

Lt. Gen. Wajid Ali Khan Burki CBE

MB, DOMS, MD, FCPS, FRCP (Ed) LL.D. (Hon)

Lt. Gen. Wajid Ali Khan Burki the founder of College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan has been an important player on medical as well as political stage of Pakistan for many years. Gen. Burke's contributions in the field of health sector both in Army and the Civil are tremendous. Apart from CPSP he helped build many other institutions like National Health Laboratories, Armed Force Medical College, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, PM&DC and thus can rightly be regarded as the Father of Medical Services in Pakistan. He was instrumental in establishing and expanding the Medical Services of the Pakistan Armed Forces and then, after the Martial Law regime of 1958, he turned his attention to Health Services in the civilian sector and medical education in Pakistan.

Most significantly, in 1962, he was instrumental in founding the College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan of which he was the Founder President and remained President until his death. In a life that spanned most of the twentieth century, from 1900 to 1989, General Burki participated in significant events in British India and Pakistan and moulded the organization of medical services as well as labour in Pakistan.

A man of commanding, indeed some would say, over-bearing personality, who tended to overawe those around him, he commanded respect from all who knew him. Over six feet tall, with an extremely short temper, General Burki was not easy to work with, however, his saving grace was his essential fairness in dealings with others and impish sense of humour that was never far beneath the surface. He was born on 28th October in 1900 at Basti Baba Khel into the Burki clan who were settled near the city of Jullundur, in East Punjab. The Burkis had maintained their unique ethnic features, and had remained in touch with their clan members in Kaniguram, South Waziristan, in what are now the tribal territories of the Northern Province. His father was an agriculturalist with extensive land holdings in the Punjab and Wajid Ali Burki grew up in a tight-knit community that ethnically differentiated itself from the local Punjabi inhabitants: with their physical appearance of sturdy built and not infrequent fair hair and blue eyes, the Burkis as a group considered themselves quite distinct from their neighbours and to some extent this molded Wajid Ali Khan's future career. With his fierce self respect and sense of honour, he was typical of his community, being physically imposing, and athletic in built he was not infrequently mistaken for a European during his student days in Britain and later, during his army career in India.

He attended Govt. High School and Foreman Christian School Jullunder (1906-1916) and later studied at Govt. College Lahore (1916-1919) and obtained FS.c degree. He then proceeded to UK for higher studies in Medicine.¹ He joined St. Andrews University in Scotland in 1919. After Oxford and Cambridge, St Andrews is the third oldest

University in Britain, and the oldest in Scotland. He adjusted to life at St. Andrews well and stood first in the Physiology examination; for the rest of his medical career at St. Andrews; he remained academically among the top students in his class. He qualified MB, ChB in 1924, and then proceeded to London for further studies, obtaining his DOMS degree in ophthalmology at Moorefield Eye Hospital in London in 1926; he trained under Sir John Parsons and published three papers on exophthalmia and microphthalmia. At the same time he successfully presented his thesis for his MD degree from St. Andrews University. Thus, by 1926 he was qualified MB, ChB, and DOMS, MD.

He was accepted into the Indian Medical Services (IMS) in 1926 when he applied while he was still in England. The IMS had one of the most distinguished records of any medical service in the world at that time, having a number of the internationally renowned medical names to its credit; in 1926, the IMS was almost exclusively limited to British doctors. There was a great deal of rivalry between the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and the IMS. General Hamilton, one of the stalwarts of the IMS is reported to have told a young Indian Medical Service officer, "You young pups don't realize what the IMS used to be. When I qualified, the top twenty of that year's batch sat for the competitive examination in England: the top five selected joined the IMS; the next 15 became Harley Street specialists, the rest started a general medical practice and the last 10 joined the Royal Army Medical Corps!"

On his return to India, Lt. Burki took up his position with the IMS in 1926, serving in various capacities as an eye specialist and general specialist across Northern India

with extended postings in Quetta and Karachi. In 1933 he was sent on a course back to England for eighteen months, where he spent more time at Moorefield Eye Hospital learning newer ophthalmologic techniques and also undergoing administrative training at the RAMC centre in Mill Hill, the headquarters of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Promoted to a major in 1935, he was married to a lady also from the Burki clan and their first son was born in 1936. Prof. Nausherwan Khan Burki is now working in Division of Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine at University of Kentucky in U.S.A. who played a vital role in establishing Imran Khan's State of the Art Cancer Care Facility in Lahore, Pakistan known as Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust Cancer Hospital & Research Centre. They were to have two sons and twin daughters subsequently. Major Burki was called up on the outbreak of the Second World War and he joined the Fifth Indian Division with which he served in Ethiopia and then in North Africa (1941-42). He was the ADMS in the Western Desert Campaign against Field Marshall Rommel. For distinguished services, he was awarded the MBE. After the conclusion of the North African campaign, he was moved to the 7th Indian Division and he served as ADMS in Burma in the war against the Japanese (1942-44). At this time, he was trapped in the famous Admin Box Siege by Japanese forces in the nearest approach to India in Burma that the Japanese achieved. Lt. Col. Burki, as he then was, served with gallantry in these difficult circumstances. He fiercely supported his Indian subordinates against any perceived British discrimination and managed to maintain adequate medical services to the troops. He had to watch the massacre of his medical officers when the Japanese overran

the MDS (main dressing station unit) and shot all the prisoners, including physicians and physician assistants. For his gallantry he was twice mentioned in dispatches. A number of the very junior doctors under his command at this time later served with him in the Pakistan Army Medical Corps.

Following the end of the war, he was appointed Center Commander and Lt. Col. in Lucknow in central India. At this time, he was one of the senior most Muslim officers in the Indian army and perforce, as Independence approached, he was given charge of the division of medical assets between the Indian and Pakistani armies. This was, of course, a very difficult time, with the Indians making every attempt to prevent any equipment or supplies from being given to Pakistan.

After Independence, he was second in seniority only to General Farooqui in the Army Medical Corps, and was soon promoted to Major General and appointed Director, Army Medical Services. When these services were merged between the army air force and the navy, he became Lt. General and Director General of the Armed Forces Medical Services. He held this post until 1962.

During his tenure as the head of the Armed Forces Medical Services, he was faced with the problem of a small cadre of trained physicians having to serve a relatively large army. He dealt with this by careful long term planning, by ensuring that appropriate officers were selected for further training abroad, mostly in Britain, and the establishment of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology as well as the Armed Forces Medical College; it is probably unnecessary to remind the reader of the high esteem in which both these institutions are held today; an Army Dental School to develop the Armed Forces own dental

services was another project he initiated. High standards of medical and dental care were established throughout Pakistan, wherever concentrations of Army were posted; these medical services were also a godsend to the civilian population in these areas, who also availed themselves of their facilities. In this way, today the Army has one of the best and most comprehensive medical care of any service in Pakistan. He was Col. Commandant of the Army Medical Corps from 1955 to 1963, which is a singular honour.

MARTIAL LAW OF 1958

In 1958, the C-in-C of the army, General Ayub Khan moved to take the reins of government from the shambles that the country had been reduced to by the politicians, and in this his closest confidant was General Burki. Together with the top army brass, they imposed 1st martial law in Pakistan in 1958 under President Iskander Mirza; later they ousted General Iskander Mirza. In 1958, General Burki was sworn in as Minister of Health, Labor and Social Welfare, and in 1959, he became Senior Minister to the Presidential cabinet and remained as such until 1962. General Burki truly believed that the imposition of martial law was a temporary move to set matters right and save the country and then he and the other Generals would withdraw back to the army and allow the civilians to run the country. In this obviously he was naive; as subsequent events proved; there was no intention of relinquishing power. This resulted in a gradual estrangement between him and General (now Field Marshall) Ayub, until in 1963, General Burki resigned and was appointed Ambassador to the Scandinavian Countries and was based in Stockholm, where he served from 1963-66.

PROMOTION OF POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

In early 1957, Prof. (Lt. Col.) Najib Khan a well known enthusiast of medical education piloted the symposium on undergraduate medical education whose proceedings were published by Prof. S.M.K. Wasti (CPSP Library Ref. No. 2975/R814). Later on December 25, 1958, when a group of educationists and scientific workers namely Major S.M.H. Bokhari, a Pathologist, Col. Najib Khan and Prof. S.M.K. Wasti were enjoying tea at the residence of Prof. Abdul Salam, Prof. Wasti proposed to hold a symposium on Post-graduate Medical Education which was enthusiastically received by the group. Col. Najib assured that he would approach Lt. Gen. W.A.K. Burki the then Federal Minister of Health to preside over this symposium. Dr. S.M.K. Wasti served as the "Advance guard" in this academic movement while Col. Najib's close association was valuable in piloting the whole symposium. Lt. Gen. Burki presided over this symposium for which talent of eminent medical personalities like Col. S.M.K. Mallick, Prof. Riyaz-i-Qadeer, Prof. M.A.H. Siddiqui, Prof. M.A. Prizada, Prof. Abdul Salam and others were utilized to spearhead this onslaught on Pakistan's backwardness in postgraduate medical education. The symposium was held on February 8, 1995 during the 11th annual session of Pakistan Science Conference in the Anatomy Hall of Dow Medical College, Karachi.²

Addressing this symposium, Lt. Gen. W.A. Burki announced the formation of National Health Commission to study the next step of organizing postgraduate medical education in Pakistan. After Gen. Burki's departure, Col. Najib Khan was honoured to preside over the remaining session of the symposium. By then Gen. Burki the senior

most member of the medical profession had earned the reputation as a man of action. During this symposium a committee appointed by the President of the Medical and Veterinary section of the Science Conference consisting of Prof. Abdul Salam, Prof. M.A.H. Siddiqui, Col. Najib Khan, Prof. S.M.K. Wasti and Major S.M.H. Bokhari made the following recommendations which were unanimously approved:³

- * "The appointment of a Commission to assess the deficiencies in the teaching and specialized medical and veterinary institutions in respect of postgraduate education and research, and to make recommendations for implementation. This Commission should consist of senior teachers and recognized research workers and should be asked to submit its report in shortest possible time.
- * Institution of Pakistan College of Physicians and Pakistan College of Surgeons.
- * Establishment of a Postgraduate Institute of Clinical Sciences for preparing in Medicine, Surgery and other medical specialties.
- * Adequate provision for the award of postgraduate fellowship in Pakistan, fellowship for teachers to go abroad and participation in international scientific conferences."

ESTABLISHMENT OF CPCP

Since the notion for establishing a College of Physicians as well as a College of Surgeons was unanimously approved by the Committee, a draft constitution of College of Physicians was prepared after consulting all constitutions of similar colleges in the world, by Col. Najib Khan. Prof.

Max Rosenheim, Prof. of Medicine at UCH offered his help and support to the Pakistan College of Physicians and he even helped in drafting the constitution of Pakistan College of Physicians which was presented to Lt. Gen. W.A. Burki the then Federal Minister of Health the same day when he presided over the seminar on Postgraduate Medical Education at Karachi on February 8, 1958.⁴

Being a Surgeon, perhaps Lt. Gen. W.A. Burki wanted to have total control, hence instead of opting for two separate institutions i.e. Pakistan College of Physicians and Pakistan College of Surgeons as unanimously suggested by the Committee, Gen. Burki had an ordinance passed by the Government in 1962 for the foundation of College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan.⁵ Prof. Najib Khan was a trusted buddy of Lt. Col. S.M.K. Mallick both of whom had done lot of work for founding the Pakistan College of Physicians. But Gen. Burki's move to combine both the colleges into one institution was not liked by Col. Najib Khan and once an admirer of Gen Burki, he turned against him. This is reported to have created lot of bad blood among them wherein Gen. Burki had the final say. Hence, as always happens when the CPSP was established and the list of its hand picked founder fellows was announced, it did not contain the name of Prof. Najib Khan who later became very critical of General Burki and also wrote against him and the CPSP. Some say, Gen. Burki who had very strong personality never tolerated any dissenting voice and critics, hence Col. Najib Khan and few others whom the General did not like were never honoured by the CPSP with its Fellowship which was offered and as some say distributed to many. Gen. Burki had such a strong personality that no

body in the CPSP Council meetings dared to disagree with him and say anything which they thought will annoy him till early 80s. He always used to hand pick the CPSP Councilors and there used to be no formal elections for many years.

It was for the first time that at the CPSP Convocation held at Nishtar Medical College Multan in 1980 that some of the Fellows by examination asserted and wanted to have elections, who till now had been silent spectators. This was the start of the democratization of the CPSP. And once the democratic virus had infected the CPSP, many heavy weights who always used to occupy a seat in the hand-picked Council were defeated in the subsequent elections.⁶ Some critics of Gen. Burki say that it was he how sat on the Presidency of CPSP for over twenty five years and did not allow any body else to become the President while others feel that no body could have dared and deserved to be elected as President of the CPSP in his presence. His contacts in official quarters and his personal friendship with the successive rulers in Pakistan have been of immense help for the CPSP. But his critics still feel that he should have allowed more democracy in the college during his life time and had this happened, the CPSP might have been saved from the problems it later had to and was still facing. However, Gen. Burki had his own viewpoint. He had witnessed the groupings among the councilors who often indulged in heated discussions in the Council meetings more so in mid-80s. These medical politicians, he often used to say will one day might destroy the CPSP. This was his greatest fear and the events which followed with the various court cases and the failure of the Council to hold

elections on time, proved that his fears were not entirely unfounded.

Some of the known critics of Gen. Burki were later honoured with Fellowship by CPSP after Gen. Burki's death but it did not include Col. Najib Khan whose equally strong personality had earned him many foes.

Gen. Burki's had realized that a postgraduate body capable of establishing medical and surgical standards and developing medical education in Pakistan was essential if Pakistan was to reduce its then total reliance on Britain and the USA for postgraduate medical training. He felt that such a college was an absolute necessity for the country if Pakistan were to produce its own highly trained physicians with their own qualification systems. General Burki's concern with the College of Physicians & Surgeons to maintain the highest possible standards and integrity is well known so that the college would remain a creditable institution. During his life time, he largely succeeded in this, since the examination for the Fellowship of the College was recognized as being relatively impartial, fair and strict and that the fellow of the college met certain standards of professional competence. He managed to keep government interference in the College to an absolute minimum-a major feat in Pakistan. At the same time, every successive government recognized the value of the college and its non-partisan nature and continued to provide a subsidy. As a man of great self-respect, he would also not allow the college to be misused or slighted, especially by colleagues from the older established colleges of Britain and the USA. Many can testify to the high regard in which the college was held during his lifetime by the British Royal Colleges.

He very carefully husbanded the resources of the college, slowly developing the building and the various departments with the help of his colleagues so that at the time of his death on January 17, 1989, College resources in available liquid funds stood at rupees four Crores. During his long tenure from 1962 to 1989 as President of the College, he managed by force of personality to prevent internecine politics from damaging the institution. Towards the end of his life, he discussed with his closet colleagues his concerns as to what might happen to the college after his demise, when he noted the intense internal rivalries that were becoming evident in council meetings. Subsequent events have partly confirmed his fears. Nevertheless, the success of the college and the large number of Fellows of the college now active in all parts of Pakistan testify to his vision.

Lt. Gen. Burki used to preside over the CPSP meetings and later went to retire with some drink. But the actual day to day work and running of the CPSP fell on the shoulders of Vice Presidents and Registrar of the College. Hence their contributions should never be minimized and they all deserve credit for this. This includes eminent personalities like Prof. M.A.H.Siddiqui, Prof. Hamid Ali Khan, and Prof.S.M. Rab and Col. M.B.Azmi.

NATIONAL HEALTH LABORATORIES

Gen. Burki's vision was also responsible for the establishment of the National Health Laboratories in Pakistan; he had realized that there had to be a nucleus for providing the highest quality diagnostic and treatment services in Pakistan, and that this could only be done under

a federal government funded national institution. The National Health Laboratories were to be the first phase in a National Institute of Health. It is a tragedy that this planned institution has fallen so short of expectations.

INSTITUTION OF LABOUR LAWS & SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES

Gen. Burki's contributions to the country's labour market and labour conditions are not as well known. As Minister for Labour and Social Welfare from 1958 to 1962, he was primarily responsible for opening the flood gates of immigration into Britain for Pakistani workers, which subsequently spread to the Middle East and which has been a major boon to the Pakistani economy. In 1960, he forcefully negotiated with a reluctant British government to allow Pakistani labourers free immigration to Britain, which was the fundamental reason why large numbers of Pakistani labourers moved to Britain during the 1960s. In addition, he was responsible for bringing in labour laws which did not exist prior to 1960, and these labour laws mainly unchanged are on the Pakistani statute books today.

On Gen. Burki's return from Stockholm in 1966, after relinquishing his ambassadorship, Field Marshall Ayub Khan made several overtures to him to try to induct him into some senior position in the government; however, General Burki persistently refused this and an eye witness episode testifies to his integrity and standards in such matters: One day, when Gen. Burki was visiting Lahore, Mr. Wajid Ali Shah, the prominent industrialist who was at that time the President of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, drove up to see him. After some polite social chit chat, Mr. Wajid Ali

stated that he had been ordered by Field Marshall Ayub Khan to immediately relinquish his post with the Red Crescent Society and hand it over to General Burki. General Burki immediately responded "Go and tell the Field Marshall that I will not accept any post from which he has the power to remove me". Over the next several years, General Burki persistently refused various offers of positions, including Governor of the Punjab and occupied himself instead with the College and his agricultural interests. In spite of this, he and the Field Marshall maintained a close and respectful relationship. General Burki was frequently asked to go on drives with the Field Marshall to his lands or to discuss all sorts of matters in confidence. At the same time, Gen. Burki maintained very good relations with the late Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who looked at him as a sort of mentor since Mr. Bhutto had joined the 1958 cabinet as a very junior minister and looked to General Burki for support during cabinet meetings.

FULL TIME TEACHERS AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE

Speaking in the inaugural session of the CPSP's Silver Jubilee Convocation on December 10, 1987, Gen. Burki urged the government to appoint full time professors who should be allowed only institutional practice. These teachers, he added, should be paid handsome salaries so that they can live a dignified life and concentrate on teaching and patient care.⁷

CPSP SILVER JUBILEE BANQUET

The Silver Jubilee Banquet held at Hotel Sheraton Karachi where President General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haque was the chief guest was a unique event in itself. In his speech Gen.

Burki said that "In my army service, I have studied the non-medical personnel in the army which can be grouped into three categories. First are those who are against the Army Medical Corp. the second who are indifferent and the third who are very partial to the medical personnel. Gen. Zia-ul-Haque comes in the third category that is why I always say that the doctors should try to get as much as possible when the going is good."⁸

Gen. Zia-ul-Haque in his speech responded by saying that "I have also studied the medical profession and its members can also be grouped in three categories. First one in those who are wedded to their profession, second who are wedded to finance and third are those who are neither interested in the profession nor money and they were the most dangerous", he remarked. And referring to the Silver Jubilee of Gen. Burki's presidency, Gen. Zia-ul-Haque said that "I am glad to see that you have completed the twenty five years of your presidency successfully without any trouble. I have developed the feelings of envy", he jokingly remarked.⁸ After the speeches were over, Gen. Burki then invited senior members of the medical profession to come to the mike and narrate some interesting jokes. And this too in the presence of the President of Pakistan, only a man of Gen. Burki's standing could have done. It was then when Prof. S. M. Rab narrated a joke saying that "You Americans behave differently in bedroom and outside" Prof. Ijaz Ahsan narrated a joke "Go Man Go—marry the girl of your choice, the Man is not your father and this he does not know" which became so popular that when the President Zia-ul-Haque left the dinner meeting, he again referred to it saying that "Go Man Go". Prof.

Nurul Islam from Bangladesh said that today Prof. Rab has excelled because he has worked with me. Others who were called to the mike by Gen. Burki and narrated interesting jokes included Prof. M. Hayat Zafar, Prof. A. J. Khan, Prof. Khalida Usmani, WHO Director General of EMRO Region, Dr. Gezairy and some foreign delegates. And all this went on in a very relaxed atmosphere.⁹

A former Registrar of College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan Lt. Col. M.B. Azmi recalls that “a tall”, fair, handsome Gen. Burki was known for his toughness and rather harsh manners. During his visit to Wards in military hospitals he would ask the doctors all sort of questions relating to medicine. He was known to have demoted officers if they did not come up to his standard of excellence.

Gen. Burki had very little tolerance for incompetence. However, he was quick to forgive, if when a mistake was made, the person owned up to it. He was certainly partial to some people and showed it when it came to appointing people to the coveted posts. Whereas he was given to display of bad temper in his younger days he learnt to control this drawback as he grew older. I was amazed to see that in his old age, he was able to tolerate people whom he could not stand in his younger days. He detested being lied to, the best way to escape his wrath, Col. Azmi says, was to tell the truth. He was very careful about spending money. He practiced this frugality while in the Army and later on, in the college. He credited this habit to his training in the army. Having lived in tents and accommodations, with the minimum of frills, he believed that we tended to waste money on expensive curtains and fancy furniture in our office. As long as he was the President of the CPSP, furniture and fixtures were purely functional.

He had atrocious handwriting which was difficult to decipher. There was only one person in the CPSP who could read his handwriting and that was Subedar Bashir. The General had written a biography in longhand which was transferred to a typed form by the Subedar. He did not permit anyone to look at the biography. I too had not seen it. My curiosity forced me to inquire about his venture one day, and while he admitted his effort, he said that it was not going to be published until after his death. It had a limited circulation and I received a copy through the courtesy of Begum Burki after his death. It was titled 'Autobiography of an army doctor in British India and Pakistan.' It revealed no great secret. It told of his loyalty to Gen. Ayub which caused him to challenge Gen. Iskander Mirza along with Gen. Sheikh and Gen. Azam Khan. Soon after Martial Law was promulgated, the combined force of three generals forced the President to leave the country. His strong loyalty was admired by Gen. Ayub until the time when Gen. Burki fell foul of Malik Amir Mohammad Khan., then the Governor of Punjab. This led to his transfer to Sweden on an ambassadorial assignment. Gen. Burki had tarnished his reputation by acquiring lands in various places, and this may have been a major source of contention. Since both were strong personalities a clash was not unnatural. Gen. Ayub had another loyal follower in Gen. Musa who was rewarded by being made C-in-C of the army for nearly eleven years.

Gen. Burki's attempt to establish a Central Medical Service, on the lines of IMS received vehement opposition from professors, teachers and civil service doctors. In the forefront of the opposition was Prof. Pirzada. This is

unfortunate because the medical profession would have had a central service of medical men akin to CSP. The opposition arose because of a clause which allowed some army medical officer to be transferred to this service after interviews with the Public Service Commission. Gen. Burki remained very bitter about this folly committed by the medical profession and never forgave those people who sabotaged his scheme.

The establishment of College of Physicians & Surgeons in Karachi was indeed a creditable and remarkable achievement. Gen. Burki had many ideas that he wished to put into practical shape. All he required was men around him who could help to make his dreams come true. He managed to get the cooperation of members from East Pakistan and it was on their insistence that the college was located in Karachi. He wanted to create a medical university complex in Islamabad and the first building of that scheme was the National Health Laboratories now known as National Institute of Health. The total scheme could not materialize after he left the ministry, otherwise the complex was to have a postgraduate teaching facility, hospitals and auxiliary departments. All those departments are now not in one place as was plan, but scattered all over Islamabad and Pindi.

Gen. Burki was a strong-willed man. He did not tell even his wife that he was suffering from cancer of the lungs. His younger son who was a chest specialist was the only one who knew of his condition. In his younger days, he was a heavy smoker but left it on the advice of Prof. Charles Wells. President Ayub also gave up smoking at the same time. Charles Wells had come to Pakistan to advise the Medical Reforms Commission.

His character was built around discipline, loyalty, faithfulness and dedication to a cause. He was an army general and demanded strict obedience. There was no question of sharing power with anyone else. This was the reason that kept him in the chair of the President of the college for more than twenty-five years. In that sense, he was not democratic. He never reviewed the College Ordinance and its laws and bylaws. Unlike other Royal Colleges, the tenure of the office holder was never fixed, making it difficult to bring about a change. In my view, says Col. Azami, this was his greatest failing, but I believe that he felt he was doing the right thing”.

Gen. Burki’s contributions towards the medical profession will always be remembered says Prof. M. Hayat Zafar. He was a very foresighted person and visualized the future requirements of the country in postgraduate medical education to produce future specialists, scholars and teachers. This made the country self sufficient maintaining a National and International standard and also almost stopped brain drain of the medical profession as most of the bright doctors who went to UK, USA never returned to serve their own nation and country.

Gen. Burki was a very straight forward man, a blunt person having his own balanced rigid views. To sum up, he was a jewel in the crown of medical profession till his demise.

OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF PAKISTAN

On July 10th 1957, in a communication addressed to Prof. Raja Mumtaz, a noted Ophthalmologist from Hawaii, USA Dr. William John Holmes expressed the desire to visit Pakistan along with some other ophthalmologist colleagues.

At that time Prof. Raja Mumtaz recalls, there was no Society of Ophthalmologists in Pakistan, who could welcome these distinguished visitors. Hence on December 19th, 1957, Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan was founded at Lahore. Since Gen. Burki had the qualifications of DOMS, besides being Director General Medical Services in both East and West Pakistan, he was elected as the first President of OSP. He served in that capacity till February 20th, 1959 and had to resign because of his too many official engagements.

It was in those days says Prof. Raja Mumtaz that the Medical Reforms Commission which as Prof. Raja Mumtaz puts it, consisted of some selfish physicians and surgeons who lacked foresight, introduced some changes in the MBBS calendar of Punjab University. As per this change the subjects of Eye and ENT were merged into Surgery under the new scheme. It was due to towering personality of Gen. Burki who nullified this change and restored the pervious status of Ophthalmology in MBBS. While chairing a meeting of Medical Administrators of medical colleges who by now had replaced the Principals during March 1959, Gen. Burki ordered that "to hell with ENT, Eye will remain a separate subject". This can be verified from many members who attended that meeting and are still alive. That is how he saved the specialty of Ophthalmology for which Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan is extremely grateful. Gen. Burki's order at that medical administrator' meeting also reflects his truthfulness and strictness. This order ensured a change in the University of Punjab calendar restoring the pervious position which was named as "latest" again named as "revised latest" followed by "Recent" and in 1981 named as "Reorganized". The MBBS degree of Punjab University

which these days carry less "Massallas" this change has again been named as "Recent". The bone of contention for all this was the Medical Reforms Commission which was formed on November 24th, 1959 and its report was released during January-April 1960.

PAKISTAN MEDICAL SERVICES

As Federal Minister, Gen. Burki wanted to constitute Pakistan Medical Service on lines of Indian Medical Service. To realize his dream, he addressed the senior medical teachers and doctors from civil and army. The civilian doctors opposed this move and were very critical of the whole idea. Despite having got an ordinance issued in this regards, Gen. Burki failed to get the Pakistan Medical Service going which he always felt sorry. Later on when he was instrumental in founding the CPSP, he became its President the honour which he kept till his death. He richly deserved this honour and kept it well throughout, maintains Prof. Raja Mumtaz.

Although Gen. Burki studied in England, but he did not like them much. In fact he was a different individual in his likes and dislikes. In recognition of his services the Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan honoured him with Prof. Ramzan Ali Syed Gold Medal at its meeting in 1981 but he refused to receive this Gold Medal from Prince Karim Aga Khan who was the chief guest. Instead, Gen. Burki desired that this Gold Medal be presented to Prof. Raja Mumtaz which he accepted with some reluctance just to avoid some unpleasantness. Gen. Burki, Prof. Raja Mumtaz says, was an institution in himself and a great "*Mardam Shinas*". He was the first Pakistani member of Ophthalmological Society of UK though he became member before partition.

MEDICAL REFORMS COMMISSION

Though Gen. Burki had many admirers but it will be incorrect to say that he had no known critics who were also well known medical personalities of the country. Col. Illahi Baksh the personal physician to the Father of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah sought voluntary premature retirement from Principalship of King Edward Medical College the post he held for over a decade when an army medical officer, one of his old student was appointed as Administrator of KEMC in 1959. Though he agreed to serve on the Medical Reforms Commission but he (Col. Illahi Baksh) did not see eye to eye with many other members. Col. Illahi Baksh had to put up a fight all the time. It was the last dinner meeting of that Medical Reforms Commission held at Rawalpindi on March 30th, 1960, when Col. Illahi Baksh got seriously agitated, developed a coronary thrombosis which killed him.⁹ Gen. Burki, it is learnt, might have located the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Lahore but because of his differences with some senior physicians (as he always considered IMS superior to RAMC) that he decided to have the CPSP at Karachi.

One of General Burki's greatest loves was agriculture. He had started to develop land in the Sindh that was allotted to various army officers and towards the end of his life was one of only two officers who were still continuing to develop their lands near Tando Mohammad Khan, when all others had already sold theirs and left the field. This land remained very unproductive and a financial drain, but it also gave him a lot of pleasure in the endeavor itself. At the same time, he successfully developed a dairy herd of Jersey cows on his land around Rawalpindi of which he

was very proud. In the mountains near Murree he had bought an orchard on which he had planted many different varieties of apple trees which were his pride and joy.

In personal habits, he was frugal, and very regular. Meals were always at set times, and there was never any deviation. His pleasures were simple - farming and reading. A man of fierce loyalties, he would never allow anyone to slight the medical profession, regularly contrasting, in senior army or government cabinet meetings, the difference in education between a doctor and others. Similarly, in British India days, he was very mindful to let the British know whenever he felt there was any hint of discrimination from them against his Indian subordinates. He was an avid tennis player, hunter and he only gave up these active pursuits in his seventies. On the other hand, he never went shopping and only visited the cinema on one or two occasions in his life.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

During his career, Gen. Burki received a number of honours: he was made commander of the British Empire (CBE) prior to independence. In 1962, his alma mater, St. Andrews University in Scotland, conferred the degree of LL.D (Hon Causa), on him. The Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh was also conferred on him in 1962. He was the commencement (convocation) speaker at Baltimore for Maryland University in 1962, where he was also awarded the LL.D (Hon Causa).

In 1988, he noted a persistent cough, underwent some tests without informing anyone except his doctors and in December 1989, when the diagnosis of lung cancer was made, he forbade his doctors to inform anyone. Thus, his

death on 17th January, 1989 came as a shock to his family, his friends and colleagues. Virtually no one was aware that he was ill, and he presided over a meeting of the executive committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons two days before his death.

Lt. General Wajid Ali Khan Burki left behind a great legacy in medical education and service: the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Pakistan, the National Institute of Health, the Armed Forces Medical Services all stand as a testimony to his vision and hard work. In a country where very few have succeeded in establishing worthwhile new institutions, his life's work stands as a challenge to our present and future generations of doctors & other citizens.

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