
Pakistan

Zia's purges and his own survival chances

by Ramtanu Maitra

During the first two weeks in March Pakistani dictator Ziaul Hag has arrested more than 10,000 supporters of the late Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the most formidable opposition to General Zia's regime. Police spokesmen said that unnamed top-level government officials were also rounded up.

According to reports from Pakistan, Zia has established two detention camps surrounded with barbed wire fences, one in Lahore Fort and the other 12 miles from Karachi. A few primary schools in Sind and Punjab provinces are also said to have been converted to detention centers.

The crackdown puts an end to press claims of "stability" in Zia's Pakistan. Even parties and individuals formerly supporting the regime are now joining the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), in which the PPP plays a leading role. The MRD now encompasses 12 parties; three new parties, including the Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP), which had formerly supported Zia, have joined the movement.

The extent of the crackdown was revealed when Maulana Noorani, president of the JUP, told a press conference that the government had turned Pakistan into a police state by arresting innocent people. Movement spokesmen also suggested that Zia is moving toward a bloodbath which will not only destroy the democratic opposition but engulf the entire region in chaos.

The mass arrests were preceded by a series of events indicating sharp foreign-policy dispute within the ruling junta. In early February, a Pakistan delegation led by the Foreign Minister Agha Shahi was in New Delhi holding preliminary talks on a "no-war pact" with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Then Shahi resigned, and was replaced by retired Lt.-Gen. Shahibzada Yaqub Khan, a man with friendly ties in Washington, where he was once Ambassador. On Feb. 24, Agha Hilaly, representing the Pakistani government at a meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, made deliberately provocative remarks against India, and the Indians canceled future talks.

Reliable sources insist that behind these developments is U.S. State Department pressure on Zia to give the United States military bases in Pakistan and to enter

an open alliance with Washington, scrapping Zia's current "non-aligned Islamic conference" profile.

Caught between the State Department pressure and the Pakistani population's growing hatred, Zia is now lashing out with mass arrests. In the process, he may so discredit himself that his fellow generals will let him collapse. One successor sometimes rumored is Gen. Fazle Muqem, a close associate of Gen. Fazle Haq. The latter was named by *EIR* last fall as part of the drug-trafficking ring in the Pakistani military.

Fazle Haq, the military governor and martial-law administrator of the Northwest Frontier Province, through which there is a gigantic flow of drugs, is the brother of Fazle Hussain, who is wanted by Interpol in connection with several cases involving drug trafficking throughout Europe.

Fazle Muqem, a retired general, is himself a close associate of General Rahimuddin, the military governor of Baluchistan, the other big drug-producing province in Pakistan. Rahimuddin's daughter is married to Zia's son, and among his associates are Europeans linked to the drug traffic.

A key controller of these generals is the London-based Agha Hassan Abedi, the founder of the Persian Gulf-based Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), who was named by late Premier Bhutto as one of the people instrumental in provoking the capital flight and social destabilization that preceded his overthrow. The BCCI is tied to the outlawed Propaganda-2 fascist lodge's financial apparatus, and to Libyan-Iranian networks.

Abedi's payroll includes such agents as Yuseof Haroon, brother of Zia's Interior Minister; Humayun Khan, Toronto-based son of Zia's newly promoted Chief of the General Staff, Lt.-Gen. Akhtar Rahman Khan; Zia's son, Ijazul Haq; and General Chisti. Chisti, who according to informed sources, runs a drug operation with the help of a front man based in Finckley, England, recently bought some real estate in Langley, Virginia, where the CIA is headquartered. Last month, Chisti went back to Pakistan, reportedly carrying a message to Zia to hasten the delivery of military bases to the United States.

Whether the State Department will sacrifice Zia or be content with shoring up the right-wing generals in his support, the overall plan is to push forward with the policy. Secretary of State Alexander Haig and Undersecretary James Buckley have pursued during the past year—from arming the Pakistani army with sophisticated weaponry to financing the drug-peddling "Afghan refugees." Now the State Department, by ignoring the documented evidence of Zia's fascist measures and large-scale drug-dealing among his generals, is instrumental in promoting an imminent bloodbath in Pakistan.