

# Remembering Dr Hussein Mullick

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In 1971 war breaks out between India and Pakistan. The India-supported nationalists of East Pakistan demand a separate homeland. A few months and a bloody war later they succeed as Pakistan loses its eastern wing – present day Bangladesh. Away from all this chaos a young man in his late 30s listens to the news anxiously in Germany with moist eyes and an aching heart. 'I have to go back my friend, the country needs me'.

The tall man, our father's friend, sitting beside him listens while looking at his friend astonishingly – a five and a half feet tall, dark, slender man wearing a black tailored suit and a black tie with white flamingos embroidered on it. "But Hussein you're burning your boats." Hussein listens with closed eyes and then suddenly opens them wide, "the destiny of your life doesn't knock twice – I must leave." He had made his decision.

In 1973 our father, Prof Dr M A Hussein Mullick, returned to Pakistan with a passion to rebuild an economy ravaged by war and a country plagued by abject poverty. He arrived from Germany where he had gone for his master's in social sciences and a doctorate in philosophy in economics with a focus on development economics and international political economy at the University of Bonn.

Our father began his career as a young scholar at the Research Institute for Economic Problems of Developing Countries and International Institute of Economics, Germany. He returned to Pakistan and chaired the department of economics, Quaid-e-Azam University, advised former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and wrote regularly for Dawn, The News and the Frontier Post for numerous years. He also lectured extensively all around the country and the world on issues close to his heart – Pakistan's economic self-reliance based on breaking free from our foreign aid addiction; induction of think-tankers in civil bureaucracy and the Senate; and devolution of power from the centre to the provinces for effective economic planning and implementation. Inspired by the Marshal Plan and Keynesian socioeconomics reducing the gap between the haves and the have-nots became the calling of his life.

We would, however, like to share a lesser known anecdote that inspired him to be positive throughout his life. In high school our father was not terribly studious. Then one day it hit him – what makes a good student? What do they have that I don't? He began to observe smart students and learned to manage time better and concentrated in

class. When the finals came he worked hard. Too nervous to go to the school to look at the results, he was surprised when his classmates began knocking on his door. "Hussein come out you have topped in the entire village!" Our father had the highest score in the entire village.

In addition to being an inspirational father he was blessed with a strong, independent and intelligent wife – Rehana Mullick – who has an equally impressive record of public service. Together they fought various intellectual battles with little personal ambition and an unquenchable desire to see Pakistan succeed at home and on the world stage.

But our father always considered Pakistan to be his first love and his first family. Although he never made it to any prime minister's cabinet as finance minister he taught, spoke and wrote with more tenacity and economic wisdom than many who did. Dr Hussein Mullick died from a prolonged illness eight years ago on August 11; his ideas are not carved on any plaque or memorial but in the living minds of hundreds of his students and protégés spread across the globe. He once told us, "my students are my secret army, they will bring about the change... so many of us are running after titles and positions... we should be focused on a strong and independent Pakistan... that is the calling of your generation".

We believe the best way to honour our father's memory is for the new government to pay attention to his words of wisdom.

Haider Ali Hussein Mullick and Mushaal Hussein Mullick

Washington and Islamabad