

*Hon. Liaquat Ali Khan*

and a great strain on our administrative machinery, which, it will be recalled, had had to be set up within a period of two months for a population of eighty million and for a territory that was spread far and wide. But our experiences, whether grave or stimulating, only convinced us that the historic decision that the Muslims of British India had taken, to work for a state of their own, was eminently justified. What is more, the events of these early years and the manner in which the people of Pakistan faced them have filled us with hope and confidence for the future. It was not the maturity of our administration or any previous experience or preparation that helped us to tide over the almost insurmountable difficulties that appeared in our way. Experience or preparedness we had none; for there had been no time for these. It was the fortitude and the determination and the self-sacrifice of the common man and woman which came to our rescue and gave our young state a momentum which will not be easily exhausted and which we believe will grow in strength. No new state could have been launched on its career under greater handicaps. But these three years of struggle have made us a wiser and more unified nation than we could have otherwise hoped to become within such a short time. Although they demanded great courage, patience and vigilance, they have endeared our freedom to us even more and have shown to us very clearly the path to a bright future.

To what use do the Muslims who form the majority of the people of Pakistan propose to put their freedom? This is a question which we as a nation have pointedly asked ourselves and to which we have a clear and unhesitating answer.

First, we are determined that the Muslims in our state shall be enabled to order their lives in accordance with their faith; that at the same time our minorities shall enjoy full rights of citizenship and shall freely profess and practise their religions and develop their cultures, and that their legitimate interests and the interests of the backward and depressed classes shall be adequately safeguarded.

Second, we are pledged to the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice as enunciated by Islam. This does not mean theocracy; for Islam does not believe either in priesthood or in the caste system. On the contrary our conception of democracy is possibly even more comprehensive than that which is contained in the institutions of universal franchise and majority rule. For it embraces social and economic justice, the right of

private ownership, of each individual to enjoy the fruit of his honest labour—and yet with laws and institutions designed to eliminate destitution and to place healthy checks on vast accumulations of unearned wealth.

All this we call the Islamic way of life and pursue it because as Muslims we could not follow any other ideology or seek guidance from any other source but God, whose injunctions we believe these to be. To abandon these principles would be for us to destroy, instead of create, what we hope to build up and for which we demanded independence and freedom and a separate state.

Third, we are resolved to safeguard our freedom at all costs, whatever the threat and whatever the quarter from which aggression may face us. For our own part we have no aggressive designs and consider it our moral responsibility to pursue the path of peace and to help in the maintenance of peace and stability everywhere, particularly in the uneasy continent of Asia, on whose future, according to our way of thinking, world peace very largely depends. Nowhere in Asia are the circumstances for the development of the democratic idea more naturally favourable than they are in Pakistan; for nowhere are people more unified and more determined to apply their moral concepts of equality and social and economic justice to promote human welfare and to resist any attempt to tamper with their beliefs. But democracy, in Pakistan or elsewhere, is of little use to the common man unless its advantages are made available to him in his daily life and his standard of living is raised at least to a level which gives him a substantial stake in the way of life which he has chosen for himself.

We are fully conscious of this, and consider it our foremost duty to develop the resources of our country at the greatest possible speed. Even in the days of our greatest anxieties we were able to go ahead with this task, and though much remains to be done we are glad that we have been able to revive our trade, to plan the development of our irrigation, the expansion and modernization of our agriculture and the utilization of our power resources; to keep our budgets balanced and to throw the gates wide open to private enterprise in our industrial development. For this task there is nothing more essential to us and nothing that we could or do desire more passionately than peace.

I know that in Canada I am among friends and speaking to people who are in the same family circle as Pakistan. I feel therefore that I can speak somewhat more intimately