

Decline of the Pakistan Muslim League and Its Implications (1947-54)

Safdar Mahmood

Before partition the sense of nationalism was at its peak among the Muslims, but after the establishment of Pakistan it declined. The Muslims did not remain as energetic and sincere as they were before Partition. It was natural because the goal set forth by the All-India Muslim League was the achievement of an Independent Muslim State, and once this was achieved, a vacuum was created. The need of the time was to re-vitalise the League and prepare it for the challenges brought up by Partition. The Muslim League achieved Pakistan and expected to fulfil all new requirements, but this was only possible with a new dynamic programme headed by dedicated leadership. It should have set a definite goal to carry out promises made in its manifesto of 1944. In this way, the League could have diverted the energies of the people toward their sovereign destiny and successfully erected a solid edifice of the State on the ashes of British Imperialism. The League needed to create a new spirit but it remained a party without a programme. It failed to cultivate a new philosophy and that brought the thinking classes, in particular, into mental conflict with the Government. The Quaid-e-Azam did not live to respond to the necessity, and his followers did not seem to feel or care about it.

Now Pakistan... had the Muslim League, an organization with a limited mass base, but strong in the countryside because of the grip which landlords and religious mystagogues (*Pirs*) exercised over the peasantry. Politics began at the top and was marked by a distinctly feudal approach to problems. Individual landlords could make or break parties by utilizing the 'parcellized sovereignty' they enjoyed over their lands and their tenants.¹

In this context, the Urdu daily *Nawa-e-Waqt* remarked that the Muslim League organisation was like a caravan without a destination.² The same views were expressed by the English daily *Dawn* that the League was not the name of a party but an ideology.³ But after the emergence of Pakistan its previous position ceased to exist.

While the League leaders never determined and defined a role for the party in the new State, the Congress leaders explained the future role of their organisation even before the partition of India. Mr. Shanker Rao Deo, General Secretary of the All-India Congress Party declared on August 4, 1947 that the future role of the Congress in the new set-up would be the levelling up and down of the glaring economic inequalities. The Congress was to be now an organised and well-disciplined party with distinctly defined social and economic ideals, with regular membership, which would subscribe to its objects and work for their realisation.⁴

The League leaders were loud in their proclamations that only the League could solve the problems but for how long the people would cling to these empty slogans was a fact which they never realised. Unaware of the growing dissatisfaction, the League leaders allowed the party to indulge in intrigues. The expectations of the people gradually faded away and a wave of frustration crept in. Time passed by and the League leaders were left behind. When they awoke from their deep slumber, it was too late to enlist the support of the people who wanted practical solutions to their ever-increasing problems.

While the real tests of Pakistan were taking place in the villages throughout the country, public attention was misdirected to the constitutional debates. Brilliant sallies, incisive retorts, imaginative proposals on the floor of the assembly dazzled the press while tardy school construction and the plight of cultivators was scarcely mentioned.... Religion, language, foreign relations, and electorates, these were the issues which danced as mirages before an expectant but distracted nation.⁵

The Muslim League had many threats to its existence before Partition, but the blow it received after Independence was fatal. When Jinnah had returned from England in 1934, the League was not an active political organisation. The All-India Congress overshadowed it in every field. With the election of

Jinnah as the League President again in 1939, a new era of political activity began. Before his arrival in India, the Muslim League was a defensive organisation composed of wealthy landlords who had no sense of devotion to the Muslim cause. They had no mission. As Keith Callard remarked: "There was no air of enthusiasm about the League of that period".⁶

Mr. Jinnah was a strong man and it was mainly due to his efforts that the League once again became an active political party. During the years 1934-38, he consolidated his position in the League. With the adoption of Pakistan as its ultimate goal in 1940, the League began to secure mass support, and many other Muslim leaders left Congress to join the League. The lower echelons of the League might have been filled with personal rivalry, but the edifice was solid at the top. Mr. Jinnah was supreme and there was none to challenge his powers.⁷ The message of the League began to reach every distant Muslim hamlet. All this was due to the untiring efforts of the Quaid who, in due course, achieved such a popularity that his name became almost synonymous with the League. While he lived, he was a great source of unity, and above all the party had a purpose, a mission and a goal. It had an ideal and the whole organisation was engaged in the freedom movement with no other thought except that of Pakistan. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of Partition was the dark future of the Muslim League. "The Quaid-e-Azam was soon dead and his successor, Ch. Khaliq-uz-Zaman was a weak man. He had neither the gifts of leadership nor even the semblance of popular backing".⁸ The slime of dissension and discord within the League soon came to the surface, and the President failed to control it. As a result, people began to lose confidence in the League, and its popularity began to wane.

The events started to dictate the terms. Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman was elected as Chief Organiser by the League Council, and he became the dupe of circumstances, and the vicious circles grew larger and larger. He appointed former presidents and former secretaries in the provinces as Zonal Organisers to supervise the enrolment campaign, which gave an opportunity to the old leadership to re-establish its hold in the Party, "thereby giving the younger elements a direct cause for resentment and revolt".⁹ "The popularity of the League suffered

at the hands of the former in East Pakistan and in West Pakistan, whatever prestige it had, was irreparably damaged by the latter".¹⁰

In N.W.F.P., the Organising Committee set up in 1948 was working under the supervision of the Chief Minister, Abdul Qayyum Khan. He tried to keep the Organisation under his control by distributing forms for the primary enrolment to his supporters. The Pir of Manki Sharif was an influential worker of the League and was a potential rival to the authority of Abdul Qayyum Khan. To avert this danger, Qayyum worked to restrict the membership of the League to his followers. Serious differences arose and the Pir of Manki Sharif protested against this highhandedness. In a statement the Pir said:

The members of the Organising Committee set up by the Chief Organiser of the Pakistan Muslim League have acted in a dictatorial manner so that the people in the N.W.F.P. have no faith in their bonafides. The Organising Committee has systematically restricted the membership of the League to the followers of the present clique in power.¹¹

He also challenged the validity of the Primary League Elections in the Province, but his protests were turned down by the Chief Organiser, "who gave a free hand to the Committee whose composition was dominated by the supporters of the Provincial Ministry".¹² In the circumstances Pir Sahib withdrew from the League with his adherents, and formed a new political party.

The same pattern was followed in East Pakistan where Maulana Mohammad Akram Khan and his partners refused enrolment forms to their opponents like Bhashani, who were forced to quit the Muslim League and form their own political party. In the Punjab and Sind, a mad race was witnessed between the factions within the League to enrol a larger number of members. It was a show of strength between different landlords whose over-enthusiasm created embarrassment on occasions. Tactics adopted by the leaders of the Frontier and East Pakistan Muslim Leagues to keep the party under their thumb, coupled with factionalism in the Punjab and Sind Muslim Leagues, led to the rise of opposition to the Muslim League at all levels. The first opposition political parties were

formed by the disgruntled Muslim Leaguers who successfully challenged the League's hegemony. The majority of the prominent United Front leader's who defeated the Muslim League in East Pakistan came from the League itself. To a large extent, the power hungry leadership of the Muslim League was itself responsible for splitting the party and eclipsing its position.

The Council of the Pakistan Muslim League on February 26, 1948, decided to separate the Party from the Government by debarring the ministers from holding any office in the party.¹³ The Muslim League was supposed to be a "super body" at that time. Ch. Khaliq-uz-Zaman sent a "strong letter" to Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister, to clarify the position of the Pakistan Government in regard to the Indo-Hyderabad War. He urged him to consult the Muslim League on the issue. He also suggested that all League Organisers should be sent for immediately for consultations.¹⁴ On certain other occasions the Muslim League Council and the Working Committee had criticised the policies of the Government. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan never hesitated in acknowledging the supremacy of the Muslim League Council over the Government. "Surely no Prime Minister of a constitutional state has ever spoken as slightly of the parliament as did Liaquat Ali".¹⁵ "This House [Council of the Muslim League] now carries more weight than the Parliament", observed Liaquat Ali in his address to the Council in 1950.¹⁶ Liaquat Ali Khan said:

I reaffirm it today that I have always considered myself as the Prime Minister of the League. I never regarded myself as the Prime Minister chosen by the members of the Constituent Assembly. The day I will come to know that the League has no faith and confidence in me, that very day, you will not find Liaquat Ali Khan the Prime Minister of Pakistan.¹⁷

This attitude not only established the superiority of the party over the Parliament, but also confirmed that the real power lay with the Muslim League and not with the federal legislature.

Khaliq-uz-Zaman nominated Liaquat Ali Khan and representatives of Provincial Government like Daultana, Mamdot, Yousaf Haroon and Abdul Qayyum Khan to the Working Committee of the Muslim League.¹⁸ This policy gave

rise to many difficulties. It meant that the Prime Minister and the Chief Ministers of the provincial governments were to participate in the meetings of the Working Committee of the Muslim League to be presided over by its President, and were to be bound by its decisions.

This measure proved dangerous in the hands of those who were no longer in the cabinet but still desired to overshadow it. Mian Mumtaz Daultana resigned from the Mamdot Cabinet,¹⁹ and remarked:

The Muslim League which was a proper forum for the expression of a constructive political stand-point was still trying to break through its second chrysalis. Under these circumstances no lead could have been given and policies suggested without causing confusion and giving favour of personal politics.²⁰

In fact, he submitted his resignation because of his personal differences with the Chief Minister, and not on any question of policy or principles. He contested the election for the presidentship of the Punjab Muslim League and was declared successful.²¹ As President of the Provincial Muslim League, he was in a position to establish his superiority over the Cabinet and to revenge the injury inflicted on him by Nawab Mamdot. Daultana started a movement of no-confidence against Mamdot, and presented him with a signed request to vacate his office. A few days after Daultana's resignation from the Cabinet, the League Assembly Party, attended by 74 members out of 78, had ensured the continuance of Mamdot as the Punjab Premier through a resolution.²² When Daultana became the President of the Provincial Muslim League, he succeeded in getting signatures of 41 members on a written representation to Mamdot to vacate his office.²³ The loyalties of the League Assembly members shifted from Mamdot to Daultana. As a result, the constitution was suspended in West Punjab because public life had been demoralized by corruption and the discipline of the services destroyed by intrigues.²⁴

The Government communique said, "Many causes have contributed to this state of affairs but in the Governor-General's opinion, the main cause is the failure of the members of the Legislative Assembly."²⁵ Nawab Mamdot tendered his resignation and the Ministry collapsed. The same story was repeated in

Sind. Mr. Khuro, the deposed Chief Minister, was elected President of the Sind Muslim League in 1950. He tried, like Daultana, to undermine the Cabinet's position. The Working Committee of the Sind Muslim League established a nine-man supervisory committee to watch the activities of the Government. The resolution of the Working Committee said, "the Working Committee further appoints a nine-men supervisory committee with the President of the Provincial Muslim League as *ex-officio* member to supervise and watch the activities of Government in all matters concerning the people of the province".²⁶ The daily *Dawn* rightly termed it as "Sind's Super Government".²⁷ Thus the people deprived of their offices in the cabinet tried to change the Muslim League (by holding the Presidentship of the Party) into an instrument of revenge on those responsible for their removal from the Government.

Khaliq-uz-Zaman was forced to resign after a violent demonstration by refugees in front of his house. The demonstration proved that the refugees had developed strong sentiments against the leaders of the League. Pakistan was a child of the Muslim League, and the League, being the only ruling party in the country, did nothing to redress their grievances. Naturally they thought that the League was responsible for all their troubles.

In the meantime, the party Constitution was amended, and Liaquat Ali Khan became the Muslim League President. Thus the Prime Ministership was combined with the League Presidentship. Even Liaquat Ali Khan could not restore the office to its former position. He could perhaps have saved the prestige of the League if he had not assumed the Premiership of the country. As a leader of the Government, he was exposed to criticism for the failure of his policies, which he could not but own as the President of the Muslim League, too. While the said amendment did not add much to his authority, which was patent both in being the Prime Minister and a popular leader, the attachment of the Presidentship removed all the possibilities of a challenge. The decision taken and the policies initiated by him were readily approved by the League Parliamentary Party.

The League, which was the super-body, now became more or less ineffective. Liaquat Ali Khan's assumption of the office of

the League Presidentship had the effect of reducing the organisation to a state of suspended animation.²³ The daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* wrote that the League had become the handmaid of Government — and how true it was!²⁴

Liaquat Ali Khan did not encourage the formation of opposition parties in Pakistan on the plea that the country needed no other political party as the Muslim League was the symbol of national unity. He contended that emergence of other political parties would create confusion and chaos, but the times were such that a healthy opposition should have been favoured so that an alternative programme was available to the masses. It could have acted as a check and a balance on the party in power. The concept of checks and balances is inherent in all democratic institutions and its absence results in tyranny.

There was peace, but it was the peace of the grave. Controversy and healthy criticism on all important national issues was lacking.

The pattern of conflict was clear from behind federal guarantees of provincial autonomy. local bosses mobilized traditional, feudal, religious, and linguistic forces in support of their power struggle with the national leadership. By remaining nominally loyal to the Muslim League, they sought only to prevent it, or failing that, to wreck it from within. In the very agency designated by Liaquat Ali Khan to unify the country did the disruption of Pakistan begin.³⁰

It has already been explained that the League before Independence grew in strength under the able leadership of the Quaid-e-Azam. The Organisation had its branches set up all over the country. The leaders toured from village to village carrying the messages of the League. The message had a meaning and the leaders had a missionary zeal. The annual sessions of the League were a manifestation of the great dynamic sweep of the organisation. Conferences, League executive meetings and Council sessions were regularly held. The League had, therefore, a grass-root level contact with the masses. The decline of this magnificent organisation started after the establishment of Pakistan because it lost contact with the common man. Liaquat Ali Khan was already the beloved leader of the people and, therefore, his Government basked in the sunshine of his personality. The hollowness of the League came to full view when the curtain was lifted with the death of Liaquat Ali Khan.

Liaquat's followers in the office proved no more than mourners and pall-bearers of the Muslim League.³¹ It was now Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din's turn to become Prime Minister. He also wanted the League Presidentship, although he was not qualified as the party constitution envisaged a one year membership to seek election for President. Being Head of the State, Nazim-ud-Din was not a member of the League. Therefore, the constitution was again amended, and he became the new President thereby proving it beyond any shadow of doubt that League politics revolved around individuals in power. Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din was required to nominate his Working Committee, but throughout his tenure of office as Prime Minister he was without a League Executive. Liaquat Ali Khan had been a popular leader and he successfully depended on the force of his personal position, but Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din seemed to stand on a pinnacle without a base.³²

In October, 1952, a meeting of the Muslim League Council was held at Dacca during the Presidentship of Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din. Two amendments were inserted in the League Constitution. The first amendment made elections of office-bearers triennial instead of annual affair. The provision for annual elections in the Constitution necessitated an annual session of the League which gave people a chance to criticize the policies of the League, to propose new programmes, to pass resolutions and to elect new office-bearers. The new amendment did away with this formality. Thus the impetus generated by elections to go out and seek the support of the people was lost. The gap between the ruling group and its followers was further widened.

According to the second amendment, the composition of the League Council was to be composed on the basis of a fixed provincial quota rather than the party strength. The seats between the two wings of the country were to be divided on the principle of parity. It was absurd because the organisation was not founded on the basis of the population of any particular area but on the actual membership of the party in different areas. As the representation in the Council was now in proportion to the general population of the area, it did not matter whether the League had the required support or not. Likewise, it was no longer necessary for the Presidents of the District and Provincial

Leagues to widen the scope of League's activities. "The Dacca amendment has decreed a revolutionary dispensation and set at naught all the familiar canons of political organisation", wrote the daily *Evening Times*, (Karachi).³³ These amendments "were declarations of the hollowness of the organisation and the narrow provincial spirit which was motivating its policies",³⁴ and the League progressively sank into a position of insignificance.

In any modern democratic system, the basic principle is the establishment of contact with the masses through the political party in power. The people in Pakistan believed in the same value and expected that the League would add a new life to its glorious past. This new chapter remained unwritten "except for the blots and smudges imprinted by unclean hands on the black and white of its leaves".³⁵ The Muslim League had done little to resolve the popular confusion and to mediate between the Government and the people.³⁶ The popular means of contact between the masses and their Party were the open general annual conventions the most popular feature of the old All-India Muslim League — but during the first nine years of Pakistan, no such convention was held.³⁷ The Council sessions were held but they mainly related to amendments to the League Constitution for one reason or the other. The hollowness of the League became manifest at the first general elections in East Pakistan in the spring of 1954 which brought defeat to the Party.

The Muslim League lost its prestige and position to such an extent that Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad had the courage to dismiss Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din though he was the leader of the ruling political party. Ghulam Muhammad appointed Muhammad Ali of Bogra the new Prime Minister. There is no evidence that the party was consulted on this change, though almost half of the members of Nazim-ud-Din's Cabinet showed their approval by willingly accepting offices in the Bogra Cabinet.

Only a few days before his dismissal, Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din was given full support by the Constituent Assembly over the passing of the budget. However, immediately after his dismissal, the Muslim League Parliamentary Party readily acknowledged Muhammad Ali to be its leader. It once again proved the

weakness of the party. "Consequently, the party became the handmaid of the Government which was clearly demonstrated when it was forced into accepting Muhammad Ali Bogra as its President after his nomination to premiership by the Governor-General", observed Mushtaq Ahmad.³⁸ Syed Noor Ahmad also commented that the League was more loyal to chairs and offices than to persons and principles.³⁹

The shifting of loyalties in a scramble for power was common practice in the Muslim League politics. The Leaguers seemed to follow the principle of "when leaders change, loyalties change too". In fact the concept of party loyalty and discipline was not allowed to emerge as an effective value of the chaotic system introduced by the League. Hence the party loyalties remained unreliable. A mixture of patronage and coercion "succeeded in reducing the status" of most Assembly members "to that of puppets who can be manipulated at will by those who have power and money".⁴⁰ In Sind, for instance, almost four-fifths of the members of the Sind Legislative Assembly belonging to the League pledged their support to Pirzada Abdul Sattar and his campaign for the maintenance of the autonomy of Sind, but after two months, Khuro secured almost unanimous support for the extinction of the province.⁴¹ Keith Callard has rightly remarked:

An observer who is not accustomed to Pakistani politics is apt to be surprised at the ease with which a leader can be assured of the undying loyalty of his supporters to find on the following day that his supplanter in office has been greeted with unanimous enthusiasm.⁴²

There was no question of policy of principle involved in the change of loyalties.

What there often seemed to be was a total lack of loyalty to any ideal or set of principles or even to the country on the part of these party (Muslim League) leaders. Pakistan was very much like Hobbes' state of nature where every political or provincial group fought against every other group. It was a ceaseless and ruthless struggle for power.⁴³

The political somersaults of the League leaders undermined the party discipline, and so before long its prestige was at the lowest ebb.

Another factor which accelerated its waning prestige was internal disputes and bickerings. The legacy of factional

scramble for positions of power and profit was continuous. The League leaders would not judge issues at a national level, but would take them as matters of personal prestige. This trend greatly weakened the organisation from within. In N.W.F.P. the factional opposition was led by the Pir of Manki Sharif, in Sind by Ghulam Ali Talpur, in the Punjab by Mamdot and in East Pakistan by Maulana Bhashani and Suharwardy. The continuous rat race for power among these factions shattered the unity of the organisation. The common man was disillusioned and when the Constitution was suspended in the Punjab and Section 92-A imposed, Liaquat Ali Khan was overwhelmed with congratulatory telegrams. The Lahore Municipal Corporation resolution on this occasion reflects the feelings of the people. It stated, "Thank God, we have been delivered from the hands of unscrupulous ministers and would-be ministers".⁴⁴ The Working Committee of the Punjab Muslim League ascribed the failure of the Ministry to the fact that the Muslim League had ceased to exist and the ministers had neglected to maintain close contact with the people.⁴⁵ This factional tussle divided the bureaucracy and the administration was corrupted, too.

On paper the Muslim League had membership running in millions, which created the impression of a broad-based organization representing all walks of life. The facts were otherwise. "If proper allowance is made for large-scale bogus enrolment which is warranted by the need of augmenting factional strength, the parade of swelling mass influence can easily be explained".⁴⁶ The tragic attempts by factions to compete with one another in enrolling bogus members was not altogether free from its lighter aspects. The phenomenon of League membership in certain areas exceeding the total adult population exposed the League to ridicule by its detractors and caused dismay in reasonable quarters of the party.⁴⁷

An important factor which adversely affected the credibility of the political leaders and the popularity of the League was the political role of the Pakistan Civil Service. Pakistan inherited the 'steel frame' of bureaucracy from the British rulers who used it for strengthening the structure of their government in India. Before Partition, the bureaucracy was kept within defined limits but in Pakistan, "Their ascent to power has been both steady and dramatic".⁴⁸ Out of the four governors under the

Quaid-e-Azam, three were British belonging to the former Indian Civil Service. While two of them presided over the cabinet meetings, one of them was powerful enough to reshuffle the cabinet without getting approval of the Chief Minister. The Governors used to write letters and send regular reports to the Governor-General and to the Prime Minister covering all matters relating to the provinces, including intrigues in the provincial cabinets and factionalism among the ruling party.⁴⁹ Many of the Muslim League leaders were tried and disqualified on the charges for which material was provided by the Governors. The amount of importance attached to these reports by the Quaid, indicated his lack of trust in the provincial Muslim League leadership.

As the hold of the League's leadership weakened, bureaucracy became strong. First of all Pakistan was a newly born country in which democratic and other affiliated political institutions had been at a developing stage. Secondly, the League as a political party lacked experience in the art of government. Besides, the political leadership had no unity. Bureaucracy, on the other hand, was relatively organized and experienced in administrative matters. On the whole, the well-groomed and highly educated bureaucracy did not like the politicians for what they did. As soon as the politicians lost control over political and administrative matters, the bureaucracy took advantage of the situation and placed itself at the helm of national affairs, which certainly further damaged the League leadership. The League could probably have averted the position if it had gone for elections. But the Central leadership of the League thought that ruling the country was its birthright. So why take the risk of elections?

Liaquat Ali Khan's cabinet included only one renowned bureaucrat, Ghulam Muhammad, who had experience in financial matters. He, on the basis of his financial experience, was given the ministry of Finance by Mr. Jinnah in the first Cabinet. According to Siddique Ali Khan, this was an interim arrangement. Liaquat Ali Khan, before his assassination, had already decided to remove Ghulam Muhammad from the Cabinet. Ghulam Muhammad remained Finance Minister up to 1951 and subsequently became the Governor-General after Liaquat's death. Nazim-ud-Din's Cabinet also had one bureau-

crat, Chaudhry Mohammad Ali, who was again Minister for Finance. During the Nazim-ud-Din period, the power of the Muslim League politicians decline steadily due to the indecisiveness and inept policies of the Prime Minister. "It looked as if civil servants led by the Governor-General and supported by Army officers had extended their influence over the Central government itself".⁵⁰

The elevation of Ghulam Muhammad, basically a Civil Servant, to the office of the Governor-General was surprising and revealed lack of political leadership in the ruling party. Ghulam Muhammad's rise to the office of Governor-General can be termed the first bureaucracy coup, and Bogra's period, in fact, was a period of the bureaucracy rule. While Bogra was the Prime Minister, Ghulam Muhammad ruled the country with the help of the Army Chief, bureaucrats and loyal Cabinet members. When Ghulam Muhammad, after dissolving the Constituent Assembly, nominated the second Bogra Cabinet, it included three bureaucrats who were given three most important portfolios. Sikandar Mirza, Ayub Khan and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali were given Interior, Defence and Finance ministries respectively. Hence the government was in 'safe hands'. It could be said that a sort of Viceroy's Executive Council had reappeared in which real power was in the hands of administrators".⁵¹ In this way, due to the weakness of the League leadership, the bureaucracy almost completely took charge of the government. This is known as the second coup of the bureaucracy.⁵²

Bureaucracy not only yearns for power, it also does not fear accountability. With Ghulam Muhammad as the powerful Governor-General, the "Cabinet resembled a new kind of Viceroy's Executive Council... Perhaps something more than that, for it was not subject to the ultimate control of a popularly elected body".⁵³ It is said that Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the Constituent Assembly for he feared that it would pass the proposed Constitution that intended to take away the Governor-General's powers to dismiss the cabinet and dissolve the assembly.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, once the bureaucracy entered the political arena, it was no more possible to keep it away from the corridors of power. Interestingly, Dr. Khan Sahib was also included in Bogra's second Cabinet. He had been dismissed from

the office of the Chief Minister of the N.W.F.P by the Quaid-e-Azam himself because his representative character, as well as his anti-Pakistan stance, had been repudiated by the results of the Frontier Referendum. Sikandar Mirza and Ayub Khan jointly imposed Martial Law in 1958. This was the third coup of the bureaucracy that brought an end to democracy and civilian politics. The eleven years of Ayub Khan's rule are dominated by the bureaucracy. Historically, this phase started in 1951 after the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan which paved the way for the ascendancy of Ghulam Muhammad to the office of Governor-General and reached its logical conclusion in 1958. With this two important classes of Pakistan came into conflict. However Liaquat's "death brought to surface the conflicts between those who held power (The Civil Servants) and those who wished to hold power (the politicians).⁵⁵

To what extent the bureaucracy had grown powerful as an element in the policy-making processes of Pakistan is revealed by one instance. In August 1952, General Ayub Khan directed the military attache in Washington, Major-General M.G. Jillani, to explore the prospects of a military alliance with the U.S. He had the audacity to write to him on his own initiative, perhaps with the blessings of the Governor-General but without the approval of the Cabinet or the Prime Minister. In October 1953, General Ayub Khan visited the U.S. apparently without the support of his government. In fact the Government of Pakistan "had not corresponded with the State Department at all about it".⁵⁶ While Ayub was in Washington, Ghulam Mohammad followed him to "request [for] military aid from the U.S."⁵⁷ Nazim-ud-Din could oppose this move but he had been removed in April 1953 and replaced by Bogra, a favourite of the U.S. It makes clear that the Civil-Military bureaucracy had captured power after Liaquat's assassination and bureaucrats were the *de facto* rulers of Pakistan. The position of the military establishment was further strengthened by the U.S. military assistance which expanded the size and capability of the army. By 1954, it did not require any special knowledge of astronomy to predict that Pakistan was heading for an army rule.

The Centre's interference in the provincial matters was one of the causes of bureaucracy's involvement in politics. "Assumption of administrative control of the provinces through

the frequent imposition of the Governor's rule had made provincial autonomy evanescent".⁵⁸ Obviously the Governor's rule meant the rule of the bureaucracy which led to the concentration of vast powers in the hands of officials. Thus the bureaucracy developed a taste for power. During the first seven years after independence, ten provincial Chief Ministers were dismissed and the Governor-Rules proclaimed in the provinces.⁵⁹ The reasons for these dismissals were charges of corruption, maladministration and irregularities against them. The continuous removals of the elected representatives by the League leadership itself on the basis of such allegations, contributed to the creation of a bad image of the party in the public. People started suspecting the politicians, particularly their integrity and ability to run the government. In brief, the failure of the League as a ruling party, the growing influence of the bureaucracy and the lack of political leadership generated a sense of disillusionment amongst the masses about the party. The pre-independence enthusiasm for the Muslim League was soon converted into disappointment. The general state of despondency created mainly by the unscrupulous politicians undermined the faith of people in the democratic future of Pakistan. Arnold Toynbee has rightly analysed that the:

Crucial problem of the emerging democracies in Asia was the tremendous dearth of able persons — a lack of experienced, able and above all, honest and public-spirited citizens with a working knowledge of how to run a country on modern lines.⁶⁰

Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din asserted, at the Muslim League Convention in 1952, that the Muslim League had a paid membership of well over sixty lakhs of Pakistanis who would elect their representatives to the primary League.⁶¹ Taking this statement at its face value, one could argue that mere membership was no index to the popularity of the organisation. To be a member of the organisation meant nothing more than payment of a triennial subscription of two annas in advance and signing a declaration agreeing with the aims and objects of the Muslim League which were; preservation of the sovereignty of Pakistan, promotion of democracy and the Islamic way of life, and securing independence of the judiciary etc.⁶² Anybody could agree with the aims and objects of the League but it did not mean that it

had the required popular support. The Muslim League had no programme and, therefore, its sixty-lakh membership was certainly not the criterion for support. Support was missing throughout. The Muslim League "rapidly became the monopoly of a class who used it for the realisation of its own political ambitions and the advancement of its economic interests".⁶³

The Muslim League was a body composed of big landlords and business magnates. The success of any democratic system depends upon an informed public opinion capable of making intelligent evaluation of the performance of men and their mettle. In Pakistan the moneyed class controlled votes *en bloc* in local areas. The ignorant voters were pushed to the polls by individuals, not programmes. Nawab Mamdot resigned from the Muslim League, went across to the opposition and won his election to the new Assembly as a member of the Jinnah Awami League. Any influential landlord could do the same as they held the platform of their own choosing. The Land Reforms Scheme was not implemented in West Pakistan, as it was against the interests of the landlords who dominated the League.

In any society, and particularly in democratically underdeveloped society where masses have not been mobilized to be assertive, economically powerful groups come to acquire political power because political power and economic power generally tend to be coterminous.⁶⁴ Dispersion of political power thus becomes possible only when there is wide dispersion of economic power. Traditionally there were two economically powerful groups in West Pakistan, namely, landlords and business magnates.

In East Pakistan, seventy five per cent of the land belonged to the Hindu Rajas, some of them possessing as much as 750,000 acres of land while the East Pakistan Muslim League Assembly Party was mainly drawn from the middle and professional classes.⁶⁵ Thus hegemony of the landlords in East Pakistan was broken after the passing of Land Acquisition Act in 1951. Since business groups were not strong, the political power was shifted to the professional middle class which was educated and was blessed with an egalitarian outlook.

However, the situation was different in West Pakistan where large landownership was concentrated in a few hands.

In the former Punjab, more than one-fifth of the cultivable land was owned by about one-half of one percent of the owners. In the former province of Sind, thirty percent of the total occupied area was in the hands of a bare one percent of the total occupants, possessing more than 500 acres each. In the former N.W.F.P., 0.1 percent owners, each owning more than 500 acres, were in possession of nearly one-eighth of the total area. Taking the whole of West Pakistan into consideration about 0.1 percent of the total landowners, that is, about six thousand people, owned land to the extent of five hundred acres or more.⁶⁶

In short, political hold and hegemony of the West Pakistani landlords can be gauged from the fact that eighty percent of the Assembly members in Punjab and ninety percent of them in Sind, elected in the provincial assembly elections of 1951 and 1953 respectively, belonged to the landlord families.

This phenomenon of Pakistan's sociology led to two developments during the post-partition period of political emancipation. First, the dichotomy in the political anatomy of West and East Pakistan generated tension between the two provinces. It resulted into polarisation and provincialism in the long run due to a conspicuous difference of outlook. East Pakistan, with greater political consciousness, had a democratic posture whereas West Pakistan's political culture represented vested interests. Secondly, due to the firmly established hold of the landed elite, elections became a meaningless exercise in West Pakistan. This reality of the situation caused disillusionment because people's dream of social revolution as a result of the independence did not materialise. The democratic process derives its strength from the involvement of the masses. Since the West Pakistani masses were denied participation in the power-structure mainly due to landlordism, it undermined the growth of democratic institutions and also falsified the Muslim League's charisma.

The League won the general elections in West Pakistan mainly because of the support of landlords. In East Pakistan it was crippled by the United Front of its opponents. Its Chief Minister, Nurul Amin was defeated by a twenty-eight year old student leader and the League candidates lost security deposits in sixty constituencies. Thus the "League met its nemesis in East Bengal"⁶⁷ in 1954.

The Organisation which was able to wrest from the British and the Hindus the right of self-determination for the Muslims, "was powerless to save the country from threat of oligarchy only seven years after the creation of Pakistan".⁶⁸ The League lost its popularity as it was taken over by the feudals barons, bureaucrats and the unscrupulous leaders. Its mass unpopularity gradually but firmly created general disgust in the country, and owing to its complete lack of moral values, the League as a party became inordinately weak in West Pakistan as well as in East Pakistan. The United Front successfully but not soundly filled the vacuum created by the League. Thus, the party that was a big political and social force and combated triumphantly against the British and the Hindus simultaneously for a separate homeland, was reduced, within a few years, to such feeble stuff that it failed to save Pakistan from dictatorial army rule.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Tariq Ali, *Pakistan: Military Rule or Peoples Power*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.41. Also see Talukdar Muniruz Zaman, "Group Interests in Pakistan 1947-58", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.39, 1966, p.85.
2. *Nawa-i-Waqt*, August 13, 1950 (Editorial): "The Politics of the Muslim League is meaningless. It is like a caravan which has no destination. The League has done nothing but thrown dust in the eyes of the people."
3. *Dawn*, April 2, 1954.
4. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, August 5, 1947.
5. Wayne A. Wilcox, *Pakistan: The Consolidation of a Nation*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1969, p.165.
6. Keith Callard, *Pakistan—A Political Study*, London, 1957, p.34.
7. *Ibid.*, p.37.
8. Mushtaq Ahmed, *Government and Politics in Pakistan*, Karachi, 1963, p.138.
9. *Ibid.*, p.138.
10. *Ibid.*, p.137.
11. *The Pakistan Times*, November 7, 1948.

12. *Dawn*, December 23, 1948.
13. *The Pakistan Times*, February 26, 1948.
14. *Ibid.*, September 14, 1948.
15. Keith Callard, p.38.
16. *Dawn*, October 9, 1950.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *The Pakistan Times*, March 6, 1949.
19. *Ibid.*, November 17, 1948.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1948.
22. *Ibid.*, June 2, 1948.
23. *Ibid.*, December 27, 1948.
24. *Ibid.*, January 25, 1948.
25. *Ibid.*, January 25, 1948.
26. *Dawn*, October 16, 1950.
27. *Ibid.*, October 18, 1950.
28. Z.A. Suleri, *Pakistan's Lost Years*, Karachi, p.20.
29. *Nawa-i-Waqt*, August 13, 1950.
30. Wayne A. Wilcox, p.91.
31. Suleri, p.21.
32. *Ibid.*, p.39.
33. *Ibid.*, p.40.
34. *The Pakistan Times* (Editorial), November 19, 1947.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Keith Callard, p.40.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Mushtaq Ahmad, p.138.
39. *The Daily Mashriq*, May 16, 1964: (It became a practice with the Muslim League Assembly Party to readily bestow upon any person the title of leadership who occupied the chair of Prime Minister. The party was loyal to Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din when he was the Prime Minister. When Bogra occupied the same chair, the party diverted all its devotion to him. In fact the loyalty of the party was to the chair and not to any individual).
40. Keith Callard, "The Political Stability of Pakistan", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.29, 1956, p.10.
41. Keith Callard, p.50.

42. *Ibid.*, p.49.
43. Khalid Bin Sayeed, "Collapse of Parliamentary Democracy in Pakistan", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol.13, 1959, p.389.
44. *The Pakistan Times*, January 25, 1949.
45. *Ibid.*, February 2, 1949.
46. *Ibid.*, August 14, 1950 (Independence Day Supplement).
47. There were no official estimates of the League's membership. The American Embassy showed interest in the membership strength of the League and came up with an estimate which was as follows: Karachi 1,50,000 — NWFP 4,00,000 — Sind 6,00,000 — Baluchistan 2,00,000 — Bahawalpur and other States 2,00,000. Cited in Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule, The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence*, Vanguard, Lahore, 1991, p.168 (fn). (These figures are highly exaggerated and reveal the incredibility of the American sources in Pakistan).
48. Khalid Bin Sayeed, "Political Role of Pakistan's Civil Service, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.31, 1958, p.131.
49. *Ibid.* This view is further confirmed by the correspondence of Mudie (Governor Punjab) and Cunningham (Governor, NWFP) with Mr. Jinnah, Governor-General of Pakistan. MSS Eur. F/164/4-9, and MSS Eur. D.670/23. India Office Library, London.
50. *Ibid.* p.133.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Ian Stephens, *Pakistan*, Pelican Books, 1964, p.294. Also Kabir-ud-Din Ahmad, *Break-up of Pakistan*, The Social Science Publishers, London, 1972.
53. Mustafa Chowdhry, *Pakistan: Its Politics and Bureaucracy*, New Delhi, 1988, p.101. Kabir-ud-Din Ahmad, p.101.
54. Hamid Yusuf, *Pakistan In Search of Democracy*, Lahore, 1980, p.46.
55. Robert Jr. Laporte, *Power and Privilege, Influence and Decision-Making in Pakistan*, Los Angeles, 1975, p.46.
56. Wayne A. Wilcox, "The Pakistan Coup d' Etat of 1958", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.38, 1965, pp.146-47.
57. *Ibid.*, pp.146-47.
58. Hamid Yusuf, pp.36-37.
59. In 1947 Dr. Khan Sahib of NWFP, in 1948 Khuro of Sind, in 1949 Elahi Bakhsh of Sind and Mamdot of the Punjab, in 1951 Khuro of Sind, in 1953 Daultana of the Punjab, and in 1954 Abdul Sattar Pirzada of Sind, Feroz Khan Noon of the Punjab and Fazal-ul-Haq of East Pakistan were removed.

60. Arnold J. Toynbee, "Communism and the West in Asian Countries", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, July 1961.
61. *Dawn*, October 12, 1952.
62. *Ibid.*, Aims and Objects defined at the East Pakistan Convention.
63. Mushtaq Ahmad, p.142.
64. R.M. MacIver, *The Modern State*, London, cited in Talukdar Muniruz Zaman, "Group Interests in Pakistan Politics, 1947-58", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.39, 1966. p.48.
65. Muniruz Zaman, p.84.
66. *Ibid.*, p.85. (According to one estimate, 7 per cent of the landowners in West Pakistan owned 51 per cent of the land while the upper crust of one per cent owned 30 per cent of the land. *Report of the Land Reforms Commission for West Pakistan*, Lahore, 1959. See its appendix-V.
67. Ayesha Jalal, p.189.
68. Mushtaq Ahmed, p.143.