

M M Ahmad 1913-2002

Author of 'Two country' Plan?

M M Ahmad, 89, who died last July was reputedly one of Pakistan's most powerful bureaucrats. He belonged to the elite ICS (Indian Civil Service, later, CSP or the Civil Service of Pakistan) and was a district officer in 1947, but by 1966, he had risen to head Ayub Khan's powerful Planning Commission. He helped to shape the country's economic as well as defence and foreign policies.

Ayub quit in March 1969 and M M Ahmad acquired yet more influence. He emerged as economic supremo of the new Chief Martial Law Administrator, **General Yahya Khan** (d.1980). After Yahya was forced out in December 1971, M M Ahmad continued as **Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's** (d.1979) economic adviser. But a few months later, he went to Washington DC and joined the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank). There, he rose to be the deputy executive secretary of the Joint Development Committee in 1974.

However M M Ahmad's imprint on Pakistan's fiscal and development policies was to last for ever. As Yahya Khan's 'finance minister', he devalued the rupee by 131 per cent and as one economist pointed out (*Dawn*, Karachi, 1 February 2002), 'that was the start of the mounting deficit finance, inflation and trade imbalance' from which the country has not been able to free itself.

In 1974 Bhutto amended the constitution to clarify the non-Muslim status of the Qadiyani creed to which M M Ahmad belonged; yet influence over the country's bureaucratic and political elite remained unaffected. Many owed their position to his patronage and almost everyone wanted to benefit from his 'Washington connections'. In 1993, then army chief **Abdul Waheed Kakar** was looking for a caretaker prime minister to replace **Nawaz Sharif**. M M Ahmad is believed to have solved the problem. The job went to **Moeen Qureshi**, who had recently retired as executive vice president of the World Bank; he was given a Pakistani 'passport' on arrival.

M M Ahmad kept a low profile, but after the October 1999 coup, he seemed to have become the regime's 'holy man'.

He was a grandson of the Qadiyani 'prophet', **Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani**, (d.1908) and son-in-law of the second Qadiyani 'khalifa', **Mirza**

Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad (d.1965). Besides being an international bureaucrat, M M Ahmad was an active 'missionary' of his Qadiyani creed. After retiring from the World Bank in 1984 he formally became the 'amir' and 'missionary in charge' of the group in the US with headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

While many powerholders in Pakistan seemed proud of being 'secular', for M M Ahmad, it was his 'religious' vocation as a Qadiyani that really defined his relationship with Pakistan. The relationship was in conflict with the existence of Pakistan itself.

According to a Qadiyani 'prophecy', revealed a few months before the independence of Pakistan, if at all India and Pakistan did separate, it would be 'transient' and the Qadiyanis were asked to try to bring an end to this phase soon. (*Al-Fazal*, 4 April 1947 and 17 May 1947)

In a 1995 article, 'Pearls of Memory' (*Al-Nahl*, Spring 1995), M M Ahmad wrote that close to independence, he was 'designated by Pakistan' as additional deputy commissioner of Amritsar to take over the charge of the district if it was awarded to Pakistan. One day the British deputy commissioner of Amritsar told him 'casually that Gurdaspur district is likely to go to India'. The award of Gurdaspur gave India a land corridor to Jammu and Kashmir and so enabled it to occupy the territory after three months.

A preliminary version of the award was ready on 8 August 1947. The definitive version was with the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten (d.1979) on 12 August. However, Mountbatten informed India and Pakistan on 16 August - after the 'process of the Transfer of Power had been completed'.

M M Ahmad gives no date when this 'top secret' information was given to him. However, instead of rushing to report the matter to the Government of Pakistan, he travelled to Qadiyan to inform his 'khalifa'. This contrasted with the conduct of Indian officers who immediately reported any sensitive leak or information to **Nehru** (d.1964) and Nehru took it up with Mountbatten.

We hear of M M Ahmad in another CSP officer, **Qudratullah Shihab's** memoirs, *Shihab Nama*, (Sang-e-Meel, Lahore, 1991) that the 1965 war with India was 'a Qadiyani conspiracy'. It was

planned by 'an able Qadiyani officer, **Major General Akhtar Husain Malik**' and 'backed by several powerful people, among them, at the top of the list was said to be Mr M M Ahmad'. Shihab checked this with the West Pakistan governor **Nawab of Kalabagh** (d.1967) and he concurred.

That the Qadiyanis have their own particular agenda on Jammu and Kashmir is an open secret. Like the Qadiyani Nobel Laureate, **Abdus Salam** (d.1996)* M M Ahmad too was opposed to Pakistan becoming a nuclear power.

In an as yet unpublished interview, the eminent constitutional expert and an authority on **Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah** (d.1948) and Pakistan movement, **Sharifuddin Pirzada**, told this writer that as far back as October 1967, **Charles de Gaulle** (d.1970) had offered Pakistan 'full' nuclear assistance and know-how; the only thing he wanted in return was to be allowed to mine for uranium in Northwest Pakistan for a 50% share. President Ayub Khan said he would reply after consulting with his officials back home in Pakistan. In the event the offer was vetoed by M M Ahmad and the army chief Yahya Khan. They warned Ayub Khan that the US would not take it kindly. Pirzada was Ayub Khan's foreign minister (1966-68) and is a personal witness to the affair.

M M Ahmad is also believed to have been a key architect of the split between East and West Pakistan. He 'planned' for economic disparity between the two wings and laid the grounds for an eventual conflict and break up.

Former cabinet secretary and author of *The Separation of East Pakistan* (OUP, Karachi, 1995) **Hasan Zaheer** (d.1998) quotes Brigadier, later **Major General, M I Kareem** telling him that '**Colonel Chaudhary**, Staff Officer of **Lt-General S G M M) Peerzada** (had) told him that he had read a top secret paper of M M Ahmed, suggesting that it was time for a friendly separation of the two Wings rather than elections and warning of serious consequences for the entire country otherwise'. Peerzada was Principal Staff Officer to President Yahya and Brig M I Kareem his deputy.

For M M Ahmad, however, helping to end the 'transient' was a duty ordained by his 'khalifa'.

Born on 28 February 1913, in Qadiyan, Gurdaspur, M M Ahmad died on 23 July 2002, Washington DC and was buried, 30 July 2002, 'in Bahishti Maqbrah' in Chenabnagar (formerly Rabwah), Pakistan.

M H Faruqi

*See *Impact International*, January 1997