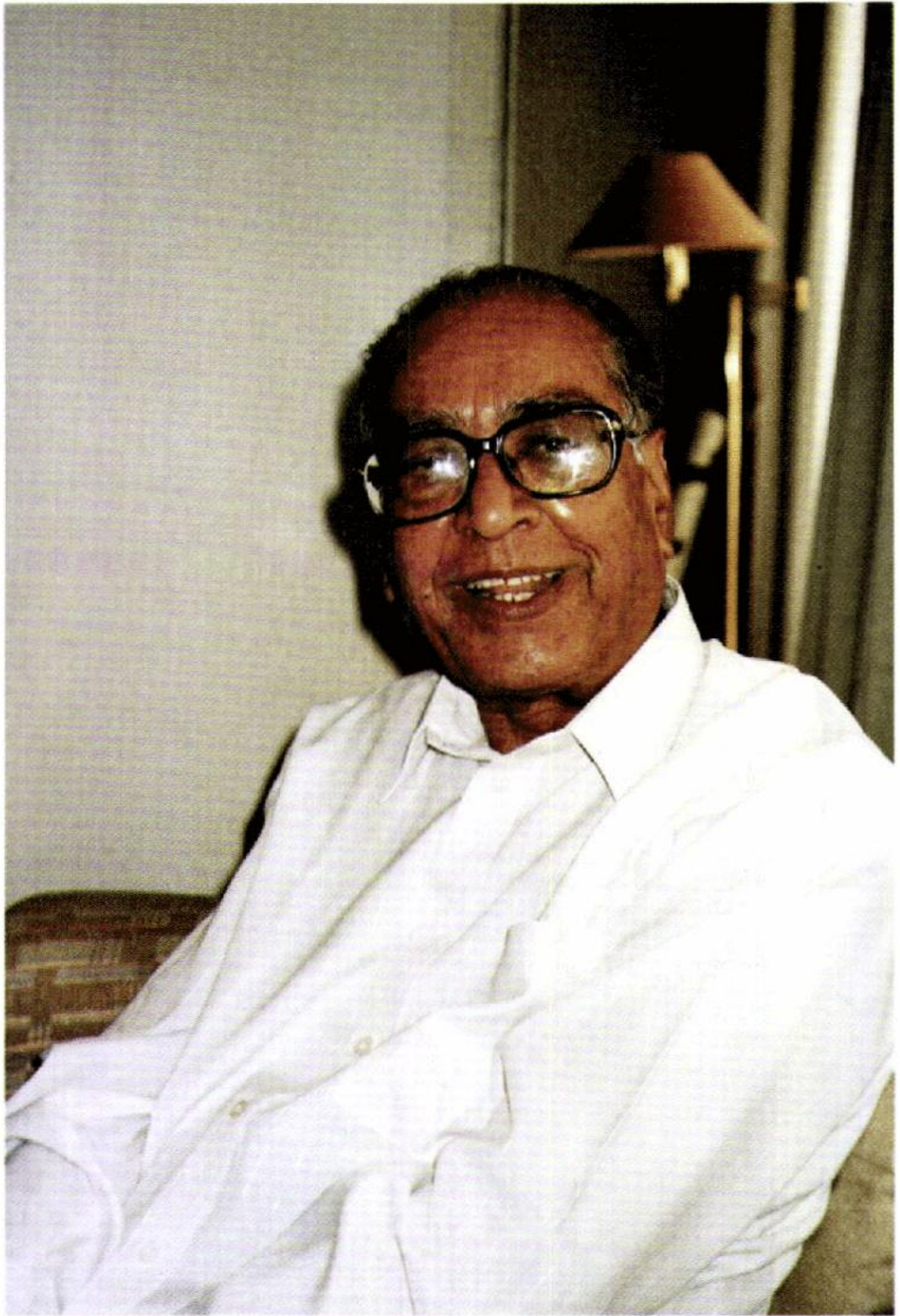


also another milestone in the 68 years old history of EFU. Most of the discussions between the two new partners were held when the Group's late Chairman, Mr. Roshen Ali Bhimjee, was still alive. The new creation still very much carries his philosophy: to serve people through the vehicle of insurance, as kind of a social service to which he himself throughout his life felt so uncompromisingly and vehemently committed.

When he died on 10th of December, 1998, he thus left behind a group of companies which seems well set and ready to accept the great challenges of an even greater future which, I am sure, lies in store for them. Roshen Ali Bhimjee always derived a great deal of pride and joy from the achievements of his associates. Having known and accompanied him for almost four decades and knowing also those who have pledged, after his departure, to take on the obligation to build on past achievements and to continue leading the EFU Institution onwards, which was Mr. Bhimjee's greatest wish, I am more than convinced that they will fulfil this wish with respect and gratitude.



MR. NA Qazi in 1997

Pioneers of Pakistan's Insurance Industry

N.A. Qazi

EFU, as we have seen, is Pakistan's oldest insurance company, and it was the only sizeable Muslim owned company, well established, even in pre-partition days. It can, therefore, rightly claim to be the cradle of Pakistan's indigenous insurance industry. Mr. N.A. Qazi, who retired as Chairman of the National Insurance Corporation a few years ago after an illustrious career with various Pakistani insurance companies, including a long spell with EFU, once congratulated his old colleagues in EFU on their Golden Jubilee, far back in 1982. In his message he said many nice and thoughtful things, and he also wrote this: „Yet another achievement of which EFU must be rightly proud of, is the training of senior officers and having provided a big number of top executives to a large number of insurers at home and abroad. There was a time when the Chief Executive of many Pakistani insurers was an ex-EFU official. This in itself is enough to hold its head high for ever. It is my privilege to have been associated with 'Eastern Federal' for a considerable period of my total insurance career, which undoubtedly was the best part of my life. Even today I have a feeling of 'oneness with the Eastern Federal Family'.“

Mr. Qazi was born in Udaipur and had started his insurance career even before he started to work for EFU. After his early education in the city of his birth he left for Jaipur to continue his studies which, however, he had to interrupt because of the sudden demise of his father which abruptly changed his life direction, as he had to look for some financial means to support him and his family. A friend of his was branch manager of an insurance company, called Free India General Insurance Company with its Head Office in Khanpur, and he suggested to him to join this company and try his luck there. This he did although his family members were very much against it as traditionally their male members had all been in government service, either in the Police Department or in any other government institution. However, the family finally gave in and MA Qazi became an insurance clerk.

„In only three years“, he remembers when we talk about his career path, „I progressed well. I was promoted to the Superintendent's position and my friend, the manager, gave me a very good grounding. I really had to do everything right from scratch, it was a composite office, general and life insurance business. So I got a chance to gain experience in all those classes. I was very happy with this company until 1947, when partition occurred. All my

relatives decided to migrate and settled down in Karachi. I stayed in a small place some 16 miles away from Ajmer and did not want to leave because my friend had looked after me so well, I just did not have the heart to leave him and my work and migrate into an unknown future. But my brothers who were already settled in Pakistan kept on sending me telegrams insisting that I should join them, which I finally and very reluctantly did. I came in 1950 and stayed with my in-laws in Hyderabad. Within a matter of a few days only I then went over to Karachi to see my brother there and one of my cousins suggested that we see the EFU. They had just arrived from Calcutta and should have some openings, that is at least what he thought. EFU had their office at Lloyds Bank Building and whilst I waited at the Ground Floor my cousin went up to see some person to make the necessary inquiries. In short: within minutes I was asked to come up, I saw Mr. Akhtar Azad and Mr. Baxter, who was then the General Manager, and within half an hour I was employed by them. I was appointed as Senior Clerk on the understanding that after a probation period of three months I would be promoted to the position of Junior Officer. I had no support, no recommendation whatsoever. But they were all very helpful and particularly Mr. Akhtar Azad did a lot for me. He had full trust in me, gave me all kinds of assignments and, most importantly, gave me responsibilities to shoulder. And he obviously was also satisfied because after only one year I was already appointed Senior Officer.“

When I joined EFU Mr. Qazi had just left to start a new and highly successful career with the Eastern Insurance Company, one of the leading East Pakistani companies at that time. First as its Manager in Karachi, gradually looking after all the company's branches in West Pakistan, and later in Chittagong, as the General Manager. The owners were very influential Bengali businessmen who also, before and after separation, actively participated in politics and had accepted ministerial posts.

After the foundation of Bangladesh Mr. Qazi returned to Karachi, succeeded Mr. Mohammad Sadiq, PIC's highly profiled and influential number two, who had left for Sudan, and then finally became chief of NIC, one of the biggest jobs available in the market. In the course of my researches for my books I, of course, also contacted him and he very kindly agreed to come and see me at my hotel. He was still full of praise for his old colleagues and friends in EFU. It was like talking to a living dictionary of the Pakistan insurance market. One of the many things he told me was how late KF Haider, when he was still the General Manager of EFU, reacted, - or rather not reacted, - when one officer after the other resigned from EFU in order to take up more senior positions in newly founded companies. „In those days“, Mr. Qazi said, „EFU was the big,

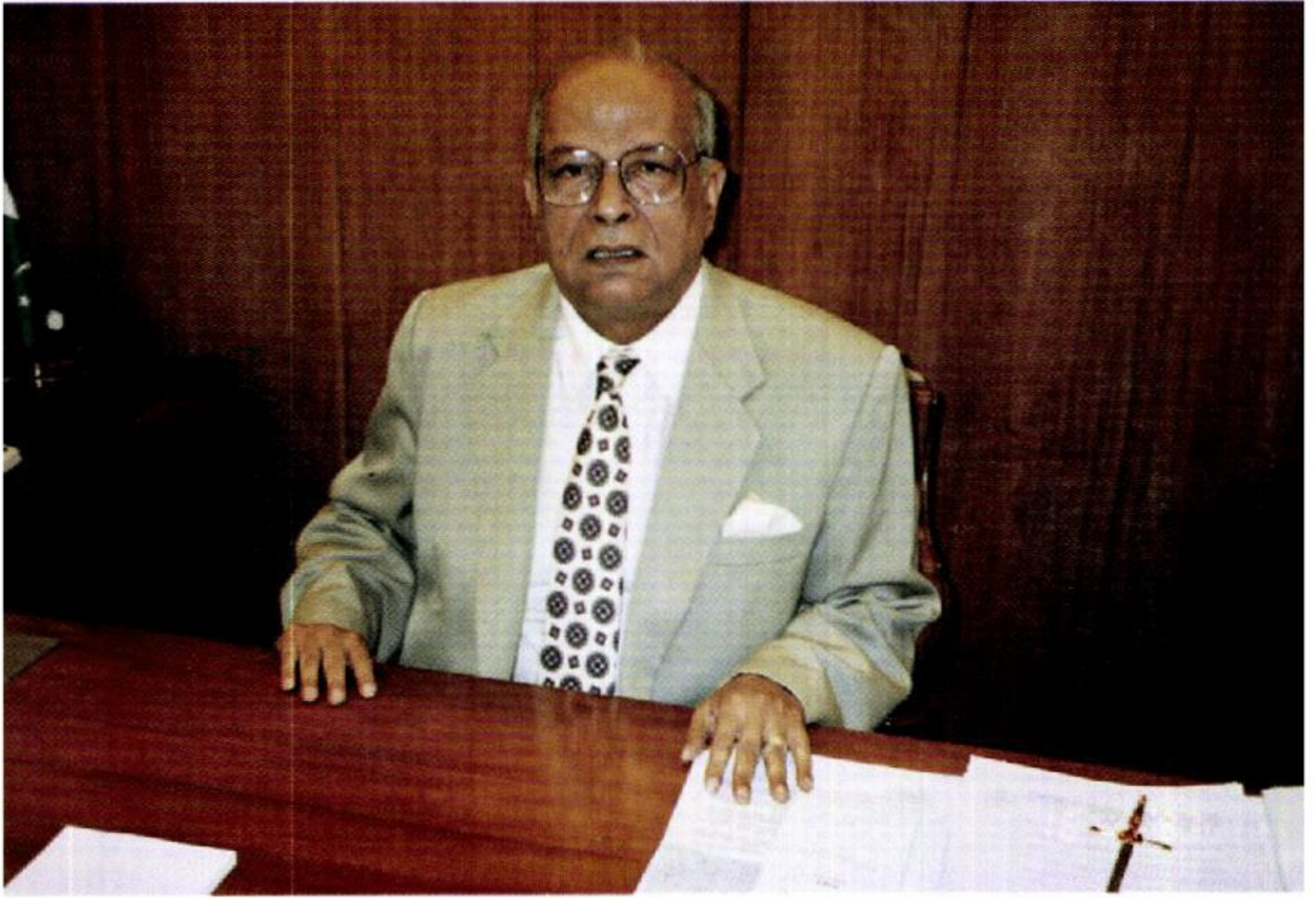
leading, top company in Pakistan. And all real senior people worth their name were employed by it. Akhtar Azad, Hashim, Tahseen Ahmed, Agha Raza, - all those who really mattered in insurance were there, - and all of them finally left. And Mr. KF Haider never really seemed to be bothered. He never tried to persuade a leaving executive to reconsider his decision, - and to stay with EFU. He simply wished everybody luck and success. He always thought of Pakistan and the insurance industry as a whole, as something bigger than just EFU. A great thing for him to do, although he, of course, knew that quite a number of people were at the same time accusing him that he did not have the welfare of his own company, which after all he once had helped found, close enough to his heart. I have never shared these views and still think that Pakistan's insurance industry owes him a lot for the generous and farsighted attitude shown by him. We were very fortunate in this market. We had quite a number of very nice and outstanding insurance executives in this country. Subjally of New Jubilee, now Muslim, for instance. Dubash, Noorani and AU Siddiqui of Premier come to my mind. Chowdhury, of course, he also had started his career with EFU. Akhtar Azad, or Hashim, who went to Muslim. All of them owed their upbringing to EFU, most of the senior people in our industry were attached to Eastern Federal first before they could make their contribution to the newly developed companies. Everybody who has an insight into insurance in Pakistan will without hesitation and reservation agree that Eastern Federal was the institution which built the insurance industry of this country. Of course, you also had the Muslim Insurance Company in Lahore at the time of Partition, and another, very small unit, the Co-operative, - but the Eastern Federal was the only company at that time which could be considered a real and solid organisation. They had the backing of such very influential people like the Nawab of Bhopal, the Aga Khan and even the Nizam of Hyderabad. EFU was really the spearhead of a genuine and real Muslim commercial organisation. They were pioneers, as I always use to say“.

M.A. Qazi himself was one of them. As CEO of the Eastern Insurance Company, Deputy Managing Director of PIC, Chief of NIC and finally at the helm of the newly founded Reliance, he always represented foremost a true sense of professionalism, always stood for quality first. And he always respected the other's point of view, provided it was based on professional grounds, facts and figures. When this manuscript was ready to go to the printers I tried to contact Mr. M.A. Qazi at his house where he was leading a quite life as a retired man when I last saw him in 1997. I could only speak to his daughter-in-law for he had meanwhile left this world. I am now all the more happy that I started this chapter with a brief profile on him for he rightly

deserves to be remembered by us as well as by all of those who follow him in his footprints.

Most of the persons he had mentioned to me, plus even a few more, came also immediately to my mind when thinking of the years in which Pakistan's insurance industry took its final shape; the late 1950s and 1960s in which newly founded companies like New Jubilee, Premier, Adamjee, Central, Eastern and United, plus a few more to come, joined hands with the already established ones and created a well functioning and overall technically sound insurance market in the country.

I would like to pick a few of them and throw some light on what I think they have achieved in this process. And I apologise to those, to whom I could not pay my respect by including even a brief profile on their lives and their contributions towards the development of Pakistan's insurance industry . It would need another book to do this appropriately.



Mr. Mohammad Chowdhury, Managing Director, Adamjee Insurance Company, 1997 at his office

Mohammad Chowdhury

Mohammad Chowdhury's outstanding role in this context was already mentioned in my publications. When I first met him, he was Manager of Premier and the market considered him to be the most knowledgeable Marine Hull Insurance underwriter in the country. He has since come a long way and the manner in which he shot 'his' Adamjee Insurance Company to the very top in the field of general insurance in Pakistan was simply remarkable and has found, as I have said before, unreserved applause even by his main opponents.

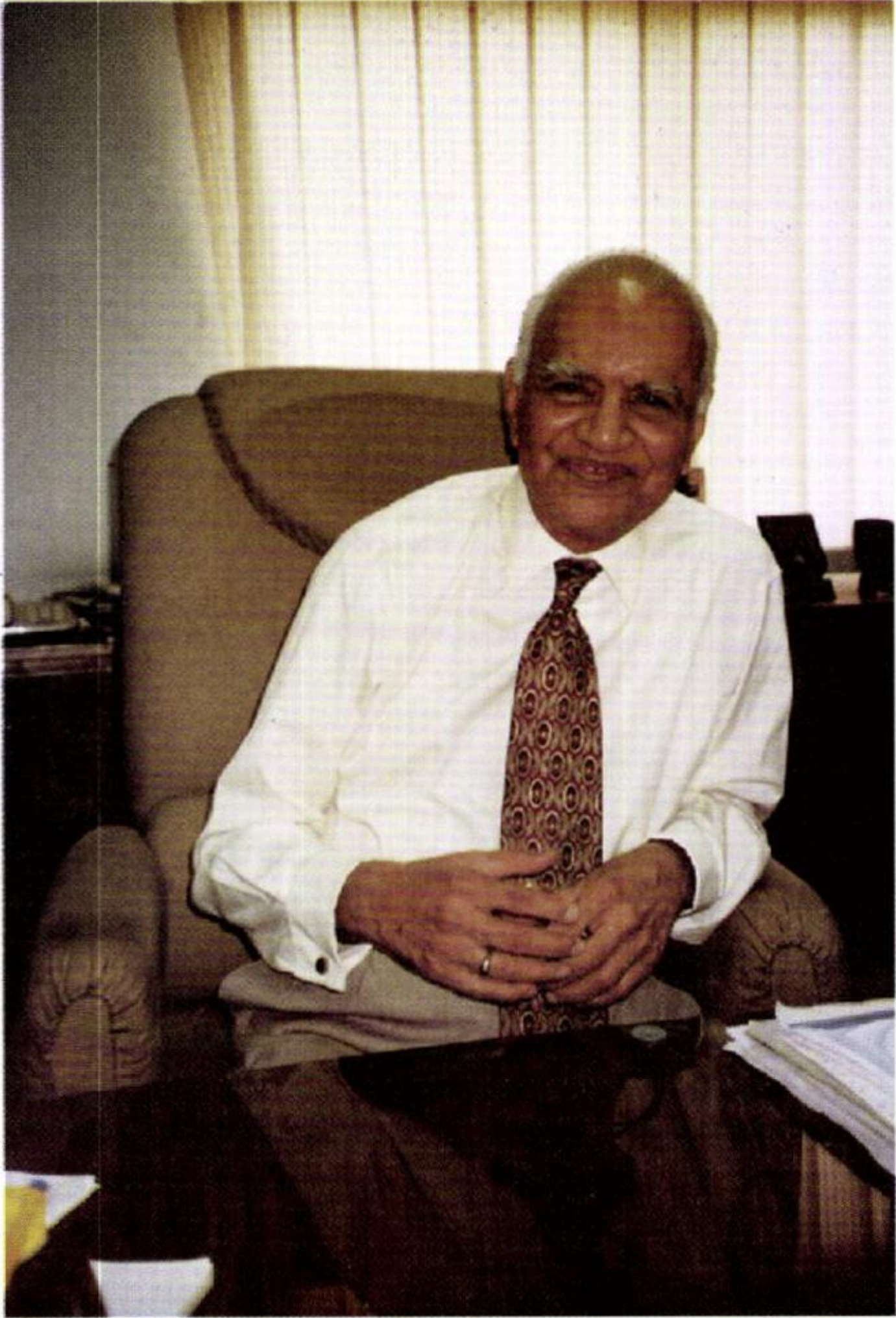
Born in Assam he studied philosophy at the Calcutta University and had appeared in the BA honours examination in 1947, shortly before Partition. „I worked with Eastern Federal from 1st of September 1947 until February 1949“, he recalls when we met at his office, in August 1997. We had met there dozens of times before, but this was the first occasion when I specifically asked him about his early association with EFU and his recollections about those days. And he responded in his usual warm-hearted and very open-minded way, which in a way also reflected our very long personal association, lasting now almost four decades. „I came to know about Eastern Federal from an uncle of mine who used to work for EFU in the Life Department as a sales officer. I wrote an application and within no time I was called for an interview. Their office then was in a very fine building known as the Standard Building in Calcutta, in Dalhousie Square, on the second floor. I was introduced to Mr. M.A. Hashim, who was Superintendent Marine and also to Mr. Mabool Ansari, who was the Superintendent of the Fire Department. They then sent me to Mr. Spooner, who was the Deputy General Manager. He asked me a few hard questions which I don't quite remember now, and after a few moments he told me that I could have the job. It was about 10.30 in the morning. India was just partitioned, my parents were in Assam, it was a kind of a disorganised situation as far as I was concerned, which I told them. And to my surprise they said that I could start working right away. So by 10.30 I had a job and had even already reported. People working there were very friendly. And some looked at me as if they were not particularly impressed by my academic qualifications. That was a time when people like them, office clerks in general, were trying to hold their own traditional values of experience in high esteem, they were not very much impressed by higher education. When I told the Chief clerk, they called him Indu Babu, that I had appeared in my BA honours in philosophy he said: 'what the hell you think you are doing here with BA honours in philosophy!?' And I answered: well, I joined the company now and you, please, tell and show me what to do. I have

decided to become an insurance man, which I think is a very good decision. And as to my education, I will try to use it wisely. We got on rather well with each other, although they spoke most of the time in Bengali, a language in which I was not really very strong. They first put me into the Reinsurance Department, then was sent to the Fire Department. And when they found out that my English was rather good they made me a correspondent. I benefited greatly by all these different jobs as a trainee and I saw advantage in everything that they asked me to do. And it may be very interesting for people who will read this one day, that I was not at all critical about what I was doing as I saw this to be a great opportunity to learn a great deal. I was given my first real responsibilities and I was asked to communicate with people who were mostly clients. My senior colleagues told me what they wanted to know from our clients, in Bengali, and I then had to write to them in English. If the reply from our client was negative, they shouted at me, complaining that I obviously had not been in a position to explain EFU's proposals in a proper way. So I had to sit down and think and write again until I had achieved the desired result. And there was one thing which I soon realised: those gentlemen who were my teachers knew a lot about the practical side of insurance, but not much about its theories. They had no real concept of what Fire insurance could all be about. They knew that a jute godown needed cover against fire. But they could not think of any extraneous perils. In those days we had severe riots in Calcutta, but riot covers were not commonly provided. But my inquisitive mind asked me as to why a company like ours was not offering riot covers!? Places get flooded, - so why not insure against it? When going through the reinsurance registers I had noticed that in some very rare cases such types of cover were in fact given, so why not sell it on a much larger scale? So I mentioned this to my senior colleagues and finally also to Mr. Ansari. And he greatly appreciated this and very much complained that nobody had thought of this before. He said: 'shame on all of us, including me. This young man is in this company for now only two months and he is telling us what we should have been doing five or ten years back'.

When Mohammad Chowdhury narrated these early reminiscences to me his eyes seemed to be on fire, he very much enjoyed rejoicing that already right at the very beginning of his career he was able to show others that he would always be a few steps ahead of at least most of them. He told me that lovely story about his first meeting with EFU's chairman, Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui, which I have included in the profile written about him. And he spoke very highly of all the officers working then for the company. „Eastern Federal had a very fine team of officers“, he said. „As a young man I was impressed by many of them. But what had impressed me most was that the

company was developed on the same pattern as all the big English companies. Their Board of Directors consisted of very eminent people. The company was popular. Quite popular. I did not know much about the Life activities, but at least on the general insurance side, they were a very popular company. But what I did not like was the decision to shift its Registered Office to Chittagong and migrate to Pakistan. That did not make sense to me, at least not in those days. I would have personally liked the company to remain in Calcutta. Remain there as an Indian company. Because it was made as an Indian company by people who were all from India. The persons who had so greatly contributed to it, like the Nawab of Bhopal, he had remained in India, the Nizam of Hyderabad. In my way of thinking the company was running away, - it would, of course, have been nationalised, a few years later, but that nobody could have visualised then. They told me that they would transfer me to Chittagong or Dacca. I was totally against it. I would have gone to Karachi, - but they insisted on my remaining in Bengal, either Chittagong or Dacca, they said. But I am a 'city man'. I would have remained with EFU in Calcutta, - but under the circumstances I had no choice but to quit. I had nothing against anybody in EFU, on the contrary. I just did not like their decision to move out of Calcutta. At that time I just did not realise lots of things which, in hindsight, I appreciated."

That was Mohammad Chowdhury's appearance on EFU's stage. He joined Norwich Union in Calcutta, was sent to Bombay for further training and then transferred to Karachi, Pakistan's new capital, to set up a Branch Office there. That was in March 1949, exactly the same time when his former EFU colleagues arrived there from Calcutta. He stayed with Norwich Union until 1952. By that time Mr. Zahid Hussain, the first Governor of State Bank called him to his house and persuaded him to join Premier Insurance Company, which he did. He joined them as an Assistant Manager, the first managerial title he ever held. „Since then“, said a smiling Mohammad Chowdhury,“ when having our lunch in his own dining room, next to his office, „I have grown reasonably steady to first become finally the General Manager of Premier and further on to what I am today“.



Mr. MA Chishti in August 1997

M.A. Chishti

I have mentioned Mr. Chishti before, MA Chishti, until recently Managing Director of Delta Insurance, a smaller Pakistani company. He is another senior citizen of Pakistan's most honourable league of insurance executives of the early hours of the industry. Ajmer born, Agra University graduate, Mashkooor A. Chishti also began his insurance career with Eastern Federal as a Junior Officer in 1947. He came to Karachi already in October 1947 and, as he told me, was not at all happy to leave his home town Ajmer. „This city is very old, may be a couple of thousand years“, he said when I visited him at his office on 14th August, 1997, the fiftieth birthday of Pakistan. We quite naturally, therefore, spoke about partition days and his great reluctance to leave the place of his birth. „I loved this city, which is a very famous one, known to Muslims all over the world because it is the burial place of a holy saint, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, some sevenhundred years ago. My ancestors were attached with this holy shrine. On the anniversary of the saint's death, the 6th of Rajab, people from all over India, Sri Lanka, Burma and many other countries of the world used to visit this shrine and I personally also had a deep attachment to this place. Yes, I found it very difficult to leave Ajmer and the bigger part of my family because my father and my eldest brother did not leave, only another brother, who was also senior to me in age, had decided to migrate, so I went along with him. I looked around in Karachi and tried to find a job and I was successful. In December 1947 I joined the Eastern Federal as Junior Officer. At that time EFU had a joint branch office with Mr. Akhtar Azad as Branch Manager and he also represented Habib Insurance and the Scottish Union. I was put in charge of Accident insurance which was mostly motor in those days. By 1948 one Mr. John Plumbe came from London as General Manager of Scottish Union. So I worked for some time for three bosses, Mr. Akhtar Azad, EFU; Mr. Plumbe and for Habib Insurance. That came to an end in 1949 when the Head Office of EFU was transferred from Calcutta to Karachi and we, that means the existing staff in Karachi, joined them at Lloyd's Building, Mcleod Road. It is still there, the original building, I think even the lift is still the same. So they all came, Mr. Baxter and Mr. Iven. And another great and well known man became for some time EFU's resident director, Mr. Shoaib Quereshi. I very much liked my job with them and was convinced that I could have a good future there. But then suddenly one relative of Mr. Ispahani and another of Mr. Sheerazi were appointed Junior Officers and soon thereafter they were promoted to Senior Officers, but were still put to work under me. I requested the management to remedy this anomaly which according to my understanding was an undue remnant from

feudal days, but unfortunately nobody dared listen. I had no choice and much to my regret left the services of EFU.“

Thereafter Mr. Chishti spent some time with London Lancashire and American International Underwriters, both in Lahore. He was then offered an attractive position with Employers Liability Insurance Company, a very well known company in those days, which then, following the ‘tidal wave’ of rationalisation and mergers which hit the British insurance industry in the late 1950s and the beginning 1960s, ceased to exist and became part of the Northern/Commercial Union Group. That was in 1963.

Mr. Chishti considers it a good piece of fortune that Mr. SC Subjally, then Managing Director of New Jubilee, had to find a new Zonal Manager in Lahore because the holder of this function, Mr. Mohammad Ishaq Khan, at the request of late Mr. Zal Contractor, who at that time was the dynamic and most energetic Controller of Insurance, was to become the Administrator of Muslim Insurance Company. And Mr. Subjally offered this job to Mr. Chishti which he happily accepted. In 1965 he was called to Karachi to become the company’s manager for the whole of West Pakistan, a position he greatly enjoyed. In 1968 Standard Bank decided to have their own insurance company and as Mr. Chishti happened to be a very close personal friend of the owner family, he had to accept their offer and became the new company’s Managing Director. Following nationalisation of the insurance and banking industry he found it increasingly difficult to continue his work for the group owning Standard Insurance and he decided to resign. „So when Mr. Subjally came to know this“, says Chishti, when we talk about his very colourful and most interesting professional career, „he called me immediately and I rejoined New Jubilee in September 1975 and remained with them until the end of 1981 when I was offered to become Managing Director of Muslim Insurance, which I accepted. In 1987 I took over the reins of Prime Insurance and finally, it was Delta“.

The cause of insurance, spreading it further and making it popular amongst the people of Pakistan, this was always close to his heart. And he always felt that much more would have to be done in the field of education if Pakistan’s indigenous insurance industry wanted to come up to present day world standard. He, therefore, was prepared to become Chairman of the Pakistan Insurance Institute for four years whose strong supporter he has always been. He was fighting for it, for the necessary funds to run it, trying to make the insurance industry aware of the lack of adequate training facilities. And it was again a man of great dedication to the cause of education, a man with great

farsightedness, Mr. Justice Mian Mahboob Ahmed, who, when Chairman of the National Insurance Reforms Commission, helped Chishti to obtain larger funds for the Insurance Institute.

MA Chishti is a restless man with a very critical mind. And he has never been quite happy with the unprofessional attitude adapted by some of the market participants which he feels is not in line with his understanding of the ethics and morale of this particular profession which he feels is so much also a social service rather than just ordinary commercial business. „My conscience“, he emphatically says, „does not permit me to feel and act otherwise. Therefore, quite frankly, many people in our industry are not happy with me because of my frankness or candid comments. And this is the reason why I write and keep on writing. To keep this industry alive in the mind of the general public, to give signals also to our insurance clientele, and to make our government aware that there is an insurance industry which is very much alive and up to the tasks demanded from them. I am, of course, aware that there are many people who are senior to me, not only in age, although there may not be much age difference between them and me, people like Mr. Roshen Ali Bhimjee, Mohammad Chowdhury, Rusi Dubash, AU Siddiqui and SC Subjally. But not all of them take the necessary time and pain to project an image of our industry among the general public, among our policy holders, although I am, of course, aware, that some of them do, or have done it in the past.“

Mr. MA Chishti may not have headed the largest companies of the industry, but he surely has been one of its more outspoken officials. He more than once has laid his fingers into open wounds. It goes to his credit that he has taken great pains to provoke and arise interest in those sectors of the general public which ultimately matter when it comes to the further development of insurance in this country. I have always felt that the industry owes him a lot for that, and I am sure that there are many in this market who would be inclined to agree with me.



Mr. SC (Mamo) Subjally, presently General Manager of Muslim
Insurance Company

S.C. Subjally

'Mamo' Subjally is another of those legendary and high-profiled insurance executives who have added their own flavour to the shaping of Pakistan's insurance industry in the 1950s. Born into a family of businessmen in Bombay he had his education there. His grandfather was, as he told me when we meet for our interview in August 1997, „one of the British baronets in Bombay, a Muslim baronet, of course. He was the owner of quite a number of textile mills in those days, but they had seen their better days by the time that I was 14. Their empire collapsed and they had to dispose off all their assets, paying back all their debts, which they did. By 1945 I had finished my education, did my masters in 'higher maths', as it was called in Bombay and then joined the British India and General Insurance Company. I was virtually just taken off the college. That was really a very strange story. I had just finished my masters and was wandering around, shopping, when suddenly I ran into the Chairman of this company, Mr. Smith, a very fine gentleman who used to play bridge with my father. And he, of course, knew me. One of the things he asked me was what I was planning to do after I had finished college and I told him that I had not yet decided and was just waiting for the results. He asked me to get into his car, which I did, thinking that he would drop me for lunch at my parents house which was not far away from his place. Instead he took me straight to his office and introduced me to an elderly gentleman, a Parsee, Mr. Dastur, the General Manager of the BIG. Mr. Smith then said to Mr. Dastur: 'You were looking for assistants, this here is the son of my friend Subjally, take him on. I know him, he is a nice guy, I know his father'. Just like that, - this is how I found my life time career, insurance, just like that“.

That was in early 1946. The company trained him first in Bombay and then sent him to a small branch office, up in the country, as junior officer under training. But suddenly and much to his surprise he received a telegram from his General Manager, around the 10th of August 1947, advising him to return immediately to Bombay, which he did. And there he was told to proceed straightaway to Karachi and to look after their business interest in what was to become Pakistan's capital within a matter of only three or four days.

„Our Chairman's company were cotton merchants“, Mamo Subjally remembers, „they had a lot of ginning factories there. HA Mehta and Company. And they were also the original promoters and founders of the British India General Insurance Company, the BIG. They had substantial interests here in Sindh because they were very important cotton traders. So

what happened was that all the Hindus running the ginning factories and even the local representative of BIG, also a Hindu, had gone away. Because of the riots, they all had gone and that is the reason why I was sent out and suddenly found myself in Karachi, in the new country, in Pakistan. These were very interesting days. Accommodation was a major problem. So I lived in a tent, just opposite the Beach Luxury Hotel which was under construction then. I do not remember for how long. Mr. Howard Stafford was the Secretary of the Insurance Association then and he was occupying the flat of the Manager of HA Mehta's firm. When he went away that flat was given to me. That was in Soldier Bazar. That's the story of my migration, - and I continued with BIG until 1951. We were still working under the direction of the Bombay office. But then, suddenly, a new gentleman from the Calcutta office took over and decided to go 'non-tariff'. That was not my 'cup of tea' and I decided that I would look around for a new job. That was also the time when I met Mr. Amir Ali Fancy again. He was my neighbour in Bombay and had come back from Africa. He was very close to His Highness the Aga Khan and he told me that he was about to float a new company, a Pakistani insurance company called New Jubilee and offered me to become its chief. I accepted and stayed, as you know, for a long time with them“.

Yes, he was Chief Executive of New Jubilee when we first met. He was my age group, like most of the young and fast rising executives of the newly founded companies in the 1950s and 1960s. And like the majority of them he was a highly motivated man who enjoyed to work, who believed in modern management methods which he had come to believe in after having attended some advanced management courses in the UK and at Harvard/USA. When talking about the 'good, old days', Mamo Subjally wallowed in memories. After Bhutto had started his populist nationalisation campaign he, like so many others, decided that there would be no immediate future for ambitious people like him and he was one of those contributing heavily to Pakistan's brain drain in the 1970s. He went over to Dubai, occupied important positions but decided to return to his home country after his children had matured and settled down in foreign countries. He is now the Chief Executive of Muslim Insurance and „happy“, as he said, „to be back home“.

He is 'happy' and yet also a bit sad, he tells me when I ask him whether he finds today's working environment different from the days before he had left Pakistan for the Emirates. "The market", he says, „has very much changed when compared to those days when you and I were still working together, in the sixties and the beginning of the seventies. You bear me out, Wolfram. When you were here we used to have lunch together. You, sometimes together

with Roshen Ali Bhimjee, the people from Habib, me and others. We were working like being members of the same club. And very often like friends. But how often do we meet at such levels, at our senior levels today!? I will give you another example and you will immediately appreciate what I am driving at. When I was Chairman of the Insurance Association and had to see the Ministry I went to see KF Haider and asked him to accompany me, which he did. The only thing he said was, yes, Mamo, but make sure it is on the Ground Floor. He could have easily evaded, I was so much younger to him. If it were national causes, Ministry or PIC, he would come. He or even Mr. Iven never looked at these issues simply from an EFU's point of view. They always took the broader one. And the same attitude, perhaps even stronger, was later on adapted by Roshen Ali Bhimjee after he had joined EFU and in fact very much became the market's powerful spokesman. We were not chauvinistic, none of us, and yet we all thought, and that very much included you, that the Pakistani companies ought to be supported to become strong and sound players within the overall structure of the market, and the government really supported us. You remember Ghulam Faruque's period, the way how Adamjee Insurance Company got started!? I'll give you a refresher. We were all sitting at Ghulam Faruque's office. A group of insurance officials and some leading industrialists. He was then Minister of Commerce, that was under Ayub Khan. And he was very friendly with the Adamjee clan. They were his personal friends. So he told the two Adamjee brothers: look, I understand you are giving all your business to Royal Exchange? And the Adamjees explained that they were doing this for the last forty or fifty years, so how could they possibly change that? But Faruque replied that he would not accept that argument and he added: you have either your own company or place your business with an existing Pakistani company. If not, I will not allow your insurance premium tax-deductible. You may not call this very democratic, - but that's the way how Adamjee Insurance Company actually got started. And the same, of course, applied to the Dawood family and their Central Insurance. But it worked, things were done, were pushed ahead. The whole concept of government was different. We have also today very good civil servants, and yet, they are so different from such great bureaucrats like SM Yusuf, Abbas Khaleeli, Osman Ali, Said Ahmed. They were absolutely honest, hard working people, with an aggressive and determined mind to build the nation. And we were all part of that, all sitting in the same boat, rowing into the same direction. The Controller of Insurance, State Bank, - it was this combination of governmental and private sector co-operation which brought also our industry to the level it actually had reached by 1972 . The years between 1951 and 1972 were the most productive years, the 'Golden Years' in Pakistan, there is absolutely no question about it. I have mentioned some

names of great bureaucrats. I am not suggesting that intellectually you don't find similarly talented civil servants in to-day's administration. But the overall environment has changed, our whole society. People in the 50s and 60s were ready to serve their country in the true meaning of the word. They worked for a cause, we all did, because that exactly was the reason why most of us came here. That feeling of 'we can do it together' has gone. And I am not putting the blame on just bureaucrats; we all, our society has undergone a complete change. I mentioned SM Yusuf. How many times did Amiralī Fancy offer him to join our group. He refused, he outright declined the offer. He said: 'look, if I would have wanted to join the private sector, I would have done so much earlier, I would not have joined the government then. I am simply not interested. I am sorry, we are friends, very good bridge friends, but I am simply not interested'. And he really meant it, because he was proud of the job he did as one of the highest and most influential government servants, and he was most sincerely convinced that whatever he did in that capacity, he did for the citizens of this new country.

„But I am also happy, as I said, to be back in Pakistan. I liked my jobs in Dubai, I was well paid. But the question of a permanent settlement there did not arise, because, as you probably know, they do not allow you to do that. Sonja and I could have joined our children in the United States or in England. But at our age, one gets used to certain ways in life, ones life style has adjusted to certain conditions. And quite frankly, I get bored in London, even more so in Dubai, I do not know what to do there, I am a misfit. Anywhere you go, you are a second class citizen, let's face it. Even when good friends try to tell you the contrary. The fact remains: you are a second class citizen, except in Pakistan. That is the main reason why I decided to leave Dubai and come back here. Of course, you make a lot of money there, financially everything is absolutely first class. But the fact is that they take away your dignity in return. Even the highest paid expatriate is a servant and a second class citizen. That is all you are. And that is why I came away from there. And here I am again myself. A first class citizen, ready to make my contribution again.“

The 'Prodigal Son' having returned home!?! That may be a catchy description of a highly sensitive and complicated issue affecting a growing number of similar fates, people who had left their country when politics seemed to have broken the necks of many successful entrepreneurs and managerial supermen. Many have now reached retirement age in whichever country they had settled during the time of their personal *Diaspora* and are confronted with the same problems as the ones just mentioned by my friend 'Mamo' Subjally. And I am

glad to see him back here, where forty years ago our paths crossed for the first time. And as he has said, we were all members of the same club, respected each other, and some became even good personal friends. Our professional contacts were largely because of the National Co-insurance Scheme, of which EFU was the leader. New Jubilee, Premier and Habib were other important members before companies like Adamjee and Central got started. 'Mamo' Subjally and I got particularly close to each other as a result of a huge claim, one of the largest ones ever at that point in time. The famous 'Sutlej River Crossing' claim. Sui Gas pipe lines had been washed away because of floods. It was a PIDC project and General Ifthekar Ahmed, PIDC's Chairman, had become rather excited and furious when his Insurance Officer told him that the panel of insurers doubted whether policy conditions warranted a full settlement of the claim. He called the leading companies to his office, and Subjally, Dubash and I attended the meeting with him. I, the youngest in age, although only marginally, was the spokesman because I represented EFU. He received us very cordially, talked nicely and rather sweetish. But his attitude changed drastically when we, very nicely and yet very determined, had to tell him that the claim as it was presented, was not to be entertained, at least not in full. He then was at the top of his voice and suddenly said: 'Mr. Ahmed', that was the name of his Insurance Officer, who had shrunk in size considerably during the last twenty or thirty minutes, 'Mr. Ahmed, tell these gentlemen that I order them to pay this claim in full by to-morrow!' And having said this, he stared at me. So did my colleagues. These were the days of Field Marshal Ayub Khan and the army was also then a most important and decisive factor in the country. I smelled that this was a very important moment in my 'Pakistani insurance career' and that my colleagues were in a much more vulnerable position towards the General than me. I thought and paused for a moment and then, very slowly said: 'Sir, with all due respect, I beg to disagree. During my long and intensive studies of international insurance and reinsurance have I never come across someone amongst my learned teachers who has told me that the international insurance fraternity is part and parcel of an Army Unit, nowhere in the world, I think. We receive orders only from our policy conditions or a court of law, if this is so required'. My colleagues got pale and must have thought that this now was the end of the day. But to the surprise of us all, the General suddenly started to laugh, ordered some tea and after some further and very friendly discussions it was agreed that 'Mamo' Subjally and I were to travel to London to have discussions with Messrs. Topling & Harding, by then one of the leading international insurance surveyors and ask them for another, neutral report on which the claim then should be settled without any further loss of time. 'Mamo' and I went to London, it was bitterly cold, January or February. We had very interesting and

constructive discussions with the surveyors; they sent one of their senior most men to Pakistan and within a few months the claim could be settled, - to the satisfaction of all concerned. And on top: this was the beginning of a most enjoyable and long-lasting personal relationship between 'Mamo' Subjally and me.

It were people like him whom I owed my growing appreciation and understanding of what Pakistan meant to him and others of similar breed and fabric. When I started to realise that people of his stature and stamina were determined to give all they could to make this 'experiment Pakistan' a viable and successful proposition.

The seeds sown by men like him are still growing and will, I am sure, finally make this country work.



AU Siddiqui, presently Advisor of Premier Insurance Company

A.U. Siddiqui

AU Siddiqui is yet another man who belongs to the same age group as SC Subjally, Mohammad Chowdhury, Chishti and Dubash, who have left their distinct footprints in the annals of Pakistan's insurance industry. A very different character though, if compared to all the others. He kindly agreed to come and see me in November 1998 at my office in Qamar House, a few months after he had relinquished his duties as Chief General Manager of Premier Insurance Company. As with all the others I enjoyed a very long and close personal relationship with him. Whenever I had come to Pakistan during the last thirty years or so I, of course, visited him at Muhammadi House, and he also was a most welcomed and not infrequent visitor to Munich. It always was nice to discuss with him general topics and latest market trends of Pakistan's insurance world because he not only was a very well informed discussion partner, but he also was a very critical and most independent mind who often ran counter to accepted opinion and 'standard practices'.

Born in Allahabad in the United Provinces, India, in 1925, he had his education there, graduated and did his LLB in 1946. „It was a purely politically motivated approach which made me decide to migrate to Pakistan“, Siddiqui told me when I ask him about this particular and most important phase of his life. „I arrived in Karachi on 17th of April 1948, I travelled via Bombay, took a boat and came over here. It were my political convictions which brought me here although I had no family connections in this part of India whatsoever, just a few friends. I travelled together with a friend of mine, hardly any luggage, and some little funds in my pocket. And I had to make a very fundamental decision, either to start my legal practice or do something differently. My father, being a member of the legal profession, would have wanted me to follow him into his footsteps,- but somehow it just did not work. So I finally decided against it and made up my mind to join the insurance profession. It took me a long time to reach that stage, and there were plenty of jobs available then, but I was in no particular hurry as I had some money from my father in my pocket. But then something just happened. A friend of mine was working for the Scottish Union and some other friends and I used to play cards with him. One fine evening he very suddenly said: 'look Mr. Siddiqui, why can't you make up your mind? Why don't you just come along with me and see my boss, just for friendship sake.' Well, and that is what I did, just for friendship sake. I met his boss, Mr. Edward John Ashley Plumbe. A very fine and friendly personality, one of the best men I have ever come across during my whole career. I liked him and therefore I decided to accept the job. Mr.

Plumbe took great pains to train me well and whenever he went for an inspection, or for whatever, he took me along. Although he was basically a marketing man, and an excellent one, he also knew the technical side of the business very well. I found all this very interesting and educational. He was a wonderful man. But after about a year he was transferred to Calcutta, he became the number two man for the whole of the East. After the merger with Norwich Union he was called to London and became Chief Underwriter of the group. But I was very fortunate because his successor, Mr Tom Climie, was also a very capable insurance man. And I worked under him for not less than ten to twelve years.”

I have met Mr. Climie personally, very typical Scotsman, difficult to understand when one first meets him. He appeared to be a tough man, but coming to know him a bit better one soon discovered him to be just a rough diamond. He was a great insurance technician and has done a lot to keep the standard of the Fire Sectional Committee of the Insurance Association at a very high level. After the Premier Insurance Company was founded he was at some point in time requested to join it as its Chief Manager and he stayed with them for three years. At the same time he remained Manager for Pakistan for the Norwich Union Group. Half of his working day he spent with his mother company and the other half with Premier.

I asked Mr. Siddiqui whether he ever would have preferred working for a Pakistani company when he was still with the British group. And he almost emphatically replied: „No, no, not at all. I do believe first in the man and only thereafter in his nationality. I liked working for a British company. It never occurred to me that there should have been anything wrong with that, not at all. I did not believe in that theory. On the contrary, I always felt a deep sense of gratitude to both, Mr. Plumbe and Mr. Climie. I have learned quite a lot from both of them, from each one in his own way. They were both great insurance men.“

AU Siddiqui had started as a Junior Clerk with his company. In 1952 the High Court had decided that the Punjab Cotton Pool had to be dismantled. Consequently many companies started opening up branches in Lahore if they were not already represented there. „My own company“, remembers Mr. Siddiqui, „put up some advertisements, interviewed quite a number of people, but ultimately decided to opt for me. I was to go to Lahore, a city which I liked, but as I was well settled in Karachi I was not very enthusiastically about it. But Mr. Climie insisted and I had to give in. I was transferred to Lahore and was told that it would be probably for a maximum period of three years. I

went there, in July 1952, and soon realised that it was a damned good job. Good also in the sense that I was given a car, a driver, club facilities, medical expenses for the family and myself. All the facilities which made life so much easier and attractive. When they asked me after three years whether I wanted to go back to Karachi, I just said: no, thank you. Let me carry on here in Lahore.“

And he stayed there until 1962. Prior to that the Scottish Union had been taken over by Norwich Union and his services were transferred to them. „I was not happy about that merger“, says Mr. Siddiqui, but I could, of course, do nothing about it. And when Premier offered me a job with them, I accepted. My only condition was that I did not have to go back to Karachi. I had fallen so much in love with Lahore that I did not want to leave it. And they agreed. I became Premier's Zonal Manager in Lahore. But finally, in 1969, I had to accept their plea and went over to Karachi, as an Attorney. And Mohammad Chowdhury was the Secretary. Akhtar Azad was the senior most amongst us, he was the manager, or even the deputy general manager, I am not so sure anymore. But when he retired, both Chowdhury and I became General Managers. A bit strange perhaps, but it worked. We went on very nicely, we worked just like two very good friends, which in fact we had become. Good colleagues. Then, one fine day, he told me that he had decided to join Adamjee Insurance Company. And I tried to convince him not to do that. I had a very good and friendly chat with him, but it did not work. He left us and joined Adamjee.“

After Mohammad Chowdhury's departure Mr. Siddiqui remained the sole General Manager of Premier and was even designated to be its Chief General Manager until in May 1998, a few months before I could interview him, he retired and became its Advisor.

Talking to him, a man who has served Pakistan's insurance industry for exactly five decades, gives great pleasure. Once having been famous for his humorous, sometimes even acid remarks, he has mellowed considerably over the years. He is still very good-humoured, casts jokes, particularly if he likes the person sitting with him, but his candid observations appear to be so much more friendly, relaxed and cheerful. He is full of generous compliments for some of the great and well known personalities on Pakistan's insurance stage. Mohammad Chowdhury. „We are very close friends today, a very great personal friend of mine“, remembers AU Siddiqui. „ And the reason why I mention this to you is that in a way you belong to that old crew, the same age group which has produced some of the finest insurance men in this country.“

Rusi Dubash. „He is a legendary figure“, says Siddiqui. „I don't know exactly why, but he was well known in the market for his wide grasp of insurance knowledge. He was a technocrat, in a very positive sense.“ And ‘Mahmo’ Subjally? „Quite a character“, he says. „Has contributed a lot to the development of insurance in its infant stage. Always trying to be helpful. Good team worker.“ Roshen Ali Bhimjee? „He was a very big man in those golden days. Everybody respected him, and so did I“.

„We also had some interesting characters in our industry“, said Siddiqui after we had paused for a moment. Both of us had kept quiet for a while, digesting what we had told each other. „Take your friend Moinuddin. He was a very successful insurance man and quite a character in his own rights. You see, in those good old days, we had quite some characters in the industry. They were always good for fun and yet more often than otherwise very successful also. I want to say this in a very positive way, and I really mean it. People like him were the salt in the soup and they have tremendously contributed to the development of insurance in this country. And I think, Mr. Moinuddin was such a character. He has achieved great things for his company and for the market as such.“

I could not help grinning, and he gave me his broadest smile. It was then that I realised that he knew that also I knew what he had just attempted to do: portraying himself, brilliantly and clandestine, by giving it the shape of somebody whom he thought might have been a bit similar to him, if not in physical appearance, but perhaps in certain ways of approach towards the more complicated aspects of our earthly life.

And I am sure, he will be remembered for that.

Mr. Rusi Dubash, presently Advisor of Habib Insurance Company



Rusi Dubash

Rusi Dubash, whom AU Siddiqui refers to as a legendary figure in the insurance industry's history book is one of those 'great musketeers' who, as I said, immediately come to my mind when browsing through it. He was the senior most in age in what Siddiqui had called 'our crew'.

Born as the son of a medical practitioner, 1919, in Bombay, he joined the just founded Habib Bank in his city of birth. And he continued with the bank until he decided to migrate to Pakistan. That was in October 1948. Because the entire Habib Group shifted to the newly founded nation. The directors, their families and all the institutions belonging to it.

When we sit in my hotel room for our interview, one day after the fiftieth birthday of Pakistan, on 15th of August 1997, I, of course, asked him whether he was related to the Habib family, for most of the times I had met him during our forty years old relationship, he had been in the company of at least one member of them. „No,“ he said. „They are, as you know, Muslims. I am a Zarathustrian. So we are not related to each other. But you can call me a family member of the Habibs because I have been associated with them over the last fifty years, a very long period of service with one family. From 1941 to 1997, fifty six long and very satisfying years“.

I ask him about the days of Partition, whether he had been under personal threat, had to fear for his life? And very quietly, soft-spoken, with hardly any sign of personal emotion, as he always presented himself, and yet with a certain flair of distanced compassion, he started to describe what he had felt during those days. „I was young“, he said, „and I remember only some parts of it. To remember details would be rather difficult. I, of course, recollect that there was a tremendous amount of political activities in those days, and the Habib family, being personally so closely attached to the Muslim movement in India felt that with the advent of Pakistan they should shift here lock, stock and barrel. So the entire family came down to Karachi, which, of course, included me. There used to be riots in Bombay. But being a non Muslim there was never any personal threat as such. Not even to Muslims in Bombay City. Hindu-Muslim riots were there all the time, but restricted only to such areas where one of the two communities was in a minority situation. Then there used to be skirmishes, even some stabbing, political uncertainty, and life over all was just not very pleasant. So we at the Habib Bank, we had to shift our office, or part of our office, to the Marine Drive in Bombay, a beautiful

location, as you might know, it was right at the sea shore, and my office was there because I was a member of the Central office.“

When giving me this part of his story, Rusi kept his usual, very composed attitude, but one could feel that he was very proud of his most intimate association with ‘his’ Habib family. Very rightly so, I think, because the Habibs had played a most important role before and during partition days.

Their story, I believe, had all started in 1841, in Bombay, when a young boy of 13 years of age joined a distant relative in his business as an errand runner. The name of the boy was Habib Esmail. He was the son of a labourer. His father had died a few years earlier leaving him as sole provider for his mother and sister. The firm itself was quite unremarkable starting from scrap metal, non-ferrous metals, different utensils, oil seeds, cotton and mica. Finally he got into the merchant banking business, very well respected as Habib and Sons. He had four sons, and like the rest of the Bombay elite they all belonged to the Willingdon Sports Club. It was here that they met the Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The third son Mohammad Ali Habib became particularly friendly with the Quaid. And this is how they got so closely involved with the Muslim movement led by Jinnah. Immediately after the 1940 resolution the British and Hindu banks started to discriminate against the big Muslim business houses. Lloyds Bank refused to renew the credit limit of Habib and Sons. This led to the realisation that high finance and banking were a strategic sector and that the absence of Muslims therefrom was a great source of weakness in their national struggle. Thus the merchant banking business of the Habibs’ set sail on the high seas of finance incorporated as Habib Bank, a public limited company, in August 1941. The venture, it is said, was inspired and fully supported by Mr. Jinnah. A good piece of fortune for the newly created Dominion of Pakistan. When three months after independence the government of Pakistan ran out of money because the congress government of India did not release Pakistan’s share of the cash reserves of British India, the Habib Bank gave the first interest free loan to them.

It was this sort of environment into which young Rusi Dubash gradually grew after he had joined Habib’s in 1941. „I continued with the bank,“ he tells me, „until 1949. It was then that Mr. Mohammad Ali Habib wanted to see me and he told me that there was a proposal laying with him from the largest Indian insurance company, the New India, for some sort of collaboration with Habibs and that they would soon send a delegation to Pakistan for further discussions. And he then said: look, I want you as a member of the family to keep an eye

on further developments. You see, he called me 'a member of the family'. Well, I did read the memorandum although I did not know anything about insurance then. And Mr. Advani, a very senior executive of New India came to Karachi accompanied by one of his directors. But having read through the memorandum I realised that this was a very one-sided proposal. And I told Mr. Habib: 'New India wants to take over control of most of the things that we might want to do. Of course, they can help us to take an inroad into the industry, but to which extent you will be independent, I am not able to say.' And the negotiations broke down. But Mr. Habib told me that I could continue with insurance, if I wanted to do this, which I did. Because I had started to like this insurance business. And I liked to work with Mr. Mohammad Ali Habib whom I used to meet on a weekly basis to give him my report on the progress made by the insurance company. After some time he asked me again whether I would like to continue with Habib Insurance or go back to the bank. And I made up my mind to finally stay with the insurance part of the group. And that's how it continued, until today, and I am happy. Now, of course, I am a retired man, I am an advisor, but there is not much for me to advise on. A new generation of the Habib family have now taken over. It was actually always the family of the sister of the original four Habib brothers who were looking after the insurance company. The Mr. Mohammad whom you knew so well, the long time General Manager of Habib Insurance was a son of that sister. We were the real partners on the working level and have steered a rather conservative course. We were never out for the market business as such. We concentrated on our own group's business plus on some very selected clients of the Bank. This policy has changed now and we will have to see how things will develop."

Based on a strong capital basis and being a member of the highly respected and reputed Habib Bank Group, their insurance arm has always followed this steady and very conservative course ever since it was floated in 1942. And as we have seen, it were to a large extent two men, Mr. Mohammad and Rusi Dubash who stood synonymous for the Habib Insurance Company for a period of almost half a century. Whatever either of these two men ever said, was solid throughout. Their word could be absolutely relied on without fail. Habib Insurance may have lacked glamour and lustre, but it always stood for professionalism, straightforwardness and solidity . Their presence in any kind of market activity added respectability and guaranteed a certain set of minimum standards from which the market as a whole could only benefit. EFU and Habib were the two companies to set standards when Pakistan's insurance industry started to get into gear. They even worked together, under one roof, for a little while, right at the beginning, when the country had just

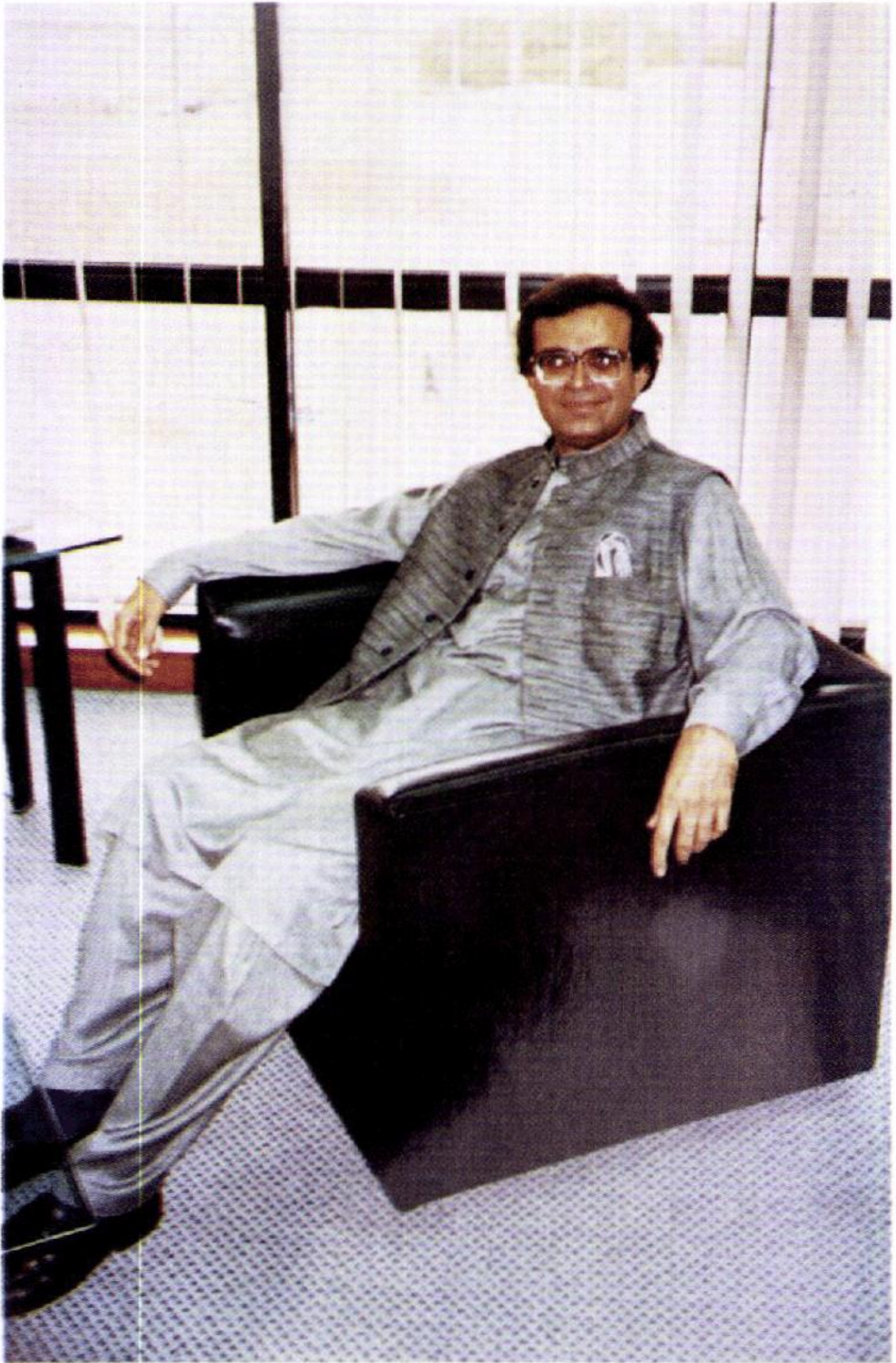
started to exist. Foreign companies who then dominated the stage, were not considered to be targets of animosity or bitter and unfriendly, 'cut throat' competition. „No“, says Rusi Dubash, „we in Habib and also our colleagues of Eastern Federal, were never at war with any of those foreign companies. They had their own clients, and we, of course, from time to time, tried to break into their clientele. And we did this by using influence, political influence even. KF Haider was there in EFU, he had far reaching contacts and possibilities, and we, in Habib with our bank, we used ours with the Memon community. And gradually we were successful. And if something went wrong, we openly discussed it with our foreign friends, because we very much considered them part of our professional group, people from whom we have learned so much. Then, of course, later, there was increasing government pressure, and then came PIC and NCS. That, of course, changed the scenario considerably and also increased competition amongst Pakistani insurers. But even then, and you are very much aware of it, that competition was a very friendly one. Once a week we used to meet either at Mamo Subjally's or Roshen Ali Bhimjee's house, for lunch, and there, no holes barred, we would accuse each other with facts and figures. But there was no bitterness or anything of that nature, nor was it having even the faintest character of a cartel, talking up prices, reducing scope of covers to the detriment of our clientele. Never, nothing of that nature. It was a very friendly community. We wanted to improve our own indigenous insurance industry by working together because our foreign competitors were, of course, still much more advanced and as global players had huge financial reserves at their disposal. So we got together because by doing so, we became stronger. Yes, we had competition, even amongst ourselves, but it was not bitter, it was not dirty, it was very friendly. And if you come to think about it, despite all the setbacks, like losing our business to NIC, increased and sometimes unnecessary reinsurance cessions to PIC, floatation of mushroom companies and a lot of other government interference, our industry has grown, has grown even substantially. Very substantially. I think there has never been a serious default by any Pakistani company, apart perhaps from one or two very small companies, where also very small amounts only could have been involved. We have any reason to be proud of what has been achieved“.

Having said this, Rusi Dubash leans back in his easy chair, apparently a very happy and relaxed man. He still continues to give bits and pieces of advice to the new and young team at 'his' Habib Insurance Company, and he even occasionally visits his old reinsurance friends, wherever they may be at home. It is mostly Zurich though, because this dedicated insurance professional even managed to get his daughter married to his lifetime passion and profession, if only indirectly, by giving her away to a very fine and capable reinsurance

executive who, amongst others, looks after his company's interest in Rusi Dubash's home market also.



Mr. Roshen Ali Bhimjee, (right) talking with Mr. Robert E. Dineen, Board Chairman of North western Mutual Life Insurance Company of United States.



Mr. Moin Fudda, Country Chief of the Commercial Union Group,
Karachi

Moin Fudda

Before bringing this chapter on an important and, as I think, also very fascinating part of Pakistan's early economic development to an end, I want my readers to meet someone who agewise, and because of a few other criteria, would not at first glance qualify for the group of people whom I have selected to represent this particular phase of the insurance industry of the country. He does not qualify to be one of the founding fathers or even a pioneer in a very particular field. He could be neither of the two because he did not even go to school when all this started to happen around him. But in what he is doing today, and the way it is done by him, he, at least in my mind, may serve as a connecting link between what happened in the past and what the future might have in store for a new generation of insurance managers, makers and dreamers alike.

I am referring to Mr. Moin Fudda, presently Country Chief of the Commercial Union Group. I first met him after he had joined Reliance Insurance in 1982. My old friend and colleague, Azim Rahim, having retired as Chief Executive from Eastern Federal had promised the owners of this newly founded company to help them establishing it. NA Qazi, another retiree, previous Chairman of NIC, was its operational chief. Moin Fudda did not last long with this new company, he was offered a senior position in PIC and went up the ladder to become one of its Executive Directors. It was then that I really got to know him personally, started to appreciate his sound technical background, his business acumen, and his apparent ambition to make it right up to the top.

Sitting in his beautiful office, CU's own building, a stone's throw away from Qamar House and just opposite to the Pakistan Insurance Corporation, he gives me some details of his personal life. Born in Karachi as the son of a businessman who had migrated to Pakistan from Mozambique in Africa, Maputo, its capital. But he mostly did his business from Lisboa, Portugal, so he virtually came from there. His mother migrated from India. His forefathers obviously once lived in Thatta, Sindh. This is at least what his father and he had meanwhile found out. Early education and some part of his college life were done in Karachi. But his higher qualifications were all acquired abroad. First in Teheran, Iran.

„One of my uncles used to work in EFU“, he tells me, „as a matter of fact he is still working there. Not in a very high capacity, but he obviously was a very dedicated person and liked his job there. That is how I got to know insurance,

in 1973. I was a student then and wanted to see if I could get an opportunity to go abroad, as so many people used to do in those days. So I was looking at all sorts of advertisements and suddenly I saw the advertisement for a scholarship for the RCD College of Insurance in Iran and I applied. Three candidates were to be selected in that year and fortunately I was one of them. So I decided to leave the country for higher education, not really knowing what insurance was all about, I just had those faint impressions of the job done by my uncle, but nothing of substance. I did my BSc in insurance and at the same time worked for Stewart Wrightson, one of the bigger London insurance broker houses, in Teheran. So side by side, schooling and working in this firm, brought me finally into insurance. It was a good learning process and after obtaining BSc I thought that I should do something more, that perhaps BSc was not yet good enough, that I needed some more international experience. I had saved some money and went to the United States and in New York I got myself admitted at the College of Insurance. I managed to get my MBA, which was great fun and finally the AIG Group picked me up. Not by Mr. Greenberg personally, but I had the opportunity of meeting him, because at that time I was the only Pakistani working for his organisations in New York. And at a few occasions they gave me the 'Pakistan file', which was basically on their desire to re-enter the Pakistani life insurance market, the ALICO file, so I was at least temporarily associated with that project also."

Moin Fudda returned to Pakistan, joined, as I already mentioned, Reliance Insurance, had some very interesting years in PIC and finally opted to take his chance with one of the big global players, the Commercial Union Group, now CGNU, to head their Pakistani operations in general insurance. Right from the beginning of his involvement with them he strongly suggested to his masters in London that the floatation of a Life insurance company in Pakistan would be worthwhile considering. And he did everything to achieve this goal. After the Eastern Federal and two other Pakistani companies were granted necessary licences, also the AIG Group got one and ALICO re-entered the Pakistani life scene. With the Commercial Union soon to follow.

Moin Fudda thus represents the interests of a non-Pakistani establishment, although he in his heart of heart would call himself a rather staunch nationalist, albeit free of even the slightest hint of chauvinism. He felt deeply hurt when, years back, the National Insurance Reform Commission was formed and some senior members of the industry, with whom he was otherwise on extremely good personal terms, raised objections to his nomination for fear that he may put 'foreign interests' on top of 'national' ones, since he was now working for a multinational company.

He still feels very sad about it. „Everybody has to work for his own bread and butter“, he says, „but on issues of national importance you don't compromise, even with your own parent company. And today, when I have to go and talk to the World Bank, I am not going and talking there on behalf of my own company, many people are witness that I am talking on behalf of the industry. I work for the national interest first and for my bread and butter or any other interest thereafter.“

Moin Fudda is a man, who, of course, wants to make a big headway with the new 'life insurance wing' of his company, and this automatically makes him a fierce competitor of primarily EFU Life, the old and new market leader in the field of privately owned life insurance companies. He is very much aware of it, and so are his 'friendly enemies' across the fire line. Much can be learnt, however, I guess, from what people like AU Siddiqui and Rusi Dubash had to say on the issue of foreign companies working in this market, something which was there right from day one of Pakistan's formation, a situation with which the market as a whole was even much more confronted some four or five decades ago. More global players may yet arrive at Pakistan's shores. Some of them may seek alliances with the established indigenous players. 'Globalisation' will at the end of the day also greatly affect the further economic development of this country, and this includes insurance. It already does, as the recently concluded co-operation between EFU General and one of the largest international insurance institutions, the Allianz of Germany, clearly proves. More of this is bound to come. This is why I felt that persons like Mr. Moin Fudda, represent an ongoing process of 'internationalisation'. Political and economic developments of countries tend to occur in waves. This, of course, also applies to insurance. As we have seen over the years elsewhere in the world, greater units seem to be an appropriate answer to the growing demand of its clientele. There was a time when government had to make sure that an indigenous industry could be developed, it therefore had to be protected. As far as Pakistan goes, this happened in a very soft and non-aggressive way. So called 'market forces' eventually took care of how things finally shaped in the insurance industry. Nobody got seriously hurt. That development is past history. New ones are obviously 'ante portas'. I am confident that with the experience gained during the first fifty years of this wonderful industry, market participants will make sure that this new 'wave', this new form of adjusting necessity will not arrive in the form of a 'tidal wave', but as hitherto in a most civilised and controlled form.

And I am glad that people like Mr. Moin Fudda, together with those of his colleagues at the helm of the large Pakistani owned companies, will see to it,

that this process is initiated solely to enhance the prestige of the industry further and to provide even better and more comprehensive forms of services to the public at large.

Chapter Three

Life sketches, profiles and biographies of people not forgotten

Introductory Remarks

The history of nations, as of commercial and industrial enterprises, is the history of people. It is the stories of outstanding men and women who were instrumental in either founding, guiding or further developing them.

As far as nations are concerned we saw this very clearly demonstrated a little earlier when glancing at the historical background of the division of British India and the creation of Pakistan. We have seen how towering personalities like Sir Syed, Iqbal, Jinnah and others have not only influenced but in a way dominated their times and causes.

The purpose of this book is, as I have said in its preface, to acquaint its readers with the historical background of one of the country's large commercial enterprises, the EFU Group of Companies. And again I could not think of a more appropriate way to do it than by trying to narrate the life stories of those people who, each in his own way, has made his contribution towards the development of this great and leading institution. I therefore consider the following profiles to be the core of this publication and would wish and hope that my readers may at the end of the day, having gone through all of them, come to the same conclusion.

I am sure that people will ask me why and how I have chosen just those persons whose life stories my readers will find in this book. And I would not be surprised if my answer is not up to the satisfaction to each and everyone. And yet, the answer is comparatively simple, I think. To start with, I could, of course, only write about such persons whom I either had known, - or still do, - or about whom others, relatives and friends have told me whatever they felt they could, - or about whom books or other publications have been written and copies of which were still available. This sometimes became a 'Himalayan task' and I am grateful to all of those who have helped me surmount it. And in hindsight, I feel very relieved, for I think that because of those selfless supporters I have been able to write about all those personalities I wanted to do. If still, the one or the other is missing in this gallery of people who have contributed greatly to what EFU stands for today, - it is entirely and solely due to lack of supporting material. I, however, accept the sole

responsibility for the selection made and apologise profoundly if inadvertently I have missed out on the one or the other.

And I want to most fervently appeal to all my readers not to mistake the number of pages written on a particular person with the importance and respect I or others attach to it. I again depended fully on whatever material I had at my disposal.

There was, however, one thing very close and dear to my mind and heart. From the very outset it was my distinct and firm intention to not only write about those persons who were anyhow well known in the country, be they either historical figures or one of her prominent citizens. I wanted to acquaint my readers also with at least a few of those people who in each organisation play vital, indispensable roles, but never reach the limelight and are forgotten the moment they retire.

And the attentive reader will start wondering why there is no profile on one of the most charismatic and outstanding personalities whose life and deeds had a most decisive influence on EFU's fate for almost four decades: Mr. Roshen Ali Bhimjee, who until his death in December 1998 served as the company's ardent and highly respected Chairman.

The answer again is a very simple one: following the request of many of his friends I have written a separate biography on him which, together with this book, which is right here in front of you, will be presented to the public at large at the same time.

Its readers will soon realise, however, that he figures quite prominently also in this publication because his life was often closely connected with that of those, whose stories I have told.

The Patrons

H.H. The Nawab of Bhopal

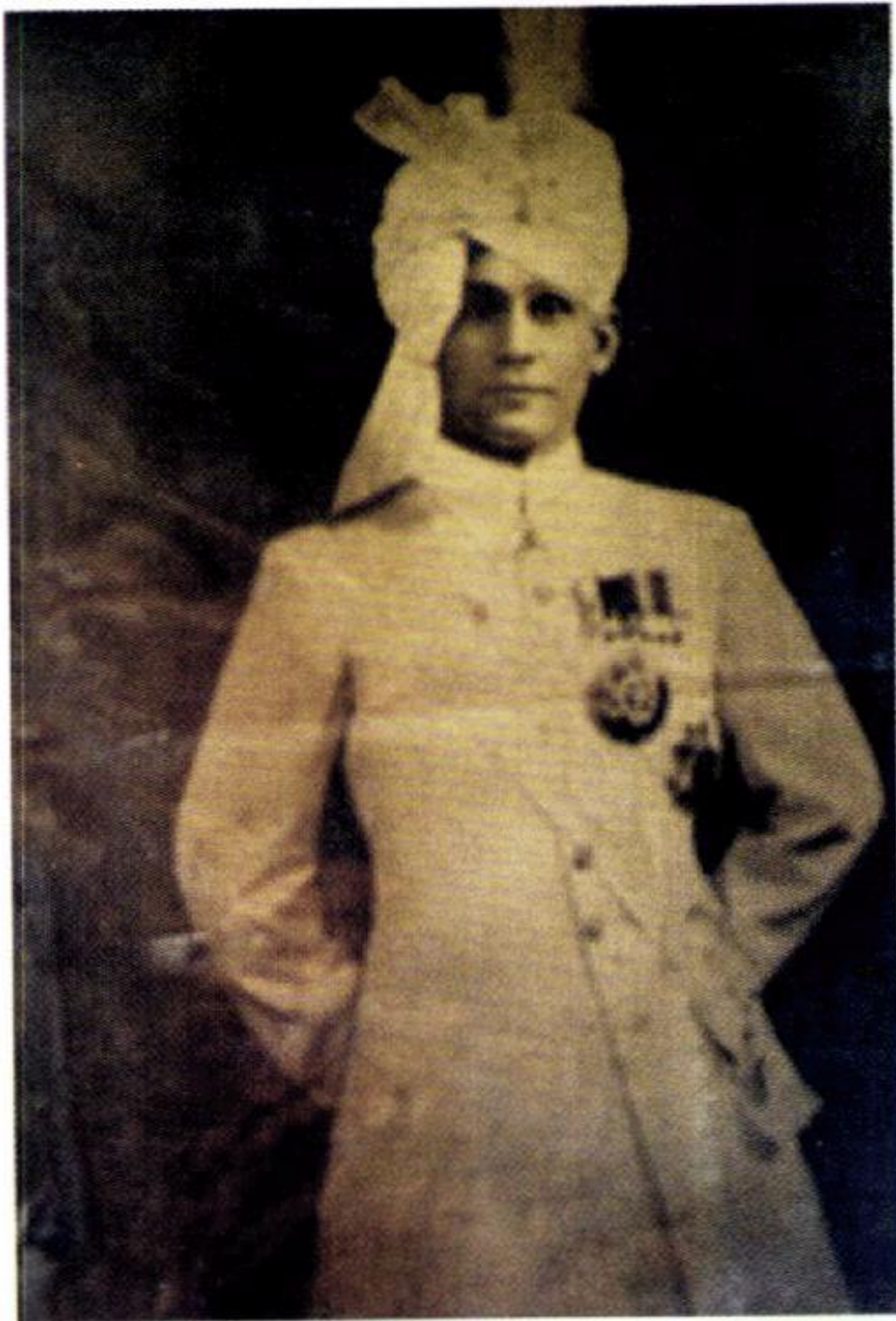
H.H. The Aga Khan



H.H. The Nawab of Bhopal around 1942



H.H. Princess Abida Sultan, last heir-apparent of Bhopal, receiving plaque of appreciation, on 50th anniversary of her having become first women pilot in India.



HH The Nawab of Bhopal in the early 30s



HH The Nawab of Bhopal together with daughter, Princess Abida, heir-apparent, the Nawab's wife and others at the palace in Bhopal

H.H. The Nawab of Bhopal King of the court at Camelot

The life story of King Arthur, the legendary king of Britain, as well as the exploits of his Knights at the Round Table of the court at Camelot have been developed by many medieval and modern writers and thereby became the subject of many legends. Contrary to that, the life of the late and last Nawab of Bhopal, who together with the Aga Khan became one of the two Patrons when the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company was founded in 1932, is very much real and also an important part of the history book written about India's Muslims struggle for freedom and Partition.

A political map of pre-independent and unpartitioned India presented a patchy mosaic of provinces and princely states. At the outbreak of World War II there were 562 such 'princedom' with a total population of about 100 million, which represented almost one fifth of the total at that time. Some of these states were very large, like Hyderabad, Mysore and Kashmir, whereas the majority of them were rather small, quite a number of them diminutive, vestigial remnants from a remote past. More than 300 of them had altogether a land area of barely 6000 square miles with a population of less than a million. In some instances the state might consist of only a few acres with just fifty people representing its total 'population'.

Whether great or small, their political status was the result of treaties between its rulers and the East India Company. And though they all varied in size, population, revenue, and the extent of the rights they enjoy, one fact is common to all of them, that is, their territory was not British and their people were not subjects of the Crown. British Indian courts had no jurisdiction inside even the smallest states and laws passed by the Indian legislature had not, except in certain cases in relation to British subjects, extended to the states. Legally they were, so to speak, foreign territory.

During the 'mutiny' in 1857 most of the princes remained loyal to the British crown, in recognition of which 'sanads of adoption' were signed with the various native rulers, guaranteeing their thrones and admitting the right to adopt heirs when necessary. However, while the princely states were supposedly sovereign in their domestic affairs, the British exercised what was known as the principle of paramountcy, which for all practical purposes meant that there were in fact considerable limitations of their powers. No state could

for instance participate in foreign relations and all matters between one princely state and another had to pass through the channels of the viceroy acting for the British government.

Much has been said and written in denunciation of the princes, whose domains have been defined as 'anachronistic pools of absolutism in the modern world'. The best of them, however, were benevolent despots presiding over progressive and well-governed states. Most of them lived like English country gentry. They travelled widely and were quite at home in the world, had homes in London and Paris, the Cote d'Azur or elsewhere. Some were great sportsmen, spent huge sums on their stables or were mighty hunters, stalking the lion, tiger and other beasts. And a few were even highly educated, enlightened and progressive thinkers.

There was evidence, therefore, that princely states did not have to be medieval backwaters and there are plenty of reasons to presume that Bhopal, one of the more influential princely states, easily qualified to be further advanced than British India in such matters as education, public health and even advancement of women.

The latter can be easily understood because Bhopal had a long line of women rulers before the last Nawab of Bhopal took over the affairs of his state after his grandmother had abdicated the throne in his favour in 1926. Hamidullah Khan, Nawab Sir Mohammad, Ruler of Bhopal became a rather prominent figure amongst Indian princes in pre-partition days. It is, therefore, all the more surprising that no historian or historically interested author has as yet attempted to write a biography on the life of this highly enlightened, brilliant, good looking, brave and fascinating man, whom the last Viceroy of His Majesty's Government, Lord Mountbatten has always considered to be his second best and second closest friend in India, - the number one position, of course, going to Jawahar Nehru. The Nawab, like Jinnah, was a non-diarist, - at least according to public knowledge, - and also his contemporaries, those who have left memoirs or other publications behind, have not given us very detailed descriptions of the Nawab's personal life. The exception being Choudhry Khaliqzaman who in his 'Pathway to Pakistan' renders a brief but very vivid account of his personal relationship with the then Prince Hamidullah Khan. I will, of course, share this with my readers, a little later.

Still, lack of supporting and written material did not prevent me from becoming rather familiar with the life and personality of the late Nawab of Bhopal almost instantly after having started to walk on Pakistani soil. The

reason being that at the time of my joining Eastern Federal Union in Karachi its General Manager happened to be Mr. KF Haider who prior to Partition was a close confidant of the Nawab. As Finance Minister of Bhopal and in various other capacities he had served him for several decades and was even after Partition his permanent travel companion. Right from the day of our first meeting in his room as Chief Executive of EFU I was confronted with a series of references to Haider Sahib's previous and sacrosanct relationship with 'His Highness the Nawab'. And after some time I almost started to believe that I knew the Nawab personally very well, although he meanwhile had died, in 1960, just a few months after I had arrived in Karachi. This even more so, as another close friend and colleague of mine, Mr. SM Moinuddin, had also been in the services of the former Nawab of Bhopal and was equally full of praise of him. What a pity that I did not know then that four decades later I would encounter his life again, and this time in an even much more detailed and intimate way. I certainly would have made some notes on the manifold and interesting facets of this man's life, which now, with the passage of time, I am afraid, I have, to a large extent forgotten.

However, to make up for this, I have been very fortunate in having been able to meet the Nawab's eldest daughter, the heir apparent, who very kindly not only received me at her estate in Malir, but gave me ample time to ask her any kind of questions which she, although bedridden because of an unfortunate fall and fracture of her leg, patiently, willingly and candidly had answered. The very interesting and exciting interview with this still fascinating and most dynamic grand old lady was arranged by the daughter of late KF Haider who still keeps close contact with Princess Abida Sultan. My meeting with this remarkable lady was one of the highlights of the many I had with dozens of most outstanding personalities. A highlight not only because of the closeness and intimacy with the mantle of history which our discussion insinuated, but even more so because of her very realistic and natural description of what was once a very important pillar of the former British Raj, the Indian princes. I was able to catch a real glimpse of this particular aspect of India's history and was now in a position to understand and appreciate much better what people like KF Haider had told me about one of the most outstanding and progressive of India's royalties.

Bhopal's ruling family was founded by a Pathan or Afghan soldier of fortune, Dost Muhammad Khan, who after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 declared himself independent in Bhopal. Nawab Qudsia Begum was the first women ruler and according to Princess Abida she was illiterate and uneducated, to the extent that she could not even sign her name. She was 18

when her husband, the ruler, was assassinated. And she had a daughter, then two years of age.

As 'uneducated' as she might have been, she nevertheless must have been a very farsighted and clever woman for she challenged all the male members of her family and finally succeeded to make her only daughter the heir apparent. She made sure that her daughter was trained in all the martial arts so as to survive in tough and rough battles with external as well as with internal enemies. She died in 1837 and her daughter, as Sikandar Begum (1816-1868) became an impressive and highly adored ruler of her state. Sultan Jahan Begum (1858-1930), Princess Abida's towering grandmother was the last in line of a series of very successful women rulers. In 1874 she married a member of a distinguished Afghan family of Jalalabad, the father of her two daughters and three sons, the youngest being Prince Mohammad Hamidullah Khan, born in September 1894, the one who in 1926 should become 'our' Nawab of Bhopal

„My grandmother had five children“, remembers Princess Abida, when welcoming me to her house in December 1997, „and my father was the youngest one. The two daughters died very young, at the age of fourteen and fifteen. Only the three boys were left, with the eldest one, Nawab Nasrullah Khan, being the heir apparent. My father was nineteen years junior in age to his eldest brother, almost like father and son, and he was nowhere in the line of succession, - he was the last. But then the two elder brothers died in 1924, within a space of five months.

According to existing law the son of the heir apparent was entitled to succeed his father. My young mother was still alive and she was the ruler. But my grandmother did not have a very good opinion of her, nor of her grandchildren because they were not brought up according to her ideas; they never went to school, they were educated at home where they were pampered and brought up like most affluent Indians. My grandmother did not approve of them. Her husband had died when my father, being the youngest, was only six years old and my grandmother was now in a position to bring him up and educate him completely according to her own visions and her understanding. She was a very enlightened person, a very progressive lady. She did not believe in spoiling children, not educating them. So she did a very courageous, almost revolutionary step, she sent my father to Aligarh. Had my grandfather lived a few years longer, my father would have never seen Aligarh, he would have perhaps never got involved with people like Maulana Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Jinnah, Nehru, Gandhi; all the politicians and spearheads of what

was then developing into India's freedom movement. His two brothers knew nothing about the political and cultural affairs of India, they were limited to what happened inside Bhopal only. But my father was right in the midst of the intellectual and political turmoil of what became known as the 'Aligarh movement' and he, therefore became known and labelled as anti British. But as he was nowhere near the succession line there was therefore nothing to prevent him from meeting these Indian political leaders while he was at Aligarh. And he picked up the Aligarh attitude of life, and that was thoroughly 'anti British.'

Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, one of the prominent leaders of the Muslim League, was in Aligarh from 1907 till 1912 and therefore met Prince Hamidulla there. In his memoirs he writes this about him: „In 1910 Prince Hamidullah Khan, the third son of the Begum of Bhopal, also joined the institution. Room No. 33, Sir Sayeed Court, which was occupied by my dear friend Nuruddin, hockey captain, and Sarwar Ali, brother of Asad Ali, the best hockey player that I have ever seen, became the rendezvous of football and hockey players, including Hamidullah Khan. Although Hamidullah Khan lived in a bungalow outside the boarding-house he stayed with us till late hours. He neither suffered from the morbid bashfulness born from a secluded harem life, surrounded by a host of toadies and sycophants, nor was he the victim of arrogance and pride, the only substitutes of the former trait in many cases. He was a prince only in name, otherwise his demeanour, his habits and his ideas of social equality, freedom of thought and of service to people were in every respect those of a common man. He was very sensible even then, but the great qualities of head and heart which he showed as the Nawab of Bhopal, the second biggest Muslim state of India, overshadowed those of some of the best men in Muslim politics. He had to live and work under a great handicap. If he had been in the political life of the country with his wide vision, his nationalist outlook, tempered by realisation of the complexities of the Indian political tangle, he might have been able to help the solution of the communal problem. His misfortune was that he was a Nawab.“

It was about this time that other Indian royalties were openly supporting the Muslim cause. The then Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad was the Vice-President of a University Fund, a fund raising campaign under the patronage of the Aga Khan who, accompanied by Maulana Shaukat Ali was touring India to personally make appeals for contributions. It was also during this period that following the Italian attack on the Turkish possession of Tripoli students at Aligarh vehemently protested 'in violent language the atrocities committed by the Italians against the small Turkish force' and, as we are told by

Khaliquzzaman 'Hamidullah Khan was throughout with us regardless of his position.' And he must have felt indeed very close to these anti British circles for Khaliquzzaman also tells us that a few years later, after he had already started his legal practice in Lucknow, he was carrying a message from the Ali Brothers to Prince Hamidullah Khan informing him of their resolve to make Bhopal their headquarters in case of an open revolt initiated by them. The Ali Brothers, amongst others, played a vital role in the so-called Khilafat Movement which I have described in greater detail in my profile on Abdur Rahman Siddiqui. Maulana Mohammad Ali was also the founder and publisher of the famous English weekly the *Comrade* from Delhi. He was a very forceful writer, both in English and Urdu. He was tried and imprisoned for publishing a series of articles in the *Comrade* in 1915 on 'The Choice of the Turks', in which he had justified the decision of the Turks to fight against the British in World War I. After his release in 1919, he started the *Comrade* in Urdu and for some years it acted as the unofficial voice of the Muslim movement. No wonder that the Indian Government was vehemently opposed to Prince Hamidullah Khan's claim of succession which his mother was so vigorously fighting for.

His two elder brothers had died in 1924 and the succession issue had therefore to be resolved. The Viceroy at that time was Lord Reading and he had come to the conclusion that the son of the heir apparent would be the next in line. „But grandmother said no,“ narrates Princess Abida and her still very strong voice becomes even more forceful when she tells me the story of how her grandmother, whom she adored, fought her battle with the British. „She started to quote Islamic law and claimed that her youngest son, the only surviving child has preference over her grandson. But the viceroy was against my father because his whole Aligarh dossier had been kept. On the other hand there were a few sympathetic officers in the government because they knew that these other young boys were not fit to be rulers, they were uneducated and just wild. When the case came up to Lord Reading for final decision he wrote: 'under no circumstances can the British Government afford to have Hamidullah as the ruler of a prominent Muslim State because of his anti British attitude'. When my grandmother realised that her case was about to be lost she decided to immediately go to England and appeal to the Privy Council. That was in 1925. We all had gone together, grandmother, father, mother, my sisters and I. We stayed in a very nice house, at 29 Portman Square in London. And it was for the first time that we had real freedom because 'Sarkar Amman', as we called my grandmother, who back home in Bhopal used to be very strict, was far too preoccupied now. We could even sneak out to the cinemas, which we were not allowed to do at home. Lady

Willingdon, the wife of the first Governor of Bombay, even managed to persuade 'Sarkar Amman' to personally go and see Charlie Chaplin in 'The Gold Rush' for there were no love scenes and nothing that would shock her or be against her religious sentiments. And she liked the film, she even saw it twice.

„Yes, she was very busy in London, she saw the Privy Council and also met King George. She pleaded, she cried, she wept, even fainted in front of the King, and she continuously pointed out article 9 of the treaty that Bhopal had with British India according to which they would not interfere with the internal matters of Bhopal. And she again and again pointed out that the British had no rights to interfere with her internal affairs. Anyway, what counts is the end, - the case was fought and finally she got what she wanted; they recognised my father. And during all this time, some eight to ten months, my cousins, back home in Bhopal, got together and made several attempts to assassinate my father. That, of course, was very common amongst the Indian ruling families. Nothing unusual. Therefore, what she did, farsighted and clever as she was, - the moment she got the official letter documenting that the British Government accepted Hamidullah Khan as heir apparent, she abdicated. She abdicated there in London at three o'clock in the morning. I distinctly remember this. A letter was written and was immediately sent to the British Government. Telegrams were sent to Bhopal and the British Government in India, - she did not lose a moment because if she had delayed these steps, and she was very convinced of this, my father in all likelihood would have been assassinated.

„We were all very happy then, I was around 12 years of age and got really excited. We had moved out to Wimbledon by then because the lease at Portman Square had expired. As I said, we were all together because my grandmother had made up her mind that if she had lost the case she would not return to Bhopal. Anyhow, my father had become heir apparent and within a few hours he was the ruler because grandmother abdicated which made the British Government very angry. They blamed her for not having informed them of her real intentions but she contended that under no circumstances could she have done that. She had only this one child left and she could never allow herself to risk his life, which according to her, was very unsafe. The British finally gave in but insisted on appointing the son of the previous heir apparent, my cousin, to be next to my father. They maintained that as my father had no sons it would be much better for the sake of the state to make his nephew the heir apparent. And again my grandmother fought like an

experienced warrior and victoriously left the battle field. I was the official and next heir apparent.“

Princess Abida, now an octagonian, smiled and it appeared that she still enjoyed telling the story of her courageous grandmother who had brought her up like her own daughter. „My mother“, she said, had nothing to do with me. My grandmother had lost her two daughters, so when I was born, she just picked me up, took me to her own room and there I remained for 17 years until ‘Sarkar Amman’ died. I was her favourite. She did not mean to be cruel, she didn’t mean to be harsh. It was just this sort of fear that she did not have enough time to prepare a girl who would come up to her standards of Muslim womanhood. And like her, I was never forced to be in *pardah*.“

Life seemed to change when in 1926 they all returned to India. There was a lot of protocol because Princess Abida’s father was now returning as the new ruler, Nawab Hamidullah Khan, in whose favour ‘Sarkar Amman’ had abdicated. „We three girls“, she now remembers, „plus my mother and my grandmother, we all had to get ready to walk in a sort of a procession down the gangway. Suddenly my grandmother decided that as I was now an adult - I was thirteen - I was supposed to go into *pardah*. This came as a real shock to me, but I had to obey. They could not, however, keep me in *pardah* for very long. I started revolting and to cheat. Whenever my grandmother was not around I used to take the opportunity to go out, play polo, did my horse riding, - everything I used to do before I became the heir apparent. But one fine day my grandmother was being driven to some place and she met me, driving my own car without *burqah* after a polo game and she almost got hysterical. She sent for my father, now the ruler, and he successfully persuaded her that not only I but also all the other girls plus my mother should do away with this *pardah* business, - and we were all very happy about it and grateful to my father.“

As I have mentioned before, Princess Abida was laying in her bed with a fractured leg when she very kindly received me for our interview. I had heard so much about her. That she had been the first Indian woman to obtain a pilot’s licence, a woman whose many cars had never seen a mechanics workshop because she did all the repairs and servicing herself, with her own hands, until even today. And there she was, the incarnation of a very refined and rare specie of a distant past, a living example of history, - and yet at the same time a highly intellectual and very practical and fully emancipated lady of the highest order. The first thing I saw, before even looking at her, were two impressive and frightening rifles, one just next to her. And after having

gone through the necessary preliminaries and courtesies she told me that these guns were real, not meant for show. That she had only recently used one, frightening off a burglar who had sneaked into her house.

„We were all brought up with guns, that was a tradition. When I was born and when my sisters were born, before the delivery there used to be a horse standing there, and the first thing done was to put the newly born child on the horse, in a cradle, - that was a tradition in our family. And it did not matter if you were a girl or a boy. There was no distinction between sex, no distinction or discrimination at all. After all, we had four women rulers who ruled over Bhopal for 108 years in succession“.

As a child and growing up young lady Princess Abida must have been very proud of her father and I think she felt very close to him, The way she talked about him as a caring and understanding father, his good looks, his intellectual charm and his great achievements as an outstanding sportsman. He was an excellent hockey player, one of India's best polo players with a handicap of 9, the highest one achievable and an extraordinary good marksman. But contrary to the vast majority of India's princes, he also took keen interest in the political developments taking place all over the subcontinent and was blessed with a number of friends who represented the best brains which the country could provide at that time.

In hindsight Prince Hamidullah Khan must have considered himself very fortunate having been able to lead a very ordinary life for more than four decades, at least when compared to the life of his two elder brothers. Had he been closer to the immediate succession line he would have never been allowed to go to Aligarh. He also would have never met the circle of friends who later, when he finally had become the ruler, should play such an important and eminent part not only in his life but also in running the affairs of Bhopal.

Most outstanding people indeed who later, after Pakistan had been created, also made their great contribution towards her further development. People like Shoaib Qureshi, a long-time friend and colleague of Pakistan's second governor-general, Ghulam Mohammad, Abdur Rahman Siddiqui and Chaudrhi Mohammad Zafrulla Khan, Pakistan's long time Foreign Minister and able representative at the United Nations were among them and formed indeed a most impressive 'Round Table of the Nawab's court at Camelot'.

Most of them had been close friends during their stay in England and some had already been together at Aligarh. They were all united in their desire to see an end of the British Raj as soon as possible, although none disliked the British and their way of life as such. On the contrary: like most members of the educated class of India they considered England to be their intellectual home base, and her political institutions and systems as something worth emulating also for their country's political future. It was also there, in England, that his circle of friends and he discussed the necessity for Muslims to engage themselves more actively in the economic field. And when the idea to float a Muslim owned insurance company was raised, he immediately pledged his financial support behind it and thus became one of the two Patrons of the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company when it was officially floated in Calcutta, in 1932, the other one being the Aga Khan.

People like the ones just mentioned, or the Ali Brothers, a man like Dr. Ansari, the Chief of the famous Medical Mission to Turkey in connection with the Khilafat Movement, an intellectual wizard as the Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad, or Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, - they all, each in his own way, must have had a great influence and impact on Nawab Hamidullah Khan, who indeed must have been a master of the tight rope. Constantly travelling between two worlds and still being an accepted part by both, is by no means an easy achievement and proves the high degree of the Nawab's ability to adapt himself easily to all the challenges arising from both ends. Being proud of his services with the Prince of Wales as his ADC (aide-de-camp) whilst visiting India and beating him - much to the embarrassment of his mother - on the Polo grounds in Bhopal, supporting directly or indirectly active members of India's freedom movement, representing India's Chamber of Princes as its Chancellor during the Round Table Conferences in 1931 and 1932, and again, conducting the negotiations on their behalf during the crucial years 1944 to 1947, needed extraordinary intelligence, flexibility, courage and self-assurance, which Nawab Hamidullah Khan obviously, and in abundance, possessed.

Princess Abida vividly remembers their trips to London in connection with the Round Table Conferences. „There was quite a lot of hope in that period“, she once said during a lengthy interview with one Mr. Omar Khan, „and in fact, people did not think that the British would ever leave. But they still thought that some sort of formula would be found to give representation to Hindus and Muslims which would satisfy everyone. And I remember having met Mr. Motilal Nehru whom I fell in love with immediately. He was such a sweet person and he was also going to the Round Table Conference“.

This is what she had also told me during our meeting, and also that she did not like Mahatma Gandhi at all. He had been on the same boat, like most of the other Indian delegates; Jinnah for instance, Motilal Nehru and his son Jaharawal, Azad, and Gandhi. That's why she had met all of them. And when asked by me why she did not like the Mahatma, - as the majority of Indians then did,- she said: „The first thing was, I thought he was a hypocrite. In that sense that every day he used to read the words of the Koran pretending to be very pro-Muslim. Then he pretended to be, how shall I put it, he pretended to treat everybody at par, did not differentiate between people at all. All were equal to him. But then, my first impression of him was of a man about whom such great fuss was made, all the newspaper men around him being full of praise, particularly of the fact that contrary to all the others he was travelling Third Class. And then, - I realised that, alright, he was indeed travelling in Third Class, - but the whole Third Class deck was cleared of all the other passengers who had to stay downstairs in their holds, cooking their own meals. And all this in a terrible heat, no fresh air. They were not allowed to go on deck. And there was he, this Mr. Gandhi, sitting on this deck all alone. What was that? What did his God have to say about it!?“

„There were many contradictions in Gandhi's way of living. He defied poverty“, writes Patrick French in his beautifully written book 'Liberty or Death', „and condemned modern industrialism, yet relied on lavish donations from the Birla, Sabhai and Bajaj families, whose fortunes came from just such sources. He always travelled with a giant entourage of disciples, many of whom were renowned for their cold hauteur towards outsiders, yet he claimed to dislike special treatment. He wished to live like India's rural peasantry, but wherever he went herbs, vegetables and chaste goats would be garnered, buildings scrubbed, whitewashed and decorated in an appropriate style, and mud refrigerated for him to smear on his stomach as one of his many 'nature cures'. His opponent Mohammad Ali Jinnah made the point that he spent less than Gandhi on train fares despite travelling first class, since he only had to buy one ticket“.

Not many details are known about the Nawab's personal life. Intimate friends, like KF Haider, who, as I already mentioned, was one of his closest confidants, speak very highly of his generosity and pleasant personality. He is described as a man who cared for his people and who easily understood that providing excellent educational facilities to the people of his state was of paramount importance. And having read about the Nawab's ability to collect only the country's elite around his own 'Round Table at his court of Camelot', my readers will not be surprised that also Sir Sayyid Ross Masood, grandson

of Sir Sayeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent educationist, once served as Minister of Education in Bhopal. Whilst there, he invited his lifelong friend, Dr. Sir Iqbal, to stay there with him for some time and saw to it that a monthly pension of Rs 500 was fixed for the great poet-philosopher. In addition the Nawab paid for the poet's medical treatment.

The Nawab's political views were known as being very pro-Pakistan. Already at an early stage he supported the Pakistan movement. Still, when negotiating the future of the princely states in the wake of independence and Partition on behalf of the Chamber of Princes, he pleaded for maximum sovereignty for them, suggested the formation of a Privy Council on the lines as were contained in the Simon Report. He was in favour of a loose federation at the centre and did not want the British paramountcy to be transferred to an Indian government.

He resigned his office as Chancellor of the Chamber when Lord Mountbatten announced the British plan for transfer of power, in June 1947. He wanted Bhopal to assume an independent status and along with the Maharaja of Indore he headed a small group of rulers who opposed accession. He also refused to attend a meeting of all the Rulers to be held on 25th of July 1947 which was to be addressed by the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, his personal friend since childhood. He openly complained that the 'Rulers were being invited like the Oysters to attend the tea-party with the Walrus and the Carpenter'. Though the Nawab had been appeased by various administrative measures, he persisted in this attitude, despite much personal persuasion by his friend, the Viceroy.

„I suppose,“ wrote the Viceroy, „I have spent more time on Bhopal's case than on all the other States put together, because he is such a charming and high-principled man that it would be a tragedy if he were to wreck the State by failing to come in now“.

It is said that two days previously Lord Mountbatten had had a very long talk with the Nawab, in which he threatened to abdicate in favour of his daughter. „I told him“, writes Mountbatten, „that I considered this would be a cowardly act and unfair to his daughter, and that he must stay for at least a year.....I do not feel that I can allow him to abdicate if I can possibly avoid this, since it would look as though I were bringing pressure to bear on him, which is far from being the case, as he himself is the first to admit“.

Realising that by now the great majority of Rulers were acceding, the Nawab wavered. He asked for a Standstill Agreement without acceding and received a firm 'No'. He then sent his Constitutional Adviser, Sir Zafrullah Khan, to discuss the terms of the Instrument of Accession, but only to be told that no special terms would be available to him. He finally signed the Instrument, stipulating only that his accession should not be disclosed until ten days after the transfer of power. In April 1948 an interim government was formed in Bhopal and in June 1949 Bhopal was eventually taken over as a Chief Commissioners province. Thus came to an end the sovereignty of the largest Muslim state in Central India. Following the reorganisation of states in 1956, Bhopal State was merged in Madhya Pradesh and Bhopal city became its capital.

This 'merger' reminds me of an interesting episode which I came to know when visiting India in December 1999. Shankar Dayal Sharma, a former President of India had just died and through one of his obituaries which I read on board an India Airlines flight I learnt that he was born in the household of a Sanskrit scholar in Bhopal. Sharma obviously was very intelligent and showed an early fondness for the rigours of academic life. He had his higher education in Agra and then Allahabad University where he did both an MA in English and an LLB. After World War II he went to Cambridge, spent a year in Harvard and was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn. The same year, Sharma returned to India to join a movement against the Nawab of Bhopal, demanding merger with India. Shortly after he had delivered a speech that the Nawab deemed seditious, he was arrested and spent eight months in prison. He was released after the state's merger with India and went to Lucknow University to teach. In 1952 the former prisoner returned home as Chief Minister, a position he held until Bhopal was merged with the newly formed state of Madhya Pradesh.

I was, of course, not able to obtain any comments which the Nawab may have made when witnessing the steep career of one of his former 'subjects'. I could, however, imagine that he would have been very proud of him.

Sitting in front of Princess Abida Sultan, heir apparent to the last Ruler of Bhopal, in Karachi, in Pakistan, and knowing that she had served this country with great distinction as her ambassador, I could, of course, not resist asking her why her father after Partition and after having signed the Accession Instrument never really considered migration to the new home for India's Muslims, a country which he himself had directly and indirectly been fighting for.

„As far as I am concerned“, she said after a long pause and rather reluctantly, „I had become a Pakistani together with Begum Mohammad Ali, wife of the famous Maulana Ali, already much earlier than 1947, before it was even created. I was totally dedicated to Pakistan through Begum Mohammad Ali's stories and visions. I was myself fairly religious, and on top I thought that Pakistan was going to be just a bigger Bhopal, but otherwise very similar. It never occurred to me that some people in this country want it to become a theocratic state. Mr. Jinnah, for sure, never wanted this to happen. And my father was my idol since early childhood. He had bought properties in Pakistan and he was due to come here. Then my husband had bought properties in Pakistan. They were all due to come here, or were pretending they would be coming. But both of them never came. My father passed a few times through Pakistan and stayed perhaps for a day or two on his way to India. But he never came here when all the newspapers were talking about the possibility of His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal coming here after the death of Mr. Jinnah to take his place as Governor General. I really do not know what stopped him. I really do not know, and I do not invent stories, that certainly is not my kind of business. And the properties he bought are still here. So is the property of my husband, it is all here. But they never came. So why did they buy these properties? Bhopal House is still there, next to the house where also Jinnah once lived. It was all rumoured and spoken about, all over the world, but then he decided not to come. I really don't know why“.

It was the first time that the Princess had mentioned her husband. He belonged to the same family as the ancestors of the Bhopali Rulers, the Nawab of Quarbai. Princess Abida's grandmother was said to have been instrumental in this marriage, also for having persuaded his mother to get him properly educated in Indore and finally at Sandhurst. Together they had one son. He is a very highly respected man in Pakistan's Foreign Service. He served his country in various ambassadorial functions and is presently Pakistan's ambassador in Paris.

Princess Abida Sultan told me how, as a child, a growing up young lady, she rode horses, played polo, hunted tigers and at the age of ten drove Daimlers into the ditches around the palace. She drew a loving picture of her grandmother 'Sarkar Amman' and described her only idol since childhood, her father, the Nawab of Bhopal, in such simple and touching language that, having left her and sitting in my car on my way back to my hotel, I somehow was under the impression of having personally met him, and it was through her still shining and towering personality that I realised what a strong and will-powered man he must have been.

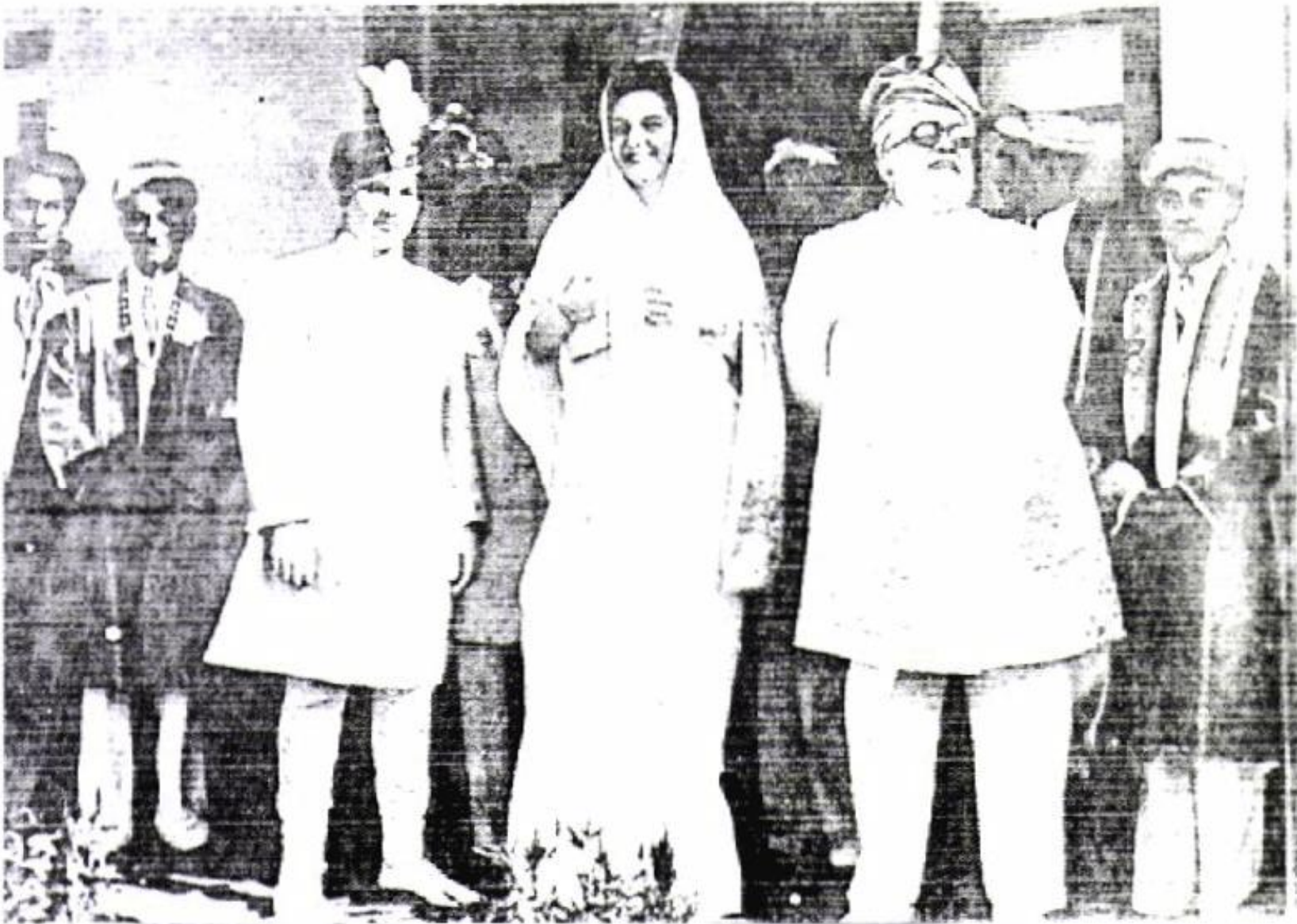
What a pity, I said to myself, that for whatever reasons, he somehow must have missed the train to the country he had helped to establish. And it seemed to me that this was an irreparable loss, a lost opportunity, - perhaps for both.



The Aga Khan leaving the House of Lords after the inaugural session of the 1930 Round Table Conference in London



H.H. The Aga Khan leads in 'Blenheim', winner of the 1930 Derby in England



The Aga Khan with the Begum Aga Khan and Prince Sadruddin at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Bombay, 1946

His Highness the AGA KHAN Royal Flush between Queens - or : Circumnavigating Dinner and Tea

The first Balance Sheet of the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company for the remaining three months of the year 1932 and the full calendar year 1933 showed two Indian Royalties as Patrons: His Highness the Aga Khan and His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal. I do not, of course, exactly know what the word 'Patron' was supposed to embrace, but I could visualise that it was meant to give a signal to the general public. Something to tell them that here now was a new insurance company which had the backing of two of the best known and most influential Muslim dignitaries. And the other Muslim royalty, the richest and most highly respected of them all, the Nizam of Hyderabad was at least indirectly present. One of his senior most government officials was shown to be a member of the Board of Directors as were the other two representatives of the two aforementioned Patrons. The three of them had also subscribed to the company's original share capital, thus showing their confidence in the new venture which was also meant to be a symbol of the growing self confidence amongst the Muslim community, a practical example of Muslim renaissance in India.

Whereas the Nawab of Bhopal had been directly involved in the actual deliberations preceding the establishment of EFU, the two other royalties were not. They had been contacted by their princely brother from Bhopal, requesting them to play their part along with him so as to get this company off the ground.

Having said this I still feel that their physical presence through the membership of their representatives in EFU's Board of Directors can not at all be underestimated. It tremendously helped the new organisation in trying to have its impact felt in a market which was dominated by British and other foreign companies, and with a few other Indian companies, owned by Hindu businessmen, around. I am absolutely sure that the founding fathers of EFU were immensely grateful not only for the personal involvement of the Nawab of Bhopal but also to the Aga Khan and the Nizam of Hyderabad for their indirect and great support.

This must have been so particularly in the case of the Aga Khan because of his dominating role in Muslim's politics since the beginning of the 20th century

until the time that Mohammad Ali Jinnah returned to India to reorganise the All-India Muslim League and was able to awaken it to new spirits and shaped it into that powerful organisation which finally created Pakistan. It had after all been the Aga Khan who in October 1906 had led that famous delegation of about seventy Muslims which was received in the ballroom of the Viceroy's house at Simla by Lord Minto. The delegation had brought with it an address signed by 'nobles, ministers of various states, great landowners, lawyers, merchants, and of many other of His Majesty's Mohomedan subjects'. That delegation had been a great success for India's Muslims, had won them separate representation for themselves through future elections to come. Thus the Aga Khan had become the undisputed leader of the Muslim Community during the first 25 years of the 20th century. His voice was to be heard even in the remotest corners of the subcontinent. He agreeing to be one of the Patrons of EFU, was therefore of immense value for them.

There were, of course, at this point in time, neither persons from the personal entourage of the late Aga Khan still around who could have contributed from own experience to this publication. Nor would it have been worth to seriously pursue an attempt to interview one of the present members of the Aga Khan clan, because even if they would have granted one, they would hardly know anything about their grandfather's feelings towards an insurance company he had helped to see the light of this world.

I was still a contemporary of the late Aga Khan. He was well known in my country. His photo was occasionally to be seen in German newspapers, - and particularly his last wife, 'the Begum' enjoyed great attention, even fame in my fatherland. But as one would expect, the picture drawn of him and his beautiful wife was a very one-sided one; a picture mainly painted by the trashy magazines. In the 'Prologue' to his autobiography the Aga Khan himself comments on this particular facet of his life when saying: „The truth about a man, as much as about a country or an institution, is better than legend, myth, and falsehood. I am someone about whom a whole fabric of legend has been woven in my own lifetime“.

I do sympathise. The only picture my countrymen knew,- and even I had known before I came out myself to the subcontinent and was able to form my own impression, was that of a man of an immense and unbelievable wealth, whose enormous weight was occasionally measured in terms of gold and diamonds, a man who spent most of his life on racecourses and who, in order to please the 'Begum' accompanied her once a year for a couple of weeks to Bayreuth in Germany to join the rich, the mighty and the titled in listening to

Wagners heroic and most wonderful operas. Even the great writer Somerset Maugham in his foreword to the Aga Khans autobiography states that „the general public know the Aga Khan chiefly as a racing man and it is not unlikely that the reader of his book, remembering the pages in which he narrates his experiences as a breeder of bloodstock and the happy winner of many classical events, will be a trifle taken aback by this moving, thoughtful and sincere chapter. There is no reason why he should be. The chase was the main occupation of the Iranian nobles from whom he is descended. It is part of the tradition he inherited and the environment in which he was brought up.“

As I said before, I do sympathise with people like the late Aga Khan whose whole life was claimed by the ‘yellow press’ as if being their property. It has always annoyed me how they, like the makers of so called ‘historical’ films find justification in forging and manipulating historical facts just as it suits them and their marketing aims. This has always troubled my mind for I still think there ought to be something sacred about the historical truth. For the benefit of those readers who are not much acquainted with the ‘real’ life and deeds of the late Aga Khan I would therefore like to briefly outline what he himself has told us about it in his ‘Memoirs’. I will do so by partly summarising what he wanted the world to know about him and by partly quoting him literally. In doing so I will, however, restrict myself to mostly of that part of his life which finds its reflection in his role as a leading Indian politician at the turn of the last century until such time that he decided to quit his active participation in India’s fight for freedom and independence.

We are told by the Aga Khan that he was born in Karachi on 2nd November, 1877, but that he spent the whole of his boyhood and youth in Bombay and Poona. He succeeded at the age of eight, to the responsibilities, spiritual and temporal, of the Imam of the Ismaili Muslims and to the wealth of his grandfather, a Persian nobleman closely related to the reigning dynasty in Persia, but also, in his own right, of the most princely blood in the Islamic world. For the family claims direct descent from the Prophet Mohammad through his daughter Fatima and his beloved son-in-law, Ali.

The Aga Khan’s estate in Bombay, where he grew to manhood, covered a large area of what is now a densely populated district of that industrialised city, a single enclosed estate with magnificent palaces and numerous less pretentious houses, beautiful gardens, a small zoo and stables built to house a hundred horses. Here he lived, surrounded by nearly a thousand relations, dependants and supporters, the only surviving heir.

For ten years he was subjected to a system of intensive education designed to prepare him for the sacred charge to which he was born. The Aga Khan himself gives a very vivid description of the type of education he received to prepare him for the responsibilities and tasks which he had inherited. And all this had to be fitted into a regular system of seasonal family migration.

„From November to April during the cold weather of each year“, he recalls, „we were in Bombay; in April and May we were at Mahabaleshwar; from June to October we were in Poona and in October we went for a short spell to one of the smaller hill stations, and thence back to Bombay. For ten years - from 1885 to 1895 - this system continued unchanged, and in it there was no room for a holiday for me, a month, a fortnight, even a week off the chain; at the most a rare day. And relentlessly was I held on the chain.”

“This was the typical and unchanging pattern of my days: I was called between six and half-past, and had my breakfast - a weak tea, bread, butter, jam, and a Persian sweet. At seven, whether I wanted it or not, I had an hour’s riding - a canter or sometimes a gallop on one of the Poona rides or on the racecourse, or at Bombay along the sands. From eight to half-past eleven I had lessons with my English and French teachers. Then I had luncheon and I was free until two o’clock. Thereafter I had three hours instruction in Arabic. A drive or some tennis in the garden, or some sort of relaxation, was then permitted until dinner at seven o’clock. After dinner came the horror of horrors. I was set down to two hours of calligraphy of the dreariest and most soul-destroying kind. My mother had been impressed by the advice- the foolish advice as it turned out - of Arabic and Persian scholars and pedants, who had assured her that calligraphy in the classical Persian and Arabic scripts was of the highest importance, and they pointed out to her that my two half-brothers who had died had both had beautiful handwriting. My mother, my uncles, and everyone else in our household united in compelling me to this horrible calligraphy. It was in fact a very real martyrdom for me because no one had realised that I was from birth so short-sighted that to read or write I had to hold a book or paper an inch or two from my nose, and in my vision of the world farther than those few inches from my nose there was no definition and no delight, for everything I saw - gardens, hills, sea, or jungle- was a haze. The simplicity and the sadness of my affliction were for years unnoticed.....”

“The discipline to which I was subjected was rigid, and even the little free time that I was allowed was subject to invasion. For it was my duty, young as I was, to receive those of my followers who came to our home of offer their loyal respects. Saturdays and feast days were the usual occasions of the