

West Pakistan Pursues Subjugation of Bengalis

The following dispatch was written by a correspondent of The New York Times who was expelled from East Pakistan on June 30 following a tour of the area.

By **SYDNEY H. SCHANBERG**
Special to The New York Times

NEW DELHI, July 13—Army trucks roll through the half-deserted streets of the capital of East Pakistan these days, carrying "antistate" prisoners to work-sites for hard

labor. Their heads are shaved and they wear no shoes and no clothes except for shorts—all making escape difficult.

Every day at the airport at Dacca, the capital, planes from West Pakistan, over a thousand miles across India, disgorge troops dressed in baggy pajama-like tribal garb to appear less conspicuous.

Street designations are being changed to remove all Hindu names as well as those of Bengali Moslem nationalists as part of a campaign to stamp out Bengali culture. Shankari Bazar Road in Dacca is now Tikka Khan Road, after the lieutenant general who is the martial-law governor of East Pakistan and whom most Bengalis call "the Butcher."

Economy Viewed as Crippled

Those are but a few of the countless evidences, seen by this correspondent during a recent visit to the eastern province, that Pakistan's military regime is determined to make its occupation stick and to subjugate the region of 75 million people. The West Pakistanis are doing so despite a crippled economy, the collapse of governmental administration, widening guerrilla activity by the Bengali separatists, mounting army casualties and an alienated, sullen population.

To insure troop strength in East Pakistan, the Government has leased two Boeing 707's for a year from a private Irish-owned charter airline, World Airways, to carry reinforcements for an army put at 70,000 to 80,000 men and replacements for casualties.

In addition to the daily

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troops arrivals, the Government is bringing in wave upon wave of West Pakistanis to replace East Pakistanis in Government jobs. No Bengali is trusted with a responsible or sensitive post; even the man who cuts the grass at the Dacca airport is a non-Bengali.

Few Bengali taxi drivers remain. Their jobs have been given to non-Bengali Moslem migrants from India such as the Biharis, who have identified and sided with the West Pakistani-dominated Government and who are serving as the army's civilian arm, informing and enforcing.

The West Pakistanis are discouraging the use of the Bengali language, and trying to replace it with their own, Urdu. Soldiers tell the Bengalis disdainfully that theirs is not really a civilized tongue and that they should start teaching their children Urdu if they want to get along. Merchants, out of fear, have replaced their signs with signs in English because they don't know Urdu.

'Peace Committees' Formed

Throughout East Pakistan the Army is training new paramilitary home guards or simply arming "loyal" civilians, some of whom are formed into peace committees. Besides Biharis and other non-Bengali, Urdu-speaking Moslems, the recruits include the small minority of Bengali Moslems who have long supported the army—adherents of the right-wing religious parties such as the Moslem League and Jamaat-e-Islami.

In the election last December those parties failed to win a single seat for East Pakistan in the National Assembly.

In a sense the election spawned the crisis, for the Awami League, an East Pakistani party campaigning for more self-rule for the province, unexpectedly won a national majority. With the previously suppressed Bengalis about to assume a strong national role, the leading political group of West Pakistan, the Pakistan People's party, refused to attend the coming session of the National Assembly, which was to have written a new constitution to restore civilian rule. President Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan responded by postponing the session, set for March 3.

Negotiations and Attack

Protests and rioting erupted in East Pakistan, and the Bengalis answered the Awami League's call for a noncooperation movement in defiance of the military.

The President flew to Dacca to negotiate with the Awami League leader, Sheik Mujibur Rahman. During their negotiations, on the night of March 25, the army launched a surprise attack on the largely unarmed civilian population to try to crush the autonomy movement. The league was banned and Sheik Mujib jailed as a traitor.

The initial Bengali resistance—led by men in the police and national army who had switched allegiance—was quickly routed, but it is now emerging from its Indian-bor-

der sanctuaries, with new recruits and supplies, to wage Vietnam-style guerrilla warfare—and cause increasing torment to the army.

Since the offensive began the troops have killed countless thousands of Bengalis—foreign diplomats estimate at least 200,000 to 250,000—many in massacres. Although the targets were Bengali Moslems and the 10 million Hindus at first, the army is now concentrating on Hindus in what foreign observers characterize as a holy war.

The West Pakistani leaders have long considered the Hindus as subverters of Islam. They now view them as agents of India, which has been accused of engineering the autonomy movement to force Pakistan's disintegration.

Of the more than six million Bengalis who are believed to have fled to India to escape the army's terror, at least four million are Hindus. The troops are still killing Hindus and burning and looting their villages.

West Pakistani officials insist, however, that normalcy is returning and have appealed to the Hindus to "return to their homes and hearths," assuring them that they have nothing to fear. Only a handful of refugees have returned and the reception centers the Government has erected to show foreign visitors remain largely deserted.

Seeking Restoration of Aid

Army commanders recently spread the word that low-caste Hindus were welcome to return to their homes. Observers view the gesture cynically, pointing out that without the low-caste Hindus—menial laborers, sweepers and washermen—the army has no one to do its dirty work.

Apart from the refugees in India, there are in East Pakistan millions of displaced Bengalis who fled their homes when the army came and are still afraid to return.

Recently there have been signs that the troops have been ordered to carry out their operations more subtly and less in the public eye. The orders, ac-

ording to foreign diplomats, are inspired by Pakistan's desire to persuade an 11-nation consortium to resume economic aid, temporarily suspended in censure of the army repression.

[A special mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which coordinates the aid program, has reported that the ravages by the military in East Pakistan will require that development efforts be suspended for at least a year. The mission made a widespread survey of the province in May and June.]

Diplomats in Dacca attribute Pakistan's decision to allow foreigners to travel freely through East Pakistan and to readmit foreign newsmen—who had been barred since the offensive began except as participants in Government-guided tours—as part of the campaign to restore the aid.

Nonetheless the killing, though it is more selective and less wholesale, has not stopped and the outlook, most observers believe, is for a long and bloody struggle.

Bengalis Pass the Word

Foreign missionaries, who are posted even in the remotest parts of East Pakistan, report new massacres almost daily. One missionary said that the army recently killed over 1,000 Hindus in a day in a section of Barisal District, in the south. Another reported that in Sylhet District, in the northeast, a "peace committee" called a meeting of all the residents of one area, ostensibly to work out a reconciliation. When everyone had gathered troops arrived, picked out the 300 Hindus in the crowd, led them away and shot them.

Whenever a Bengali talks to a foreigner in public he is running a risk. At ferry crossings Bengalis sidled up to this correspondent's car to whisper a few scraps of information about army terror or, with a quick smile, about a raid by the guerrillas of the liberation army.

As soon as six or seven people gathered a West Pakistani soldier or policeman would saunter over, glowering at the

Bengalis, and they would melt away.

The presence of the army and its civilian informers notwithstanding, the Bengalis somehow find a way to tell their stories to the foreign visitor—by slipping notes into his car or arranging clandestine meetings.

At one such meeting in a town not far from Dacca, a merchant related that a soldier arrested him one day for no reason, confiscated his money and watch and took him to the police station, where he was jailed for a night before being—miraculously, he felt—released.

The merchant said he had spent the night praying and reading the messages that covered the walls of his cell—scrawled there by previous prisoners. The messages, he said, were nearly all alike, giving the name and address of the prisoner and the date of his arrest and saying: "I may not live. Please tell my family what happened to me."

Not one of them has been heard from since, the merchant added.

Property Damage Heavy

The killings have been matched by the property damage the army has inflicted everywhere. In the countryside—for miles at a stretch some times—villages have been burned to the ground on both sides of the road. In the cities and towns large areas have been reduced to rubble by heavy gunfire.

The Bengalis say the troops were simply bent on wanton destruction. The army says that it never fired unless fired upon, but field commanders boast that in most towns there was little or no resistance.

Why all the devastation? they are asked. It was all done by "miscreants," is the stock answer.

Though some Bengalis are trickling back to population centers, most towns still have only half or less of their original numbers, and parts of some areas, like the northwest region, are virtually deserted.

Fields of untended rice are choked with weeds. On jute plots where dozens of farm laborers once toiled only a few bent backs can be seen. East Pakistan's jute, the tough fiber for gunny sacks, is the mainstay of the national economy, being the biggest single export and earner of foreign exchange. All signs indicate that the coming crop will be a poor one.

Even if the crop were good, the jute factories, with much of their skilled labor gone, could not handle it. They are operating far below capacity.

River Traffic Harassed

The insurgents continue to harass river traffic, trying to disrupt military movements and prevent harvested jute from reaching the factories. They have already sunk several jute barges in the Jessore-Khulna region, a rich jute area.

The East Pakistani tea industry has been even more badly crippled, and the Government has reportedly had to order two million pounds from foreign sources for West Pakistani consumers.

West Pakistan's economy is one of the roots of the blood-



Associated Press
AFTER MARKETPLACE WAS BOMBED: Bengalis cleaning up rubble after two-story brick building was shattered in Jessore, East Pakistan, during fighting in May. Bitterness between the Army and many residents persists.

shed. Another is the wide ethnic gap between the light-skinned, Middle Eastern Punjabis who dominate in the western wing and the dark-skinned, Southeast Asian Bengalis of the east. Except for their common religion, Islam, the two peoples are as different as can be.

From Pakistan's formation 21 years ago, the more prosperous western wing with a minority (55 million) of the population, was looked down on and exploited the poorer Bengali majority. The Bengalis grew bitter as they watched the foreign exchange earned in the east go to pay for the West Pakistani-dominated army and build the industries and development projects of the west.

Even the few development projects in East Pakistan have been halted now because of the terror, insecurity and lack of civilian administration in the countryside.

Resistance Seems to Grow

Nevertheless, the military, by rounding up laborers, has finally gotten the key ports of Chittagong and Chalna functioning again at a reasonably effective level, but there are goods to load onto outgoing ships except what was in warehouses before the fighting.

Food shortages are becoming serious in some areas and experts predict that the situation could reach famine proportions unless the army can restore the disrupted transport system and distribute available food.

Such restoration does not seem likely because the Bengali resistance, though still disorganized, appears to be gathering momentum—with increasing assistance and sanctuary, and sometimes covering fire, from India.

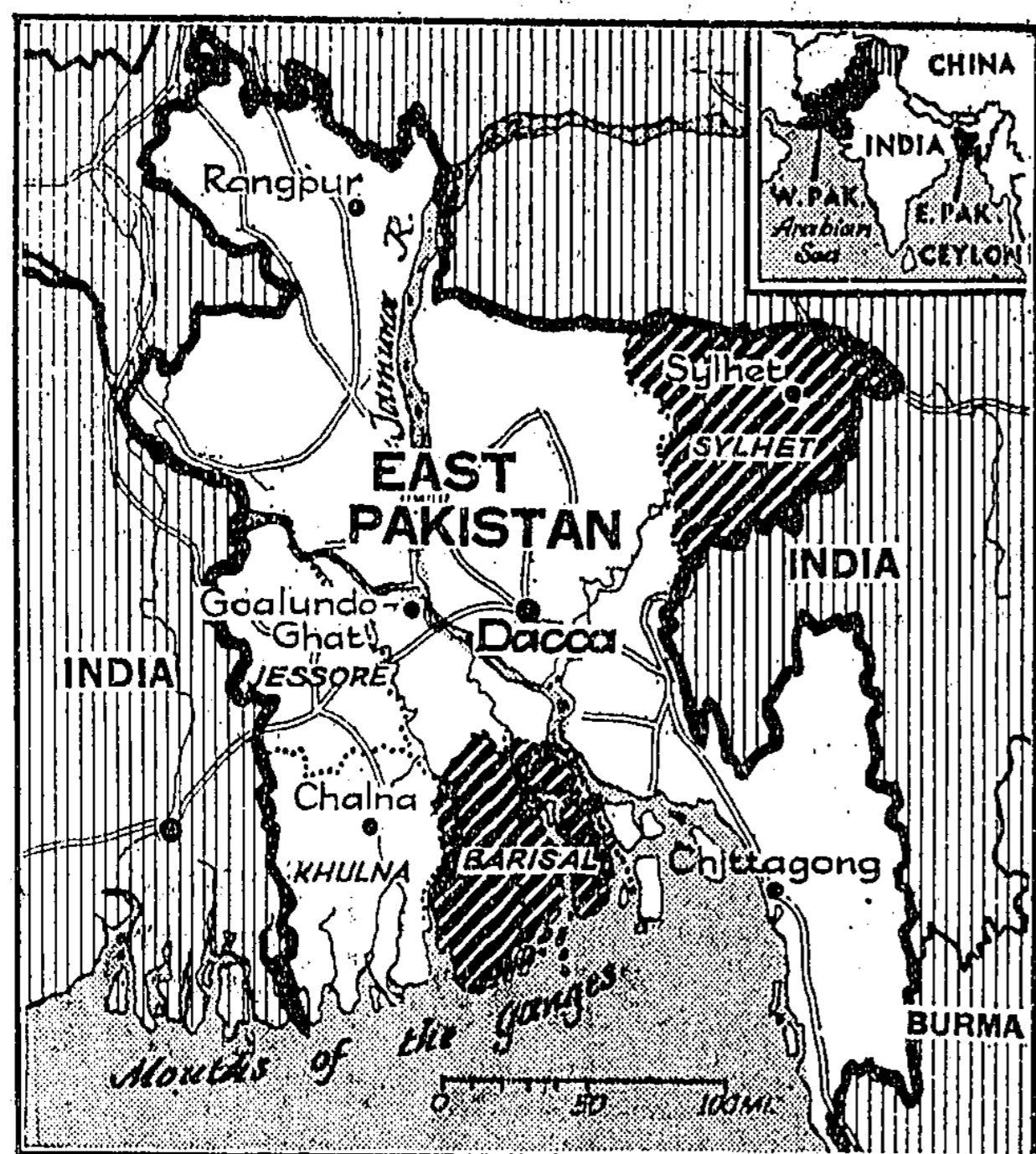
Thousands of young Bengalis are being trained in demolition and guerrilla tactics—often on the Indian side of the border,

with India providing many of the instructors. The first elements of the new guerrillas are beginning to flow back into East Pakistan.

More and more road and railway bridges are being blown up and electrical power supplies

knocked out. Some of the demolition work has been expert. Road mines are becoming common. Often the army, which is on combat alert, cannot get local contractors to repair the damage, so it uses forced labor, with meager results.

Outside Comilla not long ago the guerrillas blew a rail bridge. A repair train was sent out with army guards. The guerrillas attacked the repair train in broad daylight, killing the fireman and taking a hostage. The train sped back into town.



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Large-scale killings by the Pakistani army have been reported in the districts indicated by diagonal shading.