

Monte Carlo where she was buried by the side of her baby son, Mahdi Mohammed. Most of her considerable fortune went to Aly who became the owner of the villa at Cimiez, the house in Deauville, the Paris residence in the rue de Prony and the country place at Maisons Lafitte. All this meant little to the boy and could not compensate him for the loss of a dearly-loved mother. He never mentioned her again, evidence—as every psychologist knows—that his pain was so great, he could not bear to recall it to his mind.

Back in England and with the Waddingtons, Aly plunged into ever more phrenetic activities. He spent more and more time with his father's horses. From Michael Beary, the stable's leading jockey, he learned enough tricks of the trade to qualify as a first-class amateur rider. By the time he was old enough to ride to hounds, the Waddingtons eased him into the exclusive strongholds of English fox-hunting. In Sussex and Warwickshire where the best hunts pursued the finest foxes, houses were rented for the personable youngster with the swarthy skin and the slim, athletic figure. Aly entertained generously, was greatly admired for his horsemanship and not out of his teens when the County girls began to cast covetous eyes in his direction.

When he was eighteen he was installed in a house in London where the season's débutantes welcomed the exotic newcomer to the social scene. Prince Aly attended royal garden parties and missed few of the non-stop coming-out balls. There were whispers about this girl or that (each with an impeccable name) who was said to have put up no resistance at all to his charms, and some of them have since almost proudly confirmed the old suspicions. So that life should not be all play—the idea of sending him to Cambridge University having been abandoned—the plan was for him to study law with Charles Romer, a young London barrister with chambers in Lincoln's Inn.

Content to watch Aly's progress from afar, his father left the Waddingtons in full charge. Much of the Aga Khan's own time was spent in the company of the attractive Mademoiselle Carron whom he called 'Jane' although her friends knew her as 'Andrée'. A whole year elapsed before he proposed to her. He was over fifty, she twenty years younger, and before she had time to give her answer the Press began to speculate about his new romance. Reports said he

had fallen in love with a girl who was selling candy in a sweetshop in Chambéry: 'The girl in the candy shop had never met me,' the Aga Khan growled, 'she did not know me from Adam; my Mlle Carron was someone quite different . . .'

A thousand problems battled for his attention and he had been keeping aloof from India's sharpening struggle for independence. Mahatma Gandhi whose non-violent marches provoked much violence was in and out of prison, Mohammed Ali Jinnah was taking an increasing share in the Muslim leadership. In the long run it was impossible for a Muslim of the Aga Khan's stature not to be drawn into the conflict. In the deteriorating situation a new initiative came from Viceroy Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax) who assured Indians in a tortured phrase that the British government was seriously contemplating the attainment of Dominion status for India. A Royal Commission was sent to India to prepare for a major conference. Its leader was Sir John Simon, lawyer and statesman, and a future Labour Prime Minister, Mr Clement Attlee, was among the members.

For India's Muslims it was essential to get together and decide on a common policy. An all-Muslim conference was convened in Delhi and the Aga Khan asked to preside over it. He was back in the mainstream of Indian affairs and worked his charms on delegates behind the scenes as well as carrying out his functions as chairman. After a great deal of manoeuvring, the conference, under the Aga Khan's guidance, arrived at a common policy and decided that a federal system was the best form of government for India. Whatever the form of India's future administration, they would insist on the right to elect their own representatives and press for a share in provincial and central government. The Aga Khan could proudly claim to be the parent of these important decisions.

Even the tremendous issues of India's future, however, could not compete with the momentous developments in his private life. After two years of courtship, Jane-Andrée agreed to become his wife. In Europe, for the international statesman and popular racing man, the portly but elegant *homme du monde*, to take a wife, was an interesting social event. For the Imam of the Ismailis to take a new Begum would be a great Muslim occasion. In India, in Africa, in the Middle East his followers would hail the new Princess, celebrate

with extravagant ceremonies and shower gifts on their beloved leader and his spouse.

'I shall arrange for you to take the Muslim faith,' he told the 'bewitching maid of the Savoy mountains'. Jane shook her head. She was a Catholic, her family was Catholic and she had no intention of changing her faith. The Aga Khan was disappointed. It would have to be a civil wedding and there would be no Muslim ceremonies in Bombay and Karachi. By this time—September 1929—he could be in no doubt that his prospective marriage was exciting tremendous interest all over the world and that it would be difficult to escape the attention of the Press. But a great many problems remained to be settled before a formal announcement could be made. The heads of the community would have to be informed, his lawyers and bankers would have to make arrangements—he eventually settled £200,000 on his bride. He also had the difficult task of breaking the news to Aly. All these matters required thought and the Aga Khan was the last person to allow himself to be stampeded but he was too infatuated to show his anger when, as most women would, Jane-Andrée let the cat out of the bag before he was ready: 'I am going to marry Prince Aga Khan at Aix-les-Bains on November 20,' she told French reporters. Her father would not be gainsaid either.

Monsieur Carron told the Paris newspaper *Midi* that, contrary to the tales about himself and his daughter, he had been managing hotels in Chambéry, Nice and Paris: 'My future son-in-law, the Aga Khan,' he said, 'desires complete secrecy.' He, M. Carron, had two daughters and two sons, one of them living in Belgium, the other in Scotland. His wife had died in childbirth. His elder daughter managed a dress shop in Paris, and Jane-Andrée had been working in a perfumery at the time she met the Aga Khan at the house of one of her sister's clients. The Prince would marry her at the end of November or the beginning of December and the honeymoon would be spent in India . . .

'It is a cock-and-bull story,' the Aga Khan spluttered when confronted with this report: 'I have no fiancée!' Leaving the matter shrouded in mystery in the best Ismaili tradition, he refused to say any more. The indefatigable reporters saw him emerging from Villa Victoria in Aix-les-Bains every morning with Jane-Andrée and driving to the local course for his daily round of golf. To escape the

Press, he left 'for an unknown destination', which was, in fact, Nice.

When he returned to Aix-les-Bains a week later, the mystery was no more. He called the reporters together and told them with a big smile: 'I have refused to discuss my intentions until now because I had not made a definite decision. But the marriage is now decided upon. It will take place on December 4, and my friend Henri Clerc, Mayor of Aix, will tie the bond.'

'No romance of recent times has created such world-wide interest,' the *Daily Mail* wrote. Sheepishly newspapers put the record straight and reported that Mlle Carron had not worked in a chocolate shop in Chambéry but in a dress-making shop in the Boulevard Haussman in Paris. The *Daily Express* summed up popular reaction: 'The announcement of the Aga Khan's approaching marriage is a piece of news of great interest to the British people. The Empire has no firmer friend, and the British turf can boast of no more splendid and sporting patron. On both grounds we offer our congratulations and good wishes.'

Excitement in Aix-les-Bains was mounting as the day of the wedding approached. It was finally fixed for Saturday, December 7, 1929, and on the previous day Mlle Carron talked to reporters. She was wearing a red and beige ensemble with a big diamond spray and looked very attractive. It would be a small wedding, she said. They had abandoned the idea of having the families. Hers was too big, his could not easily come from so far. Then she went to put flowers on her mother's grave at the local cemetery.

The Aga Khan was nowhere to be seen. It turned out that he had gone on a lone motor trip to Lausanne. When he returned that evening stacks of telegrams and good wishes awaited him. He emerged only to plead for a little privacy. He was not going to tell anyone where they were going on their honeymoon except that it would be somewhere in Italy: 'After all,' he turned on the questioners, 'you would like to be left in peace on your honeymoon, wouldn't you?'

On the day, the mountains surrounding Aix-les-Bains were covered with snow and an icy drizzle hung in the air but the crowds armed themselves with umbrellas and made for the town hall, a medieval palace. By ten a.m. the photographers were in position and the streets outside chock-a-block with people. Mayor Henri Clerc, a well-known dramatist, could not have wished for a more romantic

occasion. First to arrive were the bride's two witnesses, Maître Durand, a lawyer, and Monsieur Borel, a French Deputy and Prefect of the Department of Haute Savoie. They were quickly followed by two Imams of the Paris Mosque, Ali Yvahia Diu and Mohammed Ben Lahsei, resplendent in their white burnouses and turbans.

The bridegroom, by contrast, wore a light overcoat over his lounge suit and the bride was dressed in the Aga Khan's English racing colours—emerald green, mink trimmed dress with chocolate coloured hat, gloves, shoes and handbag. The Tricolore and the Union Jack flew side by side in the Mayor's parlour and the table was strewn with roses and carnations. Monsieur Clerc made the Aga Khan an honorary citizen of Aix-les-Bains before proceeding to pronounce the couple man and wife according to French law. The formalities completed, the Mayor's place was taken by the two *mukhis* and an interpreter. Ben Lahsei read the *khotba* and wedding address in Arabic, specially composed for the occasion, and prayed with hands outstretched, palms upwards, that Allah, the one true God, would pour the essence of his mercy on the Aga Khan, his representative on earth. Then he took the small gathering as witnesses of the marriage.

Leaving the town hall, the couple were mobbed as they made their way to the Hôtel Pavillon Rivollier for the wedding breakfast. After the meal the Aga Khan gave a short newsreel interview before quietly slipping away with the new Begum. Their car was followed by another one carrying the luggage and the servants and the cavalcade drove off towards an Italian honeymoon. The wedding guests were told that Aix-les-Bains' new honorary citizen had donated £2,000 for the city's poor.

The couple had not gone far before the Aga Khan told the chauffeur to forget about Italy and take the familiar route to Cannes, no more than 150 miles away. At Cap d'Antibes, a thrilling surprise awaited the Begum. The car swung through high, ornate gates into a grandiose garden whose radiance even winter did not dim. Tall trees, manicured lawns, decorative bushes surrounded the attractive house: 'La Villa Jane-Andrée,' the Aga Khan said.

He and his bride went along the wide, marble-paved loggia into the salon with the Persian silk carpets, seventeenth-century Flemish

Gobelins and the precious *objets d'art*. The wood-panelled library with a Turkish motif, the dining-room with the wrought iron doors, heavy carved table and silver candelabra completed an ensemble as opulent as it was tasteful. The house, sumptuous and simple at the same time, resembled the man who provided it, combined an oriental taste with French elegance, was full of museum pieces but eminently livable-in.

After the honeymoon, the Aga Khan took the new Begum to London. One of their first excursions was to Fawley Manor, Richard Dawson's stables at Whatcombe, where Colonel Vuillier, George Lambton and Michael Beary were awaiting them. The congregation of the mighty racing brains-trust could have one meaning only—the Aga Khan was going all out to win the Derby. The proud owner showed the Begum one of his horses, Blenheim, a son of Blandford, who cost 4,100 guineas. Blenheim would be a runner but the horse he confidently expected to win the greatest classic for him was Rustom Pasha. Michael Beary was certain the colt would take him first past the post.

The Ritz Hotel was like a branch of the India Office and the Aga Khan's apartment the scene of heated political and diplomatic discussions. He was desperately anxious to bring about a consensus of Indian opinion but the signs were not encouraging. Indians wanted to be independent and free but no two parties agreed on the kind of India they wanted, far less on how to realise their objectives. With London or against? Dominion status? A federal state, as the Aga Khan proposed? An orderly transfer of power or a violent separation? How soon, how quickly?

While politicians argued, the situation went from bad to worse. Gandhi's followers were out in the streets, bloody clashes the order of the day, mass arrests filled the prisons. The Viceroy was in London for talks with the government but only a stroke of genius could break the vicious circle of revolt and repression. The Aga Khan tried to rise above the conflict, talked to the government, the Viceroy, the Muslims, the princes and Hindu leaders. The outcome was a British decision to hold a Round Table Conference about the future of India. For the moment, the tension eased. Lord Irwin's intention was to release Gandhi's supporters from jail but negotiations broke down and Gandhi went on his famous march

through the villages of Gujerat. His new campaign of civil disobedience and tax boycott was gaining momentum when he was arrested, prosecuted, convicted and sent to prison. The prospects for the Round Table Conference did not look good.

For a brief diversion, the Aga Khan turned to his horses. The fruits of a decade of endeavour were ripening. So far—up to the beginning of the 1930 season—he had won over £220,000 in prize money but lavish purchases and stables and studs devoured even more, and still the supreme triumph of a Derby win had eluded him. He did not begrudge the big outlay. Rustom Pasha was coming on splendidly and would not disappoint him. With luck Blenheim might also finish among the money, and this ride was given to Harry Wragg, a strong and clever jockey known as ‘Head Waiter’ because of his knack of waiting for the right moment and coming from behind to win.

At Epsom on Derby Day all eyes were on the Aga Khan and his Begum. The Aga’s hopes—if not his money—were on Rustom Pasha but the race was barely underway when they were already doomed. In spite of Michael Beary’s efforts, Rustom Pasha faded early and was soon out of the running. A horse called Diolite seemed to be heading for victory when the Aga Khan was jerked from despondency by seeing Blenheim, Harry Wragg up, coming fast to challenge. In an exciting finish, the two horses ran together stride for stride until, in the nick of time, Blenheim went ahead to pass the post with a length to spare. Behind him Diolite was beaten into third place by Iliad.

‘The Aga Khan! The Aga Khan! The Aga Khan wins!’ From one end of the downs to the other punters joined in the happy chorus of the bookmakers as the beaming owner led in his 18 to 1 Derby winner. The Aga Khan was summoned to the Royal Box and congratulated by King George V and Queen Mary: ‘How much did you have on it?’ the King asked with a knowing wink: ‘Not a shilling, Your Majesty,’ the Aga Khan confessed.

Even without a winning bet his rewards were not negligible. In that year the Aga Khan won over £46,000 in prize money alone. Rustom Pasha went on to win the Eclipse Stakes and his stable companion Ut Majeur took the Cesarewitch at 100 to 1. By this time the Aga Khan’s studs in France and in Ireland were estimated to be worth some £2 million.

Watching Aly in London at close quarters in these days the Aga Khan learned more about his son than he had known in years. Their common interest in horses brought them closer together but Aly was still in awe of his father and rather reserved in his presence. He was quite uninhibited when he plunged into the hectic life of London which was the liveliest city of the early thirties. Young people—and some not so young—lived it up as in few other capitals: the Embassy Club in Bond Street, the '400' in Leicester Square, the Café de Paris, the Cavendish Hotel, Rosa Lewis presiding. This was Noël Coward's London, Edgar Wallace's London, Evelyn Waugh's London—and Aly Khan's London.

If there was a world economic crisis on the horizon it did not darken the skies over Mayfair where David, the current Duke of Windsor, another popular Prince of Wales, set the tone and the fashion. With the aristocratic racing set as his base and Michael Beary as guide and companion, Aly melted naturally into the colourful environment.

He could dance through the night, each night with a different girl, and be off at the crack of dawn in his Alfa Romeo at break-neck speed to watch the morning gallops of England's finest horses at Newmarket where his father's string was moved to Frank Butters's stables before long. Come evening and he was back in the little house in Mayfair which he shared with his Ismaili valet. He bought his first horse, Grey Wonder, a gelding, which had been only just beaten by one of his father's horses.

Having secured the Ismaili colours of Green and Red which had eluded his father, he wore them riding his own 'Cyclone' in the South Down Welles Plate, his first race on an English course. Not much later he won the Berwick Welles Handicap on Grey Wonder and went on to ride in a hundred races altogether, a gallant if not consistently successful amateur jockey. Daring as he was on horseback, he could be positively reckless at the wheel of his car. Being unpunctual and always in a hurry only made matters worse. On his way to a race in Brighton, he was stopped by the police and fined for exceeding the speed limit. Returning from Newmarket not much later, he was involved in another motoring accident and lost three teeth but was back in the saddle a few days later. His near accidents were too numerous to count.

Extramural activities left him little time to study law and 'eat his dinners'—those reading for the Bar examination must attend a certain number of dinners at the Inn of Court to which they belong. To perfect his horsemanship, he went on a stiff advanced course at an equestrian school in Cambridge and promptly employed this for the greater glory of his barrister by winning the Bar Point-to-Point, a performance he repeated in the next two years. He had, his friends said, the love of the Arab for his steed and the skill of the Persian on horseback. But he was already aiming higher—his next adventure was in the air, he started training as a pilot and it was not long before he earned his 'wings'.

Just the same, the Aga Khan thought this was as good a moment as any for his son to take on some of the religious duties of the Imam's heir. Aly had, of course, met leaders of Ismaili communities on their visits to his father in Europe but the rank and file of the faithful had not set eyes on him since his childhood visit. Now the Imam decided to send his son on a tour of Ismaili centres in Syria which no Imam had visited in centuries: 'I am sending my beloved son to you,' he wrote in a message to his followers, 'you should consider him as equivalent to my own coming.'

At Beirut, Lady Ali Shah was awaiting her grandson to guide his first steps in this difficult territory and introduce him to some of Syria's Ismailis, rough men of the mountains, who had travelled for days from their remote homes on mule or horseback to greet the son of their divine leader. Heirs of the tradition of Hasan-i-Sabbah's *fiḍa'is*, they matched the religious fervour and fanatical devotion of the men of Alamut.

Had there been doubt about the reception these primitive warriors would give the sophisticated and westernised youngster, it was quickly dispelled. The Aga Khan never entertained such a doubt because he had a higher opinion of his son than Aly himself suspected and sensed the spark in his temperament which would quickly fire his followers. No sooner had the reception committee spotted Aly—His Serene Royal Highness, Prince Aly Khan, as he was styled in these parts—than the Aga Khan was proved right. The men prostrated themselves before the eminent visitor, tried to touch his clothes, sought his glance. Flushed with excitement, Aly responded warmly and joyfully.

The enthusiasm in the villages was even greater. Wherever he went, he was greeted by cheering crowds lining the dusty roads. Exchanging his Savile Row suits for the flowing robes of the indigenous Arabs, he joined his hosts in daring displays of horsemanship and quickly earned their respect. The tour reached triumphal proportions at Salamiya, the Ismaili stronghold where he remained a favourite throughout his life.

His was an astonishing feat of personality: 'Aly's appearances always sent the marriage rate soaring,' wrote Leonard Slater. 'Young men would speed their courting; young women would overcome their shyness.' Sex appeal may have had something to do with it but much of Aly's success was spontaneous popular reaction to a warm-hearted, handsome young man with a genuine affection for people. From Syria he went on to Bombay and Karachi where he visited *jamatkhanas*, led the prayers and performed religious ceremonies with a touch as sure as that of an experienced *mukhi*. The tour was a great success.

In London the future of the people among whom Aly moved with such ease was under discussion and his father was in the thick of the diplomatic wrangle over India. The Maharajah of Baroda said that the issues involved were the prosperity and contentment of three hundred and fifty million souls and the greatness and safety of the British Empire but it would have been more correct to describe it as the beginning of the Empire's break-up. India was on the verge of revolution, some of her ablest men were in jail and the mood was so ugly that, in the words of the *Daily Telegraph*, even British financial resources were insufficient to hold rebellious India and that to hold it by force would be foreign to the whole genius of British rule.

The 1930 Round Table Conference on India opened under a cloud because Gandhi and the Congress Party refused to attend. British and Indian leaders hoped that the Aga Khan would be able to allay some of the bitterness. He was in his place when King George V spoke at the inauguration in the House of Lords before delegates moved to St James's Palace for their working sessions. The British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, presided over the imposing assembly of Indian Princes, Muslim, Hindu and Parsee leaders, each delegation bristling with historic names. Maharajahs in diamond-studded turbans and glittering coats included Baroda, Kashmir,

Bikaner, Patiala and Bhopal, who were accompanied by their ministers. Facing Ramsay MacDonald and the British delegates, Lord Reading and Sir Samuel Hoare among them, were the Aga Khan and next to him Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the other Muslims. But a conference on India without Gandhi was like a performance of Hamlet without the Prince.

Try as he might, the Aga Khan could only postpone the inevitable end. As hopes of agreement between Muslims and Hindus—and the British—vanished, he concentrated on creating agreement among the Muslims which was no easy task either. Everybody trusted him and he was asked to arbitrate on some delicate questions but these were side issues and the free-for-all ended with the collapse of the conference.

A second gathering in the following year looked no more hopeful. The world economic crisis complicated matters, so did a change of government in England. Not even the presence of Mahatma Gandhi on this occasion made much difference. Again the Aga Khan acted as mediator and some of the more important talks took place not in the conference hall but at the Ritz. In the prevailing atmosphere, however, few expected Gandhi to visit the Aga Khan at his hotel. They soon learned better.

The midnight meeting of the two great Indian leaders took place behind the closed doors of the Aga Khan's apartment. At the outset he assured the Mahatma that, were he to show himself a real father to India's Muslims, they would respond by helping him to the utmost of their ability in his struggle for India's independence: 'I cannot in truth say,' was Gandhi's ice cold reply, 'that I have any feelings of paternal love for Muslims . . . I cannot indulge in any form of sentiment.' The chilly effect of this cold douche pervaded the whole meeting. Though they discussed every aspect of *Swaraj* (self-government), the talks led nowhere. But Gandhi paid the Aga Khan a compliment which rose above the acid Hindu-Muslim communal conflict. In these troubled days, Gandhi said, the Aga Khan displayed infinite patience, understanding and wisdom.

CHAPTER VII

ALTHOUGH intimates talked about his flashes of temper, his impatience with fools and his imperious manner which brooked no contradiction, the Aga Khan, at the age of fifty-five, wealthy, respected, popular, bestrode the contemporary scene as a benevolent father figure. Though it was difficult to imagine him in the role of a devoted son, to him it came quite naturally. Early in 1932, he announced that his mother, Lady Ali Shah, would be paying her first visit to London.

When the grand old lady of Malabar Hill arrived, their reunion was an emotional affair. She wanted to see London, scene of her son's triumphs; above all she wanted to see her son—even after all these years, separation from him was still painful. She was eighty-four years of age and not blind to the course of nature: 'Death is inevitable,' was one of the first things she told him, 'but if it comes to me in your absence, it will be unendurable.' The Aga Khan begged her not to worry: 'You will breathe your last with your head in my lap,' he promised, as it turned out, prophetically. She was as yet far from death's door.

Stories of her vitality and strength were not exaggerated. She moved with complete assurance in her new surroundings but rather than stay with her son at the Ritz, she moved into Aly's Mayfair house. Allah only knows what she thought of London life. Unlike her westernised son and grandson, she was, as someone said, 'a strict warden of the past who sees little that is worthy or desirable in the fruits of the present'. Her face adamantly hidden behind the veil her son encouraged Ismaili women to drop, she wore the traditional Persian-style silken trousers and soft draperies

which she preferred to European clothes. She ate sparingly, drank water only and observed the fasts.

King George V and Queen Mary received her, Ismailis paid homage to her. But nothing pleased her as much as to be with her son on whom her eyes rested lovingly: 'Fate has smiled generously upon him,' she observed, 'but in his good fortune he has always been good to others.' Fate smiled on him again—after an interval of twenty-two years he was going to be a father once more. Begum Andrée was expecting a baby.

Being in constant demand at political, social and sporting functions, the Aga Khan seemed to be constantly on the move from one highly publicised event to another and some of his friends wondered whether he ever found time for contemplation beyond the next Indian difficulty. As if to give them their answer he spoke on the radio—his subject, significantly, 'If I Were a Dictator'. After exercising his pet theories on religion and education, he encouraged listeners to think good and beautiful thoughts. If he were a dictator, he said, the over-clothing and over-feeding on which money was foolishly wasted would be replaced by rational diet and dress and the money spent on golf-courses, tennis-courts, cricket, football and hoekey grounds. Every European child would be taught an Eastern language, every Asiatic child a European one. His strongest plea was for the removal of barriers between peoples, mutual understanding and, above all, peace.

Peace in practical terms occupied his mind and there was no shortage of trouble spots in need of honest efforts by men of his calibre. But goodwill was not enough. He wanted to represent India in international councils but came up against some stiff resistance. Being highly thought of in London did not endear him to Gandhi and the Congress Party and his dedication to Crown and Empire was a liability. In Delhi, even in Whitehall, he felt side-tracked and, though he knocked on many doors, he received no offers.

A whispering campaign damned him with faint praise. What a splendid racehorse owner he was—but politics? Surely, his interests were mainly artistic and literary! His past political achievements? They were of benefit to Muslims only, and, as Imam of the Ismailis, was he not bound to put the interests of his followers above all

else? The man whom the public regarded as a living success story was thoroughly frustrated. His great ambition would have remained unrealised had it not been for Sir Samuel Hoare. With plans for a Disarmament Conference in Geneva maturing, Sir Samuel immediately thought of the Indian leader who pleaded the cause of peace so eloquently: 'I was appointed a member of the Indian delegation,' the Aga Khan wrote, 'nominally as second in command to Sir Samuel Hoare, but to take charge as soon as he left. I was also appointed chief Indian representative at the 1932 Assembly of the League.' Prospects for the success of the conference were not auspicious although Stalin's Soviet-Russia represented by Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov was trying to find contact with the West. The Germans, predictably, sent a soldier to deal with disarmament, General Werner von Blomberg, whom Hitler sacked when arms became the only instrument of German diplomacy.

Uninhibited by restraints which might have dictated caution to a lesser man, the Aga Khan shed the nimbus of a racing idol, the halo of a religious leader, the ivory-tower airs of a philosopher and jumped with both feet first into the political whirlpool. He gave a series of dinner parties to bring delegates together informally, the biggest for Maxim Litvinov which melted much ice. He talked to Blomberg undeterred by the signs that Germany might soon be pursuing her 'just aspirations' by force of arms. Altogether, the Aga Khan did a great deal of good in Geneva. But time was against the partisans of peace.

A peace operation was also required in his own bailiwick where the troublesome Khoja Reformers were taking advantage of the Imam's long absence to keep opposition to his religious establishment alive. To counter a new campaign, the Aga Khan asked Aly to go to Bombay and Karachi and work his charm on the Khoja community. When they heard that Aly was on his way, the Reformers changed their tactics and prepared a document to present to the son of the absentee Imam. In a crude attempt to play off the son against the father, it suggested that the spirit of Alamut was alive in India, that the dagger was still the Imam's principal weapon against his opponents, some of whom had even been murdered. The tone of the document was menacing, a veiled threat seemed to hint at counter-action.

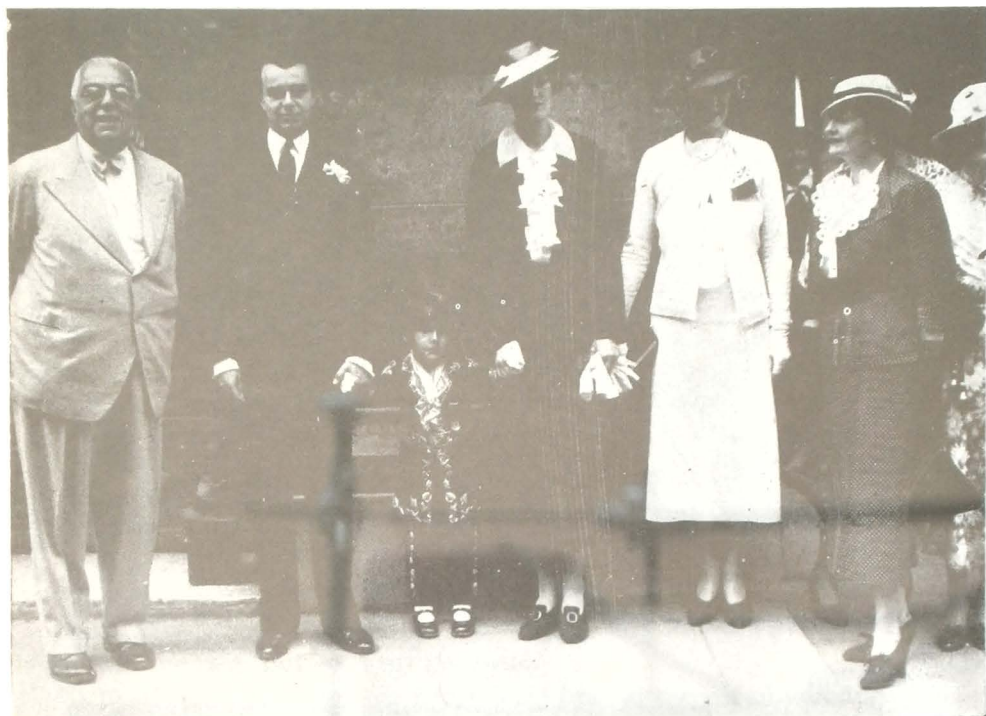
If this was designed to put fear into Aly's heart, the plan was misconceived. Aly's whole life followed Nietzsche's philosophy of living dangerously. He accepted the document, sent it through 'proper channels' to his father and forgot about it. Going about his religious duties with evident pleasure he impressed his father's followers with his joie de vivre, enlivened ceremonial occasions with his boyish enthusiasm, and conquered with his easy manner. In the family tradition, he was anxious to support an educational institution and eventually adopted Karachi University, donating and collecting funds.

An even more spectacular demonstration of Aly's enterprise and daring was in store for the community. Long distance air travel was still in an experimental stage when Aly put the finishing touches to a plan for a pioneer flight, a test for a regular air mail service, from Bombay to Singapore, ten thousand miles across an uncharted, inhospitable route. The aircraft was a tiny, fragile 'Moth' and he was accompanied by two friends, each in their own 'Moth', the chief instructor of the Bombay Flying Club and his father's erstwhile political adviser Naoroji Dumasia, assistant editor of the *Times of India*.

The venture fired the imagination of Ismailis and non-Ismailis alike. At Rangoon Aly was given a triumphal civic reception and made a fine speech which pleased the Burmese. His two friends turned back but he went on, as he said, in order to make people air-minded. The flight was a great boon for civil aviation. Other Indian princes became as enthusiastic as he and aerodromes sprang up in Hyderabad, Baroda, Indore and other Indian states.

On English race-courses that year it was the Aga Khan who made all the running. With Frank Butters training his English horses he was bound for another record season. After winning the Oaks with Udaipur, he entered no fewer than four horses for the St Leger—Udaipur, Firdaussi, Dastur, known as 'The Three Musketeers' and Taj Kasra. He fancied Dastur which had stamina and speed and only needed a little more luck than in his three classic races when he had finished second. Michael Beary chose the horse as his mount in preference to Udaipur which he left in Harry Wragg's strong hands while J. Taylor was riding Taj Kasra and Freddy Fox Firdaussi.

Doncaster race-course was packed, the Aga Khan's name was on



Prince Aly Khan and his bride, Mrs Loel Guinness, formerly the Hon. Joan Yarde-Buller, photographed after the civil ceremony, with the Aga Khan, the bride's mother and Begum Andrée, 1936. (Keystone)



Aly Khan and Rita Hayworth, his second wife. (Fox Photos)



**Aga Khan III with Gandhi at the Ritz Hotel,
London, in 1931. (Paul Popper)**



Aly Khan and Bettina. (Paul Popper)

all lips but punters and bookmakers, even racing experts, had difficulty in telling his entries apart. Beary was on Dastur which carried a great deal of money at six to one, wearing a chocolate-coloured cap; Harry Wragg's cap was green, the Aga Khan's second colour, while Firdaussi's and Taj Kasra's jockeys sported white caps. After a smooth start, it was difficult to make out the order of the runners in the distance but as they reached the straight, green, brown, white and white were close together. A few more paces in the thrilling race and the chocolate cap was in front and the bookmakers' hearts sank. Then the whites moved forward only to be overtaken by Harry Wragg's green. There was a jumble of colours from which a white cap finally emerged to pass the post by a neck ahead.

Nothing like it had ever happened. One owner had four horses in the first five. The hapless Dastur was second again, Udaipur came fourth and Taj Kasra fifth. The winner was Firdaussi at twenty to one. The Aga Khan was jubilant: 'Let me lead him in,' he said to Frank Butters taking the reins. 'He may not have been the favourite to win the race, but he is my favourite.'

That year, 1932, the Aga Khan again headed the list of winning owners with over £57,000 in prize money, more than he had ever won before. Colonel Vuillier whose controversial breeding and training methods deserved a big share of the credit did not live long to enjoy the stable's triumphs. Before the year was out, his death ended the brief association between owner and breeder which is still a topic of racing gossip on both sides of the English Channel.

Colonel Vuillier's death coincided with the birth of one of the greatest horses he ever bred, Bahram (by Blandford out of Friar's Daughter), whose name was engraved on the roll of English Derby winners three years later. A young man of German antecedents, Robert Muller, with an intuitive understanding of horses, who had been with the Colonel for some time, emerged to take an increasing share in the running of the French racing establishment.

The relentless routine the Aga Khan followed was taking him on another visit to India which was largely devoted to the affairs of his community. He toured the main centres in a special train and followers flocked to the stations to receive his blessing. Like others before, the tour produced many anecdotes which soon made the

rounds in India and Europe. Some amused him, others he shrugged off as the price of fame. One which annoyed him told of his train stopping in the pouring rain and, because he was indisposed, he stayed inside. A *mukhi* placed one of his shoes on the platform for the veneration of the assembled Khojas whereupon the purses they had come to lay at the Aga Khan's feet were piled around the shoe and gathered up by the *mukhi* before the train went on its way. According to another story the Imam handed out letters of recommendation to the Archangel Gabriel but, though this would be equivalent to a Catholic priest promising his congregation to recommend them to God's mercy, this story, too, was a figment of some lively imagination.

The community paid the traditional *zakat* but more often than not the Aga Khan paid them back with interest by helping followers with their business ventures. In the spirit of the Prophet he took an active interest in the economic as well as the religious life of Ismailis, brought them into contact with the West and helped them to find customers for their fine silks, furnishings and other products. New ideas he imported from Europe and the United States enabled Ismaili growers to produce better cotton and grain crops than their neighbours.

He made big investments in the jute industry which expanded under his régime and has grown into a vital element in East Pakistan's precarious economy (Karim Aga Khan is a big shareholder in jute mills which employ some twenty thousand men). The devotion of his followers who benefited from his enterprise did not blind him to the sorry state of India locked, as it was, in communal strife. He was angry with those he thought responsible for the violence which swept the country and said so in Letters to the London *Times* which was his favourite platform for airing his political views.

He returned from India in time for the birth of the Begum's baby. At the American Hospital in Neuilly, on January 17, 1933, she was delivered of a healthy boy. The Aga Khan was as jubilant as any man of fifty-six who becomes a father. He had already decided on a name for the baby—the name of the great Pir (teacher) who had converted the ancestors of so many of his followers. The boy was called Sadruddin ('Shield of Faith') and prayers were said for him in the Mosque in Paris. News of the event was sent to all Ismaili communities.

Leaving the baby in the care of his nurses, the Aga Khan took the Begum with him on another trip to India. She was thrilled with the reception she received from Ismaili women who felt that the presence of the Imam's sophisticated wife advanced the cause of their own emancipation. The couple went sight-seeing in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and were welcomed with garlands, loyal addresses and obeisance. They stayed with the Maharajah of Bikaner and the Governor of Bengal. After three crowded months they returned to Cannes in April 1934 to be greeted, the Aga Khan recorded, 'by a much grown, healthy, strong little boy'.

Was it the new baby which turned his mind towards dynastic thoughts? Was it the course of Indian affairs which inspired his wish to cement his spiritual dominion with territorial authority? The truth was that the Aga Khan, however remote from his predecessors, had inherited a vocation to rule—perhaps from the Fatimids, perhaps from his Persian grandfather—which now came to the surface.

Through a question in the Indian Legislative Assembly, it became known that he had discreetly asked the British government to grant him some territory in India over which he could rule. The answer was that a confidential communication had been received from His Highness the Aga Khan but that its nature could not be disclosed. The matter was taken up in the British House of Commons in July 1934 when Major-General Sir Alfred Knox asked Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India, for his comments but Sir Samuel had nothing to add to the answer given in India. When Sir Alfred Knox persisted and asked whether any other prominent supporter of the government's Indian policy had asked for an estate in India, Sir Samuel said that if this was meant to cast an aspersion on the motives of the Aga Khan, he was sure the whole House would say it was entirely misplaced.

One of the Aga Khan's biographers, Harry J. Greenwall, suggested that the land on which the Aga Khan had his eye was in the Province of Sind and that he would have been content with a relatively small estate. In retrospect, Greenwall's theory that the Aga Khan wanted the territory for his son, Prince Aly Khan, sounds unlikely. The MacDonald government refused the request but, if only as a solution to his complicated, multi-national tax problems,

the Aga Khan never completely abandoned the idea and his successor has been toying with it ever since his accession.

When, after yet another conference, the British government produced the Government of India Act of 1935, the Aga Khan was extremely critical. To everyone's surprise, his main objection was that it gave Britain too much influence (later he blamed it for taking India into the war). In his view, it ended all hope of uniting India—he was, of course, quite right. The outburst was the Aga Khan's swan song in Indian politics. Hard as he had tried to keep India united and in the Empire, he had failed. He was a disappointed man.

For Aly, life held few disappointments. It was fast—fast aircraft, fast motor-cars, fast horses; and women. If the stories circulating about him could be believed he was changing his women as frequently as his cars and his horses. He was, in truth, for many years associated with one and the same woman, married and much older than he, and was very loyal to her except for the occasional adventure one would expect from a young man of twenty-three. His trouble was that London's society women had a habit of boasting about their conquests, and what more romantic lover to boast about, truthfully or otherwise, than the rich and handsome oriental prince?

If they did not hint at a liaison with him at the time, they made certain to recall it in their autobiographies, the most intriguing of which was published by American-born Lady Thelma Furness, twin sister of Mrs Gloria Vanderbilt. Six years older than Aly, Thelma was the toast of London in the mid-thirties, a frequent partner of the Prince of Wales at dinners and dances. The heir to the throne was expected to marry her but she met Aly in New York and he (to quote from *Double Exposure* which she wrote jointly with her sister) turned his battery of charm on her, showered her with roses, pursued her across the Atlantic to England and courted her throughout a hectic London season.

Before leaving for the United States, Lady Thelma was said to have asked an American girl friend, Wallis Simpson, to look after the Prince of Wales during her absence but by the time she returned to Europe with Aly in tow, the Prince had fallen for Wallis: 'Edward VIII might still be on the throne of England today if not for Aly,' Elsa Maxwell pronounced a little extravagantly. Supplanted in the Prince of Wales's affection, Lady Thelma Furness found consolation

in Aly's arms, went with him on a European jaunt which ended—with Aly, almost inevitably—at the Deauville horse sales. However important women were in his life, horses often took precedence.

Romantic as the affair sounded in Lady Thelma's recollection, for Aly it was but a brief interlude. Mayfair gossips were still talking about it long after his roving eye had come to rest appreciatively and fondly on another woman. It was almost love at first sight. Even thirty-five years later, Princess Joan Aly Khan, when I talked to her in her Eaton Square apartment (where Prince Karim, before his marriage, used a suite of rooms as his London *pied-à-terre*) was as attractive, elegant and haughty as she appeared to her future husband in the hot summer of 1934 in Deauville where he found himself sitting next to her at a dinner party.

For the past seven years, the former Joan Yarde-Buller, one of Lord Churston's daughters and through him descended from Edward III, had been married to Loel Guinness, the wealthy Tory member of parliament for Bath, and they had one son. Aly was only dimly aware of all this, was not even certain of the lady's first name when, jokingly, he turned to her and asked her with mock seriousness: 'Darling, will you marry me?'

Si non e vero . . . The story conveys something of Aly's technique. Joan Guinness might as well have said 'Yes' there and then. They liked each other at once, met again and, when they returned to England, saw a great deal of each other. Aly, who was famous for making every woman feel that she was the only one in the world, had never felt as strongly before.

While his father remained at Antibes, Aly kept an eye on his racing interests, dividing his time between London's unending social round and Fitzroy House, Frank Butters's stables at Newmarket, which sheltered some seventy of the Aga Khan's horses, a few of Aly's and some registered in the name of the Begum. One stood out among them—Bahram, named after Omar Khayyám's hunter after the Aga's first choice of name clashed with a previous registration. Having miraculously recovered from a bout of pneumonia in early life Bahram was the year's undisputed top two-year-old, winner of all his races and the great white hope of 1935. His big test came with the Two Thousand Guineas, the first of the new season's Classics. There was some talk about a weakness of his tail

but it was a minor physical blemish which hardly detracted from his chances.

Bahram was in fine fettle. To double the stable's prospects, Frank Butters entered Theft, another Aga Khan horse, for the same race. From the South of France the owner kept in constant touch with Aly and Butters and was told that most of the money was going on a horse called Bobsleigh and that Bahram and Theft were second and third favourites. A detailed description over the telephone enabled the Aga Khan to recapture the thrill of the race as soon as it was run. Both horses emerged half-way down the final hill and were going ahead with Theft looking a certain winner when gallant Bahram stormed up to go first past the post in a splendid manner.

In the excited anticipation of the Derby, less than three weeks away, Theft was again booked to accompany Bahram, the firm favourite, but a good deal of the public's money went on rival horses, Sea Bequest, Robin Goodfellow and Hairan. There was no question of the Aga Khan keeping away from this race. He and the Begum caught the Blue train from Nice.

He was up early on Derby Day, June 5, 1935, which was wet and cheerless, but on his way to Epsom he saw the sun breaking through the clouds. A big cheer went up for King George and Queen Mary who were celebrating their Silver Jubilee on the throne of England. The Aga, the Begum and Aly went to the paddock to take a closer look at Bahram who seemed fit and well but was a little nervous and sweating. There was nothing to worry about. By the time he reached the start he was composed and moved magnificently. He was well away but boxed in awkwardly by the time the field approached Tattenham Corner. Freddy Fox, his jockey, must have been wondering how he could possibly squeeze through and the Aga Khan was anxious, too. He had no means of knowing of the little drama that was played out on the course. A shout from Fox and Harry Wragg on Theft cleared the way to enable Bahram to surge ahead and win by two lengths (from Field Trial and Robin Goodfellow). For the Aga Khan it was one of the great emotional moments of his life.

That evening he was the guest of honour at a celebration dinner for Jockey Club members at Buckingham Palace for which the tables were decorated in the winning owner's green and chocolate colours, Queen Mary's own idea.

Mahmoud and Bahram could look forward to other great victories but for the Aga Khan religious duties called. From all over the world Ismaili delegations converged on his house in Antibes to pay him homage—on August 18 he celebrated his fiftieth anniversary as Imam. The community had big plans for the auspicious occasion. On behalf of his Indian followers, Mr Gulamali G. Merchant (whose sons are prominent in the Karachi community) humbly requested His Highness to approve plans for an elaborate Golden Jubilee ceremony during his visit to India later in the year—East Africa was making similar preparations.

The Aga Khan demurred but a member of the delegation, a highly respected *mukhi* whose ancestors had been loyal Ismailis for generations, asked permission to tell the story of the Kathiawar model state of Gondal, 'small in size but great in the happiness and contentment of its people' and of Gondal's ruler, His Highness Maharajah Shri Bhagvatsinhji, who won the love and devotion of his subjects to a degree without parallel.

To mark the Maharajah's Golden Jubilee, the *mukhi* explained, the people of Gondal decided to perform the ancient ceremonial of *tula-vidhi*, or weighing, which is of historic Aryan (Indo-Germanic) origin and supposed to ensure peace, health and prosperity to the person weighed. Quoting instances from the golden age of Hinduism when Gods and heroes stalked the earth and inspired mankind to noble deeds, of monarchs who were weighed in gold at their coronations, the *mukhi* said that in all these cases the gold came from the royal treasury, its bestowal was royal largesse and the precious metal gifted in charity to the needy and the poor.

But the gold against which the ruler of Gondal was to be weighed would come from the humble purses of his subjects, the poorest vying with the wealthiest in order to provide the precious metal for the *tula-vidhi* of their beloved paternal Maharajah. Appealing to the Imam's understanding, the *mukhi* said that fifty years, half a century, was a long time to be at the head of a vast and prosperous community which owed the Imam a great deal. It demanded tangible recognition, a token of gratitude from every single Ismaili alive. Surely, what the people of Gondal could do for their ruler, Ismailis should be allowed to do for their Imam. The Aga Khan could do no other than accept the plea. He gave permission for the preparations

to go ahead but had his own ideas on how to employ the proceeds of his followers' generosity for their own benefit.

Not a man to dwell on the past, he quickly turned to current problems. By early September he was in Geneva attending a meeting of the League of Nations Assembly. Japan had just snubbed the League and Hitler's Germany was arrogantly defiant. As to India, the Government of India Act had just been passed, the last major piece of British Indian legislation before the dramatic statute which ended the rule of the British Raj in India twelve years later. The time for smooth, glib words had passed and, addressing the Assembly, the Aga Khan spoke of India's concern about the League's preoccupation with Europe, about the failure of the Disarmament Conference and rearmament which was in full swing. A fortnight later, Mussolini attacked Abyssinia and the Aga Khan's warnings were dramatically justified.

He was deeply involved in the proceedings when he was called to the telephone and told that Bahram had won the St Leger: 'It is the horse of the century!' he exclaimed jubilantly. He claimed a new record: 'I am sure I must have been the only member of the Assembly of the League ever to be called away to hear that his horse had won the St Leger.' No other horse had won the triple crown since Rock Sand thirty-two years earlier.

In the absence of his father, Aly Khan led in the winner but even on this auspicious occasion he did not look as happy and carefree as of old. His own joy at Bahram's fantastic achievement was overshadowed by a feeling of gloom which did not long remain hidden from his friends. By this time everyone seemed aware of Aly's problem. Puritans were whispering of 'scandal' and the shock waves emanating from the heart of London soon reached the Aga Khan in Antibes.

Suspicions, voiced more or less openly, received confirmation in the last week of November, 1935, when a brief notice in the British Press announced that 'A Decree Nisi was granted in the Divorce Court yesterday to Mr Thomas Loel Evelyn Bulkeley Guinness, the retiring Conservative M.P. for the city of Bath, owing to the misconduct of Mrs Joan Barbara Guinness, formerly the Hon. Joan Barbara Yarde-Buller. The suit was not defended. The co-respondent was named as Prince Aly Khan against whom costs were awarded.'

The London-Antibes telephone lines bristled with acid conversations between father and son but the Aga Khan seemed mollified when Aly assured him that this was not just another intermezzo in his turbulent love life: 'Joan and I are going to be married as soon as possible,' he said. As soon as possible was in six months' time when the decree nisi would become absolute. To escape the European winter and the talk of London and Paris, the young couple decided to await the great day in the sunshine of the Bahamas.

As they were westward bound, the Aga Khan was on his way to the East, travelling towards an ovation unequalled even in his triumphal passage through life thus far. It came about on January 19, 1936, when vast crowds in festive and solemn mood were making for Mazagaon and Hasanabad. Over the years the Ismaili 'Vatican' in Bombay had been the scene of many colourful celebrations but the Aga Khan's Golden Jubilee Durbar they came to witness on this day was certain to surpass all previous occasions in splendour. So many people converged on the scene, it was obvious that large numbers of non-Ismaili Muslims were joining the Khojas on their great day. Although the available space did not allow more than some thirty thousand to reach the immediate vicinity, one eye-witness recorded that the entire population of Bombay seemed on their feet to see the unique spectacle: 'Stupendous and unprecedented' was how some contemporary commentaries described it.

Frail but upright, the aged Lady Ali Shah was awaiting her son on the raised dais with little Sadruddin by her side. Before any of them could even get a glimpse of the Imam, the excited crowd pushed forward bowling over women and children many of whom were trampled underfoot. Coming to the rescue, Bombay's chief of police was injured in the crush. Luckily there were no fatalities and the Imam's dignified presence helped to restore order.

Amid noisy shouts of acclamation, he inspected the Khoja Volunteer guard of honour with the Begum whose precious stones sparkled on her light-green sari. Reaching the dais, the Aga Khan took his place on the *gadi*, the throne, embroidered in real gold and decorated with his coat of arms. Those standing near by thought they could discern a faint smile as he glanced at a big structure, the giant weighing machine. Presently the Imam rose and asked to be heard on an important matter. In the noise it was difficult to understand the

fragments of sound reaching the crowd through inadequate loud-speakers—he was saying that His Majesty the King-Emperor was gravely, critically ill and that he had, therefore, decided to cancel all but the religious ceremonies. Unless there was an improvement in the King's condition, none of the secular functions would take place.

Whether they could hear him or not, the crowd was obviously not in the mood for bad news. Again and again it demanded to see the Imam who rose from his seat to show himself and acknowledge the enthusiastic acclamation. Talking and shouting only subsided when Gulamali Merchant read out the text of a telegram from Buckingham Palace with the King's good wishes for the Imam's future, probably the last message of the reign that was coming to an end. Then the ceremony proper could take its course. Bowing deeply Gulamali Merchant requested His Highness to step on to the weighing machine: 'On behalf of Your Highness's followers,' the Ismaili functionary said, 'I most reverently and respectfully request that Your Highness will allow yourself to be weighed in gold on this happy and auspicious occasion, and accept the gold so weighed as a humble token of our love, devotion and gratitude for all the unbounded bounty and benefits that Your Highness's followers have derived during your Imamatus in the last fifty years.'

Nodding gracefully the Aga Khan eased himself into the chair of the weighing machine while prominent Ismailis slowly loaded the counter-pan with gold bullion until it balanced the Imam's weight of just over two hundred and twenty pounds. Loud cheers greeted the announcement that the value of the gold was 335,000 rupees or £25,760. At last there was silence as *mukhis* began to recite prayers and passages from the Koran. Slowly the Aga Khan rose: 'I accept with great pleasure,' he said, 'the gold that my dear spiritual children have offered me, and give them my loving and paternal spiritual blessings . . .' He had, he added, decided to use the gold for their benefit and had appointed Gulamali Merchant and other leading Ismailis to devise the best possible scheme to apply the proceeds to important projects such as scholarships, transfers of followers from congested districts to better accommodation, infant care and the community's general welfare.

The communal gift having been handed over, delegate after delegate stepped forward to present the Imam of the Ismailis with

other *nazerana* (valuable presents). The Maharajah of Kutch offered a gold-bordered robe and one thousand rupees in silver and the Nawab of Lunawada a beautiful silver tea-set. Diplomats from many countries brought their governments' good wishes. From Hasanabad the Aga Khan was carried in procession through the streets of Bombay and acclaimed by more people than had ever paid homage to an Imam. The following day ten thousand men and women from Ismaili communities all over the world assembled in the grounds of Mahaluxmi race-course which had been turned into a brilliantly illuminated oriental fairyland.

A silver casket mounted on four carved tigers standing on rare sandalwood—a replica of the Assembly Hall with the clock tower from which the Imam blesses his people—was handed to the Aga Khan. The casket contained a commemoration address which emphasised the great Ismaili tradition of learning, linking Al Ahzar University of A.D. 971 and Aligarh of 1936 and proudly enumerated the progress of Ismailis in Law, Medicine, Commerce and Industry—Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla, President of the Legislative Assembly, was one of the many Ismaili Khojas in outstanding positions; Sir Currimbhoy Ibrahim, another Ismaili Khoja, the first Muslim to be created a Baronet. Visibly moved, the Aga Khan once more exhorted his followers to 'educate, educate and educate their children'.

The celebrations came to an abrupt end. When news of the King George V's death reached him, the Aga Khan ordered the Jubilee programme to be forthwith abandoned, gave instructions for all Khoja shops in Bombay to be closed and business to be suspended for three days. He exchanged his colourful robes for black clothes and told his followers to wear their national mourning dress. The Aga Khan's sorrow was genuine and deep. It was also symbolic. He could not help feeling that there would not be many more British monarchs whom he could call King-Emperor. With the death of George V he mourned the India of his dreams.

CHAPTER VIII

IN spite of all the tremendous things that had happened in 1935 the, Aga Khan confessed that, for him, it was 'Bahram's year'. By the same token, the ageing Persian Prince may well have wondered whether 1936 would not turn out to be 'Mahmoud's year'.

He would have been quite right but on his return to Europe other weighty topics soon attracted his attention diverting it from his beloved horses. Indeed, even while Aly's romantic problems were as yet unresolved, the Aga Khan was preoccupied with rumblings of another, more portentous romance. Soon after his accession to the throne, King Edward VIII received the old family friend who happily transferred his loyalty to the fourth British monarch in his lifetime. The King appeared to be well briefed about his work in Geneva and asked a hundred serious and searching questions. King and Imam, individualists both, both endowed with an easy social manner and attuned to the same environment, got on well with each other. They talked for an hour and a half while, the Aga Khan recalled smugly, Lords-in-Waiting and India Office officials cooled their heels in the ante-room.

Soon they met again, first at lunch in the house of Philip Kerr, Marquess of Lothian, then at other private parties when the King was accompanied by Mrs Wallis Simpson. Although these matters were, of course, taboo, the Aga Khan was aware of the imperial drama that was slowly and inexorably building up. A friend of Queen Mary's told him that she wept bitterly whenever she thought of 'the hidden, unspoken catastrophe which loomed ahead' for her son.

The Aga Khan's son and Joan Guinness were back in Europe by May 11. Her decree nisi became absolute and preparations for their

marriage could go ahead. Many of his friends still refused to believe that Aly was about to give up his freedom when the arrangements for a simple wedding in Paris were already completed. For the ceremony the couple chose the unprepossessing town hall of the sixteenth arrondissement not far from Aly's flat. They fixed the date for May 18. The Aga Khan who came to like his future daughter-in-law promised to be present.

The skies smiled and the sun was strong on the pleasant May morning in Paris when Prince Aly Khan, still one month away from his twenty-fifth birthday and, if anything, looking even younger, set out for his wedding in a sober lounge suit with a white gardenia in his buttonhole. He was kept waiting only a few minutes before Joan, accompanied by her mother and sisters, arrived. She was wearing a trim black silk coat and a broad-trimmed black hat with a white bow and looked as cool and composed as ever as she greeted the Aga Khan, the Begum and her groom's half-brother, little Prince Sadruddin, whose blue velvet Lord Fauntleroy suit provided a lively touch of colour.

After the brief ceremony, the Mayor thanked Aly who, like his father at his own wedding, had made a generous donation for the poor of the district. From the town hall, a cavalcade of cars took the wedding party to the Ismaili Mosque at the other end of Paris where *mukhi* Ben Khalifa awaited them in the Hall of Prayers. They took off their shoes before entering and settling on the mats on the ground, Joan's first encounter with the rituals of her bridegroom's faith. The Muslim wedding ceremony with prayers and recitations from the Koran took no more than twenty-five minutes.

During the wedding breakfast, father and son discussed Mahmoud's Derby chances—by a coincidence, as they were talking, Woodstock, a horse belonging to Joan's ex-husband, was running to victory at London's Alexandra Park race-course. Mahmoud, Mumtaz Mahal's grey grandson, in spite of three fine wins among six outings in 1935, had not done well in his first race of the new season. In the Greenham Plate at the beginning of April the colt had failed to make an impression, and in the Two Thousand Guineas, a fortnight earlier, he came only second to Lord Astor's Pay Up. The Aga Khan told Aly that his confidence in the horse that was bred under his own auspices remained unshaken. On this note he parted from the

newly-weds who were off, the press were told, 'on a secret honeymoon'. Their destination was the Villa Jane-Andrée but the honeymoon was going to be short. Aly was firmly resolved to be at Epsom nine days later for Mahmoud's greatest test.

He was by his father's side as the field lined up for the 153rd Renewal of the Derby Stakes, as it is officially called, worth £9,934 to the winner. Pay Up was the five-to-one favourite and Mahmoud, who was not thought capable of staying the mile and a half, rated odds of only one hundred to eight. His trainer Frank Butters preferred Taj Akbar, the Aga Khan's other entry, but Mahmoud's jockey Charlie Smirke shared the owner's high opinion of his mount.

Watching the proceedings from the stands and trying to hide their tension, Aga and Aly picked up Mahmoud when he was lying about eighth or ninth but going well and moving up. The grey colt looked conspicuous and was easy to follow as Smirke manoeuvred him into a favourable position at Tattenham Corner. A thirty-three to one outsider, Thankerton, was leading the field by four or five lengths, followed by Bala Hissar which rated no better odds than Mahmoud, and Taj Akbar which was going strongly.

With a quarter of a mile to go, Smirke who had been anxious to conserve his mount's doubtful reserves for as long as possible, called on him for a spurt. A tap of his whip sent Mahmoud flying forward—shades of the flying Mumtaz Mahal. Now he was catching up on the leaders so fast it looked as if they were standing still and, though some experts still expected him to fade before the finish, he passed the winning post first. Three lengths behind the Aga Khan's other runner, Taj Akbar, was second and Thankerton held on to come third ahead of Pay Up, the hapless favourite.

It was a tremendous victory. Doffing his silk hat to acknowledge the cheers, the Aga Khan's lips were seen to be moving and he could be heard murmuring: 'First and second, first and second.' With the shouts of his Asian followers still ringing in his ears, he was once more basking in the favour of a big crowd. He celebrated his victory with a party at the Embassy Club in Bond Street, one of Aly's haunts, which was decorated with chocolate-tinted carnations and roses in bowls of green ink. Each of the hundred guests had a name famous in racing circles and society.

But the crowd's favour, as the Aga Khan found out, was fickle.

Popular acclaim turned to public criticism when it became known that soon after his third Derby win he had sold Mahmoud's glorious predecessor Blenheim to the United States. The price Blenheim fetched was £45,000, a great deal of money for a stallion in those days but for a man of the Aga Khan's wealth not an amount so big as to outweigh the loss to his blood line. The transaction provoked much speculation but no plausible explanation, not until thirty years later when Marcus Marsh, the trainer, wrote in his autobiography (*Racing with the Gods*) what a few initiates whispered at the time. In selling Blenheim, the Aga Khan, according to Marsh, was motivated partly by fear: 'He was a man who lived very close to the political pulse and, from the mid-thirties onwards, he was convinced that the German armies would one day engulf Europe. He was quite sure that Britain was doomed. And so he came to look upon the United States as a future refuge.'

The controversy was still raging long after the Aga Khan had left for Geneva where, later in the year, King Edward called him on the telephone from London. The conversation, though 'necessarily guarded', conveyed something of 'the profound sadness and complexity of the drama' in the King's life. The Aga Khan never revealed what they discussed but at this time the King, already preparing for the worst, was casting around for an inconspicuous place to stay after his inevitable departure from England. Switzerland was a distinct possibility and the Aga Khan a most eligible potential host but in the event Edward went to the estate of the Austrian Rothschilds at Enzersdorf near Vienna.

Deeply disturbed by the stormy course of the King's struggle for love and throne, the Aga Khan had the consolation of seeing Aly's life moving into waters as calm as the Lac Léman. He saw a great deal of his son, who was in and out of Geneva where Princess Joan was installed in a rented villa, Le Soleil, to which she had moved from Paris to await the birth of Aly's child. Doris Lyon, a well-trained, state-registered nurse was with her and Jean and Lucy Delporte, a married couple, did the domestic chores. A room was reserved in a private clinic in Geneva for mid-December when the baby was expected to be born.

The Aga Khan was at his villa in the South of France on December 10, 1936, when the news of the King's abdication reached him. The

final, irrevocable decision, to use his words, struck him as utterly tragic. With tears in his eyes he listened to the King's farewell speech on the radio. The moving confession that he could not go on 'without the woman I love' appeared to the sentimental eastern magnate as the grand climax in one of the great love stories of all time: 'Set it alongside the imperishable, tragic and beautiful stories of Persian or Arabian legends, alongside the stories of Antony and Cleopatra and of Romeo and Juliet! Does it not stand forth as perhaps the most moving of them all?' he asked.

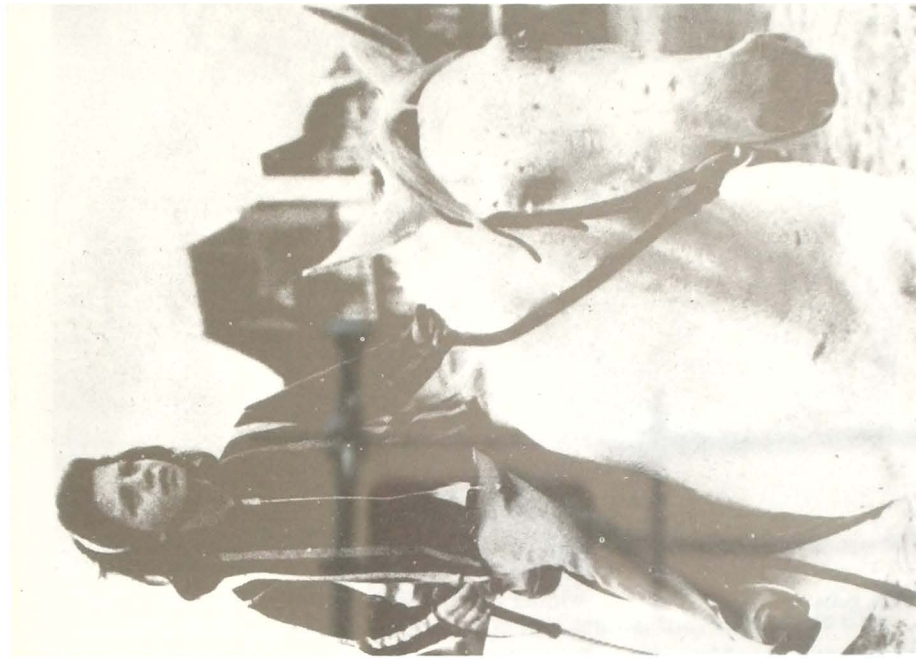
Three days later the happy event in his own family circle dispelled the gloom into which the abdication had placed him. On December 13, 1936, Princess Joan Aly Khan was delivered of a baby boy who was pronounced strong and healthy in spite of his premature birth. In these times of political tension and imperial dramas, the birth in Geneva did not command much attention outside the family and outside Ismaili centres who were duly informed. But the Aga Khan hurried to Geneva to congratulate his son and daughter-in-law and to bless the baby. Looking down on the infant he was glad it was a boy who would one day follow in his footsteps as the Imam of the Ismailis.

'What shall we call him?' the Aga Khan asked the boy's mother. Though her answer was prompt, the matter was not resolved without long discussions. Joan who had been thinking about it for some time, had made up her mind to call the boy Karim: 'I thought it sounded beautiful in any language, in Persian, in Arabic, in English,' she told me. Considering the boy's European associations—Patrick, her son by her first marriage, and her sister's numerous offspring—she did not want a name which was too difficult to pronounce. The Aga Khan did not think it a suitable name. Princess Joan remembers him saying that it had 'something to do with alms'—actually Karim means 'generous' and is one of the ninety-nine Muslim names for God. Joan was adamant and prevailed on Aly to support her. The Aga Khan, content that the continuation of the line was assured, gracefully accepted defeat.

Early in the new year, mother and baby—and Miss Lyon, who became a fixture in the household, stayed until Karim went to boarding school and remains a friend—moved to the family house in Maisons Laffitte, commuting to the flat in Paris. As soon as



Prince Aly Khan and his son, Prince Karim, at Harvard.
(Camera Press)



Yasmin, daughter of Aly Khan and Rita Hayworth, as a young girl.
(Keystone)



Aga Khan III with Bahram, winner of the 1935 Derby, F. Fox up.
(Fox Photos)



Aly Khan leads in Petite Etoile at Epsom in 1959.
(Fox Photos)

Karim could talk, he was spoken to in English and French and became bilingual. His first summer holiday, like many in later years, was spent in the house in Deauville. Aly also rented a chalet in Gstaad, the ski-ing village in the Swiss mountains not far from Geneva where Karim later went to school and acquired a big chalet of his own.

Children of perambulating internationalists like the Aga Khan's family rarely enjoy the company of their parents for long and baby Karim was no exception. He was barely one month old when the whole family—Aga, Begum and little Sadruddin, Aly and Joan—went off to the Golden Jubilee celebrations in East Africa where Ismailis did not want to lag behind their Indian brothers in tangible protestation of their loyalty to the Imam. For almost eighteen months they had been preparing for the Aga Khan, in the words of a contemporary, to become the only man in history to be weighed in gold twice—the writer did not live to see him weighed in diamonds and platinum as well.

As so often with expatriates, the Aga Khan's East African followers felt even more strongly about their leader than the Khojas of India. Like Englishmen in Australia or Canada, they had made their home in an alien continent and 'with the Imam's guidance' (as they never tired of saying) had prospered and taken root without shedding their religious beliefs.

From the four corners of Africa they converged on Nairobi for a ceremony which would differ little from the Aga Khan's Golden Jubilee Durbar in Bombay; even the amount they contributed towards the gold was almost the same—£23,000. Among those waiting to receive the Imam on arrival was the President of the Ismailia Council, Count Manji Janmohamed, and Eboo Pirbhai, member of the Council, now a prosperous merchant. Greeting Eboo the Aga Khan smiled and whispered: 'Did I not tell you that you would get on in the world?'

As in Bombay, the weighing ceremony in Nairobi was a joyful event. Prayers were offered for the health and happiness of the Imam who blessed his spiritual children. Their cheers were full-throated and heartfelt. To honour the man who had abolished purdah, Ismaili ladies gave him a tea party, proudly showing their unmasked faces for a photograph with their Imam. They were

joined by Aly's aristocratic English wife, who took the Ismaili name, Tajudowleh, and decided to learn Arabic and Urdu and Study Ismaili history (but did not adopt the Ismaili faith).

As in India, the Aga Khan ordered the funds to be used to his followers' best advantage but his approach was becoming more sophisticated. He instructed the Council to form a Gold Grant Committee to distribute the money to young Ismailis for scholarships to advance their education abroad.

Among the Ismaili schoolboys from all over Africa who benefited was Abdulali G. Tejpar, a third-generation East African Indian who recalled how he first heard about the scheme when he was a seventeen-year-old pupil at the Aga Khan School in Mombasa, one of the many founded by the Aga Khan to give religious instruction to Ismaili children, which soon added mathematics, book-keeping, accountancy and languages to its curriculum. Encouraged by his teachers, Abdulali applied for a grant and was awarded 10,000 rupees to attend the Technical Department for Radio and Engineering at St Saviour College in Bombay for two years.

On his return to Nairobi where skilled labour was scarce, young Tejpar quickly found a job, kept it for eight years, then started his own business. Following the advice and guidance of the new Imam (Karim Aga Khan) to his followers to associate themselves as closely as possible with independent Kenya, Tejpar took African partners and is working well with them. Married with three daughters and one son, all of whom were educated at the Aga Khan School in Nairobi, he wrote to the young Imam in 1968 that he would like to repay the grant which put him on the road to success and good fortune but the Aga Khan thought the Ismaili cause would be better served if he donated it to the Aga Khan Hospital.

Tejpar's story is typical of the effects of the old Aga Khan's 1937 tour and could be multiplied many thousand times. At the same time he initiated the Jubilee Insurance Company for Ismailis (with a substantial personal investment)—health, business, accident, life insurance. For East Africa in the thirties it was an ambitious scheme and Sir Eboo Pirbhai confessed that he and other leading Ismailis were a little out of their depth. They were imaginative businessmen in their own trades. But insurance?

'How do we go about it?' they asked the Imam who told them to

seek expert advice. An Indian insurance technician was invited to Nairobi to set up the company and train Ismailis. A campaign was launched to explain to followers throughout the country the advantage of insuring their property and their lives. Young men were sent overseas to study modern insurance techniques. To avoid the social problems which Ismaili prosperity could create among poverty-stricken neighbours, the Aga Khan founded the East African Muslim Welfare Society to provide funds for mosques, schools and social centres for non-Ismaili Muslims, but co-operation between the different sects did not always run smoothly and in 1968 Karim Aga Khan resigned his offices in the Society which he had inherited from his grandfather.

Europe, when the Aga Khan returned from East Africa, was already shaken by the shock waves which heralded the century's biggest political earthquake. It was an inauspicious moment for him to receive an otherwise richly deserved honour—he was elected President of the League of Nations Assembly. In his presidential address he quoted the great poet Saadi: 'The children of Adam, created of the self-same clay, are members of one body. When one member suffers, all members suffer likewise.' The erudite President saw the sweltering European conflict in terms of Hindu-Muslim relations but never applied Saadi's thoughts to Nazi practices.

He was one of two names which Hitler and Goebbels noted as of tremendous potential propaganda value to the Nazi cause—the other was the Duke of Windsor's. It was probably no coincidence that the ex-King and Imam, leaders without countries, should find themselves in Germany at the same time as guests of Hitler who was just framing the first of his 'last territorial demands'. The Aga Khan saw the Führer at Berchtesgaden where they talked about horses.

Hitler: 'How much is one of your stallions worth?'

Aga Khan: '£30,000.'

Hitler: 'Would you take forty German Mercedes cars instead?'

Aga Khan: 'What would I do with forty Mercedes—set myself up as a motor salesman in Piccadilly?'

Although the Aga Khan was most emphatic that they did not touch on politics, there is reason to believe that weightier subjects also came up. He saw Propaganda Minister Dr Joseph Goebbels in Berlin and it was not long before the meetings between the civilised

easterner and the vulgar Nazi leaders produced repercussions. Broadcasting on B.B.C. radio, the Aga Khan suddenly voiced support for Hitler's demand that Austria and Nazi Germany should be united. It obviously did not occur to him that the German clamour for the so-called Anschluss was the opening gambit in a cunning campaign to subjugate the whole of Europe by one means or another. The Aga Khan's first false step inevitably led to others.

Encouraged by connivance in high places, Hitler marched into Austria and promptly made his next territorial demand which was for the German-speaking Sudetenland, part of Czechoslovakia. By now, many counted the Aga Khan among the 'appeasers', an influential but short-sighted group of British politicians who tried to buy off Hitler with concession after concession. At the invitation of Editor Geoffrey Dawson, he contributed an astonishing article to the London *Times* which was going through a dark phase. Referring to Neville Chamberlain's visit to Munich to meet Hitler and Mussolini and seal the destruction of Czechoslovakia, the Aga Khan wrote about 'the glorious victory for peace with honour won by the Prime Minister'.

'We are told that in *Mein Kampf* Hitler wrote this and that,' the Aga Khan went on. 'But every statesman . . . has said things and suggested courses that he never contemplated carrying out when in power.' Obviously Hitler would not attack France—what for? Hitler could not possibly attack the Ukraine! Hitler's live-and-let-live policy with Poland earned his commendation—a few months later the Nazis virtually razed the country to the ground. 'What Hitler has achieved required outstanding qualities . . . Why not take him at his word?' the Aga Khan asked. In making these painful misjudgements he was in good company which included the Duke of Windsor and the Marquess of Lothian. Good man as he was, he could not visualise the length to which the Hitler gang would go to satisfy a mad ambition and had not yet diagnosed, as he did a year or so later, the Wagnerian death-wish at the root of the German character.

Death, in harsh reality, threatened his beloved mother in her eighty-eighth year. The Aga Khan was at Antibes when news reached him that Lady Ali Shah was gravely ill. All her life she had taken a Turkish bath once a week, followed by massage, manicure and pedicure at her house in Malabar Hill where a special water

system and heated alcoves had been installed. Coming out of her bath one day in November 1937, she suffered a stroke which seriously impaired her faculties.

Determined not to let her die in his absence, the Aga Khan flew to Bombay. She was in a bad way, able to recognise him only during brief spells of consciousness. Knowing that his mother wished to be buried in the soil of a Muslim state and difficult as it was to move the sick old lady, he arranged for her to travel to Baghdad where she was taken to a relative's house. While she held her own, he returned to Europe to join little Karim on his first birthday on December 13 in Gstaad and to see Joan's second baby boy, Aryn, who had been born three months earlier. 'Grandfather' stayed for Christmas which was celebrated for the children's sake, particularly Sadruddin, who was rising five. In the unusual role of family man, Aly showered everybody with gifts, the most generous of men.

Moving about as restlessly as ever, he went on safari with Joan, followed by a tour of Ismaili centres in the Middle East and India. As always he was received with rapturous enthusiasm, and again struck a chord in the hearts of Syria's Ismailis who claimed him as their very own. They were still cheering when his aircraft was already taking him back to Europe.

The Aga Khan was also on the move. He was in Cairo early in 1938 when he was again summoned to his mother's sick bed. Taking the next plane, he reached Baghdad on February 5 and was by his mother's side at three p.m. For an instant her eyes opened and a flicker of joy lit up her features. Two hours later, her head resting in her son's lap, she went (to quote the Aga Khan) 'on the safe and quiet journey from the midst of the living to achieve the peace and happiness for which all Muslims yearn'. Though thousands of Ismailis attended her funeral, the Aga Khan, following Ismaili tradition, did not accompany his mother to her last resting place at Nejef, near Kerbela, where she was reunited with her husband fifty-three years after his death.

It came as a profound shock to the Aga Khan when 'Hitler ripped off the veil of respectability' and gobbled up the whole of Czechoslovakia. So all this talk of self-determination and justice for German minorities was so much eyewash! The last few uneasy months of peace confronted the Imam of the Ismailis with problems not unlike

the Pope's. His spiritual dominion was spread over nations which might soon be at war with each other. It was tempting to keep aloof but when Mussolini's invasion of Albania brought several thousand Muslims under Fascist rule he asked the India Office whether there would be any objection to him writing on their behalf to Mussolini whom he knew personally: 'Most of them belong to the Bektashi Order,' he explained, 'and I would like to plead on purely religious grounds for these people.' The Foreign Office noted cynically that the Aga Khan's advice might help Mussolini to ingratiate himself with his new Muslim subjects. They preferred to see the Duce antagonise the Bektashi but, of course, did not tell the Aga Khan so and replied that the moment for his intervention was not opportune.

Among private affairs which demanded the Aga Khan's instant attention were his stables and stud farms. So as to preserve the precious blood lines intact, he offered them to the British National Stud at a modest price but this was not the moment for Britain to take on such a responsibility.

The flood gates of history opened and for the Aga Khan, as for millions of others, Hitler's attack on Poland on September 1, 1939, ended an era. He was angry about Hitler's deliberate act of aggression: 'However, it was not only Hitler's war,' he wrote. 'The terrible fact is that it was the German people's war.' In spite of all their great qualities the Germans seemed afflicted with a romantic self-immolatory streak in their character which was never satisfied with mere success.

But even after hearing Neville Chamberlain announce that Britain and Germany were now at war, he still hoped against hope that an accommodation might be possible. While in Florence, he made another attempt to sell his horses. As far as he could gather, Italy's Foreign Minister Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, was in favour of buying them but the Duce seems to have vetoed the transaction in the end. In the twilight of the 'phoney war', the Aga Khan's Italian excursion inspired all sorts of rumours. As the Wehrmacht overran half of Poland and the Soviets occupied the other half, Hitler's emissaries tried hard to dissuade the allies from continuing the 'futile war'. They were reported to have approached the Aga Khan and to have had 'peace talks' with him in Italy. It was a false report.

Equally false were the stories casting doubt on his loyalty to Britain. The instructions he sent to his followers at the outbreak of war were strong and unequivocal. The first of them were sent to the headquarters of Africa's Ismailis in Zanzibar where they reached his representatives, Mr Jindani and Mr Abdullah Shariff: 'Heartfelt, loyal, unstinted service must be given to the cause of the Empire which is the protector of our faith and liberty,' the Imam's message read. He expressed similar sentiments in his communication to Nairobi's Ismailia Council (President—Count Manji, Secretary—Eboo Pirbhai): 'It is our duty,' he wrote, 'to co-operate with heart and soul for the success of His Majesty, the King-Emperor. Such sincere and complete co-operation will also be in the best interests of Islam . . .'

While he and the Begum went to India, the Aga Khan's racing empire in Europe lost its popular and able proconsul. With the first sound of the bugles, Aly Khan made up his mind to go to war. A British subject resident in France, he had no doubt at all whose side he was on and volunteered for the Foreign Legion, the only French unit which accepted foreigners. A fine linguist with intimate knowledge of Africa and the Middle East, he was a most useful recruit. As Sub-Lieutenant Prince Aly Khan, No. 4702, he was posted to Beirut and attached to the staff of the French General Maxime Weygand.

The Aga Khan returned to Europe in 1940 and went to his house in Antibes—it was not a good moment. The German offensive in the West was imminent and before he had time to settle in, the Wehrmacht's Blitzkrieg on France was under way. He closed down Villa Jane-Andrée and made for neutral Switzerland leaving France in the nick of time before the Germans closed in. In Deauville, incidentally, they found a hundred of the Aga Khan's horses which went the way of all German loot—to Germany.

War also uprooted Princess Joan. Having spent the last summer of peace in Deauville with Karim and Aryn, she worked for a while with the Red Cross before going to join Aly. She took the children by sea from Marseilles to Cairo where a friend put them up and went on to Beirut alone to look for a house. Her choice fell on 'a beautiful villa with a big garden and orange trees' about which she still enthuses; she collected the children and resumed her Red Cross work with the Beirut branch.

May 1940 changed everything and their stay in Beirut was abruptly cut short. Joan and Aly were dining with General Weygand the night before he was recalled to Paris. The mood was sombre, the situation heavy and ominous. France was conquered, the French divided among themselves. Like other French possessions overseas, Syria faced an indefinite future. The formation of a pro-Nazi French government in Vichy split the military in Beirut; some of them favoured collaboration while others were implacably hostile to the Germans.

Aly was firmly with those who refused to admit defeat. Besides, as British subjects, once the French in Beirut made common cause with Germany, he and his family were in a delicate position and in immediate danger of internment. In spite of their status and wealth, the descendants of the Fatimids were not immune to the agonies of war. They left Beirut in a hurry. While Aly made his way to Palestine with several like-minded French officers, Joan and the children went to Jerusalem where they stayed at the King David Hotel, hub of the British presence in Palestine.

From Palestine Aly went on to Cairo to look for a new military assignment and joined the Wiltshire Yeomanry Regiment among whose officers were many old friends, including his brother-in-law, the Earl of Cadogan, husband of Joan's sister Primrose. He was attached to an Intelligence unit where his influence with the Ismailis in sensitive areas would be extremely valuable. He was enthusiastic and anxious to find employment to suit his talents.

Decisions on the future of the children had to await the advice of the Aga Khan, who was consulted on all important family matters, but communications were difficult and slow and it was some time before his wishes were known. Rather than take Karim and Amyn to England where the evacuation of children from cities was in full swing, it was decided to send them to East Africa where they would be among the Aga Khan's loyal followers. Princess Joan went with them to Nairobi and installed them in the family house in the Caledonian Road. The 'semi-detached' without great charm, which was known as the Aga Khan Bungalow, became Karim's new home. Their mother left him and Amyn in the care of their nurse, and rejoined Aly in Cairo where they set up house together.

CHAPTER IX

THERE is no more congenial setting for melodrama than a luxury hotel in a neutral country when the world around is at war; and certainly none with a finer ambience than the Palace Hotel in St Moritz, one of the most elegant, comfortable and best run in the world. A fussy architectural mixed grill with turrets, alcoves and balconies, the Palace was a perfect home from home for wealthy, very wealthy, people who wanted to opt out of the conflict. It was also inevitably a haunt of international busybodies and dilettantes playing the spy game. The occasional professional secret agent on a busman's holiday gave it verisimilitude.

During the Second World War (as during the First), the Palace was also a most desirable residence for eminent personages like the Aga Khan who could not easily be fitted into a definite category. He was certainly rich but exchange control temporarily cut him off from his sources of income. The war, he used to say, put him in a position not unlike that of King Midas when everything he touched turned to gold. How to get sufficient funds to Switzerland was one of his major worries.

He was, in these hectic months of 1940, an ailing man beginning to look older than his sixty-two years, and, though he had his books and his thoughts and his prayers to occupy him, his active, wide-ranging mind accustomed to civilised combat in drawing-rooms or across conference tables lacked scope in the remote valley where he and the Begum found refuge. The Khedive of Egypt turned up, a kindred spirit in some ways; wealthy Germans too were in and out of the place, usually up to no good and never revealing how they obtained permission to leave the well-guarded confines of the Reich,

nor how they obtained the scarce, tightly-controlled foreign currency to travel in style in times like these.

One of the Germans was Prince Max Hohenlohe, one of the Hitler peace scouts angling for contacts and not averse, if need be, to justifying their *raison d'être* and their expense accounts by highly coloured reports to their paymasters in Berlin. A personable man with fluent English and French, he talked to the Aga Khan in the relaxed, enervating atmosphere of the Palace lounge where all was peace.

Had the Aga Khan lived to see the version of these conversations which Max Hohenlohe passed on to Walter Hewel, the German Foreign Office official at Hitler's headquarters, as it emerged from German official documents after the war, he would have been deeply shocked. Hohenlohe's reports made the Aga Khan appear either a fool or a knave. At the very time when Britain faced a Nazi invasion, Hohenlohe quotes the Aga Khan as saying that he remembered his stay in Germany with much pleasure and was grateful for ever for the consideration accorded to him.

'The Khedive of Egypt,' Hohenlohe continued with his account of the Aga Khan's table talk, 'had agreed with him (the Aga Khan) that on the day the Führer put up for the night in Windsor they would drink a bottle of champagne together . . . If Germany or Italy was thinking of taking over India, he would place himself at our disposal to help organise the country. He was counting for that on his well-known following and on several young maharajahs . . . In his opinion the Führer would attack England directly . . .' The struggle against England, the Aga Khan was supposed to have added, was not a struggle against the English people but against the Jews in whose pay Churchill had been for years . . . If he were to go with these ideas to England, Churchill would lock him up despite his high rank.

'Although the Aga Khan is not always reliable,' Hohenlohe went on, 'his judgement has not been bad by any means. It should be further noted that, although he does not have his funds in England, he has placed them in such a way that he is now in Switzerland hard up for money to such an extent that he asked me whether I could afford to help him out with some cash for a while.' The diatribe put in the Aga Khan's mouth did not sound like the view of an Indian

prince who had worshipped the British royal family since the first weekend he spent at Windsor as Queen Victoria's guest.

Even Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's Foreign Minister, to whom Hohenlohe's reports were sent, regarded the Aga Khan as a partisan of the British and more likely to pass on information to them than vice versa. The German consul in Switzerland was instructed to tell the Aga Khan, if the opportunity arose, that 'we intend to destroy England'. Finally Hohenlohe was told that the Aga Khan's views were noteworthy but his financial interests were so bound up with Britain that he could not be used. When the Hohenlohe reports were published after the war, Aly Khan was angry: 'Ridiculous,' he said, 'my father was passionately pro-British.'

While the Aga Khan became the victim of Nazi agents—although he never once left Switzerland during the war, they spread a rumour that he visited occupied Paris as Hitler's guest—Prince Aly was in Cairo, an even more ambiguous theatre of military operations. Among the non-belligerent Egyptians, some friendly, others hostile, all suspect, the British garrison lived in a twilight between war and peace. Looking west towards Rommel's Afrika Korps in the desert, looking east towards the unstable and uncertain Middle East, Cairo was supply base, leave centre, Intelligence H.Q., meeting place and melting pot of Free French, Free Poles, Free British under a military discipline so relaxed that the war seemed a thousand miles away—and sometimes was.

The social life of the British, in and out of uniform, owed much to the customs and habits of the colonial overlords on which the Aga Khan remarked during the First World War. In 1940 and 1941, Aly took to it as naturally as to the night-clubs of Mayfair or the *boîtes* of the Bois de Boulogne. Joan made their luxurious house at Gezira a favourite meeting place for cocktails or dinner and the popular couple were always surrounded by a large but select band of friends.

If the British were to drive the Vichyites out of Syria, which was high on their list of Middle Eastern priorities, Muslim goodwill was essential and Aly Khan was just the man to win them over. From Jerusalem he broadcast an appeal to them on behalf of Britain: 'As a Muslim,' he told his listeners, 'I feel that British democracy—whatever the differences between Muslims and Britain—has given us religious freedom such as does not exist in totalitarian countries.'

Action suited Aly better than making speeches but on these occasions words did not fail him: 'Some people in eastern countries under British rule,' he said on another occasion, 'may think they have not been given the full independence to which they feel entitled. But I often think they do not appreciate that what independence they enjoy would be fictitious but for British protection. Without British backing they would become easy prey for the aggressive militarist powers which are trying to dominate mankind.'

Aly's propaganda broadcasts were part of the softening-up process which preceded the allied move against Syria. Early in June 1941, British and Free French forces of General Sir Maitland Wilson's army attacked across the border of Palestine. As they advanced, Aly's Ismaili friends welcomed Wilson's men with open arms. But there was a good deal of fighting. Although a member of the General's staff, Aly frequently raced up to the front by car, mindless of enemy fire, more like a sportsman hunting for prey than a soldier. Such courage earned him admiration and official recognition. Entranced by their brief encounters with the Imam's dashing son, local Ismailis were only too anxious to serve the cause he espoused. At the end of the successful operation, Aly asked permission to switch to the Free French. It was readily given and General Georges Catroux, Free French High Commissioner in Syria, appointed him his *chef de cabinet*. He was back in Beirut where Joan was soon reunited with him.

News of their two little boys in Nairobi was comforting. Karim and Aryn were kept so busy they had little time to miss their parents. From the children's point of view the Aga Khan Bungalow was an ideal home—the jungle garden full of parakeets and budgerigars, the tennis-court, the big lawns. Karim, Princess Joan remembers, had all his lead soldiers with him—a present from grandfather—and fought many a war of his own. Both boys adored Doris Lyon, their governess, and loved Kaderali, the young Ismaili missionary who became their tutor: 'He was an enchanting young man,' their mother recalled, 'but though they loved him they gave him a terrible time. He had only to turn his head and they were out of the window and in the garden.'

Kaderali taught them their prayers and Arabic nursery rhymes which are as charming and simple as European. As soon as they

could understand they learned all about the Prophet and the history of Islam but there was no question at this stage of acquainting them with the intricacies of the Ismaili sect into which they were born. As a boy, Karim was not aware of the split between Sunnis and Shias or between Ismailis and other Shias: 'You learn your prayers which do not reflect the different nuances,' Karim Aga Khan told me on one occasion, 'what we were concerned with as boys was the practice of Islam, not the historical differences.'

From the age of four Karim received the rudiments of an English education from Miss Lyon. Aryn followed not far behind. Mrs Bishop, the English housekeeper, completed the staff at Nairobi. Eboo Pirbhai kept an eye on the boys, and his sons often played with them, but there were very few European children—one who came to tea now and then was Princess Elisabeth, daughter of Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, who lived in exile just outside Nairobi.

The routine was only interrupted on the rare occasion when their father came to Nairobi to spend his leave with them. Even as a child, Karim could feel the magnetism of his personality. He made a dashing officer: 'It was in uniform that I first remember seeing my father,' the young Aga Khan told me. 'I am still conscious of how impressive he was—his dynamism, his life-force. He seemed so alive and alert and always on the move.' They played games: 'He would go out and play a man's game—badminton, football, tennis. He was a man's man,' Karim said, 'to me he was a friend even at a very young age.' The early impression persisted and, as Karim grew older, his friendship with Aly grew stronger. He still talks about his late father with a tenderness in his voice which betrays his deep affection.

The war, the distance and several years still separated the boy from his first conscious encounter with his grandfather, whose contacts with the Ismaili communities and with his family in East Africa were spasmodic and sparse. The Aga Khan was commuting between St Moritz, Zürich and Geneva but security measures and censorship on all sides delayed news from the outside world. What trickled through frequently tempted him to bring his experience to bear on the momentous events. When Persia, the land of his fathers, threatened to be drawn into the conflict the temptation became irresistible.

Although the Kajar dynasty had long given way to a new head of state, Reza Shah Pahlevi, a cavalry man and former Minister of War, the Aga Khan's concern was intense. Once the Soviets joined in the war against Hitler, the western allies would need a land connection with their new ally but Reza Shah took the view that the passage of allied troops and war materials across his territory would infringe Persian independence. The Aga Khan was convinced that Britain could not tolerate such a situation and would try to bring Persia into line. Through the British Consul in Geneva, he sent a telegram to the Shah urging him to co-operate with the British and not to jeopardise his throne. Was it not better to enter the war as an honoured ally than to be forced into it as a satellite? By the time the telegram reached Tehran, British forces from India had already entered Persia. The recalcitrant Shah was sent into exile but his son, the current Shah, was allowed to succeed to the throne.

Before other deserving causes could lure him into the diplomatic arena again, the Swiss government asked the Aga Khan to refrain from all political activity. Worried lest he exerted his influence on behalf of the western allies, the Germans, who had failed to recruit him, were thought to have asked the Swiss to muzzle him. What little he heard from India would have afforded him ample scope for intervention. Congress protested against Britain taking India into the war 'against her will' but Gandhi did not forswear his pacifism and did not 'seek an independence out of Britain's ruin'.

Hindu pressure nevertheless increased so much that Mohammed Ali Jinnah made it clear that India's Muslims did not want to exchange a British raj for a Hindu raj. The Aga Khan saw British policy veering towards the Hindus when Labour and Liberal members of the war cabinet made their weight felt and America entered the war and pressed Britain to give up her imperialist stance. The possibility of partition was already being discussed and the idea of a separate Muslim state called Pakistan was taking root.

The Aga Khan had to sit by idly watching the confused situation from afar. Civil disobedience and arrests alternated with attempts to reconcile the warring factions. Britain's austere and pro-Indian British Labour Minister Sir Stafford Cripps led a mission to India to offer independence after the war but it failed because, in Sir Stafford's words, 'past distrust has proved too strong to allow of

present agreement.' Angrily Congress called on the Indian people not to comply with British military requirements and demanded an immediate end to British rule in India.

In August 1942, faced with the threat of widespread violence, the British government ordered the arrest of Gandhi. It was at this stage that the Aga Khan, to spare the Mahatma another spell in prison, offered his palace in Poona, Yarovda Palace, as 'alternative accommodation'. Gandhi appreciated the gesture but insisted on datelining his letters from the palace 'Detention Centre, Poona'. Gandhi's wife Kasturbar died in the palace and was cremated in the grounds.

The old Aga's gesture to Gandhi was his last war-time contact with Indian affairs. He had other problems to occupy his mind. So low were his finances that he decided to sell Bahram and Mahmoud to America. The British racing community with their almost proprietary pride in the Aga Khan's two most famous horses was bitter. The Aga Khan's excuse was that he needed the money but when he was called to account for his surprising decision, he maintained that he virtually gave the horses away—he received £40,000 for Bahram and only £20,000 for Mahmoud: 'According to the value prevailing they were worth £175,000 and possibly £200,000,' he explained. 'When the offer for these two horses was made, I was in a very difficult position; I had to decide whether I should sell two of the best products of my stud or break up the whole stud by selling my mares and thereby selling blood lines I had built up between 1921 and 1940 at tremendous cost and labour.'

Referring to his illness, his lack of funds in Switzerland and the war restrictions, he added: 'My bankers found out that if I produced new dollars and invested the same in England, they would be able to advance me enough Swiss francs to allow me and my family to live in Switzerland . . . During those four and a half years, my family and myself lived on the sale of these two horses.'

Life offered few compensations. The Aga Khan's condition deteriorated. Surgeons and other specialists became regular visitors. He could no longer play golf or take walks but it was a long time before the source of his difficulties was found—not, in fact, until after the war when he was examined in France and was operated on for a tumour which was happily non-malignant. Ill health, com-

bined with his restricted existence and his financial worries, put a strain on his marriage. Although living in close proximity in a little country, he and the Begum grew apart. Altogether it was an unhappy time for the Aga Khan, probably the worst in his life.

While he was limited to only occasional exchanges with his followers, Aly was able to keep in personal touch with many of them. Whenever he could get away from his military duties, he visited Ismailis as representative of the Imam. The affection of the Syrians was undimmed; they seemed to love and admire him even more than the remote Imam. Aly's speeches were brief, peppery but serious; though casual and informal in some ways, he never allowed his attention to stray from the prescribed religious rites. From Damascus he flew to Bombay but managed to get back to Nairobi for a big occasion in the life of Karim.

By the time he was seven, the boy had progressed so well with his religious education, Kaderali was confident that he was quite capable of leading the community in prayer. Easter, 1943, was the date chosen for his *début* in the *jamatkhana* and on the morning of the appointed day, amid great excitement, dressed in a grey sherwani, white jodhpurs and black astrakhan hat, he faced his grandfather's followers. Princess Joan was a little anxious as she watched him taking his place at the head of the community. She had no cause to worry. Her son did not betray his nervousness, was word perfect and came through the difficult ceremony without faltering, 'A great accomplishment for such a small boy,' Princess Joan said, heaving a sigh of relief in memory of the day.

Before the end of 1943, the Aga Khan's family received a piece of personal news from him which did not come entirely as a surprise. He informed them that his marriage to Princess Jane-Andrée was over, dissolved by mutual consent in a civil court in Geneva, but that their affection, respect and true friendship for each other were in no way impaired. Custody of ten-year-old Sadruddin went to the father. To forestall comments about yet another divorce, the Aga Khan had a few pointed things to say about western laws which often compelled an unhappy marriage to continue and were as difficult to understand for Muslims as it was for Christians to realise 'the practical and contractual basis of the Islamic idea of marriage'.

The family had been aware for some time of the Aga Khan's

friendship with the tall, stately and very beautiful Mademoiselle Yvette Labrousse, a French railway shunter's daughter who was born at Sete, near Marseilles, and grew up in a flat in Cannes overlooking the hill of Le Cannet. Elected 'Miss Lyon' at the age of twenty-four, Yvette had gone on to become 'Miss France of 1930' and, with society opening all doors for a beauty queen of such charm and grace, was frequently seen in smart places on either shore of the Mediterranean. She was living in Cairo in the late thirties and was dining one evening at Mena House, the romantic hotel by the Pyramids, when the Aga Khan first met her. He was surprised to hear that she had adopted the Muslim faith, probably because of her humble origin, or, as the Aga Khan put it, because of the complete absence of snobbery and prejudice which is basic to Islam. They soon met again in Europe.

According to Gordon Young, the respected British author and journalist (writing in the *Daily Mail* of March 24, 1953), there was an Islamic wedding in Cairo shortly after the Mena House meeting. The same author who often talked to Yvette, mentioned in a later issue (April 9, 1956) that she and the Aga Khan bought a site at Le Cannet, an abandoned olive grove with only one living tree: 'That was in 1937,' Gordon Young quotes her as saying, 'I looked round the Riviera for a house and failed to find anything I really liked, so I decided to build one for ourselves . . .'

Official records show that the Aga Khan entered into the state of matrimony for the fourth time in 1944, thirteen months after his divorce from Begum Jane-Andrée. His health was improving, the war was moving into its final phase, there was even a heartening victory on the turf—Tehran, leased from Aly, won England's last war-time Derby for him. Marriage was another step on the road to recovery. At thirty-eight, Mademoiselle Labrousse was thirty years younger than her groom when they presented themselves at the parlour of the Mayor of Vevey, a small watering place by the Lac Léman not far from Aix-les-Bains where the Aga Khan had taken his third wife fifteen years earlier. As on the previous occasion, the civil ceremony was followed by a Muslim wedding. The new Begum took the name Om Habibah, after one of the Prophet's wives, and the Aga Khan felt he had at last been granted 'the real and wonderful haven of a true union of mind and soul'.

While a new wife shared his father's life in Switzerland, the gossips of Cairo were busily spreading rumours about Aly's amorous adventures. Like those circulating in London and Paris before the war, they were often grossly exaggerated. He had only to be seen talking to a woman over a cocktail or dancing at a dinner party and it was assumed as a matter of course that he had an affair with her. Egyptian girls, Polish girls, French girls—the historians of Aly's love life covered a wide area of speculation. What fed the rumours was his habit of paying every woman in his company such intense attention as if she were the only one in the world.

One who fell into this category was a dark-haired girl known as Christina Granville, who was serving in the FANYS (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry), a cover organisation for British secret agents. The daughter of a Polish aristocrat and widow of a Polish secret service agent who was killed by the Nazis, Christina—real name: Krystyna Gizycka—made her way to England to fight against his murderers, and was parachuted into Nazi-occupied Rumania to organise the escape of several important people. After her return from this mission, she met Aly in Cairo and was immediately attracted to him.

Gossip about their association pursued him even to the small Tripolitanian town to which he was posted as military governor as soon as the British Eighth Army had driven out Rommel's Afrika Korps. Although a lieutenant-colonel, he was, to quote Mr A. J. Butcher, British journalist and former staff sergeant in North Africa, 'unassuming and completely different from the descriptions in the more imaginative sections of the world's Press'. Mr Butcher remembered Aly playing 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' on a rather battered piano in the bombed out local cinema. He was just as much at ease with senior N.C.O.'s, though they sometimes pulled his leg about his affairs of the heart, as with his fellow officers, who were a little inhibited in the company of such a famous figure.

On one of his flying visits to Nairobi followed by a tour of Ismaili centres in East Africa, he stopped over at Mwanza by Lake Victoria in the British mandated territory of Tanganyika (now Tanzania) where he stayed with the Fancy family, the city's leading Ismailis, who had come from India in 1937, started a grocery store, expanded into exports and imports, prospered and came to own a cotton

factory. Aly made friends with the son of the house, Amirali Fancy who was devoting his whole spare time to the community.

At Aly's suggestion, Amirali Fancy was appointed to the local Ismaili Council, the beginning of a steep rise in the community. He returned to the sub-continent when Pakistan emerged to independence, and settled in Karachi to become one of the country's leading industrialists and head of the Ismailia Federal Council of Pakistan: 'What struck me about Prince Aly,' Mr Fancy told me, recalling their first meeting, 'was not only his tremendous energy but his infinite goodwill and sympathy and eagerness to help the community.'

After his long spell in the desert, Lieutenant-Colonel Prince Aly Khan was eager to get back to Europe but it was a year before an opportunity offered itself. It came when, soon after the allied invasion of Hitler's 'Fortress Europe' across the English Channel, Anglo-American forces were massing for an invasion of southern France to take the German enemy in the rear. When Aly found out that United States troops would be in the vanguard of the new military venture, he asked to be transferred to the U.S. Army, was granted a commission and attached to a unit about to cross the Mediterranean. He made the trip aboard a landing craft and, drawn towards the Riviera, like a homing bird, disembarked at St Tropez among the first allied troops to set foot on the soil of southern France. The date was August 15, 1944.

Christina Granville, too, had a part in the invasion. Even before the allied landing she was parachuted into France, made contact with the French underground, helped to liberate three British officers from a Vichy French prison (one of them writer Xan Fielding) who were needed to assist with the allied occupation. When Aly met Christina again she told him her fantastic story—how she had twice fallen into the hands of the Gestapo, escaped twice and carried on her dangerous work. Christina's luck ran out after the war. She never found her way back to a routine life. She disappeared and was not heard of again until she was found stabbed to death in a little hotel in Kensington, London, in 1952.

Aly did not linger in St Tropez, commandeered a jeep and made off in the direction of Cannes. The familiar Carlton Hotel, meeting place of Riviera habitués in happier days, was shuttered up but

when he presented himself at a side door he was greeted as a liberator. His next destination was Cap d'Antibes and the Villa Jane-Andrée which had escaped seizure by the Germans because a friend of the former Begum had spread her protective wings over it and kept the rapacious Wehrmacht at bay.

At the same time Aly learned that the Nazis had not allowed the house in Maisons Lafitte to slip through their fingers. Requisitioned soon after the conquest of France it became Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's private residence when Hitler transferred him from Africa to France. It would not be long before this house, too, could be restored to its rightful owners but in the meantime Aly received a new assignment. It was to act as British liaison officer with an Intelligence unit belonging to the U.S. Sixth Army Group with which he had come across from Libya.

His immediate superior was Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Cabot Lodge, former U.S. Senator from Massachusetts and member of a leading Boston family (who was destined to play a major role in American affairs). The two comrades in arms with the vastly different backgrounds hit it off splendidly. Colonel Lodge knew Aly's reputation as a playboy and was all the more pleasantly surprised by his dedication and stamina. Like everybody else he was captivated by Aly's pleasant manner and manly qualities. Gordon Grand, a major serving with the same unit, described Aly's three outstanding qualities as physical vitality, humility and love of people. He told Leonard Slater that Aly was completely unpretentious and that money meant nothing to him.

By the time the Germans laid down their arms, his unit had reached the Vosges mountains. By this time, too, Aly proudly wore the U.S. Army Bronze Star. The citation, signed by General J. L. Devers, Commander of the U.S. Sixth Army Group, praised him for his 'tireless energy, marked endeavour and constant willingness to undertake any task regardless either of its hazards or its irksomeness'. The French gave him the Légion d'Honneur and the Croix de Guerre with palm. The French citation, signed by Generals Juin and de Gaulle—later Field Marshal Juin and President de Gaulle—which reached him after the war spelled out his accomplishments: 'Aly Khan, Lieutenant-Colonel of the British Army,' it said, 'has shown in his functions as liaison officer for General Devers with the

First French Army military qualities as brilliant as those which he displayed in 1939-40 as Second-Lieutenant in the Foreign Legion in Syria and later as Intelligence Officer with the French staff. During the period from August 15, 1944, until March 1945, frequently sent on missions to the front, he won the admiration of all by his bravery under fire and complete disregard of danger, by his intelligence, tact and character, and he was thus able to render the highest possible service to the allied army.'

Alerted by Aly, friends in several armies moving in on Germany were on the look-out for his and his father's horses which the Nazis had taken from their French stables as loot. He was delighted to receive a message from U.S. General George Patton, whose storming finish had carried his troops farther east than any other, which said that the horses had been traced to the German National Stud at Altefeld but his troops were still some distance away. Because Soviet armies were fast approaching, no time was to be lost. With a jeep and a horse-trailer and a single G.I. to help him, Aly dashed across Germany but found the Germans still in control at Altefeld. It was a situation after his heart. At the point of a gun he demanded the return of his horses. With Robert Muller who had gone into German captivity with the horses, he organised their removal, carting them two by two across the French border in an expedition which took five days and five nights.

Even before the armistice was signed, but with France already safely in the hands of the western allies, Sir Duff Cooper, the British Ambassador in Paris, enabled the Aga Khan to escape from his self-imposed exile and smoothed his path from Geneva to Marseilles. He and his new Begum accepted the hospitality of the U.S. army, who put them up in one of the many requisitioned elegant and comfortable houses on the coast. From Marseilles the couple soon took off for the warmer climate of Cairo.

From Cairo, even before their arrival, Joan Aly Khan, who had been working with military welfare organisations, went post-haste to Nairobi to pick up her sons Karim and Aryn. Accompanied by the loyal Miss Lyon they stopped over in Greece before flying to Paris where they opened up Aly's house in the rue de Prony. After waiting several days for their luggage, which was too voluminous to come with them by air, it was decided to send the children and Miss Lyon

to Switzerland rather than England where conditions were still difficult and rations poor. They were installed in a rented chalet in Gstaad, the beautiful and invigorating mountain resort conveniently near the old Aga Khan's Lausanne residence.

Although he briefly contemplated making the army his career, Aly was soon on the move as well—there was so much to do, so many things needing his attention. Even before his demobilisation he flew to England, went to the races, and travelled on to Ireland to inspect Gilltown of which he was now part owner. He was full of plans for the studs and the stables and anxious to recapture the old glory of the famous colours. Then a little heavy-hearted, he went to meet Joan. His extravaganzas had not remained hidden from her and deepened the estrangement which was the result of their long separation.

More important even than their own problem was the future of the boys. Joan would have preferred them to be brought up in England where her son, Patrick Guinness, was being educated and where her three sisters (Countess of Cadogan, Duchess of Bedford, Lady Ebury) and their children provided a ready-made family circle but she realised that the destiny of an Ismaili prince demanded a cosmopolitan background. After consultations with the old Aga it was decided to send Karim and Aryn to Le Rosay, the 'school of princes' at their doorstep in Gstaad where the Duke of Kent, several other boys of royal antecedents and the sons of many eastern rulers received their education.

By this time the Aga Khan was back in East Africa where he and the Begum were met by an upsurge of affection and emotion. The Imam of the Ismailis was in his religious element but his first concern was to prepare the community for the problems of the post-war era and the severe competition in trade and industry in which only the fittest would be able to survive. What he had mapped out in years of contemplation in Switzerland could now be put into operation. The Imam called an economic conference in Nairobi to launch a series of co-operative societies in the East African territories—sixteen such societies sprang up as a result. Next he introduced plans to disperse Ismailis into small trading areas reversing a trend to congregate in the big towns. He told his followers to get together and establish wholesale businesses. The head of East Africa's Ismailis, Bahadurali K. S.

Verjee, a Kampala lawyer, said: 'Our Most Reverend Spiritual Father has given us the fundamentals . . .'

The adoration was building up towards a great celebration to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Aga Khan's Imam, his Diamond Jubilee, when 'Our August and Spiritual Father' was to be weighed against diamonds as he had been weighed against gold ten years earlier. The actual date of the Jubilee was August 18, 1945, but the Imam asked his followers to be patient. The immediate post-war period, he felt, was not an auspicious time for such a ceremony. He suggested—and the Imam's suggestion was an order—that the Diamond Jubilee should be celebrated in the following year, in March 1946 in Bombay and four months later in Dar-es-Salaam. For the Aga Khan it was a welcome opportunity to give 'My People' a new outlook, a new mentality, a new direction towards modern times.

What mattered most was that, after the dark years of the war, the Imam and his followers were reunited.

CHAPTER X

AT the age of nine, Karim was a handsome, quiet boy with a fine physique and a serious bent, more studious than his brother Amyn—later, their mother told me, the trends were reversed. A mop of dark hair, soulful eyes and a wide, pleasant smile communicated only the slightest hint of his eastern antecedents. Like his brother, Karim spoke English and French fluently, both had a smattering of Arabic. Monsieur Carmal, the headmaster of Le Rosay, whom Princess Joan went to see about the boys, was happy to accept them for his school. He already had a number of Muslim pupils, he told her, who were receiving religious instruction by private arrangements but as Karim and Amyn were the grandsons of the Imam of the Ismailis and since the office would eventually come down to Karim, it was thought important that he should continue to have individual religious tuition. Aligarh University, consulted by the Aga Khan, recommended a young student of Islam, Mustafa Kamil, who was summoned to Europe and engaged as Karim's religious teacher, now edits *Africa Ismaili*, a weekly published in Nairobi.

When the old Aga returned from Africa and was staying in Lausanne, the boys were taken to see him: 'An extraordinary relationship developed between my father-in-law and my elder son,' Princess Joan recalls, '“K” always talked to his grandfather as if they were contemporaries. There was a powerful bond between them.' It was probably due to grandfather's influence that Karim was mature beyond his age without forgoing the pleasures of a typical teenager's life. Karim—but not Amyn—liked rowing, became very good with his sculls and also played football well. Both he and Amyn liked skiing and tennis. Although very close, the brothers were different in character and, as their mother put it, 'didn't collect the same things'.

Karim saw little of his father, who was constantly on the move from country to country, from continent to continent but looked upon the South of France as his base. Aly paid £30,000 for the Château de l'Horizon, a fine house between Nice and Cannes which was originally built for the late American actress Maxine Elliot. Surrounded by a big white wall and separated from the main coastal road by the railway which runs a little too close for comfort, the Château, with the terrace overlooking the sea and an outside swimming pool, was modern, informal, comfortable rather than stately and oriental. Aly, with his taste for *objets d'art* inherited from his mother, acquired some first-rate paintings including a Dégas and some Utrillos and Raoul Dufys, which were his favourites.

The large living-room with the wide, long couch and a colourful portrait of the Aga Khan on the wall was usually teeming with visitors and there were rarely fewer than a dozen people for lunch. Mario Magliano managed the household but some guests felt that he was not as hospitable as his generous nephew would wish him to be. Two other fixtures were Aly's Ismaili servant, whom he called 'Tutti' although his name was believed to be Hussein, and Emrys Williams who acted as chauffeur and bodyguard. The energetic host swam, played tennis, toured the Riviera high spots (preferring ice-cream to alcoholic drinks), and met his innumerable friends, some of whom joined the roll of the Château's guests at a moment's notice and often stayed on long after Aly had gone off to Paris or London or farther afield. Most of his trips were made in hired aircraft until de Havilland built him a twin-engined monoplane which he later christened 'Avenger' after one of his horses. As pilot he engaged John Lancaster, a war-time friend and frequent companion.

The Aga Khan also returned to the Riviera where he stayed at 'Yakimour', the villa he had built for the Begum and named after her—Yaki was his pet name for her, based on her initials—and *amour*. She preferred saris to European clothes and owned three hundred of them, and as many pairs of shoes. The jewels her husband gave her soon added up to a unique collection. She, in turn, looked after him with devotion and patience. They made a happy couple.

Relations between the Aga and his son, on the other hand, were far from harmonious. He did not approve of Aly's mode of life, was

apprehensive about his flights in the Avenger in all weathers, his reckless courage on fast horses and his motoring at break-neck speed, which filled him with foreboding. If he was short-tempered with his son, it was a reflex action to his hidden fear that he might lose him. Aly was rarely at ease in his father's company.

There was no outward sign of tension early in March 1946 when the whole family embarked for India and one of the great occasions in the Aga Khan's life. It was bound to be ample compensation for the deprivation and isolation of the war years. The Khoja community was in a state of mounting religious fervour as the committee of Ismaili nobles in charge of the preparations for the Imam's Diamond Jubilee reached the climax of many months' work. In the thirteen hundred years' history of the sect, only two of Hazar Imam's predecessors—one of them the Aga Khan's grandfather—had occupied the august office as long; under no previous leader had the community made such spectacular progress. Much of it was due to the unique integration of religious and secular interests which the Aga Khan preached and practised—'Ismailis are not like Hindus, there is no withdrawal from the world; they are no Yogis', I was recently told by Mr A. M. Sadaruddin, an erudite Ismaili in East Africa.

The generosity with which the community approached the Jubilee was a measure of the regard in which they held their leader. Even before he and his family set out for Bombay, a British battleship, H.M.S. Devonshire, was heading towards the Indian Ocean with diamonds worth £640,000, the amount the community had collected to hand over to the Imam as an outright gift. Kept in strong metal boxes and under constant guard, the diamonds were on loan from the London Diamond Syndicate. When the battleship's progress seemed too slow, boxes and guards were transferred to a flying boat for the final lap. They arrived at the same time as the Aga Khan.

For days, indeed weeks ahead, his followers had been converging on Bombay from every part of the sub-continent and even farther afield. At the appointed time—the afternoon of Sunday, March 10, 1946—over one hundred thousand of them were at the Brabourne Stadium, happily, expectantly peering towards the raised platform in the centre and the elaborate weighing machine with the big face more than ten feet up, one huge scale balanced against a base with a comfortable easy-chair. Fourteen ruling princes, including the

Maharajahs of Kashmir and Baroda and the Ruler of Nawanagar were among the guests of honour.

A tremendous cheer greeted the Imam who appeared dressed in a long white silk robe spangled with silver and a turban threaded with gold. By his side, even more spectacular, the Begum was in a white sari studded with 1,200 diamonds worth some £45,000. Messages of goodwill from King Farouk of Egypt, the Shah of Persia, the King of Afghanistan and from Mahatma Gandhi were among those read out before the Mayor of Bombay started the weighing ceremony.

Only intimates were aware of the little drama which preceded the occasion. Because those who made the biggest contribution would be the first to place boxes with the equivalent of their donations in diamonds on the scales—to be followed by those with smaller offerings—the amount of each donation was noted in advance and the notes placed in sealed envelopes. When they were opened, a modestly endowed printer appeared to have outdone Pakistan's richest Ismaili in generosity and earned the privilege of placing the first box of diamonds on the scales. Angrily, the rich man protested and wanted to increase his donation so as to head the list and be the first to pay homage to the Imam. The Aga Khan would have none of it: 'I will not tolerate that,' he said and refused to permit the change. The printer remained at the head of the queue of the diamond-bearing Ismaili nobles.

Seated in the easy-chair on the scales, the Aga Khan looked on as the metal boxes, one after the other, were placed in position with slow deliberation and great formality to balance his weight which turned out to be $243\frac{1}{2}$ lb, one stone (fourteen pounds) heavier than at the Golden Jubilee celebrations of 1936. When the last box was on the scales, a wealthy Khoja lady broke ranks, mounted the platform and produced a fistful of diamonds to add a personal gift to the communal offering.

Thanking his 'spiritual children', the Aga Khan blessed the crowd before driving through Bombay's beflagged and illuminated streets to his floodlit place. Pride and gratitude seemed to struggle for expression while his lips mumbled prayers. The diamonds were flown back to London to serve their purpose another day and the equivalent of their value was handed over to the Imam who announced that he was creating a trust fund for the community's

economic and educational welfare. Not a penny went into his own pocket.

Preparations for a similar ceremony in East Africa were well on the way and enthusiasm among Ismailis there was as great. News of the mounting excitement reached the Aga Khan in Switzerland but his doctors were concerned about the effects of constant travel and heavy ceremonial duties on his health. They prescribed a course of injections and advised him—if he insisted on carrying out his heavy programme—to make arrangements for the treatment to be continued wherever he was. He was still in need of constant medical attention when he reached East Africa.

Taking up residence at his Bungalow in the Caledonian Road where his two grandsons had spent the war years, the first thing the Aga Khan did was to look for a capable doctor to continue the treatment prescribed in Switzerland; he was advised to consult Dr Guy Johnson, an English doctor who first came to Nairobi in 1935 for a year but liked the country so much that he stayed on—and is still there: ‘I was asked to present myself at the Bungalow,’ Dr Johnson told me in his pleasant house in the Sykes Road in Nairobi where he keeps many mementoes of the Aga Khan’s 1946 visit.

Before the doctor could continue his Swiss colleague’s treatment, the Aga Khan developed pneumonia and had to be given penicillin every three hours, day and night. Dr Johnson who was running two practices and working long hours at the time because his partner was in England, offered to give the patient the day-time injections and arrange for a nursing sister from the hospital to administer them at three, six and nine a.m.: ‘Not on your life!’ the Aga Khan told him, ‘I am not having a nursing sister. You do it!’ His word was a command. Dr Johnson did as he was told and the Aga Khan laid on transport but after the nine p.m. injection told the doctor: ‘You can’t go home now. Stay the night, sleep here and we will call you at three a.m.’

That night the doctor found a bottle of Dimple Haig whisky by his bedside: ‘I could visualise the Aga Khan thinking what he could give me,’ he mused. ‘He was the kind of big man with a very human touch, always thinking of little personal things to give pleasure to others!’ He was also most meticulous about his treatment but one evening when Dr Johnson arrived at nine p.m. sharp, the Aga Khan

was in his dressing gown playing backgammon with the Begum: 'Would you mind waiting?' he asked the doctor. 'This is very important. I can't stop now—she is winning and I am losing.'

The Aga Khan's inquiring mind never ceased working and, whatever it was, he wanted to know the why and the wherefore: 'There was no more knowledgeable patient,' Dr Johnson said. 'He knew more about more subjects than any other man, including medicine . . .' When he inquired about a prescription he was given and was told that it was sulphadimidine, he promptly asked: 'Why not sulphadiazine?' Dr Johnson explained that the drug he was giving him was an improvement on the one he had been taking: 'In what way?' the Aga Khan wanted to know and was told that it was less toxic: 'God help me,' Dr Johnson said, 'if I could not give him an answer and an adequate explanation . . .!'

From the Middle East, from Abyssinia, from the Congo and from South Africa the Aga Khan's followers came for the weighing ceremony which had brought him to Africa, to the big sports ground of the Aga Khan Club in Dar-es-Salaam which was packed with seventy thousand people, the British Colonial Secretary and governors of Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda among them.

The final preparations for the weighing were completed. Dr Johnson was giving his patient a last check-up when an attendant told the Aga Khan that a number of people wanted to see him to tell him how best to use the collected funds: 'The Aga Khan was livid,' Dr Johnson recalled. 'He stamped his foot and refused to go on with the ceremony until he received a written assurance that this was a free and unconditional gift.' As a small concession he sent a message to say that these people could indicate how they thought the money ought to be used but added pointedly that this did not mean he would necessarily obey their wishes: 'I may agree to spend the money one way,' he said, 'or I may change my mind and spend it another way!' This little matter settled he took the Begum's hand and led her out to a rapturous welcome.

After an address celebrating him as 'one of the great figures of the age', he mounted the scales and watched the heads of Africa's leading Ismaili families, one after another, placing the boxes with the diamonds on the scales but still kept a watchful eye on ceremonial details: 'Tell the Boy Scouts to move into position now!' he told the

aide: 'Now is the time for the procession to start moving!' he told another. He was alert but obviously tired. His weight balanced the diamonds at 243 lb—their value was £684,000—which meant that he had lost half a pound since Bombay four months earlier. The Begum, Aly and Sadruddin were also given gifts of diamonds.

Heaving himself up to address the crowd, the Aga stressed that the gift to him was unconditional but added pointedly: 'I do not wish to take this money for myself but want to use it as I think best for my spiritual children.' As in Pakistan, he announced the creation of a trust, the Diamond Jubilee Investment Trust, to which he was giving the money as an absolute gift, the greater part of it to go towards a new financial structure for the community. Co-operative societies, banks and building societies would be able to draw sums equal to their capital, mostly at three per cent but no more than six per cent in any circumstances. To bring the Trust up to one million, the Aga Khan made a personal contribution of over £300,000.

After the ceremony he went on a tour of community centres (including a brief excursion to South Africa). In Mwanza Amirali Fancy acted as his aide-de-camp and honorary chauffeur. Hundreds of Ismailis cherish the memory of brief encounters with the Imam. Mr A. M. Sadaruddin recalled meeting him on this occasion: 'What is your job?' the Imam asked and Sadaruddin replied that he was a writer and journalist. Shaking his head sorrowfully, the Aga Khan told him: 'I am afraid you will never be rich.' He patiently pondered over the problems of his humblest follower; his advice was usually simple and direct but he always backed it up: 'Go and start a dress shop in Dar-es-Salaam,' he told one Ismaili, 'and send me a telegram when you have opened it!' When the telegram arrived, he asked the British Governor and other prominent friends to visit it and make small purchases. Others followed suit and the business prospered. Instructions, even if they affected the whole community, were not always written down but passed on by word of mouth.

The Begum thought the Aga Khan was doing too much and warned him that he was taking risks with his health. Once she ticked him off for going out in short trousers. She had reason to be worried. He was clearly overtaxing his strength. At Dar-es-Salaam he fell ill and Dr Johnson was called to his sick bed and strongly advised him to return home. A flying boat was chartered to take him to Europe:

'Have a good trip, Your Highness!' Dr Johnson said and turned to go but the Aga Khan flared up: 'What are you saying? You are coming along, at least as far as Cairo.' At Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo, specialists were summoned to the Aga's bedside in the middle of the night but they, too, thought he ought to return to his own home. Accompanied by the Begum and Dr Johnson, he flew on to Marseilles and Nice where Aly was waiting at the airport. He was driven straight to Le Cannet.

Dr Johnson kept telling him that the prostate gland was the cause of the trouble but he pooh-poohed it: 'One does not argue with the Aga Khan,' Dr Johnson told me with a sigh. He handed the patient over to his own doctor before the flying boat took him back to East Africa. Some months later the Aga Khan wrote that he had had a prostate operation: 'You did guess right!' he conceded. ('Guess?' Dr Johnson commented.) In the same operation surgeons removed the growth which had been the source of much pain and discomfort.

1947, as the Aga Khan noted, was India's year of destiny. Though he had briefly seen the Mahatma and the Qaid-i-Azam (Mohammed Ali Jinnah) at the time of the Jubilee, he had had no part in the acrimonious final struggle for Indian independence but when the British government recognised that there were two different Indias and agreed to partition, an old dream became reality. Lord Mountbatten, one of Britain's outstanding war leaders, went to Delhi as Viceroy to bring British rule to an end and hand over responsibility to two independent states, India and Pakistan. The date set for the final transfer of power was August 15, 1947.

The Aga Khan could justly claim that—as the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton—the independent, sovereign nation of Pakistan was born in the Muslim University of Aligarh. But he was acutely aware of the immense problem partition presented. To separate Muslims from Hindus, Sikhs from both and the Princes from their states meant tearing apart the very fabric of society. The authority of the police and the army was undermined by the long power vacuum; in mixed states (Bengal and the Punjab), which were cut in half by the new frontier, there were communal riots, massacres, rape, arson, destruction and suffering on a frightening scale.

Refugees scrambled in all directions to find safety among people

of their own faith. Tens of thousands of Ismailis taking with them no more than they could carry on their shoulders made for the two wings of Pakistan looking for a roof over their heads, even if only a tent or a piece of corrugated iron. To give these hapless people a new start demanded a big effort and not a few sacrifices from the Ismaili community. On the other hand, this great new independent Muslim state also lured many Ismailis who had gone out, as the Prophet commanded, to other parts of the world to spread the gospel of Islam. Among those who were now drawn back to the sub-continent and the new Pakistan were members of the Fancy family. Amirali Fancy, too, left Mwanza and moved to Karachi where he established himself in business.

For the Aga Khan the Indian upheaval raised the question not only of his personal properties but also of the assets of the Ismaili community, which were closely linked.

He had to consider the possibility of economic restrictions on Indian nationals or people resident in India. The application of Muslim law to his personal affairs demanded the attention of international lawyers with banking experience. At this turning point, the Aga Khan decided to consult Lloyds Bank, whose branch managers in India, in Paris, Nice, Le Touquet and Geneva, all conveniently near the social centres in which he moved, had often advised him on matters of investment and connected legal problems.

The Lloyds official dealing with his account in London since the end of the war was the young French-born head of the Legal Department, André Ardoin, who had graduated from Paris University in Law and Economics before coming to England where he continued his studies and joined the Bank at the age of twenty-five. Maître Ardoin was the obvious choice when the elevated client wanted to discuss certain financial matters and asked for a bank official to visit him at the Hôtel Royal at the French resort of Evian, where he was staying with the Begum.

Ardoin flew to Geneva, where a car was waiting to take him to Evian: 'The meeting was informal,' he said. The Aga Khan told him: 'I want to make a Will' and proceeded to explain his intricate position. Discussing a problem rooted in oriental history and complicated by religious law, he was yet fully alive to western financial concepts, full of ideas which, in the context of his Middle and Far

Eastern preoccupations, could only be described as revolutionary: 'He was vital, direct and to the point,' Ardoin said. 'He asked questions, listened to the answers, asked more questions; once he had mastered the problem, he devised new techniques—he was an innovator!'

Some of the answers he sought Ardoin found in a chapter of 'Mohammedan Law' entitled 'Succession and Status' which related a legatee's creed—in this instance, the Shia Muslim faith—to his personal position in the community. Among Ismailis no such question had arisen since the Aga Khan's own accession to the *gadi* in 1885 when conditions were vastly different. That the young man from Lloyds Bank had come so well prepared to discuss these important matters impressed the Aga Khan: 'He was the kind of man who liked a face and trusted a man whom he liked,' Maître Ardoin said modestly. He was also a good judge of ability and character.

The difficulties of preparing the Will of a man with world-wide and peculiar functions proved considerable. The Aga Khan was extremely secretive: 'It was an oriental atmosphere and he had secret contacts here, there, everywhere,' Ardoin said. But as their meetings continued he put his trust in his young legal adviser and often it was a matter of 'just between you and me'. Ardoin maintained liaison between the client and the Bank, whose management gave him a free hand although legal experts were often consulted. He drafted a provisional document which became the basis for further discussions. They had not gone on for long when the Aga Khan asked Maître Ardoin to give up the job at the Bank and take charge of his affairs—Ardoin agreed and their association lasted, in a matter of speaking, beyond the Aga Khan's death. Ardoin not only prepared the Will but was also concerned with the execution of its complicated provisions when the Aga Khan died.

For the old Aga Khan who was putting his house in order, matters of property and Wills immediately raised the question of domicile and he wished sometimes that he had a territory to call his own. Not that he saw himself as a latter-day Fatimid or ruler over a big province like his grandfather, the first Aga Khan. What inspired the idea, which had fleetingly cropped up before the war, was his anxiety to safeguard the status of the Ismaili community and its property which was in his name. Might not the break-up of India

yield a spot which could be allocated to him as an administrative centre, a principality, a Vatican-like Ismaili state, small, neutral and inoffensive?

Had the Aga Khan been younger he would have pursued the project more vigorously because it would have considerably simplified the matter of death duties. European countries made no provisions in the tax law for the peculiarities of Muslim conditions and the question arose whether death duties should be paid on *jamatkhanas*, hospitals, schools. However valuable the land, who would buy a hospital in Nairobi, who would purchase a mosque? 'The difficulty was that the problem had no precedent,' Ardoin said. 'With regard to all these public places for the use of the community, the Aga Khan was not a trustee, he was the owner.'

A formula had to be found which was in keeping with his functions but the Aga Khan did not want change. The solution was to divide his property, some of which was personal, some of which was held by virtue of his position as Imam: 'A line had to be drawn between his personal and his vocational income. It was important that he should be able to dispose of his personal assets as he wished.'

The Aga Khan decided to take up legal residence in Switzerland and gave instructions to look for a suitable house for him in the neighbourhood of Lake Geneva: 'He wanted a small house,' Ardoin said, 'he always wanted small places . . . four or five rooms.' Sometimes his advisers had to remind him that a man of his wealth and position had to keep up a certain standard. Although he owned Yarovda Palace in Poona and Honeymoon Lodge in Karachi, whenever he visited India he stayed with the Governors or in hotels. By the same token, he could never understand why his son wanted so many residences: 'Don't buy all these properties!' he used to tell Aly who, at one time, maintained thirteen homes.

There is, incidentally, one territory which is an Ismaili state in all but name—Hunza, beautiful land of dark ravines, deep canyons and snowy peaks (many are 23,000 feet or more above sea level) alongside the Pamirs, known as 'the roof of the world'. It is ruled by the Mir of Hunza, Mohammed Jamal Khan, a hereditary chief and loyal Ismaili who acknowledges the Aga Khan as his spiritual leader as do most of the country's thirty thousand inhabitants.

Romantically remote and sometimes inaccessible when melting

snow turns rivers into wild torrents, Hunza—model for James Hilton's Shangri-La—is popular with adventurous tourists who receive a friendly welcome from the fair, tall people with curly hair who love music, chant war songs, strum mandolines and beat kettle-drums to produce effects not unlike some western beat groups. They make first-class soldiers and the Mir, following an old military tradition, is a major-general in the Pakistan army, while his nephew is commander-in-chief of Pakistan's paratroops. The Mir and his Rani, eminent followers of the Aga Khan, live in an imposing castle several storeys high, built of sun-dried bricks and massive timber, which commands a magnificent view and has been a stronghold for centuries.

The financial complications which the division of the sub-continent created for the Aga Khan and his community did not dampen his joy in the emergence of independent Pakistan: 'Now Islam rises once again!' he exclaimed and described the new state as 'a mighty infant, the greatest child of Islam'. He was full of praise for Mohammed Ali Jinnah, his erstwhile adversary, now Pakistan's first Governor-General. When he visited independent Pakistan for the first time he was generously honoured. The new ministers sought his views and he was consulted by the rulers of Kalat and Hunza. As a token of his confidence in the future the Aga Khan decided to make major investments in Pakistan.

One shadow over the triumph of Pakistan's independence was the death of Mohammed Ali Jinnah in 1948. The suggestion to build the simple, dignified marble mausoleum where he lies buried and which remains a landmark in Karachi came from the Aga Khan, who also selected the *ayats* (verses) of the Koran engraved on the tomb. He initiated the establishment of a new mosque and of an Islamic research institute as a fitting memorial for the founder of the country.

CHAPTER XI

ALY was back in his element. Reluctant as he had been to leave the army, he found civilian life not lacking in adventure. He even managed to invest his visits to the Ismaili community with excitement. As his green and red aircraft swooped down on Salamiya airport, some distance from the city, crowds of loyal followers cheered themselves hoarse, hailing him more like a conquering hero than a religious leader. Switching from aircraft to motor-car, he travelled along unmaneagable roads into the interior of Syria until he and his party had to take to horses and mules to reach the remoter settlements. The farther he went, the more ecstatic his welcome, followers prostrating themselves to kiss the seam of his Arabic burnous. His mission completed, he looked in at Beirut and Cairo before returning to the South of France.

The racing season was at hand and most of his time was taken up with consultations with Frank Butters, Madame Vuillier and Robert Muller. One reminder of these days is a painting of a horse carrying Aly's green and red colours past the winning post which hangs in Muller's office at Lassy, the Aga Khan's stud farm near Chantilly.

'It's Avenger,' Monsieur Muller said. Aly first heard of the horse in 1947 and asked Muller and Madame Vuillier to look him over. They inspected the horse and worked out the pedigree: 'For a maiden which had never won, it was very expensive,' Muller recalled. It did not seem in a very good condition either. Aly ought to see for himself, they suggested. The result was a remarkable encounter. Avenger put his head on Aly's shoulder: 'Look! He wants me! He's mine!' Aly exclaimed and told Madame Vuillier to buy the horse. Six weeks later, watching Avenger win the Grand Prix at

Longchamps, Aly was so exuberant that he squashed Madame Vuillier's hat in his excitement.

Soon after Migoli came second in the first English post-war Derby, the Aga Khan suffered a relapse and Aly was left in sole charge of their racing interests. Although constantly on the move between Newmarket and Deauville, the Curragh and Paris, London and the Riviera, he readily accepted an invitation from Elsa Maxwell, America's legendary social impresario, who was gathering the big names of the Côte d'Azur for a party at the Palm Beach Casino in Cannes. Everybody seemed to be there but the evening held no special attraction for Aly until his alert eye was riveted by a truly grand entrance: 'Good Heavens—what a beautiful woman!' It was Rita Hayworth who, it turned out, had come to the party only after much persuasion and after hurriedly buying an evening gown because she had come to France without any of her own.

Seeing and meeting her changed a great deal for Aly. They spent the evening together, danced and talked and, when the party drifted towards the baccarat tables, went off to the more congenial surroundings of Aly's favourite night-club where they stayed until the early hours.

In the South of France, news of such an encounter spreads faster than the forest fires. Before anything had happened, the gossips were already talking of the great new romance between Aly and Rita. They were right but premature. Rita was not really in the mood for romance but Aly, with the instinct of an *homme à femme*, had caught her at the moment at which many women are most susceptible to a new man's charms.

Though he had seen her name in lights and some of her films, Aly did not know much about her background. That evening Rita told him the story of her life. Working backwards, as it were, from the unenviable situation in which she found herself, she said her husband, America's one-time infant prodigy Orson Welles, writer, actor, director, intellectual, universal genius, was due to arrive in Cannes within a day or so. Their marriage was in trouble but she wanted to make one more attempt to mend it for the sake of their three-year-old daughter Rebecca. They had been married for four years during which time Orson had tried to interest her in the things that occupied his lofty mind and she had worked her way through

volumes of history and philosophy but, as she later put it, 'it is difficult to live with a genius'. It was no secret that they were known in Hollywood as 'The Beauty and the Brain'.

She had tried hard to live up to his standards but her show business background was probably against her although she was not ashamed of it, and had no reason to be. Her grandfather, Antonio Consino, was a good old trouper and her father Eduardo a superb practitioner of Spanish classical dancing; her mother had also been in the theatre. Born in New York, christened Margarita, she had come up the hard way, dancing with her father, graduating to small films in Hollywood. She had been married once before, to Eddie Judson, a middle-aged, imaginative American motor-car salesman who literally remade her, shortening her first name to Rita and changing her surname to an adaptation of her mother's maiden name which was Haworth.

Judson made her dye her black hair red, take lessons in voice production and deportment. She attracted the attention of Harry Cohn, President of Columbia Pictures, who could recognise a 'hot property' when he saw one and carried on where Judson left off. A fashion expert was called in to advise her on clothes, a professional publicity man spread the gospel of her remarkable vital statistics—height 5'6", weight 120 lb, bust 36", waist 26", hips 35", thighs 19", eyes brown, hair Titian. These were the ingredients of Hollywood's new 'Love Goddess', measures of predictable success. Unlike other actresses on the way up, Rita was pliable, willingly accepted advice and soon reached the top. She became Fred Astaire's leading lady and earned over six thousand dollars a week. Her marriage to Eddie broke up and Orson came into her life. But she did not find happiness with him either. To appear in one of his films she even cut her long hair, which was a sacrifice, but she and Orson did not work well together and drifted apart. She spent a year in Europe, largely to let her hair grow again.

Rita's reunion with her husband was not a success. Twenty-four hours later Orson Welles was gone. She felt miserable and was not even cheered by Aly's flowers, although they filled her apartment. At Cap d'Antibes, that week, she was introduced to the Shah of Persia, who asked her to lunch at Eden Rock, the Hôtel du Cap's elegant promontory. She accepted and an American magazine photo-

grapher who got wind of the assignation lay in wait to capture the thrilling rendezvous with his camera. The photographer—and the Shah—waited in vain. The table was laid, the champagne was on ice but Rita did not keep the appointment. Instead, she went to the Château de l'Horizon and joined Aly Khan. They stayed together for most of their time in the South of France. Gordon Young, who has chronicled the Aly-Rita romance in great detail, quoted her as saying to a mutual friend: 'Aly has asked me if I would marry him when he is free. We talked a great deal about his family, especially about his wife and sons.'

Even in the throes of a big new romance, Aly could not banish the thought of his horses from his mind for long. As much as his father, who was recuperating at Yakimour, he was determined to make the 1948 Derby their own, but they agreed that their entry, Noor, a progeny of Nearco, although a product of their own stud and trained by Frank Butters, did not stand a very sound chance. They saw a glimmer of hope in a horse appropriately called My Love, which belonged to the French millionaire, Monsieur Léon Volterra, a showman with a considerable flair for racing. My Love had done nothing really outstanding but was a half-brother of Pearl Diver, winner of the last year's English Derby with a pedigree of speed and stamina which coincided perfectly with the Aga Khan's cherished ideas on breeding.

Convinced that the horse could emulate his half-brother's feat, the Aga and Aly decided to make Monsieur Volterra an offer for My Love but the shrewd French owner would go no further than sell them a half share. Anxious to win his fourth Derby at almost any cost, the Aga Khan agreed and the deal was struck in the nick of time. The ailing Aga was so confident that he was on the threshold of another triumph for his colours, the Begum could not stop him making the arduous trip to England. He tipped My Love to the porters at Victoria Station when he and the Begum arrived in the Blue Train.

On Derby Day, Baroda's My Babu, winner of the Two Thousand Guineas, was favourite at four to one and Monsieur Volterra's Royal Drake was also much fancied but My Love soon attracted support from women who liked its name and from punters who always put their money on the Aga Khan's horses. A crisp telegram—'My

Love to all'—preceded the arrival of Rae Johnstone, the Australian jockey who was engaged to ride him and shared the new owner's confidence in the colt's ability.

Johnston got his powerful mount well away at the start and the Aga Khan who watched the race with Aly by his side was thrilled to see Noor also moving very smoothly. My Love was catching up fast with Royal Drake and passed him in the last furlong to win by a length and a half. Noor came third, relegating My Babu to fourth place. The King congratulated the Aga Khan—neither had backed the winner. Monsieur Volterra was disappointed about Royal Drake's failure and none too pleased with himself for having agreed to let My Love run under the Aga Khan's colours. His share of the prize money was £6,492. The Derby win brought the Aga Khan's wins in stake money for the season to over £46,000 but, to quote Stanley Jackson, 'the winning of his fourth Derby was the sweetest victory of all'.

My Love was only just past the winning post when Aly was on his way back to the South of France and his love. He was wooing Rita more ardently than any woman before her—and not meeting much resistance. She fell in with his hectic mode of life, enjoying the sense of freedom which the use of a private aircraft engenders. One day the Avenger took them to Paris, the next they flew to Rome or Madrid. In Madrid their romance captured the imagination of the *aficionados*. At a bull fight they went to see, the crowd chanted 'Aly' and 'Rita' instead of the names of their favourite matadors. Reporters discovered the glamorous couple, who fled to Biarritz with the press in hot pursuit before escaping to Cannes and the comparative privacy of the Château de l'Horizon.

Contract negotiations demanded Rita's presence in Hollywood but Aly could not bear to be separated from her for long and followed her to the United States. Still, characteristically, on his way to California, he stopped over at Saratoga for the yearling sales and did a deal for 200,000 dollars. Then he moved into a rented bungalow in Beverley Hills opposite Rita's house. They spent hours discussing their problem but the Press would not give them time to make up their minds whether they were ready for marriage. Aly countered persistent questions with the conventional 'Miss Hayworth and I are just good friends' but could not resist adding, 'There exists a

wonderful and healthy relationship between us.' The pressure was beginning to tell and they decided to make another run for it, went to Mexico and ended up in Havana.

Soon after their arrival, Rita's lawyers signalled that her divorce from Orson Welles had come through. She also received frantic calls from her studio which was anxious to exploit the publicity and start on a new Rita Hayworth film forthwith. When she did not respond, she was threatened with suspension, which put her 300,000 dollars a year income in jeopardy. For her it was more important to be with Aly but after a fortnight he grew impatient and seemed anxious to return to Europe.

While Aly was constantly in the news, the Aga was trying to get away from it all. He went on safari in East Africa with the Begum and Sadruddin who was too young to be a problem to his father. Their comfortable expedition to the Serengete National Park started at Marseilles where a chartered 45-ton flying boat (with some exquisite provisions in special refrigerators) waited to take them to Mombasa. Africa's finest hunters guided the party which struck camp in the bush. The big marquees with electric light, with the Aga's own porcelain bath, easy chairs and tables, fine linen, glass and silver became an oasis of western civilization. Fresh supplies were flown in daily over a distance of two hundred miles but the Aga's precarious health deteriorated and by the end of the six-week safari he caught a chill which forced him to cancel visits to his communities. He was flown back to Europe and arrived at Yakimour just when the publicity about Aly and Rita was at a new pitch.

The celebrated couple decided to speed their departure from America. Aly booked passages for himself and Rita in the liner *Britannic* which was due to sail for Cobh, Co. Cork, Ireland. To avoid the Press, Rita and little Rebecca were smuggled aboard via the crew's gang plank and made their way to their stateroom through the galley. The voyage was peaceful until the *Britannic* reached Cork harbour where reporters were waiting to board her. They cornered Aly who denied that he planned to marry. Rita said she was 'spending Christmas with some friends over here'.

They kept apart on the tender which took them ashore, drove off in separate cars one of which blocked the road against their pursuers while they went on to Giltown in the other. Though they were

quickly traced to Aly's stud farm, they kept up the pretence throughout their stay even when inveterate observers discovered them in a Dublin cinema where they saw one of Rita's earlier films and on other occasions when they took little Rebecca for a stroll. From Gilttown they flew to London, spent the night at the Ritz and the following day went to Paris to Aly's house in the Bois de Boulogne.

Dining at the Tour d'Argent restaurant overlooking the Seine, they found themselves two tables away from Orson Welles, one of the embarrassments their affair was constantly causing. Thoughtlessly, Aly was about to give the social hyenas new cause for chatter. He was on his way to Switzerland to see Karim and Aryn who were due to spend part of their winter holidays with him. Their mother collected them from school in Gstaad at the end of term and booked into the Palace Hotel to await Aly's arrival.

They had been in touch about divorce proceedings and matters concerning the boys but Joan expected him to come alone. When he arrived with Rita, they were immediately caught in the glare of publicity. It was suggested that Aly had brought her deliberately to stage a confrontation with Joan. Puritanical women's organisations in the United States launched a violent campaign against Rita threatening to boycott her films if she continued her illicit association with Aly. Aly countered that he and his wife had been living apart for three years and that divorce proceedings were pending: 'As soon as they are finished,' he added, giving the first direct indication of his plans, 'Rita and I will stabilise our situation which has given occasion for unfortunate comments in the Press.'

Six weeks later, in February, 1949, Joan's divorce action was filed in Paris. As grounds she gave 'serious insults' and 'incompatibility'. When her petition was granted, Aly was given custody of the two boys—with a Muslim father and future Imam of the Ismailis involved any other arrangement was unthinkable. Karim and Aryn admired their father who was staying with them in Gstaad—no sons could wish for a more dashing, sporting, comradely and indulgent parent. Though they were well-mannered and polite, they did not take as kindly to their future step-mother. Rita was unable to get on terms with two teenagers who would naturally harbour resentment against the woman who replaced their mother in their father's affections.

Otherwise they spent an enjoyable holiday ski-ing, tobogganning, romping with their father in the snow. Karim, particularly, loved winter sports. At the age of twelve, he was already a practised skier and winning prizes in school races and junior competitions. He started playing ice hockey, reaching a high standard for his age. For Aly the holiday ended with a tragic accident when he suffered a complicated fracture of his leg. But by the time they left Gstaad, the sky was clearing for him and Rita. They went to Cannes to see the Aga Khan who later said that he advised them to marry as quickly as possible. In the face of the newspapers' running commentaries about his son he kept a stiff upper lip. Asked by a British reporter what he thought of the impending marriage of two divorcees, he answered curtly: 'There are 150,000 divorces in Britain every year. Why criticise my son?'

Even before the divorce became final Aly fixed the date of his wedding provisionally for May 27. The divorce papers came through at the end of April. He flew Rita to Paris and took her to the salon of Jacques Fath to choose a wedding dress. When news of their impending arrival got round, the staff was thrilled. Bettina, one of Jacques Fath's top models, recalled how she and the other mannequins watched the famous couple through a chink in the door. During the parade, Rita appeared indifferent and sat there with, what Bettina described as, 'that look of nonchalance so often seen on much-admired women', but Aly was talking and laughing. When it was Bettina's turn, her eye caught Aly's—he seemed warm and sympathetic. She was showing a bridal gown and a famous American photographer, the late Robert Capa, who happened to be in the salon, snapped her as she passed in front of the Prince. It was a prophetic photograph but for the time being Bettina did not give Aly another thought.

She and two other Jacques Fath models were asked to go to the rue de Prony the following Sunday to show Rita some more dresses. Cutting into their rest day, it was an inconvenient assignment but at least Rita chose one of the dresses Bettina showed: 'I found Aly most likable,' Bettina said when I talked to her about the occasion years later, 'but I had no premonition, and would have been most astonished if anyone had suggested that I would share Aly's life with him one day.'

Aly would have been no less surprised at such a suggestion. He was completely wrapped up in his wedding plans. To avoid another burst of publicity which was bound to displease his father, he asked the Prefect of the Alpes Maritime Department to permit the civil ceremony to take place in the privacy of his château but was turned down because French law demands that all weddings must be conducted publicly at a Mairie. Reluctantly he settled for the town hall of Vallauris the local village in the hills, where Picasso made his pottery.

Early on May 27, a hundred photographers and as many reporters were lying in wait for Aly and Rita and congregating outside Vallauris Town Hall. As the morning wore on they were joined by local people and tourists who blocked the way to invited guests. The crowd was over a thousand strong when Aly arrived in a sports car driven by his brother Sadruddin. By Aly's side upstairs was his best man, General Catroux, under whom he served in the war. Mayor Derignon conducted the ceremony with as much decorum as was possible in the crowded hall.

Back at the château the band by the swimming pool greeted them with Aly's old favourite, 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes', to which the violins on the roof replied with 'La Vie en Rose'. A flower arrangement of white carnations in the shape of the letter 'M' (for Margarita) floated in the swimming pool which had been sweetened with the scent of gallons of eau de cologne. Yet the worry about his father's obvious disapproval of the ballyhoo all but spoilt the day for Aly. Rita, surrounded by her husband's friends among whom she was a stranger, was not at her best either. She went through the rest of the day in a haze and confessed that she was nervous throughout—it was worse than facing the film cameras.

That Aly gauged his father's reactions correctly emerged from the Aga Khan's comment on the Vallauris wedding: 'This was a fantastic, semi-royal, semi-Hollywood affair,' he growled in his autobiography. 'My wife and I played our part, much as we disapproved of the atmosphere with which it was surrounded.' Compared with the tumultuous civil wedding, the Muslim ceremony conducted at the château two days later by two mullahs from the Paris Mosque and attended by Ismaili nobles from many parts of the world, was a solemn, dignified affair.

The tense days of Cannes were followed by a relaxing trip to England for the racing season. In addition to the big diamond ring and the sports car which were Aly's presents to his wife, he gave her a racehorse, Skylarking, which was doing extremely well. The Aga and the Begum joined them in England and went with them to the Derby although their entries had little chance. The Aga had not been back in Cannes for long when he received the news that Frank Butters had been run over by a lorry while riding a bicycle in Newmarket and suffered severe injuries. Leading specialists whom he sent to his old trainer's bedside reported that Butters would never recover sufficiently to resume his work.

It was, among other things, to discuss the tragedy with Aly that the Aga Khan and the Begum decided to fly to Deauville. With chauffeur and maid they were leaving Yakimour for the airport when their car was pushed off the road by a black Citroen. Three men jumped out, threatened the Aga Khan with tommy guns, and brusquely asked the Begum to hand over her jewel case. They knew what they were doing—the jewels in the case included a 25-carat diamond ring worth 125,000 dollars and a bracelet worth 200,000 dollars. The total value of their haul was three-quarters of a million dollars.

As the bandits turned to leave, the Aga reminded them that they had not taken his wallet which contained 600 dollars and handed it to them. One of them said: 'Soyez braves et laissez nous partir!' (Be good sports and let us get away.) They did get away. There were rumours that the robbery was the work of American gunmen but a French policeman said in a fit of injured national pride: 'There were no foreigners on this job, no Americans, no Italians, no nothing. This was a job conceived, planned and executed entirely by Frenchmen.' The jewellery was insured by Lloyds of London.

The problem created by the Butters tragedy remained. The Aga and Aly were forced to look for a new trainer and approached Marcus Marsh for whose services two other leading owners, Lord Derby and Marcel Boussac, were already competing. Marsh was undecided. The Aga Khan's two-year-olds were well known, he reasoned, and were expected to do well; if they did, the owner would get the credit, if they did not, the new trainer might well be blamed. He sought advice from the Senior Steward of the Jockey

Club who told him: 'The Aga is, after all, the top owner in Europe—if not the world—and if you didn't accept his offer, I am sure you would come to regret it.' Marsh decided to talk to the Aga Khan and flew to see him at Yakimour. He was most courteously received.

How frail the Aga looked, he thought, but when they discussed terms and he asked for a five-year contract, the old gentleman shook his head: 'No,' he said, 'three.' Suddenly, Marsh observed, he did not look frail at all. His eyes were hidden behind dark glasses but the stubborn cast of his lips and chin was 'reminiscent of a good old-fashioned Irish horse dealer'. Marsh concluded that it was no use arguing, and accepted. On his way back he went to see Aly at his house in the Bois. Alone, except for Emrys Williams, Aly was in his usual leisure wear of cavalry twill trousers and black polo neck sweater. He told Marsh about the race he had ridden in St Cloud when he came last but one. They discussed classic hopes for 1950, particularly Palestine for the Two Thousand Guineas. The outcome of the trip was that Marsh bought a new establishment, Fitzroy House, and took thirty-five of the Aga Khan's horses.

Leaving Aly to complete the arrangements, the Aga Khan escaped the European winter to Pakistan where his community was making great strides. One of the leading Ismailis who looked after him was Captain Amirali Currim Ebrahim who held a commission in the British army during the war ('Our Prince Aly Khan was an officer and desired our people to join'), and following a family tradition, looked after the Aga Khan's estates in Pakistan, and still acts as honorary estate agent to Karim Aga Khan. His brother Zulfikarali Valiani, an eminent lawyer, was in attendance when the Aga wanted to show the Begum the crocodiles in the hot sulphur springs some twenty miles from Karachi. He arranged the excursion and joined the Aga Khan and the Begum on their drive. When their car stopped at a crossing on the outskirts of the city, they were approached by a beggar:

'Give him a hundred rupees,' the Aga Khan told Valiani. Having no cash on him Valiani explained to the beggar that he would come back with the money a little later but the beggar was doubtful and protested tearfully: 'Promise him two hundred rupees,' the Aga Khan commanded and, turning to the beggar, spoke to him in Urdu: 'Don't worry! This man will be back in an hour and give you three hundred rupees!' Valiani arranged for the man to get the money

quickly: 'His Highness,' he said to me good-humouredly, 'might easily have raised the stakes to one thousand rupees.' The Aga was extremely generous, and the community was generous to him. In the course of his visits rich followers presented him with big amounts well in excess of their payments in *zakat* and *khums* but almost invariably the donations were devoted to community projects.

On his return trip he stopped over in Tehran to see the young Shah who conferred the style of a royal Prince of Persia on the descendant of the previous dynasty. It entitled the Aga Khan to the address 'Royal Highness' which also applied to Prince Aly and, eventually, to Prince Karim who is 'His Highness' in Europe but 'His Royal Highness' east of Suez. The Aga Khan's Persian nationality was confirmed enabling him (and his descendants) to hold a Persian as well as a British passport.

In Europe a new grandchild was awaiting him, a half-sister for Karim and Amyn. Giving the lie to the gossips who had predicted a much earlier birth, Rita's baby girl was born on December 28 at the Montchoisi Clinic in Lausanne. Aly told reporters that his wife had had a difficult time. The baby weighed five and a half pounds and would be called Yasmin, Arabic for jasmine.

Yasmin's first few months were spent in Gstaad where Aly took a cottage and gathered the family around him. Karim and Amyn were once more enjoying winter sports with father until he was laid low by another ski-ing accident. Although his leg was broken in three places, his spirits were as high as ever. Wheelchair or no, he flew to Newmarket to see Palestine run—and win the Two Thousand Guineas.

Marcus Marsh had been placing bets for him: 'Have you won anything for me?' he asked, and Marcus said: 'Yes, over £2,000.' According to Marsh, Aly lost that much in the next few days but in racing finance these were not big amounts. Palestine won £12,982 in stake money and, when the colt defeated American-bred Prince Simon, American offers for him poured in, among them one for £158,000. The Aga Khan declined them all and sent Palestine to stud at Gilttown. His services as a stallion were syndicated at £120,000, divided into forty shares of £3,000 each. Almost in passing, Aly bought Wilfred Harvey's Sandwich stud of some sixty mares, stallions and foals, concluding the deal within twenty-four

hours and signing the documents as he was leaving the London Ritz for Paris.

Whether in London, Paris, or Gilltown, Rita felt as ill at ease among Aly's racing associates as among his socialite friends. Accustomed to top star billing, she did not enjoy playing second fiddle to her famous husband who preferred her to be known as 'Princess Aly Khan' rather than as Rita Hayworth. He did not like the name Rita and called her Margarita. He would not deny her any wish—her dress allowance was £4,000 a year—but there was no disguising the fact that his style of life did not suit her.

Around that time he announced that he was giving his house in the rue de Prony to the community as a European centre for Ismaili students (a house in the Kensington district of London was acquired for England's Ismailis). To replace the rue de Prony he took a town house in Paris in the Boulevard Maurice Barrès which was always filled with his friends but was never home to Rita. He was still the talk of the town, any town, and the latest crop of rumours had it that he was short of cash and had been spending too much on his houses, his aircraft, his yacht, his gambling, on unsuccessful horse deals or diamond necklaces for dancing girls.

These were the kind of rumours which attach themselves to many sons whose rich fathers are still alive and control the purse strings. They were fed with new conjectures whenever Aly sold some of his paintings but the gossips never took into account the value of his property and his share in the racing establishment which was still expanding. He certainly had enough funds at his disposal to buy another big stud farm, 'Haras de Lassy', not far from Chantilly. Buying and selling properties, buying and selling horses, winning and losing while constantly on the move, Aly's approach was casual and he tended to be late settling some of his accounts. His creditors, reluctant to press such an important customer, sometimes grumbled but did not send reminders. If Aly was occasionally short of the odd £10,000 he was certainly not broke.

A tour of Africa was next on the agenda and Rita tagged along dutifully but without great enthusiasm. It went off to a poor start. At Cairo, she thought Aly was spending too much time playing bridge while King Farouk paid court to her with embarrassing persistence. When the King's minions brought her a 'royal com-



Aga Khan III in 1924.
(Radio Times Hulton Picture Library)



Sir Eboo Pirbhai, Princes Aly Khan and Sadruddin Khan at the Jubilee celebrations in East Africa, 1946.
(Frischauer)



Sadruddin Khan, son of Princess Andrée, and Nina Dyer at their marriage ceremony in 1957. Aly Khan is in the background. *(Paul Popper)*



Aga Khan III is weighed in diamonds in Bombay, 1946. *(Keystone)*

mand' to present herself at his palace, she and Aly left Cairo hurriedly for East Africa. Rita was not cut out for the role of an Ismaili princess and found the community etiquette unnerving. By contrast, Aly revelled in his duties, addressed his followers, attended conferences with the leaders, covering a lot of ground.

When Europeans asked the couple to parties, Rita was anxious to accept but Aly was far too busy with the community. 'That's what we are here for,' he would say. Regal as she was on the screen, Rita did not cut a good figure at gatherings of Ismaili ladies with whom she had so little in common. Conversely, when she wanted to go sea bathing at Mombasa, community leaders hinted that an Ismaili princess ought not to show her figure in public.

A short while earlier, Aly had asked Columbia to stop issuing pin-up pictures of Rita. Now stories emanating from Hollywood suggested that she was about to return and resume her career in films. They were variously confirmed by Aly—perhaps fathered by a secret wish—and denied by her. Husband and wife were now completely out of tune with each other and the longer they travelled together the farther they drifted apart. She refused to join him on safari and, while he was hunting, left East Africa rather abruptly for the South of France to join—or rather collect—Rebecca and Yasmin at the Château de l'Horizon.

Aly went on with his tour—the visit of the Imam's son being a carefully arranged official affair, he could hardly do otherwise. A little later he said that he had no idea his wife intended to leave him but her sudden departure obviously marked the final break. At the end of his tour, he returned to the South of France only just in time to see her taking off with the children for Paris and Le Havre en route to the United States. Whether he was upset or relieved is difficult to say. The Aga Khan who was on his way back from another Far Eastern trip and missed seeing his granddaughter on whom he had not set eyes since her birth, was angry with Rita: 'She could surely have delayed her departure,' he complained, 'and let me see the baby.'

Tens of thousands of words have been written about the parting of Aly and Rita but the Aga Khan's terse few words summed up the end of the affair quite adequately: 'I thought Miss Hayworth charming and beautiful but it was not long before I saw, I am afraid, that

they were not a well-assorted couple.' Aly, warm-hearted and gregarious, was always surrounded by friends while Rita looked upon marriage as a haven of peace and rest from her professional work. In the Aga's view, the collapse of the marriage of two people whose ways of life were thus dramatically opposed was inevitable.

Having decided to end the marriage, Rita was apparently haunted by fear lest the powerful Aga Khan and his son might deprive her of Yasmin, perhaps even kidnap the child: 'Had Miss Hayworth made more inquiries,' the Aga commented, 'she could have found out what in fact are the Ismaili religious laws and the code which governs all my followers and my family in these matters.' Under this code, young children are entrusted to their mothers whatever the circumstances of the divorce: 'Unless we were criminals'—again the Aga Khan—'we could not have contemplated taking the baby Yasmin from her mother.' Muslim boys at the age of seven pass into their father's custody but girls remain with their mother until puberty when they are free to choose. The Aga also rejected the insinuation that he had failed to make provision for his granddaughter's future explaining that, under Islamic law, the child's father was obliged to leave her a share of his estate. Since it was unlikely that Aly would die penniless, the Aga said, there was no urgency about providing for Yasmin. Privately he was heard muttering: 'If Aly could only choose his women as he chooses horses . . .!'

From the Château de l'Horizon, Aly sent a long letter to Rita telling her of his astonishment and sadness that she had left him so suddenly. He had no thought of any other woman or of divorce, he wrote, but explained the conditions of a legal separation: 'If you should ever change your mind,' he ended, 'this separation could not prevent your light returning to my life.'

CHAPTER XII

ALTHOUGH four or five years beyond the Biblical life-span of three score and ten, and indifferent in health, the Aga Khan continued to travel between continents, turning up in Asia, Africa, the Middle East as frequently as in the watering places and racing centres of Europe. Aly was moving about as restlessly—'restlessly and sometimes recklessly searching for happiness,' to quote Gordon Young, 'which for most of the time seems to have eluded him like a shadow.' But the paths of father and son crossed frequently.

They were together in Cairo early in 1951 when they met Ismaili leaders from Pakistan, India, Burma and East Africa who came to ask the Aga Khan's permission to weigh him in platinum in 1955, the seventieth anniversary of his accession, and promised to raise a record amount. Though he might well have wondered whether he would live to celebrate the day, the Imam approved their plans because the money would help to finance valuable welfare projects for the community.

An invitation to attend the wedding of the Shah of Persia to the beautiful Soraya Esfandiari took him to Tehran for a second time in as many years. It meant more than a festive occasion. Visiting Persia was going back to his very roots, and made him more conscious than ever of his Iranian background. The Tehran palace the Shah put at his disposal was sumptuous and comfortable. In Mahalat, seat of his ancestors, thousands of Ismailis from all over the country assembled to pay him homage. The women, he noticed with great satisfaction, had given up the *chaddur*, the Persian version of purdah (though in remoter areas through which he passed they still hid their faces).

His next station³ was Karachi, the city of his birth. He addressed

the World Muslim Conference breaking a lance for the Arabic language: 'Should not the powerful Muslim state of Pakistan make Arabic its national language?' he asked. 'While Arabic will unite the Muslim world, Urdu will divide and isolate!' He defended Islam against all comers and when the *London Times*, which he sometimes treated as if it were his house organ, spoke of Islam as 'an intolerant religion which teaches the duty of shunning foreign influence', he denounced 'this sweeping generalisation' as untrue and unfair. Did not Islam practise *hilm* which means tolerance, forbearance and forgiveness? As if to show that he meant what he said, he exhorted his fellow Muslims to learn from Europe, 'those secrets of power over nature, of scientific, economic and industrial development which have made the West so powerful'.

He backed up his sermon with hard cash for research and scholarships and sponsored a technological institute in Dacca, East Pakistan, modelled on one he had seen in Switzerland. He would modernise the cotton mills and start new industries with the help of European associates, he promised, and at once put up funds for a hundred and fifty huts for homeless refugees to be built on the outskirts of Karachi. He gave permission for Honeymoon Lodge to be used as a convalescent home for ailing Ismailis—the only convalescent home in Pakistan—and started a fund for the maintenance of old mosques: £20,000 he donated towards a new mosque in London turned out to be a very long-term project; by 1970 the mosque had not yet been built.

Presiding over small lunch and dinner parties the Aga Khan, as usual, quizzed his guests about every subject under the sun. In the course of this visit he approved final plans for the Ismaili Pak Insurance Co-operative Bank which opened the following year with a capital of twenty-five lakhs (2,500,000 rupees) admitting only members who were 'Loyal and practising Imami Ismaili followers of His Royal Highness The Prince Aga Khan and His Successors'; it has since sprouted branches in many Ismaili centres. In a family transaction, he transferred the ownership of the Karachi Gymkhana, a big sports and assembly ground, to his son Aly.

The strain of work and travel across the vast sub-continent was beginning to tell. On his way to Calcutta, he suffered a heart attack which brought the tour to a premature end. He was flown back to

the South of France in the care of the Begum and two nurses. To step into the breach, Aly was rushed back from South America where he had been looking for horses. Continuing the programme on behalf of his father, he stamped the tour with his peculiar brand of bonhomie. Instead of grasping the outstretched hand of an Ismaili leader who addressed him humbly as 'Prince', he embraced the man and told him: 'Don't call me Prince, call me Brother!'

Aly insisted on visiting the smallest villages, consumed an incredible amount of ice-cream as he drove from place to place, was completely tireless and content with two hours' sleep a night. In Karachi he inaugurated a housing colony for Ismailis with a capital of forty lakhs (four million rupees) at 15,000 rupees per flat. Although he returned to inspect the work when it was in its early stages he did not live to see the completed 'Prince Aly Khan Colony' which houses some two thousand people in flats with modern bathrooms and kitchens of a much higher standard than their non-Ismaili neighbours enjoy.

Convalescing at Yakimour, the Aga Khan devoted himself to his family, keeping a wary eye on the younger generation. After a spell at Lausanne University, Sadruddin was sent to Harvard to study for a Bachelor of Arts degree (one of his contemporaries was Edward Kennedy)—the plan was for him to go on to the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies. Soon the old gentleman was well enough to discuss the forthcoming racing season with Aly who, incidentally, was seen with the French chanteuse Lise Bourdin, who was helping him to forget Rita Hayworth. One of the decisions the father-and-son racing partnership made was to buy the Italian three-year-old Nuccio for whom they paid £50,000 but the paramount aim which inspired all their scheming and planning was to win the Derby for the fifth time. The horse that carried their hopes for the 1952 Derby Stakes was Tulyar.

Ismaili leaders frequently travelled to the South of France to pay their respects to the Aga Khan. One of them, Zulfikarali Valiani, on his way to the Villa Yakimour, was given a lift by Aly Khan: 'How did you get here?' the Aga Khan asked him when he arrived. When Valiani replied: 'Prince Aly gave me a lift in his car,' the Aga frowned and asked sternly: 'Do you want to end up in hospital?' He would not allow him to return with Aly. Valiani recalls Aly driving from

Karachi to Hyderabad at eighty miles an hour and changing his coat without slowing down. No wonder Aly's friends shared his father's misgivings: 'I will do anything in the world for Aly,' Elsa Maxwell said, 'except get into a car when he is at the wheel.'

Like other Ismailis, Valiani occasionally visited Le Rosay to see how the Imam's grandson was getting on. He was off to Switzerland once more when the Aga Khan told him that he wanted an independent view on how the boy was progressing with his religious and language studies: 'When you see Prince Karim,' he told Valiani, 'try to talk to him in Urdu, so he gets some practice . . .' Karim who was playing football when Valiani arrived, stopped and ran up to his visitor. They had a talk—in Urdu—after which Karim continued his game. Inaugurating the Urdu University in Karachi several years later, Prince Karim recalled 'the burdensome duty of instructing me in Urdu' which fell to his professor at Le Rosay. 'After some time,' he said, 'I was in the fortunate position of being able to appreciate, if not fully understand, the beautiful language.'

Though he did not know it, he was the subject of long discussions between his parents and his grandfather. His time at Le Rosay would come to an end in 1953, and decisions about his future had to take into account the possibility that he might become Imam of the Ismailis sooner or later (in the light of what happened it is likely that his grandfather was thinking in terms of 'sooner' rather than 'later'): 'I was in favour of "K" going to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,' Princess Joan told me. 'He had artistic talent, was a very good draughtsman and drew some excellent pictures,' she said, pointing to the walls of her drawing-room which bear witness to young Karim's efforts as a painter and sculptor. He was equally interested in architecture and science: 'Mathematics was my strong point,' Karim Aga Khan confirmed when we discussed these days; and that is why he started classes in engineering in 1952.

His grandfather seemed to be thinking of a broader educational basis. The old Aga seemed to think highly of the boy. Whenever he was at Villa Barakat in Geneva he sent for Karim and talked to him at great length, subtly introducing him into the deeper meaning of the Ismaili faith and instilling him with the sense of mission which became apparent to all not many years later. Prince Karim himself remembers his grandfather asking questions about his religious

instruction, testing his knowledge: 'He could extract more from a human being in a short conversation than anybody else in a lifetime,' he mused. But there was also something completely inscrutable about his grandfather when it came to important matters: 'Yet, when he took a decision, one did not have to ask him for his thinking process, one felt sure it was taken *en connaissance* of all aspects.' Young Karim found his grandfather jovial but with a joviality that never turned into flippancy. He could be playful and gay and light-hearted, was not at all formal and very rarely *gris*—morose: 'If he had serious matters to discuss he would make it quite clear from the start.'

With the approach of the English Derby, the heart of the grand old man of the turf beat a little higher. He was thinking of Tulyar whom he came to regard as the greatest horse he ever owned although it was difficult to assess the limits of the colt who was never doing more than just enough. Not everybody shared his optimism. Tulyar disappointed Marcus Marsh who did not run him in the Two Thousand Guineas but was converted when the colt proved its worth as a stayer in another race. If only he were not such a lazy horse! While Aly was at Fitzroy helping to exercise the horses, he and Marsh talked a lot about policy; though the best of friends, on racing matters they no longer saw eye to eye but some of the discord was probably due to Derby tension.

There was a heat-wave and the going was hard, which was thought not to suit Tulyar, but after one gallop over a bone-dry patch, Charlie Smirke found no cause for complaint: 'This one will do for me at Epsom,' he told Marsh. Obviously, rain or shine, Tulyar was a very hot tip indeed. A rumour that the colt would be withdrawn because of the hard going was swiftly denied by Aly: 'He will run and he will win.' Marsh felt that he was working for the most powerful and demanding stable in Europe and that his reputation was at stake but the challenge from eight high-class French entries did not shake his or the stable's confidence.

On Derby Day, Tulyar was his sleepy-self and looked small and fragile. He was drawn Number Sixteen and it was up to Charlie Smirke to keep him out of trouble if he could. After a good start, Monarch was taken into the lead by Gordon Richards who was trying to win his first Derby—this was his twenty-eighth attempt. Monarch was followed by Bob Major with Tulyar third, according to

Marsh 'a perfect position'. Then the two front runners slowed down and were overtaken by Tulyar who, contrary to stable plans, raced ahead. Still, Smirke managed to keep him there. Defeating a powerful challenge from Lester Piggott on Gay Time with a brilliant manoeuvre, Smirke and his mount reached the post half a length in front.

For the Aga Khan's stable, the fifth Derby win was a complete triumph. The stake money of £20,587 was divided among trainer, jockey and stable lads but Aly, as Marsh put it, 'clipped the book-makers for £40,000'. Not much later, when Marsh gathered from a casual conversation with Nesbit Waddington that Aly proposed to move most of his horses to another stable, he tackled the Aga Khan but was told that this was entirely up to Aly. He, the Aga Khan, did not want to lose Marsh's services and would be giving him £50,000 a year to buy yearlings. Marsh was critical of some aspects of the Aga Khan's approach to breeding and racing but felt there were things 'you just could not say to a demi-God'. He was hopeful of keeping Tulyar for another season and sailed from England to spend the winter in South Africa.

Aly travelled to the United States in a glare of publicity to make it up with Rita, whose lawyer, Bartley Crum, announced condescendingly that the Prince had asked for six months' grace to re-woo his client. Laden with toys and packages, Aly arrived in Hollywood where he and Rita were plunged in an emotional situation when Yasmin swallowed some sleeping pills thinking them to be sweets and had to be rushed to hospital. The little girl was soon out of danger.

When Aly returned to Europe Rita followed him and moved into his house in the Boulevard Maurice Barrès. The atmosphere was not conducive to a genuine reconciliation. Reporters and photographers kept up a constant vigil so as not to miss a single move in the intricate game but Aly continued to see his racing cronies and business associates which suggested to Rita that he had no intention of 'reforming'. Leaving him for a second time, she moved to the Hotel Lancaster, off the Champs Elysées, and told reporters: 'I am bored with Aly's friends.' Then she headed for Hollywood—and divorce.

There followed an embarrassing period of legal wrangling about the terms of separation and what the Press called 'Aly-money'.

Rita's lawyer asked Aly to set up a trust fund for three million dollars for Yasmin. Eventually Rita was awarded 40,000 dollars a year for their daughter's upkeep. Protracted arguments also went on about Yasmin's upbringing—Christian or Muslim—and about the child's visits to her father in Europe. Still preoccupied with the absurd notion that she might be kidnapped, Rita's lawyers demanded a bond of 100,000 dollars every time Yasmin left the United States. An allegation that Rita was neglecting both her children, Rebecca and Yasmin, received wide publicity. She finally obtained her divorce on January 27, 1953, after a hearing in a Nevada court lasting seventeen minutes.

Public interest in Aly's matrimonial affairs was only rivalled by curiosity about Tulyar's future: 'Will he be sold for stud?' the Begum was asked: 'Who can tell?' she answered politely, 'we have so many mating problems in this family.' Tulyar's sale, in fact, was imminent. Returning to England early in 1953, Marcus Marsh was spending his last day aboard the liner that had brought him from South Africa when he heard on the six o'clock news that 'the Irish National Stud today purchased last year's Derby winner, Tulyar, for a quarter of a million pounds, a record fee'. He was bitterly disappointed to lose the colt and thought he was at least entitled to a percentage but when he put this to the Aga Khan he received a curt reply: 'I have never given a percentage on sales yet, and I don't intend to start now.'

However aggravating the rebuff, Marsh's personal relations with Aly did not suffer as a result. Aly called him a few weeks later and said he would like to come and spend the weekend with him: 'Good,' Marsh replied, 'we'd love to have you.' It emerged that Aly was bringing a friend who wanted to stay strictly incognito and turned out to be another Hollywood star, the delicately handsome Gene Tierney who had made her name ten years earlier in Otto Preminger's excellent film, *Laura*.

There was good reason for discretion. Freed from matrimonial bonds, Aly was once more fair game—it was not so much what he did but the role he played in the imagination of others. Like cowboys trying to test their strength against the West's deadliest gunslinger, women threw themselves at him and told the newspapers turgid tales about their alleged association. Publicity men tried to

squeeze the last ounce of juicy innuendo from Aly's most casual and fleeting contacts.

Elsa Maxwell's contribution was to confess that she had had no sex in her life but that Aly was one of the two men who attracted her. Zsa-Zsa Gabor talked about the affair she did not have with Aly, and another non-event in his life received a great deal of publicity—his withdrawal from the Mille Miglia motor race in Italy when the Aga Khan asked him not to take part. Young Karim winced whenever the headlines brought the tittle-tattle about his father home to him. It was in these days that he first formed his aversion to publicity and resolved to give the press as little cause for comment about his personal affairs as humanly possible. That he would grow up to hate, not his father, of whom he was fond and proud, but his father's playboy image was a foregone conclusion.

Around this time, one of Aly's friends brought Bettina to the Boulevard Maurice Barrès for drinks but, as so often, the guests arrived before the host. Aly was always late but always apologised so handsomely that he was soon forgiven. He took Bettina out to dinner at the Pré Catalan, his favourite restaurant and met her once more, if briefly, in the South of France. After the Grand Prix de Paris, everybody went to Aly's party, and when he gave another one in Cannes a few weeks later his father was among the guests giving the lie to rumours that they had fallen out. The Aga saw Aly paying court to Gene.

Like Rita Hayworth, Gene had been married but was divorced from her husband, a leading American couturier. Unlike Rita, she found it easy to adapt to Aly's mode of life, and fitted in as easily at Gilltown, where she joined him on his early morning rides, as in the casinos of the Côte d'Azur, where she watched him gambling for high stakes. In the passage of time, the gossip and the alarms around Aly and Gene Tierney died down and so did their friendship. Gene suffered a mental breakdown, retired to a quiet life in the United States and received psychiatric treatment before making a triumphant come-back to the screen—in another Preminger film.

With the Aga Khan ailing and ageing, the management of the racing establishment was almost entirely in Aly's hands. One problem he had to solve forthwith was the choice of a successor to Nesbit

Waddington who was due to retire as stud manager at the end of 1953. He had already investigated several possibilities and virtually made up his mind to invite Major Cyril Hall, manager of the National Stud in Ireland, to take on the job. They knew and liked each other. Major Hall was no stranger to the Aga Khan either, and had also met young Karim on some of his summer visits to Giltown. Aly summoned him to the South of France and asked him point blank whether he would be prepared to take over the management of the studs. His terms were generous, the opportunity was tempting. Major Hall's mind was quickly made up.

As soon as the directors of the National Stud released him, he took charge of the Aga Khan's seven Irish stud farms—Giltown, Sheeshoon, Ballymannny, Sallymount, Ongar, Williamstown and Eyrefield: 'At that time, the Aga Khan and Prince Aly between them had one hundred and eighty horses,' he said. 'They probably represented a value which, at a guess, would be three million pounds sterling today.'

While Aly looked after the horses, the Aga Khan spent most of his time studying reports from Ismaili centres. Their keynote was progress. Local leaders sought his approval for new projects and, asked for his advice, humble followers turned to the Imam with their personal problems. Dictating his replies, suggesting solutions, stimulating new thinking, he continued to guide the lives of millions. Economic, educational and health matters were his main concern but politics often intruded. While conditions in the Indian sub-continent were reverting to normal, he foresaw great political changes in East Africa.

As Britain's colonies moved towards independence, Ismailis were growing in stature. They would have to play their part in the transformation of their country. He discussed the subject with many of them who came to see him in the South of France or in London, where he continued to frequent the Ritz Hotel. At that time, one leading Ismaili travelled to London for an auspicious occasion which was not altogether untypical. Eboo Pirbhai, member of the Legislative Council of Kenya, visited Buckingham Palace with his family to receive a knighthood from the Queen. The Aga Khan conferred on him the Ismaili title of Count.

Another arrival in London was Karim, who, at the age of seven-

teen, left Le Rosay—not sorry by any means that his schooldays were at an end but sad to leave Gstaad, his beloved Swiss mountains and the winter sports at which he excelled. He was bound to come back again and again: ‘Ski-ing,’ he said to me years later, ‘is the one sport which leaves one no time to worry about one’s obligations or about anything else. It is compulsive concentration.’

Having been accepted for admission by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on the strength of his school record and without an entrance examination, he was spending the holiday with his parents, staying with Princess Joan in London before going to join his father at the Château de l’Horizon. Although he and Aryn would be separated for the first time, he would not be without family support in a strange land because his uncle Sadruddin was at Harvard studying Middle Eastern history, a popular figure on the campus and founder of the Harvard Islamic Association, and Patrick Guinness, his mother’s son by her first marriage, was working in the United States.

‘I was happy about the prospect of going to the M.I.T.,’ Prince Karim said, ‘everybody was happy!’ Not everybody, really. When the subject cropped up in conversation with his grandfather at Yakimour, the Aga Khan only said absent-mindedly: ‘Yes, yes, yes.’ But the following week Karim was called to Yakimour again: ‘You are going to Harvard,’ the Aga Khan told him in a friendly but firm tone which brooked no contradiction: ‘I was too young to ask his reasons,’ Prince Karim told me, ‘I did not dare to ask him—and never did.’

The young man did not know—cannot tell—whether his grandfather was already thinking of him as the next Imam. He sat his entrance examination for the Department of Engineering at Harvard, passed it and was admitted for the autumn term of 1953. At a school dance in Gstaad at the end of term, he danced once or twice with the dark-haired, handsome sister of Fernando Casablanca, one of his schoolmates at Le Rosay. Her name was Sylvia and her parents—father Mexican, mother Swiss—lived in Geneva where she and Karim saw each other occasionally. They came together again in the South of France and, young though they were, a romance developed which, in these carefree days, remained unnoticed and unrecorded.

That autumn Karim went to the States but for the next four or

five years, whenever he returned to Europe, he saw Sylvia whose family assumed that they might one day be married. It was a little early to make wedding plans for the Aga Khan's grandson who, like most youngsters of his age, was meeting a great number of girls. At a party in London which was attended by Princess Margaret and attracted a certain amount of attention, he was seen with a pretty débutante, Countess Bunny von Esterhazy, step-daughter of a Hungarian-born racehorse owner who was henceforth always referred to as his girl friend.

None of these social engagements or romantic entanglements in Europe even remotely interfered with his studies. Karim liked the life in Harvard and completely immersed himself in his studies. His interest in mathematics, chemistry and general science never subsided but it was not many months before he began to look to history for answers to questions he was constantly asking himself. Intellectually, he was attracted to Islam, which had played such an important part in his upbringing, and impressed by Harvard's exceptionally strong department on Islam and its excellent orientalists, Sir Hamilton Gibb, Professor Philip K. Hitti and Professor R. N. Frye (who later occupied the Chair of Aga Khan Professor for Iranian Studies, endowed by Prince Sadruddin). They offered a large choice of courses on Islamic matters which were of real significance.

Slowly the idea of switching from engineering to Islamic studies matured in his mind. Was it his grandfather's wish that he should study Islam? Years later, when he had already been Imam for over a decade, Prince Karim was still sensitive on this point: 'I never discussed the switch with my grandfather,' he said. 'It was a personal decision which had nothing to do with either my father or my grandfather.'

It laid the foundation for Prince Karim's astonishing range of religious knowledge and, as important, his sense of proportion on these delicate matters: 'At the university,' he said, 'there were discussions which exposed me to all aspects of Islamic studies. The scope was very wide. I read extensively and acquired an overall view.' Because it was tested by other influences and did not develop in a glasshouse atmosphere of isolated Ismaili doctrine, his faith grew all the stronger.

Obviously, he does not accept the views of every author whose

religious works he studied. In the light of his Shia Ismaili persuasion, he became critical of many works which interpret the history of Islam in Sunni terms. He has the greatest respect for Professor Hitti, a Christian Arab, whose classes he attended: 'His achievement lies in the compilation of a great many facts and figures which have never been collected before,' he mused. But this does not mean that the young Imam's conclusions coincide with the Professor's on all points or that he accepts Hitti's interpretation in every detail.

'K. Khan of Harvard' was only just beginning to come to terms with the university's approach to the theory of Islam when, as Prince Karim-al-Huseini, he was called upon to undertake an official mission on behalf of his grandfather. Separated from Ismaili contacts by the Atlantic Ocean, he had to acquaint himself with the events leading up to the situation into which he was about to be plunged. It appeared that a campaign of abuse and vilification against the Aga Khan and Aly Khan was unsettling Ismailis in East Africa, where collections for the Platinum Jubilee were under way. At one point it reached such a pitch that Mr Oliver Lyttleton, the British Colonial Secretary, was asked to investigate. Community leaders from Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda travelled to Evian, the French spa, to attend a council over which the Aga Khan presided. They decided that all Ismailis should be asked to sign a pledge of loyalty.

Important voices were raised in defence of the Aga Khan: 'These fanatics and hotheads do not realise that the Aga Khan gives us far more than we give him,' said Mr Ibrahim Nathoo, a prominent Ismaili who was Kenya's Minister of Works. Sir Eboo Pirbhai assured reporters that the community in Africa was 'completely loyal' and denounced the 'purely mischievous' anonymous attempts to damage the Aga Khan's name. The community itself would take action against the slanderers. In Kenya, mass meetings of Ismailis passed resolutions condemning the 'unknown individuals under fictitious names and bogus organisations' who carried on a subversive campaign against 'the August person of the head of the Ismailia faith, His Highness the Aga Khan, Ismailia religion and Ismaili leaders'.

The family rallied to the Imam's cause. In scorching heat, the Begum went to Mecca, the first European-born woman to make the

exhausting pilgrimage. Clad in the Ihram, the long, white, rough cotton garment of the pilgrims, which makes it impossible to distinguish rich from poor, she worshipped at the shrine of Islam. In Paris, Prince Aly was in discussions with leading Ismailis and Karim and Abyn were despatched to East Africa to tour Ismaili centres with a personal message from the Aga Khan. In Nairobi, Prince Karim addressed a large gathering, bringing home to Ismailis and non-Ismailis how much his grandfather had done for the community. One hundred and four schools in East Africa were maintained by grants from the Aga Khan who wanted as many students as possible to enter the teaching profession.

Returning to Harvard, the Prince quickly settled down again among fellow students who remained happily impervious to the aura of his family. Having switched to Islamic studies in his sophomore year, he roomed at Leverett House dormitory with John Fell Stevenson, son of the ex-Governor of Illinois and Democratic presidential candidate of 1952: 'K. Khan,' Stevenson said, 'was a charming fellow with a cracking wit.' According to his room-mate, he did not go in much for clothes and became known as 'that guy who had only one pair of shoes'. 'During the time I knew him,' said Stevenson, 'he owned two suits but I never saw either of them pressed. He had about two dozen neckties but they were all the same colour.'

The teaching staff regarded him as 'intelligent and serious but rather shy'. Professor Frye said that he had immense capabilities and was a well-rounded student, 'liked by all of us here'. Senior Tutor Richard Gill thought him an awfully nice guy, one of the best fellows at Leverett. Everyone testified to his keen mind but one instructor suggested that he did not work all the time as hard as he could have done. He dropped chemistry after a two-semester struggle but collected an impressive number of top grades and his name appeared regularly on the Dean's list, an index of high scholastic achievement. His room at Leverett House with a wide view of the Charles River reflected his current preoccupations. Gramophone records—his favourite was Tschaiakowsky's opera, *Undine*—were stacked side by side with volumes of philosophy and history to which he turned—to quote Stevenson—'with casual concentration'.