

Saturday Review



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Genocide in East Pakistan

The most fundamental of all rights—the right of a man to come to the aid of a fellow human being—is now being denied with a degree of official arrogance seldom displayed in recent history.

The people of East Pakistan, who are still suffering from homelessness and hunger caused by the tidal waves of less than a year ago, are now caught up in a man-made disaster. Their land has become a locked-in arena of authorized slaughter. Communications with the outside world have been reduced almost to the vanishing point. Those who have offered emergency medical aid or other help have been told to stay out.

The present situation has its remote origins in the division of the Indian subcontinent into two nations in 1947. The movement for independence from Great Britain had been complicated and imperiled by the existence of Hindu and Moslem blocs. Great Britain had fostered the concept of a partitioned subcontinent in which India would be predominantly Hindu and Pakistan would be predominantly Moslem. For a long time, Gandhi and Nehru had opposed partition, believing it imperative for both religious orders to be accommodated within a single large national design. Gandhi and Nehru withdrew their opposition to partition, however, when it appeared certain that national independence might otherwise be indefinitely delayed.

The design for partition called for two nations. Actually, three nations

emerged. For Pakistan was partitioned within itself, into East and West. The Western part was larger geographically and became the capital. The Eastern part was more populous and richer in resources. The units lay more than 1,000 miles apart.

In order to comprehend the geographical anomaly this physical separation represented, one has only to imagine what would have happened if Main and Georgia had decided to form a separate nation, Maorgia, with practically the whole of the United States lying in between. Let us further suppose that the capital of the new nation would have been Augusta, Northern Maorgia, while most of the people and resources would have been in Southern Maorgia. The result would have been an administrative, political, and economic shambles. What has happened in Pakistan roughly fits that description. Further compounding the situation are the severe cultural and historic differences between Punjabi (West) and Bengali (East) societies.

For a time, the peoples of East and West Pakistan were held together by the spiritual and political exhilaration of a new nationalism. But the underlying difficulties grew more pronounced and visible year by year. The people of East Pakistan chafed under what they felt was West Pakistan's latter-day version of British colonialism. They claimed they were not being represented in proportion to their numbers in either high posts or policies of government. They charged they were being exploited economically, fur-

nishing labor and resources without sharing fairly in the profits from production. They pointed to the sharp disparity in wages and living conditions between East and West.

It was inevitable that the disaffection should reach an eruptive stage. There is no point here in detailing the facts attending the emergence of political movements seeking self-rule for East Pakistan. All that need be said is that the central government at Islamabad finally did agree to submit self-rule propositions to the East Pakistan electorate. The result of the general election was an overwhelming vote in favor of self-rule. The central government at Islamabad not only failed to respect this popular decision, but ordered in armed troops to forestall implementation. The official slaughter began on March 26th.

A few documented episodes:

1) Tanks and soldiers with submachine guns and grenades seized Dacca University early in the morning on March 26. All students residing in Iqbal Hall, the dormitory center, were put to death. The building was gutted by shells from tanks.

2) One hundred and three Hindu students residing in Jagannath Hall of Dacca University were shot to death. Six Hindu students were forced at gunpoint to dig graves for the others and then were shot themselves.

3) Professor C. C. Dev, widely respected head of the Department of Philosophy, was marched out of his home to an adjacent field and shot.

4) The last names of other faculty members who were killed or seriously wounded: Minirussaman, Guhathakurta, Munim, Naqui, Huda, Ignasali, Ali.

5) Central government troops forced their way into Flat D of Building 34 at the university, seized Professor Muniru Zaman, his son; his brother (employed by the East Pakistan High Court), and his nephew, and marched the group to the first-floor foyer, where they were machine-gunned.

6) A machine gun was installed on the roof of the terminal building at Sadarghat, the dock area of Old Dacca. On March 26, all civilians within range were fired upon. After the massacre, the bodies were dragged into buses. Some were burned. Some were dumped into the Buriganga River, adjacent to the terminal.

7) On the morning of March 28, machine guns were placed at opposite

ends of Shandari Bazaar, a Hindu artisan center in old Dacca. Central government forces suddenly opened fire on civilians trapped in the bazaar. The corpses were strewn on the street.

8) On the evening of March 28, soldiers invaded Ramna Kalibari, an ancient small Hindu settlement, killing all the occupants (estimated at 200). On March 29, about one hundred corpses were put on display in the village.

9) The flight of civilians from Dacca was blocked at gunpoint.

10) On the morning of April 2, forty soldiers entered a village named Barda, rounded up the male population (approximately 600) and marched them at gunpoint to Gulshan Park, where they were interrogated. Ten members of the group were then taken off; their fate is unknown.

The foregoing represents a small fraction of the authenticated accounts that in the aggregate tell of widespread killings, especially of youth and educated people. It is futile to attempt to estimate the number of dead or wounded. Each city and village has its own tales of horror. It is significant that the government at Islamabad, until only last week, enforced vigorous measures to keep out reporters.

The U.S. State Department is in possession of authenticated descriptions not just of the incidents mentioned above but of countless others. Such reports have been sent to Washington by the American Consul General in Dacca and by American physicians attached to AID. For some reason, the State Department has issued no report covering the information at its disposal.

American guns, ammunition, and other weapons sent to Pakistan were used in the attack on Bengali people. So were weapons from the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

The United Nations has been helpless in the present situation. The central government in Pakistan claims it is dealing with an internal situation beyond the jurisdiction of the U.N.

This may help to explain why the U.N. has so far been unable under its Charter to take action against what appears to be a provable case of genocide. But it doesn't explain why men of conscience have not stood up in the United Nations to split the sky with their indignation.

The central government at Islamabad has forestalled efforts to send food, medicine, and medical personnel into the devastated zones. It seems inconceivable that this decision can be allowed to stand. The Bengalis may not possess political sovereignty, but

they do possess human sovereignty under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

The United States has not hesitated to speak sharply and effectively wherever its national interests were involved. Americans have every right to expect the United States to speak sharply when the human interest is involved. If the United States can find it

within its means and its morality to send guns to Pakistan, it can also find it within its means and its morality to send food and first aid.

The President has said that events in Vietnam represent a test of American manhood. The proposition is dubious. What is certain, however, is that events in Pakistan are a test of American compassion and conscience. —N.C.

Elmo Roper



—Wide World

Elmo Roper, whose name has become synonymous with scientific public opinion polling, died last week at the age of seventy. For the past sixteen years, Mr. Roper had also been an SR Editor-at-Large.

At home in the broad arenas of public affairs, business, education, politics, and journalism, Mr. Roper was one of the most influential and respected men in the political and sociological life of the nation. He was both innovator and advocate, architect of ideas and activist. He was an adviser to Presidents and a significant force for social good. He was one of the first in his field to recognize the fundamental importance of public opinion to business. He believed that the well-being, indeed the survival, of private enterprise depended on the enlightened good citizenship of corporations, and on the corresponding need of business to make this philosophy and approach understood by the American people. He was a prime force in the development of SR's annual awards for public-

interest advertising. He stressed the need to harmonize a corporation's desire for profits with public service as the basic means of ensuring corporate progress and stability. The growing acceptance by American business leaders of the concept of corporate responsibility in the public interest was described by Mr. Roper as "the single most important business development of the twentieth century."

Elmo Roper became nationally known after he forecast the 1936 landslide of President Franklin D. Roosevelt within 1 per cent of the final vote. Rival pollsters had predicted almost certain victory for Alf M. Landon, FDR's Republican opponent. Mr. Roper's scientific polling methods catapulted him to prominence and established the social importance of polling, which went far beyond its original use as a rather crude marketing tool. Through his vision and pioneering efforts, polling became a basic social tool in the United States and other countries, widely used and relied on by statesmen, politicians, business leaders, editors, and social scientists.

For many years, Mr. Roper wrote a widely syndicated and influential column on the currents and tides of public opinion. He also wrote numerous articles for *SR*, *Fortune*, and other magazines. He created the distinguished *Fortune* magazine opinion survey in 1935. He was the author of various books on public affairs and public leadership.

His wisdom and wry wit, his compassion and generosity of spirit in his approach to human problems and social issues, his unremitting efforts to improve the techniques and professional standards of polling—all this made him a respected leader among his peers and disciples in public opinion polling, and a cherished friend. He personified the responsible good citizenship he advocated. He served his profession, his time, and his nation well. SR's editors and readers will miss him.

—N.C.
W. D. P.