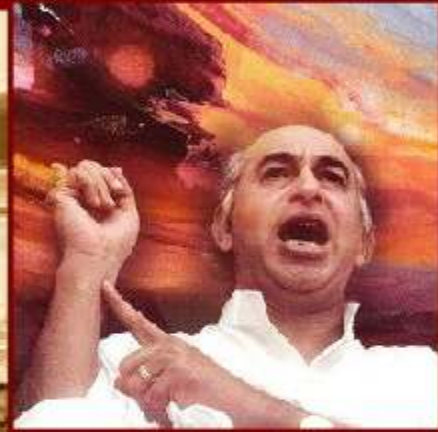
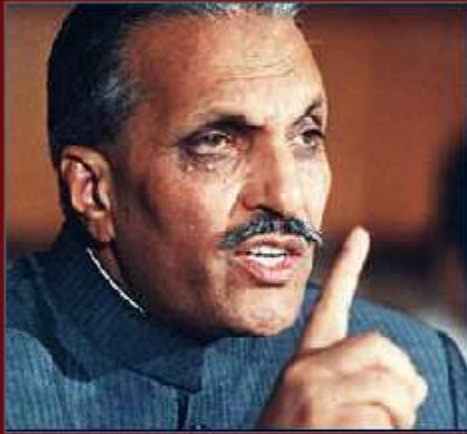


He was not hanged

Ghulam Akbar



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Reproduced by

Sani Hussain Panhwar

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**THE NINETY-THIRD SURAH
AD-DUHA
(THE BRIGHT MORNING HOURS)**

This surah although in the first instance addressed to the Prophet, has a far wider purport: it concerns and is meant to console -every faithful man and woman suffering from the sorrows and bitter hardships which so often afflict the good and the innocent, and which sometimes cause even the righteous to question God's transcendental justice.

**IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE MOST GRACIOUS
THE DISPENSER OF
GRACE.**

- (1) CONSIDER the bright morning hours,
- (2) and the night when it grows still and dark
- (3) Thy sustainer has not forsaken thee, nor does He scorn thee:
- (4) for, indeed, the life to come will be better for thee than this earlier part of thy life]!
- (5) And, indeed, in time will thy Sustainer grant thee; [what thy heart desires], and thou shalt be well-pleased.
- (6) Has He not found thee an orphan, and given thee shelter?
- (7) And found thee lost on thy way, and guided thee?
- (8) And found thee in want, and given thee sufficiency?
- (9) Therefore, the orphan shalt thou never wrong,
- (10) and him that seeks [thy] help shalt you never chide.
- (11) and of thy sustainer's blessings shalt thou ;ever] speak.

AL-Quran

WHO WAS A DEMAGOGUE WHO A MURDERER WHO A MARTYR?

In the late sixties, as Executive Editor of Daily Kohistan, Resident Editor of Mashriq Karachi and Chief Editor of Weekly Mussawar, I had committed myself to the cause of Bhutto whose emergence as the messenger of hope, the prophet of change and the torchbearer of national pride had caused the *status quo* forces to unite against the "*intransig ence*" of the masses.

In the seventies, when the likes of Maulana Kausar Niazi and company were installed as the trumpeters and the architects of the promised revolution, and a new breed of opportunity-seekers and soldiers of fortune cropped up, my youthful idealism took such a rude shock that I was left with nothing but the ashes of my burnt-out dreams. Disillusionment, frustration and anger caused me to turn, from a blind Bhutto-follower, into a blind critic of Bhutto. Paradoxically, I hated all those too who hated Bhutto. My 1977-book titled "The Apostle of Deceit" was as much my case against the status quo forces, as it was the angry cry of my anguished soul at the erosion of the hopes and the expectations I had associated with Bhutto. Reason having deserted my mind, I was ill-prepared to give a thought to the invisible restraints and constraints under which Bhutto had been functioning. No matter how confident he was of the backing of the masses, the status quo forces were far mightier because of their access to and control of the 'ultimate' instruments of power, as I discovered in the dying seventies.

In the early seventies, Bhutto had been advised by Chon En Lai not to take hurried steps towards the change he wanted to bring, as he did not have the infrastructure required to build a new socioeconomic order. Bhutto had replied: "I have to do everything for my country and my people within the time I have, and I know I don't have much time."

He always knew he was on the hit list of those who could not afford his nationalism. He tried to make himself powerful through political manipulation and such steps as the seventh amendment but in the end it was proved that he could not acquire any more independence in pursuing his objectives than his people could acquire their right to decide about their own destiny.

As the truth started revealing itself in the early years of Zia, I, who had condemned Bhutto for having betrayed my expectations learnt that he had always been "a prisoner" and it was when he tried to break out of "the prison" that the countdown to his ultimate "doom" had begun.

Zia, till he decided to find a legal excuse for hanging Bhutto, was for me just another strongman in uniform, one of those many in the third world who had thrived and continued to thrive on the extensively propagated notion that stability through the power of the summary-trial-courts and law-and-order through the threateningly-pointed-bayonets alone could solve the problems of the people.

But when Zia seriously got down to the business of tailoring Islam to suit the special requirements of his frame, I instantly knew that the worst in our history had occurred. Here was a man who was quite capable of rising some fine morning from his bed with the notion that God in His Supreme Grace had appeared in his dream and urged him to hang all the evil-doers and infidels in the country to pave way for the enforcement of Shariah. He was even capable of claiming that, to make his Divine and sacred assignment easier, the angels of God had themselves delivered the list of all such evil-doers and infidels to him.

The Zia era has passed into history as did the Ayub era and the Yahya era before it. The Bhutto era has returned, but with a new Bhutto at the helm of affairs, distinctively different in style and temperament. The pattern of the battle however has not changed. Infact the status quo forces, due to their unshared reign for over a decade, are more well-fed, better-organised and much stronger than ever before. The conditions offered to them to prove that democracy means nothing but conflict, chaos, disorder and misery, are ideal for their designs.

The country has been facing the worst economic crisis of its history, to overcome which, very drastic and potentially unpopular steps are required. Tragically the consequences of the misdeeds of a decade have to be faced by a democratic government the authority of which is already being challenged by the supreme beneficiary of the Zia era who has been hoisted to the pedestal of 'national' leadership by those who hate the very sound of the word Bhutto just as they used to hate the sound of the word Jinnah in the forties.

If we have really seen the last of our 'martial laws' the man to be revered by our future generations will be General Mirza Aslam Baig, and the person to add a chapter of pride to our national history will be the daughter of the man who was hanged for murder.

Through this book, I, as a self-appointed representative of an aging generation, am talking to our future generations who are entitled to know the exact truth about the man who fathered the constitution of Pakistan.

Was he an apostle of frenzy and deceit as I had led myself to believe in the seventies?

Was he an ordinary criminal as Zia had wanted the world to believe when he hanged him on April the 4th, 1979?

Or was he a messenger of hope, a prophet of change, a crusader against injustice, a fighter for freedom and a martyr in the cause of democracy?

I am not an authority on the subject. But those who know the truth are never going to reveal it. Yet the truth has to be found out. We owe it to history. We owe it to our future generations. We owe it to Pakistan, the interests of which are far more sacred and precious than the interests of Benazir Bhutto, of the Pakistan Peoples Party, of Nawaz Sharif, of Qazi Hussain Ahmad and Professor Abdul Ghafoor, of Maulana Fazalur Rehman and Shah Ahmad Noorani, of Majid Nizami and Mir Khalilur Rehman, of the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad, of Inter Services Intelligence, of the four-star, three-star and two-star uniforms, of the overseas directors of the unending puppet show and of the syndicate that decides who is a traitor and who, a patriot.

It is good to pray in the Friday prayers for our well-being. But not all, not always, our prayers are heard. He who runs this universe (and all the universes) does not change His Laws simply because Qazi Hussain Ahmad and Maulana Fazalur Rehman lead the prayers. They infact may be praying for different rewards. Even their mosques are different.

We get only what we deserve. Nothing more. Nothing less. That's God's Justice. It is His Grace that He doesn't judge us harshly. He knows we are humans, not angels. It is when we decide to turn into monsters that His Fury is provoked.

Let us not provoke His Fury my dear countrymen!

Let us earn His Benevolence! Let us deserve to pray for His Grace! Alhamra did not fall because there was suddenly a dearth of praying priests. Undeserving prayers are never heard, never answered.

THE AUTHOR

The author was born on 27-7-1939. He was educated in Sindh. After getting his degree in English Literature, he joined Daily Kohistan as Magazine Editor in 1961. He was made the Karachi Bureau Chief of Kohistan in 1962 and in 1963 became its General Manager and Executive Editor. In 1964 he was elected to the Board of Directors. In 1966, when the newspaper was taken over by the Pakistan Muslim League, he joined Daily Mashriq and became the editor of its Karachi edition. In 1968 he launched weekly Mussawar followed by fortnightly Film Times and Weekly Muslim Ishtraak from Lahore. He quit journalism in 1974 after having authored a few political novels on the Middle East war. It was his best-selling book on the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto which made him a controversial figure. Since 1974 he has been in advertising. In 1981 he founded Midas (Pvt) Limited which is now the biggest advertising agency of the Punjab and one of the biggest of the country.

This book comes after his absence of nearly twelve years from the world of letters.

TO

The leaders and the people of the United States of America who have always advocated the cause of democracy and the rights of man but have often expediently allowed themselves to back dictatorial regimes in the third world countries which look upto the statue of liberty with hope and reverence.

Perestroika's author who says that there will be no second Noah's Ark to save the planet Earth if its inhabitants continue to seek glory in war.

The people of Pakistan who have survived the agony of living under the tyranny of autocratic rulers and are now determined to defend their freedom against external as well as internal aggression.

The common man of Pakistan whose awakening in the late sixties caused the wind of change to blow from Karachi to Khyber.

Majid Nizami whose political philosophy is different from mine but whom I respect for his commitment to democracy.

Munnoo Bhai and Mahmood Sham with whom I share a common cause.

And

Benazir Bhutto upon whose shoulders rests the unenviable responsibility of building Pakistan into an invulnerably strong democracy on the foundations of divisive polarization, and growing regionalism.

“Happy is the country that has no history, but your country has a history of so many martial laws, of the assassination of one and the hanging of another prime minister, of a plane crash that killed a president, of an organization that opposed its very creation before becoming the sole defender of its ideology.”

“Still there can always be a new beginning. It has been proved that slander cannot make a patriot, a traitor; when water recedes the stone is still there.”

HE WAS

NOT

HANGED

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PREFACE

This year, the world is celebrating the second centenary of the revolution that catapulted the world into what we call the modern age. It happened in France in 1789. The great upheaval that accompanied the Declaration of the Rights of Man and resulted in the beheading of King Louis XVI, is known to history as the French Revolution. It changed the face of not only France, but also Europe and the whole World. It unlocked a Pandora's box of previously unknown ills and unsolved problems, including the class struggle and the rule of the masses.

Whatever were the virtues and the vices of that historic event, the fact remains that it became the dividing line between the old world and the new world, the world in which tradition had ruled supreme and the world in which change was to be the dominant factor.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was an amplified echo of the French Revolution. So was, on a lesser scale, the revolution of Khomeini in Iran.

These revolutions spawned the categories of "right" and "left" and till two decades back, the human race was considered to fall either under one category or the other.

But in the recent years, the pace of change has been so fast due to incredible advancement and progress in technology, that the old certainties of the right and the left have virtually eroded. These simple categories have now been replaced by more complex categories which cannot even be defined.

Pakistan cannot be an exception in this worldwide metamorphosis.

Even though there still are the fundamentalists of socialism and the fundamentalists of religion and they are trying hard to hang on to their opted categories of the left and the right, the fast-moving wheels of change are going to grind them into dust sooner than they think.

When Hazrat Mohammad, our prophet (peace be upon him) the last messenger of God on the earth, urged his followers to make quest for knowledge an article of their faith, he forever drew a decisive line between the ignorant and the knowing, the blind and the seer, the visionless and the visionary.

Knowledge always results in change. The more we learn, the more we change. If we are not prepared to learn, if we are not prepared to change, let us be prepared to find a coffin for our collective national burial.

This book is my subjective study of what has happened to us in the past, what is happening to us today and what may happen to us in the future.

If ideas were characters, and characters their abodes, this book could well have been termed as a novel, even though nothing written in it is fiction.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a real person. He is more real today.

Ghulam Akbar

PROLOGUE

On April 9, 1977, a PNA procession at Lahore resulted in a clash with police that claimed a few precious lives.

Till that day, for full three years after my journalistic career had ended in bitter disillusionment, anguish and frustration, I had not written a word, apart from the lines I had to pen down as a professional copywriter in an advertising agency. That night something started happening inside me. All the anger that had gathered inside me for years and years, anger over the things that had been happening to my country ever since I had attained the age of comprehension, anger caused by the erosion of my dreams, anger against my own incapability to influence the state of affairs in any manner whatsoever, anger at having been forced to quit the arena and to adopt a 'stable' career — all that anger exploded within me suddenly. The explosion had the force of the clap of thunder, and all my thinking processes succumbed to its impact. All the beliefs I as a young man had cultivated in the late sixties, seemed, all of a sudden, to fall apart completely. I found myself in the role of a prosecutor who was also determined to sit in judgement to condemn the man, who only a few years back, had been the very personification of all that was for me, worth living and fighting for.

"I plead guilty"

That was the first line of my book.

"I plead guilty of having voted for Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto" That was the second line.

The book appeared in the middle of 1977. It was an instant bestseller. It seemed suddenly to make me a popular man, but in a circle of thought, I had always defied and waged my journalistic battles against. And around me strange things were happening, the veneer of which was all fair, glittering with piety and noble designs, but the crux of which had the foul smell of sinister objectives. There were sacred beards all around, exuding an aura of contrived virtuosity that promised rich rewards to the followers and richly-deserved flogging to the dissenter. In the middle stood, short in stature but elevated above the rest by decree, a self-appointed Messiah, citing the Holy Verses of God as a proof of the Divine approval of his mission — pledging himself to the neglected cause of extracting only the 'sacred' and 'purified' elements of rulership from that 'corrupted' and 'stinking' system of government, mis-named as Democracy or the Rule of the People, by the exponents of 'anti-Islamic' Western thought.

The God-fearing satan-hating faithfuls, determined to proclaim the supremacy of Islamic Justice, arrested the ex-prime minister of Pakistan on the charges of a murder that had been committed several cities away from him.

The author of the instant bestseller titled “The Apostle of Deceit”, having fired all his guns against his ex-hero, realized suddenly that all the bullets were bouncing back at him, and that, through a cruel joke of destiny, he himself stood as accused, in the court of his mind.

The book was never republished after 1977. I could not kill it. I could not disown it. But by taking it out of circulation I could at least have the self-satisfaction of not being a part of what was happening around.

This is not an exercise in remorse. I am not the sort of a person who can regret his convictions for any objective reasons. I wielded my pen against the late Ayub Khan when his word was law. Bhutto was my idol before he came to power, but I was very outspoken in my criticism of his regime, as long as I kept writing. This was at a time when the fashionable socialists found in me a dangerous counter-revolutionary, and the bearded holy men considered me a threat to the existence of Islam. In an atmosphere charged with judgemental tendencies on extremistically polarized lines, I found myself in a void, with no one to talk to except my own self.

Writing about oneself is never a pleasant experience. One has always to guard against the charges of self-projection, but I think only when one is not guarding consciously against anything and is determined not to fall to the pressures of inhibitions, fears and rules, one can really transmit his soul through words.

I believe that I am riot just myself. I represent a generation and many thousands in that generation who have felt and thought on the same frequency, the same wavelength, and whose feelings and thoughts deserve to be recorded for history.

**MY IDOLS
AND
THEIR IDEALS**

“It is not the Will of God that poverty should be hereditary and riches should be hereditary, that health should be hereditary and disease should be hereditary, that power should be hereditary and subjugation should be hereditary. It is a crime against humanity to grant sanctity to one person’s right to live in boundless luxury, and to another-person’s bondage to a life of starvation, disease and humiliation.”

FROM ALEXANDER THE GREAT TO THE GREAT QUAID

From my school days to my university life and then to my early career in journalism, I had created several idols in my mind, to serve as the prime sources of inspiration in my pursuit of destiny. There was no fixed rationale or logic behind the creation of these idols. In some cases they mirrored my ideological leanings. In other cases they reflected my perception of history. Some had the charismatic pull, I could not resist. Some generated feelings of awe and admiration in me. Some created turbulence in my spiritual chemistry and some set my thinking processes into motion.

They came from different backgrounds, different periods of history, different ages of civilization, different cultures of mankind, and in most cases were diagonally opposite in character, style and their beliefs.

I dare not mention here the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) who towers so high above the rest of the human race that he rules supreme over all my sensibilities, perceptions and faculties.

His role as the beacon of light for the entire mankind is unparalleled.

But from Islamic history, with no disrespect to the other luminaries, I picked up Farooq-e-Azam, Khalid Bin Walid, Tariq Bin Ziad, Salahuddin Ayoobi, Jalaluddin Khwarzam and Fateh Ali Tipu.

“Son of Aas, no matter how logically you find justifications for accumulating so much wealth, you can’t convince me that if you are a true Muslim, your conscience can ever feel comfortable, sitting on all those heaps of pearls and diamonds, you say you’ve a right to own.”

In these words, Hazrat Omar, in his letter to Amro-al-Aas the governor of Egypt, defined the spirit of the economic system of Islam.

Salahuddin Ayoobi taught me to conquer without vengeance.

Looking ahead - never back, by burning the boats was Tariq’s lesson.

From Jalaluddin Khwarzam, the man who defied the might of Chengis Khan, I learnt that even a coward could fight a battle that could be won: only the very brave could keep fighting without any hope of winning.

In the past history of the west, no one really fascinated me, except Alexander the Great who had no special reason to set out to conquer the world, but was compulsively driven by destiny to march against Egypt, against the Empire of Darius, against Babylon and against the civilization across the river Indus.

At the end of my school life I came across a voluminous book by Abbot on the life of Napoleon Bonaparte. The book has remained banned in Britain and been out of print for several decades due to the positivity of the image, it built, of the French conqueror. It was a vivid, absorbing and detailed account of the prodigy who did not have any parallel in the entire western history.

Napoleon as a child witnesses the rape of Corsica, his home island, by the victorious French armies. He is deeply anguished by the death of General Paoli, Corsica's national hero. He vows to avenge the humiliation of Corsica, by conquering France one day.

As a cadet at the Military Academy, he wins a prize in an essay competition held by the Literary Academy of France. And on his triumphant entry in Paris as the supreme master of France, he marches straight to the Literary Academy, checks its record in search of the manuscript of his prize-winning essay, finds it, throws it into the fireplace and says:

"I don't want history to remember me as a second-rate writer".

For his first major battle against the Italian armies he remains awake for full three nights and days, preparing the battle plans with mathematical precision, and then at the start of the clash goes to sleep. On waking up few hours later, he summons his second-in-command, stares straight into his eyes and inquires "How many of them managed to survive and flee?"

No wonder the influence of Napoleon on me was tremendous.

The twentieth century too gave me a number of heroes.

Topping the list was Ata Turk, the grey wolf who virtually resurrected Turkey from the death-bed, as much through his sweeping reforms as through his heroic exploits.

There was also Lenin the visionary, whose revolution was aimed at the achievement of high ideals but was transformed into barbarism under the regime of his successor.

There was Mao Tse Tung too, whose historic long march symbolised the necessity of maintaining relentless pressure on the enemy in one's pursuit of the final triumph.

And above them all was Adolf Hitler, the last of the great conquerors in the tradition of Attila the Hun, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Hannibal and Napoleon Bonaparte. His single minded devotion to the concept of German supremacy bordered around madness but without this madness, he could not have come so close to defeating the combined might of the allies.

The Jewish-inspired hate-Hitler campaign didn't impress me enough to keep me from holding this extraordinary man, with an invincible will and an unparalleled mind, in such a great esteem that the rest were practically dwarfed.

Hitler was once asked by Martin Bormann whether he had faith in God.

Hitler replied: "Not in the God of Christianity or Judaism. But I do have faith in God who created me, and made me German. It would not be a bad idea to believe that He is German too".

Hitler, the condemned butcher, the blood-thirsty villain of the second world war, whom the zionist-dominated propaganda machinery of the west have always loved to paint, to some extent justifiably, as the one and the only true personification of evil, had another face too – the face that has never been allowed to be revealed to the world – the man who loved children and flowers and lived only on the royalties of his bestselling book-Mein Kampf.

These were my idols of the distant and the recent past. And there was another group too comprised of the greats of the post-war era.

On top of this group was Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah to whom I owed two-fold allegiance; one as a proud citizen of the state he had founded and the other as a student of history who saw in him a number of incomparable qualities of character – an incredibly strong adherence to the established rules and principles of honest statesmanship.

Almost everyone whom destiny puts in a leadership role, on one or the other occasion is forced by circumstances to justifiably deviate from these rules and principles, even to occasionally resort to hypocrisy in his own interests or 'in the larger interests' of his people. The only exception in the modern history in my view is the Quaid. Confronting Gandhi the highly publicized apostle of non-violence, communal harmony and peace, required not only vision and wisdom but also conviction and courage. Behind Gandhi's philosophy of communal

harmony, nonviolence, peace and tranquility in an undivided sub-continent, was the ultimate design of absorbing the Muslim minority into the mainstream of Hindu-dominated Indian Nationhood. To confront him with the reality of a separate Muslim Nationhood and to carve out an independent homeland for the flag-bearers of Islam against the combined opposition of the Hindu nationalists Gandhi's disciples and the so-called Islamic religious groups and parties, required extraordinary powers of mind, an invincible will and an indomitable faith in destiny. The Quaid proved that he was more than equal to the task. Failure was certainly a word not known to him.

THE PROPHETS OF CHANGE

Gamal Abdul Nasser, the guiding force behind the awakening of Arabs was to me, not only the champion of Arab unity under the banner of Islam but also the voice of change in the socio-economic order prevailing in all the Arab states. His struggle against the decadent regimes in the Arab world was heroic enough; even more heroic was his revolutionary war against injustice, whether this injustice was in the form of Zionist occupation of Palestine or in the form of such a wide gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.

"It is not the Will of God," was his fervent cry,- that poverty should be hereditary and riches should be hereditary, that health should be hereditary and disease should be hereditary, that power should be hereditary and subjugation should be hereditary. It is a crime against humanity to grant sanctity to one person's right to live in boundless luxury and to another person's bondage to a life of starvation disease and humiliation."

"We cannot accept ourselves in the role of second-rate citizens of a world ruled by those who think that we should learn to breathe at their will,- said Nasser in response to the politics of hegemony, being practised by the super powers.

Nasser was my living hero from the school days. I had a kind of spiritual communication with him – a bond of centuries. I saw in him the reincarnation of Salahuddin. But the times were different. The Richards of the twentieth century had the power to destroy the planet – to make the whole human race perish. The dream of renaissance had one-in-a-trillion chance of materialisation; but then the real inventor of the aeroplane was the first visionary, centuries and centuries back in history, who had first narrated the story of a prince flying on a magic carpet.

Nasser, the leader gained new dimensions in December 1956 when he took over the control of Suez canal from the custodians of the rapidly dying imperial power of the Great Britain.

Nasser the statesman said the same year in an interview to the managing editor of Life – "Nothing is permanent in politics – except impermanence. The friends of today may be the foes of tomorrow, and the foes of today may be the friends of tomorrow. It is a matter of expediency. Also of commonness of interests. Today its Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai in the punjsheela spirit of the Bandung Conference. Tomorrow you may find China and Pakistan sailing in the same boat, and the Chinese and the Indians firing at each other. It is hard for me to see

the Chinese and the Indians locked in a friendly, brotherly embrace in the times to come. The clash of their interests is unescapable. History is a curious blend of constants and variables. Human race is a constant factor. So is human nature. But human vision and behavior keep varying. I hope, one day, may be in distant future, Washington may have sufficient reasons to change its attitude. Till such a day dawns, we do not have really many options.”

This was then Nasser, the Leader, the Statesman and the Visionary who had such a commanding influence on my way of thinking. So strong was the impact of his personality on me that I had a passionate longing in my heart and soul for him to be born in my own country.

On September 1, 1965, to my great delight this longing was fulfilled. He was born. The armed forces of Pakistan had crossed the River Tavi, occupied Chamb and were heading towards Jorian, with Akhnoor as their target.

The preceding three weeks had seen Kashmir’s freedom fighters rise in arms against the occupation army of India and now suddenly the battle for Kashmir had begun on the sub-continental scale.

The foreign minister of Pakistan was addressing the nation on the national hookup of Radio Pakistan.

We are not a nation of lambs. Our heritage speaks volumes about our courage and heroism. We cannot sit back in humble submission while our brothers in Kashmir are massacred by a ruthless occupation force, bent upon making its aggression prevail in the region. We are proud descendents of Salahuddin Ayoobi.”

It was a familiar voice – one that recalled to one’s mind the picture of a playboyish handsome and brilliant-looking young man who stood out ostentatiously from the cabinet of Ayub Khan because of his unmistakable dynamism and intelligent good looks, and who had risen to the level of international recognition due to his role in cementing SinoPak friendship and his firm handling of the bilateral talks on Kashmir with Sardar Swaran Singh, the shrewd Indian foreign minister.

Till that day, till that hour, Zulfikar Bhutto had no special claim on my emotions, except that I held his brilliance in a high esteem. With one speech, with his voice choking due to the intensity of national feeling, Bhutto virtually established his claim on national leadership. I distinctly remember how I felt when I listened to him that night. At first it seemed to be an echo from the distant past – the voice of Ayoobi coming suddenly alive after centuries of suspended history, eager to

break into the future. Then I had a feeling that Pakistan's destiny had chosen to express itself through the vocal chords of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. By the time, the speech ended, the realization had firmly dawned upon me that my country at last was not without a leader. The state of static national existence had finally been broken, and a new dynamic spirit had been infused into our national life. Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt had made a new appearance – this time on the horizon of my own country.

I admit that my response to Bhutto's high-pitched nationalism would not have been so spontaneous, so intense, so unconditional and so complete, if I had already not been under the spell of that great son of Nile, who to me was the very spirit of Muslim Renaissance.

That futile war with India had a pre-determined end, which was to leave me and millions of my countrymen in a state of great frustration and eroded hopes. But it did give me and Pakistan a leader. To this leader were to belong all my loyalties and devotions and sentiments till 1972, and against this leader I was to develop a latent antipathy within my disillusioned self throughout his reign, for reasons that seemed so strong then and seem so shallow now.

Every moving fire leaves smoke in its wake. While the fire raged in the years between our two wars with India, everything he did was great, every word he uttered was sacred, and every move he made was brilliant. Then the fire started dying and by the time the country went to polls in 1977 nothing was left but smoke. And as the clouds of this smoke thickened, I was all set to write a scorching condemnation of the idol I had once worshipped so blindly. I wrote the book with all the venom I could muster at my command. Some of the venom came from the painful recall of the humiliation my soul had suffered at the fall of Dacca.

Some came from the dashed hopes of a resurrected new Pakistan under the Titanic leadership of a prodigal hero. But most of it came from the abject surrender of my thinking processes to the relentless propaganda, carried out by the opposition. Having lived in two successive eras of dictatorial regimes, and having developed the psyche of opposing the establishment as a national duty, I was ill-prepared to be dubbed as a lackey of the ruling party. It is a kind of syndrome to which men like me, men of overinflated ego, born out of their commitments to heroic convictions, easily fall.

I was not prepared to allow my hero any grace period. Nor any room for failure. He just had to deliver goods in the manner I had expected him to.

And nothing was happening in the style of a genuine revolution. Nothing was moving in the right direction.

Dr. Mubbashar Hassan had taken the economy of Pakistan into his laboratory for some interesting experiments on trial-and-error lines. Maulana Kausar Niazi was in command of the information ministry and had thus become the voice of the revolution. Mamtaz Bhutto, Ghulam Mustafa Khar and Abdul Hafiz Pirzada were the generals-in-arms of the revolutionary spirit against the forces of exploitation, tyranny and corruption. My resolve to judge my hero by my own rigid standards grew stronger and stronger. A stage came when I was not prepared to give him even the benefit of doubt.

Nothing in human nature is more sublime than love and more vicious than anger.

THE IMMORTAL MORTALS

Two of my heroes – the contemporary and the nearest ones, died within a decade. One could not enter the seventies and the other was not allowed to enter the eighties.

I remember waking up one morning to the news that Nasser's journey to Jordan for persuading the Palestinian freedom-fighters and the king's armed forces to refrain from the madness of killing each other, had taken him farther away, to that final destination from which he would never return. I looked in shocked disbelief at my wife who had communicated the terrible news to me and who was aware of my devotion to the father of the Arab revolution. It was impossible for me to believe that a man like Nasser could ever die, that a wizard of his dimensions could meet an ordinary mortal's end. I went numb inside. The shock jolted my whole being. Then the grief of my soul came rushing into my eyes. There are times in one's life, when one is utterly helpless. One just can't do anything but weep and cry. I had cried only twice before that; once when my father had died and the other time when the old city of Jerusalem had fallen to the Israeli forces in the 67 war.

Every mortal has to taste death ultimately but some are made to die sooner than the feared hour.

The war of 1967 was thrust on Nasser through an international conspiracy. In 1966, on the tenth anniversary of the annexation of the Suez Canal, Nasser had spoken of the need to build a new Arab world that would have the kind of power required for bringing Israel down to earth. He had emphasised upon the priority of emancipating the Arabs from the yoke of a tyrannical socio-economic-political order, and declared that only a united and strong Arab world could effectively counter the Zionist aggression in the Middle East. This historic speech of his was by no means a retreat from his earlier hard line. It was only a farsighted leader's acceptance of some irreversible realities, without which a new and more effective strategy could not be developed to counter the Zionist designs. None of those full-throated hysterical war cries that endeared the Arab leaders to the humiliated Arab people could bring victory to them. Only the strength, inherent in a dynamic socioeconomic-political order, could put the Arabs onto the road to victory.

This new image of a sobered Nasser was not terribly pleasing to his enemies inside and outside the Arab world. Those futile attempts on his life, and abortive efforts to dislodge him from his high pedestal had only contributed to the growth of his stature and popularity. The Washington-backed exercise of

tarnishing his image through a worldwide propaganda machinery had succeeded only partially in isolating him from the mainstream of the world politics. We in Pakistan had been learning for years, from the exponents of the dollar-backed Islam, that Nasser had been planted in the Arab World, by the Zionists, to weaken the spirit of Muslim brotherhood. Many amongst us had got convinced that Nasser's call for Arab unity under a just social order was the greatest conspiracy ever hatched against Islam. Those flaunting their piety and love of Islam through carefully well-displayed beards, had been enjoying a very pious relationship with Washington and been as vocal in condemning Nasser as their masters.

The time had come to cut the giant to size, to reduce his growing stature to the proportions, acceptable to those, holding the strings of the global power game.

Thus Nasser had been driven systematically to that war which he had wished desperately to avoid. Thus had they cornered him into an unavoidable and crushing defeat, so necessarily required for making his exit from the world scene a foregone conclusion.

On the fifth day of that six-day war, the Soviet ambassador had called upon Nasser, to express his sincere sympathies and to offer him safe exit from the country, if things went completely out of hand.

It had been a gesture of great generosity on the part of his Soviet friends to offer him an escape from the wrath of the people; he had led to defeat and humiliation.

Nasser had turned red with rage. Using all the power of self-control at his command, he had replied in a cold tone of voice:

“I am indeed grateful to you and your government for this concern about my welfare. We are defeated but not destroyed and I am not just the head of the government of (JAR but also the leader of this nation. I belong to my people just as the River Nile belongs to this land. Can you provide Nile a safe passage out of Egypt?”

The next day while the Israeli planes were still bombing the cities of Egypt, Nasser had tendered his resignation to the nation. What had followed was beyond the comprehension of the grandmasters of the global power game. The whole of Cairo had come out on the roads and the streets, unafraid of the still-raiding Israeli bombers, chanting a single sky-reaching, ear-deafening slogan in unison. “We want Nasser! We want Nasser!”

The people had absolved their beloved leader from the responsibility of the defeat.

But now, about two years later, with the dream of vindicating his honour and that of his people still unfulfilled, Gamal Abdul Nasser was no more. He had died of natural causes but his death had been systematically engineered by those in whose scheme of things he had always been an alien force - a dangerous virus.

Col Qadafi, a devoted disciple of his, had barely made his presence felt in North Africa. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's movement in Pakistan had just about started gaining momentum.

The names of Nasser, Qadafi and Bhutto come to my mind in a single flash, as though they have a common identity. Of them only Qadafi is alive, despite over three hundred attempts on his life. I can't help admitting that I have been a great admirer of his, ever since he took control of the destiny of Libya and vowed to spend its oil wealth on the welfare of its people as well as for providing greater strength to the revolutionary forces in the world of Islam. Even though he has been successfully ousted from the mainstream of the world politics by those who don't find much difficulty in defining his vocal and material support of the freedom-fighters, as a sustained promotion of terrorism and a criminal offense against humanity, I do not think he can be written off with such a contemptuous ease. He is still not too old to lead, and is young enough in spirit to carry on the fight. As long as one's spirit is not battered, one's body can absorb a lot of punishment.

Terrorism, murder and crime cannot be condoned even for the noblest causes. Qadafi ought to be emphatically told that, and the U.S. Government has been doing a nice job, in this respect. But Qadafi should also be listened to, when he points out that the stability of Israel is not any nobler a cause than the right of the Palestinians to breathe freely. Massacring helpless, innocent Palestinians to teach the Arab terrorists a befitting lesson, is not a lesser form of terrorism, simply because the murderers in this case appear in uniform with full military honours. If the Americans have a point, Qadafi has a point too. Judging from the American point of view, Qadafi is indeed a criminal, having already earned a noose around his neck. But justice is not a one-way traffic. Just for a while let the world sit in judgement from Qadafi's point of view and give its verdict. To be mad is to be mad and Qadafi does not deserve any sympathy on this account. But not all that is stored in the heads of the war-lords of Israel is sanity. I sincerely hope that saner minds will one day prevail in the White House and the State Department, and the Statue of Liberty will throb with life and say: "The human race cannot afford any Hitters and Stalins and Shamirs."

Qadafi is too intricate a character to be dealt with, in a few sweeping statements, for or against. And he is not my subject in this book.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

A decade after the funeral of Gamal Abdul Nasser, the greatest ever in the history of mankind, attended by nearly two million people, weeping wailing and crying over the last remains of their departed leader, the second in line too was exterminated.

It was yet another morning -- to be exact the morning of April the 4th, 1979. On my way to work, I happened to stop for a while, to see a friend. He was in an unusual state of tension and anxiety. The moment he saw my face, he blurted out:

“THEY HAVE HANGED HIM”

I was too engrossed in my own thoughts, mentally too preoccupied with the things I had to do that day, to get instantly to the meanings of the four words he had uttered. But as he stared at me in silence, with eyes that were expressionless, yet full of expression, something started dying in me. I tried desperately to hope that those four words had somehow no relevance to the country I was a citizen of, to the age I was living in. THEY could be some barbarians of some other land, some other continent, and some other world – possibly South African racists who had hanged some one in dissent. THEY could also be the law-enforcing agencies of the great United States of America who had hanged some Mafia gangster. And HIM could be anyone except the ex-prime minister of Pakistan who for better or worse had been elected to power by an overwhelming majority of the people, only a few years back, amidst thunderous cries of “Jiaye Bhutto Jiaye Bhutto.”

But hoping against hope does not alter the truth. The truth was writ large on the face of my friend with whom I had virtually shared a fourteen-year long journey of love-hate, the central character of which was the MAN who had been hanged.

“Didn’t I tell you they’re determined to hang him?”

My friend remarked in a cold voice after a long interval of fire-breathing silence. Yes, he had told me that they wouldn’t stop short of carrying out the judgement of their courts.

And I had argued: “No matter what the judgement is, we are living in a civilized country, a civilized world and a civilized age. No matter how potential a threat his life is to their existence, we are not living in a land of cannibals or in the dark ages. However great a villain HE may be, the life of such an extra-ordinary man is too precious a commodity to be disposed of, so disdainfully. No, the pious

man is not going to hang HIM. He is going to prove that he is really a Muslim and that despite his power-exuding uniform he is capable of human feeling, of fearing THE ULTIMATE JUDGE.”

It was not a matter of generosity or magnanimity. It was a matter of sobriety and sanity.

The insane impossibility had occurred. The very thought of it was shocking, disgusting, repulsive. And yet the man at the pulpit was reciting the Holy verses with unashamed condour.

I did not go to the office that day. I, the writer of hundreds of pages against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had been slapped on my face, struck at my gut and clobbered in my soul, by the iron hand of destiny. I came back home. I shut myself up in my room, shut out the whole world and collapsed in my chair, not sure of what to feel – sheer shock, bare disgust, naked shame, violent rage or helpless grief

They had hanged, not just a man convicted of complicity in a murder. They had hanged Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. They had hanged an institution, a nation’s pride, a leader of masses, a statesman of repute.

I thought of him being escorted to the gallows by the sentries and petty officials of the state he had once ruled. I thought of him being readied for the execution of the black warrant – the noose being put around his neck, the head he had always held high, being lowered.

And then I could no longer think. The shame of it all was overpowering. The shock of it all was soul-numbing. The grief of it all was body-chilling.

Nasser’s departure had made me cry in anguish. Bhutto’s departure seemed to have killed my capacity to cry. The world was not any poorer without Bhutto but I had been left a destitute.

Had he lived, I might never have returned to him, because I might never have known that my one-time idol had been a victim of an international conspiracy. But did he need to die to prove to me that men like him should not be judged by their weaknesses and follies, but by their strengths and achievements?

In my heart I prayed to the Omnipotent:

“From YOU, he came. To YOU he has returned. He was not an angel. He was not a devil either. He was made of the stuff, YOU make all men of. But YOU also

make monsters, give them human features and send there here to quench their blood-thirst. Let his soul rest in peace. And give us strength to defy the monsters, whose masks of piety hide the teeth that rejoice in the taste of human flesh.”

No one can be taller than one’s height. Nor shorter. What we need to learn is to accept the people as they actually are, not as what we expect them to be, also not as what we think they are.

Bhutto is a subject of great controversy. There are passions that run for him to the point of worship, and there are passions that run against him to the point, of hatred, bordering around insanity. These diagonally opposite passions have resulted in an extremely unhealthy polarization that has blurred our vision, handicapped our thinking processes and rendered us incapable of objective and honest judgement.

To those for whom Bhutto is a deity, he was beyond all frailties, all foibles and all follies.

And to those for whom Bhutto is a devil, he was simply incapable of doing anything right, anything constructive, anything honest and anything acceptable.

Those who are honest victims of this insane irrationality can be condoned for their lack of access to the hidden truths, but those who have, as a matter of expediency, been engaged in adding fuel to the fires of mutual hatred for their own ulterior motives, need to be told that the future of this country is more precious to us than their lust for power.

It was widely feared in the anti-Bhutto ranks that the PPP’s return to power under the leadership of its founder’s daughter would result in an atmosphere of revenge, vendetta and settling of personal scores.

Nothing of the sort has happened. On the contrary the country has overnight been catapulted into a new orbit where the sky is bluer, the air is fresher, the trees are greener and the atmosphere is not suffocating. Bhutto’s daughter is talking of reconciliation, narrowing distances, building bridges and burying the bitter past forever, in search of a future of mutual trust, understanding, tolerance and forgiveness. Far from showing any signs of desperation to get at the throats of the collaborators of his family’s tormentor, she is anxious to forget the scars and heal the wounds and lead a united nation.

Should this spirit be dismissed disdainfully? Should the champions of democracy find virtues in the dictatorship of Zia simply because he masterminded the elimination of Bhutto? Should Zia necessarily be projected as

David because they think Bhutto was Goliath? Should all the lies Zia spoke during his reign, all the hypocrisies he practised in his times and all the afflictions he caused and promoted in the name of Islam, be shamelessly condoned and defined as necessary tools of defense against the dragon called the Pakistan Peoples Party?

The questions are not irrelevant. They constitute the crux of the situation.

Zia was not a Goliath either. He was a product of intrigue, who saw an opportunity for himself and grabbed it. Despite his pretensions to saintly ways and to humble submission to the Will of God, he was no more than an ordinary opportunist who happened to be in that uniform at the right place and at the right time. The booty was there to be grabbed. To resist the temptation would have required the conscience of a saint or the fear of punishment. His only claim to this kind of a conscience was through the prayers he offered dutifully to neutralise God. And who could think of punishing a man in the highest ranked uniform in the country?

The prayers he offered entitled him to proclaim the dictatorship of piety in a country which had been made to stink with the foul smell of democracy” in the preceding years. Without his uniform, he could not have let loose his politically profitable love for Islam against those, who wanted to take the country back into the unholy embrace of democracy, from which he had so virtuously liberated it.

Zia was not a monster himself. The monster was around him, in the form of power he had happened to acquire. The monster was also inside him – the monster of ambition and greed and lust for power. Zia was only a prisoner of this monster.

When one gets there, at the helm of affairs, with the power to decide at will and to strike at will, one gets drunk with the deceptive notions of invincibility and immortality. Only when one’s plane explodes in the midair, that the realisation dawns that only impermanence is permanent. By then it is too late to repent.

AN APOSTLE OF
FRENZY OR A
MESSENGER OF
HOPE?

“They are born with a sense of destiny. They make mistakes but they do not sun-ender. They are ruled by their own dreams, their own passions and their own judgement of the world around them. They often have brilliant minds but they can’t help thinking with their hearts and souls too. They are not afraid of going to the altar if it comes to the preservation of their honour. They do not need the testimony of any court, to be called immortals

THE CHEMISTRY OF HERO WORSHIP

Great men have great faults," said Ehsanullah Khan an elderly friend of mine commenting on my book about Bhutto.

It was in the year 1977. He had just taken over as the Managing Director of Millat Tractors Limited. A man fired with tremendous enthusiasm for work, his imaginative ways and dynamic style had made me his admirer. And this admiration was mutual.

"Look Akbar, "he said," I view your book as an honest work only to the extent that every line of it throbs with the intensity of your emotions. Without reading it I would not have known that you're so emotional and so honest to your emotions. And without reading it I would also not have known that your honesty has been so unfair to the man who happens to have proved already, that he is head and shoulders above the normal mortals. I agree that he has many faults and committed many follies, but his strengths are so overwhelming that judging him by his faults and follies is to me, an act of misdirected honesty."

Then he proceeded to narrate his experiences in the production ministry, how he had come into contact with the great man on a few occasions in connection with certain files, and how he had been surprised by his extraordinary memory and his remarkable attention to detail, and his incredible ability to get down to the core of every matter and the crux of every problem, in a flash.

"Nothing could escape his attention and nothing could confuse his memory," said Ehsanullah Khan thoughtfully." And I tell you he is not the culprit you think he is, in connection with the fall of Dacca. He is only a scapegoat. The real culprits happen to be elsewhere, in the background."

"This is not a book of history, I replied." Nor it is a biography of Bhutto. It does not even boast of containing only the truth and nothing but the truth. It is infact an exercise in self-expression. It is my own story – the story of my emotions – of my one-time loyalty to Bhutto and my subsequent disillusionment. It was like a burden I was carrying on my soul till I had not written the book. The burden has been thrown off now, and my vision is less blurred and less coloured than before. I desperately wish I am wrong. I fervently pray you are right. After all he was the spirit that taught me the meaning of launching a thousand ships and burning the topless towers of Ilium. I would have vindicated my honour in my own eyes, if he could vindicate his honour in his own."

On the 4th of April 1979 Bhutto vindicated his honour, not only in his own eyes but also in the eyes of history. He had to do it by accepting the gallows, rather than bartering away his pride and his soul and his principles, for amnesty. Bhutto in death had acquired new dimensions. He had proved to history that he was not an apostle of frenzy, not an inventor of lies, not a trader of principles, not a prophet of doom, but a proud prisoner of his own conscience and his own ideals. Bhutto in death had become immortal.

The scorching book I had written against him in 77, the year of turmoil, had become totally irrelevant. In fact it had been taken out of circulation by me during the months of his trial in Zia's courts.

Still I owe myself a few explanations. Some explanations I owe to those too who have read my previous book. To history I owe an apology, not for having written such a book, but for having felt the way I felt when I wrote that book.

Heroes and Hero-worship provide us all with the strength, we require for structuring our faith and nourishing our convictions. It is human nature to identify one's longings and aspirations and dreams and ideals and convictions with some one superior and distant. This conscious or unconscious exercise of self-identification leads to the selection of some heroes to the exclusion of others. This selection is always based on one's special tendencies, emotional chemistry, intuitional powers, insight and depth breadth and height of vision. Once this selection is made and becomes ingrained in one's conscious mind, one starts moving unconsciously and involuntarily in a direction specified by the spiritual dictates of the chosen heroes. Then onwards, one's faith and convictions are shaped by the degree of one's commitment to those special characteristics of one's heroes, one finds irresistible. At a certain stage one's heroes and one's convictions and one's own self mingle and merge into a single identity. It is at this stage that one is ill-prepared to believe, for even a while, that one's heroes can and are, in any way, even fractionally different in reality from one's own estimation, appraisal and total acceptance of them. This phenomenon also explains our fascination with myths.

Hero-worship at best can be inspiring, can urge one on and on in one's pursuit of destiny. At worst it can erect a deep-coloured glass in front of one's vision and render one incapable of seeing the truth across it, in its own colour.

In some cases, this deep-coloured glass gets broken accidentally, and one's eyes look in disbelief at something that had looked so different few moments back. What has suddenly changed is the colour of the vision, not of the object.

Something like that happened to me in the case of Bhutto. The first crack in the glass occurred with the fall of Dacca, and then onwards, cracks after cracks started deforming my vision. At last my idol stood deformed before me.

The heroes and the idols are born – not made. They are born with a sense of destiny, with an intuitional consciousness of what life will be having in store for them. They somehow always have this mysterious, undefined and inexplicable seventh sense – the sense of destiny. As they grow up in their prescribed environments, they somehow manage to seek and find special ways of developing their inborn potential. They never accept any restrictions on their style of thinking, their manner of acting, their way of behaving. The only restrictions they accept are the ones imposed on them by their ambitions or destiny. They seldom find themselves helpless in even the worst circumstances, the most unfavorable environments and against the heaviest odds. They simply happen to know that they have it in them, that they just have to, and are going to carve out their way through the world around them. Their faith in their destiny grows with every hurdle they cross, and ultimately in most cases their destiny comes rushing half-way down to embrace them.

Each one of them has a special chemistry of emotions, sentiments, instincts, urges, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, beliefs and anti-beliefs, loyalties and hostilities.

It is the sum-total that makes them what they are. There is always a gap, big or small, between what they are potentially made to become, what they actually are, what they aspire of becoming and what they want others to believe they are.

The degree of this gap between various states of being determines their conscious and unconscious behaviours. When they evaluate themselves through the eyes of their admirers, their followers and all those whose devotions they want to win and command, they sometimes try to tailor their thoughts, ideas, emotions and behaviours according to the objective conditions. And in some cases, the real person is overshadowed by the self-created myth of himself or herself. This is how, all those paradoxes, enigmas and contradictions come into limelight which are associated with the heroes in varying degrees.

The process may not be wholly intentional. There may be occasionally an unconscious urge to move into a specific direction, but the net result is always a gap between the myth and the reality of the hero.

Without this gap no hero would be a hero. I personally believe, and believe very strongly, that the unseen hand of destiny is always at work. It is destiny that

wills us to do things that lead us into various directions which ultimately determine our fate, result in our successes or failures.

THE LOST OPPORTUNITY

Bhutto was a man of destiny. His course of life was chosen and set when he was called to enter the corridors of power as a minister designate of the martial law. He was just about 30 then.

In all probabilities, he had known it all along that somehow - anyhow, from somewhere – anywhere, such an opportunity would suddenly arrive, would practically leap upon him, and lead him on to the journey, prescribed for him by destiny. He had not only known it, he had also nourished his dreams and channelised his thoughts and revitalised his energies and prepared his arsenal. His rise to fame, glory and power was accidental only to the extent that it was willed by destiny. Such an accident just had to occur.

Otherwise, he had planned it with all the brilliance at his command. Without a strong faith in his destiny, without his fierce conviction that he would make it, he would not have made it. Every step he took brought him a step closer to his ultimate destiny.

At Benazir's age, he was Ayub Khan's Minister of Natural Resources, already rearing his wings for higher flights.

It was as Ayub Khan's foreign minister that Bhutto's true potential started coming into limelight. I am sure the months of Ayub Khan's campaign against the -insurgence- of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah in the late 64 could not have been to the liking of Bhutto and he should have felt considerably embarrassed inside, for having to be in the wrong camp.

In the early 65, the Pakistan Army, in the Rann of Kutch battle with the Indian forces, gave the nation something to cheer about. The gloom, the frustration and the despondency caused by the election defeat of the Quaid's sister at the hands of the all-powerful Field Marshal, could now be left behind as the nation suddenly found itself in high spirits. By the time the Operation Gibraltar was finalised and the battle for the liberation of Kashmir started in the valley, the nation's morale stood quite high. It soared higher as the armed forces of Pakistan moved into Chamb on September the 1st. That evening Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the flamboyant foreign minister of Pakistan addressed the nation on air, and evoked the memories of the great Salahuddin Ayoobi. The long-awaited hero had arrived on the national scene. The horizon was suddenly filled with a larger-than-life image.

On September the 6th, 1965 the Indian Forces crossed the international frontiers and attacked Pakistan. The target was Lahore. Also Sialkot. And Karachi too.

The stage was set for the birth of a number of legends. The most towering legend of them all – the legend of Major Aziz Bhatti Shaheed, gave our national history utterly new dimensions. The successors of Salahuddin Ayoobi could write with their blood equally glorious chapters of heroism. The designs of the invaders had been crushed in the dust by the soldiers of Islam. They had proved themselves worthy of their great heritage.

Meanwhile the Field Marshal under the mounting pressure of Washington had decided to surrender the chance of paving way to the liberation of Kashmir, by replacing Major General Akhtar Hussain Malik with Major General Yahya Khan in the Chamb-Jorian-Akhnoor sector.

Akhnoor could have been taken, and if it had been taken, the Indian supply line to Srinagar would have been effectively blocked. That had been the plan. But the Field Marshal suddenly shelved this plan. Whatever the pretexts whatever the excuses, the bitter fact remains that in war, in any war, there can't be and should not be any 'ifs and 'buts' when so much of vital national importance is at stake.

"Pressure is-a state of mind," said Air Marshal Asghar Khan to the Field Marshal, after having failed to persuade the President of Pakistan to act only in the best interests of the nation. "If you do not accept it, it is not there."

Bare, naked facts - uncorrupted by anyone's hypothetical presumptions, seldom come out open in such matters. Thus we have always to base our opinions on circumstantial evidence.

It is possible that Ayub Khan knew more and knew better. Let us not rile out the possibility that he could not have acted any differently due to the restraints and the constraints we are not aware of. But the fact remains that Ayub Khan had the opportunity to bring India down to its knees - no matter how big the cost would have been. This opportunity was lost and lost forever.

Bhutto meanwhile had gone to New York to plead the case of Pakistan in the Security Council. His performance there matched the mood of the nation and reflected its aspirations in totality. But Ayub Khan suddenly realised that Bhutto could not be trusted. He sent S.M. Zafar to carry out his instructions.

Bhutto the protégé of Ayub Khan could no longer feel comfortable and happy in this role.

In the days between the ceasefire and the Tashkent Declaration, Bhutto's final transformation from a protege of a dictator to a leader of a nation took place.

I had already appointed him unilaterally as the ambassador of my dreams to a world to which I could have no direct access. When he came back from Tashkent with the image of a disillusioned and cheated hero, I installed him at the highest pedestal in my mind.

I was at that time the Executive Editor of Kohistan, the third largest circulated daily of the country then.

In this capacity, I wrote several articles and features, comparing Ayub Khan with Lord Chamberlain who had bartered away the vital interests of Britain at Munich for a false promise of peace. Bhutto, I compared with Churchill, who was to lead Britain to the final victory.

In the middle of 66, Bhutto's resignation was accepted by the Field Marshal. His first train-ride from Rawalpindi was infact the beginning of anew era.

I was at the Lahore station, to have a glimpse of my hero. With me were a photographer and Khalid Mahmood our feature editor.

The crowds were unbelievable. They were everywhere, wherever they could find enough room to set their feet.

And the picture of Bhutto, sitting down near the footboard of the carriage, his shirt torn by the enthusiastic followers, is still fresh in my mind.

It appeared on the front page of Daily Kohistan, the next day. "The past is dead, the present is dying, the future lives," was the caption.

Daily Kohistan was soon to pay the price of my commitment to Bhutto. The newspaper could no longer survive as an independent organ. It had to be taken over, and it was taken over by Pakistan Muslim League. I was also a director and I remember how I felt when that cheque against my shares was handed over to me by Malik Khuda Bux Bucha.

"You can stay with us young man," he said with a patronising smile. "They say, you are very talented."

"You have a duty to perform Malik Sahib," I replied. "And I do not want to make life miserable for you. Thank you very much for the offer anyway."

In the subsequent months, the Pakistan Peoples Party was born.

I had moved to Karachi and taken over as the Editor-in-charge of Sunday Anjam, a brainchild of my teacher in journalism the late Enayatullah. In 1967 I became the Resident Editor of Daily Mashriq Karachi.

It was a listless life – a life without meaning, without any purpose. The dream of the emergence of Bhutto as the architect of change, seemed to be getting nowhere near its realisation.

It was in the year 1968, that the trumpets suddenly started blowing. I remember a fatwa appearing on the front page of Daily Mashriq Lahore in the issue of April the 30th. 1968.

It was in a red box.

It had been awarded by none other than Maulana Kausar Niazi.

“It is a blasphemy to associate socialism with Islam. Islam is a complete way of life. It has no room for such misleading anti-Islamic concepts. It is the sacred duty of all Muslims to rise in protest against Bhutto’s blasphemies.”

I was asked to carry this fatwa in the Karachi edition too. I rejected the directive firmly. I threatened to resign if the directive was not withdrawn. The late Enayatullah, knowing my temperament as well as he did, did not insist.

But I knew I could not last long in that seat. I was immune to listening when it came to my principles. And I hated to put Enayat Sahib in any awkward position. He admired me even more than I respected him.

In the first week of July 1968, I made up my mind and went to him.

“As I told you once sir,” I said. “there has to be a new beginning for me every six months – a new beginning and a new challenge. I am hardly an ideal choice for the responsibility I am currently trying to carry out. And I am not going to be convinced to the contrary. You have to find for me a new beginning or have to grant me your blessings in my own efforts to find one.”

He got the message, smiled and promised to look into the matter from my point of view.

A week later I handed over the charge to Irfan Ghazi, currently the special correspondent of the Voice of America in Pakistan.

If you do not have your own plans to join the Pakistan Peoples Party, “Enayat Sahib told me,” I have conceived a new challenge for you. We are going to form a publishing company of our own. You are going to head it. Getting a new declaration is impossible in this regime but we are going to acquire some declaration some way to launch our first publication. You have only to remember that you cannot make it an organ for the expression of your political philosophy. It is basically going to be an entertainment magazine.”

Thus it was that I came back to Lahore and on September the 6th, 1968 launched Mussawar – in appearance no more than a film weekly, but in spirit and content to become soon the voice of change in the field of communication.

Mussawar produced Nazir Naji who was later to become comrade-in-arms of Maulana Kausar Niazi. It also produced Mustansar Javaid and Irshad Hussain Kazmi who have remained my friends ever since.

THE MONTHS OF AGONY

Mussawar somehow became my identity even though inwardly I resented it. I did not spiritually and mentally belong to film journalism. The canvas was so limited. Nothing was going to change simply because I had launched a war against the lack of imagination and creativity in the film studios. But somehow I managed to identify the shameless plagiarism of our film-makers and the moral and the mental bankruptcy of the practitioners of the cinematic art with the conditions prevailing in every other sphere of life including our government and our socio-economic system. And by doing so, I also identified my efforts with the great struggle, my hero – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had launched at a much larger scale, on a much bigger canvas, against the forces of status quo.

It was a great experience for me. I was inspired enough to bring out the best out of myself. But the best I had, was not good enough to bring about any kind of revolution in the thinking of the film lords. I however won some admirers in the industry – Riaz Shahid, Ali Sufyan Afaaqui, Iqbal Shahzad, Mohammad Ali, Mustafa Qureshi and a few others. But they were simply not strong enough to stop the Film Producers Association and the Film Distributors Association from taking drastic measures against Mussawar. The axe fell on Daily Mashriq the management of which was told that no film advertisements would be released to the newspaper till Mussawar kept appearing. For six months Mashriq suffered a loss of over half a million on this account. Enayat Sahib did not submit to the blackmail, but the rest of the management was not interested in either my principles or my crusade. The film world had meanwhile found a powerful ally in Daily Mussawat, the official spokesman of the Pakistan Peoples Party. The deal was made through the good offices of Nazir Naji who through the patronage of Maulana Kausar Niazi had become a trumpeter in the orchestra of the PPP, contributing his bit to the revolutionary songs with great gusto. One fine morning, an open letter signed by Mohammad Ali the film actor, addressed to me appeared in Mussawat. The attack was so viciously worded that I was stunned. Of all the persons, an old friend of mine had entered the arena for the final assault on my tiny citadel. I was virtually friendless now. Having built the largest circulated weekly of the country with fragile resources, purely on the strength of its commitment to certain ideals, in which its readers too believed passionately, I suddenly realised that I was only one of the directors of the company and that it was Enayat Sahib's extra-ordinary affection for me which alone had enabled me to keep on fighting. Finally Enayat Sahib too succumbed to the pressure – not without grace however.

Our mission was never to bring about a revolution in the film industry, "he said to me. We intended to build a publishing house with a chain of publications,

purely on professional lines. I have never wanted to discourage you but we have to be practical. Your friends in the film industry have turned against you, and your beloved leader's party is with them. We have to find a Dunkirk-type solution. A retreat with honour. We may have to replace you with Aali Rizvi as the Editor, without affecting your position as the Managing Director. They want your ouster, but we will make them accept this formula."

I listened to him calmly, knowing how embarrassed he felt at having to say that, also knowing that he knew, how I would respond.

"I have a better solution Enayat Sahib," I replied thoughtfully, "I'll let you know in about an hour."

An hour later I tendered my resignation, surrendering my shares and all other claims.

He was a sick man, and had kept himself going through sheer will power. There was agony in his eyes as he looked at me.

"Perhaps you can go back to Karachi," he proposed in a tone of voice that lacked conviction. Or you can take over as the Quetta chief. We can find a suitable place for you here too. Whatever you decide....."

"I am not a moneyed man Enayat Sahib," I replied coldly. "I have to work to make a living, but from now onwards I'll be working for only myself I need your good wishes – not your help."

In the subsequent months I pooled up all my resources which came to about six thousand rupees. I managed to get a new declaration through hectic efforts and then I set out to acquire a message for the inaugural issue from my hero, whom I had never met in person before. I had only enemies in the PPP ranks - atleast those I personally knew.

Tariq Aziz was the only exception and he was, in those days, a fired revolutionary and an avowed Bhuttoist. He promised to get me the desired message.

On July the 20th, 1971, Tariq Aziz came to me and conveyed the good news.

"Bhutto Sahib is here, staying at Fallettis. He is not feeling well, but has agreed to receive us at 2 p.m. If you can manage to draft the required message in his language, he has graciously offered to sign it."

I had read the Myth of Independence and was fully aware of his style. Still, preparing that draft made me nervous.

At 2 p.m. that wonderful day, my chosen architect of the future of Pakistan read the draft calmly, looked up at us, smiled and then prepared to put his signatures on that petty piece of paper which in a few moments was going to become a priceless possession of mine.

On the 14th of August 1971, the first issue of the Film Times appeared, with the first page carrying Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's signed message.

By then however the country had been plunged deep into turmoil and civil war, by Yahya's junta.

The military action taken against the Awami League in East Pakistan earlier in March 1971 had, far from achieving its over-optimistic objectives, led Pakistan steadily onto the inevitable road to disintegration. The Indian-backed Muldi Bahni had tragically become, for millions of East Pakistanis, the voice of liberation from the yoke of their West Pakistani brethren!

The original objectives I had outlined and set for my magazine were suddenly irrelevant and meaningless in the new national situation.

During those months of agony, my mind started getting filled with doubts, fears, uncertainties, contradictions and lack of faith in practically everything, including my own precious self.

ON THEIR HIT LIST!

Chronicling events in order of time is a historian's job. And this is not a book of history. The science of arranging events according to dates or time of occurrence is not involved here. These are just my reflections, divorced from any kind of chronological discipline. I am writing about my heroes, my ideals, my aspirations, my dreams, my sentiments, my expectations, my frustrations, my perceptions, my failures, my successes, my limitations, my strengths, and also my times. And I am not just myself. I am also a generation within myself – a generation that was born before Pakistan, a generation that before its puberty lost its leader, a generation that passed its adolescence in chaos, a generation that lived its youth in unfulfilled hopes, a generation that was fed with high-sounding slogans - not intended to be honest, a generation that got accustomed to living under Martial Law, a generation that learnt to tailor its thinking according to the requirements of the establishment, a generation that was taught to develop the habit of remaining indifferent to its rights and privileges, a generation that has been a victim of a senseless division into groups, each one of which has been exploited by one or the other self-appointed leader, a generation that has tried to seek some kind of emotional compensation for his failures through mindless infighting - resulting from polarisation, a generation that has yet to know for sure whether it is good enough only for raising alarms of danger, or it can still contribute in any positive and effective manner to the rectification of the past misdeeds, can still help in making up for the lost opportunities, can still express its potential, if it happens to have any, in the gigantic exercise of transforming a sick society into a healthy one, an unjust order into a just one, a hypocritical way of life into an honest one, and an underdeveloped country into a modern state.

There is a history of shame, behind this generation. This shame cannot be shut out through its pretensions to such pious causes as the defense of the ideological frontiers of Pakistan, or the eradication of all anti-Islamic practices, or the enforcement of Islamic laws, or the liberation of Kashmir, or the conquest of Kabul. Nor can this shame be neutralised through any full-throated claims of commitment to such revolutionary causes as the supremacy of the exploited over the exploiter, the poor over the rich, the deprived over the privileged.

One can always find the most appropriate words to frame the most appealing sentences for the most sacred causes, but due to overuse, practically the whole dictionary has been rendered meaningless.

Still these words, the cliches and the jargons continue to serve the purpose of those, whose arsenal, in the power-war, has only one other weapon – intrigue.

It was this weapon which was used at the dawn of the seventies, to achieve the cherished objective – perpetuation of the established order, but succeeded in perpetuating only a national catastrophe --the irrevocable dismemberment of the country.

It was this catastrophe which sowed the seeds of my eventual disenchantment with my leader.

Couldn't he have done anything to avert it?

Skirting on the surface of things and forming one's opinions on the strength of purely circumstantial evidence can lead to all kinds of conclusions, except to the actual truth hidden beneath the visible veneer.

At that time the anti-change forces were so vocal, so consistent and so convincing in their crusade to incriminate Bhutto, and the circumstantial evidence seemed to be so overwhelming in their support, that I, more out of my anguish than any conviction, started succumbing to the probability of my beloved leader having displayed conscious indifference to the cause of East Pakistan and West Pakistan staying as one sovereign state.

After all Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was going to be a major beneficiary, if the sovereignty of Pakistan was restricted to Islamabad alone, and Dacca was allowed to find its own sovereign future.

I will have to grow very very old and lose my memory completely, to forget the excited, the thrilled and the emotion-charged victorious voice of Indira Gandhi, addressing her people on the All-India Radio in the second week of December 1971.

"Today," She said, "an Indian nari (woman) has finally avenged the scars of a thousand years."

The obvious reference was to the first and the subsequent invasions of Mahmood Ghaznavi and his successors, which paved way for the long reign of Muslims in the land of Asoka. The Hindu honour had been vindicated with the fall of Dacca.

The anguish I had felt at the fall of Jerusalem in 1967 returned with an intensity that was unbearable. Could Zulfikar Ali Bhutto manage to perform some miracle in that hour of shame, which would lift my sinking soul?

About a week later, he, as the new Chief Martial Law Administrator of what was left of Pakistan; spoke to the nation on television and radio.

Still hanging on to my faith in my leader's potential to rise to the occasion and to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, I was eager to listen to a fervent call to action, in the style of that great conqueror who had vowed to retake Jerusalem from the enemy, and done it.

The speech that I actually heard was a cautiously worded case for resignation to the catastrophe. It was emotionally an anti-climax for me. My injured national pride was further bruised and battered.

What I did not know then, and what I know now, is that the forces involved in the intrigue, that had led us to the catastrophe, also had Bhutto on their hit list. It took them over six more years to accomplish this task. If it had been in their power to get rid of Bhutto at that time, they would not have hesitated.

But Bhutto's landslide victory in the general elections had made him unassailable in his own fortress. He was more or less a demi-god in the eyes of the masses of the Punjab and Sindh. He had to be dealt with on a long-term plan. He had to be handed over power first, tested on his wicket, put onto defensive, and then cornered into a position of helplessness.

**THE CROWN
THE CURRENCY
THE CLERGY
THE COMMON MAN**

Bhutto at the time of coming to power was not a free man, in the most honest sense of the word. He was a prisoner of the circumstances that had driven the nation into the abyss of disgrace and humiliation. To argue that he himself had created those circumstances is to believe that the military junta in power then, was functioning under his command. He was in no position to influence the policies of Yahya Khan and his men, except by exercising his political strength, which lay in his ability to bring his followers out into the streets to register their protest against the situation created by the ruling junta, through its military action in East Pakistan. Had he followed that course and come out openly against the military action in East Pakistan, he would almost certainly have hurt the chauvinistic sentiments of a vast majority of the people of the Punjab, and exposed himself to the charge of grand treason against the ideological frontiers of Pakistan. After all, the military junta had complete support of those political forces in the country which were immune to reason and rationality, when it came to paying lip-service to such noble concepts as Muslim brotherhood, national solidarity and supremacy of Islamic ideals over ethnic and regional factors. In fact these forces had collaborated with the ruling junta in its action against the people of East Pakistan. They would have gladly collaborated with the same junta if an action on a different scale had been found necessary against Bhutto, to teach the enemies of Islam- a befitting lesson.

Perhaps the subject demands a detailed study of the atmosphere in which the preceding general elections had been held, and also of the factors that had contributed to the shaping of such an atmosphere.

At the end of the second great war, the world suddenly stood divided into two power blocs. The Soviet bloc stood for the rule of the proletariat and was committed to the cause of carrying the communist revolution to all the oppressed peoples in the world. The American bloc stood for the rights of man and felt honour bound to defend the free world against the scourge of the usurpers of human rights. Even though Britain and France had been allowed to retain their super-power status on the strength of their past glory, their role in the world affairs was now being determined by the U.S government. Stalin was the supreme master of not only the Soviet Union but also the East European countries. Chiang Kai Shek's China was to be taken over by Mao who, though

ideologically was aligned to the Soviet bloc, had no intentions of accepting Moscow's hegemony.

The world war in its final months had practically battered Germany and Japan into surrender. The Americans had ended the war with a befitting lesson to the Japanese, by selecting Nagasaki and Hiroshima as the targets of the experimental use of the deadliest mass-killing weapon ever invented – the atom bomb. Such a lesson was necessary, not only for the headstrong Japanese, but also for the rest of the world who had to be told in no uncertain ways, that the new form of imperialism could dispense with the necessity of physically occupying a country, and could subjugate it to its will, through distant control.

I shudder at the thought of a world, in which a single power had enjoyed the monopoly of the nuclear arsenal. It was not to be. The Soviet Union was quick to respond with a bomb of its own. The balance was struck. The world was divided into two power blocs, each one having its own area of authority or influence, and determined to expand it. There were countries which did not really have any options. They just had to go to one or the other bloc as a matter of rule. The cold war was to be fought for the control of the countries which now constitute what politically is termed to be the third world.

Practically all of these countries had been the colonies of the imperial powers in the past. These imperial powers were now the appointed agents of the American interests the world over. As a matter of rule, their ex-colonies had to be considered the logical constituencies of the U.S, in its global power tussle with the Soviet Union. But there was also an opportunity for the Soviet Union.

There was considerable discontent against the western imperialism and its capitalistic ways in these countries which produced a generation of radical intellectuals, most of whom were eager to identify themselves with the philosophy of Karl Marx, the revolution of Lenin and the dictatorship of the proletariat, symbolised by the large-scale elimination of the counter-revolutionaries by Stalin. Some of these intellectuals were genuine, but most of them had only an expedient enthusiasm for the revolutionary causes, and their intellectual credentials were limited only to the awareness of a few radical jargons. It became an intellectual status symbol to be classed as a radical, a revolutionary, a comrade or a communist. The Soviet Union could count upon their readily available intellect and build secret tunnels of access to the discontented people.

The Americans on the other hand could count upon the dependability of the institutions that the former colonial masters had built for their convenience and benefit. Those, who ran these institutions, could simply not afford any

disturbance in the status quo. With this status quo were linked, the destinies of the ruling classes, whose vested interests necessitated complete loyalty to the guardians of the free world. The free world in this case meant the world, in which the freedom of these classes to rule their countries was not jeopardised.

Ever since the dawn of civilization, various societies, social structures, and political systems that have been built from time to time on the planet earth, have been shaped by the balance of power between the king, who- has commanded the armies, the trader, who has commanded the resources, the clergy who has commanded the emotions and the people who have always been commanded.

In a complete and undisturbed status quo, the king, the trader, and the clergy are always welded together in a triangle of authority, to which the people submit. Only when atleast one of this triangle breaks away and joins the people, that the status quo is broken, and the seeds of change and revolution are sown. In the French revolution, the king was suddenly left alone. In the Russian revolution, the traditional church was replaced with a new one and Lenin became the clergy, deriving inspiration from Karl Marx, his spiritual god.

In the recent revolution in Iran, the clergy joined hands with the people.

Keeping this symbolic truth in mind, it was necessary for the Soviet Union to break the status quo in its target countries and to pave way for the change it desired.

And for the U.S, it was vital to maintain the status quo by providing support and strength to all the three components of the triangle, the king, the trader and the clergy. This explains the enthusiasm of the Americans in backing the religious fundamentalists in the Muslim countries, Masjumi party in Indonesia, Akhwans in Egypt and Jama'at-i-Islami in Pakistan. The clergy simply has to be the pillar of the status quo, the ally of the king and the trader, and the enemy of change if the destinies of the Muslim countries are to be controlled and guided.

John Foster Dulles, General Eisenhower's Secretary of State was the author of this strategy. His brother Allen Dulles as the chief of the C.I.A. perfected it.

It may sound to be an oversimplification or a generalisation, but the fact remains, that behind even the most complicated situations, we eventually find such simple truths.

The subject of the third world is a complex one, considering the multiplicity of the designs of the Super Powers. It is not my intention to deal with this multiplicity on these pages, but to understand the causes of the fate, such leaders as Nasser,

Ben Bella, Soekarno and Bhutto, eventually met, a generalised study of the post-war world is not avoidable.

The potential areas of influence, for which the two supreme super powers began their famous cold war, also included such countries, which, instead of becoming the stooges of the power blocs, visualised an independent course for themselves based on bilateral relationship with each of the super powers. The leaders of these countries were quite vocal about their national interests, which necessiated strict adherence to nonalignment and bilateralism. The Soviet Union encouraged this course as the second best alternative, because it allowed Moscow a lot of room for manipulation against Washington.

The U.S. - dominated free world however was deadly opposed to the growth of non-alignment and bilateralism because it restricted its influence on its former colonies To ensure that the room for genuine nonalignment was narrowed, and the leaders of the target countries had to function within unavoidable constraints and restraints on their options, these countries had been 'gifted' with, in addition to the general problems of poverty backwardness and underdevelopment, such tension - charged issues as Kashmir.

UP AGAINST THE ELEPHANT

The birth of Pakistan was a unique event in the history of modern times. A country had come into being on the basis of ideological nationhood. The founder of this country had successfully won for the Muslims of India, their right to establish their own state, comprised of the regions where they had majority.

Radcliffe was the man chosen by the British government to draw the line of demarcation between the two sovereign states, namely India and Pakistan. Only a mad man could have done the kind of a job he did. The division of the Punjab was made in a manner that the magnitude of the feared blood-bath exceeded even the worst apprehensions.

The strategically vital district of Gurdaspur was awarded to India, to ensure its access to the overwhelmingly Muslim – populated state of Jammu & Kashmir. This decision of Radcliffe cannot be dismissed as an individual act of a mad man. He only carried out the British plan to leave the sub-continent in a state of permanent tension.

Leonard Mosley the renowned British journalist of those times was in the sub-continent at the time of the partition. He witnessed the butchery and the blood-bath that accompanied the division of India. He also watched the hectic political activity in the background.

After the partition, while writing his best-seller *The Last Days of the British Raj*, he interviewed Radcliffe at his London residence.

Was it logical?" Mosley asked. "Was it fair – your award?"

With a guilty expression on his face he tried to sidetrack the shame hidden in the question, by resorting to Bernard Shaw style humour.

"When I set my feet on the soil of that city, I had a feeling that I had been deported to a living hell on the earth. It was so hot, I could not breathe. I could hardly have been able to think. All my prayers those days were for the quickest exit from that city – still alive. It was Lahore, but I hate to remember the name. I could have done better if my thinking processes had been functioning properly. But my real achievement is, that I came back alive and am here, talking to you."

Such then are the cruel ways of destiny – also of the self-appointed masters of the peoples of the third world.

The July heat of Lahore entitled India to deprive the Muslims of Kashmir, of their right of self-determination and to plunge the subcontinent into a state of tension that, even after three wars between Pakistan and India, and more than forty-one years, has shown no signs of deviating into normalcy.

It was not just the Kashmiris' right of self-determination that had been jeopardized – the stability of Pakistan had also been brought under clouds, by giving India the opportunity to control the waters.

Without a problem like Kashmir, the Britishers would not have succeeded in driving Pakistan in the direction of the west, into SEATO and a long-term bondage of Uncle Sam. India, being the favoured beneficiary of the partition, in terms of the resources gifted to it and of the geographical advantages allowed to it, was in the driving seat and was not in anyway handicapped in its pursuit of highly rewarding bilateralism and non-alignment, which would enable it to extract a lot from the Soviet Union on one hand, and to make the U.S. give it a great deal as a bonus for neutrality, on the other hand.

The dependence of Pakistan on the so-called economic and military aid of the U.S, for the preservation of its sovereignty, became so great at last, that in the mid-fifties, the-then Prime Minister of Pakistan had to make a shameless comment on the state of affairs in the Arab world vis-à-vis Israel.

Zero plus zero plus zero plus zero is equal to zero.

It was an honest effort to please Washington. In the years to follow, the man, who was to rise to the helm of affairs in Pakistan was simply incapable of this kind of honesty and therefore did not qualify to earn a place in the good books of Dr. Henry Kissinger, who was a liberal version of John Foster Dulles.

The policies of the U.S are so central to the shaping of our destiny, that I deem it necessary to explain my view and comprehension of the structural factors that combine to shape these policies.

The U.S government in the broadest sense is a combination of three institutions – the Congress, comprised of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Presidency, symbolised by the White House, and the State Department, designed to execute the policies.

The Congress and the Presidency are the elected institutions, which reflect the will of the people.

The Congress has traditionally stood for the defense of the constitution and of all that can be meant by such phrases and figures of speech as Human Rights, Individual Liberty and Democracy. In practice, not always has this defense been objective and honest, particularly when the interests of the U.S have been determined to be more sacred than the responsibilities imposed by the declared commitment of the American people to their high ideals.

The American dream and the American reality, the American theory and the American practice have frequently been in contradiction, and the U.S Congress has been able to escape this contradiction only by leaving the dirty work to the White House.

The State Department functioning under the command of the White House has the responsibility of doing it the cleanest possible way. But this cannot always be possible. There are times when the State Department just cannot afford to earn the bad boy image. In such cases the services of the notorious C.I.A. achieve the desired results. The U.S government officially can always deny any interest in such results, or any connection with the operations leading to them. In rare cases the C.I.A. may be acting without the knowledge of the White House, and under the instructions of some undisclosed authority. In some cases the State Department may actually have no knowledge of the C.I.A. operations.

I remember a cartoon appearing in The New York Times in the 60's. It was a dialogue between President Johnson and the Secretary of State, Christian Herter. Johnson, pointing at a map, was saying in anger.

“You had eighteen million dollars to stabilize the government of this country. Still it has been over-thrown!”

Herter was replying.

“I certainly had eighteen millions. But the C.I.A had nineteen to overthrow it.” This cartoon might well have explained the complexity of the manner, in which the U.S government was being run in that era. It may also have a clue to the ultimate fate of the leaders of Soekarno – Nasser – Bhutto breed.

Who could have understood the policies behind the policies of the U.S, better than Bhutto? He had seen the downfall of the all-powerful Field Marshal, whose occasional bursts of patriotic independence, reflected in some of his attitudes, and in his book titled “Friends, Not Masters”, could not be allowed to inspire the

more determined adventurers. Perhaps the strongman had acquired more confidence in his strength than was acceptable Bhutto's sudden popularity in the masses was only a distant threat. For the time being it could be allowed to shake the foundations of an increasingly unpopular dictatorship. After all, the imposition of yet another martial law could always provide the desired 'stability' and the desired conditions.

Bhutto had a brilliant mind, but he was up against the grandmasters of the game. He could anticipate their moves, plan his own too, but he knew that they knew he had potential to outplay them if allowed.

Then there were those hounds too, those ferocious defenders of the disturbed status quo, who could always be set loose on the lone target – however evasive. Perhaps he could have waved a white flag, made peace with them, and joined their company, but that would have been the end of his leadership at the grass-root level. His political destiny in that case would not have been any different from Air Marshal (Retd) Asghar Khan's. To survive politically, he just had to confront them, whenever and in whatever way the attack came. And to acquire the desired and the required dimensions of leadership, he had only one option – only one course left, to identify himself forcefully with the emerging power of the third world. He had the guts to outclass his contemporaries, also to earn their admiration, respect, friendship and willingness to accept him in the lead role. And just as he was taking big strides in this direction, he was earning the displeasure of those, who had the power and the resources to shorten his life-span, politically as well as physically.

Bhutto's political career can be divided into five periods.

The period from his induction into the Martial Law Cabinet of 1958 to the 65 war with India, enabled him to get the required exposure, to discover his potential and to prove his brilliance.

The period, from the 65 war to the formation of the Pakistan Peoples Party, made him a national hero – my hero too, because of his courageous dissent from the Field Marshal.

The period, from the formation of the Pakistan Peoples Party, to the day he was flown from New York to take control of the affairs of his country, made him a highly controversial figure, who, on one hand, was identified with change which did not suit the forces of status quo, and on the other hand, became identified with the longings of the deprived and the neglected masses in the western part of the united Pakistan. It was during this period, that the forces opposed to change

rushed to unite against him, and constructed that not-so-new theme of “Islam being in danger”, to counter Bhutto’s cry for a new order.

The period, between the formation of the PPP government and the imposition of yet another Martial Law – this time by a shrewd demagogue, made Bhutto act hastily in self-defense and take premature steps in the direction of change, without realising that he simply did not have the kind of infrastructure, required for the implementation of such a radical programme. During this period, the defeated forces of the Election 70 gathered strength, through the psychological advantage of being in the opposition, and used religion to sharpen those blazing sentiments, that polarisation had generated.

The period, between the so-called Fairplay Operation of Ziaul Haque and the controversial execution of the deposed prime-minister of Pakistan, made Bhutto an immortal, with the mythological dimensions of the characters of Homer.

**THE GREEN, THE
BLACK AND THE
RED**

“Nawai Waqt had thrown its support behind the democratic movement. Mashriq, Imroze and The Pakistan Times were the trusted tools of the establishment. Dawn, after Yousef Haroon’s forced departure from the country, could not afford to lose its remaining teeth. Jang had mastered the art of survival and growth. Where did we stand?”

THE THREE-POINT MANIFESTO

Late in the year 1963, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was still in the first phase of his political career, a group of young men used to meet regularly at the residence of one or the other. Each member of this group was frustrated with the state of affairs, and was driven by a fierce desire to participate in a grand effort to bring about a revolutionary change in the country. They had different career backgrounds, but shared a common link - the city of Hyderabad Sindh, where they had been educated.

They were determined to agree on a national manifesto, for which, they had a number of heated discussions on such subjects as democracy, socialism and Islam.

Khalid Yousef Khan, then a young income tax officer, now settled in Britain, was the driving force behind the whole exercise, and he, through our common friend Mohammad Tariq Khan, now manager of Nawai Waqt group at Karachi, used to ensure my presence in those meetings. I was at that time Bureau Chief of Daily Kohistan at Karachi – still not twenty-five. Khalid had been an admirer of my ‘fiery’ spirit since our Hyderabad days, and was of the opinion, that, if I could get rid of my fascination with such fascists as Hitler, I could contribute substantially to the movement, he intended to launch, to bring about the cherished change. Among his enthusiastic followers were a few activists too, who were bursting with revolutionary zeal. I remember only two names now Shahzad Ali Khan, whose father Nawab Zahid Ali Khan had a political background. and Nasir who. I am told, is now a Commander in Pakistan Navy, and has something to do with ‘Intelligence’.

One evening, Tariq Khan picked me up from my office and took me to a modest house near North Nazimabad.

“The final manifesto for the future political party is going to be adopted tonight,” he disclosed in his usual non-serious manner. “Khalid wants us both to commit ourselves to his mission.”

“I wish, he succeeds,” I replied with cynical coolness. “But it may take him several months to raise enough funds to meet the printing costs of his manifesto. By then Ayub Khan would have grown into a much stronger strongman, because of the new Muslim League he has formed.”

“I hope you’re not going to discourage Khalid Yousef Khan with your undesired cynicism. He wants you to be the midfield general of the revolution, in the clash of the two Khans,” remarked Tariq Khan.

The attendance in that meeting was quite impressive. Khalid wore a determined look on his face - the kind of look, I am sure, Alexander the Great had worn while entering the land of Darius. We occupied the empty chairs flanking him. He delivered a thoughtful speech on the necessity of breaking the shackles of ineptness, cowardice and indifference - if Pakistan had to be liberated from the forces of tyranny, exploitation and greed. Then he proceeded to present his manifesto.

“As Pakistan,” he said, “is predominantly a Muslim state, its official religion has to be Islam. No matter how fervently some of our friends may want themselves to be acknowledged as ‘unadulterated’ radicals, the fact remains, that Islam is the very fountainhead of our nationhood. As Pakistan was founded through the will of the people, it cannot have any form of government, except democracy. And as the roots of the forces of tyranny, exploitation and greed happen to be deep down in capitalism and feudalism, the need for a just socio-economic order can only be fulfilled through socialism.”

I was watching him interestedly as he spoke. He paused for a while before concluding. “These three words - Islam, democracy and socialism, are going to be our manifesto, which, I am sure, is going to be the destiny of Pakistan.”

Perhaps no one in that room, that night, could have imagined that Khalid Yousef Khan’s words were going to prove prophetic in the years to come.

Only three years later the Pakistan Peoples Party was formed with these three words as the quintessence of its political philosophy. Even the basic concept of the party’s flag was nearly the same, that Khalid Yousef Khan had presented that night.

It was no more than an interesting coincidence, because no one of that group adopted a political career and got into a position to boast of any kind of acquaintance or association with the father of the Pakistan Peoples Party. The coincidence however proves an important point. The soil was practically asking for this seed. Pakistan needed the Pakistan Peoples Party. The people needed Zulfikar All Bhutto.

Khalid Yousef Khan had to migrate to Britain because of his failing kidneys. I learnt that he had brought out a journal by the name of Jamhooor from Oxford. He may now have forgotten all about that exercise, twenty five years ago, but I

remember. I also remember how sharply I used to disagree with him on the subject of democracy.

“What our country needs is an Ataturk or a Nasser, who can create a state of mental absolutism in us, who can inspire us to pursue the goal of national glory with single-minded devotion, who can draw the best out of us and set clearly-defined objectives for the whole nation. The evils of capitalism, feudalism and theocracy cannot be rooted out through democracy, in which, we are under compulsion to choose the lesser evil. I visualise a Muslim Renaissance under some dynamic leader, who will take over the mosque from the clergy, and declare that capitahsm, feudalism and theocracy will have no place in our social order.” I used to argue and in reply he used to say: “I am prepared to welcome such a benevolent dictator, but he cannot descend from heavens, and the only institution in the country, that is capable of producing one, is the army. Do we have to long for another martial law in the hope, that the next strongman will riot be another Ayub Khan?”

It was a convincing argument but the idea of a God-sent messiah, taking swift control of the affairs of the country, and leading the nation on to glory at jet-pace. was so romantic and fascinating, that the rigours of discovering such a leader, through the complex process of democracy seemed to me, to be utterly needless. At that time, it never really occurred to me, that men could turn into monsters in the absence of accountability. But I think, my fascination with mental absolutism, single-mindedness, regimentation and dictatorship of ideology was unconsciously beginning to get weaker as the forces of corruption and greed started gaining ascendance through Ayub Khan’s basic democracies.

A JOURNALISTIC SCOOP

By the middle of 1964, I had fully realised that there was no possibility of an Ataturk descending from heavens, to signal the doom of Ayub Khan's regime, and that the likelihood of an officers' secret movement, in the style of Col. Nasser and his men, too was remote. Only a general could overthrow a general, and he could at best be as good as his predecessor, because of the simple fact that our former masters had not recruited revolutionaries in the army. The only course left, for bringing about a change in the leadership of the country, was democracy. I had come back to Lahore as the Executive Editor of Daily Kohistan. The Field Marshal's party was preparing for the farcical formality of reelecting its founder as the country's President. The Muslim League that had founded Pakistan under the inspiring leadership of the Quaid had died in the fifties, though it was clinically considered to be in a state of coma, and its supposedly alive corpse had been snatched from its helpless heirs by the undisputed strongman. The new party, thus created to provide a democratic cover to the Field Marshal's dictatorship, had been conveniently named as Pakistan Muslim League, so that the forces of the establishment, thriving under its umbrella, could always expediently establish their link with the historic struggle for the creation of Pakistan.

In effect, not a single national party existed at that time. There was a party of the establishment that was pre-ordained to win all kinds of elections against a non-existent opposition. There was Awami League too, but it had no roots in the western part of the country. Other parties were merely regional groups or platforms for professional politicians and champions of various dogmas and beliefs. The leaders however were in abundance. They had adopted leadership as a potentially profitable profession. Good times for the trade could come any day.

Who could challenge the undisputed right of the king to the throne? How could the courtiers of the Mighty Khan - over eighty thousand in numbers - dare invite the royal wrath by refusing to bow in humble submission?

The stage was set for the king's re-coronation. The king's men were eager to outsmart one another in their enthusiasm to win the royal favours.

But God had other plans.

It was a wild idea but it turned out to be a stroke of genius.

The seemingly non-existent opposition suddenly had an unexpected leader - the aged and the highly revered sister of the man virtually worshipped by the people of Pakistan.

The unlikeliest alliance suddenly came into being. From Council Muslim League to Awami League, to National Awami Party to Jamaat-i-Islami, a bridge was all of a sudden constructed. Even Maulana Maudoodi and Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman could spare some friendly smiles for each other. The flamboyant Sheikh's six-point formula did not pose any threat to Maulana's Islam. Nor was the Jama'at's theocratic philosophy in contradiction with Awami Leagues secular stance. A common enemy is a great uniting factor. The alliance of the Allies with the Soviet Union, against the Axis powers, had proved it in the second world war.

I can take some pleasure here from recalling the fact that when the alliance against the Field Marshal was being given the final shape in the conference at Lahore, we had been the first to break the news of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman's six-point formula. The Sheikh had brought it with him, hoping to find some suitable opportunity, to put it up for discussion. But the mood of the conference had made him hold it back. On the last day, our chief reporter Manzoor Malik had somehow managed to take a copy of the document in his possession, without the Sheikh's knowledge. As he handed it to me, he could hardly control his excitement.

I studied the document. At that time, it more or less meant to me to be a step towards making the two federating wings of the country, independent of each other.

Are we going to publish it?" Manzoor Malik asked me. "It needs a lot of courage. The government may consider it an act of treason."

"I do not agree with what the Sheikh wants," I replied. But this is news, and news is meant to be reported. All that I need to make sure of is the authenticity of this document."

"You can trust me," he said, "I have virtually stolen this document from his briefcase. Still it is upto you to decide. You can consult Aali Rizvi if you are undecided, and even Nasim Hijazi Sahib."

"Aali is not going to allow it. He hates to take risks," I said. "And Nasim Sahib may take the first available flight from Pindi, to dismiss us for having even flirted with the thought of publishing it. If it is an authentic document, we must respect the right of the people to know, what a leader of Sheikh Mujib's stature has in his mind."

The front page of Kohistan next day belonged entirely to Sheikh Mubij-ur-Rehman and his six-point formula.

Not very often does a newspaper beat its competitors so handsomely and squarely as Kohistan had done that day.

Aali Rizvi was furious in the morning and sure of a sharp reaction from the government. But as the day passed in peace, we suddenly realised that my journalistic courage had in fact caused jubilation in the Field Marshal's ranks. The theme of the enemies of national solidarity and the forces of disintegration, rallying under the 'misguided' leadership of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, had been unintentionally substantiated by us – much to the delight of the establishment.

There was no rebuff from my uncle either, who had probably been congratulated for uncovering the sinister designs of the traitors.

I felt like a fool suddenly. Had the scoop been arranged?

The only solace I could take, and I needed to take it in abundance, was from the fact, that I had performed my journalistic duty honestly and courageously.

Nasim Hijazi, the renowned writer of several best-selling historical novels, was the Chief Editor of Kohistan and the Chairman of the company that owned it.

His influence on me in my teens had been very great – next only to that of Allama Iqbal. In fact I took great pride in being his nephew. But as I grew up, both in body and mind, my understanding of Islam and Muslim history started acquiring very different dimensions. It was great to be a Muslim nationalist, but I found it increasingly irrational to remain suspended in the past. Every new decade in the history of man had been taking him to an utterly new horizon, and to remain mentally enslaved to a particular horizon was an attitude for me, which I could no longer identify with the dynamic spirit of Islam.

While I was rising rapidly in the hierarchy of Kohistan, I was also shaping my own thoughts, my own philosophy, my own comprehension of Islam and what it really stood for. The gulf between the young nephew and the aging uncle grew wider each day. I remember refusing to repeat an editorial on the Independence Day, that Nasim Sahib had written several years back and had already been repeated four times on similar occasions. I also remember his anger.

“Do you think the message of yesterday has lost its appeal today?” he said angrily.

“Only the Message of God is permanent uncle,” I replied humbly. “Everything else changes and keeps changing. Even if the message has to remain the same, the dictionary can offer us different words to incorporate it.”

I am not really deviating from my subject. I am only recalling the times that gave birth to Bhutto. I have to prove that he was not a result of some sudden political accident; he was the long-recognised need of the hour.

THE BATTLE OF THE ROSE AND THE LANTERN

I remember the day Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah was nominated as the opposition's candidate in the approaching presidential elections.

Nawai Waqt had already thrown its support behind the democratic movement. Mashriq, Imroze and The Pakistan Times were the trusted tools of the establishment. Dawn, after Yousef Haroon's forced departure from the country, could not afford to lose its remaining teeth. Jang had mastered the art of survival and growth.

What was going to be Kohistan's course? No longer a force that had once threatened to dethrone Jang, it was still the third largest newspaper of the country, the only one then, published simultaneously from three major cities of the country – Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan. Had its circulation not been suspended for six weeks by Nawab of Kalabagh a year back, paving way for the rise of Mashriq, Kohistan's fortunes could have been different.

The suspension had crippled Kohistan financially and made it fall behind in the technological advancement that it had earlier pioneered. The worse blow had come in the form of the abject surrender of the management to the might of the all-conquering Field Marshal.

Now was the chance to redeem our honour. For me it was a chance to prove my metal.

The editorial board held a meeting that afternoon, to clearly outline our policy, and to pursue it with courage and conviction.

Mah boob Ali Khan, our news editor, now with Nawai Waqt Karachi, had not any special love for courage. Aali Rizvi's pragmatism stood in the way of his convictions. I had to plead hard and forcefully and determinedly before they agreed, that, if we failed to back Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah's candidacy one way or the other, Kohistan would lose most of its ground to Nawai Waqt. But it was an agreement in theory only. The reluctance on their part to put the theory into practice was not easy to conquer. The argument went on, till Aali Rizvi finally said: "Well, I am prepared to write a cautiously worded editorial in Mohtarma's support, but I am hundred percent certain, Nasim Sahib is going to raise hell. He is arriving tonight, and you have to handle him."

That is my responsibility, "I said determinedly. "Our news coverage too has to match that of Nawai Waqt, if not surpass it."

I received my uncle at the airport. As we drove back, he started criticising his favourite Jama'at for having endorsed the candidacy of a woman. For a while my heart sank, but then I decided to argue.

"Though it is not ideal for a Muslim country to have a woman at the top, but even worse is to support corruption, immorality and misdeeds of a ruthless regime."

"Who says we are going to support corruption immorality and misdeeds?" he blurted out.

"Only we know, we are not going to, but the people do not know, and they have to be told, "I said. "They expect a lot from you. Your books have inspired them. We have only to reaffirm your commitment to them and this we are going to do by challenging the right of a dictator to rule forever. Even though Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah is a woman, she is a sacred continuity of the great Quaid. Her defeat is going to hurt the Quaid's followers more than her victory is going to hurt Islam."

"But why has she fallen into the trap of those opportunists?"

"She is an ailing woman. Her life can end any day. She is aware of it. But she is also her brother's sister, and she cannot ignore the cause, her brother had fought for. She is not interested in power. She is interested only in the liberation of her people from the yoke of dictatorship. We all owe it to her brother, if not to her people, to forget for a while, that she is a woman."

By the time we reached the hotel, where he was to stay, I had convinced him that Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah was more than a woman; she was an institution, that alone could redeem our national honour.

The new president of Pakistan, under the constitution of Ayoob Khan, was to be elected, not directly by the voters on the basis of adult franchise, but by an electoral college that had virtually been selected by the king and his men. The institution of basic democracies was claimed to have been formed to strengthen democracy at the grass-root level, but it was actually intended to serve as a broad-based court for the king to give democratic sanctity to his regal whims. Those in dissent could be appropriately handled by the ever-vigilant and dutiful SHOs.

A thumping Ayub Khan victory, in the style of the elections conducted in the totalitarian regimes of most of the third world countries, seemed to be a foregone conclusion, till the lantern of democracy was lit by no less a person than the revered mother of the nation. A trouble-free walk-over was no longer in the menu of the Field Marshal's dinner. He was suddenly up against a potential challenger. The challenge was of such a nature that it could not be crushed with as disdainful an ease as he would have liked. The SHOs had to be more subtle now, in the use of their favourite tactics, and the risks involved in subjecting the mother of the nation to the routine procedures of ensuring 'good conduct' were too high.

A serious campaign was inevitable. Thus started the battle of the Rose and the Lantern. Kohistan was with the lantern though Nawai Waqt was in the lead, because the campaign-managers of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah had decided to invest exclusively on the more dependable organ.

The advertising part of the campaign was controlled by Abu Saeed Anwar, and I knew, that even though Nawai Waqt was raising all the bills on the declared rates, it was also allowing heavy discounts to subsidize the campaign indirectly. I desperately wanted those advertisements to appear in Kohistan too, but some of our directors were not prepared to go as far as to allow any cuts. They thought, it would be a great favour to the opposition to let it buy our space.

I decided to act on my own, and arranged a meeting with Abu Saeed Anwar and company. Only Aali Rizvi was my ally in the deal. It was agreed that Kohistan would, in effect, offer free space to the cause of democracy but certain bills would have to be raised to meet technical requirements.

This formula worked.

I knew I would have to face the wrath of our Board eventually, when the time came to write off those bills. But I did not care.

The cause of contributing to the fervently hoped victory of the mother of the nation was too sacred not to be pursued whole-heartedly.

The cherished hopes were however dashed on the 2nd of January 1965. Hoping against hope, I had hoped that the basic democrats of East Pakistan would trample the designs of the Field Marshal under their feet. It was not to be.

Though, about one-third of over eighty thousand basic democrats had somehow managed to defy the power of the state and voted according to the dictates of their conscience, the rest had reaffirmed their allegiance to the value of the

currency notes rather than to the picture these notes carried. Rigging too had contributed substantially to the humiliation of the people and the jubilation of the Field Marshal. I had lost. The nation had lost. The establishment had won. The dictatorship had triumphed. The Field Marshal had confirmed his invincibility.

During those days of gloom, depression and despondency I finally got convinced in totality, that despite all its evils, the institution of democracy alone could secure for us, our fundamental right to have a government of our choice, and that God had not created and would not ever create a man, outside the sphere of prophet hood, who could be trusted with unaccountable power, and who could retain his sense of balance in the absence of checks.

Kohistan's future as an independent newspaper was now in jeopardy. It had already been blacklisted in the advertising files of the government and more effective steps to teach us adequate lessons were in the offing. The fragility of its ownership structure was already enough to push the once-great newspaper towards the dreaded downhill journey.

"There is no standstill in newspapers- my teacher Enayatullah used to say. They either progress or die."

He had been the brain behind the rise of Kohistan. He had to say goodbye to it, due to some sharp differences with his old friend and my uncle – Nasim Hijazi. His dynamism had given birth to another great newspaper Mashriq, but he did not have the kind of resources required to keep it out of the National Press Trust yoke.

This is another story.

What I intend to emphasise here is, that even though the people had lost to their ruler, the desire to win eventually, had not died. There was an invisible vacuum, of which atleast one man was positively aware. In the first battle for democracy he had been in the Field Marshal's ranks. But he could foresee the second battle, in which he visualised himself as the leader of the people. From the triumph of the Rann of Kutch, to the smoke of the Operation Gibraltar, and from there to the Pak thrust into Jorian, resulting in the 65 war with India, my would-be hero was, in all probabilities, already forming the Pakistan Peoples Party in his mind

It was the need of the hour.

One party had been formed to create Pakistan. Another had to be formed to build it.

Democracy was the path.
Socialism was the goal.
Islam was the spirit.

**THE THEORY AND
THE PRACTICE OF
SOCIALISM AND
ISLAM**

“Fighting for a revolution, planning for it, waging its battles, dreaming about its ultimate success, happen to be like romance, like courtship, when everything looks so beautiful - the flowers, the trees, the hills, the river. But revolution itself when it finally comes, and has to be implemented, is like marriage which doesn't retain the romance of it for very long, gets more and more dull, drab, monotonous, because of the routineness and the drudgery of making the kitchen run – the laundry, the bills, the children, the humbug.....”

SOCIALISM, ISLAM AND BHUTTO

There are many contradictions and paradoxes in the theory and practice of socialism. But to condemn socialism as an anti-Islamic concept is to bracket Islam with exploitation, greed and concentration of wealth in fewer hands. This unfortunately is the practice of the theocrats of Islam, who, either out of their lack of knowledge, or due to their vested interests, go all out to defend an individual's right to accumulate as much wealth as one can, and to acquire control of wealth—generating resources as completely as possible. As long as one keeps offering one's prayers dutifully and continues to observe the prescribed rituals in the traditional manner, one can expand one's riches to infinite limits. Any system that applies constraints on this right of an individual, is in their eyes anti—Islamic. Socialism thus, for them, is the deadliest threat to the existence of Islam. It amounts to blasphemy, infidelity and sinfulness. The term Islamic socialism happens to be virtually a crime against God.

There has also been an argument, that Islam, being a complete way of life, does not need the support of any such term. Its like arguing that, because Islam is complete in itself, there is no need of associating with it such words as justice, truth and honesty etc.

After the failure of that 1857 struggle for freedom, the Muslims of India were indoctrinated on similar lines by the British—backed Islamic priests, clergies and theocrats of those times.

The influence of Syed Ahmed Shaheed, Syed Ismaeel Shaheed and Teetu Mir Shaheed on the Muslim masses had grown so strong, that the will to win freedom was simply refusing to die in their hearts.

In the notorious Hunter's report, the causes of the Muslim insurgence and activism were defined as under.

“The reformatory spirit of Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab has infused so much dynamism and pride in the Muslim militants, that they consider it a sin to bow before any man. This progressive dynamism has come through Shah Waliullah's teachings, being preached by the followers of Syed Ahmad. If this trend is not curbed, the British rule may soon be challenged again. It is necessary therefore, that the services of a few influential Muslim clergies, who also happen to be good

orators, be acquired and a relentless campaign against Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab's followers be built, painting them as the worst enemies of Islam."

Hunter's recommendations were carried out, and so devastating was the campaign launched in 'the defense of Islam' against 'the blasphemous teachings of Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab, that within a decade, the word Wahabi became the most vicious form of abuse in the dictionary of the Islamic priesthood.

The Americans have dealt with socialism in the Muslim countries, in exactly the same manner. They have been helped a great deal by the fact that the forces of status quo in these countries have been enthusiastic collaborators in this exercise. The word socialism has been projected in a manner, that quite a few consider it a state of not believing in God. The Soviet Union has been presented as an evidence in this respect. Few have bothered to think, that if the Soviet Union practices a particular sort of justice; which is against our beliefs, it does not mean, that we should banish the very word justice from our society.

Just as one form of justice can be good and another bad, socialism too can be great in one form, and terrible in another. It is what we mean by justice, and by socialism that really matters.

The fault is not in the theory, but in the practice.

Khomeini's totalitarianism in the name of Islam is not any different from that of Stalin in the name of socialism. Both have to be praised or deplored on identical grounds. If killing is justified in the defense of one form of fundamentalism, it is also justified in the defense of another form. Clergies need not essentially be believers in God. They usually believe more strongly in themselves, just as Khomeini does, just as Stalin did. Not everything Khomeini is doing is Islam, and not everything Stalin did was socialism.

I have attained this level of comprehension through rationalisation and understanding of human nature. And it has taken me years and years of conscious effort. Had I, at any stage, closed all my doors on rationalization and understanding, I could well have been crying for blood in the name of God, and I would never have known that God does not like the sight of human blood.

In the broadest sense, man has been able to discover only two economic systems, each having several variations.

One system ensures the continuity of the monopoly of an individual or a group of individuals on the material resources that generate money, and are expanded through the power that money enjoys. The control of these resources was

initially acquired by their owners and users through the simple law of the jungle, in which the stronger is the hunter and the weaker, the prey. At first brutal superiority in physical strength was the deciding factor; subsequently some other factors too got involved. Two together could be stronger than one, and three even more. Thus the individuals learnt to assert their strength through groups and paved way for tribalism. The weaker groups were conquered by the stronger ones, and the deciding factor was no longer just the brutal superiority in physical strength, but also the superiority of the material resources in their possession and under their command.

Some one had to be the strongest in each group, and had to be accepted as the lord. Thus tribalism and feudalism became inseparable.

As man mastered the art of expanding his resources and kept enhancing his mastery, the concept of production was introduced which gradually gave birth to what is now called capitalism. Those in possession and control of the means of production are known as capitalists.

This system has divided the world into two groups—the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ The haves, despite being in ridiculous minority, being the masters of the means of production are also the masters of the world. The have-nots look upto them, for acquiring the means of survival, which can only come, if they agree to work for the haves on their terms and conditions.

The first revolt against the masters came in the form of a cry for making the terms and conditions of work acceptable to the have-nots. The demand became collective, and trade unionism came into being.

Capitalism has various variations according to the varying strength of the capitalists, and the trade unions they have to deal with. This strength, on one hand determines the degree of the influence—to be exercised by the capitalists in the formation of the governments and the laws governing them. On the other it determines the influence of the trade unions which symbolise the power of the have-nots.

The other system, known as socialism is the very anti-thesis of capitalism. It believes in distributing the means of production in the whole society, by making the state, the master of the material resources. It presumes that the state is owned, not by some individuals, but by the people who collectively form the society, and control all individuals.

It is the erosion of this presumption that makes socialism far less appealing in practice than in theory.

The individuals who eventually run the governments do not let the people own the state. By proclaiming themselves as the custodians of the society, they acquire unchallenged control of the state power. In theory they represent the power of the have-nots under the impressive umbrella of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In practice they hate to expose themselves to the will of the people at the polls.

The capitalist believes that he has the Divine right to have what he has and can have, very much like the clergy, who believes that he has the Divine right to condemn those, who disagree with him. The socialist does not fall far behind when he believes, that he too has the Divine right to rule in the name of the proletariat, though in this case the divinity concept is material – not metaphysical.

The traditional capitalist, the traditional clergy and the traditional socialist are therefore fundamentally the products of the same bestial instinct of man, to assert power – though their instruments of power are different.

Bertrand Russel may have discovered the ultimate secret when he says.

“The sex hunger may be fascinating for a while, the belly hunger may seem to be everything for a greater while, but ultimately it is power that really matters.”

Russel had remained fascinated with the theory of socialism for over a decade. The idea of everyone getting according to one’s needs had seemed terrific to him, till he discovered that there was no prescribed method of removing from power, the corrupters of this idea in the practice of socialism.

It was then that he wrote his famous book ‘The theory and the practice of communism.

I have deliberately avoided to use the term communism in this analysis, because it is one individual’s way of looking at the human civilization – the man called Karl Marx. His doctrine of ‘religion being an opium’ was the net result of his inability to draw, for his economic theory, any kind of support from the religion or the religions he had personally experienced.

By generalising this inability of his, he unintentionally paved way for the mushroom growth of those fashionable communists the world over, who conveniently believed that by denouncing religion, they could automatically qualify for the prestige that the term ‘progressive thinking’ carried. These fashionable progressive thinkers of the left, the self-styled flag-bearers of

communism and the proletarian revolution the world over, were able to establish their credentials in the third world countries, the countries of the sub-continent included, through constant use of Lenin's terminology and Stalin's jargons. They did achieve some ego-satisfaction from their progressive image, also handsome rewards from Moscow for serving the Soviet interests, but they also inflicted a severe blow to the cause of change by allowing the clergy to prove, that Islam and socialism could not go together.

I am limiting the canvas of this analysis to only Pakistan which happens to be in every respect a Muslim country.

Let us examine the Words of the Holy Quran in this context.

How does God define the spirit of Islam's economic system?

"Wealth should flow in the veins of a society in exactly the manner, blood flows in the veins of a person."

Just as any obstruction in the blood circulation system can cause a person to collapse, a society too can collapse if wealth does not flow through it unhindered, and gets concentrated anywhere.

This then is Islam – not of the clergy, but of God.

Can this Islam. – the real and the only true one, be made an ally of capitalism, by denouncing socialism as an anti-Islamic blasphemy? Bhutto had the answer.

Islam was much more than a set of rituals, and its progressive spirit had to be made the driving force behind the new political system, which had to be democratic in form and character, and had to have socialism as its objective, so that the promise of '*Roti, Kapra our Makaan*' to the have-nots, could be kept.

There was, enough substance in this programme to attract the masses, to make their eyes glitter with hope, to build up their desire for change, to urge them out of their passive resignation to the status quo, and to transform them from obedient subjects into determined rebels.

The volcano of change had suddenly erupted. Bhutto was elated by the enthusiasm of the people's response to his message, and by the shock-waves of dismay that, on one hand rocked the establishment, and on the other hand shook the citadels of the status quo, down to their foundations.

THE WIND OF CHANGE

The people's power seemed to surge in one swift tidal wave and the Field Marshal was promptly in a state of alert. The power of his real consistency was there to protect him, but after having remained bedridden due to coronary thrombosis for several weeks, his own faith in his invincibility had weakened considerably and he had suddenly become conscious of his mortality. The realisation that the strong man was no longer that strong, had started dawning on his generals too.

Looking back, after twenty years, eleven of which were consumed by a self-appointed messiah, I don't feel like judging Ayub Khan as harshly as I had judged him then. He had many faults, but most of them had their roots in a single act of his — the act he had committed on the seventh of October 1958. In his lust for power, he had closed the doors of his country on democracy and embarked upon a journey of manipulations, compromises and misdeeds, initially in the defense of his dictatorship and later on for the perpetuation of his power. He didn't have any ideological background to draw some spiritual strength from. He could not give his rule some purpose. His only reason of being there, at the helm of affairs, was the highest titled army rank, he had promoted himself to.

Despite all this, and in spite of all his shortcomings, he can now be judged, with a certain amount of reverence. He did not hoodwink his people. He was not an inventor of lies. He hadn't any pretensions to piety. And there was some air of dignity around him. His cabinet wasn't entirely a bunch of political mercenaries, soldiers of fortune and opportunity-seeking mediocres. They were undoubtedly the king's men, and he was beyond any shadow of doubt the king, but not all of them lacked in class and intelligence. Had Pakistan been a monarchy, with a history of royalty behind it, Ayub Khan could have been a highly revered ruler.

But he had usurped power from the people, and Pakistan was the legacy of a man whose commitment to the rule of law, sanctified by the will of the people, was not a state secret. That was Ayub's crime, certainly not pardonable in the eyes of history; but, judging strictly from the angle of human nature, which is designed to be imperfect, Ayub Khan does deserve certain allowances. He loved himself a lot. He loved his power even more, but he also loved his country. Perhaps he was incapable of comprehending the tragic consequences of dictatorship in a country, which was homogeneous only in faith, but had a heterogeneous character in other vital areas. Probably he was sincere in relying too heavily on the strength of Islam becoming a permanently binding factor between various ethnic and linguistic groups. Had he studied history, he would have known that even when the religious passions were fresh and high, at the

time of the Holy Prophet's departure from this world, the tribal factors had nearly created a deadlock on the issue of his successorship. History could certainly have told him that Arabs and Turks and Barbarians and Moors had all been Muslims, and still had refused to have a common ruler in the name of God and the Holy Prophet. The only way they could have agreed to have a unified command, was through a system that would have assured their full participation in power, and left no room for undisputed and unchallenged authority of one over the other.

Ayub Khan's knowledge of history was limited. For that matter, all those who pursue power and manage to get it within their grasp and grip, have a tendency to lose sight of history and to nourish false hopes of proving themselves as exceptions through miracles.

It is not denying the power of our religion and its tremendous influence and impact on our behaviours; but the power of those ethnic and linguistic loyalties too cannot be denied. They do not amount to negation of God!

Ayub Khan had hoped to perpetuate his power, by using the power of our religious nationhood to subjugate the power of the regional loyalties, based on ethnic and linguistic factors. He had no chance of succeeding. The songs of Islamic solidarity were just not enough. Nor was the theme of national integration. Nor the philosophy of dubbing the dissenters as traitors. The so-called Agartala conspiracy of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman could not be used on long-term basis, to deny the Bengali Muslims their right to be in the corridors of power, rubbing shoulders with the champions of national solidarity.

Man's nature cannot be changed through doctrines. Man has always been as loyal to his interests as to his beliefs. God has created him like that. That probably is also his point of departure from angels. If God had wanted this planet to be inhabited by angels. He would not have created man.

Some men become prisoners of their interests more completely than others. Ayub Khan was one of them. And being so complete a prisoner of his interests, he was incapable of allowing any change in the system, which guarded these interests.

And change was the need of the day. With change, were linked the interests of the masses. And Bhutto was there to bear the flag of change, and to lead the masses towards it.

In theory, the promise of change was so inspiring it could not be resisted. The change in the power structure had to come through democracy. The change in

the social structure had to come through socialism. And this change had to be sanctified through strict adherence to Islam, though by drawing a line between the dogma and the spirit.

In practice, the promised change was to be subverted, not by Bhutto himself as I was led to believe during his reign, but by those comrades whom he had chosen as the agents of change, and also by those Davids, who had Goliaths, hidden beneath their skins.

Maulana Maudoodi's role in the political events of those times could not be any different. He stood head and shoulders above those who formed the nucleus of his Jama'at. His intellect and his scholarly background made him a giant in the company of pygmies.

They all looked upto him for guidance and inspiration. It always happens in the parties of dogmatic character. No dogma can thrive unless its faithful practitioners lack substantially in intellect and imagination. The structural character of communism is a proof of this truth. Jama'at Islami is not an exception. Only duffers and dummies can provide dynamic strength to the dogmas preached by their leaderes. You may not help having intelligence but if you are indiscreet enough to express it, you are likely'to be disqualified.

Maulana Maudoodi was Amir of a party, that believed more in beards than in brightness. Every true believer, every devoted disciple of the Holy Prophet was expected to prove the strength of his faith through his pious looks. It had been conveniently overlooked that the greatest enemy of Islam, and of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), hadn't any different appearance. Omar bin Hisham alias Abu Jehl too had a well-groomed beard, as had his disciples. This did not make him the follower of Mohammad (peace be upon him.)

The goodness of man is inside him - in his mind and heart. To make one's holiness so consciously conspicuous is a tradition of the Church, which is structured on the concept of God speaking through priests. Islam is opposed to priesthood as an institution, because it paves way for the arrogance of piety on one hand, and for the erosion of God's unshared Authority on the other hand. No human being should claim to be speaking on behalf of God. But the power of religion is so great that the temptation to acquire it, and use it, has never been easy to resist. Resultantly the followers of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) have been exposed to as many versions of Islam, as have been necessary to accommodate all those holy men.

Maulana Maudoodi too didn't lag behind, in giving his own version of Islam. And because he also excelled in intellect, he was able to organise his party much more efficiently, if not extensively.

I have always respected intellect – even if it has been in the opposing ranks. And though I have always believed, that the religious groups like the Jama'at have done much more to serve the cause of Washington than of Islam, I hate to charge a man of Maulana Maudoodi's stature, of having been a conscious collaborator in this phenomenon. He may have been completely unaware of the fact, that his crusade against change, and his militant defense of dogma and the status quo, were only fulfilling the global designs of Washington, which had found, in the dogmatic fundamentalism of the champions of Islam, a very effective weapon to counter the wind of change.

I had the privilege of meeting the Maulana once in the company of a disciple of his. I could not help asking a silly question:

“Who was the first Muslim, Maulana Sahib?”

He was taken aback for a while, then thoughtfully named the first three converts.

“We all know,” I said, “that the Holy Quran took nineteen years to be fully revealed to the Holy Prophet and his followers. There couldn't have been any comprehensive code of conduct, any Shariah in those early days. Certainly not in the first week. What was the basis of Hazrat Abu Bakr being accepted as a Muslim in the absence of the Holy Quran, the Sharjah and all that is deemed necessary to have, and to practice, to qualify as a Muslim? Was Abu Bakr a lesser Muslim at first? Did God want to have only lesser Muslims in the beg inning? Or was it enough to believe wholeheartedly in the Oneness of God, in His being the One and the Only Deity and in Mohammad being His final prophet?”

Maulana wasn't expecting such silly questions. He took time to build his line of argument but nothing that he said, answered my questions.

And nothing that the stalwarts of Jama-at-i-Islami said, during their campaign to stop Bhutto, could answer the basic questions that rose in the minds of the people.

“Why are they trying to spread Islam in a country which is so predominantly Muslim? Why do they think that by having *Roti Kapra our Makan* we are going to become infidels and win the Wrath of God?”

An interesting episode of those days reflects the mood in which the people were.

A priestly ideologue, in his enthusiasm to prove his point, raised his arms in front of a public gathering, the Holy Quran in one hand and *Roti* in the other.

“You want this,” he asked, “or this?”

A man from the crowd shouted back.

“We have the Quran. We don’t have *Roti*. Give us what we don’t have.”

Munnoo Bhai, a very dear friend of mine often fondly narrates an incident about Bhutto.

During the campaign they were travelling in a jeep. Munnoo Bhai, Hanif Ramay and Ghulam Mustafa Khar were with the leader. There was a huge crowd, lined up on the road sides, overflowing on to the road, chanting their slogans in unison: “There is no stopping Socialism. There is no stopping Bhutto.”

“Bhutto looked at us with a smile and said, “Munnoo Bhai narrates. “You may not, but they certainly mean it.”

They more than meant it. They swept Bhutto to a thumping election victory in West Pakistan. It was a landslide in the Punjab.

BHUTTO AND THE HURRIED CHANGE

Assigned by destiny the role of a prophet of change, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was not destined to become its architect too. This is not to say that he was not qualified to realise his dreams. Despite his feudalistic background from which he had inherited his authoritative style and his not-so accommodative temperament, the fire that raged in his spirit and burnt through his style was not a contrived one. Men of such fierce passions and commanding urges can be anything but hypocrites. The aura of dynamic energy they exude, cannot be produced in laboratories. Their brilliance is more or less always honest, though it may seem from a distance, to be designed to achieve certain selfish ends. Despite their brilliance they cannot help acting impulsively, even whimsically whenever really inspired, no matter what their conscious minds may dictate. They carry heads that are capable of generating incredibly brilliant ideas, sparkling with sheer genius, but they do not always like to think only with their heads. They let their hearts and souls too, do a lot of thinking.

Had Bhutto been a thinking animal only, he would not have opted to walk proudly upto the gallows.

He had both the spirit and the mind, the will and the brilliance, required to achieve his objectives. But what he did not have and could not have the power to create, virtually from nothing, the structure of the required change. His party had been organized at the speed of a whirlwind and he himself had moved at whirlwind pace to grapple the challenge which had come rushing onto him.

While the ranks of his party were swelling, he kept overlooking the fact that water and oil could not mix. Maulana Kausar Niazi and Mairaj Mohammad Khan, J.A. Rahim and Ghulam Mustafa Khar, Dr. Mubashar Hasan and Abdul Hafiz Pirzada, Sheikh Rashid and Mamtaz Ali Bhutto, could not be paired to pull a single cart, and that too in a defined direction.

There were others too – the heavyweights as well as the lesser ones, some having risen from the lower ranks on the basis of their fierce loyalty to the leader, some having defected from various political groups, and others who had sensed the wind of change and anticipated great opportunities for themselves.

Some had great enthusiasm for the envisioned revolution but could not be trusted with any responsibility. Some could be termed as bright ideologues but could not understand their own ideas in practical terms. Some had only

pretensions to certain ideologies, and some were interested only in the diction of these ideologies – the usual jargons and clichés.

It seems to be a harsh analysis but who could have been more aware of the truth behind the statistics, than Bhutto himself, who had to go through the agony of launching a revolution with this kind of manpower? Revolutionary parties are not formed in a day. Hitler had found his Goerings and Himmlers and Rhoerns, much before hoisting the Nazi flag in the German skies. By the time, he was in the Riechtag, those Bormanns and Ribbontrops and Goebbles' and Speers had also arrived to spearhead the Nazi blitz. He was ready to take on anyone who came in the way of his triumphant march – the mighty generals, the powerful communist party and the respected Christian Democrats.

This analogy is intended only to highlight the dilemma in which Bhutto found himself. He could not postpone his revolution. Nor could he devise the strategy of phased change. He could not do so, because his enemies were all around, crying for reannexation of Bangla Desh to Pakistan, demanding a befitting lesson to be taught to the Indians and the Russians, urging Bhutto to prove his leadership by delivering goods or quit. And the only way he could confront them, was through swift implementation of his manifesto, so that at least the power of the deprived masses could stay solidly behind him. The grand masters of the power game were certainly rejoicing in his predicament, as were the agents of their interests.

It was tragic that Bhutto's Goebbles had to be Maulana Kausar Niazi and his Albert Speer had to be Dr. Mubashar Hassan. The best Bhutto had, was what he could draw from the tested ranks of the bureaucracy which in two successive autocratic regimes had learnt to dismiss disdainfully the concept of honesty and accountability as idealistic bullshit.

In theory the basic industries were nationalised. In practice the means of production were put under the control of those who, in the preceding years, as the indirect allies of the capitalists and the beneficiaries of their affluence, had acquired mastery over the art of defrauding the state and hoodwinking the people. Suddenly promoted to the new status, they virtually became capitalists themselves, and couldn't help rejoicing in their new-found power and its rich rewards.

Corruption is the worst vice in a system and productivity its highest virtue.

The vice had changed hands. The virtue was fated. In the process, Dr. Mubashar Hassan succeeded, not in implementing socialism, but in disgracing it.

Great ideas do not need great trumpeters, but great practitioners. I am a great fan of Barbara Striesand, because of her nightingale—like voice and enchanting tunes. I can be given the credit of having good taste.

But if I, in my enthusiasm, start singing in her voice I am likely to become the hottest joke in the town.

Had Bhutto been the head of just a political party, this analysis wouldn't have been necessary. But the PPP at that time was much more than a political party. It was the promise of change.

I believe that ideologues like JA. Rahim, Dr. Mubashar Hassan, Sheikh Rashid and Mairaj Mohammad Khan should have stayed in the party ranks, instead of getting inducted into power. They should have set the goals and not worked out the schedules, and the methodology of achieving them.

Implementation of socialism was not a one—day game. It should have been treated as a test match.

It was like asking the medical men to restructure the engine of an ambulance, or asking the mechanical engineers to pinpoint the causes of food poisoning in the factory mess.

The tragedy was that Bhutto had Maulana Kauzar Niazis and Mustafa Jatois on his right. Dr. Mubashar Hassans and Sheikh Rashids on his left, Mamtaz Bhuttos and Hafiz Pirzadas behind and none in front to provide him a cover. He himself had to be there, in front, whether on attack or in defense, and he himself had to accept the responsibility of the results.

Life is like a game of chess in which there are an infinite number of complex moves possible. The choice is open, but each move contains within itself all future moves. One is free to choose, but what follows is the result of one's choice. From the consequences of one's action, there is never any escape.

The first move always binds one to its consequences. In my opinion, the first thing Bhutto should have done, after assuming power, was to acquire a posture of reconciliation and compromise, to take sting out of his opposition, to diffuse the tensions and the hostilities of the election days, to tone down the language of polarisation and to create an atmosphere of dialogue and consensus on the issues resulting from the catastrophe of December the 15th, 1971 when General Niazi had laid down arms in front of General Jagjit Singh Arora.

It could have been a sincere effort, even though it would certainly have failed in the end, because of the stubbornness of his enemies. But the time he required to settle down, organize his ranks, define his priorities and determine his methodology could have been won through this exercise.

He was not the one who had caused the catastrophe.

If he had taken an open stand in favour of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman and condemned General Yahya Khan's right to decide for the people of Pakistan, the forces he had defeated in the general elections would almost certainly have rallied behind the junta, crying for Bhutto's blood, as they had been crying for the blood of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman. The argument that had been raised against him, that I too upheld in my book in 1977, was that, because he was the chief beneficiary of the debacle, he just had to be a partner in General Yahya Khan's schemes. Tragically, one believes only-what one wants to believe. But if this belief has any substance, it amounts to meaning that Bhutto's basic crime was his landslide victory in the elections of 1970 which entitled him to decide on behalf of the people of West Pakistan, at the expense of the traditional champions of the national causes whom the masses had rejected with complete disdain.

The only way these forces could reassert themselves on the national scene was through finding an opportunity to prove that the people's verdict had been wrong.

The opportunity came their way in the form of Pakistan's dismemberment, which, though mourned by them with tears of blood, was also considered a blessing in disguise to put their victor onto defensive. They gleefully seized this opportunity and set out to fix the responsibility of the tragedy, on the shoulders of the author of *The Myth of Independence*.

Bhutto was really in a tight corner. The grandmasters of the global power game wanted him to recognise Bangla Desh without delay and the army generals wanted him to ensure rapid repatriation of the prisoners of war who were not in hundreds, but in thousands - very nearly in six figures.

These were more or less his predetermined assignments – from which there was no escape.

His opposition in the country was fully aware of how limited his options were.

Still he began with a hawkish stance – cutting off relations with the countries that recognised Bangla Desh. The opposition just had to oppose Bhutto. If Bhutto was not to grant recognition to Bangla Desh it meant for them that he intended to

create a gulf between brothers. He was promptly condemned for such deplorable designs.

Then suddenly Bhutto was on his way to accept the inevitability of recognising the new-born sovereign state.

And the opposition was forced to change its stance hastily. Recognition of Bangla Desh now amounted to treachery against Muslim nationhood, and to granting of sanctity to the results of India's aggression.

I am sure, if at that stage, Bhutto had suddenly chosen to appear on television to reaffirm his faith in the Oneness of God, it would have been promptly condemned as a blasphemy and a statement would have been issued by the opposition to revitalise the people's faith that there were infact two gods – one of them residing in Washington!

Such was the state of mind, the opposition was in. The future of what had been left of Pakistan didn't matter. What mattered was how Bhutto could be destroyed. On this matter, all of them, irrespective of their ideologies, if they had any, were unanimous. In a situation like that Bhutto needed to act like Benazir. He acted like Zulfikar Ali, which he was.

Perhaps Benazir was more than right when in an interview to Time she said: "Politics for my father was a passion. For me it is a duty."

Perhaps Bhutto had not been Bhutto, if he had chosen to diffuse the rampant polarisation by offering the opposition an opportunity to savour the pleasure of being important enough to be invited by the government to share the burden of decision-making.

Because he was Bhutto and also Zulfikar Ali, he chose to close his options and to take at a time all of his enemies - head on. And he decided also to add new ones to the long list, by cracking down instantly on the private sector.

BHUTTO'S DILEMMA

I wish, socialism had been delayed for the right moment. The consequences of hastening history have always been disastrous.

Originally the division of the sub-continent had been scheduled to take place around 1950. The problems arising out of the inevitable division had to be sorted out fairly and thoroughly, leaving no room for tension. Had the division come as per the logical schedule, Pakistan would not have been without Gurdaspur and Kashmir. But the course of history was hastened under the pressure of certain unavoidable circumstances and Radcliffe's madness became the destiny of Pakistan. There is another aspect too, to this thesis. If the creation of Pakistan had been delayed beyond September 11, 1948, there would have been no one to create it. Judging from the quality of leadership that Muslim League gave to the country after the Quaid, the prospects of Pakistan being born without its founder would not have been encouraging. The possibility makes me shudder even as I think of it.

If any one of the two, the great Quaid who founded Pakistan, and his illustrious disciple, had been able to find loyal men with vision and integrity and guts, the three martial laws would not have been a part of our history.

Farhad Zaidi, my predecessor at Mashriq and a longtime friend speaks of an interesting meeting he had with the leader.

After Hanif Ramay's elevation to the Punjab cabinet, the seat of the editorship of Mussawat, the party organ had become a dilemma. A few experiments had been made, but each one more disappointing than the previous.

"I was offered the job," Farhad Zaidi says. "I would have loved to take it, if I hadn't been aware of the mess there. Being a party organ, it had to please everyone in the party ranks. And the management was in shambles."

Farhad Zaidi explained to the leader, all the reasons of his reluctance. He wanted to be accountable to a defined authority, not to every Tom, Dick and Harry. He also wanted a system to prevail, not the whims of everyone.

"I agree," Bhutto replied. "But what can be done, if those, assigned to run a system, decide to remain above it. Look at those men whom we trusted and sent there to work! Each one got away with money bags. You can find many many good reasons for not working. Some one has also to find a good reason to work."

This was then the dilemma in which Bhutto had been landed. He was running a country, in which it was difficult for him, to find a capable and trustworthy executive for a newspaper that his family owned. And scores and scores of capable loyal and trustworthy persons were required at the decision-making level, as well as at the level of operations, to run the enormously expanded public sector and its enterprises. Perhaps he had depended too heavily on the goodness of his own intentions.

I recall here the visit of the famous Cuban revolutionary Che Guevera to Egypt, in the days of Nasser.

Che was a purist, dedicated to the cause of an unadulterated revolution at every level in society. In Cuba, he had been Castro's principal lieutenant in the people's war against Batista – the very symbol of all that is evil in the dictionary of Marxism.

But Cuba under Castro was not exactly the heaven of socioeconomic justice that Che had envisioned. As his disillusionment grew, he decided to carry his dream of revolution to Bolivia. The dream was so much more beautiful and fascinating than the reality. Meanwhile he also decided to tour other such countries where socialism had triumphed. Thus he came to Egypt as an honoured guest of Nasser, who took him to various places, including the factories and the villages.

The expectations of Che weren't fulfilled here either. He complained to Nasser about the inadequacies of the fruits of the promised revolution. Nasser smiled and replied.

“Fighting for a revolution, planning for it, waging its battles, dreaming about its ultimate success, happen to be like romance, like courtship, when everything looks so beautiful – the flowers, the trees, the hills, the river. But revolution itself, when it finally comes, and has to be implemented, is like marriage which doesn't retain the romance of it for very long, gets more and more dull, drab, monotonous, because of the routineness and the drudgery of making the kitchen run – the laundry, the bills, the children the humbug...”

It is so much easier to become critics than creators. Criticism requires a certain degree of cynicism only, coupled with a little intelligence if possible. Creation requires everything one has.

As Bhutto's era began, in the wake of a national catastrophe, those who had shared his dream, men like me, decided to sit in judgement to evaluate his performance, to become the critics of his regime for one reason or the other, and to rejoice in the satisfaction this role gave them. The reality of marriage was

compared with the enchantment of the courtship days and invariably the reality was found lacking in charm. I don't know how many followers and admirers of the prophet of change succumbed to this psyche and turned against Bhutto, but I was one of the most vocal ones – as vocal in finding faults in his regime as I had once been in finding the promise of a glorious future in his message. And I believe, by deserting Bhutto in our pursuit of an image of courageous honesty for ourselves, we were unintentionally sabotaging the cause of change.

By We I mean all those who were judging him purely on the merit of his actions, without taking into consideration the strength of the forces which were all the time rearranging their ranks for their final assault on him.

To become an architect of change, Bhutto required some kind of settling down, to think, to plan and to organize. The task of restructuring the socio-economic order was no less gigantic than building a 150- storied skyscraper at some salinity-conquered site in Chichoki Malian. The engineers under his command were at best master dreamers. They didn't have the kind of credentials required to become master builders.

The ultra left, Bhutto had soundly beaten in the elections had rushed to join his ranks and was demanding a non-stop barrage of one-two combinations, in the style of Rocky Marciano, to knock out and destroy the reactionaries, the counter-revolutionaries the retrogressive forces, the barking dogs of imperialism and the lackeys of the enemies of the proletariat.

The moderate left and the moderate right which provided, philosophically speaking, the nucleus of strength to the PPP, could not be satisfied with the kind of adhocism Bhutto began to practise to solve the problems on day-to-day basis.

The ultra right had a score to settle with Bhutto. It had a determined programme to challenge the prophet of change into a duel, the final and decisive one, in which it expected to have its gun fully loaded, and the chamber of Bhutto's gun empty.

Bhutto tried hard to appease each one with a gesture here and a step there, but what ultimately emerged was the fact that when the last battle came, he was all alone in the death cell, with only his own family to fall back upon, or the memories of the ecstatic following, he had enjoyed for over a decade. All his protégés, all his former generals had chosen to seek a safety route. They were glad that they had not been incriminated. The burden of the crime of Bhutto fell squarely on the shoulders of those only, who carried his name.

Hitler on his last day had the satisfaction of having on his side Eva Braun and Dr. Goebbles, to carry out his last mission – self-emulation. Bhutto's only satisfaction lay in the hope, that his honour would be redeemed one day, and his unfinished mission would find a new leader.

Bhutto's failure in his role as the architect of change can be attributed to various factors, one as important as the other. But there can be no denying the fact, that without him, the wheels of change would not have started moving. He shook the very foundations of the established social order. So devastating was the impact of his presence on the political scene that the long-existing balance between the haves and the have-nots which had given the haves, the right to decide for the have-nots, started swinging dramatically in the opposite direction. The haves were shocked by the changing attitudes of the have-nots, and dubbed their new-found confidence in themselves as a trend towards intransigence and anarchy.

Bhutto was condemned for inciting the working classes to demand one thing they did not deserve – respectability. The awakening of the working classes was, in the eyes of the privileged masters of their destiny, no less a threat to the stability of the country, than the erosion of their right to accumulate as much wealth as they could.

There is some weight in the argument that the working classes, particular labour at all levels, when rose in revolt against the working conditions they were provided, did not match their hunger for better wages and respectability, with a proportionate degree of discipline and responsibility in their work. But it was only a natural reaction to the deplorable attitudes their employers had adopted towards them.

Whenever change comes, it brings in its wake some mishaps too. But these mishaps should not be used to denounce even the objectives for which the process of change is initiated.

Bhutto's method of moving towards change could have been better. Perhaps gradual transition could have minimised the chances of mishaps. But the basic fact remains that the objectives, for which he had chosen to become a prophet of change, couldn't have been more sublime.

The argument, that the awakening of labour had brought our production graph down, is bull-shit. What has affected our productivity is the failure of the employers to produce an adequate response to this awakening.

I often dream of a factory, where at the end of a long day, the managing director and the machine man walk out of the premises, hand-in-hand, chatting like old

class fellows. It is not the intransigence of the underprivileged only, which has made our national performance inept and gloomy. It is also the class-consciousness of the over privileged which needs to be blown up, if we are to become a dynamic nation.

**LIVING THE DEAD
YESTERDAY**

“It is a folly to dismiss them as nonentities. They have the right kind of information, and the right kind of arguments to influence the right people at the right time. They in their own way shape history.”

THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF THE PPP

Bhutto's book *The Myth of Independence* had a tremendous impact on my thinking. In fact it substantiated my own understanding of the world situation and our place in it.

During my *Mashriq* days as the editor of its Karachi edition, I had written a series of articles on the subject of Muslim Renaissance. The tone of these articles was very bitter and the target of my attack was America. I argued that despite all their noble claims of humanitarianism, secularism, love of human rights, racial and religious indiscriminate, the enlightened citizens of America were the descendents of Richard the lion-hearted who had to lay down arms before Salahuddin, the great Muslim conqueror who had recaptured Jerusalem from the Knights of the Cross after ninety-one years. The crusades had been buried in history, but the wounds had not healed even after seven centuries.

"What else can explain the jubilation and joy with which the fall of Jerusalem to the Jews has been celebrated in the cities of the west - America not excluded?" I asked. Is there anything that the Jews and the Christians share except the hatred they feel for their former tormentors – Muslims? Even the noblest of the western thinkers of the modern times cannot manage to conceal this historic antipathy."

In those articles, I built up a case for a Muslim Bloc with reduced dependence on the West, a balanced attitude towards the Socialist World, and stronger links with the East.

The theme didn't please my bosses who were not paid for allowing such 'trash to be published in the NPT newspapers.

I received indirect instructions from the Chairman to suspend the series. The Chairman was no less a man than Aziz Ahmad who was to join the top hierarchy of Bhutto's government later on.

I ignored the instructions and as expected, I received his call – only the second in six months.

"No more of this," he said and there was an air of finality in his tone.

"As long as I am in this seat sir," I replied "I am not going to accept any directions that are not convincingly explained. And till I am convinced that a

Muslim Bloc is going to be a threat to our national integrity and existence, I do not intend to suspend this series halfway.”

There was a suspenseful pause before he spoke. “I am pleased by your professional pride but you can exercise some restraint, can’t you?”

He did not call again. And I continued the series. I was pleased to know that our country had such bureaucrats who didn’t feel insulted in the face of defiance. In fact, I learnt later on, that he had talked to Enayathullah Sahib and spoken quite highly of me.

The Pakistan Peoples Party was in the formative months at that time. But Ayub Khan’s men were already painting Bhutto as a potential threat to the existence of Islam because of his blasphemous views. The governor of West Pakistan General Moosa Khan conducted a countrywide tour to highlight the achievements of the Field Marshal, during his reign which was about to enter its second decade. The first decade had been named as the decade of reforms and progress. The speeches of General Moosa were supposed to provide headlines and lead stories every day. For three days in succession we obliged the Karachi P.I.D. Chief Khalid Ali and the Director Public Relations, Bashir Hussain Shah. Then my patience ran out, and -I instructed our news editor Raza Ali Abidi to treat General Moosa’s oratory strictly on merit. The readers’ right was supreme because they paid for the newspaper. Raza Ali Abidi, nowadays with BBC, felt considerably relieved because of my instructions, as the monotony of General Moosa’s theme was beginning to test his patience too.

The information people were shocked to find that the governor had been brought from the top, down to the bottom of the news page. Their anger did not change my resolve to honour the readers’ rights.

It was during those days that I attended for the first time in my journalistic career, a couple of briefing sessions on vital national issues, conducted by no less a man than Altaf Gauhar, Ayub Khan’s brilliant secretary of information. On one occasion, the subject was the Agartala conspiracy case, and on the other occasion, the Rann of Kutch award. The crux of the Agartala case was that Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman and his party had collaborated with the Indians to hatch up a conspiracy to abduct Ayub Khan and plunge Pakistan into chaos and destruction.

Altaf Gauhar’s skill in communication impressed me a great deal. It was indeed a unique experience for me to listen to a man who could communicate everything without really communicating anything. He didn’t actually say that Sheikh Mujib was involved or his party or even the Indians. He didn’t even commit that the conspiracy had actually been hatched. But when he finished his carefully

worded speech, he had somehow managed to convey what he had intended to convey. And the direct questions asked by a couple of journalists, seeking certain clarifications, were answered by him with even greater dexterity.

“Gentlemen,” he said in his masterful style. “Some facts need not be crystal clear. The law of evidence is enough to substantiate whatever I have said.”

And he had said nothing – yet everything.

Ayub Khan was indeed lucky to have brains like him, around. How else could he have written “Friends, Not Masters”?

Ayub Khan also had Moosa Khans around him.

I remember a day at the governor’s house at Karachi.

The key figures of the national press were there, listening patiently to Moosa Khan’s problems in dealing with the dacoits and the law-breakers. “Our courts protect them,” he was arguing. “Our law is their ally. The only solution is to let them die at the hands of the police.”

We were all surprised by his candid confession.

“You mean sir,” Khan Amin Tarin of Business Post said with a smile, “that these police muqabilas are not genuine but contrived?”

General Sahib suddenly realised the gravity of the issue and tried quickly to change the topic.

Mir Khalil-ur-Rehman of Jang at this point raised the newsprint issue.

Mir Sahib complained that some unreasonable restrictions were being imposed in this respect and the authorities concerned were claiming to have been instructed by the President to do so.

General Moosa expressed concern at the attitude of the concerned authorities but said emphatically that the President had no knowledge of it.

Mir Sahib requested him to talk to the President to clarify the matter. General Sahib replied: “I assure you that the President isn’t aware of it.”

“Still you can help us by taking the matter to him,” argued Mir Sahib.

“I can’t.” General Moosa replied in an uneasy manner. The President is not in a position to be issuing instructions of any sort or receiving anyone.”

We all looked at each other meaningfully. There were rumours of the Field Marshal being, not just unwell, but in a grave condition. His health was a well-guarded state secret and now the precious secret had been leaked by the well-meaning general, obviously unintentionally.

General Moosa was slow to realise what he had innocently revealed, but once he realised it, he went on to interpret his words differently, though not convincingly. “I mean, he is keeping so busy these days and there are other important matters to give time and attention to....”

Inwardly we were all enjoying the simplicity of the good old general.

The corridors of power are not always manned by Altaf Gauhars and Aziz Ahmads. There are also Moosa Khans and Jalal Babas, as are the Buchas and the Kirmanis.

EGO OR NATIONAL INTEREST?

Bhutto's analysis of the foreign policy of Pakistan in *The Myth of Independence*, and of the interrelationship of the internal and the external factors contributing to it, was brilliant, courageous and realistic. It virtually pinpointed the areas of our helplessness, also explained the motives behind the global policies of the super powers – especially concerning the structural problems afflicting the third world countries.

As Pakistan's former foreign minister, and as a keen student of history, he was ideally qualified to understand the global power structure, the hidden undercurrents beneath the vocally championed causes of the super powers, and the factors contributing to the growing dependence of the third world countries on the aid-giving powers. He had first-hand experience of the ruthlessness of the prescribed objectives of the grandmasters of the power game. He could not be impressed by the politeness of the diplomatic smiles behind which the architects of the global power structure concealed this ruthlessness.

He knew what could happen to East Pakistan if the seeds of mistrust between the two wings were allowed to prosper along with the songs of prosperity being played by the king's men to celebrate Pakistan's march into the second decade of Ayub Khan's dictatorship.

He knew more than that. He knew what Uncle Sam was up to, and how the prevailing conditions in Pakistan were to be manipulated in the direction of a catastrophe that could only be avoided through the politics of change – change in the style of governing, change in the quality of leadership, change in the attitudes towards national issues, change in the Socio-economic structure of the country, change in the manner of dealing with the world, change in the rationale behind our aid-seeking exercises, change in our priorities relating to personal interests and collective interests, and change in our national psyche, which due to constant lack of exposure to dynamic leadership, had developed a morbid love for the status quo.

The author of *The Myth of Independence*, the founder of the Pakistan Peoples Party was, more than anything else, a prophet of change in Pakistan. It is in this capacity that he was made by nature to excel. It was in this role that he was destined to arouse the fierce emotions of the long-denied masses, and rule their ecstatic passions with all the authority of all those apostles of change who had preceded him in different ages of history.

As his cry for change broke the lull in the static atmosphere of the country, and as it continued to rise higher and spread fast in the length and the breadth of West Pakistan, from Khyber to Karachi, the custodians of status quo, the enemies of change and the trumpeters of 'stability', could read the writing on the wall. The decision to arrest Bhutto could not arrest the fiery spirit, he had unleashed. The defeated forces of the presidential elections back in 64-65, slumbering in the self-imposed political oblivion, were quick to respond to the magnificent opportunity created by their arch-rival. Air Marshal (Retd) Asghar Khan, a man I have always deeply respected and to whom I have remained associated for a number of years, suddenly became the man of the hour. His demand for the release of Bhutto and his tirade against the autocratic ways of the Field Marshal's dictatorship made him a national leader overnight.

The doom of the decade of reforms and prosperity was in the offing.

The events that led to the ouster of the Field Marshal at the hands of his own constituency and the promulgation of General Yahya Khan's martial law are a part of history and as this book is not intended to be, in anyway, a chronicled record, I am not going into the details of the metamorphosis. In fact I am not writing about the events but about the factors contributing to, and resulting in those events.

I have often wished that Air Marshal (Retd) Asghar Khan had not been led into a different direction, and had been able to convince himself that by joining Bhutto's ranks, he could play a far more effective role in the affairs of the country. I have also wished that Bhutto had not been mesmerised by his own charisma and had kept his options open to the need of strengthening his ranks with men of Asghar Khan's stature. Perhaps the history of Pakistan would have been different, if the extraordinary brilliance, the devastating charisma, the dynamic style and the formidable power-base of Bhutto had been backed by the integrity of Asghar Khan who could have been, because of his performance-oriented background, a great asset to the Pakistan Peoples Party in the vital area of functional excellence.

It is more or less an exercise in wishful thinking. It has no relevance to facts and history, but I can't help recalling here a similar exercise in wishful thinking, by no less a man than Fateh Ali Tipu.

A day before the assault of the East India Company forces, the lion of Sarangapatam was reclining against a minaret of the fort, looking up at the skies in the hope of clouds. There was anxiety in his eyes and desperation too. Every year at that time of the season, Sarangapatam used to have dark clouds and heavy rains, resulting in overflowing of the river Kaveri. But this time there were

no clouds, no rains and there was no hope of a flood in the river Kaveri. In the past, the Sultan had always prayed for safety from the devastation of floods. This time he was praying for the skies to pour down, all the water they had, into the river so that the resultant flood could stop the enemy forces, and the treachery of Mir Sadiq could be foiled. The Sultan had been praying for a whole week but his prayers had not been answered. They were not to be answered. The sky was blue and the hand of destiny was reaching out at Sarangapatam to write the last chapter of Tipu's heroic defiance of the might of the British Crown.

The very next day the lion of Mysore went down fighting – yet another martyr in the cause of freedom.

While his body lay in the pool of blood, the clouds were gathering in the skies of Sarangapatam, coming from everywhere. That night torrential rains, such as the people of Mysore had never witnessed before, sent the river Kaveri into an uncontrollable rage. Even the palace was inundated.

Such are the ways of destiny.

I did not know Bhutto in person and as a person. I had only followed his career and knew him through his performance and philosophy. But with Asghar Khan I have enjoyed personal communication for nearly sixteen years now. I know his strengths and I know his shortcomings. His opposition to the status quo and to the self-righteousness of Jama'at Islami is no less fierce than mine and that of the man he had set out to free from Ayub Khan's prison.

Perhaps Asghar Khan was swept off his feet by the fervent response he drew from the people of Pakistan, in the early part of his political career, and was led to believe that his claim to the high pedestal of national leadership was in no way weaker than Bhutto's. It was a fallacy to which anyone in Asghar Khan's place could have fallen. Human nature cannot be any better than the elements it is made of. Men who rise to such heights are likely to develop a self-centered approach to life and their personal prides come in the way of accepting those realities which do not happen to be to their advantage.

Bhutto had superior intellect, superior vision, superior qualities of leadership and superior grasp of the matters relating to statecraft. It is unthinkable that he could have bowed out in favour of Asghar Khan, who despite all his credentials and his integrity was simply no match to the moving dynamo named Zulfikar Ali. Perhaps it is unfair to Asghar Khan to make a comparison like that. Perhaps Bhutto could have done something to accommodate Asghar Khan's ego while asserting his leadership over him. Asghar Khan, with his ego boosted and respected by Bhutto, could have been a great ally to the apostle of change.

It was not to be.

The defenders of status quo, determined to defy the wind of change, easily succeeded in isolating Asghar Khan, forcing him to embark upon a separate road in the pursuit of his own power-base. In a way, by isolating Asghar Khan, they also averted the danger of Bhutto growing into invincible proportions. Still, with the might of the people's power behind him, Bhutto was capable of taking them from the scuff of the neck and choking them to defeat in the general elections of 1970. The lease of life that Yahya Khan's adhoc regime had provided to the defenders of status quo, could not avert their doom, through it succeeded in dismembering Pakistan. At least one part of the master plan of the global power-brokers was completed, not without the support of 'the soldiers of Islam' who were determined to put to sword all those who disagreed with their style of national integrity.

Bhutto failed to stop the dismemberment of the country, but succeeded in asserting his authority on what was left of Pakistan. The people who had voted for change were now ready for it. But was Bhutto ready for it? In this question and its answer lies the root cause of the tragedy that struck Pakistan on the 4th of April 1979 – the day the prophet of change was hanged, much to the relief of the forces of status quo who had all along been making plans for a counter-attack.

THE TROJAN HORSES

Eugene Burdick and William J. Ledderer jointly authored two sensational books in the late fifties which exposed the limitations, the inadequacies and in some cases, the stupidities of the American policies towards its protégés in the Eisenhower-Dulles era. One book, I remember was titled “A National of Sheep” or “The Ugly American”.

The Ugly American was adopted for the cinema-screen. The movie, starring Marlon Brando, was an interesting study of the cross-currents of various political beliefs gripping an under-developed country that was in a state of turmoil and transition.

The central character of the story was a nationalist leader, behind whom the masses had rallied, to bring about a people’s revolution, by eradicating economic injustice, social discrimination and other such evils from the country.

This nationalist leader had a wide following, in all the segments of political thought, more strongly in the moderate left. His most trusted deputy, in fact his second-in-command, was a fire-breathing leftist revolutionary. The leaders of his rightist following, though quite vocal in their loyalty to him, had established secret contacts with Washington. They had expressed suspicions about the future of the country under the nationalist leader who, because of the influence of the leftist element, could lead it to communism.

The American ambassador to the country, played by Marlon Brando, did not agree with this view, and was of the opinion that the only way the country could be saved from the threat of the feared communist revolution, was by strengthening the hands of the moderate nationalist leader, who, though was committed to the cause of socio-economic change, had no intentions of allowing his country to accept the authority of either Washington or Moscow, in the conduct of its policies, internal or external. The American ambassador kept pressing his superiors to commit their full support to the nationalist leader.

As this leader, riding on the growing tide of popularity headed towards his final triumph, the American ambassador came to know about a secret plot to assassinate the national hero on the day of the victory celebrations. He at once concluded that the plot was backed by C.I.A. and was intended to install a staunch pro-Washington government. Unable to dissuade his superiors from adopting such a course, he warned the leader against any unforeseen mishap on the victory day, and urged him to take all precautions, necessary for his security.

The leader was neither disturbed nor unnerved. He cheerfully went on with his preparations for the victory celebrations though he did ask his security men to keep an eye on his rightist friends.

The American ambassador, on his own, kept trying to find a positive clue to the plot. He succeeded at last, but only an hour before the stage ceremony, which was to take place several miles away. He rushed to the scene, but reached there just when the most trusted of the leader's deputies; his leftist second-in-command was pulling his trigger from shoulder-rubbing range. The tragic assassination could not be prevented.

I had read both the books before I saw the movie. The impact on me was tremendous. It made me think of the intricacies and the complicacies of the third world situation. There were many lessons to be learnt.

Lesson number one – In the politics of the third world countries, even the most trustworthy and the most trusted could not be put beyond doubt. The most vocal in your support could turn out to be your real enemy.

Lesson number two – The Americans were so scared of change, that they believed, that, without assuring submissive and loyal regimes in their areas of influence, they could not stop communism. Risks involved in promoting or accepting progressive thinking, and independent minded nationalism were too great to be flirted with. Throwing American support behind the trusted lackeys of imperialism, whether in uniform or in business, was the only reliable safeguard against communism.

Lesson number three. Traitors could function more effectively in the garbs of patriotism. The possibility of a diehard and outspoken radical, getting his 'salary' from the CIA. funds, could not be ruled out.

I always kept these conclusions in my mind while measuring various happenings in the third world countries – Pakistan not excluded.

There was a striking similarity between the national hero of The Ugly American and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan, even though their environments were different.

THE YEARS OF DISILLUSIONMENT

When I took out weekly *Ishtarak* from Lahore in the early months of 1972, I was still committed to Bhutto. The entertainment magazine, for which I had acquired Bhutto's endorsement in the preceding year, was relegated to secondary position because the atmosphere of the country was so intensely charged with polarised sentiments, that I needed a political journal to express myself forcefully. I had no supporters, with the exception of my longtime friend Mohammad Tariq Khan, nephew of Maulana Abdul Razzaq Malihabadi and a grandson of Josh Malihabadi. He had shared my dreams during the college days and I had brought him to journalism as the Bureau Chief of Daily Kohistan at Karachi. He is now business manager of *Nawai Waqt* and *The Nation* at Karachi.

I had left Kohistan when it was sold out to Ayub Khan's Muslim League in 1966. But Tariq Khan had continued to head its Karachi Office till the once-great newspaper had breathed its last during Yahya Khan's days.

The demise of Kohistan is a tragic story. The newspaper that had been founded by my uncle Nasim Hijazi in the early fifties at Rawalpindi, that had been built into the second largest circulated daily of the country by the Late Enayatullah, that had heralded the era of modern journalism in Pakistan – the newspaper which- was virtually an institution where most of the leading professionals of today got their initial training, was first sold to Pakistan Muslim League and then through a shady deal, to Jama'at-i-Islami which successfully deprived it of all its assets, before offering it to the martial law administration for liquidation. The man, who presided over the funeral of Kohistan, was none other than Ibnul Hassan, a protege of some third-ranked martial law administrator of Ayub Khan's early days, who had natured into a mini-administrator himself, and was fully qualified to do the kind of dirty work, required in such assignments. It is not accidental that Major Ibnul Hassan is currently in the IJI ranks and is trying to overshadow other intellectuals of his breed, through his vociferous attacks on Benazir Bhutto and her party, in the columns of a leading national daily.

I happened to meet this intellectual giant of the ultra right during my last days at Kohistan. I had gone to meet the late Mamtaz Hassan, then the Managing Director of National Bank of Pakistan. Major Ibnul Hassan was dutifully conducting the protocol. I did not even imagine at that time that this 'yes sir, no sir' man could start unleashing his intellect at the people.

Major Sahib has been doing it for over two decades now, and after the victory of the Pakistan Peoples Party, his intellect is in great demand in the IJI ranks

because of its trusted and proven commitment to the cause of status quo. Z. A. Suleris and Ibnul Hassans somehow manage to cash their intellect in all kinds of circumstances – even when their patrons are not at the helm of affairs. Loyalty, that is richly rewarded, is a useful asset.

Coming back to the subject of Ishtraak I can't help recalling the state of mind I was in, when the weekly was launched with a poor man's resources.

The wounds of the East Pakistan catastrophe were fresh and they hurt.

The Soviet Union, having directly supported India in its campaign to dismember Pakistan, was our declared enemy.

The United States, having chosen not to come to the defense of Pakistan, was our undeclared enemy.

The political forces in the country, that were more interested in destroying Bhutto than salvaging the nation's pride, had to be treated as enemies too.

The worst enemy was the malignant socio-economic order that had welcomed two military dictatorship and the erosion of the spirit of freedom, in the name of stability.

I was not just a person, not just an individual. I was a country that had been ravaged and humiliated. I was Pakistan, which had been tom asunder, as much by internal turmoil, as by external aggression.

I wanted my honour to be redeemed. I wanted my pride to be restored. I wanted my fortunes to change. I wanted my future to take a determined ride to glory. I wanted my present to be charged with dynamism and action.

And I had my Bhutto to do all this, to pull me out of the clutches of misery and despondency, to snatch me away from those demons of greed, selfishness, indifference, corruption and moral bankruptcy, and carry me into a new world, where I wouldn't feel any disgust at seeing my image in the mirror.

These were my flights of fancy. These were my cherished dreams.

And my hero, my long-worshipped idol was in command. The dreams had to be, and were going to be realised. The gap between fancy and fact had to be, and was going to be eliminated.

For a few weeks I tried desperately to hang on to my fancies and dreams. I tried determinedly to believe that whatever was happening around, couldn't be anything more than a warming-up exercise before the launch of the eventual, the actual revolution.

But what was happening, was so much in contradiction with the scenario I had written in my mind, the scenario of a grand national effort towards a future of socio-economic justice, of moral strength, of collective pride, that I couldn't help being jolted out of my fancies, my dreams and my wishful thinking.

Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and Mamtaz Bhuttos and Hafiz Pirzadas were happening to the country. They were the appointed architects of the moral fibre of the promised change. Kausar Niazi and Jam Sadiq and Iftikhar Taris were also happening to the country.

There had been the likes of them before. But I had identified them with the forces of status quo. They had been the products of a corrupt, decadent order which was required to be replaced with a healthy and dynamic one, by the chosen prophet of change.

If the promised change couldn't offer any different stuff, the whole exercise towards building a new social order could turn out to be a farcical journey backwards.

How could a revolution draw its moral strength from a Mamtaz Bhutto, a Ghulam Mustafa Khar, a Hafiz Pirzada, a Maulana Kausar Niazi and a Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi?

There was no end to my frustration. At first my criticism of the state of affairs was cautious, balanced and constructive but as my disillusionment grew, the tone of Ishtraak began to get bitter and bitter.

The blood-bath in Sindh on the language issue drove me mad with anger, and I couldn't help reacting to it violently.

The transformation of Ishtraak from a pro-PPP organ into a harsh critic of the establishment isolated me completely.

For Jama'at-i-Islami, the very word Ishtraak was an insult to Islam. No wonder the magazine was not allowed to enter the shops where holy men sold only holy stuff. I remember that several hundred copies of an issue carrying a 'blasphemous' article were burnt by the militants of the Jama'at.

For the trumpeters of the proletarian revolution, strictly in Moscow's style, Ishtraak was another kind of blasphemy. Claiming socialism to be fundamentally an Islamic concept was a trick of the reactionary agents of American Imperialism. Ishtraak thus was an anti-revolution conspiracy of the retrogressive forces, trying to subvert the inevitable victory of the proletariat.

And being anti-establishment, Ishtraak had to pay a very heavy price for its survival. Buying newsprint from the black market at twice the normal price was a constant nightmare – an unending drain not only on my already depleted resources, but also my ability to think constructively. My prejudices grew stronger and stronger and I began to view each act of the regime with suspicion and doubt. In that state of mind, it was so easy to be influenced by the non-stop propaganda of those whose sole mission was to destroy Bhutto. Once one starts viewing his surroundings through the colour of one's glasses, green doesn't remain green, white doesn't remain white, and red doesn't remain red. For me Bhutto had not remained Bhutto.

I had dreamed of a future of progress and prosperity for my country in the era of my hero; but suddenly I found myself on the verge of destitution. There were days I went without cigarettes because I couldn't afford to buy even K2s. My wife had to sell all her personal belongings to keep the kitchen running. I couldn't afford taxis and rickshaws. Hanging on to crowded buses became a way of life. I had started my career more than twelve years back with a chauffer driven new Consul. It was such a devastating turn of fortunes, but I had opted for it, by turning down the offer of Maulana Kausar Niazi for newsprint quota and other 'help'. I hated to become one of them. I considered my identity too precious to be bartered away for the prospects of prosperity.

This martyr syndrome' carries with it, some kind of ego satisfaction. I had fallen to it, and was rejoicing in my strength and invincibility, that had to be proved through inflexible defiance of the establishment, which I had started identifying with the man at the helm of affairs, the man who till then had ruled my thinking processes.

THE REVOLUTIONARY KHAN

During my journey, away from Bhutto, I came across two persons who contributed a great deal to the shaping of my attitudes towards national affairs.

One of them was Mairaj Mohammad Khan who had been a PPP stalwart before Bhutto came into power. He had been in the cabinet of Bhutto for some months. He had resigned due to lack of compatibility with the rest of the hierarchy.

I had several meetings with him, during which we discussed extensively all the subjects relating to the future of Pakistan under Bhutto.

He was of the view that Bhutto had betrayed the people by putting reactionaries in the key positions in his government.

“He doesn’t allow anyone to disagree with him,” Mairaj Mohammad Khan once said. “And if someone does manage to show some courage, he virtually invites his doom, just as I have done.”

On another occasion Mairaj Mohammad Khan said: “I was first warned against my habit to mix with common people. Then I was told to learn and observe the mannerisms, expected of a cabinet minister. Now I have been axed because I am trying to practise what he used to preach.”

I admit that Khan Sahib’s sincerity and simplicity had impressed me, but I couldn’t persuade myself to admire his intelligence, guts, style and approach. He seemed to me, to have been overly influenced by the diction of revolution rather than by the substance of it. His frequent use of those familiar jargons often amused me, though coming from his mouth, they seemed to carry some conviction too.

I remember telling him in one meeting that if he really intended to revolutionise the country and its socio-economic structure, he had to identify himself with the people of Pakistan, rather than with the people Karl Marx had addressed his philosophy to.

“Instead of aspiring to become a mini-Lenin,” I told him, you should listen to the message your name carries. You are not Mairajov but Mairaj Mohammad Khan and you are a Muslim. Don’t feel apologetic about what you are. Feel proud of your origin. Tell people that you have studied the Holy Quran, and you accept it

as the Word of God. Not all believers are reactionaries and not all reactionaries are believers.”

I was not speaking Latin to him, but he was obviously not prepared to risk his radical credentials which were dearer to him than the cause of the desired revolution.

Mairaj Mohammad Khan had been patronising weekly Alfatah ever since its birth and Irshad Rao was one of his protégés.

I requested Mairaj Mohammad Khan to grant a special interview to Ishtarak to reveal his side of the story.

“Do you have the courage to publish my interview?” he asked. “I’ve more courage than is necessary for it,” I replied.

The interview was recorded and written by Mohammad Tariq Khan. Mairaj built his case against Bhutto on the same lines as Bhutto’s rightist opponents had done. He concluded that, because Bhutto had failed to prevent the dismemberment of Pakistan, he had to be held responsible for the fall of Dacca. His main argument was that Bhutto had made no efforts to establish and build the Pakistan Peoples Party in East Pakistan.

“I urged him on several occasions to take our party to the other wing of the country,” said Mairaj. “But he paid no heed. He was indifferent. He in fact wrote a letter, advising me to stop worrying about East Pakistan.”

He produced that letter along with a few other documents which he wanted to appear with the interview.

“I can’t take the responsibility of taking these documents in original. You may give us copies,” I told him.

The interview appeared without those documents, because he had delivered them to Irshad Rao for onward delivery of the copies to us. The delivery was made not to us, but to Mamtaz Ali Bhutto, as we were informed subsequently. A few days later Mairaj Mohammad Khan was arrested.

I wish now that I had asked Mairaj why he had accepted a post in Bhutto’s cabinet if he had been aware of the designs of his chairman to break Pakistan.

Hadn’t he believed what he had wanted to believe, not because of what had happened to the country but because of what had happened to his ego?

Hadn't he betrayed Bhutto, his patron just in the manner, he had been betrayed by Irshad Rao his protégé?

The subject of Irshad Rao has come up unavoidably. I can't treat him as an unimportant person. Persons like him are never unimportant. They contribute to the shaping of history in their special way, because of the assignments given to them. The nature of their assignments may vary from time to time, and may often be in contradiction, but the spirit, with which they take them, is always honest.

They can never be accused of being dishonest to the causes they publically associate themselves with.

I happen to know Irshad Rao personally from the days when he had not yet heard of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

He was a find of Iqbal Zubeiri, the revered ex-chief executive of the Daily Mashriq, who had taken over the management of Kohistan after Ayub Khan's Muslim League had acquired ownership of the newspaper. Iqbal Zubeiri recruited many new faces. Irshad Rao was one of them. Mohammad Hussain Malik, now Nawaz Sharifs trusted Director General Public Relations, was another.

Zubeiri's reign as Kohistan's managing director was short-lived. He had to return to Mashriq and alongwith him carne Irshad Rao.

He was sent to Karachi where I was the resident editor. Enayatullah wanted me to groom him. I found him reasonably sharp and aggressive despite his humble ways. I admired his enthusiasm. He was eager to take up some kind of a challenging assignment to prove his merit. I sent him to the interior of Sindh to explore the possibilities of bringing out a series of supplements on various districts. He returned with a reasonable degree of success. He had been able to establish contacts with some useful persons-including All Hassan Mangi of Sukkur who was to take him into the PPP ranks in the Yahya days.

I encouraged his talent but at the same time advised him not to make his superiors feel like they were gods. Had he listened to my advice, he would not have become the successful man, he is now. I am glad, he did not listen. It is not easy for have-nots to rise in this competitive world.

I did not meet him for several years after my resignation from Mashriq. But I was aware of his rise as a champion of revolutionary causes. He was at Alfatah at that

time. I remember him appearing from the office of S.H. Hashmi, the managing director of Orient Advertisers Limited, who had been my friend since 1962.

The new-look Irshad Rao exuded nothing but revolution from his appearance. Starting from his Mao cap, right down to his guerilla-style shoes, he looked every inch a character from the long march. I was tremendously impressed.

I congratulated him on his success and was pleased to find, that his old humble ways were nowhere to be seen. He was very sure of himself.

From the times of Bhutto the father, to the times of Bhutto the daughter he has proved his loyalty to the family despite various ups and downs.

Another classic example of durability, though of a different type, is Ziaul Islam Ansari who has never failed to get his talent recognised.

He was editor of the Daily Mashriq in the days of Bhutto, and was a prominent member of the publicity cell of the Pakistan Peoples Party during the election 77 campaign. He was convinced, that there would be no end to Bhutto's power.

During the election 88 campaign, Ansari was chairman of the National Press Trust, and was one of the brains behind the IJI campaign. He religiously believed that even though Zia was dead, his era would never die. So strong was this belief that the issue of the Pakistan Times on the morning of the 17th of November 1988 declared that the IJI had swept the polls!

I am a great admirer of Ziaul Islam Ansari's talent. We were colleagues at Mashriq, and before that, at Kohistan. I was in a senior position, though it was not due to my superior talent. Zia happens to be one of the finest journalists of the country, talent-wise. Unfortunately he has never done justice to his potential, and has remained engaged in other pursuits. He too has an impressive record of 'rehabilitation'. There was Yahya Khan before Bhutto. Then there was Bhutto himself. After him came Ziaul Hague. There is Nawaz Sharif now. Who is going to be the next one, if not Benazir? They may all be oceans apart. But there is no dearth of such minds who have been gifted with that special ability of serving different men and different causes with equal distinction. Such persons too are, in their own way, architects of history.

If historians take up the task of finding the causes of one empire's rise and another's fall, and they ignore these wizards of the art of survival they can't come to the right conclusions.

It is a folly to dismiss them as non-entities. They have the right kind of information, and the right kind of arguments to influence the right people at the right time.

What else shapes history?

PART VI

THE WEB OF CONSPIRACY

The issue that had plagued the country ever since its birth, was settled once for all. Bhutto had done for Pakistan what Jefferson had done for the United States of America. "

MY ASSOCIATION WITH ASGHAR KHAN

During my Ishtraak days I developed very close association with Air Marshal (Retd) M. Asghar Khan. He was a bitter critic of Bhutto, but what took me close to him was his bold and aggressive stance against theocracy. He was determinedly opposed to the exploitation of religion for political gains. It was the main weapon of Jamaat-i-Islami in its crusade against progressive thinking. Because Asghar Khan had decided to match Bhutto in advocating the need for a radical change in the socio-economic structure of the country, he was no less an evil in the eyes of Jama'at-i-Islami, than his adversary.

In the election 70, Asghar Khan was a candidate from a Rawalpindi constituency. The other contestants were Khurshid Hassan Mir of the PPP and Maulana Fateh Mohammad of the Jama'at. It was a triangular battle, in which the Jama'at went to the farthest limit in proving its unquestionable mastery in the art of character assassination. Of the two targets, the retired airforce chief was selected for special attention. He had committed the unpardonable sin of criticising mullaism in one of his speeches. The Jama'at was determined to prove that beneath the veneer of respectability was hiding a loathsome sinner.

Khurshid Hassan Mir won the seat with a handsome margin. Asghar Khan who had started his political career to the ovation of the cheering masses only a couple of years back, suffered a humiliating defeat, and his dreams of becoming a national leader were shattered.

A man of extraordinary will and courage that he is, he refused to accept the setback as his destiny. He needed a good cause to revive his political image, and he found one. He was the only prominent political figure of West Pakistan to condemn Yahya's military action in East Pakistan. He even campaigned for a political solution of the problem, but the emotional atmosphere of the country was such at that time, that not many people were prepared to listen to his arguments.

After the fall of Dacca and Bhutto's coming into power at Islamabad, Asghar Khan's political role was tailor-made. He was opposed to the Jama'at as a matter of conviction, and had to attack the PPP government to establish himself as a heavyweight in the opposition ranks.

Some theoreticians may like to believe that politics has to have a strong moral base, and that it must be practised strictly in accordance with principles and with ideological firmness.

It is an idealistic belief. Though it should not be disregarded while judging a statesman, yet politics and statesmanship are two different fields. The qualities of statesmanship can be proved only after achieving political success, and to achieve political success, one has to plan one's strategy according to the available circumstances. This strategy may not necessarily be moral or principled. It has to be measured in terms of success or failure.

Jama'at may recite all the Holy Verses of the Quran in the defense of its objectives, but all its beliefs, policies and actions are primarily designed to win power. This is a subject; I intend to deal more extensively in the chapters that follow. Here my subject is Asghar Khan.

I am sure now, that if he had won that seat at Rawalpindi and had been in the National Assembly, his political role would have been quite different. Outside the National Assembly, the only way he could attract national and international attention was through projecting himself as the only potential threat to the power of Bhutto. There was one other option too but his ego could not respond positively to it – the option of reconciliation.

Had he chosen to seek this course and judged Bhutto purely on merit, by conceding to him the right to rule, the nation probably would not have suffered a hypocrite of Zia's dimensions in the years to follow.

But Asghar Khan at that stage had not learnt to keep his options open. And it was a stage when, a follower as staunch as I had been of Bhutto had enough reasons to join the opposition.

I remember my first meeting with Asghar Khan the politician. I had met and interviewed him before but he had at that time been in P.I.A. Even in that meeting as the P.I.A. Chief, he had talked about his fascination with Hazrat Omar and his style of governing the state.

The meeting, that paved way for my long association with him, took place at the residence of Mrs. Tahira Masud, now Mrs. Tahira Hafiz Khan.

I could not help looking up at him with all the respect I had for the man who had built the Pakistan Air Force into such a fine fighting machine. He sized me up with a polite smile. I reminded him of our previous meeting more than six years back, but he obviously did not remember. Over a cup of tea the interview began. He was expecting those standard questions our journalists are fond of asking and he was accustomed to.

But I was planning to create a sharp inroad into his defenses.

I said: "You are championing the cause of democracy with great dedication. You have been saying that democracy should be practised in letter and spirit, and that the root cause of all our woes is our deviation from this course, In fact this is your main case against Bhutto who, in your opinion, has grabbed power undemocratically and is now negating everything democracy stands for. But can you cite one example of democracy succeeding in changing the fortunes of the people, and in rooting out corruption injustice, exploitation and poverty from a country? Don't you think democracy means too much accommodation, too many compromises and too great indecision to allow any room for firm and positive action towards the desired change?"

He was taken aback. Giving me a stern and sharp look, he asked: "Are you trying to defend dictatorship?"

"Certainly not," I replied. "I am only trying to say that power in itself should not be the goal. Acquiring power is an important prerequisite of achieving certain objectives. In the absence of these well defined objectives, power becomes a scourge. I agree that adult franchise is the only acceptable method of getting into power. The will of the people should rule supreme. The legitimacy of power should be determined on the basis of the people's mandate, but once this legitimacy is won through adult franchise, the power structure should not be subjected to restraints and constraints in the pursuit of those objectives in which the people have placed their confidence. In other words democracy should not be used as a weapon to restrict a government's ability to act."

Asghar Khan listened to me with interest but rejected my line of argument by saying. "Dictatorship cannot be tolerated in any form or for any reason.

The interview could not really take off in that meeting and Asghar Khan suddenly decided to postpone it for a few days.

"If you can come to Abbotabad, we can have a detailed session," he said with a smile.

I agreed. The next meeting took place at his residence at Abbotabad. The interview was detailed and he was very candid in fixing the responsibility of the dismemberment of Pakistan on the shoulders of his powerful adversary. The line of argument, that he built, was that the country had three claimants to power – the army, the PPP and the Awami League. By disgracing one and eliminating the other, Bhutto had assured power for the PPP.

It all was beginning to sound so logical to me, after having gone through nearly three years of disillusionment with my ex-hero. Whether or not, Asghar Khan himself ever believed in this deductive logic is another matter, but for those whose access to the facts of the case was limited, and who had no knowledge of what Hamood-ur-Rehman commission had concluded, there was enough weight in the widely projected case against Bhutto.

The interview appeared with screaming headlines in *Ishtiraak*. I am certain it could not have failed to please those who had a contract on Bhutto's life, even though Asghar Khan and men like me were equally unacceptable in their scheme of things, as was the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Asghar Khan developed great liking for me, and showed his trust in my ability and integrity by becoming a director of the company that published *Ishtiraak*. He invested Rs Ten Thousand in all, and the deed was prepared by Barrister Dilawar Mah mood who was later to become a high court judge. Still I did not allow *Ishtiraak* to become a spokesman of Tehrik-i-Istagalal and maintained a reasonable degree of freedom in many matters.

Some Tehrik leaders were not particularly happy at Asghar Khan's confidence in me. My loyalty was personal and it had nothing to do with the party.

There was another Tehrik Leader I deeply respected and still respect. He is Malik WazirAli. He too, like Asghar Khan has always trusted me.

Despite my personal loyalty to Asghar Khan and my respect for Malik Wazir Ali, I never joined their party. Some party leaders were quite cynical to me on this issue, and I remember Malik Ghulam Jilani and Ehsan Illahie Zaheer often raising this subject sarcastically.

In August 1974, I remember having written a personal letter to Asghar Khan, explaining why I had not joined his party. I can't recall the exact words but the letter meant.

"There is nothing I can't do for you because I know you are not going to expect me to do anything against my conscience, just as I know you're not going to do anything below your dignity."

But frankly speaking, I don't visualise a great future for your party. With that bunch of mediocres and opportunity-seekers, I don't expect your party to reach anywhere. Your manifesto may mean a lot to you but for most of your partymen it is nothing more than a formality. I consider membership of a party as sacred a

contract as marriage, and I do not believe. I can have that kind of commitment to your Tehrik.

My commitment to you is very personal. I've been your admirer ever since my college days, and you are one of those very few persons I know, who happen to be as good as their reputation."

Asghar Khan was not displeased. He kept trusting me, kept taking me into confidence, and I kept Ishtraak alive against very heavy odds.

I recall here a very interesting conversation between Asghar Khan, Ehsan Illahie Zaheer and myself.

It was the holy month of Ramzan. Asghar Khan was at Lahore, staying with Malik Ghulam Jilani.

I went to see him.

It was a pretty hot afternoon.

The Air Marshal asked me whether I was fasting. I nodded negatively.

"I am pretty irregular in that department these days."

"I too am," he said and looked at Malik Ghulam Jilani who promptly ordered for tea.

As tea was being served, Allama Ehsan Illahie entered the room.

"I am disappointed at seeing you not fasting," he said to me sarcastically.

"I am sorry," I replied apologetically "I had a lot of writing to do these days and I can't really work while fasting."

"It's a bad excuse," Allama said. "The best of my books have been written in Ramzan while fasting."

As I was trying to overcome my embarrassment, Asghar Khan shot out:

"You're lying Allama. As Muslims, we are duty-bound to fast. But don't say fasting is intended to sharpen one's mind. When I was heading the air force, a report was prepared to determine the effects of fasting. It was concluded by the medical specialists that while fasting, one's sugar level started dropping after six

hours, resulting in inadequate oxygen supply to one's brain, thereby affecting one's ability to think clearly. That's why I ordered that whoever would fast would not fly. We should fast because we are asked by God to fast. Let us not try to find nonexistent virtues in fasting. There are certainly other advantages, such as strengthening of will-power and self-control. It also builds our resistance against temptations."

The sagacious Allama could not find a counterargument.

This incident is a reflection of the character of Asghar Khan. I always found him that way – very firm in his convictions, very stubborn in the defense of his view-point, and very determinedly honest towards himself and others.

But on political matters, he was guided by his ambitions. No political leader can be denied his right to engineer his future in the manner he considers most suitable for achieving his ultimate goal – power. Still, if Munir Dar had chosen to play as a centre forward, his team would have missed the finest full-back of his times, and gone always goalless!

Asghar Khan's political fortunes have risen and dropped with great consistency, due to his failure to align himself with his logical allies, and also due to the incompatibility of his strategies with his personal character. As I have mentioned earlier, he has always remained a prisoner of the very first mistake he had made, his decision to go on his own, in the pursuit of his political destiny.

A total of one hundred and twenty-one issues of Weekly Ishtraak appeared before the press laws were finally applied to it.

Sheikh Hafiz-ur-Rehman was the information chief of the Punjab at that time. I went to see him. He was quite sympathetic, but at the same time argued that I had gone too far in condemning the government.

"If you are prepared to revise your attitude," he said sympathetically, "I can, even now, find a way out."

"I think, I have come to the dead end. The only way out for me is to say good-bye to this profession. I always considered it a sacred duty may have been wrong, but I have never been dishonest. Now, if it has come to making a living for myself, I can explore other avenues," I said with an air of finality.

Next day I appeared before the district magistrate and pleaded guilty, with no intentions to carry on.

FROM JOURNALISM TO ADVERTISING

That's how my journalistic career ended. In my college days I had developed a great fascination towards boxing, under the influence of the famous fights for supremacy between Floyd Patterson and Ingemar Johanson. Mohammad Tariq Khan had shared this fascination with me, and had infact become a boxer at national level. I used to have sparring sessions with him, and had learnt, how it fealt to be hit and hit hard.

Saying good-bye to journalism was like hanging up my gloves after taking severe beating.

It hurt everywhere – the worst where no balm could be applied – my soul.

In one of the last issues of Ishtraak, I remember having published an open letter to Bhutto, warning him against the consequences of depending too heavily on the strength of his party, and of weakening the traditional institutions of democracy.

“It was under your leadership that we won democracy. I shudder at the thought of losing it because of the policies of your government. They who really hold the gun know when and how to use it. I hey are better at it than your men. And if the dreaded tragedy occurs, you may find yourself helpless in the courts, that your government has rendered helpless.”

The tragic prophecy was to come true in the years to follow.

After having paid off the staff and cleared my liabilities, I found that I was a pauper, with no means of livelihood.

It was at that time that Sarwar Sukhera the editor-publisher of Monthly Dhanak happened to meet me by chance. I had met him before, when he had launched his magazine. He had infact discussed his plans with me and sought my advice. “The best advice I can give you is, not to seek anyone's advice on something you have already clear-headedly planned to do,” I remember having told him.

Though a new-comer to the profession, Sarwar Sukhera had made Dhanak a household name in two years. There was nothing like Dhanak in the publishing industry. It had a very special look, a very distinct style and a very witty

personality. Though there were many claimants to the success of Dhanak, the magazine was nothing but an extension of Sarwar Sukhera's own personality. The magazine carried his unmistakable stamp.

In that meeting I paid rich tributes to him, for what he had done. He was carried away by my praise because, rightly or wrongly, he had always held me in a high esteem.

"Why don't you start writing for Dhanak, now that you are free?" he invited me promptly.

At first I was reluctant, but when he insisted, I agreed.

I wrote two articles for Dhanak, both addressed to my old Mussawar readers.

Sarwar Sukhera paid me as much as he used to pay Munir Niazi for his contributions to Dhanak.

That money was just about enough to sustain me for a week, and for a trip to Karachi.

There I went to see S.H. Hashmi, my old friend. For more than a dozen years I had witnessed his struggle for success and prominence on the advertising scene of the country. Now Orient had started moving upwards.

He was pleased to see me. He had learnt about the closure of Ishtraak.

"I know you're made for better and greater things," he at once started telling me. "But I've a crisis at my Lahore branch, which is in shambles due to lack of proper leadership. Till you finalise your future plans, I want you to look after my interests in the Punjab."

"You mean you want to employ me?" I asked.

"Not at all," he replied in his typically humble style. "We are friends and will always remain friends. This is a temporary arrangement which is going to keep you busy, and will help me a great deal."

I promised to give his proposal a thought. The very next day when I went to his office, he had an assignment waiting for me.

"The government is planning a large-scale advertising campaign to educate people into the metric system of weights and measures. Another campaign is

going to be launched to create general awareness regarding the identity card scheme. There is going to be a competition for each account. We have to win them both. You have to go to Islamabad, to supervise the two projects.”

I didn't argue.

I had landed in advertising.

Two days later I was interviewing the concerned officials at Islamabad for briefing.

Orient was to win both the accounts.

When I took control of the Lahore branch of Orient, I had already developed enough confidence in my ability to handle the new profession.

What was soon to frustrate me was Orient's image of mediocrity. Though it was already a big advertising agency, there was not even a single postgraduate in the whole company. S.H. Hashmi's own background did not qualify him for the profession, but somehow through intelligent salesmanship and shrewd public relationing, he had made it.

I knew from the very beginning that there was no challenge for me in the company, except in the field of organizational skill and personal salesman ship.

I had not hoped to stay at Orient for more than a year or two, but as time passed, I settled down to a life of security.

In political terms I had become virtually insensitive to whatever was happening around. I no longer cared who was doing what and why. My interest in the newspapers was purely professional. I just looked at the advertisements, glanced at the sports pages and got down to my work. Nothing really mattered any more. I had cut off all the connections with my past. I occasionally met some old friends like Sarwar Sukhera, Iqbal Zubeiri, Farhad Zaidi and Noor Ahmad Shah, who is now home secretary Sindh, but refrained from discussing politics.

During this period I made a couple of new friends – Mujib-urRehrnan Shami and Mahmood Mirza.

Shami, I found quite reasonable and rational in his approach, unlike other rightists I had known. During those years he didn't seem to be so dogmatic in his thinking as he is now.

Mahmood Mirza has always remained deeply involved in analysing the economic problems of the country and has done a lot of research on the subject. It was a period of indifference for me. Through my indifference alone, I could protest against the erosion of my dreams.

I had no idea at that time, that the countdown had begun for Bhutto, and that he was to be punished for his intransigence in the matters relating to Pakistan's agreement with France regarding the nuclear reprocessing plant. The state of mind, I had got myself into, was hardly ideal for rational and objective thinking. The purpose of Dr. Henry Kissinger's visit to Pakistan had gone unanalysed. Weaving of the web of conspiracy had quietly and secretly begun.

When Bhutto suddenly announced his programme for holding general elections, the presidential election campaign in the (IS. was already on. Perhaps even Bhutto didn't know that he was going to get crushed under the weight of the big elephant he had angered. He was trying to outsmart the elephant by winning a big mandate from the people and reasserting his authority in running the affairs of Pakistan.

After all the water that has flown in the river Indus over all these years, it is much easier to conclude that Pakistan National Alliance was not formed in a day, and 'down with Bhutto' campaign was not engineered by any of the masterminds under the PNA umbrella. The time had come to cut the third world leader down to size before cutting him down altogether. The real masterminds could count upon the effectiveness of the new alliance, which on one hand, had brought the clergy and the trader in a loving embrace, and on the other hand, had rekindled Asghar Khan's hopes of becoming Bhutto's successor.

These were the characters on the stage. Behind the curtain, Ziaul Hage was warming up. The holy general was prepared to do anything for the love of Islam.

Had the French nuclear reprocessing plant touched the sacred shores of Pakistan, Islam's future would have been in jeopardy. Bhutto just had to be exterminated.

ONLY BHUTTO COULD DO IT!

Bhutto, as I have already mentioned, was always, and continues to be judged from two extreme and diagonally opposite viewpoints. Those, who worship him, as a hero is worshipped, hate to believe that he was capable of erring and having any human weakness. Those, who condemn him, as an enemy is condemned, consider it a sin to acknowledge any good quality or positive achievement of Bhutto.

This kind of polarised thinking has rendered us incapable of judging things on merit. It is a tragic situation, the disastrous consequences of which may have to be suffered by the generations after us. The constraints, this polarisation puts on our capability to join hands in the fundamental task of nation-building, seem to be going unnoticed by those, whose pursuit of, and lust for power cannot look beyond the tangible benefits, this division offers them.

Bhutto may have been the very kernel of evil, the deadliest enemy of Pakistan and all that deserves to be despised in a human being, but even the most shameless of Bhutto-haters is going to feel inwardly guilty while denying him one credit that places him next to the great Quaid.

Pakistan was founded by the father of the nation in 1947 – to be exact on the 14th of August that year. It took the people of Pakistan exactly 26 years to have a constitution, approved unanimously by them through their directly elected representatives. The architect, the father of this constitution which represents our nationhood, our federation and our continuity was none other than Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. So fundamental is this document to the continuity of our federation and sovereignty, that even Ziaul Hague, with all that power behind him, did not have the courage to abrogate it, and had to settle with the second best option available to him – the option of outraging its honour.

It was not a small achievement on the part of Bhutto, that his constitution was passed unanimously, and even his worst foes, also those whose loyalty to the country had always been publically questioned, accorded the sanctity of their signatures to it. The issue that had plagued the country ever since its birth was settled once for all, leaving utterly no room for deviation or disagreement. Bhutto had done for Pakistan what Jefferson had done for the United States of America. Had his devotion to the country been of lesser intensity, had his pride in being the citizen of Pakistan and the leader of its people been not so enormous, and had he not spiritually linked his destiny with the unity of the people of this federation, he would not have bothered to take all those pains, to acquire

consensus on the document, which was to represent its character for all times to come.

Why was he trying to build the power of the third world if he did not love his country?

Why was he trying to create a strong Muslim bloc to lead the third world, if he was not committed to his faith?

Why was he trying to make Pakistan the nucleus of the envisioned Muslim bloc, if the interests of his country did not have the highest priority in his mind?

Why did he allow himself to be identified with the concept of an Islamic bomb and a nuclear Pakistan, if the fires of nationalism did not rage in his soul?

Why did he invite the wrath of the big elephant by saying no to Dr. Kissinger, and by continuing with his ambitions nuclear programme, if it was not for the love of Pakistan?

When a person is psyched and brainwashed his prejudices become his arguments. He simply closes the doors of his mind to all such questions which may weaken his arguments in the support of his prejudices.

I think I was in this psyched and brainwashed state when I wrote that scorching condemnation of Bhutto. Perhaps at that time, I was trying to prove to myself that I still had it in me – my courage of convictions. There are some people who prove their courage by committing suicide. And they do it with conviction. I chose to commit a spiritual suicide by declaring to the world that all that had once been so sublime for me, was, in reality, fake. And I derived some mental satisfaction from this act of courage. This satisfaction was not to last long. I was to be jolted out of my psyched state in a matter of months.

My only solace lies in the fact that I have never been and shall never be on the wrong side of the line that divides the nation.

My case against Bhutto was not that his mission was wrong. My case was that he had betrayed his mission.

Perhaps if he had chosen to be a Hitler, cracked down on the forces of status quo, destroyed them mercilessly, built a new Pakistan with a new social order, and made us all feel proud of our power. I would have dumped my love for democracy forever. I love democracy only because it is my only defense against Ziaul Haques.

Now I can tell myself and the whole world that for more than thirty months, I wrote volumes and volumes of articles and editorials against Bhutto and his government and no policeman ever knocked at my door. Some of those articles were so harsh, that even if a single paragraph in that tone had appeared only once in Zia's days, I would not have seen the light of the sun again in my life.

And they say, Bhutto was a tyrant and Zia was a saint!

Bhutto was not a saint either. He had his share of follies and weaknesses. He trusted the wrong people, those who could read his moods and bow in humble submission. He allowed a wall to be constructed around him, by those traditional king's men, not to defend him against his enemies, but to make him inaccessible, to keep all those away from him, who could become a threat to their importance. He was not a king, but they made him feel like one.

These King's men have been responsible for more catastrophes than those earthquakes and cyclones. They feed their king with only the kind of information that is in harmony with their interests, that proves their utility and that pleases the receiver. All other information, vitally important in the process of decision-making but not favorable to the king's men is either held back or is allowed to pass in modified form only. The king has often to act on misinformation or half-information, sometimes even on no information whatsoever.

THE DRAGONS STRIKE BACK

It is not my intention to analyse the election campaign of 1977, but a few observations are unavoidable.

In the general elections of 1970, Bhutto had been on the offensive. His opponents had not yet organized themselves into a single fighting unit and had been more or less in a state of disarray. Bhutto's following had been militant in its zeal, virtually bursting with confidence and fired with a mission.

Reverse was the case in 1977.

The forces of status quo had forged unity and found powerful allies, to form a single formidable fighting force, charged with missionary zeal, though negatively. Several noble causes were, later on, attributed to the PNA, the enforcement of Nizam-i-Mustafa being the most trumpeted one, but basically there was one commonly agreed cause, one jointly sponsored mission – the elimination of Bhutto. Tragically, the silent majority of the country did not realise that the “down with Bhutto” campaign, though projected as ‘a holy war against infidels’, had been designed to pave way for dictatorship. It was a conspiracy against democracy. There were thousands and thousands of those, who had been disillusioned by and disenchanted with the performance of the PPP regime and its style of doing things. But still they wanted Bhutto to stay in power, though not unchecked. Their faith in the sincerity and the capability of the charismatic leader was still intact, but they had developed grave doubts about his ability to choose right people for the right jobs.

In other words, they had not rejected the PPP but their enthusiasm had declined. Bhutto had a changed role now. The challenger of the election 70 was now defending his power, his regime, his policies. In this defense, his ranks now were manned by those, who had either lost the revolutionary zeal of the first general elections, or had created their own vested interests under the corrupting influence of power. The masses were there to rise to his call, but those entrusted with the responsibility of motivating them were now basically interested in the preservation of their own precious selves.

What could have been made to become a decisive battle between the forces of change and of status quo, was allowed to adopt the character of a clash between the forces of establishment and of “democracy” Bhutto was successfully identified with the establishment due to the follies of his trusted lieutenants.

On the other side, the PNA leadership was successful in mobilising behind it, the support of the security-conscious middle class in addition to the 'haves' who had been badly hit during the Bhutto era. Asghar Khan was suddenly back in limelight, and was once again enjoying the ovation of the cheering crowds. This was his second taste of big crowds. In his first such experience in 1968, he had campaigned for Bhutto's release from prison. This time, he had selected the opposite course. His avowed enemies were now his promoters.

It all seems so ironic, but history does have a lesson or two for each one of us.

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan is worth mentioning here. This master manipulator enjoys having a crisis in the country. Without a crisis, he knows, he cannot exist.

He reminds me of a person I knew several years back. He had this habit of creating tensions between friends by misreporting one to the other. After generating enough hatred between them and bringing them virtually to blows, he used to take upon himself, the sacred task of forging peace between them. The whole exercise used to give him a sense of importance. This habit was virtually his only reason for living.

Nawabzada has to have a dictatorship, to begin his struggle for democracy. When democracy is there, he has to have a dictatorship, so that he can restart his struggle for democracy.

Somehow he manages to keep himself busy. He likes to read his statements in the newspapers. He loves to be in every possible delegation that is required to go for talks. This special specialisation of his, to create trouble and then to emerge as a trouble-shooter, makes him a very precious 'commodity' in the Jama'at ranks, though many others too may be believing that he is essentially their man.

I wish somebody had thought of sending this man of extraordinary skills on deputation to Israel, India or any such country which deserves to taste what we have been tasting because of Nawabzada.

There is a tested proverb – "Behind every great fortune there is a crime."

I feel like rewording it: "Behind every great crisis, there is a NNK."

Perhaps he may be completely unaware of the disastrous results of his exploits, perhaps he may be doing everything, in complete innocence, just to prove his expertise in the art of political manipulation. Perhaps he may be merely a pawn in the hands of some unknown grandmaster. But we have suffered him for too long now, to continue getting amused by his presence.

He was the brain who engineered the formation of PNA and along with the Jama'at, devised the strategy for the pre-polling as well as the post-polling phase of the "down with Bhutto- campaign.

Others were merely pawns, including Asghar Khan. They all knew they could not win the elections. They could only reduce the margin of Bhutto's victory. They were interested only in creating a highly emotion-charged atmosphere, in which some kind of visible evidence could be managed to support the claim, that the nation had risen against Bhutto, and that he could not win the elections without rigging. Men like Malik Akhtar helped the PNA in establishing the charge of rigging which would have been levelled in any case, even if there had been a foolproof -system of ensuring fairness of the elections.

Even the most committed Bhutto-haters concede in their honest moments that the PPP would have acquired majority, rigging or no rigging. This amounts to accepting that the only way Bhutto could be removed from power was through martial law.

The state of mind that I was in, at that time, the results of the elections didn't matter much to me. I had been interested more in the presidential campaign of the U.S in which Carter had emerged victorious. So indifferent had I become to the matters relating to national as well as international politics, that the American plan to destabilize certain regions went completely unnoticed by me.

No one had any idea of the plans which would ultimately send Bhutto into prison and Indira Gandhi crashing down to a humiliating defeat. I have always been an avid America-watcher, and have somehow been able to read their 'future' strategy from their 'present' moves. For example, I can conclude, while I am writing this, that the rule of the generation of John Foster Dulles is finally over, and new American thinking, to match the thinking of Gorbachev, is in the offing. The changing times have at last begun to change the attitudes of those in Washington, who function behind the curtain, to decide about the destinies of the countries, which always look upto the statue of liberty with new hopes, the hopes that have never been fulfilled in the past. It is indeed refreshing to anticipate the narrowing of the gap between the American dream and the American reality.

But in those early months of 1977, the American reality was displaying itself with ruthless candour and we were not even aware of it!

We thought that the rigging charge against Bhutto and "the movement" in protest against it, were matters, purely of our national concern, that no ulterior

motives were involved, and that it was the cause of democracy and Islam that was being served in the mosques and the streets.

Not all involved in this madness were conscious partners in the conspiracy against Democracy. Some had their own reasons, like I had my own kind of madness boiling beneath the exterior of indifference. I never had any links with the PNA, not even with Asghar Khan during those years. I had my own grudge against the PPP regime, which had caused so much disillusionment in me. Despite this grudge I handled some of the advertising work of the PPP, as the branch incharge of Orient at Lahore. It was a subconscious decision, which had its roots in my past loyalty to the prophet of change. This decision was not liked by S.H. Hashmi who had probably sensed the wind of change. After the movement began, he advised me to write off the relevant bills, so that there was no proof in our record, that we had any kind of links with the PPP.

I ignored his advice.

I kept making efforts for the recovery of the bills, but contact with the responsible personnel of the PPP was not possible in those days.

It was ultimately Begam Sahiba herself – Begam Nusrat Bhutto who made the payment. The ex – prime minster of Pakistan, the father of its constitution, was in custody at that time.

I have not forgotten the remarks of Begam Sahiba, while she was clearing the liability. This is the third time; I am making payment against these bills. I hope it is the last.

These bitter words explained the callousness of those party zealots who had been cheating their leadership all along. Payments against our bills had been received twice before, but had not reached us. Perhaps she had doubts in her mind, even while accepting our claim and fulfilling her obligations, that we could be yet another group of swindlers.

When I informed S.H. Hashmi on telephone, that Bhutto’s party and family did not owe him anything any more, he couldn’t believe his ears. He had two reasons for not believing. Number one – Orient’s claim had no technical support and couldn’t be proved legally. Thus the PPP could afford not to pay. Number two – I, being aware of the fact that the management of Orient had mentally written off those bills, did not have to let that money go into Orient’s account.

It needs to be mentioned here, that my book on Bhutto, titled ‘The apostle of deceit had already appeared and become a bestseller. The publication of the book

had been financed partially by S.H. Hashmi, not because he had any special grudge against Bhutto, but because, even though he had been having very close links with Maulana Kausar Niazi and some other PPP leaders of his breed for several years, his interests were linked with that segment of the business community of Karachi, who could not afford Bhutto's return to power.

My book had remained constantly in print during the months of August and September, 1977. Let me be honest enough to confess here, that for a few weeks I did enjoy the feeling of having authored a bestseller. But as history started unfolding itself, this feeling gradually gave way to an inner urge within me to reexamine my case against Bhutto.

I remember the secret pleasure I felt when Bhutto, during the period between his release and rearrest, was given a rousing reception by the masses on his visit to Lahore.

The enemies of change had succeeded in removing Bhutto from power but not from the hearts of the people.

My book did not go into print again. By writing it I had, much against my intentions aligned myself with the forces of status quo. It was a terrible feeling to carry. I decided to kill the book.

I remember a brief conversation with S.M. Masood those days. He had been in the Punjab cabinet during Bhutto's regime – infact minister of law, and he had been a friend of mine in the early days of the PPP.

Your book has shocked me. I understand your frustration but you don't attack your father because he has not fulfilled your expectations. I am sure however, that you are going to repent soon, and then, the kind of man you are, you are going to write a similar book on the god of lies, he had said.

He had been so right!

I owe it to history to write about Ziaul Haque, about what he really stood for, what he really did to our society, our country and our faith.

In this book however, I intend to stick to my original subject. If Ziaul Haque has to be mentioned and discussed here, it is because he swallowed the best years of my generation, more than one fourth of this country's life.

**HE WAS NOT
HANGED**

“The nation was told that Bhutto might have committed many other crimes against the country but none was so great in its magnitude and impact, than the murder of a man called Nawab Amir Mohammad Qasoori, or whatever.”

THE FATAL MISTAKE

The PNA movement had a prescribed course. In the beginning, the momentum was not so fast. Bhutto might have believed that he could handle the situation. Perhaps he was not aware of the magnitude of the conspiracy, and depended too heavily on the state power which he thought was with him. He had perhaps not even imagined that the innocent and harmless-looking general, whom he had selected to head the army, and who had never failed to excel in the art of humble submission and docile obedience, could ever fail in coming to his defense when required and ordered. Perhaps, not even in his wildest thoughts, Bhutto had entertained the probability that a dutiful officer like Ziaul Haque, who had the habit of taking pains to register his devotion to Islam, and to project himself as a practising Muslim, could hide behind his sheepish smile, the wicked grin of a guerilla.

Had his confidence in the character and loyalty of General Ziaul Haque been not so great, Bhutto probably would not have fallen into the trap, set for him.

Bhutto was too brilliant a man to have allowed Zia to outwit him, if he had not taken the general for granted. Assessing the might of his enemies from the strength of the PNA ranks only, and ignoring the possibility of the champions of the game of chess, acting through the power of the uniform, proved to be a fatal mistake.

It was on the 9th of April 1977 that the PNA succeeded in drawing bullets out of the guns of the law-enforcing agencies. Those killed, as a result of the police firing at the violent procession at Lahore, were not related to Maulana Maudoodi or Asghar Khan or Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan or Shah Ahmad Noorani or Mufti Mahmood, and for them it did not matter whether they lived or died. They only needed their blood to set pace for the events that led the country to the dark night of the 5th of July 1977 – the predetermined goal of the movement for “democracy”.

Bhutto could have foiled this plan by a pre-emptive move by addressing the nation on the 10th of April 1977.

“My heart is bleeding at what they are doing to the country and its innocent citizens. Those who died might have been their men, but they were also citizens of Pakistan and were as dear to me as other citizens. I mourn their death. And they, who used them as their sacrificial lambs to achieve their heinous designs, will not be allowed to play with the lives of my countrymen any more. If I have

to hold general elections a hundred times to save the lives of innocent people, I am going to do so. The results of the elections every time are going to be the same. To prove the falsehood of their charge that the March elections were rigged, I am hereby announcing fresh polls.....”

An announcement like this, as early as the date I have mentioned, would have stunned the PNA forces and endeared Bhutto to the silent majority.

The need for the limited-scale martial law of April 22, 1977 would not have arisen in the diffused situation, and the PNA leaders, and the brains behind them would have been forced to reshape and reschedule their strategy.

It was not to happen.

Destiny had chosen a different path for Bhutto. By the time he realised the gravity of the situation and the magnitude of the conspiracy against him, it was much too late. He tried to recapture the lost time, the lost opportunity and the lost ground by initiating the dialogue. But even while those talks were going on, the grinning guerilla was sharpening his teeth. He had been provided with more than enough reasons and ground to act in the name of God, Islam and the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).

Bhutto was taken unaware.

The man, who had always made sure of kneeling before the prime minister with the humility of a faithful servant, was suddenly holding his gun at the father of the constitution.

To make himself appear like a genuinely sincere and impartial referee, Zia gave his action a respectable name – the Operation Fairplay. To prove his fairness, he took all the important political leaders of the country into custody. I remember his interview to BBC broadcasted on the 10th of July 1977.

On one hand he expressed his delight at the intensity of Islamic sentiments which had been demonstrated by the people during the movement, meaning there by that it was for the love of Islam that the people had come out into the streets.

On the other hand, he paid rich tributes to Bhutto’s leadership, arguing that it was unthinkable to fix the responsibility of rigging on the great leader’s shoulders. “Bhutto,” he said, “would have won the elections even without rigging, and personally I don’t think the scale of rigging was very large, if there was any rigging at all.”

It all sounded so fair, so impartial and so gentlemanly. Zia was not taking sides. He was there, just for ninety days, after which fresh elections would be held for transfer of power back into the hands of the people's representatives. Who could doubt the words of such a God-fearing, such a duty-conscious and such an honest Muslim? How could any fault be found in his noble intentions?

I was in a senior journalist's company while listening to his interview. I remember telling him: "He may have the looks of a goof but he is already sounding like a shrewd politician. There has to be some motive behind this effort to balance his views about the two parties. Let us hope his operation fairplay doesn't last longer than our lives."

Even though our politicians like to believe, for their self-satisfaction and ego feeding, that the only advantage the generals have over them is their uniform, I have always contended that while the politicians act mostly on hypothetical assumptions, the generals are trained to devise a strategy even if the task in hand is as simple as, moving a battalion from one place to another.

The task Ziaul Haque had undertaken was not all that simple. And the strategy he had devised could have taken him months. I personally believe, and it is not a hypothetical belief, that Zia had his eyes set on the throne even when he was a two-star general and was trying to catch the attention of the head of the government. He had probably known it for years, that he only had to strive for those four stars, after which the supreme seat of authority could be occupied at will. If the country could have an Ayub Khan and a Yahya Khan, why could it not have a Ziaul Haque?

I am sure each mistake that Bhutto committed, had made Zia bow before God in gratitude and perhaps he had prayed and prayed and prayed for Bhutto to commit more and more mistakes.

Bhutto's fatal mistake had been his choice of General Tikka Khan's successor.

Zia had planned to continue with his fairplay theme for quite some time, before switching over to the theme of 'converting the country to Islam'.

But Altaf Hassan Qureishi of Urdu Digest in his journalistic enthusiasm and Islamic fervour, blew up Zia's fairplay cover by publishing an off-the-record conversation in the form of an interview.

Altaf Qureishi gleefully told the lovers of Islam that they did not have to be disappointed by the public stand, the general had taken, and that the Chief

Martial Law Administrator's heart was bleeding with anguish at the unfortunate addiction the people had developed for such 'anti-Islamic' concepts as democracy, human rights and mutual respect for one another's beliefs.

This self-admiring sage of the ultra right, who before 1970 polling had predicted a landslide victory for the lovers of Islam' in both the wings of the country, who in 1971 had stopped just short of comparing General Yahya Khan's junta with Salahuddin Ayoobi and his commanders because of that military action in East Pakistan, was now thrilled at being told by General Ziaul Haque, that God had answered the prayers of the lovers of Islam by proclaiming Divine rule in the country in the form of martial law.

So thrilled was Qureishi Sahib, that he congratulated the nation in advance on what was to happen to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his 'anti-Islamic' party.

The issue of Urdu Digest that carried this interview, embarrassed the author of the Operation Fairplay so much that he was compelled to take some disciplinary measures against the magazine and its owners. The over enthusiasm of Qureishi Sahib had upset the plans and the timetable of the holy general. He could no longer conceal his designs behind the fairplay theme, and had to come out openly against his ex-benefactor.

I remember another zealot of this form of Islam, a less vocal one, telling me in confidence that the pious general was determined to go down into history as the man who eliminated the blasphemy named Bhutto.

"How is he going to do it?" I asked. No matter how long this martial law lasts, and it cannot last forever, Bhutto is going to reemerge on the national scene on the strength of his popularity alone, unless it is proved in a public trial that he had actually engineered the fall of Dacca, and that he had really committed all those crimes against the nation that they have associated with his name. Nothing short of a public trial can make any difference, and satisfy history."

I am sure this unnamed zealot, when reads this book, is going to recall that conversation with me. He said:

"I have met the general. I am convinced about the effectiveness of his plans. Bhutto does not deserve the decency of a political trial. He is going to get what he really deserves."

His words and his smile confounded me. I knew about his links and I was certain he had been enjoying regular privilege of being in the general's private meetings.

Not many days later, the nation was told that Bhutto might have committed many other crimes against the country but none was so great in its magnitude and impact, than the murder of a man called Nawab Amir Mohammad Qasoori. The nation was also told that if this crime against the people of Pakistan and the history of Islam went unpunished, the heavens would unleash on the country, all the fury and wrath, reserved for the infidels.

Zia had removed his mask.

He was going to use Bhutto's own establishment to prove that the ex-prime minister deserved to be hanged for a crime that had been committed so far away from his bedroom, that even a guided missile fired from Islamabad would not have succeeded in finding its way to the target, somewhere in Shadman Lahore. Zia had an 'excellent' imagination, an even more 'formidable' conscience. The judges who sat through the trial had a sacred duty to perform and they couldn't afford to be found wanting in the enforcement of justice.

Bhutto was condemned to die.

He was to be hanged to death.

They did not succeed in doing so.

They did hang him, but hanged him to immortality.

In a very special sense, he was not even hanged. He was resurrected. He was vindicated. His honour was redeemed. In their enthusiasm to exterminate him, they had chosen such a feeble pretext, that he stood automatically absolved and exonerated from all other charges.

There are several theories and rumours to suggest that the infamous hanging took place in highly sinister circumstances, and that the father of our constitution had been reduced to only an empty shell, before he was carried to the gallows for the formality of hanging, but this book, as its title may suggest, is not intended to go into such irrelevant details. I am not a Sherlock Holmes. For me the important matter to record here is, that on the 4th of April 1979, I had rediscovered a cause to live for. I had gone back to Bhutto. He was no longer a creature of flesh and blood for me. He was the very personification of my pride as a Muslim, and of my identity as a Pakistani.

My testimony is not required to place Bhutto in the hall of immortality. But it gives me some kind of satisfaction to tell myself that I had not committed all

those adorations of my younger days to some one who didn't deserve them. I am indeed grateful to Zia for having restored my faith in myself.

THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK

Misfortune is not that which can be avoided, but that which cannot be.

Ziaul Haque's long reign could not be avoided. It is said that misfortune arrives on horseback but departs on foot. Our misfortune had struck suddenly on the night of the 5th of July 1977. It was to depart not before eleven long years, one month and eleven days.

It may sound to be a harsh statement, and all those are going to be offended, who in that era learnt, that, when in Rome, do as the Romans do." There are also those who while living with the cat got a taste for mice. They too are not going to like my judgement of their benefactor. And there are those as well, who sincerely believe in Zia's love of Islam and think that Islam is poorer without him. Most of such innocent souls were carried away by Zia's sacred rhetoric, took his holy words on their face value and accepted his emphasis on the rituals as a genuine effort towards the establishment of Islamic society. They have been brainwashed so extensively, that it is going to be hard for them, even if they make a conscious effort, to realize, that they had only been watching a serial spread over more than eleven years, in which a brilliant actor named Ziaul Haque was playing the role of a man of God. I do not blame them for how they feel about him. They have every right to admire the role he played, even the skill with which he played it. I am judging the man behind this role, the man who on the night of the 5th of July 1977 raped our constitution with the assurance that he would restore its sanctity within 90 days, the man who under the cover of his operation fairplay, usurped power from the people, and set out to perpetuate the dark night of dictatorship in a country that had been founded by its father, on the principles of democracy, the man who spoke every conceivable lie in the defense, and for the prolongation of his regime, the man who hoodwinked his people by writing, producing and directing a serial, in which he could play the role of a messiah who was under compulsion from God, to set aside his constitutional responsibilities, and to take up the holy mission, for which God had selected him, adorned him with a uniform and sent him to the earth.

Those who continue to be in the spell of that serial, have to leave sooner or later that the face is no index to the heart, that bees which have honey in their mouths, have stings in their tails, that vice is often clothed in virtue's habit, and that a holy habit cleanses not a foul soul.

As a student of history, I happen to know that Islam has suffered less at the hands of its known and declared enemies than at the hands of those hypocrites in

its ranks, those pretenders to piety who have used it as a shield to hide their designs and protect their interests.

Zia did not hang Bhutto for the love of Islam. Zia did not send the father of Pakistan's constitution to the gallows because he desired the law of the land to be honoured. Zia did not exterminate the ex-prime minister of Pakistan because he wanted justice to be done, and the murder of Ahmad Raza Qasoori's father to be avenged.

Zia did it because he knew, that with Bhutto alive, even behind the bars, his plans to perpetuate his rule over this country under the cover of his holy mission to enforce Islam, could at any time face an unexpected setback. He knew, he could deal with the rest, once Bhutto was out of his way. He was too scared of Bhutto, to give him a chance. He knew, what the wrath of an injured lion could mean, if any possibility of Bhutto fighting back was left open.

All those, who had hoped that Zia would not go to any extreme, that his Muslim conscience would not allow him to become a barbarian, all those heads of states and governments, all those millions in Pakistan who had voted for Bhutto, were stunned by the self-appointed messiah's complete lack of humanity.

And still Zia had the courage to claim to be a follower of Mohammad (peace be upon him)! Perhaps I would not have judged him so harshly, if he had not taken all those pains to establish himself as a true disciple of that greatest of all men who had said: "Cruelty is the first attribute of the devil. A man of cruelty is God's enemy."

From word to deed, there is a great space. This space, Zia filled with his cunning, his hypocrisy and his cold-bloodedness.

Our misfortune really had arrived in his person and we had no other option except to resign to the fact, that from our fate, there was no flying.

The years of Zia have so much to write about, that I really can't do justice to him in this book.

Some people like to believe that he was able to rule this country for as many years as he did, simply because he had the power of the uniform behind him. This is an oversimplified belief. I do not agree with it. Zia's innings kept going on and on, not simply due to the fact that the umpires owed their loyalties to him and that the rules of the game were being framed and reframed by him to his own advantage, not even due only to the fact that he had chosen to bat on a pitch, that was a bowlers' graveyard and had no life for the fast bowlers and no help

for the spinners. All these factors were assuredly and reassuringly in his favour. But there was another factor too. He had a cunning mind, a thinking brain an innocent exterior, a foxy interior and a highly beneficial contempt for scruples. He understood the advantages of not worrying about rules and principles and loyalties as well, as he understood the impact his triple-embrace-and-double-hand-clasp habit had on the potential accomplices and the selected targets. He knew, that in a sentimental Muslim country, it was hard for many people not to believe in the words uttered, and the promises made, with the support of the Quranic verses which he was qualified to recite at his convenience and to his advantage.

His knowledge of the psyche of the nation was comprehensive. He knew that the have-nots could be subdued but not converted. He also knew that the upper classes had too many vested interests to afford a confrontation with the establishment. Their greed could be a handy ally, if fed extensively. The basic challenge lay in handling the lower-middle, the middle and the upper-middle classes. They were the custodians of morality, and the practitioners of the traditions and the rituals of religion, if not its spirit and content. They lived in the constant fear of being punished for doing this thing and not doing that thing. And beneath their vocal support of all that they could identify with one Islamic cause or another, was a carefully concealed hunger for more money, more affluence, and more security. They had somehow developed the convenient belief, that whatever affluence and security they had was due to their 'Islamic' practices, and the more dedicated they proved in these practices, the greater became their chances of growing more affluent and secure.

This sort of generalised analysis required a very sharp and rich mind, capable of in depth thinking. Zia had it.

He devised a three-point formula.

The religious sentiments of the people had to be aroused to the point of frenzy and exploited to the farthest possible limit. Anyone questioning the validity of this policy in anyway whatsoever was to be branded as an opponent of Islam.

Every act or move of the government was to be projected as a dynamic new step towards the enforcement of Islamic laws and Shariah, and every dissenter was to be treated, either as a traitor or a criminal, and put into prison or punished with lashes.

More and more vested interests were to be created for more and more people, and corruption and greed were to be injected into every fibre and vein of the society, to ensure continued large-scale resignation to the state of affairs. The

whole exercise had to be conducted under the cover of 'Islam', so that the beneficiaries of the regime could use their love of 'Islam' as a shield, as and when required.

It is tragic that we allowed a power-hungry demagogue to use the name of God, the Holy Prophet and Islam to prolong, if not perpetuate his regime, in the course of which, Shariah went hand in hand with drug trade, corruption and lawlessness. Islam, our faith, was treated like it was a football to be kicked here and there. Prayers were offered, not as a matter of faith, but as a procedure to establish our claim to being Muslims. Love of Islam became a commodity for exhibition, to earn laurels, just as kilashenkov had become a symbol of manhood and pride. Hypocrisy was proclaimed as Islam. And the way of life that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) had given to the mankind – the faith that preaches nothing but love, truth, tolerance and justice, was sent into exile.

One other factor that contributed to the success of Zia in prolonging his rule, was the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet forces. Zia could not have won the American support as extensively as he did, without this mad decision of Moscow to re-live the past history of its expansionism. Zia suddenly had a cause, to share with no less a man than Reagan. And the cause could not have been more sacred, the cause of Islam!

Islam was dear not to Zia only. It was equally dear to Reagan. The Jama'at, having Islam as a part of its name could not lag behind.

The word Islam has been mentioned frequently in this book. In most cases it has been mentioned only as a word, not taking into account the way of life it stands for.

One Islam was given to the world by the last prophet of God, which was, is and will always be, the beacon of light for all mankind, not for just those who claim to have exclusive rights on it.

This Islam determines the relationship between man and God on one hand, and man and society on the other. This Islam forbids us to bow before anyone except God and urges us to be honest and loving towards each other and society.

The holy prophet (peace be upon him) while explaining what this Islam stands for, defines an ideal Muslim as one, who has not ever bowed to anyone except the Creator of everything.

One who truly loves God and really fears Him, expresses this love and fear, not through loud proclamations, but by expressing love and concern for others,

respecting their feelings, not hurting them in any way, not being cruel to them for any reason, meeting all one's obligations to them and leaving them free to be judged by God on matters related only to Him.

Society can judge us only on matters, in which we are made responsible to society. Only God has the Authority to judge us on matters, in which we have been made responsible to Him.

It is the area of man's relationship with society that is really sensitive. We are all easily hurt and we do not forgive each other easily. God of course is the Supreme Forgiver. He knows no vendetta. We are His children, His creations. We owe our lives to Him. We depend on His Mercy. And He is Merciful. He is Beneficent. He simply can't be cruel. Cruelty is the exclusive domain of his mortal creatures. And when we decide to be cruel in His name, when we try to attribute our cruelty to His Will, we become barbarians. And God doesn't forgive barbarism.

This is then the Holy Prophet's Islam, Islam of the man who hated to hurt anyone, who unhesitatingly rose to pray for the departed soul of Abdullah bin Ubi who had missed no opportunity to hurt and harm him. Even God the All-Merciful refused to accept the prayers of the Holy Prophet for that man, but Mohammad, the greatest man to be born on the earth and under the sun, was simply immune to personal grudges, animosities and ill-feelings.

It is so easy to pretend to be his followers. It is so difficult to follow him.

He teaches us that between man and God there can be no barriers, no bureaucratic hurdles, no need of recommendations, and no room for indirect communication. God does not appoint any private secretaries. Access to Him is not through a telephone exchange or an operator.

All I have to do to reach Him is to think of Him, bow in submission and gratitude and He will be there to listen to my prayers and my pleas. He will be there to read my applications and explanations. He will be there to bestow upon me His Promised Benevolence.

Those who have always tried to keep man away from God by acting as His deputies, are the founders of the other Islam, which has been serving the interests of the power-seekers.

ZIAUL HAQUE AND ASGHAR KHAN

After the death of Bhutto, it was hoped in some quarters, that having completed his 'operation fairplay', Zia would not find it hard to keep his promise of returning power back to the people. With Bhutto gone forever, and with the Pakistan Peoples Party having been outlawed, the threat of "the infidels" being voted into power again did not exist. The elections could at last take place. And when Zia announced his magnanimous decision to let the nation go to polls, and to elect from the qualifying parties their future representatives and government, many started believing that the CMLA was not going to create a record of unkept promises and shameless lies. Among those who courted this belief was Air Marshal (Retd) Asghar Khan.

I had met him only once after 1974, during the days when the Punjab High Court's verdict against Bhutto was under examination in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. It had been a brief, by-chance meeting in which nothing of political nature had been discussed.

In June 1979, I was doing some professional work in my office at Lahore when I received a call from Orient's head office at Karachi. It was S.H. Hashmi, the managing director.

"I have received a telex from London," he said in an excited tone of voice. It was quite unusual for Hashmi Sahib to be speaking in that sort of a tone. I was surprised.

"What kind of a telex?" I asked.

"It is from Asghar Khan," he replied.

"Asghar Khan!" I exclaimed.

He knows you are with Orient," he disclosed. "And he has requested me to relieve you from your present responsibilities for a few months, so that you can work tot him in the election campaign."

"Which election campaign?" I asked.

"The general elections that the president has announced," Hashmi Sahib replied.

“You mean the elections which are never going to be held,” I said sarcastically. He ignored my comment and said:

“I want to oblige the Air Marshal, I think you should not hesitate. You can find some one to look after your branch while you are away.”

I was not sure of what to do, for two reasons. One reason was my lack of interest in the politics of martial law. The other was my belief that the Islam-loving general was simply incapable of keeping promises, particularly when it came to any possibility of transfer of power.

I told S.H. Hashmi that I would decide after having a meeting with Asghar Khan on his return from abroad.

A week later Asghar Khan returned from Britain. Soon after I went to see him at Rawalpindi.

He was his usual self, more confident than convincing. His attitude towards Bhutto’s hanging was not influenced by his old political rivalry. He was genuinely unhappy at whatever had happened. He told me that some of his partymen had objected to the comment he had made on Bhutto’s death. The comment had been through a Quranic Verse followed by a prayer for the departed soul.

“In the absence of the PPP from the political arena, you stand a chance to identify your party with the cause, Bhutto stood for. You have to be very very positive on this point. Whether or not Bhutto meant what he said, there can be no denying the fact that he set the wheels of change into motion. The coming elections, if at all they are going to be held, can once again be made to adopt the character of a clash between the forces of status quo and those of change. We have to offer the people not one option in different forms, but two distinctly different options from which to choose.” I explained my viewpoint. He listened very attentively and I was pleased to find that my reference to Bhutto had not displeased him.

“I know we have to win the support of the masses,” he replied.” I also know that the traditional voters of the PPP have to be attracted to our party. But at the same time I want our campaign to be more credible. We have to give a radical programme that should sound practical too.”

Then we discussed the party’s manifesto which had been under preparation for quite some time, and was in the finalisation stage.

The manifesto sounded quite impressive but I told him that not many in the charged atmosphere of elections would be interested in the theoretical aspects of the promised change.

“The general atmosphere in an election campaign is always emotional, and reasoning is seldom heeded to, unless backed by emotional firepower.” I argued. We have to feed the emotions of the voters, not their intellect.”

“We will think about it,” he replied with a smile. “A lot of thinking has to be done to develop the campaign theme. And then the campaign material is to be prepared quickly enough. We have very little time. I have acquired the services of MNJ in this respect. You can also put Orient on the panel. Tomorrow Mr. Javed Jabbar and Mr. Humayoon Gauhar are arriving from Karachi for a detailed meeting which I want you to attend.”

Asghar Khan had taken me for granted, and he had a right to do so. He had always trusted me and I had never betrayed his trust.

I attended the scheduled meeting on the following day. I was introduced to Javed Jabbar as the party’s representative on the campaign committee. It was my first meeting with the managing director of MNJ whose creative skills I had always admired. I found out that he was much better at communicating than at creating. I also found out, that he was taking it purely as a professional assignment and had no special love for the party. One reason of his being there was Humayoon Gauhar, then Tehrik’s information secretary and currently the front man of the South magazine.

Some mechanics were sorted out in that meeting. Javed Jabbar and Humayoon Gauhar flew back to Karachi, and I was asked by Asghar Khan to join him at Abbotabad for a week or two of brainstorming sessions.

In those two weeks at Abbotabad, I learnt a great deal about the man behind the leader. He was as good as his reputation and in some respects even better. I couldn’t help liking him more, but somehow in my mind I was not sure whether he had it in him – that very special quality which enabled leaders to get into the people’s hearts.

I had an office in the annexe of his residence where I used to write all those concepts and ideas which I wanted to become the soul of the campaign. Every afternoon we used to discuss my work of the day, and explore and examine the possibility and the strength of the alternatives.

At night I used to try hard to convince myself that I was being productive. But my heart and my soul were not in the job, and my mind was slow in responding to the challenge. It had always been difficult for me to excel as a professional, if I was not spiritually motivated.

I remember Asghar Khan remarking one day, that despite the fact that I had written a book against Bhutto, I was still under the influence of the late leader.

“Bhutto might have been wrong,” I replied. “But his thoughts aren’t”.

“But I don’t want to promise what I can’t deliver,” Asghar Khan said.

The campaign had thus to be toned down. In his own way Asghar Khan was right. But for me it was not a very heartwarming experience to try to give words to some one else’s thoughts.

After my job at Abbotabad was completed, I returned to Lahore.

There was a series of meetings in the following weeks to finalise the manifesto. In these meetings, I came to know Aitzaz Ahsan. Also Nawaz Sharif who was obviously trying to find a launching pad for his political career.

Aitzaz was always vocal in his advocacy of Bhutto’s way of doing things. This did not endear him to his conservative colleagues in the party. A.H. Kardar was also there. So was Fasihuddin Vardag. Ahmad Mian Soomro, Khurshid Qasoori, his late father Mahmood Ali Qasoori and Hamid Sarfaraz were in the galaxy too. It was on one hand, an impressive combination of heavyweights and middleweights, and on the other hand, an intriguing union of radicals and ultra rightists. Asghar Khan himself and Malik Wazir Ali were the mariners of the ship, and it was with these two only that I communicated mostly.

I remember a verbal battle between Fasihuddin Vardag, now a protégé of Nawaz Sharif, and the late Mahmood Ali Qasoori who had only to whisper, to make himself heard in the adjoining room.

The argument was about a clause in the manifesto which Qasoori Sahib wanted to sound more positively radical. Vardag thought that it was already radical enough.

“There should be no duplicity in our thinking. If we are radicals, we are radicals,” said Qasoori Sahib.

“I wish I could own as much as you do, and still be a radical,” said Vardag sarcastically. “Let us not forget that we are Muslims and we don’t have much in common with the Soviets.”

It was hitting below the belt.

Qasoori Sahib was furious for a while. Then he controlled his anger and left the room. The meeting continued.

I thought it proper to console Qasoori Sahib and sneaked out of the room quietly. I found him offering prayers in another room.

It was a sweet sight.

I came back to join the meeting.

Vardag was still vocally advocating his case for the good of Islam. “Let us not waste time on this point. Words are not going to shape our deeds. It is what we mean that is important,” I commented, looking at Vardag.

Asghar Khan was getting impatient at the argument. He promptly agreed and took up the next clause.

During meetings like these, I mostly used to listen to what was being said. I hardly participated in any discussion because I was neither formally nor emotionally associated with the party. I had just lent my time to Asghar Khan as a person. Perhaps I was hoping in my heart that, something would come out of that exercise, and that the wheels of democracy would be allowed to move again, even though the absence of the largest political party and the most popular one of the country from the promised elections, gave an air of phoniness to the show. I remember talking to Malik Wazir Ali on the subject.

“Don’t you think Malik Sahib that democracy is much more than a mere formality of holding elections. This formula of defeating the Pakistan Peoples Party without allowing it to compete, is an insult to our national sensibilities,” I said.

“You are right.” Malik Sahib replied. “But Zia has given us an opportunity to choose from the option of fighting for the PPP’s right to contest, and that of going to polls without the PPP. If we fight for the PPP’s right to contest, there are going to be no polls.”

I also remember asking Asghar Khan whether he was sure of the promised elections being held, as per the given schedule.

Asghar Khan would have loved 'not to be asked that question, because he had already committed so much in terms of time, efforts and resources. But as I had asked the dreaded question, he had no option, except to reply.

"Knowing Zia and the mentality of his junta, I am not very optimistic. But my heart is prepared to believe him. In our meeting, he swore on the Holy Quran that come what might, the elections would be held as promised as per the announced schedule. Being a Muslim, I don't have a heart to doubt what he has sworn on the Book of God. He told me that if he went back on his words, I would be morally free to call him a liar, a cheat, a son of....."

This testimony of Asghar Khan gave me some confidence in the kind of exercise we were doing. Asghar Khan may be anything else but he can't be a liar. He is just incapable of lying.

During the years he was under house arrest at Abbotabad, I went to see him once. I reminded him of my question and his answer.

He said bitterly: "It is a matter of shame for us that we have not only to live with such people but also to accept them as our rulers. But it is my mission now to get rid of this demagogue and swindler. I may not succeed in this mission but it is wonderful to have some purpose in life."

No wonder Zia had gone back on his words again.

Probably he had never been sincere in his promise, and had just been enjoying the innocence of those, who had started believing him.

Or probably he had suddenly come to the conclusion that even the absence of the PPP could not guarantee the kind of results, he wanted from the elections.

The Holy Quran on which he had sworn his pledge to the Air Marshal was, after all considerate enough to understand what power meant to him. Even if it was not, who cared?

The elections were called off till such time, the teachings of the Holy Quran were implemented. More of martial law was required to help Zia in this sacred mission for which the Almighty had created him in His more Benevolent moments. (May God Forgive us all for having listened to all those blasphemies in the darkest period of our history).

**NO FLYING FROM
FATE**

One only has to have means and power to fabricate evidence of the desired nature against the intended target. And in our country, where witnesses are bought, as cheap as a pair of shoes, and where paid evidence is a police-patronised profession, justice can always be manipulated to one's advantage.

ZIA AND THE DANGEROUS FIVE

In order to stay in power, Zia had to hang Bhutto. He also had to create a powerful class of vested interests which would resist any effort towards change. Religion had to be his most powerful weapon, and the people's sentimental religiosity his most dependable source of political strength, along with the might of the armed forces.

He was so determined to keep power singularly in his own hands, that he was not prepared to trust anyone, not even his own constituency – the armed forces. He kept hanging on to the post of the chief of staff of the army, till he lived, and thus deprived many deserving generals of their due right to relish in the pride of having held the highest rank, in the most honoured and respectable institution of the country. It is the most cherished dream of every soldier to go to the top. Few in the end qualify for the honour. Those who did, in the days of Zia, despite their unquestionable loyalty to the state and its laws, were not found worthy of being trusted with the power that would automatically accompany the honour. Zia was scared of the possibility of some one else betraying his trust, the way he had raped the trust of Bhutto.

Apart from religion, which was made a subject of ridicule by Zia for his ulterior motives, the greatest casualty of that era was the respectability of the uniform he wore.

I am not one of those radicals – the fashionable ones, who take some kind of pleasure in ridiculing the uniform, that represents our sovereignty, our freedom and our pride as a nation.

This is the uniform that I had longed to wear in my boyhood days. With this uniform have been associated almost all of my dreams of heroism, courage and valour. I attach to it as great a sanctity, as to the national flag. The two are, for me, symbolic of the same concept – our freedom, for which men like Aziz Bhatti and Arif Abbasi laid down their lives in the 65 war. Those immortals, the likes of them and the proud inheritors of the traditions they set, truly represent the dignity of this uniform, and not men like Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan and Ziaul Hague, who misused the trust placed in them and exploited their position to force their nation onto defensive, instead of defending their country and its constitution.

In the days of Zia, this uniform became a subject of ridicule, a symbol of mistrust, a target of all the hatred, the people of Pakistan were forced to feel against the usurper of their rights.

Zia did not care.

It did not matter to him, that those very people, who once used to hold their tongues in silence, on hearing the rising voice of the call to prayers, as a mark of dedication to their faith, were now in the habit of disinterestedly switching off their T.V. sets, as soon as the telecast of the call started. It was not important to Zia, that instead of spreading genuine fear of God, his stress on religious exhibitionism was creating an unfortunate tendency to use the cover of self-righteousness and well-displayed virtuosity for hanging on to not-so-decent behaviours and deeds.

And it did not bother him, how low the uniform was sinking in the esteem of those very people, who had showered their adorations on it during and after the 65 war.

Zia was a man, obsessed. His obsession was power — power at all costs.

To ensure that the gods of power stayed with him and on his side, he just had to eliminate the word Bhutto from the dictionary of our national politics, even if it amounted to restructuring the alphabet.

Zulfiqar Ali was no more there to test the functioning of Zia's heartbeat system. The name Bhutto too had been outlawed. Yet there were five of them, still breathing, and quite capable of weaving their own noose for the sacred neck. As long as they lived, the nights of Zia could not be without nightmares.

His guilty mind could not look beyond its guilt.

It needs to be mentioned here, that Bhutto himself had virtually designated Benazir as "the future torchbearer" of his mission.

He knew that she had it in her, all that was required to catapult her into the orbit of national history.

Mahmood Sham, a senior and respected journalist, whose faith in Bhutto's leadership has remained unshaken for two decades, whether it was Zulfikar Ali or it is Benazir, tells of an evening with the departed leader.

“Bhutto Sahib was in high spirits, talking in his confident style about many things at a time, things that needed to be done, things that had already been done but could have been done better, and things that he wanted to do urgently but was handicapped. Suddenly he turned towards me and said: You know who is going to take up these unfinished things and complete them? My daughter Benazir. She is made that way and is learning fast. There is more of me in her than in any of others.”

It was when Benazir was still not twenty-two, and had not yet completed her studies.

Zia was aware of her threat.

And with her courageous mother to steer her through those turbulent days, the threat could attain unmanageable proportions, if not nipped in the bud.

Eliminating them totally would have been too great a risk. The world opinion could not be ignored to that extent. The safest way to deal with them was to break the two ladies, to create cracks in their spirit, and to frighten them away from the national scene.

They were women after all, no matter how strong in their resolve, but still helplessly fragile in their frames. They had always lived in comfort and luxury. One was too old to stand the use of brutal force and the other was too young to face the brutality of the state power. The first taste of this power was given to them in the last weeks of 1977 at the Qadafi Stadium, when, on the pretext of controlling a mob situation and maintaining law and order, the two were subjected to indiscriminate *lathicharge* by the ever-vigilant and over-enthusiastic police of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Begam Nusrat Bhutto received head injuries and was hospitalised.

The policemen were not that lucky, in the case of Benazir. At it perhaps it was deemed sufficient to make her learn her lessons from her mother’s condition.

Begam Nusrat, far from getting unnerved, shaken and subdued, reacted with a bold statement in which she warned Zia, that, by resorting to such barbarous tactics, he would not be able to break the spirit of the people of Pakistan.

In the eyes of Zia, it had been nothing more than a rehearsal of what he had in store for the two ladies. He had made his intentions clear. He could go to any length for the preservation of his power. Prisons were always there, and they had not been made for men only. They were also not designed to make their dwellers feel comfortable. The stubborn ladies could be made to learn through experience,

that to live as lesser citizens outside those walls was better than living in the agony of forced seclusion with no one to give them company, except their own “false expectations” and “dying hopes”.

The formation of the MRD was the first positive step taken towards confronting the state power with the strength of the people.

Some components of the PNA, which had paved way for the dictatorship of Zia, were now in the MRD which was designed to end Zia’s dictatorship. The irony was that while the PNA had pitched itself against Bhutto, the MRD was to be led by Bhutto’s widow, against Bhutto’s killer.

History had taken such a drastic turn!

Zia was not particularly pleased at this development. He masterminded the creation of a situation in which he could kill two birds with a single stone.

A P.I.A. plane was hijacked to Kabul, and the hijackers killed a passenger. Outwardly this hijacking seemed to be an act of Alzulfiqar, the much publicized group of activists, formed by Murtaza Bhutto to avenge his father’s death. The demands made by the hijackers too seemed to prove this link, and even Murtaza Bhutto’s statement, played up so gleefully by Zia’s media, also established it as an Alzulfiqar operation.

But who turned out to be the chief, rather the only beneficiary of that hijacking?

The MRD was the first casualty. It’s first major meeting was to be held, exactly at that time at Lahore. Suddenly Begam Nusrat Bhutto was on the defensive. She had no access to the people due to strict state control on the media. She could not explain the matter to the world, while the state-controlled media went all out to condemn Murtaza Bhutto as a dangerous terrorist, a criminal on the loose, an absconder from law and a traitor who was playing in the hands of the enemies of Pakistan.

By one stroke, Zia had applied brakes to the “Movement for the Restoration of Democracy”, and at the same time had made Murtaza Bhutto an “outlaw”

Whoever had engineered that hijacking had served the cause of Zia. When we investigate a crime, our first step always is to find out the motive behind it, also its main beneficiary.

A master criminal always leaves such clues which establish evidence against his target – the one who is to be eliminated through incrimination. One only has to

have means and power to fabricate evidence of the desired nature against the intended target. And in our country, where witnesses are bought, as cheap as a pair of shoes, and where paid evidence is a police patronised profession, justice can always be manipulated to one's advantage.

The P.I.A. hijacking and the assassination of Chaudhry Zahoor Elahie can be cited as classic examples of indirect crime.

Alzulfiqar was, in both the cases, very successfully incriminated. Bhutto's son just had to be painted as a blood-thirsty, trigger-happy terrorist, so that he would never be able to pose a political challenge to the power of Zia. Bhutto's other son Shahnawaz was a more serious threat because of his resemblance with his illustrious father as well as his more acknowledged intellectual credentials. The method of dealing with him, had to be more effective. Shahnawaz was to commit 'suicide' in rather mysterious circumstances, thousands of miles away from his country and home. Sanam Bhutto had no known atavistic leanings and she could be allowed to benefit from her lack of political credentials.

This analysis has all the characteristics of an Agatha Christie plot or an Eric Ambler scenario, but I have always contended that Zia did not have an ordinary brain. He also had the advantage of not having to subject his thinking to the constraints of conscience. Perhaps he had his plans well sorted out, upto the year 2000. What he had not taken into account was the factor of destiny, the element of the unexpected. There was also a minor flaw in his thinking which became a major one, when he magnanimously replaced his martial law with a rubber-stamp parliament, in which Mohammad Khan Junejo was found ideally suited to play the role of the trumpeter of a new kind of democracy – a democracy without opposition.

This minor flaw, turned into a major one, was Zia's failure to evaluate the true potential of Benazir Bhutto whom he had started taking lightly due to his increased faith in the power of his chair.

FROM ORIENT TO MIDAS

I had always considered advertising, a highly creative and challenging profession, but during my years at Orient I realised, that in practice this profession had yet to rise above its long-established standards of mediocrity. There were creative agencies too, the most prominent being Javed Jabbar's MNJ, but an overwhelming majority of the practitioners of this art had taken it as a form of business, which to succeed, required nothing but competent PR. The rest could be managed. Copywriters could be hired as could be designers, visualisers and art directors. The boss did not have to know anything about any of these areas. He just had to have some good contacts, some influential friends, some kind of give-and-take ability, and if possible a taste for presentable clothes, to cover up his professional failings. In a way, the advertising profession had emulated the publishing industry in building its traditions and infrastructure. It was like an out-of-job store-keeper or labour supervisor deciding to establish a clinic for the treatment of all kinds of patients under his "expert" advice and management.

Perhaps every profession in its infancy has to go through this phase, when 'doctors' do not have enough resources to establish their own clinics!

Creativity, being an inborn talent that doesn't have to carry a formal degree to prove, in the first place its presence, and in the second place the level of its presence, has seldom failed to find its practitioners from the oddest quarters.

There are newspaper editors, even chief editors, who have never written a page in their 'illustrious' careers. And there are ad agency bosses who have not written a single copy all their lives. Yet they have been able to get there and stay there, at the top of their professions, may be because of their organisational skills, or their qualities of salesmanship, or their access to influential people or their worth in terms of money. Success has come to them in abundance and they may be justified in measuring their merit on the scale of this success, but the fact remains that both of these professions have remained well below the acceptable standards of creativity. There have been flashes of brightness, here and there, but these have either resulted from successful exercises in plagiarism, or have been in the area of craftsmanship. Perhaps few know the difference between creativity and craft.

Despite my best efforts, it was hard for me to adjust myself in the setup of Orient. There was no professional challenge. A vast majority of the key executives could hardly write a line without a few grammatical and spelling mistakes. The fact

that Orient was among the leading advertising agencies of the country was, on one hand, indicative of Hashmi's PR skills and organisational capabilities, and on the hand, of the general standards in the country of the profession I had always associated with men like Ogilvy and Bembach.

I had some old friends in the profession, since my Kohistan days. M. Mushtaq, the owner of National Advertisers A. Ghafoor the chief of Adarts, Sultan Mahmood, the head of United, and CA. Rauf, the boss of Lintas, had infact pioneered this profession, and I respected them for their contribution to advertising. They had more ability and knowledge than most of their successors and the profession had not risen above the level of their performance, with the solid exception of MNJ, and perhaps Asiatic and Manhattan too, at a lesser scale.

I kept telling Hashmi Sahib, that I was a misfit in his setup. But he was more interested in succeeding, than deserving success. To me he always said: "I know your talent is being wasted in this business. You are born for greater things, but till time is ripe for those greater things, you have to compromise with the present situation".

As much as I could, I did compromise, but there were times when I used to remember my college days, the dreams I had nurtured, the struggle I had gone through and the ideals. I had always thought, I was born for. My way of looking at life and its challenges, during my college and university days had hardly helped me in becoming a good student in the most traditional sense of the word. I remember arguing with a professor of literature on the point that Shakespeare in order to be great did not need the testimony of critics like Wilson Knight, and that despite what those critics said, I had every right to consider Marlowe and Milton greater poets than Shakespeare because of their greater appeal to my sensibilities.

"If you write that bullshit in your paper", the shocked professor had warned me, "you are likely to stay in the university for a year more." I had laughed and said: "Do you think sir I am here for the degree and the testimonials? I'll not need even my matric certificate to succeed in life."

To be a civil officer was every graduate's dream those days and most of my colleagues were in the run. Seven of them were to make it and become the pillars of the establishment. To express my contempt for this career-oriented attitude, I had fixed a bill-board on the entrance of my rented house at Hyderabad where I used to live with my friend Roshan Zamir Rizvi who was to become Sindh's Home Secretary, twenty eight years later.

"Mice and C.S.P. candidates are not allowed."

Remembrance causes frustration and depression. It also has its virtues. It rejuvenates your dying resolve.

I could no longer allow myself to rot in the setup of my friend Hashmi, who had probably started enjoying the fact that he had me, on his pay-roll, for good. It had not been our initial arrangement. I had been convinced by him and by my ownself, into working for Orient in a friend's capacity, not that of an employee.

The first time I had heard him refer to me as 'his manager at Lahore' I had not believed my ears. The second time I had dismissed it as a slip of tongue. The third time I had tendered my resignation, but he had managed to talk me out of it.

On the 13th of February 1981 however, I decided to quit unilaterally, even if my resignation was not accepted.

On the 18th of March 1981, Hashmi flew to Lahore to try to talk me out of my resolve.

We met at Shezan restaurant.

"You are a writer and an intellectual, and I've always admired and respected you for your capabilities. But we are not living in a society," he said, "which offers opportunities to men like you. You can't succeed in business because you are not made for it. Advertising is too intricate a business to suit your type. If you want to go into publishing, I promise to support you in future, not now."

Till that time I had not decided about what to do after Orient. During those moments, I made up my mind.

"How do you think," I said coldly, "that I can't succeed in business and that advertising is too intricate a kind of business for me to try my talent at?"

"To be a writer and to be a businessman are two different propositions Akbar Sahib," he replied with arrogance that was being concealed behind sympathy.

"It's matter of application of one's intelligence Hashmi Sahib. If me like me decide to be crooked, they can succeed much more outstandingly than those whose pretensions to intelligence are limited. Let me promise you sitting here, at this moment, that your lead of twenty-seven years over me is going to shrink so rapidly in the years to come, that it may not be too long before you watch me helplessly, fly pas you in this very profession."

Hashmi was not particularly impressed with the tone of my voice. He however managed to assemble a semi-sympathetic and semi-sarcastic smile on his face while wishing me good luck.

That night I evaluated my resources. I had exactly fifty-six thousand rupees and a few friends to launch my thousand ships and bum the topless towers of the Ilium I had challenged.

On April the 21st, 1981, Midas (Pvt) Limited was incorporated as a company. On the 4th of June 1981, Nawaz Sharif and Raja Zafarul Haque inaugurated it formally. Their presence had been arranged by Mujib-ur-Rehman Shami with whom I had been enjoying a personal friendship despite our conflicting views on life and politics.

The same day, the first advertisement carrying the Midas name and promising the Midas touch appeared.

I had fired my first gun.

Hashmi was kind enough to telegraph a message of felicitations to me. To our common friends he had said, with great concern about my future. "I wish he succeeds, but in this jungle, there are too many beasts, and the thought, that he is going to be defenseless, disturbs me because of my very special concern for him."

Shami was a great help those days. We had always been in the opposite ranks as far as our views and philosophies went, but there was a personal bond between us, of mutual respect and regard, which urged us to help each other.

In the years that followed, Shami went so far away in his direction that it was impossible for me to maintain my link.

We have met very infrequently since 1983, and that too in the social gatherings we have both attended. The last time we met was at the lunch hosted by Jang in the honour of the newly appointed Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, in December 1988.

"Can't you stop all that trash you have been writing for Mussawat for weeks?" he asked.

Writing trash is not exclusively my monopoly. There is more trash that is being written and published for avowedly sacred causes," I replied sarcastically.

“Do you want us to republish your book?” he retorted.

“Go ahead if you can. I don’t care,” I said and moved away.

I had always considered Shami to be a balanced and rational rightist, but in the UI campaign against Bhuttos, he went all out to match the Jama’at stalwarts, pound for pound, in the art of character assassination.

CREATIVITY AND CRAFT

Midas was to handle the advertising side of the PPP campaign for the 88 general elections. Before this great assignment, Midas had risen to the stature of being the biggest advertising agency based in the Punjab, and the third biggest in the country.

I had violated all the rules of economics, overruled every advice of caution and restraint, and committed ourselves to a bold and ambitious expansion programme. Within two years we had set up full-fledged branches at Islamabad and Karachi. Our financial adviser, a chartered accountant and my cousin, always thought that our financial resources were too brittle to match the challenge of the horizontal growth that I was continuously committing the company to, and that the alarmingly rising costs of establishment, in the absence of a proportionate increase in income, could plunge the organisation into a ditch of no return. There were times when his gloomy looks and disheartening arguments used to create doubt in my mind too, but praying to God always restored my confidence.

We went through crisis after crisis and somehow God brought us back from the brink of collapse every time.

I remember a gloomy evening in 1984. We needed to have Rs. 1.2 million within two days to avert a certain crash. We had already been surviving on borrowed time for several weeks. Our efforts to raise that kind of money had been futile and my colleagues couldn't hide their disappointment, dejection and despondency. I was shaken too, but I could not afford showing my loss of confidence. I cheered myself up and made them cheer up too.

"I assure you, there is going to be no crisis. We still have two days," I told them, "and I am going to arrange that money before the deadline." Everyone went home relieved, except my cousin.

"You have to blame only your own overconfidence. I've been warning you regularly against the dangers of over expanding," he said bitterly.

"I remember, you advised me two years back to cut down the monthly expenses from sixty-five thousand to forty-three thousand rupees. I responded by opening a branch at Islamabad and adding thirty-five thousands to the expenditure. Now our monthly expenditure stands at over four lakhs. Next year it is likely to be five and the year after six. In commercial terms, I am determined to build our production capacity to the maximum limit, so that when the breakthrough comes,

and it is going to come, we are capable of handling any challenge. This is my strategy and this is my hope.”

“But in business, your mathematics should always be right,” he said.

“There is a difference between a businessman and an entrepreneur. He that stays in the valley, shall never get over the hill,” I replied. “What are you going to do tomorrow?” he asked.

“Nothing,” I replied. “It’s now God’s turn to do whatever, He deems fit for me.”

I don’t let worries disturb my sleep. Infact I hate worrying. In my thinking, when one has done ones best, one must accept the results as God’s Will.

That night I had a good sleep.

Next day one of our clients turned up unexpectedly. He was Bilal, the managing director of Ammar Textile Mills Limited, who due to his own financial difficulties hadn’t been able to clear our bills for several months. He had requested us to wait for a few more weeks, and knowing that he too was caught up in a similar situation like ours, I had stopped pressurising and embarrassing him.

He had brought the cheque well ahead of his promised deadline, and it was the first seven-figure cheque in the history of Midas.

“I had borrowed that time to be on the safe side,” he explained. “But as I have received my payment, you too should receive yours.”

A non-believer may judge this incident as merely a chance, but so many chances like this have occurred in my life that I have lost count.

What I consider to be my will-power is infact my faith in Him who always does what is best for me.

Once I had a crisis with the management of a big newspaper. They were so stubborn and rude that they just wouldn’t listen. At last my patience ran out and I said to myself. “You’ve pleaded your case well, but they are not prepared to be reasonable. You have two options now. Either go down on your knees and beg for mercy or just stand up and fight.”

I stood up.

“If you think you have the power to destroy me, you are mistaken,” said coldly. “You may try to throw me out of the profession, with the power you can wield through the APNS. I’ll try to fight back.”

Walking out of their office, I was already planning my offensive against their arrogance of brute power. The situation however was saved the following day when they suddenly offered me an honourable way out.

I have always believed that courage and resolution are the spirit and the soul of virtue. This belief, more than anything else, has helped me out of critical situations.

It’s a very different state from the one which makes people gamble. A gambler just hopes without making any effort, to achieve what he desires. He believes not in himself, not in God but in the law of chance. He is basically a coward.

Believing in God means believing in His promise to reward sincere efforts. Nothing seek, nothing find; nothing crave, nothing have. He begins to die who quits his desires, and he is already dead who desires without willing to work.

I intend to write one day, exclusively and extensively about Midas, its battles for survival and its rapid rise in the world of advertising, outwardly as glamorous as the Adasia 89 carnival at Lahore suggested, inwardly seething with intrigues, malpractices, jealousies and rivalries that constantly go on behind those compromises and those courtesies and smiles which are exchanged as a matter of rule. The world of media is not any different in its character, style, morals and practices.

The two together form a much bigger world, the world of communication that plays a pivotal role in determining the direction in which the nation usually sails. Having been associated with both the wings of this big big world, and having come into contact with, and known almost everyone who matters in the communications business, I find myself ideally qualified to tell the truth behind the cover.

It is our nature that we want to hear only well of ourselves. We want to be believed even when we are lying.

The kind of power that media wields is almost indecently massive, considering its impact on those who are constantly exposed to it. And advertising contributes substantially to the constant piling up of this power. After all it is the media that is the chief beneficiary of over eight hundred millions that are being spent every

year on advertising, which in our country is still a form of business rather than a profession that has its roots in creativity.

Even Midas, with all those glittering stars associated with it, names like Salima Hashmi, Munnoo Bhai and Shoaib Hashmi, happens to be doing, at best, mediocre work. The only redeeming factor in our case is that we are aware of the mediocrity of our output and do not entertain any pretensions to excellence. Because we are aware, we are determined to overcome all those restraints and constraints that keep us from expressing our true potential. The restraints are mostly financial and the constraints originate from the attitudes and the behaviours of those who hold the purse.

The temptation to do, what others have done in order to succeed, is never easy to resist. To benefit from some one else's success is the primary motive behind plagiarism. This leaves no room for original thinking. That's why most of our well-received and admired advertising has nothing to do with our own culture, our own life, our own characters and our own atmosphere. All those Micheal Jacksons and Maddonas are great, with reference to the lifestyle and the socio-economic structure they repreent, but to create their replicas and put them on our T.V. Screen, for selling Bata shoes to the inhabitants of Bhaati Gate, Mian Chunnon, Mansehra, Sanghar and Sibi, is an exercise in self-deformation. Not till we learn to do our own thinking, and put confidence in our own lifestyle, can we succeed in establishing our own traditions in advertising. The Bata kind of work can be done by any good cameraman supported by an intelligent editor and a production manager who has access to a fat purse and a few hits from the west. Piracy, plagiarism and showmanship do not form a compound that can be a substitute for creative imagination. Such advertising tells 'whole lies', not even half-truths'. If it could be as simple as that, there would have been no need of Ogilvys and Bernbachs in the world of advertising. Real advertising brilliance lies in simplicity, in one's ability to present ordinary ideas in a manner that they become extraordinary.

There is a marketing-oriented school too which has long existed in the advanced countries but has only recently made its presence felt in Pakistan. It is comprised of those MBAs, the all-knowing researchers, and the never-erring market-analysts, who are determined to bring discipline to advertising, to subject it to all kinds of scientific tests, to measure its appropriation on various scales and to ensure its strict adherence to certain well-defined rules.

They are now holding decision-making positions in an increasing number of organisations and are determined to overawe the advertising agencies with their knowledge of the marketing terminology, and of all the rules that go into the creation of an effective advertising campaign. So great is their fascination with all

those reports that keep moving from one desk to another, that they do not seem to be remembering one basic fundamental truth which is central to the whole operation.

Advertising is not a science. It is an art – the art of communication, of motivation, and of persuasion. It is not what one is telling in advertising that is important. It is how one is telling it that really matters. No one becomes a poet by studying the trends and the habits of the readers and the listeners.

No matter how many reports one prepares in advance, about the product, the market, the consumer and the competition, it is ultimately the ad that matters. The ad has to be a work of art. It has to be an inspired thing, instead of a scientifically assembled structure of a few predetermined components.

I have already mentioned my admiration for Javed Jabbar. I think he is the best thing that had happened to advertising in our country that is, till he was an advertising practitioner and his main interest was in this profession. Subsequently he went the political way through the Pakistan Advertising Association platform, and could not concentrate on the development of his unquestionable talent, which had earned him so much success and so many jealousies.

We do not happen to know each other closely and our relationship over the years has remained confined to occasional handshakes, frequent exchange of smiles, a cutting remark here and a well-meaning joke there.

At one time he was in the habit of addressing me by my first name – Ghulam. I had to tell him that I didn't have a first name, I had an indivisible one name – Ghulam Akbar. He gave a hearty, amused laugh.

I am glad he has, since then, learnt the difference between a Ghulam Akbar and Jack Simmons. This difference he should always keep in mind while functioning as a public figure. Our nomenclature is so different from theirs, just our culture is!

**DAUGHTER OF
THE EAST**

“The wind in her face had made her wiser. She had watched it all with pain and helplessness, unable to reverse the tidal wave of events. But adversity, it is said, comes with instruction in its hand. Without those prisons and the seclusion they had provided, she could not have concentrated so single mindedly on the vital task of outlining her future course.”

BENAZIR RETURNS

I was in New York on the last day of the year 1985, I watched on television, the jubilation with which the American people welcomed the first day of the new year. The display of happiness was so genuine, so spontaneous and so overwhelming that I could not help envying them.

In the morning, the American television networks, for the first time in history showed the American and the Soviet CEOs, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, exchanging New Year's greetings, with messages of peace and prosperity for each others peoples. Both had spent probably hours on the preparation of their speeches, taken pains to select each word and phrase, shaping their sentences as carefully and cautiously as they could. But the event itself was so significant in giving positive clues to the changing attitudes of the two super powers, that I didn't bother to analyse and interpret what they had actually said. For me, the symbolic value of the joint gesture was more important than the words, phrases and sentences, spoken by the two most powerful human beings on the earth. The wind of change had at last found its way into the Kremlin and the White House. The changing world was forcing the two nuclear giants to change too. The two great wars had given the world nothing but ashes and debris and smoke and destruction and dead bodies. The long cold war had given fear, uncertainty insecurity and doubts about the future of the planet itself. The time had arrived to concede to each other, that no one could and would ever win any kind of war again. The search for a nuclear-free and non-violent world had at last started. The states and the peoples of the earth could no longer afford to neglect the cause of mutual understanding and tolerance, and any effort on the part of any of the two giants to force a victory at the expense of the other, in any area of tension in the world could hasten the doomsday for all mankind.

The Iran-Iraq war was still on. The Middle East situation continued to be explosive. And the mountains, the valleys and the skies of Afghanistan remained covered with the clouds of gun-powder smoke. But a beginning had been made in the direction of peace.

The fact that this beginning had been initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev was significant in the sense that the Stalin era along with its aftermath had finally been dumped. But the U.S response to it, in dumping the Dulles Eisenhower era along with its extended period was no less significant.

Could this new situation produce a change in the U.S attitudes towards the third world in general and Pakistan in particular?

Would the U.S now realise that the peoples of the countries, dependent on its aid, had suffered too much and for too long at the hands of their autocratic dollar backed rulers, not to deserve the long-denied fruits of true democracy?

These questions which rose in my mind were quite pertinent. The wind of change, that had started blowing, could not remain strictly a US-Soviet affair for very long. The state of affairs in my country was inseparable from the state of thinking in the White House I had a reason to be optimistic.

In April 1986 the daughter of the east was allowed to return to her country. On the 10th of April 1986, the city of Lahore was transformed into a turbulent and roaring sea of people and people and people. They had not been able to save her father from the gallows of Zia, but now had come out on the roads in thousands and lakhs to receive her, into not only their city but also their hearts. The tumult was unprecedented, and the welcome unparalleled. Zia, the dictator, Nawaz Sharif his protégé and all the rest, in fact the whole world were told in no uncertain terms who held the key to the future of Pakistan.

About two decades earlier, in my Kohistan days I had witnessed an extraordinary assembly of cheering masses to accord the-then Chinese president and foreign minister a historic welcome to Lahore. The Chinese leaders and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had waved joyously at the cheering crowd. At that time I had thought, that nothing like that would ever be experienced by me again. On the 10th of April 1986, it seemed as though the entire population of the country had converged on Lahore. I told Zia in my mind: "Mr. President your downhill journey has started. It is the beginning of your end."

Having sanctified his rule through that farce of referendum, having found the formula of partyless elections to minimise the "evils" of democracy, having found in Mohammad Khan Junejo an obedient and dependable prime minister to provide a democratic cover to his power, having tailored the helpless constitution of 1973 to suit his special requirements, having groomed a team of soldiers of fortune and ambitions go-getters headed by Nawaz Sharif, having formed financed and backed regional and ethnic groups in Sindh to break the power of the PPP, Ziaul Haque was now bursting with confidence, and considering it an insult to his power and manhood to take the challenge of a young unmarried girl seriously.

If those across the oceans, who held the strings, wanted democracy, they already had it in Mohammad Khan Junejo. They could be provided more of it in Jatois and Nawaz Sharifs who were available in great numbers. The Afghanistan war was there to guarantee continued U.S support to his regime and also to lend him

that Jihad theme, so central to his plans of becoming Ghazi-i-Azam and the eternal ruler of the true believers.

Who cared about that girl? If she thought that those lakhs of people who had gathered probably to see how Bhutto's daughter looked like, could send her to power, she was deceiving herself. Did her party exist anywhere any more?

She would soon find out that her real place was in the kitchen, not in the corridors of power. Once that initial enthusiasm of the fun-hungry masses started declining, she would probably not be able to find enough persons to recognise her!

Zia the scheming intriguer had now finally started believing in his invincibility. He did have a shrewd foxy nature but his background did not qualify him to sense the aura of change in the wind, which was blowing from the East to the West and back. He had accumulated enough power to sustain him at the helm of affairs for as long as he lived. Whatever was happening across and around the globe could not in any way affect his right to rule.

But the young unmarried girl who had returned from exile was now much more than Bhutto's daughter. Her brilliance had never been a matter of two opinions. She had the reputation of having an exceptional mind even in her early twenties and she had applied this mind to her studies with a sense of purpose.

The wind in her face had made her wiser. Trouble had brought experience and wisdom. She had been a princess before seeing her beloved father being removed from the prime minister's house, taken to the prisons of Zia and finally to the gallows and the grave. She had watched it all with pain and helplessness, unable to reverse the tidal wave of events. She had been in prisons too, where she had probably pondered extensively over the things that had happened and the reasons of their happening. Without those prisons and the seclusion they had provided, she could not have concentrated so single mindedly on the formulation of her objectives, on the vital task of outlining her future course and on preparing a timetable for action.

Away from her homeland, living in exile, she had seen her beloved brother die. Suffering had seemed to have found in her a compatible companion.

Adversity, it is said, comes with instruction in its hand. The daughter of the east had endured too much of adversity, not to have emerged as a seasoned politician and stateswoman, even though she was still in her early thirties and yet to get married.

After the tumult of the 10th of April 1986, there was a lull again, or what seemed to be a lull.

The historic return of Benazir Bhutto seemed to be becoming an event of the past history with no message for the future.

She got engaged in the task of reorganising her party, trying to know and understand the people her father had known and understood better, also redefining the party strategy and objectives in the changed times and changing circumstances.

Even Alexander the great had his generals to take the fight to the enemy ranks. Benazir Bhutto had no one except her own self and her legacy. This is not to say that there was any dearth of devoted followers and dedicated deputies. There were scores and scores of them some prepared to go as far as she went. But when you are that tall, the person standing next to you, should be above your shoulders so that when you need advice, you look sideways, not down.

Benazir did not steer after every mariner's direction. They all claimed to have been the Robinson Crusoes of their times, but she politely refused to benefit from the unproven wisdom of these proven uncles. Uncalled counsel was available in abundance but she had decided not to confound herself with too much consulting. Her style did not please some of those party loyalists who had expected themselves to act as guardian-teachers to an inexperienced niece. And there were Jatois and Khars too who believed that the robe of Bhutto's successorship was more suitable for their frames.

Zia had always been confident of getting hold of, or successfully fabricating some kind of evidence to prove to the people of Pakistan, that the lifestyle of Bhutto's daughter was too liberated and un-Islamic to make her eligible for even a small public office. He had been constantly hiring agencies and professionals to do this dirty work for him. But the daughter of the east had proved herself true to the title. Her career was impeccable and her integrity unquestionable, despite all the lies and rumours, that had in the previous years been spread as a part of the general character assassination campaign against the family.

And what's most important, her faith in God and in the goodness of her religion had been strengthened in those years of adversity and distress.

In the middle of 1987, she decided to become a wife and a mother.

That marriage ceremony at the fall of the year was not intended to be a grand show. It had become so, because of the interest of the millions of her countrymen

in her welfare and happiness. The world media too was attracted to the event at an unprecedented scale.

I went there too, along with Munnoo Bhai. The two of us roamed through that area around the Kikri ground and watched the festivities with a sense of participation. Abdul Rauf, our audio-visual director was with us.

I remember Munnoo Bhai singing a Punjabi song as a mark of adoration to the much-adored daughter of the east. He was in one of his liveliest moods.

“I have never seen you so happy,” I remarked with a smile.

“This is an occasion to celebrate,” he replied gleefully. “For so very very long, we did not have anything to cheer about. We could not accompany her father to the gallows. We were cowards. We will always remain so, no matter how tall our claims are to courage and honour. We can at least share in her happiness and reduce our guilt.”

It is because of this extraordinary quality of intellectual honesty that I’ve always held Munnoo Bhai in such a high esteem, and our friendship has been so rich in mutual love and regard.

During those days, an interesting discussion took place at our Karachi Office, between me and a Hussain Haqani-style journalist.

He argued that by marrying, she had ended her political career, more so by selecting an aristocrat as her partner-in-life.

“On the contrary,” I said, she has secured for herself a position of respect, honour and dignity in the eyes of her people. In a country that is ruled by beasts, butchers and male chauvinism, it is always good to feel protected by some one strong and loving, even if it is no less a person than Benazir Bhutto. By this single decision of hers, she has silenced all those dirty mouths for whom slander is the highest form of political virtue.”

He remarked tauntingly. “Do you think, our proud people are going to accept Begam Zardari, a newly-wed bride displayed on the pages of Jang and Nawa-e-Wagt, as the head of their government?”

“It so happens that the mothers of all of us were brides once, and our daughters are going to be brides too. Aren’t our mothers and daughters our partners-in-pride – the pride of belonging to a healthy nation?” I asked in reply.

My logic was beyond his comprehension.

He personified the complex which makes men want to keep women confined to their kitchens only.

The likes of them will have to realise one day that woman's traditional role in society has been determined not by God, but by men. What was once a social necessity has been made by men a part of their religious beliefs, so that their overinflated egos do not suffer the embarrassment of competition.

NO SECOND NOAH'S ARK!

Gorbachev's *Perestroika* appeared in 1987. It was an instant sensation in the tradition of Iacocca. Whereas Lee Iacocca's best-selling account of his life as an automobile-maker had thrown light on the power of human intellect and perseverance, Gorbachev's book came as an unprecedented blue-print for change, that couldn't be avoided.

Soon after coming into power in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev introduced the concept of *perestroika* or restructuring, to his people. At first the adoption of fundamental principles for a radical change in economic management was the central theme in the programme of *perestroika*. But then *perestroika* started moving in every direction. It became a revolt against orthodoxy – in this case the orthodoxy of Marxism.

Addressing the central committee, Gorbachev said after the publication of his book: "Of course, our notions about the contents, methods and forms of *perestroika* will be developed, clarified and corrected later on. No doubt, changes will pose new major problems which will require unorthodox solutions. But the overall concept is clear to us."

The concept was explained in the book as follows.

"*Perestroika* means overcoming the stagnation process, breaking down the braking mechanism, creating a dependable and effective mechanism for the acceleration of social and economic progress and giving it greater dynamism.

"*Perestroika* means mass initiative. It is the comprehensive development of democracy, socialist self government, encouragement of initiative and creative endeavour, improved order and discipline, more *glasnost*, criticism, self-criticism in all spheres of our society. It is utmost respect for the individual and consideration for personal dignity.

The essence of *perestroika* lies in the fact, that it unites socialism with democracy. We need broad democratization of all aspects of society."

This part of Gorbachev's 'restructuring' policy relates to the Soviet society itself. It is a bold and aggressive departure from the long-protected concept that socialism and totalitarianism cannot be divorced from each other, because it is only by making the individual sacrifice his or her personal dignity and by

forcing him or her to surrender his or her rights to the state that the ultimate objectives of socialism can be achieved.

Applying his restructuring concept to the world and the Soviet relationship with it, Gorbachev wrote.

“We started perestroika in a situation of growing international tension. The arms race was spiraling anew. The war threat was increasing.”

“We live in a world of fundamental social shifts, of an all-embracing scientific and technological revolution, of worsening global problems - problems concerning ecology, natural resources, etc – and of radical changes in information technology. It is a world in which unheard of possibilities for development and progress lie side by side with abject poverty backwardness and medievalism. It is a world in which there are vast ‘fields of tension.’

“I have more than once told my interlocutors from the capitalist countries: Let us see and take into account the realities – there is the world of capitalism, and the world of socialism, and there is also a huge world of developing countries. The latter is the home of millions of people. All countries have their problems. But the developing countries have a hundred times more than other states. They have their own national interests. For decades they were colonies, stubbornly fighting for their liberation. Having gained independence, they want to improve their people’s life, to use their resources as they like, and to build an independent economy and culture. A balance of interests is needed. For the time being, no such balance exists. For now the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

“The time is ripe for abandoning views on foreign policy which are influenced by an imperial standpoint. Neither the Soviet Union nor the United States is able to force its will on others. It is possible to suppress, compel, bribe, break or blast, but only for a certain period. From the point of view of long-term, big-time politics, no one will be able to subordinate others. That is why only one thing – relations of equality – remains. All of us must realise this.”

Taking his perestroika philosophy to the field of disarmament, Gorbachev wrote. The world is living in an atmosphere not only of nuclear threat, but also of unresolved global problems. Everyone seems to agree that there would be neither winners nor losers in any future war.

For all the contradictions of the present-day world, for all the diversity of social and political systems in it, and for all the different choices made by the nations in different times, this world is nevertheless one whole. We are all passengers

aboard one ship, the Earth, and we must not allow it to be wrecked. There will be no second Noah's Ark"

Even before reading Perestroika, I had been fascinated by Gorbachev and his style of governing the Soviet Union and dealing with the world, including the United States of America.

Wasn't he shaping a new future, not only for his own country, but also for the whole world? Hadn't he, by dumping the rigid communist orthodoxy and totalitarianism of Stalin-Brezhnev eras, thrown the ball in the U.S. court, urging the flag-bearers of human rights, democracy and liberty to respond to the voice of reason, and renounce the philosophies of John Foster Dulles and Henry Kissinger?

There was a lot of speculation in the Moscow-watching quarters of the west that Gorbachev's bold revolt against the past practices and policies would result in a fierce counter-assault and he would be cut into pieces by the fundamentalists of communism.

Gorbachev, moving firmly and decisively in the direction of his perestroika, was beginning to prove that great 'causes if pursued sincerely and forcefully could break the barriers of dogma.

His book impressed me tremendously because of its logic, reason and above all sincerity.

The American response to his peace offensive and call for change, was by no means lacking in enthusiasm. For the first time in modern history, the leaders of the two super powers were prepared to listen to each other responsively.

And as I analysed the new situation, it dawned upon me that the U.S did not any more need to exploit the religious sentiments of the Muslim countries to check the threat of communism, because no such threat in reality existed now. The politics of the world was no longer moving under the cover of ideology. Nationalism and national interests had suddenly gained eminence in determining the direction of international relations.

My inference was that we could now count upon the prospect of the United States of America, providing support to our struggle for democracy.

I often discussed this healthy prospect with Munnoo Bhai. My hope was shared by him, and we infact started thinking of bringing out a high-quality weekly newspaper before the expected surge of events.

-How are we going to have the required financial resources for the kind of project you've in your mind?" Munnoo Bhai used to ask me." Midas is a big agency but it may take some time before it can finance a venture like that."

"We have worked hard and succeeded in keeping ourselves from being swallowed by the big sharks. The media does not patronise us the way it patronises them. The PTV management gets into panic if our credit figure crosses a couple of millions. We are asked to arrange cash, in order to stay in business. The favoured agencies however can easily avail the eight-figure credit. Despite this disadvantage we have been able to survive and grow. The important thing is determination. We just have to make up our mind. The rest will be managed,- I used to tell him.

During those days, an interesting event took place. Mohammad Khan Junejo, the prime minister of the country met the leaders of the opposition to forge a national consensus on the Geneva accord. Everyone attended that meeting, including the person Zia had vowed to keep away from Islamabad – Benazir Bhutto. It was clear that the super powers were determined to settle the Afghan problem peacefully. For Zia it was a great setback. The Afghan war had given him a strong excuse for staying in power. He needed that war to go on for a few more years.

But his needs could not be given preference to the new requirements of the global power game. Mohammad Khan Junejo went ahead with his decision to sign the Geneva Accord, and to agree upon the method and the timetable of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. It was an American decision. For the first time Zia found himself in a tight corner.

I did not rule out the possibility of Zia exploiting the sentiments of the Afghan freedom fighters to sabotage the peace plan for his own ulterior motives. He could easily project himself as a fearless soldier of Islam determined to hoist the victory flag in Kabul, and to prolong the agony and the suffering of the Afghan people. In his pursuit of prolonged power, he could engage his own country in a direct confrontation, the results of which were not difficult to foresee.

The man who was capable of hanging the father of his country's constitution could do anything for 'glory' and power.

Gorbachev, on the other side had gone so far as to set an unprecedented example of telling his people about the Soviet war losses in Afghanistan, and about the price the Soviet people had been made to pay for the misadventure of his predecessors, in terms of men and material.

The pragmatic leader of the Soviet Union had decided not to sail under false colours, and to take his nation into confidence. At the same time he had made it clear that in the age of openness and restructuring, false pride could not be allowed to determine the course of events and the fate of mankind.

In the past, victory at all costs had been the name of the game. The U.S. had learnt some lessons to the contrary in the Vietnam war. Now the Soviets were learning that there was no disgrace in dignified retreat, in the larger interests of the world peace.

ZIA ON THE RUN

It was some coincidence that the formal signing of the Geneva Peace Accord was preceded by the Ojhri tragedy. Was it really an accident and had no relevance to the political atmosphere in which it took place?

It is a question which I am not qualified to answer. Those who are may never answer it. When the wind of change starts blowing, such mishaps usually occur. But what happened on the 29th of May 1988 was not a mishap. The prime minister of the country was to arrive home from his tour of Japan. Zia was to leave for his tour of China. Those who were to accompany him had finalised their travel arrangements.

Suddenly some angel of Zia's special private heaven woke up from sleep, rushed to the holy man, and shocked him with the news that a conspiracy had been hatched to darken the future of his Shariah. The conspiracy had to be thwarted if he wished to retain the blessings of the gods of power.

Junejo was taken unaware and the people of Pakistan, in fact the whole world, were taken by surprise.

Announcing his decision to dismiss Junejo and his cabinet and to dissolve the assemblies, he informed the nation that, a man of God like him could not forever close his eyes to the rule of devils whom he had trusted only in the hope that his spiritual guidance would keep them from embracing the evils of democracy.

The assembly that he himself had taken pains to form after eight years of day-and-night meditation the cabinet he himself had declared fit after a series of vital tests, the prime minister he himself had picked from a long list of qualifiers, had all gone wayward, and were found guilty of all kinds of sins – the most condemnable being their declining respect for the holiness of Zia's power.

New caretaker cabinets were formed to ensure that the sacred responsibility of enforcing Shariah and perpetuating Zia's power went into the hands of only such faithfuls, who had taken bath in the pious waters of obedience. It was found that nearly all the passengers of Junejo's ill-fated boat of corruption were aboard the new ship. Only Junejo and his devoted few were missing. Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain had decided to avail his well earned leave from the corridors of power, to assess the direction of the wind.

I happened to meet Chaudhry Sahib those days. Munnoo Bhai too was with me. We wanted him to help us in acquiring a new declaration for a weekly. He promised to do whatever he could.

We asked him to give his opinion on Zia's decision to dissolve the assemblies.

"I personally can't understand why he did it. He has to hold new elections now according to the requirements of the constitution," Chaudhry Sahib replied. "He can't get again as docile and harmless an assembly as the one he has dissolved. What is your opinion?"

Our opinion may not please you Chaudhry Sahib," I replied. But as friends, we advise you to take a long vacation from politics, till about mid-nineties. I personally foresee a change that you are not expecting and that you are not going to find easy to digest. It needs courage to break the shackles of one's past. We want you to choose the right platform."

But I am with Junejo," Chaudhry said forcefully," and not with Zia."

"That's why we want you to disappear from politics for a few years. Let Junejo and Zia both become your past. Look into the future," I said with a smile.

Chaudhry Sahib was perplexed. He never had any pretensions to being a sharp man.

"Do you think there is going to be another martial law?" Chaudhry asked after a while.

"The era of martial laws is behind us now," Munnoo Bhai said, getting up. "The country cannot afford this luxury any more."

"But you can certainly afford to take that vacation, I have advised you Chaudhry Sahib," I remarked before leaving. "Give it a serious thought. You may end up on the right platform."

Chaudhry Sahib didn't take my advice seriously. As a result he soon found himself in the ranks of his enemy number one.

In our office those days, we used to discuss a lot about what could happen and what would happen. I was of the view that Zia was on the run now and fate was the hunter. He had outlived his utility in the eyes of those who had patronised him for years. He could also not count upon the unconditional support of his real power base any more. All the steps he had taken and was taking lacked in guile

and confidence. His speeches had never been impressive but now were simply ridiculous. Even a layman could read nervousness behind his contrived smiles.

“If a man after eleven years of rule tells his people,” I used to argue, that he has yet to start his Shariah – implementation programme and that during his reign the country has reached the brink of economic collapse, he has either to be a fool himself or has to be believing that this is a nation of fools. In either case his days seem to be numbered.”

My arguments used to give my friends and colleagues some hope. But having suffered Zia for so long, Shoaib Hashmi and Mohammad Idrees found it hard to believe that the nation would ever be fortunate enough to get rid of him.

BETWEEN DEAD YESTERDAY AND UNBORN TOMORROW

Mohammad Idrees had joined Midas after Ziaul Islam Ansari had taken over as the NPT Chairman.

Writing about Mohammad Idrees makes me sad. I still cant believe he is no more. We were colleagues for five months only. Before that we had not known each other personally. It was Munnoo Bhai's idea to have him in our team. He arranged our meeting, at the end of which he was a Midas man.

"I can't suffer fools,' he said to me. "I am glad you are not."

"Let me tell you that I've been your admirer from my college days. You were a legendary debator then and have never ceased to be a living legend in more ways than one,- I told him cheerfully.

"I had heard about you a lot," he replied with a smile. "You are as good as your reputation. Midas certainly is a spiders web. I've got caught."

"Thank you for the compliment, if it is intended to be a compliment," I said. "The truth is that I like to work with people who are above my height."

"On the contrary," he remarked, "I find myself just above your shoulders."

He was witty and brilliant. In a matter of few days we were very close friends. His command on English was well-known. I wanted Midas to benefit more and more from this ability of his.

"I am never sure of those articles, a and the etc," I told him one day while working jointly on a report. "They frustrate me. Otherwise I think my English is acceptable by our standards. But this report has to be just as brilliant as Mohammad Idrees. That's why I want you and just you to write it."

"I am not flattered Ghulam Akbar," he said, smiling. "You know the subject better than I do, and if you want me to lend my name to it, I have no objection to signing it. You can put my name at the bottom, but it will be written by you and just you."

“I am flattered by the degree of your confidence in my capability,” I said. “But let me tell you, I am quite capable of making a mistake or two in every paragraph, and it is going to be quite embarrassing for you to own something below your standards.”

“I appreciate your concern for my reputation Ghulam Akbar.” Idrees smiled. “But this subject is simply not my cup of tea.”

Idrees had always wanted to be the chief editor of the Pakistan Times which had consumed practically all of his life and to which he had mentally and spiritually always belonged. During the last days of Junejo’s government, he had nearly made it, having been given the responsibility of chief-editorship jointly with Sheikh Hafizur Rehman. Midas had hosted a dinner in their honour at its office. The informal, friendly and tension-free atmosphere of our agency had impressed Idrees, and he had told Munnoo Bhai that he would love to benefit from our expertise in some areas in his efforts to rebuild his newspaper. I infact had received a proposal from him through Munnoo Bhai that he would like me to write a regular column for the Pakistan Times. I had replied that if I could motivate myself enough, I would love to give his proposal a thought.

It was not to be. Ziaul Haque had dismissed Junejo’s cabinet and brought his henchmen back to power in the National Press Trust.

Idrees had landed in Midas.

I had plans for him. All of my senior colleagues, including Shoaib and Salima Hashmi agreed with these plans. We agreed to let Idrees take over the creative management of Midas, and if possible head the team that sold its creativity. I wanted him to get acclimatized fully before the proposal was put forth to him.

At last I held a meeting of the top executives, in this respect. In this meeting I explained the reasons of the company’s successes and failures, also strengths and shortcomings, handicaps and prospects, before telling them that I wanted to return to my original profession and had to ensure that the leadership of the company was taken over by the right person.

Idrees was quick to understand what I was upto. He intervened.

“We are all impressed by your highly motivating and inspiring speech, and by all the arguments you have put before us in the defense of your future strategy for our collective well-being. But if you are trying to convince us that any one amongst us is capable of doing all that you’ve been doing, none of us is prepared to embrace this self-deception. If I could be you, you would have been sitting on

this side of the table, listening to my lecture. Let us wind up this meeting with the note that our well-being lies in the growth of the company's business, and the growth of the company's business depends upon your capability to accept more responsibilities and work more."

Idrees had killed my plans with decisive firmness.

Next day, in a more informal atmosphere, sitting alone with me at Pearl Continental Lahore, he explained his reservations about my efforts to reorganise the setup.

"It pleases me to know about the degree of your confidence in my ability. But now that I know you so well, I also know that it is because of what you are and what you can do, more than any other reason, that Midas has come this far. I may be better than you in one area and someone else better in another area, but you can always find another Idrees, a lesser one may be. What this company needs, more than ever is more of you. The firmness with which you take difficult decisions and act is a quality that you should not try to expect from others, including Mohammad Idrees, Munnoo Bhai and Shoaib Hashmi. We will all be trying to do our best, but the best of you is what can push up this company higher"

"I have never bothered to evaluate myself. Still it is a compliment that I'll always cherish, because in my college days I really used to look up at you with envy. But I feel bogged down by Midas. I want to start working on my real plans. I don't have many active years left to achieve what I've always wanted to achieve," I said.

"Forget it," he advised me. "Building a new newspaper now is like adding a new wonder to the list of seven. You will never be able to have access to the kind of resources required."

"I am a great believer in the value and potential of human capital," I told him. "It's better to go down fighting than not to fight at all. In the U.S a couple of years back. I was lucky to view a T.V interview of Donald Trump. His decision to build a 150-storeyed building in New York, and to bring back to the city the honour of having the tallest structure in the world, was widely criticised by the experts. They all thought it was a mad mad idea, with no utility value and without any rationale. Trump defiantly replied that the United States of America had been built, not by wise men like his critics but by mad men like himself. Human civilization is nothing Idrees, but our ability to transform our madness into productive action."

My enthusiasm made Idrees smile.

“You’ve that special thing in you which I have always longed to have. Because I don’t have it, I am still aspiring for what I used to aspire three decades back.”

“You will get it Idrees, provided that you really want it,” I said.

He got it at last, though only a few days before his farewell to the world.

I did not meet him for several weeks before the news of his appointment as the Chief Editor of the Pakistan Times. He had gone on leave from Midas. That very day we met by chance at the Jang’s luncheon for Javed Jabbar.

He rushed to embrace me very emotionally.

“I wish you complete success Idrees,” I said.

“Don’t write me off from Midas. I am just on leave,” he replied cheerfully.

You are one of the best things that have happened to Midas,” I said, smiling.

“Thanks,” he replied, “I’ll need your advice and support to meet this challenge.”

A day before his heart finally failed, I went to see him at the Pakistan Times office. He was loaded with plans. He summoned one of his deputies to meet me and listen to what I had to say about how good, a newspaper could be.

Our next meeting was to take place after my return from Islamabad. At Islamabad, next morning, I learnt that the cheerful stylist, a man of great charm and goodness had passed away.

I have yet to believe he is no more.

Zia had promised to hold new elections as required by the constitution. The court decision to make it compulsory for him to hold these elections on party-basis did not make the desperate general happy. He seemed to be accepting this decision as an unavoidable evil.

But he would not have been Zia if he hadn’t changed his mind again.

The morning after the night he announced his election plans, I was taking my breakfast in a hurry, going through the newspapers as well. The saviour of ‘Islam’ had announced his inability to deviate from the teachings of his faith. He

could not accommodate the western concept of party-based elections. The nation just had to go to polls as a single party the party of Zia.

The Islam-loving general had again conveniently ignored the fact, that there had been two parties Ansaar and Mohajarin - in the race to find a successor to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).

I was to accompany Munnoo Bhai and Shoaib Hashmi to make a presentation that day. I was still reading the details when Munnoo Bhai arrived at my place alone.

“Where is Shoaib?” I asked.

“He is taking the longest bath of his life. I went to pick him up but he shouted from the bathroom that the devil had no intentions of accepting retirement, and the best thing Ghulam Akbar could do now was to give up his false hopes, make peace with the Messiah and enable Midas to earn butter with bread for all of us.”

“No matter what Zia does now,” I told Munnoo Bhai, “he cannot escape the inevitable.”

**THE TRUMPETS
OF VICTORY**

“The manner, in which the new chief of staff acted, brought unprecedented honour not only to his institution but also to the whole country. He proved to history that even though the uniform that he wore carried the same authority and power that his predecessors had enjoyed, the man in the uniform could make all the difference. “

ZIA'S SELF-APPOINTED SUCCESSOR!

Ziaul Hague had discovered Nawaz Sharif before the young industrialist-turned-chief minister discovered the advantages of defending Zia's Islam.

After his brief association with Asghar Khan's Tehrik which had helped Mian Nawaz Sharif to establish his political credentials, the young gentle and harmless looking chief executive of the Ittefaq group of industries was ready to board the martial law ship, As the Punjab's minister of finance, he didn't impress anybody in the beginning, because of his inability to look acceptably intelligent. He was not particularly keen to make any pretense to brilliance, and seemed to be pretty satisfied with his image of gentleness. He allowed himself to be surrounded by all sorts of wise men who were prepared to lend their political acumen to him. His main strength lay in the riches of his family. He could buy wisdom at will and also finance his political ambitions extensively. His first patron, General Jilani, the governor of the Punjab recognised this strength of his. There could not be a better collaborator than a wealthy industrialist, hungry for more wealth. Zia found in the young protégé of General Jilani, all, that he was looking for in his civilian generals who would eventually be required to replace martial law with 'Islamic' democracy.

Ibn-e-Khaldoon, the great Muslim philosopher of history had argued in his Muqqadama that a society that gave political power to such men who were engaged in trade and money-making, stood no chance of avoiding corruption and degeneration, and that it was the first prerequisite of a Muslim state to keep power away from the hands of those whose interests lay in making fortunes.

But Zia's version of Islam was quite liberal in this respect. As long as one could find time to offer one's prayers and recite the Holy Verses of God, one was free to explore all possible avenues of fortune-making, including smuggling and drug-trade. Fortunes thus made could be used to consolidate the power of Zia and his team, and to help the cause of the ideology of Pakistan.

Nawas Sharif's credentials and potential in this respect could not be overlooked. The more powerful he was made, the higher the fortunes of his family would soar, and the greater his potential of buying support for himself and Zia became, the happier 'Islam' would feel in the grip of dictatorship.

Thus it was that the political and the material fortunes of Nawaz Sharif kept rising, and he, despite those restraints and constraints in the area of natural

intelligence and ability, was able to build his own power-base in the largest province of the country, in defiance and to the exclusion of all other pretenders to, and aspirants of effective authority.

From March 1985 when Nawaz Sharif was made the Chief Minister of the Punjab, to May 1988 when Junejo and his men were ousted from power. Zia had been playing his game with great dexterity and cunning. A new brand of Muslim League had appeared on the national scene, to fill the political vacuum, but Zia was not prepared to let any political party acquire any degree of stability. Nawaz Sharif was always there to remind Junejo that the ruling Muslim League was not a single party but an alliance of two groups, one headed by the Punjab Chief Minister himself.

These two groups finally became independent of each other after the dissolution of the assemblies. Nawaz had his own Muslim League now, to serve the cause of Zia, in case the 'unislamic' concept of party-based elections became unavoidable.

In the months of June and July 1988, a general speculation was allowed to gain ground, and in fact was encouraged by Zia's quarters, that there was no question of the PPP being accepted by either the armed forces or the U.S. The only alternative to the power of Zia and his men was Junejo's Muslim League, which was projected as the torch-bearer of democracy, enjoying the support of the U.S government and the sympathy of a faction of the armed forces.

To build the image of Junejo league, the services of Interflow, a top ad agency of the country were hired.

A key executive of this agency is reported to have claimed that the kind of money that had been placed at the disposal of the agency, was more than enough to catapult Junejo into power again.

"We are experts at selling merchandize and no matter how poor the quality of the product is, we can make it the hottest commodity in the country," he boasted. "The moment Junejo hired our services, he had ensured for his party, a landslide victory in the elections."

When this conversation was reported to me by one of our executives who happened to be present there, I could not help feeling proud of my profession.

"Advertising has come of age," I thought. "Admen are going to perform a vital role in the forthcoming elections."

What perplexed me was the attitude of placing Junejo with Dandy chewing gum, Crystal toothpaste and Premium Pride tea as a merchandize to be sold through Bata-style advertising.

At this very time the Interflow people proudly declared that their agency had also been awarded a contract to make documentaries for the image-building of the army.

So rich were their expectations, that they set up a big office in the capital to meet the requirements of their future role in the affairs of the country.

I personally believed, that the importance that Zia was allowing to be associated with Junejo's League, was a part of the strategy to shift the focus away from the Pakistan Peoples Party.

What was causing concern in Zia's quarters was the sudden hawkishness of Jama'at-i-Islami in its advocacy of democracy from the MRD platform. Qazi Hussain Ahmad and Professor Abdul Ghafoor were no longer trustworthy Trojan horses and their attacks on Zia were getting out of proportion. The Jama'at's Amir had done no service to Islam by exposing Zia's fortune-building projects behind the cover of piety and virtuousness. Instead of undermining the importance of the PPP in the MRD, the Jama'at leaders were firing their guns at the supreme defender of Islam.

Zia quickly acquired the services of Mustafa Sadiq the editor-owner of daily Wifaq to remove the misunderstandings between the government and Jama'at-i-Islami. As Federal Minister of Public Affairs, Mustafa Sadiq was also expected to be a member of the secret cell Zia had formed to launch a character assassination campaign against Benazir Bhutto and her mother. The architect of this campaign was to be ZA. Suleri.

The reason of Jama'at-i-Islami getting increasingly vocal against Zia was not that the Jama'at's leaders had suddenly developed some love for democracy and had mentally conceded the right of ruling the country to the majority party, but that they had read the writing on the wall, and wanted to exploit the opportunity to make their organisation appear anti-dictatorship in character.

At Mansoorah the Jama'at's headquarters, a much more extensive strategy was being finalised secretly, to take on the PPP by conducting the most naked, the most ruthless, the most unscrupulous and the most well-financed character assassination campaign against its chairperson and co-chairperson. Some top professionals, with experience and expertise in the field of mass communications

had been hired for this task. The services of Orient, another top ad agency of the country, had been placed at the disposal of these professionals.

We, at Midas were aware of the plans of the so-called lovers of Islam, and had decided to commit ourselves wholeheartedly, with whatever resources we had, to the cause of the daughter of the east. It was a decision taken without her blessings and her knowledge. We did not need the formality of being hired. "Great causes should not be pursued as assigned jobs,' we told each other. "Let us ourselves appoint Midas as the advertising agency of the Pakistan Peoples Party."

Zia had not closed the option of further postponing the elections, if the scenario did not go according to his plans.

His plans included:

- (a) Promotion of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi as the new head of the government.
- (b) Consolidation of Nawaz Sharif's power in the Punjab and strengthening of his hold on the Muslim League.
- (c) Emphasis on partyless elections to ensure success of the government-backed candidates.
- (d) In case the court decision to hold the elections on party-basis became difficult to overrule, curtailment of the PPP voting strength by disenfranchising those, not carrying identity cards.
- (e) Non-issuance of identity cards to the have-not classes with overwhelming support for the PPP.
- (f) Foolproof arrangements for rigging wherever manipulation of results was found necessary.
- (g) Involving Shariah Court to get a verdict against a woman heading the government.
- (h) Large-scale character-assassination campaign against Benazir Bhutto and Nusrat Bhutto.
- (i) Mobilisation of all the groups of the vested interests against the PPP leadership.

(j) Creation of scare in the ranks of those who feared that the PPP rule could mean revenge and victimisation.

(k) Promotion of regional chauvinism in the Punjab to create hostility against Sindhi leadership.

(l) Projection of the PPP as being against Islam, Pakistan and all moral codes.

Despite all these plans, Zia was relying too heavily on his past successes and glory. It was well within his power to implement these plans but he did not have enough power to change the direction of the wind.

On the 14th of August 1988, there was an MRD public meeting at Rawalpindi. Khan Wali Khan addressing it, said:

“The time has come for the army to decide whether it wants to stay as Zia’s constituency or to perform its constitutional role – the role which requires it to defend the country’s frontiers, its sovereignty, its honour.”

On the 17th of August 1988, I was taking dinner at my home, when I received a call from Syed Mamtaz Shah of Dawn.

“Congratulations Akbar Sahib,” he shot out in an excited tone of voice.

“What’s the matter?” I was perplexed by the joy in his voice. “General Mohammad Ziaul Haque is dead.”

I was stunned. As a Muslim, I couldn’t allow myself to rejoice in anyone’s death – even the death of the man who had tormented the nation for more than eleven years.

And there were those innocent ones too who hadn’t been his partners-in-crime but had died in the tragic plane crash.

Zia had lived by the sword and had died by the sword, proving to the world, the truth of the thesis, that from one’s very first crime one could have no escape.

To Syed Mamtaz shah I said, “From Him we all come and to Him we all have to return.”

A NEW MAN IN THE OLD UNIFORM

Fellow countrymen

The tragic death of the president in the plane crash, which has also deprived us of several distinguished military officers, leaves me with no option except to fulfill my duty to the nation. The goal of holding general elections to pave way for the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people remains our top priority, but the problems the country is facing today and the vacuum created by the sudden demise of the president demand certain unavoidable steps – the most important being the proclamation of a state of emergency to deal with the grave situation the country finds itself in.

For the general elections to be held in a free, fair and impartial manner, for justice to prevail in the country in totality, it is important to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and national consensus on vital matters. The late General Ziaul Hague, committed though he was to the sacred cause of enforcing Islamic principles and values at every level in the country, was after all a human being. He was not without faults. I find it hard to defend his treatment of the opposition in general and the leaders of the Pakistan Peoples Party in particular. It makes me sad to note that his policies have resulted in so much polarisation in our society. A grand sincere effort at national level is required to create a harmonious and tension-free atmosphere in the country. I have great respect for all our parties and their leaders and I am sure they will join hands with me in our collective quest for mutual understanding. I am also sure that it is not going to take us very long to create an atmosphere of mutual goodwill, so necessary for the success of democracy.

Till such time, I seek the cooperation of the whole nation and its leaders in carrying out my responsibilities as the new head of your government. I hereby declare that.....”

This, roughly, could well have been the speech we might have listened to, on the night of the 17th of August, 1988.

But the new man in command of the Pakistan Army had no political ambitions and did not need the services of a crafty speechwriter. He was determined to prove that the great institution to which he belonged was not to be blamed for the deeds and the acts of few generals who in the past had acted in their individual capacity. The manner, in which the new chief of staff acted, brought

unprecedented honour not only to his institution but also to the whole country. He proved to history that even though the uniform that he wore carried the same authority and power that his predecessors had enjoyed, the man in the uniform could make all the difference. General Mirza Aslam Baig, the new Chief of Staff, by tradition the strongest man in the country, made our hearts jump with joy when he made it clear that instead of drawing his strength from the uniform, he wore, he was going to make his uniform a symbol of pride for the nation.

Most people are not aware of the pressures to which the leaders of the Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad subjected General Baig before, during and after the elections.

They were prepared to provide him with more than sufficient reasons to act in the defense of Islam and defiance of the constitution. A lesser human being would almost certainly have fallen to the temptation. The gentle-looking, mild-mannered and soft-spoken general however displayed much more strength of conscience and conviction than had been expected.

Some cynics may like to believe that the general was in no position, because of certain national and international constraints, to secure power for himself and the army. But I am convinced that if the general had decided to keep his options open, he would have found ways and means of dealing with every situation. That he had opted to have no options speaks volumes about his character.

A week before the elections, I met an industrialist of Lahore who apart from being my personal friend, also happened to be a client of Midas.

He was very unhappy at the way I had associated myself and Midas with the cause of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

It is one thing to take up an assignment professionally for business reasons," he said, "and quite another to write such fiery anti-IJI and anti Nawaz articles for Mussawat. You may well have signed your own doom and that of your agency too."

"I don't have a bad business sense," I replied. "But I also happen to have a good conscience."

"Where was your conscience when you wrote that book on Bhutto?"

"I wouldn't have been against Bhutto if I didn't have a conscience. And because I have a conscience, I am for his daughter," I retorted.

“She is going to skin you alive if she manages to come into power. She can’t forgive that book. And you are not going to be forgiven by the IJI and Nawaz Sharif either. I feel sorry for you.”

“When I wrote that book I thought I was right. Now that I know the truth and have linked my destiny with the PPP, I think I am right. To be right is more important for me than any thing else. I want to feel very very proud of our army and I am sure this time we are not going to be betrayed. Let us pray for the country’s future and worry less about who is going to skin whom alive.” I added. “But I want you to be cautious. You may not care about your business interests, but our business interests too are linked with your agency and I don’t want an unpleasant situation.”

It was more or less a warning and I took it seriously. I decided in my mind to resign the account, after fulfilling my obligations under our contract.

My friend was shocked when this decision was conveyed to him in February 1989.

“Resigning a Rs. four-million account is not a wise step,” I conveyed to him. “But business is not everything in life for me. We are going to be better friends now that we don’t have business relations.”

This incident is indicative of the nature of propaganda that had been launched by the anti-PPP forces during the election campaign. Rumours had widely been circulated to the effect that the whole exercise was intended only to provide catharsis to the pent-up emotions of the masses, and that there was utterly no likelihood of the army ever agreeing on the transfer of power to the PPP. The purpose of this propaganda was not only to keep some middle-class and upper-class sympathisers of the PPP from aligning openly with the party and committing their resources to the campaign, but also to apply brakes on the enthusiasm of the PPP workers and to create an atmosphere of uncertainty and despondency in the party ranks.

Most of the IJI enthusiasts were of course convinced that there was actually no likelihood of the PPP forming a government. Without such a belief Orient would never have gone all out to align itself completely with the IJI and link its fortunes with the destiny of Nawaz Sharif and his-allies.

I personally know that S.H. Hashmi has not any special love for the causes the UI stands for and it was basically a business decision on his part to handle the advertising of the UI. If he had mentally given the PPP even twenty-five percent chance, he would have chosen to stay back at home and wait for the results. It

was the first time in his shrewd business career that he had failed to invest on every horse.

We had a man planted in the advertising cell of the Orient-UI alliance. He used to pass on vital information to us. He told me on the 10th of November 1988 that there was a general belief in those quarters, shared wholeheartedly by S.H. Hashmi, that the probability of the elections being called off at the last minute could not be written off.

I also learnt that a hectic search for my book on Bhutto was going on so that the PPP leaders could be apprised, with proof, of the risk they had taken in assigning an avowed -Bhutto-hater- to handle the advertising of Bhutto's party. Though the book had been out of print for eleven years, they did manage to dig out a few copies. What they did not know was the fact, that no one had given us that assignment, and that we had, on our own, taken it as a matter of conviction. They also did not know that as compared to the millions that had been placed at their disposal, to shoot down the image of the Bhutto family, the PPP did not have even thousands, to invest on the counter-offensive we had planned. The instructions from the top were to restrict ourselves only to the issues, to be decent in our approach, to be tolerant in our behavior and to be aware of our limitations in the area of finance.

I was not particularly happy with the situation. The other camp was loaded with guns and cash. They were campaigning ruthlessly on the lines of fascism, investing heavily on all those lies which were intended to look and sound like truths through repetition. The power of the media too was with them.

We had nothing but restraints and constraints, financial as well as philosophical, in our depleted arsenal.

What was more depressing was the attitude of some PPP leaders of the Punjab. They were relying too heavily on the charisma of Benazir Bhutto and quite reluctant to commit their own resources, time and effort to their party's cause. In some quarters, there was an unhealthy atmosphere of complacency too, and some infighting as well.

We had come to know that Nawaz Sharif and the IJI had planted agents in the PPP ranks and there was also the possibility of some trusted and vocal PPP activists having secret links with the man who was stinking with money and was prepared to use it to buy anyone out. Jama'at-i-Islami had found in him a great opportunity for itself. His ambitions could be fully exploited. To pump his ego, to build his hopes, to nourish his expectations, and to make him believe fiercely in his potential and destiny, the Jama'at's agents were all around him. They were

feeding him with crazy ideas. They were convincing him that by becoming the hero of the Punjab, he could more than match Benazir Bhutto for national leadership. He didn't have to have intellect, brilliance and wisdom to lead the nation. Money was an effective substitute. With money he could buy everything, all possible commodities, including intellect, brilliance wisdom and loyalty. The love of Islam was of course a readily available plus-point, a precious legacy of Zia, testified generously by Qazi Hussain Ahmad and company, its sole distributors.

The press was not lacking in enthusiasm to oblige hire, in response to his generosity in the area of granting sanctions and favours.

If the press was prepared to project him as a leader of Benazir's stature and as her potential alternative, the people too could be made to invest their hopes on this belief.

On the night of the 14th of November 1988, two days before the polling, we were having, with a few foreign journalists staying at Avari Lahore, an informal exchange of views on the prospects. Bashir Riaz, who had been an enthusiastic and tireless campaigner for Benazir Bhutto and the PPP throughout, was there too.

A young and intelligent British journalist suddenly asked Munoo Bhai: "Isn't it an insult to common sense to compare Nawaz with Benazir? He seems to be a gentle person but he doesn't have any clue to -what this whole exercise is about. It is hard for us to engage him into a conversation, equally hard to expect any worthwhile words from him. Some one has to be on his side to answer for him. Is Mr. Hussain Haqqani going to be the next prime minister of Pakistan? How the hell you choose your leaders?"

"We haven't chosen him," Munnoo Bhai replied. "Zia chose him initially, and now he has chosen himself."

It is not my intention in this book, to write about the elections of 1988, about the intrigues that went behind the curtain for the formation of a united alliance of the forces of status quo, dogma and vested interest against Benazir Bhutto, and her party, and about the details of the strategy that was developed and pursued ruthlessly and relentlessly by the IJI in its hate-Bhutto campaign.

The subject is so extensive and its scope so vast, that I can't do justice to it here in this book. I am leaving for my next work all the details of how the IJI was formed, what went on day and night at Mansoor, how the character-assassination campaign against the Bhutto family was conceived and conducted, and how the

complacency of the Punjab PPP leaders was taken advantage of, in projecting Nawaz Sharif as the leader of the Punjab VS Benazir Bhutto as the leader of Sindh.

I hope that the next book of mine would be a chronicled history of events, unlike this one which was intended, and has turned out to be a story of my own beliefs and experiences over a period of about three decades from my boyhood days to my fiftieth year in this world.

That I have been a journalist and worked in the mass communication field in various senior and responsible positions, qualifies me to write, purely from my personal standpoint, about my country and its leaders, my beliefs and their origins, and my generation and its thinking.

Not all that I have written may be truth, and nothing but the truth. But I am convinced that I have done full justice to my beliefs, hopes and dreams. Pakistan was not created to become a hunting ground for the soldiers of fortune. The Holy Prophet's Islam (peace be upon him) cannot be allowed to be used against its followers as an instrument of spreading bigotry, mutual animosity, hypocrisy, sectarian hatreds and blood-thirst.

It is not Islamic to hang little thieves and let great ones escape.

Let us not forget that it is not the beard that makes the philosopher or the saint. When rogues decide to put on saintly robes and go in procession, the devil always holds the cross. He should not be mistaken as a follower of Christ. History tells us that those whose claims to piety are the loudest have the most heinous crimes to hide. The most vocal Muslim amongst us can well be the most persistent wrong-doer. The greatest talkers are the least doers.

We have been hoodwinked too much, too often, for too long, to remain vulnerable to swindlers.

Let us not let men punish us on account of the deeds for which we are accountable to God only. And let us not hesitate to punish one another on account of the deeds for which we are accountable to one another.

This is the ideology for which Pakistan was created.

THE VOICE OF HISTORY

The long winter was over at last.

There was fragrance in the wind, the fragrance of the long-awaited spring, the fresh flowers, the sweet hopes, the victorious resolve, the rediscovered freedom and the reborn democracy.

The trumpets of victory were blowing all over the country. The three-colour combination of the green, the black and the red, so fiercely despised during the Zia era, could be seen filling the skies of Pakistan from Karachi to Khyber. The outlaws of the past were now the law-givers of the country. Events had taken a decisive turn.

It was the afternoon of the second of December 1988. History was being created at the presidency.

A young woman, hardly thirty-five, married only a year back, mother of an infant, was being sworn in as the new head of the government of Pakistan.

It had been the same month, seventeen years back, when her father had become the first genuinely elected head of the state and government.

She had seen her father's times as a young girl. She had witnessed his fall from power on the night of the fifth of July 1977. She had gone through the agony of watching his trial in the courts of Zia. She had been a helpless spectator to the fairplay drama written produced and directed by Zia and staged before a civilized world in civilized times. The last act of this play had shown her father, also the father of her country's constitution, being hanged in the name of justice.

From the fourth of April 1979 to that day, the second of December 1988, she had known no rest, no peace, no other reason to live, except to vindicate the honour of her illustrious father.

All along her Odyssey-like voyage, she had felt his strength inside her, had learnt to hang onto this strength, had done a lot of talking to him in her thoughts, and had developed an invincible faith in her own destiny.

I was in the lobby of Islamabad Hotel that afternoon, watching the TV coverage of the swearing-in ceremony.

As she walked up victoriously in the company of the president of Pakistan, she was using all her strength to fight down her tears. The story of the past years was written on her face and in her eyes.

I could read it. It was a moment of ecstasy which had brought back all the agony of remembrance.

I had a feeling that she was talking to herself during those moments.

“Its not all over for you Benazir. Till a few moments back, you were only Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s daughter. Now you are the daughter of destiny, the elected prime minister of Pakistan. His name has brought you here. Now you are on your own, with nothing but your own will, your own strength, your own insight, your own faculties, your own mind and your own soul to help you in carrying on the fight. It is not your personal fight. They hate you because you are Bhutto’s daughter, because you carry his name. They hated him because he had blown the trumpets of change. They got rid of him and are determined to get rid of you too. They have many weapon’s in their arsenal. They have the power of the press with them. Also the street power and the power of the clergy. Above all, they have money, the fountainhead of all power. They are going to go all out to destabilise your government, through propaganda and through intrigue. In the Punjab they are going to fight for the rights of the Punjabis. In the assembly they are going to champion the cause of Islam. They are going to dig out as many issues as are required to put you on to defensive – the issue of Kashmir, of Indo-Pak relations, of any sort that can help them. Your only strength lies in the mandate of the people which has brought you here. You have to add to this strength, the strength of your own being – all that you have within you, all that you are as a person. They have been blinded by their hate-Bhutto psyche. They are going to keep adding fuel to the fires of polarization. But you can’t afford to be blind to the interests of your country. You are going to keep trying to build bridges and heal wounds. The painful memories of the past have to be set aside, in order to direct the collective energies of the nation to the solution of the complex problems of the country. You have been voted into power on the tidal wave of great expectations, but the means and the resources available to you are as meagre in quantity as is the organisational structure in quality. You have to act under so many restraints and constraints. First of all you need commanders you can trust, a structure you can depend upon. You will have to rely on arbitrary decisions and adhocism till such time that you have built a competent team with the desired level of commitment.

The problems are in so many areas. The educational standards have gone down alarmingly and the literacy rate remains dismal. The country’s economy is in

ruins. They ruined it due to their patronization of corruption for political ends, and lack of long-term planning.

“There is so much to be done, and you and you alone have to do it. Only by succeeding, you can silence your enemies and critics, and prove to history that your father was not a criminal but a victim of a crime”

The oath of office she had taken was a legal formality which had made her the defender-in-chief of the country, Quaid-e-Azam had founded.

This oath had been listened to, and applauded.

But there was another oath too – the one she had taken silently in her mind – the oath that she would prove to the world that being a woman didn’t disqualify her from shouldering the responsibilities which, ever since the advent of the human race on the planet, the male of the species had monopolised.

Present in the ceremony was Begam Nusrat Bhutto too, looking up at Benazir with a mixture of agony and joy in her tearful eyes. There now stood her serene daughter where once her mercurial husband used to stand – the flamboyant and firebreathing visionary who had always enjoyed being in turbulent seas and thundering storms – the man of destiny whom even death could not kill, a lone wizard in a crowd of pygmies who had ventured to take on an army of Goliaths, and who had walked up to the gallows with his pride and dignity intact.

As the ceremony ended, my mind went blank. There was a void around and inside me. Through this blankness and void the voice of history seemed to be addressing me:

“Reward and punishment are the walls of a city. Who was punished and who was rewarded, only God knows. Only He can read intentions. Only He can judge deeds”

-Happy is the country that has no history, but your country has a history of so many martial laws, of the assassination of one and the hanging of another prime minister, of a plane crash that killed a president of an organisation that opposed its very creation before becoming the sole defender of its ideology.”

“Still there can always be a new beginning. It has been proved that slander cannot make a patriot, a traitor; when water recedes the stone is still there.”

“It has also been proved that destiny has four feet, eight hands and sixteen eyes and the ill-doer, with only two of each, cannot escape. It has further been proved

that in the final reckoning, one's own actions are one's security, not other's judgements."

"Your country has to forget the bitterness of its past. It has to have a new beginning. The remedy for injuries is not in remembering them. The cure lies in having a goal in front, not behind."

Can we do it?

This is the question I have been asking myself since that day – the second of December 1988. As I write my last lines, the date on the calendar is the twelfth of March 1989.

Can we do it, my fellow citizens of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan?

Or it has already been written on the wall that the next century would see, a National Republic of Mohajaristan, a National Republic of Sindh, a National Republic of the Punjab and a National Republic of Pakhtoonistan!

If our future history is already being authored on this pattern, the only way to defy these designs and to defend our collective nationhood and sovereignty is by respecting the peoples mandate.

EPILOGUE

We have witnessed a strange phenomenon during the first hundred days of Benazir's government. The Punjab, with nearly 60% of the country's population used to be the champion of a strong centre, and the remaining provinces used to propagate that a strong centre meant the hegemonic dominance of the Punjab because of its overwhelming numerical superiority. Suddenly it is the Punjab that is threatening the strength of the centre and is trying to weaken the hold of the federal government on the country.

The situation has been created due to the failure of the PPP to win majority in the province of the Punjab. This failure has been due to various reasons, the supposed disenchantment of the people of the Punjab with the PPP not being one of them. The fact that the voting strength for the PPP in the province has been far superior to that for the UI, clearly proves that there has been no major shift in the loyalties of the Punjabi voters. The masses remain overwhelmingly loyal to the party of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The manner in which Benazir was received by the masses on her short tour of the Punjab during the election campaign and the hugeness of the public gatherings she addressed showed the magnitude of her appeal and popularity. The results of the elections however betrayed our expectations. The main reason lay in the complacency of the PPP leadership of the province. There was virtually no organisation to counter the IJI propaganda, plans and strategy. Everyone seemed to be relying heavily on the personal popularity of Benazir and on the magic of the name of her father.

There was a great deal of sabotage too. Nawaz Sharif, with his money, and Jama'at-i-Islami with its organisation proved to be a formidable combination. They had their agents everywhere and at every level, even in the ranks of the PPP. The eleven years of Zia had created a new establishment which was extensively indoctrinated and enslaved to the vested interests. Another factor that went for the IJI was the hostility of the media against the PPP. The press seemed to be determined to identify Benazir with Sindh and Nawaz Sharif with the Punjab. This was the theme which Jama'at-i-Islami also had developed to weaken the PPP image in the Punjab.

This theme continues to flourish.

The Punjab PPP due to its lack of competent leadership has allowed the IJI propaganda to succeed in its initial objectives. Jama'at-i-Islami's hold on Nawaz Sharif continues to be strong. Its agents are practically shaping Nawaz's policies and giving them voice and expression.

But this alliance of convenience cannot last for very long. Nawaz belongs to a party that boasts of defending the Quaid's heritage. And Quaid-i-Azam remains a lesser Muslim and a near-infidel in the text books of Jama'at-i-Islami. Sooner or later the contradictions are going to make Nawaz realise that he cannot afford to keep feeding his personal ambitions at the expense of national interests.

Nawaz is merely a pawn in the game Jama'at-i-Islami is playing. Only by proving that democracy cannot function effectively in Pakistan, the Jama'at leaders can create a hope for themselves. It may be their last battle against democracy. They don't have any special love for either Nawaz Sharif or the Punjab. They only want to use the two against Benazir and the democratic order.

Benazir knows it, and despite the incompetence of her overenthusiastic deputies, she has, so far, handled the situation with great coolness wisdom and patience. She is Bhutto's daughter, which explains her brilliance. But that coolness, that patience, that willingness to bear insults bravely and that remarkable strength of character, are all her own. She knows that time is with her and she does not have to be in a hurry. Her first objective is to wear down her adversaries and opponents, to convince them that she is the captain, not a passenger. Co-pilots are welcome, but ultimately it is the captain of the crew whose will should really matter and prevail.

Her father knew the establishment inside out, because of his years with Ayub Khan. But she is a new-comer. She has yet to know them well.

When she knows them all in their true colours, when she is hundred percent sure of her choices, she is going to be in a position to build a winning team. That's when, in my opinion, the true Benazir era will begin. The phase between this point and that point is going to be a test of endurance for her, a trial-and-error period of discovering the Trojan Horses and of learning about the weaknesses and the strengths of those whom she is going to depend upon.

For all those who dream of marching on into the next century as a united, advanced, prosperous and strong nation, Benazir Bhutto is more than a person, much more than a prime minister. She is Pakistan's hope and destiny.

March 12, 1989