

Over the Eid-ul-Adha holidays, the bareness of Dhaka streets was occasionally interrupted by people covering their head with a heavy scarf, in trying to ward off the cold. A friend said in jest that in the past such garb has been used as an excuse to hide oneself from being seen.

When Pakistan President Iskander Mirza declared martial law in 1958 and appointed army commander-in-chief Muhammad Ayub Khan chief administrator, the state machinery quietened all and sundry with the fear factor. It worked for but a little over a decade of regress.

Yahya Khan photocopied everything ten years later. The effect was almost transitory.

When unleashing the most brutal and ruthless attacks in history on the civilian population of its eastern wing in 1971, the Pakistan Army tried to instil fear in the Bangalee. Bangladesh became independent and Pakistan as a country collapsed as the Bangalee population overcame the initial trepidation. Razakars and other collaborators tried to extend the terror but surrendered on 14 December as the greatest cowards mankind has ever seen.

The intense and persistent fear of a specific object, situation, or activity -- in this case the military and state police -- has been defined as phobia. Under that situation people are scared to face a law-enforcer, talk to strangers or even known people. Nervousness, worry and unease take over. Whereas phobia is often unfounded and exemplifies a circumstance blown usually out of proportion, fear is for real.

Most people are afraid of something or the other. The list of phobias surprised me for not only having excluded cockrophia (fear of cockroach) or tiktikiphobia (fear of the domestic lizard), or for ignoring the very popular examophobia, but because being afraid of the army or the police or even the secret police is not a phobia; it has to be fear. It is real.

Guilty as their leaders were, the Pakistanis are not the founders of state terrorism. In fact, the Russian tsars introduced in 1825 the Okhrana, which means 'protection'. This was the birth of the secret police. These tsar loyalists could capture, try and punish anybody, and they were given full judiciary as well as executive powers.

The list in Russia is long but the most famous has to be the KGB, which is short for Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti or State Security Committee. The KGB was the government agency of the USSR in charge of the Soviet political police from 1954 to 1991. The KGB, the last in a series of Soviet security agencies was officially disbanded when the USSR collapsed. During its years of operation the agency's main directive was to protect the Soviet regime from internal and external threats by means of a vast police and spy network.

## Fear is Never the Key

### CHINTITO

#### Phobia: Feared Object, Situation or Activity

Acrophobia	Heights
Aerophobia	Flying
Agoraphobia	Open spaces, public places
Alchmophobia	Sharp pointed objects
Anthropophobia	People
Aquaphobia	Water
Batrachophobia	Frogs, amphibians
Blenophobia	Slime
Brontophobia	Thunder
Carcinophobia	Cancer
Clinophobia	Going to bed
Cynophobia	Dogs
Dementophobia	Insanity
Emetophobia	Vomiting
Entomophobia	Insects
Genophobia	Sex
Hematophobia	Blood
Herpetophobia	Reptiles
Homilophobia	Sermons
Monophobia	Being alone
Mysohobia	Dirt and germs
Nudophobia	Nudity
Numerophobia	Numbers
Nyctophobia	Darkness, night
Ochlophobia	Crowds
Ophiophobia	Snakes
Ornithophobia	Birds
Phasmophobia	Ghosts
Phobophobia	Phobias
Pnigophobia	Choking
Pogonophobia	Beards
Pyrophobia	Fire
Siderodromophobia	Trains
Taphophobia	Being buried alive
Thanstophobia	Death
Trichophobia	Hair
Triskaidekaphobia	The number 13
Trypanophobia	Injections
Xenophobia	Strangers
Zoophobia	Animals

The KGB's domestic functions included closely monitoring the Soviet people and suppressing expressions of political discontent. The KGB also was responsible for guarding Soviet borders, protecting party and government leaders, and enforcing security in the Soviet armed forces.

The KGB relied on a vast network of secret informers and a sophisticated surveillance technology to carry out its domestic mission. Authorized by law to conduct investigations of people suspected of anti-Soviet behaviour, the KGB sent hundreds of so-called dissidents off to forced labour camps. In some cases the KGB avoided court trials by simply having people declared insane and committed to psychiatric hospitals.

Formed in 1922, conflict over constitutional and economic issues brought the Soviet Union to the brink of civil war and prompted its disintegration into 15 volatile successor states in 1991.

Nazi tyrant Adolf Hitler's trusted lieutenant Hermann Göring introduced the Gestapo 1933. As a nucleus he used the political section of the police of the Weimar Republic, but he extended it greatly, removed from it all legal and constitutional restraints. Its purpose was to persecute all political opponents of the Nazi regime (including dissenting Nazis), not only defensively, in cases of oppositional acts, but also preventively, in cases of suspected or potential opposition. In this role, the Gestapo was to collaborate with the SD (Sicherheitsdienst, or Security Service), an organization of the Nazi Party; the SD did the intelligence work that served as the basis for Gestapo operations. Suspects were arrested and usually placed in concentration camps. It was at the Gestapo's discretion whether or not the arrested were brought to trial and whether or not they were released if acquitted. The tyrant did not last and it is widely believed that killer dictator Adolf Hitler committed suicide in 1945.

The Savak (National Intelligence and Security Organization) of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran is another secret police that served an autocrat ruler. With the help of the military and later the Savak (a secret police) the shah created a centralized, authoritarian regime. He suppressed opposition, tightly controlled legislative elections, and appointed a succession of prime ministers loyal to him. The shah's regime suppressed and marginalized its opponents with the help of Savak. Needless to say, popular uprisings brought down the mighty shah's mighty government.

It's unbelievable that the KGB and the Gestapo, ruthless as they were, had trials for the people they apprehended. What sort of a trial?

Source: Encarta 2004