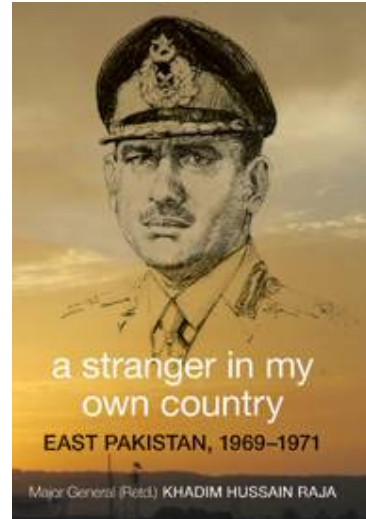


Book review

a stranger in my own country

Mostafa Abdullah, Sydney, Australia.

“A stranger in my own country - East Pakistan, 1969-1971” by Major General (Retd) Khadim Hussain Raja is nothing more than what one would expect from a Pakistani General who, according to his own admission, himself planned and carried out the inauguration of one of history’s deadliest genocides upon the Muslims of Bangladesh. It is a meek attempt on his part to clear his own name from crimes against humanity that he engineered during his tour of duty meant for the protection of his colony - that he befools others by claiming it to be his “own country”. It is no news now that Pakistan’s elite are moral decadents and of behavior



most unbecoming of Muslims. Making these known facts to be of any significance now is again an attempt by the author to distance himself from the pack of hyenas of which he was very much a part.

The author recognizes the death of some of his officers but fails to acknowledge the murder and rape of millions of unarmed helpless Bengali civilians. He proudly displays his plans of “deception” that led to the killing of thousands of unarmed and defenseless Bengali soldiers of the then Pakistan Army and East Pakistan Rifles inside the confines of cantonments. He does not even have the dignity of showing some slight remorse, let alone an overdue apology, for the massacre and human tragedy that was let loose in his own words “... in my own country ...”. His only sadness is for killing the goose that laid the golden eggs for his true country, West Pakistan. His noble plan to induct Bengali soldiers into other corps resulted in insurmountable miseries and insults caused by the Pakistani counterparts. To mention a few, one’s loyalty towards Pakistan would be questioned because he held his personal banking account with the then only bank owned by East Pakistanis (Bengalis). In one other occasion an officer’s rightful promotion was withheld for he would often answer in English (not even Bangla) when quarried in Urdu. To Raja and to most Pakistanis, induction and assimilation meant giving up yours and embracing everything ours.

Raja squarely blames Mujib for inciting hatred against Punjabis by spreading fabricated statistics of imparities between the two wings. But Raja fails to a point out

a single fabrication in his defense or at least is honest enough to dwell on the background for the unhappiness of the Bengalis. Raja mentions that West Pakistan was way ahead in industry and other sectors at the time of independence but cunningly avoids discussing the lopsided pace of industrialization and development between the two wings from then onward. Bengalis only reacted to the treatment that they suffered in the hands of West Pakistanis since the independence of Pakistan in 1946. He apprehended that Mujib would win the majority and if Raja had his own way, there shouldn't have been an election in order to preserve the colony of East Pakistan. He justifies letting loose one of the most dastardly acts in history on Bengalis for demanding what was rightfully theirs. He complains because Bengalis called his kind "Shala Punjabi". I wonder if he knew the names that are used by Phatans, Sindis, Mohajirs and others in Pakistan to refer to his kind.

I think that the appropriate title for this book could have been - A defender of our own colony – East Pakistan, 1969 – 1971.