

THE SUNDAY

A Sunday Times reporter comes out of Pakistan with the horrifying story of why five million have fled

GENOCIDE



Anthony Mascarenhas

WEST PAKISTAN'S Army has been systematically massacring thousands of civilians in East Pakistan since the end of March. This is the horrifying reality behind the news blackout imposed by President Yahya Khan's government since the end of March. This is the reason why more than five million refugees have streamed out of East Pakistan into India, risking cholera and famine.

The curtain of silence is broken today for the first time by Anthony Mascarenhas, the Sunday Times correspondent in Pakistan. He has seen what the Pakistan army has been doing. He has left Pakistan to tell the world.

The army has not merely been killing supporters of the idea of Bangla Desh, an independent East Bengal. It has deliberately been massacring others, Hindus and Bengali Muslims. Hindus have been shot and beaten to death with clubs simply because they are Hindus. Villages have been burned.

Sporadic and unconfirmed reports of atrocities by the Pakistan army have been reaching the outside world for some time, notably from refugees, missionaries and diplomats. The report by Anthony Mascarenhas—appearing in full on pages twelve to fourteen today—is a detailed eye-witness account of unique precision and authority. He supplies the missing centre-piece of the tragedy of Bengal: why the refugees have fled.

There is a remarkable story behind Anthony Mascarenhas's report.

When, at the end of March, the Pakistan army flew two divisions into East Pakistan to "sort out" the Bengali rebels, it moved in secret. But about two weeks later the Pakistan government invited eight Pakistani journalists to fly to East Bengal. The idea—as government officials left the

journalists in no doubt—was to give the people of West Pakistan a reassuring picture of the "return to normalcy" in the eastern half of the country. Seven of the journalists have done as they were intended. But one was Mascarenhas, who is assistant editor of the Morning News in Karachi, and was also The Sunday Times Pakistan correspondent.

On Tuesday, May 18, he arrived, unexpectedly, in The Sunday Times office in London. There was, he told us, a story he wanted to write: the true story of what had happened in East Bengal to drive five million people to flight.

**FULL REPORT
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He made it plain that he understood that if he wrote his story there could be no going back to Karachi for him. He said he had made up his mind to leave Pakistan: to give up his house, most of his possessions and his job as one of the most respected journalists in the country. There was only one condition: we must not publish his story until he had gone back into Pakistan and brought out his wife and five children.

The Sunday Times agreed, and Mascarenhas went back to Karachi. After a wait of ten days an overseas cable arrived at the private address of a Sunday Times executive.

"Export formalities completed," it read, "Shipment begins Monday."

Mascarenhas had succeeded in getting permission for his wife and family to leave the country. He himself had been forbidden to leave. He found a way of leaving anyway.

On the last leg of his journey inside

Pakistan, he found himself sitting in a plane across the aisle from a senior Ministry of Information official whom he knew well. A phone call from the airport could have led to his arrest.

There was no phone call, however, and last Tuesday he arrived back in London.

Mascarenhas writes about what he saw in East Pakistan with special authority and objectivity. As a Goan Christian by descent, he is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim. Having lived most of his life in what is now Pakistan, having held a Pakistani passport since the State was created in 1947, and having enjoyed the confidence of many of the leaders of Pakistan since that time, he wrote his report with real personal regret.

"We were told by the Ministry of Information officials to show in a patriotic way the great job the army was doing," he told us.

There was no question of his reporting what he saw for his own paper. He was allowed to file a story, which was published in The Sunday Times on May 2, which reported only the events of March 25/26 when the Bengali troops mutinied and atrocities were committed against non-Bengalis.

Even references to the danger of famine were deleted by the censor. That increased his crisis of conscience.

After some days' hesitation, he decided, in his own words, that "either I would write the full story of what I had seen, or I would have to stop writing. I would never again be able to write with any integrity." And so he got on a plane and came to London.

We have been able to check his story in great detail with other refugees in a position to have had wide knowledge of events in East Bengal as a whole, and with objective diplomatic sources.