IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS

The Autobiography Of
Mir Ghaus Buksh Bizenjo

Edited by B.M. Kutty

REPRODUCED BY:
SANI H. PANHWAR

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Expression of Gratitude

I am indebted to a number of my friends, who hold late Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo in high esteem and had worked with him and drawn inspiration from his leadership, for prompting me to make this modest contribution to the political history of Pakistan - indirectly though - by translating and editing the randomly written notes of late Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo.

My long time friend and colleague Karamat Ali not only egged me on to undertake this task but doggedly pursued me till I finished it. I am obliged to him for minutely going through the manuscript and pointing out the inadvertent lapses on my part. There is a long list of friends with whom I have worked in political parties for long periods and to whom I am obliged for prodding me so often since Mir Sahib's death in 1989 to compile and publish his memoirs. As they are too many, I will mention the names of only a few of them here: Dr. M.A. Mehboob, Yusuf Mustikhan, Baji Naseem Shameem Malik, Tahira Mazhar Ali Khan, Lal Bakhsh Rind, Akhtar Hussain, Zafar Malik, Shah Muhammad Shah, Dr. Abdul Hakim Lehri, Syed Zahid Gardezi, Hyder Abbas Gardezi, Usman Baluch and five friends who are no more - Shameem Ashraf Malik, Dr. Sher Afzal Malik, Aijaz Ali Jatoi, Lala Gul Muhmamad and Rasheed Baluch. Then, there are members of Mir Sahib's family, who have also been actively associated with his politics and are still in the field – his sons Mir Bizen (former MNA), Mir Hasil Khan (former MNA and currently Senator) and their cousin and former Senator Mir Tahir Bizenjo, who encouraged me in my work and also provided me some precious old photographs. I also owe thanks to my younger daughter Shazia Mohyuddin and grand daughters Hafsa Jawaid and Mazia Jawaid for helping me out at the computer in doing a large part of the typing work and fixing of photographs etc., despite their tight university schedules and providing me the badly needed buck-up. I am also grateful to my colleagues at PILER – Dr. Aly Ercelan, Zulfiqar Shah, Sharafat Ali and Zeenat Hissam for the moral support they extended to me while I was working on this project. My thanks are also due to young Abbas Haider at PILER whose help was available for the asking whenever I had trouble with the computer settings. I should also express my gratitude to Alia Amirali, who made some very useful suggestions and helped in the preliminary formatting of the manuscript. And last but most important, I thank Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed, Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi, for the final formatting and preparing of the manuscript for print and publication through the Centre. Thanks are also due to PILER and Pakistan Labour Trust for providing the financial support.

B.M. Kutty

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Editor's Note

My personal contact with late Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo (I will call him Mir Sahib from here on) dates back to mid-nineteen fifties. I was a member of the working committee of Pakistan Awami League's Karachi Chapter since 1955 and worked with late Mahmudul Huq Usmani who was the Secretary General of the Party. Though Awami League had its office at Pakistan Chowk, a short distance from the DJ Science College, Usmani Sahib's residence at 352, Nazareth Road, Garden East, Karachi remained round-the-clock meeting point of all and sundry in the Party– from top leaders to ordinary workers. Activists of other parties also visited the place from time to time. Thanks to Usmani Sahib's exceptional hospitality, his house was something like a family home for everyone who walked in.

Almost every evening after office hours (I was employed with a Pak-German joint venture company) and on Sundays and holidays, I used to spend a good amount of time at Usmani Sahib's house, assisting him in drafting his political statements and reports, taking notes of meetings and discussions and attending to other party-related work. On a few occasions Mir Sahib, who was in those days the General Secretary of Ustaman Gul (the successor of Kalat State National Party) also came to see Usmani Sahib, providing me the opportunity to know him better.

In 1956, the regional nationalist parties of West Paksitan merged to form the Pakistan National Party. It also included Ustaman Gul. In 1957 the Awami League split due to inner party differences on foreign policy. Usmani Sahib, along with Maulana Bhashani and their supporters, quit the Awami League and merged with Pakistan National Party to form the National Awami Party (NAP). Usmani Sahib was elected Secretary General of the new Party. I continued to work with him in the new Party till I was transferred by my Company to Lahore in early nineteen fifty seven. I remained connected with NAP in Lahore. NAP had a couple of members in the West Pakistan Assembly. They raised the issue of dissolution of One Unit inside the Assembly while Mir Sahib and other NAP leaders carried on the agitation outside the Assembly at public forums. NAP leaders from all parts of West Pakistan very often visited Lahore to interact with Assembly members. Most such meetings used to take place at the MPA Lodge on Egerton Road or in the Nedou's Hotel. Here I got the chance to get acquainted with G.M. Syed, Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi and other NAP leaders from Sindh. Mir Sahib also visited Lahore a couple of times.

Then suddenly time stopped still for politics in Pakistan. Martial Law, abrogation of constitution, banning of political parties and curbs on the media and mass arrests of political leaders and workers. All of us were in jail for the next couple of years. I was arrested in April 1959 from Karachi, where I had arrived on some official company work and was detained in the Central jail for over a year before I was transferred to Lahore District jail on the orders of the West Pakistan High Court. During my internment in Lahore District jail, my co-prisoner was 'Shahzada' Agha Abdul Karim of Kalat. He had been temporarily shifted to Lahore from Haripur Jail where he was undergoing ten years' imprisonment. He was a very interesting person and good company in jail. From him I got some new glimpses of Baluchistan and its leaders. Agha Sahib made only a passing mention of Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo, which prompted me to want to find out why he spoke of such an important politician so casually. When I pointedly asked him what he thought of Mir Sahib's historic speech in the Kalat Assembly on

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Kalat's independence and his overall role in Baluchistan's politics, Agha Sahib did not have much to say. Now fifty years later by hindsight I realize that the 'prince' within Agha Abdul Karim of Kalat State perhaps did not like Bizenjo, the popular non-sardar politician with radical leftist ideological inclinations!

On my release from jail in September 1961, I came to Karachi in search of a job and luckily I got one without much hassle. At the first opportunity I proceeded to revive my old political contacts in Karachi. And the first one I sought was naturally Usmani Sahib. He welcomed me with open arms. I was now back in active politics. When NAP resumed political activities in 1962, I actively worked for the Party and was elected publicity secretary of the party's Karachi chapter. Usmani Sahib's house continued to be the hub of NAP's politics and also very often served as the meeting place for representatives of other opposition parties of the United Front. I remember that in August 1962 Mir Sahib came to Karachi with some of his Baluch colleagues and in coordination with Usmani Sahib and the Karachi wing of NAP, organized a historic public meeting at Kakri Ground in which the Ayub regime's excesses in Baluchistan were vehemently condemned. Mir Sahib then left for East Pakistan and on his return after a couple of days, he was arrested at the Karachi airport. I was among the large number of party activists who had assembled at the airport to receive him and had to return disappointed.

During the run-up to the 1964 National Assembly elections and subsequent presidential elections in which the Combined Opposition Parties (COP) put up Mohterama Fatima Jinnah as their candidate to challenge General Ayub Khan, Usmani Sahib's residence was the nerve centre of Opposition's campaign activities. NAP leaders from all parts of the country used to make frequent visits to the place for meetings and consultations. I virtually became something of a 'permanent fixture' there, together with my portable typewriter, taking care of a host of political chores.

In 1966 when Mir Sahib contested the NA by-election from Lyari, I was in the front ranks of party activists, who worked tirelessly in his election campaign. After he won the elections, my contacts with Mir Sahib became more frequent and more engaging whenever he was out of jail and visited Karachi.

Come late 1968–early 1969. Those were the days when the Democratic Action Committee (DAC) of the opposition parties was waging a popular struggle for the restoration of full democratic rights of the people and dissolution of One Unit. Dhaka had turned into a cauldron of mass discontent. Endless streams of political rallies and demonstrations were reported from all over the city. Several opposition parties were holding their meetings in Dhaka. NAP too was scheduled to hold its Central Committee and Council meetings there. I was in those days working with Finance & Industry (which later on became Pakistan Economist), a monthly economic journal of Karachi. The management consented to my request to allow me to visit Dhaka, study the situation there and prepare a report for the magazine. Usmani Sahib, Mir Sahib and several other NAP leaders were planning to leave for Dhaka to attend the party meetings. I also accompanied them to Dhaka. I stayed at the residence of a party activist along with Usmani Sahib. Mir Sahib and some other West Pakistan NAP leaders stayed at the residence of Ahmadul Kabir, a prominent leader of East Pakistan NAP and owner of the popular daily *Sangbad*.

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For several days, as NAP leaders met and discussed various issues at Ahmadul Kabir's residence, I used to be around taking notes and preparing minutes of the discussions. That was when I had the closest interaction with Mir Sahib. He too made it a point to enquire after my needs and treated me with utmost kindness.

During the subsequent months, in the run-up to the Round Table Conference convened by Ayub Khan, I was in Lahore where most of the Opposition leaders had assembled and were holding consultations prior to their departure for Rawalpindi to attend the RTC. In Lahore, I had the opportunity to closely interact with NAP leaders from Baluchistan like Mir Sahib, Gul Khan Naseer and Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, besides those from other parts of the country, and later on in Rawalpindi before and during the RTC.

My contacts with Mir Sahib continued during the 1970 election campaign when he occasionally visited Karachi. After the 1970 elections, the NAP leaders from Baluchistan were frequent visitors to Karachi. Sardar Ataullah Mengal had set up his residence in a bungalow in North Nazimabad, which soon became the centre for meetings and consultations among the NAP leaders of Baluchistan. Now Mir Sahib asked me to spend as much time with him as I could spare from my office and help him in drafting his press statements etc in English. It was a real pleasure to work with him. I happily agreed.

It did not take long for me to develop a natural affinity for Mir Sahib, a special kind of respect. The best part of my experience was that I never felt overawed in his presence. On the contrary, I felt absolutely comfortable, completely at home in his company. A soothing element of informality marked his attitude towards everyone. His presence inspired self-confidence in you rather than awe, which is usually the case when you face famous political personalities. This is true of the way I felt about Mir Sahib. And it was to be so over the next 20 years I was to work with him through thick and thin as his party colleague and close confidante.

I was glad to learn that while studying in Aligarh Muslim University, Mir Sahib had made several forays into the Southern provinces of India as a leading football player. Surprisingly, he had personally known E.M.S. Namboodirippad, the distinguished revolutionary and communist leader from Kerala, whom he had met during his visits to Delhi in the immediate pre-partition months to attend the All India State People's Conference as the nominee of Kalat National Party. In later years I was to discover that Mir Sahib had a special interest in the history of Dravidian migrations as he believed that some sort of kinship did exist between Brahui and the Dravidian languages of South India.

From those days on, through the traumatic happenings of 1971 leading eventually to the secession of East Pakistan, Mir Sahib was very often in Karachi while on his way to and from Dhaka. As a result of NAP's significant success in the general elections in Baluchistan, Sardar Mengal's house in North Nazimabad, which Baluchistan NAP leaders used to frequent, soon became a popular randeavous for the media people as well as the nationalist and progressive political activists of Sindh, particularly Karachi. I was by then an accredited member of Mir Sahib's small band of close associates. And it was here that I first met the two nawabs in Baluchistan's nationalist politics, Khair Bakhsh Marri and Akbar Bugti.

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In the post-Bangladesh months, Mir Sahib played a critical role in the negotiations between NAP leadership and Mr. Bhutto on different aspects of the formation of governments and appointment of governors in the provinces of Baluchistan and NWFP. He used to be in Karachi very often and stayed at North Western Hotel near PIDC House. Finally the talks ended in the decision to appoint NAP Governors in the two provinces. The day came when Mir Sahib was to take oath as Governor of Baluchistan. Bizen Bizenjo, Mir Sahib's eldest son and one of the founders of the Baluch Students Organisation (BSO), who was with him during his stay in Karachi, contacted me and told me that Mir Sahib wanted me to meet him urgently.

I was in those days working as Joint Editor at Trade and Industry Publications, who used to publish the economic journal Trade and Industry besides Soviet Embassy magazine 'Tulu'. I went and met Mir Sahib in North Western Hotel. Mir Bizen was the only other person present in his suite. I was really thrilled when Mir Sahib disclosed the reason for calling me: Kutty, he said. You have been working so hard for so long for a cause. A window is just opening for us at least to try to partially attain our objectives. If all goes well, I will be the Governor of Baluchistan tomorrow. I want you to work with me. In terms of income, you may not be any better than you are now. But I need someone I can trust not only personally but also politically. Over these years, I have come to know you and I trust you. I will be leaving for Quetta tomorrow after the oath-taking ceremony. You must reach there. We will talk everything else when you arrive in Quetta. I could not contain my emotions. I had never imagined that Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo, the top Baluch political leader and future Governor of Baluchistan, had that much trust in me. This happened on 28th April 1972, if I remember correctly. I accepted the offer but told him that Hadi Naqvi whom Mir Sahib knew very well, would also go with me to Quetta. He said o.k.

Hadi Naqvi, with whom I was to have a life–long association as an intimate friend and comrade, agreed to accompany me. We traveled by train and when we arrived in Quetta, we were amazed to see Mir Gul Khan Naseer and Mir Bizen at the railway station to receive us. At such moments of elation in which normally people forget to extend formal courtesies even to their nearest ones, Mir Sahib had not forgotten to send the most respected poet leader of NAP Mir Gul Khan Naseer and his own son Mir Bizen to receive us. Mir Gul Khan himself drove the jeep that took me and Hadi to the hotel where rooms had been reserved for the two of us. This happened on 30th April 1972.

The first task Mir Sahib assigned to me was to sit with Hadi and Mir Bizen and prepare the draft of his speech in Urdu and English, which he was to deliver at the historic inaugural session of Baluchistan's first elected Assembly next day. He did give us the basic guidelines. We sat through the night in one of the rooms of the Governor House. Hadi Naqvi being a specialist in Urdu, we prepared the first draft in Urdu with his help and then I prepared the English version. We did not sleep that night. The drafts in Urdu and English were ready before Mir Sahib sat with us for breakfast. He went through it, suggested a few amendments and in the next couple of minutes the final text was in Mir Sahib's pocket as he left for the Assembly.

A few days later, I shifted to a room in the Governor's Rest House opposite the Governor House. After satisfying himself that I was now properly settled, my dear friend Hadi Naqvi decided to return to Karachi, where he continued his political and social work with redoubled

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determination in the years to come till his death four years ago.

Though I was formally appointed as Private Secretary to the Governor and began working at the Governor House, enjoying the complete trust and confidence of the Governor, I was doubly fortunate in that Chief Minister Sardar Ataullah, Mir Gul Khan, Mir Ahmed Nawaz and all other ministers and senior leaders of NAP gave me so much respect and love that I still consider those nine and a half months as a brief but memorable interlude in my otherwise turbulent and trouble-filled personal life. In that short period, Mir Sahib and I developed a profound understanding of each other; we were often on the same wave length (on the same 'page' as they say nowadays!) on most of the issues. Some years later as I was traveling with Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri in his jeep on our way to a friend's house in Islamabad for lunch, Nawab Sahib, responding to something I said about my inability to fully grasp his views on what he called 'euro-communism', commented in his typical style: The reason is that you have what they call a unisonal type of mental proximity with Ghousi (meaning Mir Sahib). So, you can read his thoughts in a flash. That fast-contact-element is missing in our relationship. Nawab Sahib is known for using gritty metaphors!

There is no need to elaborate how the NAP-JUI Government fared in Baluchistan in the nine and a half months it struggled to govern the province and what happened following the unconstitutional dismissal of that government – the military action, the mass arrests including my arrest, the banning of NAP, the Hyderabad Tribunal and the 'conspiracy' trial of NAP leaders, Zia's military coup, dissolution of Hyderabad Tribunal and release of NAP leaders and ultimately Mr. Bhutto's execution.

I was arrested on 17th February 1973, two days after the dismissal of NAP Government, at the Lahore Airport when I was traveling with Mir Sahib on his way to attend the National Assembly. Mir Ali Ahmed Talpur and Professor Ghafur Ahmed were also with Mir Sahib. They too were on their way to Islamabad and had joined Mir Sahib in the VIP room. When the police officer approached Mir Sahib and told him that he had orders to arrest me and declined to divulkge the reason, Mir Sahib came towards me and said: Don't worry my friend. You have spent years in Ayub Khan's jail; be brave. They are not telling us where they are going to take you. We will see what we can do when we safely reach Islamabad. You are not wearing any warm clothing. Keep this, you will need it. Saying that, he handed over to me the woollen jersey he was wearing (one which Mir Ahmed Nawaz Bugti had brought for him from London). He embraced me and wished me well. His gesture and words touched the innermost niches of my heart. It was then that I realized that Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo was not only my leader but also my friend, comrade and brother!

I was released from Hyderabad jail in May 1973. For the next two months, Mir Sahib was busy giving final shape to his proposals for the Constitution Committee of the National Assembly. The day he was arrested from the MNA Hostel in Islamabad – 15th August 1973 - within hours of the promulgation of the much-trumpeted 'unanimous' constitution, I was in Quetta. That night I was having dinner at Sardar Ataullah Mengal's private residence in Railway Colony. Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri and the Governor's erstwhile press secretary Siddiq Baluch were also there. As we were discussing the implications of Mir Sahib's arrest and what would be in store for NAP and Baluchistan, armed men of the Federal Security Force (FSF) came in and took away Sardar Sahib and Nawab Sahib. Saradr's ever agile driver Lalu Bugti drove me

and Siddiq out of the house and to safety, to pre-empt our arrests in a possible follow-up action by FSF. We remained underground for some months before I returned to Karachi and rejoined Trade and Industry Publications as Managing Editor.

In 1975, NAP was banned and all its leaders and activists were arrested from different parts of the country and interned in Hyderabad central jail to stand trial for treason. Those arrested earlier and detained in different jails like Mir Sahib (who was detained in Mianwali and Sihala,) were also brought to Hyderabad Jail. Along with other NAP colleagues – Yusuf Mustikhan, Dr. M.A. Mehboob, Fasihuddin Salar, Lal Bakhsh Rind, Syed Hadi Naqvi, Karamat Ali, Usman Baluch and others, I used to regularly attend the in-jail trial of the conspirators, besides also meeting them in the 'mulaqat' hours from time to time. Two of our party colleagues, Akhtar Hussain advocate and Barrister Abdul Wadud were members of the panel of lawyers defending the NAP prisoners.

I had a rather disconcerting experience of having to meet Mir Sahib in jail more than once in a seemingly odd capacity – that of a reluctant emissary of Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. This may sound incredulous to many, but it is true. Here I would like to refer the reader to Sardar Sher Baz Mazari's book: *A Journey to Disillusionment*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1999. Apart from several other gross misstatements, uncharitable comments and stark insinuations, some of them self-contradicting, which Sardar Sahib has chosen to make about Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo's role in the country's politics, in one paragraph on page 486, he has made a reference to Mir Sahib's 'suspected underhand dealing with Bhutto through his associate, B.M. Kutty '. With due respect to Sardar Sahib, I want to most emphatically rebut his statement and make it clear that it was not Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo who sent me to Mr. Bhutto but it was the other way round; it was Mr. Bhutto who sent me to Bizenjo more than once with the mission to persuade Mir Sahib to agree to have a one-to-one meeting with him (Bhutto) outside the jail. Mr. Bhutto had been sending high profile emissaries too to meet Mir Sahib in an attempt to win him over and seek some sort of compromise with the NAP leadership of Baluchistan. Some of them are still alive and some of them are not. Bhutto was aware of the deep trust Mir Sahib had in me, which explains why he chose an otherwise non-descript political worker like me for such an important mission.

I did meet Mir Sahib a couple of times in jail at the explicit asking of Prime Minister Bhutto, conveyed to me through PM's Principal Secretary Afzal Saeed Khan. Mir Sahib's responses in the various meetings I had with him can be encapsulated in the following words: Kutty. You go and tell Bhutto Sahib that if he is so desperate to talk to us and reach an understanding with us, he should come personally to the jail and meet the NAP leadership. Or he should wind up the tamasha of the Hyderabad conspiracy case and tribunal, set us free unconditionally and then talk to us. I have always believed and still believe in settling political differences politically through negotiations. It is an utterly futile exercise on the part of Mr. Bhutto to send you or any other person to persuade me to meet him alone or the Baluch leaders to meet him collectively, bypassing our Pakhtun colleagues.

One meeting, which I had with Mir Sahib in Hyderabad jail, is of special relevance here. It happened in the second week of May 1977. The PNA-led agitation against Bhutto's Government was in full cry. When I told Mir Sahib that I had received a message from Mr. Bhutto to meet him, Mir Sahib asked me to take the following message and if I could muster the

courage, then to convey it to Mr. Bhutto verbatim: Bhutto Sahib, the friendly-looking guns at the PM House which are at present pointed outward will turn hostile and point inward, if you fail to start serious negotiations with the PNA leadership to find a political settlement of the present crisis. Time is running out for you.

I met Mr. Bhutto for the last time on 18th May 1977 at the Prime Minister House in Rawalpindi. He received me very warmly and sounded very friendly. He asked me if I had met Mir Sahib recently and what were his views on the ongoing PNA agitation. As desired by Mir Sahib, I conveyed his message to Mr. Bhutto verbatim. Mr. Bhutto's response was: What does Bizenjo know? He has been in jail for four years. He is out of touch with ground realities. I am not worried about the armed forces. All the three chiefs have re-iterated their loyalty on oath. My problem is how to tackle the Maulvis of PNA. I will do that too.

In July 1977, I was on a short visit to Kerala to see my ailing father and meet other family members. On 5th July, as I was boarding a bus from Calicut to my home town Tirur a few miles away, I saw a hawker boy selling the special supplement of a local Malayalam newspaper with the screaming headlines: Pakistanil veendum pattaala bharanam; Bhutto tadavil – (Military coup in Pakistan again, Bhutto under arrest)!! I rushed home to listen to Zia-ul-Haq's broadcast that was to follow. My father was in tears. He was a great admirer of Bhutto. He could not believe it. But I could. I recalled Mir Sahib's prophetic message to Mr. Bhutto.

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I had been trying for a long time to convince Mir Sahib that he should write about his life. I first mentioned it to him during our flight from Rawalpindi to Quetta after his removal from governorship. He had replied: Not yet. There is a long way to go before we can sit back and write a biography. I broached it again some time after he was released from Hyderabad jail. Again he said o.k. we will do it some day soon. Though he continued to give vent to his thoughts and ideas on national, regional and international issues through press interviews and statements very frequently, he hardly found the time to sit down to write or dictate to me or someone else how he would assess the pluses and minuses of his long and eventful political career. He was soon submerged in the stormy whirlpool of national politics. And I too was with him. An unending series of events and activities, either initiated by him or in which he was an active participant, prevented him from undertaking the task.

The ensuing years witnessed a series of crucial developments in the political process in Pakistan and Mir Sahib had a role in most of them. There was, for instance, the split in the National Democratic Party (which had been formed as a substitute for NAP after it was banned in 1975) headed by Sardar Sher Baz Mazari. Then came the formation of Pakistan National Party (PNP) by Mir Sahib, with the support of a large number of former NAP-NDP leaders and activists such as: Sardar Ataullah Mengal, Abdul Hamid Jatoi, Syed Kaswar Gardezi, Shamim Ashraf Malik, Mir Mahmood Aziz Kurd, Amirul Mulk Mengal, Baji Nasim Shameem Malik, Dr. Ruknuddin Hassan, Tahira Mazhar Ali Khan, Mir Bizen Bizenjo, Dr. Abdul Hayee Baluch, Shah Muhammad Shah, Qamruzzaman Rajpar, Aijaz Ali Jatoi, Akhtar Hussain Advocate, Dr. Abdul Hakim Lehri, Fasihuddin Salar, Barrister Abdul Wadud, Dr. Sher Afzal Malik, Dr. Aizaz Nazir, Yusuf Mustikhan, Karamat Ali, Usman Baluch and many others from Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab, who constituted PNP's hardcore leadership and cadre. Soon Mir

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Sahib was carrying the PNP's political agenda across the country, his marathon 15-day tour of NWFP, accompanied by a youthful team of progressive political activists such as: Abdul Latif Afridi, Mustafa Kamal, Kaiser Khan, Gul Rehman and others, was its high point. There was also the lively national debate which Mir Sahib set off by questioning the relevance of the concept of Muslim Nation and the ideology of Pakistan. For over five years Mir Sahib carried on a resolute, single-minded campaign for constitutional reforms to guarantee the rights of the people of the federating units, leading eventually to the adoption of the historic Lahore Declaration on Autonomy of Federating Units on 2nd August 1986 by the Central Action Committee of MRD. There was also his consistent effort to bring together the disparate progressive democratic groups and individuals under the umbrella of a single political party, especially the attempts he made to reunite the Awami National Party and the Pakistan National Party.

Finally at one point Mir Sahib asked me to formulate some relevant questions for him to reflect on and respond in the shape of written notes. I did it some time in the middle of 1987 and he began jotting down the bits he could recollect as and when he found the time to spare.

This book is thus based on about 100 sheets of notes written in Urdu by Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo over a period of several months during 1987-88, whenever he found a respite from his otherwise hectic political and social engagements. The hand-written notes covered only the period from his birth (1918) to the dismissal of the NAP-JUI Government (15th February 1973) and the immediate fallout thereof. As we all know and I have stated earlier in this Note, Mir Sahib played a crucial role in the country's turbulent politics during the fifteen years between 15th February 1973 and 11th August 1989 when he passed away in Karachi. Unfortunately he left no written notes covering this period. He did, however, leave behind a couple of brief but trenchant (written) reflections on a few important aspects of national, regional and international political processes during the period between 1973, where his written notes leave us, and 1989, the year of his demise. These reflections are reproduced at the end of this book.

Some photographs printed in the centre pages of this book bear witness to the chain of political engagements within the country and abroad, in which Mir Sahib was involved during this period, bear witness to the fact that he was always on the move, never withdrawing into a state of laxity even for a day. Even after his shocking defeat in the 1988 elections at the hands of the same Baluch youth who drew their inspiration from his leadership but wrongly assumed that his political line was no longer relevant for Baluchistan, Mir Sahib never lost heart. He convened a stock-taking meeting in Nal and continued his political mission with redoubled determination. Besides undertaking an extensive political tour of Punjab, Mir Sahib visited Afghanistan and India and exchanged views with the top political leaderships in those countries on different aspects of the situation prevailing in the region.

Some Missing Links

Listed below are some of the missing links in the narrative of Mir Sahib's life. It is our intention to prepare brief notes on his role in relation to them and have them printed and published separately. Later on along with a few of his highly enlightening public statements, speeches, interviews and presentations on contemporary national, regional and international issues:

- Banning of National Awami Party and filing of reference against NAP in the Supreme Court by the Federal Government in February 1975. Hearing lasted 44 days between June and September 1975, during which Mir Sahib put up a powerful defence of the National Awami Party, its programme and activities since its formation and rejected all the allegations against the Party.
- Formation of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) and Mir Sahib's views on the character of PNA, on NDP's affiliation with it and on the PNA movement against Bhutto government.
- Saur Revolution in Afghanistan, 1979. Wali Khan and Pakhtun leaders of NDP had reservations about the Revolution, but Mir Sahib strongly supported it and condemned American imperialist plots against the Afghan Government.
- Mir Sahib, Ataullah Mengal and a large number of senior members and workers of NDP separated from the Party and formed the Pakistan National Party (PNP) in July 1979. Mir Sahib succeeded in bringing different leftist and communist factions into the PNP.
- 1984. Mir Sahib rejects the notion of Muslim nation, advances his own idea of nationalism, autonomy and national rights. A spirited debate raged in the national press for several months.
- . Mir Sahib put forth a series of proposals on autonomy of the Federating Units, undertook extensive tours in Sindh, Punjab and NWFP and initiated dialogues with various political leaders.
- Mir Sahib's pre-conditions for joining MRD and his subsequent active role in the MRD, resulting in the historic Lahore Declaration on Autonomy of Federating Units adopted unanimously by the Central Action Committee of MRD in its meeting in Lahore on 6th August 1986.
- 1979. Split in PNP and formation of ANP.
- Visit to Moscow and meetings with some top leaders of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU).
- Mir Sahib's frank and forthright comments about the unpredictable future of Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika, which he made in an address to a large audience at the Soviet Friendship House in Karachi on his return from Soviet Union.
- 1988 election- Mir Sahib's defeat and post-election activities.
- Visit to Afghanistan in April 24 – May 4, 1989 as President Dr. Najibullah's special guest at the Saur Revolution anniversary celebrations and military parade after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.
- 5-day stay in Delhi, 5-9 May, 1989 on the way back from Kabul as guest of the President of Indian National Congress and Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi. It was Mir Sahib's first ever visit to India after Partition. 5 days of hectic activity in Delhi, including important meetings with older and younger generations of Congress leaders, the top leadership of Communist Party of India (CPI) and CPI (Marxist) and a series of interviews to leading Indian newspapers and TV Channels on IndoPakistan and regional issues, besides a memorable reception hosted by Congress General Secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad, Rajya Sabha chairperson Najma Heptullah and senior journalist Rajendra Sareen at the legendary Imperial Hotel where Mir Sahib had attended the meeting of All India State Peoples Conference in 1946 – which was his last sojourn in Delhi before Partition.
- After returning from Delhi on 9th May 1989, Mir Sahib developed serious health problems. Diagnosed of liver cancer, his condition began to deteriorate rapidly. He went to England for a medical checkup and possible treatment but returned after it was

discovered that recovery was near impossible. Medical reports were sent to Moscow where a panel of doctors examined them and reached the same opinion. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India appointed a medical board to examine the reports and they too came to the same conclusion.

- Mir Sahib passed away in Karachi in the early hours of 11th August 1989.

B.M. Kutty

Chapter 1

Early Years: Twists of Fate

Birth & Ancestry

I am not sure of the exact date of my birth. We had no tradition of maintaining such records. It would be an approximate guess if I say that I was born in the winter (perhaps November) of the year 1918. That was the year in which large parts of Kalat were hit by a deadly influenza virus.

I was born in the village of Shank Jhao. It lay on the banks of river Hingol, about 150 kilometers northwest of Karachi. Though insulated from the winds of social change by centuries of isolation and backwardness, the village had a special place in history. It lay close to Hinglaj, one of the most sacred spots to which Hindu devotees came from the remotest corners of the subcontinent to pay homage to Goddess Mata Hinglaj. This movement of pilgrims had gone on for tens of centuries before I was born and continued uninterrupted till India was partitioned in 1947.

My father's ancestors had settled in the Nal Valley, about 60 kilometers from the present city of Khuzdar, some 500 years ago. They belonged to the Hamalani branch of the Bizenjo tribe. My grandfather Sardar Faqir Muhmmad Bizenjo II was the *Naib* (Governor) of the province of Makran in the Khanate of Kalat from 1839 to 1883. He owned lands in Makran, Kolwa, Awaran, Jhao, Nal and Kachhi. He had five sons, the youngest being my father Saffar Khan. He had divided his lands into three portions: those in Makran and Kolwa were bequeathed to his two elder sons, half of the lands in Jhao and those in Nal and Kachhi to the next two sons and the land in Awaran and the remaining half of the lands in Jhao to my father.

My mother Dur Bibi hailed from Rask in Iranian Baluchistan. She belonged to the Buledi tribe. Her father Mir Yar Muhammad Khan fell victim to local tribal feuds and was forced to leave Rask. He went to Karachi with his family. But the tribal blood in him cried for revenge. Leaving his family in Karachi, he travelled to Kabul and sought the help of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, ruler of Afghanistan, to regain his lost position and possessions in Rask. The Amir agreed to help on one condition. He should first join the Amir's forces and lead a *lashkar* against the Hazaras who were then waging a rebellion against Kabul. After defeating the Hazaras, he would be free to take the *lashkar* to Rask and reclaim his lost position. My grandfather accepted the offer. Unfortunately, as bad luck would have it, he never made it to Rask. He was killed in one of the battles against the Hazaras.

My grandmother with her children settled down in Karachi for good. It was there that my father, on his way back from Hajj, came in contact with the family of my mother and married her. Subsequently, my father and mother moved to Jhao and settled there. That was how I happened to be born in Jhao.

Life in the old-fashioned, backward tribal society was harsh in many ways. Apart from observing the strict tribal codes, there were also inter and intra tribal rivalries and hostilities one had to put up with. I was the only surviving son of my parents. Of my three elder brothers,

two had died in infancy and the third was killed in a tribal clash. My father also died when I was only a year old. He did not survive the influenza epidemic. Thus it fell to my mother's lot not only to nurse me through my childhood but also provide me the protection and care of a father. I had become a sitting duck for those who coveted the landed property I had inherited from my father. My life, which had hardly begun, was already in danger. In steering me through those most difficult and often dangerous stages of my childhood and adolescence and making me what I am today, the contribution of my mother was truly enormous.

I was about four years old when luck came my way from a totally unexpected quarter. Some time in the year 1922, Col. Kiess, the British political agent in Kalat, was touring the state proclaiming the abolition of slavery. Yes, this scourge was then prevalent in our society, but more about it later. On his way from Bela to Makran, Col. Kiess passed through Jhao. My mother took me to him and told him our tale of woe. The Colonel promised to arrange for a Court of Ward to take care of my property and send me to Quetta for schooling.

Thus, by a curious coincidence, my deliverance from the threat of physical liquidation by my own next of kin synchronized with the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Kalat! The irony went deeper. My deliverer was an officer of the British colonial regime - the very regime I was to oppose in the years to come as an activist of the freedom movement!

The Colonel proved true to his word. Six months later, a Court of Ward took charge of my landed properties. I was sent to Quetta and admitted in the Sandeman High School.

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From 1925 till 1935, I studied in Sandeman High School, Quetta and lived with my mother. An earthquake devastated the city of Quetta in 1935 and reduced it to rubble. Very few people survived the disaster. My mother and I were among the fortunate few. We could not stay in Quetta any longer; so we left for Karachi where I resumed my studies at the famous Sindh Madrasah High School.

During the years of our stay in Quetta and for some more years, the landed properties I had inherited from my father remained in the care of the Court of Ward, who collected the income on my behalf and defrayed our expenses. While at Sandeman High School, I had developed into a fine football player and earned a place in the Sandeman Football Club. As a member of the Club's team, I played in tournaments in far away Calcutta and some places in the Punjab.

Football takes me to Aligarh

Once again a chance occurrence came along and set the stage for the next phase of my life. It happened a year after I joined the Sindh Madrasah.

A football team from Aligarh Muslim University came to Karachi in 1936. It was accompanied by the Vice Chancellor of the University, the legendary Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed. In a friendly match between the Aligarh team and the NED College team, I played for the latter. Our team managed to hold the much more experienced Aligarh team to a draw. My individual performance received special attention, so much so that the Aligarians requested Doctor Saheb to invite me to join Aligarh University for further studies.

Obviously, they wanted me to be in their football team. As chance would have it, the sons of Jam Maqbool Khan, a senior family relative, were scheduled to proceed to Aligarh for studies. Doctor Sahib persuaded Jam Sahib to allow me to go with them. Jam Saheb gave his consent and I set out for Aligarh in 1937.

Football continued to be my first love at Aligarh. I played in several first class matches in many parts of India, not only for Aligarh University but also for the Crescent Football Club of Delhi. These matches took me to Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Punjab, Bombay, Jaipur, Bhopal, and farther south to Hyderabad, Madras, Bangalore and Mysore. Those exposures provided me the rare opportunity to know the subcontinent with its fascinatingly diverse social, cultural, climatic, goegraphical and also political hues and colours. On the field I played football. Off the field I interacted with all kinds of people, exchanged views with them and learnt a great deal which I could not have even dreamt of, had I remained holed up in the tribal isolation of Kalat-Baluchistan.

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The political events unfolding on the vast canvas of the subcontinent were gradually leaving deep marks on my receptive young mind. The Aligarh Muslim University, like other contemporary academic centers of India, was a hotbed of politics. Two sharply defined strains of political thinking prevailed among the students. One was All India Muslim League's politics based on separate exclusive nationhood of Muslims of India. The other was the secular politics of a single inclusive Indian nation espoused by the Indian National Congress. I was drawn towards the latter for two reasons. First, I was a footballer, constantly interacting with other players from different religions, castes, creeds, sects and regions, which lent a broader dimension to my thinking and perceptions. Secondly, I was born and brought up in the Baluch society, in which tribal values and traditions were preponderant, as compared to the strictures of religion. I came to be actively associated with the nationalist students subscribing to the secular political philosophy of Indian National Congress.

The Baluchistan of my youth: socio-economic setting

Though British intrusion into Baluchistan had started since 1839, the Baluch living in the Jhao area had never seen an Englishman till Col. Kiess and his entourage passed by. Slavery existed in its classical form. The possession, sale, purchase and gifting of male and female slaves were prevalent. Almost every notable family owned slaves. My own family chronicle of the period speaks of the number of female slaves a father gave in dowry at his daughter's wedding or howmany male and female slaves a groom gave to his bride as wedding gift!

A brief description of the system of landownership, farming, crop sharing and distribution prevailing in Baluchistan in those days may be of interest to the reader.

The peasant's (*bazgar's*) lot was deplorable, only slightly better than that of the slave, in the sense that he was not sold or purchased. Otherwise, the peasant too was made to do all types of work like the slave, besides being robbed of the major portion of the fruits of his labour. First, the landlord took his *'batai'* (share in the crop produced by him). Then, he grabbed another portion in the name of his servants and yet another in the name of something else until the peasant was left with little to take home. Different rates of crop sharing were in vogue, ranging from one-twentieth to one-half. In the event the peasant failed to develop and cultivate the

land for three years, the landlord could throw him out and re-take the land. That was what the tribal edict said. In actual practice, however, the landlord could eject the peasant and take the land back as and when he so wished. There was none to question him.

No job opportunities were available. Economic activities were limited to tending sheep and cattle besides farming. Farming depended entirely on rains, and rains were a very rare occurrence. The result was frequent famines and widespread human suffering. Generally speaking, the people hardly possessed any skill or craftsmanship. In the more developed parts of Baluchistan, cloth weaving by archaic methods was a popular vocation. Peasants' tools and implements like axe, hatchet and sickle were forged by local blacksmiths but on a small scale. Blacksmiths and carpenters received a portion of the crop at the time of crop sharing as 'payment' in kind for their work. Goldsmiths produced certain special ornaments for the womenfolk of prominent tribal households and were paid wages for their work.

Communication facilities were scanty and cumbersome. Animals were the main mode of transport. It took months to move food grains and other essential goods from one place to another. Animals often starved to death due to shortage of fodder.

The hardships caused by the vagaries of weather forced many families to migrate to Karachi and other parts of Sindh. If and when it rained, some of them returned but the majority often opted to stay back for good. The slaves were barred from migrating. They had to be with their masters wherever the latter went or stayed. No passport system existed. People used to travel freely to and from Iran, Afghanistan, Khuzistan (Arabistan) and other adjoining states.

There were no educational institutions worth the name.

British Indian coins and currency notes were in circulation but in the deep interior of Baluchistan, grain (mainly wheat) served as the standard 'unit of exchange'. Sales and purchases were mostly in the form of commodity barter. Articles were not 'weighed'; they were 'measured'. The system was known as *kail*. The standard unit for all types of weighing and measuring was *maund* equivalent to 2.5 *seers*. Ghee, milk, onion, potato – everything was measured and not weighed. One would get one *maund* of ghee in exchange for 11 *maunds* of grain and so on.

Political and administrative setup

In political terms one could say that everything was graveyard-like quiet in Baluchistan. There was no political activity, no political awareness. Having acquired control over Kalat, the British had only one interest left; to ensure the safety and security of the empire's frontiers particularly with Afghanistan and the maintenance of trade and communication links between India and the Central Asian region through Bolan and Maula passes. The British intervened only when they apprehended a threat to their supremacy and colonial interests in the region. For instance, they intervened when armed clashes broke out between rival tribes endangering peace and security in a certain area or when a tribe rose in revolt to challenge British supremacy or in situations that threatened vital communication lines. If and when members of a tribe indulged in murder or loot in any part of Kalat state, officials of the state administration summoned them through their *sardars*, in whose presence they were tried and adjudged by the *sardari jirga.*

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The Khan was ruler of Kalat state in name only. Whatever nominal suzerainty he exercised was confined to the so-called 'non-tribal' areas. In most parts of the state, the *sardars* held complete sway over the land and the people. Even in areas where the Khan exercised nominal control, the *sardars* very often interfered in administrative matters.

The administration of justice in the tribal areas was the prerogative of the *sardars*. The *sardars* had the last word in the *shahi jirga, sardari jirga* and *ilaqai jirga.* They were undisputed masters in their respective fiefdoms. Nearly two-thirds of the territory and population of Baluchistan were under the total control of the *sardars*. Neither the Khan of Kalat nor the British rulers interfered in their domains.

No taxes as such were paid to the government. Traditions and customs allowed the *sardars* to collect certain levies in kind from their tribal territories and landholdings, such as:

1. Rahdari (octroi/toll tax)
2. One-fourth portion of compensation money paid to the aggrieved party in settlement of disputes;
3. 'phor' or 'mali' (one animal from each flock of fifty sheep or cattle, from the breeders);
4. 'bijjar' which the sardar collected from his tribesmen;
5. 'begar' (work extracted from the peasant without paying wages).

Besides these, there were a number of other miscellaneous levies the *sardars* collected in kind from the tribesmen in various forms, in accordance with the customs and traditions prevalent in different areas at different times.

Social stratification

Regarding the social stratification in Baluch society, there was a quasi-class-based stratification deeply ingrained in our society at the time – from the slave (at the lowest rung) to *bazgar* (peasant) to *sardar* to the highest office of Khan of Kalat. Though it could not be equated with the caste system among Hindus, marriages in Baluch society could be contracted only between persons of equal social status. Similarly, the amount of compensation (blood money) a murderer's family should pay to the family of the murdered depended on the caste-class status of the latter. For instance, the blood money for the murder of a 'jat' of Kachhi area or a 'naqeeb' of Makran was 300 rupees. These two communities were regarded as nonethnic-Baluch and therefore low in the class order. On the other hand, the blood money for the murder of a Baluch commoner was 2000 rupees, for the son of a *sardar* 20,000 rupees and for a *sardar* 50,000 rupees.

Individual and collective social discrimination was so harsh in Baluch society that a state of virtual suffocation had set in. Today, when I look back in retrospect at the conditions prevailing in the 1920s and 30s, I can see why thousands of Baluch chose to migrate and settle in Sindh, Punjab and the Gulf countries. Primarily, they were forced by economic reasons, but no less compelling was the impulse to escape from the social and class discrimination rampant in Baluch society. I have asked myself why, despite the pathetic conditions in which the vast majority of people were forced to live, they refused to renounce their Baluch identity. And the answer I could think of was that, to belong or not to belong to one or other nation is not a

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matter of voluntary choice of an individual like choosing one's religion or ideology. It is an inescapable compulsion of history!

Chapter 2
Kalat-Baluchistan:
The Advent of British Colonialism and the Birth of Nationalist Politics

The advent of the British in Kalat

What came to be known as Kalat State in contemporary times was the independent sovereign country of Baluchistan before the colonial incursions of the British. To its east was Hindustan, to the north Afghanistan, to the west Iran and to the south Arabian Sea. The relations between the governments of Kalat (Baluchistan) and Great Britain were governed by a series of treaties.

The fast-expanding British Indian Empire in the south and the deeply entrenched Russian imperial power in the north viewed each other with suspicion and were looking for ways to prevent intrusion by one into the other's domain. It was something like a kind of cold war between the two. In the process, Kalat remained in a state of running confrontation with the British. There were frequent armed clashes between the forces of Kalat Government and tribesmen on the one hand and the British forces on the other.

In the year 1839, after Khan Mehrab Khan of Kalat was killed in one such armed conflict, the British succeeded in forcing the Baluch for the first time to acknowledge the former's supremacy and concluded a treaty with the latter. Coated in sweet words such as 'friendship treaty', it was in fact aimed at cornering the Baluch into accepting the supremacy of the British. More treaties followed – major ones in 1841, 1854, 1863 and 1876 – besides a number of other minor 'agreements' signed from time to time. In all these treaties and agreements, the impression was maintained that the British recognized the 'independent and sovereign' status of Kalat (Baluchistan). For instance, even as the 1876 Treaty contained a reference to British supremacy and establishment of British military presence in Kalat state, it was described as a 'Treaty of Friendship and Amity between the two Governments'. The Treaty also affirmed that the 'the British Government on its part agrees to respect the independence of Kalat and to aid the Khan (Kalat) in case of need in the protection of his territory from external attack'.

The British never honoured their treaty obligations. Between 1899 and 1903, in violation of the treaties which bound them to respect and protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Baluchistan, they went about arbitrarily re-drawing the map of Baluchistan under various pretexts. The Baluch Governorates of Quetta, Naushki and Nasirabad were taken on 'lease' from Kalat. The districts of Loralai, Pishin, Chaman and Sibi, which were acquired from Afghanistan under the Treaty of Gandamak in 1879 and the Marri-Bugti tribal zone were constituted into what was called 'British Baluchistan'. All the above-named areas were placed under the direct administrative control of the British through British Political Agents posted at Sibi and Quetta respectively. Dera Ghazi Khan was annexed to the Punjab and Jacobabad (then known as Khangarh) to Sindh. Bolan Pass was taken on lease from the Khan for a paltry compensation. This deal resulted in Kalat-Baluchistan government being robbed of not only the freedom of trade through the Pass but also lakhs of rupees in the shape of lost *rahdari* (toll tax). The tribal areas

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of Sarawan, Jhalawan, Makran, Chaghai, Kachhi and Lasbela were also placed under the 'supervision' of the British Political Agent in Quetta. The control over remaining sixteen governorates/tehsils was first placed under political 'advisors' and later on under officers from the political department in Quetta who owed allegiance to the Prime Minister of Kalat, who in turn was handpicked by the British. An impression was created that these actions did not constitute violation of the treaties but were supposedly taken with the sole intention of facilitating 'smooth relations' between the Khan of Kalat and the *sardars* who would play the role of a link between the Khan and the British. Another pretension was that it would pave the way for introduction of reforms by the Kalat-Baluchistan government and for consolidation of its 'friendly' relations with the British Government.

However, there was much more to all these steps than met the eye. In reality, the British were working very cunningly to curb the power and authority of the Khan of Kalat by patronizing the *sardars* and nurturing them to be tools of the colonial administration. The Khan's title of *Khan-e-Baluch* was changed into *Khan-e-Kalat,* thus virtually restricting Khan's suzerainty to Kalat City!

The beginning of organized politics

There was hardly any organized political activity in Kalat – Baluchistan prior to 1927-28. In fact the people knew little about political parties, rallies, meetings and so on. This is not to say that activities, which were essentially political but could not be termed as informed political actions, did not occur in Baluchistan. At intervals of ten to twenty years, one or other tribe would rise in revolt and challenge the British. From 1839 (when British intervention began) till 1915, there had been a series of violent clashes between the tribesmen and the British forces. But by 1920, such uprisings had virtually come to an end. Reason: the British had managed to *pacify* the belligerent tribes.

Nevertheless, over the years there had developed signs of a nascent nationalist surge among the intellectuals and the government servants of the Kalat State. In 1928, a few young officers of the Kalat State Administration got together and set up a clandestine group to give vent to their political views. Politics was a strictly forbidden activity, particularly for government employees. Keeping a low profile during their early activities, they chose to wait for more favourable conditions before going into the open. That was when Mir Yusuf Ali Khan Magsi, the youthful and energetic scion of the influential Magsi tribe, appeared on the scene.

Mir Yusuf Magsi had received his education in Lahore and had been living there for quite some time, during which he had the opportunity to observe from close range the dynamics of the freedom struggle in the subcontinent. He was inspired by what he saw and heard. In an article titled: 'Fariyad-eBaluchistan', published in the Lahore journal *Hamdard* on 17th November 1929, Magsi forcefully articulated the grievances of the Baluch. He severely criticised the British colonial rulers on the one hand and the despotic rule of Prime Minister Sir Shams Shah on the other, and called upon the Baluch to organize themelves for the unity and liberation of Baluchistan. The Kalat Administration was so enraged over Magsi's article that when he arrived in Sibi on 17th July 1930, he was arrested, tried by a *Jirga* and sentenced to one year's imprisonment in Mastung Jail and a fine of Rs. 20,000. Even after his release from jail in 1931, he was kept under surveillance for one year.

However, Mir Yusuf Magsi's initiative had broken the ice. It had re-kindled the fire

of nationalism in the young pioneers. They were now determined to organize themselves along with other like-thinking people into a cohesive and vibrant political forum. Before long emerged their first ever political organization: *Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Baluchan*. Besides Yusuf Magsi, other prominent activists of the Anjuman were: Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd, Malik Faiz Muhammad Yusufzai, Muhammad Hussain Unqa, Naseem Talvi, Abdul Karim Shorish and Mir Muhammad Azam Shehwani among others. The formation of the Anjuman as an organized political party marked the beginning of a secular, non-tribal nationalist movement in Kalat state. Among other demands, the Anjuman pointedly called for a democratic system of governance by elected representatives of the people. Around the same time as the Anjuman was formed in Kalat, the Baluch nationalists in Karachi formed the Baluch League.

The subsequent publication of a pamphlet titled *shamsgardi* on 20th November 1931 caused ripples in the echelons of power in Kalat. It was yet another scathing denunciation of the harsh rule of Sir Shams Shah, the despotic and unpopular Prime Minister of Kalat. The author of the pamphlet was Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd. Naturally, the Kalat Administration was not amused. Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd was arrested, tried by the *Shahi Jirga* and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Simultaneously, Khan Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, who was spearheading the nationalist movement in 'British Baluchistan', was arrested in Quetta and similarly tried and sentenced to three years in jail.

The same year, Mir Yusuf Ali Magsi became the *Sardar* of the Magsi tribe. The *sardari* not only made him wealthier but also brought him more power and influence. A deeply committed Baluch nationalist, he willingly placed his resources at the disposal of the cause for which he and his comrades had got together in such forbidding conditions. Apart from his own intellectual contribution, Magsi financed and oversaw the publication in Karachi of several documents in Urdu Language espousing the cause of Baluch nationalism.

For obvious reasons, Yusuf Magsi and his comrades had to conduct their public political activities from places outside Baluchistan. They set about the task of mobilizing the Baluch outside Baluchistan. They launched a newspaper *Azad* from Lahore through which they started to give vent to their political agenda, which could be called radical for those times. For instance, they called for, among other things, an elected Assembly to transact legislative work for the State of Kalat and a responsible government to govern the State, besides the re-integration of Bolan, Quetta, Naushki and Nasirabad into Kalat State. Their untiring efforts culminated in the holding of the 'All India Baluch Conference' in Jacobabad from 27th to 29th December 1932. It was the first ever gathering of its kind attended by Baluch representatives from every part of what constitutes today's Pakistan. The spectacular success of the first ever such mobilization of the Baluch around the nationalist cause, paved the way for a second conference in Hyderabad a year later. Going by the composition of its participants, it can be said that this time the conference had a wider and more 'assorted' representation. It was not confined only to ethnic Baluch, as is evident from the title of the second conference: 'All India Baluch and Baluchistan Conference'. In imparting a broader representative dimension to this second conference, the key role played by Khan Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai deserves special acknowledgement.

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While Yusuf Magsi and his comrades were laying the foundations of the nationalist movement

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in Kalat state, a similar initiative was taking shape in British Baluchistan. Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai was the moving spirit behind it. Daring, devoted and determined, he was already emerging as the central leader of the struggle for the rights of the people of British Baluchistan. Achakzai and his friends were also getting actively involved in the freedom struggle of the subcontinent.

Between the two Baluch conferences mentioned earlier, Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai succeeded in persuading Yusuf Magsi to coordinate his group's activities in Kalat with the nationalist group's activities in British Baluchistan in order to evolve a common platform of the nationalists of the whole of Baluchistan. As hinted earlier, a clear sign of this emerging all-Baluchistan nationalist ethos was the naming of the second Baluch conference held in Hyderabad as 'The All India Baluch and Baluchistan Conference'.

Such public manifestation of political awakening among the Baluch not only un-nerved the government circles in Kalat but also caused serious concern to the British Administration. Pressure began to be exerted from all sides on the young pioneers of the movement in a bid to nip it in the bud. The *sardars*, who wielded absolute power over their tribes and fiefdoms, also felt uneasy at the emerging new political trend and did their best to thwart it.

As days passed, the relentless pressure and all-round hostility from all sides seemed to have driven Mir Yusuf Magsi into a temporary moode of despair mood of frustration, as he abruptly left for London some time in late 1934. However, the determined and devoted Baluch nationalist as he was, he could not stay away from his people for long and returned within a few months. He was on the verge of plunging headlong into the mission he had left behind, when on the night of 30-31 May 1935, a devastating earthquake struck the city of Quetta and reduced it to dust, besides claiming thousands of precious lives. Among the dead was that indefatigable nationalist fighter Mir Yusuf Ali Magsi. His untimely death only reinforced the resolution of his surviving comrades to carry on the mission at all costs.

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The years preceding 1935 can be aptly called the period of struggle and sacrifice spearheaded by a handful of bold and dedicated sons of Baluchistan. When Yusuf Magsi was in London and had temporarily lost his link with the nationlist movement at home, the mantle of the leadership fell on Abdus Samad Achakzai and Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd. Under their joint leadership, the movement assumed an all-Baluchistan dimension. Defying all the adversities and caring little for personal safety, a small band of young nationalists led by these two stalwarts challenged both Kalat's dominant tribal oligarchy and British colonial authority in Baluchistan. They used all the means at their disposal – pamphlets, articles and statements in the print media and so on - in British Baluchistan, Lahore, Karachi and other places outside Kalat State to spread their message as far and wide as possible.

Abdussamad Khan and Mir Abdul Aziz were frequently in and out of prison but that did not stop the forward march of history in Baluchistan. Muhammad Hussain Unqa, Muhammad Naseem Talvi, Aslam Khan Achakzai and other patriots worked tirelessly to keep the movement alive. Undaunted by the hardships they faced and the persecution of the State Government and British administration, the Baluch and Pakhtun youth rallied to the nationalist cause.

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The British colonial administration had clamped a total ban on all kinds of political activities in British Baluchistan. As long as the British remained in the subcontinent, they saw to it that no known Indian political leader ever set foot on the soil of British Baluchistan. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was expelled from Baluchistan on several occasions. Once, while addressing a public meeting, he was physically assaulted by hired hooligans. Although Khan Saheb escaped miraculously, Mir Muhammad Amin Khoso, a close associate of Yusuf Magsi, who was a member of the Sindh Assembly from Jacobabad, was so seriously wounded that he spent the rest of his life in deep agony and pain. Dr. Choitram, President of the Indian National Congress (Sindh Province), who was also present in the meeting, was attacked with an axe and was severely injured. Anyone with even a button made of *khaddar* pinned on his shirt was liable to be arrested. The iron curtain the British built around Baluchistan was so impenetrable that no ordinary person, leave alone political leaders, ever felt safe visting Baluchistan. And, if anyone dared, he met with the same treatment as Ghaffar Khan, Khoso and Choitram.

If and when anyone from Baluchistan made the mistake of issuing a press statement or involved himself in any kind of political activity outside Baluchistan, he faced the harshest punishment when he came back home and even his family members were not spared. Boys hailing from Baluchistan studying in Punjab, Sindh or NWFP suffered the same fate if they indulged in political activities.

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The promulgation of Government of India Act of 1935 opened a window for limited and controlled political activity in the territories of British India. With it also came the release of several political prisoners from jail. They included Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai and Abdul Aziz Kurd. They wasted no time in seizing the opportunity, howsoever limited, provided by the 1935 Act to engage in political activities. They embarked on the task of giving a definite structural shape to their loose and disorganized political intitiatives.

For the first time in Baluchistan's history, the foundations were laid of two political parties. Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai founded the *Anjuman-e-Watan* (Fatherland Party) in 'British' Baluchistan. In a convention held in Sibi on 5th February 1937, Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd and his comrades formed the Kalat State National Party (KSNP), with Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd as President and Malik Faiz Muhammad as General Secretary. It is obvious that in the conditions then prevailing in Baluchistan, the aims and objectives of the two parties would be more or less identical. Struggle against colonialism and imperialism on the one hand and against the oppressive hegemony of the *sardars* on the other, was a common theme in the programmes of both the parties. The Manifesto of KSNP published on 1st April 1937 contained the following salient points:

- All the Baluch should be united by eliminating the differences among them;
- We the Baluch have a glorious past with excellent traditions but are deprived of our national rights;
- The Central Government of Baluchistan should be a responsible government consisting of the elected representatives of the people, with the Khan of Kalat as a 'Constitutional Head';
- The Central Government should be the custodian of the Baluch traditional heritage;

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- The Central Government should adopt a nationalist approach;
- The State should be strengthened enough to play its significant role in the family of nations;
- Baluchistan is not the slave of the British Government; rather the British have acquired facilities through friendly agreements; hence, our national integrity should not be destroyed;
- Baluchistan is as much a separate land as is Iran and Afghanistan.

Though the *sardars* held Baluchistan in their iron grip, they remained subservient to and dependent on the British Administration. While the first and foremost among the early demands raised by KSNP was the expulsion of the British, they were equally emphatic on the replacement of the *sardari* sysrtem with a democratic alternative in which the people should be able to exercise their will through their chosen representatives. There were also other demands such as: jobs in Baluchistan only to those who lived in Baluchistan and not to outsiders, the wealth and resources of Baluchistan for the benefit of the people of Baluchistan and elevation of the status of 'British' Baluchistan to that of a province.

In an incredibly short time, the two parties succeeded in drawing public support for their programmes throughout Kalat-Baluchistan. It was a remarkable achievement indeed in the given conditions. Understandably, the *sardars* did everything in their power to prevent these parties from making inroads into their tribal 'dependencies'. They did not allow the formation of party units in their areas of control. But new winds of hope and promise had begun to blow all over and people everywhere could feel it. On the other hand, the British had become more pragmatic. They were quick to grasp the changing mood of the people. They pondered over the implications of the fast-growing nationalist movement and decided to adopt a new strategy.

The British Political Agent in Kalat with his headquarters in Mastung had been handling most of the affairs concerning the *sardars*. The Khan of Kalat had lost whatever little say he might have once had in their affairs. The British, in their colonial wisdom, now deemed it advisable to restore the old relationship between the Khan and the *sardars.* The new strategy envisaged conferring on the Khan the status of Chief of all *sardars.* In this way, the Khan and the *sardars* would be persuaded to stop working at cross-purposes and act in unison against the emerging political trends and forces. Correctly assessing the emerging situation, the British had their Political Agent hand over the 'charge' of the *sardars* back to the Khan.

The Khan of Kalat versus Kalat State National Party.

One would find it hard to believe that the late Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, who became the Khan of Kalat in 1931 after the death of his father, Mir Mohammad Azam Khan, had all along shown a favourable inclination towards the nationalist movement. After the formation of KSNP, he treated its leaders and workers with sympathy and understanding. He even extended his cooperation to them on some occasions. I still have a feeling that in pursuing such a policy, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan might have been motivated by reasons other than a genuine commitment to the nationalist cause. The Khan after all would not have liked a situation in which the *sardars,* backed by the Biritish, wielded over-riding power at the expense of his paramountcy as the ruler of Kalat. Thanks to the nationalist spirit aroused by KSNP, the people in general had begun to show their dislike for the *sardars* and the British. The Khan might have seen in it his best chance to undercut both these rival centers of power and recover some of his already eroded authority. By

allowing the KSNP to strengthen and consolidate its position, he would on the one hand achieve that objective and on the other also win some popularity among his people.

The KSNP-Khan Kalat honeymoon was, however, not to last long. In an emergency meeting held at Sibi on 15th March 1939, the Working Committee of KSNP drew up a charter of demands. It included the demand for employing locals as department heads, ministers, deputy ministers, and on all other important posts including the prime minister's post. It called for the abolition of *Bijjar* tax.

The Party appealed to the people to participate in meetings and demonstrations to press these demands home. It opened the campaign by organizing a rally in Dhadhar in the Kachhi District. The size of the rally surprised even its organisers; so massive was the public participation. The State administration was stunned. It promptly sprang into action. The office bearers of KSNP along with a number of leading members were arrested.

These arrests notwithstanding, the fact was that KSNP had already made its mark on the political arena of Kalat-Baluchistan. Shrewd as he was, the Khan made a masterly move in a bid to stem the oncoming tide. He took over the prime ministership and kept it with him for a short while before appointing Mirza Sher Muhammad Khan, a trusted old loyalist of the Khanate, as the new Prime Minister. In a follow-up action, he not only ordered the release of the KSNP leaders but Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd and some other prominent activists of the Party were given important positions in the Administration of the State! The Khan had reason to feel pleased at the new turn of events. He now had his man as Prime Minister, through whom he could have a tighter grip on the governance of the state.

However, it was soon proved that the Khan's born-again affection and sympathy for KSNP was only skin-deep and was dictated by expediency. The *sardars* and the British Political Agent were rattled by the pace and sweep of these new developments. The mass demonstration in Dhadhar had forewarned them of what to expect in the coming months, if brakes were not applied in time on the nationalist surge. The KSNP should not be allowed to grow to unmanageable proportions. The Khan of Kalat, having achieved his immediate objective of re-asserting himself, was also in no mood to let the KSNP have a field day. He knew that sooner or later, it would pose a potential challenge and cut him to size. So, the *troika* of three stakeholders – Khan of Kalat, the *Sardars* and the British Political Agent – came to a tacit understanding. Plots began to be hatched to curb the KSNP.

The opportunity which the above-mentioned *troika* was looking for arrived in July 1939. The occasion was the annual conference of KSNP. The venue this time was the town of Mastung, where the British Political Agent had his headquarters. The Conference was scheduled to be held on 5-7 July 1939. It was at this point that I was to enter the world of politics. My personal life was to merge with the political life of my compatriots in Baluchistan, and my future with theirs.

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After doing my matriculation in 1939, I came to Karachi (from Aligarh, where I was studying) on a short visit, with no inkling of what was in store for me. My arrival coincided with an important

meeting of the Baluch League, a political platform of the Baluchs living in Karachi. I was also invited to attend it. The agenda of the meeting was the Baluch League's participation in KSNP's upcoming annual conference in Mastung and formation of a delegation for the purpose. I attended that Baluch League meeting and was unanimously chosen to represent the League at the Mastung Conference. As I was leaving Karachi for Mastung, it dawned on me that I was in fact saying goodbye to my education-cum-football-driven life of an all-India dimension and stepping into the turbulent sea of Kalat-Baluchistan's politics. From then on, there was no turning back for me for the next fifty years!

KSNP under attack and the Party's new strategies

The replacement of non-State personnel in government posts by locals as a direct outcome of the pressure campaign led by the KSNP helped the Party's public image to soar high. The people, the State government employees in particular, regarded KSNP as the protector of their interests. With their open cooperation and support, the Annual Conference got off to a flying start. People in large numbers came from all parts of Baluchistan to attend the conference. The *troika* understandably became panicky.

As the Conference was in top gear, it came under attack by armed hirelings of the *sardars*. Obviously, it had the covert blessings of the Kalat administration and the British Political Agent. As a large number of participants were armed too, they retaliated and an armed clash ensued.

The British Political Agent and the Kalat State administration were closely monitoring the situation. They realized that if they let the intruders press ahead with the attack, a great deal of bloodshed would occur. It could even lead to inter-tribal and intra-tribal clashes with unpredictable consequences. After all, that was not their intention. Disruption of the conference without direct administrative intervention was all that was intended. As events took an ominous turn, the State authorities intervened and pulled the intruders off the scene. Simultaneously, an official ban was imposed on the Conference.

After taking stock of the situation arising from the forced interruption of the Mastung Conference fallout of unexpected new developments, the KSNP leadership decided to send one of their representatives to meet the Khan of Kalat and apprise him of what happened in Mastung. I was selected for this mission. The consideration was: I was a non-controversial person at that point in time as I was not a member of KSNP and was attending the Conference as a nominee of Karachi-based Baluch League; therefore, the Khan might be more responsive.

Three days after the Mastung episode, I arrived in Kalat and sought a meeting with the Khan. The Khan received me courteously and listened to what I had to say. I got the impression that he already knew exactly what had happened in Mastung. When I tried to tell him of the possible consequences of a repetition of such incidents, he curtly cut me off. He did not want to hear anything more. I realized that my mission had ended in failure.

On 20th July 1939, KSNP was declared illegal and orders were issued to expel all the prominent leaders of the Party from the State. The first batch sent into exile included Party President Abdurrahim Khwajakhel, General Secretary Malik Muhammad Saeed, Maulana Arz Muhammad, Maulana Muhammad Umar and Mirza Faizullah, then Secretary Education

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in the State Government. A few days later, Mir Fazil Khan, Minister of Education, was also exiled. Malik Faiz Muhammad Yusufzai resigned from his Government job in protest and was immediately banished as well. Abdul Karim Shorish and a number of other activists of the Party were also driven into exile. Most of the KSNP members and sympathizers working in government departments either resigned in protest or were forced to quit. Entry of newspapers into Kalat was prohibited. Dar-ul-Uloom Mastung was ordered to be closed. It was clear that the Kalat State government and the British Political Agent were working in unison to crush the KSNP.

As the KSNP was being battered and its leadership forced into exile, I was kept in the Khan's guesthouse in Kalat under virtual detention. Meanwhile, the Khan called a 'Consultative Jirga' (Assembly) of all the *sardars* and the lesser tribal chieftains from all over the state. They were brought from various parts of the State to Kalat city in lorrys, as the Khan wanted to ensure a large attendance.

Following this grandiose tribal pageant in Kalat city, I was released from the 'guesthouse', but bad news was waiting for me. My landed property, which had been under the care and protection of the Court of Ward from whom my family drew necessary funds for maintenance including my educational expenses, was being 'released'. In fact, it turned out that some *sardars* including my own Bizenjo *Sardar* had advised the Khan to take this step. The purpose was clear. Once the property was released from the custody of the Court of Ward, I would be forced to focus all my attention on taking care of the property and providing for family maintenance, leaving no room for me to continue my education or engage in political activities.

There was another sinister angle to the plot. I had no younger or elder brother alive to lend me a helping hand. The task would be too much for my mother to handle. So, ultimately, it would fall to the lot of the Bizenjo *Sardar* to play guardian angel to me and my family and more importantly, to my property! In the conditions prevailing at that time, no one else would have come forward to take my lands on lease or contract and ensure me a fixed income so that I could continue my studies. It would have been foolish on my part to leave my property in the care of the same *sardar*, who had been coveting it ever since my father's death. If I were to do that and go back to Aligarh, my mother and I would soon have been reduced to a state of absolute penury and I would have been forced to give up my studies for want of funds.

My detractors did succeed, but only partially. They left me no option but to give up further studies but if they thought that I would withdraw into the political emptiness of Shank-Jhao, they were sadly mistaken. The sequence of events since the Mastung Conference had convinced me that from then on KSNP's mission was my mission as well. I had had the advantage of direct interaction with people and events in the Indian subcontinent. I had come to the conclusion that if the Baluch nation were to pull itself out of the quagmire of tribal backwardness, young men like me ought to commit ourselves to waging a long-drawn out struggle under the banner of KSNP against British colonial rule on the one hand and the retrogressive tribal social order on the other.

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After paying a short visit to my home village, I returned to Quetta. There I met the exiled leaders of KSNP and exchanged views with them. I told them that I would soon be visiting Makran to attend to the formalities of getting my properties released from the custody of the Court of Ward. KSNP President Malik Abdurrahim Khwajakhel suggested that I should do a bit of political work also during my Makran visit. I was asked to contact senior party members still working as government officials in Makran and persuade them to quit their posts in protest against the on-going persecution of KSNP leaders and activists. Prominent among those whom I was to contact were Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd, Naib Vazir (Deputy Minister) in Makran; Mir Hammal Khan, Custom Inspector at Pasni; Mir Gul Khan, Custom Officer at Jeewani, Mir Behram and a few others.

With the exception of Mir Gul Khan, I met all the others and conveyed Party President's message. I also personally tried to impress upon them that if they chose to stay on in their posts, the Government would first try to scandalize them and then sack them in disgrace. That would mean a great blow to the prestige of the Party; therefore, they should not wait for that to happen. To my great disappointment, none of them was prepared to heed the advice. It looked as if I was the lone party activist at the scene. Perhaps the authorities had also sensed it, for as soon as I returned from Makran to my village, orders were issued for my banishment from the State.

In less than a year, our party comrades in Makran were to face the inevitable. Mir Abdul Aziz was implicated in a case of alleged embezzlement of state funds and dismissed from service. However, during the trial, it came to light that Mir Abdul Aziz had withdrawn the alleged funds from the treasury with the consent of the Khan of Kalat and therefore it was not a case of embezzlement. Nevertheless, his dismissal held good. Similar false charges were also levelled against Mir Hammal Khan and Mir Gul Khan. They were forced to resign and they too soon joined the ranks of the exiles in Quetta.

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Taking advantage of the relatively less restrictive conditions in 'British' Baluchistan as compared to Kalat State, KSNP continued its activities from Quetta. In this effort KSNP received fraternal support from *Anjuman-e-Watan* and its leader Khan Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai. *Anjuman-e-Watan* was rapidly growing in strength and popularity, so much so that it had virtually become the 'British' Baluchistan chapter of the Indian National Congress. Abdus Samad Achakzai was held in high esteem by the Congress Party leadership in Delhi.

The Indian National Congress had its counterpart in the princely states of India in the shape of the All India State People's Conference (AISPC). Jawaharlal Nehru was at that time the President of the Conference and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah the Vice President. KSNP had got a fair amount of subcontinental projection through the sustained interaction of exiled comrades like Malik Abdurrahim Khwajakhel, Malik Faiz Muhammad and others with the print media outside Baluchistan. In mid-1945, AISPC formally accepted KSNP as one of its affiliate members, representing the State of Kalat. I was nominated by KSNP to represent the Party as a member of AISPC Working Committee.

The Kalat Administration and the British Political Agent had anticipated that after the

expulsion of the KSNP leaders and activists from the State, the Party would gradually wither away. To their utter dismay, things turned out quite differently. From its erstwhile existence in isolation in Kalat State, KSNP soon propelled itself into the limelight of Indian subcontinent's politics. The realization now dawned on them that it was a mistake to banish the KSNP leadership from the State. They decided not to extend the period of exile of the KSNP leaders. Thus, the exile which had started in 1939 ended in 1942.

However, wisdom was a bit too late in coming to the help of Kalat Administration and the British Political Agent. KSNP had by then become a component of a great All-India political institution and the nationalist movement of Kalat State had become linked with the freedom movement in the subcontinent.

The great divide in the Indian polity

British India was in the throes of a growing Hindu-Muslim estrangement. The All India Muslim League was asserting its claim to be the only representative political forum of the Muslims of India. Ironically, however, almost all the leading Muslim religious and religio-political groups and clerics in India refused to accept that claim. This fact was convincingly demonstrated in the 1937 general elections held under the 1935 Government of India Act. Out of 484 reserved Muslim seats in the 11 provinces, Muslim League could win only 108 as against 376 won by other Muslim groups and Congress.

On the other hand, the Indian National Congress, which claimed with a lot of justification to be a secular party, had not been able to command mass support among the Indian Muslims. This was despite the presence of eminent Muslim luminaries like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad among its top ranking leaders. The Muslim League in its bid to win over the Muslim masses resorted to all sorts of communalistic rhetoric. On the other hand, the traditionalist Hindu elements in the Congress, with their hard-line attitude towards religion, helped to further alienate the Muslims. In the process, the secular ethos of the Congress got diluted. The British on their part obviously had their own reasons to encourage the communalization of Indian politics.

After the Congress formed its ministries in 8 of the 11 provinces, the rivalry between it and the Muslim League came into the open. Hindu Muslim riots erupted in some of the Congress-ruled provinces like U.P., C.P., Bihar and Bombay, adding grist to the mill of Muslim League's propaganda against the Congress and alienated it further from the Muslim community.

The outbreak of Second World War in September 1939 called for a reassessment of policies on all sides – British Indian Government, Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League. The Congress had to set aside its aggressive nationalist posture and content itself with calling for an assurance from Britain that independence would be granted to India as soon as the war-born emergency was over. The Muslim League, on the other hand, supported the war effort but at the same time demanded that no constitutional arrangement for India be made without its consent.

The British government chose to ignore the Congress demand. The Congress reacted by asking all its provincial ministries to resign in October 1939. In response to their resignation, the Muslim League observed 'Deliverance Day' on 22nd December 1939, further widening the gulf

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between the two major political forces of India. On the 23rd March 1940, the All India Muslim League in its National Council session held in Lahore demanded the status of 'independent and sovereign' states for the Muslim majority zones of India, the precursor to the demand for Pakistan.

In March 1942, the British Government sent the Cripps Mission to India with proposals for framing a new constitution. These proposals were eventually rejected both by the Congress and the Muslim league, though for different reasons. In August 1942, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) passed the famous Quit India resolution, threatening that if the British Government did not take steps towards quitting India as soon as possible, the Congress would launch a civil disobedience movement. The British responded by arresting Gandhiji and most members of the AICC. Congress was declared an unlawful organization. The Working Committee of the Muslim League in its meeting in August 1942 termed the AICC's call for launching a civil disobedience movement an 'open rebellion' and called upon the Muslims to abstain from any kind of participation in such a movement.

Working with the AISPC

As mentioned earlier, I was associated with All India State Peoples' Conference (AISPC) as the nominee of Kalat State National Party on its Working Committee. It gave me the opportunity to work with famous politicians of that time such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad, Saifuddin Kichlu, Pattabhi Sitaramayya and several others. As a member of AISPC working committee, I also got an opportunity to revisit the famous cities of Jaipur and Jodhpur during its meetings held there in 1945-46. I had been to these cities earlier as a young member of a football team.[1]

An incident of that period is still fresh in my memory. Sheikh Abdullah was arrested by the Dogra Maharajah's government of Kashmir for authoring a *Quit Kashmir* pamphlet and for *disturbing peace*. The Working Committee of AISPC meeting in Delhi decided to send Nehru to Kashmir. Nehru was ready but the Indian National Congress would not agree, citing the presence of Cripps Mission in India as the reason. Sardar Vallabhai Patel was among those who vehemently opposed Nehru's visit to Kashmir at that juncture. Some Muslim members of the AISPC Working Committee thought that, had it been a Hindu who was arrested in place of the Muslim Sheikh Abdullah, Patel would not have been so insistent on opposing Nehru's trip to Kashmir!

But Jawaharlal Nehru was made of stronger mettle. He questioned the Congress directive, arguing that his organization AISPC wanted him to go and he would go. And so he went. As anticipated, he was arrested as he stepped into Kashmir territory and was placed under detention in a rest house. Despite Nehru having defied its directive, the Congress reacted sharply to his arrest. A directive was issued to all the Congress Governments that if the Maharaja of Kashmir stepped on the territory of any of the provinces, he should be taken into custody. The Congress also decided against holding any talks with the Cripps Mission till Nehru was released.

[1] Meanwhile, I had shifted from Shanak Jhao to my father's ancestral village Nal in Khuzdar District in 1943. Two years later, in 1945, I married the sister of Sardar Faqir Muhammad Bizenjo, the present Sardar of the Bizenjo tribe. (This Bizenjo Sardar is not the one whom I have accused earlier of coveting my properties when I was still a young boy.)

The impending division of India

The British had managed to rule the vast subcontinent for so long by means of chicanery and deceit. One of their most effective weapons was the notorious policy of 'divide and rule'. They had encouraged and sustained communal tensions, particularly between the two major religious communities of India, Hindus and Muslims. Muslims being in the minority were more prone to feelings of fear and insecurity. The Indian National Congress with all its nationalist and secular credentials had sadly failed to allay the fears of the majority of India's Muslim population. As a result, the All India Muslim League had gradually emerged as the representative voice of the bulk of the Muslims of India. Muslim League's 1940 Lahore Resolution had become their rallying cry.

The British were under mounting pressure to quit the subcontinent. The naval mutiny with its unmistakable nationalist motivation was a slap on the face of British colonial rule in India. Too many Indians had received military training and seen several years of active service during the Second World War. With nationalist sentiments surging in civilian homes and army barracks alike, the Indian armed forces on which the British depended heavily for over a century now posed a potential threat to their supremacy. The Indian National Army (INA) and its leader Subhash Chandra Bose had deeply inspired millions of Indians and the return of the INA leaders at the end of the war followed by their high profile trial for treason and the politicization of the trial by nationalist politicians, lawyers and the press had added tremendously to the tempo of the freedom movement. The British had to choose between violent expulsion and peaceful exit. Shrewd as they were, they chose the latter less painful course.

As the war ended and the British were planning to quit India, different sections of the Muslims were feeling uncertain and apprehensive of their future in what they foresaw to be a Hindu-dominated post-British India. Different proposals to resolve the Hindu-Muslim tangle, while preserving post-independent India's unity in one form or other, emerged from different quarters, including the Cabinet Mission's tri-zonal federation plan. Eventually none of them materialised. The series of Gandhi-Jinnah parleys and exchange of correspondence, the Rajgopal Acharia Formula and so on turned out to be illusory in the face of the Congress-League estrangement. In consequence, the division of India looked inevitable.

As Pakistan began to look like an approaching reality, it was interesting to see opportunist Muslim politicians queuing up at the offices of the Muslim League and at the the residences of its leaders, each trying to outpace the other to enroll himself in the Party and find a suitable position in it. One of the most prominent among them was Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan. Believe it or not, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan had not only started his political career as a member of the Indian National Congress but was from 1937 till 1946 a Congress member of the Legislative Assembly and between 1942 and 1946 he was also the Deputy Leader of the Congress parliamentary party in the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi. He was an ardent admirer of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, so much so that he authored a book: *Gold and Guns*, in which he profusely praised the outstandisng leadership of Bacha Khan and his political vision and mission. (The book was last re-printed by *Gosha-e-Adab*, Quetta in 1972). Yes, the same Qayyum Khan who was later to brutalise the politics of NWFP and inflict fascist methods of repression upon Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his supporters in his new role as a 'stalwart' of the Pakistan Muslim League and its Chief Minister in NWFP!

Kalat on its way to independence

Initially, KSNP subscribed to the idea that after India became free, Baluchistan might consider joining the independent and sovereign Federation of India as an autonomous and equal federating unit. But the situation that was emerging in the subcontinent following the end of the War, called for a revision of the earlier position of the Party in the light of a fresh evaluation of the entire scenario. Accordingly, the Working Committee of the KSNP made a thorough reassessment of the situation and adopted a resolution stating its position on the future of Kalat-Baluchistan after the departure of the British. It was decided to send the resolution to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, President of All India Muslim League, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was in those days the President of Indian National Congress, and also to the British Viceroy in Delhi. The sum and substance of the resolution was:

- The status of the State of Kalat was not identical to that of the other princely states of India;
- Kalat was not a part of the British Indian empire;
- Kalat's relations with the British government were governed by various treaties concluded directly with the British Imperial Government in London and not with the one in Delhi;
- Now that the British were leaving India, it was necessary that the treaty obligations were honoured and the independence of Kalat-Baluchistan recognized.

In the months following the announcement on 3rd June 1947 of India's Partition Plan, the Kalat government made a series of moves including meetings/talks with representatives of the Viceroy and the future Government of Pakistan in Delhi. These talks led to certain preparatory steps towards a formal reaffirmation of the suzerainty of Khan of Kalat over the whole of Baluchistan. One such meeting, something like a Round Table Conference, was held on 4th August 1947 in Delhi. It was chaired by Viceroy Lord Mountbatten and attended by his legal advisor Lord Ismay. Kalat State was represented by Khan of Kalat, Ahmed Yar Khan and Prime Minister Barrister Sultan Ahmed. M. A. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan represented Pakistan. It resulted in the signing of a 3-point agreement. Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat signed for Pakistan and Mr. Sultan Ahmed for Kalat. The Agreement stated as follows:

1. Government of Pakistan recognizes the independent and sovereign status of the State of Kalat, which has treaty relations with the British Government and whose status and position is different from other princely states of India.
2. Legal opinion will be obtained to decide whether Pakistan can be the successor to those treaties and to the ones on leased areas.
3. After obtaining the legal opinion, there will be further talks between the representatives of Pakistan and Kalat. In the interim period, there shall be a standstill agreement between Pakistan and Kalat in relation to the areas under lease to the British Government.

Following up on this Agreement, another Agreement was concluded in Delhi on 11th August 1947 between the government of Kalat and the incoming government of Pakistan. The very first clause of the agreement, which was duly broadcast over All India Radio on behalf of the Government of Pakistan, declared: *The Government of Pakistan agrees that Kalat is an independent state, being quite different in status from other states of India and commits to its relations with the British Government as manifested in several agreements.* On returning from Delhi, Khan of Kalat made a formal proclamation on 12th August 1947 of the independence of Kalat State, effective from 15th August 1947, the day British paramountcy in the subcontinent would lapse. Nawabzada Muhammad Asam Khan was appointed as the first Prime Minister of the State and an

Englishman Mr. D.Y. Phell as the Foreign Minister.

Immediately thereafter, in pursuance of the provisions of the 11th August Agreement, the Khan sent the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State to Karachi to negotiate with the Government of Pakistan the modalities for concluding a Treaty on the basis of the 4th August 1947 Standstill Agreement relating to the areas held under lease by the outgoing British Government.

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Earlier, moving towards establishing some kind of a representative system of governance, 'associating the people with the government and administration of the State', the Khan had promulgated a 'constitution' through what was called the Government of Kalat State Act 1947. It came into force from 1st August 1947. The Act, *inter alia*, stated that:

> *there shall be two Houses of Legislature in the State called the Darul Umara and the Darul Awam. The Darul Umara will represent the Sirdari Inami tribal areas of the State and such other interest as may be assigned to it by His Highness the Khan. It would be composed of the thirty six hereditary sardars representing their Sirdari or Inami areas and tribes, and such other members, not exceeding ten in all, and Ministers as may be nominated by His Highness the Khan. The Darul Awam will represent all the remaining areas and interests of the State, including areas paying land revenue, non-sirdari Jagirs, Muafis, business and ecclesiastical interests etc. The Darul Awam shall be composed of fifty-five members, of whom fifty shall be elected in accordance with rules made under this Act and the remainder shall be nominated by His Highness the Khan.*

It was followed by elections to the two houses in the manner as stipulated in the Government of Kalat Act 1947. However, the Khan wanted to block KSNP from putting up party candidates to campaign and contest elections on the basis of the party programme. So, the elections were held non-party basis. However, the majority of members elected to the Darul Awam turned out to be members of KSNP! The Party won 39 out of 52 seats of the Darul Awam. I was elected to the Darul Awam from Khuzdar-Nal constituency. In the first session of the Darul Awam held at Shahi Camp, Dhadar on 12th December, 1947, I was elected as the Parliamentary Leader of the Darul Awam.

After proclaiming independence, the Khan initiated a series of negotiations with the KSNP. Notwithstanding fundamental differences in their respective approaches to the issues facing the State and its people, an agreement was reached between the two on a minimum programme. KSNP agreed to cooperate with the government and allow some of its members to join it as secretaries. Accordingly, Malik Faiz Muhamad Khan Yusufzai, Mir Gul Khan Nasir and Malik Abdurrahim Khwajakhel joined the Government. However, this apparent gesture of trust and goodwill shown by the Khan towards KSNP concealed more than it revealed. The plain truth is that Khan Saheb simply did not trust the KSNP! He was apprehensive of the intentions of the party leadership. Offering government positions to a couple of party activists was one of his tactics to keep KSNP leadership 'pacified' and 'in good humour' and nothing more.

Baluchistan stood at the crossroads of history. Proclamation of independence was only the first step. There were more critical decisions to be taken. But Khan of Kalat did not consider

it necessary to take the KSNP leadership into confidence in matters pertaining to the future relations and negotiations with the British Government or the Government of Pakistan. His most trusted aides even at that crucial juncture in our history were the same officials, who had been posted to Kalat during the last days of British Raj.

Khan Saheb knew well that the Baluch were very sensitive about their independence. However, he seemed to lack the will to take any tangible step towards consolidating the independence of Kalat. For instance, say, a move towards formation of a national government with the participation of the *sardars* and the representatives of the Baluch people, or initiate diplomatic relations with neighbouring Afghanistan and Iran or repatriation of Pakistani ministers and officials working in the State Government and so on. The irony was that after the creation of the two houses of legislature and holding of the elections, the Khan had come to realize that the Baluch were not prepared for any compromise on their independence. But his heart was not in it. He was readying himself to enter into a process of bargain and compromise. Let us accept the truth; Khan Saheb was a broken man. The grit and conviction to own up and defend independence was no longer in him. He was in fact deceiving the Baluch youth, the freedom-loving Baluch and also himself.

The deception was not to last long. Khan Saheb met Mr. Jinnah in Karachi in October 1947. Jinnah proposed the accession of Kalat to Pakistan. Khan Saheb asked for time to consult the *sardars* and *motabars.* On his return from Karachi, he convened both the Houses of parliament to 'seek a mandate on the matter of Kalat's merger with Pakistan'. From 12th to 15th December 1947, the Darul Awam held several sessions and debated the proposal. The members were frank and forthright in expressing their views. The speech I delivered in the Darul Awam as Leader of the House on 14th December 1947 forms part of the proceedings of the Session and is printed in the book *Tareekh-i-Khawaneen-i-Baluch,* published under the name of late Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan, by the Islamia Press, Quetta, in 1947.

English translation of excerpts from Mir Sahib's speech in the Darul Awam (Assembly of Kalat State)
The British Government, by force of arms, enslaved most parts of Asia. British Government was tyrannical, oppressive. It robbed us of our independence. We had never been a part of Hindustan. Pakistan's demand that Kalat, which had earlier been known as Baluchistan and had been the national homeland of the Baluch, should merge with Pakistan is unacceptable.

Our Khan helped in the formation of Muslim League in Baluch territory. Our homes and vehicles were donated for its propagation. And a large majority of people of Kalat under Khan's leadership did everything to help the Muslim League succeed. But what is Pakistan giving us in return? How is Pakistan reciprocating? Pakistan does not want to return to us the leased tribal areas which belong to us. We don't want to keep them in the bond of slavery. They are our brothers. In this capacity they have all along been integral part of Kalat. Pakistan has refused to talk about them. Pakistan's condition is that until and unless the government of the Baluch went to them with bowed heads and in humility, Pakistan would not talk. We are ready for friendship with honour not in indignity. We are not ready to merge within the frontiers of Pakistan.

We have a distinct culture like Afghanistan and Iran, and if the mere fact that we are Muslims requires us to amalgamate with Pakistan, then Afghanistan and Iran should also be amalgamated with Pakistan. They say that we Baluch cannot defend ourselves in the atomic age. Well, are Afghanistan, Iran and even Pakistan capable of defending themselves against the super powers? If we cannot defend ourselves, a lot

of others cannot do so either.

We are asked to sign the death warrant of one and a half crore Baluch of Asia. We cannot be guilty of such a major crime.

Granted that we have no money. But we have abundant mineral resources; we have vibrant seaports; we have unlimited sources of income. Don't try to force us into slavery in the name of our economic compulsions. If Pakistan as an independent nation wants to have an agreement with us, we shall extend the hand of friendship.

The Darul Awam unanimously rejected the proposal for accession of Kalat to Pakistan.

The Darul Umarah met on January 2, 3 and 4, 1948 and, endorsing the decision of the Darul Awam, unanimously rejected the accession proposal. Some of the salient points raised by the members in their speeches rejecting Kalat's accession to Pakistan are mentioned below:

- The Baluch had lived as an independent and sovereign nation within their own national territory for several hundred years, preserving and promoting their culture, traditions and customs;
- In 1839, the British began to intrude into the affairs of Kalat State on different pretexts. They soon followed it up with armed intervention, which was resisted by the Baluch; From 1839 till 1947, relations between Britain and Kalat were governed by various treaties and agreements concluded between their governments. Even at the Britain-Kalat-Pakistan Round Table Conference held in Delhi on 4th August 1947, the independence and sovereignty of Kalat state was reaffirmed and accordingly an announcement was made to this effect on behalf of the Government of Pakistan on 11th August 1947 from All India Radio, Delhi.
- Kalat-Baluchistan had been a Muslim state like Afghanistan and Iran. Its relations with these neighbouring states were governed by treaties similar to the ones it had with Britain;
- There is absolutely no justification for Kalat-Baluchistan to efface its national and geographical entity, renounce its independence, sovereignty and specific national identity and join Pakistan;
- Kalat-Baluchistan, while maintaining its independent and sovereign status, is willing to establish with Pakistan the same brotherly and friendly relations as it will have with neighbouring Muslim countries, Afghanistan and Iran.
- The Baluch are not prepared to part with their independence and sovereignty at any cost.

True, the British had given the option to the rulers of princely states to accede to India or Pakistan. But the fact is that it did not apply to Kalat. Kalat, as I have repeatedly said, was not one of the several princely states of British India. It had been affirmed and reaffirmed time and again by the British Government that Kalat-Baluchistan was not an Indian princely state but had a treaty relationship with Britain, under which it enjoyed a special status and if it wanted to, it was free to establish relations with Afghanistan.

Pressed by the Pakistan Government, the Khan once again referred the accession issue to both the Houses for reconsideration. Darul Awam again rejected it in its session held on 25th February 1948 and the Darul Umara, in its session held two days later, also refused to accept it.

Kalat's accession to Pakistan and its aftermath

Despite both houses giving their categorical verdict against Kalat's accession to Pakistan, Khan

Shaib informed the Government of Pakistan to finalise the merger of Kalat within three months. Instead of accepting this offer, the Pakistan government decided to annex Kharan and Lasbela - the two subordinate states of Kalat – and enforcing their 'merger' with Pakistan directly. Similarly, Makran which had been a district of Kalat for the last 300 years, was made 'independent' of Kalat state on March 17, 1948 and one of its three sardars, Bay Khan Gichki was made its 'ruler' (Khan of Kalat's memoirs, *Inside Baluchistan,* published in 1975).

Eventually succumbing to incessant pressure from Pakistan Government and due to his own state of indecision, the Khan of Kalat affixed his signature to the Agreement of Accession on 27th March 1948. In taking such a step in gross violation of the will of the people of Kalat-Baluchistan as expressed unanimously by the members of both Houses of Parliament, the Khan rendered himself guilty of an act of great injustice to them. I wonder if history will ever forgive him.

There was very little the people could do to challenge the action of Khan of Kalat. He was their Khan, Khan-e-Azam, Khan-e-Kalat! He was to them not just an individual. He was an institution to which they had looked up to with awe and respect for centuries. Their relationship was governed by centuries-old traditions. And the Khan had signed the instrument of surrender of their State's independence!

On one side, there was the might of the Pakistan army and behind it stood one hundred million Pakistanis filled with the spirit and fervour of their newly won independence. On the other was the pathetic spectacle of a few lakhs of unarmed and demoralised Baluch, divided into so many tribes and subtribes, whose symbol of unity and strength - the Khan of Kalat – had abandoned them. Suddenly the Baluch nation felt betrayed and lost. In the absence of support from external sources, any attempt on their part to offer resistance would be sheer madness.

Thus it was that the patently illegal and immoral annexation of Kalat-Baluchistan passed into the annals of history as voluntary 'accession' to Pakistan.

The question arises: Why did Ahmed Yar Khan do it? Though not publicly acknowledged, it is a fact that the Khan and the *sardars* had, historically speaking, remained at daggers drawn most of the time. They had little trust in each other. Under certain local compulsions, the s*ardars* opposed the accession, but their real role always remained suspect. They kept insinuating that at the end of the day the Khan would compromise and leave them in the lurch. The Khan, on his part, suspected that the s*ardars* would at some stage or the other let him down. As mentioned earlier, the *sardars* of Kharan, Lasbela and Makran had already abandoned the Khan. Assuming that they were separate entities, independent of Kalat, the Marri, Bugti and Sanjrani *sardars* in British Baluchistan had also voted in favour of joining Pakistan. Though in number they were just six *sardars*, in terms of tribal clout and importance, they were the backbone of Khan's power. They had left him and were now in the opposite camp.

Now let me explain in some more detail why the *sardars* decided to abandon the Khan. The Marri, Bugti and Sanjrani *sardaris* were severed administratively from the Khanate of Kalat soon after the British intrusion into Baluchistan. Despite having been tribal territories of Kalat, they suffered from a sense of alienation due to their being counted as the underdogs in the

State. On the other hand, they had come to enjoy a privileged status in British Baluchistan. That gave them the feeling that if they joined Pakistan, they would on the one hand continue to enjoy the same kind of a privileged status as in British Baluchistan and on the other, they would no longer have to put up with paying obeisance to the Khan of Kalat. More or less similar was the position of the *sardars* of Kharan and Lasbela. They had acquired such a status to a certain extent during the British days whereas Makran had been striving for it for a whole century.

The underlying reason for this misconception among the *sardars* and the *motabareen* about their future status in Pakistan can be attributed to (1) a general lack of political vision and (2) apathy towards national solidarity and unawareness of the benefits of independent nationhood. It should not be forgotten that the Baluch tribes were yet to evolve and mature into conscious components of a nation. They still remained quarantined within the bounds of tribal, regional and clan-based factionalism. They mistook tribal separatism and ethno-centrism as the symbols of freedom and independence. They were not prepared to merge their separate identities into the larger framework of a Baluch nation.

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The political situation in Kalat was dismal, to say the least. Except for a handful of educated youth, who had been influenced by the Indian freedom struggle, all the others were so deeply stuck in the quagmire of tribal loyalties that it was virtually impossible to goad them into any move against their *sardars* or their Khan. In such circumstances, the Baluch were neither ready for independence nor qualified for it. On the face of it, this may sound too harsh a comment, but sadly enough it is true. The independence, which was knocking at their doors without their having waged an organized people's struggle for it, went astray by default, as neither the Khan nor the *sardars* had the gumption to grab it and hold on to it.

If at all anyone did put up some resistance, they were the members of the Darul Awam. They stood firm and steadfast by their commitment. After the Khan signed the instrument of accession, and the first Pakistan-appointed Prime Minister arrived in Kalat, the Khan came under strong pressure from members of the Darul Awam to convene a special session of the house for ratification of the Accession. The Khan agreed but before the members of Darul Awam arrived in Kalat to attend the session, the Prime Minister had got a hint that if the House were allowed to meet, the members would stick to their earlier position of rejection and refuse to ratify the Accession. So, the idea of holding the special session was shelved.

The 'accession' was followed by the banning of the KSNP and arrests of most of the KSNP leaders and active workers. I too was among the arrested. I was then the Secretary of KSNP besides being the leader of the House in the Darul Awam.

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After the accession process was through, things began to happen which belied the expectations with which the Khan and his *sardars* had opted to acquiesce in it. The 'uprisings' of 1958 and 1973 were perhaps the manifestation of a latent sense of remorse and self-pity which the Baluch felt at their earlier failure to forge unity in their ranks and foresee and pre-empt the disaster that was to overtake them.

The majority of the people were psychologically still trapped in the tribal time warp. Political awareness had over the years sharpened in relative terms but that was confined to a certain elite class. They were essentially selfish and opportunistic. They were used to looking only for possible gains and not prepared to suffer losses. The fuel that fires national liberation struggles was just not there. The key elements of such a struggle were missing, such as:

- A developed and sharp national consciousnesss
- An intense and irresistible urge for independence
- Organisation
- Objective Conditions
- Dedicated Leadership
- A readiness to render the supreme sacrifice for the cause

Having said that, the 'accession' (*ilhaq*) of Kalat to Pakistan, in the manner it was brought about, obviously inflamed the passions of the people, especially the politically conscious among them. Agha Abdul Karim, younger brother of Khan of Kalat, was beyond himself with rage. On 15th Aril 1948, he raised the banner of revolt and set out for Afghanistan along with a couple of close companions[2].

During his journey to and across the Afghan border, Agha Saheb was accompanied, among others, by Muhammad Husain Unqa, Malik Muhammad Saeed, Abdul Wahid Kurd and Muhammad Khan Raisani. Qadir Bakhsh Nizamani Baluch from Sindh, who had earlier been the Secretary of Sindh chapter of the Communist Party of India, also joined them. So many people wanted to join Agha Saheb that he found it impossible to take all of them along. He sent them back with the promise to call them as and when the need arose. But that need never arose. Before long, Agha Saheb decided to return to Kalat. On 12th July 1948, after a minor skirmish at Harboi, he gave himself up to the government authorities. Agha Saheb and over one hundred others were arrested, tried by a special *Jirga* and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The severest punishment was awarded to Agha Saheb – 10 years' rigorous imprisonment (R.I.) and a fine of Rs.5,000. Muhammad Husain Unqa was sentenced to 10 years' R.I. and Malik Saeed, Abdul Wahid Kurd and Muhammad Khan Raisani got 7 years' R.I. Those who were sentenced to one year or six months were numerous[3].

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[2] Apart from other factors that might have motivated the dissenters to revolt, it would be unfair to overlook the part played by Muhammad Husain Unqa in spurring them into action. Unqa belonged to that selected band of deeply committed political fighters who, despite being poor in material resources, displayed unflinching will and determination to keep the nationalist cause alive. Naturally, no one could have been more incensed than Unqa at the abomination Kalat had been made to suffer. When he came out of jail after 10 years' detention, the nationalist movement stood at a most critical juncture in its history. Unqa should have automatically become the front rank national leader of the movement, but he was denied the place he so richly deserved. The reason is quite straightforward: tribal prejudices and the retrogressive political mindset of certain dominant elements in our society at that time prevailed over principle. I am sure that as and when a truthful history of Baluchistan's nationalist movement is written, Unqa will find his rightful place in it.

[3] Meanwhile, Mr. Jinnah passed away on 11th September 1948, after being ill for most part of the one year he lived after independence. The last few months before his death were spent at the Residency in Ziarat, Baluchistan. Much has been said and written about the circumstances in which he died while being transported from the Mauripur airbase, where he had arrived on a special flight from Ziarat, to the Governor General's House in the city. Post-Partition Chief Minister of East Bengal, Khawaja Nazimuddin, was elevated to fill the slot of Governor General.

However, there are some questions that have till today found no convincing answers. Why did Agha Sahib go to Afghanistan in the first place? Secondly, once having taken that step, why did he return in this manner? There were as many stories as there were mouths. But one thing is sure: both the decisions were very naïve and lacked serious pre-thinking or planning.

Poorly equipped and resource-starved, Agha Saheb could not have stayed across the border for long on a mission of organizing an armed resistance movement against Pakistan without solid support from the Afghan authorities. Such support, either from Aghanistan or from any other external source, never came. Understandably, the Afghan Government was wary of allowing any such activities in its territory. Agha Saheb had no option but to return to whatever fate awaited him at home.

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Political activities in all forms were forbidden in the 'acceded' state of Kalat. After the arrest of Agha Saheb and his comrades, the political process came to a virtual standstill. After a period of around a year and a half, some time in the middle of 1950, the Pakistan Muslim League ventured out in a bid to take advantage of the political vacuum in the State. It decided to organize a convention in Kalat. The project apparently had the tacit approval of the Khan of Kalat. Muslim League being the party holding power in Pakistan, three senior leaders of the Party – Qazi Muhammad Isa from Baluchistan, Yusuf Khattak from NWFP and Nurul Amin from East Bengal - were sent to organize the Party in Kalat. Their guess was that due to the ban on KSNP, all political activists in Kalat would join the Muslim League.

The leadership of KSNP met secretly and took stock of the situation. They arrived at the conclusion that conditions in the State were too hostile for the Party to resume normal political activities, leave alone confront the Muslim League party and Government. First of all, KSNP had bitterly opposed the accession of Kalat to Pakistan. Secondly, Agha Saheb's revolt had been aborted and the belligerents put in jail. Third, the Muslim League Government in Pakistan was ideologically opposed to KSNP. The situation called for maximum caution and tactful handling. After secret consultations among party activists, it was decided that whenever and wherever the Pakistan Muslim League launched the membership campaign, KSNP members should fill the Muslim League membership forms and enroll themselves as members. When Qazi Isa, Nurul Amin and PML Secretary General Yusuf Khattak closed the membership enrolment campaign in Sarawan and conducted the party elections, they were in for the rudest shock of their lives. To their utter disbelief, all the Muslim League office bearers and committee members elected from the Party's Sarawan stronghold turned out to be office bearers and leading activists of outlawed KSNP! The PML stalwarts got so demoralized that they decided to return to Quetta. After consultations with other central party leaders, they announced the dissolution of the short-lived PML organization in Kalat state and reported to the Central PML leadership that there was no chance for the time being of Muslim League being organised in Kalat!

A note on the Baluchistan States Union (BSU)

The formation of the Baluchistan States Union (BSU) in 1952 had a hidden agenda. It was a ruse meant to whitewash the adverse fallout from the unjust accession of Kalat to Pakistan through coercion, against the wishes of the people of the State. Despite all the bitter experiences of the

immediate past, Khan of Kalat Mir Ahmed Yar Khan and the rulers of subordinate states of Makran, Kharan and Lasbela never gave up dreaming of recovering their lost positions and power. The Khan continued to remind the Governor General of Pakistan in vain about Kalat's suzerainty over its subordinate states. In the opinion of some of the observers of later period, the idea of Balochistan States Union was a trap to lure the Khan of Kalat before he was dispatched into the eternal oblivion of One Unit.

The plan for establishing the Baluchistan States Union comprising Kalat, Makran, Kharan and Lasbela was approved in March 1952 and formal notification to this effect was issued on 11th April the same year. Immediately afterwards, a meeting of the rulers of the states was convened, ostensibly to fulfill the 'constitutional and legal requirements'. Khan of Kalat was chosen as President of the BSU, a constitution was drafted and early elections and formation of government were promised.

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Chapter 3
Beyond Baluchistan: Pakistan's Early Years

Power struggles in the early years

Beyond Balochistan, much was happening in the corridors of power of nascent Pakistan. Opposition to the Government and the ruling Muslim League had gathered momentum and was seeking outlets in various forms. Deep schisms appeared within the ranks of the Party leadership. A tussle raged in Punjab between Chief Minister Nawab Mamdot and Mian Mumtaz Daulatana. Prime Minister Liaquat showed a bias against Mamdot. Soon Mamdot was sacked and Daulatana replaced him as Chief Minister of Punjab.

Due to the increasing tendency in the ruling Muslim League to encourage flattery and favouritism and suppress political dissent, new political entities emerged in the 1949-50s to challenge the Party. One of them was the Jinnah Muslim League sponsored by erstwhile Muslim League stalwart of Punjab, Nawab Mamdot. The other was Awami Muslim League formed by erstwhile top Muslim League leaders of East Bengal, Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani. Some time later, in deference to the Party's adherence to secular principles, the word 'Muslim' was removed and the party's name became Pakistan Awami League.

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On 9th March 1951, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, in a sensational announcement, revealed a 'conspiracy' in the armed forces against the state. Several senior army officers were implicated in the conspiracy and were arrested, in addition to a large number of communists and progressive leftist intellectuals all over the country. A reign of repression was let loose against political opponents. A special tribunal was set up to try the accused in this case, which came to be known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case.

Six months later, on 16th October 1951 to be precise, Liaquat Ali Khan was shot dead as he began to address a public meeting in Rawalpindi, under circumstances which continue to be shrouded in mystery. I don't wish to go into the details. Some major changes in top positions in the government followed Liaquat's murder. Khawaja Nazimuddin was moved from the position of Governor General to that of Prime Minister to succeed Liaquat. Malik Ghulam Muhammad, the then Finance Minister made his way to the Governor General's post. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, another top bureaucrat of the colonial era took over as Finance Minister. Nawab Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani who too had earlier been a senior bureaucrat became the Interior Minister. These three constituted a *troika*, which held real power after Liaquat's death. All the three were from Punjab. That was the beginning of the rise of Punjabi civil bureaucracy. Not before long, however, this *troika* would be ousted and replaced by the duo consisting of Maj. Gen. Iskandar Mirza, a loyal servant of the colonial order, and General Ayub Khan, the army chief, opening the doors for an unending series of palace intrigues, engineered government changes, floor crossings, horse-trading and a host of other political vulgarities, till the armed forces marched in and seized power in October 1958.

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Mian Mumtaz Daulatana, Chief Minister of Punjab, emerged as one of the high profile political faces of Punjab's powerful ruling elite. He had high ambitions and was an aspirant for the post of the Prime Minister. It was suspected that he played a shady role in inciting the anti-Qadiani riots in Punjab in 1953, which led to the imposition of martial law in Lahore. He reportedly wanted to embarrass Prime Minister Nazimuddin's Central Government and pave the way for its removal. But Ghulam Mohammad had other plans. After Nazimuddin got the annual budget passed by the Constituent Assembly and proved that he commanded the majority support in the House, Ghulam Mohammad decided not to let Nazimuddin build on that success and further consolidate his position as an 'empowered' Prime Minister. He dismissed the Nazimuddin government on 17th April 1953 and invited Mohammad Ali Bogra (another Bengali of course), the then Pakistan Ambassador in Washington, to come and form a new government. The Muslim League parliamentary party in the Assembly elected Bogra as its leader and Prime Minister. Ghulam Mohammad must have calculated that Bogra would be a pliable Prime Minister, beholden to him for the favour he had bestowed on him.

Ghulam Muhammad was a dyed-in-the-wool bureaucrat. Arrogant by nature – some say he was foul-mouthed too – he was least bothered about democratic norms and practices. Mohammad Ali Bogra was not a novice in politics. He had been in Muslim League's political leadership in United Bengal and a Minister in the Government. He began to assert himself as the leader of the Muslim League parliamentary party and Prime Minister. Ghulam Mohammad came to know that Bogra was lobbying with the Assembly members to have a legislation passed to curb the powers of the Governor General. He moved swiftly to pre-empt Bogra's plans by dismissing his cabinet and reconstituting it with a 'tamed' Mohammad Ali Bogra as Prime Minister on 14th November 1953. This was the beginning of the dangerous process of arbitrarily changing the governments at will by the Governor General – be it Ghulam Mohammad or later on Iskandar Mirza – either through conspiring with certain groups of Assembly members or through blackmailing them with threats of dissolution of the Assembly. Eventually, the Ghulam Mohammad-led troika decided to do away with the 'nuisance' known as the Constituent Assembly. On 24th October 1954, the Governor General dissolved the Constituent Assembly, but a much-chastened Mohammad Ali Bogra was asked to continue as Prime Minister till a new Assembly was elected. As a counterweight to Bogra, General Ayub Khan, C-in-C of the army, was inducted into the new cabinet as Defence Minister!

I don't think I need to narrate a story that everyone knows-how the Speaker Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan challenged the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, how the Sindh Chief Court nullified it and how Chief Justice Muhammad Munir of the Supreme Court justified and legitimized it, opening the way for the periodical misuse of the 'Law of Necessity' to legitimize the illegitimate dismissal of governments and dissolution of Assemblies, a malpractice that continues till today.

Towards formation of One Unit of West Pakistan

From day one after the Jugto (United) Front government headed by Fazlul Haq came to power in East Pakistan (1954), central agencies were at work hatching conspiracies to malign it and find excuses to dismiss it. Soon they did it and in the process, Suhrawardy-Bhashani's Awami League and Fazlul Haq's Krishak Sramik Party went their different ways. The Central Government now very ably played the game of divide and rule, alternately picking one or the

other in the formation of governments in Dhaka and at the Centre.

Ironically, the process of the secession of East Pakistan started when Pakistan's rulers invented the dubious East-West parity formula between the two wings of the country in conjunction with the formation of One Unit of West Pakistan. H.S. Suhrawardy, an ardent champion of democracy, was wooed into the ongoing plot with the promise that general elections could be held soon if the parity formula was accepted by East Bengal. The power brokers and the ruling elites of Punjab were always scared of Bengalis' numerical majority. They apprehended that Bengal could at any time endanger Punjab's domination by joining forces with the other federeating units of West Pakistan. How to safeguard the vested interests of West Pakistan's feudal-dominated ruling elite was the issue at stake. It was argued that East-West parity in representation, coupled with the integration of the provinces of the West wing into a single unit of West Pakistan would help to strengthen the country and contribute to greater progress and prosperity of the people of both wings.

This way, Punjab's vested interests were in fact killing two birds with one stone. On the one hand, parity formula would put an end to Bengal's numerical majority status. On the other, bringing the provinces of west wing under a single provincial administrative setup with its headquarters located in Lahore would prove the first step towards turning the west wing into Greater Punjab!

Another point needs to be kept in mind. The process of total identification of Pakistan with American imperialism, which started with the induction of Mohammad Ali Bogra as Prime Minister in April 1953, was reaching the point of transforming Pakistan into a client state of USA. Americans were busy coercing and cajoling the governments in Soviet Union's peripheries to join military pacts and allow American military bases to be set up in their countries as part of their global strategy to contain the Soviet Union and the new emerging communist giant China. All of us remember the infamous American military base at Badaber in NWFP, from where on 1st May 1960 an American U-2 plane took off for spying on Soviet Union and was shot down in Soviet territory, inviting a stern warning of severe retribution from Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

Slowly but steadily, public resentment against the pro-American policies was growing in the country. This was more pronounced among the politically conscious sections of the people, particularly in NWFP and Baluchistan. Under a calculated policy, indigenous small industries were being weakened to facilitate a free ride to foreign investors. This was executed through collusion with the dominant feudal lords of West Pakistan, whose interests too were to be protected. One Unit of West Pakistan was the answer.

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Nationalist/anti-imperialist surge in the Middle East

Nationalisation of oil industry in Iran

Meanwhile, earth-shaking developments were taking place in Pakistan's western neighbourhood. Nationalist fervour had burst upon Iran. Led by Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq, leader of the Iranian campaign for oil nationalization, the nationalist forces won a landslide victory in the Iranian elections. The new parliament elected Mossadeq as the Prime Minister in April 1951. In the course of the next three months it took control of all the installations of the

Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and expelled the British personnel manning these installations from the country. This momentous event set off a powerful chain reaction throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa and provided a new impetus to nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments in the region.

Political unrest in Egypt and the Middle East

Since the rise of nationalist forces in Iran, Egypt and the Middle East were increasingly being sucked into the vortex of impending changes. Regular armed skirmishes were occurring between locals and British soldiers in the Suez region. Anti-British demonstrations had become a regular feature in Cairo's streets. There were a series of coups in Syria, attributed by many people to a British-American tug of war for ascendancy in the Middle East.

Arab nationalism triumphs in Egypt

The chain reaction that was set off in the region by the nationalization of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by Mossadeq Government and the termination of British control over its assets found its echo in Egypt. A strong, well-organised group of young patriotic army officers, disgusted with the corrupt and depraved monarchy and the utterly inept rule of the political parties under the Pashas, staged a coup and overthrew King Farouk in 1952. Although a senior General Muhammad Naguib appeared to be the leader of the coup and remained the head of government for a certain period, before long the real man behind the coup, Gamal Abdel Nasser replaced Naguib. Nasser soon launched a radical overhaul of the entire system of governance including a review of imperialist economic and political interests in the country and the region. The change in Egypt was soon to have an electrifying impact across the Arab world and Africa.

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A New Constituent Assembly & One Unit

A new Constituent Assembly of 80 members, shared equally between East and West Pakistan, was brought into being on 28th May 1955 through indirect elections by members of the then existing patchwork provincial assemblies. In the meantime, the physically and mentally unstable and partially incapacitated Ghulam Muhammad was eased out of the Governor General's post and Iskandar Mirza took his place. Bogra continued as Prime Minister only for two months. He was removed from the post on 8th August 1955 and was replaced by the gentleman-bureaucrat Chaudhri Muhamamd Ali, the then Finance Minister.

The first act of the new Constituent Assembly was to pass a Bill titled: *Establishment of West Pakistan Act* on 3rd October 1955. The Act came into force from 14th October 1955.

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Baluchistan was not a province in the sense that Sindh, Punjab and NWFP were. In order to get round the Baluch and Baluchistan to accepting the One Unit plan, it was necessary to woo the Baluchistan States Union.

Khan of Kalat and the rulers of the sub-states had long ago lost the will to take any stand on the rights of the people of Baluchistan. On 31st December 1954, the last nail was driven into the coffin of whatever delusions they might still have had of a restoration of their old power and status, when they signed the agreement to be part of the One Unit. They did it

without consulting the people and without their consent. The Agreement stated that:

- His Highness the Khan-e-Azam hereby cedes to the Government of the Dominion of Pakistan his 'Sovereignty' and all his rights, authority and powers as President of the Council of Rulers of the Union (Baluchistan States Union), together with all his territories including territories known as the leased areas, and having been duly authorized to that end by members of the Council of Rulers, that is to say the Rulers of Makran, Lasbela and Kharan, their sovereignty and all their rights, authority and powers as such Rulers together with all their territories...The Government of the Dominion (of Pakistan) shall exercise all powers, authority and jurisdiction for the governance of the said Union and territories in such manner and through such agency as it may think fit.

As *quid pro quo* for this act of final 'surrender', it was agreed to pay an annual 'compensation' of Rs.650,000 to Khan of Kalat, Rs.225,000 to Nawab Makran, Rs.200,000 to Jam Lasbela and Rs.70,000 to Nawab Kharan!! Baluchistan States Union ceased to exist from 14th October 1955.

Formation of Ustaman Gul (Party of the People)

After their release from jail in mid-1955, Agha Saheb and Muhammad Husain Unqa came to Karachi. Mir Gul Khan, Qadir Bakhsh Nizamani and I were already in Karachi. The five of us met and discussed the need for forming a new political party in Kalat. The infrastructure of KSNP in the shape of an active and dedicated political cadre had survived the repressive measures of the government. We drew up the outlines of the new Party and agreed on Ustaman Gul (Party of the People) as the name of the new party. The aims and objectives of Ustaman Gul were not very different from those of KSNP except that the references to British and Kalat Governments were struck out as neither of them had much relevance any more. Without losing time, we proceeded to regularize the Party's organizational structure by holding elections and choosing its office bearers. Agha Abdul Karim was elected as President and Muhammad Husain Unqa as Secretary. The following weeks witnessed tremendous enthusiasm among the people all over the State to enroll as members of the new Party.

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One Unit did not foster unity or facilitate integration of the provinces at the people's level as claimed by its protaganoists, but it did help the feudal lords of the provinces to gang up and consolidate their hold on power in the whole of West Pakistan. Abolition of the four provinces in the West wing and the elimination of the numerical majority status of East Bengal served the interests of the ruling classes and indirectly also those of US imperialism.

The forcible imposition of the One Unit caused extreme resentment in the smaller provinces, which naturally was targeted against Punjab. The people of East Pakistan protested against the perceived complicity of their elected Assembly members in colluding with the dominant classes and ruling elite of Punjab in erasing their numerical majority status. Thus, the wave of protest against One Unit and parity formula began to spread from one end of the country to the other – from Quetta to Chittagong. Popular discontentment expressed itself in the form of public demonstrations, rallies and meetings everywhere. The growing influence of foreign powers headed by the United States on Pakistan's ruling classes and their policies also met with public disapproval.

Pakistan in the first decade – A 'post mortem' assessment

In Pakistan's fussy political setting, it was natural that various stakeholders were engaged in doing each other down in a bid to have the better of each other. The civil bureaucracy and military establishment had their separate axes to grind. The military saw that civil bureaucracy was trying to monopolise the instruments of power and in this game they were cleverly using the armed forces. Instead of playing second fiddle to the civil bureaucracy and helping them to hold on to power, why shouldn't they – the military – enter the arena themselves and take power? Such thoughts must have begun to sprout in the minds of the military leadership since 1953 when for the first time they tasted power as they 'ruled' Lahore under Martial Law.

The list of wrong policies, malpractices and misdeeds of successive ruling cliques in Pakistan in the first decade of independence is very long. Some glaring instances are identified below:

- The adoption of the 'Objectives Resolution' by the Constituent Assembly in 1949, opening a window for religious and sectarian elements to interfere in the process of constitution-making and eventual emergence of religious intolerance and violence in national politics and governance.
- Arrests and persecution of leaders and activists of the Communist Party and progressive students', writers', journalists' and labour organizations by implicating them in the so-called Rawalpindi Conspiracy case in 1951 and banning of these organizations and launching repressive measures against them in the following years.
- State-sponsored atrocities and reign of terror against nationalist parties and groups in Baluchistan and NWFP.
- So-called anti-Qadiani agitation in the Punjab with the tacit instigation from a section of the ruling Muslim League, which was used to justify the imposition of Martial Law in Lahore and sack the government of Khawaja Nazimuddin.
- Dismissal of Nazimuddin Government and dissolution of the Constituent Assembly.
- Failure to frame the constitution for nine years (till 1956) and to hold proper nation-wide general elections 23 years after independence.
- Introduction of East-West parity formula and formation of One Unit of West Pakistan through undemocratic political machinations.
- Overnight concoction of a new political party called the Republican Party from the womb of the Muslim League.
- Frequent in and out traffic of prime ministers and cabinets after the deaths of Jinnah and Liaquat – e.g. Ghulam Muhammad, Khawaja Nazimuddin, Mohammad Ali Bogra, Ch. Mohammad Ali, I.I. Chundrigar, Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy, Feroze Khan Noon, Iskandar Mirza, Dr. Khan Sahib, Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani, Ayub Khan, - it can go on *ad infinitum.*
- Most lethal of all, Pakistan's irretrievable plunge into the abyss of American imperialism's global 'satellite' network.

It will not be far off the mark if I say that the outlines of the future political course of Pakistan, including its disastrous internal and external policies, were drawn in those erratic first ten years of the country's history.

This period, however, also witnessed some 'positive' happenings. 1954 elections in East Bengal saw the virtual elimination of the corrupt anti-people ruling Muslim League by the

Jugto (United) Front. The Front, consisting of Krishak Sramik Party of Moulvi Fazlul Haq, Awami League of H.S. Suhrawardy and Maulana Bhashani (all three stalwarts of Muslim League's Pakistan movement), the Communist Party, Ganatantri Dal and a number of smaller groups made a clean sweep of the polls.

In the provinces of West wing, several leading Muslim Leaguers switched over to the Republican Party formed overnight under the patronage of Iskandar Mirza and Mushtaq Gurmani, with Dr. Khan Saheb, pre-partition Congress leader of NWFP and brother of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, at its head. This too was, in an indirect way though, a 'positive' development in the sense that there were some individuals among its leaders, who subscribed to liberal and even secular political views and secondly it brought to an end the reactionary Muslim League's monopoly on power in the West wing as well.

Credit goes to Ch. Muhammad Ali for wrapping up the 9-year-long constitution-making exercise and giving final shape to the first Constitution of Pakistan. With the promulgation of the constitution on 23rd March 1956, Pakistan graduated from the status of a British Dominion to that of a Republic.

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Not used to the rough-and-tumble of open politics, however, Ch. Muhammad Ali quit as Prime Minister on 26th September 1956 after being booed by a section of the crowd in a public meeting he was addressing in Karachi. Awami League leader Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy with 13 seats in the National Assembly was invited (September 1956) to head a coalition government with the Republican Party as senior partner, to succeed Ch. Muhammad Ali. For the first time, Muslim League was forced to sit in the opposition benches. The nationalist and progressive elements in the Assembly decided to support Suhrawardy. However, given the weak position of his own party in the coalition government, Suhrawardy remained under constant pressure from the feudal-dominated Republican Party and the restraining hand of the pro-Anglo-American Iskandar Mirza. He soon lost the nerve to stand by his political commitments and opted to say goodbye to the progressive, anti-imperialist programme of his Party and fall in line with Iskandar Mirza's pro-western policies.

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The leadership of Ustaman Gul announced that the newly elected President Agha Abdul Karim and other office bearers of the Party would tour the Jhalawan area. Prime Minister of Kalat reacted by ordering a ban on the tour programme. The Party responded by deciding to defy the ban. Mir Gul Khan Naseer and I were asked to foot-march from Jhalawan to Kalat and all those who would join us on our way would also march with us to Kalat. People coming from Mastung and other parts of the State at the party's invitation would join us in Kalat. There the congregation would convert itself into a political rally and then accompany the party President on the scheduled march to Jhalawan.

Gul Khan and I started from Khuzdar and by the time we reached Kalat, the crowd had swelled into thousands. With hundreds of people pouring in from different parts of the State at the invitation of Ustaman Gul, Kalat was soon transformed into a sea of humanity. For three days and nights, the party organized a series of public meetings and rallies to popularise its programme. A significant feature of these meetings was the very encouraging presence and

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active participation of Khan Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai in the rallies and related programmes held in Kalat.

Sensing the gravity of the situation, the Kalat administration got in touch with the West Pakistan Government in Lahore. Chief Minister Dr. Khan Saheb came personally to Kalat to study the situation and talk with us. Talks went on for two days. Dr. Khan Saheb lifted the ban on Agha Sahib's march to Mastung but asked him not to take with him delegates who had come from Sarawan and other places. We agreed to this and the next day we set out for Jhalawan with those who had earlier come to Kalat from Jhalawan. Ustaman Gul's promotional meetings and rallies in Jhalawan went on for about two weeks. These programmes considerabaly boosted the party's membership drive in Jhalawan. The party began to grow rapidly in every part of the State and in a very short time emerged as the true successor of KSNP.

Formation of Pakistan National Party and NAP

In 1955-56, a move began in West Pakistan for uniting the regional nationalist groups into a single political party. That was the time when the scattered leftist groups in the country were also thinking of forging unity in their ranks at the national level. With Pakistan's entry into US-sponsored military pacts – Baghdad Pact, SEATO and CENTO - in 1954-55, the government had further intensified its on-going witch-hunt against the communists and other leftist political workers and intellectuals and banned their front organizations. Working in small groups, mostly low profile and often underground, they were finding themselves increasingly vulnerable to the Government's repressive measures.The political interests of the nationalists and the leftists reached a meeting point. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Mian Iftikharuddin played key roles in this initiative for unity; the former in persuading the nationalists and the latter in prodding the leftists. Thanks to their efforts, possibilities opened up of the regional nationalist parties and groups and the leftists coming together and forming a new political party at West Pakistan level.

However, this initiative hit a minor snag when Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan proposed in the Constituent/National Assembly that West Pakistan be split into two or three provinces. Most of us opposed the idea. Khan Sahib's proposal was: Sindh, NWFP and Baluchistan be merged into one province, with Punjab as the other province or, let Sindh and Punjab remain as two separate provinces and a third province be formed by merging Baluchistan and NWFP.

We were at a loss to understand how and why Khan Saheb came up with this idea at that juncture. All of us were in favour of the principle of provinces being re-structured on the basis of linguistic, cultural, national and historical congruities. Population was perhaps the consideration behind Khan Sahib's proposal. But we had our own arguments against it. We found no logic in the demand for such regrouping of provinces. Either we accept a federation based on the principle of common language, culture, territory, geography and history in respect of which every nationality would be autonomous; otherwise, from the standpoint of administrative viability, there was no justification to have more provinces for a population of three or four crores. In the given objective conditions of West Pakistan, the national question – the question of the separate identity of each nationality – had become a sensitive issue. In fact, this point was acknowledged as long ago as 1940 when the Lahore Resolution was adopted. Pakistan being essentially a multinational state, it could not fit into a unitary framework. Eventually, Khan Sahib came round to our point of view.

A 3-day meeting (30th November – 2nd December 1956) was held in Lahore, on the first day at the Lahore residence of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and later at the residence of Mian Iftikharuddin. It was attended from Sindh by: G.M. Syed, Mustafa Bhurgri and Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi of Sindh Awami Party-Sindh Mahaz; from Baluchistan: Khan Abdus Samad Achakzai and Hashim Khan Ghilzai - Wrore Pakhtun (Pakhtun Brotherhood); from Kalat: Mir Gul Khan Naseer, Agha Abdul Karim, Mohammad Husain Unqa and myself - Ustaman Gul (Party of the Peopl Khalile); from NWFP: Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Arbab Sikandar Khan - Khudai Khidmatgar (Red Shirt movement) and from Punjab: Mian Iftikharuddin, Syed Amir Hussain Shah and Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri - Azad Pakistan Party. Full-length discussions took place on all the aspects of the formation of the new party. The party programme too was finalized. The new party under the name: Pakistan National Party (PNP) was formally launched on 2nd December 1956 in a largely attended press conference at the Lahore residence of Mian Iftikharuddin. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was elected as its president. I was a member of the Central Working Committee. Among the salient points of the manifesto of the new party were:

- Dissolution of One Unit of West Pakistan and restoration of the provinces including full provincial status to Baluchistan;
- Anti-imperialist and non-aligned foreign policy;
- Promotion of friendly relations including trade and economic cooperation with all countries especially the neighbouring states and the socialist bloc;
- Protection of the fundamental rights of all citizens including the rights of workers, peasants, women and minorities.

The new party started off with a campaign for the dissolution of One Unit and became the rallying platform for all the nationalists in West Pakistan.

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When Anglo-French-Israeli forces invaded Egypt in October 1956, the whole nation rose in protest. Suhrawardy initially expressed his government's disapproval of the invasion but within days he and his government turned into apologists for the aggressors. The powerful anti-imperialist and progressive faction in the Awami League headed by Maulana Bhashani reacted angrily to Suhrawardy's somersault. They squarely condemned the imperialist invasion of Egypt and demanded an independent foreign policy without any alignment with any power bloc. The inner party differences soon spilled into the open and culminated in an ideological split. Maulana Bhashani resigned as President of Awami League in March 1957. Subsequently, supporters of Maulana's political stand in both East and West Pakistan quit the party. Among those who quit the Awami League in West Pakistan was the party General Secretary, Mahmudul Haq Usmani.

The leadership of the Pakistan National Party, formed in Lahore only a few months earlier, initiated a dialogue with Maulana Bhashani's faction of the Awami League in an effort to join forces and form a progressive, secular, anti-imperialist, anti-feudal all Pakistan political party. There were also a sizeable number of liberal, progressive individuals and groups in the country who favoured the formation of such a political platform. So, it became possible to convene a 'Democratic Workers Conference' in Dhaka on 24-25 July 1957. A new party – the National Awami Party (NAP) - was born in that convention in Dhaka. A couple of smaller progressive groups of East Pakistan such as the Ganatantri Dal led by Haji Muhammad Danish,

besides some well-known communists, Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Fazlul Karim, Mohammad Toha and others also joined the new party. From West Pakistan, Haider Bakhsh Jatoi, founder of the Sindh Hari Committee also joined this party. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani (East Pakistan) was elected as President and Mahmudul Haq Usmani (West Pakistan) as General Secretary of the party.

The manifesto of the National Awami Party spelt out the party's main aims as:

- Defence of the sovereignty, integrity and independence of Pakistan.
- Non-aligned, independent foreign policy; withdrawal from the military pacts, SEATO and Baghdad Pact (later CENTO).
- Ending of exploitation of Pakistan externally and its people internally.
- Abolition of One Unit and reorganization of provinces on linguistic basis; maximum provincial autonomy in a federal structure, with only defence, foreign affairs and currency to be left with the Federal Government and all other powers to rest with the autonomous units.
- Protection and security of the right of adult franchise.

M. Rashiduzzaman, 'The National Awami Party; Leftist Politics in Crisis'. *Pacific Affairs*, (Colombo), Vol.43, No.3 (1970), pp.394-409, also see *Manifesto of the National Awami Party of Pakistan* (Karachi, Anjuman Press.nd. p.5).

The NAP emerged as the only all Pakistan progressive alternative to the corrupt and reactionary Muslim League which had ruled the country since independence.

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Iskander Mirza was growing uneasy over Suhrawardy's high profile national and international stature as a veteran politician of the subcontinent. As Suhrawardy began to have problems within his own party and had by then outlived the purpose for which West Pakistan's power elite had tolerated him so far – may be, some compensation for his useful role in facilitating the fabrication of the East-West parity formula and establishment of One Unit - they decided it was time to show him the door. With the connivance of the ever-scheming Mushtaq Gurmani, Iskandar Mirza managed to cobble up a new coalition of Republican Party and Muslim League with the veteran Muslim Leaguer I.I. Chundrigar at its head. Suhrawardy was left with no option but to resign on 11th October 1957. Chundrigar became the Prime Minister of the new coalition government.

This new contraption of a coalition did not last even two months. Thanks to a round of superb political maneuvering and lobbying by Mian Iftikharuddin, Suhrawardy and other secular, leftist and nationalist members in the Assembly, the Republican Party decided to wrap up the coalition with Muslim League. A new Republican-Awami League coalition was put together with the backing of NAP and other smaller groups in the National Assembly. On 16th December 1957, Chundrigar quit office and Feroze Khan Noon of the Republican Party was chosen to lead the new coalition government. Interestingly, as I have mentioned earlier, with every change in the composition of the coalition government at the Centre, the musical chairs of coalition government in East Pakistan were also rotating between Awami League and Krishak Sramik Party!

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One Unit under severe attack

The One Unit had faced stiff opposition in Baluchistan from day one. There was widespread resentement against it in other smaller provinces as well. A movement against One Unit was gradually building up throughout the country. In the bitter fight to beat each other in securing majority in the West Pakistan Assembly, both the Muslim League and the Republican groups sought the support of the NAP members. Both of them assured NAP of their readiness to abolish One Unit if NAP voted with them. NAP had categorically told both the parties that whichever of the two parties backed the dissolution of One Unit would receive NAP's support.

The main objective of the Muslim League was the dislodging of the Republican Party ministry headed by Dr. Khan Sahib during the approaching budget session. This they could do only if NAP members voted with them and NAP would agree only if the Muslim League supported an anti-One Unit Resolution in the Assembly. Muslim League was on the horns of a dilemma, because it was the Muslim League which had steered the One Unit of West Pakistan Bill in the Constituent Assembly in October 1955. In the meantime, a Resolution was formally moved in the Assembly on 17th March 1957 by a Muslim League member from Sindh, Hashim Gazdar, calling for the dissolution of One Unit and its replacement by a sub–federation of four or more units. The Assembly was scheduled to hold the budget session and the Dr. Khan cabinet was in deep trouble. In the face of the state of uncertainty, President Mirza came to its rescue by dissolving the Assembly and imposing President's rule. After the budget crisis was thus overcome, the Resolution was formally put to vote on 17th September 1957. Out of the total of 285 members of the House, 176 voted in favour of the Resolution and only four members voted against. After the voting, the Speaker sent the following recommendation to the Government: 'This Assembly recommends to the Government to communicate the view of this Assembly to the National Assembly that the Province of West Pakistan be reconstituted as a sub federation with four or more fully autonomous provinces'[4].

This was the first great victory for NAP's perseverance in the battle for the dissolution of One Unit. In just over a year from its formation, NAP had grown into a major political party of national stature. It had its elected representatives in the West Pakistan Assembly and in the National Assembly. Its fast spreading popular acceptance, based on its sustained opposition to One Unit and its strong anti-imperialist and pro-people political stance naturally caused alarm in the imperialist circles.

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In mid-1958, the coalition government of Feroze Khan Noon began to mull the possibility of holding the country's first nationwide general elections. There were strong indications that elections could take place in the first quarter of 1959. Mass contact campaigns began to be organized by Muslim League, Awami League, NAP and the Republican Party to propagate their respective party programmes.

NAP's emergence as a progressive bastion against imperialism and feudalism drove the pro-western ruling elite to reconsider the advisability of holding elections at that stage. The apprehension was that NAP would use the election campaign to drum up popular support for its opposition to Pakistan's pro-western foreign policy and military pacts and open the way for the Soviet bloc to make inroads into the country. Americans and the western camp were

[4] A.B. Awan, Baluchistan, (London: New Century Publishers, 1985, pp.217-219).

in agreement with this argument as they too apprehended that NAP in power or even as a popular opposition party would pose a serious threat to their geo-strategic interests in the country and in the region. They were not unmindful of the fact that one half of Pakistan bordered on the volatile Middle East and West Asia and the other half on South East Asia where the Vietnam syndrome was sending shockwaves far and wide. As they realized that the people of Pakistan were now more politically sensitized and would be influenced by NAP's progressive people-oriented socio-political and economic programme during the election campaign, they counselled the Noon government against rushing into elections for the time being and used Iskandar Mirza to ensure it.

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Iskandar Mirza, in collusion with his accomplices in the military establishment, laid a new trap for the Khan of Kalat. He invited the Khan for a meeting in Karachi. During the meeting it was suggested to him that he should ask the *sardars* to organize some 'visible' public activities to prove that the issue of restoration of the Khanate of Kalat enjoyed the support of the people. That would provide the government with a plausible ground to consider restoring Kalat's former status and the Khan's position as ruler of Kalat.

The Khan bought the bait and set about to organize tribal assemblies and rallies. Subsequently, he collected forty-four *sardars* of Kalat and went in a delegation to Iskandar Mirza with the request to restore the former status of Kalat. The Khan did not know that he was chasing a mirage. Iskandar Mirza and the establishment had other plans. Though the Khan had to return to Kalat empty-handed, the tribal 'activism' he had ignited did not go away. It now gained further momentum. The 'Baluch *Diwan*' held in Mastung subsequently was an unprecedented display of tribal power by the *sardars* and their tribes. An impression gained ground as if the Khan and the tribes of Baluchistan were preparing to challenge Pakistan's control over Kalat and that a potential rebellion was in the offing.

On 5th October 1958, the army moved into Kalat under the command of Brigadier Tikka Khan and after some minor resistance, Khan of Kalat was arrested, taken to Punjab and interned in Lahore.

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Chapter 4

Ayub Era

Towards military coup and martial law

Meanwhile, much had been happening in other parts of Pakistan. Huge rallies and demonstrations were taking place everywhere, demanding the dissolution of One Unit of West Pakistan.The regime was busy hatching its own plots. The ground was being meticulously prepared to 'substantiate' allegations of incompetence and corruption against the politicians, political parties and civilian rule. The general political situation, particularly the state of law and order, saw a sudden turn for the worse. A growing sense of insecurity and frustration was spreading among the populace. The deciding moment came when scuffles broke out during a session in the East Pakistan Assembly and in the midst of the accompanying chaos the Speaker was attacked and killed on the floor of the house.

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On 7th October 1958, Maj. Gen. Iskander Mirza proclaimed martial law throughout Pakistan, the constitution was abrogated, assemblies and governments were dismissed, political parties were banned and political leaders and activists were arrested in their thousands. A people, hoodwinked by a cleverly engineered round of countrywide chaos and unrest, welcomed the change as they would welcome more such changes in later years and pay dearly for their fatal misjudgement.

Within three weeks of imposition of martial law, i.e. on 27th October 1958, President Iskandar Mirza - the mastermind of the military coup - was sacked. His Army C-in-C and Chief Martial Law Administrator, Gen Ayub Khan overthrew his government, packed him off to London via Quetta and assumed absolute power.

In Kalat, Agha Abdul Karim, who had been freed in 1955 after spending 7 years in jail, was arrested again, tried under martial law and sentenced to 14 years' rigorous imprisonment. House-to-house raids were conducted and people were asked to deposit their arms with the authorities. Mengal tribe refused to surrender their weapons. Instead, they raided the Government's tehsil headquarters of Wadh and took away all the weapons deposited there. The Government responded by mounting a military action against the Mengals. After a month's operation in which scores of Mengals were jailed, the Government realized that all the tribes of Baluchistan were rapidly uniting around this issue. So, it was decided to halt the operation and seek a compromise with the Mengals. All the prisoners were released and requisitioning of weapons was suspended all over Baluchistan.

In Quli Camp, over and over again

When martial law was imposed, the people of Baluchistan were already in a state of constant agitation for more than a year, struggling for the dissolution of One Unit under the banner of NAP. Khan Kalat's arrest and banishment to Lahore provided strong provocation to the Baluch tribes to rise against the government. Agha Abdul Karim's arrest, trial and conviction under martial law poured oil on the flames of people's anger.

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The Zehri tribe rose in revolt under the leadership of Nawab Naoroze Khan. The Government responded by launching a military action in Jhalawan. NAP deemed it politically unwise to leave Naoroze Khan alone to face the martial law regime. After Agha Saheb's arrest, I was chosen as the President of Baluchistan NAP. Though political activities were forbidden under martial law, NAP stepped up the agitation in Baluchistan against martial law and One Unit. NAP's anti-martial law movement gave the tribe-centred revolt in Jhalawan a broader political dimension and drew public support as well. As the agitation spread and began to take a violent form in certain places, the Government responded by arresting all active members of NAP and throwing them into the notorious Quli Camp under the custody of the army. I too was among those arrested.

Once NAP's leaders and activists were thrown into prison, the Government promised Naoroze Khan under oath on holy *Quran* that the problems would be resolved through talks. He was persuaded to come down from the mountains. On his return in May 1959, he and his companions were taken into custody and thrown in the Quli Camp, where they remained for one and a half years. This was a flagrant betrayal of trust on the part of the martial law regime. The inmates of the *Quli Camp* were subjected to all the horrendous tortures and indignities imaginable. For instance:

- Torture including staying in standing position day and night for several days with arms stretched on both sides.
- Standing in open air facing strong winds without clothes on.
- Caning the body while hung upside down from the ceiling,
- Lying on the stomach while sepoys with boots on lept up and down on their backs.
- Starving the prisoners for long periods was another form of torture.

For one and a half years, the food served to 250 inmates of the camp consisted of 4.5 kilos of *dhal* (cereals) in boiled water and one small size chapatti per person. This menu was never changed. Of course, after 10 months, we were allowed to buy *gur* (raw cane sugar) and *chena* with our own money.

I was released after spending one year in the Camp and one day later Mir Gul Khan was also set free. However, cases were initiated against Nawab Naoroze Khan and his companions. They were put on trial under martial law.

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On my release, I learnt that no lawyer had been engaged to defend Nawab Naoroze Khan and his companions. The very next day, I personally got in touch with some lawyers and succeeded in persuading Qazi Muhammad Isa to defend them. Then I approached the Quli Camp administration to allow me to get the *wakalat nama* and other papers signed by the Nawab and other inmates. Martial Law authorities somehow came to know that I was taking interest in the cases. They lost no time in taking me into custody. Within two weeks after my release, I was sent back to the Quli Camp for the second time and kept in solitary confinement. The prisoners were kept under separate quarter guards. They were constantly abused and humiliated. There was a total ban on their meeting or talking to one another and severe punishments were meted out for violations.

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Lengthy interrogation at odd hours and keeping the prisoners awake for several nights were regular features of our detention. After being shifted from one quarterguard to another for six months, I was awarded six months imprisonment and 5 lashes or Rs.10,000 in lieu of lashes and sent to Machh jail.

Naoroze Khan was sentenced to life imprisonment and his six companions were sentenced to death and sent to Machh jail. Several others were sentenced to jail terms ranging from 5 to 14 years and sent to different jails in the country. Those sentenced to death were:

1. Nawab's son Mir Bhatte Khan
2. Mir Wali Muhammad Khan Zarakzai
3. Mir Bahawal Khan Musiani
4. Mir Musti Khan Musiani
5. Mir Sabzal Khan Zehri
6. Mir Ghulam Rasul Jathak

These six were later executed in Hyderabad Jail. Nawab Naoroze Khan died in Hyderabad Central jail in 1964 while undergoing life imprisonment.

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Some time after Nawab Naoroze Khan and others were sentenced, Agha Sultan Ibrahim Khan Ahmadzai, in a fit of intense provocation, left for Afghanistan with the intention to launch a movement against the government. On the way, Agha Saheb's jeep collided with a lorry and he was killed. He was subsequently buried in Kandahar. His son Agha Abdul Zahir, who returned from Kandahar following his father's death, was arrested. Under severe torture during interrogation by the army, he revealed the names of several persons in Baluchistan, implicating them as accomplices of his late father. The list included my name also. I had just been released from Machh Jail after completing my earlier jail term under martial law but was arrested again and thrown into the Quli Camp for the third time.

For six months we remained under the custody of the army and were subjected to all sorts of torture and indignities. Then we were shifted to Quetta Jail where we were detained for a few months. I was later on brought to Mastung and set free. This round lasted a total of around nine months.

Ayub's constitution and elections under Basic Democracy

On March 23, 1962, Gen. Ayub Khan promulgated a new constitution. He chose March 23, Pakistan Day, perhaps as a symbolic gesture for introducing his own brand of democracy in the country! The soul of his constitution consisted in the Basic Democracy system, which he flaunted as the best suited to the 'genius' of the people of Pakistan! Under this system, 80,000 Basic Democrats (BDs) were elected at the local level by direct vote. These 80,000 BDs (later increased to 120,000), divided equally between the two wings of the country, would constitute the electoral college for electing the provincial and national assembly members and the country's president. It is obvious that these 80,000 persons could be easily manipulated or purchased by the Government and the prospective candidates during the elections. In other words, under Ayub's democracy, the people continued to be deprived of their fundamental democratic right to change the assemblies and governments through their votes cast in direct elections. Though political parties were revived, they had to function under a host of restraints.

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Curbs were also imposed on the right of association of various sections of society such as students and teachers' organisations, trade unions and so on. Though martial law was lifted, open political activities were not allowed in Baluchistan. It was still martial law as far as Baluchistan was concerned.

To provide himself with a façade of constitutional legitimacy, Ayub Khan staged a referendum asking the people a single yes or no question and, like other dictators in history, garnered 98 percent of the votes cast by the basic democrats! He now became the President of the country. Before long, he stage-managed a 'convention' of turn-coat 'Muslim Leaguers' and put on the mantle of a political leader by becoming the President of Pakistan Muslim League (Convention).

Defying restrictions

Sardar Ataullah Mengal and Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri were elected to the National Assembly from Kalat Division and Quetta Division respectively, in the elections held by Ayub Khan after the promulgation of his 1962 constitution. They made effective use of the forum of the National Assembly to raise the Baluchistan issue. They showed remarkable courage in trying to rouse public awareness of the sufferings of the people of Baluchistan, through the media and other forms of personal interaction. They also disseminated the facts about the arrests and long sentences awarded to Naoroze Khan and his associates and the execution of six of them in Hyderabad Jail.

After my release from Quli camp in early August 1962, I stayed in Quetta for a few days. Sardar Ataullah and Nawab Khair Bakhsh also arrived in Quetta. NAP leadership met in emergency session some time in the second week of August and discussed the prevailing situation. It was decided that on the eve of the expected arrival of General Ayub Khan and Governor Nawab Kalabagh in Quetta to attend the Baluch *Darbar*, a mass public meeting should be held in the city, followed by a series of follow-up meetings for two days.

Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, along with one of his comrades Maulana Kanpuri, also came from Hyderabad to take part in our meetings. A grand public meeting in defiance of government restrictions greeted Ayub Khan on 22nd August 1962 when he arrived in Quetta. Speaker after speaker stood up and exposed the atrocities committed by the martial law regime in Baluchistan. Ayub Khan became so furious that during his address to the annual Sibi *Darbar* that night, he used very rude language unbecoming of a head of state. The NAP speakers gave a befitting reply to Ayub in the first follow-up meeting next day. It was unanimously decided in the meeting by public acclaim that the protest rallies would continue in the coming days. It was also decided to defy martial law and carry the protest to other parts of Baluchistan as well as outside Baluchistan.

After the Quetta public meeting, in the last week of August 1962, Sardar Ataullah, Nawab Khair Bakhsh, Nawab Akbar Bugti and I left for Karachi to explore the possibilities of holding rallies there. I met NAP General Secretary Mahmudul Huq Usmani and made arrangements for holding a public meeting in the city next day. Meanwhile, soon after we left Quetta for Karachi, Ayub Khan had taken certain provocative steps in Baluchistan. He had announced the removal of Sardar Ataullah and Nawab Khair Bakhsh from their hereditary positions as *sardars* of the Mengal and Marri tribes respectively and the 'appointment' of government-sponsored *sardars* in their place. Nawab Akbar Bugti had been similarly removed from the Bugti *sardari* earlier. The repercussions of these thoughtless actions are discussed elsewhere.

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Before the public meeting in Karachi's Lyari area was to start, the venue of the meeting was seized by police, the stage dismantled and chairs carted off. Nawab Bugti was arrested. The meeting naturally had to be called off. But two days later, we organized a public meeting at Kakri Ground, which was attended by NAP leaders, activists and sympathizers from Karachi and the interior of Sindh. The government action of the day before had so inflamed the people that they made this meeting a tremendous success by an unprecedentedly large turnout. The mammoth crowd remained at the venue, listening to the speakers from 10 in the night till 4 in the morning. Next day, Sardar Ataullah Mengal was arrested.

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We were not to be deterred by the arrests of our comrades. We were determined to go ahead with our mission. The day after the public meeting, Nawab Khair Bakhsh and I left for Dhaka with a view to organize similar meetings in East Pakistan and tell the people what was happening in Baluchistan. East Pakistan NAP organized meetings in Dhaka and Chittagong in which all the prominent NAP leaders of East Pakistan took part. Through press conferences and press statements, we did our best to get our message across to the maximum possible number of our East Pakistani compatriots. On returning to Dhaka from meetings in Chittagong, Khair Bakhsh flew back to Karachi and I decided to stay in Dhaka for a couple of days more.

After a week long stay in Dhaka, during which I had a series of very useful meetings with a cross section of the political community, I was planning to return to Karachi when H.S. Suhrawardy arrived from Karachi. He called me to his place and asked me not to leave for Karachi as the Baluchistan police were waiting there to arrest me. Suhrawardy Sahib was scheduled to return to Karachi next day. He suggested that I should shift from the hotel to a mutual friend's bungalow in the city. I thanked him and told him that at that stage, evasion of arrest on my part would be harmful to our protest movement. I decided to leave for Karachi on the same flight with Suhrawardy.

When I arrived in Karachi, police was waiting for me. I requested Suhrawardy to wait for a few minutes in the lobby because when they would arrest me in front of party workers, they would naturally get provoked and raise all sorts of slogans, and he would be unnecessarily inconvenienced. I came out alone to a slogan-shouting welcome by angry party workers and students. As expected, I was taken into custody and driven to the police headquarters, sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment under FCR (Frontier Crimes Regulations) and sent first to Machh Jail and a few days later to Hyderabad Jail. Eventually, I arrived where Nawab Naoroze Khan was undergoing his life sentence, after his six companions including his son had been hanged.

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The removal of Sardar Ataullah from the Mengal *sardari* had infuriated the Mengal tribe. Same was the case with the Marris after the removal of Nawab Khair Bakhsh from the Marri *sardari*. The Mengals under the leadership of Mir Ali Mohammad Mohammadzai and the Marris led by Mir Sher Mohammad Marri joined forces with the ongoing political movement against the military regime. Similarly, the Bugtis under the leadership of Mewa Khan Bugti also did the same. To meet the new situation, the government once again resorted to the use of military force.

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Action was launched in Jhalawan, Marri and Bugti areas. Nearly all the tribes of the Jhalawan area had got involved in the conflict on the side of the Mengals, widening the orbit of the conflict to cover almost the entire stretch of central Baluchistan. In the meantime, enraged Mengal and Marri tribesmen had put to death Khan Bahadur Mir Karram Khan Mengal and Khan Sahib Mir Duda Khan Marri, whom the government had installed as *sardars* of the two tribes in place of the 'sacked' ones. Sardar Ataullah and his father along with Sardar Ataullah's brother Mehrullah, were charged with the murder of Mir Karram Khan and taken into custody. The Government refrained from arresting Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri probably fearing a backlash and an escalation of the conflict and its extension to the sensitive Marri tribal areas.

Akbar Bugti was already in jail. Following the 22nd August 1962 public meeting in Quetta, most of Baluchistan's political leaders and activists including Mir Gul Khan, Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd, Hashim Khan Ghilzai and Mir Mahmud Aziz were all undergoing different terms of imprisonment in different jails. When I came out of Hyderabad Jail after completing my two-year sentence some time in the middle of 1964, I found that all other comrades except Ataullah Mengal and Akbar Bugti were already free. But the violent public protest was still on and the army was in a state of confrontation with the people in Baluchistan.

After consulations among party comrades, I visited Lahore and met Nawab Kalabagh, Governor West Pakistan. I had a detailed discussion with him on the situation in Baluchistan. I made it very clear to him that this problem would not be solved through military means; it called for a compromise solution through dialogue. And for that, it was necessary to set Ataullah Mengal and Akbar Bugti free. He replied that it was not possible without consulting Ayub Khan. He promised to go to Rawalpindi in three or four days and meet Ayub Khan. He asked me to wait in Lahore. As promised, Nawab Kalabagh went to Pindi and met Ayub Khan. On returning from Pindi after meeting Ayub Khan, the Nawab expressed his helplessness. Ayub had refused to release Ataullah Mengal and Akbar Bugti. I returned to Baluchistan.

1964 National Assembly elections

There were two seats in the National Assembly for Baluchistan. In the elections held in 1964 under Ayub Khan's Basic Democracies (BD) system, I was the candidate of the Combined Opposition Party (COP) in the constituency of Kalat Division. Not only was I prevented from staying in Turbat for election campaigning but the Deputy Commissioner barred the people from meeting me. BD members were comprehensively bribed and were made to take oath on holy *Quran* not to vote for me. Still I got 58 out of 84 votes in Turbat. But, in Khuzdar, Mastung and other stations, polling agents were arrested and the results were freely manipulated. In the final result, I was made to lose the election to a tribal *sardar* Duda Khan who was a political non-entity in the constituency.

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When Ayub Khan announced presidential election in 1965, all the opposition parties got involved in the task of finding a suitable candidate, who could effectively challenge him. NAP Central Working Committee (CWC) met in Peshawar. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan also attended the meeting. The CWC decided to propose the candidature of Fatima Jinnah. It turned out that all other opposition parties also were of the view that it was only Fatima Jinnah who could attract the masses towards the opposition parties and throw a strong challenge to Ayub Khan. Subsequently, all the party heads including Maulana Bhashani as NAP

chief went to Fatima Jinnah and persuaded her to contest the election as consensus candidate of the Combined Opposition Parties (COP). Fatima Jinnah gave her consent. Maulana Bhashani's role proved crucial in the successful accomplishment of this mission.

The election was scheduled to be held on 2nd January 1965. I was assigned the task of coordinating the election campaign in Baluchistan on behalf of NAP. A few days before the elections, I was arrested. The polling agents I had selected were also arrested. At Khuzdar polling station, as a precautionary step, I had given polling agent's cards to five persons. Four of them were arrested. The fifth, Mohammad Arif Mohammad Hasni, politically a nondescript person at the time, escaped arrest. He went in on the polling day and took his seat as polling agent, virtually unnoticed!

The election was held on 2nd January 1965. It is no secret how Ayub Khan 'won' the election. Suffice it to say that we were released from detention after the results were announced. Reports were circulating that Maulana Bhashani, instead of supporting Fatima Jinnah, had backed Ayub Khan for whom he had a soft corner. In all the areas of East Pakistan where Maulana had his influence, Ayub received comparatively larger number of votes. Maulana himself admitted at a later date that he had supported Ayub Khan and advanced all sorts of arguments to defend his action. Maulana had been displaying a tilt towards Ayub Khan for quite some time. In fact he had held a meeting in Karachi with Ayub Khan through a go-between, prominent industrialist, Khan Bahadur Habibullah Paracha. Maulana was reported to have complained of lack of facilities at NAP General Secretary Mahmudul Huq Usmani's house where he was staying and wanted to be shifted to Habibullah's bungalow! It may be of interest to note that Maulana used to stay at Usmani's house since the Awami League days (Usmani was General Secretary of Awami League before NAP's formation) and the Maulana had never complained!

Maulana Bhashani started saying openly that we should not oppose Ayub Khan and argued that Ayub was fostering friendship with China. Somehow, it had become a fashion for some of our leftists to give preference to external loyalties over the imperative needs of our own country and its people. Suppression of democracy, military action against the people of federating units and other undemocratic actions of the regime were conveniently glossed over. Our leftists felt restless about struggles and movements everywhere - Vietnam, Cuba, Ethiopia, Eritrea and so on and forging friendship with China. The religious parties were worried about the problems of Indian Muslims. But none of them was concerned about what was being done to their own fellow citizens here at home by their own rulers. One can agree that it is not proper to turn a blind eye to international issues, particularly the contemporary anti-imperialist and national liberation struggles. However, it should certainly not mean that one should completely ignore the problems and concerns of the people living in this country. In later years, our progressive friends were to likewise advance all sorts of queer arguments for supporting Bhutto's civilian dictatorship.

When Maulana Bhashani was asked to call the Central Working Committee (CWC) meeting to discuss his stance on supporting Ayub Khan, he was not ready to do it. On the contrary, the Maulana chose to expel some of the CWC members who had participated in anti-Ayub activities and explanations were demanded from them. I was also asked to explain why I had challenged the powers of the party president. The other person from West Pakistan who was asked to explain his conduct was Party General Secretary, Mahmudul Huq Usmani. All others whose explanations were demanded belonged to East Pakistan. The Maulana left us no option

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but to question his arbitrary actions. We mobilised many more members than required under the party constitution and requisitioned a meeting of the Central Council (CC) of the party. Maulana was not prepared to call the requisitioned meeting of the CC either.

India-Pakistan war – 1965

The 1965 war in my opinion had a lot to do with a gross miscalculation on the part of two persons – Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Their guess was that the armed tribal *lashkars* put together by Qayyum Khan and placed under the overall command of Pakistan's regular army would surprise the Indians by capturing the valley in a blitzkreig before Indian troops could move in. That goal achieved, the Pakistan army would assume direct control of the valley's defence. However, things turned out differently. Once in the valley, the armed tribals lost their head and went into a spree of loot and plunder as they advanced, alienating the local people. On the other hand, serious differences developed between Qayyum's ill-disciplined mishmash of a tribal *lashkar* and the regular Pakistan army. Indians were keeping themselves alert and closely monitoring the developments. Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri had already warned that India would respond by choosing its own battlefront. True to his warning, he ordered the Indian army on 6th September 1965 to cross the international border into West Pakistan. That was much more than what Ayub Khan had bargained for under the prodding of his two 'well-wishers'.

There were two different perceptions about the 1965 war among the rank and file of NAP. One tended to justify it while the other was critical. Opinion was divided in Punjab, Sindh and NWFP chapters of NAP. The Baluchistan chapter was totally against the war and so were the overwhelming majority of party members in East Pakistan. The latter termed it a senseless war that could push Pakistan-India relations to the point of no return. Their argument was that it would be a criminal waste of national resources and would cause a lot of death and destruction. They warned that it would weaken both Pakistan and India, making them more vulnerable to imperialist machinations in the region. Party Chief Maulana Bhashani, however, was supportive of the government's stance on the war, apparently due to his overt pro-Chinese leanings, considering that Sino-Indian relations were in those times at the lowest ebb.

Just as most of us had foreseen, the war resulted in nothing but a lot of ruin and devastation. Relations between the two countries grew from bad to worse. Both turned to the United States for aid and arms. Pakistan did it openly and India discreetly. It seemed that some hidden hands had conspired to pit the two neigbouring states against each other. In the aftermath of the war, contrary to America's indifferetnt attitude, the Soviet Union invited Ayub Khan and Lal Bahadur Shastri for peace talks in Tashkent, which culminated in the signing of what came to be known as the Tashkent Declaration on 10th January 1966, with Soviet Prime Minister Alexey Kosygin acting as the facilitator. It was the first time that Soviet Union had directly intervened in a South Asian dispute for the sake of peace as opposed to USA which very often intervened to fan the flames of war and conflict.

A ticklish by-election in Karachi

In May 1966, I contested the by-election for a National Assembly seat in Karachi. In the given situation at the time, my participation in it as a candidate was quite a sensational event. Frankly speaking, it mirrored the tension inside the ruling establishment, to be more precise, between President Ayub Khan and West Pakistan Governor Nawab of Kalabagh. Let me explain it in some detail.

The National Assembly seat in question had belonged to Mahmoud Haroon. He had

won it in the last election as the candidate of the united opposition, defeating Abdul Baqi Baluch. When Haroon was appointed minister in the West Pakistan cabinet, he vacated the seat. Ayub Khan awarded the Convention Muslim League ticket to his protégé Khan Bahadur Habibullah Paracha. Paracha and Nawab Kalabagh were old rivals, nay enemies, back in the Kalabagh area. Ayub wanted Paracha to win at all costs but Kalabagh wanted him to be defeated, no matter the cost and consequences. The third stakeholder on this seat was Mahmoud Haroon, by virtue of it being his family's traditional seat. His father Sir Abdullah Haroon also used to get elected from this constituency. So, he had a family stake in it and could not allow it to go to a person who would create problems for the family in the long run. Mahmoud Haroon and Nawab Kalabagh joined hands to find a way to thwart a Paracha victory. They started looking for a candidate who would not be bullied by the power of money or coercion and also would not create problems for the Haroon family. They chose me as the candidate. They had not consulted me in advance nor had I any prior knowledge of it. I had only recently come out of jail and was staying in my village Nal. As I have mentioned earlier, in the 1964 elections which I contested from Kalat Division constituency, it was Nawab Kalabagh who personally ordered the officials to ensure my defeat at the hands of Sardar Duda Khan.

One after the other, I received several telegrams from my son Bizen, who was then studying in Karachi University, asking me to reach Karachi urgently. I could not figure out why Bizen was so desperate in wanting me to visit Karachi. I felt that there must be something very important and I must go. On my arrival in Karachi, if I am not wrong it was some time in February 1966, I was received by a few old friends including Waja Akbar Mustikhan, Mir Hammal Khan Gohramzai and Waja Abdussattar besides Bizen and a few of his friends. When I asked Bizen why he had sent me all those telegrams, he denied any knowledge of sending any telegram. Mir Hammal Khan intervened to say that it was he who had sent the telegrams.

I was told the whole story after we reached the place where I was to stay. In the evening, Mahmoud Haroon came from Lahore and repeated the same story. The fact is that all of us, including Mahmoud Haroon, had been very close friends of many many years. I told Mahmoud that I understood their position. It could be to my advantage too, considering that my comrades Ataullah Mengal, Akbar Bugti and Naoroze Khan were in jail and seven of their colleagues were awaiting execution. I was keen to access a forum, which I could use to inform people about the plight of Baluchistan and strive for the freedom of my comrades. But I saw little chance of it happening. I told them: 'If Nawab Kalabagh could manipulate the election in Baluchistan to defeat me, it would be even easier for Ayub Khan to use the state machinery to defeat me in Karachi. When pressure would come from President Ayub, both Nawab Kalabagh and Mahmoud Haroon would abandon me and none of you will be able to help me'. But Mahmoud wouldn't give up. He went on insisting that my fears were unfounded. I told him: Look Mahmoud, you are a Memon. Yours is among the most resourceful families in Karachi and Nawab Kalabagh is a *jagirdar* of Punjab. It is said that the soul of every Punjabi *jagirdar* is in the hands of the police, DSP and SHO. And the life of you businessmen is in the fist of the Finance Secretary. Why are you bent upon destroying our precious old friendship? If you still insist, then go and convey these apprehensions of mine *verbatim* to Nawab Kalabagh. Same day Mahmoud left for Lahore and returned next day to report that he conveyed each word of mine to Kalabagh and the latter's reply was that this time he would make absolutely sure that the government machinery did not interfere in this by-election.

Mahmoud and other friends now began to press me hard. In fact, the interests of three persons converged in this case. Kalabagh wanted to see Paracha defeated because he feared

that if he won the election, he would get closer to Ayub and would easily fill the President's ears with all the poisonous stuff about him (Kalabagh), endangering his governorship. Mahmoud wanted to save his traditional family seat, which would remain safe if I won the election. I too was in search of a forum to air Baluchistan's immediate grievances. Thus, for different reasons, we became co-plotters in this scheme.

A few words here about the constituency I was to contest from. Lasbela was in those days administratively linked with Karachi. Out of a total of about 600 Basic Democrat voters, around 200 were Baluch of Lyari and Lasbela. There were also a good number of Kachhi-Memon voters. The position was very clear; if there was no government interference, my victory was sure. But the apprehension was that if Ayub decided to interfere, there would be difficulties. Habibullah was a vainglorious person but he had plenty of money. He basked in the sunshine of Ayub Khan's patronage. He lived under the illusion that he being President Ayub's nominee, victory was his for the asking. He knew nothing about what was cooking in his backyard.

This was the backdrop in which the election campaign started. Mahmoud's elder brother Yousuf Haroon was my chief election campaigner. It was a most heart-warming sight to see large numbers of NAP workers join hands with workers of other opposition parties and the students and youth of Lyari, and conduct the campaign with such unprecedented fervour. NAP's Marxist and leftist members did not hesitate for a moment to put in their best effort in the campaign, in spite of the fact that capitalist Haroon family was backing me. Industrial baron Paracha had no dearth of money, which he used lavishly to buy the Basic Democrat voters and to collect hired crowds at campaign meetings.

The polling was held without any untoward incident. When the results were announced, it turned out that Khan Bahadur Paracha had lost. Ayub Khan had ample reason to lose his cool. His nominee had lost and that too at the hands of Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo, whom he hated as one of his worst enemies. He came down heavily on those who had backed me. Mahmoud Haroon and Jam Saheb of Lasbela were the first targets. They were summarily sacked from the West Pakistan cabinet. That was followed by the dismissal of the entire West Pakistan cabinet. Not content with these steps, Ayub went further and sacked the powerful Governor, Nawab Kalabagh, on 18th September 1966, replacing him with his protégé General Muhammad Musa. Less than a year later on 26th November 1967 Nawab Kalabagh was found dead in his bedroom, allegedly murdered by his own sons. Why or whether they did it still remains a mystery.

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I wish to share with my readers a strange dream I saw about a month before the Karachi by-election:

The scene is a huge palace, something like the Punjab Governor House. I see Nawab Kalabagh coming in the direction where I am standing. Meanwhile, a servant is seen passing by carrying a tray containing what looks like singhara (water chestnuts). He has a dark complexion. It seems to me that the chestnuts are laced with some poison and they are being taken to Ataullah Mengal, who is confined somewhere there. I feel disturbed but am helpless. I fear that they will feed these poisoned chestnuts to Ataullah and he will die. As the servant passes by Nawab Kalabagh, the Nawab picks up one chestnut and eats it. I watch terrified, expecting that the Nawab will die and I will be accused of poisoning him. And at that point my eyes opened.

A month later, I contested the by-election in Karachi. Nawab Kalabagh did not interfere and I won. What happened to Nawab Kalabagh is mentioned earlier. Was it my dream coming true? I wonder.

Tashkent Declaration and Ayub-Bhutto split

Ayub Khan's relations with Mr. Bhutto suffered a setback on their return from Tashkent after signing the Declaration of Peace, mediated by Soviet Prime Minister Alexey Kosygin. Mr. Bhutto began to publicly express his dissent on the Tashkent Accord. Persons like me who stood for peace and friendship between Pakistan and India were baffled at the position taken by Bhutto. A couple of questions arose in one's mind. Why did Mr. Bhutto push Ayub Khan into launching that patently senseless adventure in Kashmir, provoking a predictable Indian military response? Why did he later on go all the hog to assail the peace accord and make a public issue of it? These are questions, which the historians may one day delve into and connect to Mr. Bhutto's bizarre role in the events of 1971 leading to the secession of East Pakistan.

On 16th June 1966, a week before the scheduled state visit of Chinese Prime Minister Chou Enlai, Ayub Khan removed Bhutto from the Cabinet and asked him to leave the capital in 24 hours. The National Assembly was in session and I was attending it for the first time after winning the Karachi by-election. Mr. Bhutto came and sat next to me. He requested me to come to his office for a while. I went to his office and there he gave me his own version of what had happened between him and Ayub Khan. He was keen to be present in Islamabad during Chou *En-lai* visit and was very bitter about Ayub's order for his exit. I told Mr. Bhutto:

> Ayub wouldn't want to give you the opportunity to meet Chou *En-lai,* at any cost, nor would he tolerate you in his cabinet any longer. He regards you to be responsible for pushing him into the 1965 war that ended in disaster. He perhaps apprehends that you will try to persuade Chou to intervene in your favour. The other factor behind Ayub's decision seems to be to prevent you from coming out in the open while still in the Cabinet and oppose Tashkent Declaration. That will make you an instant hero. If you don't accept Ayub's decision, your future will also be the same as that of the Baluch leaders. You have my example and those of Ataullah, Khair Bakhsh and Akbar Bugti before you: imprisonment, confiscation of property and countless other tortures. We are used to this kind of experience. Now it is up to you which way to choose. If you are ready for the second option, you have a lot of opportunities open to have your leadership acknowledged by people in West Pakistan.
>
> Mr. Bhutto reluctantly left Rawalpindi on 22nd June 1966 by train for Lahore.

No doubt, Mr. Bhutto was gifted with a number of remarkable qualities: he was sharp, brilliant, articulate and charming and was also known for his mastery of the art of mimicry! As he traveled by train from Rawalpindi and reached Lahore, now sobbing, now crying, now shouting, now pleading all the way, he had already become the hero of Punjab. He freely indulged in India-bashing, promised to reveal the 'secret' of Tashkent Declaration, claimed that he was removed from the Cabinet because he opposed the 'surrender' at Tashkent and he used all other tantrums to win the sympathy of the people of Punjab. Mr. Bhutto belonged to the tribe of power-seeking politicians who employ a variety of tactics to achieve their goal. Added to it all was his charismatic and youthful personality. He mesmerised all and sundry in Punjab – the young and the old!

Mr. Bhutto stayed in Punjab for some time. He held a meeting with Nawab Kalabagh and then left for Sindh. Some time later, in compliance with Ayub's edict, he left the country. After staying for a couple of months in Europe, he returned to Pakistan. By then, Ayub's anger had subsided a lot and Mr. Bhutto got the chance to engage in some political work. He travelled across the country, meeting people and carefully assessing their moods and expectations. He came to Quetta accompanied by Mr. J.A. Rahim. Besides others, he met me, Nawab Khair Bakhsh and Nawab Akbar Bugti. I was then the General Secretary of West Pakistan NAP. During our detailed talk, Mr. Bhutto expressed the wish that if NAP could offer him a position in the party corresponding to his status, he would join NAP. Surely, Mr. Bhutto would not have been content with anything less than the post of President or General Secretary. I knew that the traditions of NAP would not permit someone being accepted by the party and offered a top post just for the asking. Anyone wanting to reach the top ought to pass through the party's political mill.

As I mentioned earlier, I always regarded Mr. Bhutto as a person of high intellectual calibre and capabilities, one who could be a great asset to any political party. I issued a statement to the press, a very cautiously worded one, that if Mr. Bhutto wanted to join the NAP, its doors were open to him.

NAP's Central President, Maulana Bhashani, called for an explanation from me for that invitation to Mr. Bhutto to join the party. A full-length debate took place in the NAP Central Working Committee (CWC). I was asked to explain why I extended the invitation to Mr. Bhutto, knowing that he had served the martial law and military regime for the past eight years and even at that point in time he was driven only by the urge to be back in power. Being a founding member of the party, the CWC stopped short of taking any action against me.

The story of the 'Currency Notes' and subsequent years in jail

After attending the National Assembly session, I went to Quetta at the end of June 1966. There I learnt that currency notes with o*ne unit tor do* (undo One Unit) written or stamped on them were circulating in the bazaars. Later I came to know that Nawab Bugti had got a rubber stamp made in Lahore with these words and he not only stamped his own notes but also the notes found with his friends. One day I was sitting in Nawab Bugit's house in Quetta with Saifur Rahman Mazari and a couple of other friends. I was to leave for Karachi the next day and Mir Saifur Rahman Mazari was to leave for Lahore. So, we sent Nawab's servant to the railway station to buy tickets for the two of us. We gave him the money for the tickets. He brought the tickets and the balance amount. Saifur Rahman took his ticket and his balance amount and I put my ticket and the balance money in my pocket.

In the morning of the following day, police raided my hotel room and demanded to see the currency notes in my pcket. As I took the notes out, I found one 50 Rupee note with the *one unit tor do* stamp on it. The note was 'seized' and I was arrested and taken to Quetta jail.

Till now, it is a mystery to me how the police knew that I was carrying in my pocket the note they wanted to seize! Let us assume that among the notes Saifurrahman gave to the servant to buy his ticket, there was a fifty-rupee note with the stamp on it. And when the servant gave me the balance amount, that particular note might have got mixed with the ones he gave me. But, still the question remains how did the police know it? Surely some knowledgeable person was around, who informed them. Be that as it may, 15 days after my arrest and

detention in Quetta jail, my trial began inside the jail. After a couple of hearings, I was sentenced to 14 years' rigorous imprisonment, taken to Sukkur by road and to Montgomery (now Sahiwal) in Punjab by train and lodged in the Montgomery jail.

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The way I was treated in Sahiwal jail since day one smelt of downright spitefulness. It seemed that Ayub Khan was still smarting under the shock of his nominee's defeat in the Karachi by-election at my hands and was itching to have his revenge. I was taken to an ancient-looking relic of what might once have been a building of some sort and lodged in a semi-dark cell with its mud walls emitting a nauseating smell. It gave the impression of a leftover part of the very first structure of the jail complex built decades ago. There was no passage for light to enter, leave alone fresh air. It was a virtual dungeon.

During the night I was kept in the dark cell with a lantern burning outside the door beyond my reach. There was a woollen blanket for mattress (in the scorching summer heat!), a cotton sheet and a woven mat for bed. My own bedding and other personal belongings were deposited at the jail gate. This 'very special' class was given to a sitting elected member of the National Assembly of Pakistan! In the past too, I had been in jail in C class but never before in a stinking place like this one. I had cocroaches, mosquitoes and other unfriendly insects for company. They too seemed to have been hungry for quite a while as I could see that apparently no one had entered that cell for years. The insects set about their task of feeding on my blood with relish.

With each passing day I felt I was losing weight and growing weaker. My visibly deteriorating health caused concern to the jail authorities. Then, all of a sudden, I was shifted from Sahiwal to Sargodha jail.

My travel was 'self-financed', in the sense that to meet my expenses on the way, I was given one rupee and twelve annas (Rs.1.75) out of my own cash deposited with the jail administration! The train was so fast that it spent more time halting at railway stations than in running! Eventually we reached Sargodha the next day.

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I was kept in solitary confinement in Sargodha jail. The diet was the same as in other jails – cooked *dhal* in boiled water – and two chapatis twice a day. One redeeming factor was that there were no cockroaches and other insects here. The Jail Superintendent was a well-mannered person and seemed to be an educated one as well. In spite of being sympathetic to me, there was little he could do for me in the given conditions. He arranged my daily *dhal* to be fried and to let me have two cups of tea in the morning. Occasionally he sent me a novel or something light to read. The effect of Superintendent Lodhi Saheb's sympathetic treatment soon began to show. My rapid weight loss was halted but the weakenss I brought from Sahiwal jail stayed on for over a month.

Sargodha jail was also not more than an enlarged version of a pigeonhole. It seemed as if the Tiwanas and the Nawabs of the area had in older times built it for some special use or may be as a prison for their unruly subjects! Though it comprised two stories, the cells were too small for a man to stretch himself, not to speak of moving about. There were no distinctions in

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this jail like A class, B class, C class etc. It was perhaps built on the principle of equality of all prisoners without discrimination!

During the time I remained in this jail, there were said to be 1200 prisoners in it. Of these, 800 were involved in murder cases, quite a few of them having been convicted for murder more than once. After three months, I was granted B class but the problem was that there was no such place in the jail where one could avail B class facilities. When I told the Superintendent about it, he ordered some prisoners to put up a walled enclosure in front of the cell at the far end of the building and called it B class. The tradition of the Tiwanas and the Nawabs of barring their 'subjects' from having an open space or courtyard larger than the built-in living space in the house was strictly observed!

One day, the Superintendent came to my B class facility with a gentleman who told me that he would be honoured if I accepted his invitation to have food with him. I did not know him. I replied: 'Sir, You know I am a prisoner and can do nothing without the jail administration's permission. I cannot refuse your kind invitation, but please ask this gentleman, the Superintendent. And I would also be grateful if you kindly tell me something about yourself'. He answered that his name was Masood and he was the Commissioner of Sargodha Division.

Next day I enjoyed a good meal in jail for the first time after several weeks. In the situation I was in, no words would be enough to describe the importance of that home-cooked meal. But more than that, the genuine affection and love the visitor showed on the occasion could not but have a deep impression on me.

Bhutto forms his own party

A couple of months later Mr. Bhutto formed his own party, Pakistan Peoples Party. It was formally launched on 1st December 1967 at a convention held at the Lahore residene of Dr. Mubashir Hassan. The guiding principles of the Party programme were:

- Islam is our faith
- Democracy is our polity
- Socialism is our economy
- All power to the people

It was further laced with sideline slogans like *a thousand year war with India* and the promise to *bring the cat out of the bag* of Tashkent Declaration! This mixed package of a party programme proved to be sweet candy to the post-1965-war appetite of the India-phobic audience across Punjab.

Mr. Bhutto's magnetic personality not only helped to spread the party programme across a wide range of people but also ensnared and roped into the party's fold an assorted mix of left opportunists and disgruntled leftists besides some genuine, well-meaning progressive youth and student activsists. This last category gave the new party a colourful leftist public image that served to conceal its inner reality. With his feudal family background, Bhutto also managed to take in tow a broad spectrum of *waderas* (landlords) of Sindh and their counterparts in Punjab. In brief, opportunists of different classes, self-seekers of different varieties and lumpen political elements, along with, of course, a small band of sincere, well-meaning political workers flocked into the party. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto soon emerged as the sole spokesman of the Punjab

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and a vocal champion of the Left!

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NAP splits

I have already explained the tensions that had developed within NAP as a result of the open support Maulana Bhashani and a couple of like-minded supporters in the party extended to Ayub Khan in the presidential elections and the backing they gave to Ayub's 1965 war with India. Maulana's refusal to call the meeting of the Central Working Committee to discuss the issue of his pro-Ayub stance and his subsequent refusal to convene the meeting of the National Council requisitioned by more than the constitutionally required number of members proved to be the last straw on the camel's back. In November 1967, the members of the National Council and Central Executive Committee, along with several senior members of the party, who disagreed with the erroneous political line adopted by Maulana Bhashani and resented his undemocratic attitude, met in Dhaka and decided to separate. The Maulana's deviation from the basic political stance of NAP was responsible for this unfortunate split in the party. It was agreed to hold the National Council meeting of NAP in Peshawar as soon as possible and the West Pakistan leadership of the party was asked to decide on the dates and venue without delay.

The party now had to choose a new President in place of Maulana Bhashani. The names of two candidates came up in the following weeks: Mian Mahmud Ali Qasuri and Mahmudul Huq Usmani. An anomalous situation arose when it was found that almost all the members from West Pakistan were for Qasuri as President, while all the members from East Pakistan were for Usmani! And both the candidates were from West Pakistan!

I was in those days detained in Sargodha Jail. Both Qasuri and Usmani visited me in jail separately. We discussed matters pertaining to the formation of the new party and also the issue of who should be the party President. My personal suggestion to them was that if they could not sort the matter out between the two of them, then the best thing would be to agree on Khan Abdul Wali Khan as the unanimous choice. In my view, Wali Khan was a non-controversial person. Until then, he had not yet been very prominent in the NAP at the national level. However, at the provincial level, he occupied a key position and status.

The National Council of the Party met on 30th June and 1st July 1968 at Royal Hotel, Peshawar, with Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, President of East Pakistan NAP chairing the first session. Abdul Wali Khan was unanimously elected as President of the party. It goes to the credit of East Pakistani comrades that even after Wali Khan was chosen as President, they were generous enough in backing another West Pakistani Mahmudul Huq Usmani for the position of General Secretary. The following were elected unanimously as office bearers and members of the Central Working Committee:

Office Bearers

1. Khan Abdul Wali Khan — President
2. Dabiruddin Ahmed — Vice President
3. Amir Hussein Shah — Vice President
4. Mahmudul Huq Usmani — General Secretary
5. Dewan Mahboob Ali — Joint Secretary
6. Ajmal Khattak — Joint Secretary

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7. Mohiuddin Ahmed Treausurer

Members of the National Working Committee

1. Professor MuzaffarAhmed
2. Pir Habiburrahman
3. Moni Krishna Sen
4. Hatim Ali Khan
5. Syed Altaf Hussain
6. Ahmedul Kabir
7. Mrs. Salina Bano
8. Abdur Ratjak
9. Azizul Haq
10. Maulana Ahmedur Rehman Azmi
11. Amirzada Khan
12. Arbab Sikandar Khan
13. Mahmud Ali Qasuri
14. Sheikh Rafiq Ahmed
15. Anwar Choudhary
16. Rauf Tahir
17. Saif Khalid
18. Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi
19. Aizaz Nazir
20. Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo

A procession of about ten thousand with the East Pakistani councillors in the lead, chanting slogans, marching on the streets of Peshawar, terminated at Chowk Yadgar, where about 50,000 persons listened to the National Awami Party leaders speaking on national and international issues, with rapt attention.

In the beginning, the two NAPs were identified by the media as NAP (pro-China) and NAP (pro-Soviet), but after Khan Abdul Wali Khan became head of the 'pro-Soviet' NAP, these changed to NAP (Bhashani) and NAP (Wali Khan) respectively.

My release from Sargodha Jail

Those were days when the anti-Ayub agitation was rapidly gathering momentum. Mr. Bhutto was in detention first in Mianwali Central jail and was later shifted to Sahiwal jail. Mir Gul Khan Naseer too was then in Sahiwal jail. Nawab Akbar Bugti was in Mianwali jail and had been on hunger strike for two months. Some time in October 1968, a writ petition filed on my behalf came up before Justice Kundi of the Lahore High Court and he ordered my release.

1968-1969: things heat up

When I came out of Sargodha jail, the anti-Ayub movement spearheaded by the newly formed Democratic Action Committee (DAC) had assumed unstoppable momentum. Ayub Khan had begun to sound out the opposition leaders to find a way out of the looming crisis. I was in jail when Ayub Khan had started meeting opposition leaders in this connection. The dates for a Round Table Conference also had been fixed. West Pakistani opposition leaders had gone to East Pakistan for preparatory discussions with leaders there and had planned to fly direct to Rawalpindi to attend the RTC.

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A tricky situation had cropped up on the eve of the RTC, as it turned out that most of the available opposition leaders of West Pakistan belonged to Punjab. No representative from smaller provinces was around. Most of NAP's leadership from West and East Pakistan were in jail, including Wali Khan. NAP found the situation very disturbing. The two burning issues then were dissolution of One Unit and repeal of the parity formula but the heads of the two main parties agitating these issues – Wali Khan of NAP and Sheikh Mujib of Awami League - were in jail. Some of the opposition leaders from West Pakistan, who were expected to attend the RTC such as Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, Mumtaz Daulatana and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, were the same gentlemen who were directly or indirectly instrumental in the creation of these issues.

A week after my release from jail, I left for Dhaka. On arriving in Dhaka, I was happy to see that six NAP National Working Committee members including Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed and Mohiuddin Ahmed had just been released. We discussed the situation and it was decided to call an urgent meeting of the Central Working Committee (CWC) in Dhaka. Vice President Syed Amir Hussain Shah who was in Dhaka was requested to delay his scheduled return to West Pakistan for a day or two.

More than the expected number of CWC members of NAP reached Dhaka on time to attend the meeting. It was decided that no NAP delegation would take part in the RTC in the absence of Wali Khan and Mujibur Rahman. This decision was conveyed to Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali and Mumtaz Daulatana by Amir Hussain Shah. Shah Saheb also told them of his own inability to attend the RTC for the same reason. Similarly, Awami League made its participation conditional on Sheikh Mujib's release.

Tens of thousands of people – students and youth in the lead – were participating in day-long anti-Ayub demonstrations, processions, meetings and rallies, which had become a daily routine in most of East Pakistan's cities. One of the slogans raised by the protestors was: 'release Sheikh Mujib, release Wali Khan'.

Ch. Muhammad Ali and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan invited me to meet them to discuss the impasse. Nothing came out of the meeting because there was a huge deficit of mutual trust between us. In fact, these leaders were not pleased with the principled decision of NAP CWC and the way I defended it during our meeting. In the meantime, Maulana Bhashani and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who were not in the DAC, had made known their refusal to attend the RTC, though on different grounds. Nawabzada and company contacted Ayub Khan for advice. Subsequently, Wali Khan was released and the RTC became a partially viable proposition, partially because Sheikh Mujib was still in prison.

DAC leaders of both East and West Pakistan arrived in Rawalpindi to attend the conference. The holding of RTC now had only one hitch; the release of Sheikh Mujib. Ayub Khan was in a fix. He was not mentally prepared to release the man whom he had hauled up before a military tribunal on charges of treason against the state. However, better counsel prevailed and Ayub agreed to release Mujib on parole. But Mujib rejected the parole offer. Once again the RTC was in the doldrums. Eventually, Mujib was set free unconditionally and he flew to Lahore like a hero on his way to Rawalpindi to attend the RTC. Bhashani and Bhutto decided to boycott the conference.

During informal exchange of views, differences came up on the format/agenda of the RTC. The strong positions taken by NAP and Awami League on issues such as full provincial autonomy with restitution of the numerical majority status of East Pakistan, dissolution of One Unit and revival and restructuring of the provinces of West Pakistan on the basis of common territory, language, history, culture and other common characteristics, posed a serious challenge to the Government. Other opposition parties suggested that in the given conditions, insisting on the restrucuring of provinces would generate new problems, as most of the opposition parties were not yet ready to accept it. They tried to persuade Wali Khan to give up this demand for the time being and limit it to the dissolution of One Unit; in that case, other opposition parties would also support him. After a lot of persuasion, Wali Khan eventually relented and agreed to stop at the demand for dissolution of One Unit.

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Before the DAC meeting when NAP's entire Central Committee was in session in Dhaka, a very unpleasant thing happened. Abdus Samad Achakzai and G.M. Syed wanted to participate in the RTC. They were told that invitations had been extended to parties and not to individuals. Accordingly, NAP would be represented by two delegates namely Abdul Wali Khan from West Pakistan in his capacity as party's national President and Professor Muzaffar Ahmed as President of East Pakistan NAP. But the two leaders were adamant and threatened to approach Ayub Khan and request him to invite them. I was in those days not only President of Baluchsitan NAP but was also General Secretary of West Pakistan NAP. I tried my best to bring them round and asked Achakzai on what grounds he was demanding representation. I told him:

> *Party President Wali Khan is representing the Party. If your logic is that you want representation on ethnic Pakhtun basis, then Wali Khan amply fills the slot as he has a stronger claim to represent the Pakhtuns besides being the Party chief. G.M. Syed's claim may carry more weight because there is no ethnic Sindhi or Baluch representative in the delegation but your claim is utterly unacceptable.*

After failing to convince these two party colleagues, I served them a notice that if they chose to violate party discipline, action would be taken against them. Nevertheless, Achakzai and Syed made a request to Ayub Khan, which naturally was turned down. Following this unfortunate episode, G.M. Syed quit the NAP and formed the so-called Anti-One-Unit Front. Achakzai set up his separate party, the Pakhtunkhwa National Awami Party.

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The Round Table Conference started on 10th March 1969 and lasted for four days. In spite of the best efforts of both the government and the opposition, the RTC failed to yield results, the basic reason being, as I said earlier, an acute lack of trust. Besides, the conflicting perceptions of the two sides in relation to the enormous problems facing the country and the on-going national upsurge prevented the development of a consensus.

As Gen. Ayub's reign was approaching its end, the political climate in the country had become highly volatile. Ayub regime's long list of commission, omissions and wrong doings over the ten-year period had by then started coming home to roost. The smaller nationalities of West Pakistan and the majority province of East Pakistan were up in arms against the

Centre, demanding their long-denied national rights. The spectacle of hundreds of millions of rupees being wasted on organizing an elaborate publicity extravaganza across the country to celebrate Ayub's 'Decade of Development' in the face of rocketing cost of living, administrative mismanagement and corruption and a host of other economic and social problems had forced people in Punjab and Sindh also to rise against Ayub's rule. Besides fast-mounting labour unrest, education campuses were also in a state of ferment.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was storming East Pakistan from one end to the other, advocating his Six-Point programme. Baluchistan and NWFP were daggers drawn with the Centre on the question of autonomy and national rights. Baluchistan had already suffered three army actions. Following the failure of the RTC, there was an eruption of all the pent-up feelings of different sections of the population throughout the country.

Finding himself pushed to a corner, Ayub Khan chose to resort to the last option available to dictators. He asked his Commander-in-Chief General Yahya Khan to impose martial law. Yahya Khan took the position that it was not possible to impose martial law in support of the civilian government; instead he asked Ayub to hand over power to the armed forces. Realising the delicate nature of the dilemma he was in, Ayub Khan announced that he was quitting as President. Violating the mandatory provision of his own constitution according to which the Speaker of the National Assembly was to succeed him, Ayub transferred power to the army chief on 25th March 1969.

A word about the Ayub era

Needless to state that Ayub regime was a military dictatorship, using a democratic façade for political legitimacy. The crafting of the basic democracies system and using it to elect Assembly members and the President through indirect elections were ample proof of it. Nevertheless, there were many who thought that it was Ayub who initiated the process of Pakistan's rapid industrialization. Some sort of a land reform too was introduced and a maximum ceiling was fixed on landownership. Along with industrialization, there also emerged certain liberal political trends. For instance, in the 1964 elections, held under the pseudo-democratic B.D. system, a good number of persons with non-feudal background got elected to the assemblies. They represented the industrial and trading class: for instance, Ahmed Dawood, A.K. Soomar, Rafiq Saigol, A.M. Qureshi, the Mians of Colony Textiles, etc.

It was during Ayub era that certain meaningful steps were taken to tap the opportunities for trade and economic cooperation with Soviet Union and major strides were made in establishing close ties with the People's Republic of China. These initiatives were obviously not in tune with the long-established priorities of Pakistan's pro-western foreign policy. Ayub Khan's relatively assertive self-confidence and independent stance, dictated in fact by the search for alternate trade partners and friendlier markets by the country's fast-growing industrial and business community, did not quite please the Americans and the West. Consequently, Pakistan's relationship with them began to lose some of its earlier warmth.

Student organisations/politics in Baluchistan

Prior to 1965, day-to-day problems of the student community such as admissions, scholarships and other education-related matters used to be addressed by *Warna Waninda Gal* (Educated Youth Forum) which was formed in 1961. *Warna* campaigned for the establishment of a university for Baluchistan. In the political field, it worked with NAP in the struggle for the dissolution

of One Unit. In 1967, *Warna Waninda Gal* was re-organised and reconstituted into what came to be known as the Baluch Student Organisation (BSO). Mr. Abdul Hakim, formerly president of *Warna Waninda Gal* became the President of BSO.

In 1968, BSO held its first national convention and conducted countrywide elections. A dispute arose over the election results, as Dr. Abdul Hayee's election was challenged and the BSO split into two. The Abdul Hayee-Bizen faction which was in majority continued as BSO and the minority group under the leadership of Rahim Zafar separated and formed the BSO (anti-*sardar* group), which was later renamed BSO (*Awami*).

In matters pertaining to students' problems, BSO worked in coordination with the National Students Federation (NSF) at the national level. But when the political process in Baluchistan assumed a well-defined ideological character as it advanced in a secular, anti-imperialist and progressive direction, BSO automatically became an integral part of that process. And NAP being the engine of that process, it was but natural that BSO would become identified with the progressive nationalist politics of NAP and drawn into its operational orbit.

The vast majority of the Baluch were either illiterate or poorly educated. In a situation like that, BSO emerged as the harbinger of people's hopes and aspirations. It also served as a political nursery for the youth to develop their leadership potential and provide the second tier of leadership to NAP. No other political party in the country could claim to have had this kind of a facility to produce political workers with ideological grounding and commitment, before they made their formal entry into political parties. BSO played a pre-eminent role in the tumultuous politics of Baluchistan.

With the *sardars* continuing to exercise predominant influence on the tribal society in Baluchistan, coupled with frequent spells of state-sponsored persecution of the people at the hands of both civil and military regimes, BSO soon turned into more of a spirited political forum rather than a run-of- the-mill student organization. During Ayub's military dictatorship and later during its civilian version under Bhutto when Baluchistan faced military operations, most of the political leaders and activists were put in jail for long periods and whoever remained had to flee to the mountains. In those trying times, BSO members were not only present in the jails and in the mountains but also took over the agitational role in national politics for people's democratic rights. It will not be wrong to say that BSO served as a link between jails, mountains and the national political mainstream. In the peculiar surroundings in which it came into being and grew up, the ideas of secularism and anti-imperialism became its distinguishing marks, setting it apart from other contemporary student bodies in the country.

However, in more recent years, BSO began to suffer from a gradual erosion of trained and stable leadership as a direct result of the repressive policies adopted by Pakistani rulers towards Baluchistan, which left no space for peaceful political dissent. The youth of Baluchistan were naturally incensed and frustrated at the way both military and civil governments at the center treated the Baluch people and robbed them of their resources and fundamental rights. As a natural consequence, the culture of tolerance and moderation in politics began to give way to intolerance and extremism. The feeling was growing that they had no future in Pakistan. The logical outcome was the gradual budding of secessionist tendencies among the youth.

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Chapter 5

Pakistan's First General Elections and the Separation of East Pakistan

Towards general elections

After taking power, Yahya's first major political action was the dissolution of One Unit of West Pakistan on 1st July 1970 and *ipso facto* the abolition of parity between the two wings. He also announced that general elections would be held on the basis of one-man one-vote. For the first time, Baluchistan was given the status of a province. It is a great irony that these positive democratic steps had to come during the reign of a military ruler!

Yahya did not directly interfere in the conduct of elections. But several parties and groups were helped financially and otherwise, so that votes may be split and no single party or even two parties could obtain a majority and form a stable government. In this manner, the military ruler would be in a position to call the shots by pitting one group against the other and misusing the president's powers to make and unmake coalition governments.

Then there was the issue of the Legal Framework Order (LFO), which prescribed that the National Assembly should frame the constitution in 120 days, failing which it could be wound up and sent home. It may be noted that Yahya Khan imposed martial law but did not ban political parties unlike Ayub Khan and there were no mass arrests of political leaders. Only political activities were quarantined for some time.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman launched his election campaign on the basis of his six-point programme. In Baluchistan and NWFP, national autonomy was the key issue in the election campaign. Punjab was thrown into a defensve mode. Sindh, owing to the collusion of the Punjabis and the Muhajirs on the one hand and the opportunism of the *waderas* on the other, remained in a state of partial political limbo. Mr. Bhutto and the PPP leaned towards the ruling classes of Punjab and in due time accepted the role of their allies. Mr. Bhutto even agreed to be the Deputy Prime Minister in General Yahya's government, in the twilight days of 'original' Pakistan. About this I will write later. Mr. Bhutto's PPP, Qayyum Khan's Muslim League and some smaller groups were favourites of the Yahya clique. The General did concede sufficient time to the parties to conduct election campaigns.

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The country's first ever nation-wide general elections were held on 7th December 1970. The results belied all the prophecies and permutations made by the army junta and its camp followers. In East Pakistan, Awami League won 162, i.e. all but two of the National Assembly seats. That meant an absolute majority in the 300-member National Assembly. In West Pakistan PPP won a majority of seats from Punjab, both for the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly. In Sindh it won majority of National Assembly seats but fell 3 seats short of majority

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in the provincial assembly. In Baluchistan, National Awami Party and its junior ally Jamiatul Ulemai Islam (JUI) won the majority of provincial assembly seats and all the National Assembly seats. PPP failed to win any seat. In NWFP too the NAP-JUI won majority of seats in the provincial assembly.

I remember during a chance meeting in Karachi on the eve of the 1970 elections, I asked Mr. Bhutto what he thought would be his party's chances in the elections. His answer was that if he could win 35-40 seats, he would take it as an achievement. So, Mr. Bhutto must have been surprised at the number of seats his party was able to win.

Army junta's disappointment knew no bounds. It was literally shellshocked at the results. Awami League headed by yesterday's 'Agartala conspirator' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had emerged as the majority party with a legitimate democratic claim to power. It could form a government on its own. But as it did not win any seat in West Pakistan, it would naturally seek alliance with NAP and other smaller nationalist groups, for whom the armed forces and Punjab's ruling elite had nothing but contempt. Such an eventuality was fraught with dangerous consequences to their interests. After all, the Punjab-dominated centers of power had exercised unchallenged control over the country since its birth, in the first years in collusion with the Urdu-speaking *muhajir* elite and afterwards, with fellow class allies in other provinces. They now conspired in collusion with the army junta and in consort with Bhutto and PPP to block the transfer of power to the majority party.

Transfer of power blocked

In late January 1971 after Awami League announced the finalization of the draft constitution on the basis of its Six-points, but 'ensuring the indivisible unity between the two wings of Pakistan', most of the smaller parties of West Pakistan announced to extend their cooperation to Awami League in constitution-making. On 13th February Yahya announced that the Assembly would meet on 3rd March 1971 in Dhaka. One after the other, the smaller parties from West Pakistan announced their readiness to attend the National Assembly session. But Bhutto had other plans. He was looking for ways to block the holding of the Assembly session.

First he raised the most ludicrous demand that he be made an equal shareholder in power. This was totally unconstitutional and undemocratic. When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman obviously rejected this silly demand, Mr. Bhutto responded: *udhar tum, idhar hum* - you there (in East Pakistan), we here (in West Pakistan). These words were loaded with sinister meaning as future events were to expose.

In a public meeting held in Lahore on 28th February 1971, Mr. Bhutto had hurled a threat to the applause of the predominantly Punjabi audience that he would break the legs of any MNA from West Pakistan who dared to attend the Dhaka session of the Assembly and would not let such MNAs return to West Pakistan.** I remember issuing a statement to the press in response to Mr. Bhutto's threat, informing him that NAP members of the Assembly would attend the session in Dhaka and he was free to do what he liked. Suffice it to say that on the eve of the scheduled date of the session, Assembly members belonging to all the parties flew into Dhaka. Even some of the PPP members had purchased the tickets, just in case the situation changed for the better and they missed the bus!

We were all in Dhaka on 29th February when, on a patently bogus excuse, General Yahya

Khan announced the postponement of the opening session of the Assembly. The explanation offered was that

> a majority party, namely the PPP, as well as certain other political parties, had declared their intention not to attend the National Assembly session and if the session were held in such conditions, the Assembly itself would have disintegrated.[5]

It was only natural that this provocative action of the military junta would cause deep anger and resentment in East Pakistan. The Bengalis were furious. For 23 years, despite being in majority, they were denied access to the orbit of real power and decision-making. Now when their representative political party had won the elections with a clear majority, the attempt to deny them their legitimate right to power was highly deplorable, to say the least. Not even waiting for a formal call from the Awami League leadership, the people of Dhaka poured out into the streets in tens of thousands to protest, shouting slogans against West Pakistan. All the lines of communication and transport and the entire urban life came to a halt. Curfew was imposed in the city. No one cared for the curfew. The protest gained steam with every passing minute.

Ironically, two career military officers, Governor Admiral Ahsan and Army Commander, Gen. Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, displayed an admirable sense of foresight and good judgement. They restrained the armed forces from launching reprisal action. Their unwillingness to push the army into action against the people led to General Tikka Khan being posted to Dhaka to replace Admial Ahsan as Governor. Not one single judge in Dhaka was willing to administer the oath of office to the new Governor, signaling the total alienation of East Pakistan. All the political parties, willingly or reluctantly, became part of a mass protest movement of colossal dimension. The administration of Dhaka, for all practical purposes, passed into the hands of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his party. Their orders became the only effective administrative writ in East Pakistan. The army's control was restricted to within the cantonments and some of the federal government offices in Dhaka.

We, members of the National Assembly, were stranded in the Assembly hostel where we were stayting. I rang up Sheikh Mujib and requested him for help. Like us, he too was helpless in the face of such an all-pervading mass public protest. I spoke to Governor Ahsan on the phone. He too expressed his inability to help. Meanwhile, there was nothing left in the hostel – no food, no servants, nothing - nor could we dare out of the hostel. On the third day of the 'siege', an army convoy somehow managed to get there and we were whisked away under army escort to the airport. There was no porter there to handle the luggage. When the plane arrived from Karachi, it came to light that a PIA man came from Karachi on each flight with tickets, which he issued to passengers at the airport. The entire airport was under the most stringent security imposed by the army.

During the flight to Karachi, I was haunted by the nagging thought that East Pakistan would never again be what it was till then. I saw no hope of any mitigating developments.

My next and last visit to East Pakistan

Rattled perhaps by the rapidly deepening crisis, Yahya Khan made another announcement on 6th March 1971 convening the National Assembly session on 25th March. But that announcement

[5] Rafi Raza, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Pakistan 1967-1977 (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

was laced with an ominous threat that 'he would not allow a handful of people to destroy the homeland of millions of innocent Pakistanis and it is the duty of the Pakistan armed forces to ensure the integrity, solidarity and security of Pakistan[6].' The message was too obvious to be misunderstood by anyone.

As the situation deteriorated with each passing day, Yahya Khan expressed his intention to meet with Sheikh Mujib and discuss matters, but the Sheikh was reported to be reluctant. Some of my friends and colleagues in Karachi who had been watching the unfolding events with deep concern, asked me to go to Dhaka and try to persuade Sheikh Sahib to meet with Yahya Khan and have a frank and forthright talk with him on the situation.

Frankly speaking, I was very pessimistic. The situation in East Pakistan was heading for the point beyond redemption. The Sheikh was not expressly opposed to negotiations but the irony of the situation consisted in an amalgam of several criss-crossing factors. The traditional power holders of Punjab wanted to call it a day and get rid of the Bengalis rather than let them assume power by virtue of their majority in the National Asssembly. But before the final plunge, they wanted to see if the Bengalis could be subdued through the terror of state power and made to 'behave'. Then, there were the industrialists and traders, who had freely indulged in the economic plunder of East Pakistan for so many years. Though they would have much preferred the *status quo* to continue forever, they too were scared of a situation in which Bengali nationalists would come to hold the reins of power. That would spell sure disaster for them. So, they also chose to fall in line with their fellow stake-holders in West Pakistan. Even some of the more decent and rational political elements in West Pakistan also were heard saying in those days that there was no other option left than saying goodbye to the Bengalis!

I may cite an example of the cynicism that marked the mindset of West Pakistani rulers. I went to see Yahya Khan some time before 1970 elections to discuss certan points relating to the conduct of elections in Baluchistan according to the one-man-one-vote principle, which the people of Baluchistan were going to avail for the first time. During the conversation when the issue of East Pakistan came up, the General had this to say: Sooner or later, East Pakistan will have to be amputated. And if at all that is to happen, why let them suck our blood for two or three more years? I was shocked to hear these words coming from the mouth of the President of Pakistan. Who was sucking whose blood, the whole world knew, but not Yahya Khan and his ilk in the ruling junta and their handful of cohorts in East Pakistan.

As Yahya Khan's alarming remarks of the previous year flashed across my mind's eye, I lost the nerve to undertake a visit to East Pakistan in 1971. But I told my friends and comrades who were insisting that I should go:

> *You know all normal communication channels with East Pakistan are snapped. It is also not known in what state of mind and heart the Sheikh might be in these difficult days. At this point in time, for all practical purposes, Sheikh Mujib is not just a political leader of East Pakistan but the most popular national hero of Bengal. If you can think of a way I can establish contact with him, then I may take the chance of going to Dhaka.*

Mr. Muazzam Ali, who owned the Pakistan Press International (PPI) news agency, was also among those who wanted me to go to Dhaka. He said that one of his telex machines

[6] Ibid.

was still working, that he could send a message across to Dhaka. I requested him to send a telex message to Sheikh Mujib that if he deemed it useful, I would like to meet him in Dhaka. Next day, Muazzam Ali brought the Sheikh's reply saying that he would be pleased if I could come to Dhaka and also stayed with him. Now I was left with no option but to leave for Dhaka. Knowing well that nothing would come out of it, I still bought a ticket for Dhaka. Unexpectedly, Wali Khan arrived in Karachi from London the same day. All our friends went to him and pressed him to agree to go to Dhaka with me. I also wanted him to accompany me. Khan Saheb took a snap decision and agreed to our request.

We arrived in Dhaka on 13th March 1971. From the airport we went straight to the residence of our all-time hosts and party comrades Ahmadul Kabir and Laila Kabir. From there we rang up Sheikh Mujib. I told him of our arrival. He was very glad to hear that Wali Khan was also with me. He sounded calm and composed as he said plaintively: 'You both should have stayed with me. You are my guests. And you did not even intimate to me your arrival schedule'. My reply was: 'Ahmadul Kabir's is also not a stranger's house. He is your friend too.' We fixed up our meeting for next day.

Wali Khan and I reached Sheikh Mujib's house at the appointed time on 14th March 1971. He welcomed us with great warmth and affection. As soon as we sat down, I went straight to the purpose of our visit and said to Sheikh Sahib:

> *We expect that you will frankly tell us about your plans, because we are among those in West Pakistan who strongly support your political stand. You have won the elections and power should be transferred to you. If you choose to make a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), you can imagine the enormity of the problems we will have to face.*

On hearing this, Sheikh Saheb became very emotional. Tears welled up in his eyes as he asked:

> *Who is telling whom not to break up Pakistan? You who were associated with the Congress (alluding to our pre-independence association with Indian National Congress) telling me, who was a hard core Muslim Leaguer and rendered sacrifices for the creation of Pakistan? What an irony!*

Wali Khan intervened and in his typical whitty style and reminded the Sheikh:

> *We were then pleading with you not to break India and create Pakistan, but you said you would not rest until you created Pakistan, and you did create it. Now with folded hands we are begging you, please don't break Pakistan, but you say you will break Pakistan. You Muslim Leaguers, past and present varieties, are a special kind of species.*

Finally, we came to the core issue. We told Sheikh Saheb that the situation, as he knew very well, was extremely critical. If he remained indecisive, Pakistan would definitely break up. We tried to drive the point home that he must meet with Yahya Khan and find a way out to ensure transfer of power to him, as it was his and his party's legitimate right by virtue of their comprehensive electoral victory. The men at the helm were utterly incapable of handling the crisis. Sheikh Saheb replied:

I want to tell you that they (Yahya & Company) will not transfer power to me, even if that meant the breakup of Pakistan. Punjab will not allow me to come to power.

We could see that Sheikh Saheb was in a state of deep agony. There was an unmistakable note of sadness in his tone when he said:

I will try but on one condition. You both will remain in Dhaka as long as the talks lasted. One thing more. Now when you leave my house, I will come out with you but will not declare publicly that I am going to meet Yahya Khan.

When he came out with us into the courtyard, there was a large crowd of local and foreign correspondents waiting there. And thousands of people were raising sky-rending slogans of Joye Bangla! After surveying the scene, Shaikh Saheb announced to the waiting journalists that he would meet Yahya Khan. Everyone present there including us heard him in disbelief. When an American correspondent asked him whether he would meet Yahya Khan, only if the General came to his residence like Mr. Bhutto did, Sheikh Saheb's reply was most sensible and politically correct: 'Yahya Khan is the President of the country. I will meet him wherever he suggests'.

The following day, 15th March 1971, Yahya Khan arrived in Dhaka. He invited Wali Khan and me to meet him at the Government House. At the very outset, we made it clear to him that Sheikh Mujib was not thinking of anything like secession. His contention was that his party had won a majority of seats in the National Assembly and democratic norms demanded that power should be transferred to him as leader of the majority party. We told Yahya: 'We believe that Sheikh Mujib is fully justified in his stand. You talk to him personally and satisfy yourself'. Yahya Khan, like Sheikh Mujib, asked me and Wali Khan to remain in Dhaka while the talks went on.

Yahya-Mujib talks begin

Yahya-Mujib talks began from 16th March 1971. Sheikh Sahib made it a point to keep us abreast of the proceedings every day. In the first few days, the talks seemed to proceed rather smoothly. Later on, Yahya Khan asked all the political leaders of West Pakistan to come to Dhaka. They included Mumtaz Daulatana, Sardar Shoukat Hayat, Maulana Noorani, Mufti Mahmud and Qayyum Khan. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto arrived with a retinue of his own who included J.A. Rahim, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Rafi Raza and Mahmud Ali Qasuri (Qasuri had quit NAP and joined PPP). Yahya Khan had also summoned Finance Secretary M.M. Ahmed besides a few others. When Sheikh Mujib came to know this, he expressed his fears that the talks would not progress any further, because Mr. Bhutto and M.M. Ahmed would be there solely for sabotaging the talks.

After arriving in Dhaka, Mr. Bhutto sent a PPP delegation to meet us. It consisted of Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Rafi Raza and one more person. Mr. Bhutto desired that the parties of West Pakistan should try to evolve a common position. We were aware that Mr. Bhutto was there to take care of the interests of West Pakistan's power elite, while also promoting his own political ambitions. His scheme was to sabotage Yahya-Mujib talks if he was denied a share in power. He would prod Yahya Khan to use force to subdue Mujib and his party and in the process strengthen his own bargaining position, no matter if that led to the loss of East Pakistan. We did not accept Mr. Bhutto's suggestion for evolving a 'common position'.

Talks with Yahya Khan proceeded now on a new trajectory. In the beginning he told us that he could transfer power if the conditions of Legal Framework Order (LFO) were fulfilled. Sheikh Mujib suggested that two Assemblies – one consisting of members elected from West Pakistan and the other of members elected from East Pakistan – be convened and asked to prepare their separate draft constitutions, followed by a joint session of the two to draft a federal constitution for the country. Yahya Khan insisted on convening one Assembly. When our opinion was sought, I proposed to General Yahya:

> *Let us not create the impression that we are two separate countries, whose Assemblies are meeting separately to draft separate constitutions. Let there be five Assemblies or better call them five Constitutional Committees (one for each province) to prepare five different draft constitutions. These constitutional committees should then meet in a joint session of the National Assembly to frame the country's federal constitution.*

General Yahya showed a slight inclination towards my suggestion. However, when we met Sheikh Mujib separately that night, he told us that the General's mood was shifting fast and becoming unpredictable. He said:

> *I shall no longer ask for convening of one assembly or two assemblies. I shall demand immediate transfer of power and lifting of martial law. I shall convene the National Assembly as the leader of the majority party. The core issue is the lifting of martial law and transfer of power to my party.*

We conveyed to Yahya Khan Sheikh Mujib's demand to lift martial law and hand over power to him. When we cautioned Yahya that it was not advisable to invite the disintegration of Pakistan by sticking to technicalities, he shot back: 'If your friend Mujib doesn't behave, my army knows how to shoot their way through'. The General had spoken. It was not difficult to read what was going on in his mind. Turning to him, I asked: 'Mr. President, do you really think that the solution to this delicate issue is the military solution, solving it through military force?' His reply strangely was *No*!

When we met Sheikh Mujib on 24th March, he broke the alarming news saying: 'Now it is better that you both leave Dhaka. The army has decided to move against us in the next two days. Your presence here will serve no useful purpose'. Stunned and speechless, we left Sheikh Mujib's house and returned to our place.

General Yahya called all the West Pakistani National Assembly members to the Government House that night. I deliberately did not go. Instead, I went to meet Comrade Moni Singh of the Communist Party to say goodbye. I briefed Comrade Moni Singh about the new developments and asked him what he thought about it all. Comrade's reply was typical of the Marxist that he was:

> *I know only too well that the unfolding changes will not benefit the masses. They are inherently reactionary, but what can one do when the whole Bengali nation has taken the decision? In any case, it involves the question of the national liberation of 7-8 crore Bengalis, which cannot be wished away.*

When I returned to Kabirs' house, Laila was waiting anxiously. She informed me that there had been several phone calls for me from the government house. As we were talking, Wali Khan also returned from the government house. The General had told him that our presence in Dhaka would not be necessary now and offered that Wali Khan and I could travel with him on his flight back to Karachi. Wali Khan had thanked the General but sought his help to buy two tickets, as there was no one in Dhaka to issue PIA tickets. Next day we got our tickets and flew back to Karachi. That was on 25th March 1971.

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It was amazing to find Karachi so ill-informed about what was happening in Dhaka. As we landed at Karachi airport, the waiting newsmen bombarded us with all sorts of odd questions like: what ministries were offered to NAP and so on! Their information was that everything had been settled in Dhaka and the Government formation was in progress! Wali Khan very aptly described the actual situation by using a metaphor: 'You are worried about fixing the nose ring; in Dhaka the whole nose is being chopped off. The question of fixing the ring on the left or the right of the nose doesn't arise. There will be no nose left'. The journalists couldn't believe their ears.

On the night of 25th-26th March 1971, all hell broke loose on Dhaka. The city was on fire. The armed forces had launched their macabre operation against the people of East Pakistan. The mass slaughter was on. In the midst of it all, Mr. Bhutto flew back to Karachi and at the Karachi aiport he broke the 'glad' news to the waiting journalists: 'By the grace of Almighty Allah, Pakistan has at last been saved'.

Misled by such patently incorrect reports, people in West Pakistan, especially in Punjab, began to celebrate their ignorance! On the other hand, one shuddered to imagine the tragic fate of eight crore people of East Pakistan. West Pakistan's dominant ruling elite - *jagirdars*, industrialists, bureaucracy, armed forces and the selfish, power-hungry politicians - had thrown the Bengali nation to the wolves in a loathsome display of the basest form of brutality and selfishness.

Pakistan breaks up

As the Pakistan army launched its barbaric onslaught, gunning down unarmed men, women and children and burning and razing their hearths and homes, it was but natural that the Bengalis in the armed forces, East Pakistan Rifles, the para military forces and the police, would not just stand by and watch the carnage. They rose in revolt. More than 30,000 of them abandoned their camps and fled with all the weapons they could lay their hands on. Many of them dissolved into the vast multitude of the population but a sizeable number of them crossed the border into West Bengal. The defected army officers imparted training to thousands of young Bengalis from among the hundreds of thousands of people who also fled to West Bengal to escape the atrocities of the military. That was how the liberation army called *Mukti Bahini* was born. Obviously they received India's backing. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman chose to stay on in Dhaka. He was arrested and brought to Punjab to be interned and put on trial for treason.

Howsoever dedicated and strongwilled the *Mukhti Bahini* might be, they were obviously no match to the well-trained and well-equipped modern regular army of Pakistan. Through brute force and all-embracing terror, the Pakistan army kept trying in vain to re-

impose control over East Pakistan, but the 8 crore Bengalis, to the last man and woman, had turned into rebels with a cause – freedom.

I do not wish to go into the blood-curdling details of the nine-month long carnage in East Pakistan. Several attempts were made by different quarters to find a political solution to the crisis and bring the brutalities against the people of East Pakistan to an end. Suffice it to say that West Pakistan's power mafia and their handful of cronies in East Pakistan refused to see reason. They were set on a perilous course that would lead only to the disintegration of Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Yahya Khan formed an 'emergency' cabinet with veteran Bengali politician Nurul Amin as Prime Minister. Mr. Bhutto was made the Deputy Prime Minister in order to equip him with the credentials to head a Pakistan delegation to the UN Security Council to present Pakistan's 'case' in the debate on the East Pakistan situation. A last attempt to salvage the situation was made in the Council through a Resolution moved by the Polish delegatation. It is no secret how Mr. Bhutto torpedoed that last chance of rescue by staging an emotion-charged melodrama in the Security Council - tearing up the Polish Resolution and marching out of the meeting!

During our stay in Dhaka, the Soviet Consul General accompanied by a First Secretary, had called on us and in the course of the conversation asked us to pass on the message to our government that if they went for military action in East Pakistan, the country would break up. How could we tell them that the government they were talking about was itself the main culprit in the sordid drama being enacted in East Pakistan?

Eventually, the inevitable happened. Indian forces moved into East Pakistan. In a matter of days, more than 90,000 Pakistani troops including high ranking officers, besides a good number of police and civilian officers were taken prisoner, following one of the most degrading acts of surrender ever by a regular national army. 16th December 1972: East Pakistan passed into history and in its place emerged the independent state of Bangladesh!

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After his 'heroic' diplomatic performance in the Security Council, Mr. Bhutto did not immediately return to Pakistan. The armed forces were no longer in a position to continue ruling the country. They had been discredited in the public eye beyond redemption. Mr. Bhutto waited abroad for the moment of his 'tryst with destiny'. And that moment came on 18th December 1972, when Yahya Khan recalled him from abroad and delivered the reins of power to him on 20th December under the watchful eyes of Gen. Gul Hasan Khan and Air Marshal Rahim Khan. And the battered Pakistani nation witnessed another 'first' in the history of queer political dramatics - a politician assuming power as President and Civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator! As if all that was not enough, the Peoples Party members of the post-Bangladesh 'rump' National Assembly lost no time in endorsing the continuation of martial law and state of emergency in what Mr. Bhutto called 'New Pakistan'! Bhutto's civilian setup was for all practical purposes a continuation of Yahya Khan's military outfit in civilian clothes.

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Chapter 6

The NAP Government in Baluchistan: Trials, Tribulations, and Finally, Dismissal

Political processes in 'new' Pakistan

After the demise of Mr. Jinnah's original Pakistan and the birth of Mr. Bhutto's 'new' Pakistan in December 1971, the leftover 'National Assembly' elected in 1970 had lost its *raison d'etre* as a legitimate representative body. The Pakistan in which that election was held had ceased to exist. No doubt, Peoples Party had emerged as the overall majority party in West Pakistan but the conditions in which 1970 elections were held and the issues raised then were different from what they were in the 'new' Pakistan. Democratic propriety demanded fresh elections, but after taking over as CMLA, Mr. Bhutto did not deem it necessary to take a fresh mandate from the people. He was content with keeping the rump National Assembly, in which his party enjoyed a majority. Having done that, he went ahead with steps to put together a mechanism to govern his 'new' Pakistan.

In his first address to the nation after assuming power on 20th December 1972, Mr. Bhutto expressed his willigness to establish cooperation with NAP. As a starting step, he announced the lifting of the ban imposed by Yahya regime on National Awami Party. Talks were initiated with Wali Khan. Mr. Bhutto offered to induct Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri and Arbab Sikandar Khan Khalil as ministers in the new central government. However, some of the steps that followed gave rise to doubts in the minds of NAP leadership. One was the appointment of prominent Peoples Party leaders as governors in all the four provinces. This did not go well with the NAP leadership, as their party, in alliance with the JUI, had clear majorities in Baluchistan and NWFP assemblies and if party nominees were to be appointed as governors, then these two provinces should have had NAP-JUI nominees as governors.

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The NAP leadership got the impression that Mr. Bhutto did not really want to concede power to the NAP in the two provinces. There were also certain external factors influencing the course of events at the time. The provinces of Baluchistan and NWFP, owing to their special geo-political location, were strategically important to the United States and other western capitalist powers. In the neighbourhood lay oil-rich Iran and Gulf states, besides Afghanistan with its pronounced leaning towards the Soviet Union. The Shah of Iran was in those years playing the role of America's watchdog cop in the Gulf and Middle East region. A substantial part of Baluchistan (about one-third) lay in Iran with the sensitive Gulf of Hormuz being part of it. The Shah of Iran had also been casting a covetous eye on the long stretch of Baluchistan coastline.

The setting was such that the Shah and his western patrons were required to remain in a state of constant alert. To add to their worries, there was now this new problem of a political party with avowed nationalist and anti-imperialist credentials forming its government and

assuming power in Pakistani Baluchistan. It was sure to have its impact felt in Iranian Baluchistan, which was extremely backward and was home to a simmering insurgency against the tyrannical rule of the Shah. Americans were also desirous of setting up military bases in Baluchistan for spying on Soviet Union and in the event of emergency, for intervening in Gulf region and Middle East and blocking Soviet influence from flowing southward. They naturally did not like to see a popular political party with a commitment to promoting people's interests and safeguarding their national rights to come to power in Pakistani Baluchistan. Bhutto also did not try to hide this fact. He was on record as having said openly that the Shah of Iran would not tolerate a NAP government in Baluchistan.

The problem however was that if Mr. Bhutto were to deny power to NAP-JUI in Baluchistan and NWFP according to the 1970 election verdict, he would have no justification under a democratic dispensation to have PPP governments in Sindh and Punjab. It became impossible for him to go on with his see-saw policy indefinitely. Conditions forced him to start formal negotiations with NAP.

Mr. Bhutto was a hard negotiator. As I have stated earlier, he had never wanted to hand over power to NAP nor did his foreign backers wanted it. He deliberately tried to prolong the negotiations and make it harder and harder for the NAP leadership. Perhaps exasperated by Mr. Bhutto's dilatory tactics, NAP President, Wali Khan, entrusted to me the task of conducting further talks with Bhutto. For several months more Mr. Bhutto dilly-dallied, while his handpicked party governors in Baluchistan and NWFP went about establishing PPP's footholds in the two provinces. They were taking various steps to pre-empt the formation of NAP-JUI governments or if at all NAP did succeed in forming the governments, then to ensure that they would not have a smooth sailing.

Mr. Bhutto's delaying tactics: talks go on and on

The talks between me and Mr. Bhutto went on in Islamabad to find a way to resolve the stalemate. Mr. Bhutto had to visit Lahore on some official work for a few days. So he sent Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi to me with the message that if I deemed it all right, I could accompany him (Mr. Bhutto) to Lahore and carry on the talks or I should wait in Islamabad till he returned from Lahore. As the talks had proceeded on a positive track and were already in the concluding stages, I thought it better not to interrupt them. I told Jatoi that I would go to Lahore with Mr. Bhutto. It happened some time in the last week of February 1972.

Next day Jatoi came and took me to the airport. Once on board the President's aircraft, I wasted no time and said to Mr. Bhuitto: 'I could not sort out this problem with you on the ground. I have a feeling that talking while in the air might be more productive'. We began to talk and things turned out precisely as I had foreseen. We concluded our talks on a positive note as the flight approached Lahore. We had drawn the outlines of an agreement. It took four more days in Lahore to formalize the exercise.

Based on the outcome of our talks, detailed discussions took place between PPP and NAP-JUI on drawing up an interim constitution. The PPP team consisted of Mr. Bhutto, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Kausar Niazi, Hayat Sherpao, Rafi Raza and Mustafa Jatoi. NAP was represented by Wali Khan, Arbab Sikandar Khan, Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri and me. Maulana Mufti Mahmood and Maulana Ghulam Ghous Hazarvi represented the JUI. Besides agreeing on the outlines of the interim constitution, the accord signed on 6th March 1972 by Mr. Bhutto, Mr.

Wali Khan and Maulana Mufti Mahmood on behalf of their respective parties at the conclusion of these discussions contained the following points:

1. *The National Assembly would meet briefly to pass the interim constitution and pass a vote of confidence in the central government.*
2. *The National Assembly would, in the same session, approve the continuation of martial law till August 14, 1972; (NAP-JUI's understanding was that they were not bound to support the continuation of martial law).*
3. *The National Assembly would appoint a House Committee to draft the permanent constitution and after 14th August 1972, the Assembly would act both as a constitution-making and legislative body.*
4. *It was agreed that in Baluchistan and NWFP, the majority parties were NAP-JUI and they would be entitled to form the governments. During the interim period, the governors in these two provinces would be appointed in consultation with the NAP and JUI.*

Signing of the 6th March accord did not however turn out to be the happy ending of the process of conciliation that Mr. Bhutto had initiated when he had announced his desire to develop a relationship of cooperation and understanding with NAP. Mr. Bhutto's policy of prevarication on formulating a clear cut policy towards NAP was at work for several more weeks. During this period one or other new issue would shoot up from nowhere resulting in an exchange of letters between Mr. Bhutto's close aides on the one hand and Wali Khan and me on the other, before we finally began to move towards positive results.

In this context, the following passage from what could be termed a 'post mortem' report captioned: 'After Baluchistan, What?', published in a prestigious economic journal of Karachi, four months after the dismissal of the NAP-JUI Government in February 1973, should prove to be an enlightening piece of information to the reader:

> The delay in allowing NAP ministries to take office after the PPP formed its ministries in the two eastern provinces (Punjab and Sindh) dissipated the gain; the bickerings that accompanied the talk of confrontation in January, February and March 1972 (before and after the famous 'agreements') left a very bad taste in the mouth. The exchanges over the question of Governors added to the fund of illwill that has gone on increasing since. And in retrospect it seems that the original desire to do a deal with the NAP was no more than a time-buying tactic dictated by the fluidity of the situation.[7]

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As to the choice of Governor of Baluchistan, my personal view was that Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri would be the most appropriate choice. Nawab Marri as Governor and Sardar Ataullah Mengal as Chief Minister, in my opinion, would be the ideal combination in the given situation in Baluchistan. I was in those days the President of Baluchistan NAP. I wanted to stay on as President of the party, as I would be more useful and effective in that capacity. However, Nawab Khair Bakhsh did not agree. He insisted that I should be the Governor. This 'in-house' discord in our camp prevented us from conveying our choice of Governor to Mr. Bhutto before his scheduled state visit to China. When I met Bhutto along with Nawab Khair Bakhsh and Sardar Ataullah on the eve of his departure for China, I suggested to him to leave the question of choosing the governors of Baluchistan and NWFP to NAP. Mr. Bhutto reminded

[7] Pakistan Economist, Karachi, 9th June 1973.

us of his prerogative as President of the country to appoint governors of his choice. I answered that we were aware of the President's powers in this regard but if he left this decision on us, it would help to foster a climate of better understanding and cooperaton between us in the days to come. Mr. Bhutto said he would give us a reply on his return from China.

After returning from China, Mr. Bhutto sent me a message that he would concede the right to appoint the governors to us but that should not be taken to mean that he was giving up his prerogative as President in the choice of governors. He was doing it 'in order to create a friendly climate for the smooth functioning of the governments and it should be regarded as a concession from him'. He said he would fix an early date for Wali Khan, Ataullah and me to meet him in Islamabad.

The NAP-JUI governments take oath

Subsequently we met Mr. Bhutto in Islamabad. He asked us what we had decided about the governors.

Before I could answer, Khair Bakhsh interjected and said: 'From Baluchistan we have decided on Bizenjo as Governor and about NWFP Wali Khan will tell you'. Ataullah sitting next to me whispered in my ear to keep quiet to avoid unnecessary unpleasantness. Wali Khan proposed the names of Ghulam Farooq Khan and Arbab Sikandar Khan Khalil. All of us agreed on Arbab Sikandar Khan.

On 28th April 1972, Bhutto administered oath of office to Arbab Sikandar Khan Khalil and me as governors of NWFP and Baluchistan respectively at the Governor's House, Karachi. I arrived in Quetta as Governor of Baluchistan on 29th April 1972. The Baluchistan Provincial Assembly met on 30th April 1972. The NAP-JUI governments in Baluchistan and NWFP, headed by Sardar Ataullah Mengal and Maulana Mufti Mahmood respectively, took office on 1st May 1972.

In Quetta, the occasion was celebrated as a very special one, it being the first time that a government elected by the people was coming to power in Baluchistan. NAP, BSO and PSF workers were jubiliant. They made it all the more memorable by synchronizing it with a public meeting to mark International Labour Day (May Day), the international day of the working class. Besides NAP, BSO and PSF activists from other parts of Baluchistan and outside Baluchistan, a large number of progressive political activists and sympathizers had come from all parts of the country including Punjab to express their solidarity with Baluchistan NAP. Our dear friend and comrade Habib Jalib was there as our special guest. Jalib electrified the huge audience by reciting his popular poems in his own inimitable style. There was a fresh air of hope and expectation everywhere. Quetta was in the process of transforming itself to a haven of progressive intellectuals – poets, writers, educationists, lawyers, doctors, labour leaders and political workers and human rights and peace activists from all over Pakistan!

As I mentioned earlier, having to co-exist with a NAP government in Baluchistan where his party could not win a single seat, was not palatable to the arrogant feudal mindset of Mr. Bhutto. Nor was a political government with known anti-imperialist credentials functioning in the close vicinity of Iran and the Gulf region acceptable to the Shah of Iran or his western imperialist handlers. The Shah of Iran apprehended that the coming to power of a progressive nationalist party like NAP in Pakistani Baluchistan would inspire the Iranian

Baluch to step up their on-going resistance against his imperial tyranny. The western powers were allergic to it because they perceived it as pro-Soviet and anti-West and therefore could not digest the fact of it coming to power in such a strategically important and sensitive region.

Visit of Iran's Princess Ashraf PehlaviA couple of weeks before NAP formed the government in Baluchistan, there had been widespread anti Iran protests throughout Baluchistan and the Baluch-populated areas of Karachi to condemn the atrocities of Shah's regime in Iranian Baluchistan. Portraits of the Shah displayed at the Iranian Cultural Centre and in the restaurants owned by Iranis were torn up and burnt. There were large scale arrests following these incidents. Most of those arrested were either NAP workers or BSO activists.

Mr. Bhutto was not unaware of the anti-Iran feelings prevailing in the city. Our government was yet to settle down to work. Neverthless, Mr. Bhutto deemed it appropriate and safe to invite the high profile sister of Shah of Iran, Princess Ashraf Pehlavi to pay a goodwill visit to Baluchistan! The apparent purpose in my opinion was to show that the Shah was popular in all parts of the country including Baluchistan and that there was no ill-will against Iran anywhere. However, in our view the conditions in Quetta were certainly not ideal for such a visit, so soon after the public display of strong anti-Iran feelings.

Mr. Bhutto called me and Chief Minister Sardar Ataullah to Rawalpindi for a meeting to discuss the pre-requisites for the royal visit. We met Mr. Bhutto on 13th May 1972. There we came to know that the Princess would be flying from Tehran direct to Quetta. Given the background I have just described, this was like throwing a challenge to our government and the NAP-JUI leadership. We decided to accept the challenge. As the President of Pakistan had already extended the invitation and the Iranian Princess had accepted it, our government could not say no; more so, as the traditional hospitality of the people of Baluchistan demanded of us to welcome our guest and extend full honour and respect to her.

As Sardar Ataullah and I were flying back to Quetta after our meeting with Mr. Bhutto, we had the feeling that Mr. Bhutto was deliberately confronting us with a *fait accompli* by inviting the Princess to fly direct from Tehran to Quetta instead of the usual practice of such high profile visitors first arriving in the country's capital and then visiting other places. He was putting our 14-days old government to a severe test. Seen from a negative angle, any mishap during the royal visit could be blamed on our government's incompetence or even complicity!

As an aside, it may interest the readers to know that the Governor and Chief Minister of Baluchistan had no place to stay during their first official visit to the capital. After spending some time here and there, we were installed at Bachan Niwas, the palatial bungalow of a very wealthy Sikh gentleman who had migrated to India. By the way, this was the same Bachan Niwas which later became the official residence of Fazal Elahi Choudhry as the President of Pakistan. The huge palace complex appeared to have remained unoccupied for long and was in a state of disrepair but a couple of rooms were hastily cleaned up and made ready for us. We were told by some of the persons employed there that a very important minister in General Yahya Khan's Government, who is credited with inventing the term 'Ideology of Pakistan' stayed in this palace for some months and during his stay, some of its most highly priced carpets, rare paintings, antiques, wooden carvings and furnitures were shifted to the Minister's personal bungalow and never came back!

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When I took over as Governor, I had urged Mr. Bhutto to to set free all the BSO and NAP activists who had been put in jail following the anti-Iran disturbances. Subsequently, all of them were released. Prior to the arrival of the Princess, NAP workers and BSO activists were fully sensitized by their respective leaderships on their moral and social responsibility as hosts, to ensure that the vist of the Princess, who was their guest in Quetta, passed smoothly.

*****

President Bhutto arrived in Quetta on 17th May 1972. The entire federal cabinet besides the governors of the four provinces along with their official retinues also arrived in Quetta at Mr. Bhutto's bidding. As Mr. Bhutto did not trust the Baluchistan Government, he had asked his party leaders and ministers to bring large contingents of party workers from other provinces to Quetta, without our prior knowledge, to be present in the city during the Princess' visit, particularly in the public meeting which was scheduled for the second day of the visit. Qayyum Khan had brought with him his forty-man armed *lashkar* from the NWFP.

Princess Pehlavi was accorded a warm welcome as she flew into Quetta on 19th May 1972. Apart from other functions in her honour arranged by the Iranian Consulate General and meetings with President Bhutto and his cabinet and Baluchistan Government leaders, President Bhutto hosted a banquet in her honour at the Governor House on the night of 20th May 1972.

The guests had just taken their seats and were waiting for the President and the Princess to join them, when there was a loud uproar at the main gate of the building. As I got up from my seat and prepared to go to the gate to see what was happening, Sardar Ataullah and Nawab Khair Bakhsh stopped me saying that they would go and find out what the matter was. Moments later, Sardar Ataullah returned and told me that there was an angry crowd at the gate carrying the dead body of a young man who had been killed in firing by Qayyum Khan's men. The crowd consisting of a large number of Baluch and Pakhtun students and youth was in a highly agitated mood. So, I went myself to the gate, had it opened, walked upto the crowd and said to them:

> *In view of the sensitivity of the occasion, I give you two options. You choose and I will act accordingly. First option: take the body to the hospital for post mortem, file an FIR, disperse and go home peacefully. We will take care of everything else tomorrow morning. The second option is: I will not go back to the governor house but will join your protest right away. Now you tell me what I should do. And also remember. If you agree to disperse, then the scheduled public meeting will take place tomorrow and you will not stage any protest.*
>
> The demonstrators decided to disperse peacefully and headed for the hospital with the body.

Here let me make a minor digression to explain what was happening in the city during the day. While the PPP workers who came from other provinces kept a low profile, Qayyum's men drove round the city on trucks decked with banners and Muslim League flags and raising all sorts of provocative slogans against NAP. They also resorted to indiscriminate aerial firing, as if they were celebrating the conquest of the city of Quetta. A young auto

rikshaw driver Mohsin Kansi, a supporter of NAP, was killed and scores of others were injured in the shooting spree but surprisingly the police did not report the incident to the Chief Minister or to me. We were kept in the dark about what was going on in the city. Qayyum Khan was the Central Interior Minister and almost all the senior police officers in Baluchistan were also nominees or appointees of the Centre. Even otherwise, the bureaucracy and police, who belonged mostly to Punjab and NWFP, were hostile towards the NAP government.

On returning to the reception, I asked the IG Police who was present there why he did not report that Qayyum Khan's hooligans were indulging in acts of lawlessness in the city for the last several hours and a person had been killed. The IGP replied that he knew nothing about it. I couldn't believe my ears. I summarily suspended him and asked him to leave the reception. Then I turned to Qayyum Khan and asked him to hand over his 40 miscreants with their weapons to the police within an hour; otherwise, no matter if he was the Interior Minister, I would order him handcuffed right there and send him to jail. Hearing this, all the federal ministers and the governors of Sindh and Punjab rushed to Bhutto who was still inside the Governor House, to seek his intervention. Bhutto was reported to have told his ministers:

> *I know Bizenjo. He will do exactly what he said to Qayyum Khan. Better accept his demand and surrender the men. The other option is that I order the army to arrest the Governor of Baluchistan in the Governor's House and ask them to take control of the city of Quetta. Naturally, in the presence of our guest Princess Pehlavi, that would be the worst thing to do. Now the choice is yours.*

Obviously they had no choice. Qayyum Khan surrendered the men to the Baluchistan authorities. Dinner was served in an atmosphere of extreme tension.

Next day the entire government and political leadership of NAP including those who had come from NWFP and other parts of the country took part in the funeral of rikshaw driver Mohsin Kansi who was killed in the firing incident the previous day. The anger of the party workers and student activists had subsided to a great extent, following the swift action we took in arresting Qayyum's hooligans.

President Bhutto was worried about the fate of the public meeting that was to take place in the afternoon of 21st May. We assured him that the NAP workers and BSO and PSF leadership were conscious of their responsibility and would do nothing to embarrass the government or the Iranian guest. I had issued a public statement on 20th evening through the media, appealing to the people of Baluchistan to participate in large numbers in the public meeting being addressed by President Bhutto and Princess Pehlavi. I further said in the statement that I expected every individual living in the province to once again revive our centuries-old traditions of hospitality[8].

It was a big public meeting. Liaquat Bagh was full to capacity. NAP, BSO and PSF leaders and members were there in full force. They made sure that nothing went wrong. The crowd listened to the speeches and applauded. Mr. Bhutto was relieved beyond description. All credit to the people of Quetta, especially the NAP, BSO and PSF members, who strictly observed the directive of their elected government and kept their anti-Iran feelings under

[8] This statement was published in daily DAWN, Karachi, 21 May 1972.

the wraps, in spite of the grave provocations of the previous day.

After the departure of Ashraf Pehlavi for Tehran and President Bhutto for Islamabad, Peoples Party's *lashkars* also left Quetta, but Qayyum's forty ruffians remained in jail.

Reforms in Baluchistan

Soon after assuming power in Baluchistan, NAP Government proceeded to introduce important reforms in various sectors:

On behalf of NAP, Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri, who had been elected as Provincial NAP President after I became Governor, moved a resolution in the provincial assembly, recommending the abolition of *sardari* system. Chief Minister Sardar Ataullah Mengal seconded the resolution. A handful of independent MPAs sitting in the opposition, who had a rapport with the PPP leadership, opposed it. It may be relevant to mention here that, notwithstanding his loud claims about Islamic socialism and people's power, Mr. Bhutto did not favour this NAP initiative to abolish the *sardari* system. However, when put to vote, the resolution was passed by a two thirds majority of MPAs. Since the British days, the *sardari* system was a subject under central government's domain and the provincial government could not abolish it on its own. Therefore, the resolution was forwarded to the federal government with a stong recommendation for its speedy endorsement and implementation. However, the federal government chose to sit over it and in the end consigned it to the cold storage.

Various other proposals were made, the most salient of which are listed below:

- Proposals were drawn up for introducing land reforms in the province, along with the rehabilitation and settlement of the nomads and provision of land to them.
- Proposals were invited for the exploration, exploitation and appropriation of Baluchistan's minerals and other natural resources and to put a stop to their destruction due to callousness of those who had a private monopoly over the mining sector. An ordinance to acquire mining concessions for public purposes and public rights was promulgated.
- Land revenue on *zamindaris* of less than 12 acres and grazing tax were abolished.
- Land taxes on the *zamindaris* of Zamran region were written off.
- An extensive survey was launched to identify all possible venues for the province's development and a new structural framework for development was designed.
- All prisoners were granted 2 months' remission per year of imprisonment and the period they had spent in jail prior to the pronouncement of judgement was also credited in their favour. Consequently, the jails of Baluchistan became short of inmates.
- The press was freed from all curbs and restraints. For nine months the press in Baluchistan enjoyed such freedom as had never been witnessed in any part of the country before.
- Urdu was declared as official language of Baluchistan. The reasons for this step are explained in a later chapter.
- Baluchistan literally became an island of freedom in a sea of political inequalities and injustices.

The central government's attempts at subverting the NAP government

Mr. Bhutto was hell bent on subverting the NAP government and getting rid of it as early as possible. His central government began to prepare the ground, step by step, so that when it would finally take the extreme step of dismissing the 'bad' NAP-JUI government, the people

would hail it! That was the calculation: to pre-empt public protest, to make the people believe that such an unpleasant step had become inevitable. Mr. Bhutto did not foresee that the removal of the NAP-JUI government nine months after it was formed would not only prove disastrous for Baluchistan but would prove suicidal for himself as it would lead eventually to his own undoing and eventual execution at the hands of a military dictator.

Expulsion of non-Baluchistani employees

The issue of the expulsion of non-Baluchistani employees was intentionally made controversial by interested quarters at the center and in the Punjab in an obvious bid to malign the Baluchistan Government and the NAP. It calls for some clarification. The facts were as follows:

When the One Unit was dismantled in 1970 and West Pakistan government ceased to exist, thousands of 'surplus' government employees belonging to different units were sent to Baluchistan and posted in different government departments. Though it was explicitly written in the One Unit Dissolution Act that all such employees would later on be sent back to their respective provinces of origin, they were still working in these departments when NAP-JUI government came to power. Their continued presence blocked the process of appointments and promotions of Baluchistanis on government posts. The youth passing out from the colleges were robbed of their legitimate right to employment in their own province.

Since the days of General Riaz as Governor, local people in general and Baluchistani government employees in particular had been expressing their grievance against the denial of their legitimate right to employment and promotion in their own province. The country was under martial law and no one wanted to listen. There was no change in the situation even during the General's successor and PPP nominee Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Raisani's tenure as Governor. When I took over as Governor and NAP formed the government, public expectations and pressure increased manifold. It was obvious that the government of a political party with roots in the masses could not afford to brush aside such legitimate popular demands, as martial law regimes had been doing with impunity.

I suggested to Mr. Bhutto that we should find a rational solution of this problem and offered three options:

1. In compliance with the provisions of the Dissolution of One Unit Act, all non-Baluchistani employees working in Baluchistan government departments be sent back to their respective provinces of original domicile.
2. Same number of jobs as presently held in Baluchistan by personnel belonging to another province be offered to Baluchistanis in that particular province in the same ranks, positions and with same benefits etc.
3. The amount equal to what the government of Baluchistan is spending on non-Baluchistani employees working in its departments may be re-imbursed to Baluchistan government in order to enable it to generate employment opportunities for its own rising number of jobless youth.

Various aspects of this issue were discussed threadbare in three consecutive Governors' conferences, held during the months of June-July 1972. All the meetings were chaired by President Bhutto himself. It was finally decided that the surplus employees, in

whichever province they were then employed, shall be sent back to their original provinces of domicile. Subsequently, the provincial chief secretaries in their meeting in Quetta decided that these employees from different groups would be sent back to their home provinces in four batches with a three months' gap between each batch. The first batch from Baluchistan was sent back to NWFP, as NAP-JUI coalition governments were in power in both the provinces and the other provinces would not feel discriminated against when they would receive their share of repatriates.

Just then, like a bolt from the blue came a public announcement by the Governor of Punjab Ghulam Mustafa Khar that if all the employees originally belonging to Punjab did not return to the province within one month, Punjab governemnt would not be in a position to take back any of them thereafter.** I strongly protested at this arbitrary action of the Punjab Governor. We regarded it as a glaring violation of the parameters set by the meetings of both the governors and the chief secretaries of all the provinces. We could not have, by any stretch of imagination, filled in such short time the gap that would be left by the abrupt departure of all the Punjabi employees in one go. For fear of being left in the lurch if they failed to get back to their province before the deadline expired, the Punjabi employees insisted on leaving Baluchistan immediately. They started saying that they were getting jobs in their home province and 'their' Governor was calling them!

In a telephonic conversation, I frankly told Mr. Bhutto: 'The Punjab Governor could not have taken this rash and foolhardy step without a nod from you. It exposes the lurking hostility of the Central Government towards the NAP government. The Centre wants to cripple the Baluchistan government'. In reply Mr. Bhutto expressed his helplessness, saying that he could not pressurize his Punjab Governor! Incredible, isn't it? President of Pakistan & Chief Martial Law Administrator Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto could not pressurize Governor Mustafa Khar of the province of Punjab!

Chief Minister Mengal himself summoned the police force of Punjabi origin and held out the assurance to them that if the Punjab government failed to give them jobs when they went back to their province, the Baluchistan government would keep them in its employment, with all their legitimate rights guaranteed. But that attempt too failed. In the end, we were forced to send back thousands of such employees to Punjab to meet the deadline just to satisfy the feudal ego of the Governor of Punjab. Instead of filling the gap gradually in a year or a year and a half as we had planned, we were forced to do it in the short span of two to three months. Obviously, it put a heavy strain on the working of Baluchistan administration. Later, this unwholesome episode was given a nasty politial twist and misused, to accuse the Baluchistan government of pursuing an anti-Punjabi policy. This shortsighted approach was to lead before long to pernicious consequences for inter-provincial relations and for the stability of the federal structure of the country.

Let me re-iterate that only those persons, who belonged to Punjab and were brought to Baluchistan and employed in different government departments as part of the One Unit dissolution scheme, were sent back to Punjab. The Punjabis, who were settlers in the province and were Baluchistanis, stayed on in their jobs undisturbed, so much so that the bureaucrat who worked as Governor's Secretary, the Comptroller of Governor House, the Private Secretary of the Chief Minister and several others in key positions were Punjabis and so were hundreds of other senior and junior employees. They remained in Baluchistan because they were Baluchistanis.

The Pat Feeder incident

- The much-trumpeted Pat Feeder incident was also one of the several such charades, very ingeniously orchestrated by the central government through its henchmen in the province to slander the Baluchistan government. Let me explain.
- According to certain reports, some ethnic Punjabis, with the blessings of Governor Baluchistan, Nawab Raisani, and after making a payment of sorts, had acquired lands in the Pat Feeder area. They were also provided with local *haris* to work on the land. That it was not a simple land transaction but was designed for a sinister purpose was revealed by later developments. The central government devised a dubious plan to take back these Pat Feeder lands from the Punjabi owners. The plan was to be executed in such a manner that if and when NAP managed to form the government, it would be seen as being responsible for the forcible ouster of the Punjabi owners.
- The local *haris* were incited to occupy the lands, but they were not strong enough to undertake the task on their own. The winter season had set in. Marri tribesmen had started their seasonal migration from the cold mountain areas down to Kachhi and further down to Sindh, looking for grazing grounds for their herds. A deal was struck with one such group of Marris that if they helped the *haris* to occupy the lands, they would be allowed to keep a part of the lands. Tempted by the offer, the Marris acceptd it and launched a sudden attack on the villages of Punjabi settlers. One person was killed. This incident was magnified and projected as an 'attack' by the Marris on the Punjabis at the instigation of Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri! It was made to look as if it was part of an anti-Punjabi conspiracy hatched by NAP and the Baluchistan government.

The Chief Minister and I were on a tour of Lasbela. The Chief Secretary and the militia he sent to Pat Feeder were both Punjabis. I was informed and Mr. Bhutto with whom I spoke on phone also told me that 'many' Punjabis had been killed and 'several' villages destroyed, that Marris had carried away Punjabi women and so on. When Bhutto told me about women having been taken away by the Marris, I got the cue. I did not need any more evidence to be convinced that it was a crudely concocted story. Baluch tribesmen attacking and kidnapping women militated against their age-old traditions, which they have religiously observed throughout history. I instructed the Chief Secretary not to use the armed forces at any cost and requested Nawab Khair Bakhsh to go to Pat Feeder personally and handle the situation. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister and I decided to go on with our tour.

A few days later, I left for Karachi to attend a governors' conference. By then the situation had cleared up a little. It was confirmed that only one person had been killed and the rest of the story was fake. After Nawab Khair Bakhsh managed to get the Marris out of the area, we made investigations and a very interesting fact came to light. General Akbar Khan, who was then advisor to President Bhutto on national security, had also been to Pat Feeder area on 6th October 1972. He had reportedly pulled up the army officers for not obeying orders when they were called in and for not taking action. 'Not taking action' implicitly meant why they did not attack the Marris. In a nutshell, the plan was: the army should attack the Marris and the Marris would certainly retaliate and thus a state of confrontation would ensue, which could then be used as yet another piece of 'evidence' against the Baluchistan government.

The antics of Salim Bugti

Nawab Akbar Bugti's eldest son Salim Bugti was the leading actor in a bizarre incident in Quetta. Nawab's younger brother, Mir Ahmed Nawaz Bugti had been elected to the provincial assembly as an independent member. He, along with two other independent members, later on joined the NAP parliamentary group, raising the latter's strength to more than two-thirds. Subsequently, Mir Ahmed Nawaz was appointed as Finance Minister in the NAP-JUI government. Salim Bugti went with a contingent of armed Bugti tribesmen to the Baluchistan Secretariat and demanded that Ahmed Nawaz should resign from the government. Thanks to the tactful handling of the situation by Mir Ahmed Nawaz, an ugly confrontation with law enforcing authorities at the Secretaiat was averted.

I was in Islamabad in response to a call from President Bhutto. I think Chief Minister Sardar Ataullah was in Karachi apparently attending a chief ministers' conference. I received a telephone message from Sardar Ataullah through the Secretary of Governor Sindh, to inform me that Baluchistan Chief Secretary had ordered a siege of the Bugti House in Quetta where Salim Bugti and his armed men had taken positions around the house and on the roof, after withdrawing from the Secretariat. I immediately called the Chief Secretary and directed him not to take any action against Salim, whatever the provocation, and to ask the forces to remain at a distance from the Bugti House. I strictly warned the Chief Secretary that at no cost should the forces violate the sanctity of the house. The Chief Secretary obeyed my instructions. The forces were withdrawn and redeployed at a respectable distance from the house, so that if Salim and his armed Bugtis came out again to intrude into the Secretariat or to cause trouble in the city, they could be taken into custody. The standoff continued for a couple of days as the Bugtis indulged in provocative gimmicks on the roof of Bugti House. Eventually they dispersed without any untoward incident.

The London Plan

A strident propaganda campaign was launched in the print and electronic media about a so-called conspiracy being hatched in London by the NAP leaders and others to break up Pakistan. The campaign reached its pitch between 5th and 13th September 1972. Actually, Chief Minister Sardar Ataullah and Ahmed Nawaz Bugti were in London in those days for medical check up and had informal social interaction with some other opposition politicians who too happened to be there. Khan Abdul Wali Khan was also in London in connection with his eye treatment. Their presence in London was used by the conspiracy theorists in Islamabad to weave the story of the London Plan! As different circles in the country and abroad started questioning the veracity of the propaganda, President Bhutto deemed it necessary to order an end to the publicity of the London Plan!

The 'secret' of Russian arms in the Iraqi embassy

In January 1973, the national press carried sensational reports of a raid by security forces on the Iraqi embassy in Islamabad and the seizure of a large stock of Russian arms. President Bhutto and his drum-beaters in the central government immediately started to claim that the arms were destined for Baluchistan but were intercepted in Islamabad by the authorities. Around the same time, Nawab Akbar Bugti, who had been living abroad, returned to the country and began to make public statements from Punjab (where he chose to stay after his return instead of coming to Baluchistan), claiming to be in the know of anti-Pakistan 'plots' being hatched in London by NAP leaders and their 'secret' links with Baghdad etc. Obviously,

he had the blessings of the ruling establishment in Islamabad. The intention was quite clear - to implicate the NAP leadership and Government of Baluchistan.

The 'seized Iraqi arms' were first put on public display in the capital and later carried across the length and breadth of the country on special trains with great fan fare. The nation was treated to an elaborate and expensive demonstration of the vilest form of propaganda designed to malign the NAP leadership and Government of Baluchistan. The national press with great gusto published spicy stories based on the lies churned out from Islamabad. And the elitist quarters in Punjab, who considered themselves the guardians of Punjabi settlers in Baluchistan, lost no time in blowing the doomsday bugle. No one bothered to reflect why NAP, which was in power in Baluchistan, would want to use such a long and circutous route via the Iraqi embassy in far away Islamabad to smuggle so-called Russian weapons into Baluchistan, when they had the 900-mile long Makran sea coast with small ports, in addition to nearby Karachi harbour, available for safely executing such a secretive enterprise? A mind-boggling concoction, is it not?

I first heard the story in a train at the Lahore railway station where some journalists had come to see me. I was on my way to Islamabad. I told them that it was yet another piece of mischief meant to defame NAP leadership and government. It seemed that these weapons had been brought clandestinely to Islamabad for some odd purpose, which Mr. Bhutto should certainly have been aware of. Somehow the secret leaked out and the easiest way to cover up the botched mission was to use the NAP and Baluchistan government as the scapegoats!

The Shashik controversy

Shashik (one-sixth) is one of the forms of economic relationships between the land owner and the tiller in parts of Baluchistan. It is similar to the *batai* system in Punjab and other parts of the country. Under this system, the owner takes 1/6th of the produce (harvest) from the tiller as his share. It is not necessarily 1/6th everywhere but ranges between 1/20th in certain places to one half in others. But, over the years, *shashik* became the common name for the share (*batai*) taken by the landowners irrespective of the ratio. In Punjab and other areas the *batai,* the owner's share, is one half; the other half going to the peasant.

It was amazing that Mr. Bhutto himself and other landowners like him in Sindh and Punjab used to take one half (50%) as *batai* from the tenant and that was considered perfectly just. But when it came to Baluchistan where the landowner was taking one-sixth (i.e.16%) or even less, it was labeled as *sardari tax* and so on and condemned as exploitation of the peasant by the *sardar*!

A fact that is lost sight of in the plethora of misconceptions about Baluch society is that never in the history of the Baluch people was the *sardar* of a tribe entitled to any formal tax or other impost from the land. It needs to be clarified that in a tribe there is only one *sardar* but there can be hundreds of landlords in that same tribe. The *shashik* (one-sixth) is taken from the *bazgar* by the landlord and not by the *sardar*.

Whatever I have said about *Shashik* is not to be taken as justifying landlordism, feudalism or taxing the tiller in any form by the landowner. My view was and is that until and unless the system of *zamindari* (landlordism) is abolished through the introduction of meaningful land reforms, *batai* (sharing), by whatever name you may call it, is going to survive

in one form or other. I am discussing this issue here in the context of the manner in which it has been misused by the central government and PPP leadership to single out Baluchistan for censure. Their motive was not protection of the interests of the *bazgar* (the landless peasant) but the destabilisation of the NAP government.
I told Mr. Bhutto:

> Please don't incite the people to fight among themselves for no rhyme or reason. If you are really sincere in your love for the kissans and bazgars, then go ahead and abolish the private ownership of land. If you are not ready for that, then do one thing: Let the government take over all the shashaki lands with or without compensation and distribute such lands among the kissans. We will fully support you. If the zamindars create trouble, the Baluchistan government will take care of them. But, in the given situation, if you pit the zamindars and kissans against each other, you will only create a lot of chaos and even bloodshed. The people of Baluchistan have yet to extricate themselves from the cobweb of centuries-old tribalist norms.

But Mr. Bhutto was not interested in such advice. His pre-determined plan was to create as many pretexts as possible to move against the NAP-JUI government in Baluchistan. So, he went on playing to his own tune.

It pains me to say that this *shashik* controversy has, as I am writing this, already claimed a number of lives in Baluchistan. No one can predict how many more will have to die, or how long this totally uncalled for mayhem will go on. Neither do the people manning the central government understand this problem nor do they have the will to face the *zamindars* and *kissans* with a viable proposition to resolve it. Recently Mr. Abdul Karim Bizenjo, a high-profile *muatabir* (chieftain) of one section of the Bizenjo tribe (who was a kingpin of the Bhutto-PPP-sponsored anti-*shashik* movement in Baluchistan) and his nephew were killed by another section of the Bizenjo tribe, whose *kissans* were Karim's people.

The language issue
NAP government's alleged failure to declare Baluchi as the official language of Baluchistan was a target of criticism in certain circles. Don't forget that Baluchi language is not a developed language like Sindhi or Bengali. It is still in its very early, almost infant stage of evolution. Obviously, in its present condition of development, the Baluchi language could not have served as the official language of the province.

Let me elaborate. When the British came to Kalat-Baluchistan, they replaced the then-prevailing official language, Persian, with Urdu. Since then, Urdu had been the official language of KalatBaluchistan. In Sindh, where Sindhi was a fairly developed language, the British replaced Persian with Sindhi and until the British left the subcontinent, Sindhi continued to be the official language of Sindh.

The language which the people of Baluchistan were conversant with and which was in use outside Baluchistan also, was Urdu. Besides, the majority of government employees in Baluchistan had no command over English. The official directives in English, sent from the Secretariat to remote administrative centers of the sprawling province, could not be read and understood by the local employees – government functionaries. So, in my capacity of Governor Baluchistan, I issued an order that while Baluchi will be eventually be the official

language of Baluchistan, until it is developed and is able to meet the requirements as official language, Urdu shall be the official language of Baluchistan in place of English.

After NAP came to power, the Baluchistan government began to pay special attention to this issue. Obviously, very little could be done in the short period of just over nine months it remained in power, most of the time engaged in warding off covert and overt attempts to paralyse and bring it down. Yet, preliminary steps were taken: books/manuals were compiled on choosing the appropriate script and alphabets and proposals for the training of teachers and so on were considered in depth.

Nevertheless, our Sindhi brothers and also Mr. Bhutto thought that we were creating difficulties for them in Sindh by replacing English with Urdu as official language, but what I did was precisely what Baluchistan required and could afford at that point in time.

The Lasbela episode

The Lasbela episode (January 1973) was the last nail in the coffin of interprovincial harmony and democracy in Mr. Bhutto's new Pakistan. It was used as the final pretext to dismiss the first elected government of the people of Baluchistan at a time when it enjoyed the support of a majority of more than two-thirds of the members of the Assembly.This calls for elucidation.

With a tacit nod from Mr. Bhutto, arms were distributed among Jamote tribesmen via Jam Ghulam Qadir Khan of Lasbela. Ghulam Qadir's son Jam Yusuf was in those days living outside Baluchistan, as a warrant for his arrest had been issued by the Baluchistan government. Despite knowing that he would be arrested if he entered Baluchistan, Jam Yusuf, accompanied by Baluchistan PPP President Amanullah Gichki, entered Baluchistan and was taken into custody.

This whole exercise was part of a larger plan scripted by Mr. Bhutto and enacted through Interior Minister Qayyum Khan, to create widespread unrest in Lasbela. Jam Yusuf's arrest naturally caused some resentment among the Jamote tribesmen. It came handy as the stimulus to spur the already fully armed Jamote tribesmen to action. They set about indulging in acts of lawlessness, cutting off telephone and power transmission lines and threatened that they would break the Lasbela jail and free Jam Yusuf by force. As there was no government force available in Lasbela, the militia was called in but the militia officers said that they were not in a position to pursue the miscreants. At the militia's refusal to intervene, the Chief Minister who was present in Lasbela sought the help of citizens from the neighbourhood. In view of the precarious situation, the Commander of the Baluchistan *Dehi* (rural) police was also summoned to Lasbela with instructions to bring his men along, though they were still going through the training process. The central Government and Jam Lasbela who had planned to create a rebellion-like situation in Lasbela saw that their game had misfired and the miscreants would soon be on the run.

So, they decided to change their strategy. Mr. Bhutto called me to Lahore for urgent consultations. As I was to learn later while I was on my way to Lahore, General Tikka Khan had ordered the army into Lasbela to confront the Baluchistan *Dehi* police force, which the constitutional government of Baluchistan had deployed in the area to quell the subversive activities of Jamote tribesmen.

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I arrived in Lahore and went straight to the Governor House where Mr. Bhutto had convened a cabinet meeting. I was intrigued to find the army chief General Tikka Khan present there, obviously indicating that something fishy was being cooked. As the meeting began, Bhutto asked me rather laconically: 'What is this I hear about your Chief Minister's private lashkar in Lasbela?' I was really piqued by his loaded question. 'In Baluchistan', I told Mr. Bhutto, 'we used to have only the militia and they were under the control of the Baluchistan administration even during the British colonial days. You have snatched them from us by transferring their command to the army. When the armed Jamote tribesmen entered Lasbela and indulged in subversive activities, the militia was called in to repel them, but their officers replied that they had instructions from the center, meaning GHQ, to stay within road limits and not to go into the interior. The Chief Minister was then left with no option but to call upon the citizens to come and help the government chase the miscreants. As you know very well, Baluchistan is historically still stuck in the tribal time warp and every citizen in one way or other has roots in one tribe or the other. When in response to Chief Minister Ataullah Mengal's call the citizens entered Bela to repulse the Jamote troublemakers, they were branded as Mengal's 'tribal lashkar'. Even the Baluchistan Dehi police, who were deployed by the lawful government of Baluchistan for the same purpose, were also bracketed with them'.

Mr. Bhutto and his cabinet members heard me out in silence. I concluded with the following remarks: 'Mr. President, when the police went on strike in Lahore and the public rallied in support of Punjab's PPP government, you called it people's power and acclaimed it. But when the people came to the help of Baluchistan's NAP government to combat the miscreants, you call them private lashkar. Obviously, you have different standards for Punjab and Baluchistan.' Mr. Bhutto asked Tikka Khan about the militia's role in Lasbela. Tikka replied that he had ordered the militia not to go into the interior to pursue the miscreants. It was decided in the meeting that the Commander of the militia, Maj. Gen. Naseerullah Babar, would come and meet me the next day in Rawalpindi and in the meantime I should ask Chief Minister Mengal to let the militia take over and handle the situation in Lasbela.

I returned to Rawalpindi the same evening. I was still in the VIP lounge at the airport where Federal Minister Rafi Raza was also present, when I got a phone call from Baluchistan Minister Abdur Rahman Sardar. He informed me that the army had physically entered Lasbela. From the airport lounge I rang up Mr. Bhutto. I asked him what was the point in reaching an agreement in Lahore a short while ago when the fact is that the armed forces have already occupied one of our districts. Mr. Bhutto first feigned ignorance and asked me to wait for a few minutes. He called me back to confirm that the army had entered Lasbela but he was recalling them. He asked me to carry on with the same agreed programme.

Next day, 13th February 1972, Naseerullah Babar came to see me as Mr. Bhutto had proposed. After meeting me, Babar left for Lasbela. Earlier I had talked with Chief Minister Ataullah Mengal and when Babar reached Lasbela, the site was formally handed over to him as agreed in Lahore. In fact, since a week, the area had been under the charge of the militia and the army too was present there. In spite of this, an announcement was made that rations were being airdropped to the 'stranded' Jamote tribesmen because the Baluchistan government had 'blockaded' Bela. How could the Baluchistan government blockade Bela when its writ in Bela had been suspended for a whole week and even the Baluchistan *Dehi* police was under a state of virtual siege by the federal government's forces? And when the army too was present?

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My role in the constitution-making process

I tried to make my own humble contribution in the task of constitution-making in my capacity of Member of the National Assembly while also being Governor of Baluchistan.** The excruciating experience of being frequently let down by people with whom I worked during this process is not worth describing here. I will confine myself to reproducing my address to the people of Pakistan, as Member of the National Assembly and Governor of Baluchistan, which was broadcast by Radio Pakistan and telecast by PTV on 24th January 1973. It covers the entire gamut of what I went through during the process of helping conclude the October 1972 Constitutional Accord and what I anticipated would follow afterwards.

** Translator-Editor's Note: Even after he ceased to be Governor in February 1973, Mir Saheb did full justice to his position as MNA by actively participating in the constitution-making process. His potentially invaluable contribution to this process was truncated by his arrest in August 1973.

(English translation of Bizenjo's Radio and T.V. address (in Urdu) to the people of Pakistan, 24th January 1973)

Fellow Citizens!

I am inviting your attention today to an extremely important topic upon which hinges the future of our country, namely constitution-making. Before I proceed to discuss the Constitutional Accord of 20th October 1972 and the Draft Constitution prepared in the name of that Accord, let me remind you very briefly of the history of constitution-making in Pakistan.

Twenty-six years have passed since the sub-continent was partitioned and the two independent states of India and Pakistan came into being. During these twenty-six years, all types of men took their turn in ruling this country and each one who stepped into the shoes of his predecessor began with the promise to defend democracy, to create democratic institutions and pledged himself to constitutional rule. In the course of their stage acting, we saw half the country go behind the curtain.

We are once again face to face with another crisis, the source of which once again is constitution making. Failure to get over the constitutional tangle this time may prove disastrous. In this context, I feel I have the right as one of you, to remind you that you have to play your role as the real master, guide and mentor of those whom you have chosen as your representatives. You have got to remember that you cannot afford to remain indifferent as usual to what your representatives do, for even one single wrong step at this critical juncture can spell disaster.

About three months ago, at the invitation and initiative of President Bhutto, we sat together and made a sincere attempt to find a way out of the constitutional dilemma and the result was the Constitutional Accord of 20th October 1972. However, it seems that the situation we tried to overcome through the Constitutional Accord is emerging again, following the appearance of the Draft Constitution. The responsibility now falls squarely on your shoulders in your capacity as the source of all power and authority, to assess the situation correctly, coolly and dispassionately and see to it that your representatives do not falter at this crucial

moment in our history.

Now I shall go over to the Constitutional Accord and place before you certain basic facts to enable you to make a correct assessment of what has really happened, what was in fact aimed at and what should be done next.

Permit me to begin by saying that the Constitutional Accord of 20th October 1972 has got a rough deal from its supporters and opponents, as well as from the majority party. None of them has done justice either to the Accord or to the opposition representatives who signed it. Therefore, first of all, I should like to focus attention on certain facts which, in my opinion, are more important and fundamental than the Accord itself, namely the motive which inspired the signatories and the underlying idea behind its origin. Once you know the background of the Accord and the related facts, you will be in a position to place the Accord in the right perspective and identify those who have in fact undermined its spirit and purpose and sapped the life out of it.

Before agreeing to sign the Accord, the signatories had taken certain unanimous decisions and agreed on a few basic points which led eventually to the signing of the Accord. These were:

- The Accord would help to remove possible obstacles in the way of constitution making and facilitate the smooth and speedy execution of the task entrusted to the constitution committee.
- The Accord would not in any manner affect or abridge the intrinsic powers of the Constitution Committee or the Constituent Assembly to review it, modify it, accept it or reject it.
- Above all, by means of the Accord, we would create a viable mechanism that would to guarantee the stability of democratic institutions and render it impossible for any individual or clique to run wild with ambition and destroy those institutions.

Had these basic facts been kept in view by all concerned and had there been no attempt subsequently to present them in a distorted form, the supporters of the Accord would not have found it necessary to shout their lungs out to get it accepted, or to defend it as though it were holy scripture, criticism of which is unthinkable. Similarly, if its critics would have sat down and made a cool and dispassionate assessment of the Accord, keeping in view the above facts and also today's objective conditions, they would not have called it a negation of democracy.

A close and careful study of the Accord will reveal that its purpose was not to fortify an office or perpetuate a person in that office, nor was it designed to be the last word in constitution making. The principal objective of the Accord, as I said earlier, was to provide stability to democratic institutions and strengthen the roots of democracy. However, the majority party chose to ignore the spirit of the Accord and disregard its meaning and intent. Making use of its numerical majority it managed to push through a Draft Constitution and have it passed in the Constitution Committee, which has turned out to be a very disappointing document having little regard for democratic values and principles. Instead of trying to give the country a Constitution guaranteeing protection and stability of democratic institutions and create a favourable climate for democracy to sustain itself and flourish, the majority party was carried away by a misplaced sense of duty to immunize a certain office at the cost of institutions. Perhaps the

majority party realises this anomaly of its position and that may be why its members have waged a war of invectives against the opposition in a frantic bid to conceal the truth. Evidently, to cover up its folly, the majority party went to the extent of saying that the opposition having signed the Accord had no right to oppose the Draft Constitution in the Constitution Committee or even in the Constituent Assembly. Even more; it has been hunting for excuses to accuse the opposition of trying to back out of the Accord.

Nevertheless, the plain truth remains that by making minced meat of the Constitutional Accord, the majority party has left no other option to democratic minded people but to oppose the Draft Constitution. It may be relevant here to remind you that no opposition representative who signed the Accord or his party has up till now rejected the Accord as such. Here let me reiterate that not only was the Accord not intended to affect the powers of the Constitution Committee or the Constituent Assembly but, in keeping with accepted democratic traditions, it was also subject to the approval of the political parties whose representatives had signed it. That the Pakistan Peoples Party was the first to seek and obtain its Central Committee's approval of the Accord amply substantiates it.

The need to insinuate that the Opposition Parties had no right to oppose the Draft Constitution was obviously the result of an after-thought, coming after the spirit of the Accord had already been violated in the Constitution Committee.

It is incontrovertible true that the majority party is the one that has compromised the intent and content of the unanimous decisions taken on 20th October 1972 when we decided to provide the cover of 2/3 majority for a vote of no confidence against the Prime Minister, knowing fully well that it was against the established traditions of the parliamentary system, we were moved by one supreme consideration and that was to give strength and stability to democratic institutions, as best as we could in the existing conditions. Similarly, when we agreed to give the Prime Minister the 'right to seek' dissolution of the National Assembly, the same consideration was uppermost in our minds. We wanted to build an effective check against petty personal whims, likes and dislikes of members playing havoc with democratic values.

Take, for instance, Decision 4 of the Accord which gave the Prime Minister 'the right to seek' dissolution of the Assembly. Now read article 61(1) of the Draft Constitution which is supposed to have been based on Decision 4 of the Accord. This article empowers the Prime Minister 'to dissolve' the National Assembly (if the President fails to do so). Obviously, nowhere has the Accord empowered the Prime Minister 'to dissolve' the Assembly. The right 'to seek dissolution' is certainly not the same as the right 'to dissolve'. That the right to dissolve the National Assembly was not given to the Prime Minister implied that this right would lie elsewhere; naturally either with the National Assembly itself or with the President. By assigning this right to the Prime Minister in the Draft Constitution, not only has the spirit of the Accord been violated, but Decision 4 of the Accord has been given a good spanking as well.

As if to drive the last nail into the coffin of the Accord, Article 96 of the Draft Constitution allows the Prime Minister to continue to remain in office as a matter of right (along with his ministers), even after the dissolution of the Assembly - whatever the circumstances leading to such dissolution may be - until fresh elections are held and a new

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Prime Minister takes his place. The presence of this Article in the Draft Constitution is totally indefensible. It not only raises the Prime Minister to a level far above the National Assembly and the elected representatives of the people but subordinates the National Assembly to the will of the Prime Minister. It seals the lips of every member of the Assembly, blocks for an indefinite period the passage of a vote of no-confidence against the Prime Minister and thus renders the office of the Prime Minister all-powerful and unassailable.

The bar of 2/3 majority for a vote of no-confidence and the right to seek dissolution of the National Assembly were conceded by the signatories to the Accord, not for the purpose that a vote of no-confidence can never be passed against the Prime Minister under any circumstances.

If we take a closer look at the Draft Constitution, we cannot fail to see the dents it has made all over in the very bones of the Accord, reducing democratic norms to a heap of ruins. Take, for example, Articles 51, 78, 86, 89, 92, 95, 97 and 243 of the Draft Constitution, to quote only a few. Those articles and other related provisions in the Draft Constitution not only violate the spirit of the Accord but make an unwholesome mess of the unanimous decisions taken on 20th October last year by representatives of various political parties with a view to protect democracy and ensure the stability of democratic institutions.

By means of the above-mentioned Articles, most of the powers which should normally vest in the President or the National Assembly have been scooped up and placed in the Prime Minister's office. This amounts to a total negation of democracy. Democracy presupposes the division of powers and their distribution among various institutions in such a manner that leaves no room for an individual or institution to try to suppress or usurp the rights of the people and, through a mechanism of adequate checks and balances, may help these institutions to function harmoniously without any prompting. However, by making the office of the Prime Minister the seat of all power and authority, the Draft Constitution paves the way for absolutism to step in. Concentration of all powers, whether in an individual or in an institution, naturally leads that individual or institution on the road to absolutism and dictatorship.

After doing so much harm to the Accord, can the majority party still claim that its Draft Constitution is based on the decisions taken on 20th October 1972? When the National Council of National Awami Party issued a mandate to its members and asked them to be on their guard, that supreme body of the party was in fact giving expression to the very apprehensions which have now materialized in the form of the Draft Constitution.

I think I am justified in saying that by picking up the Accord and fixing it very cleverly in a pre-fabricated frame of its own, the majority party has provided itself the opportunity to claim that the Draft Constitution is exactly in accordance with last October's Constitutional Accord. In spite of all its efforts to whitewash its own doings, the majority party has not been able to hide the marks of the mauling which the spirit of the Accord has received from the Draft Constitution. In contrast to the unanimous desire of the democratic forces to consolidate and strengthen democratic institutions and traditions, the Draft Constitution which is supposed to owe its birth to the Accord seeks instead to render a particular office - rather than the system as a whole - secure and stable.

Before I conclude, I should like to appeal to all the political parties in the country as well as to the members of the Constituent Assembly not to forget that Pakistan has already

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suffered too many jolts, the latest of which proved almost fatal. The present crisis-filled situation demands of all of us that we make a correct assessment of it and move ahead in a spirit of mutual adjustment and accommodation so that we may struggle together successfully for the fortification of democratic traditions and institutions on which Pakistan's own stability and integrity depends.

I shall close this discussion with a personal appeal to the President of Pakistan, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto who, besides being the President of the country, also happens to head the majority party, to use his personal status and influence to find a way to remove the deepening differences which plague the constitution-making process and save the spirit of the decisions of 20th October 1972, to which he himself had made a substantial contribution and which were intended to afford protection and stability to democratic institutions. This and this alone can guarantee the security and stability of Pakistan.

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The beginning of the end – the dismissal

On 14th February 1973, Bhutto called me to the Presidency. It was to be my last meeting with him as Governor of Baluchistan. The meeting lasted for a long while and took place in an unusually pleasant atmosphere. As I left the Presidency, I knew that the deciding moment had arrived. When I returned to the Baluchistan House, my political secretary, B.M. Kutty, was standing outside and told me that Mir Ali Bakhsh Talpur was waiting for me in the guest room. After exchanging pleasantries, Mir Ali Bakhsh suggested that we take a drive. We returned after an hour. I told Kutty and ADC, Captain Tariq Ghazi who were waiting for me that I intended to have some good sleep that night and if anyone from the Presidency brought any envelope, they should receive it and I would see it in the morning. They guessed what it would be. I wished them *shab-bakhair* and went to bed. I slept very soundly that night.

In the morning of 15th February 1973, Kutty and Tariq brought me the envelope which Bhutto's personal servant and confidante Noora had delivered in the night. I opened and read it. I informed them that I had ceased to be the Governor and flight bookings should be made for our return to Quetta the same day.

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When I landed at Quetta aiport, the Baluchistan cabinet was at the airport in full force to receive the dismissed Governor of Baluchistan. I was told that a mammoth protest meeting was already in progress on Jinnah Road. I went straight from the airport to the venue of the meeting in a procession of vehicles, accompanied by the Chief Minister and his cabinet members and party leaders. Addressing the highly charged slogan-chanting crowd, I made it clear that according to the constitution, the appointment and removal of a provincial Governor was the exclusive prerogative of the President. When the President and Governor could not carry on harmoniously, the President had the option to relieve the Governor of his responsibilities. But there was a fly in the ointment! If the problem lay in the relationship between the Baluchistan Governor and the President, why was the Governor of NWFP Arbab Sikandar Khan also removed simultaneously? Nevertheless, I advised the people not to get provoked because all these steps were intended to provoke them and find a pretext to deprive them of their constitutional and democratic rights. They should not provide any excuse to the

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government to justify its undemocratic and unconstitutional actions. They should get ready for a constitutional fight for the protection of their rights.

As the public meeting was in progress and the Chief Minister was addressing it, news came of the dismissal of the elected Government of Baluchistan and the appointment of Nawab Akbar Bugti as Governor of Baluchistan. The Nawab had been waiting for this day; he had in fact been working up to it from abroad. As mentioned earlier, Nawab Bugti had been carrying out a vilification campaign throughout January 1973 against the NAP leadership in a bid to assist the central government to build up its case for dismissing the NAP government. All the while as the central government was engaged in destabilising the Baluchistan Government, Nawab Sahib was advising the former on how to achieve quick results.

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The dismissal of the Baluchistan government, which enjoyed the support of a two-thirds majority in the Provincial Assembly, was a shameless display of total contempt for basic democratic and constiutional norms. When the people rose to challenge this illegal action, it was branded as rebellion against the state. In a show of solidarity with the people and Government of Baluchistan, the NAP-JUI government in NWFP resigned. Thus, Mr. Bhutto now had a free licence to rule the country as he wished. The public protest soon ballooned into a massive province-wide uprising in Baluchistan against PPP rule.

On 17th February 1973, I was passing through Lahore on my way to Islamabad to attend a session of the National Assembly which was engaged at the time in the task of constitution making. My party colleague and secretary B.M. Kutty was also with me. As we were about to board the aircraft at Lahore airport on the flight to Islamabad, a police team headed by an SSP intercepted us and took Mr. Kutty into custody without disclosing the reason for his arrest or where they were taking him. We had been warned by friends in Lahore that we should expect things like this to happen upon reaching Islamabad. I told Kutty that if I would be allowed to attend the Assembly session, I would raise the issue of his arrest on the floor of the House and at every public forum I may have access to. A few days later, the dramatic disclosure came that Mr. Kutty was implicated in the notorious Tando Bagho arms recovery case as a co-accused with some Pakhtun timber merchant of Hyderabad, and was in the custody of the dreaded Federal Security Force (FSF).

Within hours after the dismissal of the government, it became clear that a reign of terror was being let loose against the NAP leaders, workers and sympathizers, including the student activists. The worst form of political vendetta would mark the advent of the new provincial administration, one that had no public mandate or electoral legitimacy. Fearing arrests and persecution, many party activists went into hiding.

Efforts began to force Provincial Assembly members to change their loyalties. Bribery and blackmail were used to cobble up a spurious ruling coalition led by the PPP, which itself did not have a single elected member in the House. And very soon, true to Pakistan's established tradition of overnight emergence of new political alliances and ruling coalitions, a fake government headed by Jam Ghulam Qadir Khan was foisted on Baluchistan. Assembly members who refused to change loyalties were soon to face all sorts of harassment and persecution. Members of the National Assembly belonging to the opposition, who raised their

voice against the undemocratic actions of the Central Government, were physically manhandled on the floor of the House and thrown out of the hall. The FSF was used indiscriminately to humiliate and intimidate the opposition party leaders and workers. Armed hoodlums were let loose to 'pacify' the inflamed opposition leaders.

For the four and a half years that followed, the people of Baluchistan were not merely robbed of their basic national rights but were made to endure all the horrendous barabarities which one reads about in history books; the barbarities which an invading army unleashes upon a conquered people and the occupied territory.

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Chapter 7

Reflections

The main culprit: US imperialism

The United States and its western allies were always apprehensive of the influence and prestige of the Soviet Union in the developing world. They sought to ensure by all means fair and foul that the small oil-rich states of Middle East and the countries in the vicinity like Pakistan did not enter the Soviet sphere of influence. Inherently anti-people sheikhdoms, monarchies and dictatorships in the region, which were scared of the advancing lava of progressive Arab nationalism with pronounced pro-Soviet leanings, were forced to seek safety and security in the lap of western imperialism. There was a confluence of interests between the imperialist powers and these rulers. In the entire region, no government except that of India could claim to enjoy the support of the people. All others were usurpers.

The root cause of all the tension and instability in our region is foreign interference. Be it yesteryears' Iran-Iraq war or the on-going Afghanistan crisis, the periodical army takeovers in Pakistan, the decades-old Arab-Israel conflict, the interstate disputes and rivalries between the developing countries, the endemic hostility between Pakistan and India – all are links in the same chain. By pitting these countries and peoples against one another and, for good measure, using the Soviet threat card from time to time, the US-led imperialist bloc has been able to keep the rulers of these third world countries under perpetual fear of being over-run by popular movements, while they go about freely plundering the latter's natural resources and also make huge profits by selling them weapons. This vicious cycle is going to last as long as the peoples of these countries fail to assert their sovereignty and ownership over their resources and enforce a system of governance, free from individual or collective exploitation.

The anomalies of Punjab's politics

As the representative party of the progressive, anti-imperialist forces of Pakistan, NAP emerged as the most articulate forum of the oppressed classes, communities and nationalities of Pakistan in the short span of two years since its formation in 1956 (PNP) – 1957 (NAP). As the NAP grew stronger and its programme became popular, repression by the state and criminalization of politics at the hands of the reactionary forces also became more intensive.

Every two or three years the dominant class had to invite the armed forces to crush the rising popular discontent and protect their vested interests. As Punjab had unfortunately become a strong bastion of reactionary vested interest groups and assumed their leadership, NAP could not grow into a popular all-Punjab political party. Our party comrades in Punjab had to encounter formidable obstacles while trying to organize the party. In East Pakistan and the smaller provinces of West Pakistan, the party stood on strong foundations because the party programme reflected the people's aspirations and needs; hence they responded positively. In Punjab, the situation was different and therefore our Punjabi comrades had to bear the brunt of state excesses on the one hand and on the other, face allegations of working against the interest of Punjab (interest of Punjabi elite, actually). The people of the other

provinces, by thoughtlessly blaming Punjab and Punjabis for all their problems, also hurt the sentiments of our Punjabi comrades. One must give due credit to our Punjabi comrades for standing firm on their political and ideological commitments in the face of all these adversities and provocations.

Punjab had most of the time suffered from a deficit of popular political leadership. It had often remained under the domination of civil and military bureaucracy, feudals and mullahs. People's movements were made ineffective or irrelevant in what is today known as West Punjab, to ensure that the source of recruitment for the armed forces was not affected.

On the other hand, Punjab was in terms of skill, enterprise, education and productive potential, far ahead of all the other provinces of Pakistan. Though East Pakistan was the majority province in terms of population, all the sources and levers of power were monopolized by Punjab - civil bureaucracy, armed forces, education, skill – all were under the command of Punjab. It was also the stronghold of feudal power. Making use of these instruments of power, the ruling elite of Punjab denied legitimate participation to others in the country's governance. All policies and plans were drawn up by them, for them and any obstacle in their way was removed with the help of the bureaucracy and the armed forces. It has been like a cycle – some sort of toothless democratic dispensation running the country for a certain period, followed by army rule replacing it for a few years, then giving way to a civil dispensation for another few years - and so the cycle continues till today.

Secession of East Pakistan and after

When Awami League won the elections in 1970, Punjab's ruling elites, in connivance with a scheming politician from Sindh, refused to transfer power to the winning party. It will be relevant to point out here that the political opportunists in the smaller provinces too were in the camp of the self-seeking opportunists of Punjab. The natural consequence was the popular uprising of the people of East Pakistan. For the first time in history, a majority nationality was forced to raise the slogan of secession to save itself from the excesses of the minority! And eventually they seceded in the most heart-rending circumstances. A tragedy of such magnitude had perhaps seldom occurred even during the most barbaric periods in human history - the slaughter of innocent human beings on such a massive scale and so many lakhs of people being displaced and rendered homeless.

After East Pakistan became Bangladesh in a sea of human blood and tears, the military bureaucracy and opportunist politicians proceeded to crown their fake hero Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto as the Chief Martial Law Administrator and President (of the leftover Pakistan) and actually celebrated the event! The motto was: Forget the tragedy as a bad dream and strive for a bright future in the new Pakistan! The story of how Mr. Bhutto proceeded to construct his 'new Pakistan' - how he pursued a double-faced policy during his negotiations with NAP and how the functioning of the democratically elected NAP-JUI government was obstructed constantly in the bid to build up the case for its eventual dismissal and how at last that government was dismissed after a torturous ten months in office – have been narrated earlier in this book.

Four and a half years of military action in Baluchistan got Mr. Bhutto nowhere. The issue was not just the hatred which the military action and the arrest and trial of the entire NAP leadership and activists generated against him in Baluchistan; the fact was that his wrong

policies resulted in wide-spread discontent in the whole country, so much so that his government was forced to resort to martial law-like steps in different cities to quell public protest. Protest rallies and meetings were taking place in various cities and townships at the call of the UDF – an alliance of the opposition parties – and the army had to be deployed in Karachi, Lahore and other cities. Eventually, Mr. Bhutto was forced to announce in November 1976 that general elections would be held in March 1977.

By the time Bhutto came to realize that unless he came to an understanding with the opposition parties the armed forces would be tempted to move in, it was already too late. PNA's decision to boycott the provincial assembly election after serious charges were leveled against the government for rigging the National Assembly election that preceded it and PNA's call for a countrywide strike had created the ideal setting for the army to strike. As Mr. Bhutto played his habitual game of hide and seek in his negotiations with the PNA, his hand-picked Chief of Army Staff, General Zia-ul-Haq, and his Generals were engaged in finalizing their plans to oust him. Before Bhutto could move against them, they moved and seized power on 5th July 1977. Mr. Bhutto and most of his cabinet colleagues were 'taken into protective custody' and placed under detention in Murree.

Though the Generals' greed for power had to do much with this unfortunate turn of events, most of the politicians were so blinded by their hatred of Bhutto that they were willing to shake hands with the devil if that would help them get rid of Bhutto. They failed to realize that with all his personal faults and all the odious things his government had done to the country and its people, he still did represent some sort of a democratic façade which was better than a military dictatorship.

Thoughts from Hyderabad jail

In Hyderabad jail, except me and one or two comrades, all the others were near unanimous in their preference for Zia-ul-Haq's martial law over Mr. Bhutto's civilian rule! As far as I remember, reports from outside the jail were also not very different. One doesn't have to look too far for the reasons; during Mr. Bhutto's civilian rule, everyone was in one way or other harassed, humiliated, imprisoned, tortured or cheated.

Mr. Bhutto's four and a half years' military action in Baluchistan gave birth to extremist tendencies among the youth. The subsequent decade of Zia-ul-Haq's military-*mullah* rule further sharpened these tendencies, as Baluchistan continued to be denied its legitimate rights within the federation. Today, the political leadership of Baluchistan and in particular the youth seem to have arrived at the conclusion that there is no future for smaller nationalities in Pakistan. I agree that this should not have been the answer to Mr. Bhutto's and General Zia's misrule and misdeeds. The answer, in my opinion, should have been a redoubled commitment to waging a sustained struggle to overthrow their anti-people regimes through mass people's movements. Given Baluchistan's minimal clout in terms of manpower, it was not possible for the Baluch to initiate or lead such a movement. In the given situation, the immediate logical response was adventurism, taking the Baluch youth on the path of pointless sacrifice.

I tried from the beginning to avoid confrontation, but Mr. Bhutto's politics of opportunism and lust for power, coupled with the inflexible stance of some of my comrades, intervened to foil my efforts to seek a non-confrontational way out. Armed confrontation

became the only option. There are very few precedents in history of a people enduring such trials and tribulations and facing such a mighty foe in combat for four and a half years with such monumental courage and determination, as the people of Baluchistan, the youth in particular, have done in recent years. However, owing to the lack of proper planning, absence of the necessary objective conditions and above all, due to the lack of a realistic approach, all these sufferings and sacrifices have come to naught.

In Hyderabad jail, where more than sixty of us were undergoing trial on wild trumped up charges of treason, the future of Baluchistan and other smaller nationalities and the course of action to be take remained constantly under discussion and debate. Towards the last days of our stay in jail, this debate had reached what I may call its logical conclusion. Particularly, in so far as the Baluch leadership was concerned, a decisive point had been reached.

The senior detained members of NAP from Baluchistan, called a meeting in jail to take a final decision on what should be the future course of action. Two viewpoints emerged: (1) Fight for national rights within the framework of Pakistan; suspend the resistance movement which has taken the path of violence; call the men back from the mountains; (2) Upgrade the present movement into a full-fledged struggle for separation from Pakistan; those who are in the mountains be asked to stay there and reorganize themselves for this mission.

Nawab Khair Bakhsh, Sardar Ataullah and three other comrades were of the opinion that the Baluch or for that matter any other small nationality has no future in Pakistan. Their argument ran as follows:

> Punjab will not let any other nationality live with honour and dignity. If East Pakistan, despite its numerical and electoral majority, could be exploited and oppressed with impunity to the extent that they were left with no option but to secede, who is going to pay heed to the wailings of the Baluch with their miniscule size in terms of numbers? The blood and sweat we will squander in the futile exercise of seeking to reform Pakistan should be saved for the noble cause of the liberation of Baluchistan. Therefore, no move should be made to bring back the men who are still in the mountains or in Afghanistan.

I was of the view that the opinion of my comrades was conditioned partly by subjectivism and partly by the absence of any focused investigation into or a clear understanding of the contemporary national and international developments and objective conditions. However, it is not difficult to understand their position. With the opportunistic coalition of Punjabi-Muhajir vested interests in control of the engines of power since the first days of Pakistan until 1969, Baluchistan was not even acknowledged as a province. Whereas all other regions - Punjab, East Bengal, East Pakistan, Sindh and NWFP - were allowed some kind of provincial identity and related autonomy, the Agent to the Governor General of Pakistan (AGG) continued to be the all-powerful 'Ruler' of Baluchistan! Direct or indirect army actions were launched periodically from day one till the Bhutto era, in the course of which tens of thousands of people were killed, thousands of families were made homeless and reduced to destitutes, all the fundamental rights and liberties of the people were suppressed and Baluchistan's national leaders and political workers were jailed and subjected to torture for long periods. It is a never-ending saga of betrayal of trust that still goes on. Not only successive

federal governments but political parties too - dominated by the Punjabi ruling elite have all along been bitterly opposed to the struggle of the Baluch for their legitimate rights, labeling their demands as parochial, secessionist, and so on.

Viewed in the above context, one would not find anything unusual about the subjectivism of my comrades. It is but human to react in the way they did in the given circumstances. They were justified in being overwhelmed by what they and their fellow Baluch were going through. But if you pry a little deeper into the Baluchistan-Pakistan conundrum, you would see that the answer did not lie in what my comrades were proposing. Granted that we were and are under the combined pressure of a legitimate sense of frustration, persecution, deprivation and denial of rights for decades. But, take a look at our location and status. We are situated in a region where global interests and designs of major world powers compete and collide. As I have stated earlier, South Asia, particularly Pakistan, is a fertile ground for plots and intrigues hatched by US imperialism and its western allies to destabilize Soviet Union and China and to have a dominant influence in oil-rich Iran and the Gulf states. It will be very naïve on one's part to think that the western imperialist powers will quietly sit and watch the disintegration of Pakistan and allow Baluchistan to break free. Baluchistan constitutes 48 percent of Pakistan's territory and 98 percent of its sea coast and from a military point of view is one of the most strategically vital spots in the world. If it secedes from Pakistan, will Pakistan survive? Three questions arise at this point:

1. Is it necessary to break Pakistan?
2. Is it true that the dominant ruling nationality, Punjab, and its leadership have crossed the point beyond correction and self-reform; that they are bent upon pushing Pakistan into the abyss at all costs by persisting in their wrong policies towards Baluchistan?
3. Can one say for sure that Punjab will not give up its domineering posture towards the smaller nationalities?

I believe that the people of Punjab, including the intelligentsia and the enlightened among the ruling elite of Punjab, are not insensitive to the gravity of the crisis staring them in the face. Imagine the scenario if Pakistan breaks up. How devastating will be the civil war that will accompany such breakup? Can Baluchistan, which is still passing through a semi-tribal phase with so many disparate tribes and subtribes pulling in different directions, evolve a viable centralized system of governance? How can so many tribes and clans be united and made to accept an integrated state structure? Baluchistan lies at the mouth of the Gulf; it is so close to Iran and Afghanistan and constitutes is South Asia's most strategically vital western flank; how can it be kept free and safe from the coveting eyes of external forces?

Keeping all these possibilities in mind, and the objective conditions around us, I had reached the conclusion that the aim of our mobilization should not be predicated on Punjab-bashing and secession. On the contrary, we should unite and fight for the political and economic rights of different nationalities within the framework of Pakistan. The central theme of our struggle should consist of the demand that:

1. Each nationality shall have exclusive and indisputable control over all its resources;
2. Each nationality shall be politically and economically autonomous and sovereign as explicitly stated in the 1940 Lahore Resolution, and only such powers shall be conceded to

the centre, on which all the units are unanimous and without which their defence and development can be hampered. All such decisions have got to be voluntary and unanimous. Tyranny of the majority will be counterproductive and sef-defeating.

3. Each nationality shall be free and autonomous in terms of its language, culture, customs, traditions and lifestyle.

My last effort

This is my last effort. I have been at this exercise for the last ten years since our release from Hyderabad jail. I have been frequently going to Punjab and trying to persuade the leaders of Punjab to read the writing on the wall. I have been pleading with them from every platform I have had access to, to join the struggle of the smaller nationalities for their legitimate rights; rather to assume the lead in winning the confidence of the smaller nationalities by acknowledging their rights without any reservation.

The apathy shown by the ruling classes sometimes leads me to think that the position taken by my comrades, and which I have been dismissing as subjective, is perhaps not so. On the contrary, I now tend to ask myself: am *I* the victim of a flawed line of thinking? Is it a sense of frustration that inhibits me from correctly evaluating the reality-driven standpoint of my comrades? The intelligentsia and the thinking segment of the smaller nationalities are finding it increasingly difficult to bear the burden of persistent denial and suppression of their rights by the dominant ruling nationality by force of its sheer numerical majority and its predominant position in the bureaucracy and armed forces. They argue and I cannot but agree with them that no one can or will tolerate a life of slavery for all times.

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Appendix

In order to give the reader more insight into Mir Sahib's ideas on some major issues, presented below are: ****Two detailed journalistic interviews with Mir Sahib, - 1984;*

****A transcript of the paper presented by him (in his capacity as President of the PNP) in November 1987 in Tashkent;*

****The English translation of his speech in Urdu delivered at the All Parties Conference on Afghanistan convened by Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo in March 1988.*

Appendix- 1
Personality Interview by Zahid Hussain
(Published in *The Herald*, April 1984)

The Movement has only been temporarily crushed
---Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo.

Ataullah Mengal once said of his political mentor, Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo: 'He cannot live without politics. He has to have it all the time, or he will perish.' Confinement may have affected Bizenjo's health but it has hardly lessened his zest for politics. This was the impression I got when I met him in his room at Karachi's Jinnah Hospital where he was under treatment for an ailing ear.

Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, 66, former governor of Baluchistan and currently the president of the Pakistan National Party, is probably one of the most controversial political figures in the country. His dogged adherence to the cause of 'national rights' has earned him both grudging admiration and condemnation.

Exceptionally articulate, Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo envisages a loose federation based on the 1940 Pakistan Resolution, in which the central government would hold only the portfolios of defence, foreign policy and customs, while all other matters would remain with provinces. Although he doesn't mince his words, Bizenjo weighs every sentence before uttering it --- a rare quality in our politicians. American journalist Selig S. Harrison in his book, 'In Afghanistan's Shadow' writes of Bizenjo: 'He is one of the ablest politicians in Pakistan and could have played a major role in Islamabad but for his Baluch identity and his commitment to the Baluch cause.'

Bizenjo has suffered for his convictions. Imprisoned by successive regimes, he has spent a major part of his long political career behind bars. While still a student at Aligarh University Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo actively participated in the freedom struggle, and as the end of the British colonial rule approached, he and other Baluch nationalist leaders formed the Kalat National Party with the objective of establishing an independent Baluchistan. Later after Partition he emerged as one of the main leaders of the National Awami Party, and also held the office of its Secretary General. He came into political prominence during the Ayub regime when he was elected to the National Assembly from Lyari in 1966, defeating the official candidate. He was later disqualified and tried on a charge of high treason and accused of writing anti-One Unit slogans on currency notes. He was awarded 14 years rigorous imprisonment. He was released in

1969, during the last days of the Ayub era, after serving three years of his sentence.

In 1970 Bizenjo was elected to the National Assembly from Baluchistan and was appointed the first civilian governor of the province in 1972, a post he held for a very brief period. The NAP government was later dismissed and Bizenjo with other Baluch leaders was implicated in the famous Hyderabad Conspiracy Case.

Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo's role in the national struggle and his respected status as the eldest top-ranking Baluch politician have earned him the popular title of 'Baba-e-Baluchistan.' In the present political scenario Mr. Bizenjo holds a very important position. A seasoned politician, he represents a province which has assumed added importance in the context of recent geopolitical developments in the region. In this interview Mr. Bizenjo discusses the country's present political situation and the ongoing movement for the restoration of democracy.

Q. How do you view the present political situation in the country?

A. The situation is before everyone. The perpetuation of Martial Law and the policies of the present government have led the country to a point of no return. The sharpening of contradictions between federating units and the federation has left a deep feeling of bitterness among the masses. The situation has aggravated to the extent that not only has it gone out of the control of the present government, but it will also be very difficult for any future government to deal with it. Nevertheless, I feel that the present crisis faced by the country could still be resolved if tackled sensibly and realistically.

In my opinion there are two aspects of the existing crisis – national and international. For the solution of national problems it is imperative that the state structure should be evolved in accordance with the natural and political requirements of the country. By a natural structure, I mean that Pakistan is a multinational state and it must have a federal structure on the basis of the Pakistan Resolution of 1940. The 1940 Resolution was not just a resolution, but a covenant, a charter and agreement on the basis of which the various federating units decided to form the state of Pakistan. The Quaid-e-Azam and his associates had laid the basis and principles of the form of government. Violating this principle will jeopardize the unity and existence of the country.

As far as the powers of the federating units are concerned, that has also been settled in the Haroon Commission recommendations, according to which, except for defence, foreign affairs and customs, all other subjects were assigned to the federating units. Only such a federal structure can keep the country united and resolve the existing contradiction between the federating units and the federation.

They are not asking for independence but only demanding autonomy and the legitimate rights of the federating units. I believe that the federating units and all sections of the population can be satisfied by giving the provinces maximum autonomy and by providing proper guarantees.

Q. Is the MRD in its present form capable of leading a mass movement?

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A. If we look at our political history we will find that all successful movements were launched by united fronts, and the MRD is no less capable than other alliances in the past. Some of the political parties – the Jamaat-i-Islami, JUP, Muslim League (Pagara) – have not joined the alliance, but I think that these parties should be persuaded to join. Their exclusion from the MRD only strengthens the undemocratic forces.

Q. Is it true that some of the MRD leaders are not in favour of mobilizing the masses as it might endanger their traditional leadership?

A. Yes, there are some people in the MRD who for their own vested interests do not want the involvement of the masses in the struggle beyond a certain limit. This is an inherent characteristic of the bourgeoisie and middle-class leadership. Particularly in the conditions through which the country is presently passing, these leaders would never like the movement to be turned into a mass revolt, which might damage their leadership. The scope of the present movement, however, is limited to the restoration of democracy in the country and in any case does not cross that limit.

Q. Would you agree that Abid Zuberi's letter from jail reflects the worst fears of the political parties about the movement getting out of their control?

A. I believe that if the political parties organize and lead the people according to their aspirations then the question of the movement getting out of their control can never arise. Those leaders who feel threatened by the mass movement don't represent the actual needs and wishes of the people.

The system of government under a federal structure should be such that the majority – workers, peasants and middle class – have a direct share in state powers. This can only be possible in a national democratic form of government. In my view the present internal crisis can only be resolved by strictly adhering to the 1940 Resolution and by establishing a national democratic form of government in the country.

Now we come to the second point. The present geo-political situation demands that we should strictly adhere to a neutral and non-aligned foreign policy. But the present government has taken on the responsibility of protecting imperialist interests in this region which is not only detrimental to the country's interests, but has also aroused the hostility and enmity of our neighbours. For instance, we had no quarrel or dispute with Afghanistan. But by providing refuge to the three million Afghanis – who, according to the American Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz, are not only refugees but also freedom fighters – and allowing them to use Pakistan as a base has created a situation which will sooner or later become unbearable for Russia. There is every possibility that Russia might take some retaliatory measures, which would be destructive for our country.

There is also a danger that our present foreign policy might compel us in future to become a part of the American strategy in the Gulf, creating serious problems for the independence and survival of our country. Then these 30 lakh Afghan refugees are not in any way under the control of our government, but are more under the influence of the United States and other reactionary regimes. There is every likelihood that if Pakistan, in its own interests, ever

tries to settle the Afghan issue or normalize relations with the South Asian countries against the wishes of Washington and reactionary regimes of the region, well-trained and armed refugees might be used against Pakistan itself. The influx of refugees is already a severe burden on the national economy and in that event it would become unbearable.

Q. Do you see any possibility of a return to civilian rule in the near future?

A. Martial Law is not the solution to the grave problems faced by the country, nor can it accomplish the task. Therefore, there is no other way but to lift martial law and restore civilian rule in the country. It is in the broader national interest that they should not cling to power. Further perpetuation of martial law will jeopardize the very existence of the country.

Q. What do you think of President Zia-ul-Haq's August 12 announcement about the transfer of power?

A. Zia-ul-Haq has announced that he wants to establish a new so-called Islamic form of government and is seeking the MRD's support and cooperation to implement that. His proposal has nothing to do with democracy. Accepting his formula will only mean legalizing military rule.

Q. Do you think that elections will be held as announced? **A.** No Sir, I don't think even a mock election will be held. **Q.** What is the way out of this stalemate?

A. The only solution is the holding of elections and handing over of power to the representatives of the people, which we can't expect from the present regime. All other ways will only lead to destruction.

Q. The current MRD movement has failed to mobilize the masses and could not prevail on the government to accept its demand. In your opinion what were the reasons for this?

A. In my opinion the MRD's present movement has proved to be more effective and successful than previously; there always used to be some sort of cushion; politicians were allowed to a certain extent to hold public meetings and also to take out processions. But this time we were directly confronted with the armed forces, and because of the restrictions imposed by the government we had no means left to reach the masses and mobilize them. But despite that the people of Pakistan, particularly the people of Sindh, rose valiantly.

The other important aspect of this movement was that the people have demonstrated that the use of brute force can't deter them from fighting for their democratic rights. The MRD movement has also helped in arousing political consciousness among the rural population. The movement has not finished; it has only been temporarily crushed. It can erupt again at any time.

Q. Why was the MRD movement confined mainly to Sindh? Why did it fail to get support from other provinces?

A. There is no doubt that the movement was much more widespread and intense in Sindh, but you can't say that the other provinces did not participate in it. But the sense of frustration

was much greater in Sindh than in any other place.

Q. Don't you think that the upsurge in Sindh was more spontaneous than organized?

A. It was to a certain extent a spontaneous movement since it went much beyond the preparation of the political parties. Sindhi nationalism also played a very important role in mobilizing the masses.

Q. Is MRD going to launch a second round?

A. The question of a second and third round does not arise. I have already said that the present movement is not finished, it has only been suppressed temporarily. None of our objectives has been achieved. The movement will continue till power is transferred to the people.

Q. What will this confrontation lead to?

A. The confrontation is for democratic rights and restoration of the people's sovereignty. When all the avenues for a peaceful struggle are blocked, it is obvious that the masses have no choice left but to resort to confrontation. In the existing critical national and international situation, this confrontation will have very grave consequences, affecting even the unity and the integrity of the country.

Q. Would you support the move to convert MRD into an electoral alliance?

A. There is no harm in forming an election alliance, but I think at this moment this move is premature, since the government has no intention of holding the elections. The election formula presented by the President is hardly acceptable to any party and any person of integrity. The formation of an electoral alliance at this stage might also affect the present movement as it will divert the attention of the masses from the basic issues.

Q. How do you view Mumtaz Bhutto's proposed formula for confederation?

A. I and my party firmly believe that Pakistan came into being on the basis of the 1940 Lahore Resolution and it can only exist by giving the rights to the federating units mentioned in the Resolution. Mumtaz Bhutto and others who talk about confederation in fact interpret it the same way.

Q. Baluchistan occupies a very important position in Pakistan's politics due to its strategic situation. In what way do you think the recent geopolitical developments in the region will affect the province politically?

A. Baluchistan cannot remain unaffected by the serious international developments taking place around it. Not only does Baluchistan have very long borders with both the countries – Iran and Afghanistan – where revolutions have taken place but in both these countries there are thousands of square miles inhabited by a Baluch population. Baluchistan is also situated at the brink of the Gulf. Due to these geographic and strategic factors Baluchistan has assumed a very important position for the big powers vying with each other for supremacy in this region. This situation

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directly affects all the smaller nations in the region and Baluchistan is in no position to escape from it.

Q. How do you think the Afghan issue can be resolved?

A. In my opinion Pakistan should recognize the revolutionary regime in Afghanistan and hold direct talks with them for the return of the Afghan refugees. This is the only way the Afghan problem can be resolved. Unless all foreign interference in Afghanistan's internal matters is stopped, we cannot compel the Russians to leave Afghanistan. No power in the world can compel Russia to evacuate its troops from Afghanistan. Russia intervened in Afghanistan not merely to defend the revolution in that country, it was also a matter of Russia's own defence. I feel Russian intervention in Afghanistan was a defensive measure rather than an offensive one as portrayed by America.

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Appendix-2

A Question-Answer Session with Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo
(*Viewpoint*, Lahore, 1985)
Bizenjo Elaborates

In a question-answer session with 'Viewpoint', Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo discussed what he considers are the main aspects of the present crisis.

Q. What, according to you, is problem number one of Pakistan? **A.** Pakistan's security and solidarity.

Q. How?

A. Circumstances are such that if we did not behave, Pakistan's security and solidarity would be seriously jeopardized.

Q. Would you like to elaborate?

A. The problem has two aspects, internal conditions and the external situation. Let us take the situation on the home front first. Unfortunately after Pakistan came into being, the State structure built in the country was violative of the aspirations of the people and the very nature and genius of Pakistan. The system imposed on the country is against its natural composition. It simply cannot sustain the enormous burden of the myriad problems the country faces. In its nature, Pakistan is a multinational state. Obviously in a country like this the State structure should have been strictly federal and the people with different historical, linguistic and cultural backgrounds should have been given complete internal autonomy, as was provided in the Lahore Resolution of 1940, and its political and economic system should have been raised on the concept of national democracy, which alone can meet the requirements of a backward people, and vest sovereignty with the people in the real sense of the term. Only the structure and system I advocate can guarantee the people's individual and collective (including national) rights.

After the establishment of Pakistan, the rulers ignored the genuine interests of the people and foisted on the country a State structure and an economic system that deprived the people of their collective and individual rights. The result was that the barriers of misunderstanding and mistrust were raised between the people of the federating units of the country. With time the misunderstanding and mistrust increased, leading eventually to confrontation. It was this vicious structure and system that forced East Pakistan to secede from Pakistan.

One hoped that the people who came to power in the remaining Pakistan would take a lesson from the great tragedy of East Pakistan and refashion the State structure and the country's system to suit the requirements of the country. Succumbing to their exploitative ambitions, they deluded the people and themselves into believing that they suffered defeat in East Pakistan because not enough force was used there – and, of course, could not be used there for reasons of geography – but in the truncated and broken Pakistan, they thought they could use their fire-power with impunity. They hoped that here nothing could arrest their exploitative

practice, and that they could keep the same old structure intact by force. With vengeance greater than ever before, they set out working to strengthen the Centre and vitiate the spirit of federalism, and depriving the 90 million people of the country of their rights and sovereignty.

What is the condition now? The bitterness and the tension that has built up over the years are not only adversely affecting the people's relations with the Government but have also become a source and cause of doubts and misgivings about the efficacy and viability of the State itself and about whether the people can any longer live together.

This is the situation inside the country, and it has been further aggravated by the international situation. Our rulers have failed to understand the internal situation and the people's problems, but their failure to understand the external conditions and handle them correctly has been greater. Consequently, our relations with our neighbours were seriously impaired – whereas on our good relations with them depend to a great extent our solidarity and prosperity. Taking us to be pawns and instruments of imperialist. powers, they looked upon us with disdain. Rather than strictly adhering to the principle of non-alignment in the present delicate international situation and refraining from meddling in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries and becoming champion of peace and friendship in the region, we took a different course. Particularly in the case of Afghanistan, we took a partisan attitude, misused the spirit of Islamic brotherhood and solidarity, thus initiating difficulties for ourselves and other nations of the region.

In my opinion, however, Afghanistan is a closed chapter. There is no Afghanistan problem now. The revolution in Afghanistan is forging ahead vigorously. A revolution is not a coup d'etat. A coup can be reversed but a revolution is irreversible. The Afghanistan revolution is irreversible. No, the real problem today is located in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. It can even change the geography of the region. If, as in the past, we failed to appreciate the problems and entangled ourselves into them, we would inevitably put the security of the country at stake. All the powers of the world are now assembled in the Indian Ocean, and military preparations are going on all around us. All that has to do with the Persian Gulf and the Middle East – and with nothing else. These developments have a bearing on Afghanistan but in a different manner. The media are giving forth reports to the effect that if the United States firmly and fully underwrites Pakistan's security, Pakistan can become an ally of the Americans in the present war-like conditions and can provide facilities to it on a massive scale. But this is not the true picture. The fact is that if we allowed ourselves to be dragged into the situation and became party in the security responsibilities for the Gulf, then we would find ourselves, whether we like it or not, in the frontline against Iran. The sole purpose of the exercise is to defeat the Iranian revolution and to either force Iran to rejoin the erstwhile imperialist allies or to Balkanize Iran.

The people and the rulers of Pakistan should at least realize that the effects of the fragmentation of Iran would not remain confined to Iran. It will have far-reaching consequences, and may even change the geography of the region altogether.

This then is the situation in which we are placed today. Nothing short of a Government that will deliver the goods, that is determined to resolve internal problems and to provide a State structure and system to the country in consonance with its genius that may guarantee its

solidarity, unity and prosperity, and which has the ability to establish friendly relations with neighbouring countries – (particularly India, Iran and Afghanistan) – relations which affect our destiny. Anything less than this in terms of statesmanship would not rescue the country from the present mess. What is at stake is the existence of the country.

Q. It is said that the Afghanistan revolution has changed the geopolitical situation in the region. What do you think?

A. There is no doubt that the Afghanistan Revolution has not only affected the region but the world at large. In particular, it has created new hopes in the down-trodden people of the neighbouring countries. It has not changed the geo-political situation of the region, however. There is no cause of worry on that count. We in our country changed governments, military and civil, many a time – and now we are with the idea of establishing an Islamic polity – but Afghanistan never interfered in our internal affairs. By the same token, we have no reason to interfere in the change of system there.

The powers that are raising hell over Afghanistan know fully well that Afghanistan Revolution cannot be undone. All the hullabaloo over Afghanistan is merely to divert the people's attention from the Middle-East, the Gulf and Iran. All the kindnesses being showered on a backward country like ours will last only as long as the Middle-East-Gulf-Iran problem exists.

Q. You have talked of changing the state structure. Do you think it can be done in the present circumstances?

A. There is no escaping it. You cannot get away from the need to change the country's political structure to correspond with its genius, because the country's solidarity depends on the unity and cohesiveness of its people. You cannot create cohesiveness and unity among the people by denying them their legitimate and natural rights. In that event you cannot defend the country either. On the other hand, any attempt at unity that goes against the grain of the people, their genius, will only negate Pakistan's security and solidarity. There is no short cut in the matter.

Q. Don't you think the precondition for Pakistani people's cohesiveness is federal democracy?

A. Definitely. It would be more accurate if I substituted democracy in place of federal democracy.. Democracy is incomplete without federalism, and federalism cannot be conceived without democracy. Therefore, when I talk of democracy, I imply in its content federalism and the autonomy of federal units as well, and when I talk of federalism the concept includes democracy.

Let me make one point clear. When I talk of federalism it is generally taken to imply that I am demanding rights for the people of Baluchistan and other smaller provinces. The fact is that my demand pertains to the entire country, for the simple reason that federalism is a sine quo non for Pakistan, its solidarity, its stability, its existence. Without it the people, be they from any region, cannot be happy. I think the Punjabis need it more than any other people in Pakistan.

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Q. How can we achieve this?

A. By waging a democratic struggle. The greatest obstacle in that direction is the existing regime and it has a vested interest in perpetuating the situation. The main hurdles are those who can fulfill their exploitative designs under the present setup or those of our political colleagues who have as yet failed to realize the need and importance of struggle and change. Obviously, we will have to work to make people conscious of it, and to fight against the forces that are opposed not only to federalism and autonomy but also to the unity and prosperity of the masses.

Q. An impression is created by certain circles that Baluch leaders are not interested in Pakistan. Do you agree?

A. Certainly not. It is a travesty of truth. They do not talk of Baluchistan exclusively nor are the Baluch so narrow-minded, for that matter. I believe that those who alleged that we talk of Baluchistan alone have at the back of their minds the idea that Baluchistan is not an integral part of Pakistan. Otherwise, they would not claim that the Baluch demand autonomy, which is the life-blood of a country like Pakistan, for the Baluch people only.

Were that the case, I would not come to the people of Punjab and beseech them to heed me, instead of looking elsewhere.

Q. Has any progress been made in forging unity for democratic federal struggle?

A. I think people in the politicians' community have begun to look at the problem in a more realistic manner. I am hopeful that if time permits, some political understanding acknowledging the reality that the demands of federalism have not been met in the past may emerge.

We should not forget that every time Martial Law was imposed in Pakistan the basic fact behind it was that Pakistan's genius and natural characteristic was violated. If the problem is not solved, democracy cannot flourish in the country.

Q. What is your assessment of the talks on the matter you had with other political leaders during your recent visit?

A. This time I was not allowed enough time to meet as many politician friends as I had wanted. Owing to externment from Sindh, the Punjab and the NWFP, I did not get a chance to discuss the subject in detail. But judging from whatever little exchange of views I had with others, I feel considerable headway has been made in the matter.

It is clear that our objective is to wage a struggle to hold general election on the basis of universal adult franchise with a view to establishing a democratic polity that may accord with the genius of the country.

Q. But a new political structure such as advocated by you, would necessitate amending the constitution? **A.** I have made several proposals. First, the status of the federating units as envisaged in the 1940 Resolution by the founders of Pakistan may be accepted. Second, the

Centre may keep with it the subjects of defence, foreign affairs, currency and communications, and all other subjects may be placed under the jurisdiction of provinces. Third, the demands of genuine federalism and provincial autonomy may be met through amendments to the 1973 Constitution. If none of these suggestions is acceptable, I invite the other parties to present any alternate scheme that meets the requirements of federalism and provincial autonomy in conformity to the intrinsic nature of the Pakistani state. My demand never implied that the political parties should amend the Constitution before elections. That is not possible and they (the political parties) have no power to do so. Nor would this be a democratic procedure. What I want is that political parties should acknowledge the need for genuine federalism and reach an understanding in principle and undertake that, after elections have been held, they will join us in sponsoring the agreed formula and getting it approved by the National Assembly.

Q. It is said in some circles that raising questions about federalism or people's economic rights amounts to subverting the struggle for democracy. What would you say?

A. If you exclude federalism and economic rights from the objectives of the struggle, what is left in democracy? What will be gained by such a struggle? What can such a thankless task mean?

Q. What are your views on the prospects for the coming together of nationalist and progressive parties and elements?

A. Unity of all parties and elements subscribing to the ideal of national democracy is the most important need of the day and no conscious person can ignore it. Such a unity alone can found and sustain a developed social system like national democracy. We have never minimized the need for giving this desire for unity a practical shape. However, it is a fact that no satisfactory progress or success in this direction has so far been possible. This is much to be regretted. However, in such a basic and important matter, there is no choice but to persist in efforts for understanding and unity. It is good that in view of bitter lessons of the past, people have started pondering the matter more seriously

Q. Do you intend to take any initiative in this regard?

A. I have never been unmindful of the need. This question merits persistent effort.

Q. What would you say about terrorism in politics?

A. Terrorism does not achieve anything. Terrorism in politics, from whichever side resorted to, never yields healthy results. In fact, terrorism is the last resort of the desperate and despair is not a good creed. We have had many great terrorist movements in history and all of them ended in utter failure and even their leaders ultimately realized that they had chosen a totally wrong course. Wherever reliance is placed on terrorism the result invariably is failure and a setback to popular movements. As I said, terrorism is bred by despair. Therefore, it is necessary to create in the country conditions in which despondency does not generate terrorism. Obviously, if you block all channels then people would try all sorts of things, without pondering their pros and cons.

Q. What is your reaction to the recent curbs on several politicians' movements, including yours?

A. It is most deplorable that people belonging to different federal units are being prevented from meeting one another, examining the situation in the country and its requirements, and developing close relations. This could only lead to alienation, misunderstanding and confusion.
Q. Have you noticed that although pre-censorship on dailies has been lifted, they have been told not to publish anything 'political'?

A. Another riddle this. What are the newspapers free to publish if they cannot report anything political?

Q. What are your views about the refugees from Afghanistan?

A. I have repeatedly said that the only way to send these refugees back to their homes is through recognition of the Kabul regime and negotiations with it. If this is not possible soon enough and the issue is protracted, it will be impossible to send them back. History shows that whenever refugees enter a country and spend a long time there efforts to repatriate them have not borne fruit and they have not returned to their original homes. Any prolonged stay of these people in Pakistan and other countries will create complications for the hosts.

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Appendix-3

FOR A NUCLEAR-FREE AND NON-VIOLENT WORLD

(Paper presented by Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, President, Pakistan National Party, at the symposium held at Tashkent, USSR, on 27-29th November, 1987)

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,
I am thankful to the Soviet Committee for solidarity with the peoples of Asia and Africa for giving me the opportunity to present before you my views on an issue which today agitates the entire mankind, namely, how to have a nuclear-free and non-violent world. I have no doubt that the views I am expressing are also the views of the 90 million people of Pakistan.

The issue under discussion is all the more relevant to me and my country in the context of our peculiar geo-political situation. Apart from having common borders with India, China, Afghanistan and Iran, and having a very close proximity with the Soviet Union, Pakistan is also physically linked with the Persian Gulf and has a long Arabian Sea coast. In other words, it has a peculiar geo-political and geostrategic position. Naturally, therefore, what happens in my country cannot go un-noticed by the peoples and countries around it, nor can we escape the impact of what happens around us.

As you all know, there is an undeclared imperialist sponsored war going on against one of our neighbours Afghanistan. While the people of Pakistan are a peace-loving people who want to live in peace and friendship with all the neighbours, imperialism headed by the United States of America is engaged in destabilizing the whole region, in the centre of which is situated Pakistan. You can imagine the pressures to which a country like Pakistan, situated in such a strategic area, is subjected constantly. Be it an undeclared war against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the aggressive moves against Iran, the continuation of the Iraq-Iran war or the numerous plots and conspiracies hatched and executed in this region in order to ensure imperialist control and domination, particularly of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf, Pakistan is affected directly. In spite of not being directly placed in the theatre of war, we are very much in it and are having the bitter taste of its fallout, both from Afghanistan and from the Gulf.

The question we are dealing with today has to be split in two parts. One relates to the de-- nuclearisation of the world, i.e. the elimination of all existing nuclear weapons and also the possibility of the future manufacture of nuclear weapons. The other is the transformation of the present world of violence into a non-violent world. In spite of the link between the two, the achievement of the first does not necessarily mean the attainment of the second objective.

History is witness to the fact that the Soviet Union, right from the very first day of its establishment, has strived for peace. Up to the Second World War, it was a matter of earning a respite between wars, to lengthen the space between one war and the other. In those years, socialism posed no challenge to the imperialist states. Therefore, they took their own rivalries and race for world domination to the point of fighting wars among themselves. But

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today, due to the might of the socialist bloc, imperialist countries do not push their own rivalries and contradictions to the point of war amongst themselves. They are not in a position to start a war – a nuclear war against socialism. The first to start such a war will be the second to die, but die he must.

Today in a nuclear-weapon-filled world, the very survival of humanity has become the key issue, which is possible only in a nuclear-weapon–free world. There cannot be a just or an unjust nuclear war. Similarly, there cannot be a limited nuclear war as being propagated by some of the nuclear hawks of the West, because once a nuclear war starts, there will be no stopping it. There cannot be winners in a nuclear war. Knowing all this, nuclear weapons are being modernized; precision and reliability of these weapons are being further developed. The United States' logic in support of this increasing nuclearisation of their arsenals is that they consider it to be deterrent against a Soviet nuclear attack. For the United States, the arms race is a way of waging a war to deplete the strength of other countries, for they will be forced also to waste their resources on the making of arms.

Despite this dangerous pursuit of more and more sophistication of nuclear and conventional weapons by the United States and its allies, the Soviet Union has shown remarkable perseverance in its efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons and the threat of a nuclear war. The Reykjavik, Vladivostok and Delhi Declarations are some of the historic landmarks in the single minded struggle waged by the Soviet Union in this regard. No doubt, nothing spectacular has come out of these efforts so far, solely due to the refusal of the United States to respond to the sustained efforts and proposals advanced by the Soviet Union to rid the world of nuclear weapons and war. But, one thing is unmistakably evident. Billions of people throughout the world including the United States of America are aware of the threat posed by the stockpiling of nuclear weapons and the need to destroy them. The persistent efforts of the Soviet Union are slowly making their impact, so much so that even the Star War mongers of Washington are no longer able to deceive the world with arguments such as balance of strength, deterrent and so on. The peace onslaught of the Soviet Union is certainly putting them in the defensive, leaving them no option but to respond, though unwillingly. They are also beginning to admit that there will be no security through nuclear weapons; that there will be no winner in a nuclear war.

Let us hope that sanity will prevail upon the advocates of nuclear weapons supremacy and they will eventually come to realize that no one in this world has the right to pass a death sentence on mankind, which includes them as well.

Now we come to the second aspect of the issue, namely ridding the world of violence. Imperialism may eventually be prompted by the public outcry of millions upon millions of people throughout the world and the pressures of the peace offensive of the socialist bloc, to abandon its nuclear race. However, we do not see any possibility in the foreseeable future of imperialism giving up its neocolonial pursuits in the developing countries. It is in fact intensifying its domination and plunder of newly independent states by all possible means. Imperialism is in deep crisis, both internally and externally. It is seeking a way out of this crisis by maintaining its present predatory international economic system, in the militarization of its economy and in the intensification of the arms race. It is instigating wars by proxy, pitting one developing country against the other and forcing them to squander their meager resources on

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buying arms from the imperialist countries, thus providing a thriving market for the arms manufacturers, the military industrial complexes of these countries.

As a Pakistani, I don't have to go very far from my own region to see the neo-colonial strategy and policy of imperialists in operation. Strained relations between Pakistan and India are causing severe strains on our economies and depriving our peoples of the fruits of development. Imperialism is happy to see our relations remaining tense, for this situation allows them to try and force us to act according to their dictates, to serve their interests. By directly supporting the Afghan rebel movement and creating innumerable economic, social and political problems for Pakistan, they are trying to force Pakistan to play second fiddle to their schemes in the region. They have turned the entire region into a theatre of hot war with all its dire consequences to our vital interests and to the interest of peace in the region. We do not see any sign of an improvement in the situation. US imperialists seem to be bent upon ensuring by all fair and foul means their total control over the wealth and resources of the littoral states of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. And, if the situation calls for their own physical presence there, they may not hesitate to plunge our region into a mini-war of aggression, directly or through proxies, aided and abeted by them.

In such a scenario, we do not see any chance of stopping the imperialists through sermons and persuasions. If war and violence are to be done away with in our region, it becomes imperative that the countries of our region – Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Iran and the Gulf Arab countries – unite together with the Soviet Union and other countries of the peace-loving world and expel the imperialists from our region. We have got to force them out and terminate their direct and indirect presence. The same applies to other regions of the world, be it Africa, the Far East, South East Asia, the Middle East, Central or South America. If the governments of these countries are averse to forge such a unity, it is the duty of the leaders of public opinion, the politicians, the scientists, the intellectuals and the politically conscious elements among the masses to mobilize public opinion and pressure to achieve this purpose. Otherwise, violence and war will continue, if not on a global scale – which the imperialist might not venture into in the face of the might of the socialist bloc, the non-aligned and other peace-loving forces of the world - , then at regional levels. The latter course suits them well, for they do not have to fight these wars themselves; others will fight for them, and provide the market for their weapons.

A world free of nuclear weapons may be a possibility in another 10, 15 or 20 years because the nuclear war mongers will soon realize the futility of wasting their resources on the manufacture and stock piling of nuclear weapons. The recent collapse of the stock market in the capitalist countries and the death throes of the American dollar could not have escaped their notice. They know that they have got to stop this mad race in nuclear arms; or else they are doomed, together with their whole system. They will not have to wait for a nuclear war to eliminate them. But, they are certainly not going to give up their neocolonial ventures in the developing world.

Here again, I can only express the hope that the force and pressure of peaceful competition with socialism will eventually compel the imperialist countries to re-cast their economies in such a way that these can survive without wars, without creating areas of tension and regional conflicts to ensure the sale of weapons, in a climate of peace and non-violence.

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The sooner they realize this, the better for the whole of mankind.

On the occasion of this first anniversary of the historic Delhi Declaration, I can assure you that the people of Pakistan whole-heartedly stand by the 10 principles spelt out in that document, because we do not consider it as a document signed by the leaders of two major powers of the world but a document signed by the entire mankind. Let us unitedly fight for the achievement of the objectives set out in the Delhi Declaration.

Thank You.

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Appendix – 4

English version of Mir Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo's address in Urdu at the All Parties Conference on Afghanistan convened by Prime Minister Junejo in March 1988.

On March 4th and 5th, 1988, Muhammad Khan Junejo, Pakistan's Prime Minister, convened a conference of all political parties of Pakistan at the State Guest House in Rawalpindi to discuss the position of Pakistan at the on-going Geneva talks on settlement of the Afghan conflict. Except for a handful of parties, all the political parties including the Muslim League, favoured the signing of the Geneva agreement without raising new points to block the process. The following is the English rendering of the speech that Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, President of the Pakistan National Party and the former Governor of Baluchistan, delivered in Urdu at the conference.

Mr. Prime Minister,
I am glad that you have revived an old but long-forgotten tradition of consulting the opposition political parties on matters of national importance. Obviously, it was not very easy for us to decide in favour of attending this conference, nor have we come here bubbling with optimism.

However, now that we are here, let me tell you that the purpose of our being here is to seek, together with you, ways and means to restore peace and stability in our country and this region.

Before I go into the agenda of this conference, I would like to briefly draw your attention to a problem of urgent importance. In my view, a serious problem facing our country today is the question of the rights of the nationalities residing in Pakistan. This problem has a direct bearing on the stability and security of our country. It has reached a point where our youth publicly lament that they do not see any future for them in Pakistan. You all live in this country and you cannot fail to hear the bizarre slogans being raised;- such as 'Sindhu Desh', 'Independent Baluchistan', Independent 'Pakhtunkhwa' and so on. These slogans are certainly not raised for fun. These are the logical results of the shortsighted and irrational policies pursued by our rulers for the past forty years, policies which have forced the people of Sindh, Baluchistan and the NWFP to ask themselves if they have any future at all in Pakistan.

In this context, I recall a conversation I had with General Zia-ul-Haq some time in 1980. The General told me: *'A revolution has taken place in Afghanistan. Soviet troops have entered that country. The situation poses a grave threat to Pakistan's security. What do you think about it?'* My reply was: 'General Sahib, Pakistan faces no danger from Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, India or anyone else. If at all there is any such threat it might come from the people of Sindh, Baluchistan and the NWFP where national rights have been trampled underfoot by successive governments for the last more than forty years. Rectify that situation and there will be no threat to Pakistan.'

I may agree with you that these are extreme adventuristic slogans. But I must tell you that it would not be wise to summarily dismiss these slogans. I do not agree with the contention that Indian intervention alone was at the root of the emergence of Bangladesh. The truth is that the misdeeds of our rulers left no option for the Bengalis but to invite the Indians and Indians obliged them. If the present situation in Pakistan is allowed to continue, then a stage will soon

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come when the people, the younger generation in particular, would stop looking up to us of the traditional school for leadership.

Let me tell you frankly that if we fail to resolve the issue, it would be much more disastrous for Pakistan's security and stability than Afghanistan and other similar problems. Therefore, Mr. Prime Minister, I would request you to convene a similar conference like the present one to sort out the problem of the rights of the constituent nationalities of the Federation of Pakistan. Invite the Opposition parties and let the Government side also participate in such a conference. Let us discuss this problem threadbare – let us define the rights of the constituent nationalities and prescribe adequate guarantees for their protection. To begin with, I would suggest that concrete steps be taken to implement the Declaration on Autonomy of the Federating Units adopted unanimously in the meeting of the party heads of the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) at Lahore on 8th August, 1986.

I am not among those who raise extremist demands. Nor do I support any step which could lead to the weakening of Pakistan or its disintegration. But I would like to make it categorically clear that I am not one of those who would submit to any attempt to enslave the nationalities. In that case you will find me in the fighting line. Therefore, I once again appeal to you to help rescue the country from its present state of frustration, chaos and mutual distrust. Let us unitedly ensure the unity and solidarity of Pakistan.

Mr. Prime Minister,

Let me now come to the question of Afghanistan. By involving Pakistan in the Afghanistan imbroglio, the Pakistani rulers have inflicted a tragedy on Pakistan. I say this because our involvement in this conflict was not in the interest of Pakistan. When General Zia-ul-Haq and his regime pushed Pakistan into this quagmire, I was one of those who had repeatedly warned of the grave consequences in store for Pakistan. My Party's position was based on the following premises:

- A revolution has taken place in Afghanistan. It is Afghanistan's internal affair. It is none of our business as to what kind of government they should have. Why should our Army Generals be so upset about the change in Afghanistan? We have been changing governments in our country every now and then. Today we have a civilian government, tomorrow a military government or a semi-military or a semi-civilian government. Did anyone ask us or did we allow anyone to ask us why we were frequently changing our governments?

- I wish to say something about the background of the changes in Afghanistan. There used to be two buffer states, namely Iran and Afghanistan, between the Russian and British empires. After remaining obedient buffer states for many decades, these two countries eventually called a halt to their erstwhile status, following the Islamic revolution in Iran and the National Democratic revolution in Afghanistan. There was a radical change in the entire regional scenario. Both these countries came out of the orbit of imperialist domination. America wanted to establish a foothold in South Asia in order to defend its multifarious interests in the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East and South Asia. It could not have relied on the unstable and unpopular Arab monarchies and sheikhdoms to defend its interests.

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- Take a look at the situation in the region. The interests of four major world powers happen to coverage at this strategic point – those of China, the Soviet Union and India by virtue of their physical proximity, and the United States to secure either its direct physical presence or an effective presence through proxies. The Americans tried to overthrow the neutral Government of King Zahir Shah and replace it by a surrogate Government headed by Zahir Shah's son-in-law and Shah Wali's son, Abdul Wakil. But this scheme was pre-empted when Sardar Daoud seized power with the help of the People's Democratic (Khalq) Party.

- America was not willing to give up. It began to hatch schemes to woo Sardar Daoud. Daoud visited Iran and Saudi Arabia and later came to Pakistan. By the time he got back to Kabul he was already mentally prepared to get rid of those who had helped him to come into power. His scheme began to unfold with the cold-blooded murder of popular Khalq leader Amir Akbar Khyber. It was followed by the mass arrest of the Khalq leaders. Rumours spread that the entire Khalq leadership was soon to be physically liquidated. The Khalq party cells in the Afghan armed forces were forced to strike back in self-defence. They organized the Saur revolution and seized power, in the course of which Sardar Daoud was killed. No foreign power, including the Soviet Union, had anything to do with this internal change in Afghanistan.

- Then began the flow of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, a flow which was not caused by any foreign intervention in Afghanistan. Gradually as intervention began from this side of the border and the interventionists started harassing the residents across the border, indulge in loot and plunder, and threaten them with dire consequences if they refused to leave Afghanistan and come to Pakistan, they were left with no choice but to leave their hearths and homes and seek refuge in Pakistan. In those days the new government in Afghanistan was not in a position to provide protection to the harassed Afghans. And those who called themselves mujahideen stepped up their intervention leading to retaliatory bombardment of the border regions by the Afghan Government, a virtual war situation developed and hundreds of thousands of Afghans were forced to flee to Pakistan. They were not pushed out by the Russians. They were in fact brought here under a calculated scheme. The purpose was to build up evidence against Afghanistan and the Soviet Union.

- All said and done, the fact remains that millions of Afghan refugees are today on our soil. They have created innumerable problems for us. Every sector of life has been affected – our politics, or economy, our social and cultural values. It has led to the mass spread of all types of weapons throughout the country with all its lethal consequences. Never before had our country been so severely afflicted as now by the evils of heroin and other drugs. Law and order has become a thing of past as terrorist activities gain ground with each passing day. The people are living in perpetual fear and tension. The entire Pakistani society is cracking up. To tell the truth, the day we got our country involved in the Afghanistan conflict was the day when we put our country's future in peril.

- However, now it seems that the situation is moving towards a solution. If we choose to put obstacles in the way of a solution of this problem at this juncture and thus obstruct the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the responsibility for the consequences will fall squarely on our shoulders. The natural result will be spilling over of this undeclared

war into Pakistan territory and neither the refugees nor the so-called mujahideen would be blamed for that.

- Till now, we have managed to get away with the claim that Pakistan is not an active party in this war but an affected party. But after obstructing the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan when the war spills over into Pakistan, not only would Pakistan's own stability and security be endangered but peace and stability in the whole region would be disturbed. Naturally, countries like India which have so far remained neutral in this conflict will be physically drawn into it. It would envelope the entire region. It is unthinkable that the rulers of Pakistan would go to the extent of endangering the very existence of Pakistan for the sake of defending US interests in this region. We cannot allow the existence of our country to be put in jeopardy for the sake of US imperialist interests.

- Let me warn you that when conflicts like this are pushed to the point of no return they not only lead to situational changes, but also to geographical changes. And in conditions of internal chaos, mutual ill-will and distrust prevailing in Pakistan today you can very well imagine what this would mean to our country. The only rational course left for us is to strictly pursue a positive non-aligned foreign policy and to desist from indulging in short-sighted adventuristic exercises. You remember the outcome of pursuing such adventuristic policies in 1971; East Pakistan became Bangladesh. If we fail to correctly assess the objective conditions in our region and take corresponding steps, we are going to face an even more tragic trauma than the one we experienced in 1971.

- We have no dispute with Afghanistan, the Soviet Union or anyone else. Our number one problem today is how to ensure the return of the Afghan refugees to their homes. The type of Government to be formed in Afghanistan is none of our concern, whether it should be a transitional government, a coalition government or a broad based government. We are only interested in the safe return of the refugees. The Afghan Government has done nothing to obstruct their return, nor has the Soviet Union. We have no justification in dictating terms for the signing of the Geneva Accord. By doing so, we will be obstructing the return of the refugees to Afghanistan. After signing the Geneva Accord if we find that the Afghan Government is not facilitating the return of the refugees, we will be within our right to pressurize the Afghan authorities to do so. But the present situation is quite the contrary. The Afghan government says that it is prepared to welcome the refugees back, that they are ready to provide all necessary facilities for the safe return and resettlement of the refugees. But we are stuck in the mire of all sorts of miscalculations. We believe that we have defeated the Soviet Union, that Najibullah is a nobody. Gentlemen, please wake up. The Soviet Union has suffered no defeat. You have not conquered Afghanistan that you should now dictate terms to the Afghan Government. The Soviet Union is withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan in response to its national and international priorities. Neither your power nor the mujahideen's might is forcing the Soviets out. One of my esteemed friends, Qazi Hussain Ahmed of Jamaat-i-Islami, has deemed it fit to declare that we are not game hounds to hand over our prey to others. What is all this? Please tell us who has hunted whom? You are yourselves the hunted ones. The helpless refugees are themselves victims of the present situation. They cannot even go back to their homes. How did such a stupid idea that you defeated the Soviet Union get into your head?

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- You have also been saying that the Afghan Government's writ does not run beyond twenty percent of the Afghan territory. Living as I do so close to Afghanistan, I am conversant with that country a little more than some of you. When did the control of the Afghan Government ever extend to the whole Afghanistan? Afghanistan had always been a larger version of Baluchistan's Kalat state. For hundreds of miles you will find no police, no sign of any administration, no government. The control of the Central Government of Afghanistan had always been confined to the big cities and urban centres such as Kabul, Kandhar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad or at the most Paghman, Kunduz and some other areas. The rest of Afghanistan always lived in the backwardness of its history without any Central control. If such areas of Afghanistan can be called liberated territories, then I may very well stand up and claim that hundreds of miles of similar areas in Baluchistan are liberated territories and are not under the control of the Government of Pakistan. Can it be called a rational approach?

- Gentlemen, Not an inch of Afghanistan's territory has been conquered by anyone. At the most, those who claim to control eighty percent of Afghanistan had, for a short while, been in control of Khost but the Afghan Government has recaptured even that. Which other part of Afghanistan is under the control of the so-called mujahideen? The answer is: none. All these claims are based on illusions.

- Now when a solution of this conflict is in sight, we have no business to suggest what kind of government there should be in Afghanistan. All the conditions pertaining to the four instruments to be signed in Geneva have been fulfilled and these include the one relating to the time-frame for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. We must now sign these instruments. Thereafter, we should initiate negotiations with the Afghan Government for the return of the refugees. We must ask the Afghan Government to set up camps for the returning refugees and provide them all necessary facilities.

- Mr. Prime Minister, in this context I would like to invite your attention to a very important point. You will have to send back the Afghan refugees under army escort. Peaceful villagers live enroute and they will be exposed to loot and plunder when the refugees pass through them. Nothing will be left intact. You cannot rule out the possibility of armed clashes between the returning refugees and the local people. Therefore, make sure nothing happens that can vitiate relations between the refugees and the local people when the former return to their homeland.

- There is no room or reason for delaying this question any longer. The people of Pakistan cannot permit the Government to endanger the national interests of Pakistan for the sake of the Unites States. Our first and foremost concern is the interests of Pakistan.

It is ridiculous to say that we do not recognize the Government of Afghanistan. If that is so, then which is the Government with whom we have been negotiating and would be signing the Geneva Accord? We have our embassy and consulates in Afghanistan and Afghanistan has its embassy and consulates in Pakistan. What else is recognition? You have recognized Afghanistan. The whole world recognizes the Government of Afghanistan and deals with it.

You can perhaps say that it is a de-facto Government. But if you want to indulge in the exercise of accepting or rejecting the legality of that Government, then you are in for a lot of complications. We may not be able to vouch for the legality of our own Government. So better give up this debate. Dr. Najibullah's Government is the Government of Afghanistan today. You are asking for the recognition of the refugees/mujahideen as one of the parties. In what capacity, may I ask? Do they constitute a government? Does anyone recognize them as such? Just to say that you do not recognize the Najib Government is not enough. You do recognize it and you are negotiating with it in Geneva. So sign the Geneva agreement and send back the Afghan refugees whose presence has imposed on the people of Pakistan a wholesale martial law for the last eight years.

For God's sake, do not obstruct the withdrawal of the Soviet troops and the return of the Afghan refugees. It would be suicidal for Pakistan.

Thank you

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