

PAKISTAN IN CRUCIAL YEARS 1956-58

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The period between 1956 and 1958 was extremely significant in Pakistani politics, not only because of the serious developments that took place during these years, but also because it went a long way in affecting the later course of events. Pakistan was able to frame its constitution in 1956 and the parliamentary system of Government was experimented for the following two and a half years. This period, however, was marked with serious unrest and instability.

Despite the fact that Pakistan had had a Constitution of her own since 1956, there was hardly any healthy change visible in the political scene and chaos continued as before.¹ Intrigues and conspiracies, strikes and demonstrations and change of governments in quick succession were some of the characteristic features of the two and half years following the promulgation of the Constitution. Party affiliations were changed and crossings of the floor were not infrequent. There was neither any political party nor any leader who really cared to give Pakistan a congenial and healthy atmosphere for nation-building.

Major-General Iskandar Mirza, who succeeded Ghulam Muhammad as Governor-General on 5 August, 1955, was elected the President of Pakistan by the Constituent Assembly under Article 222 of the Constitution and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, who had succeeded Muhammad Ali of Bogra as Prime Minister on 8 August, 1955, continued in his office. These were, however, provisional arrangements pending the general elections and therefore the composition and membership of the National² or the Provincial Assemblies remained unchanged.

Chaudhri Muhammad Ali had hardly assumed the office of the Prime Minister under the Constitution when he developed serious differences with the Muslim League, the party to which he owed his premiership, over the position of Dr. Khan Sahib, the Chief Minister of West Pakistan. In the West Pakistan elections held in January 1956, the Muslim League emerged as the single majority party in the legislature with 245 members in a House of 340³. Although the election results left little doubt that the Government would be formed by the Muslim League, yet the party was affiliated with serious lack of

organisation and discipline and was divided into several factions.⁴ This enabled the ruling clique with Chaudhri Muhammad Ali as one of the central figures, to impose dictatorial decisions and disregard democratic traditions. One of such decision was to ask Dr. Khan Sahib, who had the support of only 57 members⁵ of the Legislature, to continue as the Chief Minister.

Dr. Khan Sahib was not only a non-Leaguer but had also bitterly opposed the Muslim League in its struggle for Pakistan. The Muslim League on the other hand claimed that she alone had the right to form the government in West Pakistan. To assert this right, the Muslim League Assembly party held a meeting on 31 March, 1956, at Lahore, under the chairmanship of Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, the President of the Muslim League, and nominated Sardar Bahadur Khan as its candidate for Chief Ministership.⁶ Consequently Sardar Bahadur Khan requested Nawab Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, the Governor of the Province to remove Dr. Khan Sahib and appoint him as the Chief Minister.⁷ This led to a serious situation for "on the one side was a parliamentary majority which demanded its democratic and constitutional right to form the cabinet and on the other hand was a nominated Chief Minister who wanted to stay in power"⁸ However, neither the Governor nor the authorities at the Centre showed any inclination to accede to the pressure exerted by the Muslim League. The reasons advanced by Gankowsky to explain this situation may be quoted at some length:

When mass discontent with the policy of Chaudhri Muhammad Ali's government was growing the ruling circles considered it expedient to keep Khan Sahib at the head of the government of West Pakistan; for of all the politicians who had carried through the unification of West Pakistan Khan Sahib had the greatest influence in the parts of the country inhabited by Pakhtuns. By retaining Khan Sahib as Chief Minister, the Centre and the groups backing it hoped to weaken the opposition to the integrated province and to consolidate their own power.⁹

Dr. Khan Sahib on 23 April announced the formation of a new party called the Republican Party. This party came into being solely because "of the splits within the Muslim League",¹⁰ and therefore as soon as it was formed a number of Muslim Leaguers were attracted to its fold.

Although the Muslim League failed to get its Chief Minister in West Pakistan, it did get her revenge. It broke an Independence Day meeting in August, 1956 addressed by Chaudhri Muhammad Ali,¹¹ and chased him to his residence with the demand to expel a police officer of British origin, Grace by name, from the country who, it was alleged had caused the death of a person named Memon, during an investigation at a police station.¹² In the meantime, opposition to his pro-West foreign policy, more particularly his stance with regard to the Suez crisis, had become very embarrassing. Consequently, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali "threw up his office though he still commanded majority and could have secured a vote of confidence from the National Assembly".¹³ On 8 September he also resigned from the membership of the Muslim League Working Committee.

Muhammad Ali's resignation was not the fall of a person; it was rather the destruction of the party which had led the Indian Muslims to independence and provided them with a homeland of their own. But the League leadership was itself largely responsible for this catastrophe, because, as pointed out by Khalid bin Sayeed:

It had failed to transform itself into a political party with popular support. During the years since independence the main interests of the Leaguers had been to retain power.¹⁴

Muhammad Ali was succeeded by H.S. Suhrawardy of the Awami League on 12 September 1956. He headed a coalition government of the Republican Party and the Awami League. With Iskandar Mirza as the President and Suhrawardy as the Prime Minister the new partnership was well qualified "to give the country a resolute leadership"¹⁵. It raised hopes for the restoration of political stability lacking since the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan. Suhrawardy was, moreover, "one of the few leaders in Pakistan who could make an impression both in East and West Pakistan"¹⁶. But contrary to all expectations, the policy which Suhrawardy's government pursued in relation to questions of national importance caused intense discontent among the political circles in both wings of the country.

Before coming into power the leaders of both the coalition parties, namely the Awami League and the Republican party, with Suhrawardy as their chief spokesman, had at numerous public meetings attended by thousands of people strongly criticized Muhammad Ali's foreign policy. They had been supporting Egypt in her struggle against Great Britain and France, and on this question had understandably increased their popularity among the masses. But the fact of the matter was that they were not sincere in criticising the government. It was simply used as a lever to give Muhammad Ali and his Government a bad name. This is evidenced by the fact that Suhrawardy after assuming office did not bring any change in the foreign policy pursued by his predecessor. Suhrawardy even did not alter the policy of commitment to military pacts. Here, it may be recalled that during the premiership of Muhammad Ali, Pakistan delegation to the meeting of the signatories of the Baghdad Pact in August 1956, had supported an invitation to the United States to join the Pact. Interestingly enough, a similar invitation was extended to the United States during the premiership of Suhrawardy also.¹⁷ This policy was in clear contradiction to Suhrawardy's earlier commitments and thus came in for severe criticism by some of his own partymen. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, the party President, as a protest against Suhrawardy's foreign policy, resigned from his office on 9 March, 1957.¹⁸ This was followed by the resignation of nine members of the Working Committee on 31 March,¹⁹ and the expulsion of Mr. Ali Ahad, Party's Organising Secretary, who had published a pamphlet condemning the military pacts. But despite these serious developments "Suhrawardy's foreign policy was endorsed" by the Awami

League council on 13 June 1957.²⁰ At this juncture Maulana Bhashani even renounced his membership of the Awami League.

In addition to the difficulties created by the absence of a consensus within his own party on the question of foreign policy there were two other serious issues of an internal character on which Suhrawardy was seriously criticized. Firstly, Suhrawardy did not take any positive steps towards the holding of the general election which Chaudhri Muhammad Ali had "solemnly pledged to hold as soon as the technical and legal matters had been completed".²¹ And secondly, the anti-One Unit movement was quickly gaining momentum and his government hardly paid any attention to it.

In October 1956, a number of political and religious leaders formed themselves into a group called the Islam Mahaz. The group stood for the introduction of separate electorates and launched a campaign to press this demand. It was headed by a special committee with Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Maulana Abul Ala Maududi and M.A.H. Isphahani as its leaders.²² A few months later Maulana Bhashani made an attempt to unite the progressive elements against Suhrawardy's government. He toured West Pakistan in April 1957 and discussed the possibility of forming a progressive party with the leaders who favoured radical changes in domestic and foreign policy. As a result of these efforts a conference was held at Dacca on 24 and 25 July 1957, which gave birth to the National Awami Party. Its formation, "was an event of historic import".²³ It stood for the establishment of a democratic state free from all feudal and imperialistic features, implementation of agrarian reforms, dismemberment of One-unit in West Pakistan, grant of full autonomy to the provinces, and an improvement in the living conditions of the working people.²⁴ It will thus be seen that while the Republican Party had come into being mainly due to the rights within the Muslim League, the National Awami Party owed its existence to the differences within the Awami League. Besides the factors mentioned above, there were other reasons which led to the fall of Suhrawardy.

Realizing that the Muslim Leaguers took undue advantage of the discontent among the representatives of the smaller provinces, the Republicans decided to take the initiative to defeat the designs of the former.²⁵ On 15 September, 1957, the Republican Party entered into an agreement with the National Awami Party pledging its support for a resolution in the National as well as in the Provincial Assemblies which would call for the reorganization of West Pakistan by setting up "a zonal federation composed of autonomous provinces". The signatories to the agreement included Sardar Abdur Rashid, the Chief Minister of West Pakistan, Malik Firoz Khan Noon, leader of the Republican Central Parliamentary Party, and Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, and G.M. Syed, of the National Awami Party. On 17 September the following resolution²⁶ was passed in the West Pakistan Legislative Assembly:

This Assembly recommends to the Provincial Government to communicate the views of this Assembly to the Parliament that the Province of West Pakistan be reconstituted as a sub-Federation with four or more fully autonomous provinces.²⁷

It was passed by 170 to 4 votes, with 121 abstentions. The Muslim Leaguers, "did not participate either in the debate on the resolution or in the voting . . . forgetting that it was they who had initiated the move for the dis-establishment of the One Unit."²⁸

On 23 September Iskandar Mirza issued a statement declaring:

The recent recommendatory resolution passed by the West Pakistan Assembly regarding the reconstitution of the province of West Pakistan has caused considerable apprehensions among the people and the official classes. The Prime Minister [Mr. Suhrawardy] and I have consulted together on the problems raised by it, and we are of the view that there should be no tampering with the Constitution on such issues at the present juncture.

The integrity of Pakistan can only be maintained if we have stability, and we can have stability only if we have General Elections. General Elections must, therefore, be held in 1958, and as a corollary to this, these Elections must be held under the present Constitution.²⁹

H.S. Suhrawardy in a broadcast the same night said that any dismemberment of the One Unit would entail radical changes in the administrative and legislative organs of West Pakistan and in various other spheres which would make it impossible to hold General Elections in 1958, and possibly "not until 1960" and concluded:

I maintain that the future of West Pakistan and indeed the fate of Pakistan, must be decided by the chosen representatives of the people, and not be at the mercy of political manoeuvrings and political ambitions and unholy alliances. There should be no amendment in the Constitution in such radical times, until the General Elections, after which the new legislature may make what amendments it considers requisite.³⁰

It was at this juncture that Daultana with a view to defeating the Republicans, secretly³¹ assured Suhrawardy that if the Republicans withdrew their support to his Ministry he could safely count on the support of the Muslim League. Consequently Suhrawardy started "a whirlwind tour of West Pakistan, in a tearing campaign against the Republican Party."³² In a series of speeches at Lahore, Peshawar, Abbotabad, and several other cities, he used strong language against the Republican Party.³³ Naturally, the Republican Party could not take it lying down. On 10 October, it withdrew its support to Suhrawardy. On the other hand, Daultana did not fulfil the promise and consequently Suhrawardy resigned on 12 October.

The new coalition government, formed on 16 October, headed by Ismail Ibrahim Chundrigar, a Muslim Leaguer, had the support of Krishak Sramik Party³⁴, the Republican Party, and the Nizam-i-Islam Party³⁵. Its tenure of office was, however, short lived and it could not last beyond a period of two months. The main factor which led to the fall of Chundrigar's government was the electorate issue. Being a Muslim Leaguer he supported the introduction of separate electorates³⁶, whereas the Republicans, the major partners in the coalition, were in favour of joint electorates.

Malik Firoz Khan Noon was the last Prime Minister of Pakistan under the Constitution of 1956. He was a Republican leader and was supported by the Awami League. With a view to defeating the Muslim League, "the Awami League had offered help to the Republican Party even without accepting ministries in the new Cabinet."³⁷ The Parliamentary support enjoyed by the Noon cabinet was more or less the same as that of the Suhrawardy's cabinet. As the Awami League had extended an unconditional support to the Republican Party, the new cabinet was by and large a Republican cabinet. Firoz Khan Noon held office from December 1957 to October 1958. But this entire period was marked by growing economic and political crises. The already existing discontentment in East Pakistan manifested itself in a new upsurge for provincial autonomy. In West Pakistan the anti-One Unit campaign also gained momentum. The National Awami Party became the chief spokesman of this twin movement and its membership began to grow rapidly.³⁸ The ruling circles endeavouring to remain in power discarded the principles of parliamentary government and resorted to oppressive measures.

While the opposition to Firoz Khan Noon's Government was on the rise, the Muslim League was re-emerging as a political force. The Government with a view to overcoming opposition banned all military and para-military organizations. This clearly implied a ban on the Muslim League National Guards. The Muslim League reacted sharply and retaliated through protest meetings and demonstrations which were quickly dispersed by strong and ruthless police action.³⁹ The situation in the country was fast deteriorating and called for a radical approach to solve the problems. There was a widespread demand for the holding of general elections. The Government acceded to the popular demand and decided to hold elections in the autumn of 1958. The elections were however postponed until 15 February, 1959, because "the East Pakistanis wanted it on grounds of uncertain climatic conditions"⁴⁰. This explanation was hardly acceptable to the people and it caused "an out-burst of anger and deteriorated the situation further".⁴¹

It may be recalled that the Awami League had joined hands with the Republican without receiving any share in the cabinet. In view of the severe opposition from outside and possible threat of losing the support of the Awami League, the latter was offered positions in the ministry in October, 1958, and it was intended to raise the total number of ministers from 14 to 26.⁴² The device was however doomed to failure by the non-acceptance of this offer by Suhrawardy, who was dissatisfied with the number of ministries offered to him. The Awami League, therefore, withdrew its support and thus precipitated the downfall of the fourth coalition ministry. On 7 October, President Mirza proclaimed 'Martial Law' and suspended the Constitution. Thus, a Constitution which was framed after a lapse of nine precious years met its death due to internal strife and political intrigues.

This was, in short, the political situation at the Centre. A few words may

now be said about the provincial political developments. It may be mentioned here that the various provinces and states in the western wing of Pakistan were amalgamated together in October 1955 to form a single province to be called West Pakistan.⁴² The scheme for the establishment of this single province of West Pakistan was initiated in the Punjab Legislative Assembly and supported by the North West Frontier Province Legislative Assembly. The Legislature of Sind had however, bitterly opposed the scheme. In a joint statement 74 out of 110 members of the Sind Provincial Legislature supported their Chief Minister Abdus Sattar Pirzada who stood against the scheme in its entirety. This opposition however was overcome soon after and this was made possible by replacing Abdus Sattar Pirzada and appointing Muhammad Ayub Khuhro as the Chief Minister. Consequently, the same Sind Legislature which had earlier opposed the 'One Unit' scheme approved it⁴³ and a single unit of West Pakistan was created on 5 October, 1955. But nevertheless it continued to be resented by several political forces operating in the country, because, according to them, it was an artificial creation and had been imposed from above. The Red Shirts, Wrore Pushtoon, Sind Awami Mahaz, the Hari Committee, Ostoman Gull of Baluchistan, and Azad Pakistan Party led by Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, were the strongest pleaders of the abrogation of One Unit. With a view to strengthening this demand the above mentioned groups organized themselves into Pakistan National Party in December, 1956.⁴⁴ The Party held a two day meeting at Hyderabad in February 1957 and passed the following resolution:

It is resolved that the National Assembly and the West Pakistan Assembly be requested to take early steps to amend the Constitution of the Republic so as to reestablish the existing eleven divisions of West Pakistan into four Provinces (Sind, Baluchistan, Frontier and the Punjab), ensuring full provincial autonomy to the above Provinces as conferred by the Constitution and simultaneously to constitute a zonal federation of the Provinces of West Pakistan.⁴⁵

The intensity and magnitude of the opposition to the continued existence of West Pakistan as One Unit was so great that even the Muslim League, its chief advocate and creator, had to take note of it. Hoping to revive its influence and prestige and to regain power the Muslim League Parliamentary Party tabled a motion in the West Pakistan Legislative Assembly demanding the undoing of One Unit and the establishment of a zonal-federation. At this stage, many of the Republicans also changed their stand regarding the One Unit. When the debate on the aforementioned motion took place on 20 March 1957, 30 Republicans joined hands with the opposition.⁴⁶ The Republican Party at this stage "advised the Governor to prorogue the Assembly, dissolve the House, and hold fresh elections."⁴⁷ The Governor, Mushtaq Ahmad instead "advised the President to impose the Governor's rule in the Province".⁴⁸ This was accordingly done on 21 March. On 13 April the national assembly approved it by 47 to 21 votes.⁴⁹ The Governor's rule, however, came to an end on 16 July, with the swearing in of Sardar Abdur Rashid as the Chief Minister.

It was expected that the new arrangement would reduce the political strife but it did not. On the contrary, the recently formed National Party which clearly stood for the dismemberment of 'One Unit', accelerated its activities, and the Government totally failed to maintain law and order effectively. Ultimately in March, 1958, Sardar Abdul Rashid was replaced by Nawab Muzaffar Ali Qizilbash as the Chief Minister of West Pakistan. In September another shock was administered to the Republican Party when many of its members "in utter disregard of the advice from the party's central leadership"⁵⁰ attended an anti-One Unit convention at Hyderabad on 22 September 1958. The convention was held "to finally devise ways and means to give a death blow to the one unit set up before the general elections."⁵¹

In the meantime great confusion continued to prevail inside the West Pakistan Legislative Assembly. At times it was even difficult to determine on a particular day as to which party was in a majority and where did it stand on a particular issue. To give only one instance:

On May 31, Budget was passed by a clear majority. At one stage of voting, when there was some confusion as to who had won, Mr. Daultana with some of his eminent colleagues staged a 'Bhangra' dance on the floor of the House, under the impression that his party had won. Ultimately it was established that they had lost.⁵²

The situation in East Pakistan was equally grave. Although the Bangalis were seemingly united in their denunciation of the alleged hegemony of West Pakistanis, "they were divided into two rival groups led by Suhrawardy and Fazlul Haq".⁵³ These two leaders headed the Awami League and the Krishak Sramik Party respectively. At the time of elections in the spring of 1954; they had formed a United Front to oust the Muslim League. After administering a crushing blow to the Muslim League they parted company on the question of distribution of ministries. In view of this disunity it was not possible to form a stable and effective government. The United Front was however able to form a government on 3 April, 1954 with Fazlul Haq as the Chief Minister. The Front remained in power only for a short period of two months and went out of office on 30 May, 1954,⁵⁴ on the imposition of the Governor's rule which remained in force until June 1955.⁵⁵

After the withdrawal of the Governor's rule the United Front (minus the Awami League) headed by A.H. Sarkar again came to power. However, by the time the Constitution was implemented, a serious split had already appeared within the Front. As a result, the various components of the United Front fell apart and by March 1956, the Ganatantari Dal,⁵⁶ the Pakistan National Congress,⁵⁷ the Scheduled Castes Federations,⁵⁸ and the United Progressive Party⁵⁹ had left and only the Krishak Sramik and the Nizam-i-Islam Party remained in the Front. In view of an imminent collapse of the government of A.H. Sarkar, Governor's rule was imposed on 26 May.⁶⁰ The Provincial Governor, Fazlul Haq, made several attempts to form a new Government under the leadership of the United Front, but he did not succeed. Ultimately, on 4 September, 1956, Ata-ur-Rahman Khan of the Awami League formed a

Government which consisted of the breakaway parties of the United Front. It enjoyed the support of some 200 members in a House of 309.⁶¹

With the coming of Suhrawardy as the Prime Minister in September 1956, East Pakistan succeeded in extracting certain concessions. The provincial authorities were given greater powers in economic matters. A State corporation for jute trade was set up and State allocations for the development of power resources, industry and transport were enhanced. Import policy, too, was readjusted in favour of East Pakistan.⁶² These measures however failed to satisfy the general mass of population, because they benefited only the commercial bourgeoisie and big landlords.⁶³ This led to a strife within the Awami League. The left-wing leaders represented by Maulana Bhashani demanded radical agrarian reforms, abolition of land-lordism and feudalism, solution of the food crisis and an overall improvement of the standard of living of the masses.⁶⁴ They were later on supported by the Gantantari Dal and the Pakistan National Party.⁶⁵

In the meantime the demand for full provincial autonomy also gained strength. A motion was tabled in the Provincial Assembly on 2 April, wherein "full autonomy to East Pakistan without delay"⁶⁶ was demanded leaving only defence, foreign affairs, and currency with the Centre. The demand was strongly criticized by the Central Home Minister, Ghulam Ali Talpur, who said that it was "a great threat to the Unity, nay to the very existence of Pakistan . . . the Central Government under no circumstances, will allow this move to succeed".⁶⁷ This caught Suhrawardy in a difficult position. He had to either brush aside the demand for full provincial autonomy and lose the support of the left-wing leaders of the Awami League or to accept it and risk his own position as the Prime Minister. He however chose to remain in office and face the consequences. Meanwhile, Maulana Bhashani, the founder President of the National Awami Party was able to attract many prominent leaders of the Awami League to his newly formed party with the result that the position of the Awami League was seriously weakened in the province. It was now completely at the mercy of Hindu members of the Assembly who demanded a high price for their cooperation. In December, 1957 the army started a "close door operation" and sealed the borders to check smuggling of the foodgrain and other necessities of daily life. This caused deep resentment among the Hindus who were reported to have smuggled goods worth Rs. 800 million out of East Pakistan.⁶⁸

The Hindu members of the Provincial Assembly therefore threatened to withdraw their support to the Government if the anti-smuggling drive was not called off.⁶⁹ The Awami League cabinet — thus clearly confronted a vote of no confidence. Since it wanted to retain the seat of authority until the forthcoming elections at all costs, it approached the government at the Centre and got the army operation against smuggling stopped.⁷⁰ Non the less, Ataur-Rahman's cabinet was not destined to last long. He was dismissed by the

Governor, Fazlul Haq, on 31 March 1958. Whether the dismissal "was the manifestation of partisan spirit or his genuine conviction that the latter had lost majority in the Assembly, one could only hazard a guess".⁷¹ According to one report, the Krishak Sramik Party wanted to defeat the cabinet and was desperately looking for an opportunity. On March 30 when the Finance Bill was being discussed in the House, it introduced an amendment to the effect that instead of passing the Bill it should be deferred and public opinion be ascertained on it. The National Awami Party, on the other hand proposed that it should be referred to a select committee. The latter amendment was approved by a narrow margin and the question of approving the Bill was deferred until 30 April. The Governor took the plea, and Ata-ur-Rahman was accordingly informed, that since his ministry had failed to get the Finance Bill passed by 31 March (i.e. the end of the financial year) he had, therefore, no right to continue in office and therefore must tender his resignation.

Within the next few hours of the despatch of the letter Ata-ur-Rahman was dismissed. In the meantime Ata-ur-Rahman was in constant contact with Suhrawardy on telephone at Karachi and kept him informed of the latest developments. Suhrawardy in order to save the Awami League cabinet prevailed upon the Prime Minister Malik Firoz Khan Noon to dismiss Fazlul Haq. The dismissal order was accordingly conveyed to him but since the new Governor could not take the oath of office before 1 April, Fazlul Haq exercising his powers as Governor installed Abu Hussain Sarkar, the leader of the Krishak Sramik Party as the new Chief Minister. When on April 1, the Chief Secretary took over as the officiating Governor his first act was to dismiss Abu Hussain Sarkar and within minutes Ata-ur-Rahman appointed the new Chief Minister.⁷²

On 18 June the Awami League was defeated as 10 out of 29 Hindu members withdrew their support from it without giving any reason. As a result, the Krishak Sramik Party with Sarkar as Chief Minister came into power.⁷³ But within three days the Governor's rule was re-imposed⁷⁴ which remained in force for a period of two months. In August 1958, Awami League again came into power and continued in office until the imposition of Martial Law in October 1958.

On 20 September, a no-confidence motion against the Speaker was moved in the House for his alleged support to the opposition. At this stage feelings ran high and the members freely exchanged blow. In the total disorder marked with violence, the Speaker was badly assaulted and he later succumbed to his injuries. Three days later when the Deputy Speaker appeared to conduct the Assembly proceedings, rowdiness was again repeated and he was also assaulted.

Thus, at the end of the first decade of its life, "Pakistan was on a cauldron of political furor."⁷⁵ Loyalties of the leaders to parties were never very strong but were now becoming distressingly weak. Social welfare and economic

well being of the people were utterly disregarded. Bribery, corruption, nepotism, favouritism, provincialism and exploitation reigned supreme and unchecked. The situation had become so alarming that even the members of the Armed Forces could not remain indifferent to the growing political instability. They also became "restless as they saw graft and greed subvert Jinnah's ideals".⁷⁶ The successive governments that came and went, both at the Centre and at the provinces had assumed a character as if "they were neither governments of the people nor for the people, nor by the representatives of the people".⁷⁷ Attention had concentrated upon individuals virtually to the exclusion of any considerations of political ethics or regard for party discipline. In fact it appeared that "few men or groups trusted one another".⁷⁸ There was "no single social, political or economic force strong enough to bind the numerous diverse people into a single national unit or make them into a homogenous whole".⁷⁹ In the words of a well known political commentator:

The Parties in power liberally doled out licences to Assembly members who were suspected of crossing the floor and joining the opposite camp. Paradoxically enough, these barter deals did not prolong the life of the ministry, it only raised the market price of the members who blackmailed both the ruling party and the opposition expected to become the Government any day.⁸⁰

It would therefore not be wrong to concede that "the building of the National Assembly was occupied by businessmen rather than politicians".⁸¹

But matters did not end here. Corruption could be found in other shapes and forms as well. For example, "a sum of Rs. 1 lakh was incurred on furnishings of the Ministers' residences during the year 1956-57 alone." Further, "in Karachi alone as many as 34 cars were imported by the Government servants in the first half of 1957, besides refrigerators, silver ware, cooking ranges, radiograms, sanitary ware, tiles, etc. Some officers even imported two cars in the same month".⁸²

Pakistan groaned under these frustrating and humiliating conditions during this period and suffered at the hands of the Muslim League, Awami League, Republican and different varieties of their coalitions but none of these arrangements could really find roots among the masses.⁸³ The nation was in a state of despondency and despair. In West Pakistan "intrigues and corruption had rocked one provincial government after another," whereas in East Pakistan "violence and abuse were used to settle personal or party differences in the Assembly".⁸⁴

NOTES

1. D.P. Singhal, *Pakistan*, New Jersey, 1972, p. 88.
2. The Constituent Assembly was henceforth to be known as the National Assembly of Pakistan.
3. Z.A. Suleri, *Pakistan: Lost Years*, Lahore, n.d., p. 108.
4. Yu. Y. Gankowsky, and Polonakaya, *A History of Pakistan*, Lahore, n.d., p. 269.
5. *Ibid.* p. 270.

6. *Dawn*, 1 April, 1956.
7. *Ibid.*, 9 April, 1956.
8. G.W. Chaudhry, "Constitution of Pakistan", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XXIX, No.3, Sept. 1956, p. 251, quoted in H. Hussain, *Politics and Peoples Representation in Pakistan*, Lahore, 1972, p.54.
9. Gankowsky, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
10. George M. Kahin, ed., *Major Governments in Asia*, London, 1963, p. 491.
11. *Dawn*, 16 August, 1956.
12. Suleri, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
13. I.H. Qureshi, gen.ed., *A Short History of Pakistan*, Vol. IV, Karachi, 1967, p. 257.
14. K.B. Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, Boston, 1967, p.83.
15. I. Stephens, *Pakistan*, London, 1967, p. 246.
16. G. W. Chaudhry, *Democracy in Pakistan*, Dacca, 1963, p. 112.
17. *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 25 April, 1957.
18. *Morning News*, Karachi, 20 March, 1957.
19. *Ibid.*, 1 April, 1957.
20. *Ibid.*, 14 June, 1957.
21. *Morning News*, Dacca, 22 April, 1956.
22. *Pakistan Times*, 4 and 21 October, 1956.
23. A. Ghosh, *Pakistan Portent*, New Dehli, 1958, p. 14.
24. *Pakistan Times*, 28 July, 1957.
25. M.S.H. Mahmood, *A Nation is Born*, Lahore, n.d., p. 73.
26. The resolution was introduced by G.M. Bhurgari.
27. Mahmood, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
29. *Dawn*, 24 September, 1957.
30. *Ibid.*
31. A photocopy of the handwritten letter from Daultana to Suhrawardy to this effect can be seen in Mahmood *op. cit.*, p. 73.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
33. S.N. Ahmad, *Martial Law Se Martial Law Tak*. Lahore, 1965, p. 484.
34. This party was formed by A.K. Fazlul Haq in 1953.
35. This party came into existence in 1954.
36. M.F.K. Noon, *From Memory*, Lahore, 1966, p. 272.
37. G.W. Chaudhry, *Democracy*, pp. 114-15.
38. *Pakistan Times*, 15 and 17 February, 1958.
39. *Dawn*, 21 and 24 September, 1958.
40. *Pakistan Times*, 4 September, 1958.
41. Ghosh, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
42. *Dawn*, 3 October, 1958.
43. Gankowsky, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
44. The party was later merged with the National Awami Party in July, 1957.
45. *Dawn*, 19 February, 1957.
46. *Pakistan Times*, 21 March, 1957.
47. Mahmood, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Times of India*, Bombay, 23 September, 1958.
51. *Pakistan Sentinel*, Karachi, 23 September, 1958.
52. M.S.H., Mahmood, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
53. K.B. Sayeed, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

54. The Governor's rule was imposed because the Government failed to maintain law and order in the Province. For details of lawlessness see Gankowsky, *op. cit.*, p. 201-5.
55. N. Zakaria, *Pakistani Idaray* (Urdu), Lahore, 1972, p. 46.
56. *Dawn*, 4 January, 1956.
57. *Ibid.*, 10 January, 1956.
58. *Ibid.*, 12 January, 1956.
59. *Ibid.*, 4 March, 1956.
60. *Pakistan Times*, 27 May, 1956.
61. *Pakistan Times*, 5 September, 1956.
62. *Ibid.*, 5 January, 1957.
63. Gankowsky, *op. cit.*, p. 289.
64. *Pakistan Times*, 1 January, 1957.
65. *Dawn*, 1 April, 1957.
66. *Pakistan Observer*, 3 April, 1957.
67. *Pakistan Times*, 5 April, 1957.
68. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, 9 September, 1958.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
70. Zakaria, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
71. K.A. Kamal, *Politicians and Inside Stories: A Study mainly of Fazlul Haq, Suhrawardy and Maulana Bhashani*, Dacca, 1970, p. 46.
72. Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p. 297-500.
73. *Morning News*, 21 June, 1956.
74. *Ibid.*, 24 June, 1956.
75. R.V. Weeks, *Pakistan: Birth and Growth of a Nation*, Princeton, 1964, p. 106.
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79. R. Kureishi, *The Nation of Pakistan*, Oxford, 1969, p. 26.
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82. *Report of Second Economy Committee, 1957-1958*, quoted in R. Braibanti, ed., *Research on the Bureaucracy of Pakistan*, Durham, 1966, Appendix 6, pp. 394-407.
83. S.S. Hussain, *The Lengthening Shadows*, Rawalpindi, 1971, p. 43.
84. R. Kureishi, *op. cit.*, p. 35.