



MASSACRE

The tragedy at Bangla Desh and the
phenomenon of mass slaughter throughout history

Robert Payne

"East Pakistan was a country of great beauty, of dreaming villages and quiet rivers, inhabited by a people possessing a natural grace and a consciousness of their ancient culture. Their roots, deep down, were Hindu, and they thought of themselves as Bengalis first and Pakistanis second."

So begins Robert Payne's narrative of the bloody events that surrounded the birth of Bangla Desh. On the evening of March 25, 1971, soldiers of the Army of Pakistan began the systematic murder of Pakistani citizens in East Bengal. They sought out political leaders, intellectuals, peasants, professors and their students. Later the violence became indiscriminate, and village after village disappeared—the men murdered, the women repeatedly raped and carried off.

In the next nine months, nearly three million Bengalis in East Pakistan were killed. This slaughter was, in Payne's view, simply the latest instance of massacre—a phenomenon deeply rooted in human history, whose nature, structure, and form Payne analyzes, with references to Timurlane, Hitler, and others.

With a seasoned historical insight, Robert Payne fleshes out the grim story with vivid sketches of the leaders on both sides—the charismatic, visionary Sheikh

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(Continued from front flap)

Mugibur Rahman; the vainglorious Yahya Khan; the crafty aristocrat, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He narrates the crushing natural disasters that wracked East Pakistan even before the massacre began. He also probes the delicate, nerve-racking confrontation of the great powers during the last days of the killing.

Combining journalistic flair with a historian's judgment, Robert Payne has written a gripping and compassionate account of a modern tragedy. Yet *Massacre* is far more than journalism or history. Rather, it is a case study of the political and psychological failures that drive men to use mass murder as a political tool. As such, it casts revealing light not only upon Bangla Desh, but upon much of modern history. And perhaps more disturbingly, it suggests an undiminished menace for the future.

ROBERT PAYNE was born in Cornwall in 1911. He has traveled extensively in the Far East, especially in Malaya, China, and India, and visited Bangla Desh in the spring of 1972. He has written many histories and biographies. Among his biographical portraits are: *The Rise and Fall of Stalin*, *The Life and Death of Lenin*, *The Life and Death of Mahatma Gandhi*, and *Mao Tse-Tung*. He has also written *Portrait of André Malraux*, and *Chinese Diaries*.

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The Terrible Art

“Massacre is an art, not a science, and it is carried out by men possessing recognizable qualities. Among these qualities is an overwhelming contempt for humanity, which extends not only to the victims but to the soldiers ordered to massacre them. so that the general who orders a massacre is likely to turn against his soldiers once they have accomplished his purpose. Since he despises all men, he inevitably despises himself and is never far from suicide. Though he regards himself as a man who exists beyond good and evil, with no feelings of morality, he is nevertheless haunted by the knowledge of guilt and by obscure fears that the dead will take revenge on him, and therefore takes care that he is well guarded. But since he despises his guards and is always at their mercy, his sense of insecurity only increases. He, too, is a victim.”

—Robert Payne

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Introduction

THE WORLD, which has seen so many massacres, was not especially distressed by the massacres in Bangla Desh. They were taking place in a country with an unfamiliar name, rarely visited by tourists, and little known to scholars, possessing very little political influence. If you searched on the map, you would not find it. It therefore seemed to resemble one of those mythical and imaginary countries invented by medieval geographers to fill up the blank spaces of Asia, or those still more fanciful maps where the geographer writes across desert spaces: "Here are Tigers." One heard that it was inhabited by a rebellious people bent upon destroying the legitimate authority of rulers living in Islamabad. Strangely, Islamabad, which was more than a thousand miles away from Bangla Desh, also did not appear on the maps.

Even those who knew that Bangla Desh, the Bengal Nation, was formerly known as East Pakistan were not much the wiser. The very name "East Pakistan" suggested that it was nothing more than the poor step-child of Pakistan, a remote dependency or colony of the true Pakistan, which could be found on the maps without any trouble at all on the west of India. East Pakistan was more difficult to find. It was wholly surrounded by India, had a very strange shape, like a splash of spilled ink, and seemed to con-

sist of large portions of the Ganges Delta. There was nothing on the map to indicate that it was the seventh most populous nation in the world, with a population of 75,000,000.

When President Yahya Khan, the military dictator of Pakistan, decided to massacre the Bengalis of East Pakistan for daring to demand regional autonomy, the world's tragic ignorance about the country was a factor of inestimable value to him. Since there were comparatively few people who knew or cared about the people of East Pakistan, fewer still would care how many he massacred. No journalists would be permitted to see what he was doing. The massacres would take place quietly, as though in some remote and unknown region like the North West Frontier Province, where no news trickles out. All the advantages were on his side. The American government and the Chinese government were supporting him with armaments and advisers; he had unlimited funds at his disposal, a large army, a powerful propaganda machine, and the active sympathy of some of the most powerful men on earth. Dr. Kissinger had only unstinted praise for him, President Nixon admired him, and Chairman Mao Tse-tung gave him a medal. There seemed to be no reason why he should not succeed in massacring as many Bengalis as he wished. He thought that three million Bengali dead would be a sufficient punishment. Thereafter the Bengalis would stop asking for regional autonomy and become the docile slaves of his dictatorship.

It did not happen like that. The Bengalis fought back, the journalists succeeded in entering the unknown country and thus making it known to the outside world, and the Indian Army marched in to deliver the *coup de grace* to an army of massacrers. For the first time in our generation a powerful military dictatorship had been overthrown.

This was a historical event of the first magnitude, for it demonstrated that determined men can always destroy a military dictatorship, the most corrupt and the most evil form of government ever instituted. It offered hope to a world which has lived too long under the threat of military despotism, and gave no comfort to the dictators. What happened in Bangla Desh can happen elsewhere: both the massacres, and the retribution.

In the following pages I have described what happened in Bangla Desh, India, and West Pakistan during those tragic

months when the survival of Bangla Desh sometimes hung by a thread. This account is based largely on interviews with many of the people who helped to bring the new nation to birth. I visited India and Bangla Desh in March and April 1972. Among those interviewed in India were Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Mr. K.B. Lall, Mr. P.N. Haksar, Mr. Sharada Prasad, and Mr. S.K. Singh. Among those interviewed in Bangla Desh were Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, President Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, Dr. A.K. Mallick, the poet Kabir Chowdhury, Dr. S.N. Sen, the Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University, Dr. Rowshan Ali, head of the Department of Psychology at Dacca University, and Dr. Muhammed Sirajul Islam of the Department of Islamic Culture, whose name appears on the death list printed here. I owe many kindnesses to Mr. Badrul Huq and Mr. Fariduddin Ahmed.

I am also deeply indebted to Mr. Yusef Haroon, who has known Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for many years, Mr. Samar Sen, the permanent delegate from India to the United Nations, Mr. A.K. Ray, who watched the unfolding of the drama from Calcutta.

To my friends Professor Raja Rao, Professor Amiya Chakravarty, Mr. Rajeshwar Dayal, Mrs. Sushila Dayal, Mr. T.K. Mahadevan, and Mr. Nirmal Jit Singh I owe the most precious of debts, because they are those that can never be repaid.

ROBERT PAYNE

The Golden Land

EAST PAKISTAN was a country of great beauty, of dreaming villages and quiet rivers, inhabited by a people possessing a natural grace and a consciousness of their ancient culture. Their roots, deep down, were Hindu, and they thought of themselves as Bengalis first and Pakistanis second. Conquered by Muslim armies in the thirteenth century and forcibly converted to Islam, they retained the intricate spirituality of the Hindus while affirming their Islamic faith with the fervor of converts. The country had been carved out of Bengal during the Partition of India in 1947. Seventy-five million Bengalis lived in East Pakistan, and another twenty-five million lived in Indian Bengal. They were a hundred million people speaking a common language, sharing a common history, and possessing the same traditions, living on the banks of the same rivers.

These rivers gave them life and ordered their way of living, for a boat to a Bengali was like a burro to a Mexican peasant. He knew the waterways around his village, the secret channels, the hidden wellsprings. His village was likely to be nothing more than a cluster of bamboo huts that would be washed away during the floods or reduced to matchsticks during a typhoon; and within a day he would have built it again. The rivers changed their course, the land changed its shape, the monsoons of summer and the

typhoons and cyclones of winter dominated the lives of the Bengalis, and they lived precariously, never knowing what the next day would bring. Their insecurity bred a certain fatalism, a calm acceptance of disaster reinforced by their faith in Islam; but sometimes their calm broke down and they gave way to violence. When their patience snapped they were as dangerous as the tigers who roamed the swampy jungles of the Ganges Delta, a wild region of a myriad waterways called the *Sonderbans*.

On any normal day a visitor to one of these villages would find himself in paradise. A labyrinth of sunken paddies, jute fields, palms, and banana groves, a stream nearby, people chanting, a water buffalo ambling down a road, and somewhere the white-washed mosque or shrine of a local saint. The droning sound in the air comes from a mullah reciting the Koran. Sometimes the people working in the fields break into song, and in the evening there are more songs as the villagers crowd under the largest tree. The women wear heavy gold bracelets, necklaces, and anklets, and move with extraordinary grace. There is so much water that the clouds seem to be racing beneath the surface of the earth.

In these villages a man might earn less than a hundred dollars a year in cash, but he often lived better than most of the people in the towns. He did not have to pay for food and shelter, for he built his own shelter and there was food in abundance. It was a hard life, but a satisfying one. The villagers were not only farmers; they were fishermen, boat-builders, hydraulic engineers, architects of rough-hewn houses and huts, builders of dykes and canals. Newspapers usually reached them too late to provide much useful information, and they relied on their cheap mass-produced transistor radios for news of the world beyond their villages. Transistor radios had revolutionized their ideas, and they no longer saw themselves as people living in remote backwaters. They had an intelligent understanding of what was happening in the world. They listened to Radio Dacca, but also to Radio Calcutta; and every evening the village elders would discuss the news. They knew about the war in Vietnam and the comings and goings of great political figures. It was not only that the villagers were politically conscious, but they also possessed great untapped stores of political energy.

More than eighty percent of the people of East Pakistan lived

in villages. There were few towns. Dacca, the capital, was a vast sprawling city with perhaps a million inhabitants, and by official count seven hundred mosques. Jute, rice, oil seeds, hides, and sugar cane provided Dacca with its wealth; there were few industries, and the days when Dacca muslin was famous all over the world had long since vanished. In the center of the city were parks, gardens, a race course, the governor's palace, the university, the Intercontinental Hotel, all giving an appearance of wealth and spaciousness, but beyond the inner city were winding teeming little streets with huddled bamboo shops, street after street, noisy and ragged, so poverty-stricken that they seemed about to crumble into the dust. The French traveler Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who visited Dacca in the seventeenth century, spoke of "the paltry huts built up with bamboos and daubed over with fat earth." The huts have not changed, nor have the misery and the filth.

In the monsoon season, from June to August, and sometimes extending into October, the city becomes a steaming lake, an enormous quagmire. A hundred inches of rain fall every year, and most of it comes during the monsoon season. This is the time when a green mold grows on clothes and shoes, and mosquitoes and malaria flourish. During these months Dacca becomes a sea of black umbrellas.

When the sun shines Dacca comes to life again, shrugging off the long misery of interminable rains. The slow dragging pace of life during the monsoon changes to a brisk gallop; and the crowds of three-wheeled pedicabs, which looked dark and sinister during the rains, are now revealed in their true colors. Nowhere else in the East are pedicabs so extravagantly, so deliriously painted. The canvas roof, the wheels, the back, the sides, even the miserable cushion, are brilliantly painted with palaces, dragons, snow-covered mountains, volcanoes, man-faced tigers, and lovers among gauzy curtains. The artists let their imaginations run free, and they have a special fondness for panoplied kings leading their armies into battle. You can read the dreams of Dacca in these paintings. With streamers flying from the handlebars these pedicabs flash through the colorless streets like multicolored birds. For the equivalent of ten cents the driver will take you for a mile's ride, offering in addition a running commentary on everything he observes around him.

The city covers an area of twenty-five square miles, lurching in all directions across the lowland plain. Most of the streets are lined with blossoming trees; there are jute fields inside the city, and more playing fields and gardens than you would expect to find in an Eastern city. Every Bengali has a sweet tooth, and the confectioners' shops are well attended. There you find curds dipped in syrup and dumplings made of sugar and rice; and there are at least twenty varieties of sweets. "Sweet shops are to Dacca what pubs are to London," the Bengalis say, and they derive some pleasure from the fact that even in India people say that the sweetmeats of Dacca are the best in the world.

They are a people who like to smile and laugh, and tell stories, and chew betel nuts, and work hard under the broiling sun. Although they detested the military dictatorship ruling from Islamabad in West Pakistan, the Bengalis were reasonably tolerant. They were treated like a colony, the greater part of their wealth going to support a corrupt government. As long as their military governors did not press too hard on their family life, they were prepared to submit. They had their own ways of confounding the military authorities. In the spring of 1970 they were saying that in the space of five or six years they would acquire autonomy within the Pakistani union, with their own parliament, their own separate financial structure and their own army.

In the course of eight months, between the summer of 1970 and the spring of 1971, three heavy blows fell on East Pakistan, and all their predictions proved to be wrong.

The first blow came in August 1970, at the height of the monsoon. The rains fell uninterruptedly, millions of acres were inundated, hundreds of bridges were washed away, and the economic life of the country came to a standstill. It was calculated that a quarter of a million peasant huts were destroyed in the storms. Trains stopped running, the buses were mired in the mud, the telegraph wires were down, cholera spread from village to village, and no one knew how many people were drowned. The president of Pakistan, General Yahya Khan, flew to Dacca, set up his headquarters in the governor's palace, assumed complete charge of relief operations, accomplished almost nothing, and then flew back to Islamabad after announcing that the national parliamentary elections scheduled for the autumn would be post-

poned until December to give East Pakistan time to recover from the floods. He had promised to hold elections and liquidate the military dictatorship, but these promises were designed more to improve his own image as the beneficent father of the nation than to be kept, and he had no intention of surrendering his power.

The floods subsided, the dead were dug out of the mud, and the peasants rebuilt their bamboo huts and worked their fields. They observed ruefully that the government that took their tax money had done very little to protect them from the floods and that most of the money sent from Islamabad for relief had somehow found its way into the pockets of the officials.

A month before the rescheduled elections the second devastating blow fell on East Pakistan. On November 6 came the first warning that a cyclone was building up in the Bay of Bengal. American weather satellites reported its progress to Islamabad, which failed to warn Dacca either because it thought the matter was too insignificant or because on general principles it was reluctant to act. On November 10 the cyclone, which had been moving in a northwesterly direction, suddenly altered course and headed straight for the Ganges Delta with winds of up to 150 miles an hour, crashing into the coastal area of the Sunderbans and sweeping across Chittagong, East Pakistan's only major port. Twenty-foot tidal waves roared across the islands at the mouth of the Ganges. More than a million people lived on Bhoda, the largest island in the Bay of Bengal, and all the southern half of the island was destroyed. There are about two hundred islands in the delta, nearly all of them inhabited by farmers; the huts and the farmers were swept away. The cyclone struck shortly before midnight and by dawn most of the damage had been done. It was the worst cyclone within living memory, and only one other comparable cyclone is recorded in history. This took place in 1737 when 300,000 people perished in the same area.

The bodies were buried in mass graves when the waters receded, and gradually the officials exerted themselves sufficiently to estimate the numbers of the dead. They arrived at a figure of 500,000. The Bengalis themselves thought the figure was closer to a million. The government finally scaled down its original figure to 207,000, which was said to be the number of corpses actu-

ally seen by reputable officials and doctors and registered in official documents. Since few or no officials visited the islands where the greatest destruction took place, and in any case the dead had been buried before the officials arrived, while many thousands had been washed out to sea, it was generally thought that the official figures were inadequate and represented not so much what the government believed but what it would like to believe. On this basis they would calculate the amount to be granted for relief operations.

The government in Islamabad acted slowly. By November 21, ten days after the cyclone struck, it was beginning to organize relief operations and two days later it announced that a special fund of fifty million rupees had been set aside, but it was not made clear exactly what it was set aside for. President Yahya Khan, returning from a visit to Peking and drinking steadily, diverted his military airplane to Dacca and flew over the disaster area at a height of three or four thousand feet. His four-day visit to Peking had been a formidable success. He had met Chairman Mao Tse-tung, received a Chinese medal, and signed an agreement for massive arms assistance. The destruction of vast areas of southern Bengal in what was perhaps the greatest natural disaster of the century evidently left him unmoved.

As the Bengalis recovered from the effects of the cyclone, they felt as never before a sense of bitter resentment. The aloofness and indifference of the government, its inefficiency and incompetence, were never more clearly demonstrated. They observed that British aid teams arrived a full week before the team from West Pakistan. They observed too that the West Pakistan team spent most of its time in Dacca, which had been flooded by a tropical storm but was otherwise unharmed.

Something had gone irretrievably wrong, had in fact been going wrong for a very long time. But a remedy was at hand: the national elections rescheduled for December 7. President Yahya Khan did not postpone them a second time, and they proceeded normally. In East Pakistan the Awami League, headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a sweeping victory with ease. The Awami League—*Awami* means people—was a grass-roots political organization founded in East Pakistan shortly after the Partition; its goal was to wrest power from the landowners of West Pakistan

and the military. When the final list was tabulated, the Awami League had won 167 out of 169 seats. In West Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's newly created People's Party won 81 of the 138 seats. Logically, therefore, the next prime minister was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The two political leaders were a study in contrasts. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was born on January 5, 1928, the son of Sir Shahnawaz Khan Bhutto, who possessed enormous estates in Sind, where his family, originally from Rajputana, had settled in the eighteenth century. He had been knighted for his services to the British Raj, and for many years was a delegate from Sind to the Bombay Assembly. After Partition in 1947 the son enrolled at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, where he took part in demonstrations against Richard Nixon and studied economics, public administration, history, and French. He was not an especially eager student, but did well on the debating team, and his grades improved during his senior year when he transferred to the University of California, Berkeley. In the fall term of 1950 he entered Christ Church College, Oxford University, obtaining an M.A. degree in jurisprudence two years later, and in the same year was called to the bar. Then, briefly, he became a lecturer in international law at the University of Southampton, England.

Because he owned large estates and came from a prominent family—one of the twenty-two families that dominated the economic life of West Pakistan—he found no difficulty in entering government service when he returned to Karachi. He started from the top. He was only thirty when he became minister of commerce. In the following five years he became successively minister of Kashmiri affairs, minister of information, minister of fuel, and minister of industries and natural resources in the military dictatorship of President Ayub Khan. Despite (or perhaps because of) his wealth, education, and connections, Bhutto had no roots among the people; he spoke Urdu, the language of West Pakistan, badly, and thought in English.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, born of middle-class parents in a small town sixty miles southwest of Dacca, attended Islamia College in Calcutta and the University of Dacca, but never acquired an academic degree. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started from the bottom, building up the Awami League slowly, his office being

his own bedroom in a middle-class neighborhood in Dacca. He was a fiery orator, handsome and vigorous, capable of working twenty hours a day. He spoke the Bengali of the peasants and it was said that he knew twenty dialects. He had spent nine years in prison owing to his aggressive political activities that displeased the authorities in West Pakistan.

The symbol of the Awami League was a little wooden boat. Such boats could be seen all over East Pakistan; they were painted on walls or appeared on posters, sometimes with the "Six Points" printed under them. The Six Points formed the Awami League's demand for regional autonomy with the federal government in charge of foreign policy and military affairs. Implicit in the Six Points, but not mentioned, was the restoration of parliamentary rule and the elimination of martial law.

In January 1971, after the elections, President Yahya Khan flew to Dacca to conduct preliminary negotiations with the Awami League. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was adamant in demanding regional autonomy. He towered over the short president, who appeared at these meetings in full military uniform with seven rows of medals, and carried a silver-tipped swagger stick. They talked in English, their only common language, and came to no conclusions. "You have the votes, but I have the power," President Yahya Khan said. There could be no agreement between them, for while Sheikh Mujibur Rahman insisted that he possessed a mandate to rule through the elections and that in any democratic country he would already have been sworn in as prime minister, the president declared that a new constitution would have to be drawn up and agreed upon before he could assume power. The National Assembly was scheduled to meet on March 3 in Islamabad and there presumably all the constitutional questions would be resolved.

At this point Zulfikar Ali Bhutto announced his intention to boycott the National Assembly. There was then total deadlock, for in spite of the comparatively poor showing of his People's Party at the elections, there could be no National Assembly without it. He had his own reasons for prolonging the crisis, and he was aware that the president and his generals were planning to destroy the Awami League by armed force. The boycott, then,

The Golden Land

was theoretical, for the president was determined that the National Assembly would not meet.

The decision to crush the Awami League had been taken in the middle of December shortly after the announcement of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's overwhelming victory at the polls. To the military elite it was intolerable that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should become the prime minister of the two Pakistans. The first step was to bolster up the military forces in East Pakistan, where there were already 30,000 troops. Another 30,000, rapidly indoctrinated, were sent by sea and air to East Pakistan during the following three months. The indoctrination consisted of a short course on the psychology of the Bengalis, who were depicted as weaklings, traitors, and subversives who loved India more than Pakistan and were not truly Muslims. Their instructions were to put down a rebellion that was expected to occur in the near future.

The final decision to embark on a general massacre was made on February 22, 1971, by five men who sat round a table and drew up plans for a general massacre in East Pakistan. The five were President Yahya Khan, General Pirzada, who was chief of staff, General Tikka Khan, who commanded an army corps, General Umar Khan, the chairman of the national security commission, and General Akbar Khan, the chief of intelligence. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was immediately informed and ordered to place himself at the disposition of the president.

The first step was to engage the leaders of the Awami League in further negotiations, thus giving them the illusion that some if not all of their demands would be met. The negotiations could be protracted indefinitely, and if necessary the signal for the massacre might be given while negotiations were still continuing. Although Sheikh Mujibur Rahman distrusted the military dictatorship, he genuinely believed there was some substance in the negotiations and he continued to argue point by point with the emissaries sent to Dacca by President Yahya Khan.

On March 3, 1971, the motor vessel *Swat* arrived at the port of Chittagong with a regiment of Baluchi soldiers and an immense store of ammunition. The stevedores refused to unload the ammunition and erected barricades around the port to prevent

destroy the Awami League by armed force. The boycott, then,

the ammunition from being sent to the military cantonments. The danger had never been so clear, but the shape it would take was uncertain. On the same day Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared a *hartal*, a general strike, a weapon that had proved effective against the British in India. Newspapers were still published; radio, television, and telegraph still operated; but banks were open for only two hours a day; and everything else came to a standstill. Trains did not move, ships were not unloaded, and private businesses closed their doors. No children went to school, and the students at the university and the technical colleges left the campuses. The *hartal* affected all government offices, the high court, the offices of Pakistan International Airways, and the collectors of taxes. "The movement will continue until the people realize their emancipation," Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared. "The denial of the rights of the majority of the people by order of an undemocratic minority is an intolerable insult to the people."

Inevitably there were disturbances, for there were now roadblocks all over the country to prevent the army from moving. Barricades went up around Dacca. The army fired into crowds of demonstrators and some 200 people were killed. There were more ominous signs that the army was about to engage in a crackdown to put an end to the *hartal*.

On March 7 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressed a crowd of nearly a million people on the race course in the center of Dacca. He spoke bitterly about the killings. "If they fire another bullet," he said, "then make every home a fortress." He ordered roadblocks to be set up wherever they were needed. Food and water must be denied to the army, for the military dictatorship in Bangla Desh must come to an end. "Fight with whatever you have, even if I am not there. If we have to shed blood, then it will be shed until we have won our independence. *Inshallah*, we shall free the people of this country!"

He said later that this was probably the last speech he would ever make, for he expected the army to arrest him and perhaps kill him. He had not made a declaration of independence, but he had come closer to it than ever before.

In spite of the *hartal* the "negotiations" continued. President Yahya Khan flew again to Dacca on March 15, and six days later

he was joined by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who announced that he would launch a civil disobedience movement in West Pakistan unless the negotiators accepted his own terms. General Tikka Khan, the governor of East Pakistan, ordered all the judges and government servants back to work. He also ordered that everyone in possession of firearms must immediately surrender them. Both orders were disobeyed.

Day after day the negotiations continued. There were promises, half-promises, protracted discussions on constitutional law, provisional agreements that were changed into different provisional agreements on the following day. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman demanded the withdrawal of martial law, an official inquiry into the army killings, all soldiers to remain in their barracks, and the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people. From time to time President Yahya Khan would pretend to agree with one or other of the points, and then there would be more discussions to define the precise area of agreement. He was playing for time, but time was running out. He had already fixed the date for the massacre. He spent the afternoon of March 25 in futile pretense of negotiations and around seven o'clock he flew out of Dacca in the presidential airplane, having given the order for the massacre to begin.

In a famous poem Rabindranath Tagore had spoken of Bengal as *Sonar Bangla*, "golden Bengal." It would not be golden much longer. Soon it would vanish under a mountain of corpses.

Massacre

THE MASSACRE began at exactly eleven twenty-five on the evening of March 25, 1971.

Four American-built M-24 tanks, followed by a platoon of Punjabi and Baluchi soldiers, rolled up in front of the two student dormitories of the University of Dacca and shelled them at a range of fifty yards. The tanks had not made much noise as they advanced along the metal road from the cantonment, and the soldiers marching behind them were under orders to keep silent. The few passers by were not particularly surprised to see the tanks moving through the center of the city; there had been strange and erratic troop movements throughout the previous week.

The soldiers crouched behind the tanks, as though they feared heavy gunfire from the windows and roofs of the dormitories. Many of the students were already in bed, others were working late, while still others were discussing the political situation which had been growing increasingly tense during the last few days. They had the feeling that trouble was brewing, but not even the most intellectually adventurous could have guessed that it would take the form of an attack on the dormitories and the butchering of students followed by a general massacre in Dacca. On that dark and sultry night the last thing to occur to them was that they were in danger.

The two dormitories were known as Iqbal Hall and Jagannath Hall. Iqbal Hall was named after a famous Muslim poet and housed the Muslim students, while Jagannath Hall was named after one of the Hindu gods and housed the Hindu students. The two dormitories lay close together, and it was therefore an easy matter to shell both of them simultaneously.

The shelling, which lasted five minutes, killed about thirty students, including a young artist who was painting at his easel and whose body was later found sprawled across his blood-soaked canvas. A few students succeeded in reaching the flat roof and were able to fire at the tanks and the advancing Punjabis and Baluchis with old-fashioned, bolt-action rifles before the searchlights sprang up and they were picked off one by one by sharpshooters. Then the soldiers, shouting loudly, broke into the dormitories, shooting at random, and ordering the students to come out with their hands above their heads. Those who did not come out fast enough were shot or bayoneted. Once outside the building, the students were lined up against the walls and mown down with machine guns fired from tanks and armored cars, which had now come up so that the officers could observe the scene. Students who remained alive were then bayoneted to death.

Within a quarter of an hour 109 students were dead. The bodies of the Muslim students were dragged up to the roof of Iqbal Hall, where they were left to the vultures. The bodies of the Hindu students were heaped together like faggots and later in the night, six students, who had been spared, were ordered to dig a grave for them. After they had dug the grave they were shot.

The orders given to the army were to kill everyone in the two dormitories. Thus it happened that janitors, servants, sweepers, and resident professors were also killed. An old man, known as Madhu, who was in charge of the canteens for the students, was killed, and so were his wife, his son, and his two daughters. A death list of professors living in the neighborhood of the university had also been drawn up, and raiding parties were sent out. Some of these professors lived in an apartment building known as House No. 34. In apartment D lived Professor Maniru Zaman, the head of the department of statistics. The professor, together with his son, his brother, who was an advocate in the East Pakistan High Court, and a nephew who happened to be spend-

ing the night in the apartment, were dragged out, lined up against the wall of the first floor foyer, and shot down with machine-gun fire. The professor, however, was still alive when the soldiers left and his wife dragged her wounded husband back into the apartment. Three hours later the soldiers returned under orders to remove the bodies and bury them. They found Professor Zaman in the bedroom, dragged him down the stairs, propped him up against the wall, and shot him through the head. It transpired later that the man on the death list was not the professor but his namesake in the department of Bengali culture.

Professor Govindra Chandra Dev, head of the department of philosophy, was an elderly bachelor who had never taken any part in politics. He liked to look after poor students, whom he housed and fed, and he delighted in leading them in discussions on religion and philosophy. The soldiers broke into the house, killed the students, and then marched the professor into a nearby field and shot him.

The killing of Professor Dev was inexplicable. He offered no threat to the military regime. His crime was that he was a professor and a Hindu. Most of the professors who were killed that night or during the following days worked in the department of Bengali culture. Altogether eleven professors and lecturers were killed. Dr. Munim, an instructor in the English department, was killed by mistake. The soldiers had been searching for a certain Dr. Munir in the department of Bengali culture. In this casual way the soldiers went about the work of killing professors.

There was method in their violence. Very soon it became clear that there were about a dozen men on the university staff working with the military officials. The death lists written in English in a curiously unformed hand have survived.

By coincidence, a professor of engineering, Dr. Mohammed Naser, living close to the dormitories had acquired a new videotape camera only a few days before. From a window overlooking Jagganath Hall he was able to make a film of the attack on the dormitory and the murder of the students, helped by the blinding searchlights playing on the walls. In the film the students can be seen pouring out of the shattered dormitory with their hands above their heads, and being lined up against the walls. An officer is seen jumping down from a tank turret to examine

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Friday

✓ Md. Shabidur Rahman
Hydrographic Sec.
I.W.A. Dacca.
Moon Mission
4th floor.

✓ Wazir Ahmad Bengali
36 E UQ

✓ Dr. Faizul Mohi IER
10 Saturday 35-6 UQ

✓ Dr. Latif IER
31 E U.Q
Munir chy. Bengali
Kabir chy
Dr. Purnanarayan
Geography
✓ Saduddin Society
16 D UQ

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11 Sunday

✓ A.M.M. Shaidullah Mathematics
12 D U.Q
Dr. Serajul Islam St. History

✓ Dr. Nurul Huda
14 A U.Q

✓ Dr. Akhtar Ahmad IER
11-D UQ

✓ Dr. Abdul Khair History
35 B

12 Monday
✓ Iqbaluddin - History

✓ Zahirul Haque - Philosophy
H.M. Hall

✓ Ashraful Haque English

✓ Dr. Serajul Islam chy. 4

✓ M. Haider chy. Bengali
14-F

✓ Anwarul Karim
30-E

✓ Rashidul Haque English
✓ Abdimalbocker Bengali

A death list giving the names of professors and lecturers to be killed at Dacca University. Chy means Choudhury, a common name in East Pakistan. Kabir Choudhury, the poet, survived, but his brother, Munier Choudhury, was killed later. Dr. Sirajul Islam was one of the comparatively few survivors.

them, and as he marches up and down the line of students he appears to be holding a review. Then he steps aside, gives an order, and the long line of students falls to the ground. Then, mysteriously, as though coming from nowhere, another line of students appears, and they too are mown down. The film moves jerkily, with something of the effect of an old silent movie, and strange shapes are seen moving in the shadows. Nevertheless, the film records for posterity the first of the many massacres that took place in East Pakistan.

Two days later Michel Laurent, a foreign correspondent, slipped into the dormitory. About twenty bodies were still lying outside, and there were still some students lying in their beds.

They were dead, and their bodies were burned by shellfire. There was blood everywhere, and the tank treads could still be seen.

The attack on the student dormitories was part of a concerted plan to wipe out the intellectual life of the country. But the military were not concerned with destroying only the intellectuals. As fanatical Muslims they were determined to destroy the Hindu minority and all the other elements that might dispute their authority. As the night wore on their intentions became clearer. The plan of operations involved indiscriminate killing in order to inspire fear and terror, but it also involved carefully selected targets. The plan had been worked out over many weeks, and in its original form offered a list of objectives to be pursued in a period of forty-eight hours. In fact very few of these objectives were achieved, and eight months later the military was still pursuing the same objectives.

While the attack on the dormitories was continuing, tanks, weapons carriers, and soldiers were converging on other areas of the city. For several weeks troops from West Pakistan had been flown to East Pakistan, and at least twenty thousand well-armed soldiers were available for military operations in Dacca. One target was the barracks of the East Pakistan Rifles, a constabulary force recruited from the local Bengali-speaking population and therefore unlikely to join forces with the Urdu-speaking invaders. Just as the military received orders to destroy everyone in the dormitories, so it was ordered to destroy everyone in the barracks situated in the Pilkhana district at some distance from the center of the city in the western suburbs. The commandant of the East Pakistan Rifles had some warning of what was about to happen, and the barracks were placed in a state of defense. The attackers shelled the building, set part of it ablaze, and then sent in the Punjabi and Baluchi soldiers to finish the work. Unlike the students, who were caught off-guard and in any case had only a few bolt-action rifles to defend themselves with, the East Pakistan Rifles were armed with machine guns and recoilless rifles, but the final outcome was the same. About a hundred were killed inside the barracks, and those who surrendered were bayoneted to death. There was another mass grave, and a column of thick black smoke drifted up into the dark sky from the gutted barracks. Another column of black smoke was rising from Jagannath Hall, and there were small fires raging all over the city.

Two police stations went up in flames. One of these police stations, in the Rajar Bagh district, was attacked with tanks, bazookas, and automatic rifles, but the policemen were forewarned and defended themselves so well that for days afterward the Punjabi soldiers talked about the attack as the most terrible experience they had endured during that terrible night. They had given no quarter, and the policemen had gone on fighting even when the whole building was an inferno. There were only a few survivors among the police, and they were carried off in a weapons carrier, and nothing more was heard of them.

From the windows of the huge Intercontinental Hotel, reporters saw fires breaking out all over the city. The reporters could only guess what was happening. Someone had scrawled on a blackboard set up in the hotel lobby: "Please do not go outside." The warning was reinforced by the presence of heavily armed soldiers in battle dress in the lobby. The captain in charge of the soldiers was more explicit and threatened to shoot everyone, especially reporters, who so much as stepped an inch beyond the glass doors. The lobby, all glass and chrome-plated steel, was beginning to look like a staging area in a war.

There were only two good hotels in Dacca, and the Intercontinental was the best, the most expensive, and the most luxurious. Nearly all the foreign correspondents lived there. By midnight all of them realized that they had become war correspondents, but very few of them knew what the war was about. President Yahya Khan had just flown to Karachi, and it was a reasonable assumption that there had been a military coup against him. A few guessed that it was another kind of war. A Bengali student, gazing out of an upstairs window, suddenly cried out: "My God, they are shooting everyone!" That, as it happened, was the kind of war that was being fought.

From time to time the heavy glass doors opened to admit some more soldiers or some luckless visitors ordered off the streets. So it happened that around midnight some British diplomats returning to their embassy from a party found themselves under arrest and commanded to cool their heels in the lobby, which had now become a general prison for all foreigners. The British diplomats reported they had seen military roadblocks all over the city. This surprised no one, but explained nothing. The telephone was working, and the more enterprising reporters were

busily attempting to contact sources of information in the city. Surprisingly often the telephone would be lifted at the other end, but as soon as the reporter announced himself there was silence and the telephone was replaced. Occasionally there would come a scrap of information. A Bengali newspaper man telephoned to say that in the downtown area crowds armed with iron bars and staves were racing through the streets. At 1:15 A.M. the telephone went dead and the beacon light on top of the telephone exchange went out.

The reporters milled about the lobby filled with overstuffed armchairs and sofas and flowering plants. There were three ornamental Chinese canary cages in the lobby and they were now covered with damask curtains for the night, so that the canaries could sleep. But very few people slept that night. One of those said to be sleeping was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had flown into Dacca on March 21 at the invitation of President Yahya Khan. His suite on the eleventh floor was guarded by soldiers armed with tommy guns. Reporters who reached the eleventh floor by the slow and erratic elevators were told that he could not be disturbed.

In fact Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was not asleep. He was looking out of the hotel window and watching the fires blazing across Dacca, seeing the army in action and sometimes wondering apprehensively what the future had in store for a country now wholly in the hands of the military. "In front of my eyes I saw the death and destruction of our own people," he wrote a few days later in a short autobiographical pamphlet called *The Great Tragedy*. "It was impossible to think straight. Many thoughts crossed my mind. Had we reached the point of no return?" After gazing at the burning city for three hours, he finally went to bed, only to be awakened early the next morning with the news that he had been ordered back to West Pakistan by President Yahya Khan. He had nothing to say to the reporters who crowded round him in the lobby, and brushed past them. When he reached Karachi that evening, he declared: "By the grace of God Pakistan has at last been saved." It was a very odd comment indeed, and far from the truth.

The man the reporters most wanted to see on the night of March 25 was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. A telephone call to his

residence less than a mile from the hotel, made shortly before the telephones were cut off, elicited the information that he was alive and well, but two of his Awami League supporters had been killed at a roadblock.

In fact Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was calmly waiting to be arrested. At about eight o'clock that evening a pedicab had swung down the narrow lane leading to his two-storied bungalow in the district known as 32 Dhanmandi and left a brief, unsigned message. The message said: "Your house is going to be raided tonight." He had not the least idea that thousands of people would be killed before the night was over, and his only thought was that the party leadership was about to be arrested. He summoned some of his followers, told them about the message, and as the acknowledged leader of the party ordered them to disperse at once and go underground. Later, when he was asked why he did not follow his own advice, he answered: "I must spare the people. If I am not here, Yahya Khan will burn Dacca to the ground in his effort to find me." He knew the violence of the enemy and made his arrangements accordingly.

Meanwhile there were family matters to be attended to. His wife, the Begum Fazilatunnessa, two daughters, and two of his three young sons were in the house with him. He could not send his wife away, for she would refuse to go, but it was necessary that his two daughters should leave the house immediately. The elder daughter, Hasina, was twenty-four, married, and pregnant. The younger daughter, Rehana, ten years younger, was a student at the Dhanmandi girls' school. They were both taken to a friend's house. There remained his sons Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, who was named after the British philosopher Bertrand Russell. Jamal was seventeen, and Russel was six. Another son, Sheikh Kamal, was nineteen, a student at Dacca University, and could be expected to look after himself. He was not at the house, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did not know where he was.

Having made his decision to keep his wife and his two sons with him, he simply waited on events. "We are staying here," he said, and jerked his thumb toward the ground. He was quite calm. From time to time there came telephone messages from his friends asking for news of him and he became impatient. "What do they expect?" he asked. "I am staying here because

this is what I must do. If I ran away, I would be capitulating to them." He still thought that very little of importance except his own arrest would happen to him during the evening. He had been arrested five times, and each time they had attempted to break his spirits by torture and threats, but they had always failed. They might kill him, but that was a matter of indifference to him. "Do you ever think about death?" a friend once asked him. "I think about death all the time," he answered, "but it is of no consequence."

So he waited for the arrival of the officer with the order for his arrest, calmly puffing on his pipe, secure in the knowledge that he had done everything he needed to do. By midnight he realized that things were changing rapidly. The telephone was ringing continually, the sounds of gunfire could be heard, and there was distant shouting. He knew nothing yet about the attack on the university, but he knew that the barracks of the East Pakistan Rifles and the police headquarters at Rajar Bagh were under fire. This could mean only that the Pakistani Army was determined to wipe out all the pro-Bengali military installations in the country, and he therefore made the second weighty decision he would make that night. He dictated to a friend in the Central Telegraph Office the following short message to be sent down all wires. "The Pakistani Army has attacked police lines at Rajar Bagh and East Pakistan Army Rifles headquarters at Piiikhana at midnight. Gather strength to resist and prepare for a war of independence."

No one receiving this message would doubt where it came from. It was not necessary that it should be signed; it was enough that the message should be heard in all the towns and villages of East Pakistan. The military had made the first of their irretrievable mistakes: they had attacked the university and the police before seizing the telephone exchange.

"Gather strength to resist and prepare for a war of independence" was the most fateful sentence he had ever spoken. It was also the most dangerous, for as soon as it became known to the military authorities, they would have cause to arrest him for high treason. There would be a summary court martial and he would be immediately sentenced to death.

His wife, speaking about the events of that night many months later, remembered that he was unusually calm and deliberate as

The noise of the shelling grew louder. The message was sent to the Central Telegraph Office shortly after midnight. No further messages were sent, though news of the troop movements in Dacca kept coming in until the telephones went dead at 1:15 A.M. Strangely, no one had come to arrest him.

His two bodyguards were hovering over him protectively, and it occurred to him that they were quite useless. They were heavy-set, powerful men, absolutely devoted to him. Their names were Raza and Moheuddin, and they had served him for many years. He told them it was time they slipped away, but they kept arguing. Finally he shouted: "I order you to go!" and they backed out of the room, surprised by his sudden vehemence, and went downstairs to conceal themselves nearby.

He gave the same order to his sixty-year-old maidservant Rana, explaining to her patiently that it would be dangerous for her to remain. She, too, refused to go. Since she had always won all her arguments with him, he simply abandoned the struggle. The houseboy also refused to go.

Afterward people wondered why he did so little while he was waiting to be arrested. In due course he would answer that there was very little he could do. It was not a time for oratorical pronouncements, for giving detailed orders, or for mapping strategy. A nation of seventy-five million people was about to be plunged into war. At such times silence was best.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a bookish man, and so he went into his small library and began reading. The shelves were heavily stocked with the works of Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell, the two modern writers for whom he had the greatest respect. He leafed through some books and then wrote up his diary, which he had kept since he was an undergraduate at Dacca University. Except when he was in prison, he had never gone to bed without writing up his diary. Later he would say that one of the mistakes he made that night was not to safeguard his books and diaries, which could have been buried in the garden or given to friends for safekeeping. After that night he never saw them again.

At about 1:30 A.M. there came the deafening clatter of tanks and armored cars moving down the tree-lined lane leading to his house. There were two, or perhaps three, trucks full of soldiers who spilled out and took up positions on both sides of the small

house, shouting and shooting into the air. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was resting on his bed. As soon as he heard the shooting, he sprang up and pushed his wife and youngest son into the bathroom. A shot fired through an upper window grazed his youngest son. There were at least a hundred soldiers surrounding the house, and this disproportionate force suggested that the army believed his house had been transformed into a defense post. The soldiers were still firing into the air, and by this time the house had been completely encircled.

Although he had been calm all evening, the Sheikh was now in a cold rage. There was something grotesque about the massive attack on a small unprotected house. There seemed to be hundreds of soldiers in the lane and in the garden. Searchlights were being played on the house and orders were being uttered in harsh voices, and the noise was deafening.

A young captain shouted in English: "Sheikh, you should come down now."

Wearing a maroon colored dressing gown over pyjamas, the Sheikh stepped onto the wide balcony overlooking the lane and shouted: "Kill me if you like, but stop shooting at my people! You don't have to behave like dogs and rats!"

"Please come down now," the young captain said.

He was studiously polite, and seemed to be a little frightened by the behavior of the soldiers. He was under orders to take the Sheikh alive.

"I am quite ready," the Sheikh said. "There is no need for you to fire, no need for all this barbarism! All you needed to do was to call me on the telephone and I would have come!"

The young captain waited for his prisoner to come downstairs. The Sheikh said goodbye to his wife, his children, and the maid-servant, and then came down the stairs, looking pale but otherwise unruffled. Before entering the heavily armored Toyota land cruiser waiting at the gate of the house, he characteristically ordered the soldiers to get his luggage, a small bag with a change of clothing, which he had deliberately left behind. He looked grim, and expected to be shot before the night was over.

The young captain congratulated himself that the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had taken place without incident. In this he was wrong. A night watchman standing near the garden

house next door had been surprised by a sentry, who killed him instantaneously with a single bullet.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was carried off to military headquarters, where he refused to answer questions. There was no court martial. Evidently the military authorities had not yet decided what to do with him, or perhaps they regarded him as a hostage. Four days later he was flown to West Pakistan, and an observant photographer took a picture of him sitting on a bench at an airport, looking totally unruffled and absorbed in his own thoughts.

An hour and a half after his arrest another army truck drove down the lane leading to his house. This time the intention was to arrest his wife and children, but they had fled to the shelter of a neighboring house. In a rage the soldiers smashed everything they could lay their hands on, broke up the furniture, overturned the beds, threw down the bookcases, destroyed his manuscripts, and ripped up the pictures and photographs hanging on the walls, among them a signed, silver-framed photograph of Mao Tse-tung. A reporter, Anthony Mascarenhas, who visited the abandoned house a few weeks later, was surprised by the evidence of wanton destruction and puzzled by the photograph of Mao Tse-tung, who was actively engaged in supporting the military rulers of Pakistan with tanks, guns, and ammunition. In fact, there were good reasons why Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should have placed Mao Tse-tung's picture on the wall, for he had been one of the leaders of an official Pakistani delegation to Peking in 1952. He was deeply impressed by Mao Tse-tung, although less impressed by Chinese Communism. The house was a shambles, and it occurred to Anthony Mascarenhas that they had savaged it in the same way that a wounded tiger will savage a tree, clawing at it in despair and frustration because there is no other enemy in sight.

Nevertheless they left the house standing, having received no orders to burn it to the ground. Elsewhere they burned, looted, murdered, and raped at their pleasure. In the poverty-stricken Hindu areas all that was necessary was to set fire to the thatched roofs and watch the people streaming away like ants from a battered ant hill; then they were machine-gunned. Shopping bazaars were set on fire, and the huge white walls of the Bait-ul-Makar-tam Mosque, which dominates the city, flickered in the light of the flames.

At 2:45 A.M. the newsmen at the International Hotel looking down from the upper windows saw a jeep with a mounted machine gun swinging into an alley just below them. Some soldiers followed the jeep on foot, carrying a rocket gun. From Mymensingh Road there came a band of a dozen Bengali youths, shouting defiantly, and at the sound of their voices the jeep edged out of the alley, the machine gun swung round, there was a burst of fire, and the youths fled. In the darkness it was impossible to see whether any of them had been killed. The soldiers and the jeep then turned into the dark alley, their objective being the building that housed the presses and the editorial office of the newspaper *The People*, known to be a supporter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The newspaper had also published articles deriding military rule. The soldiers were moving about in the dark alley, their flashlights flickering eerily, shouting and calling on the people in the building to surrender. No one came out. A rocket was fired into the building, the machine gun on the jeep fired into the windows, and soon the building was on fire. As far as the newsmen could see, no one was killed. After setting fire to *The People*, the soldiers burned a bazaar and several houses before they raced away.

Around 4 A.M. the sounds of shooting died down, but from time to time there were bursts of automatic fire. Most mysteriously, tracers from a long way away flew past the hotel. The night was full of strange noises, but when the hazy dawn rose all was quiet; here and there black smoke rose into the sky. Dacca did not look as though it had changed very much. The Bait-ul-Makarram Mosque still dominated the skyline; and if one half-closed his eyes, one might think it was the same city one had seen the previous day.

That night 7,000 people had died in Dacca, and another 3,000 were under arrest. This was only the beginning. In towns and villages all over East Pakistan the army was in command, the fires were raging, the dead were lying in the streets, and the ugly black crows were so gorged with blood that they could scarcely fly.

That day the newsmen were ordered to leave and were taken under armed guard to the airport where they were searched, their notebooks and films confiscated, and they were warned that

it would be better for them if they wrote nothing about their last night in Dacca. Most of them left in the early evening. To the last moment they remained prisoners in the hotel, threatened with death if they ventured even a few yards outside. Some, braver than others, followed a captain as he walked out of the door. He screamed at them to go back, adding: "If I can kill my own people, I can kill you!"

If the military rulers of Pakistan thought they could stifle all news from East Pakistan, they were mistaken. The newsmen in the Intercontinental Hotel were well aware of the reasons for expelling them. In the eyes of the military they had already seen too much.

The military believed that once the newsmen had gone, it could impose a *cordon sanitaire* around East Pakistan, and then secretly perform the surgical operation required to preserve the dictatorship. No foreign government could interfere, for this was an internal matter and they were the sovereign rulers of the nation. The People's Republic of China and the United States were their allies, on whom they could rely in any emergency. Airplanes, tanks, guns, and ammunition were theirs for the asking. It was expected that in two or three weeks the surgical operation would be completed and the patient would be all the better for the bloodletting.

For month after month in all the regions of East Pakistan the massacres went on. They were not the small casual killings of young officers who wanted to demonstrate their efficiency, but organized massacres conducted by sophisticated staff officers, who knew exactly what they were doing. Muslim soldiers, sent out to kill Muslim peasants, went about their work mechanically and efficiently, until killing defenseless people became a habit like smoking cigarettes or drinking wine. Before they had finished, they had killed three million people. Not since Hitler invaded Russia had there been so vast a massacre.

The Military Elite

FOR NINE MONTHS East Pakistan, one of the most densely populated regions on earth, was given over to massacre on a scale unprecedented in recent history. Only the Japanese massacres in China during the 1930's and the German massacres in Russia during the 1940's could compare with it. What happened was something so terrible that it passed beyond ordinary comprehension. It was a methodical, deliberate, and calculated massacre, and it failed only because the perpetrators made a series of obvious mistakes. If they had not made these mistakes, they might very well have succeeded in their aims. They had powerful allies, and they were in a position of strength so overwhelming that it seemed impossible for them to fail.

Massacres take place only when men want them to happen, give the orders, and feel sufficiently secure to carry out their plans with impunity. They are prepared, planned in detail, and carried out according to logistical programs. The word "massacre" is not used. It is most customary to use the word "destroy." Whole sections of a city, whole villages, whole districts may be "destroyed," meaning that nothing must be left alive in that area. The military planners are not in the least disturbed by the total immorality of their acts, for a massacre is merely an extension of war to its ultimate aim, the elimination of the enemy. The people of East

Pakistan, by declaring for regional autonomy, had assumed the role of the enemy in the eyes of the military elite in West Pakistan. They must therefore be punished, and the punishment would take the form of a general massacre. It was believed that the shock of a general massacre would bring the East Bengalis to their senses.

The orders came from Islamabad, the seat of government of West Pakistan. Islamabad is a new, gleaming, modern city on the outskirts of Rawalpindi, with no pretensions to beauty, without traditions, and with no particular reason for existence. Built at a cost that Pakistan could ill afford, it seemed to symbolize by its immaculate tall buildings and air-conditioned luxury the gap between the rulers and the ruled. In March 1971 the president's palace in Islamabad was occupied by General Yahya Khan, who combined the offices of president, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and chief martial law administrator. These titles were interchangeable, and he was in fact the military dictator of Pakistan, which had been under military rule since October 1958, when Field Marshal Ayub Khan seized power.

Yahya Khan's appearance was strikingly dramatic. Heavily built, with a round face and low forehead, with graying hair, thick black eyebrows, a small pinched mouth, a stubborn chin, and a strange white patch of hair amidst all the gray, he had something of the appearance of the dramatic actor in search of a kingly role, although his real talents lay in comedy. He was a womanizer, an adulterer, and a common thief, for he continually raided the public treasury. He liked to flaunt his mistresses, four of whom were well known and often appeared with him at night clubs. The West Pakistanis were not especially disturbed by his constant womanizing, but they despised him for his hard drinking. He was rarely sober, and at times of crisis they would hear his thick, curdled voice coming over the radio like a message of doom, for they realized that a drunken head of state might lead them into intolerable dangers. Nevertheless they admired him for his human qualities: his innocence, his garrulousness, his air of bonhomie. Unlike his predecessor, Ayub Khan, who had seized power by armed force and always resembled a sergeant major on parade, Yahya Khan resembled a good-natured buffoon with no savagery in him. In fact, he was very savage and he had

no qualms in ordering the arrest and torture of anyone who spoke against his military dictatorship.

Those who knew him well spoke of his extraordinary indecisiveness. His opinions were nearly always those of the last person he had spoken to. Since he was impatient with civilians and rarely listened to them, his opinions were those of his military staff, men like General Pirzada and General Umar Khan, who shared his contempt for the civilian world. Brought up as a soldier, with a soldier's limited interests, he found himself out of his depth when it came to discussing economics, production costs, housing, and wages. He was not concerned with social questions; these were left to his subordinates. His main interest lay in military affairs and questions of strategy and tactics. According to Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the Indian minister of defense, all the major decisions made by the Pakistani high command during the war of December 1971 could be credited to Yahya Khan. They were nearly always reckless decisions made in total disregard of the consequences. There came a time when the Indian chief-of-staff found it comparatively easy to imagine what his next reckless decision would be.

Yahya Khan was not quite a nonentity. People who should have known better were fascinated by him, and there must have been some reason why he cast a spell over them. He felt genuine concern for his friends, aided them financially, asked after their children, and frequently sent them costly presents, unlike Ayub Khan, who was close-fisted and somewhat puritanical. Yahya Khan enjoyed his wealth, his power, and his women, and he communicated a sense of enjoyment. He enjoyed being drunk, and he liked others to be drunk with him. He was a man who took his responsibilities lightly.

In the modern world such men are anachronisms, and it is always difficult to understand how they survive. Since they are incompetent as rulers, and continually betray their incompetence, the question arises why the people permit them to remain in power. The answer would seem to be that the people have no alternative. The dictator has acquired supreme power and can force everyone to do his will. Such men can only be swept away by revolution, by a shattering defeat, or by an economic crisis.

It would also appear that the people of West Pakistan were prepared to tolerate him precisely because he was an anachronism, reminding them of an imaginary past of kings and sultans.

It is possible that Yahya Khan was perfectly aware of the need to act out an anachronistic role. He liked to ascribe his regal bearing to his descent from Nadir Shah, the tribal chieftain who elevated himself to the Persian throne, marched against India, conquered Delhi, sacked it, and then retired to his own frontiers, taking with him an immense treasure that included the Kohinoor diamond and the Peacock Throne, embedded with emeralds and rubies, of the Mughal emperors. Yahya Khan worshiped the memory of his great ancestor, and everyone in West Pakistan was aware of his imperial origins. In quieter moods he would confess that he was not descended from the emperor but from one of the emperor's generals. In his official biography written for publication abroad he described himself as a man who came "from a well-known family, descendants of the military elite of Nadir Shah, who conquered Delhi in 1739." An earlier biography describes him more modestly as "the descendant of a long line of soldiers."

What is certain is that he drew strength from the image of himself as a descendant of Nadir Shah, and his fantasies of conquest thrived on an imaginary ancestry. That Nadir Shah was immensely cruel and rapacious, a looter and murderer on a prodigious scale, was not a matter which gave him much concern. Once in power he was able to convince himself that he was descended from an emperor, whose footsteps he was determined to follow. He, too, would sack Delhi and punish the infidels, his armies advancing at great speed across Rajasthan, pausing only long enough to light the firebrands that would burn the city to the ground. It was a pleasant dream, and he surrendered to it.

Yahya Khan was born on February 4, 1917, in the obscure village of Chakwal near Jhelum, some sixty-five miles southwest of Rawalpindi. There is some mystery about his father, who is described variously as a small farmer or as a tailor. The name Yahya is quite common in Pakistan; it is the Arabic form of John, referring especially to John the Baptist, whose birth is recounted briefly in the Koran. To an Arab or a Pakistani the name suggests

steadfastness, for this is the quality attributed to Yahya in the Koran. Khan means "prince" or "chief," and was merely a decorative addition to Yahya.

As a boy he was described as cheerful and impudent. He attended Government College at Lahore and obtained his B.A. degree at the University of the Punjab in 1936, when he was nineteen. He entered the Military Academy at Dehra Dun, coming out at the head of his class. Indian officers who knew him have described him as an excellent cadet who was determined to make a career in the army. Commissioned in 1938, he was assigned to the Second Battalion of the Worcester Regiment and a year later he was transferred to the Third Battalion of the Baluch Regiment at his own request. During World War II he served with his regiment in the Eighth Army in Egypt, the Sudan, Iraq, Libya, Cyprus, and Italy, where he was captured by the Germans but succeeded in escaping to France. He made no very great mark in the war and never rose above the rank of captain. In the spring of 1944 he returned to India on leave, and on April 4 he was married in Lahore to the daughter of an army officer. The marriage produced a daughter known as Yasmeen Yahya and a son known as Agha Saddat Ali Khan.

Yahya Khan's rise to prominence came after the war. In August 1947, when Pakistan came into existence, he was a relatively little known staff officer with a reputation for hard drinking and womanizing. He had no power base, no deeply rooted political connections. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the astute and fragile politician who brought Pakistan into existence, was already ailing and would soon descend into a strange form of madness that left him helpless in the hands of a small oriental court of intriguers. Yet to the end Jinnah possessed some grasp on reality. In particular he knew that Pakistan, divided into two wings separated by over a thousand miles was essentially vulnerable and would need a large and powerful army in order to defend itself. He had not the slightest intention of permitting the military to rule. Like Nehru, he regarded the military with suspicion and kept them in their place. Unlike Nehru, who already possessed in the Indian Army a substantial and well-trained force, Jinnah possessed little more than a skeleton army, ill-equipped, with

comparatively few officers. In pre-Partition days it was generally believed that the British favored Muslim officers over Hindu officers. It was said that a Muslim officer had a more martial bearing than a Hindu officer, and was more of a fighting man. Army records at the time of Partition, however, show that the great majority of officers were Sikhs or Hindus, and only thirty-two Muslim commissioned officers were listed. Pakistan was left with the task of building up a new army almost from scratch. Yahya Khan was appointed commandant of the new Staff College with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He was then only thirty years old.

He advanced rapidly. In 1950 he was appointed general staff officer at a divisional headquarters, and a year later he was a brigadier in charge of an infantry brigade. In that year Liaquat Ali Khan, who was Jinnah's successor, was assassinated while addressing a public meeting. The motives of the assassin were never discovered, but it was widely believed that the army was responsible for the assassination. The army, from its headquarters at Rawalpindi, was now strong enough to impose its will on the government in Karachi. From being a small, frustrated, amorphous group it became in the space of four years a highly disciplined force. It was, in fact, the only well disciplined force in the country.

It is important to recognize the role played by the army in the early history of Pakistan. It was built up at great speed by determined men who saw themselves as the destined rulers of the country. They despised parliamentary elections, but they permitted parliament to pass the laws they approved of. They ruled indirectly, invisibly, conspiratorially. They bribed politicians and officials, and the few who refused to be bribed were killed or vanished into obscurity. The phenomenon was not an unusual one, for the German Army after World War I behaved in the same way and the Young Turks rose to power with the same methods. Unfortunately for the leaders of the army of West Pakistan there was no Kemal Ataturk possessing a social vision and the determination to create a secular state. These young Pakistani officers saw themselves as conquerors, with India or at least vast regions of northern India as the prize.

A new aristocracy was born. In a remarkably short space of time

it imposed itself on both East and West Pakistan. It proclaimed itself the inheritor of the martial tradition of Islam, the successor of Timurlane and Nadir Shah and all the other Islamic conquerors of India. Although most of them had worked with Indians in the military academies, and some of them had been on terms of close friendship with Indian officers, these officers taught themselves to despise the Indians. This was probably their greatest mistake.

Among themselves the officers talked English by preference, and sedulously imitated the British. They spoke an excessive outmoded English, dating back to the 1920's or even earlier; it was almost Victorian. This was not the English spoken by the Indian Civil Service or by officials of the Indian government, who speak with cultivated ease in the English of today. The English spoken by the Pakistani army officers (and to a somewhat lesser extent by the Indian army officers) was a conscious imitation, almost a parody, of a language that had long fallen into disuse, a throw-back to an earlier age when Britain ruled the East in the panoply of imperial glory.

An officer who was ordered to massacre an entire village and who carried out the assignment without casualties would be regarded as "a jolly good chap." He was "a hale fellow well met," who had not "let the side down." His "bag" might include a hundred bayoneted women and children, but the exploit was "a jolly good show." An elite always possesses a language of its own, and this archaic language, though curiously inappropriate to the business it was conducting, helped it to believe in its innate superiority and its remoteness from ordinary human preoccupations. It was one more of the many cushions protecting it from the outside world.

A Pakistani officer wore a uniform exactly modeled on the British uniform. He carried a swagger stick in exactly the same way that British officers carried it, saluted in the British manner, and usually wore the trim, close-cropped mustache commonly worn by British officers. Well-tailored, elegant, serene, he affected a nonchalant air of superb authority, as befitted a man who belonged to the conquering race. If he had few intellectual endowments, this was a matter of indifference to him. Like the British officer in pre-Partition India, he was concerned with his women,

his horses, his polo-playing, and his troops. He lived in a world apart, and he was content with it.

While the outward forms were predominantly British, the inner forms were Islamic, tribal, Asian. Though the Pakistani officers imitated British manners and regarded themselves as the heirs of an enduring imperial tradition, their minds moved in oriental ways, colored by Islamic tradition, tribal rivalries, the knowledge that had been bred into their bones of the many Muslim conquests of India. They were only a few generations away from the feudal principalities of the Punjab and the tribal dukedoms of Baluchistan. Islam, in particular, penetrated their lives. It was not the Islam of Mecca or of Al Azhar University in Cairo. It was against the Muslim creed to drink spirits, but they drank prodigiously. Islam frowns on excess, and demands that all men should live in humble servitude to God, and they were the least humble of men. The essential egalitarianism of Islam, by which the slave becomes the equal of the master, had no meaning for them. They observed the outward formalities of Islam if it pleased them or if it suited them, but did not feel bound to them. They were above the law, even the moral law.

Nevertheless, Islam confronted them at every turn, demanding their attention and their allegiance. Though they disobeyed its moral precepts, they fervently recited the blood-curdling passages in the Koran which celebrate war against the infidel. They knew these passages by heart, and there were even more blood-curdling passages hidden among the *hadith*, the traditional sayings of the Prophet. A Pakistan officer reading, for example this text from the Koran:

If there be of you twenty steadfast, they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a hundred, they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand . . .

would find himself believing that the Prophet was pointing directly at India, for the Indians were preeminently "a people who do not understand."

Bemused by his reading of the Koran, a Pakistani officer would declare that one Pakistani soldier was worth ten Hindus, and go on to declare that all Hindus were cowards who ran away at

the sight of a Pakistani brandishing a gun. The Hindu was weak-bodied, because he ate no meat, and spiritually weak because he needed the assistance of a hundred gods instead of Allah, the One God. The extraordinary thing is that in spite of all the evidence to the contrary they came to believe in the equation: one Pakistani soldier equals ten Indian soldiers. It was an article of faith, recited even at moments of defeat.

The military elite existed in a world of unreality, and was therefore all the more dangerous and explosive. No other military elite had come into existence so suddenly from such small beginnings. Out of this handful of men there had grown a formidable army of officers who controlled both East and West Pakistan. By the autumn of 1958 they had come to the conclusion that it was absurd to continue ruling from behind the scenes. They decided to rule openly as a military dictatorship. Field Marshal Ayub Khan became the dictator in 1958.

Ayub Khan was born on May 14, 1907, in the little village of Rehana, fifty miles north of Rawalpindi. His father was a soldier who achieved the rank of Risaldar Major, his mother a peasant girl. Like his successor, Yahya Khan, he claimed a distinguished ancestry, being descended from Sardar Muhammed Khan Tarin, a tribal chieftain who ruled a few villages in the neighborhood of Guldheri. In his autobiography Ayub Khan remarks casually that his distinguished ancestor became "head of state," but this is to stretch the words beyond any reasonable meaning. Ayub Khan remembered vividly that when he was two-and-a-half years old, his mother gave birth to a baby and he was so jealous that he seized a club and attempted to kill it. He was a violent child and a violent man.

He attended Aligarh University without taking a degree, having shown no particular aptitude for his studies. Some British officers, visiting the university, were struck by his martial bearing, suggested that he might be officer material, and invited him to take the entrance examination for Sandhurst, the military training college near Aldershot in southern England. He passed the examination, did well at the college, and graduated first among the Indian students. It was not an especially enjoyable period, for he made no close friends and was desperately homesick. When he returned to India he joined the 1st/14th Punjab

Regiment, where he attracted little attention and advanced very slowly.

With the outbreak of war in September 1939 his advance was more rapid. He attended the Staff College at Quetta and was appointed to army headquarters in New Delhi before being posted to Barrackpore, near Calcutta, where he worked on plans for the defense of India against a Japanese invasion. He saw fighting in Burma, and was by all accounts a brave and capable officer. At the end of the war he was on the North-West Frontier in command of a battalion at the Khyber Pass fighting the frontier tribesmen. Ayub Khan said later he disliked fighting the tribesmen because it was completely senseless.

During the period of Partition, when millions of Muslims and Hindus in the Punjab were being uprooted, he was a staff officer attached to the Boundary Force intended to control and assist the mass migrations. The Boundary Force was totally ineffective, and he found himself in the position of an observer who could do nothing at all except write reports on the numbers of people killed and the numbers of women and children mutilated. Then, still an obscure staff officer, he was sent to Waziristan, beyond the frontier, where several divisions were engaged in another hopeless war against tribesmen. It was decided to withdraw these divisions, and Ayub Khan was given command. He organized the retreat so well that he attracted the attention of the commander-in-chief of the Pakistani Army, a British general. Thereafter his rise was rapid, and when the British general retired in 1951 Ayub Khan stepped into his shoes. Not for two hundred years had a Muslim commanded armies in this region.

Almost from the beginning Ayub Khan had been a member of the officers' conspiracy. He was older than most of them, and more cautious. One day in 1954, returning from a visit to military installations in the United States, he found himself alone in a hotel in London. The night was warm, he could not sleep, and he began to write out at some length his ideas about the future of Pakistan. In twenty-five numbered paragraphs he drew up a program for a new streamlined form of government with the president as "the repository of power," while the provinces were to be given "as much autonomy as possible." The powers given to the provinces were stated in vague terms, while the overriding

powers granted to the president were repeatedly stressed. It was his first sketch for the dictatorship he imposed on Pakistan four years later.

He discovered to his surprise that the process of assuming power was very easy. "It was as simple as pressing a button," he said. He simply dismissed the cabinet and parliament, warning them that they would be shot if they opposed the dictatorship. Someone had the courage to ask him on what authority he was acting. "My authority is revolution," he said. "I have no sanction in law or constitution."

With the coming of Ayub Khan to power in 1958 Pakistan became an iron dictatorship subject to his will. He styled himself head of state, field marshal, minister of defense, chief martial law administrator, commander-in-chief of all land, sea and air forces, and he called his dictatorship "basic democracy." It was not democracy in any form recognizable to the social scientists.

Under a military dictatorship there is usually a slight improvement in transportation. The trains ran on time, the airplanes ran on schedule, the passenger ships left the docks at Karachi at exactly the moment promised by the travel agents. There were some other useful achievements. He dismissed or forcibly retired 1,660 civil servants for corruption, inefficiency, and misconduct, and sent hundreds of politicians to jail. Businessmen engaged in blackmarketing and hoarding were also jailed. He vigorously collected unpaid taxes and instituted price controls. The larger landowners, who had formerly exercised a considerable measure of political control at least in matters affecting the ownership of land, found themselves stripped of their powers. It is not difficult to collect taxes, jail landowners and politicians, and see that the trains run on time when one is a military dictator with power of life and death over everyone in the state. He promised that his authoritarian rule would be only temporary. That, at least, was how his words were interpreted. "Let me announce in unequivocal terms," he said, "that our ultimate aim is to restore democracy." The "ultimate aim" lay far in the future.

Under Ayub Khan, East Pakistan could expect to be treated harshly. He despised the Bengalis, whom he described as a people who have "all the inhibitions of the down-trodden races and

coming they examined the route from the airport to the race course where he would be speaking, and concluded that it was beyond their power to guarantee his safety. Rumors that there would be an attempt to assassinate him during his triumphal journey through the city were flying round Dacca. There were still many Pakistani agents and members of the fanatical secret societies Al Badr and Al Shams at large. The police suggested that it would be better if he came from the airport to the racecourse in an armored car, or better still in a tank. A sense of fatality hung over his arrival.

The student council met hurriedly and decided that this was more a matter for students than for the police. With the approval of the provisional government they decided to assume full responsibility for his safety. They stationed themselves along the route from the airport and they mingled with the crowds massing on the racecourse. There were only six thousand policemen in Dacca, but there were fifty thousand students from the university, the colleges, and high schools. They were deadly serious.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman drove through Dacca in a Dodge truck. There were twenty people standing with him on the bunting-draped truck, so that he was almost surrounded. "*Sheikh Mujib zindabad!*" (Long live Sheikh Mujib). The words came like a deep rhythmic chant, like an incantation, full-throated, charged with emotional energy, for he had been very close to death and his long life seemed miraculous. Nothing quite like this had happened in the world since the day when General de Gaulle marched in triumph along the Champs Elysées.

When he reached the racecourse he vanished from sight, moving through the crowd within a phalanx of students. Suddenly a young student appeared on the rostrum. "The Sheikh is here!" he announced, meaning that he would soon be speaking to them. Then the student went on: "For his safety and ours, everyone please sit on the grass! Keep your hands on the grass! Watch the hands of everyone around you! Watch! Watch!"

When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman climbed up on the rostrum, there was a sound like a gasp, a roar of surprise, as though even now the half million people sitting on the race course could scarcely believe what they saw. For a long while he stood there

ants. The officers organized corruption in the same way that they later organized massacres: methodically, efficiently, without regard for the consequences. The country was being bled to support the army, and the army was being bled to support the officers.

Although all this was widely known, and the president was deeply involved in the conspiracy, there was never any effort to put an end to a state of affairs which threatened to destroy the state. There are precise social laws that apply to a corrupt society. Long ago Giovanni Battista Vico had shown that all societies progress through six stages: "Men first feel necessity, then look for utility, then attend to comfort, still later amuse themselves with pleasure, thence grow dissolute in luxury, and finally go mad and waste their substance." Under Ayub Khan's dictatorship the country's substance was being wasted to an appalling degree, and not only its financial substance. The spiritual energies of the country were being wasted. The farmers, the students, the teachers, the government clerks on small fixed salaries, and the workers in the factories who were paid starvation wages, all knew what was happening and dared not protest. They had nothing to live for. They lived at the mercy of a military elite, which was indifferent to everything except its own power.

Islamic countries are well aware of the dangers of the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a small elite. Islamic philosophers and social critics, remembering the fate of the Umayyad Dynasty, that ruled in Damascus during the seventh and eighth centuries, and many other dynasties in the past, constantly warned against the establishment of military elites that inevitably alienated themselves from the people, acting like cancerous growths, poisoning the body politic, until at last the state collapsed or went into acute convulsions, embarking on fatal adventures that were merely the outward signs of the sickness within. "From these sicknesses," wrote the great philosopher Ibn Khaldun, "no state can ever recover. Once it has reached this stage it is marked by death."

Ayub Khan and his lieutenants destroyed the last remnants of the democracy that had existed during the rule of Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan. Ayub Khan's successor, Yahya Khan, an even less able general, with even less knowledge of his-

tory and social affairs, merely followed in his path, proclaiming himself dictator while in fact the forces of corruption worked on him, dictated to him, and drove him to madness. Too corrupt and too cowardly to attack India in force, he turned his army on his own people, thus enabling the military elite to enjoy a war without the least danger to themselves. Medals would be awarded, promotions would be secured, the body counts would be tabulated, and there would be the continuing excitement of the battlefield, only this time the battlefield was their own country and the victims were their own compatriots.

The Year of the Vulture

ON MARCH 4, 1971, Lieutenant General Tikka Khan was appointed governor and chief martial law administrator of East Pakistan. He was a tall man with a clipped mustache, a sallow complexion, dark brown eyes, and a rather pointed chin. He dressed well, always wearing a uniform that looked well-pressed at the end of a day's work, and he possessed the brusque, quick military manner almost to the extent of caricature. In East Pakistan he nearly always wore dark glasses, which gave him a faintly sinister appearance, and there was the inevitable swaggerstick under his arm.

Since he was one of the military conspirators who had finally decided on February 22 to punish East Pakistan, he knew exactly what was demanded of him. Unlike his predecessor in East Pakistan, General Sahibzada Yakub, who had offered his resignation because he objected to President Yahya Khan's policies, General Tikka Khan was not only in favor of them but regarded himself as a hawk among hawks. He appears to have genuinely believed that all problems would be solved by a forty-eight hour blood bath. He had considerable experience with blood baths and was known as "the butcher of Baluchistan" because he had annihilated a whole tribe of rebellious Baluchis in 1965, when he

commanded an army corps. He destroyed all their villages, forts, and strongholds, and there were no survivors.

His origins were obscure, but it is known that his family came from Kahuta, a small town twenty miles east of Rawalpindi. He had risen rapidly, and at the time of his appointment he was a member of the select military planning board at Islamabad. He was one of the very few men whom President Yahya Khan trusted implicitly. Like the president he was a heavy drinker and womanizer; unlike the President he was able to hold his drink and did not parade his women. His aide-de-camp was his son who resembled him to perfection, so that when they appeared together—and they were rarely apart—it was as though the general was being accompanied by himself twenty years younger.

The appointment of General Tikka Khan struck horror into the Bengalis, who knew from that moment that they could expect no mercy. His appointment became legal only after he had been sworn in by the chief justice of East Pakistan, but the chief justice refused to attend the swearing-in ceremony. The general therefore had no legal standing as governor of East Pakistan and all his acts derived their authority from the president.

The Indian officers who knew him well before Partition regarded him as a run-of-the-mill officer of no particular distinction, who complained bitterly because he was not promoted over the heads of men he regarded as inferiors. He was proud, touchy, and short-tempered. His rapid rise after Partition surprised them, for they did not feel he was good officer material. "He was an indifferent soldier," said an Indian general who had studied with him at the military college. "I would hate to be under his command, and I am sure I could beat him on the field." Among Indian Army officers the story was told that Tikka Khan was originally an illiterate soldier who had applied to enter the officers training corps and been rejected by the British colonel. Later, the colonel saw him during a boxing match, and was so impressed by his fighting ability that he decided to let him enter the corps. Still later, the colonel learned to regret his decision, but by then it was too late.

Overall command of the massacre was entrusted by President Yahya Khan to General Tikka Khan. As he was about to leave Dacca by airplane for West Pakistan on the night of March 25,

President Yahya Khan turned to General Tikka Khan and said: "Now sort them out." For the next six months General Tikka Khan faithfully attempted to carry out his instructions.

His principal lieutenant was General Rao Farman Ali, who knew East Pakistan well, for he had spent most of his military life there. Unlike General Tikka Khan, General Rao Farman Ali had some pretensions to being an intellectual. He read books, cultivated the professors at the university where his daughters were being educated, and spoke Bengali. Formerly he had been a brigadier stationed in Chittagong and he was now the military commander of all the forces stationed in Dacca. "Rao" is a Hindu word meaning "rajah," and there is some mystery about how such a dedicated Muslim acquired a Hindu name.

He was born in Rajasthan, which is now in India, to a lower middle-class family. Hard-working, intelligent, and unscrupulous, he advanced rapidly and was only forty when he became a major-general. One of his first tasks when he was appointed to Dacca was to organize a society of fanatical Muslims loyal to the military dictatorship, recruiting most of them from the university. This secret society was called Al Badr and was named after the battle of Badr, which Mohammed fought successfully in A.D. 624, with three hundred of his own followers pitted against a thousand Meccans. Thereafter this was known as "the Day of Deliverance." The members of the secret society knew that they were being recruited to bring about another "Day of Deliverance." They were responsible for compiling the lists of professors and students to be executed. There was also in existence another secret society called Al Shams, meaning "the sun," which had the same purpose.

When General Tikka Khan was asked shortly after the massacres began why he was killing so many people, he answered ambiguously: "I am not concerned with the people. I am concerned with the land." General Rao Farman Ali was concerned with the people. He was the principal organizer of the massacres in the Dacca area throughout the entire nine months of military occupation. He did not look like a killer. Like Tikka Khan he was tall, handsome, and sported a small military mustache. He dressed elegantly and carried the usual swagger stick. What distinguished him from other Pakistani officers was a certain studious air, even

a certain refinement. He wore hornrimmed spectacles and carried himself more like a young professor than a general.

He was the dedicated killer without scruple and without mercy. "I will finish the Bengalis in forty hours," he announced on March 25, 1972. He spent the night with a large-scale map of Dacca in front of him and a battery of telephones at his side. There was also a tape recorder to record his orders in detail for posterity. These orders were delivered in English. The tape survived, and we can hear his rather soft and lilting voice ordering the attack on the students' dormitories, and then when the attack was over, he can be heard saying: "Nothing asked, nothing done. You don't have to explain anything. Once again, well done."

After his arrest a sheet of paper with some casual jottings in his handwriting was found in his desk drawer. One sentence at the head of the page particularly interested the Bangla Desh officers who discovered it. "The green of East Pakistan must be painted red," he wrote. He did not mean that East Pakistan should become Communist; he meant that it should be drowned in blood.

General Rao Farman Ali was not a typical product of the Pakistani military elite. In his quiet studious way he was more fanatical than the fanatics in Islamabad. Though he played the game of massacre as if it were a game of chess, he was playing for high stakes. The spur was ambition, for great rewards and even higher positions were open to the chief architect of "the Day of Deliverance."

At the beginning everything worked well for the military command. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was under arrest, the leaders of the Awami League's local offices were being hunted down and shot, students and professors were being killed, the Hindu shopping area in the Old Town was going up in flames, Hindu temples were being sacked, and the offices of newspapers favorable to the Awami League were being destroyed. On the following day began the great exodus from the city. The mass exodus provided General Rao Farman Ali with one of his favorite stratagems: small groups of well-armed soldiers were stationed along the highways and at river crossings. At these checkpoints the soldiers roughly examined the refugees, formed them into two groups, ex-

ecuted one group and allowed the other group to go free. The bodies were thrown into the rivers or buried in mass graves. Within a week, half the population of Dacca had fled, and at least 30,000 people had been killed. Chittagong, too, had lost half its population. All over East Pakistan people were taking flight, and it was estimated that in April some thirty million people were wandering helplessly across East Pakistan to escape the grasp of the military. Many of the townspeople had friends and relatives in the villages. Slipping at night past the checkpoints they made for the villages. The further they were from the towns, the safer they were. If they took refuge in villages close to Dacca, they were doomed. At the village of Demra, nine-and-a-half miles from Dacca, all the women between the ages of twelve and forty were raped and all the men between twelve and forty were shot.

The villagers fought back. The interminable fields of rice and jute provided hiding places, and the rivers and canals provided them with escape routes. Unlike the West Pakistani soldiers, they were boatmen and knew their way through the complicated mazes of canals. Although the military authorities ordered them to surrender their transistor radios, few did so. The voice of Radio Calcutta was louder than the voice of Radio Dacca. While Radio Dacca proclaimed that East Pakistan was at peace, with only a handful of miscreants disturbing the public order, the villagers were well aware of the true situation.

The weapons of the Bengali villagers were cunning and silence. Women were well-guarded and hurried to their hiding places at the first sign of danger. By day the younger men worked in the fields, and a visitor would observe that everything was normal except that there were fewer women about. But in fact the entire organization of village life had changed. The elders who formerly ruled over the village had given up their authority to the younger men whose task was to secure the safety of the villagers. Lookout posts were manned, guards took up their stations along the roads, scouts were sent out to explore the situations. Communication with the neighboring villages was kept open. The most important task was to gather information about the enemy's intentions. By day the villages lay drowsy in the heat, but at night all of East Bengal awoke into feverish activity. In the evening

the villages became sovereign, for the villagers knew the secret pathways, their small boats glided along the waterways, and their sources of information were more accurate than those of the enemy. Messengers were running constantly from one village to another. At night, too, the villagers went over to the offensive. Enemy patrols were cut to pieces, and enemy sentries died quietly with knives sticking out of their throats. A surprisingly large number of jeeps and weapons carriers were destroyed or damaged by the simple expedient of digging a wide ditch across the road and covering the ditch with brushwood. In time, using the tactics worked out during the early months of the massacre, the villagers became a powerful fighting force. The massacres were followed by counter-massacres.

The inhabitants of an unarmed village like Mylai can be massacred with ease, but when massacre is visited upon an entire nation, the military power is well advised to secure its own defenses before it embarks on a general strategy of extermination. The military in East Pakistan was more vulnerable than it thought; they had not taken into account the resourcefulness of the villagers. Nor had they taken into account the fact that in Asia power is exerted not only from the barrel of a gun, but flows invisibly through the ether. A professor from Dacca University told me that he sometimes listened to the radio for twelve to fifteen hours a day when he was hiding in a remote village, and his chief worry was how to secure radio batteries. Just as the Viet Cong fights under instructions from Radio Hanoi, and the radio provides it with the sense of adhering to a large community, so in East Pakistan the radio provided the villagers with a sense of community and purpose as well as the information that sometimes helped them to save their lives. "Without our transistor radios," said the professor, "I think we would have all died."

The trouble, of course, was that transistor radios break down, batteries die, and few people know how to repair them. There were never enough of them. There were times when the loss of a radio confronted a village with stark tragedy. Men are never lonelier than when they know the army is hunting them down; the radio provided them with a psychological defense against loneliness. Power in Asia flows through transistor radios. This was something that the Pakistani military authorities did not know.

There were many other things they did not know. Many of the Pakistan officers had been faced with uprisings among the tribesmen of Baluchistan. They quelled these uprisings by bombing raids on the tribal strongholds followed by a general massacre of the survivors. Since these villages were all in a comparatively small area, the operation was conducted without the slightest difficulty. But East Pakistan is not a small area, and the East Pakistanis are not Baluchis. While the villagers of East Pakistan knew very little about fighting, they learned the hard way, very quickly, and they were too numerous to be exterminated.

The errors made by the Pakistani military authorities were built into the structure of their thinking. The military elite that conducted the massacre had no roots among the people and could not conceivably understand what the Bengalis were thinking or how they would conduct themselves. The army had an espionage system recruited from fanatical Muslims which proved useful in drawing up lists of names of members of the Awami League or of professors who showed a special interest in Bengali culture, but these lists were defective. Their chief allies in the villages were always the rich landowners and officials, who soon realized that they were outnumbered by people who hated them. In many cases the landowners and the officials continued to live in the village in a state of armed truce with the villagers. Military intelligence derived its information from these gentlemen, but it was not necessarily accurate. Nor were the military authorities deeply concerned to collect accurate intelligence. The theory behind the massacre was expressed by Yahya Khan during his military conference in February 1971. "Kill three million of them," he said, "and the rest will eat out of our hands." It did not matter which three million were killed. The figure of three million represented four percent of the population.

Yahya Khan's order was carried out, but his prediction remained unfulfilled. It seems never to have occurred to him that even when they are unarmed, when their houses have been burned to the ground, when their women have been raped and their children slaughtered and they have nothing left to live for, men will go on fighting.

The Bengali villager is not a studious person and rarely possesses more than a few books. He knows the Koran, and he has

paid special attention to the text that reads: "God abhors all oppressors." But he knows many poems and can recite the epics by the hour, and he possesses a language of remarkable complexity and beauty. It is the language of Rabindranath Tagore and countless other poets, for the language lends itself more readily to poetry than to prose. Bengali is a difficult language to learn, and Gandhi, who spent an hour every day during the last years of his life attempting to learn it, confessed himself baffled by its complexities.

The Bengali villager may not have spent many years at school, but he was likely to be a cultured man with a deep knowledge of his country's history and a wide knowledge of Bengali poetry. Because he knew his country's history, he knew that since the beginning of the Mughal empire Bengal had never been free. Traditionally Bengal was a country of revolutionary uprisings. Year after year the Mughal emperors reigning in Agra or Delhi had sent expeditions against Bengal, and year after year they announced the success of the expedition and the submission of the rebels. But the next year, or three years later, there would be another rebellion against the rulers whose capital was hundreds of miles away. When the British conquered India, the rebellions continued. In 1971, when West Pakistan announced in thinly veiled terms that the Bengalis must submit or face the consequences, they were not aware that anything especially new was happening. They had a long tradition of rebellion, and this time they proposed to rebel to the utmost. There was scarcely a Bengali who did not realize that the massacres on the night of March 25, 1971, were the demonstrable signs of an ultimate victory. It was not only that the enemy had chosen to employ the basest weapon imaginable, and thus shown an essential weakness, but by deciding upon massacre as his principal weapon he had demonstrated finally that he was not in the least interested in the welfare of East Pakistan. Yahiya Khan would, if he could, annihilate all of them and repopulate the land with Punjabis. Since this was not possible, massacre was merely a futile gesture of despair, like stabbing over and over again the body of a man who died with the first stab wound.

Certain consequences followed: first, the Bengalis knew from the beginning that the enemy would eventually fail. They as-

sumed that it would take two or three years to rid themselves of the military oligarchy. The cost would be terrible, and it proved to be even more terrible than they had thought it would be: nevertheless they were prepared to pay the price. Second, they knew that during the first weeks they would be at a hopeless disadvantage because the enemy would exert all his power to crush them, hoping to announce to the world in the shortest possible time that the rebellion was crushed, although in fact there had been no rebellion. Third, they knew that during the day the Pakistani Army would have them at its mercy, and by night the soldiers were at the mercy of the Bengalis. Fourth, they knew that they possessed invisible weapons—courage, resourcefulness, knowledge of the enemy. They knew the mentality of the Punjabi and Baluchi soldiers, because they had lived under an army of occupation ever since Partition. They also knew the mentality of the officers. Finally, they were buoyed up by the vision of independence, the belief that in their own lifetime they would be masters in their own house.

When at the end of the massacres the psychologists at Dacca University set out to examine the evidence before them, they were struck by the fact that nearly everyone they questioned confessed to an extraordinary sense of elation throughout the nine months of slaughter. Life was hideously dangerous; friends were killed or vanished into the torture chambers; everyone knew about the unspeakable atrocities committed by the soldiers; and yet, confronted by total disaster, they felt only a boundless hope.

Something very similar happened in Britain in World War II when all of Europe was in the grip of Hitler's armies. In this desperate situation the British found a triumphant sense of community among themselves. Life was never so sweet as when it was threatened by an overwhelming power. In Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the Bengalis found their Winston Churchill, seeing him magnified, all the more present because he was absent.

Much of what the Bengalis thought they knew, they did not know. They had not guessed—it was beyond their wildest imaginations—that the Pakistani Army would be given license to rape, torture, and bayonet Muslim women, and that it would tear children apart. No doubt there would be atrocities, but it was unthinkable that those immaculately dressed Pakistani officers, who

resembled British officers of a slightly darker hue, would deliver specific orders to their soldiers to rape women and murder children.

By all accounts the Punjabi soldiers were the most ruthless, the most adept at murder. The Baluchis were less intelligent, but more scrupulous, killing without enthusiasm. They were good soldiers, but reluctant murderers. Cases were known of Baluchis killing their own officers and going over to the freedom fighters who were known as the Mukti Bahini,* but it did not happen very often. The Punjabis were aroused easily to hatred, and the officers skillfully manipulated their hates and their fears.

Sometimes, to ensure that they would obey orders, the Pakistani officers led their Baluchi troops to believe that they were in India fighting against the detested Hindus. The Baluchis were not so stupid that they could not recognize a Muslim temple or a Muslim shrine, and it did not take them long to learn that the officers were lying to them. Later a slightly more credible reason for massacring Bengalis was offered to them. It was explained that the Bengalis were Hindus recently converted to Islam, whose religion was merely on the surface. They were really heretics, and therefore deserved to be killed.

The Pakistani military elite was experienced in small-scale massacres, for most of the officers had taken part in punitive expeditions in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province. In their eyes this was part of the day's work, and they were not troubled by the fact that the tribesmen shared their own religious faith. The massacres were merely a logical extension of martial law. The martial law authorities had the right and duty to suppress dissent. If a million people dissented, or seventy-five million people dissented, then every last one of them must be punished to the full extent of the law. Once martial law was established by Ayub Khan, the only acceptable condition was one of total conformity to the law. A military commander had no difficulty interpreting the law, for in its most general terms the law was "whatever the chief martial law administrator will approve of." Since it was known that he approved of soldiers and disapproved

* Originally they called themselves *Mukti Fauj*. "Mukti" is a Bengali word meaning "freedom," "fauj" a Persian word meaning "army." "Bahini" means "army" in Bengali.

of civilians, believed in the need for stern punishment, and was not especially interested in the improvement of social conditions, the officer could do as he pleased.

The Bengalis found no comfort in the military dictatorship, which continually exasperated them, injured them, and plundered them. The military elite was all powerful, for it was invested with governmental authority. It was the last court of appeal, the judge, the tax-gatherer. Its influence extended throughout the whole country, reaching down to the most remote villages. It had been in power so long that it had come to regard military rule as somehow sanctioned by antiquity. In the eyes of the officers a country could be managed just as easily as a platoon on the parade ground.

The Bengalis could perhaps have stomached the incompetence and corruption of the officers for a few more years; what was intolerable to stomach was their ignorance, their stupidity, their senseless cruelty. Up to 1947 Bengalis had been ruled by the British and the Indian Civil Service, which was occasionally corrupt and sometimes but very rarely incompetent. It was never ignorant, stupid, or cruel. As a result of Partition the Bengalis, who had hoped for something better, found themselves being ruled by administrators from West Pakistan who amassed fortunes and then returned to their estates in Sind or Punjab. Few Bengalis were permitted to rise in the administration.

When the army attacked on March 25, 1971, the Bengalis, after a few days of stunned astonishment at the cruelties of the invaders, fought back, even though they were unarmed. They bent, but did not break. They fought with a sense of conscious moral superiority.

Although killings took place all over East Pakistan, and no village escaped, there is evidence that Dacca and the surrounding regions suffered most heavily. This was perhaps inevitable because Dacca was the seat of the military government and the center of communications in East Pakistan. At all costs it was necessary to ensure that this region was completely pacified. The surrounding villages were systematically destroyed and depopulated, checkpoints were established to prevent anyone leaving or entering the city without authorization, and a special army group was formed to administer the vast burned-out area around Dacca.

The military authorities wanted at all costs to prevent the Mukti Bahini from entering Dacca, and they believed that by creating a ring of destruction around the city they had accomplished their purpose.

They failed in this, as they failed in so many other things. People slipped out of the city at night without passing through the checkpoints. Not all the villages could be destroyed, for the military needed a continual flow of supplies from the countryside, and it was necessary, especially on the main highways, to preserve the fiction that everything had come back to normal. So, very often, it was the remote village, the one that could not be seen from the main highway, that suffered most. These villages, like Mylai, vanished.

Here, in the dead region surrounding Dacca, the military authorities conducted experiments in mass extermination in places unlikely to be seen by journalists. At Hariharpara, a once thriving village on the banks of the Buriganga River near Dacca, they found the three elements necessary for killing people in large numbers: a prison in which to hold the victims, a place for executing the prisoners, and a method for disposing of the bodies. The prison was a large riverside warehouse, or godown, belonging to the Pakistan National Oil Company, the place of execution was the river edge, or the shallows near the shore, and the bodies were disposed of by the simple means of permitting them to float downstream. The killing took place night after night.

Usually the prisoners were roped together and made to wade out into the river. They were in batches of six or eight, and in the light of a powerful electric arc lamp, they were easy targets, black against the silvery water. The executioners stood on the pier, shooting down at the compact bunches of prisoners wading in the water. There were screams in the hot night air, and then silence. The prisoners fell on their sides and their bodies lapped against the shore. Then a new bunch of prisoners was brought out, and then the process was repeated. In the morning the village boatmen hauled the bodies into midstream and the ropes binding the bodies were cut so that each body drifted separately downstream.

The warehouse of the Pakistan National Oil Company was the main extermination center for the region around Dacca. Here

came prisoners picked up from Dacca itself, from the nearby town of Narayanganj, and from the villages.

There was no time to interrogate the prisoners, and there were no trials. All those who arrived at the warehouse, usually in trucks with their hands tied behind their backs, were doomed. Men, women, and children died together.

At Hariharpara the military authorities achieved one of their greatest successes—mass extermination at almost no cost. There was no need to build costly installations. There were no expensive gas chambers and incinerators. Death was packaged, wrapped up in bundles. The dead left no trace, and the terrified boatmen with their knives and grappling hooks performed their functions in a proper silence.

Although the Hariharpara extermination camp was primitive and unsophisticated, it was efficient, orderly, clean. Since all the large towns and most of the villages lay on the banks of rivers, the same system could be, and was, employed elsewhere.

The Pakistani military authorities prided themselves on their gift for organization. But while they could organize killing, they were inept in other tasks. They failed to keep the trains running on time, they were unable to organize regular food supplies for the town, and the flow of medical supplies to the hospitals abruptly ceased. The problem of the railroads was especially difficult, because they had shot the senior railroad officials and there were very few people available who knew how to run the trains. They had also burned down the railroad workers' colony at Chittagong and killed most of the workers. The management of the docks and port installations at Chittagong was in the hands of regular army and naval officers, because all the senior officials had been killed or had escaped. To provide a working force for the docks it was necessary to fly in workers from West Pakistan. It was also necessary to fly in porters to work at the airports at Dacca and Chittagong.

Within a month of the first massacres, economic stagnation had settled on East Pakistan. The railroads were almost at a standstill, hundreds of barges lay idle along the river banks, food stocks were rotting in the docks, the jute was dying in the fields, and the main rice crop lay unharvested. The freedom fighters were blowing up roads, bridges, and railroads. While President

Yahya Khan proclaimed from Islamabad that the country had reverted to normal, everyone else knew that the country was still in chaos; and while the military attempted to organize chaos, they singularly lacked the means to do it. The country was in ruins, and they were incapable of putting the pieces together.

The evidence shows that they did not try very hard. In June President Yahya Khan called for a "maximum austerity program" in East Pakistan, as though maximum austerity had not already been reached. He called for "maximum economy," the banning of all inessential imports, and modest development programs. The most inessential imports consisted of armed soldiers, but they continued to be imported in large numbers. Originally they had been given the single task of massacring Bengalis; now they were given three more important tasks, for which they were unfitted. They had to defend the 1,350 mile frontier with India with the real expectation that they might be attacked at any moment. They had to run the ports and railroads and in many other ways attempt to organize the economy of an economically ruined country. They had to fight the Mukti Bahini. Sometimes they were compelled to do all these things simultaneously.

The army was overextended, and no longer enjoying its task. The Indians observed the growing signs of incompetence in the Pakistani military command, and the Mukti Bahini took courage from the knowledge that they were fighting an enemy which could no longer manage its affairs, but was at the mercy of forces over which it had no control. By the end of June, three months after the March massacre, the tide was turning and the Bengalis were speaking openly about a victory by the end of the year.

If they were optimistic, it was because they could see the demonstrable signs of demoralization. It was becoming easier to bribe the enemy, to obtain false passports for travel within the country, and to secure the release of prisoners. The army offered no guarantees: a bribe might be accepted, and the prisoner might still be killed. The man offering the bribe might also be killed. But surprisingly often the bribe was taken and the prisoner released. Bribery, like massacre, was organized, and it was widely believed that any man possessing the equivalent of a thousand dollars could save his own life. By far the largest number of people killed were the poor, who could not barter for their lives.

One of the first tasks given to the military was to execute all known members of the Awami League. If they could not be found, their houses were burned to the ground, and their wives, sons, and daughters were killed in their stead. If they were found, they were usually submitted to slow torture, not in order to wring secrets from them but in order to punish them. Sometimes a single son would be taken, or a daughter would be carried off to one of the makeshift houses of prostitution in the barracks. The soldiers were evidently knowledgeable in the art of torture: they knew how to keep their victims alive after submitting them to intense agony, reviving them whenever they fell unconscious. They would cut off a man's leg one day, and on the next cut off the other leg, and then an arm, and then another arm, and then break his spine. Another victim was cut into pieces and his body was rearranged so that the head seemed to come out of his stomach, and then the victim's best friend was brought in to observe their handiwork. The more important members of the Awami League died more slowly than the junior members.

By the middle of April the order to execute members of the Awami League out of hand was rescinded. Instead, a new system was inaugurated. Supporters of the Awami League were classified in three categories—white, gray, and black. The white, who were few, were given complete clearance. The gray lost their jobs and might be imprisoned or transferred to West Pakistan, where they could be kept under observation. Mostly the gray consisted of civil servants, and it was felt that they might become useful later. They were allowed to live, but only on sufferance. The black were shot. In April 1972 a board of inquiry established by the government announced that a careful accounting showed that 17,000 members of the League had been murdered.

On July 30, 1971, President Yahya Khan gave his first televised press conference since the beginning of the massacres. He was in a jovial mood, not in the least dismayed by the articles in the world press describing him as a butcher. He told his audience that he received complete and accurate reports from East Pakistan daily, and he could find nothing in them to warrant the suggestion that the country was in a state of upheaval. On the contrary everything was proceeding smoothly now that the "Awami League terror" was broken. The refugees who had fled

to India were under a misapprehension; they should return to the loving arms of their compatriots. "Today," he went on, "we hear about refugees who are not refugees at all, because it is nothing more than a show put on by the Indians." As for the burning of villages, it should be obvious to everyone that this was enemy propaganda. "It's a lot of rubbish!" he said in his clipped parade ground voice.

"Just that?" someone asked.

"Yes, just that!" he answered.

President Yahya Khan's powers of self-deception had been immeasurably strengthened by his enjoyment of the presidency, and he could no longer tolerate reality. To the very end he was able to pretend that no blood, or very little, had been shed in East Pakistan. If there were some slight disturbances, this could be attributed to "secessionists, miscreants, rebels, extremists, intruders, anti-state elements, criminals, mischief-makers, saboteurs, and infiltrators." In his public speeches he repeated this litany of evil-doers several times. It was a satisfying litany, for it explained everything.

Those small disturbances that sometimes occupied his attention were now taking place all over East Pakistan. By August the Mukti Bahini had killed 500 collaborators, and a small counter-massacre was being mounted by men who were absolutely determined to rid the country of President Yahya Khan's armed assassins. The Mukti Bahini had an extensive espionage system, and they had their own secret ways of dealing with the enemy. For example, the chairman of the "peace committee" at Khulna was beheaded in broad daylight in his own house, although it was being guarded by ten bodyguards.

There is no evidence that the military made any contingency plans for a counterattack by the people they were massacring. In their eyes it must have been unthinkable that the people would ever dare to strike back. They thought they had broken the spirit of the Bengalis, and they came very close to it. "Too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart," wrote the poet W.B. Yeats. Their sacrifice was prolonged almost beyond endurance. Nevertheless, by November the Mukti Bahini controlled a quarter of the country, and they were to claim later that they had killed 25,000 of the enemy. They were on the offensive and the

enemy was becoming desperate. All over East Pakistan there were villages flying the bottle-green flag of Bangla Desh with its scarlet circle on which there had been superimposed a bright yellow map of the country. The green flag with the crescent was coming down.

Early in April, in a mango grove near a small hamlet just inside the East Pakistan border, the acting president of Bangla Desh, Syed Nazrul Islam, proclaimed the sovereign independence of his country. There were honor guards, salutes, presentations of garlands, solemn speeches. Small boys perched in the mango trees, which filled the summery air with their scent. Someone remembered that the Battle of Plasscy, which brought most of India under British domination, had been fought only a few miles from the mango grove. "However long it takes, however many of our people die, we shall win in the end," said Syed Nazrul Islam, a descendant of the prophet in whose name the Pakistan military elite was waging war. No one dared to guess how many would die before the end of the massacres was in sight.

The Terrible Art

MASSACRE IS AN ART, not a science, and it is carried out by men possessing recognizable qualities. Among these qualities is an overwhelming contempt for humanity, which extends not only to the victims but to the soldiers ordered to massacre them, so that the general who orders a massacre is likely to turn against his soldiers once they have accomplished his purpose. Since he despises all men, he inevitably despises himself and is never far from suicide. Though he regards himself as a man who exists beyond good and evil, with no feelings of morality, he is nevertheless haunted by the knowledge of guilt and by obscure fears that the dead will take revenge on him, and therefore takes care that he is well guarded. But since he despises his guards and is always at their mercy, his sense of insecurity only increases. He, too, is a victim.

A man who embarks on a massacre and carries it through must have an iron will, an absolute determination to succeed, for if he fails the consequences to himself and to his army may be disastrous. Though he may pride himself on his will power, he will sometimes find himself faltering, not so much because he is uncertain of his aim but because he is burdened with a responsibility so heavy that he feels that he must temporarily cast it off and take solace in other pleasures. He therefore appoints a subordi-

nate to assume overall command of the massacre, and days or weeks may pass while he gives himself up to drugs, or women, or drink. When he awakens from a drunken stupor, he asks his aide-de-camp: "Is the massacre still going on?" Told that it is progressing favorably, he drinks down another bottle of whiskey and falls into another drunken stupor.

All massacres are the acts of madmen, but they are madmen with a difference. They have the power to carry out their fantasies on a scale so vast that they are frightened by it, and whip up their courage by embarking on still greater massacres. Once a massacre has begun, there is no theoretical reason why it should ever end. If Hitler had conquered the world, he would no doubt have developed an unreasoning hatred for some other races besides the Jews and ordered the execution of the Chinese, the Indians, and the Americans.

One can imagine a general sitting in a padded cell with a roughly drawn map in front of him. From time to time a hospital attendant appears. He does not enter the cell. It is enough that his face should appear behind the iron bars.

"Excellency, twenty thousand peasants were killed this morning in the northeast corner," the attendant says.

The general beams his approval, tears off the northeast corner of the map, and lets it fall to the floor.

"Very good," he says. "Now tell them to attack the northwest corner. Kill everyone there. Have no mercy."

"Have you any further instructions?" asks the attendant.

"Yes, today they must all be garroted. Tomorrow you may line them up and machine-gun them. It is much simpler and does not take so much time."

"Excellency, your wish is my command," the attendant replies, clicking his heels and giving a military salute.

So it goes on, day after day. The northeast corner, the northwest corner, the top, the sides and the middle are all torn off the map and allowed to fall on the floor. When there is no more map, the general exclaims like Nero: "What an artist I am! Tomorrow I shall draw up a new map and we shall begin another campaign. I want you to carry it out just as expeditiously as the last one. Also, I shall design some more medals."

Then the general in the padded cell smiles and goes quietly to

sleep, aware that he has successfully accomplished a superhuman task.

Something very like this takes place when massacres are ordered. President Yahya Khan, sitting in his air-conditioned palace in Islamabad and listening to his daily military briefings, neither knew nor cared what was really happening. The military reports were carefully tailored to his wishes; they represented no recognizable reality. Nor was he in the least interested in the details of the massacre, for he had assumed from the beginning that it would be eminently successful. What he wanted was to enjoy the fame of a conqueror, the respect due to a man who has accomplished great deeds; and he gloried in his power to chastise the East Pakistanis who had not submitted to his will. Yet he was so remote from them, so indifferent to them, that he might just as well have been in a padded cell.

The pity is that so few generals are kept in padded cells, where they can embark on imaginary massacres with no danger to anyone.

When the generals attempt to rationalize their massacres, they usually explain that they need the territory occupied by the victims. They do not need it for their personal use, though they may acquire some pleasant estates. On the contrary, they regard themselves as totally disinterested: the territory is required to enable their people to live well. They will be guaranteed a continuous supply of food, oil or minerals, and their standard of living will improve, and they will be endlessly grateful to the general who conquered the land for them. The conqueror sees himself as a savior. The fate of the people he is massacring is not worthy of consideration. All that matters is that his people are enriched at the expense of an enemy so contemptible that he scarcely deserves to live. The watchword is "loot," though it may be disguised as "a rectification of frontiers."

Another rationalization is found in the need to punish. Thus Hitler called upon the German people to punish the Czechs because they were committing "unheard of crimes" against the German minority. The crimes were imaginary, but this did not prevent him from threatening to level Prague to the ground. The imaginary crimes deserve real punishment.

Other massacres have been justified by religious differences:

the fanatical belief in the superiority of one faith over another, or of one sect over another. Thus Catholics and Protestants massacred each other. The Jews massacred the Canaanites, Mohammed ordered the massacre of the Jews, and the Crusaders massacred the Muslims. Such massacres nearly always mask the naked desire for territory and slaves. The announced aim of a massacre is rarely the true aim. Sometimes the cause of a massacre is simply the blood lust of a conqueror. Hulagu, destroying the seven hundred thousand people of Baghdad and then ordering the reigning caliph to be trampled to death by his horsemen, gained nothing at all by his victory, for he left Baghdad immediately after destroying it and never saw it again. A nihilistic rage for destruction for its own sake, without any reason, inexplicable except in terms of deep psychological wounds or madness, has brought about many massacres.

The Chinese chronicles relate that toward the end of the Ming Dynasty an adventurer called Chang Hsien-chung invaded the province of Szechuan at the head of a small army and proclaimed himself emperor of the Great Western Kingdom at Chengtu. The scholars rejected his claim, and he immediately gave orders for the massacre of the scholars. Having destroyed them, he set about destroying all the merchants, then all the women and all the officials. Finally he ordered his own soldiers to kill each other. He ordered the feet of the officers' wives to be cut off and made a mound of them, and at the top of the mound he placed the feet of his favorite concubines. For some reason he was obsessed with ears and feet, and since it was too much trouble to bring the bodies of the villagers who lived in remote outlying districts to Chengtu, he ordered his private guards to bring him their ears and feet, and he carefully counted them. When the massacre was over, he ordered that there should be placed in a prominent position in Chengtu an inscription carved in stone, reading:

Heaven brings forth innumerable things to help man.
 Man has nothing with which to recompense Heaven.
 Kill. Kill. Kill. Kill. Kill. Kill. Kill.

Sixty years ago the inscription, in twenty-one characters, could still be seen in Chengtu.

Chang Hsien-chung was the classic example of the man who

destroys in furious rage without any desire for territory or slaves. His rage was directed against mankind, so insignificant and powerless compared with the sovereign power of heaven, and it is possible that he genuinely believed that men were so contemptible that they did not deserve to live. But he arrived at this conclusion only after the scholars had rejected his claim to be their emperor, and he killed them because they frustrated his plans and because they constituted the traditional ruling class which would inevitably attempt to overthrow him once he was in power. The ferocious three line poem provided him with a philosophical justification for his acts, but it was not necessarily the real justification. The poem celebrates philosophical nihilism, of which many vestiges remain in the great Chinese classic called the *Tao Teh Ching*, which appears to have been written in a period of constant wars. Taoism offers its follower a way of withdrawal from the tumultuous events of this world, a retreat into the Void, the consciousness that human life is so much at the mercy of inscrutable forces that it is better not to act at all than to act counter to those forces. The unknown author of the *Tao Teh Ching* writes:

Heaven and Earth are without benevolence.
 To them all the creatures are but as straw dogs.
 The Sage has no benevolence:
 To him the hundred families are but as straw dogs.
 The space between Heaven and Earth
 Is a blacksmith's bellows,
 Vacant, inexhaustible.

Chang Hsien-chung was simply going one step further. If all the creatures are but straw dogs, the straw animals used during the sacrifices and later discarded, then it was perfectly permissible to discard them, since they serve no purpose. "Kill. Kill. Kill . . ." is, in this view, the logical conclusion to be drawn from the statement that "Heaven and Earth are without benevolence." In much the same way Dostoyevsky came to the conclusion that if there is no God, then everything is permissible.

Happily, the philosophical nihilist usually ends by killing himself, and he does not embark on massacre because he does not possess the necessary weapons or because he finds himself too

immersed in his own nihilistic thoughts to care whether a massacre takes place. Dostoyevsky's "underground man" says quietly: "May the whole world perish so long as I have my cup of tea." By the time he has had his cup of tea, he may feel too refreshed to pursue his thoughts on world destruction. Dostoyevsky's "underground man," coming out from under the floorboards, is a man without certainties, believing in nothing, vengeful and destructive, and too weak to kill a fly. What happens when the philosophical nihilist is robed in imperial panoply with an army to do his bidding?

When Timurlane advanced on Delhi after winning many victories and capturing a hundred thousand prisoners, it occurred to him that he had only to threaten to kill all his prisoners and the rulers of the city would capitulate. Unfortunately the ruse failed, and Timurlane found himself in a position which he found distasteful, especially since most of the prisoners had already been given as slaves to his *amirs*, his officers, and the scholars who were in his retinue. He issued orders that all the prisoners were to be strangled within an hour. A contemporary chronicler speaks of the repugnance felt by a scholar, who would not have voluntarily slain even a sheep, when he saw his fifteen slaves being strangled. Timurlane's warriors conquered the army of the King of Delhi, and then sacked the city.

When Timurlane wrote his own account of the sack of Delhi, he went to some pains to explain that the final massacre of the inhabitants occurred as a result of a series of accidents and misunderstandings. He had announced a general amnesty after the city fell to his troops, and therefore expected that peace would settle on the city. Soldiers were sent in to gather stores and provisions; they acted a little too violently, and he sent in some officers to restrain them. Some women in his harem had asked permission to see the conquered city, and he permitted them to enter under an armed escort, thus adding to the number of armed men capable of mischief. He had learned that part of the city was filled with refugees from the surrounding areas, and for some reason he wanted them expelled and sent in more armed men. Soon his Turki soldiers were completely out of his control. Here he describes what happened:

For these several reasons a great number of fierce Turki soldiers were in the city. When the soldiers proceeded to apprehend the Hindus and *gabrs* who had fled to the city, many of them drew their swords and offered resistance. The flames of strife were thus lighted and spread through the whole city from Jahanpanah and Siri to Old Delhi, burning up all it reached. The savage Turks fell to killing and plundering. The Hindus set fire to their houses with their own hands, burned their wives and children in them, and rushed into the fight and were killed. The Hindus and *gabrs* of the city showed much alacrity and boldness in fighting. The *amirs* who were in charge of the gates prevented any more soldiers from going into the place, but the flames of war had risen too high for this precaution to be of any avail in extinguishing them. On that day, Thursday, and all the night of Friday, nearly 15,000 Turks were engaged in slaying, plundering and destroying.*

For Timurlane there were no regrets. By a series of accidents he had accomplished his purpose. The amnesty had lulled the Hindus of Delhi into a sense of security, and the Turki soldiers had them at their mercy. If Timurlane's explanation of how the massacre was brought about is not completely credible, it is because the accidents seem to be contrived. There was a terrible massacre, and he went to some pains to explain that it was not his fault, he had not wanted it, and he regretted, or half-regretted, that it had taken place.

Unlike Timurlane, Hitler never offered excuses for his massacres. He gave orders that Leningrad should be leveled to the ground and the entire population massacred, and he reserved a special fate for Moscow. Not one person was to be left alive and not one stone was to be left standing on another, and the rubble of the city was to be concealed under a vast lake. The *Sonderkommandos* were under orders to kill men, women, and children, and those who showed signs of squeamishness at the prospect of killing women and children were to be severely punished. It was pointed out to them that Jews, Poles, and Russians were sub-human and did not deserve to live. If there were a few survivors, they could be employed as slaves. Hitler's attitude toward the

* Sir H. M. Elliot, ed., *The Autobiography of Timur* (Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1963), pp. 59-60.

inhabitants of eastern Europe was not markedly different from Timurlane's attitude toward the Hindus. In his view they deserved to be killed not because they had committed any crime but because they existed.

Massacres were committed by the *Sonderkommandos* daily, hourly. They were part of a day's work. The soldiers entered villages and burned them down with flame throwers, or they stood the villagers up against a wall and machine-gunned them, or they ordered the young men to dig a mass grave and calmly ordered the rest to march into it. The Germans practiced the art of massacre with efficiency; it became a habit. They kept careful records—so many men, women, and children killed in such and such a place, together with the methods employed—and special rewards were given to those who had shown themselves possessed of a talent for mass slaughter. So automatic were the massacres in Poland and Russia that the armed zealots who obeyed Himmler's orders took on the aspect of automatons. Massacre was mechanized.

As the war advanced and Hitler decided upon the mass-slaughter of the Jews, massacre became formal and institutionalized. The extermination camps came into existence by a process of trial and error. At first the prisoners were placed in a small room and poisoned by the exhaust from a diesel engine which poured in through a funnel. Gradually they were placed in larger rooms, more sophisticated poisons were employed, and the corpses were burned to ashes in incinerators. The most modern machinery was employed, and a massive bureaucracy superintended the conveyor-belt executions. No bureaucracy like this had ever existed before. Normally, bureaucracy can afford to be reckless of human material; this bureaucracy was *absolutely* reckless. Yet it was demonstrably a bureaucracy, and anyone looking at the clerks poring over their ledgers might have thought it was a quiet government office. The ledgers with the innumerable lists of the innumerable dead have survived neatly bound in black leather, with every execution meticulously recorded under eight headings. According to Heydrich's Order Number Eight any deviation from these proceedings must be severely punished. The eight headings were (1) serial number (2) surname and given name (3) date and place of birth (4) profession (5) last

known place of domicile (6) grounds for execution (7) date and place of execution (8) remarks.

The extermination camps provided employment for hundreds of thousands of SS officers and soldiers too cowardly to go to the front, but who nevertheless were permitted to enjoy the excitement of killing. Inevitably the SS guards became demoralized, and showed themselves to be totally useless for any other task. It is not difficult to kill defenseless people; it demands very little skill; and it is deadly boring when it is practiced every hour of the day. The prison guards were therefore given license to kill without reference to the bureaucratic rules handed down from headquarters. It was permissible to beat a man to death or beat out a child's brain. All that was necessary was to insert under the heading of "remarks": "Shot while trying to escape." Thus, together with the rigidly controlled bureaucratic methods of execution there existed a simpler and for the guards more satisfying method of execution, and during the later stages of the war when the extermination camps were being filled to capacity, the guards increasingly found satisfaction in private killings of a peculiarly bestial kind. At first this privilege appears to have been reserved exclusively for the camp commandants, but later it was granted to any guard who wanted it.

All aspects of killing are disturbing and terrifying, but this aspect is the most disturbing and terrifying of all. The privileged killers in East Pakistan, like the killers in the extermination camps, did not limit themselves to killing. They tortured, mutilated, degraded, as though they felt an overwhelming need to reduce the person they were killing to the status of an unrecognizable, inhuman "non-object." They took pleasure in discovering ever more horrible ways of degrading the human person. They raped, but it was not sufficient to rape. They must go on to other things. The girl's breasts are cut off, a bayonet is thrust up her vagina, she is disembowelled, and her head is cut off. What is left no longer resembles a girl, and the murderer can convince himself that he is seeing only a bloody object lying on the ground, despicable. In this way he can sometimes protect himself from feelings of guilt, forgetting that he is in fact all the more guilty of a crime that cries to heaven because in mutilating a girl he has degraded the human condition.

When Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, he gave orders that thirty-six million Russians should be "liquidated." This figure, which represents roughly half the Russian population west of the Urals, was not chosen blindly, for he wanted a large work force of slaves to do the menial work for the German settlers and at the same time he wanted to strike so much terror in the survivors that they would never dare to rebel against German rule. In his view the killing of thirty-six million Russians was a sufficient deterrent. The Pakistani military authorities were not so demanding or so foolhardy, and they demanded only that the population should be reduced by three million. According to official Soviet figures, Hitler's armies and secret police forces killed twenty million Russians.

Although it is scarcely possible to speak of any philosophical basis for Hitler's wars, nevertheless there were certain philosophical assumptions involved. They were related to the value placed on human life. In an order published on September 16, 1941, shortly after the invasion of the Soviet Union, Field Marshal Keitel wrote: "It should be remembered that a human life in unsettled countries counts for nothing, and a deterrent effect can be obtained by unusual severity." What he meant by "unusual severity" was not spelled out, but the officers were well aware that it included the massacre of civilians and of prisoners and the destruction of towns and villages. Much had changed since World War I, when every German soldier from the highest to the lowest carried in his paybook a document called *Ten Commandments for the Conduct of the German Soldier in War* pasted inside the cover. Among these commandments were: The Red Cross of the enemy is inviolable, the civilian population is inviolable, the soldier must on no account plunder or wantonly destroy, and wounded enemy soldiers were to be treated humanely. Field Marshal Keitel's order was an invitation to indiscriminate massacre.

Another order, found among Keitel's papers after his arrest, included women and children among those whose lives counted for nothing. "You are authorized to take any measures without restriction, even against women and children, in order to achieve success," he wrote. General Rudenko, the Soviet prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, asked Keitel how he interpreted this order. He replied that he meant only that women and children should be

removed for their own protection from the scene of operations. General Rudenko was not convinced. "By removal you mean murder," he suggested. "Tell me, is that a just order?"

There was a long pause, while Keitel grew visibly pale. The document signed with a "K" resembling barbed wire was presented to him.

"I consider this order to be just," he said, "and as such I admit it—but not measures to kill. That would be a crime. No German soldier ever thought of killing women and children."

Keitel was hanged, and this document was his death warrant. When he offered himself as a man who genuinely believed that a direct order to kill might somehow be interpreted as an order to remove people to a safer place for their own protection, he was demonstrating his stupidity as well as his inhumanity. What was most remarkable about the Nazi leaders when they were placed on trial at Nuremberg was their appalling stupidity. They lied transparently, they continually reminded themselves and the audience that they had sworn a sacred oath to Hitler and could by no conceivable means find any reason to break it, and they were continually attempting to throw the blame for their own crimes on others. It seemed inconceivable that these dull, shoddy men could once have held the world by the throat. Some like Hermann Goering had ordered massacres, others like Albert Speer had worked slave laborers to death and thought nothing of it, while others like Julius Streicher had hounded Jews to their deaths. In stupidity and in guilt there was nothing to choose among them.

To the Bengalis of East Pakistan there was no heavier cross to bear than the stupidity of their conquerors. There was little to choose between the behavior of the Punjabi soldiers and the behavior of the SS guards in the extermination camps. The Punjabis enjoyed inflicting pain. Death came, but only after prolonged torture. At Auschwitz slow torture and degradation were practiced with astonishing virtuosity. There are reports of bearded Jews having their beards ripped off and then their bleeding faces were burned with torches. Those who struck back had their eyes gouged out and their teeth smashed. Only after they had suffered these and many more indignities, were they strung up by one leg and left to die slowly. The Punjabis, too, showed ingenuity in inventing tortures of considerable complexity. They regarded the

quick shooting of defenseless prisoners with distaste. It was more rewarding to spend half a day working over their prisoners, reviving them when they became unconscious, then starting all over again. Unlike the Japanese during the sack of Nanking, who thought it sufficient to bayonet women and children and then left them alone, the Punjabis took pleasure in sexual mutilation, and indeed there were sexual overtones in their massacres. When a male prisoner fell into their hands, they would first examine him to see whether he was circumcised. If he was, it meant that he was a Muslim; if he was not, he was a Hindu and therefore deserving of a heavier punishment. A Muslim might be permitted to die after a torture lasting twenty-four hours. A Hindu would not be treated so leniently, and he would die a week later.

At the root of the mystery was the phenomenon of boredom. At all costs boredom must be avoided, and the more intricate and painful the tortures the more certain were the executioners of deriving emotional profit from the operation. It was immensely satisfying to them to hear the cries of the dying. They delighted in seeing how the most noble of men can be made to weep pitifully and to die in agony. To ensure the greatest profit the spectacle must be made amusing, as though some fantastic joke was being played. A man whose bones are broken or whose skin has been peeled off him evokes commiseration in most men; for the executioners he is an object of comedy.

All through history the executioners have acted in the same way. In Assyrian reliefs and Mayan wall paintings we are aware of the amused, indulgent smiles of the executioners. When Sultan Abdul Hamid II ordered the massacre of the Christian Armenians in October 1895, a German doctor who was traveling in the area reported that the mobs aided by regular troops and the police were soon bored by killing and quickly invented elaborate techniques to provide comic relief:

The monotonous work of dragging hundreds of defenseless Armenians out of their homes and hiding places merely to behead, stab, throttle, hang, or beat them, soon palled. The merry mob wanted variety. Simple murder became dull, and the business must now be made more amusing. How would it do to light a fire and roast the wounded at it? To gibbet a few head-downwards? Drive nails into others? Or tie fifty of them together and fire into the

coil? Putting out eyes and cutting off ears and noses was a special accomplishment. Christian priests who refused to become Mohammedans were considered particularly worthy of this fate. Petroleum and kerosene were at hand. It is true that the authorities intended them to be used only for the purpose of burning down houses and destroying grain. But why not put them to other and more useful purposes? . . .

The baker in Kesserek, who had already murdered ninety-seven Armenians, which he proved by exhibiting their ears and noses, declared that he would not rest until he had brought up the number to one hundred. But he found his master in Hadji Bego of Tadem, who had butchered more than a hundred Christians, and who, as a sign of his prowess, cut a woman into four pieces and put them on posts to public view. The butcher of Aintab, who stuck the heads of six Armenians on his spit, was outdone by the Turk at Subaschigulp, who slaughtered Armenians like sheep and hung their bodies on meat-hooks. The people of Trebizond brought out the humor of the thing; they shot Adam, the Armenian butcher, and his son, cut them to pieces, stuck the limbs separately on sticks and offered them for sale to passers-by: "Who will buy an arm, a leg, feet or hands? Cheap! Who will buy?" But innocence must be spared. The Sultan had commanded that Christians under seventeen should not be killed. But who heeds such caution? The Muhammedans of a large village in Marash saved at least one small child from this fate by throwing it into the fire.*

The Turks indulged in the same barbarities when killing the Armenians as the Punjabis when killing Bengalis. Reading the chronicles of the Armenian massacres we might be reading the chronicles of the massacres in Bengal. There are only a limited number of ways to extract amusement from dead or dying men; and wild laughter always accompanies massacres.

Today no one remembers Aintab, Kesserek, Subaschigulp, or Marash, but they were places where human dignity was violated and assaulted beyond any hope or possibility of forgiveness. There are blood-stained fields all over the world that cry out for vengeance.

Unhappily there is no way to avenge a massacre. The crime is too vast, too absolute, for vengeance. To place Yahya Khan

* M. C. Gabrielian, *Armenia, A Martyr Nation* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), pp. 260-61.

A Schema of Massacre

MASSACRE HAS ITS OWN structure and although it appears to assume many outward forms, the basic structure is nearly always the same. It obeys predictable laws and assumes predictable shapes according to the nature of the forces involved; and just as one can study the nature of war, so one can study the nature of massacre, which is war reduced to its simplest dimensions.

A massacre is the most hideous act that men can perform. Under no conditions whatsoever can it have moral justification. Those who perform the act put themselves outside the pale of humanity; they are guilty of a crime that shrieks to heaven. It is so terrible that the men who plan and order it always take care not to witness it. When the massacre is taking place, they are as far away as possible from the scene of the murders. The sight of murdered men and mutilated women and children offends them and tends to weaken their resolve. They therefore run away like the most abject cowards, and surprisingly often turn to drink and womanizing to drown their sense of guilt, their knowledge that they will one day be called to account for their crimes. Yahya Khan was perhaps an extreme case of a man who orders a massacre and then runs away as fast as possible. On the day he issued

the final order for the massacres in East Pakistan he flew from Dacca to Rawalpindi, thirteen hundred miles away.

There are two basic forms of massacre: the static massacre and the massacre of maneuver. The static massacre is simply the mass execution of men who have fallen into the conqueror's hands. They are usually prisoners, and surprisingly large numbers of them have been executed in a single day, or in the space of a few days. Thus it appears that the 11,000 Polish military men killed in the World War II massacre at Katyn Forest near Smolensk were all shot within the space of four or five days. A huge pit was dug, the men were led into it blindfolded or with their coats wrapped round their heads, and they were then shot in the nape of the neck. Afterward the pit was covered with earth and planted over with saplings.

In a static massacre the victims have no chance of escape. When Brigadier General Dyer ordered the massacre in the Jallianwalla Bagh at Amritsar on April 13, 1919, all the advantages were in his favor. The unarmed Indians, whom he had decided to punish, were in an enclosed space surrounded by walls and houses, and it was an easy matter to bring up his Gurkhas and Baluch rifle men and order them to fire into the crowd. Some 1,650 rounds were fired, and about 400 Indians were killed and four times as many were wounded. Only a handful of Indians succeeded in escaping over the walls, and those who were severely wounded were allowed to bleed to death, for at his orders no doctors or medical orderlies were permitted on the scene until the next day.

In a static massacre men die, and that is the end of the matter. The massacre of maneuver is a far more complicated affair, for it brings into existence a complex system of forces which nevertheless moves according to ascertainable laws. The classic example of the massacre of maneuver took place during the first stages of the German invasion of Russia in World War II. The German Army carried everything before it. There were large-scale massacres in all the towns they passed through, and hundreds of thousands of prisoners were rounded up and later massacred or left to perish of hunger. Yet the Germans never possessed complete authority over the lands they had conquered, for inevitably they found themselves opposed by partisans. The partisan groups

blew up bridges, railroads, and ammunition depots. They were a presence that could be felt, though they moved invisibly behind the lines. A hundred thousand partisans were hiding in the forests, harrying the German forces. Later, when the Russian Army was brought up to strength and went over to the offensive, the partisans lost their importance. In those early days they showed what could be done by groups of determined men working behind the enemy lines. The Mukti Bahini were acting in Bangla Desh like the Russian partisans in the autumn and winter of 1941.

One of the reasons why it is possible to construct a schema for a general theory of massacre is that the character of a man who orders a massacre is invariably rigid and fanatical. He is contemptuous of mankind, guilt-ridden, insecure in his personal relationships, incapable of compromise, merciless. He usually cushions his insecurity by inventing for himself a distinguished ancestry and by proclaiming his adherence to a martial elite. He has a recognizable character and his actions under stress are predictable. The actions of the people he is massacring are far less predictable. They may, or may not, strike back; they may, or may not, find a leader; they may, or may not, surrender. The massacre may come upon them so suddenly that they are taken completely unawares and find themselves helpless in the hands of the adversary. But if they strike back in force even when they have suffered a million dead, then the general who has ordered the massacre is likely to panic, make all the wrong decisions, and issue a stream of orders urging his commanders in the field to be even more merciless and more brutal, as though they had not already reached their maximum effort in mercilessness and brutality.

Since the pattern of his actions is known, the survivors of the massacre act accordingly. They, too, become merciless to the utmost possible extent, capture hostages, torture them to death, and make sure that the enemy finds the bodies. They know that it is not necessary to have bullets in order to kill; it is only necessary to have a pair of hands. When I asked Mao Tse-tung what his soldiers would do when confronted with the heavily armored tanks of the Kuomintang, he answered quietly: "We shall tear them apart with our bare hands!" So, too, in Bangla Desh, the peasants and the Mukti Bahini defended themselves with their

bare hands, with sharpened stakes and with kitchen knives against the Punjabi and Baluchi soldiers armed with tanks and automatic weapons.

The survivors act with the strength of despair. They are prepared to undertake any burdens and assume any risks in order to rid themselves of the hated enemy. They act with a steady unyielding force. The enemy usually acts with maximum force at the beginning, and thereafter the force declines.

Since a massacre of maneuver is often a long, tedious, and unnering affair, almost mechanical in its repetitive operations, the enthusiasm and fervor of the soldiers soon dies down. The soldiers who found themselves murdering at their leisure, killing defenseless townspeople and equally defenseless villagers, quickly discover the limitations in the art of massacre. It is comparatively easy to race down a street in an armored car machine-gunning everyone in sight. It is easier still to set fire to shops and houses, and to murder and mutilate women. To kill a child demands no very great skill. But when the people fight back, the soldiers discover that they are not dealing with pasteboard figures set up in a shooting gallery. People do not like being killed at the orders of drunken, incompetent dictators or generals who regard a successful massacre as a military feat which will bring them promotion. They fight with cunning. They learn how to hide. The soldiers must therefore ferret them out by entering their hiding places, thus depriving themselves of the luxury of fighting on their own ground.

The danger point for the soldiers comes about a month after the massacres have begun. By this time killing has become so wearisome and exhausting that they turn away from murder to the more pleasurable excitements of loot and rape. The military authorities in Dacca were well aware of the dangers of looting and promised severe punishment for all looters. Nevertheless the looting continued, and the people who were being massacred watched with grave interest the demoralization of the enemy.

One could construct graphs showing the curves of declining morale of the soldiers. A massacre can be analyzed statistically, the forces at work can be isolated, studied, and compared with similar forces working during other massacres. Since massacre by definition is the organized destruction of human beings without

mercy and without any regard for moral laws, the mere fact that it is organized means that it is subject to the laws of force. But it is more important to observe that the people instinctively came to understand the forces at work without benefit of statistical analysis. They felt these forces acting on their skins and on their nerves, for a man fighting for his life against desperate odds possesses reserves of intelligence and understanding denied to the enemy.

From the available historical records it appears that massacres go through eight formal stages. Sometimes of course a massacre is so swift and complete that it is all over in a few days, and in such cases there is no development. Sometimes, too, the second or third onslaught by the army will reduce the civilians to such a state of weakness that they will surrender, preferring to become slaves or to be executed than to carry on a hopeless war. But when the army massacres defenseless civilians who resist with all their strength and finally overcome their oppressors, then the schema of a massacre will almost invariably follow the same pattern:

First, the future victims are lulled into a sense of security. A military commander who prepares a massacre seeks the utmost advantage. He therefore draws up his plans in secret and does everything possible to ensure that the people know nothing about them and do not even suspect they are being drawn up. It is explained to them that all their wishes will be met and all disagreements are at an end. Ideally, the victims should be in a state of euphoria. This principle was recognized by the guards in the extermination camps who gave sweets to the children on their way to the gas chambers.

Questions of morality do not arise, and the military commander is not swayed by motives of kindness, nor does it occur to him that he is committing an act of cowardice and treachery. His aim is to lull them into a false sense of security by every available means. He is perfectly capable of inviting the people to attend a military parade and to throw flowers at the marching soldiers. At exactly the right moment the guns open fire.

Men intent on massacre have gone to extraordinary lengths to disarm suspicion. Abdul Hamid II, Sultan of Turkey, pleasantly

surprised the Armenians in October 1895 by signing a *firman* granting them the reforms they desired and then gave the order for a general massacre. Timurlane publicly granted an amnesty to the people of Delhi and then sent his soldiers to kill them. When the Japanese attacked Nanking in December 1937 they encouraged the Chinese to set up "safety zones" for the civilian population. Once they were inside the city, they raced to the "safety zones" and massacred nearly everyone in them. President Yahya Khan conducted negotiations with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman until shortly before he flew to Rawalpindi on March 25, 1971, after announcing that the negotiations were proceeding satisfactorily.

Second, the death blow. The massacre is planned like a military campaign. The streets are the battlefields, but there is almost no house-to-house fighting. The aim is to strike a paralyzing blow in the shortest possible space of time. Potential centers of resistance are wiped out. Colleges and universities are among the first to be attacked. The Japanese deliberately bombed Nankai University in Tientsin during the early stages of the war against China for the same reason that Yahya Khan gave orders for the attack on the students of Dacca University. "Everything revealing itself as a Polish power of leadership must be destroyed *again and again* with ruthless energy," wrote Hans Frank, the ruler of the General Government of Poland. The aristocracy, the clergy, the professional classes, the scholars, and the students are always among the first to be rounded up and shot.

Since it is intended that the blow shall be decisive, the military commander will engage the whole weight of the army in the massacre. There is no need to call up reserves. Striking with overwhelming force against a defenseless population, he expects the first blow to be the last. After some days the massacre is called off, and the commander announces a general amnesty to the population while intelligence officers study the situation. In East Pakistan the first massacre was called off within forty-eight hours.

The death blow causes the worst damage and paralyzes the survivors, reducing them to a state of passivity and almost of indifference. They are too numbed to be surprised by the brutal manifestation of the enemy's will. An army, faced with a similar

blow, will panic and flee in disorder. The civilian population will flee, but does not panic. Instead, it falls into a kind of stupor, which the military commander mistakes for acquiescence.

Third, the victims recover from their paralysis. The massacres do not come to an end with the first knock-out blow. During the following weeks there are sporadic mass killings, but they are neither on the scale of the first, nor are they carefully planned. They are the echoes of the thunderclap. These killings serve the purpose of reminding the population to remain quiet and submissive.

As the victims are gradually aroused from their apathy, they begin to strike back, at first timidly, then more passionately, with ferocious determination. Soldiers patrol the streets at night at terrible risk. If they are on foot, they are likely to be murdered. If they are in jeeps or weapons carriers, they may find a steel wire drawn tightly across a road. If they are in tanks, they may suddenly be brought up short by a Molotov cocktail. Finally, they abandon their night patrols, leaving the civilian population in command of the streets during the night.

The civilians have by this time formed spontaneous groups, usually very small. If one group is captured and put to the torture, it can reveal nothing of importance to the military, which inevitably magnifies the strength of the resistance, imagining that it is organized when in fact it is still disorganized. At this stage the lack of organization benefits the civilians.

Fourth, the military mounts a second massacre. Like the death blow, the second massacre is carefully planned on the basis of intelligence reports. The aim once more is to terrify the people, but where previously the blow was aimed at selected targets—universities, police stations, barracks—with the mass shooting of civilians playing a minor but essential role, the second blow is deliberately conceived as pure unrestricted terror.

● Outwardly it appears that the military has lost its nerve and is giving itself up to destructive fury, but in fact it knows what it is doing. It destroys aimlessly, but aimless destruction is itself an aim. By destroying at random on a massive scale it hopes to crush the last remnants of resistance.

In East Pakistan this second massacre began toward the end of April, 1971. Previously the military employed tanks, armored

cars, and ground troops. Now, as the troops fanned across the country, they called in the support of warships, gunboats, and jet planes. Chittagong was continuously and heavily shelled by the Pakistani naval vessels *Babar* and *Jehangir*. Gun boats shelled villages on both sides of the Mongla and Chalna channels. Jet planes streaked low over the countryside, dropping napalm on villages and chemical bombs on jute plantations to render them useless. The terror was unrestrained, and it was no longer thought necessary to make any gestures of appeasement. Schools were burned to the ground and school children were lined up and shot.

Fifth, the victims begin to organize. Since the enemy has overextended his lines during the second phase of operations, more and more guns are falling into the hands of the civilian population. Guerrilla leaders are emerging. The period of shock and stupor has passed, and there are the beginnings of organized resistance. The military command may congratulate itself on the vast numbers of people killed and the vast numbers of villages burned to the ground, but these satisfying statistics are somewhat mitigated by the knowledge that increasing numbers of soldiers are being lost. The military now takes stock of the situation, and there follows a period of withdrawal and recuperation.

Sixth, the military mounts a third massacre. There is, of course, no reason why the military should not be capable of mounting an indefinite number of massacres. It is in its power to kill, but it is rarely in its power to inspire respect. By the time the third massacre is mounted, the victims have acquired an intelligence service of their own and they have already formed well-led and well-trained guerrilla armies. The Mukti Bahini suffered badly in April during the second massacre. By the middle of July they were winning their first victories.

The third massacre took place during June, July, and August at the height of the monsoon. One might have thought that the monsoons would help the defenders, but it was not so. As the waters rose, it became easier for the military to move along the rivers at night and to descend upon unsuspecting villages, and then vanish into the night. The military was learning guerrilla techniques, but it was almost too late.

By this time the guerrillas were well-armed, and almost the en-

ture population was supporting them. The military was now being diverted from their main task of killing defenseless civilians and concentrating their efforts on stamping out the Mukti Bahini. This was war, and they did not like it. Neither the military elite nor the soldiers had shown that they possessed stamina. They were losing their nerve.

Seventh, the victim bites off the enemy's hands and feet. Once the tide begins to turn, the military begins to disintegrate. It has acted on the assumption that at all times it possesses overwhelming strength, and in fact it still possesses tanks, armored cars, and airplanes in large numbers. It has intelligent staff officers and an efficient communications system. It has, in fact, everything necessary to conduct more massacres. What it lacks is the will to fight. Eroded by fear, incapable of making accurate judgments, it surrenders to panic. It is still dangerous, but it is beginning to be dangerous to itself. Uncertainties crowd in on it and the center does not hold.

The Mukti Bahini were now occupying large areas and surrounding the towns. When talking about the fighting, they say they were amateurs until September, but by October they were professionals. They were now better trained, better disciplined, and better equipped. They had tanks, small ships, motor boats, even half a dozen airplanes. They were a hundred thousand men, roughly the same number as the Pakistani Army, now reduced to a rabble demoralized by six or seven months of privileged murder, rape, arson, and looting. There were still some good fighting men, but they were outnumbered by the rabble.

The Mukti Bahini had the will to fight and the will to victory. The enemy was suffering from a disease well-known in hospitals — it was losing the will to live.

Eighth, the final massacre. A dying viper attacks up to the moment of its last breath. Even when it is paralysed with a broken back, it will still raise its head and strike anything within reach.

Confronted with inevitable defeat, the German Army retreating across the steppes of Russia and the plains of Poland set fire to villages and massacred peasants not because there were any advantages to be gained by destruction but because they knew they were defeated. They killed in a fury of hatred, in paroxysmic rage. Since they were doomed, everyone else must be doomed.

Similarly, when the guards in the extermination camps realized that they were about to be overrun, they sometimes attempted to burn down the entire camp and all the inmates before fleeing to whatever safety remained for them in the West. They demanded a last holocaust.

So, too, in East Pakistan, in every district occupied by the army, massacres took place only a few hours before the formal surrender. In Dacca the people who were killed were mostly professional men, doctors, scholars, and students. Many of the dead were found scattered in shallow ponds and depressions in a deserted brickyard near Mohmmedpur on the outskirts of the city. They were still recognizable. All of them had their hands tied behind them; the majority had been shot to death; and about a dozen had been brutally butchered.

After the surrender the death lists were found, giving the names of all the intellectuals and professional men who were to be killed. The lists were long and numerous. They were compiled by collaborators and mercenaries belonging to fanatical organizations like Al Badr and Al Shams, which sought to restore East Pakistan to the West Pakistan fold. Many of the men on the death lists could not be found, because they were in hiding. At the next-to-last moment orders were given to round up as many of these people as possible and shoot them. East Pakistan, too, must have its last holocaust.

This schema of a massacre from its cautious beginnings to the last inevitable paroxysmic flare-up is biased in favor of the victims, for it assumes they will win. They do not often win. The victory of the peasants of East Pakistan is that rare phenomenon—the massacre that fails. Recorded history is full of massacres that succeeded only too well.

Nevertheless there is some hope to be derived from the thought that massacre is a complex organism with a structure of its own, capable of endless variations, but composed of recognizable elements acting in recognizable ways, following laws which are invariable. We realize that the chosen victims are not necessarily powerless. They, too, are fields of force, capable of reacting violently whenever the enemy lets down its guard. They are least powerful, and perhaps powerless, when they are cooped up in a small space like the Chinese who were massacred in the

“safety zones” in Nanking and the Spanish Republicans who were massacred in the bullring at Badajoz. Given space, they may yet overcome their oppressors. There is a sense in which the fastest airplanes cannot move as fast as a man running for his life. The most elementary stratagems are often successful: running, hiding, digging pits, trenches, and tunnels, throwing Molotov cocktails, wielding knives, or killing with one's bare hands. A mechanized army furnished with the most modern German weapons roared across southern Russia, massacring everyone in its path, but in the end most of the German soldiers were killed and the partisans attended the victory celebrations.

As long as there is space, there is always hope. The greater the space, the greater the hope. Thrust, recoil, regrouping of forces: thus armies act, and so do unarmed civilians. They can thrust more effectively, recoil, and regroup more effectively, when they have space to move in. Space is their hiding place, their innumerable lines of retreat, and their source of supplies. “At night everyone seemed to be on the move,” said one of the Mukti Bahini fighters. “We were like ants scurrying in all directions.” The army, for its own safety, preferred to spend the night in cantonments. Space was less useful to them.

The victims often have advantages denied to the enemy: a sense of common purpose, which is more than a common desire for survival. They have what Ibn Khaldun called *asabiya*, which means the affection men feel for their brothers and neighbors when they are badly treated or killed, and then by extension their instinctive sense of brotherhood in its most positive outgoing sense, so that *asabiya* becomes a weapon they can hurl at the enemy. It is more than brotherhood, for it becomes power. Ibn Khaldun showed how the Arab armies, surging out of Arabia and conquering the Byzantine and the Persian empires in the course of a few years, were in full possession of *asabiya*, and how that power gradually diminished in the empires of their successors when there no longer existed a hard-core sense of community. The Bengalis possessed an abundance of *asabiya*. It was their secret weapon, and perhaps the most effective.

Native courage they also possessed in abundance. It was not the courage of trained soldiers who march into minefields at the command of their officers. It was more secretive, more cunning.

more human. They had lost so many of their friends and relatives that they placed a high value on their own lives. They were fighting to enjoy the day when the last corrupt Pakistani officer had been swept into a prison camp, and they fought all the more vigorously because freedom seemed to be waiting for them at the end of the long bloodstained road.

The lesson to be learned from the victory of the freedom fighters in East Pakistan is therefore an important one. In an age of atom bombs and mechanized warfare, when man appears to be helpless at the mercy of huge imponderable forces and of dehumanized politicians, his own humanity is his safeguard. He may be overwhelmed by the enemy, as the Samnites and the Etruscans were overwhelmed by the Romans in massacres so dreadful that nothing was left of them except the evidence of their art, but he has a fighting chance, he is not entirely weaponless, and he has more allies than he suspects.

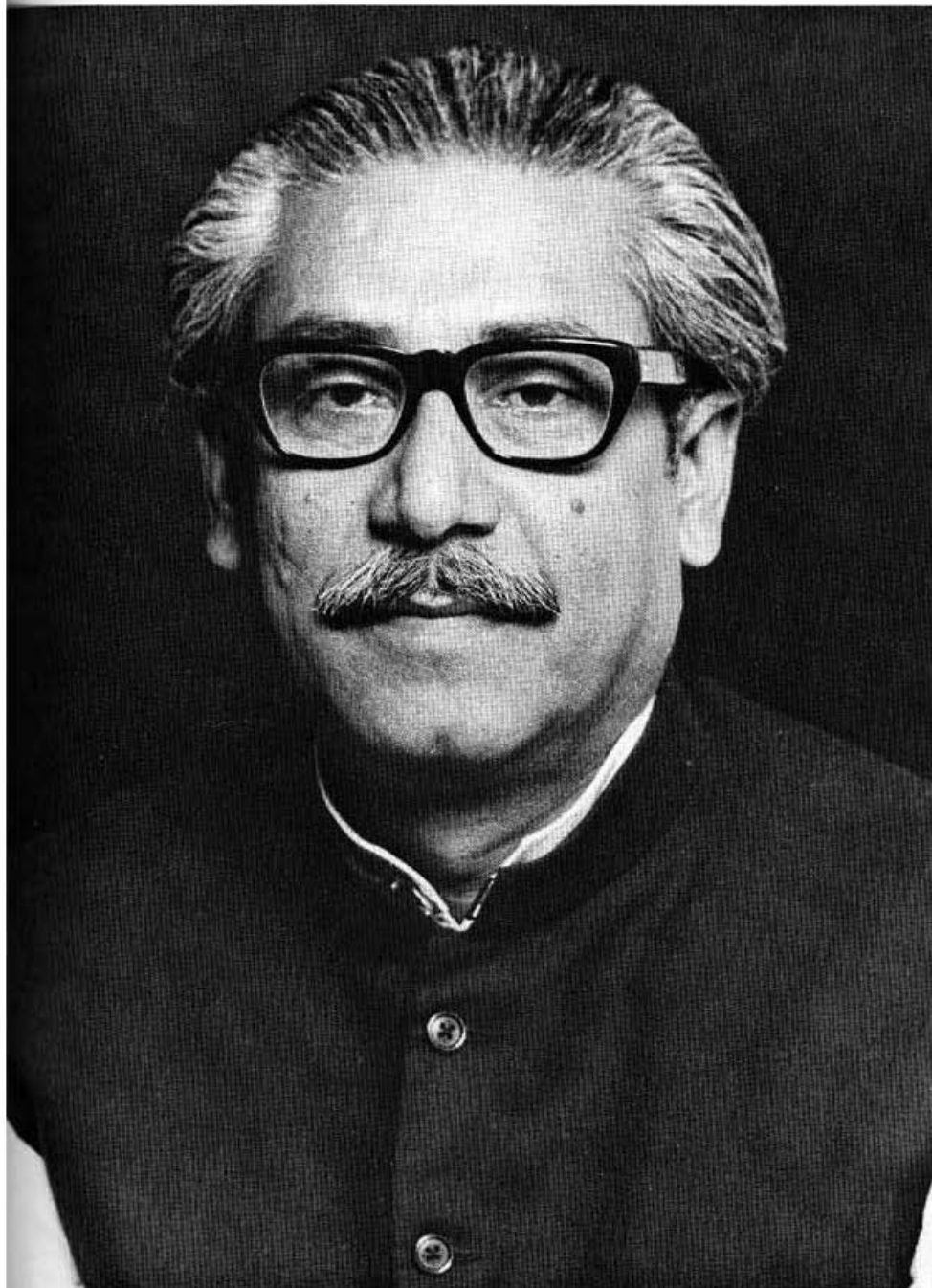
In the raw will of man lies the key to victory.

The Prisoner

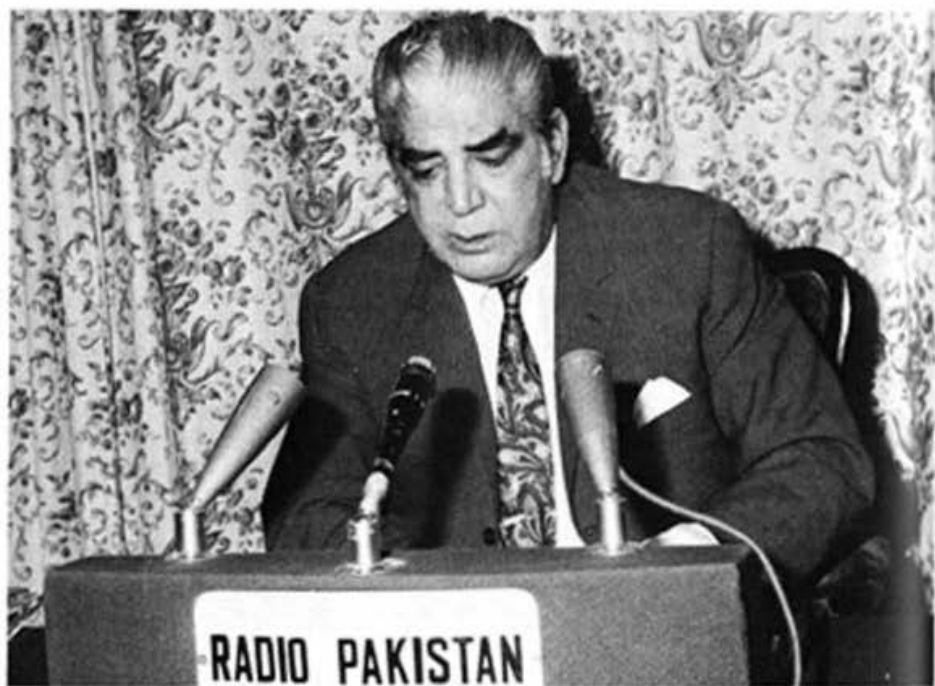
SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN was one of those men who possesses the raw will to victory to an extraordinary degree. He was in prison in West Pakistan, reduced to the status of a blind deaf-mute, knowing nothing, incapable of influencing the course of affairs, at the mercy of his jailers. Yet throughout all the months of imprisonment he never despaired. He was certain of victory, as other men are certain that the sun will rise tomorrow. It was inconceivable to him that the Bengalis would ever submit to the invaders.

"I knew my people well, and I knew their strength," he said later. "That is why I did not despair."

His world consisted of four walls, a bed, a stone floor, a window so high that he had only a fleeting glimpse of the sky. It was a world he knew well, for he had been in many prisons. He liked to boast that except for his first short prison sentence he had always been kept in solitary confinement. "When they want to break your spirit, that is what they do to you," he said. "Very often they succeed." The sun rose, the shadows lengthened, darkness came, and there was only the small cell. The guards brought his food and then vanished, leaving him to his endless meditations. He did not know what town he was in, and if he



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
(PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, DACCA)



Above: President Yahya Khan (INFORMATION SERVICE OF PAKISTAN, NEW YORK)

Right: General Tikka Khan and his son (OFFICE OF PRESIDENT CHOUDHURY, Dacca)



Right: Mrs. Indira
Gandhi (INFORMATION
SERVICE OF INDIA, NEW
YORK)



Below: Zulfikar Ali
Bhutto (WIDE WORLD)





Wounded Bengali girl in refugee camp (INFORMATION SERVICE OF INDIA, NEW YORK)



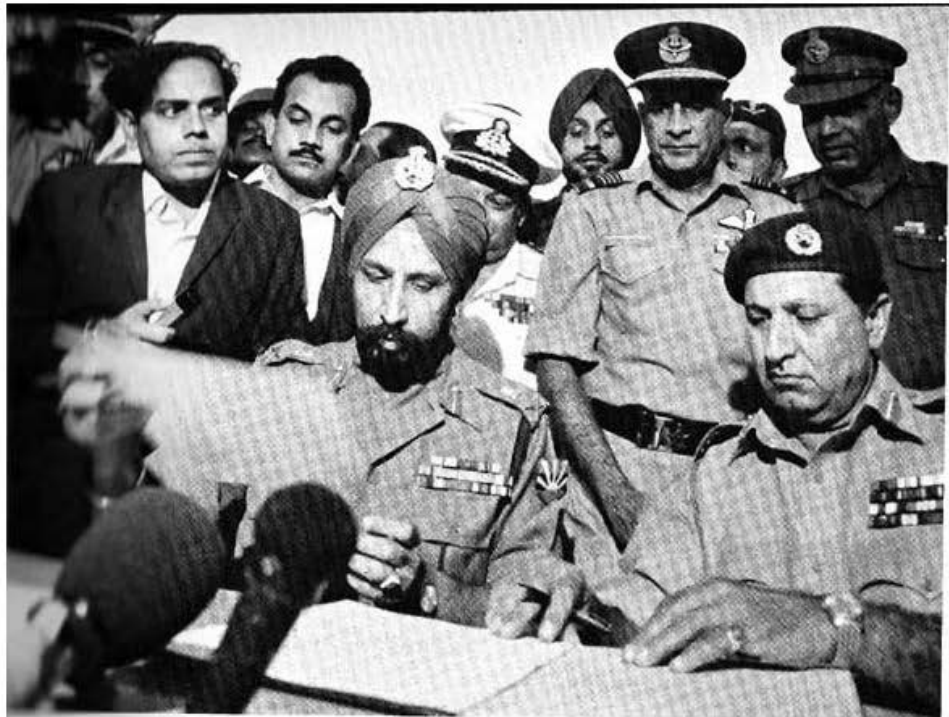
Refugees marching across ricefields near Indian frontier (SIRAJUL)



Above left: Intellectuals killed at brickworks outside Dacca, December 14, 1971 (SIRAJUL)

Above right: Lieutenant General Aurora (left) and Lieutenant General Niazi (right) sign instrument of surrender on Dacca race course, December 16, 1971 (WIDE WORLD)

Opposite: Villagers at Atangir killed in Pakistani bombing raid, December 8, 1971 (INFORMATION SERVICE OF INDIA, NEW YORK)





Return of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Dacca,
January 10, 1972 (JASON LAURE)

had known, it would have been a matter of indifference to him. He knew he was somewhere in West Pakistan and he knew that at any moment the door would burst open and there would be a man with a machine gun standing outside.

In East Pakistan they called him *Banglabandhu*, which means "friend of Bengal." It was an expression of their affection for him, their *asabiya*, their sense of community with him. Sometimes they called him *Mujib-bhai*, which has almost the meaning of "dear Mujib." To the prison guards he was an important prisoner of state, whose life was likely to be brief. Every week the prison governor despatched to Islamabad a report on the prisoner's behavior: he had taken food, he had not taken food, he had marched up and down his small cell, he had slept well or badly. President Yahya Khan was more interested in the statements he made, but apart from the obligatory "*Salaam*" in answer to the same greeting by the guards when they entered his cell, he spoke hardly at all. He was a model prisoner. "I should not be commended for being a model prisoner," he said later. "After all, I had a great deal of experience."

There are some men who can adapt themselves to a long prison term, falling into a kind of mindless lethargy. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was not one of them. He was never able to adapt himself to prison life except in the most superficial way. He hated, loathed, and despised prison, all the more because he was naturally ebullient, high-strung, and fond of talking. Those who have met him are surprised by a quality rare among political leaders—his gaiety. When he enters a room, the lights seem to grow brighter, fountains suddenly seem to be playing, and the sky outside is ablaze with fireworks. He speaks of "my country," "my children," "my people," his arms shooting out to embrace them in an ecstasy of astonishment that anything so beautiful as Bengal and its people could exist. He possesses a genuine friendliness and sympathy, and is puzzled because there are people in the world who are not equally friendly and sympathetic.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman knew that his life depended upon the whim of a military dictator. He was therefore in the same position as the Bengalis during the first weeks of the massacre. He knew, no one knew better, that he had no weapons except the raw will to victory and the consciousness that he was not alone.

"I was ready to be executed," he said. "A man who is ready to die, nobody can kill."

He knew nothing about the events that were happening in East Pakistan, but he could guess much. If East Pakistan had been overrun by Yahya Khan's troops, if the Awami League had surrendered, then he would be killed. As long as Yahya Khan could find some use for him as a hostage, he would be permitted to live. He was allowed no newspapers, no books, no radio. He was given tobacco, his only luxury. Meanwhile he kept count of the days, recited the Koran, gazed at the tiny patch of sky, and gave himself up to the interminable silences of prison.

The guards, of course, knew who he was, and treated him with some deference, perhaps because they knew that changing political fortunes might bring him once more to high office, perhaps even to the presidency. This deference was expressed in bows, in half-smiles, and very occasionally in whispers. But as he remembered those long months in prison, he was aware of being enclosed in a vast cone of silence from which there was no foreseeable escape. Years would pass, and he would still be looking at the little patch of sky.

What sustained him was his pride, his absolute refusal to believe that anyone or anything could break his spirits, and a strange, almost mystical belief in the power of the people to support him in adversity. He felt very close to them, as though in their millions they were physically present. He had not the slightest doubt that they were supporting him with their prayers and more than their prayers. "I felt their love, and I returned their love," he said. "So it was when I was among them, and it was the same when I was in prison. I loved them ardently, and this was enough to sustain me. If it had not been for their love, I would have died many times over."

When speaking of his prison experiences, he is inclined to be abrupt, saying that they were too horrible to be contemplated and one learned nothing except patience, which was not a virtue. He was not a calm prisoner, but he made sure that the jailers would think he was calm. Once, when he was sentenced to life imprisonment, he said he found himself working out quite calmly that with remission for the time spent in prison before

affect a villager living with his family on a few acres of land. "Hundreds of thousands of rupees are being spent on the cities," he said, "although eighty per cent of the people in the provinces do not have two square meals a day and cannot clothe themselves adequately."

He was born on March 17, 1920, on a farm in the village of Tongipara about sixty miles southwest of Dacca in the district of Faridpur. His father, Sheikh Lutfur Rahman, was a clerk of the court who possessed some land and farmed it. "Sheikh" was not a title but part of his name, and to a Bengali, living far from the sheikhs of Arabia, such a name suggested not wealth and power but a rather lowly origin. Sheikh Lutfur Rahman acquired the name because it had been given to him by his father and he in turn handed it down to his son.

As a child Sheikh Mujibur Rahman suffered from beri-beri, a disease not uncommon among people who eat polished rice which is devoid of vitamins. He was severely ill, and it is possible that the disease affected his eyesight. From that time he became very nearsighted and sometimes had trouble in focussing his eyes. Yet even as a child he read prodigiously, regarding books as though they were almost objects of worship. His father encouraged him in his reading, and he was soon reading the law books in the house.

He was about ten years old when he displayed the first signs of a social conscience by distributing rice from the family store to a tenant farmer who worked on the farm. "They were hungry, and we have all these things," he explained. Sheikh Lutfur Rahman was not particularly disturbed and asked the boy to consult him before raiding the family store again.

The boy grew up tall and straight, uncommonly handsome and graceful, but not especially studious in his school work. Partly because of his weak eyesight, partly because he disliked the curriculum, and partly because he preferred talking to studying his school books, he matriculated from high school at an age when many Bengalis have settled down and begun raising a family. He was twenty-two when he left high school, and he had already been in prison. It was the year when Gandhi was denouncing British rule more vigorously than ever before. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman joined the independence movement. For throwing

times at a police station he was sentenced to six days in jail. It was his first taste of prison, and he enjoyed the experience. Later he would develop a deep horror of prison and find himself at the same time strangely attracted to it.

In that same year he went to live in a student hostel in Calcutta, while he studied history and political science at Islamia College, the only Muslim college in the city. He worked at his books during the morning and spent the afternoons and evenings politicking, building up short-lived political societies among the students, visiting Muslims who held political office, and acting as student councillor of the All India Muslim League founded by Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Politics was his life. "I spent all my time in politics while I was living in Calcutta," he said later. It was not quite true, for he sometimes attended lectures and took examinations. At Islamia College he first encountered the works of Bertrand Russell, who left a lasting impression on him. In 1947 he graduated. It was the year of the Partition of India, and he was now a citizen of East Pakistan.

He returned to Dacca, enrolled as a law student in the university and continued to be active in politics. Here, too, he spent the morning with his books and the rest of the day politicking. He founded the East Pakistan Muslim Students League, became a practiced speaker, and soon found himself in jail again. Once again he received a six-day sentence, this time in solitary confinement. A year later, in March 1949, he was making speeches on behalf of the servants and menials at Dacca University who had gone on strike for better wages. This was a punishable offense, and he went to prison again. When he came out he learned that he had been expelled from Dacca University. He also learned that he had been appointed joint secretary of the Awami League, founded by the veteran politician Hasan Shaheed Suhrawardy, whom he regarded as his mentor. There were food riots that year. The Awami League held demonstrations calling on the government to lower the price of food, and once more Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was sent to prison. For the next twenty years he was in and out of prison. "Prison," he said, "became my other home."

Between 1953 and 1957 there was a change in his fortunes. By this time the Muslim League was in a state of decay. To placate Bengali nationalism, it was decided to permit Bengalis into the

cabinet. Fazlul Huq, known as "the Lion of Bengal," briefly became prime minister of Pakistan, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was appointed minister of agricultural development. The appointment lasted two months. He went to prison again. But in June 1955 he was elected to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, and once more became a cabinet minister. This time he was minister of commerce and industry. Seven months later he relinquished his ministerial office and returned to Dacca to reorganize the Awami League.

During this period he was often traveling. He accompanied a delegation to Peking and another to New Delhi, where he had two private talks with Jawaharlal Nehru, and was impressed by the Indian prime minister's good sense, his belief that it was perfectly possible to come to an agreement with Pakistan if there was good faith on both sides. He also talked with Rajendra Prasad, who was then at the height of his power and influence. He did not share the prevailing Pakistani belief that India was the enemy destined to be conquered. India was the friend to be won over if there was to be any peace on the subcontinent.

When Ayub Khan seized power in 1958, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was among the first to feel the dictator's wrath. He was thrown into prison in October 1958, released two years later, then arrested again and given another two year sentence. This was his longest continuous period of imprisonment. He was a very sick man when he was finally released in 1961. Warned to keep away from politics, he continued to work for the Awami League until it became the major political party in East Pakistan. In April 1966 Ayub Khan threw him into prison again. He remained in prison until January 1968. Then, as he was leaving prison, he was arrested by some military officers, who ordered him into a jeep. He thought they were going to execute him. There was just time to bend down and gather a handful of dust to sprinkle on his forehead. "O Allah, I was born from this dust," he whispered. "Allow me to die here!" Then they took him to Kurmitola Cantonment and held him in jail for five more months. No one knew where he was. He seemed to have vanished from the face of the earth. The prison cell was twelve feet square, and there was no sunlight, for the solitary window was covered with thick red paint. In the evening he was allowed to walk for a few minutes in

the garden under the eyes of an armed guard. Of all his prison experiences he remembered this as the worst.

Ayub Khan had not yet finished with him. He was placed on trial as one of the ringleaders of an extraordinary conspiracy aimed against the government. This was known as the Agartala Conspiracy. He was accused of conspiring with members of the armed forces to overthrow the government of East Pakistan and to establish an independent state. The conspirators were said to be engaged in the conspiracy throughout 1965 and the spring of 1966. There were many secret meetings, the conversations had been recorded, and all those who took part were said to have confessed. Altogether twenty-eight conspirators had been rounded up, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's name was at the head of the list.

It was not difficult to prove that there had been no conspiracy and that all the confessions had been extracted under torture or threats of torture. The evidence presented to the court was so flimsy that even the lawyers for the prosecution found themselves smiling. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was portrayed as the paymaster doling out small sums of money for military weapons—two thousand rupees to one person, four thousand to another. It was an astonishing way to begin an armed revolt. Witnesses came forward to say that they had seen him waiting at a bus stop for other conspirators and then taking them in a roundabout way by car to a secret meeting place. He was accused of being in continual contact with Indians who provided him with large sums of money. He denied all the charges, launched into an attack on the government, and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The trial was a mistake, as the government later realized. The Agartala Conspiracy Case was reported in the newspapers. The evidence, which appeared so flimsy in court, seemed even flimsier in cold print. The students in East Pakistan came out on strike, marched in procession with the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and denounced the government for imprisoning him on trumped-up charges. There were riots with police shooting into the crowds. In February 1969 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was released unconditionally, and there was a mass meeting at the race course in Dacca to celebrate his return to freedom. A month later Ayub Khan resigned all his offices in favor of Yahya Khan, the

commander-in-chief of the Pakistani Army. The military elite was still in command.

Yahya Khan was one of those men who learned nothing from the past. He was another Ayub Khan, remote from the people, governing by armed force. He hated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman even more than Ayub Khan hated him, and from time to time while the massacres in East Pakistan were going on, he spoke darkly about the fate reserved for his prisoner.

The most ominous threat came in his broadcast on March 26, 1971, the day after the massacres began. "Sheikh Mujibur's decision to start the non-cooperation movement is an act of treason," he declared. "He and his party have defied the lawful authority for over three weeks, they have insulted the Pakistan flag and defiled the photograph of the Father of the Nation. They have tried to run a parallel government, they have created turmoil, terror and insecurity, and they have committed murders." It was generally assumed that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would be brought before a military court and tried for treason, a capital offense.

The more Yahya Khan thought about it, the more he found himself in a quandary. He had expelled the journalists from Dacca, and hopefully nothing would ever be known about the massacres. But if he announced publicly that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would be placed on trial, then in the normal course of events journalists from all over the world would demand to be present. Therefore it would have to be a secret trial, or perhaps there would be no need for a trial at all. It was enough to sign a presidential order for his execution.

From statements he made later it became clear that he was toying with the idea of killing him quietly. He was acutely aware that he was treading on dangerous ground, and at the same time he was quite unable to disguise his hope that the prisoner would soon be dead. In July 1971 he said: "The Bengali leader is alive and well in the highest class of West Pakistani jail. But I cannot vouch for Sheikh Mujib's life 'beyond today.' He will be tried and that does not mean that I will shoot him tomorrow. He can die a natural death. He is in the highest class of jail. He does no labor, has a small room with a bed, a fan, hot water, and a doctor in attendance."

The last words were ominous, for they prepared the ground for the "natural death" which could be expected daily. The insistence on "the highest class of jail" was puzzling. So, too, was the remark that "he does no labor." What was clear was that Yahya Khan was still uncertain and had not yet worked out a clear course of action. There were advantages in keeping Sheikh Mujibur Rahman alive, but there were also advantages in killing him. Later he said: "My generals are pushing for a military trial for Mujib and for his execution. I have agreed, and the trial will be held soon."

A few days later it was announced that the trial would be held before a military court consisting of five judges. It would begin on August 11 and was expected to last three or four weeks. Meanwhile evidence was still being collected by an army of plain clothes policemen in East Pakistan. The charge against him was one of "waging war against Pakistan." This vague charge was subdivided into twelve specific charges, of which six carried the death penalty. If the prisoner was found guilty of only one of these charges, he could expect to be hanged or shot.

The trial took place in a new one-story red brick jail in the textile town of Lyallpur, a hundred and fifty miles due south of Rawalpindi. The judges and the witnesses were carefully selected, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was provided with a lawyer chosen by the judges. The prisoner refused to defend himself and refused to consult with the court-appointed lawyer. The witnesses, flown in from East Pakistan, were journalists who reportedly had been present during Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's speeches. Speeches originally made in Bengali were solemnly translated in Urdu, the judges took copious notes, and the prisoner remained silent. The trial was a farce, for the sentence had already been handed down.

Nevertheless all the proper trappings of a trial were in evidence: the judges, the prosecutor, the lawyer for the defense, the witnesses, the court stenographer, and the prisoner accused of high treason who announced when asked whether there was anything he wanted that he wanted his body to be taken to Bangla Desh for burial, thus infuriating the judges who regarded the mention of the words "Bangla Desh" as an act of treason. For the rest of the time he remained silent. Silence was a weapon he wielded with skill and deftness. There are many kinds of silence

—the silence that accuses, the silence that thunders, the silence that pronounces judgment on the judges, and the silence that accepts whatever fate has to offer. The trial was being held in secret, and his many silences were magnified. On August 24, two weeks after the beginning of the trial, there came the announcement that the court was in recess. No date for the resumption of the trial was given.

To many it seemed that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in greater danger than ever. There were rumors that he was being tortured, that he was on a hunger strike, that he was already dead, and had indeed died before the military trial began. Islamabad did nothing to dispel the rumors. It was to the advantage of the military elite that no one should know what was happening to its most distinguished prisoner. When questioned during one of his rare press conferences, President Yahya Khan answered that it was a matter of no importance at all, everything would be understood in due course, and he was not permitted to divulge the secrets of the courtroom. Asked where Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was imprisoned, he said he did not know.

The technique had been worked out originally by Hitler in his *Nacht und Nebel* order. The prisoner must vanish into "the night and the fog." No one must know whether he is alive or dead, where he is, whether he is sick or in good health. His name is obliterated from the records, and he is known simply by a number. Hitler believed rightly that when a man vanishes in this way, there is such misery among his friends and relatives that the punishment extends over ever-widening circles. It is almost the ultimate punishment. Man becomes a question mark.

In East Pakistan the Bengalis did not know whether he was alive or dead, and thought of him, alive or dead, as the President of Bangla Desh. In this way he entered into legend, and was larger than life, all the more powerful because he was silent, invisible, and far away. If President Yahya Khan thought that by keeping his prisoner in solitary confinement he was punishing the Bengalis, he was mistaken. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was all the more present among them precisely because he was absent. They fought in his name and died with his name on their lips.

In Muslim tradition the Absent One, the Hidden One, has a cherished place. When, for example, Imam Muhammed, the

twelfth of his line and the fourteenth in direct descent from the Prophet, vanished into a cave in Samarra, he became for many millions of Muslims the most potent of imams, ruling mankind and guiding its destinies, more alive in their imaginations than when he was physically present; and it was believed that in time he would return as the divinely appointed Mahdi to usher in a new age or a new heaven.

There was therefore nothing new in the idea of the absent leader. They were not especially shocked or hurt by his absence. In the small box where they kept their small treasures there was usually a portrait of him pasted inside the lid, and they would look at the portrait to remind themselves that he was once among them. It was not worship; it was simply that he had become in a surprisingly short space of time the undisputed leader of the nation. When in late October Radio Bangla Desh from Calcutta announced categorically that he was alive, having remained silent on the subject through all the months of massacres, no one was particularly surprised. They felt they had known all along that he would return in his own good time.

Indian Summer

INDIA IN THE SUMMER of 1971 was living through a nightmare. The refugees were pouring over the frontier in unimaginable numbers and the massacres of the Bengalis were continuing at an increasing pace. The Indians were desperately aware that there was nothing they could do to prevent the complete takeover of East Pakistan by the military. It was not the slightest use to appeal to Islamabad, and there was almost nothing to be gained by appealing to the United Nations. The West Pakistani military was riding high, secure in its alliance with the United States and the People's Republic of China, both of whom could be relied upon to send guns, tanks, and ammunition whenever they were called upon to do so. That these weapons were being used to kill defenseless peasants was not a matter of the slightest concern to them.

The world conscience was aroused, and people of good will prayed and hoped that the military dictatorship would come to grief. But praying and hoping are never enough, and the world conscience is notoriously forgetful. In an age of massacres, what was one more massacre?

The Indians were in the position of people looking down from the upper story of a house at the garden next door, where people were being butchered in broad daylight, men, women, and chil-

them screaming for help until they were shot or hacked to pieces. Some succeeded in escaping over the garden wall and they were cared for. There was no police force which could be summoned. There was no court of appeal. There was no way to protect the innocent and no way to punish the guilty. The massacres might, and probably would, continue for many months without any effective protest.

The long summer confronted India with a dilemma which nations rarely have to face. During World War II Sweden was confronted with a comparable situation on a scale incommensurably smaller. When Hitler invaded Norway and instituted a reign of terror throughout the country, hundreds of Norwegians escaped into Sweden. The Swedes, fearful that they would be invaded next, raised no protest against the invaders, sheltered a number of refugees and continued to trade profitably with Germany. A pious neutrality, weighted in favor of Germany, permitted them to enjoy the luxury of peace. India could not afford the luxury of neutrality. The Indian people were clamoring for action, but no action was possible.

As the flood of refugees increased, the cost of supporting them even on a minimal subsistence level reached staggering proportions, threatening to drain the Indian economy. By November 9,300,000 refugees were being cared for. Many of them were sick, many died, many had been wounded. A cholera epidemic, which threatened to kill off hundreds of thousands, was successfully controlled with the help of a newly invented immunization gun which only needed to be held against the bare arm of a refugee to take effect. From all over the world doctors and nurses came to serve in the pathetically ill-equipped field hospitals near the frontier. Money came in, but it was never enough. During the monsoon rains the refugees lived in the shelter of rough tarpaulin or crouched inside concrete pipes, while the land around them churned with mud. The lucky ones lived in hastily erected prefabricated huts. One could stand in a refugee camp and see these huts stretching to the horizon, and beyond the horizon there were more huts, more concrete pipes, more huddled families sheltering under tarpaulins. As the months passed, hope gave way to despair. They were waiting for the massacres to end, but there was no end to them.

In New Delhi some of the best minds in India grappled with the problem. A new generation of Indian administrators had come into existence. They were cool professionals, precise, intricate, competent, with clearly defined aims. They resembled British administrators in the precision of their language and their refusal to indulge in rhetoric, but they also possessed a peculiarly Indian subtlety, a gift for making fine-drawn distinctions which sometimes involved them in unnecessary complexities. They were confronted with problems of nuclear energy, electrification of the villages, the manufacture of airplanes, the green revolution, which was at last producing an abundance of rice and wheat. The birth rate was under control: there was no immediate prospect of a vast increase of population to offset the growing food stocks. The Naxalite terrorist organization, which once threatened to spread across the country, was now contained, principally because it had no organization to speak of, and Bengal, where the Naxalites originated, was still under presidential rule, meaning that it was no longer governing itself but being governed by managers sent from New Delhi.

All the internal problems faded before the pressures coming from East and West Pakistan. The Indians were sure they could repel an invasion, for they had long ago taken the measure of the military elite in Pakistan, and in addition they possessed an excellent espionage system. If the invasion came, they were sure they would know when it was coming. What chiefly troubled the Indians was their sense of isolation, the knowledge that vast and imponderable forces were at work over which they had no control, and the certainty that the Nixon administration was actively supporting President Yahya Khan and therefore was an accomplice in the butchery in East Pakistan. The Nixon administration officially denied that it was sending arms to Pakistan while continuing to send them. It was not a question of a few rifles and machine guns, which could be used for killing Bengali peasants, but of heavy armaments which were being transported on a priority basis by the United States Air Force to West Pakistan. Later the U.S. Government Accounting Office revealed that more than \$3.8 million in military supplies were sent to Pakistan after the massacres had begun and after a government spokesman told Congress that all shipments to Yahya Khan's regime had ceased.

The Indian government was well aware of the flow of armaments to Pakistan and arrived at the only possible conclusion. In the eyes of the Nixon administration India was expendable.

The urgent problem was to discover why the American government had come to this conclusion. The problem was partly solved in June when the Indians learned that the military government in Islamabad had worked out an astonishingly simple plan to bring about the downfall of India. There were three stages to the plan, and one of them was already in operation. The first stage was the massacre of the Bengalis and the domination of East Pakistan by a firm military dictatorship. The second stage was the establishment of an *entente cordiale* between the United States and the People's Republic of China, with the government at Islamabad acting as the marriage broker. The fact that the United States and China had been declared enemies was not a matter that greatly exercised the mind of Yahya Khan, who derived military assistance from both of them. His suggestion that Islamabad, where there were both American and Chinese military assistance missions, was the obvious meeting place where agreements between the United States and China could be worked out was assented to by the American and Chinese governments, and soon a strenuous stream of messages passed between Washington and Peking. The *entente cordiale* was perhaps not as warm-hearted as Yahya Khan had hoped, but at least it was progressing favorably, with Islamabad acting not only as the marriage broker but also as the director of ceremonies and chief telegraph office.

The third stage was the most important one. It was nothing less than the invasion of India, aided by China and the United States.

The idea, so captivating in its simplicity, so vast in its implications, delighted the military elite in Islamabad. India, without allies, isolated and boxed in, would be attacked in force from both East and West Pakistan, by the Chinese in the north, and hopefully by the United States in the south. The box would be crushed by hammer blows from four sides.

This pleasant prospect originated in the minds of Yahya Khan and his staff officers. The idea however was not completely original, for it had been discussed at length shortly after Ayub Khan seized power and again during Ayub Khan's first visit to the Chin-

ese capital. But Yahya Khan had the distinction of being the first to present the idea, though in a somewhat disguised form, to the United States government. His timely offer to act as marriage broker led ultimately to the summit conference between Chairman Mao Tse-tung and President Nixon in Peking, but none of the communiqués issued after the conference paid tribute to his services.

Meanwhile secret agreements were being drawn up with the People's Republic of China. Yahya Khan offered substantial areas of northern India to the Chinese in return for their assistance. He was committing an error common among politicians: he was selling the bear's skin before he had captured the bear.

The Indian government learned of the existence of the plan and was understandably shocked by it. They noted that the plan suffered from a fundamental error, which could be stated quite simply. India was not conquerable. Even if the Pakistani armies, equipped with heavy tanks and the latest airplanes and accompanied by American and Chinese advisors succeeded in crossing the frontiers, they would ultimately be lost in the vast mass of the subcontinent. It was inconceivable that India would ever surrender, just as it was inconceivable that the United States, China, or the Soviet Union would ever surrender if they were invaded. The war would go on indefinitely, draining the energies of the invaders until at last they ran away.

Nevertheless orders were given for stepping up the supplies of ammunition and the Indian Army was placed on the alert. In a speech delivered in June, the prime minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, said: "We shall have to go through hell before we have finished with this thing."

A new Indian government had come into power only a few days before the massacres in East Pakistan began. Outwardly the new government did not appear to differ remarkably from the previous government. There were the same familiar faces, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was still prime minister, and the Congress Party was still the ruling party. But the new government had something that no previous government had possessed: it had received such an overwhelming majority of votes, such a clear mandate from the people, that it was no longer under the necessity of compromising with any party or group of parties. In effective di-

net power it was stronger than any government that had ever existed in India.

The new government was relentlessly determined to carry out its mandate. At fifty-four, the prime minister could scarcely remember a time when she was not deeply involved in politics. As the only child of Jawaharlal Nehru, she had been caught up in the independence movement and had known everyone who had taken part in it. She had known Gandhi well, and she had also known the great Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore, who influenced her perhaps more deeply than any other person except her father. She was a politician to her fingertips with all the advantages that come from having lived among politicians all her life. Her marriage to a young Parsee called Feroze Gandhi had given her by the purest accident—for her husband was in no way related to Mahatma Gandhi—the only name in India that possessed more political resonance than her father's name. She was her father's daughter, with many of his mannerisms, but she was more precise, more practical, more down to earth than he had ever been. Jawaharlal Nehru would compromise, if necessary; his daughter rejected compromise. He was sometimes carried away by his oratory; his daughter rarely permitted herself the luxury of oratory. She liked facts and was impatient of theories.

The men closest to her in the government were Kashmiri Brahmins like the Nehrus. Cultivated and humane, they lacked fanaticism and their minds moved like well-oiled machinery. P.N. Haksar, T.N. Kaul, D.P. Dhar—it is significant that they were nearly always known by their initials—wielded enormous power, but showed not the slightest interest in the trappings of power. P.N. Haksar was the prime minister's principal secretary, tall, urbane, with the sharpest cutting edge of any mind in the government, reducing all problems to their harsh essentials. T.N. Kaul and D.P. Dhar were her chief advisors on foreign affairs, and there was little to choose between them in intelligence and daring. They knew the world of international politics as though it was all clearly visible to them from the heights of the Kashmiri mountains. Outwardly D.P. Dhar, with his heavy black eyebrows and round moon face, resembled an indulgent Mughal aristocrat whose fine manners seemed designed for the simple purpose of putting himself and everyone else at their ease, but he was the

most daring of them all. He was to become the chief architect of Indian foreign policy, his master stroke being the Twenty Year Indo-Soviet Pact signed on August 9, 1971. By this pact the USSR and India were pledged to come to each other's assistance if either was invaded by a foreign power. Pakistan and the People's Republic of China were on notice that India possessed a powerful ally. Thereafter the Indian government moved with self-assurance through the mazes of international politics, more certain than ever before that the problems on her borders would be solved.

To D.P. Dhar, too, went the chief responsibility for maintaining close contact with the Provisional Government of Bangla Desh, which worked out of an office in Calcutta. The Mukti Bahini were being trained on Indian soil; funds were placed at the disposal of the provisional government; the counterattack was beginning. The Indian government had no illusions about the necessity of transforming East Pakistan into the sovereign state of Bangla Desh. The question was how it could be done, for the bloodbath was continuing, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was still in jail, and the United States was still supporting the military regime in Islamabad. Dr. Henry Kissinger's visit to Rawalpindi in July was an ominous indication of official United States sympathy for Pakistan and his secret flight to Peking to lay the foundations for a summit meeting between President Nixon and Premier Chou En-lai was even more ominous, for the People's Republic of China was also supplying weapons to the military dictatorship.

When Dr. Kissinger visited Delhi in an effort to explain President Nixon's attitude toward the war in East Pakistan, he inevitably received a cool reception. Students marched in the streets bearing the slogan "Kissinger of Death." The Indian government had studied his writings and his actions in depth, and they had few illusions about his antipathy to India. The meeting between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Dr. Kissinger was described as "chilly."

Dr. Kissinger uttered no words of sympathy for the embattled people of East Pakistan. The massacre in his eyes was simply an unfortunate political event which interfered with the cordial relations between the United States and Pakistan, but did not di-

omish the high regard they had for one another. They would continue to work in harmony, however many massacres took place. This was all the more surprising because the American Consul General in Dacca was cabling accurate accounts of the massacres to Washington, which could not plead ignorance. The more charitable Indians believed that the cables were being routed through Islamabad, where they were severely edited before being sent on to Washington. In fact they went to Washington direct and were never edited.

The Indians were not baffled by Dr. Kissinger. They had taken his measure. They knew him well, disapproved of his theories of world politics based on his early studies of the career of Metternich, and they understood the compulsions that led President Nixon's national security adviser to spend his free hours in the dead world of night clubs, belly dancers, and Hollywood starlets. They made a distinction between the worlds of the living and the dead. What distressed them was his essential vulgarity and his constant straining for the limelight, while he embarked on his well publicized secret missions. Nor did they have any difficulty explaining why a German Jew, who spoke English with a heavy Germanic accent, should be so acceptable to the Muslims of Islamabad, for he shared their pleasures. They could not imagine him visiting the refugee camps. Set that owlish face opposite the face of a wounded Bengali girl, and no one could doubt how much of dignity and human warmth there was in the girl and how little in the man.

For the Indians Dr. Kissinger remained a threat to be watched closely and studied minutely, because many of their difficulties had their origins in Washington. There were times when they seemed to be studying Dr. Kissinger even more closely than they studied Pakistan.

Except for the Indo-Soviet Pact all the news that summer was bad. By August 30 the refugees actually counted numbered 8,207,000, and no one could possibly tell how many hundreds of thousands had slipped into India under cover of darkness. About a quarter of a million refugees were dispersed into the interior, creating the inevitable social disruptions. India could not afford to maintain the refugees and could not send them back. Mr. Samar Sen, the Indian ambassador to the United Nations, who

was born and raised in Dacca and therefore felt the full force of the tragedy, said to a visiting journalist: "There is nothing we can do except pull a little bit here and a little bit there. What we can do is out of all proportion to the immensity of the problem. We are like little fish attempting to deflect the movements of a whale." From his office in New York the view was spectacularly dismal, but in India it was considerably less dismal. The Pakistan military command was having difficulties with the Mukti Bahini, its supply problem was acute, and President Yahya Khan was speaking of holding by-elections and convening a National Assembly. He did not explain how this could be brought about while East Pakistan was being violently disrupted. He declared in a broadcast on June 28: "Since the nation has recently been subjected to a very severe jolt, I have decided that the national and provisional governments shall have at their disposal the cover of martial law for a period of time. In actual practice martial law will not be operative in its present form, but we cannot allow chaos in any part of the country and the hands of the government need to be strengthened until things settle down." In this way President Yahya Khan promised to eliminate martial law while simultaneously retaining it for an indefinite period. By-elections would be held for seats in East Pakistan which had been declared vacant and the normal processes of the government would continue under "the cover of martial law." It was not a prospect that offered any hope for the people of East Pakistan.

In that year the monsoon rains were unusually prolonged, and it was not until the beginning of October that the rains finally ceased. The fighting continued throughout the monsoon season, with large areas falling into the hands of the Mukti Bahini. Still larger areas fell to them when the military authorities in Dacca ordered their best troops to the frontier to guard against an Indian attack. Since the frontier was 1,350 miles long, these military movements had the effect of weakening the forces engaged in massacre and for a brief period the people of East Pakistan enjoyed a respite. They had the satisfaction of knowing that the Mukti Bahini were benefiting by the new disposition of troops. Similar Pakistani troop movements were observed on the western border. The Indians were not unduly alarmed. On October 13, exactly eleven days after the Pakistanis began to move up their forces,

They ordered their own troops up to the frontiers and a week later they were in their battle positions. If there was a Pakistani attack, General Sam Manekshaw, in command of the Indian Army, was confident that he could defeat them on all fronts.

This confidence was based on a profound understanding of the Pakistani military mind and an equally profound faith in the fighting ability of the Indian troops. "We had the confidence that comes from studying them closely," said K.B. Lall, the secretary of defense. "We had watched them becoming increasingly demoralized in East Pakistan, and we knew that if there was any fighting in the east we would be in Dacca within two weeks. We did not underestimate them, but we knew exactly what they were worth in fighting power." He observed that the best generals were being given ministerial posts, while the worst were being given commands in the field. With some satisfaction the Indian ministry of defense learned that General Tikka Khan, a third-rate general, had returned to Islamabad, being replaced by General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, who was so wholly inept and corrupt that he might legitimately be accounted a sixth-rate general. If there was any fighting in East Pakistan, General Niazi could be expected to panic at the first opportunity. With President Yahya Khan in overall command and General Niazi in direct command at Dacca, the Indian Army felt that the enemy was singularly ill served. Long before the battle the Pakistani Army was digging its own grave.

On October 24, when the Indian and Pakistani armies were facing each other at the frontiers across a distance of two hundred yards, Mrs. Indira Gandhi decided that the time had come to make an appeal to the world conscience. Above all she wanted a political settlement of the problem. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman must be released from jail, the refugees must be permitted to return, there must be an end to the massacres in East Pakistan—these were not negotiable terms, but all the rest was negotiable. So, when she traveled across Europe and the United States, she spoke on behalf of the refugees and the people who were being massacred on a scale unprecedented in modern times, saying that the problems of India and Pakistan, which together include a quarter of the population of the world, were soluble if only men of good faith would attempt to solve them. In the course of two-

and-a-half weeks she visited Brussels, Vienna, London, Oxford, Washington, New York, Paris, and Bonn, pleading for an understanding of these urgent problems, receiving much goodwill and many checks for the refugees, but coming no nearer to a solution.

There were no longer any great world figures who could speak out with indisputable moral authority. An Albert Einstein, or an Albert Schweitzer, might have been listened to, and their advice might have helped to turn the scales. It was left to André Malraux, almost alone among intellectuals, to speak with high seriousness about the desperate need to assist the freedom fighters of Bangla Desh, saying that it would be a crime against humanity if the Pakistani Army succeeded in conquering Bangla Desh. He was seventy years old, but he offered to fight against the Pakistanis, saying that it was absurd for intellectuals to attend conferences on behalf of Bangla Desh and to pass resolutions of support. Instead, they should fight. "It is not easy," he said, "but everything else seems useless to me." For various reasons his offer to fight was politely rejected, but to the end of the war he continued to thunder against the governments which did not recognize that the invaders were irremediably evil, while the freedom fighters at least possessed the possibilities of good. Meanwhile President Yahya Khan thundered against India, repeating that no one must be permitted to interfere in the internal problems of East Pakistan, that everything was going well, and that India alone was the culprit, the source of all the crimes committed on the subcontinent. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was sent to Peking to negotiate a defense pact with the People's Republic of China. He received some enigmatic promises of assistance. "China is fully and enthusiastically supporting Pakistan," he said on his return. "We can expect the maximum assistance, and India should have no illusions about this."

Mrs. Indira Gandhi's travels in Europe and the United States were not entirely in vain. She had learned the full extent of the aid given by the United States government to Pakistan, and she had learned too that there was scarcely anyone in the United States who had any sympathy for Pakistan outside the Pentagon and the small coterie around President Nixon. When President Nixon suggested that she should withdraw her troops from the frontiers, because President Yahya Khan had promised to with-

draw his troops unilaterally, she answered coolly: "Let him take all his troops outside of Bangla Desh."

She returned to India for the anniversary of her father's birthday on November 14. She looked pale as she stepped off the airplane at Delhi, but her eyes flashed and her jaws were set. She would not panic, she would not submit to dictation, she would act with calm and strength to the very end. If it became necessary to invade East Pakistan, it would be done. Hopefully, the enemy could be counted upon to make the first ill-timed move. She expected that by the end of November or the beginning of December the crisis would be reached.

She like to quote from the *Upanishads*, and in one of her speeches at Bonn before returning to India she quoted the lines: "Though man through his intelligence has the power to roll up the sky like a strip of leather, there will be no end to his suffering until he finds the Light within."

With the coming of winter the great powers were poised for a confrontation. They could roll up the sky like a strip of leather, but they could not find the Light within.

Counterattack

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1971, was a quiet day in New Delhi. There were the usual crowds milling about Connaught Circle, the hawks hung in the sky, and the children were out in force in the gardens of the Zoo, where the white tigers prowled in the shadow of an ancient fortress. It was a day like every other winter day, the air crisp and sweet. November and December are always the best months in New Delhi.

Nothing of great importance was being discussed in parliament, where the day had been reserved for private members' bills. Many members of parliament had returned to their home states for the weekend, and the leading members of the government were dispersed over the length and breadth of the country. Mrs. Indira Gandhi had flown to Calcutta to address a mass meeting. Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the defense minister, had flown to Patna in eastern India, and intended to fly later in the day to Bangalore in the south. Mr. Chavan, the finance minister, was in Bombay in western India. Sardar Swaran Singh, the foreign minister, was one of the few leading members of the government in New Delhi, and he spent part of the afternoon attending the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of parliament, watching over the fortunes of a bill concerned with relief for the refugees from East Bengal. This was a private member's bill, but it clearly had the backing

of the government, and he was there to see that the government's views were heard. He finished his speech, and then walked in a leisurely fashion to one of those curious ceremonial meetings which plague the lives of cabinet ministers in New Delhi, a tea party given on the lawn of Parliament House to celebrate the silver jubilee of the Public Accounts Committee, one of the many fiscal arms of the government. The tea party was being presided over by the President of India, Mr. V.V. Giri, who was seventy-six years old, a little bent, but remarkably active. The president concealed behind a kindly exterior a sharp intelligence and a passionate indignation over the social inequalities still remaining in India. He therefore attended all the social functions he could in order to make his views known, and he was much more than a ceremonial president.

Nevertheless this tea party was one of those very nearly meaningless celebrations where every speech and every act were only too predictable. Everyone was a little listless. The President praised the work of the Public Accounts Committee, and the guests stood about in small groups or sat in their chairs with those blank expressions which betray the fact that nothing surprising, nothing that will exhaust their energies, is going to happen. A few minutes before 6 P.M., when it was growing dark, and the lights were coming up all over New Delhi, they were catapulted out of their seats and the meeting came to an abrupt end. Suddenly they heard the fierce penetrating wail of the air-raid warning system.

The war, which so many had feared and so many had expected had begun.

In Calcutta, nine hundred miles away, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was about to conclude her speech when an aide came to the platform and whispered that Pakistani airplanes had attacked several Indian airfields in the west. A few moments later the air-raid warning sounded over Calcutta. She brought her speech to an abrupt end and left the platform, looking grimmer than anyone had ever seen her. When she became prime minister, she had hoped and prayed that she would never be the prime minister of a nation at war.

The air strike by the Pakistani Air Force was evidently modelled on the Israeli air strike against the Egyptian airfields at the

beginning of the Six-Day War. Airfields at Srinagar, Avantipur, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Chandigarh, Faridkot, Pathankot, Sadek, Okha, Jodhpur, and Uttarlai were attacked in the west, and the airfield of Agartala was attacked in the east. Most of them were brief running attacks, and the heaviest attack was on the airfield at Amritsar, lasting about half an hour. The first attack came at 5:47 P.M. The airplanes were French-built Mirages and American-built F-86 Sabre jets. Simultaneously with the air attacks came massive ground attacks along the western border, especially in the Poonch sector, along the cease-fire line in Kashmir.

Although the cabinet members were scattered over the country, all the service chiefs were present in New Delhi, and so was Mr. K.B. Lall, the secretary of defense, who now found himself in command in the absence of the minister of defense. He worked well with the service chiefs and belonged to the new breed of government officials, cool, precise, imperturbable. While the prime minister and the cabinet ministers raced to New Delhi, important decisions were already being made.

The service chiefs were mystified by the attacks on the Indian airfields. What mystified them was the curiously amateurish and ineffectual nature of the attacks, as though they had been conceived in haste and carried out with reluctance. Very small forces were involved. Thus, two airplanes attacked the Indian bomber base at Agra and three airplanes attacked the base at Srinagar. Altogether less than twenty Pakistani planes were involved over a vast area reaching from Kashmir to Rajasthan. The official Indian losses were one light airplane and one three-ton truck damaged at Amritsar. There were a number of bombed runways, but they were recommissioned within a few hours.

The service chiefs controlled a network of espionage agents in Pakistan, and they knew a good deal about the intentions of President Yahya Khan. They also knew that on November 25 he had told a visiting journalist: "We will be fighting a war in the next ten days." President Yahya Khan frequently boasted of the fighting capabilities of the Pakistani Army, and his words were not necessarily to be trusted. But the Indian Army had been placed on a state of alert, the airplanes had been dispersed, and the naval vessels were at their battle stations. If Pakistan struck India, which possessed a much larger standing army, far more

airplanes and at least three times as many warships, was in a position to strike back. What chiefly bemused the service chiefs was that Pakistan by this unprovoked attack on the airfields was inviting the occupation of the country they were coming increasingly to call Bangla Desh, and when the prime minister arrived in New Delhi later that night Bangla Desh was uppermost in her thoughts. The signal for the advance into Bangla Desh had already been given.

President Yahya Khan had ruled as a military dictator with incompetence, and he now led his country into war with the same incompetence. The radio at Islamabad proclaimed that Pakistan was fighting a *jihad*, a holy war, against India. This, too, bemused the service chiefs, who had never regarded wars as holy.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi flew into New Delhi from Calcutta at 10:30 P.M., and an hour later there was a formal cabinet meeting. New Delhi had been blacked out. The leaders of the opposition parties had pledged their support, and President Giri had proclaimed a state of national emergency. The wheels of government were running smoothly, and by the time Mrs. Indira Gandhi came to the microphone at twenty minutes past midnight all that could be reasonably done had been done.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi's speech over All-India Radio was a call to arms and a calm recital of events. The enemy had attacked the airfields and shelled defense positions on the frontiers. India was in peril, and there was a long period of hardship and sacrifice ahead. But though she spoke of war and grave hardships, she dealt at great length with Bangla Desh, whose liberation was now at last in sight. She said:

Since last March we have borne the heaviest of burdens and withstood the greatest of pressures in a tremendous effort to urge the world to bring about a peaceful solution and prevent the annihilation of an entire people, whose only crime was to vote democratically. But the world ignored the basic causes and concerned itself only with certain repercussions.

The situation was bound to deteriorate. A courageous band of freedom fighters have staked their all in defense of the values basic to our way of life.

Today a war in Bangla Desh has become a war on India. This imposes on me, my government, and the people of India great

responsibility. We have no other option but to put our country on a war footing. Our *jawans* and forces are mobilized for the defense of the country. Emergency has been declared for the whole of India, and every necessary step is being taken.

It was not a fiery speech, nor was it intended to dramatize a situation already sufficiently dramatic. She spoke quietly, a little hoarsely, almost hesitantly. In a message to the armed forces she spoke with more warmth and color. She said:

The enemy has raised the false and pernicious cry of a religious war. The people of Bangla Desh, who are overwhelmingly Moslem, have given a fitting reply to the military rulers in Islamabad.

You and we are fighting in defense of the great principle that the people of all religions are equally our brothers. We are defending the great ideals of equality and brotherhood, which are the life and blood of our democracy.

"*Bharat*" means not only the fields, hills and rivers which make up our country, not only 560,000 villages and towns, not only the 550 million people, but the ideals of tolerance and respect for higher morality which the very mention of India has evoked for thirty centuries.

Fight well, my countrymen. Victory will be ours.

The service chiefs felt certain of victory, but they were also aware that Pakistan had powerful allies in China and the United States, and there were indications that both had been forewarned of the attack against India and that both had given their blessing to the enterprise. They were not, of course, public blessings. They were whispered in coded telegrams, they appeared as flashing lights in the White House Situation Room, or they appeared in secret military appropriations. The service chiefs feared foreign intervention, and every member of the cabinet realized from the beginning that a diplomatic war would have to be fought at the United Nations. Sardar Swaran Singh, the foreign minister, had formerly been minister of defense. On him more than anyone else fell the responsibility of forestalling and preventing foreign intervention.

The more the service chiefs studied the maps and the intelligence reports the more they felt certain that unless Pakistan had suddenly been provided with a superabundance of sophisticated

weapons from the United States, the Pakistani armed forces were no match for the Indian armed forces. The high passes leading from China into India were deep in snow and ice, and it was inconceivable that Chinese armies would pour into India. The minister of defense had repeatedly warned Islamabad that if Pakistan attacked India, the war would be fought on Pakistan soil.

Logistically, Pakistan was at a devastating disadvantage, being outnumbered in men and weapons by three to one. India had 920,000 men under arms, Pakistan had 324,500. India had 625 warplanes, Pakistan had 270. India's naval supremacy was even more marked, for India had one aircraft carrier, *INS Vikrant* (formerly *HMS Hercules*), while Pakistan had none. India had two cruisers, three destroyers and four submarines, while Pakistan had one light cruiser used for training, five destroyers and two submarines. As a fighting force the Indian Navy was three or four times more powerful than the Pakistani Navy.

On the first night of the war, while Mrs. Indira Gandhi was speaking to the nation, the Indian Navy scored a great victory. The victory was all the more remarkable because four days passed before the Indians were aware that they had destroyed the enemy vessel, the submarine *PNS Ghazi* (formerly *USS Diablo*), which was lurking outside the naval port of Vishakhapatnam, waiting for the Eastern fleet to emerge. The submarine, which carried ten 21-inch torpedoes, had left Karachi in mid-November under orders to take up its battle station by December 3, its main task being to destroy the aircraft carrier *Vikrant*. The Indian destroyer *Rajput* was patrolling the harbor approaches that night and detected on the sonar screen the presence of a submarine a few miles off the entrance channel. Depth charges were tossed into the sea, but without any apparent result. Half an hour later there was a tremendous underwater explosion which shattered windows all over Vishakhapatnam. During the following days there were heavy seas, and it was impossible to send down divers. When the seas calmed, two fishermen found a torn life jacket and brought it to the naval authorities. The life jacket provided little information except that it had been made in the United States, and for a moment the Indians wondered whether they had sunk an American submarine. Finally divers were sent down, and they found the *Ghazi*, the pride of the Pakistani Navy, lying on the seabed

with a crushed nose. She had been a majestic vessel, 2,400 tons, 311 feet long, carrying a complement of 200 men, with a cruising range of 14,000 miles. Pakistan had lost half of its submarine fleet in the first hours of the war.

The war was scarcely a day old when the Indian Navy made a daring attack on the naval base at Karachi, which was heavily defended with guns, radar, and missiles. The object was to deliver a crippling blow on the chief Pakistani naval base at the very beginning of hostilities. Maintaining radio silence, the Indian task force steamed toward Karachi, reaching the outer waters at midnight. On the radar screen they detected the presence of four fast moving enemy warships, and opened fire. The battle was soon over. The Pakistani Navy lost a destroyer and a minesweeper, both sunk, and another destroyer and minesweeper were badly crippled and limped back to harbor. To add insult to injury, the task force steamed closer to shore and bombarded the port, the harbor, and the oil installations. Four nights later the task force renewed the attack, bombarding Karachi again. Gwadar, Pakistan's second largest port, was set on fire, and all the minor ports on the Makran coast were bombarded.

The Indian Navy commanded the high seas. They were busily boarding Pakistani merchant ships and escorting them to Indian harbors. One Indian frigate, *INS Khukri*, was lost to enemy torpedoes during the second engagement against Karachi. This was the only serious naval loss sustained by India during the war.

In the east the Indian Army was advancing into East Pakistan with astonishing speed. The total strength of the liberation forces, including about 100,000 Mukti Bahini, was about 340,000 men. Since East Pakistan was surrounded on three sides by India and on the fourth by the Bay of Bengal, with Indian warships in full command of the sea approaches, it was only a question of time before the Pakistan army would be brought to its knees. The total effective force of the Pakistani Army in East Pakistan was a little less than 100,000 men. They were heavily outnumbered, and their morale was at a low ebb. The Indian commanders were surprised when the Pakistani forces surrendered and begged to be protected from the Mukti Bahini. "Why do you surrender?" asked one Indian commander. "Because we are afraid of being

tortured to death by the Mukti Bahini," said the Pakistani colonel. "We are not afraid of dying—only of torture."

General Osmani, in command of the Mukti Bahini, gave explicit instructions that his troops should not torture the Pakistani soldiers who fell into their hands. "We follow the rules of war," he said. "We are too proud of our freedom to engage in massacres." Nevertheless there were occasional counter-massacres, and the Bengalis derived some small satisfaction from watching the Punjabis pleading for their lives.

The Mukti Bahini infiltrated Dacca, where they had their own command headquarters. They were in the government offices, foreign consulates, banks, hotels, businesses, and shops. They were busily "cutting off the hands and feet" of the enemy by sabotaging electricity and oil supplies, destroying bridges, and assassinating collaborators. The internal lines of the enemy defense system were becoming hopelessly confused. General Niazi was complaining bitterly to Islamabad that his ammunition supplies were running low, and he needed 50,000 more troops. Neither ammunition nor troops were sent to him. Within five days the war became a mopping up campaign.

Everything about the last few days of Pakistan's military rule in Dacca had a curious dream-like quality. The Indian Air Force was bombing the airfield, the cantonments, and the main supply routes, but the Pakistani military command was behaving as though no war was taking place, or rather as though a war were taking place inside a dream. Orders were transmitted, but they were rarely obeyed. Staff conferences were held, but they were merely opportunities for the officers to meet, drink, and discuss the latest hockey scores or the horse races in West Pakistan.

The new governor of East Pakistan, General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, was a heavy-set man with a booming voice, who somewhat resembled a bulldog. In his own eyes he was "Tiger" Niazi, and he was pleased when anyone addressed him as "Tiger." He had risen from the ranks, and liked to say that he was "all soldier." Like his predecessor he had nothing but contempt for the Indians and the Bengalis. Once, shortly after his arrival in East Pakistan, he journeyed to the border and shouted into an electric megaphone: "Look here, you fellows, this is Gen-

ral "Tiger" Niazi talking to you. If there is any nonsense from you, I'll have my men over there giving you what you deserve. Take it from me, if there is any fighting it will be on Indian soil!" The Indians were not amused and promptly sent some shells into his headquarters.

He prided himself on his wit. To some correspondents he said: "This is a low-lying area. People here are low, and they lie!" After such witticisms he would roar with laughter, throwing his head back and shaking like a dog that has just come out of water.

But what was even more dangerous was his belief that the Indian Army was quite incapable of fighting. They lacked the will power, the stamina, and the courage of the Punjabis. They were half-men, whose entire history showed that they had never won a battle or dared to confront a powerful enemy. He believed these things because he had been taught to believe them. One Muslim soldier was worth ten or twenty or thirty Hindu soldiers, and under certain conditions a hundred Hindu soldiers. He could recite all the battles won by Muslims, and then ask: "Tell me just one battle won by the Indians! It's impossible. The buggers can't fight."

He was still saying these things three days before the fall of Dacca at a time when the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini occupied more than half of East Pakistan.

There were, of course, many reasons why he believed these things. Since he belonged to the Pakistani military elite, he continually repeated the slogans of the elite without examining them. They were articles of faith, unchallengeable. Everyone around him believed them, and it would have been bad form even to discuss them and examine them. Then, too, he was lazy, leaving most of his work to General Rao Farman Ali, who had spent a much longer time in East Pakistan and could be expected to understand the situation better. General Niazi simply had to sign the documents presented to him every morning, and the afternoon could be spent in whatever manner he pleased. There was a harem in the governor's palace and his chief pleasure was to visit the ladies of the harem.

The governor's palace itself effectively screened him from the real world. With its white dome and immaculate facade, one

vast ceremonial hall opening into another, the floor covered with Persian carpets and inlaid with intricate parquetry, it resembled the Hollywood version of a maharajah's palace. Everyone who entered it felt dwarfed, solemn, and rather stupid. Sometimes, crossing one of those immense rooms, you would find a glass case containing a carved ivory model of a mosque or of an emperor's tomb, which seemed to have been left there by accident, gleaming white against the dark hangings, and these miniatures of ancient buildings made the ceiling seem higher and the far-away doors more remote. The chandeliers tinkled faintly, the soft sound made softer by the thick-piled carpets and the heavy curtains.

On December 13 General Niazi did something he had never done before. He emerged from the palace with only his personal guard and walked briskly along the main highway in the direction of the Intercontinental Hotel. He was in full uniform with four rows of medals and wore his customary beret, and he carried a shooting stick. Exactly why he had emerged was unclear, and it was thought that perhaps he wanted to see the situation for himself. Indian troops were nine miles away in the south, and from time to time there could be heard the dull roar of artillery.

At a street corner near the hotel he encountered some journalists, who asked for an interview. He opened up his shooting stick, stuck the point in the ground, and sat on the chrome-plated seat. He looked carefree and relaxed, swaying a little on his perch, his hands waving eloquently. A journalist asked him what the Pakistani Army would do if the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini attacked Dacca from all sides.

"What you fellows don't know," he replied, "is our hidden strength. I tell you, things are going to happen very quickly, amazing things. By tomorrow or the next day the whole situation will have changed."

He said nothing more about the strange things that were about to happen or about the hidden reserves of strength.

"I promise you one thing," he went on. "It doesn't matter whether we have enough men to defend the city. If you stay around, you'll see our men dying gloriously. It is now a question of living or dying. We know what we are dying for. What does

the enemy know? Remember, every Muslim soldier is worth ten Hindus. We shall give a good account of ourselves. Gentlemen, the great battle for Dacca is about to begin!"

Then, answering a few questions without at any point committing himself, he returned to the palace.

Some passers-by waved to him, shouting: "Long live Pakistan!" and "Crush India!" He waved back, and walked jauntily down the road.

The journalists were puzzled. Some thought he was under drugs, others that he was simply wandering down the street to escape from the oppressive atmosphere of the map room at the palace, where the advances of the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini were more or less accurately recorded. He smiled easily, he looked as though he did not have a care in the world, and as commander-in-chief of an army about to engage in a life and death struggle for the capital of East Pakistan he was unconvincing.

Unknown to the journalists there were reasons for his strange elation. On his desk in the palace lay a decoded signal just received from Islamabad. The signal read: "You must hold out under all conditions. The great blow from the north and the great blow from the south will soon be delivered."

General Niazi had no difficulty interpreting the strange signal. It meant that the Chinese Army was poised to attack India from the north and massive American assistance was on its way from the south. The old idea of attacking India simultaneously on four fronts had been revived at this very last moment, just in time to stave off defeat. Nevertheless General Niazi's elation was short-lived: the Indian Army was too close to Dacca for comfort. The signal had been intercepted by the Indian government and shown to the Soviet ambassador in New Delhi. The Soviet government threatened to create a diversionary movement on the Chinese border if the Chinese Army descended into India and promised to send ships into the Bay of Bengal to intercept any American ships coming to the rescue of General Niazi's army.

On the morning of December 13, while General Niazi was strolling through the streets of Dacca with his shooting stick under his arm, the world was edging toward nuclear catastrophe.

The great blow from the north was never delivered. The great blow from the south was perhaps about to be delivered at the orders of President Nixon. The Seventh Fleet, consisting of the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*, the amphibious assault ship *Tripoli*, the guided missile frigate *King*, and the guided missile destroyers *Parsons*, *Decatur*, and *Tartar Sam* were steaming into the Bay of Bengal, ostensibly to assist in the evacuation of American civilians from Dacca but in fact to provide General Niazi with desperately needed fire power. No one in the Nixon administration had worked out exactly how this enormous fire power would be used or what targets would be aimed at. At the White House it was generally agreed that this show of force would be sufficient to deter the Indian Army from occupying Dacca.

In his large wood-paneled office dominated by the portrait of a medieval Rajput warrior-princess, the Indian secretary of defense, Mr. K.B. Lall, received the news of the coming of the Seventh Fleet with incredulity.

"They must have gone absolutely mad," he said. "Such things simply don't happen! The Americans must be absolutely out of their senses!"

The decision to send the Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal had been reached after a secret meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington on December 8, attended by Dr. Henry Kissinger and Mr. Richard Helms, the head of the C.I.A., who announced that according to his information the Pakistani Army could hold out for no longer than seventy-two hours. The meeting was made memorable by Dr. Kissinger's announcement that President Nixon was doing his utmost to help the Pakistanis. He said:

We are not trying to be even-handed. There can be no doubt what the President wants. The President does not want to be even-handed. The President believes that India is the attacker. We are trying to get across the idea that India has jeopardized relations with the United States. We cannot afford to ease India's state of mind. "The Lady" is cold-blooded and tough and will not turn into a Soviet satellite merely because of pique. We should not ease her mind.*

* The full report of the meeting was disclosed by Mr. Jack Anderson and published widely on January 14, 1972.

Such were the premises upon which the decision was made. President Nixon regarded the Pakistanis as lambs, the Indians as wolves, and he was prepared to do everything possible to assist the lambs against the wolves.

The Seventh Fleet was now on its way. The radios of Manila, Djakarta and Singapore were all announcing the progress of the fleet. The Indian secretary of defense telephoned Mr. Kenneth B. Keating, the American ambassador in New Delhi, who knew even less about the movements of the Seventh Fleet than the Indian government. Mr. Keating knew the Indians well, he had excellent sources of information, and he had repeatedly warned the Nixon administration against supporting the Pakistani military regime. President Nixon was adamant. He admired and liked President Yahya Khan, and had nothing but contempt for Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She was "that woman" or "that tiresome old woman," and he had even worse words for her. President Yahya Khan had entertained him royally in 1964 and 1967. He was upright, manly, a born soldier, with a clear grasp of the military situation, a keen brain and the manners of an aristocrat. Therefore he was to be preferred to the woman who complained so bitterly about the massacres, and who had committed the unpardonable crime of seeking an alliance with the Soviet Union when her country was threatened. President Nixon had misjudged the characters of the two leaders, one a military dictator, the other a woman elected by an overwhelming majority of the people. All his errors stemmed from his inability to judge character. The order commanding the Seventh Fleet, armed with nuclear weapons, to support the East Pakistani Army of General Niazi was among the most dangerous he had ever given.

It is axiomatic that when a great and powerful nation makes a show of force, it must be prepared to use that force. But there was no possible way for the force to be used to help General Niazi's disintegrating army. Even if the Seventh Fleet had sunk the Indian aircraft carrier *Vikrant* or landed marines at Chittagong or bombarded towns occupied by the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini, it could not have affected the course of the war. The Pakistani Army was collapsing out of its own inertia, its own cowardice, its own corruption. It could massacre, but it could not fight.

If by chance there had been Soviet warships in the Straits of Malacca, a totally unnecessary confrontation would have taken place. The wrong battle would have been fought at the wrong time and the wrong place, with consequences which would have affected everyone on the globe.

When General Niazi returned to the governor's palace, he had many urgent affairs to attend to. The most urgent of them was to save his own skin, for he had no faith in the great blows from the north and south. He was already in secret correspondence with the Indians, and he was already preparing to surrender, a fact which he had not communicated to Islamabad. All this was known to the Indian secretary of defense, who was perplexed by the knowledge that the Seventh Fleet was hastening to the rescue of a commander-in-chief who knew that he was no longer in effective command and whose talk of defending Dacca to the last man was not so much bluff as the weary repetition of old attitudes. General Niazi knew better than anyone that his army was unable to fight. What he wanted was a safe conduct for himself and his troops permitting them to escape unharmed. He also wanted to enjoy one last massacre before he left Dacca forever.

The massacre took place that night and the following night. At least a hundred intellectuals, doctors, editors, professors, and students, were rounded up, roped together, and marched off to execution. The bodies were found in shallow ponds and depressions in a deserted brickyard near Mohammedpur on the outskirts of Dacca a few days later.

General Niazi also gave orders to burn and destroy whatever remained of the wealth of East Pakistan, thus depriving the Bengalis of the substance of victory. The order was given too late to have much effect, but he succeeded in destroying all the banknotes in the Central Bank, reasoning that without money the economic life of East Pakistan would come to a standstill. While all this was going on, he continued to sue secretly for a ceasefire on his own terms, promising to leave Dacca unharmed provided he was repatriated with his troops to West Pakistan and provided there would be no reprisals.

These terms satisfied neither the Mukti Bahini nor the Indian high command, who wanted nothing less than unconditional sur-

render and were prepared to fight to the finish unless the enemy met their terms.

Up to this moment the press in Rawalpindi and in all the Pakistani newspapers were proclaiming that powerful allies were coming to their aid and that victory was certain. If indeed there was no victory, the world would then be shown an example of deathless courage and endurance. "If all else fails," they wrote, "at least the warriors of Islam know how to die." This was being said at a time when the armies of General Niazi was surrendering *en masse* to the Indians and the Pakistani soldiers were begging to be protected from the Mukti Bahini.

The fronts rolled up like strips of leather. Nothing could stop the advance of the Mukti Bahini and the Indian forces on Dacca. From time to time General Niazi gathered some of his senior officers around him and told them the same bawdy stories he had told countless times before, and sometimes he would slap his hand against his head and murmur: "Incredible, unbelievable . . ." In fact, his defeat was only too credible. What was incredible was that a small group of buffoons was able in this modern age to command such a vast massacre.

The end came at 4:31 P.M. on December 17, 1971, when General Niazi signed the instrument of surrender on the racecourse at Dacca, where Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had spoken nine months earlier. He tore off his epaulettes and presented them to the Indian General Jagjit Singh Aurora, and then handed over his revolver. Finally he pressed his forehead against the forehead of the Indian general in the ancient oriental token of submission, which is also a plea for mercy. It was strange that he should plead for mercy, for he had never shown mercy to anyone in the past.

The Return of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

WHILE GENERAL NIAZI was surrendering on the sea course at Dacca, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was lying on his cot in the condemned cell in the prison at Lyallpur. He had been charged with high treason and assumed he had been condemned to death. It remained only for President Yahya Khan to choose the date and the method of execution.

Even before the trial Sheikh Mujibur Rahman expected to be executed, and after the trial he expected it daily. There could be no appeal, no reprieve. By his own conduct during the trial he showed that he neither demanded nor expected mercy.

In all of Asia there was scarcely anyone who knew less about what was happening in Bangla Desh. He did not know that he had been elected president. He knew nothing about the establishment of the provisional government, or about the Mukti Bahini, or about the victorious march of the combined Indian and Bangla Desh forces on Dacca. He knew nothing about the massacres or the refugees, or the sudden threat of a nuclear holocaust when the Seventh Fleet steamed into the Bay of Bengal. The monsoon had passed, it was winter again, and he huddled under his blanket against the cold. In Dacca the sun was blazing and the trees were in flower.

There were many other things he knew, but they were not

readily capable of being put into words. They resembled dreams, feelings, presentiments, shapes of force. Some of these things could be expressed in the form of logical statements. The mere fact that he was still alive meant that President Yahya Khan was still hoping to find some use for him as a hostage, a bargaining point, and from this it followed that East Pakistan had not fallen completely under the sway of the military authorities. It followed that fighting was going on, that the Bengalis were resisting with all their might, and that the military were hard-pressed. He knew his Bengalis, and he knew they would never surrender.

But against the knowledge that he was being kept alive to serve as a hostage, there was the knowledge that President Yahya Khan was temperamentally unstable, capable of changing direction for no logical reason. There was nothing to prevent him from writing an order for the prisoner's immediate execution while in a drunken stupor. He was the dictator and his will was law. He might regret the order the next day, but by then it would be too late. He was unpredictable, rapacious, and vengeful, and to be his prisoner was to know that your life hung on the mercy of his whims. President Yahya Khan resembled his dubious ancestor Nadir Shah who ordered men strangled or stomped to death by elephants if he disliked the shapes of their smiles.

One could weigh the knowledge of inevitable victory against the certainty that the door would soon open and the man with the machine gun would be standing there; and these two things might have equal weight. The prize was inevitable victory, and this could be achieved by being killed and providing a martyr to the cause. In Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's eyes this was a small price to pay.

Outwardly, President Yahya Khan possessed supreme power: he had the prisoner in his grasp. Nevertheless, the really powerful weapons belonged to the prisoner in the condemned cell. They were moral weapons, sharpened during long terms of imprisonment, and formidable in their authority. The prisoner knew how to wield them. He had only to remain defiantly silent for his power to increase. If he had answered the charges at his trial for high treason, he would have diminished his power. By answering them he would have given them substance and reduced himself to the level of his adversary. By the votes of the

electorate in East Pakistan, he could claim that he was the elected president of both East and West Pakistan, because he had achieved a parliamentary majority. President Yahya Khan was nothing more than a usurper, with no more authority than that provided by the guns of the military faction.

So Sheikh Mujibur Rahman remained in prison, defiant to the end, and with every passing day his stature increased. Nor, like President Yahya Khan, was he at the mercy of political events. He was isolated from them, beyond and above them, unreachable. Although he could make no speeches, pass no laws, reach no decisions, his voice was heard, his decisions were known, and he was all the more effectively a lawgiver. His silence was thunderous.

He was a legend in his own lifetime, living in the hearts and dreams of people all over the world, more powerful in prison than he could ever expect to be as a free man.

To become a legend means to become, in a strange way, exalted above other men, no longer subject to their laws or to the ordinary laws of human behavior. Such a man may be killed by an assassin, as Gandhi was killed, but he is rarely killed until he has reached old age and accomplished the greater part of his work, for he is protected by invisible forces, and chiefly by the affection of his worshipers. Love can become a protective shield, making a man very nearly invulnerable.

Nevertheless he was very vulnerable, for it occurred to President Yahya Khan in the last days of his presidency that if Dacca fell and all East Pakistan was lost, then it was right and fitting that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should be punished. He sent his agents to the prison with orders to prepare to hang the prisoner, but they were to wait until they received a coded telegram before actually carrying out the death sentence. Dacca fell, but the coded telegram did not arrive. In the next cell a grave was dug, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was told that it was merely a slit trench to be used in the event of an air raid. He prepared himself for death.

Like an actor who had at last found a role in the theater of the absurd, Yahya Khan was disposed to act out the part of Nadir Shah to the end. He had always been vengeful, and the prospect of killing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was so pleasing that he de-

liberately delayed sending the coded telegram so that he could enjoy it all the more in expectation. He was drinking even more heavily than usual, and in an unguarded moment he confided his decision to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had returned from a meeting at the United Nations with the knowledge that more than half the delegates regarded the military government of Yahya Khan with loathing and contempt.

"And what," asked Bhutto, "do you think will happen to our soldiers in East Pakistan, if he is hanged?"

Yahya Khan had not given the matter much thought. In the past he had always acted, and the consequences looked after themselves.

Bhutto explained what the consequences would be. Not one of the soldiers would be left alive.

Yahya Khan insisted that the order should be carried out. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would be killed in absolute secrecy, no one would know, and if necessary the order for the execution could be pre-dated to October. The world would be told that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had already been tried and duly executed for acts of high treason.

Bhutto realized that it was necessary to act quickly. He was deeply implicated in the crimes of the military government, but unlike Yahya Khan he was capable of rational thought. He had his own following in West Pakistan, and his own small but efficient private army. He therefore sent his agents to the prison and they arranged with the prison governor to smuggle Sheikh Mujibur Rahman out, hiding him first in the governor's house, where he remained for two days, and then for greater safety in a house some fourteen miles away. From being the prisoner of Yahya Khan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became the prisoner of Bhutto.

For Sheikh Mujibur Rahman it made very little difference. He was guarded round the clock by army commandos loyal to Bhutto, whose treachery he knew well. He was given no books or newspapers, and was not permitted to listen to the radio. He received no letters from his family. He still did not know that he was the elected president of Bangla Desh, nor did he know that he owed his change of residence to Bhutto. He had simply been plucked out of one prison and placed in another. On December 26

he was flown by helicopter to a bungalow near Rawalpindi, his third prison in the space of a week.

By this time, even without newspapers and radio, he was aware that there had been vast changes, and that with every change of prison his prospects were more hopeful. His guards were coldly watchful, but they no longer looked murderous. He asked no questions, for he knew they were under oath to remain silent. He noticed that they sometimes jumped to attention when he passed them.

On the following night he was told that a visitor had come to see him. When he entered the drawing room, he found Bhutto waiting there with his armed guards. Ten days had passed since the surrender at the race course in Dacca, that most shameful moment in the history of West Pakistan, and Bhutto was wreathed in smiles. It pleased him to see the rather dazed look on his old adversary's face. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had thinned out, there was more gray in his hair, he moved a little jerkily, as people do when they have been in a confined space for a long time, but he was recognizably the man who had formerly attempted to conduct negotiations with the leaders of West Pakistan.

"How did you come here?" Sheikh Mujibur Rahman asked.

Bhutto was still smiling.

"I am now the chief martial law administrator and president of Pakistan," Bhutto replied.

"Very good. Tell me whether I am free, and if so, I will talk—otherwise not."

Bhutto emphasized that he was the chief martial law administrator, and therefore there was still a dictatorship. Everything depended upon his will.

"You can leave whenever you wish," Bhutto said, but this was only a manner of speaking, for it soon became clear that he could leave only when Bhutto wished.

Freedom was conditional. It depended upon a satisfactory conclusion to negotiations. The prisoner was free to walk out of the bungalow, but not very far. From Bhutto he learned that a new provisional government had been established in Bangla Desh nine months ago, headed by Syed Nazrul Islam, and there had

been much fighting. Bhutto promised to supply him with books and newspapers, and in future he would be permitted to receive letters and to listen to the radio, but beyond this he could promise nothing. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would be treated like a prisoner whose record of good behavior entitled him to the indulgent smiles of his jailer. Although he was now permitted to receive information, he was not permitted to grant interviews or to do anything with the information he received.

Bhutto was by turns affable, threatening, sweet-tempered, stern, and commanding. The heavy weight of destiny had fallen on his shoulders, and he demanded the prisoner's sympathy and assistance. Only together could they settle the vast and intricate problems confronting Pakistan. If they continued to fight one another, then Pakistan would go down to irretrievable ruin.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said little, chiefly because the habit of speaking had left him, but also because he knew very well that his words were being recorded and Bhutto would have no hesitation in using his words against him. Ignorance made him vulnerable. He had known, of course, that there had been a war, and he now learned that the Indian and Bangla Desh forces had been victorious. From Bhutto he also learned that Yahya Khan had been within an inch of hanging him.

"You owe your life to me," Bhutto said, recounting the story of his own efforts to rescue Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the hangman's noose.

So they talked by the fireside on a raw December night, rehashing the old insoluble problems, searching for their causes, and coming to no satisfactory conclusions. All the evils had come about when Ayub Khan proclaimed himself dictator, and they had continued into the dictatorship of Yahya Khan, and no doubt they would continue under Bhutto. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman learned to his astonishment that Yahya Khan had surrendered his power to Bhutto without protest, without conditions, his brain softened by alcohol, his mind failing. Quietly and firmly Bhutto had presented the case for the prosecution, and Yahya Khan was forced to admit that he had brought his downfall on himself and by his own incompetence lost an empire.

That, too, was Bhutto's story, and not to be trusted unless there was collaborative evidence. In fact, Bhutto had seized

power with the advice and support of the younger officers of the army, not by any feat of personal ascendancy or by argument with Yahya Khan. He was, and would remain, the tool of the army. His private army, known as the People's Guard, had been and still was commanded by Major-General Akbar Khan, one of the four generals who ordered and planned the military takeover of East Pakistan. This paramilitary force was designed to keep the people of West Pakistan in subjection to the military. Bhutto might talk about popular elections, but he would never hold them unless he was certain that he would win.

There was high drama in the confrontation between Bhutto and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, but it belonged more to the middle ages than the present day. Bhutto was playing the role of a caliph of Baghdad confronted by a usurper who has fallen into his power. It amused him to contemplate the many punishments he could inflict on his prisoner, the many deaths he could be made to suffer, or the many uses to which he could be put. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was still in danger, living in the cloudy no man's land between prison and the promise of freedom.

They were two presidents. One had been president for nine days, the other for nine months. One had received his power from a usurper and was therefore himself a usurper,* while the other had been elected to office by popular suffrage. Ironies abounded during the confrontation between the two presidents in the bungalow near Rawalpindi. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did not yet know that he was the duly elected president of Bangla Desh, and Bhutto did not yet know what he was going to do with his prisoner."

It was one of Bhutto's less endearing characteristics that he exulted in having the power of life and death over people. Once the wife of a high official came to him because her husband had been arrested. She begged him to help her, reminded him of all the services her husband had performed on his behalf, and said she would do anything if only her husband was returned to her. Bhutto leaned back haughtily and snapped: "How did you have the audacity to come here? How do you know I did not put your husband in prison myself?" Then he waved her out of the room.

Bhutto had the feudal temper, the feudal capacity for treachery. If he promised something today, one could be sure the promise

would be rescinded three days later. Therefore his promise of conditional freedom meant no more than that he might, if it pleased him, grant a certain measure of freedom. What he wanted above everything was a united Pakistan, and he appealed to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman not to break away. Bangla Desh and West Pakistan were brothers who had quarreled. Now let them unite, for the quarrel was finished. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was baffled by Bhutto's arguments, for they corresponded to no recognizable reality. If the quarrel was finished, who was the victor? Bhutto was evasive. There was no victor; it was only necessary that the two wings of Pakistan should reunite. Bhutto wanted the assurance that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would work toward reunification, and soon it became clear that he wanted a signed document, a treaty, which he could present to the people as an earnest of the Sheikh's good intentions. "I can do nothing until I have talked to my people," Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said. "Let me go back, and then I shall be able to talk to you." On that note the strange conference came to an end.

During the following days he read the newspapers published in Rawalpindi. *Dawn* and *The Pakistan Times* were scarcely more than propaganda sheets, and no one reading them could possibly be aware that West Pakistan had suffered an ignominious defeat. There were long articles in praise of Bhutto with photographs of the chief martial law administrator and his family on every page, and his speeches were printed at astonishing length, but there were no reports of his meeting with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, no mention of Bangla Desh, and it appeared that India was still behaving with her accustomed intolerance and brutality. A headline read: **INDIA WAVES SABRES. TERROR IN KASHMIR. PAKISTAN CONTINUES FIGHT FOR JUSTICE.** The whole article might have been written in 1956. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was trained to read between the lines, and soon came to the conclusion that the chief martial law administrator was unsure of himself, still depended on the army, and would remain in power only as long as the military permitted. The real decisions were being taken by the generals responsible for the massacres, and there was therefore not the least likelihood of changes in the political structure of West Pakistan. Bhutto had worked out no political program to benefit the masses. Perhaps he realized that the time

had come for profound changes, but he was as much a prisoner as the man surrounded by armed guards in the bungalow outside Rawalpindi. Bhutto, too, was at the mercy of armed guards.

From all over the world came pleas for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The secretary general of the United Nations, the prime ministers of half the countries of Europe, and international associations of lawyers sent telegrams to Islamabad to urge his immediate release. The Soviet government, allied to so many Muslim governments, sent a plea couched in the most urgent tones, with a warning that if anything happened to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the consequences might be disastrous. Bhutto remained unmoved. Throughout his political life he had listened to people pleading to him to release prisoners. It was nothing new. He knew the rules of the game, for he had invented them. No prisoner was ever released unless it was to his advantage to release them. He still hoped that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would sign a document in favor of a united Pakistan or fall into one of the many traps laid for him. When it became clear that no promises could be extracted from the prisoner, and that nothing further was to be gained by keeping him, but on the contrary the stature of the prisoner increased with every passing day, Bhutto decided upon a ruse. Since there was no parliament, he would go to the people and offer them the opportunity to make the decision he had already reached. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, condemned to death for high treason by a military court, would be sentenced to freedom by a court of the people.

The ruse was successful, for the court was packed with Bhutto's followers and by vociferous members of the People's Guard. The mass meeting was held at Karachi. Bhutto addressed the crowd in his most emotional style, reciting all the injuries that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had inflicted on Pakistan and then pointing to his undoubted virtues. "Shall Sheikh Mujib be freed?" he asked dramatically, as though he were Pontius Pilate asking the people to decide the fate of Jesus. "Yours is the decision! I place it in your hands! You alone shall decide!"

He paused, raised his hands high in the air, as though he had more to say, and then suddenly his hands dropped to his side. It was the signal for a hundred thousand Pakistanis to shout in unison: "Free him! Free him!"

Bhutto bowed his head in submission to their will, and whispered hoarsely into the microphone: "You have relieved me of my great burden."

The charade was over, but not quite over. The West Pakistani newspapers, which had never announced the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and had mentioned his trial on charges of high treason only on the back pages, now announced that the people of Karachi had unanimously voted for his release. Bhutto savored his triumph, and then decided that he would like to keep on savoring it. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was not told that he had been freed by the decision of a popular court in Karachi. He remained under armed guard.

More and more telegrams piled up on Bhutto's desk, who now enjoyed the sensation of keeping the rest of the world on tenterhooks, having held his prisoner so long that he was in danger of believing that it was in his power to hold him indefinitely. In the mounting suspense the rumor that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been killed, a rumor widely believed during the summer, was revived. It seemed to be the only explanation for the interminable delay. Privately, Bhutto assured everyone that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in good health and would soon be permitted to leave West Pakistan.

Twenty-one days after the surrender on the racecourse at Dacca, Bhutto finally permitted his prisoner to leave. From one's knowledge of Bhutto, one might have known in advance that it would happen in this way, tortuously, in the utmost secret, after the prisoner had submitted to the most exquisite refinements of mental torture and intimidation. Twice, in the days following the strange trial at Karachi, Bhutto visited Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the bungalow. He always came at night, and always without warning. Each time he demanded that East and West Pakistan should continue their association, the link must not be broken, it was beyond belief that what had been joined together should be sundered. When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman reminded Bhutto that he had been promised his freedom long ago, and was now no closer to it, Bhutto spoke of the importance of continuing these negotiations that were still in their initial stages. They could, of course, be continued elsewhere. He suggested Teheran or Ankara. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman showed not the

slightest interest in choosing a site for negotiations. What he wanted above all was to return to his beloved Bangla Desh. He did not trust Bhutto, and distrusted him more every day.

Although he was allowed to read the Pakistani newspapers and receive letters, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman still had only a hazy idea about the situation in Bangla Desh. Bhutto mentioned that the Indian Army was in Dacca, as though that was a crime to be avenged.

"If that is true," Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said, "then there must have been some Bengalis who favored them. Are you telling me that the Indians were welcomed with open arms?"

Bhutto returned to the prospect of another meeting in Iran or Turkey before Sheikh Mujibur Rahman flew to Dacca. At all costs Bhutto wanted to delay his return. He wanted to keep Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as far away from Dacca as possible, and he was prepared to employ any ruse to do so. He still had many cards up his sleeve.

At last, on the evening of January 7, 1972, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was told that an airplane, a chartered Pakistani airliner, was waiting for him at Islamabad airport. There were various delays, for Bhutto insisted that the departure should take place in the utmost secrecy, and it was not until two o'clock in the morning that the automobile carrying Bhutto and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman began the short drive to the airport. Up to the last moment Bhutto was talking about the threads, strong as steel, that bound East and West Pakistan together. Up to the last moment Sheikh Mujibur Rahman assumed that he was going to be flown to Dacca.

"No," said Bhutto, "we are going to fly you to London."

"Why?"

"Because it is my wish," Bhutto replied.

Then Sheikh Mujibur Rahman knew that he was still a prisoner and so he would remain until he stepped off the airplane in London.

Bhutto still retained his options. At his orders the airplane, when halfway to London, could be made to return to Islamabad. The cat had not yet finished playing with the mouse. Above all, there was the satisfaction of sending him in the wrong direction.

The airplane touched down at Heathrow Airport at 6:36 A.M.,

January 8, just as dawn was breaking. The first radio message from the pilot was received in London an hour earlier, and was immediately telegraphed to the Foreign Office. A Foreign Office automobile met him just in time. He was a head of state, but the usual twenty-one gun salute reserved for such dignitaries was lacking, for his nation had not yet been recognized by Britain. Edward Heath, the prime minister, was out of the country but immediately made arrangements to fly to London. The Bangla Desh authorities reserved a suite at Claridge's Hotel for him, and there, in royal comfort, among servants dressed in eighteenth-century costumes, in an atmosphere of pomp more suitable to kings, film moguls and corporate executives, the president of Bangla Desh spent his first day of freedom.

The turn of events left him breathless, jubilant, and profoundly depressed. For the first time he learned from his compatriots the full extent of the havoc caused by the Pakistani Army; he learned the names of friends who had been killed in the massacres and of the villages that had gone up in flames. He asked about his family and learned that they were all safe. The soldiers came for his ninety-year-old father and eighty-year-old mother, arrested them, debated whether to kill them, decided that they were not worth a few bullets, and contented themselves with lining up the six servants of the house and shooting them in full view of the two old people. Then they burned down the house and went on to better pastures.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman put in a call to his wife and another to Syed Nazrul Islam, the acting president, in Dacca. A third call went to Mrs. Indira Gandhi who was in Lucknow. Later in the day he held a press conference in the ballroom of Claridge's Hotel. Outwardly he appeared fresh and debonair, with the jauntness of a man half his age, but at intervals there was a cutting edge to his voice. "I assert that the existence of the People's Republic of Bangla Desh is an unchallengeable reality," he said. "and our future relations with any other country must be based on this fundamental reality." When a reporter asked him why he had flown to London, he answered: "Don't you know that I was a prisoner? It depended on the Pakistan Mujibur Rahman's will." It was an odd way to describe Bhutto, but it served its purpose. Later he would take the bit in his teeth, mentioning Bhutto by

name, saying that it was up to him to place the criminals on trial and see that they were punished, forgetting for the moment that Blutto was as much responsible for the massacres as anyone else.

He had learned how to master his anger, but sometimes the anger broke through. Asked whether he had been tortured or mishandled, he answered: "What do you mean—mishandled? Do you know that where I was imprisoned, it was the worst cell in the worst place—a condemned cell, solitary confinement?" He raged against the atrocities committed by the Pakistan soldiers. "Do you know that they arrested my children and interned them? Do you know that hundreds of thousands of buildings have been burned and children have been killed? How is that possible, tell me?"

When he spoke of "my children" he meant the Bengalis. At this time he did not know that very few of them had been interned: it was simpler to kill them than to arrest them. "I have just come out of jail, I was in prison, and I don't know what has happened," he went on. Even now he knew less about what had happened to his country than the most junior reporter in the ballroom.

When he was asked about his plans, he said that he simply did not know. He said he would return to Bangla Desh "whenever I so decide," which might mean within a day or a week. He needed a few moments of calm in order to prepare his return, but there were few such moments during that first dream-like day of freedom. Visitors came and went, telegrams arrived, baskets of flowers appeared mysteriously in his suite, the telephone was ringing constantly. In the evening he met the prime minister at 10 Downing Street, and there at last he made the decision to return immediately, for Edward Heath offered him an RAF Comet for the journey to Dacca. After barely twenty-four hours in England, he flew off to Bangla Desh. He left in complete secrecy; the authorities were well aware that the large number of Pakistanis in London did not share the enthusiasm of the Bengalis.

There was a brief stopover at New Delhi. Almost the entire government came to Palam airport to welcome him. As the white RAF Comet came in for the landing, there was a subdued roar of excitement followed by thunderous applause. For a few moments he stood at the top of the landing steps, looking dazed in the sun-

light, and then he seemed to be running down the steps two at a time.

He was in no mood for making long speeches, and he preferred to talk quietly with Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Nevertheless a speech had to be made, and he spoke jubilantly into the microphone on the theme of his own journey from the darkness of prison into the sunlight of Bangla Desh. After thanking the people of India, "the best friends of my people," he went on:

This journey is a journey from darkness to light, from captivity to freedom, from desolation to hope. I am at last going back to Golden Bengal, the land of my dreams, after a period of nine months. In those nine months my people have traversed centuries. When I was taken away from my people, they wept. When I was held in captivity, they fought, and now when I go back to them, they are victorious. I go back to the sunshine of their million victorious smiles. I go back to a free, independent and sovereign Bangla Desh. I go back to join my people in the tremendous tasks that now lie ahead, in turning our victory into the road of peace, progress and prosperity.

I go back not with hatred in my heart for anyone, but with the satisfaction that truth has at last triumphed over falsehood, sanity over insanity, courage over cowardice, justice over injustice and good over evil.

Joi Bangla! Joi Hind! !!

It was a good speech, for he said what needed to be said, and it was all in character. Someone once remarked that he used the word "I" so often that it was like watching telegraph poles flashing past from an express train, but it was never, or very rarely, the self-indulgent "I." He spoke of "my people," "my brothers," and "my children," rejoicing in his own affection for them, certain that they returned his affection. In New Delhi he was elated and very tired, and when he reached Dacca airport later in the day he was even more elated and even more tired. He was weeping when he stepped down from the Comet, and he seemed not to hear the delirious cries of welcome. Flowers were showered on him and a heavy garland was placed round his neck. A few weeks earlier he had been expecting a hangman's noose.

The police were in a quandary. As soon as they heard he was

coming they examined the route from the airport to the race course where he would be speaking, and concluded that it was beyond their power to guarantee his safety. Rumors that there would be an attempt to assassinate him during his triumphal journey through the city were flying round Dacca. There were still many Pakistani agents and members of the fanatical secret societies Al Badr and Al Shams at large. The police suggested that it would be better if he came from the airport to the racecourse in an armored car, or better still in a tank. A sense of fatality hung over his arrival.

The student council met hurriedly and decided that this was more a matter for students than for the police. With the approval of the provisional government they decided to assume full responsibility for his safety. They stationed themselves along the route from the airport and they mingled with the crowds massing on the racecourse. There were only six thousand policemen in Dacca, but there were fifty thousand students from the university, the colleges, and high schools. They were deadly serious.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman drove through Dacca in a Dodge truck. There were twenty people standing with him on the bunting-draped truck, so that he was almost surrounded. "*Sheikh Mujib zindabad!*" (Long live Sheikh Mujib). The words came like a deep rhythmic chant, like an incantation, full-throated, charged with emotional energy, for he had been very close to death and his long life seemed miraculous. Nothing quite like this had happened in the world since the day when General de Gaulle marched in triumph along the Champs Elysées.

When he reached the racecourse he vanished from sight, moving through the crowd within a phalanx of students. Suddenly a young student appeared on the rostrum. "The Sheikh is here!" he announced, meaning that he would soon be speaking to them. Then the student went on: "For his safety and ours, everyone please sit on the grass! Keep your hands on the grass! Watch the hands of everyone around you! Watch! Watch!"

When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman climbed up on the rostrum, there was a sound like a gasp, a roar of surprise, as though even now the half million people sitting on the race course could scarcely believe what they saw. For a long while he stood there

silently, while the strange flickering, roaring sound welled around him. Then he spoke about the massacres and about the barbarians who had burned thousands of villages and raped so many women, and he pleaded for forgiveness.

"Forgive them!" he shouted. "Today I do not want revenge from anybody! There must be no more killing! The Bengali who will eat, smile, sing, and be happy is my Bengali. All who live in Bengal must live together peacefully!"

Again and again he spoke of the millions who fled, the millions who had been massacred, and sometimes he would pause, unable to continue speaking. When he spoke about the enemy, there was a harshness in his voice. Why had they committed these terrible acts? What had they hoped to gain? He said: "Let there be no corruption among you! Do not take bribes! Do your duties honestly!" He said this because he realized long ago that corruption lay at the heart of the problem. He went on: "The poet Rabindranath Tagore said, 'O Mother Bengal, you who created seventy million Bengalis and did not permit them to grow to manhood . . .' Well, they have reached their manhood now! We have proved that we are a nation of heroes, and nothing in the world can now destroy us!"

The massacres were over, the conqueror had been conquered, a new life was beginning, a new hope was springing up. On that bright sunlit day, in a racecourse in a little known city, a tall man on a rostrum was bringing hope to all the other oppressed people in the world. It was a day to remember, for such things do not happen often in the world.

"You know," said one of the students who attended the meeting on the racecourse, "it was like a miracle. There was the man who had been condemned to death, and who was still in danger of death, and who had spent ten of his fifty years in prison, and he was talking as though life was full of boundless opportunities, and I knew—I was absolutely sure—there were people there with guns ready to kill him. He did not care—he absolutely did not care. He was even annoyed with the students who went to such lengths to protect him. He said: 'What does it matter if they kill me here? I am in Bangla Desh now, and I shall die here!' He smiled, because the idea of dying in Bangla Desh pleased him."

"What would have happened if they had killed him on the racecourse?" I asked.

The student shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course we would have massacred all the Pakistanis remaining in Bangla Desh. What else could we do?"

Golgotha

IN THE YEAR 1657 the Mughal Empire was at the height of its power and influence, and seemed to be enjoying a long summer of peace. It was the peace that comes when supreme power is so well organized that it reaches down to the remotest villages. The Emperor Shah Jahan was genuinely beloved, the intricate Mughal administration dealt reasonably and fairly with the people, and there was the feeling that the empire was so firmly established that it would endure from generation to generation. When the emperor fell ill, no one was particularly disturbed. He would soon recover, and meanwhile Prince Dara Shikoh, the heir to the throne, ruled in his name.

Prince Dara Shikoh was one of those rare princes whose minds are illuminated with generosity and intelligence. He was then forty-two years old, but looked younger. He had fine-drawn features which seemed to be carved in ivory, and he possessed a natural gaiety. He especially enjoyed the visits of foreigners to his court and asked them endless questions, because he was deeply interested in the world around him. Since the Mughals were Muslims who ruled over a predominantly Hindu population, he also entertained Hindu scholars and religious leaders. His consuming passion was to build a bridge between Muslims and Hindus. His

books and poems, which have survived, show him wrestling eloquently with the problem of synthesizing the two religions or at the very least demonstrating that though they were outwardly dissimilar the inner core was the same. Just as he consorted with Persian poets, Jewish philosophers, Jesuit priests, and Hindu monks, so he felt that it was not beyond the bounds of possibility that Muslims and Hindus would learn to be tolerant of each other. Since he was emperor in all but name, he was in a position to ensure that Muslims and Hindus would meet on common ground and quietly discuss their differences. "Pluck out the thorn of intolerance," he wrote, "and then there will be peace all over our land."

His younger brother Prince Aurangzeb was a man of a different character. He was a fanatical Muslim, harsh, intolerant, ferociously ambitious for power. He despised Prince Dara Shikoh for consorting with foreigners, and spent his time with his mullahs and soldiers. He led his army against the army of Prince Dara Shikoh and won the battle, then marched on Agra where the Emperor Shah Jahan, now fully recovered from his illness, ordered him to put down his arms. "Remember," said the emperor, "that eternal prosperity comes only from remembering God and showing kindness to men." "You have brought this on yourself," Prince Aurangzeb replied, and for the remaining eight years of his life the emperor was shut up in a small room in the Red Fort at Agra.

A more terrible punishment was reserved for Prince Dara Shikoh, who was tracked down and brought in chains to Delhi. Worn out by grief and misery, wearing a travel-stained cloak and an old gray turban, his head bent to avoid the bright glare of the August sun, the prince was paraded through the streets on the back of an old mangy elephant. Behind him on the howdah crouched a slave with a naked sword with orders to cut off the prince's head if he made the slightest effort to escape or if the people weeping in the streets attempted to rescue him. But he never raised his head, never glanced at the crowds, and they say he sat there "like a crushed twig."

The crowds were silent because they were awed by the spectacle of the prince bowed down in misery. When he had passed out of sight, there were riots to protest his imprisonment, but

they were quickly put down. That night Prince Aurangzeb ordered the execution of his brother. Slaves entered his prison cell and hacked off his head, which was then brought to Prince Aurangzeb. "Let the face be washed—it is too bloody," he said. When it was washed he examined it closely, afraid that some other head might have been substituted, and he was not satisfied until with the point of a sword he lifted one of the eyelids to see whether there was the little dark speck on the white of the eye. The speck was there. He smiled, insisted that the courtiers observe the speck, and gave orders that the head be embalmed, placed in a luxurious casket, and presented to the Emperor Shah Jahan. "It is good that my son should remember me," the emperor said when he received the casket. When it was opened and he peered inside, he fainted away. Today the head lies in the vast marble tomb of the Emperor Humayun in Delhi.

For Aurangzeb, now Emperor, the killing of Prince Dara Shikoh on August 30, 1659, was not a matter of very great importance. He felt that his brother's death was destined and his father's imprisonment was also destined. What was at stake was the supremacy of the Muslim faith and the necessity to chastise the Hindus. He spent the rest of his long reign—he died at the age of eighty-nine in 1707—making their lives as inhumanly difficult as possible. They were no longer allowed to build temples, he placed restrictions on the observance of their sacred holidays, he taxed them heavily, and when they came out in rebellion he massacred them. Unlike Prince Dara Shikoh, who worked continually for reconciliation and tolerance, the Emperor Aurangzeb was determined to reduce the Hindus to the status of slaves. In his corrupt and brutal reign the Mughal empire went into a decline.

The murder of Prince Dara Shikoh was the turning point. Thereafter intolerance became a way of life, and the Muslims continued to rule the Hindus by the sword until the British conquered India.

The Pakistani military elite inherited the traditions of the last emperors of the Mughal dynasty. They formed a kind of royal court which existed in superb isolation from the people, indifferent to the needs of any except themselves. Proud and insolent, convinced that they alone possessed the true faith and the right

to subjugate all those who opposed their faith or were indifferent to it or did not belong to it, they ruled despotically without fear of opposition because they possessed the instrument to enforce their will. It was as though the Emperor Aurangzeb had been provided with tanks and jet planes. At all costs, even at the cost of massacre, they must secure dominion over the country.

The massacres in East Pakistan were intended to put an end once and for all to opposition to the ruling power. If only one man escaped the net, then the massacre would have failed in its purpose. Total conformity, total submission was essential. Only a military mind could believe that these aims were desirable, or attainable. Nevertheless they acted on the assumption that the survivors would never dare to raise their heads again. In the eyes of the military this massacre was final, for it would be so terrible and so long-lasting in its effect that there would be no need for any other. Major General Shaukat Raza, one of the three divisional commanders in the field, informed the *Sunday Times* correspondent in June 1971: "You must be absolutely sure that we have not undertaken such a drastic and expensive operation—expensive both in men and money—for nothing. We have undertaken a job. We are going to finish it, not hand it over half done to the politicians so that they can mess it up again. The army can't keep coming back like this every three or four years. It has a more important task. I assure you that when we have got through with what we are doing there will never be need again for such an operation."

Major General Raza was under no illusions; he knew exactly what he was doing. The army had given itself the task of winnowing out the chaff, leaving only the pure grain. The Bengalis who refused to be re-educated along Islamic lines or otherwise proved themselves unreliable were to be killed *en masse*, while the Hindus were to be killed or put to flight, their property being given to the good Muslims, meaning those who were obedient to the army command. There was the additional advantage that hundreds of thousands of Hindus would flee to India, where they could be expected to weigh heavily on the Indian conscience and the Indian treasury.

All this had been worked out with care by men who had already acquired experience in massacres in Baluchistan and the

Northwest Frontier Province. They were sly and treacherous, deeply involved in criminality, remote from the ordinary life of the people, and they were incapable of telling what they meant when they spoke of "the Islamisation of the masses." But they possessed the outline of a theory and the means to put it into practice. They were, after all, officers in a professional army, as President Yahya Khan remembered several times during the course of the massacres. Speaking to the correspondent of *Figaro* on September 1, 1971, he said: "What happened in Dacca was no football match. When my soldiers kill, they do it cleanly. My army is a professional army, and it is well-trained!" His soldiers did not kill cleanly and they were well-trained only in massacre.

What happened was something that has happened many times under military dictatorships. The small, close-knit military elite, feeling that it lacked popular support and was therefore threatened, struck out in an effort to impose its will on the people by force of arms. The reign of terror was expected to numb the people into obedience. In the process there occurred the breakdown of all human responsibility, the abdication of all human justice. All those human ties which are necessary in every human society were snapped. Since it did not matter who was killed, for the intention was to create an atmosphere of numbing terror across the entire length and breadth of the land, the lives of ordinary human beings ceased to have any value or any meaning. Only the lives of the officers of the military elite were regarded as valuable.

Yet it should not be forgotten that the military elite acted not from strength but from weakness. They felt threatened, and in their more lucid moments they were well aware that they were not professionals but amateurs acting out a traditional charade. President Yahya Khan continually insisted that he commanded a professional army. "Don't think I'm a weak chap!" he would say, hinting at vast reserves of strength. He thought of himself as strong-willed and resolute, a winner of battles, but these battles existed only in his imagination. He said: "Don't think I'm a weak chap!" too often for anyone to believe that he was strong.

By the very nature of his self-appointed task, a military dictator is a weak and frightened man. His eyes gaze penetratingly at everyone he encounters, he continually makes the appropriate

gestures of a commander, and all the time he is living in fear that his bemedaled uniforms, his guards and his armies will suddenly vanish from sight and he will be revealed for what he is—a man who is terrified of life and close to suicide. He surrounds himself with armed guards and trusts none of them. He is suspicious of his generals for fear that they will usurp his place. He dare not walk in the streets for fear of assassination. He must continually invent a new language to explain his thoughts: thus a massacre becomes “a military operation carried out in furtherance of our national goals.” The most miserable of men, he must remind himself continually that he is strong and in full command of his faculties when in fact he is weak and close to madness.

Because military dictators create so much injury and are so offensive to civilization it is always best to put them out of their misery as quickly as possible.

The massacres in East Pakistan now belong to history. We know now almost as much as we shall ever know about the motives of President Yahya Khan, his advisors and the small group of generals who imposed their will on a country that seemed to be defenseless. More mass graves will be opened, and one day the full extent of the massacres will be assessed. Meanwhile there are lessons to be learned which affect the lives of nearly everyone on earth. The massacres in East Pakistan were not an isolated phenomenon. They were merely the expression in its purest form of a phenomenon that is now commonplace: the war against civilians.

In World War I the civilians were not regarded as combatants, and although there was often fighting near large cities, the rules of war demanded that civilians be protected. The soldiers faced the enemy and they shelled and shot and hurled grenades against one another, obeying the rules of war. The Germans sometimes employed the weapons of terror and massacre, but these were officially frowned upon. It was felt that if the war was to be won, it was better to win it honorably.

Something very strange and terrible happened in the years following World War I. Where previously the military commanders ordered that the Red Cross should be respected, that women and children should be regarded as inviolable, and that senseless destruction must be avoided at all costs, now the commanders

gave their soldiers license to bomb hospitals, massacre women and children, drop napalm on villages, and destroy everything that might be useful to the enemy including the smallest huts of the poorest peasants. The laws of war were abrogated. It was permissible to machine-gun refugees pouring along the main highways because it was necessary that these roads be reserved for military traffic. Entire cities were reduced to ashes. No limit was placed on what might be destroyed. The aim was to destroy the will of the enemy, and since the enemy consisted of men, women, and children, it was permissible to kill them all. Civilians were expendable, and it was incumbent on the military commander to kill as many as he could.

All over the world, in every country where armies have fought, more civilians have died than soldiers. In the last four decades about twenty million soldiers have died in battle or as a result of their wounds and two hundred million civilians have died in massacres.

The first sign of the coming terror was witnessed in Manchuria in 1931, when the Japanese raped, looted and massacred on a scale hitherto unknown. There were few correspondents in the areas they penetrated, and little was known about the extent of these massacres until the Japanese began their long-planned invasion of China. Only then did it become evident that the Japanese high command regarded the right to massacre as the inherent right of every military commander in the field. The Japanese had discovered the simple truth that mass murder was just as effective as winning battles in the war against the enemy's spirit. When a man sees his village in flames, and discovers that everyone he has ever known has died, there is no more fight in him. That, at least, is the theory. In practice, as often as not, the man goes on fighting to the end.

The fighting in the Yangtse Valley was never sufficiently recorded in the West. Chinese sources show that whole provinces were depopulated, and the Japanese brought fire and terror to every hamlet and village they encountered. The great powers watched in silence, provided the Japanese with all the armaments and scrap iron they wanted, and showed not the slightest interest in the fate of China. The Japanese were a martial race, and no doubt they would succeed in conquering China, and it was better

not to get involved. In much the same illusory fashion the great powers watched the happenings in East Pakistan without any feeling that they were morally bound to help the helpless. It was hoped that the massacres would soon come to an end and that the military dictatorship in Islamabad would eventually arrive at an understanding with the people it was massacring.

The Japanese had been taught to despise the Chinese. The Germans had been taught to despise the Slavs. The Punjabis of West Pakistan had been taught to despise the Bengalis. By arousing hatred and contempt for the enemy, the military authorities secured an advantage which would otherwise be denied to them. A soldier inculcated with contempt for the enemy finds no difficulty in massacring them.

In Vietnam the same situation arises. Traditionally the people of the north have despised the people of the south, and it was therefore all the easier for the government of Hanoi to attack the government of Saigon, sending its armies into the south, and organizing rebellion. When the American Army was sent into Vietnam, the terror was compounded, for the American soldiers despised the Vietnamese. They were "gooks," a word that reduces them to subhuman dimensions. The Americans spoke of the Vietnamese in the same way that the West Pakistanis spoke about Bengalis. They were expendable, their land could be defoliated, pockmarked with twenty million bombs, and reduced to a wasteland. Massacres were the commonplace of the war in Vietnam, and no one was ever able to count how many Vietnamese villagers died from bullets supplied by great powers who had no interest in the fate of villagers.

As we have seen, it is always the villagers, the most helpless of people, who suffer most. They get in the way of armies and are brushed aside. They have no powerful voices to speak for them, no walls to protect them, and no one remembers their names. We remember Mylai because by the merest accident it became a *cause célèbre*, but who remembers the hundreds of other Mylais not only in Vietnam, but in China and Russia and East Pakistan? Thus we learn that massacres are quickly forgotten, and no battle roll lists their names. The worst evil is that the military have grown so accustomed to massacre that a small one is readily forgiven and only a large massacre demands the attention of a

judge advocate. In East Pakistan the army dispensed with judge advocates. The more massacres he committed, the more likely was the officer to receive promotion. Massacre was the name of the game.

Since increasingly the military have recourse to massacre, it is necessary to inquire whether they are likely to continue. The answer, clearly, is that they have only just begun. The temptations and the rewards are only too evident. In country after country military dictatorships have been established, deriving their power from their threat of massacring whole sections of the population. Once it has come into power, a military dictatorship can only be overthrown by armed force at a cost in human lives so incalculable that scarcely anyone would dare to issue the summons of revolt.

The whole world now lives under the threat of massacre, for the military has discovered that it possesses a weapon of proven efficiency and every military elite in every country thirsts for power. It is not in the least difficult, for example, to imagine the American Army deciding that the existing government was so incompetent to rule that it had become necessary for the army to seize power and to rule by decree. The army already possesses a vast compendium of computerized lists of people it views with suspicion. It would have no trouble in rounding up dissidents, and no qualms in shooting them. That the army is by its very nature totally incompetent to rule over an infinitely complex social organization is not a fact that has ever commended itself to generals. They have spent their lives simplifying problems by the simple process of killing. Anyone who has spent any time in an army mess knows how contemptuous army officers are of civilians. In much the same tones as President Yahya Khan decreeing the massacre of the Bengalis, they can be heard saying: "Let's kill a few of them, and they'll all knuckle under." A few may mean ten million—a satisfying figure. Twenty million may be too much, and thirty million might be regarded as outlandish.

The military elite in the United States is potentially as lawless and corrupt as the military elite in Pakistan. Already the generals do as they please, having circumvented civilian authority to a surprising degree and accumulated so much power within the military industrial complex that they are cushioned against the

possibility of thorough investigation. In Vietnam they have conducted their own "preemptive reaction strikes" on their own authority, as though the country belonged to them and they could destroy it at their pleasure. Like the Pakistani officers they receive handouts from industry and free junketing in the airplanes of corporate executives. They regard the accumulated wealth of the country as their own reserve fund, and if anyone suggests that the national wealth would be better spent in improving social conditions, they answer that defense is paramount, for without defense there will be no social conditions to improve. Meanwhile the cost of defense rises to astronomical proportions, the rich grow richer and the poor poorer.

The military regard civilians as expendable. The civilians can argue more forcefully that the military is expendable, and it is not even tolerable unless it is under close civilian control. Since it is by nature lawless, it must be watched continually. What is needed beside every general is an *advocatus humanitatis*, an advocate who will speak on behalf of humanity and reason with power to dismiss the general instantly once he steps over the bounds of legality. It may be inconvenient to the general, but it is not his convenience that is at issue. Wars are totally pointless and senseless, and someone must speak for humanity. The Russians placed a political commissar beside every general to ensure that he acted in accordance with party doctrine. Someone should see that the generals obey the doctrines of humanity.

Once civilian control is removed from the military the temptation for the generals to indulge in political adventures is expanded ominously. Nothing is simpler for the military than to acquire power, for as Mao Tse-tung once remarked, "power comes out of the barrel of a gun." Having stated this, Mao Tse-tung immediately corrected himself, declaring that "power belongs to the people." The statements cannot be reconciled. Nor does the generalissimo who acquires supreme power in the name of the army need to defend his actions, for his accusers are jailed or massacred and the accusations are expunged from the record.

All soldiers are anachronisms. They belong to the ancient feudal world when frontiers still possessed some meaning. Today, when frontiers are little more than lines on a map and a man can travel over twenty frontiers in a single airplane flight without

ever asking permission to cross them, they have lost what little meaning they once possessed. We cannot guard against the spy satellites revolving around the earth, busily discovering our industrial and military secrets. We are confronted with a situation in which the scientists, not the military, are in command; and the military is all the more dangerous because its traditional powers have been usurped. It must therefore constantly seek new battlegrounds in order to justify its existence and safeguard its interests. Meanwhile the military performs a murderous shadow play, inventing battles which should never have been fought, while high above them, beyond the reach of machine guns and airplanes, the trajectories of the future missiles are already being charted, as though drawn lightly in pencil on the untroubled ether.

We come at last to the realization that the military no longer has any place in a world worth living in. Like the ancient dinosaurs with their insignificant brains and heavy lumbering bodies weighing thirty tons, they have all the appearance of dominating the earth, seemingly powerful beyond any imaginable power, though doomed to extinction. The military parades its might, threatens and blusters, and all the time it is being eroded by an inner corruption. Today, for the first time, the civilian population has acquired an ally against the predatory forces of the military. This ally is the civilian scientist who commands more destructive power than any army, and is capable of behaving far more intelligently than any general. He has the power to destroy to the ultimate degree, while the military can only destroy relatively. For good or evil the destiny of the world is in the hands of the scientists and there is some comfort to be derived from the fact that scientists have shown no particular interest in murdering peasants.

Meanwhile, for perhaps another century, we shall have to live with the military, which will continue to massacre civilian populations. Massacre has become the essential corollary of modern warfare. In Vietnam it has been practiced on both sides so successfully that the protagonists have felt encouraged to continue the slaughter indefinitely; and sometimes it has served as a pastime for weary and frightened soldiers. The casualty lists do not give the number of civilians killed daily, perhaps because the war

would stop if the figures were known. It is felt that the deaths of civilians are inconsequential, and the living wounded are even more inconsequential. Should one prepare each day a list of the civilian dead and wounded and those who have suffered? But the list would be endless, and who would read it?

The crux lies here: for the dead, the wounded, and the suffering soon enough comprise the mass of the people. The civilian population deserves to have its own casualty lists and its own memorials. It deserves, too, to be represented in the war councils. In the thirty-year war in Vietnam no peasant has ever been permitted to speak in parliament, or advise the military commanders, or discuss his plight with the military dictatorship. Since there are military dictatorships on both sides, he is at the mercy of forces over which he can never hope to exercise control.

● Of all the evils inflicted on mankind the worst are floods, cyclones, epidemics, and massacres. Floods can drown whole provinces, a cyclone can kill half a million people in the space of a few hours, yet we know that floods can be controlled and even the worst effects of cyclones can be mitigated by building storm shelters and sea walls. The anti-cyclone engineers are at work and partial remedies are in sight. Fifty years ago epidemics of bubonic plague swept across Asia at regular intervals, while diphtheria and tuberculosis were scourges which carried away millions of lives, and today they are almost unknown. The people of Bangla Desh who suffered floods, cyclones, epidemics, and massacres all in the space of a few months deserve at least the prospect that these scourges will come to an end. We need the engineers who will work to prevent wars and massacres.

About 260 B.C. the Indian king Ashoka invaded the country of Kalinga, which lay to the east of his vast territories. When his army conquered the army of Kalinga, he did something which few kings ever do. He walked across the battlefield and looked at the unnumbered dead. It was reported to him that altogether a hundred and fifty thousand lay there. He was so shaken by the crime he had committed that he embraced Buddhism, a religion of peace, announcing that henceforth no man and no animal might be killed throughout his kingdom.

In our own time it is not likely that an Ashoka will arise. As long as there are military elites there will be massacres, and we

cannot hope that they will be shocked into sanity by the sight of the dead.

Just as in India a king embraced an ethic which for his generation outlawed all wars and killings, so in China there arose a moral philosopher, Confucius, who announced that the human body was sacrosanct and inviolable. "Not a hair of the head must be touched," he proclaimed. He introduced a moral code which gave first place to the quiet scholar and last place to the soldier, and it is perhaps significant that he came into prominence at the end of a period of interminable wars.

Today in Bangla Desh they are still uncovering the mass graves. The earth and the rains have eaten the flesh away, there are only bones and sometimes a strip of faded cloth. Often it has been observed that the dead embrace each other, the hands are joined, or a hand lies protectively on a shoulder. Often, too, it was observed that the faded cloth was of the coarsest and cheapest kind, such as only the very poor would buy.

In the end our common humanity may save us, or like the Emperor Aurangzeb at the end of his life we may find ourselves regretting our sins. "I am so evil," he wrote, "that I fear God will have no place for me. Therefore bury me bare-headed, for they say that all those who come bare-headed into God's presence will receive His mercy. But I do not believe He will dare to look at me."

That common humanity is our only refuge, our only hope. Confronted by murderous soldiers enjoying the prospects of massacre, men, women and children nearly always retain their natural dignity, and in dying triumph over their adversaries. Hermann Graebe, a German engineer, watched the Jews dying in a great death pit in Dubno in the Ukraine and later wrote an account of what he had seen:

Without screaming or weeping these people undressed, stood around in family groups, kissed each other, said farewells, and waited for the sign from the SS man who stood beside the pit with a whip in his hand. During the fifteen minutes I stood near, I heard no complaint or plea for mercy. I watched a family of about eight persons, a man and a woman both of about fifty, and their children of about twenty to twenty-four, and two grown-up daughters about twenty-eight or twenty-nine. An old woman with snow-

white hair was holding a one year old child in her arms and singing to it, tickling it. The child was cooing with delight. The couple were looking on with tears in their eyes. The father was holding the hand of a boy about ten years old and speaking to him softly; the boy was fighting back his tears. The father pointed to the sky, stroked his head and seemed to explain something to him.

At that moment the SS man at the pit shouted something to his comrade. The latter counted off about twenty persons and instructed them to go behind the earth mound. Among them was the family I have just mentioned. I well remember a girl, slim and with black hair, who, as she passed me, pointed to herself and said: "Twenty-three." I walked around the mound and stood in front of a tremendous grave. People were closely wedged together and lying on top of each other, so that only their heads were visible. Nearly all had blood running over their shoulders from their heads. Some of the people shot were still moving. Some were lifting their anus and turning their heads to show that they were still alive. The pit was already two-thirds full. I estimated that it already contained about a thousand people. I looked for the man who did the shooting. He was an SS man who sat at the edge of the narrow end of the pit, his feet dangling into it. He had a Tommy-gun on his knees and was smoking a cigarette. The people, completely naked, went down some steps which were cut in the clay wall of the pit and clambered over the heads of the people lying there, in the place to which the SS man directed them. Some caressed those who were still alive and spoke to them in low voices.

So it was in Dacca, and in all the forgotten places where the earth cries out for vengeance and where vengeance is unknown. Everywhere the soldiers and the SS men act like crawling vermin, while the dying embrace and caress one another, join hands and speak in consoling voices, maintaining their human dignity to the end.

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