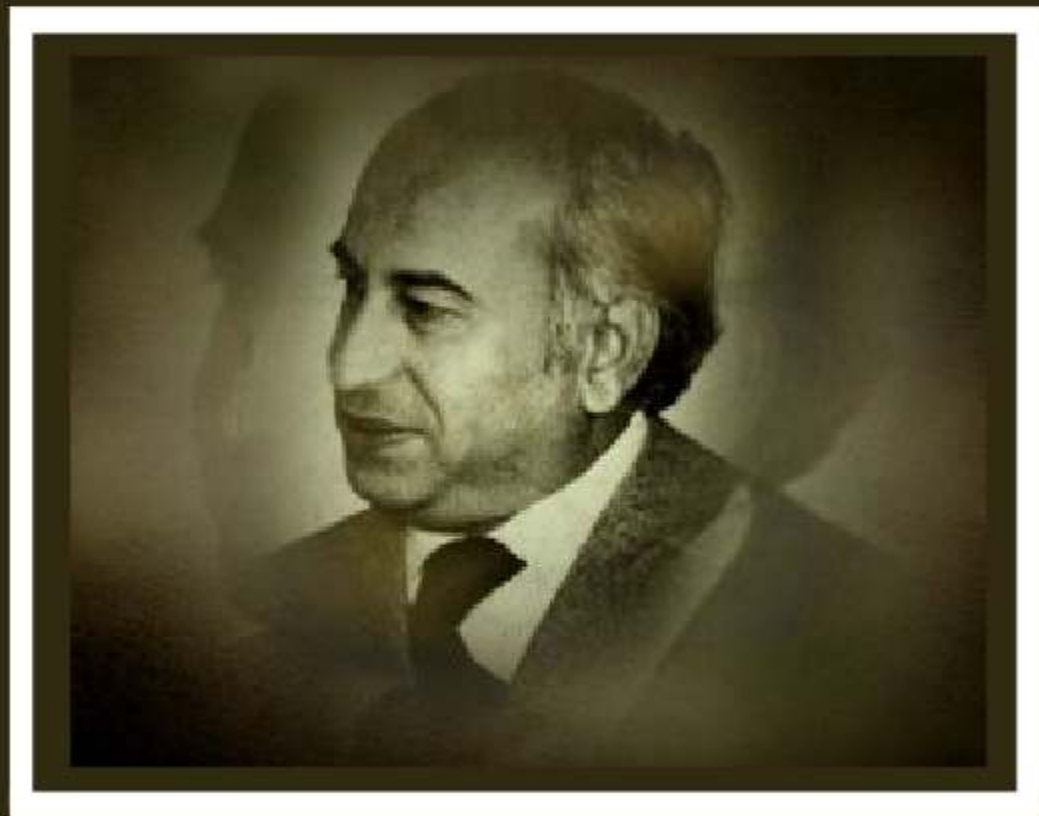


Bhutto a Political Biography

By: Salmaan Taseer



Reproduced By:
Sani Hussain Panhwar
Member Sindh Council, PPP

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PREFACE

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a political phenomenon. In a country where the majority of politicians have been indistinguishable, grey and quick to compromise, he stalked among them as a Titan. He has been called 'blackmailer', 'opportunist', 'Bhutto Khan' (an undisguised comparison with Pakistan's military dictators Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan) and 'His Imperial Majesty the Shahinshah of Pakistan' by his enemies. Time magazine referred to him as a 'whiz kid' on his coming to power in 1971. His supporters called him Takhare Asia' (The Pride of Asia) and Anthony Howard, writing of him in the *New Statesman*, London, said 'arguably the most intelligent and plausibly the best read of the world's rulers'. Peter Gill wrote of him in the *Daily Telegraph*, London: 'At 47, he has become one of the third world's most accomplished rulers.' And then later, after a change of heart and Bhutto's fall from power, he described him as 'one of nature's bounders'. Senator McGovern called him 'a man of peace'. The spectrum of epithets is wide, as indeed the man was complex.

He was a politician of egregious guile and shrewdness. Long before other politicians of his time, he recognised the need to direct his appeal to the poor and dispossessed. He cut across traditional political lines with devastating effect, leaving in his wake shattered myths and establishing in the process a whole new type of politics. His rhetoric taught the poor masses of Pakistan to hold their heads high, telling them that they 'were the real fountain of power'.

I first saw Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in August 1966 when, as a student in London, I went to hear him address the Pakistani community in Britain at the Conway Hall. He had just left Field Marshal Ayub Khan's cabinet and his opposition to the recently signed Tashkent peace agreement with India was an open secret. His youthfulness, his rhetorical powers, his fashionable left-wing views and his fervent Pakistani nationalism all served to captivate me.

It was after returning to Pakistan to participate in the anti-Ayub movement that I first met Bhutto at the house of Hafeez Pirzada, a young lawyer and party worker destined to rise and fall with his political master. Despite his growing political importance and his devastatingly acute-intellect, Bhutto found time at that dinner party to talk at length with me. As well as captivated, I was hugely flattered that he should squander so much of his time and energy on a young devotee. Yet it was on that occasion also that I first encountered another side of the Bhutto phenomenon. I had asked him why he did not ask a prominent left-wing student leader to join his party 'Became I've f—d his hunt,' he replied, 'and I think he hates me for it.'

During his first years of power I found myself, like many of my countrymen and many foreigners, torn between breathless admiration and violent antipathy for the man. In July 1976 I decided to try finally to resolve these contradictory feelings, and wrote to him saying I intended to write his biography. We met at his residence in Karachi. Bhutto greeted me, relaxed and dressed informally in a bush-shirt. He immediately put me at ease, referring to various matters I had mentioned in my letter. He then proceeded to recall, with a clarity that left me incredulous, a conversation we had once had. As I had not met Bhutto for seven years, I could not conceal my surprise at his retentive powers. He smiled and replied: 'Well, that's my job.'

Bhutto was overthrown by the army a year after that meeting and the long process of his trials and execution presented the opportunity to examine his life and political work with greater objectivity. I have tried to avoid turning this narrative into the duller sort of history book, and have chosen to use the watersheds of his career as a means of illuminating Bhutto's brilliant, exasperating, self-destructive and still enigmatic political personality.

His detractors condemn him, pointing to his years of power with its undoubted flaws and misrule as a justification. But one must look at his entire political career to judge him better. As a minister in Ayub Khan's cabinet and in political diaspora he made an indelible mark on the politics of his country. Possibly it is for this period of his political life that he will be most remembered. His creative foreign policy, iconoclasm, youth, the political education and respect he gave the poor, his populist style, courage, all combine to enshrine him in the corridors of history. As Prime Minister he redirected Pakistan's economic priorities, projected himself continually at the masses, realigned foreign policy towards radicalism, Islam and third world countries, stabilized Pakistan after the 1971 defeat and gave the country a Constitution. These are real accomplishments which his autocracy, unscrupulousness and whims tarnish but cannot efface.

A number of friends, family and well-wishers have helped me with my labour: my wife Yasmin, who patiently and understandably tapped away, typing my dictation and scribbles into a coherent form and helping me with manuscripts. Raja Ehsan Aziz, who collected incredible quantities of information and interviews – his contribution was invaluable and his friendship an added reward; Bunny Saiduddin and Sameena Rehman who helped me collect data; Yawar Hilaly, Zafar Hilaly, Ali Afridi, Farida Atallah, my mother Mrs. C Taseer and Shanaz Fancy, whose advice and criticism were invaluable. I am also grateful to Peter Gill, correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph, who has given me the benefit of his insights into the circumstances of Bhutto's overthrow

which he covered for his newspaper. I have, of course, to add that any mistakes or errors in judgment are mine alone.

SALMAAN TASEER
Lahore May 1979

Chapter One

THE BHUTTOS OF LARKANA

Sindh, home of the Bhutto clan and one of the provinces of modern Pakistan, is a harsh and unforgiving land. The tyranny of its climate matches the tenacity of its feudal dominions. The mighty River Indus brings life and some relief as it winds across the scorching plains, but then exacts a fearful revenge in ruinous and almost annual flooding. Even the sounds of Sindh seem more poignant than those of more settled climes – the reed pipes, the whining mosquitoes and the creak of cart-wheels on their way to market. It was a Sindhi poet, Shah Abdul Latif, who captured the forlornness of his country in this haunting verse

*The sorrowful smell of the mist
lingering over the Indus,
Gentle waves of rice, dung and rind
This is the salt cry of Sindh
As I die let me feel
the fragrance of tears.*

Across this ill-starred country, local dynasties grappled murderously for control in the years that witnessed gradual extension of British power and influence in the Indian sub-continent. By the early nineteenth century Sindh had been consolidated by its own overlords into one of the most brutal of feudal societies. Sprawling estates, sometimes stretching over thousands of acres, were worked by poverty-stricken haris (tenants) who remained for centuries at the complete mercy of their waderas (feudal overlords). Great shikargahs (hunting preserves) were reserved for the private delectation of the old Sindhi families. Regardless of the influx of contemporary ideas, Sindh remains today a redoubt of reaction. Exploited, illiterate and landless, the unfortunate haris have struggles for generations in bondage, as their bodies and those of their children are handed over to successive waderas. Their long subjugation, as history sorrowfully attests, has left the hari abysmally servile. He greets the wadera by touching his feet and with downcast eyes Feudal allegiances have been imprinted on his mind, finding an absurd culmination in some areas of Sindh like Sanghar, where the fanatical Hurs followers of the Pir of Pagaro, an hereditary spiritual leader and feudal overlord – believe death in the service of their leader will ensure a passage to heaven.

A stream of foreign conquerors, local dynasties and various other claimants to their place under this burning sun have heavily influenced the development of

Sindh, contributing also to the racial spectrum of its people. For hundreds of years waves of migrants sweeping across the land, some settling down, others moving on to fresh pastures, have created an extraordinary racial mix. Historians believe that the people of Sindh are the descendants of various Sakka, Kushan and Hun races who invaded the sub-continent thousands of years ago. In Larkana district much of the population is said to be of these stocks. Prominent clans inhabiting the district are the Chandios, Khuhawars, Hakros, Jatios and Mahesars, with the main distinction being between Baluch and non-Baluch tribes. One of the most entrenched of the old Sindhi clans are the Bhuttos.

As the home town of the Bhutto clan, Larkana has latterly gained a prominence which it hardly deserves. A small, neglected, dusty provincial town, it has the usual fly-infested slums and crumbling old houses, all in keeping with its general dilapidation. Its pattern is that most favored by British colonial planners, with the railway line dividing the native bazaar from the homes of the ruling elite.

There is a more inspiring site nearby. On the banks of the Indus lies Mohenjo-Daro – a dead metropolis more than 5,000 years old and certainly one of the most advanced of the world's early civilizations. In 1922 a team under the British archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler were examining a huge dirt mound near the village of Mohenjo-Daro and unearthed a lost civilization that was to add several thousand years to Pakistan's pre-history. The grandeur of this dead city bears silent witness to the craft and ingenuity of these early people.

Larkana town was founded in the early days of the Kalhora dynasty at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Kalhora rulers are now chiefly remembered for their interest in extending Sindh's irrigation system. According to one version, Shah All Muhammad Kalhora was commissioned to undertake the task of digging a canal and named one of the nearby villages after its inhabitants, the Lariks, an indigenous tribe of Sindh. At one time it was called Chandka after the dominant Chandio tribe; but in due course the name Larkana, or 'village of the Lariks', crystallized. In later years the village became a place of some importance, and has been mentioned by travellers such as E B Eastwick in his book *A Glance at Sindh before Napier*. History haunts Larkana district. A 3,000-year-old chronology records the turbulence, migration and march of conquerors culminating in the final and bloody annexation of Sindh by Sir Charles Napier in the nineteenth century. At times the hoof-beats of the warring armies seem audible. It was from Larkana that Napier's Camel Corps sallied forth on its murderous assaults against the ruling Talpur tribes. Sir Richard Burton in his book *Sindh and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of the Indus* writes of Larkana:

Beyond Sewan lies Larkan, the chief town of a well watered and well cultivated district; and apparently, with the exception of Kurrachee [Karachi], the most prosperous place in Sindh.

Long after the annexation of Sindh by the British and the imposition of a new administration, Larkana became, in 1901, the headquarters of the district bearing its name.

Larkana district has always been the most fertile area in upper Sindh. Irrigated from early days by inundation canals which were developed and extended by the progressive Kalthoras, its rich agriculture has stood out in sharp contrast to most other parts of Sindh. Wheat and rice fields abound, interspersed by mango and banana orchards. In 1932 the opening of the Lloyds Barrage had a further impact on the agrarian affluence of Larkana as well as on the power of the Bhutto family who own its wealthiest portions. Estimates vary as to the actual acreage owned by the Bhutto clan. Before the 1959 Land Reforms, each major clan head reportedly held around 40,000 to 60,000 acres of extremely productive land in Larkana, Jacobabad, Thatta and Sukkur. The largest jagirdars (landlords) in Larkana district and perhaps even in the sub-continent were the Chandio family who owned hundred's of thousands of acres of largely uncultivable land.

It was the mighty patronage that Bhutto himself wielded as Pakistan's leader that was to transform Larkana. Nationalized industries, banks and corporations were encouraged to open offices in Larkana town. Pakistan International Airlines built an air-conditioned hotel. Other prestigious public works like the People's Stadium, parks, newly built medical hospitals and schools mushroomed, giving the town an eminence that far transcends its contemporary importance. The city area on the eastern side of the railway line has also undergone a sharp transition with new 'pukka' houses taking the place of the old 'kuccha' ones. The soft fluorescence of tube lights provides an eerie effect on the narrow roads, many of which still retain the rusticity of the countryside.

Modernistic monuments have been raised to the memory of international figures – Sukarno Square, situated near the Bhutto residence commemorates the memory of the founding father of Indonesia. Another monument, an obelisk structure rising high in the hot dusty sky, gives testimony to the enduring popularity of the builder of modern Turkey, Kamal Ataturk, whose sayings, together with those of Bhutto, are inscribed on the base of the monument in brass letters. Some of the roads have been named after important contemporary figures such as Raza Shah Pehlavi, the recently deposed ruler of Persia, and Hayat Muhammad Khan Sherpao, Bhutto's principal lieutenant in North West Frontier Province, who was assassinated in 1975.

As waderas of Sindh, the Bhuttos possess all the vices and virtues of their class. Living, consolidating and extending their sway over great areas of Sindh for five or six generations, they have an almost tactile empathy with the soil. Their life style is traditionally one of idyllic ease: Shikars, leisured hunting forays across the estates, afternoon siestas and an abundance of serfs catering to every whim. Couched for generations in leisure, the waderas are quite divorced from any work ethic. Inter-family squabbles, land disputes and intrigues are the stuff of feudal Sindhi politics. The pursuit of public office, at least until populist democracy intervened under Bhutto himself, was little more than a leisurely canter to the winning post.

The traditions of feudal Sindh have greatly influenced the Bhutto clan's behavior and continue to do so. Favours are bestowed as part of the munificence and not as a right of the recipient. Other characteristics must have percolated into the young Zulfikar's thinking: a proclivity for apparently senseless vendettas, grand gestures, an exaggerated insistence on the debt of friendship, and an atavistic recalling of past feuds and links. He could remember (and frequently did) real and imagined slights spanning generations; familial anecdotes of every leading clan of Sindh and a vast repertoire of tidbits, scandal and family skeletons.

Allied with this was a penchant for dangerous living, perhaps a key part in the feudal playboy's existence. Several prominent members of the clan, Bhutto's grandfather Ghulam Murtaza, his two brothers Sikander and Imdad, uncles Wahid Buksh and Elahi Buksh, all died long before they were fifty. Over-sensitive to this, Zulfikar privately told friends on a number of occasions that he had a premonition of an early death and therefore must accomplish whatever he could before the age of fifty. He was overthrown by the army from supreme power at the age of forty-nine, tried for murder and hanged on 4 April 1979, when he was fifty-one.

Family tradition has it that the Bhutto clan of Sindh sprang from Rajput migrants, who came from Jaselmere, now in the Indian border state of 'Rajasthan, some four centuries ago. The first of them, Sehto Khan Bhutto, arrived in the middle of the sixteenth century and established a village, traces of which can still be found in upper Sindh. The family fortune, however, was founded in the early nineteenth century by the legendary Dodo Khan Bhutto who warred ruthlessly with the surrounding tribes to wrest large tracts of agrarian land for his family. His son, Allah Buksh Bhutto, extended the family domains by successful campaigns against the Burdi clans of Jacobabad and Jamali clans of Ghari Kharo.

Dodo Khan Bhutto made an alliance with Nawab Wali Muhammad Leghari, Governor of Sindh's ruling Talpur family, and gained in both property and style from Leghari's patronage. Dodo Khan Bhutto was Zulfikar's great-great-

grandfather and regarded as the virtual Nawab (ruler) in the area. He travelled in a palanquin accompanied by a large retinue of retainers which, in those days, was the privilege of only the heads of the Talpur family and the Pir of Pagaro, the region's pre-eminent spiritual leader. Dodo Khan's efforts firmly established the Bhuttos among the elite families in Sindh – a position which they have continued to hold.

In a family foretaste of the accusations that would one day be made against him, Zulfikar's grandfather, Ghulam Murtaza Bhutto, was arraigned on a charge of murder. And just as Zulfikar and his close relations and allies were to claim that he had been 'framed' by his political foes, so family tradition says that Ghulam Murtaza was the victim of a politically inspired plot, this one apparently hatched by the local British authorities. Superstitious locals were less inclined to blame any elaborate conspiracy. It was said that by attending a religious ceremony honoring a dead Muslim saint, Ghulam Murtaza had conspicuously and flamboyantly worn gold ornaments. The plain and pious people of Sindh saw this as an affront to the great saint's memory and were content to attribute Ghulam Murtaza's future misfortunes, including the murder charge, to his sacrilegious ways.

The case against Ghulam Murtaza was instigated at the behest of the British Collector of Shikarpur district, and was a sensational political scandal in its day. Ghulam Murtaza hired the most eminent barrister of the Punjab, Sir William Henry Rattigan, as his Defence Attorney at a fee of Rs. 1,250.00 a day – more than £80 (\$125) in modern money, and a fabulous sum in those times. Although he was acquitted, Ghulam Murtaza's enemies were not willing to let matters rest there, and soon afterwards instituted a fresh series of murder cases against him. Aware that his arrest would mean certain execution, he fled. In absentia, Ghulam Murtaza was tried, found guilty and his properties and lands seized.

As a fugitive, Ghulam Murtaza hid in the Punjab where he disguised himself as an orthodox Sikh and took the name of Sardar Dayal Singh; he wore long hair, a beard, the traditional bracelet and comb of the Sikh. He wandered north to Peshawar on the North West Frontier, and still further to Kabul where he was reputedly the guest of the Ruler of Afghanistan.

Ghulam Murtaza continued his wandering for several years, till, growing anxious about his two infant sons, he decided to return to Sindh. Still disguised as Sardar Dayal Singh, he sailed down the Indus and arrived in Karachi to surrender himself to British justice. He succeeded in obtaining a retrial and an acquittal, as a result of which his property and lands were restored. It did him little good. At only thirty-one Ghulam Murtaza died, reportedly poisoned.

Zulfikar's father, Shahnawaz Bhutto, was born in the ancestral village of Ghari Khuda Buksh Bhutto in Larkana district on the 3rd of March 1888. During his father's years as a fugitive in Punjab and elsewhere, Shahnawaz and his brother Ali Gauhar were brought up in the custody of their uncle Rasool Buksh Khan Bhutto. Shahnawaz was educated in the Madrasa-e-Tul Islam, Larkana, and then at St Patrick's School, Karachi. Due to Ghulam Murtaza's premature death, Shahnawaz had to return to manage his family estates after completing only six years. He was never able to continue any formal education after this, but acquired a good command of English which he learned to speak and write fluently.

Sustained by an agreeably comfortable revenue from his estates, Shahnawaz entered the political arena at a young age and rose steadily to prominence. When Sindh's representative to the Viceroy's Imperial Legislative Council died in 1919, Shahnawaz was elected unopposed to succeed him. In 1920 the local district boards were democratized and there was an election for president ship of the District Board for Larkana, one of the most powerful posts in the district. Once again, Shahnawaz was elected unopposed. The virtual appointment of Shahnawaz to these important positions is indicative of the comparative wealth and power of the Bhutto family, specially as Larkana district contained a number of prominent Sindhi families: the Chandios, Magsis, Israns of Kambar, Bughias of Dokri, Jatois of Mehar, Larkhiaris of Sewan and Dewans of Tayyab.

Official honors and positions began to flow freely after this. Shahnawaz was made an honorary first-class magistrate; he received the Order of the British Empire; he was awarded the title of Khan Bahadur in 1921 and Companion of the Indian Empire in 1925. In 1930 he was knighted in the New Year's Honours list, the citation reading:

He is the most influential zamindar in Sindh ... he has constantly and effectively exercised influence in support of the Government.

So resplendent was Shahnawaz in honors that in August 1930 the Secretary of Revenue, Bombay, could write to him addressing him as 'Khan Bahadur, Sir Shahnawaz Khan Ghulam Murtaza Khan Bhutto, Kt, CIE, OBE'. In the official list of January 1932 which laid down the orders of seating of Indian gentlemen in the Commissioner's durbar at Larkana he was placed third after Nawab Ghaiba Khan All Nawaz Khan Chandio and Amir Ali Lahori.

Shahnawaz was no popular politician. He relied more on discreet maneuvering and elitist pressures typical of feudal politics. Although tiring eventually of the fevered political intrigues of Sindh, he was by no means reticent in advancing his own position. In 1928, after Maulvi Rafiuddin was appointed a minister in the

Bombay Government, Shahnawaz wrote a letter to Sir Leslie Wilson, the Bombay Governor, suggesting that he was perhaps better qualified for the appointment. Sir Leslie replied: 'I always understood that you did not want a post in Government being a very busy man with great interests and influence in Sindh; but if I read your letter right, I fear I must have been mistaken. I naturally am aware of the claims that you have with regard to social status and influence as compared with others whom you mentioned.'¹

As one of Sindh's leading politicians, his position was eventually acknowledged when in May 1934 he was appointed Minister of Local Government in the Bombay cabinet.

Nor was Shahnawaz a radical. Indeed, he ranked high among those respectful Indian politicians who counseled against any active opposition to the British. He remained in their good books throughout his public life, tokens of which were the honors and citations that they heaped upon him. Shahnawaz was essentially a loyal Muslim leader and hence an anti-Congress politician. He activated a number of Muslim committees and groups and fought courageously for a series of Muslim causes. He was a friend of many famous Muslim politicians like Muhammad All Jinnah, founder of Pakistan, and particularly of Muhammad Ali Jauhar, a notable Muslim leader and educationist, who on his death-bed called for Shahnawaz to be by his side.

Politics at the height of the Raj was limited to a privileged few. Recurring again and again on the boards, committees and councils which Shahnawaz served were the names of the Sindhi political elite: Abdullah Haroon, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Amir Ali Lohari, G M Sayed and M K Khurho. They seemed, within a tightly confined circle, to oppose, join and intrigue in a bewildering series of permutations. Politics, it seemed, was a sort of aristocratic game, with real power firmly in the hands of the British. Despite their plots and machinations against each other, they all seemed to belong to one large, happy family, attending each other's marriages, deaths, ceremonies and finally in the larger interest, holding together. Hidayatullah, for instance, was present at Shahnawaz's second marriage, was a fellow member of the working committee for the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency, and yet the two were bitter opponents during the 1937 Sindh elections.

It was Shahnawaz's dogged fight for the separation of Sindh from the old Bombay Presidency that earned him a lasting place in the history of the subcontinent. He based his demand on the fact that Sindh was historically a

¹ A letter from Sir Leslie Wilson to Shahnawaz Bhutto – 11th May 1928

distinct unit with its own culture, language and ethnic groups. It had been appended to the Bombay Presidency by pure accident and was too remote to be administered properly. Moreover, being predominantly Muslim, Sindh as a part of the Presidency was outnumbered by the greater Hindu population making up the other member-states. Convinced that the rights of the Muslims of Sindh would be threatened, Shahnawaz continued his crusade for separation of Sindh for almost a decade. He attended the Round Table Conference in 1931 and 1932 where he directly remonstrated with the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, that the rights of Sindh were being brushed aside. As a result of this, a separate committee was formed with Lord Russell as its chairman, to examine 'the question of constituting Sindh as a separate province'. His return to Larkana after the Round Table Conference was a triumph. A huge procession was taken out through the village to celebrate the arrival of Sindh's most redoubtable proponent. Although then only an infant, Zulfikar remembered the scene: 'I was taken up on the roof to watch the people and the procession. I can recall all the excitement.'²

On the 24th of December 1933 the British Government gave in to Shahnawaz's tireless campaign and two years later Sindh formally became a separate province. The reverberations of Shahnawaz's action rippled further than anyone could have possibly imagined at the time. During the partition of the sub-continent, Sindh's pre-existing status as a Muslim majority province was a decisive factor in the granting of nationhood to Pakistan. A separate status meant that it would now comprise a part of the new Pakistan – a factor affecting the entire question of whether the new state was viable. In the interregnum – until the legislature of Sindh was elected in March 1937 - Shahnawaz was appointed Adviser to the Governor of Sindh.

In the meantime, Shahnawaz's greatest triumph had led directly to his greatest defeat. As the leading proponent of the separation of Sindh, Shahnawaz was appointed early on as adviser to the British Governor, but early in 1937 it was decided that the first election for Sindh's newly created Legislative Assembly would be held. Campaigning by Sindh's feudal chieftains slowly got under way. The principal politician in Sindh at the time, other than Shahnawaz Bhutto, was Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, a shrewd lawyer from coastal Sindh and a former minister and Executive Counselor in the Bombay Government. Both politicians had an admirable line-up of prominent Sindhis behind them which crystallized into two distinct political groups: the Sindh United Party led by Shahnawaz and the Sindh Muslim Party led by Hidayatullah. There seemed to be no important divergence on principle; the two parties had been formed purely on the basis of personal rivalry and feudal allegiance. Prominent in Shahnawaz's

² Conversations with the author

group were Haji Abdullah Haroon and G M Sayed, and in Hidayatullah's group there were Ayub Khurho, Kazi Fazalullah and Amir Ali Lohari.

With no authentic political difference involved, it was hardly surprising that the election campaign became a compound of trickery and chicanery as factions switched sides, realigned and then switched back again to maximize their advantage. Secure in his family power, his long service to the Muslims and the laurels he had won for his work on the separation of Sindh, Shahnawaz felt his victory was assured. When he first heard his opponent would be Abdul Majeed Sindhi, he remarked with that contemptuous arrogance which would one day characterize many of his son's utterances: 'A jackal is entering the lion's den.' Unwisely, he did not return to Larkana until a few days before his election. On arrival, he found his campaign in complete disarray. Members of his family who were to represent him had connived with his opponents to render his position untenable. Disgusted by the perfidy around him, Shahnawaz threw in the towel and returned to Karachi while the polling was still in progress. Although he lost his own seat, his party gained a substantial majority in the Sindh Legislature; but the machinations and intrigues surrounding the election so upset him that he left his Sindh United Party to be fought over by his opponents, who managed to install Hidayatullah as the first Chief Minister of Sindh.

At only forty-nine, the age at which Bhutto himself was to be removed from power, Shahnawaz retired permanently from Sindh politics and joined the Public Service Commission in Bombay. A statement issued on his departure from politics reflected the hurt he felt at being rejected;

It is with deep regret that I now have to bid farewell to the people of Sindh . . . I have done all that lay in my power for the wellbeing of my fellow subjects . . . in doing so, I may have done more harm to myself than anyone else. On account of political jealousy I have to bid farewell to the political life of the province . . . to my friends I say, I cherish you all; to my opponents I say, I bear you no ill-will.

Shahnawaz brooded over the ingratitude and humiliation of defeat for many years. That grudge passed to his son who vividly remembered, though only nine years old at the time:

We were staying at the Chief Minister's residence as my father was Advisor to the Governor of Sindh at the time. Normally the house was full of guests and cars with people coming and going. I remember arriving home and finding everything deserted I asked our old family servant Babu, 'What happened? What's the matter?' and he replied, 'Sir, Sahib has lost his election.'

Zulfikar never forgot what his father suffered. It became an insult to the family honour which he took upon himself to vindicate. Opponents like Ayub Khurho ensured he remembered by mercilessly crowing at every opportunity. Many years later in 1970, Zulfikar and Ayub Khurho bitterly contested on the old battleground of Larkana, but this time the results were dramatically different. Khurho crashed to defeat by over 40,000 votes, losing even his own polling station of Akil. The old man had been vindicated.

In 1947 Shahnawaz moved to Junagadh, a princely state on the Gujrat coast, as Minister in the Council of its ruler Sir Mahabbat Khan Rasul Al Khanji and a few months later was appointed Divan in the place of Khan Bahadur Ghulam Abdul Kadir. In a state where the Divan is the de facto ruler, Shahnawaz's appointment was significant enough to be announced over All-India Radio. These were desperately troubled times for Junagadh as the state, although predominantly Hindu, had a Muslim ruler who was audaciously flirting with the idea of joining Pakistan. Shahnawaz, under Jinnah's instructions, succeeded in persuading the ruler of Junagadh to take the plunge and accede to Pakistan.³ However, agitations by the pro-Congress population stymied this attempt and forced the ruler to abdicate from the state in September 1947. With the real possibility of bloodshed and civil disruption, Shahnawaz made the controversial decision to invite the Indian Dominion to take over, and on the 8th November 1947 left for Pakistan with his family. In acknowledgement of the difficulties, both practical and political, involved in deciding as he did, Shahnawaz later said: 'Handing over the administration to the Indian Union was comparable to inviting a thief to tea.'⁴ The trauma of Junagadh and its accession to India was a matter of great personal grief to Shahnawaz, contributing, together with his indifferent health, to his final retirement from any further political activity.

After his return to Pakistan he remained Divan for a few more years to the now relatively impecunious Nawab of Junagadh, living during this period in a large house on McNeill Road, one of Karachi's more affluent residential areas. He then moved to Larkana where he took up the sedentary life of a retired Sindhi zamindar. While his son Zulfikar was abroad representing his country in the United Nations, Shahnawaz died in Larkana on the 19th of November 1957.

There was nothing charismatic or colorful about Shahnawaz. Rather, he was a mild, staid and dignified man – very much the feudal baron who believed firmly in the conventional values of his zamindar class. He was rooted in the traditions of social immobility. In spite of the political disappointment of his later

³ Dilip Mukerjee – *A Quest for Power* (from records of letters discovered at Junagadh Palace)

⁴ G W Choudhry — *Pakistan's Relations with India*

life, he seems easily able to forgive political opponents. A eulogy published on his eighth anniversary of his death emphasizes this:

He possessed immense patience in the face of provocation. He tried to avoid speaking in offensive terms even to his opponents ... he was not revengeful even when he was convinced his enemies had done him wrong:⁵

A forgiving nature is not a wadera characteristic. His son Zulfikar never forgot an insult – a trait he shared by all accounts, with his grandfather Ghulam Murtaza Bhutto.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was born at 3 am on 5th January 1928 at Al Murtaza, the rambling family residence in Larkana. His birth date places his sun in the zodiac under Capricorn ruled by the stern and melancholy Saturn. The birth was celebrated with all the pomp usually reserved for a son born into a Sindhi feudal house. For several days Al Murtaza was open house to relatives, friends and well-wishers who travelled not only from the nearby Nao Dero, Garhi Khuda Buksh and Mirpurkot, but as far away as Sukkur, Thatta and Jacobabad. According to tradition, the child was named at the Jamia mosque, Larkana, under the auspices of the local 'Mullah-priest'. After recitations from the holy Koran, Shahnawaz announced before the attendant gathering that he would name his son Zulfikar Ali. Zulfikar was the name given to his sword by Hazrat Ali, one of four Caliphs of Islam and a great warrior. Historically, the sword of Ali has been long regarded as a symbol, of struggle against oppression, significant to those who consider such portents as a harbinger of things to come. For Shahnawaz, Zulfikar's birth had a special significance as he was the first male issue from his second wife. In 1924 Shahnawaz had fallen in love with, and married, an attractive Hindu girl who, before marriage, converted to Islam, changing her name to Khurshid. The 'nikah' was held in Quetta at the residence of Nawab Bahadur Aazam Jan of Kalat. Khurshid's humble origins were anathema to the feudal Bhuttos, and for a considerable period they remained adamantly opposed to the union. Even as a young boy, Zulfikar was aware of this clan hostility towards his mother and her anguish made a deep impression upon him. He never forgot his mother's mortification at her treatment by the clan. 'Poverty was her only crime' he once said, and even attributed his own egalitarian attitudes to his mother's talk of the inequities of the feudal system. Shahnawaz and Khurshid, however, remained devoted to each other throughout their married life. Visitors to Bhutto's house remember Khurshid as a charming and affectionate person and the domestic atmosphere as extremely happy.

⁵ Miran Muhammad Shah. *Dawn* 19th November 1965.

Shahnawaz came to focus increasingly lavish attention on his youngest son Zulfikar. Ayub Khurho recalls : ‘Whenever he was in the village, the little fellow was always with him and later on he was really proud of his son’s academic achievements.⁶ His own education being minimal, Shahnawaz vicariously reveled in Zulfikar’s intellectual achievements, giving him an education reserved for the elite of the sub-continent (Berkeley, California, and Oxford, England). It seemed that Zulfikar’s successes compensated the old man for his disappointments at the somewhat dissolute lives of his two elder sons, Sikandar and Imdad, who both died at a young age.

Like most fond fathers, he nurtured high expectations. Immediately after Zulfikar returned to Pakistan, Shahnawaz began to groom him for a political career. He frequently impressed on him the necessity of developing links and alliances with the politically well-connected and the powerful. In the best seigniorial traditions he introduced him to the zamindars and political barons of Larkana and Sindh. In the 1955 indirect elections to the National Assembly, Shahnawaz deputed Zulfikar to help Ayub Khurho who had pleaded with Shahnawaz to approach Sardar Sultan Chandio, a powerful local landlord, and Sardar Ahmed Khan Bhutto, Zulfikar’s father-in-law, for their support. Zulfikar was his political heir and was clearly expected to bring honors to the Bhutto name.

Threads of family legacy and clan history were all-important to Shahnawaz and he passed this on to his son. The choice of naming his grandson fell on Shahnawaz and he chose to call him Mir Murtaza after his own father. Zulfikar’s second son was born after Shahnawaz’s death and almost as a matter of course was named Shahnawaz. Shahnawaz’s first grand-daughter was called Benazir after one of his own daughters who died when only ten years old. Zulfikar commissioned portraits of his grandfather Ghulam Murtaza, his father Shahnawaz and brothers Sikandar and Tindad. Hanging in the vestibule of Bhutto’s residence Al Murtaza in Larkana, their stern faces and characteristically drooping lower lips bear witness to his relish at his family’s feudal past.

⁶ Interview with Ayub Khuhro by the author

Chapter Two SALAD DAYS

As an infant Zulfikar stayed in Larkana with his mother. His parents were devout Muslims and he was sent at the tender age of four to the 'mullah', a priest at the local mosque to learn Arabic and to recite from the Holy Koran. Formal schooling was initially erratic. Wary of family vendettas and squabbles, Shahnawaz preferred to keep his son with him, and the constant moves made any coherent and systematic education impossible. He first went to school at a convent and then at the kindergarten (girls' section) of Bishops High School at Karachi. In summer he used to accompany his father to Poona – the seat of the Bombay Government during the stifling heat – and study at the local convent. Finally, with his father's defeat in the Sindh elections in 1937, the family moved to Bombay where he entered the Cathedral High School where he stayed till he completed school.

Cathedral High School was mainly for children of the Bombay elite, a community of few Muslims and a predominance of British, Hindus, Parsees and Anglo-Indians. As a child his friends were drawn from a wide spectrum of Bombay's varied communities: Karan Singh (son of the ex-ruler of Kashmir and a future Minister in Indira Gandhi's Cabinet), Asif Currimbhoy (from a predominant Muslim Khoja caste family), Jehangir Musageth and Pилоo Mody (both Parsees) and Omar Kureshi who was to become a well-known sports journalist in Pakistan.

He had the normal schoolboy interest in sport, but cricket was a particular favourite, as a result of which he developed a hero-worshipping attachment to the famous Indian Test cricketer Mushtaq Ali, who rather patronizingly recalls: 'Zulfi had great talent for cricket and if he had persisted he might have been able to play a good class of cricket.'⁷ Besides avidly watching fixtures in Bombay, he travelled as far away as Calcutta just to watch a Ranji Trophy match.

At school his growing awareness of world events led him into occasional clashes with authority. Towards the end of his school career, he spoke in a debating tournament on the subject of the United Nations and the plenary San Francisco Convention. During his speech he attacked the British Government's decision to appoint Sir Feroz Khan Noon as the Indian representative.

⁷ Zulfi my Friend – Pилоo Mody

I felt it was a great travesty of justice that such men should represent India on the eve of her independence. It should have been someone like Jinnah or Nehru.⁸

The school principal was a stern Scotsman called Mr. Bruce who was so annoyed at Bhutto's precocity that he refused to award him the first prize that he had won, and instead warned him about 'dabbling in politics'.

During his Senior Cambridge examinations (equivalent to today's GCE 'O' level) he got news that his younger sister, Benazir, who was studying at a convent at Poona, had died suddenly. His father was away in Sindh so that he had to take his mother to Poona and arrange for the burial. Benazir was his youngest sister and only ten when she died. He had developed a deep attachment to her and was emotionally devastated. Because of his absence he could not complete some of his papers and failed his examinations. The following year he sat again and passed easily.

At thirteen, while still in school, Bhutto was married to one of Sardar Ahmed Khan Bhutto's three daughters, a distant cousin, and almost ten years older than him. This archaic form of marriage was typical of the type of property alliances favored by feudal Sindhis. At that age Zulfikar could barely comprehend what the union meant. He later told the Italian journalist Oriana Falaci:

I didn't even know what it meant to have a wife, and when they tried to explain it to me I went out of my mind with rage, with fury. I didn't want a wife, I wanted to play cricket.⁹

Sardar Ahmed Khan Bhutto had no male issue and his substantial ancestral lands were divided among his daughters. Although Bhutto's father's village was Ghari Khuda Buksh he adopted Nao Dero as he was personally responsible for administering the large tracts of agricultural land inherited by his first wife. The marriage was barren and he rarely saw his first wife who spends most of her time in the village. However, in deference to family wishes, the marriage was not dissolved.

In 1946 the struggle for Pakistan was reaching a climax. Jinnah set aside 16th August 1946 as 'Direct Action Day' in order to demonstrate to both the Indian Congress and the British the massive Muslim support for Pakistan. 'This day we bid goodbye to constitutional methods', Jinnah announced. 'Today we have also

⁸ Conversations with the author

⁹ Interview with History — Oriana Falaci

forged a pistol and are in a position to use it.' Anxious to impress his opponents, Jinnah encouraged the Muslim students in Bombay to show their strength by agitation. Bhutto, who happened to attend an address by Jinnah to a group of students, was enthralled by his clarion call to action. At the meeting Bhutto got up and proposed that the best form of protest would be if some demonstrators could be organised at Elphinstone College, a predominantly Hindu institution. Jinnah instructed the students to go ahead and the demonstrations proved to be a great success. This was Bhutto's first real political exposure and he recalled it vividly:

I suggested we go to the heart of the Hindu institutions, one of which was the Elphinstone College. We could get the Muslim girls to stand with placards outside and stop people going in. Jinnah told me to handle this. I knew some students in Elphinstone College and so we got it organised and it worked perfectly . . . it had an effect on the other students and the papers reported it as well.¹⁰

At this time Bhutto was near the end of adolescence. He reveled in his image as a man about town, dressing meticulously if somewhat foppishly; dining at Bombay's Taj Mahal Hotel and developing an early fondness for women. The Indian actress Nargis recalls him as having a boyish crush on her and 'very charming and likeable but always reeking of gin and perfume Bhutto, as I knew him, was a feudal landlord with princely pleasures, drinks, shikar and dancing with a new girl every night.'¹¹

He sported a wispy moustache, black wavy hair and a carnation in his expensively tailored jacket, and fell passionately in love for the first time with an athletic girl, Surrayya Currimbhoy, who went on to become the high-jump champion of India.

But then as now, Bhutto the playboy lived amicably enough with Bhutto the politically minded. No articulate and politically conscious Muslim could have expected to stand apart in the emotionally supercharged 1940s. The country was enmeshed in the turbulence of Partition. After centuries of living together the Muslims and Hindus of India were breaking up into two distinct countries. Bhutto's most impressionable years encompassed the terminal period of the struggle that led to the formation of Pakistan. Earlier tolerance that existed between the two factions fast deteriorated as attitudes hardened. Communal murders bore hideous witness to the savagery, and the anguished political debate which preceded the creation of Pakistan had an impact on most young

¹⁰ Conversations with the author

¹¹ A Quest for Power – Dilip Mukerjee

people. Pan-Islamism was a shared orthodoxy in those times and Bhutto was no exception.

Most Muslims in Bombay were traders of Gujrati extraction. Their major interest was more the preservation of their capital than the creation of Pakistan so that in cosmopolitan Bombay, young Bhutto's determined political posture stuck out. However, with characteristic zeal he propagated to everyone who cared to listen the necessity for Pakistan and a separate Muslim homeland.

Zulfi was a confirmed follower of Jinnah ... Zulfi was a great advocate of the two nation theory and felt without Pakistan the legitimate rights and interests of the Musalmans could not be safeguarded.¹²

Shahnawaz, in his quiet way, was deeply committed to Pakistan's cause. Throughout 1947 he had been involved in the bitter partisan politics of Junagadh where Muslims and Hindus were pitted against each other for control of the State. His struggle for the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency was primarily in order to free the Muslims of Sindh from the dominance of the Hindus who compromised the majority – a microcosm foreshadowing the struggle for Pakistan. According to Bhutto, 'the grains of Pakistan were contained in the separation of Sindh'. The controversy surrounding the separation was repeatedly argued out in Shahnawaz's drawing room. As a young boy Bhutto was exposed to the debate and often drawn to vociferous support for his father.

One frequent visitor to the -Bhutto house at this time was Allah Buksh Soomro, a pro-Congress politician and a friend of Shahnawaz who was treated as a part of the Bhutto family. Being an opponent of the Pakistan idea, he would argue with Shahnawaz for hours. He disagreed with the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency claiming that it would only make a province of the Punjab. Other visitors were G M Sayed, Jaffer Khan Bulaidi, Pir Elahi Buksh, Ayub Khurho, Mir Bandey Ali Talpur, the Bijarnis, Jatois of Mehar, Shahs of Nawabshah and Mir Allehdad Talpur - all of them were Sindhi feudal politicians of the old guard. The house was always overflowing with visitors and the Bhuttos entertained almost every day. As a young man Bhutto was constantly exposed to the feudal politics conducted in Shahnawaz's drawing room.

The house was always full of people. In the drawing room, outside in the halls and gardens. All day food was being cooked. Meals being transferred from one

¹² Zulfi my Friend – Pилоo Mody

room to the other. A constant bustle of coming and going. We kept open house. That's how I remember my father's house.¹³

These were troubled yet clearly exciting times with traditional beliefs under question everywhere. After the war the world had been turned upside down. The independence of India, the emergence of communist states, the death of his traditionalism and the last struggles of imperialism made powerful impressions on Bhutto's adolescent mind. Surrounded by competing gods, he read and absorbed from the politicians who visited his father's house at Worly Road, Bombay. At this stage his opinions were not deep-seated or consuming, perhaps more in his emotions than ingrained in his intellect. But the embryo was forming. In September 1947, a month after partition, Bhutto sailed for the United States to study in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California (USCLA). After a chance meeting on Exposition Boulevard with his old school friend Omar Kureshi, they moved into digs together at 342-South 1, South Flower Street. Theirs was typical student lodgings with bed and breakfast and a somewhat raunchy landlady called Jones to supervise the bachelor establishment.

Bhutto recalled his freshman years – or 'salad days' as he liked to call them – with affection and nostalgia. These were happy days for a young man on his own for the first time. He was a movie fan, especially of westerns. His favorite actors were Gary Cooper and, perhaps in bizarre recognition of some political camaraderie, Ronald Reagan. He played cricket on Sundays with a tiny group of fellow exiles at a cricket club called 'The Corinthians'. A fan of American football, he travelled to see the Grand Final at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. Sometime during this period he dropped the softer 'Zulfiqar' and began spelling his name 'Zulfikar'.

He pursued the pretty young girls in Los Angeles with more than normal zest, and as a consequence he concluded one of his first, and possibly least successful, financial deals. Both Bhutto and Omar Kureshi were courting two rather wealthy young ladies who lived in plush Beverly Hills. Their first visit by tram imposed some strain on the twin romance. After long deliberation they decided to buy a Nash car in joint partnership. The vendor conformed to the prototype American second-hand car salesman: cigar, friendly grin and, pat sales talk which concluded with a line that he could sell them any car but the Nash, and an assurance that if they returned the car at any time within a year they could have their money back. They fell for all this and purchased the car, which broke down on the way home costing a further fifty dollars. The car salesman, of course, suffered an attack of amnesia when reminded of his terms of their deal.

¹³ Conversations with the author

He was not an academic by temperament, and he did only enough work to see himself through examinations. His grades were good and he found no difficulty in coping with the University's requirements. Newsweek Asian editor William Smith, who was a student at California Occidental College in the late forties, remembers him debating, calling it a 'championship debating style'.¹⁴ Another University friend recalls: 'He was a very good debater and politically orientated. There were two issues he was strong on: the destiny of Pakistan and a fanatical hatred of Israel which had recently been established.' Heated disputes with professors was another common feature, and on one occasion, after a particularly vehement argument with a Professor Colwell, he was asked to leave the class. Even at that time, he had identified himself firmly with his Asian back-round. Strongly opinionated, he wrote on one occasion an indignant letter to Newsweek magazine protesting against the use of the word 'Asiatic': 'At the Asian conference held in New Delhi in 1947, it was unanimously decided that a change of era in Asia also demanded a change in political terminology', he wrote. 'A serious and harmful term, "Asiatic", viciously called and scandalously used by imperialists was deleted and replaced by the word "Asian". Since then we have become quite particular in using a new name for our new Asia.'

He got embroiled in a slanging match in the college magazine *Ice Box* where he wrote:

Once again we have been treated in a dastardly manner by entrenched imperialists and their bed-fellows ... the destiny of Asia is above and beyond the group of glorified cut-throats and 'civilized' cannibals ... American bullets have already decorated many Asians. A few million more will shed a greater quantity of blood but will not molest in any measure the celestial rise of my Asia ... Ideals grow quickly when watered by the blood of martyrs.

In another letter to *Newsweek* magazine he contradicted a story which contained certain inaccuracies about Jinnah:

One, Mr. Jinnah is not the son of a Hindu converted to Islam but a Muslim by birth. Two, it is not prerequisite of virtue in Islam to wear a beard or attend a mosque for prayers.

And then concluded strongly, though untruthfully:

¹⁴ Interview in *Newsweek* – 29th December 1975

I have personally seen Mr. Jinnah in mosques on numerous occasions.

His writings had the quality of political sermons, and he was ready to hold forth at every opportunity. In another article in a local magazine, on the eve of a visit to the United States by the Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, he eulogized:

Pakistan is one of the beacon lights in the array of independent Asian states ... its creation was a singularly uphill task accomplished under unprecedented circumstances.

'Days spent in New York are usually memorable', he wrote on a brief sojourn while on his way back to Karachi in September 1948. 'Thoughts went through my mind ... of the first days in the great city and of the many wonderful moments spent in it on my numerous visits.' Bhutto found New York enchanting, and was thrilled by the size and dynamism of the metropolis. Ironically, in later years, New York was to provide a back-drop to some of the most dramatic and poignant moments of his life: when he launched into his maiden speech defining aggression at a United Nations Session in October 1957; the excitement of the September 1965 war when he was catapulted into a truly international role as he defended his country at the Security Council; the tragedy and disgrace of his country's defeat in 1971 and his dash back to Pakistan to assume power. When walking in the streets of New York till dawn as a young man of twenty in his 'favorite plaid suit' even Bhutto with his penchant for the theatrical could never have visualized the train of events which would lead him to New York in later years.

In January 1949 Bhutto transferred to Berkeley, one of the campuses of the University of California. Once again he decided to move into digs with an old friend from Bombay, Pilo Mody. They chose a house at 1800 Alston Way, sharing it with a number of other students from India.

By this time Bhutto had read widely in politics, jurisprudence, philosophy and international law. Standard reading like Plato, Mill, Aristotle, Hobbs and Locke was digested avidly. He also absorbed the works of Machiavelli, Toynbee, Nehru and Laski, particularly focusing on history, biographies and accounts of Metternich and Talleyrand. The discursive reading undertaken in these years was to prepare his mind for future radical ideas. He was taught by Professor Hans Kelsen, founder of the Vienna School of Jurisprudence and International Law, a celebrated jurist whose writings he later quoted at the United Nations in 1957, on his first diplomatic mission abroad, and again on several other occasions. He took a post-graduate course in the history of philosophy since Socrates and Plato and its impact on the theory of International Relations. He found the course fascinating and obtained 'A' grades.

Days at Berkeley were calm and leisurely. He joined in the normal student activities and travelled across America whenever he could. Unlike the antiwar days of the 1960s, there was nothing iconoclastic about the student community. There were no bleary-eyed 'acid freaks', sleeping bags and groups of angry students shouting defiance around Sproule Plaza – the entrance to the University. Neatly cropped hair, sports jackets, football games and a vegetable-like belief in the American way of life was more the prevalent ambience of the late forties. Pictures taken of Bhutto at the time shows a gawky young man neatly dressed, sporting a moustache, usually with smiling girls wearing Betty Grable hair styles.

Politics moved to the forefront of his interests. He remembered reading and discussing the issues of the day: the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the post-war reconstruction of Europe and the growth of communism in Eastern Europe. He had not formed any firm political attitudes at this stage or consolidated an intellectual frame on which to hang his opinions. This was still a period of enquiry and learning for which he was beginning to show an increasing proclivity.

His identification with Islam was more emotional than intellectual. A desire for cultural belonging often assumes exaggerated importance to students studying in a foreign country. In a talk at University on the Islamic Heritage he held forth lyrically:

The Islamic heritage: how am I to unfold this opulent heritage of ours; where shall I begin? ... I shall refer to the accomplishments of Islam as my own accomplishments, for I genuinely consider any accomplishment of the Islamic people as a personal feat just as I consider any failure of the Muslim world as a personal failure.

At Berkeley, Bhutto fought his first-ever election for one of the twelve seats of the Student Council body which governed the association of students of the University of Southern California. He listed as his qualifications: membership in Honour Student Society and the Tau Kappa Alpha National Varsity Debate Fraternity. Campaign platforms included – with due allowance for American student jargon – 'plans for closer integration of foreign students in campus affairs, support for the one-dollar-fair-bear-wage and of the academic stand on the loyalty oath'.¹⁵ In a pre-election interview with the Daily Californian, Bhutto supported raising the salary of the university employees, instituting a purchase card system on campus and a limited action against discriminatory living groups.

¹⁵ Extract from a college magazine

Whether he displayed the same political mastery as he did in later years, over the obscure issues of the day is not clear. However, after a hectic campaign, Bhutto became the first Asian to win a place in the Council.

After graduating with honors in political science from Berkeley in 1950, Bhutto went on to Oxford University where he joined Christ Church College to read jurisprudence. He was granted senior status at Oxford, which meant that he had to complete a three-year course in two years. Having taken jurisprudence, it was compulsory for him to pass in Roman Law which required a working knowledge of Latin. He detested Latin and claimed later that he got nightmares just thinking about it. Although he found Latin repugnant, it seemed to have left an indelible impression as his earlier speeches and writings were often sprinkled with Latin tags. As he was reading for his bar examinations at the same time, he frequently travelled down to London to attend dinners at the Lincoln's Inn. He graduated from Oxford University in 1952 with an MA honors, obtaining a creditable second class, and was called to the bar in 1953.

His days at Oxford were surprisingly uneventful, and perhaps even disappointing. Although he joined the Oxford Union, he never participated in debates. He was very much the playboy, giving parties every other day. Contemporaries at Oxford remember him as 'foppishly dressed, suited, with a handkerchief in his top pocket – possibly the best dressed man in Oxford'. He was often seen at the best restaurants, the preserves of the very rich, and he made frequent trips to Europe.

On a visit to Pakistan in the summer of 1951 he fell in love with Nusrat Sabunchi – a tall, pretty girl of Iranian extraction. Bhutto saw Nusrat for the first time at a marriage that they both attended and impulsively persuaded his parents to propose for her. There was some opposition from them as they had hoped their son's second marriage would be a feudal alliance, but finding him adamant, they agreed. On 8th September 1951 Bhutto and Nusrat were married in a ceremony complete with the traditional bands, dancing, lunches, dinners and receptions extending for several days. Nusrat wore an embroidered bridal 'gharara' – traditional long skirt – and jewellery. On his part, Bhutto rejected the traditional bridegroom's 'achkan' – coat – and 'turra' – turban, wearing instead an elegant black suit with a folded handkerchief in his pocket. For a week after the marriage Nusrat lived with Bhutto in Karachi and then accompanied him to Turkey and Italy where they briefly honeymooned. She stayed a further six weeks with him in London and then returned to Pakistan to live with the Bhutto family in Larkana while he completed his education.

His association with Oxford was to continue. In February 1975 the University Council, browsing through a list of its more distinguished pupils, chose to award

him an honorary degree, as they had done to Indira Gandhi in 1971. The decision created a furore. An anti-Bhutto lobby, fortified by Bengalis, Indians and others, quickly formed and vehemently opposed the Council's decision – the first time an honorary degree had been challenged. Important academics lined up on either side. Sir Hugh Trevor-Roper, Regius Professor of Modern History, Lord Blake, head of the Queen's College, prominent Christ Church men like Michael Howard and Hugh Lloyd Jones and C P Snow were all pro-Bhutto. The anti-Bhutto lobby was led by Dr Richard Gombrich, a lecturer of Sanskrit, Peter Levi and an old foe Rehman Subhan, the Bengali economist. After hectic debate, and to Bhutto's fury, it was narrowly decided to withdraw the offer. Family honour was, however, redeemed in 1976 when his daughter Benazir contested for the presidency of the Oxford Union and won.

His years at Oxford provided no clues to future triumphs. He seemed at best destined for conventional success. He remained oddly divorced from the frenzied political activities in which most young men of the sub-continent seemed almost inevitably enmeshed. Acquaintances and friends agree that he showed no outstanding qualities which could be interpreted as premonitions of greatness. There were no early signs of the man who was to change the face of his country's politics.

Chapter Three RAKE'S PROGRESS

By the time Bhutto returned to Pakistan in November 1953, chronic political instability had tarnished one of Asia's newest countries. The authority of the Government was challenged at home and its credibility questioned abroad. Domestic disaffection spelt graver trouble for the future. East Pakistan was seething with discontent after serious language riots, and the Muslim League was heading for disastrous election defeat early in 1954. The Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad had unconstitutionally dismissed the Prime Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin in April 1953, and installed the pro-American Muhammad Ali Bogra in his place.

In Punjab, Mumtaz Daultana was rocking the provincial ministry with a series of political maneuvers whose reverberations were being felt in the capital. The federal Parliament was heatedly debating the Munir Committee report on the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, the country's first Prime Minister. So low was the Government's prestige that the Opposition moved a motion in the Assembly demanding that foreign experts be invited to assess the report, so suspect was impartiality of the Government. Suppression of dissent, a sure sign of a regime in trouble, was also becoming evident with the ordering of the withdrawal of Government advertising from the Opposition paper, Karachi Dawn.

In foreign affairs, Pakistan had become nearly totally subservient to the USA. At the time of Bhutto's return to Karachi, a triumvirate consisting of Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad and Foreign Minister Zafarullah Khan were secretly negotiating a military alliance with the United States. The Soviet Union issued a note of protest. Although the Government's official answer was a firm denial of the suggestion that they were negotiating such an agreement with the Americans, later events confirmed the Soviet suspicions. This was the heyday of the Dulles era, and ground-work for the controversial pro-Western defence pacts of SEATO and LENTO was being prepared. Pakistan–United States ties were further cemented by a three-day visit to Pakistan in December 1953 by Vice-President and Mrs. Richard Nixon. At a banquet in Nixon's honour in Karachi, the freshly arrived Bhutto, accompanied by Nusrat, was formally introduced to the Nixons.

Throughout the middle fifties, politics in Pakistan was a bizarre and unprincipled scramble for office. Ministries fell and were replaced at both the centre and provincial levels with bewildering speed. From April 1953 to the

Iskandar Mirza-Avub Khan Martial Law of October 1958 there were five prime ministers: Khwaja Nazimuddin, Muhammad Ali Bogra, Chowdhury Muhammad Ali, H S Suhrawardy and Feroz Khan Noon. With an eye only to personal aggrandizement and power, politicians gaily precipitated crises which led unerringly to deeper and deeper crises for the country's democratic institutions - and in the long run, threatened the country's very existence. Bhutto lists three such acts which altered the course of Pakistan's history:¹⁶

1 The 'illegal' dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad in October 1954.

2 The constitutional formula for parity of representation instead of proportional representation in the Constituent and National Assembly of Pakistan, (the Muhammad Ali formula of September, 1953.)

3 The imposition of One Unit which dissolved the historical provinces of West Pakistan in October 1955.

While Pakistan's so-called leaders played a grotesque game of musical chairs, India's influence was at its zenith. In 1956 when the Western powers attacked Muslim Egypt, the Suhrawardy government refused to join in the international chorus of condemnation. India, on the other hand, made a series of strong statements in support of Egypt. Nehru's prestige was being felt everywhere. He was hailed as the architect of the new independent neutralist policies. Together with Tito and Gamal Abdul Nasser, he was one of the heroes of the third world.

Having spent six of the most formative years of his life abroad in foreign universities, Bhutto returned to Pakistan thoroughly Westernised. He dressed in dapper suits, drove a large Packard car and mixed with the cream of Karachi society. And yet his Westernisation was only a veneer. There was no deep adoration for things Western. Although he enjoyed the intellectual stimulation provided by the West and its creature comforts, his emotional commitment to Pakistan was complete. His roots and aspirations were fixed firmly in his own country, his loyalties were firmly nationalist. In fact, he intensely despised the pro-Western attitudes of young men from India and Pakistan who like him had had the advantage of a good education abroad.

This remained his view and was frequently expressed. In July 1965 during a speech to the National Assembly he rounded on opponents of the proposed Afro-Asian Summit:

¹⁶ Zulfi my Friend - Pилоo Mody

If there are still any 'bars [big] Sahibs' or 'brown sahibs' who think that we have no place in the world of Asia and Africa, to them I can only say this: the people of Pakistan have no place for you in Pakistan, because Pakistan is a part of Asia and Africa, and Pakistan must march with the aspirations of the people of Asia and Africa.

Bhutto returned to Pakistan with the clear intention of immersing himself in politics. There was never any sentimental hankering after the more sophisticated intellectual offerings of the West. His English accent was 'educated sub-continent' and not overly anglicized. Links with friends made abroad were consciously cut: 'I told them, if you come to Pakistan we'll meet; but I am going back to stay. No letters or sentimental reminders. I deliberately did not retain old University friends.'¹⁷

Where lay the springs of ambition for Bhutto? With the easy self-assurance which privilege breeds, he had no doubts about his gifts and what he might do for his country. He was his father's favorite son and political heir. And even judged by the standards of the politically motivated Sindhis around him, he was highly educated both academically and in the ways of the world. There was no other scion of a prominent Sindhi family with an equivalent education who also possessed that less definable 'political grasp'. Great things had always been expected of him by his father and immediate family.

Although it may be foolhardy to attribute idealistic motives to a pragmatist like Bhutto, there is no doubt that he was driven at an early age by a strong desire to redeem Pakistan nationalism. Dr Johnson's observation that patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel may be no less true of twentieth-century Pakistan than of eighteenth-century England, but Johnson could hardly have been aware of the altogether more fragile national entities which the twentieth-century would bring. Bhutto's early writings, education and background all indicate a consuming passion to serve and revive his country's stature. Certainly a need for personal power was a key factor; but it cannot alone explain the demonic energy with which he pursued high office, and his country's interests.

As a young man of twenty-five, he combined social standing with all the social graces. He came from one of the wealthiest and most powerful families of Sindh; he had a string of academic achievements, a beautiful wife and a great deal of charm. He slipped without resistance into the vacuous and parasitic life of the rich. The Bhuttos were always seen at the right houses and parties of the old Karachi families. A family friend reminisces:

¹⁷ Conversations with the author

He was good-looking in rather a sensuous way, always over polite and courteous and seeming to know the correct thing to say at all occasions.

Another recalls him as 'making it a point to seek out senior politicians and to be excessively attentive to them'.

On returning to Pakistan Bhutto took up law. His father Shahnawaz had placed him as an assistant to the well known Hindu lawyer Ram Chandani Dingomal. Most of the rich Sindhi families were Dingomal's clients. Bhutto's tenure with Dingomal was not an unqualified success as the crusty old lawyer believed in treating his apprentices as clerks regardless of their background. As a spoiled son of a rich landlord, Bhutto found Dingomal's attitude difficult to take. Shahnawaz complained to friends that 'Dingomal treats my son like a clerk'. The tension was further exacerbated when Bhutto received an accolade from the Chief Justice of Sindh for a legal case which he conducted.

Unlike many graduates freshly returned from long sojourns in the West, he found no difficulty in adapting to his native environment. Sindhi and family traditions were too deeply part of his make-up. He could spend long periods in Larkana, Sukhur and Jacobabad simply enjoying being there. Speaking fluent Sindhi he easily mixed with old family friends and politicians. Shahnawaz had often emphasised to his son the importance of sustaining his roots. The lesson was well learnt and later passed on to his own children. Bhutto always insisted that they should spend time in Larkana and other parts of Sindh to develop that feeling of identification with their homeland which he regarded as essential.

The period after his return from studying abroad was important. Berkeley and Oxford had provided the intellectual equipment with which to tackle national issues. As Shahnawaz's son it was assumed he would make his debut at a suitable time by contesting an Assembly seat from Larkana. Active politics became an increasingly dominant part of his life.

By 1954 Pakistan's Central Government was intent upon submerging the country's four distinct provinces of Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier and Baluchistan into 'One Unit'. Bhutto had laid down his own thinking in a pamphlet published in October 1954, entitled 'Pakistan, a Federal or Unitary State'. Of One Unit he wrote: 'If executed, it would unquestionably annihilate the geographical boundaries of the small units, but with the same decisiveness, it will perpetuate provincialism'. He launched this convoluted and fanatic attack on the Punjabi politician, Mumtaz Daultana one of the founding architects of One Unit. 'Like John the Baptist, the former Chief Minister of the Punjab has succeeded in alluring the people of West Pakistan to righteousness. Now the

nation awaits the Messiah whose hand will transform this diversity into barren identity.’ A little later he issued a press statement from Larkana strongly condemning the concept of One Unit. Although an active member of the veteran Sindhi politician G M Sayed’s anti-One Unit body called the Sindh United Front, he eventually left it disillusioned.

I went twice to his forum, but the third time I didn’t go. He wanted kudos for nothing. I was disgusted with him. There was no programme of action. Then, in the middle of everything, he would sit and whisper with Pir Muhammad Ali Rashdi! [A pro-One Unit politician] I was not one of those people who could sit around and say ‘Sain Ayo’ – ‘Sir has come’. I decided it was a farce. I met Pirzada Abdul Sattar [an ex-Chief Minister of Sindh]. I told him to arrest Khurho, arrest Rashdi, seize the opportunity, ban their newspaper *Al Wahid*. I also met Iskandar Mirza [President of Pakistan], Bengali politician, Mumtaz Daultana, other Punjabi politicians. These were the only things you could do in those days.

In Sindh, Ayub Khurho was installed as Chief Minister in order to railroad One Unit through Parliament. Despite widespread agitation in the province, Khurho succeeded through a policy of roughly marshalling his forces in the Sindh assembly. One of his political opponents attacking him in the Assembly said:

You struck terror – and I say this with confidence – that you struck terror into the hearts of the members of the Sindh Assembly when they came to vote.¹⁸

Although only on the periphery, politics for Bhutto was already his abiding interest. He continued to extend his political contacts, developing a particularly close friendship with the corpulent, mercurial Bengali politician H S Suhrawardy. Suhrawardy was a friend of Shahnawaz, but soon developed a personal relationship with his son. On one occasion, he came especially to Larkana to persuade Shahnawaz to urge Zulfikar to join the Awami League. On another occasion he sent Mujibur Rahman for the same reason, but Zulfikar refused. Together they would frequent Karachi’s nightclubs, drinking and arguing endlessly. Despite the personal friendship, they were unable to agree on any subject; yet Bhutto retained a great respect for his views and intellect.

In April 1956 a group of disaffected Assembly members formed an overnight party called the Republican Party, and succeeded in seizing power by a vote of no confidence against the Government. That such an absurd group could gain

¹⁸ Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan debates – 10th September 1955

power reflected the complete bankruptcy of the upper echelons of Pakistan's politicians. In an article called 'A Development for Democracy' in December 1956, Bhutto severely attacked the Republican Party:

The Republican Party in West Pakistan was born in dubious and inauspicious circumstances ... the architects of the Republican Party have also fallen into the quagmire of intrigue and conflict.

But Bhutto as yet enjoyed no position of political consequence, and he was bored. He reacted as gifted people of under-used talents have reacted before. He began to drink, often heavily. He began frequenting Karachi's nightclubs like the Excelsior, Beach Luxury and Taj – a favorite was the Le Gourmet in the Palace Hotel – from where he would often be seen staggering out in the early hours of the morning. But his assiduous cultivation of pleasure did nothing to alleviate his overall sense of purposelessness. His companions were usually sottish Sindhi landlords, and their inebriated sessions – often lasting all night and into the next day – became part of Karachi's gossip. His elder brother had succumbed to alcohol and there were fears that he would go the same way. He capped all this with a series of love affairs which added further fuel to the prevalent talk.

One of Shahnawaz's friends was the President of Pakistan, Iskandar Mirza, whom he had first met when a minister in the Bombay Government in the 1930s. Iskandar Mirza was fond of partridge shooting, and visited Larkana every year from 1954 to 1958, staying at the Government Circuit House in Larkana. Some of the most lavish and elaborate shikars in Sindh were organised by Zulfikar's father-in-law Ahmed Khan Bhutto.¹⁹ Senior Ambassadors, notably the American, were often present. During the course of these visits, Iskandar Mirza met Zulfikar and developed a personal relation with him. He once told Zulfikar that he was planning to give a history lecture in Karachi and asked him if he could write the paper. Impressed with what he read, he asked Bhutto to write position papers on a number of other subjects like Kashmir and CENTO.

Iskandar Mirza's patronage increased. In 1957 he sent Bhutto to New York as a member of the Pakistan delegation to the twelfth session of the United Nations General Assembly where he made a well-researched speech entitled 'The Definition of Aggression'. Having earned his laurels, he was again chosen in February 1958 to go to Geneva as the leader of the Pakistan delegation to the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. Once again Bhutto spoke extremely well and confirmed his reputation as a clever and forceful avatar.

¹⁹ Ayub Khan accompanied Iskandar Mirza on several occasions to Larkana. Indeed there were rumors that the coup of 1958 was hatched in Larkana. This is most unlikely, however, since the shouting season begins in November – and the coup was staged in October 1958

In January 1958, after Shahnawaz's death, Iskandar Mirza again visited Larkana, where his personal rapport with Bhutto developed. Bhutto remained grateful to Iskandar Mirza for his kindness, and later, whenever he visited the United Kingdom he never forgot to call on him, during the ex-President's years in exile. Mirza, on his part, continued to retain a fondness for Bhutto, and wrote of him years later:

It is encouraging that two men whom I first selected as leaders: Mr. Z. A. Bhutto and Air Marshal Asghar Khan are giving a lead to the people.²⁰

What Mirza did not foresee was that his two protégés would turn out to be bitter and implacable foes.

²⁰ Iskandar Mirza Speaks – Iskandar Mirza

Chapter Four

IN THE FIELD MARSHAL'S SERVICE

On the night of 7th October 1958 Iskandar Mirza, the President, and General Ayub Khan, the Commander-in-Chief, aborted Pakistan's eleven-year experiment in democracy. Abrogating the Constitution and declaring Martial Law, they assumed dictatorial powers with Iskandar Mirza as President and Ayub Khan as Prime Minister. Iskandar Mirza handed over the implementation of the Martial Law to Ayub Khan, taking upon himself the task of selecting a cabinet. A list was prepared of prominent persons who had no political connections with any of the previous regimes. This eliminated the old Sindhi political guard of Kazi Fazulillah, Ayub Khurho and Pirzada Abdul Sattar. In order to bolster the cabinet's national image, a powerful Sindhi was needed. Iskandar Mirza remembered the bright Sindhi lawyer he had met in Shahnawaz's house, and appointed him at the age of only thirty to the office of Minister of Commerce and Industries. On the 27th of October the new team took oath of office. At the time Bhutto was a complete unknown, so much so that in a press report on the cabinet's swearing in, he was called 'Zulfiqar Ali Bhutta'.²¹

The new cabinet had barely been inducted when Ayub Khan deposed Iskandar Mirza and personally assumed the title of President. Reluctant to create any further jolts, Ayub Khan allowed Iskandar Mirza's cabinet to retain office. A few days later, Bhutto attended his first cabinet meeting at the old Prime Minister's house in Kutchery Road, Karachi. Judging a modest demeanor to be in order, he sat demurely, hands folded in his lap between the bearded and elderly Minister of Communications F. M. Khan and Food and Agricultural Minister Hafizur Rehman. The meeting had been called on the unexceptionable subject of streamlining the administration, and Bhutto's views were not sought. Later, the cabinet posed for a group photograph in which Bhutto was conspicuous by his youth. His first official duty as minister was to receive the West German Finance Minister Ludwig Erhard.

Bhutto had been a student of law and political science, and knew nothing of commerce. However, with characteristic enthusiasm, he plunged into his new assignment. As Commerce Minister, one of his more important tasks was the reorganization of foreign trade. The Commerce Ministry under Bhutto implemented concrete measures such as laying down regulations for government quality control on exports and formation of export promotion

²¹ Dawn – 29th October 1958

centers. Bhutto insisted that the reforms in foreign trade organization should be completed by June 1959. The highlight of his tenure as Commerce Minister was the introduction of the Bonus Voucher Scheme designed to help Pakistan's exports. The scheme was designed by a West German economist and had an immediate short-term benefit on the balance of trade. It later developed into a permanent crutch, and it fell eventually to Bhutto to dismantle it in May 1972 after he reassumed power.

In the early years, Ayub Khan's government was extremely popular. The initial months were heady days with reforms, corrective legislation and anticorruption measures rattled out at an amazing pace. Bhutto was carried away in his admiration of Ayub Khan, and determined to prove his loyalty. After barely a month in office, he enthused during a tour of Jacobabad: 'In President Muhammad Ayub Khan we have a dauntless leader... I can assure the people that never has a cause had a man with a greater purity of purpose.' In his first year as minister, Bhutto was awed by power. As the youngest member of the cabinet, he was deferential towards his senior colleagues and particularly towards Ayub Khan. One cabinet colleague recalls him as 'always shy, low key and soft-spoken'.

Bhutto's rise was meteoric. His intelligence, ability and capacity for hard work soon set him apart even from his more experienced colleagues. He managed to make a success of whatever he undertook, and in the space of barely a year he graduated into a position of trust. In October 1959 he was sent by Ayub Khan as leader of the Pakistan delegation to the United Nations, and carried out his mission successfully – still only thirty-one at the time. This was Bhutto's first opportunity as an Ayub Khan Minister to represent Pakistan on the international stage, and he enjoyed his assignment thoroughly. He fluently expounded Pakistan's position on disarmament, together with a brief assessment of the competing Soviet and British disarmament proposals. As a student of international affairs and having twice before represented Pakistan in a similar capacity, he was well equipped to speak on the subject. His appetite was whetted, and he seldom missed any opportunity in later years to represent Pakistan in important forums abroad.

In January 1960 Bhutto was switched to Minister of Information and National Reconstruction (with Minority Affairs thrown in). A primary responsibility of his new job was the projection of Ayub Khan's regime. This was a far more political assignment, and brought him into much greater contact with Ayub Khan. Information being a delicate subject, it required a special finesse which he soon learned. A few months later, and still only thirty-two, Bhutto was given the additional and vital Ministry of Fuel, Power and Natural Resources, and also

Kashmir affairs. He gradually moved closer to Ayub Khan, and by the end of the year had slipped unnoticed into the inner coterie.

Again, in October 1960, he led the Pakistani delegation to the important Fifteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Fifteenth Session was one of the most important in the United Nations history, and was attended by a galaxy of international statesmen like Krushchev, Macmillan and Fidel Castro. Here he rubbed shoulders with the world's political elite and found the experience congenial.

In the year before Bhutto took over as Minister of Fuel, Power and Natural Resources, the Soviet Union had offered to assist Pakistan in oil exploration. But no action was taken on the offer. And so it fell to Bhutto to take what many would later regard as the first small step in an historic change in Pakistan's foreign relations. Suffocated by Pakistan's ill-advised dependence on the West, and anxious to develop a counter-balance, Bhutto soon began to advocate a policy of links with the communist bloc. As a minister charged with exploiting Pakistan's natural resources, he persuaded Ayub Khan to pursue the Soviet offer. On his return from the United Nations in October 1960, he announced his intention to visit Moscow in the immediate future to discuss a Credit Agreement with the Soviet Union for technical assistance in the search for oil.

On the 13th of December 1960 Bhutto flew to the Soviet Union to begin negotiations. Bad weather and flight delay caused their aircraft to be diverted to Samarkand instead of Tashkent. So the delegates spent the day in Samarkand as tourists. This was Bhutto's first visit to the Soviet Union. Having no official chores, he strolled through Samarkand enjoying the city's beauty, and wrote in appreciation: 'We spent an unforgettable day visiting its famous historical monuments and mosques. The grandeur of Islamic architecture and culture, so richly visible in the citadel of the great Taimur [Tamerlane] and his descendants, was truly impressive.²² He found a cultural link in the Muslim heritage between Samarkand and Pakistan: 'To find an unmistakable affinity in the midst of this gulf is to know now how abiding is Pakistan's heritage.'

The next day they motored to the historic city of Tashkent. The vast Soviet countryside, with its massive multi-storeyed apartment blocks and agricultural development, made a deep impression. In Tashkent they found time to pray at the famous Jamia Masjid. Ironically, in the same bitter cold, he was to go again five years later to Tashkent for the controversial Indo-Pakistan Summit which was to play such an important part in his future career.

²² Pakistan Times – 23rd March 1961

The delegation finally arrived in Moscow for the more serious business of talks on the proposed credit arrangement. He met the ebullient Krushchev at a Kremlin reception. A few months earlier they had met at the United Nations where Bhutto had led the Pakistan delegation to the General Assembly. Krushchev had gained headlines throughout the world for removing his shoe and banging it on the table during Macmillan's speech. Bhutto found Krushchev in great form and warmed to him. The two developed a close rapport: 'I liked Krushchev very much and he was very fond of me. We had many an interesting conversation.'²³

The draft Treaty which Bhutto brought back from Moscow was a great triumph and represented a major departure from Pakistan's previous foreign policy outlook. But it was not signed without intricate maneuvering. The Russians initially insisted the loan interest should be fixed at 51 per cent. When Bhutto reminded them of their previous references to being willing to accept 21- per cent, they said that this rate was a special preserve of countries friendly to the Soviet Union, and Pakistan, as a member of two pro-Western defence pacts, did not qualify for such favored treatment. Bhutto, aware that 51 per cent interest on the loan would be rejected by the cabinet, bluntly refused. With a brinkmanship which he was later to bring to the level of an art, he cancelled the delegation's scheduled visit to Leningrad for the next day and ordered everyone to pack bags. The embarrassed Russians backpedalled and the delegation returned with a thirty-million-dollar loan at a negligible 21 per cent interest rate. The Russian minister who dealt with the loan, Mr. Mikoyan, was impressed by Bhutto's negotiating skill, and remarked to Agha Hilaly, the Pakistan Ambassador in Moscow: 'Watch him. He is young and very clever !'

The oil agreement was a sensitive issue. A number of ministers were unhappy about it, and debate dragged on for almost six months. It was not until February 1961, in the teeth of strong opposition from the pro-Western Finance Minister Muhammad Shoaib, that Ayub Khan finally let Bhutto have his way.

Bhutto later recounted the hostility which he encountered within the cabinet to the oil agreement. 'The terrain was roughened for me by my own government', he wrote. 'Some influential ministers of Ayub Khan's cabinet counseled that the visit would be "inadvisable". When persistent arguments broke this resistance, the key man in my delegation, who had gone to Delhi, claimed to be sick. Another of my principal advisers was instructed not to stay with me in Moscow

²³ Conversations with the author

for more than a few days. I was directed to return home a day before the Agreement which had been evolved was to be signed.'²⁴

The signing of the oil agreement was the first significant overture towards the communist bloc. Public opinion was against Pakistan's pro-Western policy, and this important departure was greeted with enthusiasm. Bhutto was widely regarded as being the architect of this realignment, and his reputation as an independent nationalist began to take root.

On 1st May 1961 the Constitution Commission presented its report to Ayub Khan who appointed two committees to examine the report and give their recommendations. One committee was composed of bureaucrats and the other of seven cabinet ministers. These ministers presumably carried special expertise, or more likely, the special confidence of the President'.²⁵ The Cabinet Committee was chaired by Manzur Qadir, the Foreign Minister, and included Bhutto, Muhammad Shoaib, Muhammad Ibrahim, Abdul Kasim Khan, Akhtar Hussain and Habibur Rehman. This was the inner group, and despite his lack of years, Bhutto was an important member. The opinions of the Cabinet Committee had an important bearing on the final shape of the Constitution. As a member of the Cabinet Committee, Bhutto's views ran closely parallel to those of Ayub Khan. There is no evidence of his opposition to any of the principles or clauses of the 1962 Constitution despite his later condemnation of the whole exercise.

With the promulgation of the Political Parties Act of 1962, political life was revived in the country. Ayub Khan's search for a suitable vehicle to sustain himself in power culminated in the decision to appropriate the dormant Muslim League. As the party responsible for creating Pakistan, the Muslim -League still retained a special appeal. Consequently, in the summer of 1962, secret negotiations and bargaining sessions were arranged with assorted ex-Muslim Leaguers. A decision was finally made to call a convention of the Muslim League and reactivate it under Ayub Khan. Bhutto coordinated and assumed the central role in the political horse trading that followed. In an important public meeting held on 15th August 1962 (to coincide it with the fifteenth anniversary of Pakistan's existence) at Goldbagh in Lahore, he was the only central minister on the stage when Ayub Khan launched an attack on his political opponents.

The next day Ayub Khan and Bhutto flew to Rawalpindi together to attend an important special cabinet meeting to formulate policy. The meeting lasted more

²⁴ Article on Bilateralism published in November 1976

²⁵ Carl Von Vorys - *Political Development in Pakistan*, p 216

than six hours and took the vital decision to found a broad-based national party which would be called the Pakistan Muslim League.

Frantic activity followed, and a special five-member committee (with Bhutto and one other minister as members) was set up the same day to formulate detailed plans for reorganizing the new Muslim League and to prepare a report the following morning. Bhutto flew back and forth between Karachi, Quetta and Rawalpindi, talking to the politicians aligned with Ayub Khan, issuing press statements and working towards the inaugural convention.

The convention was held in Karachi on the 4th of September 1962. Bhutto, together with a host of others, participated in the five-day-long session. For Ayub Khan, the Muslim League inaugural convention was an unqualified success, giving him the power base he needed. For Bhutto it marked a further step in gaining the esteem of his political master. He and two others were elected deputy leaders of the party.

Shortly afterwards Bhutto was appointed Secretary General, a post which enabled him to establish important political links. Five years later, when he launched his own party, a number of ex-Muslim Leaguers such as Pir Ghulam Rasool Shah, Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, Mustafa Khar, Mustafa Jatoi and Fazal Elahi joined him. The Muslim League – a group of assorted politicians united only by ambition – soon degenerated into a hotbed of intrigue. All around him there was a vicious race for political favour. As a trusted confidante of Ayub Khan, and holding an important party post, Bhutto was exposed to the machinations which were a characteristic of the League. He learnt an important lesson in power-broking, and got a special insight into the tenuous principles and shifting loyalties of Pakistan's political elite. Any vestige of respect he may have retained for the niceties of bourgeois democracy rapidly dissolved. This much was clear later when he chose to devote so much of his political energy towards cultivating the masses. Once mass support is obtained, he found, the fickle loyalty of politicians follows.

Bhutto's task at this time was to explain the 1962 Constitution to different political forums. He toured the countryside in the defence. 'The new constitution was in consonance with the genius of the people and was arrived at putting the country on a true democratic pattern at the same time ensuring Islamic equality, justice and tolerance', ran one report of his efforts. In Punjab University, when defending the Constitution, Bhutto was shouted down by students. He exhibited an early flair for showmanship by rolling up his sleeves and challenging one particularly hostile student to a boxing match. Among the politically aware students, his reception was unfriendly, but he still managed to alleviate a great deal of the hostility by his open style and engagingly direct rhetoric.

According to The terms of the Constitution, elections would be held in March 1962 for the new Assembly. As a young politician anxious to win his spurs, it was necessary for Bhutto to contest the election from his home constituency of Larkana. Moreover, Ayub Khan was keen to choose his ministers from among elected members of Parliament. This was his major election debut, and its success or failure would have an important bearing on his political future. Conscious of this, he set about ensuring a place in the National Assembly by engineering, in the best feudal traditions, a complex series of political deals. He first arranged the support of the West Pakistan Governor, the Nawab of Kalabagh, which translated into hard political terms meant the support of the district administration and the police. It was thought at the time that those National Assembly members who were appointed ministers would have to resign their seats. Bhutto's appointment as a minister in the new cabinet was a foregone conclusion. He made no secret of the fact that his vital support in any ensuing by-election would not be forthcoming for anyone opposing him. With these guns lined up behind him, he had no difficulty in persuading his opponent Abdul Fateh Memon to withdraw with an ambassadorship to Saudi Arabia thrown in as a sweetener. Already, it appeared, he had developed a deft touch for squalid political dealing.

Although the 1962 election turned out to be a walk-over for Bhutto it proved to be a forerunner to another and perhaps a more interesting contest. In 1963 the Supreme Court ruled that ministers could not retain their seats in the National Assembly. Following the Supreme Court verdict, Bhutto's seat at Larkana was rendered vacant and a by-election scheduled for 1st September 1963.

Bhutto now had the option to allow his seat to go uncontested or throw a challenge to his opponents by contesting vicariously through a 'dummy candidate'. Characteristically, he chose to contest and selected a relative, Sardar Pur Buksh Bhutto, as a surrogate.

The Opposition reacted by combining and putting up a joint candidate, Abdul Hamid Jatoi, a liberal landlord with an honorable record of political opposition. In addition to this, Abdul Hamid Jatoi was influential, with the 'right credentials by family and caste links, and, perhaps crucially, he retained the overt support of two of Larkana's most influential politicians, Ayub Khurho and Kazi Fazalullah. With an active opposition against him, the duel looked difficult for Bhutto. Moreover, this time the Khan of Kalabagh, the Governor, showed no interest in supporting him. The official machinery was ordered to remain neutral. In some circles it was even conjectured that the Khan of Kalabagh would be personally delighted to see Bhutto fall flat on his face.

Having decided to fight at Larkana – his old family battleground – he plunged into the campaign with prodigious energy. He abandoned his ministerial duties for the period of the election. Determined not to repeat his father’s defeat back in 1937 he stayed in Larkana. This election was Bhutto’s first real bleeding, and an important lesson in survival. It followed the classic pattern of intrigue and counter-intrigue, especially with the craftiest old politicians in Sindh enmeshed in the struggle against him. Alliances were made, previous debts invoked, promises of future support given and byzantine plots hatched. But eventually he prevailed over his opponents and on 3rd September the 1,613 ‘basic democrats’ of Larkana voted in Bhutto’s candidate handsomely. After the announcement of the results thousands of cheering people collected outside Al Murtaza and took him through the city in a big and noisy victory procession.

Bhutto’s victory did a lot for him in Larkana. The older politicians in Sindh had till then looked on him as a political light-weight, assuming his position was largely due to government patronage. But this election showed he could mix it with the best of them. For his opponents it was a useful corrective to any lingering illusion they had of his naivety. Although his victory went unnoticed in the rest of the country, it carried a special significance in his own area. He was now acknowledged for the first time as a potent force in Sindhi politics in his own right. A political base, particularly in one’s family constituency, is a vital ingredient for any politician with serious national aspirations. And the elections provided this for Bhutto.

When Sardar Pir Buksh Bhutto’s tenure expired in 1965, Bhutto persuaded his cousin Mumtaz Bhutto to contest from Larkana. A rather reluctant Mumtaz agreed, and with Bhutto’s support was duly returned on the Muslim League ticket.

After the birth of the 1962 Constitution and the election of representatives to the National and Provincial Assemblies, Martial Law was lifted and Ayub Khan reconstituted his cabinet to give effect to the promulgation of the Constitution and the revived Assemblies. This time it was a much more politicized and expanded affair and included various victorious National Assembly members. Politicians like Abdul Sabur Khan, Muhammad Ali Bogra, Fazalul Qadir Choudhery, Waheed-u-Zaman, Lal Mian and Abdul Wahid Khan were drawn in. Pure technicians like Manzur Qadir were left out, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs given to a former Prime Minister Muhammad All Bogra. Bhutto retained his portfolio of Fuel, Power and Natural Resources, moving up in cabinet seniority.

As Ayub Khan’s special trouble-shooter he had now become indispensable. There was a close friendship and affection between them. In August 1963 a

grateful Ayub Khan awarded Bhutto the Hilal-e-Pakistan – Pakistan’s highest civil award. Carried away with enthusiasm for Ayub Khan, Bhutto produced flattering public eulogies of his master on the floor of the National Assembly, in other public forums and in print. So eloquent were they that Bhutto was caused much embarrassment in later years. Writing in the Pakistan Annual he declaimed: ‘He is an Ataturk, for like the great Turkish leader, he has restored the nation’s dignity and self-respect in the comity of nations. And above all a Salahuddin, for like the great Ghazi-ul-Islam, this heir to the noble heritage has regained a hundred million people’s pride and confidence, the highest attribute of life, without which a people are soulless.’

As a young minister, Bhutto had not lost that pleasure-loving and rakish aspect to his character that had made him such a figure in the Karachi nightlife. Now he cut a dash in the drawing rooms of Islamabad, and was the most-sought-after guest in the Islamabad cocktail and dinner circuit. He had a reported series of amorous dalliances with the wives of various government officials. At nightclubs and parties he showed special fondness for dancing. More enthusiastic than accomplished, he would often remove his shoes in case he stepped on his partner’s toes.

An incorrigible and talented mimic, he would regale the after-dinner parties in Islamabad with imitations of the pompous Khan of Kalabagh and other colleagues, to the fury of his victims. The Commander-in-Chief, General Musa, conducting war operations was a specialty. With his penchant for soaking up information about political colleagues, skeletons in family closets, tidbits, personal idiosyncrasies and intimate gossip, he always had a huge fund from which to draw.

But Bhutto was far more than a talented courtier. He eschewed the personal financial corruption that tempted so many members of Ayub Khan’s cabinet, and efforts after his departure from the Cabinet to implicate him in corrupt deals failed. The notion that money might be utilized to purchase social standing is foreign to a man accustomed to feudal values, in which rank is inalienable and quite distinct from material wealth.

There is little doubt that even at this period Bhutto’s sights were set on the highest political office. In a cabinet of conservatives he openly identified with radical causes. Pakistan’s unofficial poet laureate, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, recalls that when he received the Lenin Peace Prize, and as a communist he was treated as a pariah by the Ayub Khan regime, the first telegram of congratulations he received was from Bhutto. He remained an active member of the Afro-Asian Society which was characterized by its anti-Americanism. On public platforms and forums he actively supported third world politics, neutralism, and a pro-

China policy. He had the courage to oppose the American intervention in the Vietnam war, and particularly their use of toxic gases and was able to convince Ayub of the folly of responding to a request by President Johnson to send Pakistani troops to fight in South-East Asia.

But he also dug for support in more traditional veins. In both the 1962 and 1965 elections he campaigned energetically for the Muslim League in Sindh, and established a web of alliances with feudal leaders. During the 1963 tribal insurrection in Baluchistan he made a special effort to intervene on behalf of Sardar Akbar Khan Bugti, one of the most important tribal leaders in the province, who had been sentenced to death by Ayub. Bugti's life was spared, and the debt has been frequently and publicly acknowledged since. It was on these strange and apparently paradoxical appeals to feudal support and to ideological radicalism that Bhutto was later to found an entire regime.

Chapter Five NEW DIRECTIONS

It was in the field of foreign affairs that Bhutto made his most decisive contribution to the Ayub years. Pakistan's foreign relations preoccupied him long before he assumed formal control of the External Affairs ministry. Even as Minister of Commerce and as Minister of Fuel, Power and Natural Resources, he took every available opportunity to speak out on international affairs. Cabinet sessions had provided him with another forum for his views. In cabinet meetings he had impressed his colleagues with fluent discourses on Pakistan's foreign relations and, more crucially, had gained Ayub Khan's ear.

The External Affairs Ministry was Bhutto's objective. During the period of declining health of Muhammad Ali Bogra, a former Prime Minister and Ayub's Foreign Minister in the early years, Bhutto had acted frequently as the Government's senior spokesman on foreign affairs. He was also appointed chief delegate for the Indo-Pakistan talks on Kashmir. When Muhammad Ali Bogra died in January 1963 Bhutto was the natural choice as successor.

He brought to the job a wealth of knowledge, extraordinary energy and real flair. His academic grounding, knowledge of the world, subtle intellect and above all his consuming interest in the subject proved the essential elements in the reputation he was to gain as a formidable diplomat and statesman. These talents were supplemented by an abundant self-confidence. 'There is no point in my appointing a Foreign Minister', he once said when head of state. 'Nobody knows more than I do about foreign affairs.' And it was probably true.

Although Ayub Khan later claimed exclusive credit for the foreign-policy initiatives of his years in power, it was very often Bhutto's originality of perspective that led to such departures. We have already noted his contribution to more realistic relations with the Soviet Union, although Soviet backing for India and Moscow's strategic interest in Pakistan's western provinces were always to act as a brake on truly close relations between the two countries. In other areas also, Bhutto impelled Pakistan towards policies that came to be regarded as the essential foundations of Pakistan's foreign relations. At the time they were considered revolutionary. With its membership of two Western alliances, SEATO and CENTO, Pakistan was seen to be in the West's pocket. While avoiding a rupture with the West, the outlook was significantly changed. A more enthusiastic response to the post-colonial nations of what is now called the third world and the development of close relations with the People's Republic of China were both accomplishments of Bhutto's years as Foreign

Minister. They established the pattern for Bhutto's foreign policy even when he assumed supreme power in Pakistan. Membership of SEATO, by then a moribund organization made all the more irrelevant for Pakistan through the loss of East Pakistan, was dropped amidst suitable clamor, but the break with the West was never absolute. Pakistan continues to be a member of the more effective CENTO. A similar and affordable gesture was made when Bhutto withdrew Pakistan from the Commonwealth, but relations with Britain and other Commonwealth countries remained cordial.

For many years Bhutto reveled in his reputation as a 'hawk' in relations with India, a stance he doggedly maintained until the 1971 Bangladesh war when the loss of half the country put Pakistan at a conclusive military disadvantage with its neighbor. His appointment as external affairs minister in 1963 was taken as an indication to the Indians of a tougher line in Indo-Pakistan relations than had hitherto been followed by Ayub.

After an exchange of letters between Ayub Khan and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, in November 1962, fresh hopes had been raised of a solution to the Kashmir issue which had bedeviled relations between the two countries since independence. Dean Rusk, the American Secretary of State, and Duncan Sandys, the British Commonwealth Secretary, came to India to help bridge the gap between the two countries. In January 1963 Bhutto told the International Relations Society at the University of Karachi that this was 'a golden opportunity to settle the problem' because of India's desire to obtain Western armaments. Bhutto and Swaran Singh, the Indian Foreign Secretary, held a series of talkathons all through the early part of 1963, dragging on with round after round and ending inconclusively. Although as Foreign Minister he brought a greater authority to his position as chief delegate, Bhutto made no progress towards a negotiated settlement of the Kashmir issue. And he emerged from the talks convinced that it was not worth trying.

So long did his negotiating session with Swaran Singh last that Bhutto became intimately familiar with the turbaned Sikh's traits and foibles. He would then entertain Ministry officials by mimicking him. How he scratched his ear when he was thinking; his nose when he needed time; or rubbed his forehead when being evasive. At the following day's meeting his colleagues would have difficulty keeping a straight face when the dour Indian External Affairs Minister began again to run through his repertoire of mannerisms.

For the Western bloc his appointment was to represent a further check on Pakistan's commitment to the capitalist world. Bhutto had firmly identified himself with nationalism and, its corollary as he saw it, anti-Americanism. He appreciated early on the need for Pakistan to play an international role as a third

world Asian country, and not as an appendage to some artificial bloc established to suit the West.

When President Sukarno of Indonesia sent a special envoy to Pakistan suggesting an Afro-Asian conference, Bhutto quickly agreed. In April 1964 he led the Pakistan delegation to the preparatory meeting of foreign ministers at Djakarta for the conference which was to be held later in the year in Algiers. Pakistan's foreign policy had grown so close to China and Indonesia by this time that there was talk of 2n Islamabad–Peking–Djakarta axis to isolate India on the diplomatic front. Bhutto wanted to adopt a belligerently anti-Imperialist stand at Djarkarta but was held in check by Ayub Khan. A resolution was sponsored by several countries condemning American military action in Vietnam, which Pakistan opposed. According to Ayub Khan, 'he pleaded that the conference concentrate on constructive and positive matters'.

Pakistan played an active role in drafting the conference agenda which was accepted practically in toto. At Djarkarta Bhutto and the Indonesian foreign minister Subandrio together produced a joint communiqué which was indicative of the closeness that had developed between the two countries. The communiqué was a watershed in Pak–Indonesian relationships in that for the first time Indonesia came off the fence on Kashmir and called for a solution in keeping 'with the wishes of the people of the state'. Indeed, Bhutto took every opportunity to inject unflattering references to India's Kashmir stance into conference agendas and communiqués.

The scheduled Afro-Asian Conference which was due to be held in Algiers in June 1965 had to be abandoned because of the anti-Ben Bella coup in Algeria. Initially Bhutto insisted that the conference take place: Pakistan wishes to be among the pall bearers of the final funeral of Colonialism', he proclaimed. Despite the chaos and shooting in Algiers, Bhutto chartered an oil company plane from London where he was attending the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference with Avub Khan and flew to Algiers to see if he could salvage something from the disaster. According to Bhutto, Ayub Khan was against his going to Algiers. "What do you want to go to that habshi [negro] conference for?" he asked, "Why do you want to be a cat's paw of the Chinese?" but I insisted it was our duty.²⁶

Algiers, where the conference was scheduled, was chaotic. There were bomb explosions, gunfire and demonstrations by pro-Ben Bella factions and a number of foreign ministers had not turned up. Clearly a conference was impossible.

²⁶ Conversations with the author

Bhutto had consultations with Marshal Chen Yi of China, Bouteflika of Algeria and various other foreign ministers. As a prominent member of the fifteen-member preparatory committee, Bhutto pushed through a communiqué postponing the conference to 5th November 1965. As a result of this the scheduled Foreign Ministers Conference was adjourned without being convened, and when an irate Indian journalist asked Bhutto, 'Why was there a consensus for holding the Foreign Ministers Conference until you arrived and changed it?' he tartly replied, 'Thank you for the compliment.'

It is evident from all accounts that Bhutto dominated the proceedings. His reputation as a dedicated champion of third world unity precluded any aspersions that he had anything but the best interests of the conference at heart. Rather than allow a disconnected, half-hearted moot which would have petered out, he directed and pushed the other members towards a consensus. His face-saving role was widely acknowledged by the international press. In an article on the postponement of the conference *Le Monde* wrote: 'In these circumstances the unexpected arrival of Mr. Bhutto who had realistic and sensible suggestions to resolve the deadlock honorably was welcomed with general relief.' In another assessment *Le Figaro* wrote: 'Among all countries it was Pakistan which played a leading role ... having arrived only on Saturday at the Algerian capital, Pakistan Foreign Minister Mr. Bhutto was the real architect of the compromise.' The Algerians on their part were placated by his insistence that Algiers again was chosen as the venue for the next meeting.

Out of the melee, and largely due to his efforts, a mini-Summit meeting was arranged a little later in Cairo between Pakistan, China, Indonesia and the UAR. Ayub Khan chose not to attend the mini-Summit, delegating Bhutto instead to represent him. Pakistan's stature reached its highest when Ayub Khan, on his way back from the Commonwealth Conference, stopped at Cairo airport for two hours and was received by the three giants of the third world, Sukarno, Chou-en-Lai and Nasser. A direct outcome of the mini-Summit was a greater rapport between the attending powers. At the end of the Cairo Summit the Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio announced to the press: 'Close co-operation has been reached between China, Indonesia, Pakistan and the United Arab Republic.' Practically from nowhere Pakistan had suddenly emerged in the forefront of third world affairs.

Barely two and a half years after his becoming Foreign Minister Bhutto was playing a catalytic role in Afro-Asian affairs. There were no more debilitating and inconsistent vacillations. A charter of basic priorities had been clearly enunciated. Commenting on Pakistan's new international diplomatic role, *Le Figaro* wrote: 'Since Pakistan renounced her American allegiance and came closer

to Peking, although remaining in the Commonwealth, she is in the right position to play referee in Afro-Asian councils.'

Pakistan's celebrated tilt towards China – the most controversial aspect of her foreign policy – came to a dramatic climax during Bhutto's tenure as Foreign Minister. Although foreign-policy positions seldom affect a politician's strength in domestic political affairs, the Chinese question is an exception to the rule. No aspirant to a political office in Pakistan can now criticise the People's Republic of China and expect to survive. The success of the Chinese revolution and the discipline, militancy and independence of the Chinese people have made them widely admired throughout Pakistan. China has resolutely stood by Pakistan at times of crisis, besides dispensing hundreds of thousands of dollars of aid to its ally. A common view on Asia and a joint hostility to India – Soviet expansion cemented the relationship further. Any politician, Bhutto included, who could prove his role in developing Pak – China relations wins immediate political advantage.

In the early years Pakistan's attitude towards the People's Republic of China had been ambivalent. She extended recognition on the 4th of January 1950 (five days after the Indians); but still held to the traditional Western nightmare of communist domination of Asia led by the militant People's Republic of China.

Disconnected overtures of friendship were often negated by corresponding provocations. Firmly wedded to the rigid Dulles view of history, Pakistan was unable to maintain her relations with China on an even keel. During the early part of the Ayub Khan regime, Pakistan's relations with China reached an all-time low. After the Tibetan rebellion against China in March 1959, and the Dalai Lama's flight to India, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Manzur Qadir, declared that 'expansionist tendencies' were 'more noticeable in China than in Russia'.²⁷ And in November 1959 Ayub Khan apprehensively observed: 'The sub-continent will be vulnerable to attack within five years. Chinese occupation of Tibet and road construction activities in Afghanistan pose a serious threat from the north.'²⁸ He then went on to offer a joint defence pact in India. The Chinese responded in colorful and typically cryptic fashion, by asking the Pakistan Government to 'pull up the horse before the precipice'. A little later, during a visit to the United Kingdom, Ayub Khan remarked to the *London Daily Mail*: 'A Russian Chinese drive to the Indian Ocean is a major factor in the communist drive for world domination.' Even on the all-important question of China's admission into the United Nations, Pakistan vacillated.

²⁷ *Pakistan's Foreign Policy* – S M Burki

²⁸ Interview with Khayyan International reported by *Morning News*, 9th November 1959

In September 1962 India and China went to war over their remote Himalayan borders. The immediate response by the Western countries to India's call for military aid established irrevocably in Pakistan's eyes where the real priorities of their supposed allies lay. For the Western powers the border war was a welcome opportunity. They stepped in with an alacrity and commitment which left the Pakistanis astounded. Despite vociferous protests and reminders by Pakistan of past allegiance to the Western cause, they poured in arms and aid to India in complete disregard of Pakistan's carefully laid plans for a military balance in the sub-continent. No serious effort was made to tie aid to India with a settlement on Kashmir. Pakistan was forced to re-examine her policy towards China, and a new pattern in their relationship rapidly developed.

Barely a week before war clouds gathered over the Himalayas, Pakistan and China had begun serious negotiations to delineate their northern boundaries. Tentative initial approaches had been made much earlier. As early as March 1961 the two countries had announced their decision to start serious discussions. The success of the border talks was vitally important to both countries, as further tension was not in either's national interest. Talks continued successfully, and by December 1962 a joint communiqué was issued announcing complete agreement had been reached in principle on the northern boundaries.

From November 1962 Bhutto was effectively acting spokesman on foreign affairs in place of the ailing Muhammad Ali Bogra. Pakistan's foreign policy had turned increasingly pro-Chinese, and she came down strongly on China's side in the border dispute with India. In an important speech before the National Assembly, Bhutto spoke in China's defence, justifying her rejection of the boundary line laid down by the British to demarcate Chinese territory and that of British India, condemning Indian intransigence and truculence, tracing contradictions in India's foreign policy and accusing India of starting the war in order to secure Western armaments. Bhutto even hinted at the possibility of a non-aggression pact between Pakistan and China: 'Our alliances are for self-defence, and a non-aggression pact further reinforces the defensive character of all these alliances.'²⁹

On Pakistan–China friendship: 'I declare that our friendship with China is not tainted by any form of bargain or barter ... China has assured us that our membership of pacts with the west is in no way incompatible with our friendship with China. This friendship is unshakable and unconditional.'³⁰

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Speech to the National Assembly – 27th November 1962

A few days later Bhutto again declared and perhaps more forcibly than ever before: 'I should like to make it clear beyond all doubt that we have friendly relations with the People's Republic of China and nothing will be permitted in any way to endanger these relations. Our relations with China are an independent factor in our foreign policy, and not contingent on any other.'³¹

This was the essence of bilateralism, a word which Bhutto re-emphasised time and again in his discourses on foreign policy. It simply meant that Pakistan would fashion its relations with other powers upon mutual interests, national aspirations, and after weighing external conditions; but not as a result of pressure by a third power.

Sino–Pakistan border discussions were already under way when Bhutto took over as acting spokesman on foreign affairs. His job was merely to ensure that discussions proceeded on their normal course. He was not responsible for initiating the Sino–Pakistan border agreement and played a merely ceremonial role. It was Bhutto's good fortune that the concord was reached when he was Foreign Minister. On the 2nd of March 1963 the final agreement was sealed in Peking amidst considerable fanfare. As Foreign Minister Bhutto travelled to China for the signing ceremony, and featured prominently in the publicity surrounding the agreement. At that time Bhutto never claimed credit for the border agreement with China: 'The late Muhammad All Bogra was to go to the People's Republic of China to conclude the agreement. Most unfortunately, he did not live to do so, and I had to go in his place.'³²

Later on, however, he over-reached himself in laying exaggerated claims to being the sole architect of the Pak–China alliance. Indeed, so vociferous was he on this, that it has been accepted as a truth by most Pakistanis.

Although Bhutto was not responsible for initiating the relationship, it is fair to say on his taking over as Foreign Minister the China policy gained new impetus. Bhutto had, for a considerable period of time, been strongly lobbying for closer links with China. Whereas previously Pakistan–China relations had been directionless, they now took the form of a coherent and long-term aspect of foreign policy. There were no more banal anti-Chinese statements either direct or implied. Pakistan firmly supported the Chinese positions in international forums, and friendship with China continued to grow throughout his tenure as Foreign Minister. In August 1963 the two countries negotiated an air-service agreement with important commercial advantages to Pakistan International Airlines,

³¹ Speech to the National Assembly – 4th December 1962

³² Speech to the National Assembly – 17th July 1963

making it the first international carrier to operate through Canton and Shanghai. Rich commercial rewards also continued to flow. China became the biggest buyer of Pakistan's cotton and in 1964 it offered a sixteen-million-dollar interest-free loan to Pakistan. The relationship with China became an ever more important factor in the Indo – Pakistan equation.

By the end of 1963, Indo–Pakistan relations had degenerated sharply, compounded by the riots in Indian-occupied Kashmir over the stealing of a sacred relic, reputed to have belonged to the Prophet Muhammad, from the Hazrat Bal Shrine near Srinigar. In February 1964 Chou-en-Lai visited Pakistan. Bhutto, who was in New York representing Pakistan in the Security Council, flew back to be present for the visit. It was at this time that Chou- en-Lai abandoned China's previous neutrality and came down heavily on Pakistan's side. In a joint communiqué the two countries expressed their hope 'that the Kashmir dispute would be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir as pledged to them by India and Pakistan'. The communiqué was a watershed in Pak-China relations, and contrasted sharply with past hedging by the Western powers. Chinese popularity burgeoned, and the entire China policy took on a new shape.

Annoyed at Pakistan's growing independence, the United States, in the autumn of 1965, tried to pressurize Pakistan to adopt her former pliancy. She persuaded the Aid to the Pakistan Consortium to postpone its meeting. Bhutto immediately turned to the People's Republic of China who responded by declaring that they would give whatever possible within her capacity to aid Pakistan.³³ It was during this period, just before the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, that Bhutto, addressing the National Assembly, made the celebrated statement that if Pakistan was attacked she would be aided by one of the most powerful countries in Asia, an obvious reference to the People's Republic of China.

Perhaps the greatest success of Pakistan's China policy came during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965. The Chinese issued a straightforward condemnation of India, branding her the aggressor. On 16th September 1965 China issued a dramatic ultimatum to India.

'Supported by the United States imperialists and their partners, the Indian government has always followed a policy of Chauvinism.' The statement went on to demand that India dismantle within three days her military bases in and around China's boundary; return kidnapped Chinese and livestock or 'bear full responsibility for all the grave consequences arriving there from'. A full-scale

³³ Dawn - 4th August 1965

intervention suddenly became a reality and the world took notice. On the 19th of September 1965 the United States Under-Secretary of State George Ball asked the minister of the Pakistan Embassy in Washington to clarify her position vis-à-vis China. While Pakistan's Western allies continued to vacillate, China came out without reserve in her support. This was the stuff alliances were made of, and for the Pakistani masses Chinese popularity reached a zenith.

The Chinese support for Pakistan during the 1965 war left no doubt in anyone's minds the direction in which Pakistan should now face. As Foreign Minister, Bhutto spared no words in voicing the thanks of his grateful countrymen. On the floor of the National Assembly, on public platforms, press conferences and statements, he repeatedly eulogized China's role. From the rostrum of the United Nations General Assembly in September 1965 he acknowledged China's support: 'Our great neighbor to the North, the People's Republic of China, gave us full moral support, and rising high above ideological differences, upheld the cause of righteousness.' Addressing the National Assembly of Pakistan he said: 'I come now to another great and powerful Asian country which gave Pakistan unstinted support that is the People's Republic of China ... throughout the period of conflict, the Chinese government and people continues to support Pakistan's heroic resistance.'

The China policy had been vindicated in the eyes of the masses of Pakistan, and Bhutto had gained widespread public adulation as one of its major advocates. A strong group in the cabinet led by Muhammad Shoaib who had opposed the China policy, were now completely isolated. Bhutto's calculated drive towards Pakistan's communist neighbor paid huge dividends to his country, besides aiding his personal political ambitions.

Chapter Six

WAR AND PEACE 1965-6

Of all the issues that have made enemies of India and Pakistan since independence, Kashmir is by far the greatest. The dispute involves the extensive dominions of the former Maharajah of Kashmir, a Hindu who ruled over a predominantly Muslim people. But the emotional core of the question centers on the Kashmir valley, at 5,000 feet in the foothills of the Himalayas and by common consent the most entrancingly beautiful part of the sub-continent. The decision of the Maharajah in 1947 that the state should accede to India has never been accepted by Pakistan, for whom the overwhelming preponderance of Muslims in the valley dictated that the state should become part of Pakistan. The first Kashmir war was fought at the time of that 'accession', a conflict that brought one-third of the state under Pakistan's control, now known as 'azad' or 'Free' Kashmir, but left the larger – and more beautiful – part to India. More than thirty years and two more wars later, the ceasefire line has changed, but the issue remains unresolved.

Kashmir has proved just as emotional an issue for the Indians as for the Pakistanis. Indeed, the family of Pandit Nehru, first Prime Minister of Independent India, and his daughter Indira Gandhi, India's third Prime Minister, originally came from the state where they had served the Maharajah. For Nehru in particular the future of Kashmir was a question clouded by his own emotional attachment to the valley. Bhutto recalled meeting the Indian Prime Minister at one juncture in customarily tortuous Indo–Pakistan negotiations. The discussions turned to Kashmir, and Bhutto noted that Nehru's eyes glazed over and his eyelids drooped in apparent reverie. 'Wake up, Panditji,' said Bhutto. 'We're supposed to be discussing Kashmir.'

After the failure of the Indo–Pakistan talks on the status of Kashmir in the summer of 1963, relations between the two countries became increasingly tense. Bhutto, as Foreign Minister, had presided over the abortive attempts at a compromise, but nothing had come of the talks, and there appeared no way out of the impasse. He showed his personal frustration and ably represented his countrymen's aspirations in this vivid contemporary statement:

Let it be known beyond doubt that Kashmir is to Pakistan what Berlin is to the west, and that without a fair and proper settlement of this issue, the people of Pakistan will not consider the crusade for Pakistan complete.³⁴

³⁴ Statement at Lahore — 14th July 1963 (reply to Nehru)

Following the failure of the talks, an incident in Srinagar in December 1963 set off riots in the Indian-occupied portion of the state. A holy relic, Mohi-Muqaddas (Hair of the Prophet Muhammad), was stolen from the Hazrat Bal Shrine near Srinagar, capital of the Kashmir valley. The incident sparked off riots and anti-Indian demonstrations in Pakistan. Each side accused the other of complicity, and relations further deteriorated. The spontaneity of the riots in Srinagar seemed to indicate seething discontent in the state. Bhutto digested this and deduced that if this was the prevalent feeling, the aspirations of the population could be ignited into a full-scale anti-Indian insurgency. If these currents could be properly channeled into an insurrection, the Indian Government would be forced to reconsider its fossilized position on the future of Kashmir. 'The time to act is coming', Bhutto told a Western diplomat at a New Year's party.³⁵

In December 1964 India added to the existing tensions by applying Articles 356 and 357 of the Constitution to Kashmir which had the effect of eroding the state's special status in the Indian Union. This was India's way of terminating a political limbo, but on Pakistan the effect was incendiary. A spate of condemnations and demonstrations erupted all over the country. Bhutto was furious. This action spelt out for him something he had always suspected: that India had no intentions of giving up the disputed territory. He sought no further proof of Indian intransigence. Unless India's hand was forced – and clearly diplomacy was not the way – the Kashmir problem could never be solved.

Armed border clashes between Indian and Pakistani troops were a constant theme in relations between the two countries, but increased greatly in number and intensity in the early part of 1965. In April 1965 the most serious of the clashes took place in the desolate marches of the Rann of Kutch, on the Indian Ocean seaboard between West Pakistan and the Indian state of Gujarat. The Indian army put up a poor showing which further convinced the Pakistanis that they possessed the military edge on India.

There were other factors prompting Pakistani action. After the Sino-Indian war of November 1962 the Indians had embarked on a massive arms build-up which had disturbed the existing balance in the sub-continent. If Pakistan was ever to find a military solution, the time in which to do so was limited. Nehru's death in the summer of 1964 had convinced Islamabad that the Shastri government was weak. It was felt that the Indian Union, with its diverse population, was vulnerable to break-up. The cry of the Madras-based Tamiz party for autonomy, the Maharashtra–Mysore border dispute and the Sikh demands for a Punjab

³⁵ Narrated by Dilip Mukerjee – *A Quest for Power*

province was taken as further evidence. In an article after Nehru's death, Bhutto wrote:

How long will the memory of a dead Nehru inspire his countrymen to keep alive a polyglot India, the vast land of mysterious and frightening contradictions, darned together by the finest threads ... the key to Indian unity and greatness has not been handed over to any individual. It has been burned away with Nehru's dead body.

Another factor was Ayub Khan's touching belief that he would inherit Nehru's mantle as Asia's foremost leader. Pakistan was firmly convinced of the futility of any Western diplomatic intervention or a United Nations-inspired solution for Kashmir. An exaggerated belief in the effectiveness of guerilla movements prevailed as a result of the Viet Cong in Vietnam.

Around the summer of 1965, a small inner circle around Ayub Khan, of which Bhutto was one of the most influential members, made the decision to invoke an armed uprising in Kashmir. This circle, other than Bhutto, consisted of Information Secretary Altaf Gauhar, Foreign Secretary Aziz Ahmed, Defence Secretary Nazir Ahmed and, representing the army, General Akhtar Malik.³⁶ Although the international climate appeared generally favorable to the venture, it was Bhutto more than any other member of Ayub Khan's cabinet who convinced him to act. He argued forcefully and strongly, gradually convincing Ayub Khan of the wisdom of taking action. As Foreign Minister and by far the most articulate of those around the President, his persuasion was crucial:

I wrote to Ayub Khan saying if we wanted to pursue a policy of confrontation with India time was running out. We had to act now or it would be too late.³⁷

Some political commentators have argued that the policy of confrontation with India from the Rann of Kutch incident to the armed insurrection in Kashmir was exclusively Bhutto's idea. 'Bhutto, who was trying to build up his image as a tough anti-Indian leader,' wrote the Indian journalist Kuldeep Nayar, 'prepared a working paper — which came to be known as the Bhutto Plan — to argue that if India was to be tackled at all, now was the time.'³⁸ Bhutto personally has made

³⁶ According to Anwar Saeed who interviewed Bhutto, hardly anyone of Ayub Khan's ministers or other high officials beyond Bhutto, General Akhtar Malik and a few other Generals knew of the plot

³⁷ Conversations with the author

³⁸ Distant Neighbours — Kuldeep Nayar

no bones about his advocacy of confrontation in Kashmir and is on record as saying that, like Jinnah in 1947, he was for war with India in 1965.

The plan was certainly audacious and perhaps foolhardy. It was supposed to proceed thus: guerillas were to be infiltrated into Kashmir igniting an armed insurrection involving Indian troops; an embarrassing suppression which in turn would cause reverberations around the world, particularly among Indian Muslims, a chain of protests and adverse reaction from world opinion. This, it was hoped, would force India to reconsider its position on Kashmir and perhaps bring about a situation where fruitful talks could be held on a plebiscite in the troubled valley. It was argued that a protracted insurrection would force India to the conference table which, unlike the abortive 1962-3 Bhutto-Swaran Singh talks, might provide a more positive outcome.

After the event, Bhutto sought to evade responsibility for the detailed planning of Pakistan's Kashmir venture. His efforts in this direction – and his failure – come over well in this exchange with the author.

Bhutto: They sent in regulars whereas I wanted guerillas. You know, the fish in water theory. I wanted Azad Kashmiris.

Author: But, sir, guerillas of the same racial types are not enough. They must be indigenous people from the same village. Even if they are from a nearby village they can be clearly identified as outsiders.

Bhutto: Well, maybe. Anyway they f— d it all up.

Proper planning, indeed, was lacking. The Pakistanis were in a hurry to rush through with the whole adventure. In fact, the impetuosity and lack of follow-through bear unmistakable signs of Bhutto's planning.

With the guerilla infiltration into Kashmir, fighting broke out. On 6th September 1965 the Indians retaliated by attacking across the international frontier into West Pakistan. The Indian decision clearly took the policy-makers in Islamabad by surprise. They retained an exaggerated opinion of the Pakistan army's strength.

We thought our armored divisions would cut through like a knife through butter. But they messed everything up by dividing the armored division ... and then of course Khem Karan³⁹ was a disaster.⁴⁰

³⁹ Pakistani Patton tanks got bogged down in the flooded fields of Khem Karan

⁴⁰ Conversations with the author

No one expected such a reaction and a number of them lost their nerve. Bhutto, however, was in his element. He did not feel that the outbreak of war meant abandoning confrontation. It was an extension of the same thing. A military action would be even more effective in mobilizing world opinion against Indian control of the valley. As one of the principal architects of confrontation, he was faced with a new set of alternatives. Continued hostilities were disturbing the *status quo* and this was clearly to Pakistan's advantage. India was no longer a smug sitting tenant. If the war could be fought to a standstill it was equivalent to a victory. While the action smoldered, the loser could only be India.

Ayub Khan, however, could not bear the high tension of running a war. He pleaded with the United States Ambassador for American intervention to stop the conflict and appeared ready to grab at any straw which would bring about peace. Suddenly on 23rd September 1965 he accepted a ceasefire based upon a United Nations resolution which stated that cessation of hostilities 'was a first step towards a peaceful settlement of the outstanding differences between the two countries on Kashmir and other related matters'. The war was brought to an abrupt end without securing any provision for a self-executing arrangement leading to a permanent settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Nothing was obtained other than a promise that Kashmir would not be regarded as a dead issue.

At the news of a cease-fire, public rioting broke out all over West Pakistan. Kashmir over the years had become the country's greatest cause. After deafening world forums for eighteen years on the rights of the Kashmiri people that Pakistan was willing to fight for barely sixteen days seemed like a bad joke. Bhutto had gone before the country on a national television hook-up only a few days before the war, saying:

The heroic struggle of the people of Kashmir is a part of the glorious essay against colonial domination ... this endeavor will not be for Pakistan, nor will it be for the state of Kashmir ... it cannot and it shall not fail.

After the speeches made by the leaders of Pakistan extolling the troubles and travails of the oppressed Kashmiri people, a cease-fire without achieving any concrete advantage was unacceptable.

The overwhelming international support for Pakistan during the war and the comparative isolation of India was a vindication of Bhutto's new forward diplomacy. Commenting on India's isolated position in the *Times of India*, J. G. Kirpalani wrote:

There was not, in the whole gamut, a single nation, great or small, rich or poor, that was openly and whole-heartedly on our side.

The Arabs and the Muslim bloc came out almost without exception in Pakistan's favour, with traditional allies like Iran, Jordan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia taking the lead. Indonesia violently attacked the Indian aggression and offered military aid to Pakistan. China, as mentioned earlier, issued a dramatic ultimatum together with an offer of arms aid. The western powers, and most surprisingly the Soviet Union, sat on the fence. Other than Malaysia, India could claim no positive support from any other country.⁴¹

As one of the principal hawks on the Pakistan side, Bhutto could clearly see that his position would soon become untenable in Ayub Khan's cabinet. One of Ayub Khan's ministers, S M Zafar, who was with Bhutto in New York after the announcement of the cease-fire, recounts:

Mr. Bhutto wanted to know my reactions [to the cease-fire] ... Mr. Bhutto appeared perturbed and told me that he could not continue to stay in Government. I told him that sense of duty demanded that those responsible for the cease-fire should bear the burden also. He again said he would have to leave.⁴²

Meanwhile, the Security Council had been called to an Emergency Session to debate the Indo–Pakistan war. Pakistan was initially represented by S M Zafar, the Law Minister, whose inexperience damaged Pakistan's position. Bhutto was dispatched to represent Pakistan. He arrived distraught on the 2nd of September, immediately plunged into the hall of the United Nations and began speaking at 3 am in the morning.

Bhutto's speech before the United Nations Security Council was unique in its emotional content. For an audience of sophisticated diplomats and political commentators, it was full of exaggerated hyperbole, tautology and emotionalism. But the Pakistani masses are not sophisticated diplomats and political commentators. For them the speech was an apt articulation of their eighteen years of sorrows, frustration and hurt. Over Kashmir, they had repeatedly been driven up one cul-de-sac after another and Bhutto's speech was lauded for its defiance. Hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis wept openly as they heard his tear-choked voice on the radio:

⁴¹ *Times of India* – December 1965

⁴² *Through the Crisis* – S M Zafar

We will wage war for a thousand years; a war of defiance ... we shall fight in self defence, we shall fight for honour. We do not want to be exterminated, we cherish life. We want to live, we want our people to live ... but we are resolved to fight for our honour, to fight for Pakistan.

A few days later, on 28th September 1965, Bhutto again addressed the Security Council. This time he delivered a blistering attack on India and the Indian position. On 25th October 1965 he returned again to New York where he berated India in language never before heard in the United Nations. He began recounting Indian atrocities in their portion of Kashmir, and when the Indian delegation led by Swaran Singh walked out he remarked: 'The Indian dogs have gone home, not in Srinagar, only in the Security Council.' Bhutto's words were ordered to be expunged from the United Nations official records. He accused India of 'crude atrocities, genocide and a barbaric Nazi-like policy The ghettos of Poland live as painful and fearful memory, but the ghettos of Jammu and Kashmir are stinking to high heavens with human flesh ripped asunder by a monstrous and habitual aggressor determined to destroy like a bloodthirsty barbarian all that stands in his way.'

The reactions to his speech were again extreme. The Indian press and political commentators unleashed a storm of fury:

At the Security Council meeting convened on October 25th at Pakistan's instant, Bhutto excelled himself by his anti-Indian diatribes . . . the purpose of recalling this nauseating rhetoric is not to highlight the morbidly anti-Indian facet of Bhutto's personality . . . but to bring out the circumstances in which the Tashkent conference was convened.⁴³

It is doubtful if the United Nations, in the worst of its haranguing, tirading, shoe-pounding days saw such unbecoming behavior as that of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan that night of 25th October 1965.⁴⁴

Some international journalists concurred:

On the basis of Mr. Bhutto's performance here ... he could best serve his country's cause by staying at home with his mouth taped shut. His diatribe was a

⁴³ *Success or Surrender* – G S Bhargava

⁴⁴ *India and the Future of Asia* – Patwant Singh

catalogue of verbal excesses delivered with a high pitched emotion in a voice sometimes nearly breaking in sobs of passionate hate.⁴⁵

Such criticism made no impact at home. For the Pakistanis, Bhutto became an overnight hero. Instinctively they warmed to a man who channeled their own fanatical belief in the rightness of Pakistan's cause in Kashmir. They marveled at someone who could stand up in the United Nations of all places, and pour out fire and brimstone on the hated Indians. The Security Council speeches confirmed that hawkishness which was already serving to set him apart from other ministers around Ayub Khan. His popularity grew and he alone among his colleagues emerged from the war of 1965 with enhanced stature.

After the cease-fire, matters continued to drift, and there appeared no sign of an imminent settlement. The Soviet Union, which had remained studiously neutral, made several offers of mediation during and after the conflict. In November 1965 Bhutto travelled to Moscow where he was informed by Kosygin and Gromyko that the United States too had endorsed the Soviet initiative. As the continuing stalemate suited the Indian position, there appeared no alternative for Pakistan but to accept the Soviet offer. On 8th December 1965 simultaneous statements were issued at Karachi, Delhi and Moscow announcing a summit meeting in the Soviet city of Tashkent for 4th January 1966.

The Pakistanis put together a formidable delegation for Tashkent. Other than Ayub Khan and Bhutto, there was Information Minister Khawaja Shahabudin, Commerce Minister Ghulam Farooq, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, the Air Force Chief, Foreign Secretary Aziz Ahmed, Information Secretary Altaf Gauhar and several other prominent diplomats. India was represented by Prime Minister Shastri, External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh, Defence Minister Y B Chavan, Ambassador T Kaul and Foreign Secretary C S Jha. The Soviet Union demonstrated interest in the outcome by lining up an impressive array of top brass - Prime Minister- Kosygin, Foreign Minister Gromyko, Defence Minister Malinovsky.

The prime consideration for Pakistan was a settlement on Kashmir. Any agreement without Kashmir would be quite meaningless. As a sitting tenant India was anxious not to disturb the status quo. They were maneuvering for an acceptance of their occupation of the valley together with, if possible, a no war agreement. It was in her interest to adopt a 'step by step' approach, which, translated into harsh reality, meant discussion and agreement on peripheral matters but not on the central issue. There was always a great stress on 'the right

⁴⁵ Quoted from the *Winnipeg Free Press* by Patwant Singh in *India and the Future of Asia*

atmosphere for fruitful discussions' - a vacuous phrase meaning a winding down of tension in exchange for the promise of further talks. If past experience carried any message for Pakistan it was the futility of this hackneyed formula. Bhutto had always argued that only by sustaining the tempo and degree of tension could the situation ever be qualitatively altered. 'Confrontation, confrontation, confrontation', he claimed, 'is the key to the India Pakistan dispute.'⁴⁶

Talks began on 5th January 1966 with Bhutto and Swaran Singh facing each other across the negotiating table thrashing out the phrases and minutiae of their proposal drafts. Bhutto peremptorily made Pakistan's stand quite clear: 'We must address ourselves to finding a solution of the Kashmir problem.'⁴⁷ When Swaran Singh suggested a no-war pact, he concurred – with the vital rider that the same sort of self-executing mechanism be agreed upon for reaching a solution of the Kashmir problem as had been provided in the Rann of Kutch settlement, The Indians refused to accept this, and stuck to their position that Kashmir was an integral part of the Indian Union and not negotiable. This was again reiterated by Shastri who, in his first meeting with Ayub Khan, told him bluntly in Urdu: 'I am afraid it will displease you to hear this, but we cannot give up Kashmir.'⁴⁸

After four days of talks it was obvious no progress was being made and an atmosphere of futility prevailed. The Karachi Dawn emphasised the mood with the headline 'Tashkent may break up today'.

At this stage the Russians, who had discreetly remained in the background, began to intervene actively. They quickly gauged that it was impossible to obtain any compromise from Bhutto, and so concentrated on the more amenable Ayub Khan, emphasizing to him the attendant benefits which would flow from a settlement, and endorsing at the same time the Indian 'step by step' approach. They found Bhutto's insistence that any agreement must include a Kashmir settlement frankly irritating.

When Bhutto continued to rail about Kashmir's plebiscite, Foreign Minister Gromyko had to remind him that since Pakistan had failed to achieve its case by war, Bhutto should not expect the Soviet Union to deliver Kashmir to Pakistan on the conference table.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Speech in Lahore - 20th December 1970

⁴⁷ *India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh and the Great Powers* – G W Choudhry

⁴⁸ White Paper on Kashmir, Government of Pakistan 1977

⁴⁹ *India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh and the Great Powers* – G W Choudhry

To impress Ayub Khan further, the Russians carefully stage-managed a dramatic backdrop for a peace agreement.

There was a constant whirl of cine cameras and a clutter of news wires seeking to record history being made. There were famous Russian Marshals like Zhukov and Sokolovsky who had trampled history under the steel of their gigantic formations, kicked their heels and saluted every time Ayub Khan made any official appearance.⁵⁰

In addition to the Soviet Union, Ayub Khan was under considerable pressure from the Western powers to come to a settlement with India. The United States was clearly backing the Russian initiative. When Ayub Khan visited Washington the previous December, Lyndon Johnson had unequivocally told him that the United States could not influence India on Kashmir and advised Ayub to 'get it out of your system'. The Vietnam war was gradually turning into a focal point of United States foreign policy and for the furtherance of American objectives in that theatre Pakistan's friendship with China – which the United States considered a direct outcome of the India Pakistan hostility – had to be neutralized. The Soviet Union and the United States were anxious to continue with detente and the situation in the sub-continent was an unnecessary source of friction.

The crucial meeting between Kosygin and Ayub Khan took place on 9th January 1966, Ayub agreed to shelve the Kashmir issue. The Russian strategy of concentrating on the President paid off at last. A Soviet draft was quickly prepared and presented to India and Pakistan for acceptance. But Bhutto stepped in and insisted on various changes to the draft, the most important being to strike out a specific no-war clause. Neither the Soviet Union nor India wanted to rock the boat by haggling too much and were happy enough with the reconstituted draft. On 10th January 1966 the fateful Tashkent Declaration was signed.

Proof of Ayub Khan's lack of judgment in accepting the declaration so meekly was soon evident from the response it evoked back in Pakistan. News of the signing was greeted by howls of derision and fury all over the country. Rampaging mobs ran amok cursing Ayub Khan and his government, and shouting slogans like '*hume khoon ka jawab do*' – 'we want an answer for the blood we have spilt'. Violence erupted even before the Pakistani delegation

⁵⁰ Outlook – 12th January 1974

returned home. In student riots, on the Punjab university campus, several students were killed in the police firing.

As matters were seen at home, there was no reason for Ayub Khan to have signed anything. He could have refused to accept any document which did not include a settlement on Kashmir. The whole country stood united and resolved to carry on the struggle. World opinion was firmly with Pakistan. The war had reached a stalemate on the ground which was regarded as amounting to victory for Pakistan as the longer the confrontation continued the greater the pressure on India to reconsider its approach on Kashmir. The Chinese ultimatum had shocked the western powers out of their past stupor. Recognizing Pakistan as the weaker of the two protagonists, the Soviet Union and the western powers had emphasised that she should come to terms with India; but if Pakistan could convince them of her steadfastness of purpose the same pressure could just as simply be switched to India.

Somewhere in the rarefied atmosphere of high tension diplomacy Ayub Khan had lost his sense of purpose. A combination of United States and Soviet pressure; the false camaraderie exuded by India; an absence of historical understanding and a failure of spirit together pushed him overboard. Ayub Khan was well intentioned but tragically lacked the grasp of history that the occasion demanded. He seemed unable to get his equations right. Why had Pakistan gone to war? If over Kashmir, then where was the settlement on Kashmir? These were the central and disturbing questions he should have asked himself. He had been cajoled into stepping up tension in the valley. The Indian counter-attack over the international border had unnerved him and from then on he just did not have the stomach to continue the fight. He found the very turn and speed of events bewildering. Desperately he tried to extricate himself from the situation by signing what he naively thought was a 'document of peace'. A whole flood of tensions and forces had been released in Pakistan as a result of the war and its sequel. To have borne these in mind while coping with competing and contradictory international pressures required the subtle intellect of a great diplomat. Bhutto had the feel for all this. Ayub Khan did not.

Bhutto could clearly see the implications of signing the Tashkent Declaration. He bitterly opposed the Declaration and fought tenaciously for the exclusion of some of the more damaging clauses. But as Ayub Khan's Foreign Minister, his influence was clearly limited. A variety of political commentators and journalists present endorsed Bhutto's opposition to the Declaration. According to Lawrence Zeering:

It appears now that Foreign Minister Bhutto counseled the President against accepting anything less than an agreement for the holding of a plebiscite on Kashmir.⁵¹

Indian journalists like Durga Das go even further by claiming that:

Foreign Minister Bhutto tried to sabotage the agreement by raising all kinds of objections to the Soviet draft. Even after Ayub had, in his own handwriting, agreed to include a non-use of force in the draft declaration, Bhutto omitted these words from the fair draft sent back by the Pakistanis to the Russians. The Soviets were indignant and decided not to let Bhutto, whom they now were describing as a 'gariachi Glave' (hot head), get away with it. They successfully poured cold water on him by going back directly to Ayub and holding him to his earlier commitment. Bhutto, thereafter, cut a sullen figure at Tashkent. At a glittering ceremony at which the Declaration was signed, those present saw Bhutto quietly rapped by Ayub for blowing smoke rings and conducting himself in a manner which was not in keeping with the dignity demanded by the occasion.⁵²

Other impressions and accounts generally concur.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who must have known a good deal of the actual situation, even if his military judgment was untutored, was nevertheless opposed to the Tashkent Declaration, and a few months later he quarrelled with Ayub Khan over it and left the Government.⁵³

According to Kuldip Nayar:

When India asked for an official confirmation of the amended draft, Pakistan said that there never was any draft. Bhutto apparently had had his way. He had threatened to go back to Pakistan straight away and 'take the nation into confidence'. Ayub knuckled down under his threats because he could not take chances. He had emerged weaker from the 1965 conflict.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Ayub Khan Era* – Lawrence Zeering

⁵² *India, from Curzon to Nehru and After* – Durga Dass

⁵³ *From Crisis to Crisis* – Herbert Feldman

⁵⁴ *Distant Neighbours* – Kuldip Nayar

Bhutto alternately sulked and threatened, showing his dissatisfaction where he could by small acts of rudeness. He drummed his fingers on the table; yawned into the face of the other delegates; hummed and sometimes smiled privately to himself as if he, the Soviets and the Indians knew that Ayub Khan was being taken for a ride.

The Tashkent Declaration was a peculiar document. It covered barely two typewritten pages, laying down a list of anodyne generalities which were intended to govern the complex relationship between Pakistan and India, containing platitudes like 'discourage propaganda directed against the other countries' and 'consider steps to restore economic trade and cultural relations as well as communications'. What made the Tashkent Declaration political dynamite, however, was the manner in which it treated the vexed question of Kashmir. Just once in the preamble was Kashmir mentioned, and only in passing:

... the interests of the peoples of India and Pakistan are not secured by the continuance of the tension between the two countries. It is against this background that Jammu and Kashmir were discussed, and each of the two sides put forth their respective positions.

There was not even enough diplomatic circumlocution to save the day for the Pakistani negotiators.

There was no reference to Kashmir as an 'issue', 'dispute' or 'problem'. Considering that the two countries had twice gone to war over the Kashmir issue, it seemed a sorry response. For eighteen years the people of Pakistan had been fed on the day they would liberate Kashmir. Massive appropriations of the nation's wealth to the war chest had been justified on these grounds. After all this, the Declaration barely mentioned Kashmir. Trying to explain this away, a bewildered Pakistan foreign office spokesman issued a press statement and quoted lamely from the Declaration: "Jammu and Kashmir were discussed", it obviously did not mean the Indian Premier and President Ayub discussed the weather in Jammu and Kashmir.'

On the question of future belligerency, the first clause of the Declaration stated that 'both parties reaffirm their obligations to the United Nations charter not to have recourse to force, and to settle their disputes through peaceful means'. This meant, in effect, no more attempts at a military solution, which for Pakistan was tantamount to relinquishing all claims over the disputed valley.

The Indians were understandably jubilant at the signing of the document. They clapped loudly, their faces wreathed in smiles. They had wanted an acceptance

of the status quo in Kashmir and the removal of a war threat. They had come close to getting both. Bhutto, with a face like thunder, sat glowering, refusing to join in. The Times of India of 17th January 1966 followed up with an editorial expressing 'complete endorsement of the Indian point of view ... nothing can now be gained by questioning Kashmir's status as an integral part of India.' According to Kuldip Nayar:

It was essentially an Indian draft which the Soviet Union had made its own, by making marginal changes. C S Jha, the Foreign Secretary, told me 'we carried the draft with us from Delhi and got most of our things through'.⁵⁵

The ineptitude of the government's public relations machinery compounded Ayub Khan's problems. No organised effort was ever made to prepare the public for the declaration. Before and during the war, Pakistan propaganda had been whipping up public frenzy. War hysteria was rampant – fuelled by years of hate and frustration. When the cease-fire was signed they tried to damp the fires of frustration; but finding the country in a near state of anarchy they switched back to anti-Indian tirades. Intermittent reports of armed skirmishes and border shootings continued to appear which helped to keep the fever burning. Suddenly Pakistan's acceptance of the Tashkent Declaration was announced, and so another about-turn was tried and articles published in the press extolling the advantages of Pakistan–India friendship. A day after his arrival at Tashkent, and before any signs of a satisfactory outcome. Ayub Khan naively allowed himself to be photographed grinning amiably placed between Shastri and Kosygin, all three clasping each other's hands.⁵⁶ The picture was flashed all over the front pages of the government-controlled press. Considering the delicate sentiments prevailing at the time this seemed almost calculated to antagonize. After the public eruption against the signing of the Tashkent Declaration, the information media again cranked up on anti-Indian propaganda. Throughout this high voltage period, no clear direction or orchestration of public sentiments was planned. There was merely reaction to events without any overall strategy.

As a politician, Bhutto exploited Tashkent to its limit. It was too good a chance to be missed. In his struggle against Ayub Khan and during the 1970 election campaign, he was mercilessly and unscrupulously to play upon public disillusionment for his own ends. Time and again he hinted darkly of a secret clause to the Declaration though subsequent events have clearly proved that none existed. At public meetings up and down the country he threatened to

⁵⁵ *Distant Neighbours* – Kuldip Nayar

⁵⁶ *Dawn* – 1st January 1966

reveal 'the secret of Tashkent'. In his book *The Myth of Independence* he wrote: 'The truth of this chapter of history has yet to be told.' He hinted at everything from an international conspiracy to a secret protocol between Ayub Khan and Shastri. His response to the crowd's excitement would often take him over the edge of responsibility. On public forums as the crowds screamed back at him, begging him for the revelation, he promised to reveal it all when 'the time was right', pleading restraint by the Official Secrets Act. Today, when a Pakistani thinks of Tashkent he thinks of some dark plot conjured up over his head by faceless great powers. Tashkent, thanks to Bhutto, haunts the national consciousness. He played around with it like a conjurer right up to the end, although the rabbit was never produced from the hat.

The night after the Declaration was signed Shastri died of a heart attack. 'He was so pleased with himself that he died of joy,' Bhutto casually remarked later. Bhutto was awoken in the early hours of the morning by a grim-faced Russian soldier knocking on his door. He got up and tried to question the soldier who spoke no English and kept insisting that he follow him. He followed the guard who led him to the dacha of Aziz Ahmed, the Foreign Secretary.

'What's happened Aziz?'

'The bastard's dead,' replied Aziz Ahmed.

'Which one?' said Bhutto.

Chapter Seven

PARTING OF THE WAYS

Bhutto's relationship with Ayub Khan never recovered from their differences at the time of the 1965 Indo–Pakistan war. Bhutto's opposition to Tashkent, the growing personal animosity and the regime's need to find a scapegoat for the failure of objectives of the 1965 war made it necessary for Ayub Khan to remove him. Another imperative was the growing Anglo–American annoyance with Bhutto's pro-Chinese and aggressively anti-Indian outlook. Bhutto, on his part, had been growing slowly disillusioned with Ayub Khan. He found the President's attitudes hopelessly fossilized. 'I would argue with him, pay attention to the working class, but he was terrified only of big power conspiracies. He was always afraid of the CIA or something, and felt he could always handle the people . . . I once went out campaigning for the Muslim League in Sindh and worked day and night organizing the party. When I returned feeling the job had been well done, I got a call from Ayub Khan who told me that he had heard I'd been infiltrating all my own people into the Sindh organization, and would like to have a discussion with me about it . . . Ayub Khan was always susceptible to the person who had his ear last. If you spoke to him he would say "*behtar salah*" – good advice – and "do as you want". If after that another man got to speak to him, he would say the same thing, "*behtar salah*" – good advice.⁵⁷

Matters came to a head during the war. Ayub Khan's vacillations over Pakistan's relationship with China and his inability to stand up to Western and Soviet pressure infuriated Bhutto: Pakistan's friendship with China and third world countries, for which Bhutto had always campaigned, was anathema to Ayub Khan. Friendship with China, as a tactical ploy, was acceptable, but he did not view it as a long-term policy, let alone as a permanent feature of Pakistan's external relations. He had been schooled at Sandhurst, the British military academy, and this remained the horizon of his thinking.

In December 1965 Ayub Khan took Bhutto with him on a visit to the United States. Accompanying them was a seven-man delegation consisting of high-ranking diplomats and officials. On the way they stopped in London for talks with the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson. It was there that the first indications of Western sentiments regarding Bhutto were conveyed to Ayub Khan. Bhutto vividly recollects the meeting: 'I knew after he came out from his meeting with Harold Wilson that he had been prepared psychologically, because

⁵⁷ Conversations with the author

Ayub kept eyeing me, grinding his teeth. When I was reading a newspaper, I could see him looking at me from the corner of his eyes, and I could tell he had been groomed for the kill.⁵⁶ After Harold Wilson retired from politics, Bhutto wrote to him recounting the incident and good-naturedly ribbed him for his complicity.

In Washington another incident confirmed his suspicions. Ayub Khan and President Lyndon Johnson had a private meeting and were closeted alone for several hours. At the tail-end of the meeting, Mrs. Ladybird Johnson joined them for coffee. Accidentally she picked up a few remarks at the end of their conversation which implied Bhutto's planned departure. After the meeting she came out from the room, and seeing the Pakistani delegation there, she asked: 'Which one is Bhutto, I'd like to meet him.' Bhutto stepped up and introduced himself. Unaware of the implications of what she had just heard, Ladybird said: 'Oh, I'm so glad to meet you. I wanted to say goodbye to you before you left!' Bhutto was by now convinced it was just a question of time before he was eased out. The resumption of United States aid to Pakistan shortly before Bhutto was ousted was further proof of the United States influence over Ayub.

In February 1966 Ayub Khan went to Larkana to stay with Bhutto, and according to Bhutto: 'I told him then, "Sir what is all this? Why don't you come straight out with it and tell me I've got to go? I don't mind going. I've resigned before. But I understood those hints in New York when Ladybird Johnson came and said, "When are you leaving?"' Ayub Khan, however, reassured me and told me there was no question of my departure.'⁵⁸

Bhutto had offered to leave the cabinet on several occasions. But at that time, with public disaffection over the handling of the war and Tashkent running high, it did not suit Ayub Khan to see his popular Foreign Minister go. Although Bhutto, on his part, could see the writing on the wall, he still vacillated as to what path of action to follow. In retrospect he clearly ought to have insisted on resigning immediately after Tashkent. Instead, he tried to regain his position with Ayub Khan.

As Foreign Minister, he was called upon to demonstrate a measure of agreement with the policies of the regime he was serving. On the 15th of February 1966 and a few weeks later on the 9th of February 1966 he came out with a misty defence of the Tashkent Declaration which was a masterpiece of ambiguity: 'The Tashkent Declaration provides yet another framework within which the pursuit for a just and honorable solution of the Kashmir dispute will be continued.' On

⁵⁸ Ibid.

the 14th of March 1966 Bhutto again defended the Tashkent Declaration on the floor of the National Assembly, but this time in stronger terms: 'The Tashkent Declaration has been the subject of a great deal of comment at home and abroad ... The Tashkent Declaration forecloses no possibility, blocks no avenues, the achievement of our legitimate aims and the vindication of our just rights.' Although he never wholeheartedly joined in the general acclaim voiced by the cabinet, his defence of the Declaration remains sharply inconsistent with his later condemnation of it.

Privately sympathizing with rising public indignation over the Tashkent Declaration, Bhutto found it increasingly difficult to come to the defence of the Government's action. His post as Secretary-General of the Muslim League made his position even more delicate, and he hesitated less and less in voicing his private misgivings over the pact. It came as no surprise when on 19th March 1966 he resigned, and the resignation was accepted by the Muslim League's working committee.

At the party's conference held in Dacca on 20th March 1966 his place was taken by an uninspiring functionary, Sardar Aslam. Bhutto pledged himself, however, to continue 'working as a soldier and lieutenant of President Ayub Khan'.

He continued his various chores as Foreign Minister. In April 1966 he led the Pakistani delegation to a CENTO Ministerial Council meeting in Ankara, and the RCD Ministerial Council meeting in Teheran in May 1966.

In June of the same year he went to Indonesia at Sukarno's request. Sukarno had been sending repeated messages to Ayub Khan, asking him to allow Bhutto to come and see him. Sukarno's regime was on its last legs, and he wanted Bhutto's advice and companionship. After their meeting, the two issued a powerful communiqué reiterating Indonesian support for Pakistan on Kashmir. The Ayub Khan regime was intent on suppressing any publicity for Bhutto, and the press did not publish the communiqué. Instead, a remark designed to embarrass him was published in which he was reported to have stated that 'CIA agents were as active in Pakistan as in Indonesia'.

Personal meetings between Bhutto and Ayub exacerbated the tension. On returning from Indonesia, Bhutto was summoned to Rawalpindi. His uncle Ali Gauhar Bhutto had died and he wanted to go to Larkana, but as the President was so adamant, he cancelled his trip and rushed to Rawalpindi:

'Sir, my uncle's died, but as you sent for me and said it was urgent, I've come to see you.'

'How is Sukarno?'

'Sukarno's fine,' he replied. And that was the extent of the exchange. Ayub Khan's casual lack of sympathy for Sukarno's plight annoyed Bhutto further. Sukarno had supported Pakistan in the 1965 war and also Pakistan's stand on Kashmir. Bhutto had written a letter of sympathy to Sukarno after the 1965 coup in Indonesia, to which Sukarno had replied, addressing him as 'My dear Zulfikar' and then thanking him for his letter, saying:

It touched me deeply, since it was written with such an understanding of my person and character ... I understand that the struggle of the people of Pakistan as part of the struggle of the new emerging forces in which you have such a great share.⁵⁹

Bhutto's meeting with Sukarno in Djakarta was to be their last. Soon afterwards, Sukarno was pushed from power by a right-wing junta. Ratna Devi, Sukarno's widow, remained a long-time friend of the Bhutto family, paying them a special visit to Karachi in October, 1969.

On the 16th of June 1966 Ayub Khan told Bhutto that he wanted him to leave. Having anticipated this for some time, Bhutto was quite prepared. He had already sent his personal possessions to Larkana so he could pack his bags and leave in a few days. Ayub Khan did not remove Bhutto as Foreign Minister but sent him to convalesce for 'a long leave due to health reasons'. The reason behind this, according to Bhutto, was that he intended to frame corruption charges against him and this could only be done against a minister who was still in office, and not after his departure. Despite intensive efforts by Ayub Khan's government, they could not find a trace of malpractice.

In the light of the subsequent revelations of corruption and misuse of power emerging as a result of the army coup in July 1977 Bhutto's immaculate record as Ayub Khan's minister is not easy to explain. Bhutto's early idealism and sense of commitment soon wilted before the temptations of supreme office. Without minimal checks and balances he quickly resorted to less scrupulous methods of retaining and dispensing power.

On the night of 20th June 1966 Bhutto sat in the drab waiting room at Rawalpindi railway station, waiting for the Khyber Mail which was coming at midnight from Peshawar to take him back to Larkana. The atmosphere was depressing. Just a few days had elapsed since his departure from Ayub Khan's cabinet and he was

⁵⁹ Letter from Sukarno to Bhutto – 31st September 1965

fast becoming a non-person. As a formality and because he was still technically Foreign Minister, a number of prominent persons were present to say goodbye: the UK High Commissioner Sir Maurice James, Information Secretary Altaf Gauhar, assorted foreign office officials and friends like Mustafa Jatoi and Mustafa Khar.

A few days before, he had invited a group of friends over to his house. Around thirty members of the National Assembly had come, including Mir Ejaz Ali Talpur, Nawabzada Ghafoor Hoti, Hamid Raza Gilani, Jam Sadiq Ali, and those faithful lieutenants Mustafa Khar and Mustafa Jatoi. The atmosphere was full of promises of support and everlasting friendship. Altaf Gauhar had given a farewell lunch for him the day before. Although Bhutto was leaving, it was generally felt that his exit could only be a temporary one.

On the day before his departure from Rawalpindi, a tiny one-inch news item appeared in the press: 'Mr. Bhutto has been allowed by the President to proceed on a long leave for health reasons . . . all indications are that Mr. Bhutto will not return to resume duties.'⁶⁰ This was hardly the sort of fanfare that greets the departure of a Foreign Minister, and it was now clear that Bhutto was in disgrace. That very same morning, the Karachi Dawn carried an editorial downgrading Bhutto's role as Foreign Minister: 'Mr. Bhutto had proved to be an excellent exponent of the brilliant foreign policy of President Ayub Khan.'⁶¹ The press continually emphasised that Bhutto's departure would not mean any change in Pakistan's foreign policy.

The next morning Bhutto was planning to make a stop-over in Lahore to have lunch at the invitation of the Punjab Governor the Khan of Kalabagh. Kalabagh had, till then, been a political adversary of Bhutto. The reason for the invitation was unclear. It might have been feudal chivalry towards a fallen adversary. Probably more likely was Kalabagh's machiavellian desire to mend his fences with Bhutto as he saw his political future on the decline and was expecting a confrontation himself with Ayub Khan.

As Bhutto's train pulled out from Rawalpindi, his mind was in turmoil. He could sense the mass disaffection with Ayub Khan and the bankruptcy of the political elite with whom he had for so many years been content to share power. His future plans were uncertain. In spite of rumblings of discontent, Ayub Khan appeared soundly ensconced and for Bhutto the road back to power seemed a difficult one.

⁶⁰ *Dawn* – 18th June 1966

⁶¹ *Dawn* – 20th June 1966

The train journey from Rawalpindi cleared up any lasting doubts. The news of his departure had spread like wildfire. At every small station on the route and all through the night, crowds collected to greet and garland him. In the small hours of the morning, every time the train stopped, he would be kept awake by excited crowds who descended on his salon car, anxious to see him.

The climax came at Lahore. As Bhutto's train crawled into the station, the scene before him was incredible. A vast mass of humanity was swarming over the platform, the carriage roof, bridges, balustrades, and spilling on to the road outside. As the train approached the station they ran forward to garland him, clap and kiss his hand. Thousands of students and well-wishers had flocked to see him. They lifted him on their shoulders and carried him out shouting slogans like '*Bhutto zindabad*' (Long live Bhutto), '*United States murdabad*' (Down with the United States), '*Pakistan—China zindabad*', and, more surprisingly, anti-Ayub slogans as well. Their affection, warmth and enthusiasm so moved him that tears poured down his face as he was carried out of the station. A story popular at the time, and reported in the Urdu press, was that the handkerchief which he used to wipe his eyes was sold later for Rs. 10,000. Pakistan's redeemer seemed to be at hand.

The reception at Lahore station was a watershed. This was the first time that Bhutto had experienced such massive public acclaim, and it had a very special message. He had stepped down from the isolated ivory towers of Islamabad into the arms of the masses who one day were to propel him into power. Till then he had received no indication of his huge popularity with ordinary people, or the extent of the popular dissatisfaction with the Government. He did not know what to make of the crowd appeal and seemed at first quite bewildered how to react. Later, he would learn to respond to the acclaim, and take mass audiences to greater heights of fervor. This time he could only thank them repeatedly. But the full impact of his defiance at Tashkent had come home to him for the first time. So, too, had the gap between the guarded and calculated reaction to him among the upper echelons of the Establishment and the fervor of the crowd. This was where his power base lay. It was from here that he would draw his strength for his future confrontation with Ayub Khan.

The fever pitch of his supporters never abated during his stop-over at Lahore. At Fallettis hotel where he went from the station, groups of eager admirers came to visit him and encourage him. Again, when departing from Lahore station after lunch with Kalabagh the scene was much the same. He was mobbed by the enthusiastic crowds, and profusely garlanded. The crowd's determination to cheer him on his way delayed the train for several hours. Next day at Larkana, and then at Karachi, the Lahore scenes were repeated, with students taking the

lead. The National Students' Federation issued a laudatory press statement saying: 'Mr. Bhutto represents the youth in this country in his vigor, intellect, honesty and devotion.'⁶² Bhutto's exit had become a dramatic odyssey and the adulation and the crowd response a key experience in his political development.

In August 1966 Bhutto departed for Europe. It was at Ayub Khan's insistence that he agreed to go abroad. His widespread popularity was disturbing the Government, and it was felt that a few months out of the public eye would allow sentiments to cool. When abroad, he met several groups of supporters, but restrained himself from any direct attacks on Ayub Khan or his policies. In London he stayed at the Dorchester Hotel where groups of admirers would come to call on him. He made it plain that he had not left the Government for health reasons, and that his forbearance in not criticizing Ayub Khan was a temporary phase. In an address to the Pakistani community at Conway Hall, London, he said: 'I am not supposed to be in good health but I can assure you, no matter how poor my health, it is good enough for Indira Gandhi ... I was advised it would not be a good thing for me to meet and address Pakistanis in England ... I have not spoken in the country [Pakistan] for good reasons and I don't think that I would like to speak here also for a good reason on internal matters.' The inflection in his voice made it clear what he meant. All along Bhutto pointedly restricted himself to speaking only on foreign policy. His dialogue had a very strong anti-India bias and he referred to the 1965 war as a 'glorious period in our history ... the nation unitedly stood as a rock against the onslaught of a predator. The Indians said that by evening Lahore shall fall and my reply was "No Indian mother had given birth to an Indian who could take Lahore" '. He frequently advocated the necessity of acknowledging China's relevance in world affairs and the importance of her inclusion in world forums such as the United Nations.

At that time one of Bhutto's staunchest defenders was Lord Bertrand Russell who wrote to the Spectator on 15th August 1966 and later to the Economist of 28th August 1966 in reply to an attack on Bhutto:

The fate of national leaders who respond to the need of their people is increasingly clear. Unless they find the means to resist the pressures applied to them, in which case journals such as the Economist attach unpleasant labels to them, Mr. Bhutto is a national leader of his country in the tradition of Jinnah and the storm of prolonged applause he receives is not restricted to London.

⁶² Dawn – 23rd June 1966

Lord Russell also wrote to the leaders of various Asian and communist countries such as General Ne Win, Boumeddiene, Nasser, Sukarno, and Gromyko asking them to support Bhutto as he had been removed from office as a result of direct United States pressure. In his letter to Boumeddiene, Lord Russell said:

I am concerned about the removal of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was the architect of a foreign policy of independence and Afro-Asian solidarity, removing Pakistan from the ranks of neo-colonial states and bringing her to the forefront of those countries in Africa and Asia most clear and vigorous in their independent policies ... I hope you'll find it possible to support his efforts, for it is likely that his principled stand in support of Pakistan's independence will result in his return.⁶³

Bhutto returned to Pakistan in the beginning of October 1966 via Afghanistan to Rawalpindi. When he went to Flashman's Hotel where he was staying, huge crowds came out to see him. During a visit to Lyallpur, so many people had collected inside the narrow streets that the surrounding walls collapsed. It seemed Ayub Khan's ploy of getting him out of the country in order to dissipate his support had not worked.

Throughout the latter part of 1966 and after his return to Pakistan, Bhutto was unclear as to what course to take. He discussed collaboration with several political parties and groups. Nearly all major parties have claimed that at one stage or another they were holding discussions or seeking avenues of co-operation with him. He even considered re-starting a law practice and negotiated with at least one lawyer on a possible partnership. He was playing with a variety of options at this stage and was unsure as to exactly when he should enter the political arena. Always conscious of the importance of timing, he coasted along without making any definite commitments other than talking, listening and testing the political temperature around him.

⁶³ Letter of Lord Russell to Boumeddiene – 13th August 1966

Chapter Eight

REACHING FOR POWER

Gradually and in low key, Bhutto began to address public forums and meetings. He carefully refrained from taking any extremist political stances or attacking Ayub Khan. The game-plan was to keep his position as close to the centre as possible in order not to alienate other political groups, particularly the rightist parties. He had understood that in any future confrontation with Ayub Khan he would need the support of a wide spectrum of Opposition parties. He had still not made up his mind when he should openly enter the political arena, but the growing crowd response and encouragement from audiences that gathered to hear him was pulling him inexorably forward. His sensitive antennae had picked up the political signals and the message was encouraging.

Bhutto's popularity was disturbing Ayub Khan's government. It was felt that he was cashing in on the anti-Tashkent feeling prevalent in the country and if his role could be successfully denigrated he would naturally fade into political oblivion. Consequently in February 1967 Ayub's Information Minister Khawaja Shahabuddin was chosen to launch a bitter attack on Bhutto. At a speech on Pakistan–Soviet relations at the Dacca Press Club, Shahabuddin accused him of adopting 'an equivocal attitude' towards the Tashkent policy; of being one of the principal negotiators at Tashkent; praising the agreement at Tashkent and defending it later; repudiating his previous attitude because of public agitation in West Pakistan against the Tashkent Declaration; keeping silent for the first few days after the Tashkent Declaration was signed because he knew the subsequent agitation would debilitate the Government and 'enable him to parade as a leader of the youth and a hero'. Shahabuddin's attack was given front-page coverage by most of the press in Pakistan and was followed a few days later by another outburst by an Ayub Khan minister, Saeed Kirmani, who more or less reiterated Shahabuddin's accusations; but Kirmani went a step further in bring up Bhutto's supposed past indiscretions such as advocating that Government servants should belong to Ayub Khan's Muslim League and that there should only be one political party in the country.

It was Khawaja Shahabuddin's attack which prompted Bhutto to take the plunge. Addressing a meeting organised by a student body at a Karachi restaurant, he issued a bitter rejoinder and challenged Khawaja Shahabuddin to an open public debate on Tashkent. The colorful and elaborate prose employed in this was typical of him: 'The ring is being tightened around me ... if the Information Minister has at long last donned the armour of Mark Antony and is in search of a Brutus, he will not find him in me as I have stabbed no Caesar.' He demanded

that there should be 'a full-fledged debate on the basis of equality without loaded dice ... Section 144 (restrictions on public assembly) should be removed forthwith ... lift the curtain of secrecy and let the light come before the public gaze'. He also accused Shahabuddin of 'playing marbles and pointing pierceless darts at ordinary citizens', and of making the press the 'Marie Walewska of your Information Ministry'. Besides the baroque rhetoric, the statement contained a list of vital matters which should be taken into account when considering his role in Tashkent:

- 1 His assessment and evaluation culled from Foreign Office records of the invitation for a conference at Tashkent.
- 2 His views on important issues, particularly India's efforts 'to wrench out a no-war declaration'.
- 3 His discussion with the Indian delegation in the first and only ministerial level meetings between the two delegates prior to the Tashkent Summit.
- 4 His comments to Gromyko when the draft of the Declaration was delivered to him.
- 5 The number of meetings between the leaders of the delegation without the assistance of advisers and evidence of views exchanged therein.

He rebutted Shahabuddin's query as to why he did not resign immediately after the signing of the Tashkent Declaration by contending that it was not normal practice, and specially at that high voltage period, for a delegate to resign if he disagreed with the document. He counter-attacked by condemning Shahabuddin's role at Tashkent, accusing him of remaining silent on matters to the extent that he, Bhutto, had had to criticise him.

The battle between Ayub Khan and Bhutto had now started in earnest. Every few days one of Ayub Khan's ministers would issue a statement accusing Bhutto of some act of covert or active disloyalty. An East Pakistani minister, Khan Sabur, made a speech admonishing Bhutto: 'As a friend, I'd advise him not to play a quixotic game to cover the thrills of his inconsistent behavior'. The Karachi Dawn, in an editorial entitled 'Crisis from the Wilderness',⁶⁴ chastised Bhutto for his past inconsistencies and his 'abusive language to answer his former colleagues, far senior to him in age as well as experience'. Obscure religious leaders like the

⁶⁴ 3rd March 1967

Pir Sahib of Zakori Sharif,⁶⁵ and Sardar Aslam Khan, Secretary General of the Pakistan Muslim League joined in, with Abdul Monim Khan, the Governor of East Pakistan, accusing him of flamboyancy and asking him to 'settle down'.⁶⁶ Each attack seemed more banal than the last. The dead, repetitive prolixity of their utterances only defeated their purpose. By referring constantly to his youth and his iconoclastic attitudes they only high-lighted their own staid and fossilized images. His old *bête noire*, Ayub Khurho – who had gone over to the Ayub Khan camp – challenged him to fight a test election in their joint home constituency of Larkana. He reminded Bhutto of the defeat his uncle had suffered at Ayub Khurho's hands in an election in 1946 and also revived the defeat of Bhutto's father Sir Shahnawaz in the 1937 Sindh provincial election.

On 30th June 1967 Khawaja Shahabuddin, on the floor of the National Assembly, accused Bhutto of claiming Indian citizenship till he became a cabinet minister in 1958. Ironically, these same accusations had been raised in the Indian Rajya Sabha after the 1965 war by the Minister of Rehabilitation; but the Pakistan Government had vehemently denied it at the time. Members of the Opposition in the Assembly hit back at the Government, dismissing the charges as an attempt to discredit Bhutto. The accusation arose as a result of the sale of a house by Shahnawaz in Bombay which had been in his son's name. As Bhutto was a minor at the time, the money was deposited with the court on his behalf. After Partition Bhutto, who had departed for the United States, was declared an evacuee under a court order issued on 6th July 1949, which meant he could only claim his money back through an application to a Pakistan court.

Bhutto had, like most persons at the time, travelled to the United States on a 'British–Indian' passport. He therefore claimed that the Indian court had no right to declare him an evacuee. His somewhat ham-handed attempts to recover his money led him to make several statements which were to prove embarrassing in later years: 'Merely because the applicant's parents resided in Karachi and the applicant's marriage took place there ... it could not be concluded that the applicant's home was also in Karachi at any relevant time.' At the same time he was also attempting to recover the deposit through legal processes in Pakistan as a Pakistani citizen.

There was nothing sinister in what Bhutto did. He was only twenty when he had filed his application and convoluted legal tussles were a common phenomenon among Pakistanis and Indians with property on the wrong side of the border. He was embarrassed enough, however, to issue a defence of his position, saying that

⁶⁵ *Dawn* – 3rd March 1967

⁶⁶ *Dawn* – 9th March 1967

he and his family had been long resident in Sindh and although he had left for the United States on an Indian passport he had acquired a Pakistani passport in July 1949.

With the advantages of hindsight, it is often said that Ayub Khan's regime was already tottering by this time, but at least on the surface this did not appear to be so. His ministers were as deferential as ever. The World Bank president had recently visited Pakistan and was praising the economy. Statistics of progress were being trotted out and all outward signs of stability were in evidence. The Turkish Prime Minister, Demirel, when visiting Pakistan at the time, effusively praised Ayub Khan, calling his leadership 'valiant'. Other Opposition groups looked totally lost. Some of them had got together in May 1967 to form a grouping called the Pakistan Democratic Movement. Internal squabbles and policy differences reduced their credibility to such an extent that even the Government press which briefly turned upon them decided their case was hopeless, and went back to their incessant tirades against Bhutto. On his part, Bhutto was careful not to align himself with these tarnished politicians. Instead, he carried on with his anti-Indian and leftist stance, adopting most of the issues of the left and speaking out strongly, for instance, against the American role in Vietnam, about which the Ayub Khan government was being ambivalent.

It was during the summer of 1967 that he began to expound a more concrete political manifesto on his speaking tours. As a member of Ayub Khan's government, Bhutto had had a nationalist and anti-American image, but he had not been identified with any particular ideology. His pro-Chinese stance during his tenure as Foreign Minister had ostensibly clothed him with a leftist veneer, but there was no record of his enunciating any socialist principles. He now adopted a leftist position on economic issues, emphasizing egalitarianism in order to make it palatable. He stressed that it had to be of the Islamic type and not the militant atheistic variety. Pakistan was a staunchly Muslim country and Bhutto was careful not to preach anything which might have seemed to contravene Koranic teachings. He propagated a personal belief in Islam and acknowledged that Pakistan was an Islamic and theocratic state. On India he adopted a combative posture: there was to be no compromise on the rights of the Kashmiris, and confrontation with India was to be the method of solving the Kashmir issue. He condemned the Defence Pacts that Pakistan had entered into in the fifties; the American role in the Vietnam War and he extolled Pakistan—China friendship. Bhutto managed to articulate what he felt were public aspirations at the time. And the message came across strong and clear. He had the uncanny ability to express the people's frustrations and sentiments in a language they could understand.

By the autumn of 1967 Bhutto had established his credentials as a formidable politician. His open style, youth and agile mind impressed all those whom he met adding to his growing band of followers. He prowled the countryside in search of support, haunting tea-stalls, citizen and society lunches, wayside towns, villages and hamlets. He had acquired an imprint in his memory of the national atlas with all its demographic subtleties and local political squabbles. He had mastered every political labyrinth seeing better than others the concealed patterns in the prevailing tapestries of intrigue.

He could sit with small-town politicians making deals, arrangements and promises involving the distribution of power or influence – the very heart of politics. Political purpose pervaded all his relationships. Bhutto learnt to master and enjoy the often dissimulative horse-trading. His drive towards power was inexorable and pervasive. He had evolved into the complete politician – wily, cunning, ruthless and determined to succeed. He was unfettered by ethics in his dealings with the often sordid politicians around him. ‘Scrupulous people’, Jacques Turgot once cynically remarked, ‘are not suited to high office.’ And high office was what he most definitely wanted.

During his tenure as a minister, Bhutto had developed a reputation as a speaker; but his style was of the debating type – better suited to a drawing room or sophisticated forum. He had no real experience of public speaking and mass oratory. Moreover, his voice was high-pitched, his command of Urdu limited and he could not speak any Punjabi which was a considerable disadvantage because he was gaining support in the Punjab. When his lack of Urdu was criticized by his opponents he aptly retorted, ‘There are only two languages in Pakistan – the language of the exploited and the language of the exploiters. Today I am going to speak to you in the language of the exploited.’

But he now set about changing this. Single-mindedly he practised speaking and in a period of months could address meetings in quite creditable Urdu. He abandoned his carefully tailored suits for shirts and the *kurta-shalwar*, the baggy national dress. On the stump, raw and natural he would cast away conventional elocution, shouting out the plain idiom of ordinary folk. The crowds, infused by the sheer spirit and power of his performance, reacted with spontaneous enthusiasm. As the crescendo of his rhetoric mounted he would stop and take off his coat and roll up his shirtsleeves. The same word was repeated again and again with mesmeric effect. Sometimes he would carefully tear his *kurta* sleeve so that it would billow and flap as he waved his arms. When the crowd clapped he would clap back. These gestures found increasing crowd response and became part of his style. All of this added to his aura of defiance.

He mastered another primary political art in being able to present different faces to different people. He directed himself to each one in a very personal way – noble cadences for the idealistically inclined, Rabelaisian and often obscene anecdotes for the earthy types, and always nourishing tidbits about rivals. All were beamed to create that special bond upon which lasting relationships are built.

Appreciating the need for unity among his supporters, he would arrange endless truces and reconciliations. Patiently, in the vestibule of his house at 70 Clifton, Karachi, he would listen gravely to the lengthy outpourings and complaints. His perseverance in such confabulations was inexhaustible; reassuring and implying support for everyone. After hearing them out at length he would give an encouraging pat, somehow conveying special sympathy for their point of view so that they would go away feeling they had been fully heard out. A few minutes later another group would arrive, perhaps totally hostile to the first and with their own version of events. He would again repeat the same performance and this group too would go away apparently satisfied.

He seemed to relish the intrigues which are an integral part of politics in Pakistan. And with the aptitude of a natural politician, he soon mastered the genesis of every group and sub-group. He learnt to hold in his own hand every strand of the vast web of alliances and links. These were the guts of politics and he reveled in them. Even at the height of his power, Bhutto could recall with incredible clarity each turn his party members have taken minute details of in-fighting, of reconciliations, and of the postures that each one adopted.

Meanwhile, Bhutto's own political creed was evolving. In the early part of his campaign he restricted his speeches to foreign-policy matters. His outlook was fervently anti-Indian and pro-Chinese. He knew that at that time his position had a great deal of public support. He beamed his language towards the areas where he felt the greatest sympathy existed. His call to the colours attracted a mixed bag of support, confirming his remarkable personal appeal more than support for his political message. His move towards socialism was graded very carefully. Only after he was sure of the public response did his demands gradually become more strident. When he sensed the mood changing, he changed as well. The more socialist the ambience, the more agitational his message, so that by the time his election campaign was in top gear in 1970, his entire style had undergone a radical change. He talked of revolution, overthrowing exploitation, destroying the capitalists and feudalists, and confronting American imperialists. He responded to the fervor around him, invoking and being invoked. Speakers at his public meetings like Mairaj Muhammad Khan deployed the language of the far left. So radical grew the atmosphere and slogans that they would have made

a public meeting of a Western left-wing sectarian communist party appear moderate by comparison.

The long political tradition of his birthplace, a feeling of uniqueness in terms of education, familial tradition and his growing self-confidence imbued him with a singular determination to rule. In private drawing rooms he would often proclaim his desire one day to lead Pakistan. A conviction that great great things awaited him together with the day-to-day frustrations and petty betrayals produced patterns of alternating gloom and ebullience. His political exile from the Ayub coterie still meant social ostracism, sometimes taken to absurd lengths. Old acquaintances found it inconvenient to know him In Karachi's exclusive Sindh Club his entrance would produce averted faces and discreet exits. Personal hardships and pressures made their physical impact. His hair greyed and he visibly aged. A decade was telescoped into these few years.

It soon became obvious to Bhutto that he had to crystallize his challenge into a more definite form. The essentials of a proper political campaign such as a manifesto, a formal organization and cadre were required, and this could only be achieved through a political party. Exploratory talks with established parties had foundered. The advantage of linking up with an existing organization was obvious. But any alignment which would detract from his momentum or mean a shared platform did not appeal to him. He did not wish to fit into an existing mould or limit his own maneuverability. Besides none of the other politicians in the forefront seemed temperamentally suited to his style. Already supporters and friends whom he had sounded out seemed more or less in agreement that there was a need for a new political party. He had a gut feeling that it would be best to go it alone. The difficulties were greater but then so were the rewards.

Bhutto's first public indication of his intention to start a fresh party was at a press conference in Hyderabad on the 16th of September 1967 at the home of his friend Mir Rasul Buksh Talpur. He did not indicate on what lines the party would be organised or the type of programme except that it would be 'progressive'. Subsequently, at several other meetings, speeches and conferences, Bhutto elaborated on the political goals of the new party. He indicated that it would be radical and reformist, democratic, socialist, that it would appeal to fresh blood and be dedicated to making Pakistan a powerful Muslim country. He was careful at this stage to qualify the type of socialist programme he would follow. He emphasised the egalitarian aspect, saying his socialism would be peaceful and remove exploitation but yet encourage smaller private enterprise.

Bhutto's decision to start a brand new political party was both audacious and typical of his all-or-nothing approach. His willingness to cut across established political patterns displayed a transcendent self-confidence. Considering the

emaciated state of the established opposition parties, chances of another runner seemed little more than hopeless. He would have to cope with organizational problems, inexperienced recruits and possibly further hostility from the existing parties which would surely resent a fresh rival. Without any major politicians supporting him, or an established political structure, he nevertheless decided to go ahead. His personal credo was outlined in a paper entitled Document No 3, 'Why a New Party?' which was presented before the party's inaugural convention. The document was written by Bhutto personally and bears his melodramatic stamp: 'Inch by inch the wheel of evolution is rolling forward ... each epoch has its own political significance; its seismic pattern'. Although he appreciated the necessity of unity among the various 'progressive parties', he felt that a new party would 'form a bridge between the existing conflicting interests and give a lead in reconciling the historical dichotomies of the Opposition'. He saw the party as a central point around which other progressive parties could rally. A party more in tune with the times was also needed, he argued. He felt a growing surge of sympathy for radical thinking, 'a fresh approach and a new style, a new determination under the umbrella of vigorous ideals, to grapple with the multitude of mighty problems'.

The inaugural convention was held in Lahore on the 30th of November 1967. Notice of the convention was passed by word of mouth as it was felt that no newspaper would publish an advertisement. As public halls were unwilling to risk government displeasure, the site selected was the back garden of left-wing supporter Dr Mubbashir Hasan's house at 4-K Gulberg.

On a wintry Punjab morning, the delegates descended on the elegant tree-lined road where Dr Mubbashir Hasan lived. Prominent from Sindh were the Talpur brothers, Mir Rasul Buksh and Mir Ali Ahmad; the Frontier Province delegation was led by Haq Nawaz Gandapur and Hayat Sherpao;⁶⁷ Baluchistan by Tahir Muhammad, Punjab, surprisingly, had no recognised politicians other than Sheik Rashid. East Pakistan was unrepresented.

The convention was to be held over a period of two days, and was intended to cover important matters such as party formation, its name, flag, election of its Chairman and adoption of Foundation Documents articulating various public platforms of the party. Dr Mubbashir Hasan had arranged for the *shamianas*, the colorful canvas awnings which are an essential part of any such gathering, the chairs and catering for an expected three hundred delegates. With a

⁶⁷ Coincidentally, both were to die tragic and premature deaths. Gandapur was killed by lightning in 1970 and Sherpao was assassinated in 1975

characteristic display of financial acumen, he arranged to charge each delegate Rs. 20 entrance fee in order to defray costs.

The convention began with traditional renderings from the Holy Koran. Two persons were voted as convenors of the meeting, and serious business then began. Bhutto gave the opening address to the assembled delegates. After confessing that this was one of the most important speeches of his life and that he found it extremely difficult to speak, he laid down with a great clarity the party position on a wide range of topics.

The first matter settled at the Convention was the party name. Three names were proposed in the Foundation Documents:

- 1 People's Progressive Party.
- 2 People's Party.
- 3 Socialist Party of Pakistan.

Instead of these, the name Pakistan People's Party was chosen.

Though no one was aware at the time, the name Pakistan People's Party was not a new one. Immediately after Partition, Ghaffar Khan, a pro-Congress leader from the North-West Frontier, had formed, after the dismissal of his Red Shirt government, a secular Opposition party called the Pakistan People's Party. The first Pakistan People's Party, unlike its successor, proved short-lived, and disappeared after the brutal shooting of the Red Shirts in Babra in 1948.

The flag had been designed by J A Rahim and Bhutto. At the convention, a sketch was produced by Bhutto from his breast pocket. His proposed flag had a white crescent and star on the forefront with three vertical stripes: red, black and green – colours suffused with Muslim history. Red was the colour of the Prophet Muhammad's flag; black was used by the Abbassid caliphs and by the famous Muslim conqueror Mahmood of Ghazni; green was the colour of the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt and of the national flag of Pakistan. A popular but inaccurate interpretation of the party's flag colours is: red for revolution, black symbolized oppression by the capitalists (a sign of mourning) and green for Islam. The crescent and the star have for years been a symbol of Islam. The crescent was drawn by Bhutto and is straight with the horns towards the outer end 'as if in anger', and this too was accepted.

The crescent and the star, associated with memories of Muslim greatness, was never depicted on the banners of the Arab caliphs. These were ancient cult symbols in the Middle East going back as far as the Babylonian civilization. The star is, of course, Venus, the brightest in the heavens. It was only after the

conquest of Istanbul by the Turks that the crescent and star emblem which stand on the dome of Hagia Sofia, figured on the banner of the Ottoman Turks, from which it spread wide among other Muslim people. In the sub-continent the people had been deeply affected by the Turkish Empire, and looked upon the crescent as representative of Islam, though the flag of the Muslim Mughals who had ruled India for two hundred years was sky blue – the colour of the Mongols. A set of ten Foundation Documents had been prepared to be read out before the delegates at the convention. The original documents were badly printed and full of appalling grammatical and spelling mistakes. One reason was the refusal by any established press to undertake the assignment, and therefore, only ad hoc arrangements were possible. The Foundation Documents were finally printed by Shorish Kashmiri, an eccentric right-wing journalist who befriended Bhutto in the early days, but later on became one of his most vehement critics.

The Foundation Documents were written by several of the original members: J A Rahim was the main contributor together with Dr Mubbashir Hasan, Hanif Ramay and of course Bhutto. The documents which were to lay out in broad terms the ideology and creed of the party convey a strong impression of having been hastily strung together without adequate thought or direction. The party ethos was summed up as follows: 'Islam is our faith; democracy is our polity; socialism is our economic creed, all power to the people.'

The tone of the documents was stridently radical and covered a .broad spectrum of subjects. The first two documents dealt with the party's name and flag and the third, as mentioned earlier, explained the rationale behind the new party.

Document Four, 'Why Socialism is Necessary for Pakistan', Document Five 'Draft Declaration of Principles' and Document Six, 'The evolution of the Economy', were written mainly by J A Rahim and his son Sikander Rahim. The documents unambiguously laid down the party's intended socialist outlook. They dealt with the problems of under-development, Western exploitation, weakness of the economy, and offered at the same time a social democratic solution. The language however, was that of the far left. The economic arguments were sketchy and poorly directed. The document called for 'a classless society' as one of the party's main objectives without suggesting any acceptable method of bringing this about. Broadly, however, the documents had recurring progressive themes including the 'elimination of feudalism', 'abolition of illiteracy', fixation of minimum wages and academic freedom.

Document Seven, 'Declaration on the Unity of the People', was the bizarre creation of Hanif Ramay. Written like a quaint nineteenth-century Marxist pamphlet, it expounded a confusion of ideas in a staccato prose which can best be described as theatrically absurd:

Justice is delayed. Usurpers have a free hand. The down-trodden have little hope of redress. Wealth and power obstruct justice. WE PROCLAIM BY GOD ALMIGHTY that when man gives up the straight path because of its hurdles and does not recognize tyranny when he sees it and chooses to keep silent against oppression then certainly, MAN HAS GONE ASTRAY, Then certainly, MAN STANDS ON THE BRINK OF DISEASE. Then certainly, SOCIETY HAS LOST ITS ANCHOR. Jihad is the only way.

And then ended with a sentence:

With our writings, our speeches, our wealth and our lives, WE PROMISE TO CONTINUE THE JEIAD UNTIL GOD'S EARTH IS LIT UP WITH DIVINE LIGHT.

Document Eight, 'Jammu and Kashmir', was written by Bhutto. Pakistan's stand on Kashmir was forcefully argued. A pledge to stand by the rights of the people of the disputed valley was accompanied by a strident demand to 'wait and maintain the policy of confrontation'

Document Nine, 'The Need for Pakistan to have Special Relations with Assam', was written by J A Rahim on the somewhat obscure theme of the injustice of the assimilation of Assam into the Indian Union.

Document Ten, 'The Six Points and Answer', is of particular significance because of the subsequent secession of East Pakistan. The document presented in a rational and balanced manner the reason for the demand for Bengali autonomy, but refuted the efficacy of the 'six points' Chokey on local autonomy as a proper solution. Sympathy for the then incarcerated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Bengali leader of the Awami League, also pervaded the document:

'It would be improper to doubt his sincerity in this matter, in view of the eminent services he has rendered to Pakistan in the past ... that he can be proved to be mistaken in his judgment casts no reflection on his good faith.'

With the PPP in its infancy, its sponsors were careful not to arouse unnecessary hostility from existing parties. The Document expressed complete sympathy with the relative poverty of East Pakistan and its claims of exploitation by the west wing. Instead of the measures outlined in the six points such as 'separate

currencies, separate foreign exchange accounts', it suggested a far more direct solution: 'The right method is obvious', it said, 'the nationalization of all the major industries in West Pakistan.'

The only election held in the convention was for the Chairman. As soon as the question was brought up at the final session, the delegates all rose to their feet and chanted 'Bhutto! Bhutto!' There was no need for any balloting or show of hands. His election was unanimous and by acclamation. There was no doubt in anybody's mind that the party was being formed around the personality of Bhutto. He was the binding factor and the nexus. Bhutto's election was particularly significant as from that day to the present the party has never held any election for any other office whatsoever. Bhutto accepted his election with a small speech in which he promised, with the help of the Almighty God, to discharge all the responsibilities, implement the party programme and work for the farmers, labourers and the whole nation.

A series of committees was constituted, such as a political, economic and constitutional committee. Of the twenty-five names listed in these various committees at the time of writing, only few, such as Sheikh Rashid, still remain within the party fold. Some, like Malik Aslam Hayat, just faded away; Haq Nawaz Grandapur and Muhammad Hayat Sherpao are dead. The Talpur brothers, Hanif Ramay and J A Rahim have all left in bitterness and disillusionment.

The convention passed a series of resolutions. Some were predictable, requesting the removal of oppressive and discriminatory laws and the release of political prisoners; some were nationalistic, such as for the withdrawal from defence pacts, for an independent foreign policy, strengthening of the armed forces; others were leftist, condemning feudalism and capitalism, expressing support for the Afro-Asian struggle against American imperialism, and the rights of labourers. Others were bizarre, such as a call to establish links with the people of Assam and the rejection of the Radcliffe Awards (partitioning the sub-continent).

Two maulvis (Muslim priests) Muhammad Saeed and Qudratullah, were included to ensure the Islamic credentials of the party. They also spoke at the convention emphasizing the absence of any conflict between Islam and socialism as both were essentially egalitarian men.

With the completion of business the inaugural convention of the Pakistan People's Party was concluded in an atmosphere of optimism and goodwill. An interesting feature of the convention was the marked absence of feudalists who later on were to dominate the party. Mustafa Jatoi, a feudal, Mumtaz Bhutto, a cousin of Bhutto's and another land-owner, and Mustafa Khar did not join at this

stage. The resolutions raised by the delegates, too, were revolutionary and anti-capitalist.

In its infant stage the Pakistan People's Party had no press organ of its own. The only significant coverage for the convention was from the bi-monthly *Nusrat*, owned by one of the party's founding members Hanif Ramay. Not unexpectedly, the press chose to ignore the inaugural convention. Some papers like the government controlled *Pakistan Times* wrote tauntingly:

The so-called People's Party launched by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto last week, has stirred hardly a ripple. Unfortunately, like other Opposition parties, it had only a string of slogans to offer.

Such words were hardly prophetic! In its earlier days the PPP tilted strongly towards the left. Seeing Bhutto as comparatively progressive, a large number of socialists and Marxists of various hues joined the party. Although there was considerable doubt over his socialist credentials at that stage, he represented for them 'a jumping off point' in the anti-Ayub Khan struggle. Removing Ayub Khan was the first necessity of the left wing. The conventional Marxist thinking then was that they would seize control of the PPP during this period, retain Bhutto as a figurehead as long as he continued to be useful, and then dump him at a suitable time. Examples of broad-based nationalist movements succumbing eventually to the control of the more militant Marxist caucus were quoted in support of this theory – the Viet Minh, the anti-Batista front in Cuba and the near success of the communist anti-Vichy front in France. It was often argued in those days whether the leftists were using Bhutto or Bhutto was using the leftists. Prominent among the large phalanx of socialists, Marxists and NeoMarxists who lined up behind Bhutto during the early days of the PPP were some of those who played a large part in the founding of the party: the pro-Chinese student leader from Karachi, Mairaj Muhammad Khan; Dr Mubbashir Hasan, whose book *Shahra-e-Inqalab – the Road to Revolution*, published in August, 1976 clearly categorises him as a conventional communist believing in class struggle; J A Rahim, a secular Marxist; Sheikh Rashid, a committed socialist, erstwhile member of the 'forward bloc' of the Muslim League, associate of the communist Muslim Leaguer Daniyal Latifi and long time worker among the Punjab peasantry; Mir Rasul Buksh Talpur, a socialist and ex-member of the Khaksars;⁶⁸ Mukhtar Raana, labour leader and pro-Chinese communist; Hanif Ramay, who later recanted on his socialist beliefs but who at the time gave the phrase 'Islamic

⁶⁸ A socialist party founded in the thirties by Allama Mashriqi and organised along nationalist lines.

socialism' widespread currency. Other leftists included Taj Muhammad Langha, Khurshid Hasan Meer, Dr Shamim Zainuddin and Haq Nawaz Gandapur.

The left wing was to make periodic, though often unsuccessful, displays of strength. Before the inaugural convention of the party, Sheikh Rashid successfully insisted the Foundation Documents include 'the elimination of feudalism', though Bhutto wanted 'the elimination of feudal practices'. J A Rahim, for his part, refused to allow the word 'Islamic socialism' to be mentioned anywhere in the Foundation Documents or in the Manifesto. At a Punjab PPP meeting scheduled on the 29th of March 1970 a group of leftists comprising Sheikh Rashid, Taj Muhammad Langha, Ahmed Raza Kasuri, Khurshid Hasan Meer and Amanullah Khan decided to draft resolutions drastically reducing the permitted land ceiling to twenty-five to fifty acres, and abolishing land tax on holdings of up to twelve acres. Their drafts were vehemently opposed by the more right-wing Punjab members like Mustafa Khar and Mairaj Khalid, and the party meeting was postponed. In the fracas that ensued, 'show cause' notices were issued to the leftists, and one of the group, Amanullah Khan, was expelled from the party.

Another confrontation took place at the Hala conference held on the 1st of July 1970. The conference was at the ancestral village of the Makhdoom of Hala – a PPP adherent – in the rather incongruous setting of a cinema owned by the Makhdoom. The conference had been called to decide whether or not the party would fight the coming elections scheduled at the end of the year. The leftist hard core led by Mairaj Muhammad Khan strongly and somewhat irrationally opposed this. The argument was that it was ideologically wrong 'for a revolutionary party to fight bourgeois elections which were designed to hoodwink the people'. The less extreme left in the party broadly supported the decision to contest as it would give them 'an opportunity to present their point of view before the people'. Thoroughly irritated by the intransigence of the hard left wing, Bhutto lashed out at Mairaj Muhammad Khan: 'I know Mao, I know socialism, Mairaj doesn't!' The extreme left wing lost out in this confrontation and its major advocates refused to contest the election.

Initially everything was ad hoc. Attempts at organization were half-hearted and there was no support for this from the upper echelons of the party. Bhutto's role was evangelical and never organizational. His time was spent in recruiting individuals and power groups into the party. The people around him had no experience of party organization, and because of the dichotomy in political thinking between members, any real organization was impossible. Leftists and rightists would vie with each other to ensure the maximum number of their supporters getting party jobs. In Karachi for instance, in 1968, an intense rivalry existed between the supporters of Karachi President Hafiz Pirzada and Secretary

Mairaj Muhammad Khan. There was perpetual bickering, complaints and delegations appealing to Bhutto to intervene against the other. Internal contradictions were kept in check at this stage by Bhutto personally, who would always appeal to them to stick together for the greater good.

Organizational attempts to gain control of the party by one group often lapsed with the ascendancy of a rival faction. The early organization in the Punjab was created to a large extent by Sheikh Rashid. Later, as he lost power to Bhutto's devotee Mustafa Khar, the established offices were destroyed and workers were dismissed by Khar, who pushed his own people forward. With the fall of Mustafa Khar, the next Chief Minister Hanif Ramay repeated the process to find his own organization subjected to a similar laundering on his departure from power. In May 1977 Mustafa Khar again rejoined the party after which Secretary-General Nasir Rizvi departed with his followers.

There were never any attempts to form think-tanks or to think through in any serious manner ideological issues. The party never produced any serious position papers with senior party members specializing in any subject. Perhaps the two exceptions were J A Rahim in Karachi and Dr Mubbashir Hasan in Lahore who made sporadic attempts. J A Rahim founded a small group in 1969 called 'The Icons' who would collect at his house and read position papers. The Icons bumped along the ground in a rather uninspired fashion for some months and then eventually ground to a halt in general apathy.

The party's earlier success contained the germ of its future difficulties. So rapid was the growth and response that membership could never be organised or properly controlled. No hard core group of party cadres developed, and the gradual percolating process through which loyal and determined workers are created never occurred.

Bhutto's quick success in gathering support left the existing political establishments cold. Hardly anyone was willing to commit himself to the PPP and nearly all his followers were novices. Other than perhaps Sheikh Rashid in the Punjab and the Talpur brothers in the Sindh, there were no politicians with recognised credentials. The first party Secretary-General J A Rahim was an elderly ex-Foreign Secretary. Though erratically brilliant, he had no political experience and could barely speak Urdu. Dr Mubbashir Hasan, the next party Secretary-General, was an engineer by profession who fought his first election in 1970. Party intellectual Hanif Ramay was a little known editor of an even less known Urdu journal. Mustafa Khar, who became the Governor of the Punjab under Bhutto, was possibly the most insignificant member of the Ayub Khan Assembly. Mairaj Muhammad Khan, a left-wing Karachi student leader, was unknown outside his student environment, and was essentially an agitator with

a gift for oratory. It is a tribute to Bhutto's political craft that he could forge an alliance from this material and capture power.

Bhutto's domination of the party exceeded even that of Jinnah over the Muslim League. Indeed, a comparison between the two individuals and their parties reveals a number of common features. Both the Muslim League and the PPP grew from real, social and ideological needs. The Muslim League was at the helm of the struggle for Pakistan, which in 1940 was not just an emotional cry but a desire by the middle-class Muslims of the subcontinent to alleviate Hindu economic domination. The PPP too was created from a need to break the shackles of the Ayub Khan regime, and the class structure which had dominated the peasantry and working classes. Both parties were in tune with the popular aspirations of the people and understood in Bhutto's words 'the flow of history' or 'the music of history'. They could judge the mood of the people and evoke the mass support needed for their respective movements.

Like Jinnah, Bhutto had charisma, and an ability to touch mass sentiments and translate mass support into power pressure. In the 1940s, the Muslim League destroyed Unionist ascendancy in the Punjab by the use of student demonstrations. In 1968 the PPP shook the Ayub Khan regime with student help. Again, like Jinnah, Bhutto stood head and shoulders above his colleagues, and ruled by diktat. Jinnah paid little attention to party organization and party machinery. He used the League to achieve Pakistan but never organised it to remain a coherent force, so that after his death, it disintegrated into rump forms revolving around individuals. Although the PPP had uniquely affected the polity of Pakistan, it was always betrayed by its impermanence. It had all the paraphernalia of a party, complete with a Manifesto, flag, committees, slogans, organizational structures at district and national levels, and yet, because of its domination by Bhutto, it remained his creature and its very existence depended on him personally.

By September 1968 a qualitative change was evident in Ayub Khan's position. His diminishing popularity coupled with Bhutto's relentless attacks was beginning to tell. A crowd of over ten thousand delegates attended a PPP convention held at Hyderabad showing the growing support to Bhutto. The mood at the convention was buoyant and Bhutto announced that if an East Pakistan candidate or a suitable West Pakistan candidate was not available, he would fight the coming presidential elections.

The Hyderabad Convention was memorable for the oration he delivered. It was a masterful synthesis of rhetoric, drama, poignancy and defiance. He was at his combative and theatrical best. His speech had the audience alternately thrilled and in despair; laughing and weeping; incredulous and then nodding their heads

worldly wise at the obvious truths he emphasised and re-emphasised. He told them 'We have to overwhelm dictatorship step b' step ... the death of Kalabagh paralyzed one of its arms ... now the person should throw out this mutilated dead body from the government honored Respected Khan Sahib [referring to Ayub Khan] I am not a coward that I should be afraid of Section 144 and the DPR (Defence of Pakistan Rules). I am not scared of the power of your guns, either. Bring your guns, the people of Pakistan are with me and the people are more powerful than the atom bomb ... use your radio, television and newspapers ... our hands are empty. But remember! We have seen this "powerful" paper tiger from inside. Come on, we are ready. Come on and fight, come into the fields, come into the poor hungry streets where the people are dying. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto waits for you.'

A few days earlier he had told a small caucus of party workers that the present government had only another 'twelve months and nineteen days of tenure' — a clear indication of his plans to contest the presidential election. His candidature caused immediate consternation in the Ayub Khan camp. Bhutto's major support was from the Punjab and particularly in the rural areas which in the previous elections had come out strongly in favour of Ayub Khan. Another and perhaps more important aspect was that if a strong candidate emerged from East Pakistan, Ayub Khan and Bhutto might end up splitting the vote giving an easy run for the East Pakistan candidate. Bhutto, under any circumstances, would queer Ayub Khan's pitch. According to Bhutto, Ayub Khan made several overtures to him at this stage, through his sons Akhtar Ayub and Tahir Ayub, asking him either to step down or negotiate terms to re-enter Ayub Khan's cabinet. However, nothing came of any such discussion and Bhutto continued to remain adamantly in opposition.

In an attempt to off-set Bhutto's Hyderabad meeting, the West Pakistan Governor-General Musa was sent to marshal pro-government forces and address a public meeting at Hyderabad where, on the 11th of October 1968 he vehemently attacked Bhutto: 'He has taken the trouble of coming out of his air-conditioned house in Karachi to Hyderabad and has preached open violence ... Do you believe that over five million soldiers in India are afraid of one man in Pakistan? ... He did whatever he could to protect the Indian saboteurs during the 1965 war who were behind our troops in the Rajasthan front ... He removed his coat and tie while speaking to the people here and rolled up his sleeves. I don't think either the timing of this action or the occasion called for it. He acted in this manner in order to show off. The place to take off his coat was the front line in 1965 where bitter fighting was going on. The audience in front of whom he so acted consisted of tonga walas, rickshaw walas and some labourers, and this man plays on the weaknesses of some of us for the dramatic and the sensational. You

must ensure that your vision is not clouded by jugglery of words and slogan mongering.'

General Musa's tirade only helped to make Bhutto a focal point around which anti-government forces could group in ever increasing numbers. His cause had now gained a momentum of its own, spurred on by his apparently inexhaustible energy and peripatetic fervour. Between the 25th and 30th of October he addressed seven public meetings at Kohat, Peshawar, Charsadda, Ismailia, Peshawar again, Abbottabad and Mansehra; attended party conventions and moots and at the same time innumerable discussions with workers, journalists and groups of students. He seemed to be everywhere and ready to talk to anyone. To those around him he was a man of action and enormous energy with a will to power and great ruthlessness.

General Musa's attack was followed by a series of statements issued by Ayub Khan devotees Malik Muhammad Qasim, of the Muslim League, said of Bhutto: 'He is in a strange pathological condition', Qasim said, and called him 'a bright Indian boy'. Ayub Khan's son Gauhar Ayub cautioned Bhutto to refrain from 'irresponsible statements'. The Pakistan Times editor K A Suleri said: 'Obviously Bhutto had not yet found stability in his psyche - whether to be a landed aristocrat according to his birth or a common man according to his latest fad of socialism'.

A great awareness and intolerance of the status quo now prevailed. Ayub Khan had unwisely chosen to mark ten years of power by the celebration of what he called a 'decade of reforms'. A political joke which gained currency at the time was to call it the 'decay of reforms'. The intention behind these celebrations was to depict the progress the country had made under Ayub Khan. The plan however misfired. The dichotomy between the rich and the poor, despite the impressive figures trotted out by the Government, remained as severe as ever. Growing corruption among the bureaucracy, political suppression, the smarting frustration of the 1965 war, all added to the underlying discontent.

The first distant thunderclap of the tempest which was to carry Ayub Khan away came on the 7th of November 1968. A group of students who had purchased some contraband goods from Landi Kotal, in the tribal areas of North West Frontier, were apprehended by the police and the goods confiscated. Infuriated by this they formed a procession against what they felt was police high-handedness, and in the ensuing scuffles and riots a student was shot. Although this demonstration was not in any way political, it acted as a catalyst setting off a chain of events that were to culminate in the riots which ended ten years of Ayub Khan's rule.

The next day, a small delegation of students went to Rawalpindi's Intercontinental Hotel where Bhutto happened to be staying. They pleaded with him to intervene on their behalf and, aware of growing student political power, he issued a statement protesting against police brutality and attended the memorial prayers for the dead student who had been killed in the rioting. Bhutto's unqualified support of the student cause added to his popularity among them. The police firing was followed by a series of student protests all over West Pakistan. Processions took place, and as tension mounted, schools and colleges throughout West Pakistan were closed by the Government.

On the 9th of November Bhutto arrived in Lahore to a huge reception organised by the inflamed students to whom he had become a hero by his support of their cause. Lahore railway station once again was a public platform of dissent with a crowd of thousands shouting anti-Ayub and pro-Bhutto slogans. So dense was the melee that for thirty minutes Bhutto could not leave his railway carriage, till an enterprising supporter brought a car around to the platform. Once again scuffles broke out with the police which turned into a full fledged riot. Late into the evening and long after Bhutto had departed, police were battling all over the area around the railway station with student demonstrations.

Goaded beyond endurance, Ayub Khan acted. In the early hours of the morning of 13th November 1968, Bhutto was arrested in Lahore under the Defence of Pakistan Rules at the house of Dr. Mubbashir Hasan with whom he was staying. He was charged with inciting disaffection 'to bring into hatred and contempt the government established by law'. Along with Bhutto, seven other members of the PPP were arrested.

A weeping Nusrat Bhutto rushed to Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri – one of the leading criminal lawyers in Pakistan with an exemplary record in the defence of civil liberties – and asked him to file a habeas corpus petition.

In his affidavit filed before the court, Bhutto complained of ill-treatment after arrest, poor food and 'rats and bats' in his cell. The original affidavit said 'cats and rats' at which an enterprising junior in Kasuri's office pointed out that cats and rats could hardly exist together at which the affidavit was judiciously changed to 'rats and bats'.

He went on to accuse the Ayub Khan government of a whole range of persecutions: threats against his cousin Mumtaz Bhutto and nephew Mushtaq Bhutto; dacoity [gang robbery] cases against his friend Mustafa Khar; arrest of fellow party man Khurshid Hasan Meer; attempts to disrupt public meetings, and seize his and his family members' land holdings and preventing from selling his rice crop of 1967. His affidavit covering sixty-two foolscap typed pages,

recounted the events leading up to his arrest and took on the nature of a political testament and call to arms. A stirring indictment of the Ayub Khan regime, it became a passionate though over-theatrical declaration of Bhutto's political creed. 'My struggle is for national renaissance ... in the fullness of time the wheel of fortune will turn and in the revolution of this turn a better tomorrow will dawn ... the issues that confront Pakistan reach beyond the limitations of time and space ... a future in which Pakistan is a formidable fortress of the millat [community] of Islam serving oppressed mankind everywhere ...'

Bhutto's affidavit was widely read and copies were cyclostyled and passed around among groups of students and the politically conscious. The State Counsel, irritated by the affidavit's polemic, submitted to the court that parts of the affidavit should be struck off the official court records as they represented a political document and 'a lecture on this political philosophy by Mr. Bhutto'.⁶⁹ The State Counsel also tried to hit back at Bhutto by reading to him various defenses he had expounded of the Ayub Khan regime: 'The revolution in Pakistan was of a unique nature in so far as it sustained and supported the rule of law ... since the system worked in the interests and for the welfare of the people therefore it was the people's regime and hence democratic.'⁷⁰ All this, of course, embarrassed Bhutto. There was no getting away from his past involvement and eloquent defenses of the Ayub Khan regime, but as a political counter-thrust it was quite ineffective. In the public image, Bhutto was a persecuted David pitted against a vindictive Goliath.

Bhutto found gaol detestable. He did not possess the spiritual reserves of a Gandhi or Nehru, both of whom actually grew to enjoy the rigours of jail which gave them a long needed opportunity for contemplation and reflection. He was very much a man of this world for whom life without people and activity was meaningless. There was nothing ascetic about him and he found his incarceration unbearable.

His arrest, contrary to government hopes, sparked off increased agitation. On the day of his arrest he was due to go to Multan, and unaware of his arrest crowds of his supporters turned up at the Multan station waiting to receive him. When the Khyber Mail arrived without Bhutto and news of his arrest spread, furious crowds wrecked the train in a demonstration of their support for him. Lawyers joined in the protest by marching in groups of four along the Mall in Lahore in order to escape the government's restriction on 'unlawful assembly'.

⁶⁹ *Dawn* – 5th February 1969

⁷⁰ *Pakistan Times* – 14th November 1968

Bhutto remained confident of the successful outcome of his clash with Ayub Khan. Whispering in the ears of a Washington Post correspondent Selig Harrison when in court, he said: 'Your boy [Ayub Khan] does not recognize how much trouble he is in. He never had a capacity for facing crisis and he will fold up in the difficult months ahead. I say he will be out of office by the end of the year.'⁷¹

Bhutto's continued incarceration only gave further momentum to the public demonstrations and protests against Ayub Khan. And more important, it cleansed him of his previous Ayub Khan links. Neville Maxwell wrote in *The Times*: 'Every month in gaol now should erase the stigma of a least six months in the Ayub government.' On the 17th of November 1968 the former chief of the Pakistan Air Force, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, announced that he would actively campaign for the Opposition. Asghar Khan had a reputation for honesty – a scarce enough commodity among the ruling elite – and was widely regarded as the father of the Pakistan Air Force. As a popular, though non-political figure, his entry into the arena drew ecstatic crowds. Asghar Khan's campaign message demanded the release of Bhutto and the restoration of press freedom and civil liberties.

Sensing the kill, fresh challenges appeared one after another. Prominent among these were Justice Murshid from East Pakistan and General Azam Khan, a previous Ayub Khan supporter now turned opponent. The Opposition parties which up to this time had watched in silence, now began protesting, holding press conferences and participating in civil demonstrations. The nature of the protests began to change qualitatively. Whereas previously the main demonstrations were student-led, they now spread to all segments of the population. District Bar Associations, local party committees, teachers' associations, all began to get into the act. Once the chain reaction had been set off, there seemed to be no end.

Bhutto was transferred from one gaol to another till finally in February 1969 he was brought to Larkana in a special government plane and placed under house arrest. He brought out the old Gandhian ploy of a fast unto death unless the Government agreed to lift the State of Emergency. On the afternoon of 14th February 1969 at his residence Bhutto and party stalwarts Mustafid Khai, Abdul Waheed Khatpar, Nisar Muhammad Khan and Dr Mubbashir Hasan announced that they would fast until death unless Ayub Khan lifted his various repressive laws. The move was instantaneously popular and scores of followers and party functionaries promised to join in. His decision to last unto death was watched by thousands at his residence Al Murtaza in Larkana. A new spirit of sacrifice and optimism was abroad in the country and the Government's repressions seemed a

⁷¹ *Times of India* – and February 1969

sure sign of coming victory. Besieged from every side, the demoralised Ayub government had no choice but to announce the lifting of the Emergency Laws and the release of Bhutto together with arrested leaders: Wall Khan, Rasul Buksh Talpur, Ajmal Khattak and others detained under the Defence of Pakistan Rules.

On the evening of Ayub Khan's announcement, huge crowds carrying banners and raising slogans descended on Al Murtaza joined by crowds of devotees who had been keeping a night-long vigil nearby. At 6.45 pm Bhutto's release was announced and the iron gates barring the house flung open. There followed scenes of wild exhilaration. Bhutto was lifted shoulder-high and garlanded and shouts of '*Jeyai Bhutto! sada jeyai!*' – 'Long live Bhutto! Long may he live!' were raised by his dancing followers. Prominent among those present was Air Marshal Asghar Khan whose intrepid defiance of Ayub Khan's regime had been a major factor in the Government's backing down. Asghar Khan and Bhutto embraced and the shouting crowds raised slogans for both of them. At that juncture Asghar Khan's popularity was close to Bhutto's and their camaraderie seemed to augur a future political alliance. Both were regarded as champions of the anti-Ayub struggle. A correct alchemy of timing and confrontation had stolen the limelight from the other politicians who had characteristically sat on the fence and entered the arena when it was too late.

Exhausted but exultant, Bhutto announced from Larkana that the second stage of his struggle to topple Ayub Khan was now to begin from the 'historic city of Karachi which has a legacy of opposition to the Ayub government'. His choice was a shrewd one as Karachi was one of the few cities which had voted against Ayub Khan in the presidential elections of January 1965, and as an opposition stronghold it would provide the right jumping-off point.

Bhutto's arrival on the Bolan Mail at Karachi electrified the city. Thousands of people turned out at the cantonment station in welcome. From Larkana to Karachi at every small wayside station huge crowds collected to greet him. One after another and all through the night the train would creak to a stop at every tiny station – Dadu, Kotri, Jamshoro and on to Hyderabad. The scene was the same with enthusiastic people turning out for a glimpse of him. Bhutto would emerge from his coach promising a better future, the end of all they detested and to bring Ayub Khan to his knees.

When the train finally arrived at Karachi a storm of humanity welled up to greet him. Bhutto jumped on a truck leading the procession, dancing and singing with the crowd. His public showmanship which had always infuriated his opponents ignited the crowd's enthusiasm. Slogans raised were revolutionary and catching: '*Seenay pe goli Khain gay, inqalab lain gay*' – 'We will take a bullet on our chest but will bring a revolution'. '*Hum ko roti Kapeda do, warns gaddi chor do*' – 'Give us

bread and clothing; otherwise vacate the chair'. The procession crawled through the city with Bhutto like some latter-day Pied Piper at its head. Thousands and thousands of dancing and cheering supporters followed. Bhutto was their hero and he reveled in the adoration around him. He would bring his hands together as if he were handcuffed and then snap them free to show that the chains were broken; raise his hand and clap above his head with the audience clapping with him. Noisy and exultant, the procession wound its way through the centers of the town to the tomb of the founder of the nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

At several points they were attacked by rightist and pro-government factions but nothing could restrain the impromptu demonstrations of joy by the hundreds of thousands of people who turned out to see him. At Jinnah's tomb, with the party tricolour flapping everywhere, he addressed the assembled crowds. His speech was violently anti-government and highly emotional. It covered everything from a promise to fight for the people's rights to a struggle to the death against Ayub Khan ending with a threat 'to pull out the one good eye of the one-eyed Moshe Dayan'. To the politically prescient it had become obvious that Ayub Khan's political hegemony had been shattered.

In a final bid to redeem his position Ayub Khan's government invited the Opposition leaders to a Round Table Conference. Bhutto's initial response to the invitation was ambivalent. He was still unclear as to whether it would be politically wise or not and therefore wavered, changing his conditions and demands every few days. Eventually, certain that any association with Ayub Khan and with the other Opposition parties at this stage would detract from his support, he categorically refused to go to Rawalpindi where the conference was scheduled. With his special political savvy, he could see that the dichotomy of views between the Opposition parties attending the Round Table Conference would make any chance of a sensible accord remote. Instead he continued with his agitational politicking. Arriving at Lahore, he led a mile-long procession from the airport to a public meeting at Chowk Yadgar where, amidst thunderous applause he denounced the Round Table Conference saying that 'the public meeting was the People's Round Table' and that 'I will not go to the Conference with my hands dyed in henna'. Everywhere his demands for Ayub Khan's resignation were greeted with public acclamation. In order to divest himself of all associations with Ayub Khan he renounced the 'Hilal-e-Pakistan' – the Pakistan Government's highest civil award which he had received during his days as Ayub Khan's Foreign Minister.

As Bhutto anticipated, the Round Table Conference was a disaster and concluded in disarray. Although united in negativism, the diverse views of the Opposition made uniformity impossible. Bickering, fighting and intriguing among themselves, the Opposition both damaged their image and destroyed any

chances of a success. With the failure of the Round Table Conference, there also foundered Ayub Khan's last chance to divide the Opposition and gain further time for his government to work out some compromise.

Ayub Khan, however, decided on one last ploy involving a rapprochement with Mujibur Rahman. He appointed erstwhile foes, Mahmood Haroon, as High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and Yusuf Haroon as Governor of West Pakistan. Both had now become relevant due to their close association with Mujibur Rahman. Yusuf Haroon had a reputation as a shrewd political broker and it was argued that his appointment as Governor was a prelude to some political deal.

Though belonging to one of the twenty-two families, the Haroon brothers had a long standing friendship with Mujib to whom they gave a salary of Rs. 3,000 and many other facilities during his long period of political persecution ... Secret meetings took place at the presidential house between Ayub, Mujib and the Haroon brothers in a 'cordial atmosphere'.⁷²

The proposed deal was that Mujib would be made Prime Minister of Pakistan under a parliamentary system and with regional autonomy for East Pakistan.

Bhutto immediately smelt a rat. It was obvious that Ayub Khan was trying a last-minute palace coup. In those days Bhutto was working in close conjunction with Maulana Bhashani from East Pakistan, another loser in any Mujibur Rahman – Ayub Khan detente. A crucial pairing took place. Both politicians synchronized a deliberate raising of the political temperature. Bhashani began to preach violence, *hartal* (strike) and *gherao* (encirclement), and Bhutto began to shout accusations attacking Yusuf Haroon's appointment vociferously, calling him a 'foreign agent' and his appointment 'anomalous and scandalous'.⁷³

As the crescendo mounted Mujibur Rahman lost his nerve. Any arrangement with Ayub Khan was bound to be seen as a 'sell-out' by Bengalis and would mean political suicide for him. G W Choudhry, one of the persons present at the negotiations, recalls:

Mujib became shaky; in fact, the whole situation was so confusing that hardly any political settlement or serious political negotiations could take

⁷² *The last Days of a United Pakistan* – G W Choudhry

⁷³ *Daily News* – 25th March 1969

place ... nobody could understand what was happening and how the crisis could be resolved.

Ayub Khan seemed to be hanging like an over-ripe apple with Bhashani and Bhutto shaking the tree for all their worth. Both determined not to stop till the prize came plummeting down.

Unnerved by the widespread disaffection, it was the army which finally served notice on Ayub Khan that henceforward they would look to their own interests. Forsaken by his last bastion of power, Ayub Khan finally succumbed to the inevitable.

The end of ten years of Ayub Khan was conveyed to the nation on Radio Pakistan in the measured, gravel tones of Yahya Khan, the army chief:

'I, General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, do hereby declare that the whole of Pakistan shall be under martial law with immediate effect, and I assume the powers of Chief Marshal Law Administrator and the command of all the armed forces of Pakistan.'

Chapter Nine TO THE POLLS

General Yahya Khan, the most roundly abused of all Pakistan's recent rulers, was intent from the beginning on the restoration of democratic institutions. Restrictions on political activities were removed on 1st January 1970 as a prelude to elections scheduled for the end of the year, and the campaign began in earnest. General elections were a new phenomenon for Pakistan. This was the first time direct elections were being held at a national level. Provincial direct elections had been last held in 1954 in East Pakistan; in 1953 in Sindh and in 1951 in Punjab. Open discussion on the merits of each party, alternatives, past political records and matters which had lain dormant for many years were now resurrected. Both Mujibur Rahman's direct appeal to the masses brought dramatically far-reaching changes in a political environment which had remained sterile for decades. The politically naive were forcibly aroused everywhere. Election fever began to grip the country. Conservatism, Islam, socialism, provincial autonomy, capitalism, free press, constitutional principles, Bhutto's 'new politics' and so on, the arguments continued ceaselessly. An entire people were reaching for political maturity.

The machinery and framework of the elections were contained in the Legal Framework Order (LFO) promulgated by Yahya Khan on 31st March 1970. The LFO was a comprehensive document containing a preamble and twenty-seven articles with accompanying schedules. Details included the composition of the national and provincial assemblies; the election schedules with a time plan and eligibility for candidature; one man one vote; elections on adult franchise and a constituent assembly which had to enact the Constitution in one hundred and twenty days. The time table was important in view of Pakistan's past experience in constitution making. The first 1947 Constituent Assembly and the second 1955 Constituent Assembly had collectively dithered for a total of nine years without producing a Constitution. Except for the inevitable token mutterings, the LFO was accepted by all the political parties in Pakistan.

Once the campaign began, a highly charged political atmosphere developed. There was horse-trading between the candidates and parties for tickets and support. Agreements were thrashed out by brokers running from one political power-house to the next. Graffiti, posters, specially made arches and gates, banners and cardboard copies of party symbols, party colours and slogans added to the colour. At last an educational political process seemed to be under way in Pakistan, and new hope prevailed.

In early 1970, the country's varied political currents, old loyalties and new thought waves criss-crossed in startling variety making any exact political assessment difficult. In the absence of any recent voting results, indicators such as polls or referendums, assessments were based on traditional considerations: pre-Independence groupings, the politics of caste and community and the traditional feudal ties. Injected into all this was a growing political awareness which had begun to transcend previous patterns.

Bhutto's strategy was based on a calculated appreciation of existing political patterns. Each of the five provinces of Pakistan had their own peculiar characteristics, and he intended to concentrate where the response was the greatest. East Pakistan would be ceded without a fight and so could Baluchistan. The designated battlegrounds were Punjab, Sindh and, to a smaller extent, the North West Frontier.

In Sindh, other than the urban centers of Karachi and Hyderabad, it was thought that the voting would be along traditional feudal lines, meaning that political parties with the largest collection of pirs (religious leaders) and waderas (feudal lords) were expected to win. In concrete political terms the main groupings were G M Sayed's United Front of Sindhi chauvinists and anti-One Unit adherents which had support along a broad spectrum of opinion, particularly the petty bourgeois and small landlords. G M Sayed's status as a symbol of Sindhi resurgence was unique among Sindhi leaders. His campaign cry was 'jeyai Sindh' ('Long live Sindh'). Some areas of the province were dominated by Punjab farmers who had received allotments of prime agricultural land in the Kotri-Barrage area of Sindh during Ayub Khan's regime. This had understandably caused a backlash in the province which G M Sayed's party was trying now to draw on. Another caucus revolved around Bhutto's old enemy, Ayub Khurho of Larkana. Kliurho had joined hands with the Council Muslim League of Mian Mumtaz Daultana, a former Punjab Chief Minister, and had managed to line up a number of feudal leaders with him. An anachronistic yet important formation consisted of the Pir of Pagaro of Sanghar. Pagaro, as the sacerdotal head of several thousand fanatical tribal followers known as Hurs had the respect of a number of the religious and feudal Sindhi leaders. Pagaro had strengthened his challenge by joining another branch of the Muslim League led by Khan Qayum Khan, the North West Frontier leader. In urban Karachi the population was heavily 'muhajir' – Moslem immigrant from India – and was largely committed to one or other of the obscurantist Islamic parties.

Bhutto had managed to line up a respectable tally of prospective winning candidates in Sindh. Well known among them was Pir Ghulam Rasool Shah of Tharparkar, Darya Khan Khoso of Jacobabad, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and Hakim Ali Zardari from Nawabshah, Makhtoom of Hala, Haji Sadik Ali Memom from

Thatta, Mir Ali Ahmed and Mir Rasool Buksh Talpur from Hyderabad. Just before the election, he managed to extricate Jam Sadiq Ali, one of the Pir of Paragaro's right-hand men from Sanghar. His collection of feudals was as good as anyone else's and on that basis alone the Pakistan People's Party was expected to win a substantial number of seats in the Sindh Assembly. Bhutto himself had taken on the formidable task of fighting three Sindhi seats in the National Assembly : at Badin against Najmuddin Khan; Thatta against a representative of the Chandio family and the third, his home constituency of Larkana against Ayub Khurho.

In the Punjab on the eve of the election the strongest contenders seemed to be the Council Muslim League led by the urbane Mian Mumtaz Daultana. Ever since he was initiated into politics in pre-Independence India, Daultana had been a power to contend with. After Partition he initiated a series of political manoeuvres in the Punjab and succeeded in overthrowing the Mamdot ministry to become Chief Minister. Ambitious for the greater prize of Prime Minister he was implicated in the anti-Ahmadi (a quasi Islamic sect) riots in the Punjab, which dethroned not only the incumbent prime minister Khawaja Nazimuddin but Daultana as well. Thereafter, he brooded in the wings. A maestro at playing feudal politics and at power brokerage, Daultana managed over the years to build around him a series of alliances with the various Sardars, nawabs and chowdhries of the Punjab. He appreciated the influence of every clan, tribe and grouping in Punjab politics: the Noons of Sarghoda, the Chowdhries of Gujrat, the Gilanis and Qureishies of Multan, the Kilabaghs of Mianwali, the Hayats and Makhads of Wah and Cambellpur, the Mazaris and Legharis of Dera Ghazi Khan, the Sayeds of Jhang and the Mians of Lahore and Baghbanpura. The local influence of each particular family was woven into Daultana's canvas. He led a flock of Punjabi vested interests who saw in him a counterweight to Bhutto's socialism. Daultana had been either unable or unwilling to come to terms with Ayub Khan which added to his appeal.

As the aura of power grew around Daultana, so did his support. He began to extend his web into Sindh where he built alliances centralized around Ayub Khurho. In Frontier province and Baluchistan he extended his contacts with various tribal sardars and was reputed, during election year, to have contrived a tacit understanding with Mujibur Rahman as well. Behind his cultivated aura of feudal gentility, Daultana was an intensely ambitious man. In some ante-rooms he was tipped as the next Prime Minister of Pakistan. So formidable was Daultana's line-up of feudal support that his Council Muslim League was expected to take at least fifty seats, most of them in the Punjab. Despite public statements to the contrary, Bhutto himself was impressed by Daultana's strength. In fact, there were several indications that he expected some sort of future political alliance with Daultana. He refrained from personal public attacks

against him, studiously avoided public disagreements and never really carried his election campaign to Daultana's home territory of Vehari. Although Punjab was considered Daultana's backyard, Bhutto was quite prepared to carry the battle to the province as a whole. He had already demolished a great many myths of Pakistani politics and was happy to demolish more.

At the start of the election year in East Pakistan, Mujibur Rahman's Awami League seemed to be gaining strength but there was still some doubt as to the extent of his support. The right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim Leagues in various rump forms and some individuals also claimed a following. Maulana Bhashani's National Awami Party had much support in the working classes and among dispossessed tenants. As the election approached, his political fortunes began to dwindle. Mujibur Rahman's strident call for Bengali nationalism caught on like a brush fire. After the cyclone in November, 1970 the autonomy demand translated into 'six points' became the one coherent voice of the people of East Pakistan.

In the North West Frontier province the position was even less clear. The National Awami Party of Khan Abdul Wali Khan, successor to his father Ghaffar Khan's old pro-Congress Khudai Khidmatgars, had a large following, particularly in an area known as the Mardan triangle. Khan Qayyum Khan's period in office as Chief Minister of the Frontier in the early fifties had won him many adherents which he maintained despite his subsequent political skullduggery. Traditional Muslim parties had convinced the religious and conservative Pathans of their Islamic credentials and seemed possible winners in the southern areas of the province.

In Baluchistan, everything gravitated around tribal loyalties which were chiefly with the National Awami Party sardars (tribal leaders) such as Ghaus Buksh Bizenjo, Khair Buksh Marri and Ataullah Mengal. Their traditional following together with an honorable record of past political opposition assured them substantial support.

Bhutto launched the PPP election campaign at a massive public meeting at Nishtar Park, Karachi, on the 4th of January, 1970. The rhetoric was vintage Bhutto and had the by now customarily mesmeric effect on the crowds: 'Our politics is the politics of the masses – it is the politics of the open ... if there was any conflict between Islam and socialism, I swear we would have rejected socialism. I'm a Muslim first and need no certificate.' This was then followed by a public meeting in the Liaquat Gardens, Rawalpindi, in Jinnah Park at Peshawar and at Mochi Gate, Lahore. The historic public grounds he spoke in had never seen crowds like this. Surging crowds of hundreds of thousands, as far as the eye could see, on the surrounding trees, perilously perched on telegraph poles with

every inch of available space taken, and still thousands stood outside the ground listening to the muffled messages of the loudspeakers.

He strode across the country unleashing a welter of words, gesticulating, promising, raising slogans and generally anointing himself the messiah for his poverty-stricken people. The invocation rang with distinctly liturgical overtones. Amidst the passionate rhetoric and shrill argument there was a clear and underlying message of the need to combat exploitation, frustration and the retarded aspirations of the people.

Throughout his campaign, Bhutto concentrated foremost on mass rallies. Like Nehru, he was at his best in vast public meetings. As his crowd feel developed, he could increasingly understand the stimulus and response of mass politics. The vast majority of people in Pakistan can neither read nor write and do not have the financial resources to own radios and televisions. Public meetings, therefore, are the primary platform across which a message must be expounded. In essence, the PPP manifesto barely differed from that of several of the other major parties, but the others lacked Bhutto's resonance and ability to get it across. His immediately popular campaign slogan, '*roti, kapada, makaan*' – 'food, clothing and shelter' – caught on. Possibly, a few years later, this influenced Indira Gandhi, who, in the Fifth Indian General Election and in the 1972 State Assembly Elections adopted a similar catchy economic message, '*gharibi hatao*' – 'remove poverty'.

Irreverent and crude, Bhutto often used deprecatory nicknames for his opponents. The intellectually ponderous Asghar Khan was called 'Alloo (potato) Khan'; the portly Khan Abdul Qayum Khan 'Double-barreled Khan' and the Khurhos 'the ugly duckling of Sindh'. He warned Habibullah Khattak, an industrialist who had been taking over factories with government patronage: 'I'll give him a suppository, and all his mills will come out of his backside' When speaking, he would mimic politicians, and on one occasion he wiggled around the stage with a handkerchief in a ribald lampoon of Indira Gandhi.

A major problem he faced was the information media which were heavily biased against him. As a relatively new phenomenon, the PPP had not developed any publications of its own other than the *Al Fatah*, *Nusrat* and the daily *Mussawat*, all of which had a miniscule circulation. The conservative Islamic parties had shrewdly accumulated substantial temporal muscle in the form of a well-organised and widely circulated Urdu press with magazines like *Urdu Digest* and *Chattan*. Private press barons – principally the Haroon family from Karachi – controlled the *Dawn*, *Hurriyat*, *Evening Star* and other assorted magazines. The Haroons, as old political rivals of Bhutto, reserved their special malevolence for him, and maintained an extraordinarily high level of attacks upon him

throughout the campaign. Another press baron, Khalilur Rehman, who owned important newspapers such as Tang and Evening News avidly, denigrated the PPP at every opportunity. The largest section of the press (Pakistan Times, Morning News and Lailo Nehar) was controlled by the government-owned National Press Trust. The Information Minister General Sher Ali, under whose aegis these fell, had strong right-wing sympathies, and carried on a running personal duel with Bhutto. Bhutto attacked Sher Ali on several occasions, once saying that he was an Ambassador who used to 'take orders from me when I was Foreign Minister' and promised, when he got into power, that he would put an end to the National Press Trust. He never did.

The Bhutto–Sher Ali squabble gave rise to an amusing aside. A group of retired Defence Service Officers, outraged at Bhutto's diatribes against General Sher Ali and in a state of near apoplexy, issued a statement accusing him of gross disrespect towards his elders, ending with the following memorable line: 'The General was in uniform when Bhutto was only in liquid form!'

Although he maintained his fiery rhetoric for mass contact, Bhutto carefully transformed his appeal when appearing on a pre-election national television hook-up before a largely middle-class urban audience. He spoke in a soft and mellow tone beginning with 'Tonight I am addressing you as a citizen of the poorest nation in the world'. He referred to the immense problems which the country faced, painting an apocalyptic picture; 'We stand on the edge of a catastrophe ... frustration and despair are written large on the faces of the people.' He extolled the national virtues: 'Our ideology is inspiring ... we have made tremendous sacrifices in the past.' On economics he sugar-coated the nationalisation pill: 'We do not propose to nationalise industries that are functioning competitively' and 'we hope to bring a harmonious equation between the public and private sector'. Appreciative of the largely pro-Islamic beliefs of this particular audience, he took pains to explain the compatibility between his brand of socialism and Islam. For a great deal of the viewers, this was the first time they had ever heard him speak and the response was sympathetic. Bhutto's speech was calculated to dispel the embedded beliefs among the urban middle-class that he was little more than an irresponsible pro-communist demagogue. He succeeded.

The sword, which the PPP chose as its election symbol, was a great success. Zulfikar means the sword of Hazrat Ali, (a great warrior of Islam) and its choice was no coincidence. On a tour of Campbellpur, several months before the election, party member Khurshid Hasan Meer asked Bhutto what he had chosen as an election symbol. In his customary manner, Bhutto threw the ball back into Meer's court and asked him what his personal preference was. Meer suggested the sword, which throughout Islamic history had been a symbol of struggle

against oppression and which he felt should go down well with the public. Bhutto listened and said nothing more at the time.

Months later, when the time for an application to the Election Commissioner for an election symbol came round, Bhutto, in Lahore at the time, summoned Meer: 'Go to the Election Commissioner Justice Sattar and select an election symbol.'

'What is your choice, sir?'

'Well, you know what to ask for. You suggested it.'

By then, the election symbols had been published. In Urdu the symbol was a sword, the English translation was a dagger — obviously unsuitable because of its treacherous implications. Meer mentioned this to Bhutto who reacted irritably: 'Don't raise minor points. Go ahead with what you suggested in the first place.'

Meer, with considerable difficulty, managed to convince the Election Commissioner to have a uniform translation and give the sword to the PPP in both English and Urdu. Meer returned triumphant and was congratulated by all concerned. During the campaign the sword proved an unqualified success. People found it easy to copy and it became part of the PPP's combative image. The only opponent to the choice of the sword as a symbol was the crusty party Secretary-General J A Rahim. On hearing of its selection he wrote a vitriolic letter to Bhutto saying that the party symbol should be representative of the labour who produce the wealth of the country. A sword was 'fascist and militaristic', and unsuitable for a socialist party. He concluded his letter by complaining, with some justice, that he knew why Bhutto had chosen the symbol, because of the link it had with his name.

Some days after the election, a group of PPP leaders were convivially sitting around with Bhutto recounting election stories. Meer, proud of his efforts and anxious for recognition, reminded the gathering that he had selected the sword which had been such a great success. Bhutto fixed him with a stare: 'Who said you selected it, Meer? I selected it.' Meer, realizing his gaffe, kept quiet. Two and a half years later, after J A Rahim was dismissed by Bhutto, Meer, an adherent of J A Rahim's, protested by publishing a poem of sympathy in the Pakistan Times. Bhutto called for Meer, admonished him for writing the poem: 'You know, Meer, Rahim never liked you very much. In fact, you remember the election symbol you chose — he rejected it saying it was fascist and militaristic.' There can be few more rounded examples of Bhutto's duplicity, in small theatres as well sometimes as in great.

As Bhutto's campaign intensified, his opponents tried everything to stop him. Memories were invoked of his collaboration with Ayub Khan; his socialism was pronounced kufr (godlessness) by bearded and solemn ulema (Muslim divines). His reputed immorality and drunkenness were berated; he was accused of being the biggest feudal landowner of them all. Everything was tried, but nothing seemed to work. Day after day, the crowds came to hear him in ever-increasing numbers. The grave, pompous and sanctimonious leaders, most of whom had been drawn from the feudal classes, wearing Jinnah caps and talking down to the people, and with a solid record of rank political opportunism behind them, were made to appear discredited has-beens, all saying the same thing or the same sort of thing, reminding the people of their duty to God, and how Pakistan had been created for the Muslims, and Kashmir would one day be liberated and so on. All of it had been said before and heard before, and nothing was believed. At the end of a speech, dutiful slogans were usually raised by party hacks invoking a dispirited response; 'Pakistan zindabad; Quaid-e-Azam zindabad; Muslim League zindabad.'

On the Bhutto bandwagon it was all quite different. They beat drums and danced. They were encouraged to jeer at the men in Jinnah caps who had betrayed them so many times over the years. The slogans were 'Walika thah! America thah! Bhutto wah! wah! wah! – The capitalists are finished' (the Walikas were a leading capitalist family), 'America is finished and now it is Bhutto's glory only.' Every provocative statement in Bhutto's speech was regaled by '7eyai Bhutto! Sada jeyaz!' – 'Long live Bhutto, may he always live.' The Sindhi folksong 'He Jamalo' had its words put to music and the crowds sang it lustily, threatening destruction and triumph over their erstwhile overlords, capitalists and past political mentors. Bhutto wore Mao caps and entered the political arena clapping his hands above his head, Chinese-style. The Chinese were extremely popular and all this was loved. His posture was one of defiance and his appeal undeniably emotional. He swore never to betray the poor and the down-trodden whom he represented and who, under his leadership, would now rule. His language was the language of the people. In the Punjab he often threw in crude double entendres which were in turn cheered by the lusty Punjabis whose language is liberally peppered with such epithets. He managed to turn the tables on his opponents on every count. When accused of drinking, he replied yes, he drank 'sharab' (alcohol) and not the blood of the poor. The crowds were delighted. Accused of womanizing, he replied: 'Yes, I womanize, but I don't go after little boys like my opponents do.' At a press reception a reporter facetiously asked him if he knew his Qalma to which he replied: 'I've been married not once but twice. How could that be if I didn't know my Qalma?' Such political badinage was all new stuff for Pakistan and Bhutto's appeal grew. Unable to present a coherent front, the other opposition parties disintegrated into random sallies against their young foe and outrageous claims for their own lack-lustre

political causes. At last, on the 7th of December 1970, Pakistan went to the polls in the first-ever general election in the country's twenty-three-year history. Long queues had formed from early morning and lasted all through the day as the voting continued. Polling was orderly and well organised and no attempts were made in any way by the Government to interfere with the outcome. From every little backwater, village, small town, they came in bullock carts, on cycles, singing songs with little pieces of paper clutched in their hands with their chosen symbol on it. Radio Pakistan and the Television Corporation had made elaborate arrangements for the election with viewing boards, and teleprinters conveying the results from all over the country and various commentators to analyze and interpret the results. Early evening and through the night the results of the counting in constituencies all over the country came in. By seven o'clock in the evening a definite trend had become discernible.

One by one, political behemoths began to tumble. In Punjab and Sindh the carnage was wrought by Bhutto's PPP while in East Pakistan the havoc was caused by Mujibur Rahman's Awami League. What initially looked like a strong showing by PPP and the Awami League turned into a rout. Area presidents, political pundits, Muslim Leaguers, ex-Ayub Khan ministers, all fell like ninepins: Yasin Wattoo, ex-President, and Malik Qasim, General Secretary of the Convention Muslim League, Chowdhry Muhammad Hussein Chatha and Umrao Khan and Rehmat Elahi of the Jamaat-e-Islami. The deputy leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Mian Tufail Muhammad, was defeated by Sheikh Rashid of the PPP. Veteran railway union leader Mirza Ibrahim lost his deposit in a Lahore constituency which had 30,000 railway workers' votes to Dr Mubbashir Hasan of the PPP. Saeed Haroon of the famous political family of Karachi lost in Lyari, a seat which the Haroons had dominated for dozens of years. It was later reported that even the Hareons' own workers did not vote for him. Strong local waderas like Mustafa Jatoi and the Makhtoom of Hale were elected on PPP tickets by an avalanche.

The variegated right-wing Islamic parties with their fiery rhetoric slipped into a political eclipse. G M Sayed's Sindh United Front suffered a similar fate, failing to win a single seat. G M Sayed personally lost his deposit in Dadu against Malik Sikandar of the PPP.

For the Council Muslim League the result was a catastrophe. Out of fifty or so seats contested they won only seven. Other than a few traditional figures like Chowdhry Zahoor Elahi from Gujarat, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan from Campbellpur, their campaign strategy had been a disaster. Daultana himself barely managed to salvage his Vehari seat by a few thousand votes against a relatively unknown contestant from the PPP, Taj Muhammad Langha.

Daultana had cemented his alliance with Ayub Khurho by arranging the marriage of his daughter to Khurho's son. As the campaign continued, Daultana began to sense the growing support of the PPP. In a desperate attempt to prevent a massive upset, he tried to muster flagging support by appealing to Punjabi chauvinism. The story goes that he advised a small gathering of journalists that as Punjabis they ought to vote for the Council Muslim League as it was predominantly a Punjabi party, at which a voice from the audience retorted: 'Daultana Sahib, if you can give your daughter to a Sindhi, surely we can give our vote to a Sindhi!'

Bhutto had audaciously elected to fight six National Assembly seats at the same time. In Sindh he made a clean sweep defeating Najmuddin Khan in Badin, a Chandio representative in Thatta and Ayub Khurho in Larkana. Khurho had been taunting Bhutto for many years by constantly reminding him of his father's defeat in 1937, and challenging him to a contest. This victory carried for him the special rewards of political revenge.

Incredibly, in Lahore he defeated the son of the city's famous poet Allama Iqbal. In Multan, again Bhutto won. Initially it looked like a tough fight. His main opponent was a 'favorite son', Babu Feroz Ansari. However, he managed to maneuver the dominant Qureishi and Gilani families over to his side. This factor, together with his great personal popularity, clinched the issue.

The only seat he lost was in the Frontier constituency of Dera Ismail Khan to the long entrenched leader of the Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam, Mufti Mahmood.

In East Pakistan it was the Awami League everywhere and except for two constituencies, they made a clean sweep. Mujibur Rahman had contested two seats in Dacca town, in one of which he beat his lone rival Khawaja Khairuddin by the extraordinary margin of over one hundred thousand votes. He wrote the political obituary of veterans like Fazlul Qadir Chowdhry, Professor Ghulam Azam, Professor Muzaffer Ahmed, Mahmud Ali, Maulvi Farid Ahmed, Maulana Athar Ali, Wahiduzzaman and a host of others. Having read the writing on the wall, A Sabur and Ataurahman Khan had judiciously withdrawn from the fight.

The birth of Air Marshal (Retd) Asghar Khan's party Tehrik-e-Istiqlal was aborted. Not a single party candidate was returned. He even lost his own seat in Rawalpindi – a cantonment area where his military background should have been an important factor – to the relatively unknown Khurshid Hasan Meer. His party was built around him and his rejection was the rejection of his party.

When Asghar Khan plunged initially into the fray, he was widely regarded as a far better political bet than Bhutto: mass popularity at least equal to Bhutto's;

Punjab ancestry; charm; an unblemished record for integrity as ‘Mr. Clean’ of the Ayub Khan regime and a conservative political position which was certainly more acceptable to the pro-Islamic parties than Bhutto’s socialism. His past record was of professional excellence without any stain of political collaboration with Ayub Khan. Aware of Asghar Khan’s popularity, Bhutto offered him presidency of the PPP; but Asghar Khan refused. He found Bhutto ‘too dishonest and cunning’⁷⁴ The Times, in a dispatch from Rawalpindi, said: ‘The Air Marshal is undoubtedly made of presidential timber. He is untarnished with the blemish of a past political career. He is the subject of hero worship as the father of the Pakistan Air Force’⁷⁵ And more important, Asghar Khan was still extremely popular in powerful army circles.

Despite his admirable credentials, Asghar Khan lacked a dimension. An apt comparison of the two politicians would be that of the hare and the tortoise. Whereas Bhutto stayed away from the disastrous Round Table Conference, Asghar Khan did not. He sat among political wheeler-dealers like Mumtaz Daultana, Shaukat Hayat Khan, Nawab Nasrullah and Mujibur Rahman, who were more intent on making a deal with Ayub Khan than restoring the civil liberties he had struggled for. He then joined Nawab Nasrullah’s Awami Party. Nasrullah promised him the presidency, and Asghar Khan went to Dacca for what he thought was his election. On arriving in Dacca he found he had been duped. Nasrullah, wary of Asghar Khan’s popularity, had abandoned his candidature. Outraged, he started his own Justice Party which gradually meandered to a halt. The Tehrik-e-Istiqlal (Party of Steady Fortitude) was his next effort to gain political credibility. In the 1970 elections it, too, failed, but Asghar Khan was watching and learning from his setbacks. Indeed, many of the tactics adopted by Bhutto during his own ascent to supreme power were later to be used with some success by Asghar himself – against Bhutto.

Sitting in Larkana, Bhutto listened to the results of his incredible victory with satisfaction. Within four and a half years of leaving Ayub Khan’s cabinet and barely three years after forming the PPP he had won overwhelmingly in West Pakistan, transforming the political heavens and creating a multitude of stellar newcomers. He had spread his message across the length and breadth of West Pakistan and in the process had politicized an entire country. Nothing would ever be the same again. His much reviled campaign had proved triumphantly well judged. It was demonstrably clear that he had understood the nation’s aspirations better than older and supposedly more experienced politicians.

⁷⁴ Conversation in 1969 between Asghar Khan and the author

⁷⁵ *Quest for Power* – Dilip Mukerjee

There was no doubt that Bhutto was personally surprised at the extent of his victory. He described it characteristically to the cheering crowds: 'I have lost, you have won.' He had won sixty-four out of eighty-two seats in Punjab and eighteen out of twenty-seven in Sindh and one seat in the Frontier Province. Close to the elections he had forecast among friends a maximum tally of around forty seats in West Pakistan and none in the East Wing.

After the election a large gathering was arranged at 70 Clifton, Karachi, to celebrate the PPP victory. The mood was buoyant and triumphant. Party functionaries and elected Assembly members were hobnobbing, recounting stories of their election and exchanging the current political gossip. Bhutto was seated under the shamiana on a sofa with Jam Sadiq Ali, Rasul Buksh Talpur, Hafiz Pirzada and other party members. One by one people would file past, shaking hands and offering congratulations. Some of them had worked devotedly and supported the party, others had held back and were trying to get on the bandwagon. There were hangers-on, opportunists, members of other parties trying to switch sides and so on. As each individual came up to Bhutto, he received a response precisely in accordance with his contribution. A genuine worker, regardless of his position, would be greeted warmly by Bhutto who would stand up, clasp hands and return the 'mubarik' Others would get a baleful glare, limp handshake, depending upon his assessment of their role. On some occasions, sarcastically: 'Well – I'm glad we are meeting after such a long time!' or, 'What about that little job I asked you to do? You were too busy then, but it seems you're not busy now.' Bhutto never forgot.

Chapter Ten

THE GREAT TRAGEDY

Out of Pakistan's 1971 tragedy a new nation was born and an older one torn asunder amid terrifying bloodshed. These cruel days are still burnt deep into the consciousness of the people of what are now the separate countries of Pakistan and Bangladesh. From the era of optimism ushered in by General Yahya Khan's decision to hold elections in 1970, Pakistan was soon plunged into despair and a whirlpool of horror: the breakdown of negotiations between Yahya Khan, Mujibur Rahman and Bhutto; the army crackdown in March; the nine months of debilitating and bloodthirsty civil war; and the full-scale hostilities with India which resulted in the final and formal secession of East Pakistan.

After the conflict was over, Bhutto commissioned a report on the entire Bangladesh episode from Mr. Justice Hamoodur Rahman, Chief Justice of Pakistan and himself a Bengali. Bhutto testified before the commission whose sessions were held in camera throughout, but he never published the final report, arguing that some parts of it could embarrass Pakistan in its conduct of foreign relations. His detractors preferred to suggest that Bhutto never dared issue the report because he was so heavily implicated in the political chicanery and blundering that preceded the country's break-up. That may be so. But it is equally likely that the Hamoodur Rahman commission report was by no means the final word on political responsibility for the catastrophe that overcame Pakistan. Considering the circumstances in which the commission worked, its final report may even have erred in Bhutto's favour.

Blame can never be satisfactorily or finally apportioned to the major players in this grisly drama, but that Bhutto, Mujibur Rahman and Yahya Khan share responsibility there can be no doubt. Many, indeed, are inclined to the view that Bhutto, as the most sure-footed politician of the three and thus the best-equipped to assess the consequences of his actions, must accept the lion's share of the blame. Argument on the point will remain one of the central themes of Pakistani politics, perhaps for decades.

The seeds of East Pakistan's secession had been sown a long time before. A combination of West Pakistani capitalists and bureaucrats had for years deprived the poverty-stricken Bengalis of their share in the economic fruits of a free Pakistan. Politically, too, despite three Bengali Prime Ministers, East Pakistan remained a backwater. The first indication of the swelling frustration came in the riots which erupted in 1952 over the place of Bengali as a national language. After this, a series of actions compounded the smoldering resentment: the

dismissal of Khawaja Nazimuddin, a Bengali Prime Minister, by the Governor-General; the imposition of One Unit in 1955, which the Bengalis interpreted as an attempt to neutralize their numerical majority.⁷⁶ The arrest of Mujibur Rahman and Maulana Bhashani on the assumption of power by Ayub Khan in 1958 and the later Agartala Conspiracy case, involving charges that Mujib and others had plotted with the Indians against the unity of Pakistan, were interpreted by Bengalis as a conspiracy against Bengal. A procession of historical events had already cast their dark shadow over the political arena before the final convulsion in 1971.

The outcome of the 1970 general election could only make a volatile political situation explosive. Mujibur Rahman's Awami League won 167 out of the 169 seats in East Pakistan on a platform of provincial autonomy, but held no attraction for the West Pakistani voters. Bhutto, for his part, won an overwhelming majority in West Pakistan alone. Both had ignored the other wing of the country, so that their victories turned them into rivals from the outset. Throughout the election campaign, Bhutto never visited East Pakistan, preferring to concentrate his energies on the provinces where he calculated the best returns. He anticipated a coalition at the centre 'with one or other of the major parties.

For Bhutto, a West Pakistani leader whose electoral success was founded on a direct appeal to the Punjabi masses, Mujibur Rahman's 'Six Points' were anathema. Indeed, most politicians of standing in the key province of Punjab had long considered them a charter for secession and, as guardians of Pakistan's essential spirit, had accordingly condemned them out of hand.

Although the PPP first refuted them in its foundation documents, the approach was conciliatory. It was assumed that Mujibur Rahman was still a Pakistani politician and that 'Six Points' represented a negotiating position which could be altered depending on prevailing political realities. In the 1970 general elections, Bhutto ignored 'Six Points' as he never seriously assumed till as late as November 1970 that Mujibur Rahman would be in a position to win an electoral majority and form a government based upon such demands. Under the terms of the Legislative Framework Order, the Rules framed by the Yahya Khan regime for conducting the 1970 elections and the handing over of power to a civilian government, a two-thirds majority in the Assembly was necessary to pass a constitution. The chances of Mujibur Rahman attaining such a majority were remote. All through the election year, 'Six Points' had therefore been relegated to

⁷⁶ One of the prime sponsors of One Unit was Mian Mumtaz Daultant. When the bill was first passed by the Assembly, one of its members, Mian Iftikharuddin, rose to say prophetically: 'This action will result in the secession of East Pakistan.'

a position of relative unimportance, as there seemed more pressing political and economic issues to claim Bhutto's attention.

After the election the situation changed drastically. Bhutto now saw that Mujibur Rahman, with his majority of seats, could form a government even without support from West Pakistan. And yet he was not the man to play second fiddle. With control of only two provincial governments out of five, he saw his position as far from assured. He knew the shifting loyalties of politicians and could envisage the danger of an Awami League government with all the carrots to offer in the centre weaning away his own party men. His move therefore was to bid for a role in the federal government. This could only be accomplished by holding himself out as the elected government of West Pakistan (though no such political unit existed) and raising the specter of secessionism, particularly in the volatile Punjab.

If the PPP was to participate in the federal government, he needed a stronger base. He therefore set about dramatizing his hand and building up his negotiating strength by adopting an aggressive posture. On the 20th of December 1971 he led a massive procession through the streets of Lahore. With his huge majority in the Punjab Assembly, he was a darling of the crowds. Addressing one of the largest gatherings ever seen in the city, he said: 'Punjab and Sindh are bastions of power in Pakistan. I have the key of the Punjab Assembly in one pocket, and that of the Sindh Assembly in the other pocket ... the rightist press is saying I should sit in the Opposition -benches. I am no Clement Attlee⁷⁷ ... Who would redeem the prices and solve the problems of the working and downtrodden people if we sat on the Opposition benches? ... I have brought about an awami toufan (people's hurricane). I am the real voice of the people. If anybody wants to create hurdles in the way of the awami toufan, the consequences will be disastrous. It is not a clown who is saying this. I am prepared to go into another struggle and would even sacrifice my life for getting justice to the down-trodden.' He wanted to have an incendiary effect and he succeeded. The political temperature rose dramatically. It was his style to try and draw first blood. The over-expansive rhetoric was planned to sound a clear warning that he was determined to allow no maneuvering behind his back.

Bhutto's speech at Lahore drew a storm of criticism. His blatant thrust for a place in the new government was condemned by a wide spectrum of political parties and leaders in the country. The General-Secretary of the Awami League, Tajuddin Ahmed, issued a furious rejoinder: 'Punjab and Sindh can no longer aspire to be bastions of power. The democratic struggle of the people was carried

⁷⁷ The British Labour Leader who was content to become deputy to Winston Churchill in the British War Cabinet

against such bastions of power.’ He went on unequivocally to state that the Awami League could frame the Constitution with or without the co-operation of any other party.

Somewhat taken aback by the vociferousness of his opponents Bhutto thought it wise to allow the atmosphere to cool. At a reception in Multan a few days later, he said: ‘My party has no lust for power. It wants a position of authority simply to fulfill the pledges made to the people ...’

Having taken stock of the political realities, it was now time for the protagonists to begin discussions on the transfer of power. In the second week of January 1971, Yahya Khan and Mujibur Rahman met in Dacca for the first of their mutual parleys. These early rounds of talks were on general issues.

The Legislative Framework Order clearly laid out the basis of any proposed constitution which must be within the framework of a united Pakistan. According to various political commentators, Mujibur Rahman had always indicated his intention to modify ‘Six Points’ to an acceptable degree.

The whole political dialogue between Yahya Khan and Mujib from 1969 up to their crucial meeting in December 1971 after the elections was based on Mujib’s unqualified and repeated pledge to modify his ‘Six Point’ plan.⁷⁸

Bhutto concurred with this:

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman maneuvered the government into believing that he would become more amicable after the elections.⁷⁹

Apparently Yahya Khan was convinced at this stage that Mujibur Rahman’s ‘Six Points’ were negotiable and appeared quite satisfied with the outcome of the talks. He emerged from the meetings describing Mujibur Rahman as ‘the next Prime Minister of Pakistan’.

On the 27th of January 1971 Bhutto arrived in Dacca for talks with Mujibur Rahman. Significantly, Mujibar Rahman did not consider it necessary to receive Bhutto at the airport. He had already begun to conduct himself as if he was the next Prime Minister. Bhutto however received a warm welcome at Dacca and large crowds turned up to see him, chanting pro-Mujib and Bhutto slogans.

⁷⁸ *The Last Days of United Pakistan* – G W Choudhry

⁷⁹ *The Great Tragedy* – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Chances of a compromise seemed good and a general feeling of bonhomie prevailed between the people of the two wings. The two politicians even found time for some good natured banter.⁸⁰

Mujib: Well, isn't this world a stage and we are all actors. .

Bhutto: Yes. Those who acted well won laurels, and those who put up a poor show failed.

Mujib: But this was no acting. It was all real stuff. The people have voted for our programmes and not for our faces.

Bhutto: That's exactly what I mean. A heavy responsibility rests on our shoulders. Sheikh Sahib looks younger than me. Mujib: I daresay Mr. Bhutto is more handsome than me.

Bhutto: In that case, I deserve some concessions.

A lengthy series of discussions continued between Bhutto, Mujibur Rahman and the leaders of the Awami League and the PPP. A criticism which the Awami League made at this stage was that the PPP had no definable negotiating position. Whereas the Awami League had been working on the implications of 'Six Points' for a considerable time, the PPP was still uninitiated, and were not prepared to discuss the minutiae. Bhutto has always laid greater emphasis on his negotiating skills and paid less attention to the more mundane details which the Awami League wished to discuss. Bhutto's early meetings with Mujibur Rahman were noncommittal. No clear agreement or understanding was reached. On 31st January 1971 he left Dacca with a comment of masterly ambiguity: 'I am not returning to Lahore unhopeful. This does not mean I am returning hopeful. You cannot expect an emphatic statement on matters which lingered for the last twenty-three years after a three day talk.'

In spite of the superficially pleasant exchanges, one vital factor remained - the extent to which Mujibur Rahman would bend in his demands. Although Mujibur Rahman had clearly advocated 'Six Points' as the cornerstone of the Awami League manifesto, 'Six Points' in its totality were not acceptable within the framework of a united Pakistan. A number of private messages and soundings began; but Mujibur Rahman remained intransigent. In his public speeches, he became increasingly adamant on the sanctity of 'Six Points': 'We want to frame a constitution, and we shall frame it on the basis of "Six Points"'. Those who would

⁸⁰ *From Larkana to Peking* – Mehmud Sham

accept it, let them accept it; those who won't let them not accept it. If anyone refuses to co-operate, it will be his responsibility.'⁸¹

At this stage, Bhutto was in a dilemma. The scheduled date for the Constituent Assembly to meet was 3rd March 1971. Mujibur Rahman's refusal to compromise meant that it would be left up to him alone to prevent the passage of a 'secessionist constitution' through the Assembly. Moreover, if a constitutional formula could not be evolved in 120 days, then under the terms of the Legislative Framework Order the Constituent Assembly would stand dissolved. This would mean a negation of the last general election, and possibly another one – an equally unpleasant alternative. For although Bhutto had won a massive electoral majority in terms of seats he had won only 34 per cent of the votes cast in West Pakistan. If another election was to be held, the rightist parties would almost certainly combine in an effort to deprive him of fresh victory.

Perhaps another politician with more moral scruple and with a greater respect for democracy would have bowed before the will of the majority and quietly entered the Constituent Assembly to debate the future of Pakistan. Bhutto, however, possessed none of these gentle characteristics. He never had much faith in the parliamentary process. For him 'the people's will' was something which could be swayed, influenced and indeed molded according to a politician's skill and opportunity at a particular time. Mass support is a means towards power. Educated in the harsh school of 'wadera' politics and Ayub Khan's 'democracy', his respect for democratic norms was shifting and cynical.

There was another danger in convening the Assembly. It was quite possible that a number of elected members from West Pakistan would give way to the Awami League's dominant position and compromise with them, enabling Mujibur Rahman to get the two-thirds majority needed to pass the constitution. Bhutto could not trust his own party, which consisted of a motley group of individuals, some of whom he barely knew and who had been swept into power on a wave of pro-Bhutto feeling. People's Party members like Mir Ali Ahmed Talpur who genuinely felt that the Assembly should convene had already covertly indicated their willingness to collaborate with the Awami League. National Awami Party members like Mir Ghaus Buksh Bizenjo and Ataulab Khan Mengal from Baluchistan and Wall Khan from Frontier were assumed to be in sympathy with the autonomy demands of the Awami League. Faced with this equation, Bhutto chose to play up the horror of a secessionist constitution being pushed through the Assembly. He did not want his supporters to consider too carefully that a two-thirds majority was not easy, specially for a constitution based upon 'Six

⁸¹ *Speech in Dacca* – 9th February 1971

Points' in its original form. Even if the Awami League had forced the issue and won, who was to argue that this was not a perfectly democratic decision reached by the people's elected representatives?

Another option for Bhutto was to obtain a commitment from Mujibur Rahman that he would not go to the Assembly and insist upon an application of 'Six Points' in its entirety. If Mujibur Rahman could be persuaded to be reasonable, the chances of a compromise formula for a constitution within the Assembly was possible. But more important, there would be no sudden surprises sprung upon the minority members from West Pakistan. Opting for this formula, he suggested on 1st February 1971: 'The PPP stand is that we should go to the National Assembly with an agreed constitutional formula to save time.'

For the first two weeks of February the situation remained fluid. There were hurried meetings between various party leaders – Yahya Khan, Mujibur Rahman and Bhutto. Bhutto met Wali Khan, had dinner with Qayyum Khan, working sessions with Mumtaz Daultana and several other political leaders, sounding out and assessing the prevailing influences and currents.

Tides of extremism were rising on both sides. The wily Maulana Bhashani was addressing public meetings, openly preaching secession and stating that should the Awami League violate the principles of 'Bengali freedom' on which it was returned, it would be violating its election mandate. Riots broke out in both East and West Pakistan on minor issues. An Indian plane was forced to land at Lahore airport by two 'high-jackers' who claimed they were Kashmiri freedom fighters. The high-jackers blew up the plane, and the Indian Government used it as an excuse to ban overland flights across India between East and West Pakistan, an action which seemed to highlight the geographical isolation of the two wings and was destined to be a grave hindrance for Pakistan in sending troops and war material to the East. Whereas protests broke out in West Pakistan on the Indian action, Mujibur Rahman issued a press statement suggesting the whole incident was engineered by West Pakistan's 'vested interests to exploit conditions with the ulterior purpose of sabotaging the peaceful transfer of power to the people'. Despite various West Pakistani politicians flying over to East Pakistan to meet Mujibur Rahman, he considered it beneath his dignity to reciprocate by visiting West Pakistan. A noticeable hardening in attitudes was becoming clear.

On the 15th of February 1971 Bhutto threw down the gauntlet. At a press conference in Peshawar, he announced: 'My party will not attend the National Assembly session starting on the 3rd of March at Dacca unless it is made clear to me and my party men that there would be some amount of reciprocity from the majority party, either publicly or privately. We cannot go there only to endorse the constitution already prepared by a party, and to return humiliated.' He then

went on to voice his opposition to 'Six Points': 'My party is of the opinion that the constitution based on "Six Points" cannot provide a viable future for the country ... my party is very keen for the early transfer of power, but not the transfer of Pakistan ... a constitution imposing a vendetta against Pakistan cannot be accepted.' He ended his statement by saying that he was not prepared to put his party men in a position of 'double hostages'.

Bhutto's decision not to attend the proposed constituent Assembly session in Dacca was violently attacked by most politicians, in both East and West Pakistan. The National Awami Party Leader Wali Khan, talking to newsmen at Karachi airport, said: 'There was a difference in the "Six Points" programme as a political slogan and the "Six Points" which could form the basis of the constitution ... let the Awami League give details of its constitution in the Assembly. If everyone began drafting and discussing the constitution in every part of the country, it might never solve the issue. We were voted to the Assembly by the people to form the constitution. If we sit in the Assembly and discuss this problem, only then will there be some understanding.' Extremists like Akbar Khan Bugti went a step further : 'Mr. Bhutto wants to push Bangla Desh out of Pakistan.'

Unrepentant at the controversy he had provoked, Bhutto maintained his truculent posture. He told a workers' meeting at Karachi : 'There are three forces in the country : the Awami League, Pakistan People's Party and the armed forces. We do not recognize any fourth power. The Awami League is a party of the people as is People's Party. We accept Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as our elder brother. The elder brother should also listen to the younger brother. My party will not go to affix its thumb impression on a dictated constitution.'

The last two weeks of February 1971 the crisis continued to brew. Bhutto held a two-day national convention of the PPP with party members from all over West Pakistan attending. It was necessary for him to secure the complete support of his party at this stage and they readily gave it. In fact, they went a step further by agreeing to hand over their resignations to Bhutto with a full mandate to do whatever he wished.

Mujibur Rahman, on his part, remained intransigent, and addressed public meetings all over East Pakistan reiterating his party's stand on 'Six Points' and his refusal to bow to any pressures. Other leaders of Bengali opinion were equally intractable. A massive public meeting at Paltan Maidan in Dacca convened by the Students Union concluded its resolution by saying that 'Mr Bhutto's moves were designed to sabotage the rightful demands of Bangla Desh'. The very word 'Bangla Desh' had now gained widespread currency all over East Pakistan. Politicians and student leaders were competing in extremism. The president of Dacca University Central Students Union, A S Rab, announced: 'The

1952 Bengali language movement was not merely a language movement, but laid the foundation of an independence movement.'

Bhutto now, moved to break the deadlock. On the 28th of February 1971 he addressed a massive public meeting at Lahore, offering as a carrot three alternatives.

- 1 That Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should give some indication that on three of the six points – currency, taxation and foreign trade, he was prepared to reach some agreement before the National Assembly meets, or
- 2 The National Assembly session should be postponed, or
- 3 That the Legislative Framework Order (LFO) provision that the constitution be framed within 120 days should be waived.

If any of these three alternatives were accepted, he would gladly attend the proposed Constituent Assembly meeting on 3rd March 1971. He then went on to say that if before the scheduled National Assembly session Mujibar Rahman would even indicate an accommodation, he was ready to attend the Assembly. In the case of a postponement of the session, he would go again to his elder brother Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Quoting from the Sindhi poet Shah Abdul Latif of Bhitai:

'I'll go to my beloved, touch her feet, beg her and persuade her by all means.'

After the carrot, he then threatened the stick. The latter part of his speech was possibly the most belligerent he had ever made. He threatened a strike from the Khyber Pass to Karachi – 'not a single shop would be allowed to remain open'. He promised that the people of Pakistan would take full revenge from anybody who attended the Assembly session when they returned from Dacca, or, as he expressed it himself, 'he would break their legs'. In spite of Bhutto's three alternative conditions, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman refused to budge.

Faced with Bhutto's obduracy and Mujibur Rahman's intractability, Yahya Khan announced the postponement of the impending Assembly session sine die. His statement caused an eruption of twenty-five years of Bengali suspicions that power was to be denied to them yet again. A shrill serenade of protest greeted the decision and the huge groundswell of support rose for Mujibur Rahman, pushing the more extreme elements in his party to the forefront. Positions became further polarized and chances of a settlement faded further into the distance. Popular support for Mujibur Rahman was demonstrated in practical terms by the almost unanimous decision of the Bengali bureaucracy, police, judges and civil administration who pledged their support. His house became

the civil secretariat. In hard political terms, a de facto transfer of power had taken place in East Pakistan.

The tempest released by the 1st March decision to postpone the Assembly drove the negotiating parties towards an inevitable showdown. A fusion of pressures had pushed events beyond anyone's control. At best, there was hope of only diverting or delaying the inevitable, and a convulsion seemed imminent.

If Mujibur Rahman was ever willing to compromise, he now no longer could. Bengali chauvinists were on the rampage all over the country. Despite government attempts to underplay the news, planeloads of non-Bengali refugees began arriving in West Pakistan with gruesome accounts of slaughter and mob violence. The heady success of running a parallel government in defiance of Islamabad had further hardened the negotiating attitudes of the Awami League.

The final parleys between Yahya Khan, Bhutto and Mujibur Rahman, which began towards the end of March 1971, were doomed from the start. In his book, *The Great Tragedy*, Bhutto gives several accounts of these last and fateful meetings. His book seems to indicate the complete breakdown of any trust or mutual communication between the negotiating parties. Mujibur Rahman would first take Yahya Khan and then Bhutto into separate corners, whispering and asking for support against the other. Statements like 'You take West Pakistan and I'll take East Pakistan' were made. All sorts of outrageous schemes were passed around. Already the chances of any negotiations for an agreement within a united Pakistan had become an impossibility.

Awami League leaders were driving into the meetings in cars flying red and green Bangla Desh flags. While negotiating the final drafts of the constitution, the word 'confederation' had suddenly crept in and the word 'Pakistan' was being used as if it was some necessary evil. On the 23rd of March 1971 (Pakistan Day) mobs tore down the Pakistan flag all over East Pakistan, desecrated the picture of Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah and shouted slogans for the freedom of Bangla Desh. The negotiating parties were talking in a vacuum, and a surreal atmosphere prevailed. At some time during this period, the army decision to suppress the autonomy movement was taken. The troops were ordered to move out of the barracks and M M Ahmed, one of the principal negotiators, quietly flew back to West Pakistan while talks were ostensibly in progress.

On the afternoon of the 25th of March 1971 Yahya Khan flew to the west wing after giving instructions to his army to suppress the secessionist movement. Bhutto's first intimation of what Yahya Khan had planned was when he looked out of his hotel room at 11 pm on the 25th of March 1971, to see army artillery destroying *The People* – a defiantly Bengali nationalist newspaper.

Bhutto's role in the last stages of the drama remains controversial. As a canny political animal, he used a number of ploys and negotiating tactics to maximize his leverage. He was quite prepared to (and no doubt did) play Mujibur Rahman against Yahya Khan, tactics which they too were adopting against him. He engaged in his share of innuendos, threats, and sometimes overplayed his hand for political ends. His inflammatory speeches immediately after the election reeked of his own ambition, and certainly added to the mounting tension. It is also obvious that he had little regard for conventional democracy or for the freshly elected Constituent Assembly. Perhaps most damning of all, he could surely guess the impact of the postponement of the Assembly. As a politician he must have been aware that it would drive the Bengalis nearer secession.

Yet Bhutto's role in the break-up of Pakistan stopped short of active connivance with the army. All the evidence suggests that his most bitter critics were wrong in charging him with collaboration with the army in order to destroy Pakistan and hoist himself into power. Bhutto seems to have been as confused as anyone else by those crisis days in March, and as surprised when the 'crunch' came. It is true that no edifying interpretation can be put on his decision to boycott the Assembly in Dacca. But his ignorance of the army decision to 'take out' the Awami League and its supporters on 26th March was authentic. Mujibur Rahman himself never accused Bhutto of active connivance with the army, and after the appalling bloodshed the two men even developed almost cordial relations.

In such a central and traumatic event in Pakistan's existence, Bhutto has long been under suspicion over his role. He proved a voluble defendant, and some would certainly argue that he protested rather too much. From the time of the army crackdown he compulsively sought to justify himself, reiterating Mujib's secessionist stance, the blunders of previous politicians and his own record in arguing East Pakistan's economic exploitation.

Chapter Eleven

REINS OF POWER

By the end of November 1971 Indian armed infiltration into East Pakistan had reached a level which made war a certainty. And in West Pakistan a combination of the Indian armed threat and internal political pressures was forcing Yahya Khan to consider divesting a portion of his own authority on to Bhutto. Accordingly, he summoned Bhutto to Islamabad on 24th November 1971 for the first series of discussions which lasted throughout that week.

On the 3rd of December 1971 war broke out between India and Pakistan, precipitating the need of a broader political participation in the central government. It was a time of national emergency and Bhutto's inclusion in the war effort as the leading civilian politician in West Pakistan was vital. On the 7th of December he joined a coalition ministry as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister with Nurul Amin, the ageing independent politician from East Pakistan, as the Prime Minister and Yahya Khan as President. That same day, Jessore, one of the most important towns in East Pakistan, fell to the advancing Indian troops. Once again, Bhutto was called upon to represent his country at the United Nations Security Council which had been summoned into Emergency Session. On the 8th of December he left for New York, announcing, with a customary oratorical flourish : 'We will not rest, be it today, tomorrow or a thousand years till we clear the Indian aggression from the sacred soil of Pakistan.'

He arrived in New York to a flurry of diplomatic activity. The United States sponsored a proposal calling for a cease-fire and immediate withdrawal of troops by both sides. The first few days were spent in directing negotiations with the international delegations to speed the resolution through. After lengthy lobbying and meetings, the resolution was adopted by one hundred and four votes to eleven against. Pakistan accepted; but India, sensing imminent victory and backed by the Soviet Union, refused to follow suit. Bhutto's first speech in the Security Council on the 12th of December was an impassioned appeal for the unity of Pakistan. He turned to Swaran Singh, the Indian Foreign Minister: 'This is the first lesson of history for the beginning of time ... what belongs to people will go to that people. "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's; render unto God that which is God's" ... East Pakistan is part of Pakistan. You know this; remember it well ... listen, Swaran Singh, golden Bengal belongs to us, not to India. Golden Bengal is part of Pakistan. You cannot take away Golden Bengal like that from Pakistan. We will fight to the bitter end. We will fight to the last man.'

But the war situation was hopeless, and it was a question of time before the Pakistan army succumbed. Bhutto spoke once more at the Security Council on the 14th of December, and then again the next day at a session called at his request. His last speech was the most dramatic. It was made with full knowledge of the impending disaster and fall of East Pakistan. In this highly charged atmosphere, Bhutto launched into his emotional rhetoric: 'The great powers will forgive me – I have addressed them in this moment of anguish ... the super duper powers, the razzling dazzling powers ... the super powers have imposed their super will ... the permanent representatives of the Soviet Union talked about realities ... the way you throw out your chest, the way you thump the table, you do not talk like Comrade Malik, [The Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations] you talk like Czar Malik. I see you smiling, well, I am not because my heart is bleeding ... Britain and France have abstained ... the only part they can play is to accept a shameless *fait accompli*. Gallic logic and Anglo-Saxon experience has cost us dear ... finally, I am not a rat. I have never ratted in my life ... today I am not ratting, but I am leaving your Security Council ... impose any decision; I will not be a party to it. I will not be a party to the ignominious surrender of part of my country. You can take the Security Council. Here you are, I am going.' He spoke extempore, gesticulating and with his voice rising shrilly in pitch. As he reached the finale he rose, and with tears streaming down his face, tore up the Security Council agenda and stalked out of the room with a dramatic flourish. He had managed, through the tone of his speech, to convey the despair and sorrow gripping the nation as it was being torn apart. 'Mr. Bhutto', the Washington Post wrote, 'turned the Security Council into a living theatre.'

On the 16th of December Dacca surrendered, and a few days later the guns fell silent on the western front. Pakistan had suffered the worst military defeat in its history, one of the worst defeats in recent military history.

The military debacle made Yahya Khan's position untenable. Rioting broke out all over the country, and marauding mobs ran up and down the streets screaming for Yahya Khan's blood. In Punjab, the PPP held massive public meetings demanding a transfer of power to 'those to whom it rightfully belongs'. In desperation, Yahya Khan sent a message to Bhutto on the 18th of December to return to Pakistan and assume power. The day before, Bhutto had addressed a press conference at the Pakistan Embassy in New York where he stated that he would return home within a day or two, assess public opinion and try and have a dialogue with the people: 'Once the people agree, we can look beyond the Himalayas, because then the people will be taller than the Himalayas.' His attitude towards India remained defiant: 'If India thinks she can rub Pakistan's nose to the ground, the sub-continent will be plunged into a blood bath you can't imagine.'

Before departing, Bhutto had a twenty-five-minute meeting with President Nixon and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs William Rogers. Faced with Indo-Soviet hostility, it was important for Bhutto to get the United States' approval. His past leftist and nationalist stance had left them suspicious of his direction and intentions. His discussion with Nixon concluded happily enough for the New York Times to write in its editorial: 'Mr Bhutto is no stranger in the past to political uses of anti-Americanism. He takes office with the open blessings of President Nixon.'

In spite of the disaster that Yahya Khan and his generals had visited upon Pakistan, they were unrepentantly busy intriguing and negotiating some manner by which they could still retain control. Yahya Khan was trying, till the very last moment, to promulgate a constitution which would enshrine the army in power. A series of meetings and negotiations had already begun – directed by Bhutto on the telephone in New York – between Bhutto's right-hand man Mustafa Khar and the clique around Yahya Khan. The army was divided within itself. A group of senior officers led by General Gulf Hasan, the Army Chief, and Air Marshal Rahim Khan, the Air Force Chief, were leaning towards handing over to Bhutto. The situation was fluid and the caucus around Yahya Khan divided. Bhutto was not at all sure when he left New York whether power would be handed to him or not. When asked by the Washington Post on 19th December 1971 whether he would become Prime Minister he replied : don't know. I may be in the gaol next week.'

While Bhutto was flying to Pakistan, a little publicized but decisive meeting tipped the scales. On the 19th of December 1971 officers of the rank of major stationed near Islamabad, received a signal that Lieutenant-General Harald Khan, the Chief of Staff, was to address them in the National Defence College hall at 10 am the following day. The signal was of more than ordinary interest, as by then it had been announced that power was to be transferred to Bhutto, and everyone was aware of his impending arrival.

At the appointed hour, the hall was packed to capacity with officers standing around the aisles. The front chairs were occupied by a row of grim-faced generals. The defeat had sickened the younger officers, and the despair and humiliation of the war was etched on every face. An atmosphere of tension and expectancy prevailed.

Punctually, at 10 am, a confident-looking General Hamid walked on to the stage. Casually, and exuding a remarkable degree of confidence, he recounted the events leading up to the debacle: efforts at rapprochement with Mujib, his determination to secede, a justification of the army action in East Pakistan, the

Indian support for the insurrection to the final fall of Dacca. There was no sign of regret or embarrassment at the manner in which the generals had handled the war. In fact, his entire tone suggested painstaking justification of the conduct of the top brass and an attempt to instil confidence in the younger officers. Bhutto was mentioned occasionally, as if in passing. In pin-drop silence, the roomful of officers listened to his forty-five-minute-long address. There was a feeling that the talk was a prelude to some intended action the general had in mind. And yet ostensibly, the general appeared calm and straightforward, concluded the address and invited questions from the floor.

The first officer to rise was a Major Minhas who made a speech in which he said that the whole nation should hang its head in shame. He spoke of the manner in which the nation had been insulted and humiliated. His tone was accusative, and quite alien to the normal military traditions.

At this, another major rose, and started referring to the corruption among the upper echelons of the army, and then turned on to Lieutenant-General Hamid Khan, directly accusing him of malpractices and nepotism. As the general tried to defend himself, another officer rose and attacked the entire strategy and planning of the generals. After this, a brigadier – the senior most officer so far – identifying himself with the younger officers, began shouting at the junta. Then a major leapt up, pointed at the front row of generals and screamed: 'They all deserve to be sent back home.'

Suddenly the atmosphere had become defiant and rebellious. The air was thick with cigarette smoke, and it was beginning to look more and more like a 'people's court' during the French Revolution. Overt respect for senior rank had vanished. The younger officers were shouting 'Bastards', 'Drunkards!', 'Disgraceful!' and 'Shame!'. Infuriated at their country's tragic defeat, trained and disciplined officers threw away every vestige of tradition. Never in the Pakistan army had such a scene occurred.

Lieutenant-General Hamid Khan's composure and that of the generals of the front row had completely collapsed. His face showed that he was broken. Faintly he tried to conclude the meeting and quietly left the hall followed by the shocked senior officers who had been sitting in the front row.

Yahya Khan had played his last card. The game was up.

Bhutto's dash back to Pakistan and assumption of power were cloaked in drama and excitement. On the morning of 20th December 1971 the Pakistan International Airlines plane carrying Bhutto landed at Islamabad airport – the first civil airline flight to land since the previous 3rd December. Mustafa Khar,

the faithful lieutenant, had driven up to the tarmac in a powder-blue Mercedes-Benz. Bhutto stepped off the plane, debonair in a wide-lapel blue suit with pinstripes, and without any outward sign of the tension and pressure which he was under. A large crowd had collected to cheer, along with a hurriedly gathered group of diplomats, prominent among whom were the American Ambassador Joseph Farland and the Chinese Ambassador Chung Ton. Some enthusiast had brought flower petals and garlands; but the ceremonies were hastily dispensed with in view of the grave situation prevailing.

Bhutto drove with Mustafa Khar straight to the President's House. There he had a closed session with Yahya Khan for a couple of hours, and then emerged where a brief transfer of power ceremony was arranged. Yahya Khan had lost the will to continue, and morosely signed on the dotted line. Present at the ceremony were J A Rahim, acting head of the PPP, and Mustafa Khar. A civil servant, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, carried out the formalities. At 2.45 pm a ripple of excitement ran through the crowds outside the President's House. Loud cheering broke out as a car emerged with Bhutto at the back flying the presidential standard.

Bhutto's assumption of power was greeted favourably by the world press. In an editorial entitled 'Bhutto's the One', the Washington Post wrote on the 21st December 1971: 'Only a Nasser, someone expressing the subliminal longings of his people, could have survived the disaster of a scale which President Yahya Khan visited upon Pakistan ... Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who replaces him, becomes the first civilian to lead Pakistan since 1958, not only as a skilful politician ... he knows the world, having been Foreign Minister. In a masterly prelude to power last week, he denounced the United Nations as "a farce and a fraud" and stalked out, promising to fight on for a thousand years.' David Housego, writing in the London Times, called Bhutto 'something between Castro and the Shah of Iran'.

The world watched, anticipating another Armageddon. The whole structure seemed on the verge of collapse. An army coup, a riot, a rampaging mob, any small incident could spark a flame which could set the entire fabric alight. Malcome Browne wrote in the New York Times: 'The difficulties ahead are of staggering dimensions ... the trauma of defeat has bitten deeply into Pakistan. It is as if the entire nation has pulled a blanket over its wounded head to avoid seeing or being seen.'

With Pakistan's defeat, the power balance in the sub-continent had undergone a major change. The very existence and viability of Pakistan was under re-examination, and a number of countries, even her supposed allies, were asking some searching questions. The Shah of Iran, in an interview with C L Sulzberger of the New York Herald Tribune, when talking of Iran's political boundaries

remarked: 'To the east lies Pakistan, which shows signs of coming apart.' He added: 'If Pakistan disintegrates, another Vietnam situation could develop.' The Chinese and Americans were also concerned at the developments in the sub-continent. The Chinese were beginning to see the Moscow and pro-Moscow forces around them in the ascendant, and the American Government was drawing flak for its pro-Pakistan stand, finding once again it had backed the loser.

Bhutto has preserved a special place for himself in Pakistan's history for the courageous manner in which he directed events at that moment. All around him there was defeat and despair. The country had been ripped apart. Six thousand square miles of territory was under Indian occupation and nearly 90,000 prisoners-of-war in Indian gaols. The army was demoralized and disgraced; the economy ravaged: hostile power cliques based upon privileged industrialists and his political opposition threatened him; and the public seethed with frustration and discontent. 'Many problems face us,' he had said at a press conference at London Airport on December 19th, 'it is almost the first chapter of Genesis.'

At this moment of national crisis, he displayed the true qualities of leadership. He inspired confidence among those around him and among the people at large. Regardless of the despair and difficulties which must have overwhelmed him in private, he displayed nothing on his countenance and betrayed no misgivings. Dejected and broken civil servants, army officers, party members were always encouraged with a pat on the back. 'Come now, take heart,' he would tell them. 'We'll face up to it. We'll make it.'

Without an organised team Bhutto had to grapple alone. None of his ministers had been schooled in statecraft. Their experience and misdirected enthusiasm often made his problems worse. Although he had been Foreign Minister in Ayub Khan's cabinet, he too had never had any previous experience in administration at the helm of events. He ran a one-man government as President, Chief Martial Law Administrator, Foreign Minister, Interior Minister and Inter-Provincial Co-ordination Minister. Within the space of a few days, he had taken iron hold on the reins of power.

For Bhutto, this was the authentic call of destiny. He shrugged off the prevailing gloom around him and got to work. All through the night he burnt an energy and drive which seemed indefatigable. The urgency was infectious and his office in Islamabad became the nation's power house. He followed his first meeting with the chiefs of the armed forces by discussions with party members; a session with economist M M Ahmed; a highly emotional talk to the nation on the radio and television network; a meeting with central government secretaries and so on late into the night and the next morning. Islamabad hummed with frenetic

activity. Groups of prominent citizens were called and sounded. Meetings continued with ambassadors, political leaders and vice-chancellors of the universities. Appointments were made one after another. Aziz Ahmed was summoned out of retirement and named Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Governor State Bank; Aslam Azhar, head of television; Mumtaz Bhutto and Hayat Sherpao were appointed governors Of Sindh and the Frontier; old friend Ynnas Saeed was made Managing Director of the National Press Trust; Nurul Amin was sworn in as Vice-President of Pakistan; Justice Humoodur Rehman was appointed to probe into the military debacle in the east wing.

Rather than choose the slower democratic process, he characteristically opted for the arbitrary advantage of retaining the title of Chief Martial Law Administrator. Orders and pronouncements were issued, covering a whole range of subjects. The passports of Pakistan's leading industrialists and their families were seized. Officials and ministers had to travel in economy class. Industrial sanctions granted through the patronage of Yahya Khan's govern, ment were rescinded. Travel abroad was stopped. He forbade traffic to stop when he travelled on the roads. He drew no salary. Every sphere of national life was affected and the numb and shocked nation gradually began to revive, helped along by his indomitable will.

In an interview with the Baltimore Sun on 15th January 1972 Bhutto aptly remarked: 'If you Americans think Franklin Roosevelt had an amazing first hundred days, watch us.' Astonished at the activity emanating from his government, the paper reported : 'The catalogue of reforms grows daily as Mr. Bhutto works until dawn, sleeping only three or four hours each night.'

Another side of the Bhutto regime was also under construction. He began to set up para-military and intelligence organizations in order to monitor his opponents, ambitious army officers and even his own party men. No one was spared his relentless scrutiny. For such tasks as these he selected men who were not notably endowed with political scruples and thus eminently suited for the job in hand. He appointed Masood Mahmood as head of the newly set up Federal Intelligence Agency a venal scoundrel who subsequently vindicated Bhutto's assessment of him by turning state's evidence immediately after his arrest by the military regime that deposed Bhutto in July 1977. Notorious policemen like ex-Inspector General Anwar Ali, Haq Nawaz Tiwana and Hamid Bajwa were recruited into the intelligence apparatus around him.

Even at this vital juncture in the nation's history, he found time to indulge his penchant for vendettas. Individuals he personally disliked and who had tried to damage him, like industrialist Habibullah Khattak banker S U Durrani and ex-

Navy chief A R Khan, were imprisoned without adequate reason. In an early display of his intolerance for dissent, he arrested Altaf Gauhar, the editor of Dawn, for mildly criticizing him.

A fundamental consideration was the need to secure his own position. There was no shortage of ambitious candidates after Bhutto's job. His only assets were a popular mandate and the Pakistan's People's Party – a disorganized mass which had been swept into power with no experience of conducting itself as a government party.

He immediately began to address a series of mass rallies which were relayed by television and radio across the nation he sight of hundreds of thousands of chanting people was an important warning to the planners of any possible palace coups. Every issue was taken to the masses, as was his decision to release Mujibur Rahman, still in gaol in West Pakistan, which was put to a huge public meeting in Karachi on the 3rd of January 1972. 'Shall I leave him? I want the people's will to prevail. Shall I release him? If you say no, I won't, but if you want me to release him, I will. Raise your hands; all those who want me to release him.' The hands shot up, and he thanked them 'for having given him permission to release Mujibur Rahman'. Mass power was his biggest card, and he was constantly reminding Islamabad's close-knit corridors of power that this was his exclusive preserve.

The mass power at his disposal could also turn into a bomb, sparking off riots which could dislodge his government. He had to cajole, plead, direct, lead, restrain, charm, convince, and command the seething masses of Pakistan. He walked the political tightrope with the skill of an acrobat. He galvanized the restless crowds, yet struggled to keep their energy in check. His slogan of '*roti, kapada, makaan*' – 'food, clothing and shelter' – had raised aspirations to a dangerous level, and again and again he would plead, 'Give me time, I need time. When I promised you *roti, kapada, makaan*, we were one country. The country is broken, the exchequer is bankrupt. I'll redeem my pledges, but please give me time. Please be patient.'

His urgent need for action produced its own problems. Edicts were often ill-prepared and so badly planned that they had to be withdrawn, contributing to greater confusion in the country. He abolished the 25th of December holiday (Jinnah's birthday as well as Christmas Day) but then reinstated it; he abolished the privy purses of the heads of princely states, reconsidered the move and then rescinded the order. He arrested two industrialists, Ahmed Dawood and Fakhruddin Valika, and released them a few days later 'as a token of goodwill towards the business community'. The far-reaching decision of the 2nd January 1972 to nationalize basic industries was full of contradictions and omissions. A

few months later, he dismissed fifteen hundred government officers on a variety of charges ranging from inefficiency to corruption. The order was an administrative disaster – containing names of some officers who had already retired, some who were dead and others with a record of competence and honesty. The hasty improvisations of Bhutto's one-man show were, later to become a recurring feature of his regime.

Chapter Twelve

SIMLA

The Bangladesh war of 1971 left India with more than 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and almost 6,000 square miles of Pakistani territory. Pakistan, for its part, had taken no more than 600 Indian prisoners and a few enclaves of Indian territory, notably in the Chamb sector of the Western frontier after a fierce tank battle. Fighting in Kashmir had also enabled India significantly to redraw the ceasefire line to its advantage. All this gave New Delhi an apparently decisive upper hand in the bargaining over the peace settlement that was certain at some stage to succeed the conflict. It was even possible that this whip-hand could be used to force a final Kashmir settlement, naturally to India's advantage, out of Pakistan. Or so the Indians fondly thought.

Preliminary discussions on a peace agreement took place at the level of officials in the Pakistani hill resort of Murree in the spring of 1972. D P Dhar, a Kashmiri confidante of Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister and chairman of the Foreign Policy Planning Committee, headed the Indian delegation, and Aziz Ahmed, head of the Pakistan Foreign Office, led for Pakistan. From the outset the Indians pressed for an overall settlement of all outstanding questions and even sought a binding no-war pact with Pakistan. Well aware that capitulating to such demands would only compound political difficulties at home, the Pakistan delegates rejected India's approach, and instead made much of India's violation of the Geneva conventions in holding on to the prisoners of war long after the conflict had ended.

It was Bhutto himself who intervened to smooth over the cracks and assure Dhar of Pakistan's genuine interest in peace. Dhar found himself so impressed by Bhutto's eloquence and allowed himself to be quoted in Pakistan so fulsomely in his "praise that he was under a cloud on his return to India.

The Murree talks did little more than map out the agenda for a full-scale peace conference at summit level between Bhutto and Mrs. Gandhi. And the place chosen for this historic meeting was Simla, capital of the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, one of the country's principal hill stations, but once far more famous as the summer capital of the British Raj. It had been Simla where the meeting took place between the Congress party and the Muslim League to discuss the Radcliffe award partitioning the sub-continent. And it was Simla that Fay Campbell, daughter of a senior British official, recalled when, looking out of her window during the partition riots, she saw '... a group of Sikhs riding on cycles

behind fleeing Muslims, cutting off their heads as if in some gruesome hunt'.⁸² With this contrasting background of negotiations and turmoil, Simla provided a suitable canvas for a meeting intended to re-draw the old tormented relationship. Between his own people's exaggerated expectations and the Indian position, Bhutto walked a tightrope. For the benefit of his countrymen he maintained his militant posture and in his more direct dealings with India he became increasingly conciliatory as the date of the Summit approached. In order to soften up the hostility of the Indian press and politicians, he went even further in projecting a dovish image. He told the Statesman newspaper on 26th March 1972: 'What I say now is, you maintain your position that Kashmir is an integral part of India. Between these two positions (yours and ours), there is enough room to diffuse that problem and lower the tension. We can make the cease-fire line a line of peace. Let the people of Kashmir move between the two countries freely.' In another interview at the same time with Dilip Mukerjee of the Times of India, Bhutto put forward this interesting formulation: 'The struggle for self-determination cannot be inspired from outside. Like revolution, it cannot be exported. It has to be an indigenous struggle. The people of Kashmir believe that they have been deprived of the right of self-determination. They will rise. Their struggle will be basically theirs. Outside support cannot solve their problems.' In more rhetorical vein, he told B G Verghese of the Hindustan Times: 'There's something in my heart that tells me that we'll achieve peace ... I'll make a search for peace even if it kills me.'

For Bhutto to go to Simla was a forbidding experience. He had come to power through the support he enjoyed in the Punjab which had a history of anti-Indian militancy. He was also the man who, in the United Nations Emergency Session in New York in 1965, had promised to fight for a thousand years, and when the indignant Indian delegation walled out of the Session, said: 'Indian dogs have not yet left Kashmir although they have left the Security Council.' In his acceptance speech on assuming power in 1971, he pledged himself to revenge and to redeem national honour. Indeed, a great part of his career had been founded in trumpeting and exploiting the anti-Indian cause, and in some moods he seemed reluctant to face the need to have to make peace. He told the Guardian on 3rd March 1972: 'I was a confrontation man. I don't want to go and see them grinning at me.'

There existed a strong personal rivalry between Bhutto and Indira Gandhi – a compound of personal chemistry, circumstances and temperament. Both were autocratic, individualistic and totally identified with their countries' nationalist aspirations. Bhutto's persistent refusal to relinquish Pakistan's claim to Kashmir

⁸² *Freedom at Midnight* – Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre

always annoyed Indira Gandhi, a Kashmiri Brahmin adamantly committed to her country's position on Kashmir as an integral part of India. Soon after the 1971 war, Indira Gandhi had given an interview to the Italian journalist Oriana Falaci in which she made certain deprecatory remarks about Bhutto: 'You know, Bhutto is not a very balanced man,' she told Miss Falaci. 'When he talks you never understand what he means ... I'm told Bhutto is ambitious; ambition may help him to see reality.' According to Miss Falaci, Bhutto personally invited her to Pakistan after the Indira Gandhi interview where, incensed by Indira Gandhi's remarks, he allowed his feelings to surface, saying : 'With all her saris, the red spot on her forehead, her little smile, she'll never succeed in impressing me ... a diligent drudge of a school girl, a woman devoid of initiative and imagination.' He went on to jibe at Indira Gandhi's frankly poor academic record. 'I can't believe she succeeded in getting that degree in history at Oxford. I completed a three-year course at Oxford in two years, and in three years she was not capable of finishing the course.'

With a mischievous sense of timing, the Bhutto interview was published just before the Simla summit meeting was due to start. An indignant Indira Gandhi demanded that its full text be transmitted from Rome, and on reading it almost changed her mind about meeting Bhutto at Simla. Bhutto, for his part, denied ever having made such offensive remarks, but they seemed far too waspishly in character to have been inaccurate.

In addition to possible personality clashes, there were other problems. The right wing in India was clamoring for an end once and for all to the Pakistani threat. If India had won the war there was no reason why she should not extract a victor's price at the coming conference. This meant that all claims to Kashmir should be finally renounced by Pakistan; an explicit no-war pact signed; Bangladesh recognised and the war crimes tribunal accented as irreducible minimums. It was widely reported that before the conference, the extreme right-wing Jan Sangh party were preparing a 'Satyagrah' peaceful demonstration at Simla to pressurise Indira Gandhi. Then there were right wingers like Bansai Lal,⁸³ the Chief Minister of Haryana and later to be totally disgraced after Indira Gandhi's fall, who would extract the last ounce of flesh from a defeated Pakistan.

There existed on the Indian side much suspicion of Bhutto himself and the extent to which he could be trusted. Bhutto's previous inconsistencies were analyzed,

⁸³ Bansai Lal was one of the Ministers who received Bhutto when he arrived at Chandigarh. In a speech about the Simla Conference, he said of Bhutto: 'He ran down the plane stairs ... drenched in perspiration and sat quietly ... ashamed and scared of India's decisive victory' – Bombay Mail, 12 1 1976. And then again: 'He dilly dallied at Simla before begging for the release of the POWs' – National Herald, New Delhi, 19, 1976

recounted and cited as proof of his unreliability. Years of bitter hostility peppered with futile attempts at compromise had left their mark. There could hardly have been a less promising prelude to a diplomatic Summit and no one was predicting any dramatic breakthrough. In fact, the prospects for any progress were dim.

On 27th June 1972 Bhutto departed for Simla from Lahore airport which had been specially spruced up for the occasion. He was wearing a light grey suit and not the normal braided jacket which was his party's uniform. His mood was subdued, though he seemed to recover some of his customary enthusiasm when addressing the assembled crowd. He swore 'there shall be no Tashkent under any circumstances', and on Kashmir, 'no compromise on the issue of the right of self-determination'. He added a claim that he had worked for Pakistan's cause since the age of fifteen, and asked the crowd for their confidence. Captivated, they answered back with shouts of reassurance. Then, shaking hands with assembled VIPs and party members, with a burst of nervous energy he leaped up the gangway two stairs at a time to disappear into the waiting green and white PIA Boeing.

He took with him to Simla a huge entourage of about ninety including a large press contingent, politicians, diplomats and others. Among them were his principal negotiators; the veteran Aziz Ahmed; aide Rafi Raza; party stalwarts like Mustafa Jatoi and Hayat Sherpao; National Awami Party leader Arbab Sikandar Khan; his daughter Benazir and a host of others, most of whom were merely spectators.

Waiting to receive Bhutto at Chandigarji was the Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh, veteran of many previous verbal duels and negotiations with Bhutto. The last time the two had met was at the 1971 Security Council Session in New York, when Bhutto had stormed out of the Assembly after asking the forum how the appendage 'distinguished' could apply to the Foreign Minister of India 'when his hands are full of blood and his heart is full of venom?' Despite all this, an aura of sentimentality hung in the air, as is somehow always the case during Indo-Pakistan meetings. The Frontier Governor Arbab Sikandar Khan was embraced as he got off the plane by fellow Pathan Muhammad Yuuus Jan, a former assistant to Jawaharlal Nehru and confidante of Indira Gandhi. Both had been co-workers twenty-five years ago for the legendary Frontier Gandhi, Ghaffar Khan.

From Chandigarh, Bhutto and Swaran Singh flew together in a Russian-built M-8 helicopter. The roar of the engines made conversation impossible and any communication had to be by handwritten notes. A red flare signaled their approach as the helicopter swooped over a high ridge studded with pine trees, to

settle on the football pitch specially converted for the occasion into a helipad. Bhutto climbed out, still managing to look debonair, although he was drenched in sweat as the helicopter was not air-conditioned. Despite the brilliant sunshine, Indira Gandhi wore an overcoat over her sari in case the rain that had been pouring steadily for the last two days should recur. At 12.45 the two heads of government warmly shook hands – the first such meeting in over fifteen years.

After completing the motions of protocol, Indira Gandhi showed her guest to the back of a waiting limousine. But Bhutto quickly moved in front, gallantly holding the door open for her to enter. And then with flags flying they sped off to Himachal Bhawan where Bhutto was to reside.

The Indians, on their side, had made elaborate preparations for the Summit. Indira Gandhi had arrived in Simla a few days before to supervise arrangements and personally attend to the furnishing and comforts of her Pakistani guests, right down to the curtain colours and the flowers in Bhutto's room at the Himachal Bhawan. A hot-line was established between Simla and Islamabad for the use of the Pakistani delegates, and a similar line to Dacca so that the Indians could keep Sheikh Mujibur Rahman abreast of the discussions. The Mall in Simla had been fenced off to enable the hundred-odd cars placed at the disposal of the Pakistani delegates to move around freely. Transport and catering were around the clock and liaison officers were always available to meet the delegates' requirements. Main roads were heavily guarded by policemen, and fresh paint was in evidence everywhere.

The Indians had lined up a powerful negotiating party. From among the top Congress brass there was Finance Minister Chavan, Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram, Food Minister Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, and External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh. The real working caucus was led by the suave D P Dhar, and included the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P N Haksar and Foreign Secretary T N Kaul. Chavan and Jagjivan Ram were known hawks and it was later remarked that they were invited so that they would not make subsequent political capital by denouncing any Agreement as a sell-out to Pakistan. It is ironic but worth recalling that Chavan, Swaran Singh and Kaul had actively participated at the ill-fated Tashkent Summit as indeed had Bhutto and Aziz Ahmed. It was not only the ghosts of the British Raj that hovered over Simla.

The agenda which had been previously agreed during the talks at Murree was not released so that the intense negotiations which began on the afternoon of 28th June gave no clue to the attendant group of journalists and political pundits. There were press conferences, working dinners, state banquets, briefings and hard negotiating sessions where drafts were discussed and revised. Everyone knew the major issues at stake, but how close the two sides were coming to each

other remained a mystery. The Indians wanted an all-embracing settlement to include a no-war agreement; recognition of Bangladesh; re-establishment of diplomatic links and trade as well as a final solution of the Kashmir problem. For the Pakistanis it was much more difficult. They had somehow to recover their territories politically on Kashmir or on the recognition of Bangladesh.

As the talks dragged on and the drafts became increasingly dog-eared, it was apparent by the afternoon of the 2nd of July – due to be the last day of the conference – that no agreement was in sight, and officials were beginning to leak news of breakdown and failure. The government Morning News of 29th June from Karachi carried the headline ‘Atmosphere of Cold but Correct Politeness at Simla’. It was also becoming abundantly clear that the working teams were merely feinting and skirmishing. The main gladiatorial contest could only take place between Indira Gandhi and Bhutto. Only these two had the political authority to tie the package together.

Bhutto paid a visit on the evening of 2nd July to Indira Gandhi’s residence ‘the Retreat’. The two dispensed with all aides and closeted themselves alone. In the informal atmosphere, Bhutto wound their mutual problems into the indissoluble chains of history. He spoke to her of their great cultural heritage; Mughal heroes and emperors like Aurangzeb and Ashoka and the judgment of generations to come if they failed at Simla. He outlined to her the sort of Agreement which would be acceptable, reiterating the historical significance of their tryst. ‘I found myself talking in the perspective of history’, he mused to journalist Noti Ram in November 1976. ‘I remember asking her what the world would say if we failed ... consider our claims to being continuations of great civilizations ... let us start by agreeing we are in disagreement’. It has been suggested that Bhutto agreed, albeit informally, to recognize Bangladesh in the near future. Whether he came to some implied agreement or whether his eloquence took its toll, the net result was positive. After he finished, Indira Gandhi smiled and suggested they resume the conversation after dinner. After twenty minutes, Bhutto emerged looking triumphant and at last there seemed some hope of a breakthrough.

The real drama, however, occurred after the valedictory banquet given by the Pakistanis in the dining room of the Himachal Bhawan. All through dinner, Bhutto sat looking pensive next to Indira Gandhi. Abruptly after the meal, they rose as if by some prior agreement, and left the dining room. Suddenly everything began bustling. Aides Haksar and Rafi Raza began to rush in and out with drafts and papers and the forlorn atmosphere became highly charged.

The Pakistani delegations established themselves in the reception room of Himachal Bhawan, and the Indian delegation opposite in the billiard room. News began to leak out that an agreement was near, and scores of photographers

and newsmen started to descend on the Himachal Bhawan, forcing their way into the ante-rooms. Pilloo Mody, an old friend of Bhutto, recalls in his book *Zulfi My Friend*:

As the door to the billiard room opened, we saw Jagjivan Ram sitting on the billiard table, Mrs. Gandhi leaning over the green frantically scratching away, obviously at the draft treaty, with Chavan and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed poring over the table with a host of bureaucrats surrounding them.

By around 11 pm the two parties emerged smiling from their temporary headquarters, and word went around that an agreement had finally been reached. Though preparations had been made for a signing ceremony, everything was finally so hurried and unexpected that no electric typewriter or proper parchment paper was available on which to type the treaty. After couriers had been dispatched in every direction, all was then made ready. Bhutto had to borrow a pen as his official one did not work. As the Pakistani Government seal had already been sent by road to Chandigarh, both sides had to forego putting their official seals on the documents. The Indian Foreign Secretary T N Kaul had already departed for Chandigarh under the impression that an agreement could not be brought about. In the early hours of the 3rd of July the historic Simla Agreement was finally signed.

That India and Pakistan reached such a perfectly calibrated balance of language and discretion when their initial positions were so diametrically opposed was no accident. Both politicians must take the credit; but part of the secret is contained in the Simla Agreement itself. The actual document barely covers three small pages, most of which tabulate general intentions to put an end to conflicts and normalize relations. What is far more important is the manner in which the document is drafted and the flexibility of its language which allows both sides to interpret its clauses to suit their individual positions. This made it possible to cover crucial problems existing between the two countries and yet cover possible political retreat for both Indira Gandhi and Bhutto.

The First Clause of the Simla Agreement states that 'The Principles of the Charter of the United Nations shall govern the relationships between the two countries', and then goes on to say in the next clause that both countries will settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations. Indira Gandhi's interpretations of this part of the Accord ran counter to Bhutto's. Her emphasis was always on 'bilateral'. This magic word was interpreted to exclude then and forever all third parties, specifically the United Nations. In a press conference on 13th July 1972, while the Pakistan Assembly was still debating the Simla Accord, Indira Gandhi stressed this interpretation, going so far as to state that the

stationing of United Nations observers in Kashmir was entirely an internal Indian matter, a stance that was intended to have the effect of burying Pakistan's claim for a special status for Kashmir as well as Pakistan's call for the implementation of past United Nations resolutions on a plebiscite. Bhutto, on the other hand, had another interpretation. In a speech before the National Assembly when the ratification of the Agreement was being debated, he categorically denied that advocating bilateral settlements precluded the United Nations or outside intervention. A few days later, in another speech to Pakistan's Institute of International Affairs, he emphasised the references to the United Nations in the first clause of the Accord, and went on to quote Article 103 of the United Nations Charter which states that, in the event of a conflict between the obligations of the members of the United Nations, and their obligations under any other agreement, the United Nations Charter prevails.

On the question of a no-war pact, the Simla Agreement again manages to be sufficiently nebulous to allow both parties to juggle with words. The Agreement does not specifically say 'no-war', but states that the two countries 'will refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of the other'. In several other places it also prohibits either side from resorting to force or unilateral action against the other. Bhutto repeatedly maintained that he had not signed a no-war pact, and the Indians continued to claim that refraining from the use of force amounted to one.

In the actual text of the Accord, the words 'dispute', 'problem' and even 'question' are not used to describe the differences over Jammu and Kashmir. These exclusions were interpreted by the Indians as a concession to them. The Pakistanis, on their part, maintained that in the Agreement the solution of their mutual differences remains pending the final settlement of the problems between the two countries'. The 'problem' referred to was clearly Kashmir.

Perhaps the most concrete achievement from Pakistan's point of view was India's agreement to withdraw its troops from West Pakistan territory. This was vital as refugees from border areas were posing serious internal problems for Pakistan. In Kashmir, both sides agreed to accept the 17th December 1971 cease-fire line as the line of control. For India this had important implications, for by accepting the 1971 cease-fire line, it meant the old 1949 cease-fire line had now disappeared, and a partition of the State was a *fait accompli* in practical terms. Bhutto, however, interpreted this too as a gain for Pakistan: 'By bifurcating and delinking the international boundary from the cease-fire line in Kashmir, Kashmir has been acknowledged as a disputed issue.'

In a volte face from their previous step by step approach at Tashkent, the Indians wanted an all-embracing settlement which would include the many issues at

stake, particularly Kashmir and Bangladesh. This was impossible for Bhutto as the political temperature at home prohibited him from making any final settlement on such sensitive matters. By persuading India to accept a step by step settlement, Bhutto gained an important victory, for he needed time to win over the internal opposition in Pakistan, specially on the vexed question of recognizing the independence of Bangladesh. The Indians had all along been pressing for 'a package settlement'. or, to use the phrase of D P Dhar at the Murree talks in March 1972, 'a bouquet of roses' – to which Bhutto had smartly replied, 'No, no, not a bouquet of roses, one rose at a time!'

Feeling against recognition of Bangladesh was running high in the Punjab and delaying recognition was a must for Bhutto. He did not know at the time of signing what the public reactions at home would be. If the Simla Agreement was interpreted as a sell-out, and that had been accompanied by recognition of Bangladesh, his position would have been dangerously exposed. He therefore preferred to wait and accept the inevitable only when he saw fit.

The manner in which Bhutto subsequently brought off the recognition of Bangladesh showed an exquisite sense of timing. He waited until the 1974 Islamic Summit at Lahore to act. Then, apparently under pressure from influential and much-admired Arab leaders and with national emotions strongly running towards Muslim solidarity, he staged a dramatic recognition. It enabled Mujibur Rahman to fly from Dacca to embrace his old adversary and to attend the Summit, to the fury of the Indians. It was the last time that the two men met: Bhutto issued a markedly dry-eyed statement when Mujib was murdered in August 1975.

The return of the Pakistani prisoners of war was left in cold storage at Simla. The Indians were hoping to play this card as a pressure point to force the recognition of Bangladesh and possibly a Kashmir settlement. Subsequent events, however, moved decisively in Bhutto's favour. Through a cleverly orchestrated public relations blitz, he made Indian insistence on retaining the POWs so embarrassing that they recanted and agreed to their return without the quid pro quo of Bangladesh recognition. Newspaper advertisements in the international media highlighting the fate of the POWs in Indian hands soon undermined Indira Gandhi's self-assumed mantle as a liberator of an oppressed people. Leaders of pro-Pakistan Islamic countries played their part by persuading India to release the POWs. Sheikh Zayed of the United Arab Emirates, for instance, refused to go on his promised state visit to India till she released the prisoners. The Indian ace card was the anticipated protests in Pakistan from the hundreds of thousands of wives, children and relatives of the captured soldiers. In fact there was no such pressure on Bhutto to give ground in order to secure the release of the prisoner.

Rather, the families of POWs demonstrated throughout the country against giving in to such blackmail.

By mid-1973 the exasperated Indians returned all the 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war. Later, as a gesture of goodwill, just before the Islamic Summit in February 1974, Mujibur Rahman dropped even the threatened trial of 195 prisoners of war he had retained.

The manner by which Bhutto succeeded in bringing about the Simla Agreement would have delighted his heroes Metternich and Talleyrand. Cannily he revealed his hand, carefully playing each card so as to gain the very maximum. He talked sadly of the deterioration in relations between the two countries, regretted the tragedy in human suffering that the war had brought about, and expressed hope of a bright future for both countries if there was a lasting peace in the sub-continent. Throughout the Simla meeting, Bhutto was sweet reason itself. His talent for simulation and drama was utilized to a maximum. The similarities between the people of the two countries were invoked and past statements like 'We are two distinct nations' were pointedly forgotten. He chose carefully to remind Indira Gandhi that she would emerge from this a statesman of world status if she could be responsible for a lasting peace in the sub-continent. Such an honour had escaped her predecessors, including even her father.

Bhutto started by arguing that this was the first democratically elected government in Pakistan's history, and unlike the dictators of the past, was directly answerable to the people of Pakistan. He carefully suggested that if an agreement could not be reached, or if he was forced to accept a humiliating settlement, he was at risk of being overthrown by the army. This would mean that Indira Gandhi would have to deal with a military dictator who, if anything, would be more intransigent. Bhutto, at that time, despite his past anti-Indian tirades, looked much better to the Indians than the alternatives. This struck a chord with Indira Gandhi who, above all, showed herself a political realist. In a speech to the Rajya Sabha, after the Simla Agreement, she said of Bhutto: 'Whether we like him or not, he has also got elected with a fairly big majority.'

Indira Gandhi was also aware that Bhutto alone could extract political capital from any failure of the Simla Summit. He could always return to Pakistan and claim that unlike Ayub Khan in the past, he had refused to bow to India, preferring to have no agreement than one which amounted to an abdication of Pakistan's rights. The Indians were categorically told that because of domestic constraints there could be no no-war pact; no surrender of Pakistan's stand on Kashmir and no formal acceptance of the dominant Indian position in the sub-continent.

Bhutto also understood and played on the severe international political pressures faced by Indira Gandhi. She had won the war: Indian forces had occupied 6,000 square miles of Pakistani territory, taken 90,000 prisoners of war and managed through a skilful public relations campaign to present herself as having had the war forced upon her by the lunatic junta of West Pakistan. And yet, the obvious strength of her bargaining position was also a liability. With every known card in India's pocket, too many concessions could not be forced from Pakistan or Simla would begin to look like another Versailles. Should Bhutto, moreover, be humiliated over something for which he was not directly responsible?

It was politically essential that Bhutto interpret the Simla Accord as a victory for Pakistan, and he proceeded to do this as soon as he returned from India. His first speech on his arrival at Lahore airport was typical of the approach: 'It was never my intention to agree to another Tashkent. Another Tashkent can only be signed over my dead body . . . On the vital question of Kashmir too, we have made no compromises. We told them categorically that the people of Kashmir must exercise their right of self-determination.' In a speech at Islamabad airport a few days later, Bhutto spoke again in the same strain and managed this time to give the distinct impression that he had outwitted the Indians at the conference table: 'Some political parties in India are criticizing their government on this agreement. They think India did not get anything as a result of this Accord, while Pakistan got back its territory. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came here, they say, and duped them ... this is not even the success of Pakistan; this is the success of principles', and then, 'I pay my compliments to the Prime Minister of India because she has accepted Pakistan's point of view by agreeing to principles'. The artful politician was at work, ensuring it was never felt in any way that he had been worsted at the diplomatic table.

As far as domestic opposition went, Bhutto's problems were insignificant. Except for Asghar Khan, his inveterate opponent, who charged him with agreeing to form a confederation of India and Pakistan, and the rightist Jamaat-e-Islami who, without explaining exactly how, said that it was far worse than the Tashkent Declaration, there was little relevant criticism. None of the major Opposition leaders wanted to make any real issue of it. The National Awami Party had always been propagating a policy of friendship with India, and therefore happily endorsed the Accord. No widespread demonstrations or public outcry marked the announcement as had been the case after signing the Tashkent Declaration. In a subsequent debate on the Agreement in the National Assembly, the standard of the Opposition arguments was so poor that any attempt at effective attack floundered. This time, unlike after the Tashkent Declaration, the people of Pakistan did not imagine they had won a war which was later compromised on the negotiating table. They had this time lost a war, but were regaining their pride at the peace table.

There is little doubt that the Simla Summit was a triumph for Bhutto. He had emerged with Pakistan's territory intact to start a dialogue and above all, convince the people of Pakistan that Simla was not a sell-out. Pakistan had gone to Simla a defeated country, and yet came away with an agreement that involved no further compromise. This was Bhutto's achievement. He had played his hand adroitly. The language of the Accord was flexible enough to live with. The subtleties will be interrupted for many years to come by intellectual lawyers, diplomats and political pundits. For Bhutto all this was important. But what mattered far more was the way in which the Accord would be digested by the people of Pakistan. It had not, after all, been the wording or legal minutiae of the Tashkent Declaration which brought Ayub Khan to his knees, but its mishandling back in Pakistan.

It was a stifling hot day even by Punjab standards when the PIA plane carrying Bhutto's party taxied to a halt at Lahore airport. A murmur began to rise from the expectant crowd. The Accord had already been announced and its significant clauses published; but still the assembled crowd expected to hear something significant or dramatic from Bhutto himself. When the plane stopped, he emerged, jumped smartly down the steps and shook hands with the assembled VIPs and party officials who muttered 'Congratulations', 'Well done' and 'Welcome back, sir', though most of them had not by then read the actual text of the Accord, let alone understood its implications. Bhutto immediately launched into his speech in front of the microphones. He began slowly, and then, as he moved towards the climax, began to harangue the crowd: 'I told you there would be no second Tashkent.. . over my dead body', and the crowd shouted their approval. 'I hope you are satisfied with the results of the Summit meeting in Simla. If you are unhappy please say so. Even at this stage we can make a change and tell India that we do not want our territory back. Please tell me, are you happy?' The crowd roared back its approval, hands were raised, screams of appreciation and slogans '7eyai Bhutto! Sada jeyai!' ('Long live Bhutto, long may he live'). The Simla Accord, unlike Tashkent, had been properly packaged and properly sold.

Foreign policy proved to be Bhutto's forte. For it was here that he could bring into play his great comprehension of the nature and practice of relationships between countries. His mind was wedded to no fixed concept or dogma but retained a vital fluidity of thought. He was able, like Kissinger, to view the world as an imperfect experiment. He believed that everything is transient and nothing is permanent. He talked of 'the totality of things', 'the compulsion of events', 'the canvas of history' and 'the rhythm of our times'. On foreign affairs he was erudite, with an obvious love for the subject, understanding and rationalizing the whole complex of power politics and international relations. He has been firmly

placed, time and time again, into a foreign policy groove which is anti-Indian. And yet he told the Indian journalist Dilip Mukerjee on 15th March 1972: 'There was a time when we thought of confrontation, militarily and politically. It is for the advantage of Pakistan. Today the situation is not there. It has changed qualitatively. I cannot pursue the policy of confrontation. I want consultation and negotiation.' He went on further: 'I will agree to nothing which runs counter to Pakistan's national interest, but I am fully prepared to take into account the sweep of history'.

Like the nineteenth-century Austrian statesman Metternich, and Bismarck later on, he proved capable of manipulating various levers and range of options with virtuoso skill. In his paper *A World Restored – Castlereagh, Metternich and the Restoration of Peace, 1812-1822*, Kissinger discourses on the diplomatic efforts after the Napoleonic wars to restore peace, and when on Metternich, his writing seems a tailor-made vignette of Bhutto.

To attain this state of balance, statesmen must use cunning and patience; they must be able to manipulate events and people. They must play the power game in total secrecy, unconstrained by parliaments, which lack the temperament for diplomacy. They must connive with the largest possible number of allies. They must not be afraid to use force, when necessary, to maintain order. They must avoid ironclad rules of conduct; and an occasional show of credible rationality may be instructive. They must not shy away from duplicity, cynicism or unscrupulousness, all of which are acceptable tools of statecraft. They must never burn their bridges behind them. And if possible they must always be charming, clever and visible.

Chapter Thirteen CONSOLIDATION

On his assumption of office, a wide and complex group of power blocs existed to deter Bhutto from grasping absolute power: a rightist-cum-Islamic political front, the industrialists and the urban propertied classes, some senior army officials with an unslaked thirst for power, segments of the fossilized bureaucracy, an assortment of political opponents (significant of whom were the National Awami Party and Tehrik-e-Istiglal) and, to some extent, an emerging opposition within his own party. The influence of each rose and subsided depending upon current trends and events. Always oversensitive to the slightest threat, he devoted a great deal of strength and energy to consolidating his grip. His early days of power required a juggler's act with dozens of balls kept in the air at the same time. Before every move, Bhutto carefully calculated the political advantages, the relative impact on his position and the counter-forces he could muster. He managed to keep the pressure groups around him off-balance. His early years as head of state were characterized by an inexorable drive to consolidate his hold on the reins of power.

Thirteen years of rule had left the Pakistan army an unpredictable political force. Senior officers had grown accustomed to participating in and influencing events that had nothing to do with their jobs. Directorships of government corporations, ambassadorships, allotments of agricultural land at give-away prices and a whole host of special privileges had become an accepted benefit of office. The Yahya Khan junta, in particular, had exceeded all previous norms by predicting election results; negotiating with political parties; maneuvering and playing off one political group against the other, and so on. All this culminated in Yahya Khan's proposal in the murky twilight of his days in power that a Constitution be drafted ensuring the army a permanent share of power. The present ruling junta is again in favour of this bizarre plan.

On assuming office, and in his first broadcast to the nation, on the 20th of December 1971 Bhutto appointed Lieutenant-General Gul Hasan as Commander-in-Chief of the army, and Air Marshal Rahim Khan as Commander-in-Chief of the air force. Both officers had helped him into office, and their appointment was a suitable reward. In the same broadcast, he announced the removal of six 'fat and flabby' generals followed by a Presidential Order issued three days later in which he removed another three admirals, three major-generals and two air commodores, bringing the total number of sacked top brass to fourteen. Most of these officers had been part of Yahya Khan's caucus, and their removal was a necessity. These actions were, however, just a preliminary gesture. The

depoliticizing of the army was to be conducted later with much greater thoroughness, but to no avail.

Within a few months of their appointment, Bhutto felt the need to remove Lieutenant-General Gul Hasan and Air Marshal Rahim Khan. Kings, history has found, very often set out by destroying the king-makers. The two officers had not actively plotted against him, but their record suggested that they might. Air Marshal Rahim Khan, on one occasion, had given a press interview boasting that he had been responsible for ousting Yahya Khan.

For the fledgling PPP government, the removal of such senior officers was no easy task. Bhutto, however, set about it with surgical precision, and left nothing to chance. On the afternoon of 3rd March 1972 Lieutenant-General Gul Hasan and Air Marshal Rahim Khan were summoned to Rawalpindi, and told to hand in their resignations. As a precaution against any counteraction, Bhutto had organised a massive public meeting in Rawalpindi. In the event of the army or air force commander provoking trouble, it was intended that the public meeting should be the catalyst for mass demonstrations. To ensure against any hitch, Bhutto repeatedly rang up Khurshid Hasan Meer, the chief organizer of the public meeting, to monitor proceedings.

After obtaining the resignations of the two officers, it was thought prudent to remove them physically from Rawalpindi in case they had any plans for an anti-Bhutto coup. Three loyal party members, Mustafa Khar, Mumtaz Bhutto and Mustafa Jatoi, were entrusted with the job. That afternoon, the small group set off in a blue Toyota car for the Governor's House, in Lahore, with Mustafa Khar driving, Mumtaz Bhutto in front and Mustafa Jatoi in the back with the two officers.

The trip was not entirely lacking in drama. On the way the car was held up by a long convoy of army trucks moving between cantonments. The bodyguard had apprehensive visions of the officers leaping from the car and exhorting the soldiers to regroup on their side. Their fears proved unfounded. They arrived safely at the Governor's House, where the two generals, resigned to their fate, waited to see if there would be any future reaction to their removal from office.

The two senior officers were replaced by un-ambitious professional soldiers, General Tikka Khan⁸⁴ and Air Marshal Zafar Choudhery. Bhutto justified his

⁸⁴ General Tikka Khan was best known for his suppression of the tribal revolt in Baluchistan during Ayub Khan's regime and for his campaign against the Bengali separations movement in 1971. He was later to demonstrate extraordinary loyalty to Bhutto's cause by joining his cabinet and hemming a senator at the height of efforts to remove him.

action to the nation by declaring: 'The people of Pakistan and the armed forces themselves are equally determined to wipe out Bonapartic influence in the armed forces. Bonapartism is an expression which means professional soldiers turning into professional politicians. I do not use the word 'Bonapartism', I use the word 'Bonapartic' ... Bonapartic influences must be rooted out in the interests of the armed forces.'

At the same time, Bhutto took the opportunity of substituting the grand-sounding title of 'Commander-in-Chief' by the more modest 'Chief of Staff'.

The removal of Lieutenant-General Gul Hasan and Air Marshal Rahim Khan was the first in a series of steps designed to ensure the army stayed in barracks. Structural changes were organised in the armed forces so that the Chief of Staff's tour of duty would be fixed, with no extensions allowed. Various para-military forces under independent command were set up in order to balance the army's power. Under Article Six of the 1973 Constitution, it was enacted that 'Attempts of conspiracy to abrogate or subvert the Constitution by use of force or by other unconstitutional means, or aiding and abetting for the same shall be an offence constituting high treason'. In an address to the armed forces on the occasion of the Pakistan Military Academy passing-out parade at Kakul, Bhutto warned that Pakistan would not allow 'under any circumstances, its soldiers and citizens to become tools for political exploitation by any other power'.

On 5th February 1976 Bhutto created a Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, ostensibly to 'integrate the defence system'. The committee was headed by Lieutenant-General Muhammad Shareef, a person somewhat removed from the other three service chiefs (unlike the Indian system where the most senior of the three Chiefs of Staff heads the committee by rotation). The retiring Chief of Staff General Tikka Khan was appointed an advisor to the Prime Minister on national security, with Bhutto personally retaining the Defence portfolio. The objective of all these changes was to diffuse the army's political power.

The only real attempt by officers to usurp power was firmly dealt with. On 30th March 1973 the Ministry of Defence announced that a small group of military officers had conspired to seize power. During the course of their trial, presided over by a little-known Brigadier called Muhammad Zia-ul-Huq, Bhutto personally examined the relevant trial papers and intelligence reports and held discussions with prosecution lawyers. The officers were found guilty and sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment.

Civilian attempts to incite the armed forces were crushed with equal firmness. On 21st September 1976 a Special Tribunal awarded a four-year sentence to Hanif Ramay, former Chief Minister of Punjab, for 'attempting to cause

disaffection among members of the armed forces and to bring to hatred or to excite disaffection towards the government established by law in Pakistan'. A few days later, a Special Tribunal awarded severe sentences to two journalists for publishing objectionable material in the same vein. But none of these actions were to help Bhutto stave off the army coup in July 1977.

When Bhutto first came into power, he had little competition from civilian opposition parties. None had any real national appeal, and Bhutto's domination of the domestic political scene seemed complete. Yet he acted towards them with an authoritarianism that was unnecessarily intolerant. Coercive methods were used such as the withholding of newspaper advertising, the arrest of dissenting journalists and the breaking up of public meetings (particularly those of Asghar Khan) by PPP toughs. The Opposition was given no access to the media, and newspapers and broadcasting organizations propagated only a pro-government stand. Considering that no Opposition leader could be compared to him in stature or intellect, such actions are difficult to explain. Only an intense personal insecurity can adequately account for it.

Bhutto found it equally difficult to co-operate with Opposition parties, though he cannily managed to obtain their consent on matters requiring a national consensus. Bhutto acquired one hundred and eight votes in the National Assembly for his candidature as Prime Minister, although the PPP officially had only eighty-one out of the hundred and forty-six seats at the time. This was achieved by a discreet hint that Opposition representatives would be added to the cabinet.

In the smaller provinces of Baluchistan and North West Frontier, a National Awami Party and Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam coalition commanded a majority in the legislatures as a result of the 1970 General Election. One of Bhutto's first acts on coming into power was to lift the ban that Yahya Khan had imposed on the National Awami Party and allow them to form provincial governments.

The National Awami Party was, however, vehemently opposed to Bhutto, and their provincial outlook further exacerbated tensions. Bhutto, for his part, used his power in the centre to undermine the authority of the provincial governments which, in their turn, refused to co-operate with the central government. After continuous tension and harsh infighting, the National Awami Party and Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam coalition in Frontier and the National Awami Party ministry in Baluchistan were dismissed, and governor's rule imposed in both provinces. The assassination in 1975 of Hayat Muhammad Khan Sherpao, the young PPP Governor of Frontier and Bhutto's principal aide in the province gave Bhutto the excuse he needed to ban the National Awami Party and shunt its leaders into gaol.

Bhutto's refusal to co-operate with the National Awami Party must be counted as one of his greatest acts of folly. Both the National Awami Party and Pakistan People's Party had broadly similar platforms: both were secular in outlook, with left of centre economic programmes. Moreover with National Awami Party governments in, the Frontier and Baluchistan and a Pakistan People's Party majority in Punjab and Sindh, the formation of a coalition in the centre would have been a logical step. Such a government would have soothed provincial discord and ushered in some much needed stability in relations between the centre and the provinces. But co-operation of this nature would have required Bhutto to accept the National Awami Party leaders as equals. This his outsize ego and authoritarian style prevented him from doing. He ruled his own party with an iron fist and proved pathologically incapable of sharing power in any form. A coalition with the National Awami Party would have been an act of great statesmanship, and Pakistan's subsequent history would have been happier for it. But it was not to be.

Among Bhutto's most intractable opponents were the conservative Islamic parties which continued to hold considerable sway, particularly in the urban centers. With fanatical dogmatism and intolerance, they had repeatedly assailed Bhutto's far from thorough-going socialism as a threat to Islam. Despite their sanctimonious canting and unyielding, if sometimes hypocritical, puritanism, they retained a taste for violence. Their well organised cadres had not refrained from physical attack on PPP workers during Bhutto's days of struggle against Ayub Khan. The Islamic zealots were an odd lot – Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat-e-Ulema, Markazi Jamiat-e-Ehle Hadis – united in bigotry, yet divided by loyalty to one or other of their many obscurantist 'maulvis' – priests.

Bhutto's tactics against them were simple but effective. He anticipated and fulfilled any demand before they could raise it. Within a few months of coming into power, he allowed a record number of persons to go for 'Haj' - the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Subsequently, in the 1973 Constitution, he specifically provided that Islam would be the state religion, and the head of state a Muslim. In deference to conservative Muslim opinion he acquiesced in 1974 in banning the Ahmadiya, a quasi-Islamic sect. Bhutto was no bigot, and the incident left an unpleasant taste in his mouth. After much heart-searching, the question was thrown to the National Assembly which overwhelmingly declared them a non-Muslim minority. He made Friday into a national holiday, founded various government organizations for propagating Islamic teaching, encouraged the Arabic language and introduced the Koran into school curricula. On 22nd February 1974 he organised the historic Islamic Summit Conference at Lahore. Bemused by his anticipation of their demands before they could force his hand,

one of his opponents sardonically remarked: 'Mr Bhutto is the biggest maulana of them all. In fact, he should be called "Maulana Larkanvi".'

Bhutto faced equally intense; if more subdued, opposition from Pakistan's dispossessed capitalists. In January 1973 he nationalized some basic industries. The objectives of patronization were three-fold: to fulfill his manifesto undertakings, to rationalize the country's economic structure and, perhaps for Bhutto the most vital, to destroy the industrialists as an anti-Bhutto power bloc. The Nationalization Order covered thirty-two companies and ten categories of basic industry, including steel, chemicals, heavy engineering and cement. A series of similar moves followed: banks, insurance companies, shipping, vegetable oils, rice husking, cotton ginning and flour mills, all came under government control. Bhutto moved in total secrecy. Except to a small group of aides charged with execution, no one was allowed to hear of impending nationalization measures. Mill owners heard of the take-over of their factories either through a public announcement, or by arriving at the premises to find policemen in control.

Industrialists proved easy game. Disorganized as a group and demoralized by Bhutto's apparent unassailability, they barely resisted. There were no press campaigns or political protests. Their own long history of rapacity and their lack of social commitment left them without support, and it was felt they were getting their just deserts. Pakistan's balance of power has rested with land-owning families, and the business community enjoyed little political representation. Bhutto treated them all with marked callousness, warning: 'I have two CID's (Criminal Investigation Departments). 'One is the government CID, the other is the people's CID. You will not be able to play hide and seek with me.' Addressing a group of prominent industrialists at Karachi airport after nationalization, he gave them a lecture on how to behave in the new Pakistan, ending with the disdainful and patronizing remark, 'Sleep well, and give my love to your children'.

During the first few years of supreme power Bhutto left economic management largely to his Finance Minister Dr Mubashir Hasan, an engineer by profession and left-winger whose hatred of private enterprise certainly succeeded in wrecking the existing framework, but failed to replace it with anything better. Indiscriminate nationalization failed to raise output and frightened away any new investment. A plethora of paper reforms were introduced. No detailed or staged plans were ever worked out so that the reforms in the main were merely an exercise in public relations. Bhutto's own attitude is best reflected in a speech he made at Quetta in 1972 where he promised colleges, schools and hospitals and ended by saying: 'Where will the money come from? *Allah Tallah de ga* – God Almighty will provide it.'

Like many other men seated uneasily in power he was deeply suspicious. He trusted no one and always checked and rechecked on what his ministers were doing, their internal groupings and loyalties. A revealing incident highlights this characteristic . Bhutto as usual was sitting at the head of the table during a cabinet meeting, with his ministers seated both on his right and left in diminishing order of seniority. The most senior minister, J A Rahim, who was a stickler for protocol and always insisted on writing everything down kept scribbling notes to another minister, Mahmud Ali Kasuri, sitting nearby. As he passed note Bhutto could contain himself no longer. Suddenly his hand descended and like a hawk grabbed the note. As his startled ministers looked on he opened and read it and then indicated that the meeting goes on.

Pakistan will develop an atom bomb' Bhutto once remarked way back in 1966 'even if we have to eat grass.' Although he categorically denied or disguised his plans in order to sidestep international pressure he consistently planned and worked towards building a nuclear bomb. Earlier on when he was Minister of Fuel, Power and Natural Resources in Ayub Khan's cabinet he began reorganizing the Atomic Energy Commission, increasing their budget and lobbying in their interest. After the Indians exploded a nuclear device in the Rajputana Desert, Bhutto redoubled his efforts.

Bhutto's purpose in building a nuclear bomb was more than a reaction to India. For him it represented a trump card in his foreign policy. Pakistan would become the first Muslim country with the bomb. Among the rich and security-anxious Arab states with whom he planned to share the secrets it would enhance Pakistan's stature and importance incalculably. There is some evidence that heavy funds were injected by the Libyans to promote his plan which, if realized, would tip the balance of power in the Middle East.

American pressure on Pakistan to refrain from buying nuclear reactors from France was part of their desire to try to contain Bhutto's over-ambitious plans. With a nuclear bomb and the ability to share it with the Arab states, Bhutto saw himself catapulted into an international role far greater than his poor country permitted him. Persistent American pressure to stop Pakistan's plans which culminated in the cutting off of aid on 6th April, 1979 adds to the argument. Bhutto went to the extent of blaming them for unseating him because of their fear of Pakistan possessing the bomb. He counted his development of Pakistan's nuclear capability as 'my greatest achievement', even above his stabilizing Pakistan after 1971 and developing a bilateral foreign policy.

Soon after the PPP government assumed power, exports shot up to over a billion dollars a year as a result of trade that had formerly been done with East Pakistan

being switched instead into the world market. Thereafter, exports stagnated whereas imports rose from \$850 million in 1971-2 to \$2 billion in 1975-6. Most of this enormous increase was financed from foreign borrowing so that the external debt doubled from \$3.5 billion in 1972 to \$7 billion in 1977. This was to entail a crippling legacy of debt service for future governments.

Other economic indicators, point towards further waste, inefficiency and stagnation. In 1969-70 investment in manufacturing industry amounted to 35 per cent of all private investment. By 1975-6 it had fallen to 15 per cent. In 1969-70 external resources contributed 44 per cent to federal development expenditure; by 1975-6 it was 100 per cent. Bureaucrats in the federal government increased in number from 700 in 1971 to 2,000 by 1977. Agricultural output rose at an average rate of around 1.4 per cent compared to 6.3 per cent between 1964-5 to 1969-70. Industrial output between 1969-70 grew at an average annual rate of 2 per cent in comparison to 8.2 per cent between 1964-5 and 1969-70.

And yet, despite this depressing array of statistics, Bhutto still managed to maintain an impressive following, particularly among the rural poor. He undoubtedly increased their share in the national cake even though the cake may have shrunk. Government land was distributed to the poor, farm produce prices were subsidized by the Government and taxes on small land holdings were reduced or abolished.

The Land Reforms promulgated in March 1972 drastically reduced permissible individual land holdings from 500 to 150 acres, and then again in January 1977 to 100 acres. A series of benefits were given to workers including higher basic pay, bonuses, compensation, insurance, pensions, housing facilities among others. Other reforms covered education, health, separate ministry for minorities and religious affairs. By 1977, an industrial labourer in Pakistan could earn (with benefits), about \$65 per month compared to around \$15 per month in 1971.

Despite inflation, this represented a real improvement. Bhutto appreciated the importance of a distributive economic programme. Despite the massive increases in GNP during Ayub Khan's regime, the poor benefited little. Most of the increased national wealth was appropriated by a new breed of industrialists and other privileged minorities which only fanned the flames of envy, thus adding further to Ayub Khan's unpopularity.

There were mistakes and much of the criticism was justified, but some of Bhutto's reforms have had positive benefits. The land reforms and nationalization measures certainly reduced the huge pools of private capital and wealth differentials that existed in Pakistan. Their impact, though not immediate, will continue to percolate through in years to come. Emphasis was given to

developing heavy industry and other infra-structure programmes such as road building programmes. Steel, fertilizer plants and shipbuilding industries requiring heavy capital investment were given priority. Particular emphasis was given to the defence industry. The agricultural sector too was helped by subsidizing fertilizer and seed and wholesale prices for output from farms were fixed.

But none of Bhutto's successes truly lay in the economic field. Economics really rather bored him, and the successes there were came almost by accident. What fascinated Bhutto was the give-and-take horse-trading world of politics, domestic or international, and this is where we must look for his achievements. Perhaps the greatest was the promulgation of the 1973 Constitution. The political bargaining that formed the backdrop to this required Bhutto's special touch. Opposition parties were alternatively coerced and persuaded to endorse the Constitution, and eventually came to heel. During the course of negotiations, there were threats of walk-outs and boycotts of the National Assembly, all of which Bhutto dealt with in turn, balancing, negotiating and finally triumphing. The Constitution is federal in character and after much haggling within the cabinet Bhutto accepted, against his inclinations, that he would be Prime Minister, and not continue as President. There are provincial legislatures and, although Bhutto's treatment of the National Awami Party negated the provisions, a substantial degree of autonomy for the provinces.

It is in the field of foreign affairs where Bhutto's greatest successes must be counted. It is an area of more than distant interest because Pakistanis care deeply how their country is viewed abroad. When Bhutto took office, Pakistan's diplomats had been fighting a rearguard action against the rest of the world for months. Yahya Khan's criminally inept handling of the secessionist movement in East Pakistan, and the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war had reduced Pakistan to an international pariah. Beleaguered at home and abroad, even the country's continued existence seemed in doubt. It was more a question of survival than of extending influence.

Bhutto's years of rule saw great changes from those troubled days. Pakistan's voice was listened to with increasing respect in world forums. Sane relations were worked out with India, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. Traditional friendships with Arab states developed steadily, and yielded practical results in the colossal aid extended by them during the Bhutto years. Foreign-policy initiatives were taken towards organizing a Third World Conference. The Islamic Summit in Lahore was a brilliant success, and, as we have seen, enabled Pakistan to loosen India's grip on her jugular.

Barely one month after coming into power, Bhutto withdrew from the Commonwealth as a protest against Britain's recognition of Bangladesh. His action seemed impulsive and ill-thought-out at the time – indeed it had an unexpected impact on the status of Pakistanis in Britain, until regularized by the British parliament – but it was the natural outcome of his long-standing opinion of the Commonwealth as 'a vestigial institution'. He saw the organization as an unconnected group of nations wedded together with nothing in common but a shared colonial legacy, and with no real means even of resolving differences between members. The different history and needs of their members meant that they could never talk with one voice on any matter. In fact, Bhutto argued that membership of the Commonwealth often dragged them into unnecessary conflict as a result of 'anomalous overlapping of obligations and responsibilities which only increased individual and collective burdens and dilute the natural aspirations of the people of Asia and Africa'. It was among Asian and African countries – bound together more naturally and organically – that he felt that Pakistan could more appropriately realize her aspirations. A common struggle, an identity of purpose and a shared history of exploitation bind these countries together into a cohesive bloc through which Pakistan could raise her voice.

In the early days of 1972, the cabinet was heavily weighted towards the radical. Bhutto's speeches and those of his ministers were laced with revolutionary jargon. Emboldened with what they thought was the dawn of a socialist era, a number of the more militant leftists spread out among industrial workers preaching class struggle and revolution. The impact of their utterances was incendiary, and Bhutto's government was forced into one of the worst confrontations in the country's history with striking labour from Karachi's industrial areas. The strike was eventually overcome, but not before the Government had to resort to firing and widespread arrests. As the need for practical administrators grew, the influence of the left wing diminished. Bhutto progressively replaced often incompetent ideologues with more experienced and pragmatic administrators.

A poor joke dogged Bhutto in his years of power. 'What is Bhutto's biggest asset?' the riddle went. 'The opposition.' 'And what is Bhutto's biggest liability?' the riddle continued. 'His own party men.'

Internal dissensions and struggles were characteristics of the PPP. In its early years a strong feeling of common purpose, fear of outside suppression and streaks of idealism held the various competing factions together. After its advent into power, these links faded into the background and diverse influence and squabbles came to the forefront. Bitter and often violent fights marred the party image. In May 1974 the president of the Punjab PPP, Mairaj Khalid, conceded that disputes had emasculated the party's effectiveness. A series of scandals

highlighted the extent of disunity in the ranks. In March 1974 Lahore police registered a case against a PPP Provincial Assembly member Iftikhar Tarri for shooting and critically wounding a member of the People's Guard.

The dominance of Bhutto over the PPP was one cause of the factionalism within the party. Whereas polarization in other parties is normally relieved by break-away factions, this was not possible in the PPP. The fate of any splinter group was oblivion. There thus remained within the PPP a diverse group of people whose ideological differences exacerbated the tensions within the party. Most internal dissension took the form of inter-group rivalry, and was very rarely directed towards Bhutto. In fact, the normal practice before attacking a fellow member was a brief introductory speech extolling the leadership of Chairman Bhutto.

It is true, of course, that while the PPP was debilitated by factionalism, most other parties in Pakistan's political history have suffered the same fate. They have been divided and, in most instances, split and resplit, and then split again, so that the original form remains barely discernible. The Muslim League has tried to function in a variety of rump forms – the Council Muslim League, the Convention Muslim League, Muslim League (Khan Qayyum Khan group) and so on. The National Awami Party was formed by several splinter parties and groups and then resplit again into the Wali Khan group, the Bhashani group, the CR Aslam group and so forth. In no case, does it seem, have individuals been able to combine together on a consistent platform to preach a consistent policy.

Despite attempts, the PPP was never organised into cadres, tiers, and no election for party office was ever held. At a major convention in Islamabad on 30th November 1972, the PPP's attempt to rejuvenate itself caused serious cleavages. There was such overt dissension between various groupings, that a plan to leave delegate selection to local committees had to be abandoned several months later by the Secretary-General Dr. Mubbashir Hasan who dissolved all local committees. In the early years of the party it did not suit Bhutto to crystallize his political colours under any definite flag. He had to draw on the widest possible support. Labels and ideologies were secondary and everybody was welcomed into the party fold. Party elections were continually avoided as it was feared that if any specific ideology were to gain control of the party's machinery, it would first of all weaken Bhutto's personal hold, and also antagonize future entrants of a different political persuasion. Throughout its various stages, the PPP had remained a kind of ideological catch-all, with the personality of Bhutto as the sole cementing force. Following his death, his wife and daughter have inherited his legend, and taken command of the PPP.

By 1976, with an election expected soon, Bhutto's political future seemed so assured that a new PPP bandwagon – or gravy train – began to roll. The rate of entry into the party became a torrent. Every day there were announcements in the press from politicians (real or self-appointed) of their decision to join the PPP. Each decision was preceded by a laudatory statement praising the leadership of Bhutto, and then an announcement that the politician was joining the PPP with several thousand followers. Each numerical claim of following depended on the aspirations of the claimant. A cursory glance on such announcements in the national press from March 1976 to April 1976 tells an incredible story:

'Sixty thousand tribals join PPP'

'Dozens of lawyers join PPP'

'Fifteen thousand Hindus join PPP'

'Three hundred thousand Harijans of Sindh join PPP'

'Four thousand tabibs [para doctors] join PPP'

In addition, there were dozens of announcements from actors, wrestlers, prodigal members and notables from other parties, all joining the PPP. Defections from Khan Qayum Khan's Muslim League, a political ally of the Government in national and Frontier politics, to the PPP reached such proportions that Khan Qayum Khan had personally to protest to Bhutto, asking him to stop accepting any more recruits from his party. The influx of members with hybrid ideologies throughout 1976 created further problems for the party's organizational structure. Older party members complained that their positions and influence were being taken away by those who had no claim to it. A great number of party tickets awarded for the 1977 General Election were awarded to new recruits with local influence such as Sardar Shaukat Hayat, Mian Sallahudin and Nur Hayat Noon among many others. Thousands of new recruits pouring in made an ideological hotch-pot of extraordinary complexity. The only coalescing factor, in the absence of a binding ideology, purpose or experience remained Bhutto's own personality.

On 4th January 1977 Bhutto announced general elections for the following March. Under the terms of his own 1973 Constitution, the PPP Government had more than a year to run, but so carefully had he prepared the ground for the election contest that the very act of bringing forward the polls was designed to bolster his flagging image as a democrat and thus to gain further political advantage. The decision to go to the country – the first time in Pakistan's troubled history that a civilian government had sought to renew its mandate under adult franchise – came at a time when India, customarily Pakistan's holier-than-thou democratic neighbor, was stuck fast in Mrs. Gandhi's autocratic State of Emergency. Before the month was out, Mrs. Gandhi had taken the fateful decision to offer her Congress regime for reelection, a decision prompted in no small measure by

Bhutto's own election gambit. It seemed, Bhutto commented, that 'the leadership of the South Asian sub-continent is coming into the hands of Pakistan for the first time'.

For months there had been a more than usually meticulous publicity build-up for the Government's actions, and no issue was too far removed from the political arena to avoid being ruthlessly exploited for the electoral purposes of Bhutto's party. The discovery of oil in commercial quantities in Punjab was announced jubilantly in December, 1976, and somehow subtly attributed to Bhutto's qualities of leadership. On 2nd January 1977 he enacted land reforms, further reducing the maximum holding to a hundred acres, with a promise to distribute land among impecunious peasants. A few days later the Government issued a White Paper cataloguing Bhutto's consistency on the Kashmir dispute. A report was also commissioned into the implementation of the party's 1970 manifesto, with particular emphasis on the country's capacity to manufacture aircraft, submarines, tanks, artillery and radar. By the time the election was announced, Bhutto's political supremacy in Pakistan seemed unassailable.

The formal announcement of an election date heralded a mad scramble for PPP nominations, both at the national and provincial level. A PPP 'ticket' was taken as an assured seat in the Assembly. The massive defections of the previous year had also convinced Bhutto that electoral victory was a foregone conclusion. 'We will be extending our life,' was the way he put it.

Despite all the groundwork, both administrative and political, and the confidence displayed by the PPP and its leader, the Government came in for some big shocks within days of the election announcement. All nine main Opposition parties managed to combine together to form the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). They included the religious parties, the regional parties and Asghar Khan's Tehrik-e-Istiklal. A powerful undercurrent of dissatisfaction burgeoned, sweeping the Pakistan National Alliance candidates forward. In a poor country, agitation has a powerful appeal and the poverty and squalor under which so many Pakistanis had lived for generations were easily channeled against the ruling party. Bhutto found himself facing a furious assault of frustrated aspirations.

The structure of the PPP at this juncture is of vital importance in understanding its weaknesses. The massive street agitation which precipitated the fall of Bhutto could never have succeeded if the PPP had been strong enough to respond and control the situation. In Pakistan street power is of enormous importance. As we saw earlier urban and not rural agitation toppled Ayub Khan. On a head count a party may have millions of rural voters but a screaming mob of five thousand on the streets of Karachi can bring down a government.

By the end of 1976 the feudal character of the PPP was complete. Party tickets for the impending elections were given out to feudals or their representatives in the rural areas. This strong feudal support however was of no consequence in the towns. Over reliance on state machinery, corruption, infiltration of opportunists and a failure to effectively implement the ideals which the party promised succeeded in alienating students and labour. In July 1976 Bhutto nationalized the cotton and rice husking trade – a move which infuriated the small traders, brokers and middlemen. Now they too became his implacable foes. The Islamic fundamentalists combined to retain their urban support and with the advantage of a political sermon before prayers, the mosque provided a natural rallying point for anti-Bhutto factions. A powerful line-up of street power gradually emerged which Bhutto failed to recognize.

The PNA attack was directed at Bhutto personally, and then centered on the twin issues of civil liberties and inflation. They accused the Government of instituting oppressive laws, and pointed to the PPP's bleak record on press freedom, the curtailment of individual rights, the misuse of state machinery and the broadcasting media. On the economic front, Bhutto replied that inflation was a world problem, and his government was not to blame, at which one of the Opposition leaders Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani countered: 'Are the prices of tomatoes, potatoes and onions also a worldwide problem?'

Some of the early enthusiasm for the PNA faded with the publication of their Manifesto. Some of its leaders had earlier insisted that their Manifesto would be the Koran itself; when they finally agreed on a charter, it turned out to be a surrealistic hotch-potch of ungrammatical nonsense. They promised to return prices to 1970 levels, introduce Zakat (Islamic tax), abrogate interest on foreign loans, denationalize industry, ban liquor and gambling, withdraw Pakistan from the Central Treaty Organization (C.F.NTO) among other things. Bhutto made mincemeat of the document. 'It contains no philosophy,' he declared. 'It contains no ideology. It contains no rationale.' He called the Opposition leaders 'agents of the capitalists' and commented sarcastically on their desire to forge new links with Bangladesh: 'They are such great experts on foreign affairs who can come out with unique utterances which the rest of the world cannot understand'. In contrast, the PPP Manifesto was a properly thought-out and sensibly balanced document. Though it judiciously refrained from further comments on nationalization, it contained a wide range of suggested reforms and improvements.

Bhutto believed that he had a strong record to defend him stabilizing Pakistan after the trauma of 1971, promulgating a constitution, implementing a wide range of reformative and legislative measures, particularly in the economic

sphere, the return of respectability in the foreign policy field, and perhaps the most important of all, holding the 1977 General Elections – itself a remarkable enough action for a Third World government in undisputed power. The continuance of his government, Bhutto argued, represented stability; the PNA's advent into power would bring crisis and political chaos. Bhutto exploited this too, by repeatedly claiming that 'the next five years will be a period of consolidation' and that a PNA government would 'crack up in five days'.

The campaign leading up to the Elections proved a formidable challenge for Bhutto. He was appalled by the vehemence of the opposition against him. He, after all, was the 'man of the masses' and the 'Quaid-e-Awam' – people's leader. Yet his opponents' meetings were packed whereas his party men had to have recourse to massive government patronage and inducements to lure big audiences. If anything, the PNA was even more astonished. After spending six years in the political wilderness, its leaders had grown accustomed to addressing empty halls and to meeting public indifference. Denied a political voice for so long, the sight of cheering crowds convinced them of the certainty of victory.

With his back to the wall, Bhutto once again demonstrated his extraordinary capacity for political survival, and his equal enjoyment of the challenge. Whereas the Opposition parties had a wide array of spellbinding orators, he alone among his party men had the charisma to draw huge crowds, and a great deal of the burden accordingly fell upon him. He launched into a tour of the countryside, going from town to town, speaking for hours, abandoning security measures and haranguing the crowd as he repeatedly drove home the message: the nine-party alliance was a bundle of contradictions; their Manifesto was evident nonsense; their past political records were tarnished, he had saved the country in 1971; his government had introduced a plethora of reforms aimed at bettering the lot of the common man; his government represented security and so on. He displayed the usual showmanship. Lifting up his shirt on one occasion he displayed his stomach saying, 'this is the stomach of a working man, not that of the corpulent Opposition leaders who eat halwa [sweets].'

Bhutto's plan was to concentrate on the pivotal province of Punjab from where 115 of the 200-man Assembly were to be elected. He could already safely expect overwhelming support from the hinterland of Sindh where his ethnic background and the backing of waderas assured him victory. In Punjab he gave tickets to the cream of the political elite – Sardar Sahukat Hayat Khan from Campbellpur, Balak Khan Mazari and Farooq Leghari from Dera Ghazi Khan, the Kalabagh family from Mianwali, Nur Hayat and Anwar Noon from Sargodha, Daultanas from Vehari, Gilanis and Qureishis from Multan, Saifullah Tarar from Gujranwalla, Aziz Chawdri from Shakargarh, Bokharis from Jhang, the Abbasis from Bahawalpur and so on. In contrast to 1970, he was joined by the

best of the Punjab aristocracy. He combined all this with the claim that he represented the poor and the downtrodden whereas his opponents were 'capitalists and reactionaries'.

Slowly but surely the tide began to turn in his favour. Bhutto's personal campaigning brought massive crowds on to the streets even in 'Opposition' cities like Karachi, and there was growing evidence that while the spectacle of huge Opposition rallies, the majority of Punjab voters, in particular, would settle in the end for the stability and the populist policies that another term of Bhutto meant. The PNA itself obligingly played into the Government's hands. They promised to release the National Awami Party leader Khan Abdul Wali Khan, jailed since 1975 and widely regarded as a traitor in the Punjab. In addition one of the parties recruited the discredited Lieutenant-General 'Tiger' Niazi, formerly army commander in East Pakistan, to tour the country addressing political meetings. He had a curiosity value, but his idiotic grin in news photographs as he signed the instrument of surrender in Dacca in December 1971 still haunted the militantly anti-Indian Punjabis of Pakistan. His appearance on public platforms was regarded by some as a sheer insult. The Opposition began to be seen for what it was – a group of ill-organised parties banding together and resorting to any tactic or alliance to realise its one and negative slogan – 'Bhutto must go.

Chapter Fourteen

DECLINE AND FALL

Polling for National Assembly seats was held on 7th March 1977 and by midnight it was clear that Bhutto's PPP had gained a runaway victory over the Pakistan National Alliance. When the results were complete, the PPP had won 154 seats in the 200-seat National Assembly, and the combined Opposition had gained only thirty-six. It was a result that dumbfounded even PPP loyalists, and particular suspicion was voiced at the disastrous PNA showing in Punjab. The Opposition lost no time in accusing the Government of rigging the poll. Journalists were summoned on 8th March to the garden of a house in Rawalpindi where, under a colorful shamiana (tent awning) already erected for the purpose, Air Marshal Asghar Khan set the scene for a popular agitation that was to end in Bhutto's downfall.

Flanked by Tehrik-e-Istaklal aides and a sprinkling of representatives from other Opposition parties, the normally urbane Air Marshal was in deadly earnest. 'We always knew and believed that whenever elections took place in Pakistan under Bhutto's regime, they would be totally rigged and utterly devoid of all ethical character,' he declared in a written statement to the frantically scribbling garden full of reporters, both Pakistani and foreign. He claimed that there had been large-scale bogus voting among women voters to the advantage of the Government, particularly in Punjab. He also alleged that there had been switching of ballot boxes 'on a large scale' and the printing and distribution of a 'large number' of extra ballot papers that had been stuffed into ballot boxes. 'The election, therefore, in our confirmed opinion, was a complete farce, and objections to the election commissioner provided no relief', the statement declared. The Air Marshal called upon the election commissioner, Mr Justice Ahmed Jan, to resign so that 'the farce that has been perpetrated on the people of Pakistan is exposed'. More crucially, he announced that the Opposition would boycott the poll for provincial assembly election due two days later on 10th March, a decision that was strictly implemented and had the effect of turning the four assemblies into farcical gatherings composed entirely of government members. Pre-empting any moderate feeling among Opposition Alliance members about how to confront the Bhutto government and possibly using his early opportunity to talk to the world's press as a means of getting his way with his colleagues, the Air Marshal declared that he was also in favour of boycotting the National Assembly. It was a view that prevailed with the Opposition, and in fact no opposition member ever took his seat in Bhutto's short-lived second-term parliament.

The Opposition's immediate refusal to accept the result of the 7th March election caused grave concern in government circles. Within hours of the Air Marshal's press conference Bhutto was addressing a full-scale press conference called specifically to rebut the rigging accusations, the whole affair televised throughout the country on a special hook-up. He began his response by saying that the PNA had been simply unprepared to accept the 'verdict of the people' and argued that his policies had received overwhelming endorsement from women voters, urban workers and rural labourers. He declared that there 'should have been riots' in Punjab if what the Opposition was alleging was true. 'These allegations of rigging are completely false,' he said. 'There is no truth in them at all.' With more prescience than accuracy, Bhutto then went on: 'If the Opposition now decides to take the law into its own hands, to unleash the forces of anarchy, to subvert the constitution, to invite people on to the streets and to create agitations, then we are quite competent to deal with these things.'

It was evident that Bhutto was worried, but neither worried nor quite confident enough to put the matter to the immediate test. The sharper and more - independent-minded aides around him argued almost from the beginning that Bhutto should accept the implicit challenge hurled at him by the Opposition, and have a fresh poll. Some were later to argue that it should have been the tactic adopted even before the Opposition was able to implement its boycott against the 10th March provincial elections. But Bhutto was certain that he could outsmart the Opposition leaders, even if they embarked on a full-scale agitation, and never gave ground soon enough. Indeed, for a man credited with immense intuitive political skills, Bhutto's handling of the agitation crisis that followed the poll was disastrous. He offered the Opposition more seats, he gave more powers to the chief election commissioner so that he could carry out more investigations more quickly into allegations of rigging, he rapidly conceded that there had been fairly widespread malpractices, and as the agitation developed he began making more substantial political concessions to the Opposition parties. But it was invariably a matter of too little and too late, and the result was that for the crucial post-election period Bhutto never regained the political initiative.

The rigging of the 1977 elections has assumed major importance in Pakistan's recent history. It was the sole public issue on which the Bhutto government was brought to its knees, and thus determines the foundation of future regimes in Pakistan. It is also a central factor in reaching any assessment of Bhutto's political methods, He was accused of personally directing a massive, indeed some opponents claimed 'total', effort to rig the results of the election, and it was stated that had he conducted a free and fair poll the Opposition would have won the election by a substantial majority. Bhutto denied the charges, and his

supporters continued to minimize the effect of the rigging and malpractice conducted by some of his party men and by officials in his service.

The election process went sour, as far as the Opposition was concerned, very shortly after an election date was announced. Out of enthusiasm for the cause of the PPP, officials in Sindh and other provinces insured that the seats of Bhutto himself and his chief provincial lieutenants went 'uncontested'. When the time came to file nomination papers, the Opposition candidate selected to fight against Bhutto and others intending to fight against his chief aides, principally provincial chief ministers, found themselves abducted and unable to file their papers. At least twelve seats were affected in this way. What may never be satisfactorily made clear, is who ordered the abduction of Opposition candidates. For it is inconceivable that in an election of this nature Opposition candidates would not be found for the seats of such political targets as the Prime Minister and his provincial chief ministers. The Opposition claimed that Bhutto himself had been responsible, but the charge was never satisfactorily proven. Another explanation is that senior officials in the Prime Minister's secretariat issued orders that certain seats involving senior government personalities were not to be contested. It is unlikely that local officials would have indulged in such practices without being prompted by their seniors or by their political chiefs, and the very number of seats involved suggests some planning behind the actions. The declaration that Bhutto and others had been elected unopposed was greeted with a certain incredulity in Pakistan, but the announcements came early on in the Opposition campaign and the customs and practices of an exceedingly deferential democracy took time to be eroded. It was an issue, however, on which Opposition resentment was being harbored.

For the province of Baluchistan, tiny in population but vast in area, the election was a blighted exercise from the beginning. Although the Government put up candidates, the Opposition Alliance, represented there exclusively by the National Awami Party, boycotted the polls. For them, the issue was clear. The tribal leadership of Baluchistan is also its political leadership, and political leaders had suffered at Bhutto's hands since 1975 after the murder of his Frontier chief minister Sherpao in Peshawar. With the banning of the National Awami Party, a new party arose to take its mantle under the name of the National Democratic Party, led by among others Begum Nasim Wali Khan, wife of Khan Abdul Wali Khan. But the Baluch opposition to Bhutto had little by way of alternative leadership, and also argued that a free and fair election in the province was impossible in circumstances of residual military tension. The Pakistan army, under General Tikka Khan, had been engaged in suppressing a tribal insurrection in the province since the end of 1972, a rebellion occasioned initially by the dismissal of the National Awami Party ministry in Quetta, the provincial capital. The fighting reached its peak in 1973 and early 1974, and

although virtually at an end when the elections were announced, there was still considerable tension in the air. Thousands of tribesmen had fled from their homes either out of fear for army action or to carry on the guerrilla struggle better from the hills. Others had fled over the border to Afghanistan which had had a long history of favoring the tribal Pathans and Baluch against the central Government in Pakistan. An amnesty was demanded for those who were in the hills in order to normalize conditions for the election; the Opposition also demanded that instead of being in forward anti-guerrilla formations in the province, the army should be pulled back to barracks for the poll. These were laid down as formal conditions without which the Opposition would not field candidates for the Baluchistan National Assembly seats. Bhutto refused, and there was thus no contest. Although the Opposition was later in no position to claim that the polls in Baluchistan were rigged, the fact that there was to be no election in the province cast doubts on the validity of the exercise elsewhere.

Tales were told in Opposition circles of how on election day itself, the results were not given direct to the news media, but were first vetted by staff at the Prime Minister's house in Rawalpindi. Some particularly sensitive results were said to have been announced out of phase and exclusively on the say-so of the Prime Minister's men. The rigging issue became such a partisan matter that the truth will probably never be known, and firm evidence of methodical and centrally directed rigging of this type is lacking, despite the white papers subsequently brought out by the army junta.

As the agitation got under way, the PNA promised to issue a series of white papers to demonstrate the extent of the rigging. One was produced, but it was a poor document, and while providing evidence of individual malpractices, failed to establish what the alliance claimed was the widespread nature of the rigging. Further white papers in the series were never issued, on the plausible but inadequate grounds that those who would have collated the evidence and produced them were by then in gaol, victims of the sweeping purges carried out by Bhutto in an effort to stem the tide of opposition.

Other avenues for discovering the extent of the rigging were frustrated by the PNA itself. The Alliance refused to help the election commission in its investigation of abuses, a decision said to have been based on its lack of confidence in the commission's authority but in reality a further effort to withdraw recognition from any institution that owed its existence to the Bhutto government. In private and unrecorded statements, the election commissioner told Western journalists that he had been appalled by the malpractices of which he and his officials became aware, and on several occasions in lengthy judgments denounced even senior members of the Bhutto administration with extraordinary force. Five weeks after the election, the commission announced

that it intended to prosecute Hafeezullah Cheema, Railways Minister in Bhutto's pre-election cabinet, for electoral malpractices committed in his Punjab constituency of Sarghodha. The commission found that false ballot papers had been stuffed wholesale into ballot boxes, that Opposition votes had been over-stamped in order to invalidate them, that ballot boxes had been tampered with, that in a largely illiterate community where thumb prints are used for identification and for voting purposes, the same prints appeared on scores of ballot papers and that identical thumbprints had been concealed by wrapping cloth around the person's thumb. In some polling stations, the commission concluded, there had been no voting at all. At others, voters arriving when polling began were told that all their votes had already been cast, and the commission accepted evidence that Cheema himself and his PPP associates had entered polling stations with guns to beat up election officials who were proving less than cooperative to his cause.

'The events clearly reveal a pre-planned design to subvert the electoral process, and to secure a victory for Mr. Hafeezullah Cheema at all costs, by resorting to the foulest possible means,' the election commission declared in its denunciation of this senior PPP Minister. 'It is painful to observe that Mr. Cheema in his position as a federal Minister in the central Government should have resorted to such foul methods, throwing to the winds all norms of decency and democratic behavior in his blind desire to win the seat for himself. He and his henchmen indulged in violence and intimidation with reckless bravado to achieve their nefarious designs.'

As the Opposition agitation wore on, Bhutto came to acknowledge that there had been widespread malpractice. He told press conferences and a succession of individual journalists that he was prepared to have individual wrong-doers, whatever their seniority in the PPP, investigated, exposed and punished for their actions. What he denied was that he had himself orchestrated or ordered the rigging from his secretariat in Rawalpindi. He adopted other less satisfactory defenses of the PPP's actions. At one stage, he even stooped to argue that there had always been rigging in democratic elections, and that Pakistan was no exception. He pointed to cases of electoral corruption in the United States, and claimed that the British had systematically rigged elections in undivided India. He told one story of how a British district official had achieved the election of a favored candidate by declaring on election day that for the purposes of that day alone, 11 am, some three hours after the polling had begun, should be regarded as 4 pm, and thus the period during which legitimate votes could be cast was severely restricted. When pressed to comment on the extent of the rigging, he fell back on the estimate of a sympathetic foreign journalist, Peter Gill on the *London Daily Telegraph*, that between fifteen and twenty seats had been materially affected.

While only gaining 36 out of the 200 National Assembly seats, the PNA gained more than 33 per cent of the votes cast. It was a significant figure, and went some way to account for the anger and frustration that ordinary PNA supporters felt at being deprived of a greater say in the nation's affairs, even failing to secure enough seats to stop Bhutto enjoying a two-thirds majority in the Assembly with all the capacity which that entailed for changing the constitution virtually at will. Many PNA supporters appeared simply to have failed to understand that one of the gravest drawbacks in a first-past-the-post election system in parliamentary elections is that minority parties are very often deprived of an equitable share of the seats. It has been one of the principal arguments used for proportional representation. The Pakistani voter, untutored in the complexities of psychology, was perhaps understandably incredulous at the poor showing of the PNA, and was easily led to conclude that such an outcome could only have been achieved by skullduggery.

The extent of the rigging, moreover, was not a reflection of the number of seats that would otherwise have been won by the PNA. There is much evidence to suggest that PPP candidates, invariably the more senior ones and including a number of ministers, resorted to abuses because of their concern that they might not win. The malpractices were often indulged in on a scale that would have made a crucial difference had the contest been close, but turned out to be a severe embarrassment when overwhelming victory was easily secured. For there is little doubt that by his own extraordinary efforts during the campaign, Bhutto had impressed the voters enough to gain a comfortable victory at the expense of an Opposition that offered little prospect of stability. Bhutto's own estimate of the number of seats conclusively rigged may not be unduly conservative. For the rigging in these cases must have been extensive enough to mean that otherwise the seat would have gone to the PNA. This does not excuse the moral turpitude of Bhutto and his party men in sanctioning or providing a political climate in which rigging on this scale could be conducted, but it serves to place in context the true impact of the malpractices. For in those areas where the PPP was known to be at its weakest, the party did predictably badly. In Karachi, the party lost seven out of nine seats, with the two gains going to ministers of Bhutto who counter-argued that the opposition had been responsible for strong-arm tactics and rigging ventures in the city seats which the PPP lost. In Hyderabad, the second town in Sindh, both seats went to the Opposition, and despite five years of steady political effort in North West Frontier province, the Opposition gained eighteen out of twenty-six seats. Results in Baluchistan would certainly have been of this order had the province had an open election. One of the weaker arguments advanced by the PNA to back up its claim to have been cheated of an overwhelming victory was that throughout the campaign its leaders had been

greeted by huge, some of them historically large, crowds. It was true, political jousting, particularly after a period of enforced political silence such as was witnessed before the elections were called, is a form of theatre for the Pakistani masses, and enjoyed as such. But the size of the crowd was not necessarily an indication of solid and unwavering support. With telling emphasis, Bhutto told the press conference summoned on 8th March that he had been greeted by one of the largest crowds ever seen in Karachi only a few days before the poll, a crowd that brought traffic to a standstill for hours throughout the city and through which Bhutto progressed with snail-like slowness during the afternoon and evening. His party, Bhutto reminded journalists, had then done disastrously badly in Karachi.

For many of the Opposition parties, the 1977 elections represented a final attempt to remove Bhutto. If he could not be removed from power at this time and through this election process, it was doubtful that they would ever remove him. If he was provided with a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, he would be doubly impregnable. Many Opposition leaders looked with misgiving at the magnificent Presidential Palace rising steadily from the scrub and wasteland on the fringe of Islamabad. It was not beyond a speculation that in the course of the Assembly brought about as a result of the 1977 elections Bhutto would introduce fresh constitutional changes so that he could revert to being President, a station in life that he had so evidently enjoyed, move to the Palace, and there pursue his dreams of third world influence while taking only an occasional interest in the Lilliputian affairs of Pakistan, by then run by his lieutenants from the PPP. It was a prospect that chilled Pakistan's variegated Opposition which for separate motives came together to bring Bhutto down.

For Air Marshal Asghar Khan, it was a personal crusade against a man with whom he had once collaborated in removing Ayub Khan from power. The religious parties had even stronger motivation for seeking Bhutto's removal. For Bhutto was an avowed modernist standing for everything they most distrusted, and standing above all for the diminution of the great influence for so long enjoyed by the Muslim priests. For the National Democratic Party, successor to the banned National Awami Party, Bhutto had not just locked up their leadership. He represented an unbendingly strong centre determined to meddle in the affairs of the provinces despite constitutional guarantees on provincial autonomy. For the NDP leadership and their colleagues in gaol, it was Bhutto, not them, who endangered the further unity of Pakistan by refusing to grant a measure of autonomy to the Pathan tribesmen of North West Frontier and the Baloch of Baluchistan. Bhutto's decision to hold the election in March provided that rare occasion on which an apparently well-ensconced leader offers himself to his people for re-election. Such occurrences are rare enough in Asia, and the PNA was going to exploit it.

Four days before Pakistan went to the polls, Air Marshal Asghar Khan gave a press interview in Karachi whose significance only became fully clear some time after the election. What he said – and there was no subtle implication about it – was that he and his party might not accept a government victory. He did not advance any particularly horrifying evidence at this juncture of Bhutto's intention to rig the polls. It was as if the rigging was not at issue. The important issue was that the Opposition might simply not accept a PPP win. 'We don't want to plunge Pakistan into chaos and confusion,' he said, 'but the question is whether there is any point sitting in an assembly that may have been rigged. I am not suggesting that we go out into the streets with sticks and stones and bars the day after the election. But we don't necessarily have to go and sit in Parliament. My feeling at the moment is that it would not serve much purpose.' It was an extraordinary statement to make without firm evidence that Bhutto planned to rig the poll, and suggested that what was at issue in the 7th March election in Pakistan was not the chance to defeat Bhutto in a fair fight, but to bring Bhutto down at any price. For within days of the election result, Opposition supporters were out on the streets with those very implements catalogued by the Air Marshal, and the fight was on. It seemed that from very early on there had been a decision taken to convert the Opposition political campaign, if necessary, into a full-scale political agitation.

As the agitation rose in intensity, Bhutto searched with increasing desperation for weapons with which to combat it. He claimed, and many were prepared to believe, that he and his party had become the victim of an 'international conspiracy' intended to provoke his downfall. The only tentative evidence advanced for this notion was that the black market rate for the American dollar in the port city of Karachi had fallen during the agitation. This was taken to mean that the city was awash with dollars, and accusing fingers were pointed at the United States Government and the Central Intelligence Agency. Reasons for the Americans being interested in Bhutto's removal were then confidently advanced. Bhutto charged that the administration of President Carter was so determined to block a deal whereby Pakistan would purchase a nuclear re-processing plant from France that they would actively seek to undermine the Bhutto administration. It was also suggested that Bhutto's very stature as a third world leader troubled the Americans, and in a National Assembly speech soon after being sworn in as Prime Minister, Bhutto catalogued his anti-American stances down the years. 'My opponent is not the PNA, but Jimmy Carter,' Bhutto claimed. But there is corollary to Bhutto's conspiracy theory which is unflattering both to the PNA and to Pakistanis in general. It suggests that there was no authentic opposition to Bhutto at all and that Pakistani opponents of the regime were incapable of running an agitation without the active and financial support of foreign intelligence agencies. There is little doubt that right-wing forces did

indeed come together in a well-laid plan to remove Bhutto from office, and there is equally little doubt that funds from dispossessed industrialists, major enemies of Bhutto, were used to fuel the agitation. But neither Bhutto nor his spokesmen were able to prove the charge that it was a foreign conspiracy, and the accusation came full circle when members of the PNA solemnly alleged that the Russians were financing Bhutto's struggle for political survival after his removal from power.

Within a month of the poll, Bhutto's power and prestige in Pakistan was at their nadir. Every ploy he advanced to stem the tide of opposition was spurned. The death toll was steadily mounting; the agitation was to claim some 350 lives, more than were killed in a united Pakistan throughout the agitation that removed Ayub Khan from power. Try as he might, Bhutto seemed incapable of taking any bold initiative to regain his lost authority and credibility. He had been further weakened by the catastrophic defeat suffered by his old adversary Indira Gandhi in the Indian elections in the third week of March. Her defeat gave the Pakistani opposition a further valuable boost, and the feeling was widespread in Pakistan that the Indians could not be allowed to gain a greater reputation than the far less docile Pakistanis for the removal of dictatorial government. For Bhutto, Indira Gandhi's defeat was a body blow. His supporters dismally reflected that Indira Gandhi had now done Pakistan two grand disfavours. She had been responsible for finalizing the break-up of Pakistan in 1971, and now she had taught her neighbor Bhutto another lesson by withdrawing from office with good grace.

Bhutto tried everything. At his swearing-in ceremony as Prime Minister in the National Assembly, he offered to withdraw Pakistan's State of Emergency if the Opposition would cease its agitation, and take its seats in the Assembly. 'Not only can the Emergency be lifted on the categorical assurance that the opposition will behave legally, it also means the release of prisoners who are now our guests, and it includes all those prisoners who are held under the Defence of Pakistan rules', he declared. But with the Indian State of Emergency withdrawn the moment Indira Gandhi left office, the conditional withdrawal of Pakistan's emergency left the PNA unimpressed. They spurned the olive branch, and the tempo of the agitation kept rising. After widespread killing and curfews in Lahore, Bhutto tried another tactic to draw the sting of the Opposition street agitation. In mid-April he announced a swinging series of conservative Islamic reforms, including the banning of alcohol and gambling, to impress his right-wing Islamic foes. It did nothing of the sort. Indeed, the sight of Bhutto, an avowed modernist cravenly giving in to the reactionaries merely convinced the Opposition that he was on the ropes, and a further effort would remove him from power altogether.

Even during the polls the Government had deployed the army to insure that the peace was kept. As the agitation stepped up, troops were used more and more to patrol curfew-bound cities. But few Pakistanis anticipated that Bhutto would be able to call on the army to perform even more formidable tasks in support of his regime. On 21st April when it seemed that Bhutto had no more answers left, he played his last card. In agreement with the army's high command, he declared a limited Martial Law 'in defence of the civil power', a tactic that was flagrantly in violation of the terms of his own constitution that made no allowance for Martial Law at all, and handed over control of the three most troublesome cities of Lahore, Karachi and Hyderabad to the army. It was a fateful step. The army had been progressively de-politicized during his five-year regime, and for its past involvement in political affairs was subjected to an incessant stream of re-educating propaganda. It was now being called upon to come out of barracks to act again in a political role and to serve as Bhutto's remaining lifeline.

The army commander who brought his men to Bhutto's defence at this critical juncture was General Zia ul-Huq who as the junior Corps Commander in Multan had been appointed Army Chief of Staff thirteen months before. We have seen already that it had been Zia who as a brigadier had presided over the trial of army officers charged with the attempted coup in 1973 against Bhutto. His appointment over the heads of other more senior officers to replace the faithful General Tikka Khan in 1976 came as no great surprise to those used to Bhutto's methods of operation. It was essential that he have a man of loyalty, and an officer of no discernible political ambitions for the job. Bhutto believed that he had found his man in General Zia, and for some months his confidence was well placed.

The allegiance shown by senior military officers to the Bhutto regime in April was the decisive factor in prolonging his tenure of power. The officers, convinced that this was where their duty lay, even went out of their way later to issue a public statement of loyalty to Bhutto, a step that greatly influenced the PNA in deciding to come to the negotiating table with a Prime Minister whom they said they did not recognize. Another crucial factor influenced their decision. They planned for the end of April a 'Long March' on the Rawalpindi residence of Mr. Bhutto. It was conceived as a final act of defiance towards the Bhutto regime, an act of defiance that he would be incapable of resisting. But as the PNA prepared for the march, the Government planned their counter-measures. Rawalpindi was virtually sealed off from the rest of the country, with police and the army securing all approach roads to the town. The result was that the 'Long March' turned into a minor riot in the bazaars of Rawalpindi and Bhutto later converted even that minor riot into a substantial triumph for himself by touring the area unprotected within hours of the trouble. He even addressed street comer

meetings. Unwittingly, the PNA had provided Bhutto with the platform for a modest restoration in his political fortunes. The old showman was back.

Bhutto soon conceded that there should be fresh elections. He was forced even to dispense with diversionary schemes involving a referendum to discover the strength of anti-government feeling and a plan to hold provincial elections before any re-run national elections. Despite the concession, negotiations were interminable and notably lacking in good faith. When the discussions began the entire leadership of the PNA, with the single exception of the Sindhi religious leader Pir Pagaro, was under detention at a government rest house near Rawalpindi. Great efforts were necessary, moreover, to entice Air Marshal Asghar Khan, emerging as the PNA strong man just as he had emerged during the election campaign as the PNA's most charismatic leader from Kot Lakhpat gaol, outside Lahore, to join in the discussions.

For his part, Bhutto seemed confident that with the armed forces on his side he could continue to play cat-and-mouse with the Opposition. At a crucial juncture in the discussions, for instance, he left on a lengthy and hastily arranged tour of Middle East countries when political good sense dictated that all his energies should have been concentrated on agreement with the Opposition over the terms of a new poll. For their part, the PNA leadership had good reason to watch and wait rather than to move rapidly towards a finally packaged agreement. PNA leaders had been disagreeably surprised that the army had come so willingly to Bhutto's aid, but they were still hopeful that the generals could be persuaded to change their minds. Air Marshal Asghar Khan, the principal proponent of this view, joined in a small but powerful chorus of senior retired officers in calling upon the present command to desert Bhutto. This group included General Gul Hasan and Air Marshall Rahim Khan, the two officers who had helped Bhutto into power and had then been dismissed by Bhutto within months. As is often the way in Pakistan, they had been given prestigious ambassadorships in Europe, but this only meant that they continued to nurture their grievances in comfort.

There was no shortage of issues on which both sides in the discussions could stall. The PNA refused to repose the smallest trust in Bhutto, and insisted on an agreement that would reduce his influence to insignificance in any re-run elections. The army and the judiciary were to supervise the polls, and it was only after tortuous discussions that the PNA was prepared to withdraw their demand that Bhutto should be forced to step down from office altogether before fresh elections were run. The prospect of re-run polls once again brought to the fore the thorny issue of Baluchistan where the Opposition threatened another boycott unless the army returned to barracks and the tribal leadership was released from gaol. It was on such issues that the talks dragged on, sometimes seeming to be near success, at other times broken off in disgust. Early in July the army stepped

in to put an end to the discussions and locked up the politicians in an operation code-named 'Fairplay'.

General Zia-ul-Huq's political inexperience and the hostility of the Bhutto family towards him created difficulties for the new military government. Within a month of launching 'Operation Fairplay', Zia was denouncing Bhutto, his old leader, as a murderer and a corrupt villain. His undertaking to hold elections within ninety days of assuming power remained on course until 1st October when, after a hasty re-think, he ordered their abrupt and indefinite postponement. A number of other decisions were hastily taken back and a sad procession of broken pledges demonstrated, at the very least, that Bhutto had chosen a non-politician to be his army chief in March 1976.

When Bhutto was overthrown, his opponents in the PNA believed him to be finished. Most, indeed, were so enthusiastic about the army take-over that it seemed they had been actively promoting such a critical turn in events for all the months of the agitation and the stone-walling during negotiations. The army, too, believed that Bhutto's career was at an end. His poor handling of the post-election crisis seemed to have dimmed his appeal even among supporters, and it was widely assumed that General Zia's promised elections after his 'ninety-day' operation would lead to the political burial of the PPP and its leader.

As part of 'Operation Fairplay', General Zia announced that the new military regime intended to take no judicial action against members of the previous administration, Bhutto included. But, he added significantly, the courts were still open to those who wished to bring their own prosecutions, and in the meantime the military would conduct its independent investigations into the Bhutto government, and present its findings to the new National Assembly after fresh elections in October. Bhutto's support which had ebbed away during the agitation had begun to wax again as many Pakistani voters chose to back the underdog against the united might of the Pakistan army and the PNA. Fresh elections were due on 18th October and it was the army's view that Bhutto had to be stopped in his tracks before the polls. On 17th September only four days after his release on bail, General Zia made a tactical blunder by ordering the re-arrest of Bhutto, this time under Martial Law. The army threatened to put Bhutto before a Martial Law court, but so unfavorable was the reaction at home and overseas that he had to rescind the plan, and having secured a reversal of the Lahore High Court's bail decision, Zia was content to see the civilian law courts proceed with the trial once more. Other charges were waiting in the wings, this time alleging a range of financial irregularities and the misuse of his office. With other senior PPP men in gaol with him, Bhutto appointed his wife as acting chairman of the party. Even from gaol, Bhutto continued to exercise a huge influence on the course and conduct of the election campaign, and as 18th

October approached it was clear that he had regained most of the support lost during the agitation. The Bhutto bandwagon was rolling at its fastest in the Punjab, and fearful army generals, egged on by leaders of the PNA, pleaded with General Zia to intervene and stop the contest. The grounds selected were 'accountability' – that the trials of Bhutto should be finished before elections were held. In reality, however, it seemed that Bhutto stood too good a chance of winning for the elections to be allowed to go ahead. On 1st October the General went on national radio and television to declare the elections postponed, and in a Lahore gaol Bhutto awaited his political and judicial fate.

To the amazement of his opponents, Bhutto retained an unswerving following among the Pakistani masses. The repeated attempts to discredit him by the army junta, the media and his political opponents failed to dull his appeal. The embers of the fires he lit could not easily be extinguished. Throughout his political crusade he always appealed directly to the poor, reiterating that they were the 'fountain of power'. His economic policies, though wasteful, were re-distributive, and undoubtedly improved the lot of the common man. During his tenure, he increasingly toured the remotest corners of Pakistan carrying his message: 'Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is the friend and savior of the poor. And in Pakistan the message was widely believed.

Chapter Fifteen

THE TRIAL

The first of a series of events leading to the trial and subsequent death sentence of Bhutto was the murder of Nawab Muhammad Ahmed Khan Kasuri, father of Ahmed Raza Khan Kasuri, a renegade member of the PPP and vociferous critic of Bhutto. Ahmed Raza met Bhutto in June, 1966, after he left Ayub Khan's government and immediately fell under his spell. He became one of Bhutto's most ardent supporters and was a founder member of the PPP. Later he contested the 1970 General Election on a PPP ticket and won. The two exchanged mutually flattering correspondence and in one letter Bhutto called Ahmad Raza 'a man of crisis'.

After Ahmad Raza's, election to Parliament the sweetness began to fade. The young politician imagined himself another Bhutto and reveled in his image as a firebrand. He courted publicity at every opportunity, thrusting himself whenever he could into the centre of any available political drama. He defied Bhutto on a number of occasions, with an independence of spirit that Bhutto could never appreciate. His generally eccentric behavior and penchant for melodrama often made him the butt of his colleagues' humor. Frequent clowning added to this image. Tall, with an uncanny resemblance to the American actor, Jack Palance, young Ahmad Raza was never taken very seriously and in fact regarded somewhat a buffoon.

Buffoon or not, Ahmad Raza's intransigence and lack of respect for Bhutto's authority soon became more than a mere annoyance. He was the only member of the Pakistan People's Party who insisted on going to Dacca in March, 1971, to attend the subsequently aborted Assembly session. When Bhutto insisted that all party men should give him unconditional resignation letters from Parliament in order to forestall possible defection during his negotiations with Mujib ul Rahman, Ahmad Raza refused. He organised his own group in the PPP called the 'Raza Progressive group' and in October, 1972 he was formally expelled from the PPP. He attacked the charter forming the Federal Security Force as it was being railroaded through Parliament by the PPP announcing prophetically 'This force has been established to create terror in the minds of the opponents of the regime. This force has been created to check the process of democracy in Pakistan.' He refused to put his signature to the 1973 Constitution on the grounds that it was not democratic and Islamic enough and said to Bhutto Tor me there is only one Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam's⁸⁵ Pakistan: what "new Pakistan"?

⁸⁵ The great Leader

Because you should be the Quaid-i-Awam⁸⁶ of a new Pakistan?’ At any opportunity and in every forum available he would level the most outrageous criticisms of Bhutto. Where angels feared to tread Ahmed Raza would charge in regardless.

On the 3rd of June 1974 goaded beyond endurance Bhutto snapped at Ahmad Raza on the floor of the National Assembly ‘You keep quiet. I have had enough of you: absolute poison. I will not tolerate your nuisance.’ Bhutto’s outburst proved costly. In his subsequent trial the prosecution made great play of this remark showing his hatred for Ahmad Raza and evidence of a motive for murder. Events now took an ugly turn. On a number of occasions Ahmad Raza complained he had been the victim of armed attacks. However, his complaints were dismissed as a publicity stunt. In fact the Speaker of the Assembly, Sahibzada Farooq, chastised him when he announced it on the floor and a PPP member told him he must have been near a firing range.

On the night of the 10th November 1974 Ahmad Raza was driving home from a wedding reception with his father, Nawab Muhammad Ahmed Khan sitting by his side and his mother and an aunt behind. Soon after he left the house a volley of shots burst out. Ahmad Raza turned and accelerated away when he heard two more bursts. A bullet hit the dynamo of his Toyota car so that the lights fortunately went out, making him a difficult target in the dark. After driving on till he was sure he was safe Ahmad Raza pulled up to check if all was well. He turned to his father, whose head was resting on his arm to find his shirt and seat soaked with blood.

Ahmad Raza managed to get his father to the nearby United Christian Hospital, where the old Nawab was immediately operated upon. A posse of police officials descended on the hospital and Ahmad Raza was asked to file a police report termed the First Information Report (FIR). The FIR forms part of the evidence in a criminal case and is the first legal complaint of the plaintiff. Ahmad Raza dictated his version of the entire incident to the police official present, explained that he was the target and his father had been shot by mistake and when asked to name the culprit said: ‘Zulfikar Ali Bhutto!’ The writing official almost dropped his pen, but Ahmad Raza insisted it was his right by law and he was sure that he knew the perpetrator of the crime. As the police officials were persuading Ahmad Raza to withdraw his accusation, news came of the death of his father from the bullet wounds. Now there was no stopping Ahmad Raza. At last the harassed and nervous police officer succumbed and accepted Bhutto’s name as the murderer in the FIR.

⁸⁶ People’s Leader

At the time of the murder Parliament was in recess. On 20th November 1974, Ahmad Raza attended Parliament. Rising to a privilege motion he held up a bottle with his father's blood and a blood-drenched shirt. He dramatically announced his father's death to the Parliament and accused Bhutto's regime of murderous attacks against members of Parliament.

More than anything else Ahmad Raza reveled in his image as rookie parliamentarian and the publicity which he drew. With the prospect of an impending election in March 1977 he decided to come to terms with realities. Faced by the obvious political strength of the PPP and the prospect of losing his rostrum in the ensuing election he succumbed to a combination of pressure and guile and rejoined the PPP in the hope of gaining a nomination for the Party ticket from Kasur. In the process he sent ingratiating letters to Bhutto and issued laudatory statements. Returning from Mexico in 1976 as a member of a parliamentary delegation he wrote to Bhutto 'we found that your image as a scholar statesman is emerging and getting wide acceptance'. At Bhutto's trial Ahmad Raza assured the court that his motive for returning to the PPP was fear and coercion. Though there was truth in this, a more cogent reason was opportunism in the best Pakistani traditions. Bhutto however knew better than to give him a platform from which to repeat his attacks. After exacting his support and allowing him to rejoin he abruptly refused him the Party ticket for the elections. Infuriated and humiliated Ahmad Raza bided his time.

The army coup of July 1977 removed Bhutto from the seat of power but not from the hearts of the masses. Despite revelations of wide-spread corruption and government suppression Bhutto remained the only politician who had reached out to them. His mass popularity made a showdown between him and the army inevitable. Looking around for a stick to strike Bhutto down the military government found the murder of Ahmad Raza Kasuri's father a God-sent gift. A special Martial Law team was formed to investigate the murder with the express intention of implicating Bhutto.

The Martial Law authorities detained the Director General of the loathed Federal Security Force, Masood Mahmood and Inspector Ghulam Hussain, who were given pardon in advance and became informers (technically called 'approvers'). Another main prosecution witness was Bhutto's Chief Security officer, Saied Ahmed Khan. After six weeks in detention Masood Mahmood submitted a hundred-page statement, confessing to his participation in the murder of Nawab Muhammad Khan, in collusion with Bhutto. He also listed a plethora of harassments, arrests, threats, bomb blasts and crimes committed by the Federal Security Force. Saied Ahmed Khan followed with a thirty-page statement which made equally distressing reading. The other four wretches involved in the

murder, Mian Muhammad Abbas, Director Operations and Intelligence, Ghulam Mustafa, Inspector, Arshad Iqbal, sub-inspector and Rana Iftikhar Ahmed, assistant sub-inspector, all confessed their guilt, pleading that they were coerced into the assassination by Masood Mahmood and were merely acting under orders.

Bhutto was arrested from his residence in Karachi for the murder of Nawab Muhammad Ahmed Khan Kasuri. After receiving bail he was rearrested, this time from Larkana under a Martial Law order. The sections of the Penal Code under which he was charged left no doubt as to the intentions of the Government. Section 120 B (Criminal Conspiracy), Section 301 (culpable homicide by causing death of another) Section 302 (murder) and Section 307 (attempt to murder) – each except the latter carried the death penalty. Bhutto's arrest, though expected, caused widespread consternation. However it was treated as a political move and the expectation was that after a period of time he would be released as a new set of equations emerged.

The trial termed the State vs Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Others opened on 11th October 1977 at the Lahore High Court – the first time in contemporary history that a Head of State was being tried by a civil court for murder committed while in office. Although Adnan Menderes, ex-Prime Minister of Turkey, had been executed after the notorious Yassida trials, he had been tried by a military tribunal. Bhutto's image assured international reverberations and a flock of reporters arrived at Lahore to cover the trial.

Built during the Raj in neo-gothic style with magnificent arches, the Lahore High Court provided a suitable backdrop to the drama. In the court room the five bewigged judges – a full bench in cognizance of the gravity of the trial – sat under a crimson canopy served by bearers (waiters) dressed in red coats with white turbans. The high ceiling, magnificent teak carved woodwork, central chandeliers and Victorian windows were reminders of the country's colonial past. Outside, clusters of lawyers, muttering in hushed tones – resplendent in black robes and white ties – added to the atmosphere. A special wooden dock had been built for Bhutto. The court room designed for 150 persons was packed with extra chairs added where possible. In this highly charged atmosphere Bhutto walked in flanked by policemen. Half the audience rose and another half deliberately did not, a reflection of the schisms that racked the country.

One by one the charges were read out to Bhutto and the four other accused. Wearing a dark suit and looking confident Bhutto got up, leaned on the railings, spectacles in hand, looking straight at the bench and with studied concentration answered 'I am not guilty'.

In spite of its dramatic beginning the trial of Bhutto in the Punjab High Court gradually petered out into a farce. A natural antipathy between Bhutto and the Chief Justice of the High Court, Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain, produced intermittent threats, snubs and invective. Halfway through Bhutto boycotted the trial and issued a series of statements attacking the junta and the bench, which forced the court to make the proceedings in camera. After the trial had dragged on for five months the High Court found Bhutto guilty and sentenced him to death – a decision which surprised no one, given the anti-Bhutto tone and atmosphere of the trial.

The sharp difference between the personalities of Maulvi Mushtaq and Bhutto was the root cause of their clash. The crusty Chief Justice was very much an establishment figure. All his life he had honestly administered justice from the bench as a man who believed in rules, procedures and all the etiquette of conservatism. For Maulvi Mushtaq, Bhutto was anathema. He disliked his flamboyance and his disrespectful attitude towards the icons that Maulvi Mushtaq worshipped. He stood by the book which Bhutto flouted with an impudence which infuriated him. When Bhutto was Prime Minister he had deliberately promoted Aslam Riaz Hussain, a junior and much more pliable judge over Maulvi Mushtaq's head, an experience which deeply embittered him. To Maulvi Mushtaq's credit, during his tenure on the bench he had an exceptional reputation for courage. When Bhutto was Prime Minister and hounding an opponent, Chowdhry Zahur Elahi, with a plethora of criminal and civil cases, Maulvi Mushtaq gave Chowdhry Elahi 'blanket bail', making him immune from further arrests. Ironically when Bhutto was arrested by Ayub Khan it was Maulvi Mushtaq who again allowed Bhutto bail despite government pressure. In 1969 when hearing the Malik Mir Hassan case, he held that the Court had a right to examine any actions committed under Martial Law and that they could be struck down by the Court if not backed by a constitutional provision.

At the very start of the trial Bhutto protested at Maulvi Mushtaq presiding over the bench, but was overruled. He could sense the antagonism emanating and subsequent events justified his fears. Bhutto was labelled 'the principal accused' though his role was allegedly that of an abettor. He was placed in a specially constructed dock in the court room, which he felt was done to devalue his stature and 'to cage and humiliate him'. The day the dock was erected in court Bhutto and the other accused were seated behind it, at which the Chief Justice rudely remarked 'we know you are used to a very comfortable life. I am providing you with a chair behind the dock instead of a bench'. On other occasions when Bhutto rose to protest the Chief Justice shouted 'you sit down'.

While a witness was describing the purpose for which a gun had been secured he said, 'for use against Chief Justice'. He then corrected himself saying he meant another judge, Syed Jamil Rizvi. At which point Mushtaq remarked pithily that he should have said 'Judge, not Chief Justice, as the turn of the Chief Justice had not yet come'. Bhutto interposed from his seat in Urdu 'It will come!' Maulvi Mushtaq immediately directed an attending police officer to make note of this threat at the nearest police station.

The text of the High Court judgment was filled with spite against Bhutto. His conduct during the trial was berated as 'arrogant and insulting' and 'at times unruly'. He was labeled 'a compulsive liar' and in the final summary went on to admonish Bhutto as a head of state 'He can be a Muslim only in name who could flout with impunity his oath [of office] without caring for its ugly consequences and terrible results'.

Whenever the facts were equivocal the court seemed to prefer the prosecution's version. In the best traditions of Anglo-Saxon justice the judiciary in Pakistan has been trained to presuppose an accused man's innocence unless his guilt is established. But now the opposite was true so much so that one of the Supreme Court judges, Ghulam Safdar Shah, reprimanded the High Court, saying 'It is well settled that the burden to prove the guilt of an accused lies on the prosecution . . . this axiomatic, wholesome and cardinal principle relating to the safe administration of criminal justice does not seem to have been present, with respect, to the mind of the High Court with the result that the finding recorded by it cannot even be remotely supported.'

The trial had its moments of drama. At one stage when Ahmad Raza was giving evidence, Bhutto took exception to one of his statements and said 'nonsense' to his counsel. At which Ahmad Raza turned on him and shouted 'Shut up, you murderer! How dare you butt in? You must address the court through your counsel.' Bhutto stared back indignantly only too aware how low he had been dragged from his pedestal.

There were also lighter moments, particularly during Ahmad Raza's marathon seven-day testimony. An incorrigible joker he would often reduce the court to helpless laughter. D M Awan, Bhutto's lawyer, when questioning him on his relationship with Bhutto asked him when he met Bhutto.

Ahmad Raza:	In Faletti's Hotel, Lahore, in June, 1966.
D M Awan:	What did you talk about?
Ahmad Raza:	He was weeping, so we could not talk.
D M Awan:	You must have talked of something.

Ahmad Raza: As I said, he was weeping.⁸⁷

At which the bench interceded, 'Mr. Awan, Mr. Kasuri is making a subtle point Please re-phrase your question.'

D M Awan: Alright. What did you say to him?

At this Ahmad Raza shifted around uneasily and looked reluctant to answer and then said to the court 'My lords, must I answer?'

Suspecting a foible by Ahmad Raza the lawyer fell for his trap.

D M Awan: Come on. You have to answer. What did you say to Bhutto?

Ahmad Raza: I said, 'don't weep, my friend!' (smiling)

In retrospect it seems inexplicable why Bhutto allowed himself to fall into the trap of a court trial. Initially he appeared convinced that the prosecution would not be in a position to build a tenable case and decided to make a legal battle of it. As the trial progressed he felt less and less sure of his position. To the sophisticated the trial (whether supported by evidence or not) was by its very nature political and should have been fought on that basis alone. Allowing himself to fall into courts and legal cases was one of his biggest blunders. Political testimonies, histrionics, dramatic statements are all part of a game of which Bhutto was the past master. He should have termed the trial 'a political assassination' and refused to fight his accusers in the courts. His life could only have been saved by alchemy of international and domestic pressures, not by legal jargon or the cleverness of his lawyers. By giving his opponents the sanctity of a court conviction he made his elimination a possibility which would otherwise have not been easy.

Bhutto's appeal in the Supreme Court of Pakistan was a dramatic document and a damning indictment of General Zia-ul-Haq's government. He outlined the General's backpedalling on his earlier promise of elections; described the entire case against him as a fabricated conspiracy; listed a series of press interviews given by the General attacking Bhutto, declaring him guilty while his trial was in progress; highlighting various spiteful remarks made to him by the Chief Justice of the Punjab High Court during the course of the trial; accused the bench of prejudice and bias and concluded with the prayer 'that the judgment orders of

⁸⁷ "Referring to the highly emotional visit of Bhutto to Lahore after his departure from Ayub Khan's government

conviction and sentences passed against the appellant be set aside and the appellant acquitted'. Despite the death sentence hanging over his head Bhutto's appeal was characteristically courageous. There was no cringing or abject language. He went straight for the Martial Law chiefs, asking for and giving no quarter, making it clear that it was either the General's head or his.

The trial before the Supreme Court dragged on for months. The complete bench of seven judges sat through the entire proceedings – an unprecedented acknowledgement of the importance of the case.

In the Supreme Court Bhutto's defence reversed their earlier tactics of boycotting the proceedings and decided to make a legal battle of it. The grounds upon which they attacked the judgment was that the prosecution had failed to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt, that the prosecution witnesses, particularly the approvers, Masood Mahmood, Saied Ahmad Khan and Ghulam Hussain, were not worthy of credit and their evidence remained uncorroborated. It was this evidence which was the pivot upon which the prosecution's case rested. Bhutto's lawyers throughout the trial attempted to debunk their testimony claiming that they were biased and coerced into turning approvers in order to save their own necks. Their villainous past was highlighted and their character (or rather the lack of it) constantly reiterated.

Destroying the character of the two principal approvers was a double-edged sword. For why should Bhutto choose such low characters to run his intelligence and federal security force? In fact in the High Court the Chief Justice at one stage advised the defence counsel that by high-lighting the malevolence of Masood Mahmood and Saied Ahmed Khan so vividly he was only damaging his own case. If Bhutto had chosen these men it must be for the worst of reasons and to carry out the sort of activities which the prosecution was trying to prove.

Approvers' evidence alone could not stand up in the Court, it had to be supported by circumstances, other evidence and above all a motive, and it was on this that the battle turned.

Voluminous testimonies, documentary evidence and motives were produced by the prosecution. As Bhutto was not physically involved in the murder the link between the assassins and him was the approvers. They claimed that they were in criminal conspiracy with Bhutto who ordered the execution of Ahmad Raza.

Axiomatically the strength of a chain is that of the weakest link and many links in the long chain of circumstantial evidence snapped. The position of the used cartridges found afterwards was at variance to the supposed physical location of the assassins. The defence also proved that Bhutto alone did not have a motive to

kill Ahmad Raza. The prosecution's ability to prove their case beyond 'reasonable doubt' was suspect. During the trial contradictions were noted in ballistic tests and other evidence of the approvers. No 'smoking gun' or irrefutably evidence was available.

On 20th December 1978 Bhutto's trial moved to its climax. Anxious to avoid suspicion of anti-Bhutto bias the Supreme Court allowed Bhutto to address the court personally, although normally representation is made through the defence counsel. On the day of the address the court room was packed. Admission passes were given to nearly a hundred more persons than the court room's capacity, so that some foreign journalists had to squat on the floor. PPP stalwarts like Qaim All Shah and Aziz Ahmed were present, as was his wife Nusrat Bhutto. Ahmad Raza Kasuri attending the Supreme Court for the first time was seated opposite Bhutto on the prosecution benches.

Rumors had been circulating of Bhutto's bad health, poor living conditions and flagging morale, but his entry into the court room dispelled all lingering doubts. He was dressed immaculately, looking thinner but ebullient. He wore a dark suit, with sharply creased trousers, a silk tie, brightly polished Italian shoes, diamond-studded gold cuff links and a rose in his button hole. He exuded confidence and his very presence was a tonic to his supporters.

Bhutto's speech before the Supreme Court spread over four days and bore all the vintage Bhutto hallmark of drama, poignancy and brilliance. He covered a whole range of subjects: political problems of the sub-continent, his maltreatment in gaol, duplicity of the military regime in power, the necessity to hold elections in Pakistan. Frequently the bench had to interrupt to request him to confine his speech to the legalities and issues of his trial. But there was no containing Bhutto, for he was playing to the gallery and the world at large and was enjoying every minute of it.

He complained of the insulting behavior of the High Court's calling him 'a Muslim in name' and recounted all his services to Islam: the Islamic Conference at Lahore, bringing back 90,000 'soldiers of Islam' from Indian prison camps, solving the age-old Qadiani issue and so on. As his voice rose to a crescendo Bhutto broke down into sobs and kept repeating in Sindhi, '*Lal meri path rakhio bala*' – a plea to the Sindhi saint Lal Shahbaz Kalandar to preserve his respect.

For four days Bhutto addressed the court. His performance had the court stunned and the foreign press correspondents enraptured. Excerpts of his speech were printed all over the world. Personally he was confident that he had turned the tables and would be acquitted. When he concluded he told his legal counsels 'we've burst the case wide open'.

After he sat down the court was to witness yet another drama. The legal counsel for the co-accused rose and asked if their clients could address the court as Bhutto had been granted that privilege. The bench agreed and one by one they rose to speak. The first to speak was Mian Muhammad Abbas, Director Operations Intelligence of the FSF. A graying dignified-looking man, he asked for and obtained permission of the court to speak in English. He began by saying that he knew Ahmad Raza's family well from Kasur, he had the greatest respect for them and since he was going to meet his maker he wished to beg forgiveness from them for the murder. He did not plead innocence and instead made it clear that he had acted on instructions.

Another co-accused Sufi Ghulam Mustafa's testimony was even more dramatic. He came with a copy of the Koran in his hand and told the court that they must have heard many persons swearing innocence on the holy book, but this time they were to hear someone swearing on the holy book that he was guilty. Holding the Koran he pointed a finger at Bhutto -

'This is the guilty person and I beg forgiveness for what I have done.'

His testimony shook the court and Bhutto even more. The colour drained from his face and he mopped his brow and leaned back in his seat. The accusations and confessions of convicted men facing the gallows had a spellbinding effect - their tense utterances had nullified the impression of Bhutto's long monologue.

On 7th February 1979 the Supreme Court by a majority of one found Bhutto and the four co-accused guilty as charged. The decision was announced at 11 am in the morning. Despite the police posses' patrolling the streets people clustered by radios and in groups trying to digest the news. Bhutto's powerful presence was part of the national psyche. His death could only damage further the country's fragile polity.

With a mist of doubt hanging over the entire proceedings Bhutto's conviction was strongly disputed. Three of the seven Supreme Court judges disagreed with the verdict. Judge Dohrab Patel in his dissenting judgment pointed out that the prosecution had failed to corroborate the testimony of the police officers in the strictest legal sense and moreover the evidence was equivocal, making Bhutto's involvement in the shooting 'reasonably capable of innocent interpretation'. Another dissenting judge, Ghulam Safdar Shah, came out even more strongly with the conclusion 'the prosecution has totally failed to prove its case against Bhutto'. Amnesty International commented on the case 'the evidence on which Mr. Bhutto was convicted was based almost entirely on the statements of alleged accomplices'. Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General in the Lyndon Johnson

administration witnessed the trial and condemned it outright 'Over a deliberately protracted period of time legal cover has been given to an intended act of murder through the judicial process.' New York Times, 14th February 1979. Given the official hostility towards Bhutto and the military colour of the incumbent regime, the Supreme Court's impartiality was always suspect. While the trial was in progress the Martial Law Government issued a series of White Papers, highlighting irregularities of the Bhutto regime, and the official media did not conceal their prejudice against Bhutto and the PPP. The head of the junta, General Zia-ul-Haq, attacked Bhutto publicly calling him 'totally unreliable, mercurial and cynical. Under his kid gloves are hidden a pair of soft and smooth hands stained with the blood of the innocent. To reach the dizzy heights of megalomania he would not hesitate to turn the corpses of his dearest friends into a ladder'.⁸⁸ And in another interview to the Urdu Digest he called him 'a worst cheat and cold blooded murderer'. Party men were being tried before military tribunals and suspended from political activity. The prevailing environment was of sustained hostility towards Bhutto.

The past record of subservience by Pakistani courts towards the incumbent government reduced their credibility further. After the imposition of Martial Law in July, 1977 judges of the provincial courts and Supreme Court took a fresh oath. Earlier, after the 1973 Constitution they had been sworn into office promising to 'preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan'. Now not one of them found it incompatible with his conscience to forsake his old oath and serve a Martial Law regime. In October 1954 the Governor General of Pakistan, Ghulam Muhammad, dismissed the Constituent Assembly, as a result of which the Speaker, Maulvi Tamizuddin, challenged the Governor General's action. The Supreme Court upheld the executive decision. Again in the 1958 Dosso case, the Martial Law regime of Ayub Khan was given legitimacy on the grounds that a 'successful revolution destroys the Constitution'. Later in the Asrna Gilani case in 1972 (after Yahya Khan had fallen from power) his martial regime was declared a 'usurper' by the Supreme Court and 'all laws enacted during this period were invalid'. After the military coup of July 1977, relying on the verdict of the Asma Gilani case Nusrat Bhutto challenged the validity of the regime. But the Supreme Court managed another about-face justifying Martial Law on the grounds of 'imminent civil war'.

The most courageous decision ever taken by a court in Pakistan was that of the Punjab High Court against Bhutto's government when it dismissed his attempts to reinforce his tottering position by declaring 'partial martial law' after the civil

⁸⁸ Interview with Kehyanitar International of Tehran

riots following the March 1977 General Election. It declared 'partial martial law' to be 'inconsistent with the provisions of the 1973 Constitution'.

But to dismiss the case against Bhutto as fabricated or the trial as a kangaroo court is too simplistic. He was heard by the High Court, whether satisfactorily or not and exceptionally fairly by the Supreme Court. In fact at the end of the trial Bhutto and his counsels profusely thanked the Supreme Court bench for the considerate and patient manner in which they had heard the case. Foreign observers, jurists and journalists who attended the Supreme Court proceedings were impressed by the impartiality shown. Three out of seven Supreme Court judges were free to disagree with the verdict and wrote strong dissenting judgments. A host of witnesses and weighty legal arguments supported the prosecution case.

Reliance was placed on American and English jurisprudence, rulings of the House of Lords, the Privy Council, the High Court of Burma and the Indian and Pakistan Supreme Courts. The Criminal Procedure Code, Pakistan Penal Code and the Evidence Act were used in legal argument. Citations relied upon by the two counsel ran into hundreds of cases with exotic names which reflected Pakistan's colonial heritage: Mohinder Singh vs. the Emperor, the Queen Empress vs. Maganlal and Motilal, Bhubari Sahu vs. the King. Some of the authorities quoted were Halsbury's Laws of England, A V Dicey, L C Greene, N D Basu, Russell, Gour, Dr Nand Lal, Bishop, Monir, Wigmore, Earl Jowitt, Stroud, Glanville Williams, Corpus Juris Secundum and Black's Law Dictionary. Bhutto's counsel, Yahya Bakhtiar, spoke in the Supreme Court for fifty-six days and the record spread over fourteen hundred pages.

Bhutto never took the legalities of his trial seriously. He was convinced that it was politically motivated and that eventually, after a political solution was found, the case would be dropped. He had personally used the courts against his opponents and now naturally assumed that his trial was a political ploy to break him. A conviction and death sentence which would be implemented was too remote a possibility even to contemplate. He told a foreign reporter who asked him how he envisaged his future political life, 'Either I will be Prime Minister again or sitting in a London pub.'

His selection of counsel was governed by this line of thought. He wanted lawyers who could attack the judges and extract the maximum amount of political juice from the situation. Hayat M Junejo, an extremely capable criminal lawyer, was initially employed to represent him but was dropped as he refused to fight the case on any basis other than its legal merits. In the High Court Bhutto's lawyer, D M Awan, was inarticulate, often ill prepared and on several occasions was admonished by Bhutto himself for failing to, argue coherently. In

the Supreme Court he used Yahya Bakhtiar as his counsel, an old friend from London days. Although Bhutto as Prime Minister had made Yahya Bakhtiar Attorney General his experience of criminal law was extremely limited. The prosecution on the other hand employed two of the best professional criminal lawyers in the country: M Anwar, who died during the trial and then Ijaz Batalvi. Bhutto's guilt will be debated for generations to come. It is beyond the scope of this book to examine the legal minutiae and evidence. References in support of both contentions would fill volumes. However some important issues emerged from the case.

An aspect of Bhutto's regime that was portrayed by the trial was the type of police and intelligence officers he employed. Other than Saied Ahmed Khan and Masood Mahmood there were amoral types like Haq Nawaz Tiwana, Hamid Bajwa, Mian Anwar Ali and M K Junejo (the last named also sang like a canary to save his neck). At one stage Najab Khan allegedly involved in the assassination of ex-Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan made an appearance in his coterie. Another ruthless politician from Sanghar in Sindh, Jam Sadiq Ali, was entrusted with a number of unsavoury actions. In March 1976 the author asked Yusef Buch, Bhutto's Special Assistant who, Buch thought, was running the Government. The reply was 'As far as I can see it's police or police types.'

Another disclosure was the sordid role of the Federal Security Force in the nation's affairs. The litany of their crimes is too long and too strongly evidenced to be ignored. Innumerable kidnappings, bomb blasts, assaults and unspeakable cruelties were unleashed by Bhutto through the FSF on opponents both real and imagined. The beating, kidnapping and torture of the elderly J A Rahim, one time Secretary General of the Party and Minister of Production was supervised and executed by two of Bhutto's henchmen, Saied Ahmed Khan and M K Junejo. The FSF's activities were not the peccadillos of over zealous lieutenants. Bhutto sat astride the nation's affairs, supervising every small incident. Not only was he aware of what went on but seemed actively to encourage and direct them.

Another peculiar side of the case was the complete acceptance of the PPP hierarchy of Bhutto's tactics against his opponents. The author discussed Bhutto's trial with a number of senior party men, all of whom agreed in private that Bhutto had persecuted his opponents but that hanging him was no answer. Doubt was often expressed of the legal case against him although his involvement in similar activities was accepted. A number of supporters justified his treatment of opponents as part of politicking in Pakistan and even necessary, and pointed to other examples of leaders who had behaved equally ruthlessly.

Guilty or not Bhutto's trial was political and not criminal, as has been repeatedly alleged by the martial law authorities. Pakistan's politicians and the ruling clique

can be indicted in a host of criminal cases and the process of accountability is never ending. As a political solution therefore killing Bhutto can only exacerbate the political tensions in the country. Pro and anti-Bhutto forces will be inevitably polarized, making the possibility of a future democratic process extremely remote.

A realistic though unpalatable fact is that in the third world politics violence is endemic. In Pakistan imprisonment, torture, kidnappings and assaults are part of the fodder of politicians. To expect the discipline of western parliamentary democracy with 'her majesty's loyal opposition' is unreal. Compared to other third world countries like Indonesia, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan the politics of the sub-continent are relatively mild. It is in this context that Bhutto's tactics should be judged. Among the exploited population of Pakistan, violence is part of their lives and they find Bhutto's style quite understandable and perhaps necessary. Their overlords have subjected them to unspeakable brutalities for generations. Bhutto, being their champion is forgiven anything.

Given Bhutto's predominant position in the country's political scene and the overwhelming support for the PPP from the common man, his death will damage the whole political process.

Appeals against Bhutto's conviction flooded in from every conceivable quarter. Kurt Waldheim, Jimmy Carter, Helmut Schmidt, Giscard d'Estange, Pierre Trudeau, James Callaghan, were just some of the western statesmen who urged clemency. Communist heads of state and particularly Brezhnev and the Chinese Government joined in the chorus. Every Muslim and Arab state without exception pleaded for Bhutto's life. Yasser Arafat extolled his services to Islam and the Palestinian cause, calling him a *ledayen'*. Even old political enemies and members of Parliament from India were vociferous. Janata Minister, Raj Narain, said his execution would be 'nothing but a barbarous thing'. The Janata Party President, Chandhra Shekhar in his appeal against the sentence said 'I feel I am echoing the sentiments of a vast majority of the people of India'. Indira Gandhi called him 'a great politician whose life must be spared'. The former President of Pakistan, Fazl Elahi Chaudhry, in a formal letter to Zia-ul-Haq said of the death sentence, 'nationally it threatens the independence, integrity and sovereignty of the motherland and internationally it is bound to aggravate beyond the point of no return stability in the area'. Tributes from politicians, leaders and men of letters from all over the world flooded in. His international status and reputation provoked an unprecedented response.

Bhutto's life became a *cause célèbre* as he sat in his death cell, while his lawyers coursed through the 800 page Supreme Court verdict, looking for inconsistencies which could allow fresh appeals.

Visitors reported Bhutto calm and confident and that he had few regrets except the nature of his death. He said he would have preferred 'revolutionary justice' – death by a bullet and not the hangman's noose. In a letter to Kurt Waldheim he pleaded for intervention 'Relevant world leaders are aware as to why my life hangs in the balance. This unimpeachable evidence of the last fourteen years will show them beyond doubt that my blood, if it spills, will surely stain their hands and that in history they will owe me a debt of blood.'

Poignantly he wrote in his death cell – As I sit in the four walls of this tiny cell my mind reflects on the canvas of life spent with dedication in the service of my people. In my solitary confinement I have lived the past twice over. The scenes that come on the screen of my memory are a veritable feast. I recall many momentous occasions: the Partition, the rebellious mood of youth, the Ingo-Pakistan wars, the Security Council, the matching of wits with giants.' He then characteristically concludes with a passage from Ostrovosky's *How the Steel was Tempered*:

Man's dearest possession is his life and since it is given to him to live but once he must so live as not to be scarred with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past, so live as not to be tortured for years without purpose, that dying he can say, 'All my life and my strength were given to the first cause in the world – the liberation of mankind.'

His politics had traumatized the nation. A veritable giant whose charisma had reached out to the poor, that forgave him any crimes he may have committed. His whiplash had tortured and infuriated the establishment, his opponents and the bourgeoisie but not the starving masses of Pakistan, whose tears at his demise must vindicate him in an ultimate sense. 'Mine is the Court of the people of Pakistan,' Bhutto said. 'This is where I will be judged.' And in the Court of the people Bhutto was innocent.

Paradoxically, it was Bhutto's political strength which brought about his execution. The military junta could not contain him and felt that only his elimination could bolster their precarious position. The conflict had narrowed down simply to 'him or us'. As discussed earlier, under Article 6 of the 1973 Constitution 'any person who abrogates or attempts or conspires to abrogate, subverts (or attempts or conspires to subvert) the Constitution by use of force or show of force or by other unconstitutional means shall be guilty of high treason.' Any return of Bhutto to power would have inevitably resulted in treason trials – a risk none of the junta was willing to take.

On 4 April 1979 Bhutto was hanged at 2 am in the morning at Rawalpindi Central Jail. Contrary to the usual practice of hanging prisoners at dawn the authorities thought it prudent to accomplish it in the dead of night so that his body could be flown back to Larkana and buried by the time the news broke among the population. For several days his grieved supporters rioted and demonstrated in impotent fury; burning buses and cars, stoning banks but with little effect.

Bhutto's death was received with revulsion by world media. Telegrams, letters and statements by international leaders, politicians and statesmen sympathized with his family and condemned the action. The Syrian government cancelled a scheduled state visit of General Zia-ul-Haq. The United States government cancelled aid to Pakistan two days later, ostensibly because of its nuclear programme but the timing suggested otherwise. Colonel Ghaddafi held a public prayer meeting. At Srinagar in Kashmir rioting mobs burned the Jamaat-c-Islami offices. Indonesia declared seven days of mourning. Sheikh Zahid of United Arab Emirates burst into tears in public on hearing the news.

During the last few days of his life Bhutto was calm. He had reconciled himself to the possibility of his death. He was housed in the 'zanan khana' - women's quarters' in Rawalpindi jail. His cell was 7 feet by 10 feet, with a bed and mattress, small table and bookshelf. An adjacent cell was a kitchen, where a convict was housed to cook for him. Every ten days or so the attendant was changed in case he grew too attached to Bhutto. He was allowed to be sent meals from the house of his dentist and family friend, Dr Niazi.

At one stage he had a guard watching him when he went to the toilet. Bhutto found this so demeaning that he practically stopped eating so that he would have to be subjected as little as possible to this humiliation. After a while this practice was discontinued and he was provided a private toilet outside his cell.

He was allowed reading matter and in his last days read *Khyber* (Charles Miller), *Richard Nixon's Memoirs*, *Discovery of India* (Nehru), *Eva Peron* (John Barnes) and *Witness to Surrender* (Salik).

Tarah Masih, a squint-eyed hangman employed by the Punjab government, was brought from Lahore. Tarah Masih's entire family have been hangmen for four generations since the time of Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of Punjab. Employed at a salary of Rs. 375/- per month (\$37.5) he gets an additional Rs. 10 (\$1) per victim. A chronic alcoholic whose meagre income allowed him access only to methylated spirits, Tarah Masih had hanged several thousand criminals. One unforgettable occasion for him was when he hanged three child rapists publicly

on General Zia-ul-Haq's orders before a crowd of around thirty thousand. However, never in his macabre career had he claimed so eminent a victim.

During incarceration Bhutto suffered from persistent gum inflammation and kidney trouble. He lost weight and his clothes hung around his body. And yet his spirits were usually good and even the dismal atmosphere could not diminish his sense of humor. When his dentist, Dr. Niazi, was examining his teeth with a convict holding a lamp, Bhutto told him 'You seem as unfortunate as me, Niazi. In your clinic a beautiful girl would be aiding you but now all you have is this man.'

The jail authorities were not unnecessarily unkind. The superintendent was as considerate as the circumstance allowed. However, a Colonel Rafi Ahmad from the 26th Punjab Regiment seconded by the Martial Law authorities frequently tormented him. Always cool and self possessed he would taunt Bhutto with remarks like 'Why do you want to read when soon you will be hanged?'

On the morning of the 3rd April Nusrat and Benazir were summoned to visit Bhutto. Benazir wrote to a friend 'I am told this is my last meeting with Papa. I will try and be brave and not cry.' Nusrat and Benazir were driven in a Chevrolet to Rawalpindi Jail. After the customary search they were escorted, through the barbed wire fence, to the 'Zenan khana', where Bhutto was quartered. A distance of five feet or so separated them from Bhutto. They sat opposite each other. A friendly prison official had confided to Bhutto that this was the last time he would see them. Their exemplary composure in the shadow of death was a source of great strength to him. No tears were shed. Bhutto would sometimes console them as they talked of the future of the PPP and Pakistan.

Bhutto handed over his books, slippers, dressing gown and other personal possessions to them. He started to take off his wedding ring but Nusrat stopped him. She gave him prayer beads which he hung around his neck. He kept two cigars only as he had gauged his requirements until his execution and a bit of Shalimar perfume so that he would smell pleasant. His last wishes which he conveyed to them have not yet been made public. Nusrat and Benazir's faces were grief stricken when they parted but only after they left his presence did tears begin to trickle down Benazir's face.

Later Bhutto sat quietly and smoked. His mind must have been crammed with memories and vignettes of his tumultuous life. He lit a cigar, drank a cup of coffee, then had a bath and at around eight o'clock had a light dinner. Since The Supreme Court had upheld his death sentence he was not allowed a razor or any other article which he might possibly use to kill himself. He asked that he be allowed to shave. 'I don't want to die looking like a maulvi', he told his servant

Rahman. After these functions with great self control he lay down and closed his eyes.

At around 1.30 arts Bhutto was awakened by jail officials and informed of his execution orders. He was wearing an off-white shalwar kurta which the jail officials did not insist that he change for the normal prison regalia. These were the clothes he died in. While the black warrant was read out to him he listened quietly, but when the jail officials wanted to tie his hands behind his back he protested. It seemed demeaning. He wanted to walk to the gallows and die with dignity. When the officials insisted he struggled until the rope was forcibly tied. He was then laid on to a stretcher and carried about four hundred yards until he wriggled off and began walking and stepped up on to the platform of the gallows. The hangman placed a black cloth on his head. His feet were tied. The attendant magistrate identified him, nodded to the hangman, who pulled the lever. His last words were 'Finish it'. After thirty-five minutes Bhutto's lifeless body was placed on a stretcher.

He had died as courageously as he had lived. All his faults were forgiven. His long incarceration, dignity under pressure and refusal to plea for mercy made him a martyr. Not for a moment throughout the eighteen months he spent in jail did he relent or show weakness. If he had adopted a conciliatory posture he would have most certainly avoided execution. But for Bhutto his image, ego and reputation were above human attitudes. His physical life had become immaterial to him now. He died to give birth to an even greater legend which his admiring countrymen will always carry.

Chapter Sixteen

THE BHUTTO CONUNDRUM

Bhutto was a man of paradox. He could flare at the slightest provocation, and yet remain serene in the face of threats that would shatter the equanimity of a lesser man. He could be kind and forgiving to friends, but also petulant and dismissive. As both a public and private personality, he craved the attention of an audience, and demanded the total loyalty of those around him. Such loyalty was often gladly given, and not always repaid. At the same time, he hated criticism with violent intemperance, and could be ruthless with those who voiced it. Some around him have ascribed this insecurity, the core of an ebulliently self-confident personality, to his mother, and her position as a convert from Hinduism in an established Muslim feudal family.

Bhutto saw enemies where none existed. In his years of power, he treated his political opponents as dangerous subversives, and succeeded in making them so. The idealists and the independent-minded who joined with him in the early days to make the PPP an instrument in Pakistan's regeneration had all left him by the end. Some deserted him; most were pushed. And however they departed; they were often ruthlessly hounded by Bhutto and his men. His fear of the independently-minded extended into Pakistan's institutions. He weakened the judiciary, the industrial community, the bureaucracy, and even in the end his own party. He could not bear equals and ensured that even within the PPP, an alternative leadership never emerged. After his third arrest under the Martial Law government in September 1977, his wife Nusrat was made party leader. Even at this crucial time he preferred a surrogate to a potential rival. He directed an incredible amount of energy and skill in attacking his enemies. And like Don Quixote he often attacked imaginary monsters.

Bhutto was in every sense a politician. And as a politician, he lacked moral scruples. Everything and anyone was expendable on the altar of political advantage. On the economic front, for instance, he directed policy in a short-term manner, distributing largesse in the form of privilege, making wasteful investments of public money and distributing incomes at the cost of financial stability. During the last days of his rule he banned alcohol and gambling as a sop to the Islamic zealots, though his whole being rebelled at the idea. He declared the quasi-Islamic Ahmadiya sect to be non-Muslims in order to enhance his image among Muslim conservative opinion, though he was certainly no bigot and despite the consistent support of this sect for the PPP. At times, a politician must be prepared to take a stand on principles. To lead rather than to be led. This Bhutto was seldom prepared to do.

As his power increased he began to fall predictably into the classic mould of dictatorship. He would rule by whim rather than through institutions. His personality cult was encouraged. His picture began to appear in public halls and buildings next to that of Jinnah, the Quaid-e-Azam. Squash tournaments, cricket leagues and parks were named after him. The government-controlled press and television began to project his personality to an insufferable degree. A barrage of propaganda was unleashed which only succeeded in antagonizing people.

He would often use his extensive powers to implement small kindnesses. He allowed General Zia-ul Haq's entire family (all expenses paid by the State) to go abroad for treatment of Zia's retarded child. In fact, when the General launched his coup, his family was still in the USA, thanks to Bhutto's personal kindness.

In the ten years from its foundation to Bhutto's fall, the PPP never held an election for office bearers. Democracy, for Bhutto, was an instrument with which he could exercise his own brand of power. When convenient, he used his large parliamentary majority to back his wishes; but he was equally content to avoid the legislature if necessary. The exercise of power was Bhutto's first priority. If he could do it through the democratic process, well and good. After the 1977 General Election, he tried to placate the Opposition by offering them National Assembly seats as a sweetener. 'What's the problem?' he remonstrated with them. 'You want more seats. Only thirty could have been rigged. All right, you have them. Take thirty seats!' This was hardly the give-and-take of democratic politics. As his rule became more and more personalized, so grew the inevitable coterie of hangers-on and opportunists. Those closest to the source of power naturally exercised the greatest influence. The art of anticipating Bhutto's pleasures became more important than commitment, principles and integrity. Ministers like Kausar Niazi, grew in authority as a result of their obsequiousness and personal relation to Bhutto. The atmosphere around him was that of a Byzantine court.

With his growing isolation he chose to rely on the state apparatus. Students, lawyers, teachers and other more progressive political groupings were abandoned in favour of the old feudal vote banks, particularly in Punjab and Sindh. The more vital and idealistic political forces which had supported Bhutto so avidly in the 1970 general elections became disenchanted and their place was taken by those reactionary forces against whom he had once so courageously pitted himself. As a politician, Bhutto should have appreciated this important change in the make-up of his support for it played a key role in bringing him down in the 1977 riots. The feudalists may be able to deliver captive votes but they could' never provide the demonstrating mobs which burst on to the streets first to topple Ayub Khan and then Bhutto.

Although continually calculating his own advantage, Bhutto nevertheless appreciated the value of ties of affection. Brilliantly judicious in the exercise of personal attention, he would often charm small party functionaries by referring to them by name, and recalling something they once said to him. He once telephoned the author long distance to Karachi when he had just joined his party in the middle of a hectic electioneering tour, only to apologize for not being able to attend a dinner to which he had been invited. This kind of courtesy for small and yet vital considerations was one of his battery of assets. Any catastrophe, grief or problem affecting his ministers or colleagues was scrupulously noted, and when he met them again, he would enquire or comment. All of which add to the intensely personal relationship he enjoyed with a wide range of people. He remembered meticulously the smallest courtesies and no favour was too tedious to dispense.

He gained an international press far greater than the importance of his country warranted. Foreign correspondents were particularly vulnerable to his charm, intellectual camaraderie, and his readiness to admit faults and rationalize his position. Whereas with his old rival Mujibur Rahman – the late President of Bangladesh – journalists highly sympathetic initially would often be left with a feeling of irritation at his limited intellectual capabilities, with Bhutto they almost knowingly fell into his net, writing of him with sympathy and understanding.

He had a prodigious capacity for work and was unable in any real sense to go on vacation or take time off. The landscape of his mind was continually agitated with issues, personalities and situations. He slept only four to five hours a day. As Prime Minister he managed a hectic day full of meetings, visits and interviews, still finding time to pore laboriously over files, memoranda and official documents. Everything was marked and commented upon in his own writing with a remarkable grasp of detail. He telephoned his ministers at all times of the night, even at parties, to summon them for discussions. One of his aides arranged a memorandum of four thousand words to be delivered at his office at 11.30 pm as he was going out to dinner, and knowing that if he had it delivered earlier, he would be summoned from the party. The next morning Bhutto chaired a cabinet meeting from 9 am to 3 pm and one hour later, called him to discuss the memorandum. When he arrived the paper had been read, underlined, commented upon and a series of highly penetrating observations noted on it for discussion.

He was both well versed and articulate in most contemporary political issues, but nowhere has he personally written or propounded anything particularly original or learned. His two major books, *The Myth of Independence* and *The Great Tragedy*, are a recounting of his position and views on a number of events and

policies relating to Pakistan which, if it were not for his political eminence, would have been treated as trivial. He contributed a few articles for foreign journals like the Quarterly Review of Foreign Affairs, but these also are a reiteration of his stance as a more than usually independent minded nationalist, socialist and a summation of the problems he faced on coming to power, with his usual darts at India's intransigence and hostility. His earlier writings as a student, too, show no special flair or sign of any intellectual exercise.

He dressed conservatively and elegantly, using the same tailor (Hamid of Elphinstone Street, Karachi) for the last twenty years. An American Tailors' Guild voted him, to his delight, one of the world's best dressed men. In the Ayub Khan cabinet of the 1960s, he was the first minister to wear tapered trousers, causing his older and more staid colleagues to refer to him as 'the teddy-boy minister'. When campaigning, he developed his own style of 'shalwar kurta', which caught on in the country and has become standard regalia under the title 'Awami libas' – people's clothes. One of his first acts as President in 1971 was to kit out his ministers with a uniform – a jacket and trouser suit reminiscent of the old colonial Jodhpur outfit – which local wags -called 'band-master uniform'.

His huge library in Karachi was largely of contemporary history and politics, with many biographies and books on political theory. He owned valuable eighteenth-century manuscripts on Indian history, in their original bindings, and a priceless eight-volume edition, *Descriptions de L'Egypte en Recueil*, printed in 1817 and a whole section of law books. Not surprisingly, Metternich, Talleyrand, Nehru and Machiavelli were well represented. Several hundred books cover five to six shelves on Napoleon Bonapart alone; biographies by Laufrey, Junet, Ireland, Constant, Count de las Cases and several editions of Sloan's famous eight-volume work. The brit-a-brac of statesmanship also litters his Karachi home, including valuable carpets, gifts and memorabilia notably autographed pictures of himself with world leaders.

His physical appearance – five feet eleven, of medium build – gave no clue to his tremendous reservoirs of energy. As Prime Minister he would begin his day without breakfast, a cup of coffee mid-morning, a small lunch, snacks at teatime followed by a reasonable dinner. Except for an occasional swim, he never found time for any physical sport. When minister during the Ayub Khan regime, the Islamabad cocktail and dinner party circuit left a noticeable mark around his waistline and jowls. But his years of campaigning, his hectic work schedule in power and careful diet ensured that his weight remained at a balanced 165 pounds. Conscious of the necessity of good health, he had regular medical check-ups. 'I'll last longer than anyone else who's governed Pakistan,' he proudly told Oriana Falaci in 1972. 'First of all because I'm healthy and full of energy ... I can

work as I do even eighteen hours a day. Then, because I'm young, I'm barely forty-four, ten years younger than Mrs. Gandhi.'

Bhutto's aristocratic background permeated his surroundings. In his choice of objects, possessions, houses, clothes and food, he always opted for quality. Current trends and fashions did not touch him except for modern art, which he once collected avidly. He retained an eye for beauty and classic designs. The furniture in his house would invariably be teak, heavily carved, with never a trace of aluminum or steel, and covered in the most expensive of fabrics.

His personal tastes were unashamedly expensive. In spite of Pakistan's poverty, he had no compunction in spending several million dollars on a presidential Falcon jet, and had his houses centrally air-conditioned at state expense. He wore silk shirts from Turnbull & Asser, of London's exclusive Jermyn Street, silk socks ('Gold toe' brand), silk ties (Yves Saint Laurent or Christian Dior), a carefully folded silk handkerchief in his jacket pocket, Gucci or Bally shoes, and enjoyed sipping red wine after meals (Chateau Margaux was his favourite). After dinner he lit a cigar (Romeo y Julieta or Davidoff) which, while smoking, he characteristically dipped in his brandy (Remy Martin). Fearful of gaining extra pounds, he carefully regulated his drinking to just two whiskies an evening, preferring one or other of the deluxe brands (Black Dog, Royal Salute or Chivas Regal).

And yet he could extricate himself from all this, plunge into the squalid poverty of the villages and the countryside, tramping across fields, sweating all day in the sun, eating and talking in the humblest surroundings. If he despised any particular class, it was the petty bourgeois for their avarice and limited vision, never the very poor, with whom he immediately related. In spite of the revelations by the military regime that deposed him of the profligate and sordid aspects of his rule, he managed to retain, to the chagrin of his opponents the affection and indeed adoration of the very poor.

Although Bhutto strongly and unequivocally declared his adherence to socialism, it is difficult to define his political creed. It was certainly not socialism of the Marxist or atheistic variety. It leant more towards a crude and populist egalitarianism. 'Populist' adequately conveys Bhutto's distinctive manner and approach, rooted as it was in the simple aspirations of the people of Pakistan. He played on their prejudices, including anti-Hinduism, he made himself the champion of small against big, and he gave vent to their frustration at the country's traditional social divisions.

He changed the weekly holiday from Sunday to the Islamic Friday in deference to popular sentiment, remarking laconically: 'It has fallen to the lot of this

humble sinner to perform such a noble task.' To his socialism, there was the additive 'Islamic', injected as a palliative for his predominantly conservative Muslim countrymen. At different times he extolled 'Scandinavian-type socialism', 'welfare socialism' and a 'mixed economy'. In June, 1962, in a speech to the National Assembly he strongly defended free enterprise as a vital component of democracy. 'A government can be either democratic or totalitarian. If it is to be democratic, then the system of free enterprise must form part of it ... by free enterprise, you do not mean a jungle of lawlessness where only the rich can grab whatever they want ... nobody wants absolute free enterprise.'⁸⁹ He was, above all, a pragmatist, and not wedded to any fixed dogma. Believing that political power must lie with the vast majority of his poverty-stricken countrymen, he sought a redistributive economic system. He always tried to redress chronic economic imbalances and in doing so, no matter what his real motives, his achievement is real. As an insider in the Ayub Khan government, he was exposed to the rapacity of unbridled free enterprise, and the economic misdirection of an economy geared to the creation of pools of capital at the expense of society at large. All this left a bad taste in his mouth, and convinced him that other approaches were necessary.

Bhutto was once described as a 'power craftsman', and certainly his exercise of power developed into a fine art. Like a technician at the laboratory controls, he watched the gauges, pressing and pushing buttons when temperatures rise dangerously or drop suddenly, switching loads, turning levers, interpreting signals with a skill that became almost second nature to him. He enjoyed and was intrigued by the grammar of power and its uses: the techniques of patronage, reciprocity and the language of quid pro quo. Favors were rewarded and betrayals revenged. Traditional qualities of integrity, loyalty and honesty are factors in an equation and no more than that. He was relentless and unprincipled where his own interests are concerned, quite prepared to resort to blackmail threats or bribery to achieve what he set out to do. He was careful never to adopt a static position, especially with his enemies and would deal with or use anybody, regardless of personal predilections. In spite of his dislike of the Frontier leader Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, he kept him as a coalition partner for five years, dispensing cold-bloodedly with him when he felt his use had expired. For Bhutto, politics was a game to be played without reference to individuals.

His most striking characteristic was his dynamism. He had to be where the action was. An official account or second-hand briefing was never enough. Wherever possible, he would visit the trouble-spot, political or otherwise, personally. During the 1974 floods in Pakistan, Bhutto travelled everywhere by

⁸⁹ Speech to the National Assembly, 21st June 1962

helicopter, viewing the damage and learning for himself the magnitude of the disaster. As a canny politician he ensured his personal supervision did not go unobserved. His presence was splashed liberally across newspapers and radio and television; now emerging from a helicopter wearing his favored Mao cap; now embracing a dispossessed old peasant woman; now ordering relief stores, even sometimes lifting things himself. It appears he had imbibed one of Machiavelli's renowned dictums: 'Being on the spot, disorders can be seen as they arise and can quickly be remedied. But living at a distance, they can only be heard of when they get beyond remedy.'

He always seemed to have one ear cocked for an issue to exploit, no matter how trivial. His impulsive insistence on participation and in voicing opinion on any event often caused embarrassment. In January 1971 Indian agents posing as hijackers forced a plane called 'The Ganga' to land in Pakistan and then blew it up, thereby giving the Indian government an opportunity to ban over-flights across India. Bhutto rushed to the spot and publicly lauded the hijackers as 'freedom fighters and great Pakistanis' – an action which he was forced to retract later. Again, when the Pakistan hockey team misbehaved at the 1972 Munich Olympics, Bhutto was off the mark too early, blasting the Argentinian umpire. 'I was mad, I was furious. I told my foreign secretary that I would break diplomatic relations with Argentine tomorrow if an Argentinian umpire had tried to do damage and hurled insults at my countrymen.' After seeing the film of the game, he did an about-turn and publicly apologized for the Pakistan team's behavior.

In crowds and among friends he could be highly entertaining with a humor that was earthy to the point of crudity. When the author asked him about the demise of a senior minister in his cabinet, he replied: 'What can I do? He came to me and said, "My backside is hurting. The doctor says I have to lie down". "Okay," I said, "if your arse is hurting, go. I don't want any painful arsens in my cabinet!"' Fighting with his back to the wall after the July 1977 army coup, he warned the Pakistan National Alliance president, Maulana Mufti Mahmood: 'Be careful, Mufti, with one hand I'll grab your throat and with the other by a place I don't wish to mention in front of ladies!' Individual characteristics are carefully noted, retained and reproduced for general entertainment. 'Every time Ayub Khan was telling a lie, he would start pulling up his socks.' He has a penchant for showmanship, and his actions could leave his countrymen bemused. He once jumped up on to the stage when Prime Minister to join the performing singers in 'Sohni dharti' (a national song and a particular Bhutto favorite). When on a state visit to North Korea in the summer of 1976, he amazed the dour Kim Il Sung by striding in among a singing troupe and joining in with a tuneless but determined effort. He seized opportunities for acts of personal showmanship. When Pakistan discovered the Dera Ghazi Khan oilfield in December 1976 he announced it at the

National Assembly, waving a bottle of oil in one hand and embracing a senior Opposition leader with the other.

He could cloak his feelings behind a facial mask which did not betray by even the smallest flicker his real thoughts or reactions. He used to summon officials whom he intended to sack, hold long discussions with them and then bid them a warm farewell. Their shock on discovering their fate can be imagined. Like a rotating prism, he could present a face which was just the reflection of the light shining upon it – a facade for every occasion.

Like many other outstanding leaders, he was a passionate man. He had a series of love affairs and dalliances which he claimed were a part of inherent romanticism : 'I am a romantic,' he told Oriana Falaci, 'I don't think you can be a politician without being romantic – and as a romantic, I think there is nothing so inspiring as a love affair. There's nothing wrong with falling in love and conquering a woman's heart – woe to men who don't fall in love !'

While relaxed and casual when the occasion allowed, he also attached great importance to protocol and form. He liked the right clothes for the right occasion. On matters of seating, priority and seniority, he observed the rules strictly. He insisted upon conducting cabinet meetings in a systematic and efficient manner. Unpunctual ministers were quickly rebuked and he made clear his abhorrence of short cuts and slips.

World statesmen he admired include Nasser, Sukarno and Chou-en-Lai – all now dead. All three were giants of the Third World and men who at one time or another were reviled by the western press for adhering to policies which were in the best interests of their country – a special Bhutto characteristic. Nasser always took a personal interest in Bhutto. Even when he was out of power in 1969, he invited him to visit Egypt. Of Sukarno, Bhutto went in awe: 'I worshipped Sukarno. He had a big heart and guts.' The feeling was reciprocated. Sukarno often wrote to Bhutto and in 1966 insisted upon his visiting him during his incarceration. Chou-en-Lai, perhaps; occupied the pedestal in Bhutto's estimation. He told David Frost in a television interview: 'Without casting any aspersions on the other great men of the world, Premier Chou En-Lai, like Napoleon, is a complete man. He knows about music, he knows about history, he knows about military science, he knows about what is happening in the world. He would be able to analyze the most complicated problems relating to scientific technology. He is hardworking and studious. He is fully aware of whom he is talking to and what his inclinations are.'

Bhutto put a higher premium on loyalty than intelligence or integrity. And loyalty meant personal allegiance to Bhutto, not to an ideology. As members of

his inner cabinet learned the hard way, he had no compunction in administering a blistering tongue-lashing for real or imagined shortcomings. Seasoned ministers were bawled out like village idiots with seldom any apologies later. It was the price his aides paid for sharing Bhutto's power.

There seemed nothing too small for him to involve himself with, and nothing too big. He was a nationalist, almost chauvinistically so, and yet an internationalist too. He had the sophistication to appreciate doctrines and philosophies of worldwide portent, and simultaneously grasp the details of local squabbles and provincial disputes. He could spend hours mulling over minutiae, personal anecdotes, petty incidents and conversations, all of which he could recall and recount in incredible detail, delighting in gossip about ministers and notables, their sex lives, marriages and past actions. Petty harassment and victimization of imagined and real opponents were always ordered by him personally. He could dream up absurd methods of humiliating people, and then, in a complete about-face, reinstate them and deny any personal involvement in their travails. While dispensing such rough-and-ready justice, he might be sitting in meetings with officials of the Atomic Energy Commission or considering fresh foreign policy initiatives or details of election campaign strategy – all decisions which could have a colossal impact on the future of the country.

By no stretch of the imagination could Bhutto be described as a family man. His work schedule and commitments made it impossible for him to spare much time for his wife and children. Of his four children, he was closest to his elder daughter, Benazir, who was born in 1953 when Bhutto was only twenty-five. She is an intelligent girl who has displayed an early interest in politics. She was educated at Radcliffe and then Oxford, where she successfully contested the presidency of the Union debating society in 1976. After her father was deposed by the army in July 1977 Benazir entered the political arena. She addressed public meetings and began rallying support for her father's flagging cause. Of all his children, Benazir seems to display most of her father's political magnetism. Bhutto took it upon himself to advise her on her reading and enthusiastically endorsed her political activities. For a short time she worked as an assistant director in the Pakistan Foreign Office and accompanied Bhutto to the Simla Summit Conference in 1972.

Benazir has developed in stature under the cruelest of pressure. She stood by her father like a rock as he tried to fight his way out of the death sentence imposed on him. She has represented him and wherever she has gone has managed to create an impression of guts and commitment. After Bhutto's death great hopes have been reposed in this young girl. PPP adherents are convinced that she will become the new leader and messiah to lead them along the road that her father pointed out.

His elder son Mir Ghulam Murtaza was born in September, 1954. He is a quiet boy, and seems to lack political ambition. Daughter Sanam was born in August, 1956 and the younger son, Shahnawaz, in November, 1958. Initially Murtaza seemed little involved in the personal and political crises which succeeded Bhutto's fall from power: However, after the High Court sentenced him to death, Murtaza gallantly took up his father's cause travelling all over the world and pleading for his life. Murtaza tried in every available forum to publicize his father's plight. Tragically his work was of no avail.

Nusrat never had any political ambitions. She devoted the earlier part of her married life to having and caring for her children. When Bhutto was minister in Ayub Khan's cabinet she seemed no different from the other 'Islamabad begums' carrying out official entertainment, opening flower shows and charity affairs without any predilection for political debate or involvements. She is remembered in that circle as a charming and affectionate person with no outstanding abilities other than a remarkable memory for faces and names.

When Bhutto was arrested by Ayub Khan, Nusrat was thrust, in November, 1968, for the first time into a political role. Bhutto supporters pushed her into leading demonstrations. She was mounted on trucks and reluctantly became a symbol of defiance. The campaign was a great success and on Bhutto's release she quietly retired and continued to support him with a minimum of fanfare.

Later on, as the Prime Minister of Pakistan's wife she blossomed. Her role was of necessity a public one. She executed her functions with dignity and soon earned the respect of all she met. At this stage she developed a zest for political participation and gradually entered into the cut and thrust of active politics. She became head of the female wing of the PPP and then a member of Parliament by indirect election on a reserved woman's seat.

After the army coup of 1977 Nusrat emerged as a political personality in her own right. With Bhutto's arrest and a campaign of suppression launched against the PPP, she fought like a tigress for her husband's life and to preserve the party. Renegades' like Nasurullah Khan Khattak, Kamal Azfar and Maulana Kauser Niazi were isolated and removed from the party. Slanders, physical assault and repeated incarceration were endured with a stoicism which left those around her astounded. She seemed to have absorbed all Bhutto's courage and some more. Lesser persons would have buckled under but Nusrat never flinched. The drama of the court trials and Bhutto's grisly death were tragedies which have given her stature heroic proportions.

Nusrat has emerged as the undisputed leader of the PPP. Her travails, her loyalty to her husband and her commitment to the poor people of Pakistan have in the eyes of the traditionalist Pakistani masses lifted her on to a pedestal as a mother figure. She seems to combine all the legendary qualities of humility, decency and endurance which they can look up to and which epitomize the eastern woman. And under all this is a shrewd political person, with many of her husband's virtues and without his tragic flaws.

Nusrat is a formidable political personality of the future. Upon her and Benazir's shoulders Bhutto's political mantle has fallen. She is the focus around whom the various disparate and factional forces of the PPP will rally. Barely a few days after Bhutto's death Hafiz Pirzada renounced any claims to the leadership of the PPP by publicly advocating that Nusrat Bhutto be made 'Chairman for life'. Party workers all over the country have recognised her and Benazir as the true heirs of Bhutto – an early warning to any ambitious party members who may feel that Bhutto's demise presents them with an opportunity.

Bhutto had an outsize ego to match his achievements. Any kind of criticism was not well taken. Indeed, he found it almost physically uncomfortable to endure. A journalist who once described him as 'balding' was severely rebuked. Although he had the perception to discern any practised duplicity, he remained dangerously susceptible to flattery. When in power, he succumbed increasingly to this weakness. Flatterers and sycophants found favour. Public officials and bureaucrats tried to deify him, naming tournaments, parks and debating contests after him – empty tributes which soon disappeared after his removal as head of government.

Curiously, he had a deeply ingrained concern as to how history would judge him. His role during 1971 which ended in Pakistan's truncation often agitated his mind. After he came to power he would again and again repeat and reiterate the contradictory forces he then faced Mujibur Rahman's 'insincerity towards the concept of Pakistan' and Yahya Khan's 'treachery'. Yet oppressiveness towards the end of his regime, marred his chance of the special place he always dreamed of. 'I will not go down in history as a rigger of elections', he insisted after the March 1977 election debacle. His death however redeemed his claim. He has become a symbol which, watered by the tears of the poor, will only grow with time. If the impact of an individual on history is accepted – and in Pakistan's case, with its undeveloped institutions, it must be – then he has influenced events more than any other Pakistani politician, including Jinnah.

All his life he had a quality that held the eye. Impressive to visitors, magnetic to crowds and attractive to women, he dominated any group. His undoubted achievements – directing and propelling a new foreign policy, stabilizing

Pakistan from the ashes of defeat after the 1971 Indo–Pakistan war, organizing and leading the mass demonstrations which toppled Ayub Khan, giving Pakistan a constitution creating a movement and against overwhelming odds to win the general election of 1970, politicizing an entire nation – ensures him a place among the greatest of Third World politicians. On the other side, there was authoritarianism, an unscrupulousness, a predilection for vendettas and an intolerance of criticism. He could and did stoop to any means to achieve his ends. Political opponents were harassed, humiliated and tortured. Institutions were destroyed and official procedures were trampled underfoot whenever Bhutto felt the need. For all these faults Bhutto managed to retain the adoration of the populace. His charisma, extensive political skills and populist appeal have made him a legend. His continuing popularity will ensure that his long shadow will be felt for years to come. The politics of Pakistan were haunted by Bhutto as long as he remained alive and now even more so after his death.

On 4th April, 1979, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was buried according to tradition in the old Ghari Khuda Buksh family graveyard. Carried in an army helicopter his body made its final journey back to his ancestral village. All shops and businesses in the village and nearby Larkana closed in respect. Maulvi Mahmood Bhutto read the *namaz-e-janaza* (the last prayer) and then a procession of sobbing villagers, led by clansmen Sardar Pir Buksh Bhutto and Sardar Nabi Buksh Bhutto carried his coffin. Many members of his family were interned, abroad or not able to reach there in time. Intermittently the procession would halt so that fresh mourners could have the honour of giving their shoulders to the coffin. Occasionally in Sindhi they would cry '*Sain Bhutto ayo* – Bhutto has come'. Weeping and reciting from the Holy Koran they lowered his body into the grave and then shoveled earth over the coffin with their hands. The mortal remains of Sindh's most famous son were interred, but a legend, watered by the tears of millions, was born to live on.

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