

PAKISTAN OFFERS SEIZED TV FILMS

Distributes Footage From
Newsmen for Propaganda

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE

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KARACHI, Pakistan, Oct. 23 — Television film confiscated from foreign news teams last March by Pakistani Army authorities has been distributed by the Pakistani Government for use as propaganda, it has been disclosed.

Last March 26, several hours after the Pakistani Government ordered its army units in East Pakistan to crush separatist resistance, about 40 foreign correspondents covering East Pakistan were expelled.

In Dacca, East Pakistan, and Karachi, West Pakistan, they were relieved of almost all their notes, manuscripts, still photographs and movie and television films. A few items were sneaked out of Pakistan, but the only news team whose material was not seized was the one from Communist China. While the United States is the main supplier of foreign aid to Pakistan, China is regarded by the Pakistan Government as its main friend.

In a meeting with foreign correspondents here this week, Aslam Azhar, general manager of Karachi's Government-operated television station, disclosed that seized foreign television film had been made available for Pakistani propaganda films.

Produced 2 Films

Mr. Azhar produced two propaganda movies on the East Pakistani situation under contract to the Pakistan Government's Department of Films and Publications. "I was offered the use of two cans of the confiscated film," Mr. Azhar said. But he said he did not use the film in his movies and did not know which branch of the Government had offered it. Much of the footage, he said, dealt with events that took place before March 25, and Government cameramen arrived in the eastern province later. Mr. Azhar said he had purchased some footage from Visnews, an international news and feature-film syndication service.

The movies purported to show that the Pakistan Army had been entirely justified in quelling an armed revolt in East Pakistan in which rebels had allegedly killed 100,000 people before troops moved in. Among the foreign television organizations with teams in Dacca during violence on March 25-26 were Visnews, the Columbia Broadcasting System, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and teams from Hong Kong and Japan. Mr. Azhar's disclosure was the first from a quasi-official source that confiscated foreign news material was distributed by the Pakistani Government.

The consulates of all the countries whose newsmen were involved have repeatedly complained to the Pakistani Government about the seizures and demanded that the film and other property be returned to their owners but all such pleas have been ignored.

Among the items seized by the Pakistan Army was the manuscript of a book on Japan by Selig S. Harrison, a correspondent on The Washington Post. Pakistan's President, Gen. Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, was asked at a news conference several months ago whether the Government intended to return the manuscript to its owner.

"Let the Japanese ask for themselves," the President replied. "Mind your own business."

There have been persistent reports in East Pakistan that army policemen have made extensive use of seized notes, address books, texts of interviews and similar material taken from foreign correspondents in tracing and prosecuting political opponents.

According to one report, some of this material has been used as evidence against the imprisoned leader of East Pakistan's Bengali population, Shiek Mujibur Rahman, head of the East's dominant party, the Awami League.

Search for Evidence

Shiek Mujib has been undergoing trial in secret for "waging war against Pakistan." At least three East Pakistan newsmen are said by colleagues to have been called to testify for the trial.

All were compelled to make written depositions against Shiek Mujib, and one was flown under guard to West Pakistan to give evidence at the trial, associates say. The other two reportedly escaped and went underground rather than go to West Pakistan to testify.

None of the material confiscated from foreign newsmen, including personal letters, receipts or other items is known to have been returned.

At the time of the seizure, a Pakistani office told the newsmen, "Now you will have nothing but your memories." Most correspondents later wrote of the fighting and killings that engulfed Dacca and other East Pakistani towns.

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