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PROBLEM OF FEDERALISM IN PAKISTAN CONSENSUS BY COMMAND 1954-1956

The first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP), after functioning for nearly seven years, was dissolved by Governor General Ghulam Muhammad on October 24, 1954, just thirty-three days after it had adopted a Constitution Bill and the Prime Minister had promised a constitution by the end of the year. During these years, there were several deadlocks in constitution-making but except for the one of January-March 1953 which had religious overtones, all the others were due to lack of consensus on basic federal issues. There was complete accord over Pakistan becoming a federal state which was a natural consequence of the Muslim struggle for independence and the territorial composition of the state of Pakistan, but differences of a fundamental nature arose over details.¹ Pakistan was a geographically divided country with East Pakistan comprising single political unit and having nearly 56 per cent. of the country's total population and West Pakistan consisting of three provinces (Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), one chief commissioner's province (Baluchistan), ten princely states (Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Qalat, Las Bela, Makran, Kharan, Dir, Amb, Swat and Chitral) and the frontier tribal areas.

During 1947-54, a tussle went on between East and West Pakistan to secure constitutional supremacy at the centre. The Bengalis wanted dominant position because of their numerical strength without taking into consideration the nature of the federal structure. On the other hand, the Punjab-dominated leadership of West Pakistan endeavoured to resist such an eventuality. By 1954, three aspects of federalism had emerged on which consensus of the political parties was required: (i) the principle of parity at the centre between East and West Pakistan; (ii) the distribution of powers between centre and the provinces or the quantum of autonomy for East Pakistan; and (iii) the one unit of the provinces and princely states of West Pakistan.

The principle of parity was suggested during the prime ministership of Liaquat Ali Khan who obtained the consent of Bengali Muslim League MCAs (Members of the Constituent Assembly) to this principle at a formal meeting in early 1951. However he did not get sufficient time to evolve a federal formula on its basis, but all subsequent attempts at finding an agreed form of federalism were based on this principle. As far as political parties were concerned, the acceptance of parity was confined to the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and

its provincial branches. The United Front (UF), comprising the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (EPAML); Krishak Sramik Party (KSP), Nizam-i-Islam Party (NIP) and Ganatantri Dal (GD) and other East Pakistan-based parties were opposed to it and wanted to have representation for East Pakistan on the basis of population. As for the distribution of powers between the centre and the provinces, these parties favoured devolution of maximum powers to the provinces. This phenomenon was reflected in their manifestoes and when they drew up the joint twenty-one point programme for the UF, this demand was given prominence: point nineteen called for "full and complete autonomy leaving only defence, foreign affairs and currency under the jurisdiction of the centre".² Since these parties had no representation in the first CAP, they exerted pressure from outside the Assembly. The rigidity of their stand on regional autonomy was mainly responsible for the dismissal of the UF Ministry in East Pakistan in May 1954.

The idea of merging the provinces and princely states of West Pakistan into one unit was not a new one, but at this time it was put forward to make West Pakistan as a solid bloc to prevent East Pakistan from securing constitutional ascendancy at the centre. Historically, various regions of West Pakistan had been under one administration at different times. The Indus valley civilization, the Baluch confederacy and Sindhi ruling dynasties overlapped the contemporary provincial boundaries. In recent years, the regions of the Punjab and the NWFP were one administrative unit till 1901 when the NWFP was constituted into a separate province. Later on, there were proposals to remerge the two provinces. Similarly when separation of Sind was under consideration there were suggestions to amalgamate it with the Punjab or Baluchistan. Such proposals were not taken up seriously because before independence the Muslims were in favour of creating more autonomous provinces in order to have maximum possible area under purely Muslim administration. Again various proposals for a separate Muslim state in South Asia were confined to the Muslim majority areas of the north-west and closer integration of these regions.³

After independence, several administrators and politicians suggested the integration of West Pakistan on grounds of administrative convenience and economy,⁴ but no one ventured to implement it in deference to the feelings of the people of the smaller provinces of West Pakistan who did not welcome the idea of merger. However, after 1953, the integration of West Pakistan became a political necessity for the ruling elite. The prospect of Bengali domination at the centre before the East Pakistan elections of March 1954 was no more than a mere apprehension for some 'hawks' in West Pakistan but the UF's aggressive election campaign, its landslide victory and the post-election statements of its leaders made the threat real.⁵ Another dimension to this issue was Pakistan's

defence policy and its alignment with the West. In the 1950s, Pakistan's defence philosophy was based on the assumption that physically and geographically East Pakistan was indefensible and that it could be defended only from West Pakistan i.e. if India attacked and occupied East Pakistan, Pakistan should strike deep into India from the West and occupy maximum area for negotiating a bargain.⁶ This policy required that at the centre West Pakistan's position vis-a-vis East Pakistan should not be lowered because otherwise continuance of this policy might be hampered. Pakistan's pro-West alliances made similar demands on its internal structure. As far as Pakistan was concerned, in the 1950s, the United States of America and its allies attached more importance to the Baghdad Pact (after 1958 Central Treaty Organization – CENTO) than the South-east Asia Defence Treaty Organization (SEADTO, later called SEATO). Thus, for the US, West Pakistan was more significant strategically than East Pakistan and it was here that the US secured military bases. West Pakistan's dominance at the centre could be safeguarded only under the one unit scheme. Primarily for these reasons, General Muhammad Ayub Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, became interested in constitutional issues also and, in October 1954, wrote a note, "A Short Appreciation of Present and Future Problems of Pakistan", in which, among other things, he stressed the need for welding the provinces and states of West Pakistan into one unit.⁷ Those who sponsored the one-unit plan at this time were generally referred to as the 'central leadership', and included Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, Major-General Iskandar Mirza and General Ayub Khan.

Absence of consensus on the afore-mentioned federal issues contributed to the dissolution of the first CAP. The government installed after October 24, 1954, although headed by the President of the PML, Muhammad Ali of Bogra, was not a representative or party government. Since it had prominent politicians, businessmen, bureaucrats and military men, it was styled as the 'Cabinet of Talents'. General Ayub Khan joined this Cabinet as Minister for Defence and Major-General Iskandar Mirza, who had been Governor of East Pakistan since the dismissal of the UF Ministry in May, was appointed Minister for the Interior. The latter also assumed the role of official spokesman of the new regime. These appointments were indicative of the forces supporting the new regime and its policies.

From the dissolution of the CAP to the framing of a constitution in March 1956, the 'central leadership' employed all sorts of threats and coercive tactics to impose on the politicians and political parties a consensus regarding fundamental federal issues. This was done in two phases, the dividing date was the election to the second CAP. During the first phase, force was used openly to bring about agreement, and in the second phase it was only thinly veiled.

The first item on the agenda of the "Cabinet of Talents" was the one-unit scheme and in its implementation the regime apparently adhered to a constitutional course. Nearly every representative body functioning in any region of West Pakistan was consulted, but force was ever present behind the facade of constitutionalism and Iskandar Mirza's curt and categorical observations left little doubt about it. The one unit in his view would be a 'steamroller' which the 'small pebbles', i.e. the opponents of the one unit, could not stop, and on another occasion he threatened with the imposition of martial law if one unit was not implemented.⁸ It was through such tactics that consensus on the one unit issue was forged.

On November 22, 1954, Prime Minister Muhammad Ali of Bogra announced the decision of merger and defended it on grounds of economy, future economic development especially of 'neglected areas' and simplification of the constitution-making process by having just two units, East and West Pakistan. He expressed the hope that the merger would bring about a psychological change by eliminating the fear of domination by one province over the other and assuring protection to regional susceptibilities about language and culture. Various representative bodies in West Pakistan endorsed the one-unit plan before and after the Prime Minister's announcement but these decisions were not taken freely. On November 15, 1954, the NWFP Legislative Assembly took up this issue. Political atmosphere in the province was made so oppressive that Pir Aminul Hasanat of Manki Sharif, President of the NWFP Awami Muslim League and leader of the opposition group in the Provincial Assembly, appealed to the opposition parties to retire from parliamentary politics in protest and described Sardar Abdur Rashid, the Chief Minister of the NWFP, as 'an outright butcher' of democracy.⁹ During the debate and voting on the one-unit motion the opposition group boycotted the session. However, the remaining members passed the motion unanimously.¹⁰ A great deal of pressure and inducement was employed to obtain this favourable vote. Sardar Abdur Rashid later revealed that he had been allured to accept the one-unit plan by various fascinating promises including the one for the establishment of the capital of the unified province somewhere in the NWFP. Later, in March 1955, when this pressure loosened and the MPAs realised the implications of the one-unit scheme, all of them, at a secret session of the provincial Assembly, gave a mandate to Sardar Abdur Rashid to oppose the scheme whenever it came up for consideration at the higher level. Subsequent dismissal of Sardar Abdur Rashid from the chief ministership was the result of his opposition to the one-unit plan. His successor, Sardar Bahadur Khan, a Muslim Leaguer and brother of General Ayub Khan, was a staunch supporter of the plan.

The Punjab Legislative Assembly was the next to consider the one-unit

scheme. The scheme provided 40 per cent. representation for the Punjab in the unified West Pakistan legislature instead of 56 per cent. representation to which it was entitled on the basis of population. This arrangement, which was to remain effective for ten years, was meant to allay fears of Punjabi domination prevalent in the smaller provinces of West Pakistan and at the same time persuade Bengalis to accept parity at the centre in place of their rightful 56 per cent. share on population basis. The central leadership despatched Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani as the Governor of the Punjab to accomplish this task.¹¹ He did not face much difficulty in convincing the faction-ridden Punjab Assembly about the usefulness of the scheme. However, the pro-one-unit resolution in the Punjab Assembly made no mention about the condition of 40 per cent. representation and the MPAs were so keen to please the new Governor that they did not bother to inquire into the details of the scheme.¹² On November 30, 1954, the Punjab Assembly passed the resolution unanimously.

After this, the Sind Legislative Assembly took up this issue for consideration. Before October 24, 1954, serious opposition to the idea of one unit had come from the people of Sind. G.M. Syed's Sind Awami Mahaz had led the opposition, calling for radical form of autonomy, i.e. leaving only defence, foreign affairs and currency with the centre. Even 74 out of 109 MPAs, in a joint statement to the press on October 23, 1954, one day before the CAP's dismissal, had opposed the idea of one unit. Abdus Sattar Pirzada, the Chief Minister of Sind and one of the signatories of the statement by the MPAs, in an attempt to block the merger scheme, called a meeting of the Sind Assembly on November 15, 1954, to consider a resolution against one unit. The 'central leadership' was exasperated with Abdus Sattar Pirzada for supporting this move and wasted no time in dismissing his Ministry. Muhammad Ayub Khuhro, Abdus Sattar Pirzada's long-time rival, was now brought in as the Chief Minister who promised to take the Sindhis along the one-unit proposal. Known as the strongman of Sind for his ruthless tactics against the opponents, Ayub Khuhro accomplished his assignment without much sophistication. Before a discussion on the issue in the Assembly, he took some strong measures including the detention of prominent anti-one-unit politicians like Abdus Sattar Pirzada, G.M. Syed, Pir Ilahi Bakhsh, Qazi Fazlullah and Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur, then speaker of the provincial Assembly, and the banning of the influential anti-one-unit Sindhi daily, *Al-Wahid* for one year.¹³ Commenting on these measures, one opposition leader observed that Hyderabad, the provincial headquarters, was turned into "a military camp to decide a purely constitutional issue".¹⁴ When the one-unit resolution came up before the Assembly for a decision, 104 out of 109 members were present and out of them 100 voted for it.

Baluchistan, which had no regular legislature, was not ignored. Here, on behalf of the Baluchistan States Union the Khan-i-Azam signed the merger agreement. Even in the princely states such as Khairpur and Chitral the legislature and the advisory council respectively were called on to vote for one-unit proposal. In Bahawalpur the Amir, after abrogating the state constitution and dismissing the cabinet, agreed to the merger.

In December 1954, the Governor-General constituted a Council for the Administration of West Pakistan under Section 135 of the Interim Constitution. This Council, consisting of the governors and chief ministers (or equivalent where applicable) of the units, set up four sub-committees to settle problems of organization, staffing, integration of services and co-ordination of publicity. These committees finalised their work in February 1955, but before the regime could proceed further, the Sind High Court gave its ruling on Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan's petition against the Governor-General's decision about the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly; the ruling was that the Governor-General's action was unconstitutional.¹⁵ The Supreme Court, on an appeal by the federal government, decided in favour of the Governor-General basing its decision on the requirement that all laws passed by the CAP must have been assented to by the Governor-General instead of being issued just under the signatures of the President of the CAP. Encouraged by this ruling of the Supreme Court the Governor-General proceeded to implement the one-unit plan by an executive decree. On March 27, 1955, he issued the West Pakistan (Establishment) order which empowered him to set up the administration of the new province. Within a week, he appointed Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani and Dr. (Abdul Jabbar) Khan Sahib as governor and chief minister of West Pakistan respectively. The government was also planning to issue a full-fledged constitution but the Supreme Court stopped this process of legislation by executive decrees. Subsequently as a result of references made to the Supreme Court by the federal government, first a constituent convention and then the (second) Constituent Assembly of Pakistan was constituted.¹⁶

Like the first CAP, electoral college for the second CAP, was also the provincial legislatures but unlike the former seats in the latter were allocated on the basis of parity between East and West Pakistan. Therefore, the need for forging consensus of political parties on the principle of parity became imminent. The only party that had accepted parity so far was the PML which had a majority in the West Pakistan Assembly. But as far as parity was concerned West Pakistan's consent was not required since it was to gain rather lose anything by it. Under parity, East Pakistan was to surrender a substantial portion of its due representation. In the East Pakistan legislature the four party (EPAL, KSP, NIP and GD) UF, which controlled 96 per cent. of the Muslim seats, wanted representation at the centre on the basis of population.

It was obvious that any federal formula based on parity could be enforced only with the consent of the parties constituting the UF. Under normal conditions, this would have been a near impossible task but the 'central leadership' achieved this objective by allurements and threats. In May 1954, the UF Ministry had been dismissed mainly for its disagreement with the 'central leadership' over the form of federalism. Since then East Pakistan was under Governor's rule, i.e. administered directly by the centre. Organizationally, the UF was never a well-knit body and the followers of its three main leaders, A.K. Fazlul Haq, Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, clashed immediately after the electoral victory over the distribution of seats in the Fazlul Haq Ministry.¹⁷ The dismissal of the Ministry and long duration of Governor's rule in East Pakistan kept the conflict in the UF alive while the 'central leadership' exploited every opportunity to enhance it further. The antagonism between the AL and the KSP, the two major components of the UF, came to light after the dissolution of the CAP. Both the parties welcomed the dissolution order but arranged separate receptions for Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad when he visited East Pakistan.¹⁸ Later, Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy (AL) and Abu Husain Sarkar (KSP) joined the 'Cabinet of Talents' without any mutual consultation.¹⁹ This also affected their relationship. The situation reached a climax in February 1955 when the AL formally broke away from the UF.²⁰ Henceforth, the AL and the UF missed no opportunity to humiliate each other. Maulana Bhashani might have helped to keep the unity of the UF but he was out of the country since May 1954 when he went to Stockholm to attend a meeting of the Socialist International. In his absence, Iskandar Mirza dubbed him as a communist and threatened to shoot him if he returned to Pakistan.²¹ He was allowed to enter Pakistan in April 1955, under popular pressure from East Pakistani parties ranging from the AL to NIP but by then the whole political scene had changed drastically.

Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy, by accepting ministership in the 'Cabinet of Talents', had committed himself to the principles of one unit and parity. As an insider, he knew the forces working for these principles. Therefore, he undertook to secure his party's approval of the principle of parity and revealed the sort of pressure at work and the alternatives available to the politicians. In a press statement on April 24, he disclosed that in case the people did not cooperate in framing a constitution on the basis of these principles, then the country would have "a civil dictatorship with military support" or an outright martial law.²² His East Pakistani disciples accepted his reasoning in support of parity, but even then Maulana Bhashani, chief of the East Pakistan AL, obtained a written pledge from him to the effect that he would do his best to have regional autonomy for East Pakistan, as defined in the Twenty-one-Point

Programme of the UF, incorporated in the future constitution and if he failed to do so he would resign from the cabinet.²³

The other East Pakistani parties, KSP, NIP, GD, Pakistan National Congress and even the East Pakistan Muslim League denounced Suhrawardy for accepting parity and considered it detrimental to Bengali interests.²⁴ The UF resolved to fight for the rights of Bengalis in order to have representation on the basis of population.²⁵ But this opposition to parity did not prove solid and durable. The 'central leadership' won over the UF by another mechanism. Before the elections to the second CAP, Prime Minister Muhammad Ali of Bogra suddenly announced termination of Governor's rule in East Pakistan and installed a UF Ministry headed by Abu Husain Sarkar. In return for this gesture, the UF not only helped in Muhammad Ali of Bogra's election to the CAP, but also participated in the elections to the CAP on the basis of parity.

In the elections to the second CAP no single party could secure a majority; party position was: PML 25 (including one Muslim League independent), UF 16, AL 13, Noon Group 3, Communist 1, Independents 3, and Pakistan National Congress 4, Scheduled Castes Federation 3, United Progressive Parliamentary Party 2, and others 2.²⁶ This situation required formation of a coalition government. But before restoring a political government, the 'central leadership' wanted to ensure that it would be in a position to manoeuvre consensus on fundamental federal issues through the constitutional process. It had already taken certain steps in this direction including securing of seats in the CAP for its members like Major-General Iskandar Mirza, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali and Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani. Now it convened a one-day plenary session of the CAP at Murree where it conducted negotiations with the parliamentary parties and groups in secrecy on constitutional issues and coalition-forming. Controversy surrounds these negotiations. An agreement appears to have been reached between the PML and the AL and the signed document was kept by Iskandar Mirza, then Interior Minister, who later exercised influence on the two parties perhaps as a result of this document.²⁷ The agreement laid down (i) full regional autonomy; (ii) parity between East and West Pakistan in all respects; (iii) one unit in West Pakistan with the approval of the people thereof; (iv) Bengali and Urdu as the two state languages; and (v) joint electorates.²⁸

After reaffirmation of the controversial federal principles by the PML and the AL, attention was focussed on wooing the UF which, in its hostility toward the AL, was prepared to outbid the AL in the negotiations for the formation of a coalition government. While the AL was laying down strict conditions for coalescing with the PML, the UF agreed to join unconditionally.²⁹ In this situation, a PML-UF coalition was worked out. The 'central leadership' made

other important moves also. General Muhammad Ayub Khan withdrew from the cabinet although his presence was quite visible whenever doubts arose about the acceptance or continuance of the fundamental federal principles. Another move was replacement of Ghulam Muhammad, who was totally incapacitated by long illness, by Iskandar Mirza first, in August 1957, as acting, and two months later as a full-fledged, Governor-General. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali instead of Muhammad Ali of Bogra, who had outlived his utility and was regarded unreliable regarding the federal issues, was elected leader of the PML parliamentary party which kept the PML under the direct control of the 'central leadership'. These developments frustrated Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy's long cherished dream of becoming the prime minister of Pakistan and he showed his bitterness by opposing the constitutional issues in the CAP which he had accepted earlier as the Law Minister in the 'Cabinet of Talents'.

Chaudhri Muhammad Ali headed the PML-UF coalition whose primary task was to frame a constitution for Pakistan. As a first step, a One Unit Bill was introduced in the CAP in order to facilitate the work of evolving a pattern of federalism. All the major parties in the CAP had consented to the one-unit plan. Since the PML was controlled by the 'central leadership', it was supposedly the party sponsoring the plan. As for the AL, the One Unit Bill was originally drafted during the law ministership of Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy. The UF had also committed itself to the plan by joining the Chaudhri Muhammad Ali-led coalition. However, in the CAP the Bill faced opposition for unexpected reasons. Sardar Abdur Rashid who had fallen out with the 'central leadership', disclosed that one unit was part of a 'grand strategy', detailed in certain 'Secret Documents', to manoeuvre Punjabi domination in West Pakistan as well as the whole of Pakistan. The authorship of these Documents was not revealed but these were allegedly written by Main Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Daultana, former chief minister of the Punjab, who never refuted the allegation.³⁰

The opposition to the One Unit Bill inside the CAP did not carry much force since those leading the attack had at one time supported the one-unit plan. Even now they were not opposed to it in principle. They denounced it because of the way it was being rushed through the legislature and the alleged motives behind its implementation. The real opponents of the one unit were outside the CAP: former Khudai Khidmatgars led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan; NWFP Awami League led by Pir Aminul Hasanat of Manki Sharif, Sind Awami Mahaz of G.M. Syed, Sind Hari Committee of Hyder Bakhsh Jatui, Wrore Pukhtun (Pukhtun Brotherhood) of Abdus Samad Achakzai and Ustaman Gul (Peoples Party) of Prince Abdul Karim. The first two organiza-

tions set up the Anti-One-Unit Front to mobilise support against one unit and the other parties collaborated with them subsequently in this campaign. Their activities assumed more significance when, after the promulgation of the 1956 Constitution, they consolidated their energies into one party, first the Pakistan National Party and then the National Awami Party.

On September 30, 1955, the One Unit Bill was passed by a vote of 43 to 13. With the establishment of one unit on October 4, the problem of representation at the federal level became easy to solve since there was already an agreement on parity between East and West Pakistan. The only other federal issue that remained to be settled was of distribution of powers between the centre and the provinces or the quantum of autonomy for East Pakistan. The views of the UF, excluding its NIP members, and the AL on this issue were identical but their mutual hostility disabled them to unite and effectively push their point of view. Besides, one party was in the government and the other in the opposition. On the other hand, the 'central leadership' did not favour the sort of autonomy these parties were demanding. As parity and one unit, the two issues of its primary concern, had been accepted, the 'central leadership' could now confront the question of centre-province relations from a position of strength. Another constitutional issue that still awaited solution was the Islamic character of the future constitution. The 'central leadership' exploited the Islamic issue and skilfully used the strength of the Islamic forces in the country to withstand the pressure in support of the demand for regional autonomy.

On October 4, 1955, after the enactment of the One Unit Bill, the coalition party appointed a twelve-member sub-committee to evolve an agreed formula for regional autonomy and prepare a draft constitution. The regional autonomists first struggled from within the coalition and its sub-committee for the acceptance of their demands. The sub-committee submitted a draft constitutional bill which did not contain Islamic provisions of the 1954 constitution report, including the most important one relating to the barring of laws repugnant to the Quran and Sunnah.³¹ When the coalition took it up for discussion on November 4, the NIP members of the UF boycotted the meeting called for this purpose. Discussion could not proceed further. It was then decided to refer back the controversial issues to an enlarged sixteen-member sub-committee. Now the strategy was to wean away those who wanted an Islamic constitution by conceding Islamic provisions in order to turn down regional autonomy.

A week after its appointment, Prime Minister Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, presenting an interim report of the sixteen-member sub-committee to the coalition, appealed for a strong centre. Obviously the report did not provide

for regional autonomy. The UF parliamentary party, on the request of Mahmud Ali, general-secretary of the GD, discussed the interim report separately to devise its own strategy to secure autonomy. After the meeting, A.K. Fazlul Haq, leader of the UF parliamentary party, reported that he and his party were fighting "every inch" for regional autonomy.³² The coalition discussed the report for four days and then adjourned to meet on November 29 to consider the final report.

Meanwhile various tactics were employed to weaken the UF stand on regional autonomy. The outspoken protagonist for regional autonomy in the coalition, Mahmud Ali, was implicated in a police strike in Dacca and detained. Rumours were also circulated that Governor's rule might be imposed in East Pakistan where UF ministry was in office. The UF was, however, not cowed down by these tactics. It expressed confidence in Fazlul Haq and Abu Husain Sarkar, Chief Minister of East Pakistan, and demanded provision in the future constitution for (i) Bengali as one of the state languages; (ii) communications (railways, posts, tele-communications and broadcasting), trade and commerce, and industries, except the basic industries, as regional subjects; (iii) locating naval headquarters in East Pakistan; and (iv) situating 60 per cent. of the military academies in East Pakistan.³³ No progress was made and when the CAP met on November 29, amidst protest and walkout by the opposition, the Assembly was adjourned to give the coalition more time to resolve the issue of regional autonomy. The deadlock continued. On December 17, the Prime Minister sounded a 'warning' that if no solution was discovered, civilian rule in Pakistan might end and armed forces might take over.³⁴ After this warning the coalition worked out a compromise formula speedily and a constitution bill was published on January 5, 1956 which was presented to the CAP four days later.

The East Pakistan AL and the GD, whose general secretary had been released on January 4, organized the campaign against the draft constitution for its not providing regional autonomy as defined in the Twenty-one Point Programme. January 6 was observed as a 'protest day' by these parties. Addressing a meeting on that day, Maulana Bhashani demanded a constitution based on the Twenty-one Point Programme and termed any deviation from it as a betrayal of East Pakistan.³⁵ He expressed his anger and frustration at another meeting on January 15, where he observed that in case the centre did not meet the demand for regional autonomy, East Pakistan "would have to think in terms of secession".³⁶ The movement against the draft constitution was successfully countered by the religious parties who wanted its acceptance because its Islamic provisions satisfied them. This movement was centred in East Pakistan where the draft was likely to face opposition. The religious

parties first sponsored an All-Party Islamic Front and then an All-Parties Islamic Constitution Committee. Their campaign for the draft overshadowed the one organized by the regional autonomists. The regional autonomists, therefore, failed to achieve their objectives. The federal principles set forth earlier thus became part of the 1956 constitution.

NOTES

1. For a discussion of these aspects, see the author's articles, "Problem of Federalism in Pakistan: The preindependence Dimensions", in the *Scrutiny* (Islamabad), January-June 1980, pp. 71-82; and "Problem of Federalism in Pakistan: The Continuing Debate, 1947-1954", in the *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* (Lahore), October 1981.
2. See the text of the Twenty-one Point Programme in M. Rafique Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan, 1947-1958*, Islamabad, 1976. Appendix I.
3. For a few of such proposals, see Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan*, Lahore, 1963.
4. For details, see Herbert Feldman, *A Constitution for Pakistan*, Karachi, 1956.
5. See Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy's statement in "Pakistan Problems: of Partition", *Round Table*, vol. xlv, no 176 (September 1954), p. 400. After the elections, he had observed that "East Bengal would henceforth rule Pakistan via Karachi".
6. For instance, see General Ayub Khan's statement in the *Dawn* (January 18, 1955) in which he remarked that the "defence of East Pakistan did not lie in that part of the country. It was not defensible even if the entire military strength was thrown there, so long as the western base was not strong".
7. For full text see Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends not Masters*, London, 1967, pp. 186-91.
8. *Dawn*, February 24, April 21, 1955.
9. *Ibid.*, September 6, 13, 1954.
10. *Ibid.*, November 16, 1954.
11. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1954.
12. *Ibid.*, December 1, 1954.
13. *Ibid.*, November 13, 1954; and William S. Metz, *Pakistan: Government and Politics*, Berkeley, 1956, p. 144.
14. *Dawn*, December 14, 1954. Statement by Abdul Majid Sindhi.
15. For details about these cases, see Sir Ivor Jennings, *Constitutional Problems in Pakistan*, London, 1957.
16. *Dawn*, May 11, 1955.
17. *Ibid.*, April 4, 5, 1954.
18. *Ibid.*, November 12, 13, 15, 1954.
19. *Ibid.*, December 14, 21, 1954 and January 5, 1955.
20. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1955.
21. *Ibid.*, November 15, 1954.
22. *Ibid.*, April 24, 1955. Suhrawardy's statement.
23. Maulana Bhashani released this document to the press on April 6, 1957.
24. *Dawn*, April 22, 23, 1955.
25. *Ibid.*, April 30, 1955.
26. *Ibid.*, June 22, 23, 1955. The remaining eight seats allocated to the princely states were filled in by rulers' nominees.
27. *Ibid.*, August 11, 1955. See also Firoz Khan Noon's statement in *ibid.*, October 21, 1956 and Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy's in *ibid.*, December 6, 1957.

28. *Ibid.*, August 11, 1955 and also see Firoz Khan Noon's statement in *ibid.*, October 21, 1956.

29. *Ibid.*, August 10, 1955. Abu Husain Sarkar's statement; and "Pakistan: Power Politics and the Constitution-making", p. 75.

30. For full text of these documents, see Rizwan Malik, "The Politics of One Unit, 1955-58", unpublished M.Phil. thesis, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, 1978.

31. *Dawn*, November 5, 7, 1955.

32. *Ibid.*, November 16, 17, 18, 19, 1955.

33. *Ibid.*, November 28, 29, 1955.

34. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1955; and "Pakistan: Last Stage of Constitution-Making", *Round Table*, vol. xlvii, no. 182 (March 1956), p. 178.

35. *Pakistan Observer*, January 7, 1956.

36. "Last Stage of Constitution-Making", p. 179.