the Pakistan People`s Party (PPP) in West Pakistan-with little to share by way of even a minimum common national agenda, each. staking its own claim to absolute state power.

The military under Yahya sought to retain its own grip on the instruments of power regardless of the popular mandate for a return to full civilian rule. The resulting civil-military tussle on the one hand, and the political failure to arrive at an inter-party (AL-PPP) compromise on the other, led to a vicious chain of crises ending in a humiliating military surrender and the eventual break-up of the country.

,At 1200 hours on 20 December 1971, in the aftermath of the surrender in Dhaka, Yahya handed over power to Zullikar Ali Bhutto, the leader of PPP, West Paletistan's majority party. The Punjabi-mohajir compact of the past was replaced by the Sindhi-Punjabi alliance leaving the mohajirs, the Balochis, and the Pathans out in the cold. The language controversy and the ensuing riots in Karachi brought the mohajirs into direct conflict with the (Sindhi) PPP-dominated provincial and central governments. Bhutto's 'talented cousin' and Sindh's absolute ruler, Sardar Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, ordered that Sindhi would now become the official language in Sindh. The rnohajirs hit the streets in defence of Urdu, their sole badge of identity, to incur the PPP's (Bhutto's) displeasure. The non-PPP Jamiat-i-Ulerna-i-Islam (1UI)- Awami National Party (ANP) coalition governments in NWFP and Balochistan were anathema to Bhutto's concept of absolute power. He would proceed to dismiss the JUI coalition government under Ataullah Mengal and Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo in Balochistan. The same coalition government in NWFP under Mufti Mahmood and Arbab Sikandar Khalil retaliated and resigned triggering a serious constitutional crisis.

Bhutto's rule meandered through six calendar years, December 1971 to July 1977, ending in martial law declared by his hand-picked army chief, General Mohammad Ziaul Haq. Some landmark episodes of Bhutto's rule had been the framing and adoption of the 1973 Constitution; initiation of the nuclear programme to give the world the first 'Islamic Bomb'; the growing mohajir-Sindhi divide, and troubled

Post-Jinnah Pakistan should serve as an eye opener!

NOTES

1. Ayesha Jalal, Self Savereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam sinch 1850 (New York / London: Routledge. 2001).
2. Ayesha Jalal, op. cit.
3. Born in the Kamal district of eastern Punjab, 1 October 1896.
4. Tanveer Fazal, 'Religion and Language in the formation of Nationhood in Pakistan and Bangladeshi Nation and National Identity in South Africa edited by SQL. Sharma and T.K. Oommen {Hyderabad: Orient Longman). Reproduced from an excerpt in 'Books Author, Dawn, Karacli, 17? April 2001.
5. Ibiid
6. Ibid.
7. Cited in the author's Mohajir, 1997, p. 168.
8. Jalal, op. eit.

relations with NWFP and Balochistan, the latter rocked by the longest-lasting and bloodiest guerrilla insurgency ever in Pakistan. He called early elections in March 1977 in the hope of winning another f1ve-year term. These elections were massively rigged and set off mass countrywide protests under the banner of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), a hotchpotch grouping of diverse, mutually conflicting so-called 'deeni (religious) and political (secular) parties committed to Nizam-i-Mustafa the system, or Sharia, of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Bhutto, underestimating the force of the protest, placed disturbed areas under local martial law. thereby bringing the military back into politics and paving the way for the general martial law that was declared on 5 July 1977.

Ziaul Haq`s martial law (July 1977-December 1985) further destabilized domestic politics and at the same time pushed Pakistan into a geo-strategic quagmire. Zia capitalized on Islam, using it as his main source of legitimacy anti an effective tool to silence all domestic opposition. He also plunged headlong in support of the Afghan mujahideen in their jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. It is Worth recalling that th Afghan mujahideen were funded and armed by the US through Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate working in collaboration with the American CIA.

In the political vacuum following a ban on the mainstream majority Pakistan People's Party, politico-religious parties emerged as the new power-brokers. Two senior leaders of the]ama'at-e-Islami (JI) even joined Zia's cabinet; the mohajirs of Karachi, especially the student community who had supported the Jama'at until then, were dropped by the Wayside after the elections. Students at Karachi University split into many ethnic groups-Siridhi, Punjabi, Pathan, Balochi, Gilgiti, and so on-the mohajirs admission to various faculties and access all other facilities, mainly living quarters in the university hostel, were provided on the basis of the provincial connection. The JI's student Wing, the Islami Jami'at-e-Tulaba (UT), was not an all-mohajir student group; it had within its ranks a fair share of Punjabis and Pathans as well.

The pro-Jama'at mohajir students in the IJT quit the organization after the elections and in 1978 launched the All-Pakistan Mohajir Student Organization (APMSO) under Altaf Hussain, a fellow student at Karachi University. That was the advent of the 'other' in student politics. Six years later, in 1984, APMSO grew into the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM). Sindh Chief Minister Syed Ghous Ali Shah and the deputy martial law administrator, Major-General Mohammad Afzal

Khan, were said to have helped create the MQM. During an interview with the weekly Takbir published on 27]U116 1991, Ziaul Haq was asked whether he had supported the creation of the MQM. He admitted, 'Yes, (but) 1 was not quite aware of the serious consequences of my action." Whether the army actively collaborated in creating the MQM may Well be disputed by the party leadership, but what cannot be questioned is the fact that a political party did indeed emerge in the shadow of martial law.

Martial law was lifted on 31 December 1985 but party-based political activity was not fully restored. Ziaul Haq remained the army chief and by virtue of Article 58~2b of the Eighth Amendment continued to enjoy virtually the same powers he had exercised during martial law. However, fresh political winds started to blow across Pakistan as leader of the PPP, Benazir Bhutto, returned to the country, to a huge Welcome in Lahore, in June 1986. On 8 August of the same year, the MQM held its first public meeting, a huge success, in Karachi's Nishtar Park. MQM leader Altaf Hussain also called on G.M. Syed,* the veteran leader of the leay Sindh party, to open a dialogue and to generate a rapport between the old and new Sindhis (mohajirs) that would transcend all ethno-lingual prejudices.

The mohajir-Patlian confrontation in December of that year, and the ruthless violence and bloodshed perpetrated in the pre-dominantly mohajir Qasba, Aligarh, and Orangi colonies by the Pathan drugs mafia, shattered the emerging sense of a mohajir-non-mohajir rapport (see Chapter 5 for a fuller description of the episode). In the aftermath of the December upheaval, the MQM emerged as a party with a politico-philosophical agenda, and became a platform from which the mohajirs could vent all the pent-up heat resulting from their sense of 'otherness It performed Well in the non-party, 'Local Bodies' polls in 1986 and 1987 gaining municipal control of Karachi and Hyderabad and governing the two cities with its own, mayors. In the party-based general elections of 1988, the MQM emerged as the second-largest party in Sindh and brokered an alliance with the PPP, the largest single

He was a great human being. I will not forget the words which Syed Saheb said to me during a meeting. I had asked him who would carry forward his mission after him, and he showed no hesitancy in replying that Altaf Hussain would be the person who would further his mission.

Altat'Hussain. Leader of the MQM, on GM, Syed
Dawn, I6 January 2006

party at both provincial and national levels. The alliance soon collapsed.

The MQM hit its roughest patch in l992 when it came into direct confrontation with the army. A rival faction led by two party dissidents, Afaq Ahmad and Amir Khan, came into being with the open protection and active support of the paramilitary forces while the regular army looked on. Altaf Hussain went into self-exile in London Where he stays as a British passport holder and heads the MQM"s international secretariat. His control and grip of the party apparatus remains absolute and unchallenged.

On 26 Julyl997, the convenor of the MQM Rabita Committee, Syed Ishtiaq Azhar, announced at a press conference in Karachi that the party had transforrned from 'Mohajir' to 'Muttahida', claiming that it was now the sole representative of the country's middle and oppressed classes and a challenge to the feudal elite and sectarian forces.

After the 2003 general elections, the MQM together with the Pakistan Muslim League (Q) emerged as the political arm of General Pervez Musharraf 's government, both at the centre and in Sindh. In 2005, the MQM swept the city government (Local Bodies) polls. How Well and for how long it can carry the double burden of state power and leadership of the lower and middle classes are questions Whose answers are not easy to predict; however, the opportunistic MQM- Muslim League (Q) compact under the protective umbrella of President Pervez Musharraf does not look like a durable arrangement within the country's volatile political calculus. Its collapse would throw the MQM, and the rnohajir community with it, back to the fateful days of 1992.

As for the mohajir dilemma in Pakistan, it remains as complex as before. To their inherent sense of 'otherness' has been added what Ayesha Jalal calls 'else (ness)', a state of mind in the context of their changed relationships with Indian Muslims and Bangladeshis, once their fellow citizens and kinsmen, now strangers and foreigners with little in common except haunting memories of a shared past.

The lot of the Pakistani Biharis remains the most pathetic and lamentable. They stand completely denationalized, ostracized, and disowned, rotting in the squalor of their Bangladeshi camps as 'rr1.iilta.s'areen' -a people under siege. The dramatic shifts in nationality from Indian to Pakistani, from Pakistani to Bangladeshi-turned-Bihari Without a country have been mind-boggling. The Palestinian diaspora and refugees perhaps offer the nearest parallel to the Biharis. The

Palestinians do, however, hold passports of the country of their residence. Even the handful in Israel stay more as ‘the other’ than ‘else’ in relation to the rest of their tribe. The state of ‘else (ness`)’ applies only to the historical relationships that exist between the Pakistani and Indian Muslims, the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis, and the Bengalis and the Biharis. The Pakistani-Indian Muslim, Bangladeshi-Bihari paradigm is best summed up by Ayesha Jalal as follows:

As citizens of rival, if not ‘enemy’ states, Indian and Pakistani Muslims have in a sense been living in a state of ‘else (ness)’-being without the presence of the ‘else’ and yet mentally not apart from it. The emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation-state represented the tragic transition from sameness to else(le.ss) ness that has invariably left deeper psychological wounds than the contradictions defining otherness.

The Urdu-speaking mohajirs from the Ganga-Yamuna belt show a strong preference, or a tragic weakness, for a strongman, and a dedication to an essentially romantic idea rather than to an achievable, practical goal. Hence their absolute commitment to the idea of Pakistan and their active participation in the struggle for its creation under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The MQM draws its inspiration from the same mohajir mindset of absolute loyalty and devotion to one man, in this case Altaf Hussain who, even as an exile in London, controls and wields the party apparatus any way he chooses, practically unopposed and undisputed. As a popular party slogan would have it,

Jou Quaid ka ghaddar hai,	Anyone playing a traitor to the leader
Wah maut ka haqdart' hai.	Deserves to die.

The leader and not the goal is what appeals more to the mohajir mindset, as reflected in another MQM slogan:

Hamain manzil nahin rehnuma chahiye

The question is: what happens to the followers when the leader is no more? What happens to the MQM after a change at the top? It will return immediately to its mohajir roots and cease to be ‘Muttahida except in name, with little or no place in an ethnically-driven Pakistan.