

PAKISTANI GROUP HELPS BOTH SIDES

Razakars Inform on Army and on Separatists

By **BARUN ROY**

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CALCUTTA, India, Nov. 16 —The razakars are no more the hated group they used to be. They have found a new role that makes them acceptable, at least partly, to the separatist guerrillas of East Pakistan.

The role is that of the double agent. The razakars, employed primarily by the West Pakistanis to keep watch and report on the activities of the Bangla Desh (Bengali Nation) forces, have reportedly been helping the guerrillas lately with vital information about the West Pakistanis.

The word razakar means servant of the king. It was originally adopted in the nineteen-forties by militant Moslems who were resisting the integration into Hindu India of the State of Hyderabad.

Organized Last Spring

The term was revived last May to identify a right-wing force being organized by the Pakistanis. The razakars now are a composite group consisting of West Pakistani policemen, members of the Moslem League, the Jamaat-i-Islami party and drafted men. There are 6,000 to 7,000 razakars.

Moslems and Hindus alike have charged that razakars spied on them, tortured and killed their people. Their supposed mission is to police small towns the Pakistani Army normally does not reach. They are also supposed to get information about the outlawed Awami League and to counteract the league's propaganda.

Since the Pakistani Army usually communicates with the razakars before it goes into action in a small town or village, they know about impending raids hours ahead. There is thus plenty of time to warn the rebel commandos to leave or to take defensive positions.

"We are killing the razakars no more," a spokesman for the guerrillas said yesterday. "That is, not if we are not forced to. That is not profitable, because we do need all the information they can give."

The spokesman said that many recent successes scored by the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Forces), as the guerrillas are called, and around Dacca, the provincial capital, were due to information that had come primarily from the razakars.

But information is not the only thing the razakars provide the guerrillas. They also provide the rebels with protective cover.

If the razakars are in an area, the army, which patrols the main roads, usually leaves the place alone. It is not that all the razakars are sympathetic to the guerrillas. There are many in their ranks who are strong haters of Bengalis.

Spying Has Its Limits

But by and large, the tendency among the razakars is to be helpful to the Mukti Bahini while remaining a passive ally of the army.

The role of double agent suits the razakars. The role, virtually, is that of single agent since the razakars give the Pakistanis only as much information about the separatists as will not jeopardize their safety as far as the other side is concerned. By playing double agent, a razakar saves his skin.

Thousands of razakars have been killed by the guerrillas since they were recruited by the Pakistanis in May. The recruits brought the wrath of the Mukti Bahini down on their heads because they took part in the killing, looting and burning that followed the Bengali declaration of independence of March 26.

According to a Mukti Bahini spokesman, they are now a demoralized group and are rarely active in any significant way.

Hundreds have surrendered to the liberation forces and are still surrendering in many sectors. The spokesman said an added factor that is forcing the razakars to deal with the guerrillas is the growing realization that Pakistan cannot win.