Part-IX: Genocide In Bangladesh By Pakistani army 1971

Dakah, 26 July, (Asiantribune.com): Bangladesh was created after the India-Pakistan War of 1971, a conflict—elaborated in this report—that was preceded by the massacre of an estimated two million East Pakistani citizens and the ethnic cleansing of 10 million (mainly Hindus), who fled to India from that country. In the summary of his report dated November 1, 1971, US Senator Edward Kennedy (D - Massachusetts) wrote:

Field reports to the U.S. Government, countless eye-witness journalistic accounts, reports of International agencies such as World Bank and additional information available to the subcommittee document the reign of terror which grips East Bengal (East Pakistan). Hardest hit have been members of the Hindu community who have been robbed of their lands and shops, systematically slaughtered, and in some places, painted with yellow patches marked ‘H’. All of this has been officially sanctioned, ordered and implemented under martial law from Islamabad.”

"They (Hindus) come out of East Pakistan in endless columns, along trails stained with tears and blood. They are dressed in rags, robbed of everything they owned, the women raped, the children gaunt from hunger. They have been on the move for up to a month, hiding from Pakistani soldiers by day, slogging through flooded rice paddies at night. A vengeful army pursues them to the very border of India. Rifle and machine gun fire crackles.

The bedraggled columns scatter for cover. But soon they are moving again, streaming into India. Sobbing violently, a middle-aged man says, “The soldiers took my two nephews. They kicked them with their boots, ducked them in an open sewer, then machine-gunned them. After that, they took 50 to 60 young men of our village into a field and killed them whit bayonets”.

A woman who was shot in the leg clutches her daughter and says, “We were just about to cross the border when they started shooting at us. I don’t know what happened to my husband”. A ten-year old boy, who lost an eye when an army patrol threw a grenade at him as he
was ending cattle in a field, says, “Can anyone tell me what happened to my parents?” Since late last March in 1971, when the Pakistani army launched this genocidal attack on the defenseless population of East Pakistan, more than eight million people have been driven from their native land. Millions more will surely follow. Moreover, the refugees have put grave strains on India, pushing India and West Pakistan to the brink of a war that could involve the two arch rivals of the communist world, the Soviet Union and China, The Readers' Digest wrote in November 1971.

. ..While the horrors of the refugees are bad enough, something even more ghastly is going on inside East Pakistan, also known as East Bengal, Reader Digest added: An American missionary in Dacca grits his teeth and says, “It’s murder - mass murder”. The military junta that Pakistan has tried to cover up the atrocities, and maintains that East Bengal has largely returned to normal. But one of the authors of this article, who spent two weeks there last August, found evidence to the country on every hand. Touring three districts of East Bengal by car, he found not a single village or town that had not suffered at the hands of the troops. Many towns were half-empty, homes and shops looted and burned, people either dead, driven into exile or hiding in the country side. Perhaps a third of Dacca’s population is gone; its economy is crippled and its people are so terrified that no one ventures outdoors at night. Not far from Dacca, a missionary said, “The soldiers killed 249 people in our village. Fortunately for the wounded, high-powered bullets tear right through them, so the doctors didn’t have to probe.” A farmer in a refugee camp along the Indian side of the border said, “The headmaster of our school was sitting on the veranda of his home, grading examination papers, when the soldiers dragged him out into the road and cut his throat.” Said another refugee, “The soldiers forced the doctor in our village to dig his own grave; then they shot him.” A doctor in a border hospital pointed to a woman who had been raped repeatedly by the troops in the presence of her four children after the soldiers had killed her husband.

“On the afternoon of March 25, Yahya, having broken off the talks with Mujib, returned to West Pakistan. At 11 O’ clock that evening, Tikka Khan was unleashed.Suddenly, all of Dacca rocked with explosions. Troops opened fire with artillery on the city; tanks rumbled throughout the streets, gunning down anything that moved. The dormitories of the university, a stronghold of Bengali nationalism, were riddled by machine-gun fire. The invading soldiers went on a rampage in the old city, a particular political stronghold of Mujib, breaking down doors,
dragging people into the street and shooting them. Shops were looted and burned. the barracks of the pro-Mujib Bengali police were gutted by tank cannon. Troops burst into a telephone exchange and killed 40 persons on duty.Special West Pakistani army squads had lists of people-professors, doctors, businessmen and other community leaders - whom they dragged off to army headquarters. Most have never been seen again. Although Mujib’s followers urged him to go into hiding, Mujib refused. Tikka’s troops took him off to imprisonment and an uncertain fate in West Pakistan. With Dacca in ruins, Tikka sent his troops into the countryside, and in each town the ghastly pattern was repeated. Anyone associated with the Awami League was killed. Young men, Muslim and Hindu alike, were rounded up and murdered. In almost every town, refugees report, women were raped.

...The Indian government is making every effort to care for these piteous people, but the influx is so staggering that new miseries await them there. For instance, in one of more than a thousand squalid refugee camps in India, 150,000 people live in straw hovels surrounded by mud and filth. There are few latrines. and the stench is such that people cover their faces with cloth.

Because of the vast numbers, refugees have to wait in line for as long as ten hours for their food rations - ¾ pound of rice a day per adult, plus some lentils, vegetables when available, and a little salt and cooking oil. The children suffer the most. Many are beginning to look like the starving children of Biafra, their ribs protruding, their stomachs distended. Almost all suffer from malnutrition or dysentery. Life-giving milk and other protein foods are available in some of the camps, but the rush is so great that many children never get any. A doctor at a border hospital says, “the children die so quickly that we don’t have time to treat them.” [ *Article by David Reed and John E. Frazer, Readers’ Digest, November, 1971. ] "

The birth of Bangladesh in 1971 was a unique phenomenon- it was the first nation state to emerge after waging a successful liberation war against a post colonial state. The nine-month-long liberation war in Bangladesh drew world attention because of the genocide committed by Pakistan which resulted in the killings of approximately three million people and raping of nearly a quarter million girls and women. Ten million Bengalis reportedly took refuge in India to avoid the massacre of the Pakistan army and thirty million people were displaced within the country(Loshak,1971; Marcarenhas, 1971; Payne, 1973 ;Ayoob and Subramanyan, 1972; O’Donnell, 1984,Rounaq,2005,p.65)
Eye Witness Accounts

On the night of 25-26 March on the orders of General Yahya and the Pakistani ruling clique the Pak forces armed with mortars, cannons and recoilless guns attacked the citizen in their sleep.

In an attempt to drown in blood and silence in terror the upsurge of Bengali Nationalism, the military junta of Yahya Khan unleashed the most barbaric war of extermination against the entire people of Bangladesh. In the wake of this war the occupation Pakistani Army indulged in an unparalleled orgy of wanton loot, rape, murder and destruction. It is these gruesome happenings which have been characterized by U Thant, the Secretary General of the United Nations, as “one of the most tragic episodes in human history” and as “a very terrible blot in the page of human history.”

Loren Jenkins of Newsweek, New York, was in Dhaka on March 25-26 and here is what he reported: “When the army decided to strike, it attacked without warning. Houses were machine-gunned at random. It was a blatant exercise in terror and vengeance, there can never be any excess for the sort of fire-power we saw and directed against unarmed civilians. There can be no excuse for the mescal’s burning of the shanty homes of some of the most impoverished people.” (April 12, 1971).

On March 25, 1971, the Pakistan army launched Operation Searchlight to 'eliminate' the Awami League and its supporters in East Pakistan. The goal was to 'crush' the will of the Bengalis. The killing began shortly after 10 pm. In the first 48 hours the orgy of killing had ravaged Dhaka city.

The Hindu population of Dhaka took the brunt of the slaughter. Dhaka University was targeted and Hindu students were gunned down. Mujib was arrested shortly after declaring Bangladesh independent. The rest of the Awami League leadership went into hiding and those that survived eventually fled to India. The genocide had just begun.

On February 22, 1971 the generals in West Pakistan took a decision to crush the Awami League and its supporters. It was recognised from the first that a campaign of genocide would be necessary to eradicate the threat: 'Kill three million of them,' said President Yahya Khan at the February conference, 'and the rest will eat out of our hands.' (Robert Payne, Massacre [1972], page 50.)
On March 25 the genocide was launched. The university in Dhaka was attacked and students exterminated in their hundreds. Death squads roamed the streets of Dhaka, killing some 7,000 people in a single night. It was only the beginning. Within a week, half the population of Dhaka had fled, and at least 30,000 people had been killed. Chittagong, too, had lost half its population.

All over East Pakistan people were taking flight, and it was estimated that in April some 30 million people were wandering helplessly across East Pakistan to escape the grasp of the military. (Payne, Massacre, page 48.) Ten million refugees fled to India, overwhelming that country's resources and spurring the eventual Indian military intervention. (The population of Bangladesh/East Pakistan at the outbreak of the genocide was about 75 million.)

But the will of the Bengali people was not broken on the night of March 25, 1971. On the contrary, while Dhaka burned, so did the illusion of a united Pakistan.

Yahya Khan and the Pakistan army planned their genocide well. Yahya Khan aimed to crush the Bengali spirit once and for all. Before the crackdown all foreign journalists were expelled from East Pakistan. Only a handful managed to evade the Pakistani army.

One of them was Simon Dring. On March 30, 1971 he filed a chilling report of the massacre that took place in Dhaka on the night of March 25. Dring reported that in 24 hours of killing, the Pakistan army slaughtered as many as 7,000 people in Dhaka and up to 15,000 people in all of Bangladesh.

The Pakistan army employed tanks, artillery, mortars, bazookas and machine guns against the unarmed population of Dhaka. Their targets were students, local police, intellectuals, political leaders, Awami League supporters, Hindus and ordinary citizens. They carried out their ruthless killing spree with military precision.

Dring described the attack on Dhaka University as follows:

'Led by American-supplied M-24 World War II tanks, one column of troops sped to Dacca University shortly after midnight. Troops took over the British Council library and used it as a fire base from which to shell nearby dormitory areas.
'Caught completely by surprise, some 200 students were killed in Iqbal Hall, headquarters of the militantly antigovernment students' union, I was told. Two days later, bodies were still smoldering in burnt-out rooms, others were scattered outside, more floated in a nearby lake, an art student lay sprawled across his easel.

'Army patrols also razed nearby market area. Two days later, when it was possible to get out and see all this, some of the market's stall-owners were still lying as though asleep, their blankets pulled up over their shoulders.'

The 'old town' quarter of Dhaka city was singled out for destruction by the Pakistanis because of strong Awami League support there and because there were many Hindu residents in the area. Here is how Simon Dring described the attacks on unarmed civilians:

'The lead unit was followed by soldiers carrying cans of gasoline. Those who tried to escape were shot. Those who stayed were burnt alive. About 700 men, women and children died there that day between noon and 2 pm, I was told.

'In the Hindu area of the old town, the soldiers reportedly made the people come out of their houses and shot them in groups. The area, too, was eventually razed.

'The troops stayed on in force in the old city until about 11 pm on the night of Friday, March 26, driving around with local Bengali informers. The soldiers would fire a flare and the informer would point out the houses of Awami League supporters. The house would then be destroyed -- either with direct fire from tanks or recoilless rifles or with a can of gasoline, witnesses said.'

After having massacred 15,000 unarmed civilians in a single day, the Pakistani soldiers bragged about their invincibility to Simon Dring:

"These bugger men," said one Punjabi lieutenant, "could not kill us if they tried."

"Things are much better now," said another officer. "Nobody can speak out or come out. If they do we will kill them -- they have spoken enough -- they are traitors, and we are not. We are fighting in the name of God and a united Pakistan." In the name of God and a united Pakistan, genocide had just begun.
Don Coggin, correspondent of Time, New York, reporting from Dacca wrote: “Before long, howitzer, tank, artillery and rocket blasts rocked half a dozen scattered sections of Dacca. Tracers arched over the darkened city. The staccato clatter of automatic weapons were punctuated with grenade explosions and tall columns of black smoke towered over the city. In the night came the occasional cry of ‘Joi Bangla’ (victory to Bengal) followed by a burst of machine gun fire” (Time, New York, April 5, 1971).

Saturday Review, edited by Norman Cousins, reported: “A machine gun was installed on the roof of the terminal building at Sadarghat, the dock area of old Dacca. On March 26, all civilians within range were fired upon. After the massacre, the bodies were dragged into buses, some were burned. Some were dumped into the Buriganga river, adjacent to the terminal,” (Saturday Review, May 22, 1971).

Quoting reports from British citizens who were evacuated from Dacca a few days after the start of the military operations, Guardian, London, April 5 wrote.

Another British eyewitness account described how troops in Dacca shot nine professors, their families, and 21 students in one of the University resident buildings. Similar attacks were alleged to have taken place in three halls. At Tanti Bazar, troops surrounded the area and set fire to the bamboo and thatched houses in an area of a quarter of square mile where thousands lived. Women and children who attempted to flee were machine-gunned and bayonetted.

“Two small Hindu villages on the infield of the Dhaka horse-racing tract (near the central district) were surrounded by the army and every man, woman and child was massacred. Three days later, a heap of bodies, three feet high, remained where they fell when they were machine-gunned.”

Sanders, an Englishman, is an eye-witness to the ghastly rape of the Bengali girl students at the Rokeya Hall of the Dacca University. In an impassioned letter to the editor of the Blitz, Bombay (April 11), Sanders wrote: “April 2, 1971. It was around 5 p.m. when about 350 to 400 Pakistani troops attacked the hall. They entered all the rooms lodging the girls and dragged them out, tearing off their clothing one by one. The girls were pinned down to the floor, face upwards, leg mercilessly pulled apart and fully stretched then finally the brutal act of ramming. It was at this juncture that 50 brave girls jumped to their death from the hall instead of falling into the hands of the barbarians.”
Not only in Dhaka, but also in Chittagong, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Jessore, Khulna, Dinajpur, Pabna and Kushtia as well as in scores of villages, Yahya Khan’s West Pakistani army committed such atrocities on hundreds and thousands of Bangali women. Even old women and literally kids of twelve years were not spared. All foreign correspondents have testified to this horrible rape of Bangali womanhood.

Another leading U. S. Journal made the comments: “Three is no doubt that the word massacre applies to the situation. It’s a veritable blood bath. The troops have been utterly merciless. It was like Genghis Khan, said a shocked Western official.” (Time, April12).

Here is another report on the carnage in Dacca by victor Chen, who had been visiting Dacca as a tourist (Newsweek April 19,1971).

“The houses were burned down, and some were still smoldering....... literally dozens of dead bodies were strewn all over the place, many of them small kids, all of them riddled by bullets.

Here are other reports on “Reign of Terror” let loose in Chittagong.

“The Americans evacuated from Chittagong told Newsweek's Tony Clifton that the bitter fighting there had reduced East Pakistan’s largest port to a ghost town.” (NewsWeek, April 19,1971).

“In a civil war already marked by brutality, the lightning attacks were notable for their savagery. In the port city of Chittagong, Pakistani troops forced Bengali prisoners to ride on the front of a truck, shouting 'victory for Bengal' an Independence slogan. When other Bengalis emerged from their hiding places, the Pakistanis opened fire with machineguns.” (Newsweek, April 26,1971). The same issue of Newsweek further reported: “In the cities of Sylhet and Comilla along the eastern border, West Pakistani firepower routed the followers of Mujibur Rahman and left the bodies of scores of dead peasants to the wild dogs.” Martin Woollacott, Guardian’s correspondent, reported from near Jessore, a vital road and rail centre:

“West Pakistani troops have sent patrols out from their cantonments in Jessore to mortar and burn villages close to the town.”

“Fires were springing up in all direction...... Some 500 yards beyond flames were visible as the thatched roofs of houses in the next village caught fire”.
“In the fields lay farm implements that peasants had abandoned earlier when a Pakistani aircraft appeared overhead”. (Guardian, April 4, 1971).

**Locked In Arena Of Authorized Slaughter:**

The Pakistani Nazis wanted to hide the ugly truth from the world. So they bundled out all foreign journalists of the country and took away all reports, films etc. from them. Here is how Loren Jenkins of Newsweek (April 12) describes that episode:

“Two hours later, we were herded into four army trucks and taken under guard to Dacca airport, where we were searched and most of our notes and films were confiscated. A plane carrying representatives and relief of the International Red Cross was turned back from Karachi by the Pakistani Govt. which refused permission for proceeding to Dacca”.

In this connection, the Saturday Review of May 22 editorially commented:

“Their land (East Bengal) has become a locked arena of authorized slaughter. Communication with the outside world has been reduced almost to the vanishing point. It is significant that the Government at Islamabad enforced vigorous measures to keep out reporters.”

Time correspondent Don Coggin was among the expelled foreign journalists. He, however, trekked back from India to become the first American journalist to visit Dhaka since the fighting started. His report (Time, May 3): "Now it has become a city of the dead, a month after the army struck, unleashing tank guns and automatic weapons against largely unarmed civilians in 34 hours of wanton slaughter. Dhaka is still shocked and shuttered, its remaining inhabitants living in terror under the grip of army occupation. The exact toll will never be known, but probably more than 10,000 were killed in Dhaka alone. Perhaps half the city’s population has fled to outlying villages. With the lifting of army blockades at road and river ferry exits the exodus is resuming. Those who remain venture outdoors only for urgent food shopping. Rice prices have risen 50% since the army started burning grain silos in some areas. In any case, 14 of the city's 18 food bazaars were destroyed. The usually jammed streets are practically empty and no civil Government is functioning. The most savage killing occurred in the old city where several sections were burned to the ground. Soldiers poured gasoline around entire blocks, igniting them with
flame-throwers, then mowed down people trying to escape the cordon fire. They’re coming out! A Westerner heard soldiers cry, ‘kill the bastards.’ ‘One Bengali businessman told of losing his son, daughter-in-law and four grandchildren in the fire....Few apparently survived in the destroyed section’s 25 square blocks of the old city. If they escaped the flames they ran into gunfire.....To frighten survivors, soldiers refused to allow the removal of decomposing bodies for three days, despite the Moslem belief in prompt burial, preferably within 24 hours, to free the soul....‘We can kill anyone for anything’ a Punjabi captain told a relative, ‘we are accountable to no one.’”

After a six-week news blackout, six foreign correspondents were allowed by the Pakistani Government to have an escorted tour inside Bangladesh. According to an eyewitness account in the New York Times of May 11,’71 issue by its correspondent, "War, sabotage and staggering absentee rate at key facilities have virtually paralyzed Chittagong port." His dispatch further said, "typical of the situation in Chittagong is the state of a complex of apartment building of the electric supply company which used to be occupied by 1,000 Bangalis. The buildings are now almost empty, walls bear the marks of bullets and apartments gutted. The army came in and opened fire on every thing, many people were killed and rest have gone away, entire neighborhoods in Chittagong have been demolished." (The Statesman, May 12,’71). Louis Krar, Time correspondent, was a member of the journalists’ team. Time of May 24 reports: .... “The journalists, carefully staged to make the Government’s improbable tale at least look convincing. Army escorts for the six newsmen spared no efforts to clean up, screen off or simply avoid shell-pocked buildings, burned-out Bengali settlements left by Tikka Khan’s jet and tanks ... The army was not at all eager to let the journalists look around on their own.”

While walking through Natore, Louis Krar reported, "I found myself in the Hindu section of town. It was totally destroyed, a pile of rubble and ashes, as I walked, a young Bengali pressed close and explained that he was a student. ‘We are living in terror of the army,’ he told me. ‘Until to-day, when you came, they have been killing people.’... Just about everywhere the killing had followed a typical pattern: Government troops would try to liberate, a rebel-held town in a deliberately provoking manner.... the army would pounce with everything it had. At Mymensingh, a town north of Dhaka, that meant an air strike by Pakistan jets and a five-hour shelling by two American-made M. 34 tanks.....Many of Mymensingh Bengali sectors are in ruins, and about 90% of its pre-civil war population has fled or been killed.
Vulture The Only Winners

Associated Press correspondent Mart Rosenblumm, another member of the team, reported (The Statesmen, May 13, 1971): "Responsibly estimates of all death start at five figures and range over a million. Reasoned accounts, projected from body counts at mass graves, say about 10,000 persons were shot dead or burned to death in the first few nights in Dacca... They broke into selected professors, and students' quarters executing some 14 faculty members..

Army unites shelled and set fire to two newspaper offices, then set upon the Bengali population in general... Bengali jewelry shops in the Shankaripara area were blown apart. Dacca was quickly brought under army control, but systematic killing and looting continued... The army shelled towns and fired at anything that moved. In Jessore houses were blasted off their foundations. Soldiers asked Bengalis to come out of their houses and then machine-gunned them. Some towns show gaping charred areas which foreign observers say were caused when the army seeking to flush out or punish the Bengalis, dropped canisters of gasoline from the air and set them afire. The army clearly made attempts to cover the facts, bamboo screens was created along some roads. Careful repairs designed not to look like repairs were made on University Buildings., reporters had to slip away to see the worst damage.

"Europeans likened the damage and terror to that of the hardest hit theaters of World War-II. Hardly a family emerged without a personal tragedy, a memory of death, terror and deep loss. The vultures were the only winners."

Account Of A Pakistani Journalis

These reports have now been fully confirmed by the detailed account, which has come from Anthony Mascarenhas, a top Pakistani journalist who, as he himself put it, had the opportunity to observe at first hand, both what Pakistan leaders say in the West, and what they are doing in the East.

As a matter of fact, the story behind Anthony Mascarenhas account itself is remarkable and revealing. In mid-April eight Pakistani journalists were flown (to East Bengal) at the instance of the Pakistan Government. The purpose was to give the people of West Pakistan a reassuring picture of the 'return to normalcy' in East Bengal. Seven of the journalists have done what they were intended. But one did not do
so. He was Mascarenhas, a Goan Christian by birth, holding a Pakistani passport since 1947. An Assistant Editor of the Morning News in Karachi and also the Sunday Times (London) correspondent in Pakistan, his experience was horrifying. He has seen what the Pakistani army has been doing. And he left Pakistan, gave up his home, his possessions and his job as one of the respected journalists of Pakistan. He did all these to tell the word the true story of what had happened in East Bengal. He has filed his story in the Sunday Times: "Behind Iqbal Hall a large residential building seemed to have been singled out for special attention by the army. The walls were pitted with bullet holes and a foul smell still lingered on the staircase. Neighbours said the bodies of 23 women and children had been carried only hours before. In Comilla, I witnessed at close quarters the extent of the killing. I saw Hindus, hunted from village to village and door to door, shot off hand. I have heard the screams of men bludgeoned to death in the compound of the civil administration headquarters. I have seen truckloads of other human targets and those who had the humanity to try to help them hauled off for disposal. I have witnessed the brutality of kill and burn mission as the army units, after cleaning out the rebel, pursued pogrom in the town and the villages. I have seen whole villages devastated by punitive actions. Here is one of many instances of such 'punitive actions'. We saw what this meant when we were approaching Hajiganj on the morning of April 17. A few miles before Hajiganj, rebels who were still active in the area had damaged a 15 feet bridge the previous night.

According to Major Rathore (G-2 OPS), an army had immediately been sent to take punitive action. Long spirals of smoke could be seen on all sides up to a distance of a quarter of a mile from the damaged bridge. And as we carefully drove a bed of wooden boards, with which it had been hastily repaired, we could see houses in the village on the right beginning to catch fire. Along with the above, in a systematic way Bengalis are being replaced by West Pakistanis in every sphere of life. Thus senior Air Force and Navy officers who were not involved in any way have been moved as a precaution to non-sensitive positions. Even PIA air crews operating between the two wings of the country have been strained clean of Bengalis.

In place of East Pakistan Rifles, recruiting Biharis and volunteers from West Pakistan have raised a new force the civil defence force. Biharis are also being used as the basic material for the police. Officers sent out from West Pakistan supervise them. 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.”

But why such atrocities, depredations, punitive actions and weeding out of Bengalis? Are all these acts just sporadic, senseless reaction to Bengali Nationalism? Mascarenhas offers the following explanation: "We are determined to cleanse East Pakistan once and for all from the threat of secession, even if it means killing of two million people and ruling the province as a colony for 30 years.” Senior military and civil officers in Dhaka and Comilla repeatedly told me. The West Pakistan army is doing exactly that with a terrifying thoroughness. The bone crushing military operation has two distinctive features: The cleansing process, a euphemism for massacre and the moves to turn East Bengal into a docile colony of West Pakistan.”

This proposition is upheld by the continuing slaughter and by everything else that the Government has done since March 25. The decision was coldly taken by the military leaders and they are going through with it all too coldly. What is the upshot of all these. According to Mascarenhas, "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.”

Hundred Mai Lais and Lidices

Dennis Neeid, Associated Press correspondent, says (the Statesman, June 12): "Hindus are bearing the brunt of the wide scale killing burning and looting. Pakistan troops are encouraging the populace itself to do the dirty work for them. Failure to take part in the pogrom is taken as an indication of disloyalty to the Yahya Khan regime and many are driven to in fear for their own lives.”

Newsweek’s Tony Clifton recently visited India’s refugee-logged border region and reported (Newsweek, June 28): “I have no doubt at all that there have been a hundred Mai Lais and Lidices in East Pakistan and I think there will be more.” He added, "A much-decorated officer with Patton in Europe during World War II, Gallagher, told me: 'In the war, I saw the worst areas of France-the killing grounds in Normandy but I never saw anything like that .It took all of my strength to keep from breaking down and crying.' Clifton further stated: "All this savagery suggests that the Pakistani army is either crazed by blood lust or more likely, is carrying out a calculated policy of terror amounting to genocide against: The whole Bengali Population."
Like Morning After Nuclear Attack World Bank Report

The World Bank team, headed by I. P. M Cargill, British Director of the Bank’s South East Asia Department, which made on-the-spot study of the situation in Bangladesh, also reported that atrocities reminiscent of World War-II devastation and My Lai have been committed in Bangladesh. Although the formal report has been considerably doctored. Hendric Van der Heijden, an economist member of the World Bank Mission, stated in his eyewitness account that Kushtia looked "liked a German town in World War-II after allied strategic bomb attacks. Ninety percent of the houses, shops, banks and other buildings were totally destroyed. People were setting around dazed. When we moved around, everyone fled. It was like the morning after a nuclear attack. I asked them to show me a shop where food was being sold; it was in the next 90 minutes impossible to find one. The population was down from 40,000 to 50,000." He said, "approaching Jessore, it became soon clear that was the area where the army punitive action had been very severe: from the air, totally destroyed villages were clearly visible, a building was still on fire, and to the eastern side of the runway a good many houses have been destroyed, some 20,000 people were killed in Jessore, more than 50% of the shops have been destroyed." (The Statesman, July 14). The World Bank’s formal report stated: "West Pakistan military action in East Bengal has so ravaged the country that commerce has ceased, economic activity is at a low ebb and most of the population suffer from fear and lack of confidence." The team said that despite claims by the Pakistani authorities, "The situation is indeed far from normal. Nor are there any signs that normality is being approached or that matters are even moving in that direction or that situation will improve significantly or rapidly.

"If blood is the price of people’s right to Independence, Bangladesh has overpaid. Of all the recent struggles to bring down Government and change frontier in the name of National freedom, the war in East Bengal may prove the bloodiest and briefest. On this level alone the East Pakistanis have achieved a record of suffering. But even if their movement is destroyed within a few days or weeks, it may only be a temporary defeat in a War of Liberation which will eventually be recognised as just." New Statesman on April 16, one day before the proclamation of Independence, carried under the title 'Blood of Bangladesh' in red type on its front page, the above comment.

"Mother squats weeping & points to her sons"
Standing thin legged like elderly nuns
small bodied hands to their mouths in prayer
Five months small food since they settled there
On Jessore road Mother wept at my knees

Bengali tongue cried mister Please...

<B?-- September on Jessore Road by Allen Ginsberg

“Bangladesh is at war. It has no choice but to secure its right of self-determination through a National Liberation struggle against the colonial oppression of West Pakistan,” said Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed on April 17, 1971, at Mujibnagar. The number of refugee started increasing rapidly, i.e., from the 10th April to 30th April it was 57,000 per day; 102,000 per day in May; 68,000 per day in June; 26,000 per day in July; 34,000 per day in August; 27,000 per day in September; 14,000 per day in October and 8,000 per day in November 1971.

Refugees entering India may be divided into two categories, first those who seek Government assistance. They, on arrival, report to the Reception Centers opened by the state governments. Secondly, those who go to live with their friends and relatives.

Upto November 30, 1971 the total number of refugees in the camps was 67,97,245 and outside the camps living with friends or relatives 31,02,060. The total number of camps was 825 of which 746 were situated in West Bengal, 35 in Tripura, 20 in Assam, 24 in Meghalaya and some camps in U P and Bihar.

In May, 1971 in some districts as many as 75 per cent of the total camps were located in schools and public buildings. The influx of refugees in West Bengal and Tripura had been very heavy. In June 1971, the Government of India decided that immediate programme for the dispersal of refugees in West Bengal from the border areas should be worked out. For this purpose, 50 Central Transit Camps with a capacity of 2.5 million refugees were decided to be set up either in the interior of West Bengal or in other states wherever Government land is available. In pursuance of this decision, 15 Central Transit Camps were set up in West Bengal, Tripura and Assam.
The Government of India issued a directive that refugees from East Pakistan should be registered under the Foreigners' Act, 1946 and they should obtain residence permit for stay at the place where them registered.

Time Magazine of its issue on December 6, 1971 wrote: “Today India’s worst fear is that many of the refugees will refuse to go back to East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) under any conditions. Nearly 8,00,00,00 of them are Hindus, who were singled out by the Moslem military for persecution.

Pakistan, moreover, claims that only 2,00,000 Pakistani refugees are in India-a figure that correspondence may suggest that even if there were a settlement, the Pakistanis would refuse to permit the Hindus to return. ... A confidential report recently submitted to Mrs. Gandhi’s cabinet concluded: ‘the most alarming prognosis is that not even 10% of the Hindu evacuees may choose to go back’. If this becomes a reality, it might be disastrous for West Bengal’s economy, and this economic disaster is bound to bring in its train serious socio-political problems of perhaps unmanageable dimensions.” (Time, 6/12/1971, p-12)

Quite remarkably, this genocide has been largely erased from public memory and the perpetrators escaped unpunished though identified in an official report. According to Saleem Samad, journalist and human rights observer with the normal rate of population growth, the Hindu population in Bangladesh in 1991 should have been 32.5 million. The actual population was 12.5 million. By this calculation, the number of Hindus missing from Bangladesh over two decades, ending in 1991, is already 20 million. (to be continued)

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