

GENOCIDE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

The enormous financial outlay already made on the East Bengal operation and the continuing heavy cost also testify to the government's determination. The reckless manner in which funds have been poured out makes clear that the military hierarchy, having taken a calculated decision to use force, has accepted the financial outlay as a necessary investment. It was not for nothing that 25,000 soldiers were airlifted to East Bengal, a daring and expensive exercise. These two divisions, the 9th and the 16th, constituted the military reserve in West Pakistan. They have now been replaced there by expensive new recruitment.

The Chinese have helped with equipment, which is pouring down the Karakorum highway. There is some evidence that the flood is slowing down: perhaps the Chinese are having second thoughts about their commitments to the military rulers of Pakistan. But the Pakistan government has not hesitated to pay cash from the bottom of the foreign exchange barrel for more than \$ 1million worth of ammunition to European arms suppliers.

Conversations with senior military officers in Dacca, Rawalpindi and Karachi confirm that they see the solution to this problem in the speedy completion of the East Bengal operation, not in terms of a pull-out. The money required for that purpose now takes precedence over all other governmental expenditure. Development has virtually come to a halt.

In one sentence, the government is too far committed militarily to abandon the East Bengal operation, which it would have to do if it sincerely wanted a political solution. President Yahya Khan is riding on the back of a tiger. But he took a calculated decision to climb up there. So the army is not going to pull out. The government's policy for East Bengal was spelled out to me in the Eastern Command headquarters at Dacca.

It has three elements:-

(1) The Bengalis have proved themselves "unreliable" and must be ruled by West Pakistanis;

(2) The Bengalis will have to be re-educated along proper Islamic lines. The "Islamisation of the masses" -- this is the official jargon -- is intended to eliminate secessionist tendencies and provide a strong religious bond with West Pakistan;

(3) When the Hindus have been eliminated by death and flight, their property will be used as a golden carrot to win over the under-privileged Muslim middle-class. This will provide the base for erecting administrative and political structure in the future.

This policy is being pursued with the utmost blatancy.

Because of the mutiny, it has been officially decreed that there will not, for the present, be any further recruitment of Bengalis in the defence forces. Senior air force and navy officers, who were not in anyway involved, have been moved "as a precaution" to non-sensitive positions.

Bengali fighter pilots, among them some of the aces of the air force, had the humiliation of being grounded and moved to non-flying duties. Even PIA air crews operating between the two wings of the country have been strained clean of

Bengalis.

The East Pakistan Rifles, once almost exclusively a Bengali para-military force, has ceased to exist since the mutiny. A new force, the Civil Defence Force, has been raised by recruiting Biharis and volunteers from West Pakistan.

Biharis, instead of Bengalis, are also being used as the basic material for the police. They are supervised by officers sent out from West Pakistan and by secondment from the army. The new superintendent of police at Chandpur at the end of April was a military police major.

Hundreds of West Pakistani government civil servants, doctors, and technicians for the radio, TV, telegraph and telephone services have already been sent out to East Pakistan; More are being encouraged to go with the promise of one and two-step promotions. But the transfer, when made, is obligatory. President Yahya recently issued an order making it possible to transfer civil servants to any part of

out of sensitive positions in the Civil and Foreign Services. All are currently being subjected to the most exhaustive screening.

This colonisation process quite obviously does not work even half as efficiently as the administration wishes. I was given vivid evidence of this by Major Agha, Martial Law Administrator of Comilla. He had been having a problem getting the local Bengali executive engineers to go out and repair the bridges and roads that had been destroyed or damaged by the rebels. This task kept getting snarled in red tape, and the bridges remained unrepaired. Agha, of course, knew the reason. "You can't expect them to work," he told me, "when you have been killing them and destroying their country. That at least is their point of view, and we are paying for it."

Captain Durrani of the Baluch Regiment, who was in charge of the company guarding the Comilla airport, had his own methods of dealing with the problem. "I have told them," he said with

were soundly beaten in the general elections last December.

The only prominent personality to emerge for this purpose has been Mr. Nurul Amin, an old Muslim Leaguer and former chief minister of the province, who was one of only two non-Awami Leaguers to be elected to the National Assembly. He is now in his seventies. But even Nurul Amin has been careful not to be too effusive. His two public statements to date have been concerned only with the "Indian interference."

Bengalis look with scorn on the few who "collaborate." Farid Ahmad and Fazlul Quader Chaudhury are painfully aware of this. Farid Ahmad makes a point of keeping his windows shuttered and only those who have been scrutinised and recognised through a peephole in the front door are allowed into the house.

By singularly blunt methods the government has been able to get a grudging acquiescence from 31 Awami Leaguers who had been elected to the



Mascarenhas exposed the brutality and racism of the Pakistani forces to the rest of the world.

Pakistan against their will.

I was told that all the commissioners of East Bengal and the district deputy commissioners will in future be either Biharis or civil officers from West Pakistan. The deputy commissioners of the districts were said to be too closely involved with the Awami League secessionist movement. In some cases, such as that of the deputy commissioner of Comilla, they were caught and shot. That particular officer had incurred the wrath of the army on March 20 when he refused to requisition petrol and food supplies "without a letter from Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

The government has also come down hard on the universities and colleges of East Bengal. They were considered the hot beds of conspiracy and they are being "sorted out". Many professors have fled. Some have been shot. They will be replaced by fresh recruitment from West Pakistan.

Bengali officers are also being weeded

reference to the Bengalis maintaining the control tower, "that I will shoot anyone who even looks like he is doing something suspicious." Durranni had made good his word. A Bengali who had approached the airport a few nights earlier was shot. "Could have been a rebel," I was told. Durranni had another claim to fame. He had personally accounted more than 60 men while clearing the villages surrounding the airport.

The harsh reality of colonisation in the East is being concealed by shameless window dressing. For several weeks, President Yahya Khan and Lt.Gen. Tikka Khan have been trying to get political support in East Pakistan for what they are doing.

The results have not exactly been satisfying. The support forthcoming so far has been from people like Moulvi Farid Ahmad, a Bengali lawyer in Dacca, Fazlul Quader Chaudhury and Professor Ghulam Azam, of the Jamaat-e-Islami, all of whom

national and provincial assemblies. They are being kept on ice in Dacca, secluded from all but their immediate families, for the big occasion when "representative government" is to be installed. But clearly they now represent no one but themselves.

Abdul Bari, the tailor who was lucky to survive, is 24 years old. That is the same age as Pakistan. The army can of course hold the country together by force. But the meaning of what it has done in East Bengal is that the dream of the men who hoped in 1947 that they were founding a Muslim nation in two equal parts has now faded.

There is now little chance for a long time to come that Punjabis in the West and Bengalis in the East will fell themselves equal fellow-citizens of one nation. For the Bengalis, the future is now bleak: the unhappy submission of a colony to its conquerors.