

Jinnah's dream of unity dissolves in blood

By **KENNETH CLARKE**,
who returned from Karachi yesterday.

CIVIL war in Dacca seems to spell the final, bloody end to the dream of unity between the two peoples of Pakistan, separated by 1,000 hostile miles of India and tenuously linked by a solitary thread, religion.

That was the dream of Mahommed Jinnah, "Founder of Pakistan."

Fighting again broke out in the East wing, which teems with over 70 million Bengalis, just when it seemed there might be a slender chance to compromise on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's demand for almost complete autonomy in the East and counter-demands from Mr Bhutto, the Western leader.

Bhutto blamed

President Yahya Khan went to Dacca 12 days ago for talks with the Sheikh and his Awami League leaders. Mr Bhutto finally consented to join them there.

It was Mr Bhutto, threatening to boycott the National Assembly, who was blamed for precipitating the crisis.

President Yahya, warning the nation that the army would go to any lengths to retain Pakistan's "integrity," postponed the session to Thursday this week. Again it was put off.

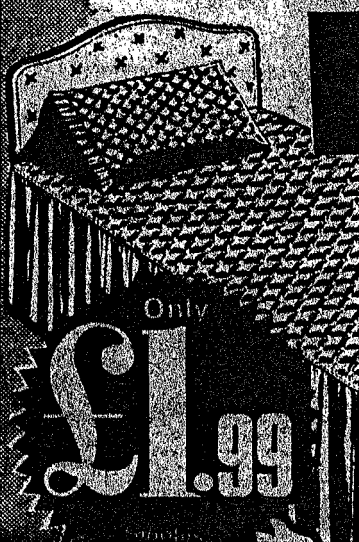
This, it was thought, was to give the two political leaders and the military ruler more time to sort out an interim form of Government that would transfer power from the army to the politicians.

At last December's peaceful elections the league scored a big overall majority for both wings of Pakistan. Mr Bhutto's People's party had the biggest vote in the Western provinces.

At the beginning of this week, all the principals were round the table in Dacca and conferring with their party chiefs. With his appeal to preserve some semblance of unity, President Yahya seemed to have done the impossible and carried the two leaders to a point of near agreement.

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"It's settled," screamed headlines in West Pakistan newspapers. But in the East, an area of proliferating population, famine, disaster and decay, they were still counting their dead—officially 172—from clashes between rioters, police and the Army three weeks earlier.

When it has been said that Pakistanis in both East and West wings are Moslems the similarity ends. The Bengalis are more typically Asian than their Western "brothers."

Inferior breed

The Westerners generally regard the people of the East wing as an inferior breed. There are, in fact, two Pakistans.

The Bengalis, responding totally to Sheikh Mujib's call for non-violent non-co-operation, grew more undernourished as food ran out. They live under strict military curfew.

Under Sheikh Mujib's six-point plan for independence, only overseas and defence affairs would be left to a central government. Mr. Dhutto, making warning noises in Karachi, began to prate about civil disobedience and equal autonomy for West Pakistan.

Then, miraculously, they got together. Why did it all go wrong?

President's limitation

I was told in Karachi that President Yahya, who says he called elections to enable the Army to return to barracks, does not speak for all the military commanders.

There has been talk of a possible coup and there is reliably said to be a clique of more hawkish officers whose pressure may finally have driven President Yahya into a doomed attempt to impose rule of the gun on "Bangla Desh"—the self-proclaimed Free Bengal.

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