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DEMOCRACY AND NATIONALISM ON TRIAL

a Study of East Pakistan

JAYANTA KUMAR RAY

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To the memory of my father
BADANYA KUMAR RAY

FOREWORD

In the Epilogue of his autobiographical narrative *India Wins Freedom*, the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad pointed out that the two regions of Pakistan, West and East, had no point of physical contact. "People in these two areas", he said, "are completely different from one another in every respect, except only in religion. It is one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest that religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different. It is true that Islam sought to establish a society which transcends racial, linguistic, economic and political frontiers. History has however proved that after the first few decades, or at most after the first century, Islam was not able to unite all the Muslim countries into one State on the basis of Islam alone".

While he was a Fellow at our Institute Dr. Jayanta Kumar Ray, one of our front-rank workers in the field of Political Science and International Relations, undertook to prepare a study of the state of affairs in East Pakistan for the first twenty years of its being and becoming. He wanted to find out the extent to which the new State of Pakistan has succeeded or not, to bring about the unity and integrity of the two wings of the State, geographically so apart, culturally, linguistically and economically so different and divergent, on the basis of religion alone. He also wanted to find out at the same time, what happens to the cultural, political and economic life of such an area when it is sought to be politically unified and economically integrated with another area more than a thousand mile apart. Since certain tensions are inevitable in any situation of this

kind, Dr. Ray also wanted to study and understand the nature of these tensions.

This study is now ready in print and the Indian Institute of Advanced Study have great pleasure in releasing the book to the public in general and to all students of the contemporary history of South and South-east Asia in particular. But on behalf of the Institute I must make it clear at the same time that the Institute do not take any responsibiliy for, nor do they identify themselves with the interpretations offered and the opinions expressed by the author in respect of particular facts or in that of his general line of argument. We however made ourselves sure that all facts were documented fully and well and that there was nothing in the book that could offend one's religious susceptibilities. We believe that the book is a competent study of the East Pakistan situation and would afford an adequate understanding of a problem which is at once complex and sensitive.

Simla, September 12, 1968.

NIHARRANJAN RAY
Director

PREFACE

East Pakistan since 1947 has been the scene of a restructuring of the elite and an outburst of cultural-economic-political aspirations of the new elite. The Hindu elite of the pre-1947 era was replaced by the Muslim elite mainly as a result of violence that either killed or pushed out the members of the older elite into the neighbouring state of India. The new East Pakistani elite, however, finds it almost impossible to achieve its legitimate cultural-economic-political goals because of the use of force and intrigues by the West Pakistani ruling authorities spearheading the military-bureaucratic complex. If violence paved the way to the emergence of the Bengalee Muslim intelligentsia in East Pakistan, its aspirations are also atrophied by the West Pakistani ruling group ever-ready to use violence for that purpose.

This book seeks to analyse the emergence and the frustrations of the new Bengalee Muslim elite in East Pakistan. These frustrations are deep-rooted, widespread and represent genuine grievances of all East Pakistanis except those enjoying the patronage of the West Pakistani ruling clique in Pakistan (now led by Ayub). A thorough acquaintance with these frustrations opens up the heart of an elite pining for democratic rights and the fulfilment of nationalist impulses. There is a noticeable tendency among writers on Pakistan, including journalists as well as professional scholars, to ignore the legitimate aspirations of the East Pakistani elite. An uncritical acceptance of official propaganda, mingled with personal prejudices and political predilections, overlay this tendency which has even affected some Indian writers. A Special Correspondent of the *Financial Express* (Bombay, 9 January 1955) wrote that President Ayub made it an important ingredient of his policy to remove economic dis-

parity between East and West Pakistan, and, according to him, this enabled Ayub to defeat Fatima Jinnah even in East Pakistan in the election held a few days earlier. The Correspondent thus bridged the enormous gap between the declaration of a policy, and its implementation, by plainly reproducing official views, and completely ignoring the reckless manoeuverings of the ruling coterie that secured Ayub's victory in that election. To take the instance of another Indian writer, S. Nihal Singh's article on economic development in Pakistan, published in the *Statesman* (Calcutta, 3 July 1967), praises Pakistan's policy of transferring industries, developed by the Government, to private industrialists. He regards it as a mark of 'pragmatism' which, he regrets, is 'unthinkable' in India. He is absolutely blind to the labyrinth of corruption and nepotism that leads up to every such case of transfer which, moreover, intensifies the economic stranglehold of a few West Pakistani industrialists on East Pakistan. Such failures in assessing the situation in Pakistan, especially in its East Wing, are only magnified in the case of Western writers, the exceptions being rare. Ignorance of the Bengali language is one definite cause of this failure. But there are also undercurrents of political prejudices, which should better be guessed than reported, producing such a failure. Field trips, for which many Western authors have enviable facilities, do not help much. After all, a field trip in an undemocratic country can be thoroughly sterile without official cooperation; a scholar who justifiably looks forward to field trips at some intervals cannot be fully blamed if he hides or underplays certain facts in order to soothe official sensibilities of the host country.

The present author has tried his best to steer clear of these pitfalls. His researches have, again and again, brought to the fore two fundamental questions. Is it possible for a military dictatorship to deprive its citizens, for an indefinite period, of legitimate democratic rights for which the citizens agitate non-violently? The answer is, probably, 'yes'. Can a military dictator-

ship succeed, by a brazen recourse to violence and distribution of spoils, in welding two culturally-geographically separate regions of a country, one region serving as a colony of the other, into a harmoniously working nation? The answer is, probably, 'no'. These questions are not unfortunately raised by many writers on Pakistan. It is hoped that this book which raises such questions will stimulate discussion on them.

JAYANTA KUMAR RAY

Calcutta
5 August 1968

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY

The dominant themes of this book are set forth in the first two paragraphs. At the outset, one can suggest that the problem of East Pakistan is two-fold. (1) Since the emergence of Pakistan as an independent state, those who dominated the Central Government, remaining predominantly West Pakistani in composition (despite occasional changes especially upto the time of the military take-over in 1958), have consistently tried to impose (and greatly succeeded too) a cultural, economic and political hegemony upon East Pakistan. The relative strength of cultural, economic and political motivations in this hegemonial design may be a matter of debate, but the design itself is not. Nor are its results, which are writ large on the face of East Pakistan, and will be briefly discussed in this book. (2) Minorities in East Pakistan—Buddhists, Christians and, by far the most numerous, Hindus—have been systematically discriminated against and pushed out into the neighbouring areas of India. The degree and extent of discrimination vary from time to time and place to place but it has occurred continuously.

One can endow with a kind of synthesis these two broad observations about East Pakistan by asserting (with some simplification) that the West Pakistani leaders and administrators have sometimes unleashed a large-scale campaign of uprooting East Pakistan's minorities with a view to furthering the aim of dominating East Pakistan. These campaigns are to be distinguished from regular, almost daily, continuous (but not planned by West Pakistani overlords) assaults on minorities which, however, do not assume the form and dimensions of the massacres in (a) February 1950 or (b) January 1951 These assaults have

diminished in frequency and severity over the years, and, at the present moment, do not constitute a significant factor. Another thread connecting the two major propositions about East Pakistan is the attempt by the West Pakistani leaders to use the minorities as the means to pressurize India. Those who are in power in Pakistan have almost a maniacal anxiety about the loyalty of East Pakistanis in general (and of minorities especially) to their authority and the inclination of East Pakistanis to rebel or secede. While the anxiety rests on a mere suspicion, at least for some time immediately after Partition, the suspicion can be traced to historical and geographical circumstances.

The factors responsible for the distrust of West Pakistani rulers towards East Pakistan, their fear that East Pakistan might break away from the new state, their attempt to keep East Pakistanis under subservience, are many and complex. When the non-Bengalee Muslims carried on their campaign for Pakistan in undivided India, they almost invariably treated Pakistan (comprising Baluchistan, Kashmir, the North-West Frontier Province, the Panjab and Sind) and Bengal (a part of which is now East Pakistan) as the two predominantly Muslim areas of India which, because of cultural and geographical differences, should form two independent political entities while other provinces of undivided India, with a predominantly Hindu population, would form another separate and sovereign political unit. Some evidence may be put forward to indicate how deeply the non-Bengalee protagonists of Pakistan were impressed by racial-cultural differences between Pakistan and Bengal, and how seriously they advanced the case for two separate, sovereign Muslim states in these two areas as distinct from the Hindu state of India. It is a noteworthy fact that Sir Muhammad Iqbal, respected by Pakistanis as the progenitor of the idea of Pakistan, even left out Bengal (and Sind) from his projected Muslim state announced by him in his Presidential address at the Allahabad

session of the Muslim League in 1930. The Muslim state of his conception embraced Baluchistan, the Panjab and the North-West Frontier Province. He confidently asserted that the Muslims of North-West India were destined to achieve that state.[1] Chaudhry Rahmat Ali, the Founder-President of the Pakistan National Movement, launched in 1933, also left Bengal out of Pakistan which, in his version, included Afghania (i.e., the North-West Frontier Province), Baluchistan, Kashmir, the Panjab and Sind. Bengal, like Pakistan, should become a separate sovereign state, he pleaded, as he deplored that all Muslims of India did not sufficiently realize the threat posed by 'Indianism', i.e., the assumption of India's territorial unity, the hope that Muslims can look upon India as their motherland. The Pakistan National Movement, wrote Rahmat Ali, began to fight the persistent menace of 'Indianism' by demanding the creation of a sovereign Pakistan. As the Movement gained momentum in the following years, it began to press for a sovereign Muslim state in Bengal which, he asserted, was created by history, confirmed by the majority principle, and ordained by destiny. He exhorted Muslims to launch a national movement within the area of Bengal. Rahmat Ali went further and advocated the establishment of another sovereign Muslim state in Hyderabad-Deccan, which he called 'Usmanistan'. He clearly referred to Bengal, Pakistan and Usmanistan as "three independent nations" and proposed to solve the issue of their interrelations "by the creation of an international organization". He also suggested "an alliance of the nations of Pakistan, Bengal and Usmanistan" as an additional protective armour which, he hoped, 'Indianism' would not be able to pierce and thus threaten the Millat (i.e., Muslim Nation).[2]

Rahmat Ali's fancy had wild flights. In his concern for minimizing the threat from 'Indianism', he prescribed the Balkanization of the Hindu-majority areas into Hindustan, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Dravidia, all of them independent states

Bengal should add Assam to its territory and, Rahmat suggested, bear the name Bang-i-Islam. He was not without concern for the large number of Muslims left over in the Hindu states, and advocated the creation of many other smaller Muslim States, e.g., Haidaristan in U.P., Faruqistan in Bihar and Orissa, Siddiqistan in M.P., Moplastan in Karnatak, etc. That these ideas, initially dismissed even by Muslims as merely a "student's dream", received "some encouragement" from seasoned politicians like Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Lloyd cannot but cause surprise.[3]

Mr. El Hamza was another non-Bengalee Muslim writer who exercised much influence on his co-religionists agitating for Pakistan. His book, *Pakistan : A Nation,* was first published in February 1941, and ran into the third edition by December 1944. His project was more modest than that of Rahmat. He wanted to see two predominantly Muslim areas in undivided India, one in the North-West and the other in the East, transformed into two independent states for the Indian Muslims. He emphasized the racial-cultural-geographical disparities between Pakistan (comprising Baluchistan, Kashmir, North-West Frontier Province, Panjab and Sind) and Bengal, i.e., between North-West India and Eastern India, the latter being also called by him Bangala. Hamza[4] made an elaborate analysis of the differences in the dress, food, physical and mental capacities between the people in the two regions, and the physical environment in which they live, and concluded that both North-West India and Eastern India were endowed with unique and unmistakable individuality. "Bengal with its 80 inches of annual rainfall, its hot and humid atmosphere, its rice fields, its impenetrable thick forests, its mighty cities and its amazingly dense population of dark, lithe, jute and rice cultivators, is a different world from the Punjab with its dry, treeless plains, its extremely cold winters and extremely hot summers, its desert flora and fauna, and its comparatively sparse population of tall, big-boned Aryan

wheat and cotton growers." He, of course, confessed that he did not have enough knowledge about Eastern India to argue in detail for the national self-determination of Muslims in that region. He, therefore, concentrated on elaborating the case for independent statehood of the nation of Muslims in Pakistan that excluded Bengal. He carried the distinction between Pakistan and Bengal to an interesting limit as he tried to illustrate why there cannot be any communication between, say, a Bengalee woman and a Panjabi woman in spite of the fact that "all those things of which life is really made are discussed and criticized with great animation by the matrons". For, "they cook different things for their households in different ways. They make different clothes of different materials for their husbands and children. They wear different clothes and jewels themselves and neither would dream of putting on the like of those worn by the other. They speak different languages. The physical appearance of each—the hair, the eyes, the complexion, the cast of the face and body are objects of curious regard for the other. Can there be any bond of sympathy between these women to link them as individuals of the same nation? It is difficult to see any."[5]

It is significant that Hamza wrote the book with the specific purpose of formulating a historical, geographical and sociological justification of the demand of the All-India Muslim League for the political fragmentation of India as set forth in its famous Lahore Resolution of 1940. That Resolution stated categorically that India's Muslims would not accept any constitutional plan which did not stipulate the formation of "Independent States" in such areas as the North-Western or Eastern India where Muslims constituted the numerical majority. Hamza took it upon himself to substantiate this Resolution by underlining the racial-cultural diversities of Indians in different regions and by contending that India's inhabitants composed not one but several nations including, e.g., Pakistan and Bengal. Although Hamza did not want to break up India into as many

'stan's as Rahmat, he did envisage the emergence of Hindūstan, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Dravidia as independent states in Hindu-majority areas.[6]

A few more examples will perhaps suffice to demonstrate how widespread such a trend of thought was among Muslim writers supporting the political division of British-ruled India. Mr. M. R. T. (nowhere does he give the full name) wrote many articles, collected into two books,[7] trying to elucidate the demand of Indian Muslims organizing the Pakistan movement. He elaborately pleaded for the establishment of two sovereign states as two separate homelands for Indian Muslims in the North-Western and North-Eastern regions of India which, he claimed, were geographically well-defined, economically viable and culturally distinct, and, lying on the two flanks of a 'Hindu India', would act as a check on the aggressive designs of the latter, and inspire confidence in the smaller neighbours of the latter.[8] M.R.T. appeared to be more realistic than Rahmat, having no use for numerous 'stan's figuring in Rahmat's scheme. He brought out a distinction between the significance of the word 'Pakistan' and that of the Pakistan movement which was important. The word 'PAKISTAN' denoted Panjab (for P), Afghan Province or the North-West Frontier Province (for A), Kashmir (for K), Sind (for S), Baluchistan (for TAN), while the letter (I) did not stand for any area but joined the other letters. The Urdu equivalent for 'PAKISTAN' has no 'I' in it and, thus, creates no confusion about the geographical significance of the different letters in the word. As the Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League indicated, the Pakistan movement was not confined to the Muslims of North-West India. M.R.T., therefore, thanked Jinnah (who wrote identical, appreciative forewords for both of his books) for broadening the scope of the Pakistan movement which demanded, in accordance with the Lahore Resolution, two independent states as two homelands for India's Muslims. Nevertheless, M.R.T. should have remem-

bered that Rahmat Ali had advocated an expansion of the scope of the Pakistan movement even earlier. M.R.T. appeared to pay more attention to the details of his scheme for an independent Mulism state in North-Eastern India, than Hamza or Rahmat. He called it the "Eastern Pakistan State" as distinguished from the "Western Pakistan State" in North-West India. The Eastern Pakistan State excluded many districts of Bengal, i.e., Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan, Darjeeling, Hooghli, Jalpaiguri and Midnapur, and included the Tippera princely state and Assam's Goalpara and Sylhet districts. M.R.T. indicated that the population of the Eastern Pakistan State was more than double that of Egypt or Iran or Turkey, and more than thrice that of Afghanistan.[9]

Ziauddin Ahmad Suleri, too, pointed out that the Indian Muslims' demand for Pakistan meant the establishment of "independent homelands" in the "compact areas" of North-East and North-West India where Muslims preponderated. The Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League, according to him, clearly dictated the formation of two "independent Muslim States" in these areas.[10] Similarly, Jamil-Ud-Din Ahmad categorically declared that the way out of the constitutional deadlock in India during the Second World War lay in the recognition and fulfilment of the Muslims' demand for two "independent states" "in the North-Western and North-Eastern regions of India where they are in clear majority".[11] Mr. Ahmad happened to be a lecturer in Aligarh University and a member of the All-India Muslim League Council.

The geographical-cultural factors inspiring this advocacy of two separate Muslim states did not disappear in August 1947 when the single free state of Pakistan was born covering certain parts of North-West and North-East India. It was somewhat natural that the West Pakistani rulers would not be quite sure of the loyalty of Bengalees residing in the eastern Wing of the new state, separated by at least a thousand miles of Indian

territory, and speaking a different language. They were also panicky about East Bengal being the prey of the cultural influence of India via West Bengal sharing the common language (i.e., Bengali) with East Bengal (later named East Pakistan against the wishes of its inhabitants). This foreign influence, they were afraid, might lead to the disruption of Pakistan. This apprehension probably merged with a vague suspicion that Bengalee Muslims might think of reuniting with West Bengal. For in 1947, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, the last Chief Minister of undivided Bengal, took an active part in pushing forward the project of a sovereign state of undivided Bengal, distinct from India and Pakistan, that proved abortive. One of the arguments Gandhiji used in the pre-Partition era to challenge the Pakistan demand was that he was unable to distinguish between a Bengalee Hindu and a Bengalee Muslim (unless he was told who was a Hindu or a Muslim), and that this inability struck at the root of the theory of Hindus and Muslims forming separate nations. Some Muslim writers in the pre-Partition era, again, emphasized the bond of unity between Bengalee Hindus and Bengalee Muslims in order to argue that the Eastern Indian homeland of Muslims, comprising an independent state, would prove to be stable and, therefore, should be set up without any misgivings. After Partition, however, this situation became a source of fear to the West Pakistani rulers who could sense the political frustration of East Bengalees ruled by the Central Government from a distant capital (at first Karachi, later Rawalpindi). They felt that frustration might produce a challenge, cemented by collaboration between East Bengalee Muslims and Hindus, whose political consciousness was known to be sharper than that of West Pakistanis, against the West Pakistani ruling clique.[12]

Even Islam, the common religion of Muslims in East Bengal and West Pakistan, did not appear to be a harmonizing element. The West Pakistani Muslims tended to look down upon the

Bengalee Muslims because the latter happened to be mostly the descendants of converts from Hinduism, while the former claimed to be the descendants of Muslims coming from West Asia. According to them, the conversion took place mainly because these Hindus, placed very low in the caste-ladder of Hindu society, intended to escape the tyranny of the caste-system by embracing Islam. The West Pakistani Muslims, therefore, treated their co-religionists in East Bengal as a kind of second-class Muslims.[13] The factual basis of this view was disputed by East Bengalee scholars who emphasized that Islam made its converts in East Bengal at a time when Hinduism was far from being the dominant religion of that region. East Bengalees, on the contrary, proud of their language and literature whose enormous riches far outclassed that of the language and literature of the Panjabis or Baluchis or Sindis, looked upon the West Pakistanis as relatively uncultured. The West Pakistani civil servants, controlling the administration of East Bengal after Partition, often confirmed this impression by their arrogant and excessively domineering behaviour towards the East Bengalees. The pains of humiliation exacerbated the pains of being left out of high offices.[14]

The sense of urgency driving West Pakistani rulers to hold East Bengal in leash received probably a further impetus from the composition of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Partition. The Constituent Assembly for undivided India had been set up much earlier than the acceptance of the Mountbatten Plan for Partition which, again, was implemented at a great speed. The Constituent Assembly of undivided India was set up in July 1946 in accordance with the Cabinet Mission proposals of 16 May 1946 which did not provide for a totally independent state of Pakistan as it emerged in August 1947 as a part of the Mountbatten Plan. A Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, set up in consistency with the Mountbatten Plan, would have been perhaps markedly different, for obviously the non-Bengalee leaders

of Pakistan would have adopted some device to counteract the numerical superiority of Bengalees such as what they did later on in fashioning the composition of the central legislature. The actual position in 1947 must have been highly disconcerting to non-Bengalee politicians and bureaucrats. The Bengal delegation at the Constituent Assembly had forty-four members. Among them four were the non-Bengalee nominees of Jinnah, and thirteen were Hindus. Even if the latter seventeen were not counted, the Bengalee representatives, belonging to the Muslim League, numbered twenty-seven and together held an unassailable majority. Bengal, however, failed to exercise the power that seemed to be within its reach while the Pakistan Constituent Assembly functioned in its dual capacity of a constitution-making and a law-making body. So long as Jinnah was alive, there was no question of their even trying to exercise such a power. His unrivalled personal stature as the foremost political leader of the country and the creator of Pakistan was sufficient to enable him to dominate the Cabinet and the Constituent Assembly as well as the civil and military services. Where it fell short of what he wanted to do, he did not hesitate to use ordinances with far-reaching repercussions in any sphere of government, central or provincial. In theory, he, as the Governor General, was merely a constitutional ruler. In practice, he wielded absolute power in a manner that would excite the envy of a thoroughbred autocrat.[15]

After the death of Jinnah, the post of the Governor General went to Khwaja Nazimuddin, a Bengalee. One could expect Bengalee predominance if Nazimuddin succeeded in using his post in the same way as Jinnah did. But Liaquat Ali, the Prime Minister, far outstripped him in political prestige and talents. Liaquat Ali thus enhanced the status and authority of the Prime Minister's post which had been overshadowed by that of the Governor General in the days of Jinnah. Both Jinnah and, to a lesser extent, Liaquat, long honoured as the former's most

trusted lieutenant, commanded a political loyalty superseding the cleavage between West Pakistan and East Bengal More specifically, the cleavage was between the Panjabis and the Bengalees The Panjabis, forming an overwhelming majority in the civil and military services, thought that they should capture the formal constitutional machinery and thus consolidate and perpetuate their actual control over the day-to-day administration obtained from their supremacy in the civil and military services The predilection for domination in the Panjabis was apparent in the pre-Partition days when some writings[16] on projected Muslim homelands held out the promise of Panjabi supremacy in a Muslim state covering North-West India; the domination of the Panjabis in the political-military-economic spheres was taken as something natural and inevitable in such an independent Muslim state It was not unexpected that, with the formation of only one Muslim state embracing territories in the North-West and North-East of undivided India, this Panjabi supremacy could not be taken for granted East Pakistan had a much larger population than the whole of West Pakistan, and occupied the majority of seats in the Constituent Assembly The Panjabis, moreover, dreaded the linguistic-cultural bond between East Bengal and West Bengal, and imagined that this bond might adversely affect the political consolidation of the new state of Pakistan They were also afraid that the Hindu intelligentsia, despite the fact that some of its members migrated to India at Partition, might combine with Bengalee Muslims to thwart Panjabi domination Therefore, they resorted to the policy of Hindu-baiting in order to destroy the prospects of Hindu-Muslim unity, and of replacing Bengali by Urdu as the state language, or denaturing Bengali by substituting the Arabic script for the prevailing one, so that the possibility of contamination of East Bengal's loyalty to the Panjabi rulers could be eliminated at its cultural roots spreading up to West Bengal It was unfortunate that Jinnah and Liaquat did not

use their exceptional authority to restrain Panjabi manoeuverings and bridge the gulf between the East and the West in Pakistan As to ordinary members of the Muslim League, they were more preoccupied with the scramble for loaves and fishes than with ending this cleavage and, because of their inexperience in administration, they played into the hands of the Panjabi bureaucracy Panjabis fully utilized the opportunity to further their schemes of domination while Jinnah and Liaquat, perhaps the only persons who could have counteracted these schemes, continued to acquiesce in them[17]

Rushbrook Williams was perhaps over-generous in his assessment of Jinnah's role in instigating the East-West battle in Pakistan when he wrote: "The position was not so serious so long as Mr. Jinnah lived: he criticised each side for its intolerance, and used his great influence to make both realize that they were Pakistanis first and foremost he gave East Pakistanis their full share in Cabinet and other appointments: he insisted that the interests of East Pakistan should rank equally with the interests of West Pakistan in the plans and policies of the Central Government" About appointments it should be said that the number of Bengalees at the ministerial level looked substantial under the Jinnah regime only after he was forced to appoint four Bengalees in order to quell the agitation among Bengalees which sparked off an anti-Jinnah demonstration during his visit to Dacca in March 1948 These four persons were: Mr Tafazzal Ali, Dr A M Malik, Mr Muhammad Ali and Khwaja Nasrullah During the aforesaid visit to Dacca Jinnah also found Bengalees deeply resenting the attempt to impose Urdu on them Students of Dacca University expressed, in a restrained fashion, their opposition to the announcement by the Father of Pakistan in course of his Convocation Address on 24 March 1948 that Urdu was to be the official language of Pakistan Professor P C Chakravarti, an ex-provost of Dacca University (and now the Professor of International Relations

at Jadavpur University, Calcutta), who sat by the side of Jinnah in the rostrum at that Convocation, informed this author that the students instantaneously responded to Jinnah's announcement by voicing three slogans which reiterated their faith in the unity of Pakistan, the leadership of Jinnah, and their determination to have Bengali as a state language The ceremonial procession, usually passing through the students, was thereupon cancelled Jinnah even added in his Convocation speech that the language agitation in East Bengal drew support from Pakistanis with no loyalty to their state and from the Indian Press In thus ignoring the substantial grievances behind the language agitation in East Bengal and trying to link it with pro-Indian and anti-Pakistani plots, he merely revealed himself to be susceptible to the same fear that gripped Panjabis (much smaller in stature than himself) in the bureaucracy, that East Bengal might slip out of their clutches In 1948 the Panjabi bureaucrats ruling East Bengal made the first systematic attempt to impose Urdu on the Bengalees The student population reacted instantaneously and collectively They did not bother about the accusation of Panjabi bureaucrats that these students were simply Indian stooges and were not strong enough to remain free from India's cultural influence. They were forbidden to organise meetings, and became the victims of arrests and atrocities by the police as also hired hooligans when they organized meetings, decrying the imposition of Urdu Citizens joined the students in attending such meetings in spite of the regular swoops of the police on them Their zeal to organize meetings could only be matched by the zeal of the police to break those meetings[18].

The percentage of the Bengali-speaking people in Pakistan went down in 1950 on account of the communal violence in East Bengal causing a large exodus of minorities to India Yet the 1951 census in Pakistan showed that this percentage stood at 54 6 in contrast to 7 2 for the Urdu-speaking It was thus

preposterous to try to impose Urdu on East Bengal. The only slogan to buttress this unfair imposition would be that the defence of Bengali was anti-Muslim and that Hindus participated in this defence with the motive of undoing Pakistan. It testifies to the great courage of Hindu politicians in Pakistan that they did not remain quiet in order to escape such an accusation. On 25 February 1948, Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta, a Hindu member of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly, demanded that Bengali should be used, along with Urdu, in the proceedings of the Assembly. Prime Minister Liaquat angrily retorted that Urdu alone could be the national language of a Muslim state such as Pakistan. Instead of condemning D. N. Datta as an Indian agent, the Bengalee Muslims supported this viewpoint in their anti-Urdu campaign. They could well understand that the tight control exercised by the Muslim League party, especially by leaders like Jinnah or Liaquat, on the Bengalee Muslims at the Assembly, often precluded an effective voicing of Bengalee demands by the Bengalee Muslims.[19] That the West Pakistanis tended to view the language movement launched by East Bengalees with unmixed contempt and utter indifference will be clear from the following passage by Mohammad Ahmad, who had been a close associate of Field-Marshal Ayub Khan.[20] "University and college students had fallen *prey to foreign-engineered disruptionist influences.* They spent the better part of their day in dabbling in politics; going out in processions, shouting slogans over the controversy as to whether Bengali or Urdu should be the State language for Pakistan, was their favourite pastime. Anti-Government demonstrations were daily occurrences and there is little doubt that most of them were contrived *by hostile anti-Pakistan elements,* mainly to paralize [sic] the Government.... An angry mob of demonstrators, mostly students, raiding the provincial Secretariat, dragging out Ministers from their offices and forcing them to declare on loudspeakers that the national language would be Bengali, was a common and for some per-

verted individuals an amusing sight.... As soon as the situation was beyond control, the administration would seek the aid of the local garrison." Ahmad was speaking of the days when Nazimuddin was the Chief Minister of East Bengal, while Jinnah was the Governor General and Liaquat the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Muslim League thus began to lose its popularity in East Bengal as it meekly submitted to the iron-clad control exercised by Jinnah and Liaquat and did not make any strong endeavour to counteract the machinations of the Panjabi bureaucracy. In the 1954 East Bengal elections, to which this book will refer later on, the Muslim League had to pay through the nose for this inability to stand by East Bengal's interests and emotions. It is disconcerting to note that the indifference of the West Pakistani ruling clique to the importance of Bengali for the East Bengalees is sometimes reflected in the comments of foreign experts who are expected to be able to afford a greater objectivity. Callard, for instance, points out that the primary issue facing the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan was the concept and actualization of the Islamic State. He referred to the language movement in East Bengal as a sort of 'secondary' issue facing the Assembly even though he agreed that "this single issue aroused more heated feelings than any other". Callard should have thought that the language question was not in any way less important to the East Bangalees than the question of an Islamic State.[21]

The language question actually confirmed the suspicions of the Panjabi bureaucrats that Hindu-Muslim collaboration in East Bengal would thwart their ascendancy. The files of *Janamat* indicate how Hindu and Muslim intellectuals stood on a common ground assailing the imposition of Urdu on Bengalees. This demonstration of Hindu-Muslim unity only incited Panjabi bureaucrats to step up their attempts to Urduize Bengali as an insurance against a probable failure to replace Bengali altogether by Urdu, to harass the minorities systematically and to pre-

pare a large-scale assault (that took place in 1950 and will be discussed later in this book) on minorities causing a fresh wave of migration to India. The Objectives Resolution of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, with its patently Islamic provisions, probably inspired the Panjabi bureaucrats to launch a stronger offensive against East Bengalees. The East Bengal Government appointed a Committee to reform and transform East Bengal's language and literature in accordance with the proclamation of Pakistan as an Islamic state preceded by the political separation of East Bengal from West Bengal. The Government made one crucial error in announcing the purposes of this Committee. The Objectives Resolution referred to principles of toleration underlying Islam but nowhere proclaimed as Islamic state; but the questionnaire formulated by this Committee clearly described Pakistan as an Islamic State The questionnaire revealed the ill-concealed attempt of the Committee (or, more precisely, of the Panjabi bureaucracy) to replace Bengali by Arabic script, to import Arabic, Persian and Urdu words recklessly into the Bengali language and thus to strike at the roots of East Bengal's language and culture. This questionnaire, dealing with such a vital issue, was not publicized in the newspapers for the purpose of eliciting public opinion. It was issued to a few persons chosen mostly for their identity of views with those of the Panjabi bureaucrats and their Muslim League collaborators. The questionnaire sought to explore ways and means of saturating Bengali with Islamic idealism; its framers forgot that an artificial attempt to inject idealism in language is only to hamper its spontaneous expression and growth. An absurd proposition in the questionnaire concerned safeguards for minorities—as if a language is like a territory that can be partitioned between two groups of people.[2]

Dr Sarojendranath Ray of Dacca University argued in an article entitled 'The Future of the Bengali Language' that this language was already extremely well-developed, and the

attempt to reconstruct it now could be undertaken only by a genius or a fool. He compared the two newspapers, *Azad* (Dacca) and *Anandabazar Patrika* (Calcutta), and pointed out that the Bengali used in the two were remarkably alike despite the enthusiasm of Maulana Akram Khan (the mentor of *Azad*) for the reform of Bengali. He also referred to the Bengali writings of the then Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University, Dr. Muazzem Husain, himself a great scholar in Arabic, and pointed out that Husain, being a real scholar, did never try to substitute forcefully Arabic words for Bengali words because he cared to preserve the purity of any language, whether Arabic or Bengali. Ray made a comparative study of the Bengali and Urdu alphabets, demonstrated the irreconcilable differences between the two in matters of pronunciation, sound and style of writing, and concluded that it was as impossible to write Urdu in Bengali script as to write Bengali in Urdu script. He commented that the attempt to write Bengali in Urdu (i.e., Arabic) script was nothing but a rape on Bengali.[23] Dr Muhammad Shahidullah, a leading educationist of East Bengal and the topmost linguist and philologist, published a book entitled *Our Problem* that constituted a timely, sober but devastating critique of the malafide endeavour of the Government to reform Bengali. Some of the main arguments in the 80-page book may be summarized as follows. While the scholar in Shahidullah enabled him to insulate his arguments from the heat of political partisanship, he was bold enough to point to the fallacies in the Government's endeavour in a trenchant fashion. He requested the opponents of Bengali to remember that Bengali, as much as Urdu, was a language of the Muslims. Although the origins of the Bengali language could be traced to the era of Buddhism, in the succeeding Hindu era the monarchs displayed so much anti-Buddhist feelings as to nearly stop the growth of Bengali literature. It was in the days of Pathan rulers that medieval Bengali literature developed and prospered with the patronage

of Muslim Sultans and aristocrats. Urdu was not the mother-tongue of the people in any region of Pakistan, whereas Bengali was not only the mother-tongue of the majority of Pakistanis, but a very rich language. Therefore, Shahidullah asserted, Pakistan should adopt Bengali as the state language, if English was to be abandoned because it happened to be a foreign language. Urdu, of course, could be a second state language, he suggested. He strongly condemned the efforts of some politician-administrators and their stooges to replace the Bengali script by the Arabic script which, he was sure, would affect the entire future of East Pakistan. He deplored the tendency to mix up the question of religion with the question of language, and asserted that the introduction of the Arabic script for Bengali would poison the fountain-head of knowledge in East Pakistan and ruin East Pakistan. He eloquently characterized those persons as the real enemies of Pakistan who wanted to submerge Pakistan in the darkness of ignorance in the name of religion. Shahidullah declared that the replacement of Bengali by Urdu in the courts and educational institutions of East Bengal would be tantamount to political serfdom for the Bengalees. It would not only be contrary to the principles of a scientific educational system but also to the tenets of provincial autonomy and self-determination.[24]

It is indeed a sad commentary on the decline of non-partisan scholarship in our time that writers as eminent as Callard or Rushbrook Williams have paid almost no attention to the attempt on the part of the non-Bengalee ruling coterie to substitute the Arabic for the Bengali script. Anti-Bengali propagandists began to play on the religious impulses of Bengalee Muslims by deliberately using the expression 'Bramhi' script for the Bengali script, and the expression 'Arabic' script for the popularly known Urdu script. Obviously they tried to condemn the Bramhi (i.e., Bengali) script as a gift of Brahmins and thus to attract the attention of Muslims away from what

was given by the Brahmins to what was bequeathed by the Arabs. They forgot that the appeal to religious feelings was not quite sensible in the study of literature. The Christians in Greece and Rome continued to admire and read the great literary masterpieces of the pre-Christian era, just as the Muslims of Iran set great store by the illustrious literary creations of the pre-Muslim era. Moreover, the anti-Bengali propagandists were not being logical when they pointed out that the introduction of the Urdu script in Bengali was essential for the promotion of national solidarity in Pakistan. East Bengalee writers reminded them that the use of the same Roman script by the English, French, Germans and Italians did not appear to be significantly contributing to their reciprocal amity. Some East Bengalee Hindus even suggested that they were prepared to learn the Urdu language, but not to read Bengali in Urdu script, for they wanted to avoid the slander of being called Indian stooges. East Bengalees were afraid that in case of the introduction of Urdu script in Bengali they would have to start afresh in the field of literature while the progress of their literature through the past six hundred years would be erased off.[25] While the educationists and students in East Bengal almost unanimously opposed the imposition of Arabic script, the Government persisted in its attempted imposition. In an article entitled 'The Future Progress of East Bengal: Education', Shahidullah regretted that even before the Committee appointed by the Government of East Bengal submitted its report on the possibility of writing Bengali in Urdu script, the Government was going ahead with the scheme of introducing the Arabic script in Bengali. He wondered why the Central Government granted an enormous sum for adult education in East Bengal through the Arabic script. He underlined the futility of the scheme by pointing out that a man learning Bengali in the Arabic script would be able to read too few books to satisfy his thirst for knowledge.[26] In 1949 the Government opened twenty

schools for adult education teaching Bengali through the Arabic script. In 1950 the Government doubled the expenditure for that purpose. Anonymous publications, obviously enjoying the Government's patronage, came out in defence of the introduction of the Arabic script. A copy of a Government circular revealing the Government's role in bringing out such pamphlets was published in one Bengali monthly magazine entitled *Agatya.*[11]

Let us discuss the contents of only one such pamphlet which will amply reveal the mind of the West Pakistani politicians and administrators and their favourite propaganda devices. The pamphlet begins and ends with the command of the Prophet to one Maulana Zulfikar Ali of Chittagong passed on in a dream in course of which the Prophet ordered him to introduce Arabic script in Bengali. The pamphlet served a religious tranquillizer because the Muslim students and educationists of East Bengal opposed the Arabic script on scientific-literary grounds in an unchallengeable fashion, and the Government had to carry the battle, by means of such a pamphlet, to the level of religious fanaticism. The pamphlet asserted that the Muslims had ended political enslavement by Hindus with the establishment of Pakistan, and now they should proceed to wipe out cultural slavery with the adoption of the Arabic script. The Bengali script was the foundation stone of the cultural ascendancy of Hindus which would vanish when the foundation-stone was knocked off. The pamphlet then laid down three alternatives before the East Bengalee Muslims in such a way as to make the rejection of the Arabic script a religious crime : (i) they could refuse to read the Quran; but such a refusal was impossible as long as they continued to be Muslims; (ii) they could read the Quran written in Bengali script, but this was impracticable; (iii) they could replace the Bengali script by the Arabic script. Undoubtedly, the pamphlet dictated, the third alternative was the only one to be acceptable

to Muslims whose religious duty was to read the Quran in Arabic script. A few quotations from the pamphlet are worth a perusal as they point out how the Panjabi bureaucrats hoped to achieve the twin objectives of eliminating the cultural barrier between East Bengal and West Pakistan and the cultural affinity between Hindus and Muslims in East Bengal at one stroke, i.e., the imposition of the Arabic script. If the Bengali script departed, "the cultural wedge which our enemies have been seeking to drive into our body politic will thus drop out and we shall stand politically and culturally unified as one people", the pamphlet declared, and added : "It has been our enemies [sic] fond hope that having failed to delude and mislead Muslims of East Bengal in the political field they may perhaps yet succeed in the cultural field over which they held sway so long ...by applying the term Bengalee to both Hindus and Muslims a community of interests between the two on cultural grounds is sought to be established. This common culture stunt is the first step which our far-seeing enemies are taking in their long-term nefarious plan of creating disruptive tendencies within Pakistan itself.... We must smash the new idol of Bengali common culture which we are now being taught to worship. The Arabic script provides the hammer that will smash it for good".[38]

After we have gone through these propaganda pieces it will perhaps be refreshing once again to refer to Shahidullah's writing. In an article entitled 'The Problem of Our Education', he reiterated his standpoint that it was unrealistic to try the Arabic script for a literacy campaign which the Central Government was pushing through in East Bengal. He cited the example of Turkey under Kemal Ataturk who realized that the Arabic script, however sacred that might be, was unsuited to the Turkish language, and reaped immense success in his literacy campaign conducted through the medium of the Roman script. Shahidullah also referred to the case of Indonesia which

switched over from the Arabic to the Roman script. Shahidullah could not but express surprise at the move of the Central Government to eradicate illiteracy in East Bengal with the help of the Arabic script. Another East Bengalee, Ahmad Sharif, later wrote that Bengalee Muslims could best imbibe the teachings of Islam if these were imparted in their mother-tongue, i.e., Bengali. He referred to Iranians who had enriched Islam by accepting this religion from the Arabs without switching over to the language of the Arabs. The real objective, Sharif stressed, was not to preserve the so-called purity of Islamic teachings by insisting on an alien script as the vehicle of Islam, but to disseminate those teachings in the most effective manner by means of the mother-tongue.[29]

The only redeeming feature of these sordid tactics employed by the East Bengal Government was that they did not work. The people of East Bengal demonstrated their vitality in rejecting the Arabic script, as so many of their elders did in joining the freedom movement in the era of British rule. It is to the enormous credit of the people, especially the Muslims, of East Bengal that they successfully resisted the Government and retained the Bengali script. But this success perhaps augmented the apprehension of Panjabi bureaucrats about the unity between Muslims and Hindus which they considered to be a serious threat to their arbitrary rule in East Bengal. Their apprehension was also aggravated by some popular movements during 1947-50 in which Hindus participated along with the Muslims. In 1949, for instance, the women of Dacca organized a meeting at the Coronation Park and demanded that the Government should grant greater civil and political liberties to citizens. Hired hooligans pounced upon the women, Hindus and Muslims, and stripped many of them of all their clothes. Policemen were standing aloof at first, and then made it a part of their duty to help those hooligans molesting the ladies.[30] In the same year, to take another example, the Muslim peasants in the district of Sylhet rebelled against the notorious Nankor system

whereby the Muslim peasants, along with their wives, constituted the personal property of the landlord. The Government sent armed police forces to quell the rebellion. There were two Hindu women among the leaders of the rebellion, who were dragged by the hair to the police station across paddy fields spanning the length of two miles.[31] It was not easy for the Government to destroy the bonds between Hindus and Muslims in East Bengal forged by many decades of sharing a common culture. Mr. Nirad C. Chaudhuri wrote : "In costume and gastronomy there was assimilation up to a point. In literature there was much more. But there was most mingling and syncretism at the folk level, including even religion. The Hindus and Muslims sang the same folk songs, had the same popular festivals, and the Muslim peasants brought offerings to Hindu gods just as the Hindus, too, took offerings to the shrines of the Muslim saints, historical or mythical."[32]

After their failure to replace the Bengali script by the Arabic script, the East Bengal Government was left with another device by which they could strike at the roots of this cultural accord and simultaneously squeeze out those members of the Hindu intelligentsia who stayed on after Partition : this was to launch the murder, arson and looting of Hindu lives and property on the scale of the Great Calcutta Killings of August 1946 which took place when Suhrawardy was the Chief Minister of undivided Bengal.[33]

The role of the Muslim League Government in Bengal (led by Suhrawardy) in the Great Calcutta Killings of 1946 gave Hindus a foretaste of what could happen to them in Pakistan after Partition. Some members of the Hindu intelligentsia, therefore, left East Bengal and crossed over to West Bengal. This provided a ready-made opportunity to the Muslims who could step into the vacancies created by the exodus of Hindus. They were surely waiting for this opportunity. Muslim writers of undivided India, while preaching the

necessity of Pakistan, frequently ventilated their frustrations, born of the economic superiority of the Hindus, and looked forward to the day when the economic domination of the Hindus would be no more. These frustrations could not vanish unless there was a large-scale migration of Hindu businessmen, civil servants, doctors, lawyers or teachers to India.[34] The establishment of Pakistan would be meaningless to many Muslims if they had to continue to live under Hindu predominance in the learned professions and business. In pre-Partition East Bengal the predominance of Hindus was all too apparent. Without a considerable corrosion of this Hindu predominance, a mere transfer of political power to the hands of Muslim League leaders would not be of much significance to numerous Muslims agitating for Pakistan for many years. The validity of this interpretation was borne out by the systematic policy of squeezing out the Hindu middle class adopted by the Pakistan Government since Partition. It was, therefore, a queer type of hypocrisy that Jinnah and Liaquat indulged as they bitterly criticized the Hindu intelligentsia, leaving Pakistan on the eve of Partition, and accused them of trying, under instructions from India, to paralyze the Pakistani administrative-economic set-up.[35] Such withdrawal definitely produced acute difficulties for Pakistan, especially at the initial stage. But the Hindu middle class could not be expected to leave Pakistan gradually in such a manner as to make way for skilled Muslims without, at the same time, imparting a shock to Pakistan's economy by staging a large-scale exodus. The complaint of Pakistanis was not about the creation of vacancies, which they had been eagerly awaiting for many years, but the speed with which a large number of vacancies were created in 1947.

Perhaps an overmuch concern not to offend official standpoint underlies the myth of perfect safety of Hindus in East Bengal circulated by foreign specialists who have even gone to such an extent as to ignore the importance of the Government-

engineered minority killings in East Bengal in February 1950.[36] These killings in 1950 marked indeed a watershed, for it led to the complete evacuation of the Hindu intelligentsia from East Bengal. This writer has met many members of the learned professions who stayed on in East Bengal after Partition and wanted to live there permanently, but were compelled to migrate to India after the February holocaust which, it should be emphasized, merely climaxed unending humiliations, tortures and economic exploitation they had to face daily since the formation of Pakistan as an independent state. Callard wrote that "those Hindus who did remain, principally in East Bengal, showed their willingness to accept the new state of Pakistan". But he completely missed the significance of the 1950 holocaust as he went on to add that "in East Bengal.....with rare exceptions communal violence since partition has been avoided".[37]

A brief resume of the sufferings of minorities in East Bengal, given below, will reveal how misleading Callard's observation is. Immediately after Partition, the Panjabi bureaucrats, with their Muslim League collaborators, set assiduously to the task of tyrannizing the minorities and those Muslims who abhorred communal violence. They drafted hooligans into the National Guards (also called 'Ansars'), and patronized the 'Kuttis' in order to accomplish this task. The Kuttis were the descendants of riffraffs imported from Bihar by the Nawabs of Dacca who employed them to provoke or mastermind communal riots. Kuttis, clearly set apart from the general body of East Bengalee Muslims and Hindus, spoke a dialect that was a mix-up of Dacca Bengali, Hindi and Urdu. After Partition, they became the unofficial army of the Muslim League and began to carry out the mission of oppressing the minorities systematically and to create an atmosphere of horror from which the Hindus could only seek an escape into West Bengal. The Panjabi bureaucrats almost monopolized power in the provincial Secretariat as also in district administration. The first Chief Secretary of East Bengal, Mr. Aziz Ahmed, was a Panjabi. He wield-

ed absolute authority, with the backing of the Central Government, and even used to boast that he was the Government of East Bengal. The thoroughness with which he executed the policy of persecuting the minorities and bestowed favours on those district officers who proved themselves willing and able to administer that policy, demonstrated that his was not an empty boast. Most of the Secretaries to East Bengal's Muslim League Ministers were non-Bengalees while the Ministers themselves were all Bengalees. It was not correct to argue that there was a dearth of Bengalees capable of taking up these posts; these appointments only revealed a certain design on the part of the Central Government. The Secretaries took many important decisions without even bothering to consult their Ministers who were Bengalees. These officials did not think of trying to build a peaceful social order on the basis of voluntary cooperation between the majority and the minority communities.[38] That such a basis existed in East Bengal has been attested by members of the Hindu intelligentsia and prominent political leaders who have at last been compelled to migrate to West Bengal. Mr. Pravash Chandra Lahiry, who stayed on in Pakistan for fourteen years after Partition and was a member of the East Pakistan Cabinet for some time, has narrated an incident which indicates the fund of good sense in the common people that could be utilized to build a society free from communal disorders. In this incident, on Lahiry's intervention and persuasions, the Muslim miscreants gave back at a public conference the articles and the cash they, being incited by some political bosses, had looted from a Hindu house situated less than a furlong away from the police station. Lahiry writes : "I give details of this incident only to show how the simple and unsophisticated people could be made to become a cat's paw in the hands of the designing politicians."[39]

The East Bengal Government did not capitalize the good sense prevailing in the majority community. It employed the

Ansars and Kuttis to infect the common people with the virus of communalism. The Ansars and Kuttis set examples of self-aggrandizement by persecuting the minorities. If these examples were not sufficient to incite the common people to act upon those examples, or at least to cooperate with the hooligans, the latter, sure of being backed by the Government, would mete out punishment to liberal-minded Muslims. Ansars were so much confident of enjoying top-level official support that they even defied sometimes the instructions of highly placed district officials who happened to be tolerant, humane and wanted to avoid the persecution of minorities. Mr. Khondker Ali Tyeb, an East Bengalee, was the first District Magistrate of Rajshahi after Partition. He tried his best to restrain Muslim goondas from oppressing the minorities; the goondas gave him the nick-name Kali (the name of a Hindu goddess) Tyeb. He failed to protect the minorities from the goondas who commanded patronage at much higher levels of administration. Tyeb even failed to protect himself against abuses hurled at him in a public meeting at the Rajshahi town, although he was in the company of an East Bengal Minister. Neither the Minister nor the District Magistrate had the power to punish the offenders. On the contrary, Tyeb was transferred to a post in the provincial secretariat wherefrom his non-communal approach could pose no obstacle to the mischievous policy of the top-level administrators. In contrast stood the figure of Mr. A. Majid (a non-Bengalee) who succeeded Tyeb as the District Magistrate of Rajshahi. He unleashed limitless atrocities on the Hindus in Rajshahi district and completely broke their morale. He went to queer extremes as he applied the Security Act and arrested an octogenarian estate-manager and an illiterate milk-maid, both Hindus, on the day Radio Pakistan announced Jinnah's death, because the former was feeding a few persons as part of the last rites of his deceased daughter-in-law, and the latter was selling butter! Majid was later posted in Mymensingh where

he began his relentless campaign against the Hindus by requisitioning seven hundred houses all at once. The official careers of Majid and Tyeb presented an important moral: unlike the latter, Majid got quick promotions. P. C. Lahiry, then a member of the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly, brought Majid's atrocities to the notice of Liaquat (Prime Minister), Nazimuddin (the Governor General) and Nurul Amin (the Chief Minister of East Bengal), but they simply refused to react.[40]

Nazimuddin, while he was the Chief Minister of East Bengal, toured, along with some Hindu leaders, certain districts immediately after Partition, and was instrumental in preventing a large-scale communal disorder in his province.[41] But he acquiesced in the policy of systematically squeezing out the minorities plotted by Aziz Ahmed, the Chief Secretary. After Partition, the economic predominance of the Hindus in East Bengal was too glaring. They dominated the learned professions, business and industry, and in many of the important towns enjoyed a numerical superiority. One sure device to oust the members of the Hindu middle class was to make them homeless. The Government set in motion a process of indiscriminate requisitioning of Hindu houses. Even the manner of requisitioning was horrible. An ailing old man or woman, having no other shelter, would be compelled to quit his own house at a moment's notice. The Government fixed the rent of requisitioned houses in a wholly arbitrary manner, sometimes leaving only a slender margin over the municipal tax to be paid by the owner of the house. In many cases the Government paid even the arbitrary rent with extraordinary irregularity or not at all. There was nothing to prevent a District Magistrate to simply take away and distribute the assets of Hindus among the Muslims in a particular place. Apart from Government requisitioning, there were forcible dispossessions by Ansars and goondas enjoying official support. When the Hindu members of the provincial

Assembly pointed to these grievances of the minorities, they were simply assured that these cases of hardship were not to be treated as a calculated assault on a particular group of people, but nothing was done to ameliorate the hardships. Sometimes officials, accompanied by armed policemen or militarymen, would turn out the owner of a house (along with his family) without producing any requisition order of the Government. Appeals to the authorities against such gross injustices were of no avail. The Government requisitioned recklessly godowns, shops and even educational institutions belonging to Hindus. Taking over of Hindu houses by official and non-official agencies, with or without any order of requisition, proved to be a potent weapon of slowly and steadily expelling the members of the Hindu middle class.[42]

The East Bengal Government, in order to relieve the shortage of housing in Dacca, built a number of new flats at Azimpura. But the Government servants, living comfortably in requisitioned Hindu houses at a ridiculously low rent, refused to move to those flats. *The Morning News* (Dacca) commented: "The East Pakistan Government's much-advertised building project, the quarters at Azimpura, to house the army of its officers and clerks have at long last been completed and allotments of flats to individual officers are now being made. A piquant situation seems to have arisen. Rumour in the city has it that Government servants for whom the quarters have been constructed at great expense are refusing to occupy the flats. Several reasons have been advanced. They are at present occupying houses, they say, far more comfortable and cheaper than the official quarters. Many of them are living in Government requisitioned houses—commodious, airy bungalows with lawns around. The rents for these are very low, being officially fixed.[43]

Richard Symonds was partially correct when he spoke of "the ruthless requisitioning of their houses" as the "worst complaint" of non-Muslims in East Pakistan.[44] There were

many other complaints which were equally justified. The Government made numerous arrests of political leaders and respectable members of the minorities on vague charges of anti-state activities. Dr P. C. Chakravarti of Dacca University, to take one leading example, was imprisoned on unsubstantiated charges of espionage and anti-Pakistani activities. Often the grounds of arrest were as flimsy as keeping the picture of Gandhi or Nehru at home. The way arrests were executed was often strikingly inhuman and deliberately designed to sap the morale of the minorities; an old, respected leader would be handcuffed and tied by rope to other members of his family while being taken to the police station through the streets. The Government heaped indignities systematically on minorities by ordering widespread searches of houses. The major objective was harassment, and not the discovery of incriminating materials which almost none of these searches could produce. Harassments usually included molestation of women in the house. Searches were carried out not only by officials but also by Ansars. While the Government ruthlessly oppressed the minorities, it did not allow local newspapers to publish any news about the persecution of minorities. The P.T.I. representatives were constantly harassed so that they found it almost impossible to fulfil their duties. Members of the provincial legislature initiated adjournment motions on the grievances of minorities; these were usually disallowed. The legislature, perhaps in an effort to achieve a complete blackout of news, did not even publish its proceedings. As a result, Government officials felt free to improvise all sorts of measures to exploit the minorities. The District Magistrate of Jessore, for instance, ordered a prominent businessman (a Hindu) of Jessore to close down all his mills, e.g., an *atta* mill, a rice mill, a brick-dust mill, etc., and requisitioned about twenty wagon-loads of coal stocked by that businessman for use in his mills and in his brick field. The allegations of a Jinnah or a Liaquat, faithfully boosted by Western scholars,* that minorities left

* *e.g.* Mr. Ian Stephens and Mr. L. F. R. Williams.

Pakistan in order to cripple the new state economically, would thus appear to be utterly irrelevant; they only signify that some members of the minority had foresight and resources enough not to allow Pakistani rulers the opportunity to strike at them at times and places of the latters' choice. Those who were not so far-sighted, resourceful or emotionally flexible to leave their hearth and home, had to pay, sooner or later, the penalty like the aforesaid businessman in Jessore. The District Magistrate, during the last ten days of September 1948, hauled out all his enormous stock of coal without even offering a receipt. This instance lay at one extreme where the Government officials personally directed the persecution of minorities; at the other extreme lay instances where a hooligan in a village or a town would openly cut out paddy bundles from fields or catch fishes from ponds belonging to a Hindu, such instances multiplying if the village or the town had a large number of Muslim immigrants from India who had no social-cultural bonds of attachment with the Hindus of East Bengal. At best, the police would ignore the protests lodged by the Hindus; at worst, they would threaten the victims and even cooperate actively with the hooligans.[45]

In December 1949 the Congress Legislature Party of East Bengal submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of East Bengal, Nurul Amin, drawing his attention to many of the grievances of non-Muslims. It stated, among other things, that the minority boards, to be formed in accordance with the Pakistan-India agreement of 19 April 1948, were not functioning properly. In many areas they had not been formed, or, even if formed, did not hold even one meeting. The Government, according to this memorandum, arbitrarily suspended some municipalities and local boards where Hindus happened to form the majority. The memorandum deplored the absolute indifference of the guardians of law and order to complaints by non-Mus-

lims, and their active role, in many cases, in inciting hooligans to persecute non-Muslims.[46]

This memorandum achieved no purpose. By the time it was submitted, the stage was already set for a big conflagration designed to achieve five major objectives of the Panjabi bureaucrats and Muslim League associates. The objectives were (a) to drive out the remaining members of the Hindu middle class who braved the continuous oppressions and stayed on; (b) to kill off the Namasudras who were possessed of martial qualities and happened to live in large, compact pockets near sensitive border areas; (c) to destroy the morale of the rest of the non-Muslims so much so that they would either be an easy prey to the proselytizing zeal of Muslims, or would subsist as near-fossilized specimens of humanity posing not even a remote threat to the authority of the autocratic rulers; (d) to check the widening rift between Bengalee and non-Bengalee Muslims caused by the latters' arrogance and imprudence bolstered by actual administrative power; and (e) to divert the attention of Bengalee Muslims away from economic sufferings caused by the stoppage of trade between India and East Bengal and the apparent reluctance of the Government of Pakistan to revive that trade since India's devaluation of currency in 1949. The February Killings of 1950, which came as the denouement to large-scale violence against non-Muslims committed during the preceding several months, achieved all the objectives. From the start to the finish, the February outburst bore the stamp of careful official planning and remorseless implementation. Its chief architect, Aziz Ahmed, deserved full credit for the success of his mission.[47]

In August 1949 Muslim hooligans, accompanied by the Ansars and with the connivance of the police, raided some villages in the district of Sylhet, assaulting and murdering Hindu villagers. Hindu members of the Legislative Assembly of East Bengal discussed the question on the floor of the Assembly, appealed

to the Government for remedial measures, but nothing was done. The same type of well-organized, Government-aided atrocities were then unleashed in the district of Barisal. Once again the Hindu legislators made an ineffective appeal to the Government, and expressed the apprehension that the Government's indifference would only heighten the pitch of lawlessness. Their apprehension came true quite soon. On 10 December 1949, a Muslim mob attacked and took forceful possession of the Putia Rajbari. Large-scale looting, killing, conversion and rape of women took place in about twenty villages in Bagerhat in the district of Khulna. Father Thomas Cattaneo, a Roman Catholic Missionary, reported that entire villages in the district of Rajshahi, inhabitated by Santals, were looted and burnt. "Generally everywhere police, Ansars and Muslim mob directly and indirectly combined to wreak vengeance."[48] On 20-21 December 1949, the Superintendent of Police, Khulna, led the police, military and the Muslim mob to attack mercilessly the innocent inhabitants of the village of Kalshira and several neighbouring villages mostly populated by Namasudras. The pretext of the attack was to search out persons engaged in anti-State activities. When later on Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal, Minister for Law and Labour, Government of Pakistan, visited Kalshira, he found that only 3, out of 350 homesteads in the village, had escaped demolition. On 22 January 1950 (and the following days), the police and the military brutally assaulted the Hindu men and women, especially the Scheduled Castes, at Habiganj in the district of Sylhet, while Muslim hooligans raided houses and ravished women. "Military pickets were posted in the area. The military not only oppressed these people and took away foodstuffs forcibly from Hindu houses, but forced Hindus to send their womenfolk at night to the camp to satisfy the carnal desire of the military," wrote J. N. Mandal. Mandal also took it up with the Prime Minister of Pakistan who promised Mandal a report that never came.[49] On 6 February 1950,

the Hindu members of the provincial Legislative Assembly tried to discuss some of the incidents (mentioned in this paragraph) by means of adjournment motions which were promptly disallowed. Muslim Leaguers hurled humiliating comments on them. Next day, these Hindu members asked for an enquiry into the incidents by a Committee of the Assembly. They had again to face offensive comments by Muslim Leaguers, and became the victims of a vicious Press campaign dubbing them as Fifth Columnists. The Press had already started fanning communal frenzy by publishing imaginary stories of atrocities on Muslims in West Bengal and inciting the Muslims to act violently, while it also spread false stories of demolition of mosques and conversion of Muslims in West Bengal.[50] Abdul Matin of the United Press of Pakistan was reported to have been killed in Calcutta; he learnt about this report when he later went to Dacca. The Chief Secretary reprimanded him as he refused to submit a false statement on riots in Calcutta which he never witnessed in that city.[51]

On 6 and 7 February 1950, Radio Pakistan, Dacca, came out with highly provocative announcements amounting to a virtual appeal to Muslims to take up arms against non-Muslims. On 10 February came the finale. On that day a few women, wearing vermilion marks on their forcheads and conchshell bangles on their wrists and in blood-stained clothes, were taken round the East Bengal Secretariat at Dacca. These women, it was alleged, were the victims of riots in Calcutta where they were forcibly converted into Hinduism and compelled to marry Hindus. The Secretariat staff then stopped work and took out a procession, shouting revengeful anti-Hindu slogans, and came to the Victoria Park at about 12 noon where they held a meeting. The grim irony of the whole situation was that at the very moment the Chief Secretaries of East Bengal and West Bengal were holding a meeting in the Dacca Secretariat in order to devise measures against communal outbreaks. According to

some reports, even the Chief Secretary of West Bengal was roughly handled by the Secretariat mob. At the aforesaid meeting in the Victoria Park venomous anti-Hindu speeches were made by different speakers including Government officials. The meeting ended at about 1 p.m. when anti-Hindu orgies flared up simultaneously in all parts of the city of Dacca. Violence spread to other parts of the province at a lightning speed. At railway stations and elsewhere non-Muslims were mercilessly butchered. Trains were stopped at certain places and non-Muslims murdered. The most severely affected areas, apart from Dacca, were in Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet. In all these areas a Government-sponsored mob recruited ordinary people and led the way to relentless barbarities. The police not only abstained from helping the victims, but helped the oppressors and allowed the communal frenzy to gather maximum momentum and the resultant outbreaks ran their full course for several days. In certain places mass conversions marked the halt of the carnage. "All outward indications and the manner in which the atrocities have been committed (having regard to almost uniformly timed and followed methods of execution) lead to the irresistible conclusion that the whole troubles took place and were allowed to take place according to a preconceived plan."[52] Some figures, indicating the nature and extent of the damage caused in Dacca, are available. In Dacca Hindus formed 59% of the population and possessed 85% of the properties in the city after the establishment of Pakistan. About 90% of this Hindu population left for India after the 1950 holocaust, and the property holdings of Hindus fell to 12.7%. The number of Hindu boys in schools stood at 2,000 before this holocaust, and it dwindled to 140 by December 1950; as to girls, the figures were 1,200 and 25 respectively. About 90% of the Hindu shops in Dacca were looted on 10 February 1950, and many were burnt down. Nearly fifty thousand Hindus in that city lost their houses on the same day. About ten thousand

Hindus in the whole of East Bengal died during the February massacre.[53] It is fair to quote here what Maulvi Ibrahim Khan of East Bengal told the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 17 March 1950; "Sir, I shall try to give an unvarnished account of something of what happened. That there was loss of a number of Hindu lives is unfortunately a fact. That there was loss of Hindu property is equally unfortunately true. That on this occasion at least there was no provocation from the Hindus of the Dacca City to the Mussalmans is also not without foundation. My heart bleeds and goes out in sympathy to the suffering brethren of my sister community and I feel deeply ashamed for all that happened...."

A tailpiece to this 1950 genocide was the promotion of the District Magistrate of Barisal which included some areas worst affected. Mr. Satin Sen, one of the ablest freedom-fighters of undivided India and who had later to die in a Pakistan jail, openly accused Mr. Farruqui, this District Magistrate, of instigating hoodlums to torture non Muslims. Farruqui soon got a promotion, while Satin Sen was rotting in the prison. One redeeming feature of this genocide was that some Muslim gentlemen informed their intimate non-Muslim friends of the exact timing of the coming crisis, and thus enabled the latter to take some precautionary measures. This, of course, confirms that the entire bloody affair was planned far in advance.[54]

Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, deeply shocked by the February killings and the mass exodus of refugees to India, suggested a meeting between the Premiers of India and Pakistan to examine this grave issue. Liaquat at first rejected the suggestion unceremoniously. Later he changed his views. He came to Delhi and signed on 8 April 1950 an agreement for the protection of minorities in both the countries. It came to be known as the Nehru-Liaquat Pact or the Delhi Pact. During April-May, J. N. Mandal toured certain areas in East Bengal mostly inhabited by the Scheduled Castes and not seriously

affected by the February massacres. He found in many areas non-Muslims complaining against *a few* Muslims in their respective localities making, with the connivance of officials, the life of non-Muslims miserable. A few designing Muslims went on harassing respectable non-Muslims by instituting cases in which the latter were simply accused as Communists or anti-Pakistani. It was a handy charge that exposed any non-Muslim to harassment and financial exploitation by hooligans, Muslim lawyers and police officials. Mandal submitted the report of this tour to the Pakistani Premier in June 1950. Some aspects of this report are worth an enumeration. In rural areas, the report said, the non-Muslims felt unsafe for two important (apart from many other) causes: rape of women and interminable dacoities. The report noted that the complaints against Ansars, who were accused of the large majority of misdeeds against non-Muslims, were almost universal. Even in elections to Union Boards or District Boards non-Muslims got entangled and persecuted in a peculiar way. Two groups of Muslims might compete for their support and the group that does not win their support starts torturing them, frequently by accusing them of being Communists or anti-Pakistani. Officials, of course, did not care to protect the non-Muslims. Mandal came across some instances where a Muslim official was harassed by transfers because he happened to be non-communal and hence popular with the non-Muslims. His report suggested certain specific measures, e.g., the disarming and disbanding of the Ansars, and recruitment of some police officers from among non-Muslims (which were, needless to add, never implemented).[55]

On 8 September 1950, J. N. Mandal was compelled by Liaquat to issue a statement, full of half-truths and untruths, suiting the latter's purpose. In that very month Mandal, an ex-Minister for the Muslim League in the Interim Government of undivided India and then the Minister of Law and Labour in the Government of Pakistan, fled from Pakistan to India. He sent his

letter of resignation to the Prime Minister of Pakistan early in October 1950. This letter of resignation, long, cogently argued and soberly worded, is a basic document for the study of East Pakistan. Unfortunately, for such specialists as Keith Callard, this document does not exist. Here is another instance of how official lies penetrate an important book and vitiate the author's judgement. Callard lashes out at Mandal at least twice for leaving Pakistan and never caring to resign.[56] It is true that Mandal sent his letter of resignation after crossing over to India; but he could not be condemned if he simply wanted to save his skin, and to drop the "load of false pretensions and untruth" he had to carry on his conscience as a Pakistani Minister, for the Prime Minister could easily force out wrong statements. His letter of resignation recounted how, on the request of Suhrawardy, he toured in November 1946 some parts of East Bengal with Namasudras in the majority and prevented them from staging a retaliation against the riot in Noakhali (October 1946) where many members of their caste had been butchered or converted to Islam. When, after the establishment of Pakistan, he brought to the Prime Minister's notice atrocities on non-Muslims arising out of "the anti-Hindu policy pursued by the East Bengal Government, especially the police administration and a section of Muslim League leaders," he found absolutely no response. He quoted, in his letter, a long list of actual incidents and thus furnished an elaborate analysis of how non-Muslims were oppressed daily and regularly, reduced to a status of statelessness and facing a future "darkened by the ominous shadow of conversion or liquidation". Neither the East Bengal Government nor the Muslim League leaders took the Delhi Pact seriously, or were prepared to implement it sincerely. Maulana Akram Khan was then the President of the Provincial Muslim League. His editorial comments in a monthly journal, *Mohammadi,* were alarming to minorities, and proved the futility of the Delhi Pact. He commented on a broadcast by Dr. A. M.

Malik, Minister for Minority Affairs of Pakistan, in which Malik declared that the Prophet had extended religious liberty to the Jews in Arabia. Akram Khan commented that Malik ignored the more important directive issued later by the Prophet enjoining the expulsion of Jews from Arabia. Mandal's comment on the absence of "serious communal disturbance" after the Delhi Pact was significant: "It could not simply continue even if there were no Agreement or Pact"; the loot would not be worth the effort. The Government treated the Delhi Pact as a useless piece of paper and persisted in pouring out communal propaganda and squeezing out non-Muslims. The Police and Circle Officers continued to apply coercive measures to replace Hindu Presidents of Union Boards by Muslims. Officials helped interested non-officials in replacing Hindu Secretaries and Headmasters of schools by Muslims, even though it meant a flight of teachers and led to the situation where only 500 out of 1,500 High English Schools in East Bengal were working Junior Muslim officials were superseding the few Hindu Government servants who also faced abrupt dismissals without any cause. A leader of the stature of Mrs. Nellie Sengupta protested against the arbitrary removal of Chittagong's Public Prosecutor who happened to be a Hindu; the protest was ineffective. Thefts, dacoities, abduction, rape, non-payment or short payment on goods and services offered by non-Muslims, receiving no legal protection, went on as usual.[57] Lahiry was probably correct when he commented that Mandal "felt horrified and completely bewildered to see his friends, relations and other members of his own 'Namasudra' class (scheduled caste) of the Hindu community in the district of Barisal, either brutally murdered or maimed and their houses and properties pillaged and ravaged. The sight was too much for him and he migrated to India in disgust, shame and sorrow."[58]

In the penultimate paragraph of his letter of resignation Mandal touched an important point on the status of Muslims

in Pakistan, East and West. They were not enjoying any civil liberty—except the members of "the charmed circle of the League rulers and their corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy". He pointed to injustices done to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his brother Dr Khan Sahib in the North-West Frontier Province, and to the fate of Suhrawardy and Fazlul Haq in East Bengal. "Mr Suhrawardy to whom is due in a large measure the League's triumph in Bengal, is for practical purposes a Pakistani prisoner who has to move under permit and open his lips under orders. Mr Fazlul Haq, that once dearly loved Grand Old Man of Bengal, who was the author of the now famous Lahore Resolution, is ploughing his lonely furrow in the precincts of the Dacca High Court of Judicature.... East Bengal has been transformed into a colony of the western belt of Pakistan, although it contained a population which is larger than that of all the [other] units of Pakistan put together. It is a pale ineffective adjunct of Karachi doing the latter's bidding and carrying out its orders."[5]

The complaint that East Bengal was being thoroughly neglected by the West Pakistani rulers had been ventilated much earlier. Mr. Azizuddin Ahmed of East Bengal told the Constituent Assembly in its legislative session on 1 March 1948 that East Bengal was "really very much neglected". On 2 March 1948, the Chief Minister of East Bengal presented, on behalf of his province, a list of demands that included "a fair and proper share in the Armed Forces of Pakistan". Liaquat tried to ignore these demands by raising the bogey of provincialism, and said piously that there was no difference between a Provincial Government and the Central Government. That Liaquat was interested in counteracting Bengal's ascendancy that might accrue from its numerical superiority to other provinces of Pakistan, was indicated by the Constitution of the Muslim League which was so drafted as to do away with Bengal's hegemony in the Muslim League Council by means of a careful distribution of seats among various provinces. Liaquat also tried

to unify West Pakistan into a single unit (although he did not succeed) so that its bargaining power as a constitutional unit could be equalized to that of East Bengal as another unit in a federation. Liaquat did not always clearly announce the equal importance of the Panjab and Bengal in a constitutional scheme; but his intentions were quite clear. He increased the number of West Pakistan delegates to the Constituent Assembly as he coopted five Panjabis, and allowed the heads of princely states to nominate four delegates.[59]

Liaquat's control over the party machinery proved adequate in limiting the efficacy of the Bengalee delegates in their probable attempt to dominate the Constituent Assembly. It also proved effective in reducing the Bengalee delegates to a minority in the Basic Principles Committee (B.P.C. for short), which was set up on the day the Objectives Resolution was passed, and in each of the three Sub-Committees, i.e., on Federal and Provincial Constitutions and Distribution of Powers, on Franchise, and on the Judiciary. Bengal's representatives, deprived of a majority, fought for increasing the powers of the Provincial Government in the future Federation, but were unsuccessful. Their anxieties deepened. The Muslim League Parliamentary Party of East Bengal held an important meeting in December 1949 and issued a mandate to the delegates to the Constituent Assembly to strive for full autonomy for East Bengal, while only defence and foreign affairs should be vested in the Central Government. The Muslim League became more and more unpopular in East Bengal because the Government suppressed the liberties of the people and created the impression that East Bengal was totally subservient to West Pakistan. Consequently, some independent Muslim candidates defeated Muslim League rivals in elections to local boards. Alarmed by this development the Muslim Leaguers of East Bengal stepped up their demands for provincial autonomy in order to recapture popular sympathies. The West Pakistani leaders and administrators also reacted by diverting the attention of East Bengalee Muslims away to the massive communal massacres of 1950.[60]

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CHAPTER 2

ECLIPSE OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

The 1950 communal violence in East Bengal is a landmark in the history of Pakistan. The architects of this holocaust were scarcely aware that they were sowing seeds of a movement in that province that would pose a serious challenge to their political and economic domination over the province. Mr. Bhupendra Kumar Datta, a member of the two Constituent Assemblies of Pakistan, revealed to this author a staggering piece of information which he had received from a Central Minister of Pakistan (whom he could not name): Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, the first and the only Secretary General of the Government of Pakistan, a Punjabi, formulated two guidelines for his Government's policy toward East Bengal. Firstly, East Bengal was sooner or later expected to walk out of Pakistan, and therefore, the Government must not pay much attention to East Bengal's economic needs. Secondly, the Goverment must find ways and means to squeeze out the Hindus.[1] The bureaucrats could pride themselves on the fact that their master stroke of 1950 pushed the members of the Hindu upper middle class out of East Bengal. Little did they realize perhaps that they were thus laying the foundations of a broad-based Muslim upper middle class in East Bengal determined to oppose their political tyranny and economic exploitation. As West Pakistani traders and financiers filled up the positions left vacant by departing Hindus, or entered new fields through Government patronage almost exclusively reserved for them, the feeling among East Bengalees of economic domination by non-Bengalees began to grow. The forced evacuation of Hindus sometimes created problems; for instance, the large-scale exodus of experienced Hindu teachers gave rise to problems of student-teacher relations. But, un-

doubtedly, it was an effective instrument for social mobility, somewhat akin to a purge in a country going through a political revolution. Thus, while the number of Muslim women teaching in colleges was negligible in August 1947, within a decade they came to constitute a large majority.[2]

Elated by quick dividends from the policy set by Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, the non-Bengalee bureaucrats continued to pursue the measures of cultural, economic and political repression of the East Wing. His major premise was that these would delay, if not avert, East Wing's secession from Pakistan. The bureaucrats looked upon expenditures for East Pakistan as completely wasteful in accordance with this premise.[3] They overlooked the vital fact that East Bengalees had a strong political consciousness, which could not be matched by their brethren in the West Wing[4] and which would not easily yield to repression.

A patent lack of understanding of the vital problem created by the cultural-geographical barriers between the two Wings of Pakistan, and the concomitant tendency to use all sorts of coercion to eliminate the problem, has characterized the non-Bengalee ruling clique of Pakistan in their attitude and behaviour towards East Bengal. With the birth of Pakistan as an independent state on 14 August 1947, the people in the two Wings were required to demonstrate their sense of identity. East Bengalees, it should be admitted, showed remarkable resilience and provided quite a few instances demonstrating their keenness to identify themselves with the West Pakistanis and Muslim non-Bengalee refugees from the former provinces of British India. They accepted the name 'Pakistan' for their state, although the letters in this wordy cocktail (except 'i' acting as a link letter) stood for areas excluding East Bengal. P stood for Punjab, A for Afghania or the North-West Frontier Province, K for Kashmir, S for Sind, and TAN for Baluchistan. East Bengalees accepted the name without any expression of disfa-

vour. They also agreed to the location of the capital in the West Wing, i.e., in Karachi, even though the majority of Pakistanis lived in the East Wing and they were deprived of the enormous economic benefits that the location of the capital conferred on the West Wing. The East Bengal Government agreed to maintain thousands of surplus employees on its staff in order to accommodate refugees from areas now forming part of India. All the key posts, including those of Secretaries, at the East Bengal Secretariat went to non-Bengalees after Partition. But no Bengalee got the post of a Secretary in the Secretariat of any of the other provinces. To suggest that there was no Bengalee qualified for such a post was a travesty of truth. There was a dearth of officers belonging to the I.C.S. (i.e., Indian Civil Service), and, therefore, senior officers from the Audit Service and the Foreign Service were promoted to the C.S.P. (Civil Service of Pakistan) and appointed as Secretaries, along with the I.C.S. officials, in the Central Secretariat. But the members of the I.P.S. (i.e., Indian Police Service) were debarred from the opportunity of promotion to the C.S.P. East Bengalees could interpret it as a discriminatory tactics deliberately directed against them. For there were many East Bengalees, with good academic background, in the I.P.S., and qualified enough to occupy the posts of Secretaries. But they were excluded from the C.S.P., and, as a result, there was no East Bengalee Secretary in the Central Secretariat after Partition. When East Bengalees deplored such happenings, they were accused by others of provincialism. The accusation was meaningless, for even in the Eastern Bengal Railway, all the important posts were given to non-Begalees, whereas no Bengalee secured a key post in the Railway of the West Wing. East Bengal admitted six non-Bengalees within its quota of members of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan; in this way no less a person than Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan came to occupy an East Bengal seat in the Constituent Assembly. No other province

sacrificed any of its Constituent Assembly seats in this fashion. East Bengalees found out that their province existed for all, while every other province existed only for itself.[5]

East Bengalees had a majority of seats in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. In spite of a large-scale exodus of Hindus after the 1950 massacre, the East Bengalees outnumbered the people of the West Wing, and, in a democratically constituted legislature, were expected to gain the upper hand. The West Wingers, especially Panjabis, would not tolerate this. The Panjabis dominated the military and the civil services and looked upon themselves as the natural leaders of Pakistan. They could not reconcile themselves to yielding leadership to the numerically superior Bengalees in a democratic constitutional structure. Herein lies a real explanation of the delay in constitution-making in Pakistan.[6] If a constitution implied the supremacy of the numerical majority, i.e., Bengalees, in the legislature, the non-Bengalees would rather postpone the formulation of a constitution. If this postponement ultimately meant sacrificing democracy, the non-Bengalee political leaders were even prepared to pay that price. As a result of their obstructionist and go-slow tactics, even the one-page document, the Objectives Resolution, could not be drafted before 1949. On 18 January 1950, Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta, an East Bengalee Hindu, expressed his regret at a session of the Constituent Assembly over the inordinately slow pace of constitution-making. He referred to the contrast between this Assembly which worked for only two hours a day and the British Parliament working for many hours daily. Mr. Hamidul Huq Choudhury, an East Bengalee Muslim, supported Dhirendra, and emphasized that India had already framed its Constitution and there was no reason why Pakistan should not be able to do it. Prime Minister Liaquat gave a strange retort to Dhirendra; he said that the members of the British Parliament worked for many hours "because they talk too much".[7]

The bargaining power of the Bengalee Muslim League members of the Constituent Assembly did not, however, appear to be commensurate with their numerical strength. For instance, the Chairman of the B.P.C. (i.e., Basic Principles Committee) was a Bengalee, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan. But, of the twenty-four members of the B.P.C., only six were Bengalees, including three Hindus; there were, of course, non-Bengalees theoretically representing East Bengal in the B.P.C., i.e., Dr. Mahmud Hussain, Dr. I. H. Qureshi and Liaquat himself. Bengalee Muslim Leaguers were almost completely subservient to the control exercised by the supreme party leader, at first Jinnah and then Liaquat. The Interim Report of the B.P.C. demonstrated the weak bargaining power of the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers and drew a pointed attention to the tussle between requirements of democracy and the demands of the power-loving minority, i.e., the Panjabis. It prescribed Urdu to be the only official language. Chapter II, dealing with the Central Legislature, spoke of an upper house called the House of Units, with equal representation for the Units, and a lower house called the House of People that would be elected by the people. The two houses were endowed with equal powers and required to settle disputed questions at a joint sitting. But nowhere was it stated as to how the people would elect their deputies to the lower house. East Bengalees were naturally frightened by this apparent conspiracy to reduce their numerical superiority and deprive them of their democratic rights sanctioning a rule by the majority. All important matters, e.g., money bills, were to be discussed and decided upon at the joint sitting of the two houses where East Bengal's majority would be reduced to a minority, and the domination of the East Wing by the West Wing would be facilitated by means of a constitutional subterfuge.[8]

There were widespread protests in East Bengal against this Interim Report. Expressed in hundreds of meetings held in almost every district, sub-division and village, these protests

assumed the shape of a mass upsurge. A Grand National Convention was held in Dacca for three days in November 1950. Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan presided over the Convention. Speakers at the Convention included such eminent leaders as Fazlul Huq, who joined the people in denouncing the Interim Report and demanding autonomy for the two Wings of Pakistan. They wanted all powers to be vested in the provinces, excepting defence, foreign affairs and currency, which would be handed over to the Centre. The Central Government vainly tried to counteract the protest movement by large-scale arrests and arbitrary detentions. The detenus, complained the East Bengalees, were treated much worse than by the British Government in undivided India. The Muslim League Party in East Bengal was compelled to publicize its concern for the popular agitation against the Interim Report, and to recommend a drastic revision of the Report.[9]

Liaquat indicated his awareness of the strength behind the East Bengal agitation, but shrewdly refrained from acknowledging it formally. He hurled a potent weapon against the Bengalee rebels: he simply ignored their objections while moving the postponement of consideration of the Interim Report at the Constituent Assembly on 21 November 1950. Liaquat resorted to the plea that suggestions to make the Report more Islamic and more in consonance with the Objectives Resolution should be invited from the public. He encouraged those critics of the Report who would like to infuse more of Islam into it. He was also guilty, in an indirect manner, of strengthening the hands of those reactionary elements which would aggrandize themselves at the expense of minority groups and provoke such crises as the anti-Ahmadi riots in the Panjab in 1953, which will be discussed later in this Chapter. Mr. Nur Ahmed, a Bengalee Muslim Leaguer, congratulated Liaquat on his decision to postpone the consideration of the Interim Report. He spoke of the mounting suspicion of the Bengalees that the implementation

of this Report would transform East Bengal into a colony of the West Wing of Pakistan. Nur Ahmed declared that he himself did not have any such suspicion, and tried to wipe it out from the minds of Bengalees. He, and perhaps the entire Bengal Muslim League, thus showed up to be the errand-boy of the ruling coterie.[10]

The popularity of the Muslim League declined still further in Bengal. That the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers were themselves responsible for this decline could easily be appreciated by a reference to their role at the Constituent Assembly during the discussion on the Government of India (Second Amendment) Bill in January 1950. This Bill sought to limit the duration of Ordinances promulgated by the Governor-General. It stipulated that the ordinances would expire at the end of six weeks after the reassembly of the legislature, or earlier, if the legislature passed a resolution disapproving an ordinance. These ordinances had the force of law, and a large number of them had been promulgated in past years. In 1948, for instance, the Governor-General issued twenty-seven ordinances, and twenty in 1949. But the Bill would apply only to ordinances promulgated after 31 December 1949, and leave untouched many unpopular ordinances such as the Public Safety Ordinance which severely curtailed the rights and liberties of citizens. During the past 42 years of its existence, the Muslim League launched one mass campaign, and that was against this ordinance in the Panjab during Britain's rule. Thousands of Muslim Leaguers walked into British jails as a result of their participation in this campaign. But now the very same Party was ruling out even the submission of such an ordinance before the legislature and allowing the executive to usurp the functions of the legislature. It was surprising because the Muslim League had an invincible majority, and should not have faced any difficulty in placing an ordinance before the Constituent Asesmbly. One could assert, therefore, that some ordinances were so vicious that the ruling coterie

was afraid of exposing them to a thorough discussion on the floor of the Assembly. The Bengalee Muslim Leaguers at the Assembly did not raise any voice of protest against the Government of India (Second Amendment) Bill. One of them, Nur Ahmed, repeated the hackneyed excuse that many ordinances had to be retained in order to prevent the disintegration of Pakistan which was encircled by enemies. The opposition to this Bill, which withdrew by one hand what it gave by the other, came mainly from the Hindu members of the Constituent Assembly, and from only two Muslim members representing the Panjab, Mian Muhammad Iftikharuddin and Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan. Nevertheless, these two Muslim members were not found on either side when an amendment moved by Prof. Raj Kumar Chakravarty, ably supported by Mr. Kamini Kumar Datta and Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta, seeking to apply the Bill to ordinances passed before 31 December 1949, was put to vote. All the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers, present and voting, opposed the amendment that alone could infuse some substance into the Government of India (Second Amendment) Bill, and thus undermined their popularity in their province.[11]

The enactment of the aforesaid Bill was a victory for the Panjabi-led bureaucracy which was eager to arrogate to itself the powers of the legislature. The politicians could not resist its thrust for supremacy. They did not try to defeat the Bill despite the fact that it weakened them, and that the Muslim League Councils in the porvinces of Panjab, Sind and East Bengal had earlier passed resolutions to scrap the Public Safety Ordinance which escaped the provisions of the aforesaid Bill. But this bureaucracy was alarmed by Liaquat's decision to postpone the consideration of the Interim Report of the B.P.C. It not only held Liaquat guilty of a failure to secure East Bengal's support to the Interim Report, but suspected Liaquat to be favouring Bengalees. Nor did the bureaucracy like Liaquat's attempts, however slow, to have a democratic constitution for

Pakistan that would inevitably curtail its authority. The view that it connived at the assassination of Liaquat (in October 1951) could not, therefore, be altogether discarded. There were many facts, which could not be easily dismissed as mere coincidences, supporting such a view. A Panjabi police officer killed on the spot the assassin of Liaquat, and got an immediate promotion. Other Panjabi officials, suspected to be associated with this plot of assassination, were simultaneously rewarded with promotions. Documents about the investigation of the murder were announced to have disappeared in a plane crash which, again, was not enquired into. Liaquat's wife declared unequivocally for several years at public meetings that she suspected the bureaucracy of hatching up a conspiracy to assassinate Liaquat. She was insistent on this point till she succumbed to the machinations of the bureaucracy that neutralized her opposition with the offer of a job of an Ambassador to her.[12]

Liaquat's exit saw succession in Pakistan being settled by an uneasy compromise that had in it all the seeds of disintegration. Ghulam Muhammad became the Governor-General, while Nazimuddin became the Prime Minister. The Bengalee-Panjabi rivalry was not resolved by this arrangement, rather it was perpetuated. Bengalees agreed to have Ghulam as the Governor-General perhaps because Ghulam had been already sick and might not prove to be uncontrollable. The Panjabis accepted Nazimuddin as the Prime Minister because he was known to be of a weak disposition and expected to yield to their manoeuverings. These calculations were inherently explosive, and became more so because (and this will be discussed in detail) the expectations of Bengalees did not materialize, whereas the Panjabis, tightly holding the reins of authority exercised through the bureaucratic machine, succeeded in realizing their goals.[13]

Nazimuddin seemed to be yielding soon to the thrusts of the influential Panjabis such as the Governor-General, Ghulam Muhammad, and the Finance Minister, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali;

On 26 January 1952, Nazimuddin announced at a public meeting in Dacca that Urdu would be the only official language of Pakistan. His retreat was all the more baffling because in 1948, when students of the Dacca University launched a large-scale agitation in support of making Bengali a state language, Nazimuddin showed much boldness and concern for this vital demand of the Bengalees. In 1948 students even surrounded his house; he had the courage to face them personally and thus control a situation that otherwise would have got out of hand. He was then the Chief Minister of East Bengal, and he assured the students and the people that he would try to make Bengali a state language. The agitation died down, although from time to time students took out peaceful processions and kept alive the popular demand for Bengali as a state language. But Nazimuddin's announcement of 26 January 1952 raised many suspicions in their minds and touched off a full-scale agitation. They had trusted their leaders, and now the leaders were on the retreat. They became apprehensive of back-stage manoeuverings that might nullify the legitimate claim of Bangali to be a state language. A full-fledged official announcement might come suddenly one day and it would be too late to challenge the finally promulgated official decision. The Bengalees were afraid that their economic difficulties would worsen if Urdu became the only state language, for they could be easily discriminated against in Government jobs on the pretext that they did not know Urdu. Some highly placed Government officials incited such fears; for instance, soon after Nazimuddin's announcement on 26 January 1952, came the announcement of the State Bank Governor that cheques would be issued in Urdu.[14]

Bengalees had no alternative but to resort to a massive campaign in order to demonstrate that they would not tolerate the injustice done to their language, and that they were prepared to pay the necessary price, however heavy, for the realization of their just demand. They lost their faith in the Muslim League

stalwarts of East Bengal. Nazimuddin's statement of 26 January 1952 quickly produced a storm of protest and students of the Dacca University organized a mass movement to counter the cultural onslaught of the West Wing. The Government reacted with utter tactlessness and brutality. There were arbitrary arrests and persecution of students. On 21 February 1952—which became another landmark in the history of East Pakistan—the police tear-gassed peaceful student demonstrators and opened fire on processionists. Two students died on the spot, another a few hours later. Nurul Amin, the Chief Minister of East Bengal, displayed panic and belated awareness of the urgency of the issue by rushing out from the provincial legislature on 22 February a resolution urging upon the Central Government to adopt Bengali as one of the official languages. The campaign of 21 February had been publicly planned through several preceding weeks. It was nothing of a surprise. What was surprising was that Nurul Amin did not care to pass that resolution two days earlier, which might have prevented the police atrocities of 21 February and a permanent damage to the popularity of the Muslim League in East Bengal. That the Muslim League was not even prepared or perhaps able to repair the damage was apparent from the way it tried to misrepresent the entire 21 February episode. Instead of recognizing the genuine grievances that led to a spontaneous upsurge on that day, Nurul Amin and his followers started a campaign of vilification. They pointed out that the language agitation was planned by Communists and Indian agents. This propaganda did not have any impact on the Bengalee Muslims. But the Government utilized it to terrorize and oppress Hindus, including members of the Minority Boards, who were arrested and imprisoned. In order to cover up their failure to bolster the claims of the Bengali language as against the designs of the Central Government, the Muslim League leaders even propagated that Bengali was a product of Sanskrit and only the vehicle of Hindu culture.

This was inept propaganda because about fifty percent of the Bengali words were of Arabic, Persian and Urdu origin, and Bengali was the vehicle of the composite culture of the Bengalee Hindus and Muslims. In fact, the Muslim rulers of Bengal in the pre-British days were largely responsible for the development of the Bengali language. Nurul Amin and his followers should have acknowledged that the demand pressed by the language movement was rather modest. For it aimed at making Bengali one of the state languages of Pakistan, although, according to the 1951 census, 54.6 percent of Pakistanis spoke Bengali, and only 7.2 percent spoke Urdu, so that any demand of having Bengali as the sole state language would have been quite reasonable.[15]

The universal support commanded by the language agitation had a dramatic indicator in the role of the *Azad,* till then fanatically devoted to the Muslim League. The *Azad* prominently featured police brutalities during the agitation and its editor resigned from the Muslim League Parliamentary Party. Nevertheless, the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers could not shake off the thraldom of the Central ruling coterie, although they passed the above-mentioned resolution on 22 February. Very soon this resolution proved itself to be a political trick meant for temporary relief from a crisis. On 10 April 1952, Nur Ahmed placed before the Constituent Assembly a motion for Bengali being made one of the state languages of Pakistan. Nurul Amin, also a member of the Constituent Assembly, virtually restrained him from speaking on the motion. Nur Ahmed usually spoke long and would not stop till the President intervened, but that day he behaved differently. It was apparent that the West Pakistani leaders succeeded in compelling Bengalee members of the Assembly to observe silence on that urgent motion. Another motion for indefinite postponement of consideration of Nur Ahmed's motion, which enjoyed the blessing of the non-Bengalee ruling clique, was put forward by Pirzada Abdus Sattar

Abdul Rahman. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq of East Bengal even admitted that it was better to postpone the consideration of Nur Ahmed's motion in order to relieve the discomfiture of Assembly members from Bengal. He suggested that the Bengalee members were in an awkward situation, torn between their loyalty to their own conscience and their commitments to the Government or the ruling clique, between a desire to please the constituents in their province and to obey the dictates of the ruling clique. Fazlul Haq was afraid that Nur Ahmed's motion, if put to a vote, might be lost, and the harm thus done to the cause of the Bengali language might be irreparable—so much was the control exercised by the ruling clique over the MCAs (i.e., Members of the Constituent Assembly). It was advisable in his opinion to wait and thus enable the Government to reconsider its position on such a vital issue. A perusal of the speech by Fazlul Huq would make one feel that Bengalee Muslim Leaguers, although commanding a majority at the Constituent Assembly, were at the mercy of the ruling coterie. The situation should have been exactly in reverse if institutions of parliamentary democracy were to flourish. Hindu members from East Bengal gave vent to all the arguments needed for supporting Nur Ahmed's motion. Nurul Amin could only hurl abusive remarks on them for it was not possible for him to refute those arguments. For instance, he said that each of the Hindu members "has spoken in the strain that they are the only advocates, fathers and forefathers of Bengali language". Nurul Amin then propounded the astounding thesis that two Bengali languages were in existence : Muslim Bengali and Hindu Bengali. In support of this thesis he said, for instance, that Muslims use the word 'pani' for water, while Hindus use 'jal', forgetting that Hindus and Sikhs throughout north India use 'pani'. It was an irrelevant example to support an insubstantial claim. Bengalee Muslim Leaguers, including Nur Ahmed, voted for indefinite postponement of the consideration of Nur's motion.[16]

How, during Nazimuddin's tenure as the Prime Minister, Bengalee Muslim MCAs abdicated in favour of the non-Bengalee ruling coterie was again revealed in the same month, i.e., April 1952, during the discussion on the Security Bill. In this way they hindered the cause of democracy and nationalism in Pakistan. This Bill sought to vest unbridled powers in the hands of the executive. A Minister, for instance, could detain any person on mere suspicion for a year without even caring to inform the person of the ground of his detention. The Minister could decide upon detention on the report of intelligence or police officials, and would not provide the victim any chance of representing his case publicly. The decision of the executive could not be challenged in any court of law. The Bill provided for an Advisory Committee merely to hoodwink the people. The reference of a case of detention to the Advisory Committee could take place at the end of a year. But the reference could be avoided, and a man detained indefinitely, if, before the termination of a year the detenu was released for a few days or hours only and re-arrested. Moreover, the decision of the Advisory Committee was not binding on the executive. Thus the Government could easily chastise political opponents by being itself the accuser, the judge and the court of appeal. The Security Bill severely curtailed the freedom of the Press too by providing for, e.g., pre-censorship. It also crushed the liberty of associations, the executive having the power to confiscate the property of an association that did not serve its interests. There were many provisions in the Bill which would enable the ruling clique to satisfy its whims and quench its unbounded thirst for power. But the Bengalee Muslim MCAs did not voice any strong protest. Of course, Shaukat Hyat Khan of the Panjab was there to oppose the Bill with reason and determination. But the cause of liberty-loving East Bengalees, it appeared, was only upheld by fearless minority leaders fighting a battle they could never win. The Bill was passed on 25 April after Prof. Raj

Kumar Chakravarty introduced a number of amendments to mitigate the inroads upon popular liberties made by the Bill. These amendments were all negatived. The Bill was hastily drafted and introduced at the end of the session when the Assembly did not have even sufficient time (not to speak of inclination) to discuss in detail such a momentous Bill.[17]

While the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers thus proved themselves to be politically bankrupt, the ruling clique took effective steps to sterilize leadership that might emanate from minority groups and unite East Bengal against its intrigues. In order to keep East Bengalees politically divided and weak, the non-Bengalee rulers adopted the device of separate electorates. The Government of India (Third Amendment) Bill, enacted on 19 April 1952, stipulated five separate electorates for Buddhists, Christians, 'General' Hindus, 'Scheduled' Hindus and Muslims. It almost envisaged the East Bengal legislature as an ecclesiastical fair. The strangest feature about this stipulation was that minorities, i.e., non-Muslims, did not demand any safeguard in the form of separate electorates. Nor were they consulted. On the contrary, their views, ventilated unequivocally and repeatedly since 1947, were arbitrarily disregarded. In November 1949, the Scheduled Castes Federation passed a resolution demanding a joint electorate. In March 1951, all the Hindu members of the East Bengal Legislative Assembly demanded a joint electorate. Caste Hindus and Scheduled Caste Hindus were not divided into separate electorates in the Panjab and Sind. The reason could well be that, unlike in the Panjab and Sind, the minority population in East Bengal was numerically significant and its political importance could not be completely ignored. The Government of India (Third Amendment) Bill tore apart Muslim electors from non-Muslims and also broke non-Muslims into pieces. So far as the Central Government was concerned, this was surely a device to erode the numerical strength of the East Wing whose population minus minorities would be smaller

than that of the West Wing. As for the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers, afraid of what would happen in the coming provincial elections, here was a device to compensate for their ever-dwindling popularity. They might try to catch votes on communal propaganda, or on a manipulation of the divisions among the minorities.[18]

At the Constituent Assembly the minority leaders squarely opposed the Bill that divided them into separate electorates. It was a queer spectacle indeed where the majority leaders, representing eighty-six percent of the population, wanted to thrust separate electorates on minorities whose call for a referendum on the issue went unheeded The minority spokesmen rightly argued that this was a trick to reduce them to the category of inferior citizens for ever depending on the mercy of the majority community. It would avert national integration and arrest the growth of a party system sustaining democracy. If politics was based on religion in Pakistan, there was a menacing probability that Pakistan would degenerate into a permanent one-party dictatorship. The non-Muslims, forming about fourteen percent of the population, had no chance of building a party that could democratically compete with a party of Muslims. Separate electorates would not only foster communalism and thus threaten national integration, but also sap the foundations of democracy. The Muslim-majority countries of West Asia did not adopt this system, and Pakistan was doing something that was practised by colonial rulers pursuing a policy of 'divide and rule'.[19]

Some Muslim Leaguers lost all sense of proportion as they proceeded to defend the indefensible, i.e., separate electorates. Nurul Amin asserted that prior to the introduction of safeguards for the depressed classes in undivided India these classes failed to send even one of their members to any legislature. Mr. Prem Hari Barma immediately pointed out the gross error in Nurul Amin's statement by affirming that he himself, a mem-

ber of those classes, had been elected to the Legislative Assembly of undivided Bengal. Nurul Amin went on making a long, desultory and inflammatory speech, using even unparliamentary words which the President expunged from proceedings. Zafrullah Khan began to quote profusely from the Vedas, Puranas and Smritis in order to underline the distinction between a Brahmin and a Sudra, while he arbitrarily identified the Sudras with the depressed classes in the mid-twentieth century. His reference to a social situation existing thousands of years ago was hardly relevant to the social situation of 1952. A Hindu MCA did the most tactful thing : he quoted Jinnah in support of the thesis that the Scheduled Castes were not racially or culturally different from the Caste Hindus, and thus argued against separate electorates.[20]

The Government of India (Third Amendment) Bill aimed another blow at East Bengal. It gave one seat per 1,40,000 people in the provincial legislature of East Bengal. The quota for the Panjab had been decided to be 1 per 1,04,000 people. It was not wise on the part of Bengalee Muslim Leaguers to agree to such discrimination, because this might later on be linked up with representation in a Central legislature. Unequal representation at the provincial legislature could (although this was not certain) facilitate a scheme of representation in a Central legislature of the future, based on the size of the provincial legislatures, that reduced the majority of the East Wing into a minority. Nazimuddin thus gave a poor account of his leadership in the preservation of the bargaining power of Bengalees vis-a-vis non-Bengalees. In a sense his support for separate electorates weakened East Bengal's bargaining power. At a time when the Government showed little concern for the economic necessities of East Bengal, the adoption of separate electorates thoroughly alarmed the minorities and took away all incentive from those minority people who had some capacity to invest funds and facilitate East Bengal's economic development. Separate electorates

reduced minorities politically to ciphers, they felt they were being degraded permanently into the status of slaves just because of an accident of birth. They would cease to have equal rights along with the Muslims, and could not claim to share the burden of the majority community in building up a new nation. Bengalee Muslim Leaguers thus tended to sacrifice the support of those people whom they could count on in their tussle with the West Wing. Strangely enough, minorities were even advised by yes-men of the Government to create trust in the majority, although commonsense would suggest that a majority had to inspire confidence in the minority.[21]

On 22 December 1952, Nazimuddin presented the Report of the Basic Principles Committee to the Constituent Assembly. It observed a significant silence on the question of the official language; this indicated once again the strength and determination of the non-Bengalee ruling clique. The chief contribution of Nazimuddin's Report, as distinct from the Liaquat Report, towards constitution-making was the formula of a parity of representation between the two Wings in the Central legislature which, as in the Liaquat Report, would be bicameral. The House of the People would have 400 members divided equally between the East and the West Wing. The House of Units would consist of 120 members similarly divided. The Council of Ministers would be collectively responsible to the House of the People which enjoyed all effective powers. The House of Units possessed the power to recommend revisions. One could easily detect some flaws in the B.P.C. Report. The composition of the two Houses was identical, and the utility of the House of Units was, therefore, questionable. The Report did not lay down any method of reconciling the conflict, if any, between the two Houses.[22]

These flaws in the Report, however, were not decisive in the ultimate postponement of its consideration. The real explanation lay in the ceaseless Bengalee-Panjabi rivalry. For the

Bengalees parity implied a considerable sacrifice; it meant the surrender of the legitimate power accruing to the majority in a democracy. To the Panjabis, however, parity was not enough. They were suspicious that, in spite of parity, East Bengalees coming from a united province would dominate the West Wing divided into nine units. Panjabi stalwarts of the ruling coterie, e.g., Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, Mian Mumtaz Daulatana, whipped up a campaign against the Report, although the Report was unanimous, and included among its signatories the Chief Minister of the Panjab, i.e., Daulatana, himself. The West Wing Press was also prompt in ventilating its protest. All these were sufficient for Nazimuddin's Report to suffer from the same fate as Liaquat's Report : its consideration was deferred. But these were not sufficient to enable the Panjabis to extort other political concessions, in addition to what was available through the formula of parity, from the Bengalees who had the majority in the Constituent Assembly. The Panjabis felt all the more insecure as Nazimuddin succeeded in playing upon the fears of Panjabi domination among the smaller provinces of the West Wing and winning much political support there. The political rivalry between the Bengalees and Panjabis became exacerbated by bitter personal animosities between Nazimuddin and Daulatana, and between Ghulam Muhammad and Fazlur Rahman, the closest associate of Nazimuddin. Unless, by some drastic measure, the Bengalee politicians could be dragooned, Panjabis could not hope to push through the Constituent Assembly the constitutional provisions of their choice. They had the Governor-General on their side. The Governor-General could dismiss the Nazimuddin Ministry, nor was he unwilling to think of this alternative, in case this was the only means by which he could get rid of Fazlur Rahman. Nazimuddin backed Fazlur unswervingly, and Nazimuddin commanded the confidence of the majority in the Constituent Assembly. In other words, Ghulam had to dismiss the Nazimuddin Ministry if he

intended to oust Fazlur whom he could not tolerate even for a moment. Pakistani politics was frequently governed by deeply personal considerations. Here was a situation where personal enmities lent a sharper edge to broader political rivalries. Ghulam was prepared to dismiss the Nazimuddin Ministry. But he had to wait for a suitable pretext. The anti-Ahmadi agitation in the Panjab, leading to a slaughter of thousands of Ahmadis, a minority sect professing Islam, during March-April 1953, provided a pretext. Daulatana successfully directed the agitation against Nazimuddin. Ghulam Muhammad no longer hesitated to take a drastic step that might have a salutary effect on the morale of Bengalee MCAs and enable Panjabis to force political concessions out of them.[33]

The Panjab Provincial Muslim League, headed by Daulatana, was fomenting the anti-Ahmadi agitation for a long time before the publication of the Nazimuddin Report. Daulatana himself formulated a resolution, approved by the Council of the Panjab Provincial League on 27 July 1952, which showed that Daulatana and the League sided with anti-Ahmadi agitators in branding Ahmadis as non-Muslims and, moreover, wanted the Central Government to take the necessary constitutional decision on this issue. Earlier, various branches of the Panjab Provincial Muslim League passed resolutions in a similar vein. Both before and after the publication of the Nazimuddin Report, many leaders of the Panjab Muslim League persisted in expressing such views in numerous speeches and writings. Panjab's Director of Public Relations enlisted the cooperation of the Press for diverting the anti-Ahmadi movement to Karachi. Several newspapers were literally purchased by the Daulatana Ministry. Funds allocated to eradication of adult illiteracy were freely spent on the purchase of newspapers with the knowledge of Daulatana himself. These newspapers went on inciting the anti-Ahmadi agitators. Speeches by Daulatana on 30 August 1952 and on 13 September 1952 clearly reiterated the views incorporated

in the above-mentioned Muslim League Resolution of 27 July. The All-Pakistan Muslim Parties Convention, held in Karachi during 16-18 January 1953, set up a Majlis-i-Amal which sent a delegation of the Ulama to Nazimuddin. The Ulama delegation served an ultimatum to Nazimuddin which held out the threat of a direct action unless the demands of the anti-Ahmadis were accepted within a month. The demands were that Ahmadis were to be declared a non-Muslim minority, that Chaudhri Zafrullah Khan was to be removed from the post of the Foreign Minister because he was an Ahmadi, and that Ahmadis occupying important Government jobs should be dismissed. The Government decided to reject the ultimatum at a Conference on 27 February 1953, attended by Central Ministers and representatives of the Provincial Governments in the West Wing. The Government also decided to arrest the leaders of the anti-Ahmadi agitation. Arrests were immediately followed by large-scale disturbances. Even amidst disturbances, Daulatana issued a proclamation on 6 March 1953 that the Government of the Panjab admitted the legitimacy of the anti-Ahmadi demands and it was sending a Provincial Minister to Karachi in order to impress the Panjab's viewpoint on the Central Government.[84]

The Muslim League was the ruling party at the Centre as also in the Panjab. Yet the League members, including prominent leaders and the Panjab's Chief Minister himself, acted in such a way as to undermine the authority of the Central Government. They did not do anything to prevent the disturbances despite clear directives from the Central Government, issued in September 1951 and July 1952, that sectarianism must not be allowed to grow into an aggressive movement. Nor did they do anything to curb the disturbances after their outbreak; on the contrary, Daulatana's proclamation of 6 March only encouraged agitators to unleash a reign of terror on Ahmadis. It is hard to explain this behaviour on the part of Muslim Leaguers unless one stresses the Bengal-Panjab rivalry in the

realm of constitution-making which had been brewing for months before the actual publication of the Nazimuddin Report (in December 1952) and, of course, came to a head thereafter. Daulatana revealed to the Court of Inquiry (on the anti-Ahmadi disturbances) that, although he put his signature on the Nazimuddin Report, his support for the Report was subject to reservations put forward in a note of dissent submitted by him. This could be linked up plausibly with his firm refusal to treat the anti-Ahmadi disturbances as purely a question of law and order. If the disturbances were so treated, said the Report of the Court of Inquiry on these disturbances, a District Magistrate and a Superintendent of Police would have easily quelled them. What happened ultimately was that the military had to step in and it put down the agitators promptly. Lahore passed under Martial Law which remained in force till mid-May.[25]

A question remains as to why Nazimuddin, who must have been aware of the political intrigues going around, failed to treat the anti-Ahmadi agitation as purely a problem of law and order, and to take decisive steps, e.g., arrests, much earlier. This leads us to a kind of ideological blindness or confusion, prevailing in the minds of Pakistan's leaders since its inception, and becoming more marked after the death of Jinnah, that resulted in sloganeering and victimized the slogan-wielders. In season and out of season Pakistan's leaders spoke of an Islamic State (and struck terror in the minds of minorities). The Objectives Resolution held out the ideal of a state where Muslims would be enabled to regulate their individual and collective living in accordance with the requirements of Islam set forth in the Quran and Sunna. The Basic Principles Committee set up a Talimat-i-Islami Board to help it in infusing Islam into the basic principles of the constitution for Pakistan. The B.P.C. Report, presented by Nazimuddin, recommended that no laws repugnant to the Quran and Sunna should be enacted. In order to implement this recommendation, the Nazimuddin Report

prescribed the establishment of a Ulama Broad to which all proposed laws would be referred. All these fanned the fanaticism of many Muslims including the Ulama at one extreme and the lawless adventurers at the other. They also inflamed the lust for power in the Ulama who hoped to capture more of political support by carrying on the anti-Ahmadi agitation. Nazimuddin, therefore, was placed in a highly embarrassing situation. He could manipulate the slogan of an Islamic State and substantially augment his popularity by accepting the demands of anti-*Ahmadis. But that* would have tainted the image of Pakistan in the eyes of other states; Pakistan could no longer claim that it was a progressive state wedded to the ideals of democracy. If, on the other hand, Nazimuddin promptly rejected the demands of the Ulama, he might have been able to forestall the threat to law and order by making necessary arrests and a show of force at an early date. But he would then have to risk a loss of popularity; the Ulama might easily condemn him as detracting from the so-called ideal of Islamic State and make him unpopular.[26]

It is true that the intrigues of Daulatana and his followers placed Nazimuddin in such an uncomfortable position. But the intrigues could not have succeeded unless Pakistani leaders, including Nazimuddin, had been incessantly using for the last few years the slogan of an Islamic State to buttress their popularity. If they were interested in building a modern and democratic state in Pakistan they should have avoided that slogan. Muslim masses, dreaming of the splendid achievements of Islam during 150 years after its birth, would always be enthralled by an appeal to the ideal of an Islamic State, without realizing that, in the context of modern democratic ideals, the ideal of an Islamic State was simply a menace to their rights. Again, they could interpret, or be incited by political bosses and the ambitious Ulama to interpret, the ideal of an Islamic State as permitting them to maltreat non-Muslims or minority Muslim sects in any

way they liked for self-aggrandizement. Such an interpretation would make it tremendously difficult for the rulers to maintain law and order. The Objectives Resolution of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan conformed to the Quran and the Sunna as it vested sovereignty in God. Quite inconsistently, however, it prescribed that Pakistan would be a sovereign state and observe democratic principles enjoined by Islam. According to Islamic political theory, the Islamic State embraced the entire community of Muslims in the world, and Pakistan did not have within its boundaries all the Muslims. Nor could Pakistan have a Khalifah to whom the heads of other Muslim states would pay their allegiance. An Islamic State can never claim to possess sovereignty because it does not have the power to repeal any injunction of the Quran and the Sunna. Islamic political thought looks upon God as the Legislator and rules out the role of any lawmaking body set up by ordinary human beings. Sharia, i.e., the Islamic law fixing up the code of conduct for the Muslims, did not evolve after the death of Muhammad, the Prophet, as this death snapped the line of communication between God and man. Sharia was all-embracing and immutable. Sharia has no place for various individual liberties which are the sine qua non of a modern democratic state. The doctrine of Siyasa in Sharia, again, is a negation of rights conferred on citizens by a modern democracy. This doctrine vests enormous discretionary powers in the ruler of an Islamic State which would arbitrarily nullify the individual rights sanctioned by a modern democracy.[27]

Pakistani leaders, including Nazimuddin, who were always harping on the notion of an Islamic State, should have taken into account the dangerous possibilities opened up by ambitious, aggressive political and religious leaders taking refuge under such a notion. To talk of an Islamic State is to inflate the sense of self-importance of the Ulama, whet their political ambition, and to encourage the Ulama to infect the masses with certain

prejudices and create an explosive situation. The evidences recorded by the Court of Inquiry on the anti-Ahmadi disturbances of 1953 vividly revealed the explosive potentialities. The Objectives Resolution failed to satisfy the Ulama who found, for instance, the provisions with regard to fundamental rights of citizens a direct violation of the concept of an Islamic State. The Ulama unequivocally rejected the concept of a modern democracy, while they failed to cite an agreed model of an Islamic State. Most of the Ulama referred the Court of Inquiry to the Islamic Republic operative during 632-661 A.D. Some of them cited the regime of such an intolerant ruler as Aurangzeb, although none preferred the regime of Akbar, the apostle of toleration. No two Ulama agreed upon the definition of a Muslim, although all of them were quite emphatic on the point that a Muslim who changed his views during his lifetime, for instance, if he is born a Shia and becomes a Sunni or vice versa, is to be punished by death penalty. Anybody who is a Shia or a Sunni, a Barelvi or a Deobandi, condemns everybody else as beyond the pale of Islam, a *Kafir*. In their testimonies to the Court of Inquiry the Ulama were similarly emphatic on the position of non-Muslims in Pakistan as an Islamic State. Non-Muslims of countries conquered by an Islamic State earn the status of *Zimmies;* they are entitled to some rights although they are not full citizens. Non-Muslims, who are already inhabitants of an Islamic State, can claim certain rights of citizenship only if the Islamic State has entered into an agreement with them and conferred on them the status of *mu'ahids*. In the absence of such an agreement, they do not possess any rights of citizenship. In other words, the non-Muslims of Pakistan as an Islamic State would not be granted the status of even Zimmies or mu'ahids, not to speak of the status of a citizen.[28]

When the constitution-makers of Pakistan accorded an important status to the Ulama, they became guilty of encouraging the latter to spread dangerous notions about an Islamic State

and to tempt the masses to commit atrocities on non-Muslims for self-aggrandizement under cover of a religious slogan. Pakistan's constitution-makers should have reminded themselves that such temptations survived even the regime of Akbar who succeeded greatly in practising toleration and integrating the Muslims and the non-Muslims. Shaikh Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi hated Akbar's policy of peaceful integration of Muslims and non-Muslims. He proposed to uphold the honour of Islam by dishonouring non-Muslims as much as possible. If non-Muslims thus were compelled to live in terror every moment of their existence, the honour of Islam would rise. Shaikh A. F. Sirhindi advised Muslims to minimize their contacts with non-Muslims and to keep the latter away like dogs. Akbar had abolished the *jizya* tax which was levied on non-Muslims in return for certain services, e.g., military, which the non-Muslims were not obliged to perform. Shaikh A. F. Sirhindi not only advocated the re-imposition of the jizya, but redefined the purpose of this tax. According to him, the fear of jizya should constantly humiliate non-Muslims by compelling the latter to dress ill and avoid pomp, and this was the real reason why jizya should be levied. Shaikh A. F. Sirhindi was a Sunni, and he considered it a religious virtue to persecute not only Hindus but Shias and even a group among the Sunnis. The Ulama who incited the perpetrators of brutality on the Ahmadis in 1953 were not surely much ahead of the venerated Shaikh A. F. Sirhindi. The gravity of the failure of Pakistani leaders, who did not make any attempt to roll back the tide of anti-Ahmadi agitation, becomes all the more apparent when one notes that the persecution of Ahmadis, an insignificant minority among the Muslims, by the dominant Muslim sects, was not a new occurrence. It took place even during the British days when the majority sects took all possible measures to oppress the Ahmadis, e.g., boycotting them and forcing them to evacuate from areas where they had been living long, dismissing them from various jobs

simply because they happened to be Ahmadis, carrying on a campaign of vilification against Ahmadis. Even a poet and philosopher like Sir Muhammad Iqbal got very much agitated over this issue and suggested that the British Government should treat the founder of the Ahmadi sect in the same way as the Roman Government had treated Jesus Christ; on second thought he calmed down and recommended that the Government should declare Ahmadis (also called Qadianis) as non-Muslims. It was not surprising, therefore, although it was surely unwarranted by any notion of fairplay and decency, loyalty and discipline expected of Government employees, that members of the Board of Talimat-i-Islami, backed up the anti-Ahmadi agitation and supported the resolution on direct action against the Government, passed in January 1953 at the All Pakistan Muslim Parties Convention in Karachi. None of them resigned from the Government job, and none announced that he disapproved the massacre of Ahmadis.[29]

Pakistan's leaders, therefore, were playing with fire and damaging the social fabric of the state they were entrusted to build up when they strengthened the hands of the religious fanatics by preaching the notion of Pakistan as an Islamic State. They proved themselves unable to follow the lead given by Jinnah who, in his famous speech of 11 August 1947 before the Constituent Assembly, clearly outlined the ideal of a modern, democratic state Pakistan should try to attain. This speech by Jinnah delineated religion as a matter of personal faith without any bearing on rights of citizenship which were declared to be equal for all irrespective of caste, colour or religious faith. This speech revealed Jinnah's confidence about Pakistan's progress once Pakistan equalized privileges and obligations of its citizens regardless of their personal faith and past animosities. Jinnah on that day called upon the majority and minority communities to forget the past, to bury the hatchet, and work cooperatively to build up a prosperous Pakistan. The Objectives

Resolution of 12 March 1949 was a virtual negation of Jinnah's speech of 11 August 1947. Brigands were quick to join hands with religious fanatics who got a tremendous boost from the Objectives Resolution and the frequent announcements by leading politicians on Pakistan being or becoming an Islamic State. The upshot was a regular victimization of the minorities, including Ahmadis as well as the Buddhists, Christians and Hindus, which sometimes reached a climax as in the holocaust of February 1950 or of March-April 1953. Politicians, especially of East Bengal, appeared to suffer the worst. The massacres of 1950 struck at the roots of Hindu-Muslim solidarity in East Bengal without which it was not possible for that province to stand up to the machinations of the non-Bengalee rulers. The disturbances of March-April 1953 cost Nazimuddin his Premiership, although his rival, Daulatana, had also to relinquish the post of the Chief Minister of the Panjab. How politicians are sometimes grievously entrapped by their slogans was amply illustrated by Nazimuddin's attempts till the very last moment before the slaughter of Ahmadis to win over the Ulama even by the offer of bribes. The Ulama, dreaming of an Islamic State dominated by them, refused to yield. Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad used the killings of Ahmadis as a pretext for dismissing the Nazimuddin Ministry on 17 April 1953. The dismissal took place after the disturbances in the Panjab had been brought under complete control. The real motive behind it was clear: to bring East Bengal Muslim Leaguers to their knees for the purpose of exacting bigger concessions in constitution-making.[30]

A more blatant and undemocratic exercise of the Governor-General's power could hardly be imagined, for Nazimuddin retained the support of the majority in the Constituent Assembly and had recently secured the passage of the annual Budget. Ghulam Muhammad made Mr. Muhammad Ali (of Bogra in East Bengal) the new Prime Minister; it was an innocuous

concession to Bengalee sentiments. Muhammad Ali (of Bogra) had been out of the country for several years and had no grip over Muslim Leaguers. He was chosen to be the Prime Minister because he was expected to be a puppet in the hands of the Panjabi bureaucrat-politicians including Ghulam himself and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali. They demonstrated succinctly their will and capacity to chastise the politicians and dealt a shattering blow to the prospects of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. The politicians lay low. They did not retaliate against bureaucratic machinations ; they did not even pass a vote of censure against the new Prime Minister. This enabled the non-Bengalee bureaucrats-turned-politicians, enjoying the support of the military, to feel free to violate parliamentary conventions whenever such conventions threatened their selfish interests. The legislators could not retaliate because they lacked unity. While Bengalees felt humiliated by Nazimuddin's dismissal, Panjabis were elated. Mr. Khalid B. Sayeed was not exactly fair when he compared parliamentary government in Pakistan to "a disorderly football scrimmage among unscrupulous politicians," for the bureaucrats were constantly active in creating and fomenting that disorder.[31]

The Governor-General and his followers began to press for bigger concessions from Bengalee Muslim Leaguers in the realm of constitution-making. The new Prime Minister, Muhammad Ali (of Bogra), obliged the Governor-General by accepting the latter's plan for an interim Constitution. This plan envisaged the establishment of a new Constituent Assembly because the existing Assembly had lost its representative character. The Interim Constitution sought to reduce the powers of the Assembly by vesting discretionary power in the Governor-General to veto legislation. It also intended to steer clear of such Islamic provisions as the procedure to prevent legislation repugnant to the Quran and Sunna. Bengalees, however, survived the initial shock caused by the Governor-General's arbitrary dis-

missal of Nazimuddin, and proceeded to fight the designs of the Governor-General. The East Bengal Provincial Muslim League Council passed a resolution rejecting the Interim Constitution. What was more interesting, Bengalee Muslim Leaguers harnessed the support of the Ulama in their campaign against the Interim Constitution. At a result, the Ulama gained considerably when the Constituent Assembly, controlled by the Bengalees, accepted the recommendation of the B.P.C. that the head of the state should be a Muslim, that the Constitution must incorporate a procedure for the prevention of legislation opposed to the Quran and Sunna. Bengalee Muslim Leaguers also foiled another plan of the Panjabis: unification of the various units of West Pakistan. Panjabis thereby hoped to improve their chances in the contest with the Bengalees coming from a single unit. They tried to revise the recommendations of the B.P.C. by consolidating West Pakistan into One Unit and then applying the principle of parity to the representation of the Eastern unit and the Western unit in the Central legislature. The Panjabi group felt that this consolidation would also enable them to reduce the influence of Hindu members of the Central legislature whose cooperation with the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers on such important issues as the language issue the Panjabis detested. The Hindus would not be able to take advantage of Bengal-Panjab rivalry and make their presence felt in the Central legislature once the Panjab was able to extend its sphere of influence in a consolidated single unit for West Pakistan. But these calculations on the part of Panjabis could not bear much fruit as the Bengalees succeeded in fanning up the fears of the smaller units of West Pakistan as regards manifold opportunities of Panjabi domination in One Unit. Panjabis complained that they could not carry out this One Unit scheme on account of the intrigues by the Bengal group in the Constituent Assembly. Nevertheless, it should be added that the smaller units of West Pakistan could not all favour One Unit

because of very real apprehensions of Panjabi domination. The Bengal group merely capitalized those fears. Ghulam Muhammad and his associates had hoped that the show of force, i.e., dismissal of Nazimuddin, would be enough to ensure a complete command over the Constituent Assembly. They found themselves to be wrong. Perhaps they were driven to think of a more drastic step for establishing their control over the Constituent Assembly.[32]

Till they could muster sufficient confidence to take such a drastic step, the Governor-General and his associates consented to a new formula of parity, and thus enabled a discussion on the B.P.C. Report by the Constituent Assembly. Muhammad Ali (of Bogra), credited with the discovery of this new formula of parity, presented the Report to the Assembly on 7 October 1953. According to the Muhammad Ali formula, East Bengal would enjoy a majority in the House of People, getting merely one-fifth of the seats in the House of Units having co-equal powers with the lower House. East Bengal would have 165 seats in the lower House, while other Units in the West Wing got 135. The Panjab and East Bengal got 10 seats each in the upper House, the other Units in the West Wing being allotted the other 30 seats. East Bengal could not possibly dominate the West Wing, because in case of a difference between the two Houses, there would be a joint sitting where each Wing would have 175 seats and a valid decision required the support of at least thirty percent of the members of each Wing. In this way the potential advantages flowing to East Bengal on account of its larger population were almost eradicated. Subsequent events showed that neither the Bengalees nor the Panjabis were satisfied with the Muhammad Ali formula of parity. Although this formula modified the Nazimuddin formula palpably in favour of the Panjabis, the latter still felt unsafe because divisions between the various Units in the West Wing were open to manipulation by the East Wing. For the Bengalees, the composition

and powers of the upper House and the mode of settling differences between the two Houses were a distinct violation of the democratic maxim of majority rule by means of an over-stretching of the principle of parity. Yet the Bengalees and Panjabis agreed to this formula. Such an agreement was hard to explain unless they had some other political interest in initiating publicly a reconsideration of the B.P.C. Report. Probably, as MCAs, they wanted to impress the people that they were serious about promulgating a Constitution for the country. The seriousness was questionable because the Report left many vital problems unsettled, e.g., financial allocations between the Centre and the Units, and because vital decisions, e.g., with regard to parity of representation, were shaped outside the Constituent Assembly.[33]

As an attempt to solve the problem of constitution-making in Pakistan, the Muhammad Ali formula did not deserve much credit. It was a reaffirmation of the failure of Pakistanis to establish a national identity and of the undying jealousies and suspicions between the two Wings. The Muhammad Ali formula was a more rigid institutionalization, than the Nazimuddin formula, of this inter-Wing mistrust. Consequently, it was more deadlock-prone than the Nazimuddin formula. The upper House was not popularly elected, and yet it was given co-equal powers with the lower House. The West Wing secured 40 out of 50 seats in the upper House. Indirect election would favour the return of rich persons to this upper House, who might easily oppose social welfare legislation hurting their vested interests. This was a very ominous probability so far as land-reform legislation in the West Wing was concerned. Serious differences of opinion between the two Wings on budgetary allocations, again, were to be anticipated, and tough politicians of one Wing could easily exploit the thirty percent regulation to block the passage of the Budget. The long-term consequences of the Muhammad Ali formula were possibly ignored by those who agreed to it for

the sake of a temporary compromise. The formula would encourage the formation of political parties on the basis of provincial considerations and not ideological differences. It was thus an obstacle to the growth of a healthy party system required in a democracy. It exacerbated provincial feelings, instead of lessening them. Bengalee MCAs testified, during the discussion on the Muhammad Ali formula at the Constituent Assembly, that the publication of the formula immediately heightened anti-Bengalee feelings in the West Wing. In East Bengal, too, almost all the important political organizations, except the Muslim League, expressed disapproval of the new formula, and suspicions towards non-Bengalees rose up. The Government prorogued the sessions of the Panjab Legislative Assembly prematurely because some notable members of the Panjab Muslim League Parliamentary Party were known to be totally opposed to the new formula, and were prepared to criticize it during the session, and they could in this way nullify the impressions sought to be implanted by the ruling coterie in the people with the help of an advocacy, however short-lived, of this formula. The thirty percent requirement, moreover, because of inter-Wing ill-will, could operate in favour of corrupt Ministers who would be able to take shelter behind this requirement and survive no-confidence motions even if passed by a large majority. Perhaps the whole hubbub on the new formula of parity and the show of constitution-making could be condemned as a fraud on the people who were cheered up by talks of a new formula of parity facilitating the advent of an Islamic Constitution, and then made to hear that the consideration of the B.P.C. Report could not be completed because of the coming elections in East Bengal. In fact, one eminent woman, Begum Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, associated with the Muslim League since its inception, announced on the floor of the Constituent Assembly her resignation from the Muslim League on the ground that she could no more put up with fooling the

people time and again by approving a few clauses, calling them Islamic, and then putting the Constitution in cold storage.[34]

Bengalee Muslim Leaguers, who surely had their eye on the coming provincial elections when they decided to accept the Muhammad Ali formula and start a reconsideration, though incomplete, of the B.P.C. Report, did not themselves appear to be particularly wise. They fully alienated the minority voters by placing too much emphasis on the Constitution being Islamic. The Constituent Assembly, with the active support of the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers, decided that no law, repugnant to the Quran and Sunna, should be enacted. The request of the Hindus that their personal laws at least should be kept free from interference under such a provision, was not granted. The Assembly, furthermore, voted for the establishment of a Government organization to propagate the teachings of Islam among the people. Hindus became afraid that this was a scheme to enlist the support of the state for proselytization. The fears of Hindus and other religious minorities could be easily appreciated when one read such provisions with the provisions that the name of the state would be the 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan' and not simply 'Pakistan,' that only a Muslim should be the head of the state, and that minorities should vote in separate electorates. The minorities felt that they were being reduced for ever to the category of inferior citizens, and the threat of religious aggression, now receiving covert Constitutional sanction, was also ever-present.[35]

Opinions of many eminent Ulama, of important West Wing newspapers, policy and practice of officials and non-officials, all justified such fears of minorities. Members of the Board of Talimat-i-Islami wrote a Report containing their interpretations of Quranic verses which could not but strike terror in the hearts of minorities. They argued on the basis of one verse, for instance, that there can be no friendship between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. They concluded on the basis of another

verse that no non-Muslim should occupy any important official job. Once the Governor-General attended a reception, as part of a religious festival organized by the Hindu MCAs, and he made the innocent remark that the occasion was an auspicious one. Immediately the leading Karachi daily, *Dawn,* published a long article pleading that the Governor-General, the head of an Islamic State, was not being reasonable when he declared the religious celebration of another community to be auspicious. Once in the house of an MCA, a few Bengalee Muslims and Hindus gathered and sang a song in praise of the Bengali language. But the *Morning News* soon published a letter condemning such singing as idolatrous and un-Islamic. Hindu MCAs rightly argued that the emphasis on Islamic provisions of the Constitution was stirring up fanaticism even amongst the educated sections of Muslims, not to speak of the illiterate masses. They recalled how even Nazimuddin, then the Chief Minister of East Bengal, proved himself to be powerless before the outburst of such fanaticism on the occasion of a Hindu religious procession in which for many decades Hindus and Muslims of Dacca had been enthusiastically participating. During 1947-48 some Muslim fanatics opposed the passage of the procession through one of the customary roads, and Chief Minister Nazimuddin failed, although he tried, to override that opposition.[36]

Matters did not improve after the 1950 communal massacre and the Liaquat-Nehru Agreement. The Government sent a circular to chiefs of commercial firms instructing them to obtain prior approval of the District Magistrate before appointing a non-Muslim. Nurul Amin had the audacity to deny this in a session of the Constituent Assembly, and the Secretary of a commercial organization, who knew about this denial, sent a copy of the circular to Nurul Amin. Another fourteen-page circular reduced to mockery the Liaquat-Nehru Agreement and the talks of social justice in an Islamic State. This circular, forwarded to all the District Magistrates who were asked to keep secret the

instructions contained therein, prescribed that no property should be returned, on some pretext or other, to the Hindus going out of Pakistan during or after the 1950 holocaust and then returning back to Pakistan with the hope of enjoying the protection of the Liaquat-Nehru Agreement. Hindus found all the avenues of employment being rendered inaccessible. Cries of an Islamic State appeared to condone the policy of harsh discrimination practised against them by the Government. After all, non-Muslims must not aspire to have a comfortable living in the homeland of Muslims. Hindus engaged in trade and industry had no alternative but to wind up their business and leave. Even after Partition, at a time when Muslims of East Bengal did not have the means to start many industries in their province and the Central Government was not interested in industrializing that province, some Hindus invested crores of rupees in industry. But the bureaucracy deliberately placed so many hindrances in their way, what the bureaucracy can always do very easily, that they had to consider migration to India and then, oddly enough, they had to face the accusation that they were Indian agents and they never tried to look upon Pakistan as their homeland. A more glaring example of an official policy, at once oppressive and hypocritical, could rarely be found. It was a habitual trick on the part of the Government to get out of any inconvenient situation by blaming it on the Hindus. Even the assassination of Liaquat was initially sought to be attributed to a Hindu. If Pakistan's relations with India worsened at any time, the Hindus of East Bengal had to pay a penalty. One Central Minister made a curious announcement in a public meeting that Pakistan was not a nation-state but an Islamic State; this speech implied that Buddhists, Christians and Hindus could never combine with Muslims to form a homogeneous nation-state. Such utterances merely strengthened the belief, popular and advantageous to the majority community, that Muslims were entitled to play havoc with the rights of

minorities, especially when the Government encouraged this foul play. Consequently, Muslims continued to occupy the houses of Hindus forcibly, to steal paddy or fish from the premises belonging to non-Muslims who became too demoralized even to lodge complaints with the police because of familiar police brutalities on these complainants. The rulers forgot that lawlessness and violence might become chronic in a society where the Government allowed the Muslims to trespass freely on the legitimate rights of non-Muslims. They were staking the future of the entire social order.[37]

Nor could the non-Muslims hope to improve their position in the future by acquiring political influence in a genuine democracy with a healthy party system setting no store by communalism. For separate electorates were thrust upon them. On 22 October 1953, when the BPC Report presented by Muhammad Ali (of Bogra) was being discussed, Mian Muhammad Iftikharuddin made a significant comment at the Constituent Assembly: "Sir, I submit that Muslims in India are being treated much better than how Hindus are treated in Pakistan. We told the world that we are going to give you an ideology and this is how we are behaving!" He complained that Pakistani leaders were using the word 'Islamic' as merely a slogan, while they failed to absorb non-Muslims as integral parts of the nation. By adopting a narrow-minded and parochial policy toward the non-Muslims, Iftikharuddin alleged, Pakistani leaders were not only impairing their prestige but also menacing the interests of Muslims in other countries. To subject non-Muslims to disabilities in Pakistan was to expose the Muslims, residing in states that had a majority of non-Muslims, to risks of similar maltreatment. "For ever we have declared them foreign to ourselves. We have not given those minorities the rights or the facilities whereby they would have assimilated themselves in our national life," declared Iftikharuddin.[38]

Muslim League leaders of East Bengal wrongly hoped that

the propaganda of the Islamic State would see them through the coming provincial elections. For there were many long-standing grievances of East Bengalees against the Government which the Muslim Leaguers were powerless to redress. East Bengalees became more and more convinced that non-Bengalee rulers were out to exploit them in the name of Islamic unity and brotherhood. When, however, they talked of such exploitation, they were accused of provincialism. Bengalee MCAs did not keep silent for fear of these accusations, and over the years continued to ventilate the legitimate grievances of their province which the non-Bengalee rulers deliberately ignored. In 1948, the Central Government removed the Sales Tax for two years from the Provincial to the Central List. In 1950, Ghulam Muhammad, then the Finance Minister of Pakistan, moved the Government of India (Fourth Amendment) Bill for keeping the Sales Tax in the Central List for another two years. The Bill was passed. East Bengalees regarded this as an undue usurpation on the part of the Central Government, especially because, as the Census report indicated, two-thirds of the people of that province were undernourished, while the provincial Government had extremely limited resources and had Sales Tax as the only expanding source of revenue. West Pakistani traders, sure of receiving the patronage of the Central Government, welcomed the renewed transfer of the Sales Tax to the Central List, while East Bengalee traders resented it. The loss was all the more intolerable because, after Partition, the Central Government carried through a scheme of reallocation of financial resources resulting in a severe loss of the East Bengal Government's share of the jute duty and income-tax proceeds. The Raisman Award removed only partially the injustices caused to East Bengal by this reallocation. In 1949 the Central Government passed, without consulting the East Bengal Government, the Distribution of Revenues Order, which imposed an upper limit on East Bengal's share of jute export duty. The

Raisman Award removed the upper limit. The Award also offered a small compensation for the loss as regards the Sales Tax in the form of a share of Central Excise duties on tobacco, betelnuts and tea. East Bengalees particularly resented the allocation of half of the Sales Tax proceeds collected in Karachi to various Units in West Pakistan. For East Bengalees were not allowed to import from abroad, and many goods coming from foreign countries to Karachi, where many dealers were privileged possessors of import licences, were re-exported to East Bengal, while Sales Tax on these goods was collected in Karachi.[39]

The Central Government was demonstrably unfair to East Bengal in the matter of financial assistance extended by it to various Units of Pakistan. The Explanatory Memorandum attached to the Central Budget for the year 1952-53 gave out the story luridly. The Central Government Grants-in-aid to East Bengal since the inception of Pakistan amounted to 9 crores and 93 lakhs of rupees, although East Bengal contained 56 percent of the country's population and, on that basis, deserved Rupees 25 crores and 33 lakhs. The Central Government loans to East Bengal during the same period amounted to Rs. 15 crores and 46 lakhs, although, on the basis of population, it should have received Rs. 27 crores and 91 lakhs. It was not surely possible for the Central Government to maintain mathematically exact parity as between various Units in the distribution of financial assistance. But East Bengalees could legitimately complain that they had received, during the aforesaid period, only 21.9 percent of the Central Government Grants-in-aid, and only 30.4 percent of the Central Government loans. As to East Bengal's share of Central revenues, the figure was even more startling; it amounted to 18.7 percent (excluding the duty on jute which was solely produced in East Bengal). Moreover, the Central Government, while it tried to safeguard the interests of cotton-growers in the West Wing, showed very little concern

for the lot of jute-growers of East Bengal who earned the largest amount of foreign exchange for Pakistan. This foreign exchange was not utilized for industrializing East Bengal; it was set apart mostly for the industrial development of the West Wing. The Central Government paid no heed to the resolutions of the East Bengal Provincial Muslim League pleading for the fixation of a minimum price for jute, while it was quick to adopt a price-support policy for the cotton-growers of the Panjab. The non-Bengalee officials in all the services continued to behave as if they had the right to rule over Bengalees because they were superior to the Bengalees whom they treated as worthless creatures deserving more of hatred and arrogance than of compassion and pity. Consequently, as Shahoodul Haque, a Bengalee MCA, told the Constituent Assembly on 18 March 1952, the gulf of distrust between Bengalees and non-Bengalees was widening to a significant extent. "It is no good concealing the fact that a feeling is rapidly growing in the Eastern Zone of Pakistan that the Eastern Zone is becoming a colony for the people of the Western Zone," said Shahoodul.[40]

The British rulers deliberately adopted the policy of keeping Bengalees out of the armed forces. For them Bengalees were too much politically conscious and too eager to take to terroristic tactics for ousting the foreign rulers. East Bengalees were shocked to find the non-Bengalee rulers sticking, after Partition, to the same policy. In his budget speech of 1948, Nazimuddin, then the Chief Minister of East Bengal, outlined the dangers of such a policy as he put forward the demand of Bengalees for adequate representation in the armed forces. Bengalees had a strong urge to enlist themselves in the armed forces, and the heads of Pakistan's armed forces attested their ability by recording praises for the lone battalion raised from East Bengal. It was not enough to assign only a small share of the new recruits to East Bengal; the share must be fair and proper so that the representation of Bengalees in the military

services would become adequate within a short period. Otherwise, Nazimuddin warned in the aforesaid speech, the two Wings of Pakistan would be of unequal strength and fail to work harmoniously. East Bengalees were dismayed to find, however, that Nazimuddin, even when he became the Prime Minister of Pakistan, failed to offset the machinations of the non-Bengalee ruling coterie and secure adequate representation of Bengalees in the armed forces. During the discussion on the Central Budget for 1952-53, Bengalee MCAs repeatedly pointed out the stepmotherly treatment meted out in this matter to their province by the Central Government. Even the recruitment arrangements were totally adverse to East Bengal. Pakistan had 8 Air Force Recruiting Centres of which only one was located in East Bengal. Each Centre could recruit 250 trainees at a time, but the minimum of 33 percent of the seats in the East Bengal Centre were reserved for non-Bengalees. Similar handicaps faced East Bengal with regard to recruitments to the army and the navy. East Bengal suffered the same kind of injustice in the matter of institutions for imparting military training to students; there were 7 such institutions in the West Wing, and only one in the East Wing. Bengalee MCAs confessed that they were weary of urging upon the Central Government to extend suitable opportunities to Bengalees for recruitment to the military services.[41]

They pointed to other cases of glaring negligence on the part of the Central Government so far as the interests of their province were concerned. The Central Budget for 1952-53 allotted Rs. 12½ crores to the West Wing for the uplift of education and health, and only Rs. 5½ crores to the East Wing. The Central Government was running all the 7 Technical Education Training Centres in the West Wing providing for 1100 students, while all the Training Centres in the East Wing were closed down excepting one at Dacca which had the capacity to admit only 150 students. A portion of the Dacca High Court,

occupied by the military, was not vacated although every year the military establishment ate up a huge part of Government funds. Non-Bengalee officials occupying superior positions discriminated against Bengalees in matters of promotion. When Bengalees spoke of such injustices, the non-Bengalee rulers refused to treat it as a problem for the integration of their country and considered it a serious challenge to their domination, Their reactions, therefore, only heightened the already strong disaffection among Bengalees. Syed Abul Basher Mahmud Husain rightly announced: "All cry in the name of Islamic brotherhood but very few follow that. This is providing a cry in the wilderness. How long you would exploit East Bengal in the name of Islamic brotherhood and solidarity. Double dealing has no place in Islam but it is gaining its root in Pakistan in the name of Islam... In fine I would say that the gesture so far shown by the Central Government towards East Bengal has aroused a feeling that the 'Go slow' activities in matters of East Bengal is being pursued with a motive to keep East Bengal all along under certain disabilities."[42]

Apparently, without substantial provincial autonomy, East Bengalees could not hope to redress grievances of the kind noted above. But the B.P.C. Report, presented by Muhammad Ali (of Bogra) did not provide for even a shadow of autonomy. Muslim League leaders of Bengal, including the Chief Minister, Nurul Amin, thought they could ignore autonomy and yet win the elections by means of communal appeals fortified by jargons of an Islamic State. This B.P.C. Report extended insignificant powers to provinces, and paid no attention to the cultural-geographical barriers between the two Wings of Pakistan enjoining a large measure of provincial autonomy. Otherwise, dissatisfactions would grow and threaten the very unity of the country. It was true that Nurul Amin, by agreeing to this B.P.C. Report, ensured a large number of jobs for Bengalee Muslim League politicians in the Central Legislature. But he

ignored the larger interests of Bengalees who had virtually no access to the Central Secretariat located in the West Wing and who could not, therefore, plead with the Secretaries for mitigating many of their serious difficulties. Muslim Leaguers carried through an amendment to the B.P.C. Report providing that at least one session of the Central Legislature would be held each year in Dacca. Here was an election stunt that merely pinpointed genuine provincial autonomy as a must for a state like Pakistan, and yet evaded the grave issues involved in implementing such a stunt. The amendment emphasized the problem, and yet avoided the only available solution, i.e., a large measure of provincial autonomy. Supporters of the amendment suggested that this would allay the fears of East Bengalees that their province was a colony for exploitation by the West Wing. These supporters were frightfully aware that Opposition parties in East Bengal were trying to forge a united front by raising the demand for provincial autonomy. They wanted to use this amendment as a sedative to the mounting cry for autonomy. They ignored how the holding of one session of the Central Legislature in Dacca would impede coordination between the Ministers and the bureaucracy with its headquarters in the West Wing. Such an arrangement was likely to multiply inefficiency. Nor could it open up the access of East Bengalees to the high-ups in bureaucracy without which their vital interests would continue to be neglected. Mian Muhammad Iftikharuddin, who sharply criticized the B.P.C. Report for ruling out provincial autonomy, declared at the Constituent Assembly that this Report was "totally unjust and unkind" to East Bengal, and "that an unnatural centralisation, an unnatural control over others would not lead ultimately to unity, but on the contrary would lead to disruption". He suggested that the amendment stipulating the sitting of one session annually of the Central Legislature in Dacca merely revealed how "ridiculous" was the Constitution proposed by the B.P.C. Report. Iftikharuddin fur-

ther declared that the framers of the Lahore Resolution could think on right lines because they were not seized by a lust for power, and they could, therefore, envisage two autonomous states for the Muslims of undivided India; but the present rulers of Pakistan were too preoccupied with the scramble for power to take a correct decision and provide for complete provincial autonomy.[43]

During 1953-54 the bureaucrats and the military generals in Pakistan resorted to another contrivance to consolidate their position. They decided to strengthen the military machine by entering into a military aid pact with the United States. This would not only enable Pakistan's rulers to pressurize India for a satisfactory solution of the Kashmir issue, but also help to bolster an authoritarian regime which was becoming excessively unpopular in the East Wing. A stage might come when East Bengal was to be held by sheer military power. The pact with the United States did not materialize before May 1954.[44] Meanwhile, politics in East Bengal took a dramatic turn and posed a serious obstacle to the manoeuverings of the West Wing rulers.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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11. *CAP Debates*, 6 January 1950, pp. 54-61.

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CHAPTER 3

TOWARDS A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Bengalee Muslim League leaders neglected the vital interests of East Bengal and became more and more unpopular, while they ran after temporary personal interests and played into the hands of the non-Bengalee ruling clique. They were, of course, aware of it and continued to postpone elections which fell due in 1952. They were even afraid of facing by-elections, and at one time as many as thirty-four seats went vacant at the provincial legislature. Acute cultural, economic and political grievances of East Bengalees paved the way to the formation of two political parties which developed into serious contenders for power apart from the Muslim League. These were the Awami Muslim League (founded in 1949) and the Krishak Sramik Party (founded in 1953). The former was led by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani; Mr. Husain Saheed Suhrawardy joined later. (Shaikh Mujibur Rahman of this party, later renamed Awami League, is at the present moment the foremost leader of the autonomy movement in East Pakistan). The K.S.P. (i.e., Krishak Sramik Party) was led by the oldest and most respected politician in East Bengal, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq, who had moved the historic Lahore Resolution.[1]

These parties of East Bengal could easily draw the attention of the people to severe curbs on freedom of speech and expression by which the non-Bengalee bureaucrats, with the acquiescence or impotence of the Muslim League, ruled the province. They could easily point to the economic exploitation of the East Wing by the West Wing made possible with official connivance. East Bengal's foreign exchange earnings were spent mostly to industrialize West Pakistan, and to serve the interests of West Wing industrialists who secured official favours in the

form of industrial permits, import licences, etc. Consumer goods imported by them were brought to Karachi first and then sent to East Bengal where they were sold at an unwarrantedly high price, despite an allowance for the cost of transportation between the two Wings. The people of East Bengal were thoroughly conscious of such exploitation; facts and figures available in official publications too confirmed it.[3]

When, therefore, elections took place in East Bengal in March 1954, the fate of the Muslim League was sealed. The Muslim League confronted a coalition of parties called the United Front of which the major partners were the Awami Muslim League and the K.S.P. The United Front drafted a 21-point Programme on the basis of which it fought the elections. This Programme referred to the Lahore Resolution as it demanded autonomy for East Bengal in all fields except defence, foreign affairs and currency. In the field of defence, again, it called for self-sufficiency of East Bengal, and demanded the establishment of Pakistan's Navy headquarters in the East Wing. The Programme promised to make Bengali one of the state languages, to industrialize East Bengal, secure freedom of speech and expression, etc. In short, the United Front's election manifesto pledged to eliminate the cultural-economic-political repression unleashed by the Central ruling clique which the Bengalee Muslim Leaguers failed to avert, or even to fight strongly. The United Front volunteers adopted a particular technique of electioneering oriented towards an important ingredient of Muslim social life. They went to village supermarkets (called *haat* in Bengali) where hundreds assembled together for the prayer on friday afternoons when they easily distributed leaflets and sold newspapers. Hamidul Haq Choudhury's one-sheet one-paisa newspaper, *Sangbad,* was very useful for this purpose. Election results were staggering : the Muslim League was completely routed, winning only nine seats in a legislature of three hundred and ten members. The Muslim

League failed to secure more than 2½% of the votes despite the utilization of the entire governmental machinery and the resort to communal propaganda from which the major partners of the United Front abstained. The climax in these elections, probably the most outstanding in the history of popular elections, was marked by the defeat of the Chief Minister, Nurul Amin, in his home constituency, by a young man aged twenty-five only.[3]

The difficulty now facing the non-Bengalee political leaders and bureaucrats was unprecedented. It was proved that the puppet Prime Minister, Muhammad Ali (of Borga), and his Muslim League Party did not have the shadow of popular support. On the contrary, the United Front, in accordance with the election pledge and inspired by the support of about 97½% of the voters of the province, was expected to oppose the domination of the East Wing by the West Pakistani ruling coterie. It had been easier to control Muslim Leaguers, who had lost popular support years ago, in order to facilitate that domination. The United Front, moreover, made opposition to the projected Pakistan-America military aid pact one important plank in its platform. It would try, therefore, to frustrate the scheme of a far stronger military machine without which the ruling clique was not sure of being able to prolong its authoritarian existence. In fact, the newly elected members of the East Pakistan provincial legislature did not make much delay in expressing its opposition to the proposed military pact. The elections in East Pakistan were held soon after the Eisenhower announcement of 25 February affirming the decision of the United States Government to extend military assistance to Pakistan. According to Sidney Hertzberg, the United States Government "hastened the announcement of. ..... military aid in the hope that it would help Prime Minister Mohammad Ali's Moslem League in the elections in East Bengal. ..... But the Moslem League was not simply repudiated in the elections; it was wiped out as a legal party".[4]

Fazlul Haq became the leader of the United Front and took office as the Chief Minister of East Bengal on 2 April 1954. The ruling clique did not take long to engineer a plot to topple the United Front. Certain emotionally charged statements of Fazlul Haq facilitated the execution of this plot. The United States-Pakistan military aid pact was signed on 19 May 1954. A few days before, and once again, a few days after the signing of this pact, Fazlul Haq made some statements in Calcutta and Karachi which touched off dramatic controversies and political crises bearing upon rivalries between the two Wings of Pakistan. On 4 May 1954, Fazlul Haq declared in a speech in Calcutta : "It is important that the people of two Bengals [East Bengal in Pakistan and West Bengal in India] should realize the fundamental fact that in order to live happily they must render mutual assistance to each other." He said that politicians had partitioned territories, but the common man should ensure that everybody lived peacefully. Language proved itself to be the most important unifying factor in history and the people of two Bengals, bound together by a common language, should forget political divisions and feel themselves to be one. Muslim League politicians, smarting under the recent defeat by the United Front, grabbed this opportunity to criticize Haq severely and suggested that Haq was repudiating the very creation of Pakistan and should be condemned as a traitor. Next day, 5 May, Haq complained that Muslim Leaguers had deliberately twisted his speech, and probably his critics did not understand English, for he had not in any way repudiated Pakistan. During his stay in Calcutta, Fazlul Haq addressed an informal meeting in the house of Mr. Ajit Kumar Datta. Some eminent politicians attended the meeting. Fazlul Haq, in the company of many old friends and admirers, once again gave way to emotionalism and spoke of building bridges of friendship between two Bengals. He pleaded his helplessness in rescuing minorities in East Bengal from the oppressive policies pursued by the civil-

military apparatus completely dominated by non-Bengalees. He said he could not solve this problem till he came to wield effective power free from interference by the non-Bengalee ruling clique at the Centre. That would be possible when East Bengal gained real provincial autonomy.[5]

On 10 May 1954, in order to counter critics, Haq issued the following statement to the Press : "I am surprised to find that interested people and political opponents read in sentences, taken out of their context, meanings to suit their political purposes and tried to condemn me as a non-beliver in Pakistan. What I actually said [in Calcutta] was that I did not believe that the political division of a country could by itself necessarily remove the bases of contact, friendship and mutual dependence." The situation took a critical turn when the *New York Times* of 23 May printed the account of an interview with Haq by its Karachi correspondent. Haq was quoted as saying that independence for East Pakistan was his goal. Haq, the report said, was in favour of independence because East Pakistan was geographically far removed from the West Wing and because there were economic as well as cultural causes of disagreement between the two Wings. During this interview in Karachi Haq also complained against favouritism in the Central Government offices where the Panjabis got undue preference while Bengalees were excluded. Asked about probable reactions of the Central Government to a move for separation, Haq was reported to have replied : "Undoubtedly they will try to resist such a move. But when a man wants freedom, he wants it." In order perhaps to clarify Haq's position the correspondent added in his report of the interview that during recent election campaigns Haq's United Front made vigorous protests against the fact that the Central Government was spending too little on East Pakistan which, because of its jute exports, supplied to the Central Government the major portion of its foreign exchange earnings. Haq protested that his statement, as reported by the *New York*

Times correspondent, contained "nothing but deliberate falsehood and perversion of facts," and that every sentence in his reported statement was "a perversion of truth". In order to contradict the report he issued the following statement : "East Pakistan should be an autonomous unit of Pakistan. This is our ideal and we will fight for it. I never said for a moment that our ideal is independence. I extremely regret that I am so much misunderstood and misreported. Perhaps people come to me with preconceived notions about me." Later a Pakistan Government handout revealed that Pakistan's Premier summoned Fazlul Haq and John P. Callahan, the *New York Times* correspondent who had filed the despatch on interview with Haq, and placed before the two men together the published report of the controversial interview. While Haq stressed he did not make some of the statements attributed to him, Callahan refused to admit any inacuracy in reporting or to withdraw any part of it.[6]

One could suspect that the Haq-Callahan controversy resulted from the manoeuverings of the Central ruling coterie which needed a pretext to unseat the Haq Ministry in East Bengal. The suspicion was almost confirmed when, at about the same time, the coterie took another move to disgrace and dismiss the Haq Ministry. It fomented troubles at the Adamjee Jute Mills in Narayanganj, a business centre in East Pakistan containing many non-Bengalees. Fazlul Haq was able to form the Ministry on 15 May. The Central ruling clique delivered a blow at this Ministry with perfect timing. The new Ministers were taking oath from Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman, the Provincial Governor, when news about serious riots between Bengalees and non-Bengalees in Narayanganj reached Dacca. Non-Bengalee workers of the Adamjee Jute Mills, instigated by the Central ruling coterie, attacked Bengalees who then retaliated, and the riot led to a marked lawlessness. Non-Bengalee officials, and not the newly appointed Ministry, controlled the apparatus for the

maintenance of law and order, and they were crafty enough not to interfere till there were large-scale killings. They intervened only after the Central Government could seize those killings as a pretext to condemn the Haq Ministry as inefficient, and only to crack down upon the Bengalee labourers in Narayanganj. These labourers, it should be added, belonged to a Trade Union led by Maulana Bhasani, and voted undividedly in favour of the United Front in the recent provincial elections. The non-Bengalee officials utilized the excuse of quelling the riot to commit atrocities on these Bengalee labourers who, along with the Bengalee intelligentsia, were thus permanently alienated from the non-Bengalee rulers. The non-Bengalee ruling clique was setting the stage for the dismissal of the Haq Ministry. *Dawn* toed the line of this clique as in an editorial of 26 May 1954, entitled "The Terrible Truth," it heaped severe condemnation upon the Haq Government and asserted : "Had East Pakistan's present ruling party done its own duty as Muslims and Pakistanis, a trail of Muslim blood would not have signalised its assumption of power, growing redder and deeper almost week by week and bursting into a veritable flood at Narayanganj."[7]

The Central Government, in order to cover up its design to dismiss the Haq Ministry, not only condemned the Haq Ministry as inefficient but also accused it of sheltering communists and Indian agents who tried to disrupt national solidarity. These were charges frequently levelled by the ruling clique on persons whose political influence and popular support it wanted to atrophy. This clique spread the story that the Haq Ministry was not willing to restore law and order, although the machinery for the maintenance of law and order was in the hands of non-Bengalee officials who could easily discredit the newly-born Ministry. *Dawn* accepted the story, and, remarkably enough, even the *Times* (London) lent it support. The Central ruling clique further circulated the story that the Haq Cabinet

included three communists including Shaikh Mujibur Rahman. The ruling clique printed lakhs of pamphlets denouncing the Haq Ministry and distributed them throughout East Bengal by aeroplanes at Government expense. It also put under arrest about fifty United Front members of the provincial legislature. East Bengal was about to pass under the Governor's Rule. Iskander Mirza, the Defence Secretary, flew to Dacca in order to take office as the new Governor. Only two days later, on 19 May 1954, Pakistan signed the military assistance pact with the United States. The Government left nothing to chance, or to the play of democratic forces. It concocted a charge of treason against Fazlul Haq and dismissed his Ministry on 30 May. On that day, Premier Muhammad Ali broadcast a talk to the nation denouncing Haq as a traitor and as essentially disloyal to Pakistan. At the same time, he accused Haq of having failed to preserve law and order in East Pakistan which, he alleged, had become the hot-bed of disruptive forces setting the Province against the Centre and Muslims against fellow-Muslims. The Haq Ministry, Muhammad Ali charged, was even unprepared to take strong measures to restrain those forces. The Haq Ministry was thus unfit and could no more be trusted to carry on the administration of the province. On the same day, the administration of East Pakistan was taken over by the Central Government from the hands of the Haq Ministry by means of a Proclamation of the Governor-General. The attitude of East Pakistanis could not be assumed to coincide with that of the Central Government in this matter. Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan, a Minister in the deposed Haq Cabinet, said on 31 May: "This is a preposterous measure unheard of in democracy when the whole country [i.e., East Pakistan] is behind the government. No power or ruling clique has ever resorted to such a drastic measure only because the other party [the United Front] is against their will and is opposed to them."[8]

East Bengalees easily saw through the game by which their

democratic verdict at the polls was annulled. But they were powerless before the oligarchy backed not only by their own military but also the might of the most powerful country on the earth. The fantastic character of the charges of treason against Fazlul Haq could earn no better proof than the fact that the same clique afterwards appointed Haq as the Central Interior Minister and later the Governor of East Pakistan. Z. A. Suleri rightly cited the dismissal of the Haq Ministry as 'the worst abuse' of the Central Government's power vis-a-vis a province.[9]

Within a few months after the Narayanganj riots the ill-feeling of East Bengalees towards non-Bengalee rulers further deepened during a flood in their province, the worst in living memory. As floods struck East Bengal in August, the United States acted with spectacular rapidity. Various agencies of the United States Government, i.e., the three Departments of Agriculture, Defence and State, and the Foreign Operations Administration combined together to launch a relief programme that landed men and supplies in Dacca within a week. It is significant to note that the first relief packages to reach the East Wing came from as far as the United States, and not from the West Wing. 'Help for East Bengal,' an editorial in the *Pakistan Times,* contained a revealing comment: "It would have been more fitting and proper if the first gift parcel to reach Dacca had been from West Pakistan and not from a far-off alien land. But if the response among us has so far been lamentably poor, it is perhaps due more to ignorance of the emergency than to any unwillingness to help. Any cynical suggestion that the people of West Pakistan are devoid of humanity and patriotism and that they are oblivious of the need of doing everything to relieve distress among their own kith and kin deserves to be rejected with contempt." East Bengalees could not surely be blamed if they resented the indifference of the non-Bengalee rulers towards their suffering caused by a natural calamity.[10]

Meanwhile, the stalemate in constitution-making persisted as the principle of parity between the two Wings, laid down in the formula of Bogra's Muhammad Ali, failed to satisfy Chaudhri Muhammad Ali and his associates. They would not adopt the Constitution, although it was ready, unless the various units of the West Wing were consolidated into one. Bengalee Muslim MCAs, after the crushing defeat of the Muslim League in the recent provincial election, could no longer claim any popular support. Panjabis felt that this was an opportune moment when they should be able to pressurize Bengalee MCAs into an acceptance of the One Unit plan. But Bengalees, alarmingly conscious that the Muslim League's disaster in the recent elections was largely the result of their failure to stave off the economic-cultural-political domination of Bengalees by non-Bengalees, spearheaded by Panjabis, refused to agree to the plan which would further facilitate that domination. An editorial in the *Times of Karachi* of 20 August 1954, entitled "A Western Unit," summed up the reasons why Panjabis demanded One Unit and it revealed simultaneously why Bengalees persisted in opposing it: "Equality between the Eastern and the Western units will restore national balance. The idea of taking advantage of disunity in the West will disappear, thus removing national suspicions. More than that the position of the Hindu minority is adjusted to its proper size. In harmony and accord, without aspiring and conspiring to dominate each other, the two parts will develop equally to their rightful position." Despite the defeat of the Muslim League in the recent elections in East Bengal, Bengalee MCAs could not be removed because these elections could not affect the legal supremacy of the Constituent Assembly. Nor were the Bengalee MCAs expected to commit political suicide by leaving their seats in the Assembly. In September 1954, the ruling coterie led by Ghulam Muhammad and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali initiated another move to increase its bargaining power vis-a-vis Bengalees. It put forward the

scheme of a zonal sub-federation of the various units in the West Wing. It hoped thereby to assuage the fears and suspicions of the smaller units in the West Wing about Panjabi domination in a single unit for the West Wing. To Nazimuddin and his followers this was a move to compensate for the failure of the One Unit scheme and to block the promulgation of the Constitution which was almost ready.[11]

Panjabis resorted to a delaying tactics that led to the postponement of many meetings of the Constituent Assembly. Often the Bengalee MCAs sat in the Assembly chamber waiting vainly for the return of the Panjabi MCAs prolonging deliberately their tea session in the room of Chaudhri Muhammad Ali. Panjabis encouraged the Governor-General to exercise his powers arbitrarily against non-Panjabi MCAs, including Bengalees, so that the latter would be compelled to conform to the demands of the Panjabis. The Public and Representative Offices Disqualification Act of 1949 (PRODA for short) was a handy instrument by which the Governor-General could always terrorize a non-conformist politician. The Governor-General, or the Governor or any five persons could level a charge of misconduct against a politician, which would then be referred by the Governor or the Governor-General, to the High Court or the Federal Court. On the basis of the Court's findings, the Governor-General could, in his discretion, pass an order disqualifying for a period of not more than ten years any person from occupying any public or representative office. Ghulam Muhammad, the Governor-General, began to brandish PRODA against influential non-Panjabi politicians. He even threatened to use it against Bogra's Muhammad Ali, the Prime Minister. At last the politicians gathered for once their courage to clip the wings of the Governor-General, and clear the way to the functioning of a parliamentary democracy. The pangs of the recent electoral debacle suffered by Bengalee Muslim Leaguers lent an edge to this risky effort on the part of politicians. In course of the

month of September 1954, the MCAs repealed the PRODA; they amended the Government of India Act in such a way as to restrain the Governor-General from arbitrarily dismissing a Prime Minister as in the case of Nazimuddin. They did all these when Ghulam Muhammad was out of the capital. They did not do anything untoward, but merely tried to introduce legal provisions as a substitute for normal conventions in a parliamentary democracy, e.g., that a Prime Minister enjoying the support of a majority of legislators should not be removed from office. Ghulam was not surely prepared to put up with this affront. Nor could his Panjabi associates tolerate this frontal assault on their designs. They hardly saw any chance of realizing their designs, including the establishment of One Unit in the West Wing, unless the Constituent Assembly was dissolved, and politicians supporting the One Unit scheme were allowed to dominate the new Constituent Assembly by manoeuverings in the existing units including East Bengal. Perhaps the efforts of MCAs to do away with the autocratic powers of the Governor-General merely expedited the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the Constituent Assembly on 24 October 1954. "It can be argued," wrote K. B. Sayeed, "that the Governor-General had dissolved the Constituent Assembly not because it had failed to produce a constitution but because it had prepared a constitution which was highly distasteful to him and to his group."[12]

The timing of Ghulam Muhammad's assault on the Constituent Assembly had a special significance. Only ten days earlier, i.e., on 14 October 1954, it was reported in *Dawn* that the Assembly would finish the business of constitution-making within less than fifteen days. Premier Muhammad Ali (of Bogra) announced that the Constitution would be formally inaugurated on 25 December 1954. This Constitution inoculated the Ministry against arbitrary dismissal by the Governor-General, and the law-making assembly against dissolution by the Governor-

General. "Therefore," observed K. B. Sayeed, "the Governor-General struck at the Assembly in order to save himself in October 1954, because after December 25 he would not have been able to do so." Nevertheless, it should be remembered that a Governor-General's ordinance (of 1947) explicitly removed the power of dissolution of the legislature vested in the Governor-General in accordance with the Government of India Act of 1935. The Governor-General's proclamation of dissolution stressed that the Constituent Assembly had lost the confidence of the people, and that its representative character had to be restored by fresh elections. This plea, which would have been impressive immediately after the defeat of the Muslim League in East Bengal elections, lost its validity as it was put forward as late as October when it appeared to be a sudden discovery with an ill-concealed political motive. As G. W. Choudhury observed: "If it [the Constituent Assembly] had been dissolved immediately after the election in East Pakistan, there might have been some justification, but its dissolution after its attempt to curb the undemocratic and arbitrary powers of the Governor-General seems to indicate that the real motive of the Governor-General in dissolving the House was personal rather than any regard for democratic principles or traditions. His subsequent attempt to give the country a constitution by decrees rather than by Constituent Assembly seems also to substantiate his personal motive rather than any concern for the peoples' representation or rights." A plausible interpretation is that Ghulam and his associates at first hoped to take advantage of the loss of popular support suffered by Bengalee Muslim Leaguers in the recent provincial election, and to pressurize the Bengalee MCAs into accepting constitutional proposals of their own choice, including the One Unit plan for the West Wing. When this tactics did not pay off, Ghulam threw away all the masks of power-play and dissolved the Bengalee-dominated Constituent Assembly. He asked for and received the backing of the army

in this outstanding manoeuver, and thus incited the army leaders to give in future an unceremonious burial to parliamentary democracy in Pakistan.[13]

Ghulam Muhammad had scant regard for institutions of parliamentary democracy, least of all for a popularly elected legislature with a majority of Bengalee members. He preferred to run his regime with the support of the military and the bureaucracy. Nevertheless, he was prepared to have a showpiece legislature with members he could order about. Ghulam could hope to fabricate such a legislature only if he could create divisions among politicians by the lure of offices. Especially, such divisions had to be injected into the ranks of the United Front which emerged to pose the most menacing challenge to the continued domination of the Panjabi-led ruling coterie. This coterie was afraid that Bengalees, led by the United Front, might succeed in obtaining far-reaching provincial autonomy and thus stamp out the political-economic exploitation by the Panjabis. It was also afraid that Bengalees would combine with non-Panjabis in a future national legislature, under the guidance of such eminent leaders as Fazlul Haq and Suhrawardy, and then proceed to dominate Panjabis. Ghulam Muhammad, therefore, tried to work out a plan for sowing jealousies and suspicions in the United Front. He became eminently successful not only because of his astounding skill in the application of such tactics but also because the United Front leaders (like almost all the leaders of Pakistan) proved an easy prey to the temptations of Ministerial jobs held out by the ruling coterie. Thus, when the Haq Ministry was dismissed and Iskander Mirza began to rule East Bengal as its Governor, the United Front leaders were found competing with one another for Mirza's favours. It is true that the United Front included a few top-ranking Muslim leaders of undivided India who could be expected to behave in a more responsible fashion. It may, indeed, be hypothesized that these leaders, who, thanks to the British policy of encouraging the Muslim League's demand for

Pakistan for the purpose of weakening the freedom movement launched by the Indian National Congress, did not have to wage any serious battle or court much sacrifice in the past, could go to any length in order to occupy Ministerial offices. The creation of Pakistan meant to them almost a windfall gain of a large number of high offices from which they were too impatient to see themselves excluded. Perhaps their political integrity and stamina were fragile because they did not have to sharpen these qualities through years of genuine self-sacrifice inspired by a noble ideal. The victory of the United Front in the 1954 elections was no test of the honesty and sincerity of its leaders; this victory was largely the result of popular revenge against corrupt, inefficient Muslim Leaguers and a protest against exploitation by non-Bengalees. The dismissal of the Haq Ministry provided the test: and the United Front leaders, eager to curry the favours of Mirza, were found wanting. These leaders should have been extremely careful in maintaining the unity of a Front that was merely an electoral alliance and not a regular political party. They proved themselves unable to exercise the necessary care. Their morale further drooped as Iskander Mirza, as the Governor of East Bengal, freely resorted to terrorizing and repressing the members of the United Front. The leaders of the United Front, with almost no habit of self-sacrifice in their past political career, became more amenable to the tactics of the ruling coterie.[14]

Ghulam Muhammad took full advantage of this weakness in the United Front politicians who began to seek high offices instead of roaming about in the political wilderness and submitting to persecution for the sake of some principles. They became ready to sacrifice principles on which they got themselves elected if thereby they could terminate their political starvation. After the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly Ghulam Muhammad came out craftily with his plan of a Ministry of Talents drawing members from different political parties

and thus planting dissensions in all of them. Bogra's Muhammad Ali was allowed to remain the Premier in this Ministry of Talents, while Iskander Mirza was rewarded for his consistent attempts to repress the members of the United Front, during his Governorship in East Bengal, by the office of the Interior Minister. Muhammad Ayub Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, became the Defence Minister, and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali was the Finance Minister. Suhrawardy of the Awami Muslim League joined this new Ministry as the Law Minister, while Abu Husain Sarkar of the KSP too came in as the Central Health Minister. These appointments hastened the disintegration of the United Front by accentuating two kinds of rivalries. One kind of rivalry comprised the contest between the two dominant sections of the United Front, the Awami Muslim League (AML for short) and the KSP, for the patronage distributed by the ruling clique; another concerned the dissensions within each section as between those who succeeded in gaining access to lucrative offices and those who did not. The unity of the Front was soon in shambles. Restoration of parliamentary government in East Bengal would open up a large number of offices and the AML-KSP rivalries were focussed on it. Suhrawardy wanted to see Ataur Rahman Khan of the AML being recognized as the leader of the United Front and then installed as the Chief Minister of East Bengal, while Fazlul Haq, backed now by Bogra's Muhammad Ali who considered Suhrawardy to be his opponent, tried to frustrate this move of Suhrawardy. With the AML in power in East Bengal, Suhrawardy might have been able to oust Bogra's Muhammad Ali and himself become the Prime Minister of Pakistan. His followers tried to dispossess Fazlul Haq of his position of the United Front's leader. An open collision between the AML and the KSP took place in Dacca in February 1955 when, at a meeting of the United Front Parliamentary Party, the AML members attempted to pass a motion of no-confidence against Fazlul Haq. The meet-

ing degenerated into a chaos as both the AML and the KSP tried the unusual device of conducting two separate meetings with two chairmen and speakers parading factional claims, while the audience gave a free rein to all its capacity for making noise. The AML and the KSP thus reached the stage of a formal split.[15]

In the scramble for patronage, the principles on which the United Front had secured an electoral victory became a casualty, along with its unity, while the ruling clique took long strides in the way of realizing its constitutional objectives. For instance, Suhrawardy, as Law Minister, found it convenient to please Ghulam Muhammad and his associates by supporting the formation of One Unit in the West Wing. But he did not pay any heed to the demand for provincial autonomy, which was the most important plank in the United Front platform in the 1954 elections, while, as Law Minister, he drafted a Constitution for Pakistan, which, in 1956, became the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. After he occupied the office of the Central Law Minister, Suhrawardy also reversed his attitude to the United States-Pakistan military alliance. He became an enthusiastic advocate of the alliance, although the 1954 election campaign had seen the United Front vigorously opposing this alliance. Suhrawardy, however, failed to realize his ambition of installing an AML-led Ministry in East Bengal and then replacing Bogra's Muhammad Ali as Pakistan's Premier. In June 1955, at a moment when both Suhrawardy and Ghulam Muhammad were out of the country, Bogra's Muhammad Ali out-manoeuvered Suhrawardy by restoring parliamentary government in East Bengal headed by Abu Husain Sarkar, a nominee of Fazlul Haq. Only a year ago Muhammad Ali had branded Haq as a traitor, and now he installed Haq's nominee as the Chief Minister of East Bengal. Ghulam Muhammad did not wish to see Suhrawardy getting too powerful, and, therefore, he telegraphically gave his consent to the sudden constitutional

stroke of Bogra's Muhammad Ali. One important reason of success of this Ali-Haq plot was the attitude of the Hindu members of the East Bengal legislature. They refused to side with Suhrawardy, the author of the ghastly Calcutta riots of 1946, in the AML-KSP tussle. Fazlul Haq, moreover, assured them that he would fight for a secular-democratic Constitution, including a system of joint electorate, in the new Constituent Assembly which, in accordance with the decision of the Federal Court, had to be convened soon by the Governor-General. At that moment the Hindus trusted Fazlul Haq solely because they could not trust Suhrawardy, although in the near future they were to be totally disillusioned about Haq. This support of the Hindu members enabled Haq to set up Abu Husain Sarkar as the Chief Minister of East Pakistan. This also supplied Haq with a bargaining power in the new Constituent Assembly that met on 7 July 1955. There were eighty members in this new Assembly, divided equally between the East and the West Wing, nine out of forty seats of East Bengal being reserved for the non-Muslims. The non-Bengalee ruling clique thus not only offset the numerical majority of East Bengalees by a formula of parity but also upheld that formula which reduced Bengalee Muslims to a minority in the Constituent Assembly (which would be transformed into the country's first National Assembly after the promulgation of the Constitution). No party held a sufficient number of seats in the new Constituent Assembly to form a Ministry alone. Fazlul Haq needed, and received, the support of non-Muslims as he tried to enter a coalition Ministry. His alliance with Bogra's Muhammad Ali bore another fruit in August 1955 when Ali compelled Suhrawardy to leave the Ministry of Talents.[16]

Perhaps Ghulam Muhammad would not have convened the second Constituent Assembly had not the Federal Court advised him to do so. But this rebirth of politicians could not cause much harm to Ghulam who had already demoralized and

divided almost all the powerful politicians by clever offers of patronage. Ghulam, however, did not stay long to play with the destiny of politicians. In August 1955 he took leave for sickness from which he never recovered. Iskander Mirza became the Governor-General. Mirza, like Ghulam, had no love for democratic institutions. He was an armyman-turned-civilian-turned-politician. One of his articles of faith was that politicians must not be allowed to exercise much influence and to drag the country into disorder. He chose Chaudhri Muhammad Ali as the Premier of Pakistan when Fazlul Haq's United Front, minus the AML, joined a coalition Ministry with the Muslim League. Bogra's Muhammad Ali, a politician, had to yield to Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, a civilian-turned-politician, who headed the Muslim League-United Front coalition in the new Constituent Assembly. The price of the Haq-led United Front's entry into the coalition Ministry was its pledge to support the One Unit scheme for West Pakistan. Fazlul Haq's party also insisted that the Muslim League, while keeping the Suhrawardy group out of the Ministry, should provide regional autonomy for East Bengal. Nevertheless, Fazlul Haq too soon played into the hands of the non-Bengalee ruling clique, forgot the key demand of provincial autonomy enshrined in the twenty-one points of the 1954 election manifesto of the United Front, and betrayed the minorities by lending support to a constitution that was not secular but Islamic, a Constitution that was not democratic because it set apart minorities as inferior citizens in a system of separate electorates.[17]

With the exit of Ghulam Muhammad, Iskander Mirza and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali became the major actors. It is indeed surprising that a leader of Fazlul Haq's eminence succumbed tamely to the manoeuverings of the bureaucrats and military leaders and ignored East Bengal's permanent interests. He thus struck at the roots of the democratic movement in East Bengal and, indeed, in the whole of Pakistan. When the representatives

of the East and the West Wing agreed upon the formula of parity in the second Constituent Assembly, they reached an understanding that the two posts of the Prime Minister and the Governor-General of Pakistan would be divided between the two Wings of Pakistan. But, under the new Constituent Assembly, this understanding was at once violated, and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali and Iskander Mirza, both Panjabis, occupied those two key posts. Fazlul Haq acquiesced in this usurpation by the ruling clique. He also acquiesced in the rushing through of The Establishment of West Pakistan Bill in the new Constituent Assembly. The formation of One Unit in West Wing thus got an undue precedence over the revalidation of laws, although, according to the directive of the Federal Court, the new Constituent Assembly should have completed revalidation at the earliest opportunity. The entire Government of Pakistan remained enmeshed in illegality without revalidation of a large number of important laws. But the Constituent Assembly proceeded to enact the Bill for the establishment of one consolidated province of West Pakistan, replacing the various older units, while Ministers continued to carry on their work and draw their salaries illegally. This could happen because neither Mirza nor Chaudhri Muhammad Ali nor Fazlul Haq paid much attention to the need to develop a democratic tradition in the country. They preferred to engage themselves in political bargaining in order to satisfy their factional demands. They all failed to take note of the long-term needs of the emerging nation as they remained absorbed in attempts to maximize their personal political influence. In the new Constituent Assembly they ignored the urgency of constitution-making and went ahead with the Bill for the formation of One Unit in West Pakistan. The establishment of West Pakistan Bill made a mockery of the democratic rights of the people, for it vested completely autocratic powers in the Governor of West Pakistan and the Governor-General. It was thus an undisguised attempt to con-

solidate the power of the Central government. It went so far as to appoint the Governor and the Chief Minister of the province of West Pakistan even before the bill for its establishment was enacted.[18]

That the submission of Fazlul Haq and his followers to these intrigues of the Central Government was highly injurious to East Bengal, and merely encouraged the civil servants and military generals in Pakistan to play havoc with democracy, was amply revealed during the debate on The Establishment of West Pakistan Bill. This debate drew attention to a secret document, drawn up by a few top-level bureaucrats under the guidance of Chaudhri Muhammad Ali as early as November 1954, revealing the motives and tactics behind the establishment of One Unit in West Pakistan. The document emphasized, in an unvarnished language, the necessity of forming One Unit in the West Wing in order to forestall any chance of domination by a Bengalee majority, and holding up the restoration of parliamentary government in East Bengal as also the adoption of a Constitution till, by political bargaining and intrigues, the hindrances to the creation of a single province of West Pakistan in the West Wing were removed. This document, with the title 'Clearing the Decks', also exonerated the use of force for the furtherance of the entire design of the ruling coterie, although it cautioned against the exclusive use of excessive force. It recommended the employment of the whole administrative apparatus for the same purpose. As a matter of fact, propaganda materials supporting the One Unit scheme were printed at Government expense. The Government Radio poured out propaganda in favour of the One Unit scheme, while the opposite viewpoint had no opportunity to be aired by the Radio. On the contrary, if the opponents of the One Unit scheme tried to distribute pamphlets preaching their views, they were arrested. The Constituent Assembly debate on The Establishment of West Pakistan Bill revealed how Ministers were arbitrarily

appointed and dismissed, and the power of the bureaucracy was ruthlessly used to tame politicians in different regions of the West Wing and coerce them into acceptance of One Unit for the West Wing, or simply to replace them by others easily agreeable. A provincial Chief Minister could continue in office as long as he deferred to the wishes of the Central Government by offering unstinted support to the One Unit scheme. He was further required to demonstrate his support by a relentless use of force and craft so as to obtain a verdict from the provincial legislature favourable to the One Unit scheme. If he was able to do so, he could be and remain a Chief Minister even if he was not a member of the provincial legislature. Or, he had to quit. He had to vacate even if he tried to oppose the One Unit scheme because the people in his province refused to approve the scheme. Thus, the Pirzada Ministry in Sind, guilty of upholding popular wishes and opposing the One Unit scheme, was replaced by the Khuhro Ministry. Khuhro at that time was not even a member of the provincial legislature. But, after becoming the Chief Minister with the help of the Central government, he justified his appointment by a pitiless use of terroristic methods which enabled him to exact the consent of the Sind provincial legislature to the One Unit scheme. In the Panjab, too, Malik Firoz Khan Noon incurred the wrath of the ruling clique because of a difference of opinion over the One Unit scheme. He, therefore, fell from his office of the Panjab's Chief Minister, to be replaced by a man who was not a member of the provincial legislature. Similarly, in N.W.F.P., Sardar Abdur Rashid Khan, the Chief Minister, was forced to quit because he had the courage to act as the mouthpiece of the people in his province and oppose the One Unit scheme. Sardar Bahadur Khan, who replaced Abdur Rashid, drew commendation from the ruling clique by announcing that any person speaking against the Bill for the establishment of West Pakistan would be punished for trying to disrupt Pakistan.[19]

Followers of the ruling clique, pilotting the One Unit Bill, boasted that they were democratically obeying the wishes of the people: nothing could be further from the truth. The government did not have the courage to hold a referendum on this Bill, although in the provincial elections in the West Wing, held much earlier, the establishment of One Unit was not an issue at all. Moreover, as explicitly admitted by the then Premier of Pakistan (after he ceased to be the Premier), those provincial elections were rigged. The government machinery was freely and openly used to influence and coerce voters. Afterwards, ballot boxes were tampered with. The people thus had hardly any chance to express their wishes and send their representatives to the provincial legislatures, which later on selected their representatives to the second Constituent Assembly. Members of these provincial legislatures, similarly, were not allowed by the ruling clique to exercise their free choice in sending their nominees to the second Constituent Assembly. They became the victims of, or were threatened with, arrest, imprisonment or even a dissolution of the legislature, unless they agreed to support the One Unit scheme and to select those representatives to the second Constituent Assembly who would offer their support to that scheme. Instead of holding a referendum on the One Unit issue, the ruling clique adopted the less risky method of unleashing a reign of terror on legislators, and even went to the length of threatening criminal proceedings against High Court Judges who might have come to the rescue of hapless legislators. Apparently, the Central government could only rely on undemocratic methods for maintaining it in power, while carrying through a major constitutional change. The experience in the last Constituent Assembly, where Bengalees had a majority, impelled it to set up One Unit in West Pakistan regardless of popular wishes. For the same reason, Fazlul Haq's United Front should have abstained from supporting this scheme, without making substantial autonomy for East Bengal

a pre-condition for its support. It was not in a spirit of cooperation with East Bengal that the ruling clique pursued the One Unit scheme with indecent haste and unprincipled terrorism. This was crystal-clear the moment it refused to divide the two highest offices of the country (those of the Governor-General and the Prime Minister) between the two Wings of Pakistan. But Fazlul Haq's United Front persisted in siding with that clique, forgetting all about the vital interests of East Bengal, which could not be safeguarded without real provincial autonomy. The leaders of East Bengal failed it miserably. They upheld the designs of the West Pakistani leaders and administrators, blinded by the lure of office which were, after all, temporary. Events soon proved that they were able to maintain neither their power nor the interests of their province, although they had too readily sacrificed the latter for the sake of the former.[20]

East Bengal's politicians happened to be sharp and energetic critics when they were not enjoying offices in collusion with some West Pakistanis. They thoroughly exposed, during the debate on the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Bill, how Fazlul Haq and his associates violated their pledges to the electorate and to other politicians from Bengal while offering their support to this Bill. When the second Constituent Assembly had its opening session at Murree, the MCAs of the two Wings arrived at an agreement comprising several important points to which the Constitution was to conform. This agreement providing for One Unit in the West Wing also emphasized parity between East and West Pakistan, full regional autonomy and joint electorates, and equality of status between Bengali and Urdu as the official languages of Pakistan. One Unit was surely established in the West Wing. Bengali-Urdu rivalry was shelved for the time being by the declaration that English would continue to be used for official purposes for the next twenty years. But the Constitution incorporated another provision sounding

ominous to Bengalees: it said that the Central and the Provincial Governments should take steps to develop *a* national language. East Bengalees suspected that this was a clever subterfuge to annul the equality of status accorded to Bengali and Urdu by means of an agreement between the two Wings' MCAs in May 1954. The other three provisions in the five-point Murree agreement were totally violated by the Constitution presented to the second Constituent Assembly. Consequently, there were widespread protests in East Bengal against this Constitution, and against Fazlul Haq. Haq's popularity slumped and once he was not allowed by the people to address a public meeting in Dacca. On the contrary, at least 60,000 persons met in Dacca at the Paltan Maidan to pass a resolution condemning the Constitution that did not provide for regional autonomy. Not a single newspaper of East Bengal praised the Constitution. Fazlul Haq's associates blew hot and cold in defence of their role in the Constituent Assembly. Hamidul Haq Choudhury, an associate of Fazlul Haq and then a Central Minister, alternately pleaded that full regional autonomy was not practicable and that full regional autonomy was actually granted by the Constitution. The United Front Parliamentary Party of East Bengal held a meeting in which it condemned many provisions of the Constitution, and denounced Hamidul, asking him to revise his statement that the Constitution provided for full regional autonomy. A meeting of the East Bengal Muslim League, presided over by Maulavi Tamizuddin Khan, the Speaker of the first Constituent Assembly for seven years, condemned the Constitution as extremely unjust to East Bengal. Ataur Rahman Khan trenchantly spoke of the game of office-seeking that explained why Fazlul Haq's United Front went back on the Murree agreement: "At murree there was that agreement but when they came to Karachi, things started taking shape and Mr. Hamidul Haq Choudhury played a very prominent part during that period. That part of the history is the history of their stepping into

power. They broke the agreement and the solemn pledges. They have come into power." No less trenchant was Fazlur Rahman who succinctly hinted at the machinations of the Panjabi-led ruling coterie now agreeable to a Constitution of their own liking and able to have Chaudhri Muhammad Ali as Pakistan's Prime Minister: "Sir, the history of ups and downs in the constitution-making is the history of rise to power of Mr. Mohammad Ali."[21]

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Bill was silent on the institution of joint electorates, although it was a part of the 21-Point programme of the United Front and of the Murree agreement. Apologists of the Constitution boasted of its Islamic character, while Awami Leaguers challenged its Islamic character by pointing out that Islam stood for fairplay and justice, and that the Constitution, by refusing to grant joint electorates despite their demand by the Muslims and non-Muslims of East Bengal, was simply violating the precepts of justice and fairplay. They also ridiculed the idea of an Islamic Constitution that would bind only the Islamites in Pakistan and exclude millions of Muslims living in many other countries of the world. They warned against a repetition of the 1953 Panjab carnage which could easily flare up because of the nearly insoluble difficulty of defining a Muslim. Moreover, the Constitution sanctioned certain things explicitly forbidden in Islam, e.g., gambling and drinking. It stipulated that the Head of the State must be a Muslim; but that is not sufficient to make the Constitution Islamic. Shaikh Mujibur Rahman made a few significant observations as he laid bare the pretensions behind the plea of an Islamic Constitution. He said that "Pakistan is for Pakistanis" and that "Pakistan has not been formed for the Muslims alone". Apologists of the Constitution, Mujibur added, "want to bluff the people of Pakistan in the name of Islam. This is only a label and not the ideal. They have exploited the masses of Pakistan for the last seven or eight

years in the name of Islam, in the name of Rasoolullah." The intention of the framers of the Constitution was clear: they wanted to win over the Mullas by using the slogan of an Islamic Constitution. Ataur Rahman Khan poignantly observed: "They have actually kept certain provisions in the Constitution by which they wanted to please these Mullas by giving them a signboard of this Constitution being Islamic. Its Islamic character is just like a liquor shop over which a signboard of Islamic Sharab Khana is placed. Indeed you have done very good. Anything you do but put a signboard of Islam, it will become Islamic."[22]

Awami Leaguers, joined by almost all the Hindus who were chagrined by Fazlul Haq's somersault, put up a tough opposition to the passage of the Constitution Bill. At times the ruling clique was compelled to resort to the undemocratic practice of suddenly adjourning the Assembly without consulting the Leader of the Opposition in order to mitigate the sting of the Opposition. Nevertheless, the Opposition failed to break the alliance between the Muslim League and the United Front (of Fazlul Haq), cemented by the love of offices. This alliance was instrumental in log-rolling various articles of the Constitution Bill. It took full advantage of an Opposition walk-out on 7 February 1956 when it passed about fifty clauses of the Constitution. On 29 February, Suhrawardy, the Leader of the Opposition, proposed that the Government, instead of sledge-hammering the Constitution, should convene a round-table conference to discuss and resolve the controversial clauses of the Constitution. His proposal was immediately rejected. The Awami League members then left the Assembly, followed by almost all the Hindu MCAs and Mr. Mahmud Ali (of Ganatantri Dal) and Mian Muhammad Iftikharuddin (of Azad Pakistan Party). This walk-out, of course, did not prevent the final adoption of the Constitution on the same day, i.e., 29 February 1956. A near-famine situation existed in East Pakistan when

the Constitution Bill was about to be passed. Many East Bengalees suspected that the non-Bengalee rulers did not deliberately try to ease the situation for they wanted to avert any strong movement of Bengalees, obviously dissatisfied with the Constitution and showing a determination to resist its enactment. The government wanted that Bengalees should be kept busy fighting the famine rather than the Constitution. Popular feelings against the Constitution, however, became so strong in East Bengal that Maulana Bhasani could boldly declare on 15 January 1956 at a public meeting in Dacca that East Pakistan would have to consider secession if the Central Government did not remedy the injustice done to the people of East Pakistan.[23]

On 23 March 1956, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was inaugurated. Fazlul Haq became the Governor of East Bengal: the reason why he sacrificed the interests of East Bengal was now clear to everybody. The Constitution even changed the name of East Bengal into East Pakistan. This was a grievous blow to East Bengalees to whom the name 'Bengal' was not a mere geographical expression but the symbol of a distinct culture which they were all proud of. The Bill for the establishment of West Pakistan had also attempted to change the name of East Bengal into 'East Pakistan,' but failed on account of a severe opposition by Bengalee MCAs. The Constitution Bill, however, thanks to Fazlul Haq and his associates, succeeded in enacting this change of name which was universally hated by Bengalees. Fazlul Haq, during the debate on the Constitution Bill, tried to cover up his craze for office by accusing Suhrawardy of his failure to implement the 21-Point Programme during December 1954-August 1955 when Suhrawardy was the Central Law Minister. This accusation, though well-directed, could not free Fazlul Haq from the charge that he betrayed the interests of East Bengal for becoming the Governor of East Pakistan. Haq, however, should have had the foresight, with several decades of political experience behind him,

to know that this betrayal would mean a steady corrosion of the political influence of his United Front and a loss of power in the near future. The minority MCAs were quick to withdraw, with a few exceptions, their support from the Muslim League-United Front coalition. The minority representatives in the provincial legislature, too, withdrew their allegiance from the United Front Ministry led by Abu Husain Sarkar. They joined hands with the Awami League which had eliminated the word 'Muslim' from its title in October 1955, and continued to demonstrate this secularization by insisting on joint electorates. There were large-scale defections from the United Front itself, caused not only by the Front's betrayal of East Pakistan's interests but also by the inevitable stresses and strains accompanying the distribution of offices that had no visible connection with any commendable principle. Abu Husain Sarkar's Ministry found the ground beneath its feet sliding out. He was without the support of a majority in the provincial legislature. He tried, without success, to bring back some of the minority leaders to his fold by fresh baits of offices, including Ambassadorial appointments. In a desperate manoeuver to save his power, Sarkar raised the number of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries in the province to forty. This unnaturally huge Ministry earned the nickname of 'Alibaba and his Forty Thieves,' because it engaged in rampant corruption as regards issuing government permits and licences, etc.[24]

The performance of the Sarkar Ministry revealed the grave misfortune of the people of East Bengal in respect to the quality of their leaders. This Ministry, aware of its lack of majority support in the provincial legislature, clung fast to the unparliamentary device of never meeting the legislature at all. By this device the Ministry artificially prolonged its life, although, ultimately, it could save neither its power nor its dignity. Sarkar came to power in June 1955. Since then the provincial legislature met only once to elect the Speaker and

the Deputy Speaker, and remained dormant for about a whole year. But the budget had to be passed, and Governor Fazlul Haq instructed Abdul Hakim, the Speaker, to summon the provincial legislature on 22 May 1956. Fazlul Haq strictly ordered, however, that this session should be restricted only to passing the budget. The legislature must not be allowed to discuss anything else, not even the food situation which was extremely acute. Haq and his protege, Sarkar, were afraid that any such discussion might lead to an acrimonious debate and a vote terminating the tenure of the Sarkar Ministry. As the Governor of the province, Haq was required by the Constitution to lift himself above party squabbles, but he was actually waging a political battle for his rickety United Front, and went so far as to tie up, most undemocratically, the hands of the Speaker in order to save the Sarkar Ministry from a vote of no-confidence in the legislature. Abdul Hakim, the Speaker, was patently disgusted by Haq's interference. He opened the session by emphasizing the limits within which the legislature was to work, but, finally, expressed his indignation at the policy of the Government and dramatically adjourned the House for an indefinite period. Shaikh Mujibur Rahman raised a point of order on the late presentation of the budget. The Speaker declared that the Ministry was guilty of undue delay in the presentation of the budget, and that he would not allow the Finance Minister to introduce the budget now. Abu Husain Sarkar attributed this episode to a conspiracy, hatched up by the Opposition in collusion with the Speaker, to unseat his Ministry. The budget could not be presented to the legislature. It was a constitutional deadlock. East Pakistan saw the President's rule for nine days. On 1 June 1956, the President's rule came to an end, and the Sarkar Ministry took office once again, although it had failed to demonstrate that it enjoyed the confidence of the legislature. Sarkar continued his attempt to win back the support of the Hindu legislators in order to avert a

vote of no-confidence, but he only succeeded in entrapping a few. The Pakistan National Congress, which had thirty-one members in the provincial legislature, refused to succumb to temptations of patronage held out by Sarkar. Therefore, Sarkar started vilifying the Congress members, accusing them of pro-Indian and anti-Pakistani activities. This accusation, a very convenient stick to beat any non-Muslim with, could not restore the parliamentary fortunes of the KSP-led United Front.[25]

In July 1956 the Sarkar Ministry thoroughly mishandled the food situation: it took the help of the military in easing the food problem. It thereby demonstrated afresh its incompetence, exacerbated the public disapproval showered on it, and proved further that it would retreat to the pressures of the ruling bureaucratic-military clique which was vitally interested in discrediting politicians in the eye of the people by importing the military in the civilian sphere. The Sarkar Ministry gave a long handle to the military by allowing it to take charge of transportation and distribution of food, and by vesting the powers of a First Class Magistrate in the hands of military officers who were to try food offences. These military officers disposed of cases in the company of civilian Magistrates without allowing the latter to exercise any authority. Removal of the inefficient Sarkar Ministry could perhaps have rendered the trespassing of the military upon the civilian life totally unnecessary. But the Central Government preferred to keep the Sarkar Ministry in power, add to the infamy of the politicians supporting the Ministry before it finally fell, and boost the military. On 4 August 1956, Dacca witnessed a hunger march organized by the Awami League. The police opened fire, and killed a few, after they failed to stop the march by erecting barricades. Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, marching at the head of the procession, earned great popularity by lifting a dead body and walking ahead. The Dacca High Court declared as unconstitutional and invalid the ordinance that enabled the military to handle food dis-

tribution and exercise magisterial powers for trying food offences. Within a few days a fresh executive order, passed in defiance of the judgment of the Dacca High Court, restored the authority of the military to continue to participate in the food administration of East Pakistan. The Sarkar Ministry, whose days were numbered, was a party to these palpably undemocratic precedents.[26]

On 13 August the provincial legislature was once again summoned to pass the budget. The Sarkar Ministry was afraid of meeting a hostile House. It had even alienated the Speaker who, between 22 May and 13 August, proved his determination not to yield to the threats and temptations held out by the KSP members. Only four hours before the scheduled time on 13 August, when the legislature was to meet, the Governor, on the advice of the Chief Minister, prorogued the legislature. The Speaker and the Opposition members entered the House to find the Treasury Benches empty. Only a small number of supporters of the Ministry was present. The Speaker announced the Governor's order proroguing the House. Immediately, Shaikh Mujibur Rahman read out a motion of no-confidence in the Ministry which was endorsed by an overwhelming majority of the legislators who had been simply cheated by the Governor. The House presented a unique spectacle: it ignored the Governor's order and carried on its business by ventilating its grievances against the Ministry, especially about importing the army in civil administration and about proroguing the House in an unconstitutional fashion. The Speaker left the House after some time, but the Members continued their proceedings. They drew up and adopted a resolution that requested the President of Pakistan to dismiss the Governor of East Pakistan who had violated the Constitution by demonstrating his political partisanship and continuing to act as the leader of a party. According to this resolution, the Governor was trying to keep that party's Ministry in office by a gross abuse of his authority. The resolu-

tion, signed by 200 out of 297 Members present in the House, also demanded the dismissal of the Sarkar Ministry in which it recorded a lack of confidence. A significant statement, issued by Suhrawardy on 17 August, revealed that Abu Husain Sarkar even tried to persuade the Governor to dissolve the provincial legislature. This attempt was unparadonable in view of the fact that the provincial legislature did not discuss the budget since March 1953. Suhrawardy warned that the people might retaliate against the unconstitutional behaviour of their rulers, and that the people could opt for civil disobedience if the rulers preferred dictatorship to democracy. Furthermore, Suhrawardy stressed, the rulers must not assume that the police and the military were merely passive instruments which could be used freely, as on the occasion of the dissolution of the first Constituent Assembly, to suit their selfish designs. Thus Suhrawardy put forward perhaps a subtle suggestion that, after Ayub's take-over in 1958, could be looked upon as a valid forecast.[27]

The Central Government now decided to change the Ministry in East Pakistan. Iskander Mirza, the first President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, continued to pursue the policy, initiated by Ghulam Muhmmad, of continuous intrigues to divide and defame politicians. He had already created a rift not only between the dominant partners of the United Front (of 1954), i.e, the KSP and the Awami League, but also within the ranks of the KSP-led United Front and the KSP itself. In August 1956 the KSP-led Ministry in East Pakistan lay thoroughly disgraced. It was high time for the leaders of the Central Government to liquidate this Ministry, and apply the same tactics of assassination-through-offices to the Awami League which was becoming more and more popular on account of the corruption and misrule of the Sarkar Ministry, and grew powerful with the support of non-Muslims. The non-Muslims were attracted to the Awami League by its non-communal character illustrated by omission of 'Muslim' from its title and its vigorous advocacy of

joint electorates. Mirza could take it for granted that he would be able to wreck the unity of the Awami League. Already he had demonstrated his skill in intrigues by wrecking the unity of the Muslim League. He was rearing up a new party, the Republican Party, under the leadership of his protege, Dr. Khan Sahib, which attracted a large number of Muslim Leaguers frustrated over the distribution of offices among Muslim Leaguers. Mirza had considerable influence over the military as an ex-military official; he had also a tremendous control over the bureaucracy as an ex-official. He wanted to use the Republican Party to augment and consolidate his influence over the politicians. For the same reason, he intended to sabotage the unity of the Awami League which was becoming increasingly popular. The lust for offices in Suhrawardy and his followers, overriding their loyalty to principles and to interests of East Pakistan and blinding them to their own permanent interests, helped Mirza in reaching his goal within a short period of time. A number of conferences was held in Karachi to discuss the conduct of administration in East Pakistan and the possibility of changing the Ministry. Many East Pakistani leaders participated in those conferences. The Central Government in the end directed the East Pakistan Ministry to face the legislature by 31 August; the Governor was to form an alternative Ministry if the legislature did not meet or the Sarkar Ministry could not obtain a vote of confidence before 31 August. On 30 August the Sarkar Ministry resigned. In view of its non-chalant violation of parliamentary conventions during the fifteen months of its ignominious career, the resignation was not a moment too early. The Awami League, supported by the Pakistan National Congress, held a safe majority in the provincial legislature. Ataur Rahman Khan was the leader of the Awami League Parliamentary Party in East Pakistan. He formed a new Ministry on 6 September 1956, which meant, at least tempora-

rily, the restoration of parliamentary democracy in East Pakistan.[28]

This change of Ministry in East Pakistan upset the delicate balance of power in the National Assembly where the Muslim League-United Front coalition was giving way to a split in the Muslim League that saw the emergence of the Republican Party as very powerful. Prime Minister Chaudhri Muhammad Ali resigned on 8 September. A Republican-Awami coalition with Suhrawardy as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, took office on 12 September. The very next day, signs of an imminent split in the Awami League became apparent in course of a mammoth public meeting in Dacca presided over by Maulana Bhasani and addressed by Premier Suhrawardy. This meeting adopted several resolutions reaffirming the decision of the Awami League to discard Pakistan's foreign policy of military alignment with the West. In his speech, Suhrawardy remained silent over this issue. At this meeting Bhasani decried the malpractices indulged in by Awami League Ministers in the distribution of permits and licences. Suhrawardy tried to reject this allegation. As days passed, the rift between pro-Bhasani and pro-Suhrawardy sections of the Awami League began to widen. The pro-Bhasani section emphasized adherence to the principles championed so long by their party, e.g., real regional autonomy for East Pakistan, and an independent foreign policy freed from the bondage of pro-West military pacts. Suhrawardy and his followers were prepared to disregard these principles in order to enjoy offices. Suhrawardy and Ataur controlled a variety of patronages, e.g., permits, licences, posts in government and semi-government undertakings, which they cleverly distributed in order to enlarge their following and isolate Bhasani. At the National Assembly, the coalition of the Republican Party with the Awami League was dominated by the former, the latter having a very small number of members.

Suhrawardy could not hope to change the policy of this coalition by thrusting upon it the principles of the Awami League. Much more convenient was to insure against any dissident note struck by an Awami MNA (i.e., Member of the National Assembly) by giving him a Ministerial job. Only one MNA from the Awami League, Mr. Nurur Rahman, did not get into the Ministry, and he expressed vocal support to Bhasani's viewpoint till he was promoted to be a Deputy Minister. Thrusts and counter-thrusts by pro-Suhrawardy and pro-Bhasani elements continued for some months till the final rupture in July 1957. The Awami League Council meeting, held on 7 and 8 February 1957 at Kagmari, revealed how sharply the lines were drawn between the two sections of the Awami League. The struggle for mastery launched by the two sections created much confusion and disorder in the Kagmari meeting. Bhasani emphasized the need for provincial autonomy, and warned that East Pakistan might some day bid farewell to Pakistan if West Pakistan did not cease to exploit it. The Council meeting was a partial triumph for Bhasani, because a Council resolution reiterated Awami League's condemnation of Pakistan's foreign policy based on military alignment with the West. Suhrawardy, however, proclaimed his support to this foreign policy which the Government headed by him was actually pursuing. The Awami League, thus, was seen to be speaking in two voices. Its opponents in the National Assembly did not leave this opportunity to criticize Suhrawardy for abandoning his party's principles only to stick to his office. Bhasani organized a Cultural Conference at Kagmari along with the Council session. Some Hindu and Muslim delegates from India attended this Cultural Conference which, in a true spirit of goodwill among nations, saw the erection of arches after the names of many eminent leaders of different countries including India. Bhasani's opponents, inside and outside the Awami League, joined hands to condemn him as playing the role of an Indian agent. Bhasani's bold

attempt to create inter-communal and inter-country harmony was scandalously distorted by politicians who appeared to understand little else except the enhancement of personal political influence by any means.[39]

In April 1957 Suhrawardy suffered another defeat in the hands of Bhasani. On 3 April Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed introduced a motion at the East Pakistan legislature that urged upon the East Pakistan Government to request the Central Government for adopting suitable measures towards full regional autonomy for East Pakistan. According to this motion, the Central Government would confine its activities to the fields of defence, foreign affairs and currency. The East Pakistan legislature passed this motion unanimously, while Ataur, the Chief Minister, remained absent. Mujibur outshone Muzaffar Ahmed in his passionate support to the motion. The Central Interior Minister, Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Talpur, unwarrantedly magnified the implications of this motion, and warned that the Central Government would strongly combat any secessionist move on the part of East Pakistan and its union with India's West Bengal. In this way the non-Bengalee members or proteges of the ruling clique persistently raised the bogey of pro-Indian-anti-Pakistani conspiracies whenever East Bengalees showed their determination to oppose the domination by non-Bengalees. Suhrawardy forgot all his earlier pledges to the electorate and his party as he dismissed the demand for regional autonomy, formulated in the aforesaid resolution of the East Pakistan legislature, as a political stunt. Maulana Bhasani revealed at a Press Conference on 5 April that Suhrawardy, before he obtained Bhasani's assent for joining Ghulam Muhammad's Ministry of Talents as the Law Minister after the dissolution of the first Constituent Assembly, gave a written pledge to Bhasani to the effect that he would strive to influence the constitution-making body for the adoption of the 21-Point Programme including the demand for full regional autonomy; if he failed, he would leave the Minis-

try. Pro-Suhrawardy elements, however, continued to follow the policy of dislodging Bhasani from his position of pre-eminence in the Awami League. They enticed old members within their fold by patronage, and recruited a large number of new members in order to outvote Bhasani at the next meeting of the Awami League Council. The efforts bore fruit at the Council meeting in Dacca held on 13 and 14 June 1957. Suhrawardy and his followers could claim to have scored a partial victory over Bhasani at this meeting. They sponsored and passed a face-saving resolution on regional autonomy. It suggested that the Constitution had to be amended to provide for regional autonomy, and that the Awami League was to wait till the next General Elections which might make it possible to amend the Constitution with the help of a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. The meeting approved the foreign policy of Suhrawardy. The procedure adopted by Suhrawardy's supporters to hackle and humiliate Bhasani proved neither their popularity nor their attachment to principles. When Bhasani rose to speak on foreign policy, the new pro-Suhrawardy recruits shouted fiercely and made it impossible for Bhasani to speak for long. He cut short his speech and left the meeting. This was on 13 June. According to the agenda, voting on the resolution for foreign policy was to take place on 14 June. But voting actually took place after Bhasani left the meeting. A large number of outsiders, including Suhrawardy's Private Secretaries, body-guard and Intelligence Branch officials who had accompanied Suhrawardy, participated in the vote. Maulana Bhasani was the President of the Awami League. He was simply ignored.[30]

Suhrawardy-Bhasani clash became too deep to be contained within the framework of a single political party. The intensity of the clash could be measured by an assertion of Suhrawardy that the Constitution extended ninety-eight per cent of full regional autonomy to East Pakistan. At the National Assembly

Hamidul Haq Choudhury made a revealing comment on this assertion : "He [Suhrawardy] told the House at the time of Constitution-making that he will not allow this Constitution to function because it was detrimental to the interests of East Pakistan. Now that he is in office he has come out with the statement that 98 percent of the demands of East Bengal have been met and only two percent remain which possibly will be met with the appointment in jobs of other persons who were opposing the Constitution and that will make up the hundred percent." The formation of a new political party, at the initiative of Bhasani and his followers, seemed inevitable. On 17 June Bhasani declared that on 25 and 26 July a convention would be held in Dacca to launch a new political party wedded to safeguarding Pakistan's sovereignty and establishing genuine democracy in Pakistan. He further declared that this new party would embrace both the Wings of Pakistan. Throughout East Pakistan the Awami League split into two in consequence of the Suhrawardy-Bhasani rift, the Suhrawardy group being regarded as the official group and the Bhasani group as the break-away group. Suhrawardy tried to counter-balance the loss of strength of his Awami League by starting negotiations with some KSP leaders. These negotiations, if successful, would undoubtedly help him in maintaining his political influence at the Provincial as also the National Assembly, precarious though it always was. Nevertheless, these negotiations failed. On the contrary, Bhasani succeeded in welding unity between many organizations in the two Wings of Pakistan, and appeared to be laying down the foundations of a strong all-Pakistan political party. Already in West Pakistan, Frontier Gandhi Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan's Khudai Khidmatgars, Mr. Mahmoodul Haq Usmani's dissident section of the Awami League, Mian Iftikharuddin's Azad Pakistan Party, and Mr. G. M. Syed's Awam-e-Mahaz had merged into the National Party. This National Party was so powerful that it could sway the balance of power

in the West Pakistan provincial legislature. As a result, both the Republican Party and the Muslim League attempted to win its support. On account of Bhasani's efforts, the pro-Bhasani elements in the Awami League of East Pakistan, and the Ganatantri Dal of East Pakistan were heading towards a merger with the National Party of West Pakistan. On 24 July Bhasani sent his letter of resignation from the membership of the Awami League to its Secretary, Shaikh Mujibur Rahman.[31]

The Dacca convention of 25 and 26 July 1957 saw the birth of the National Awami Party as a result of the merger of the National Party of West Pakistan with the ex-Awami Leaguers, led by Bhasani, and the Ganatantri Dal of East Pakistan. The National Awami Party largely accepted the basic tenets of the Awami League which Suhrawardy had flagrantly violated. It declared in its manifesto that Pakistan should follow an independent foreign policy and abrogate the military pacts with the West. The manifesto aimed at the establishment of democracy through peaceful means, and at securing full regional autonomy to both the Wings of Pakistan. The Central Government's control would be limited to the fields of currency, defence and foreign relations. The manifesto, among other things, advocated the dismemberment of the One Unit for West Pakistan and its reconstitution into a Zonal Federation so designed that one unit would not be able to overshadow others. Incidents during the convention of 25 and 26 July once again confirmed how East Pakistan politicians ignored the basic restraints to be exercised for fostering a stable democracy in order that they might boost temporary factional necessities. They were even prepared to take the help of the bureaucracy in order to put rival politicians to bay, even though it meant the adoption of thoroughly undemocratic methods and clearly encouraged the bureaucracy to further debilitate the already weak politicians. Suhrawardy's agents created violent disturbances at the aforesaid convention and, in order to disrupt a public meeting at the Paltan Maidan,

connived with the bureaucracy to impose a ban on meetings after the meeting had started. The meeting, attended by such eminent leaders as the Frontier Gandhi and the Baluchistan Gandhi, Khan Abdus Samad Khan, fell a victim to pro-Suhrawardy hooligans, and then to an executive order inspired by Suhrawardy. Some leaders and members of the National Awami Party sustained injuries. In the districts, too, the National Awami Party's leaders and supporters were subjected to violent assaults by pro-Suhrawardy riffraffs instructed to break up the conventions and public meetings organized by the new Party which appeared to be strong enough to oust the Awami League office-holders from the Central Government. Violence unleashed on the supporters of this new Party received a good deal of impetus from the failure of Suhrawardy, who nurtured the ambition of augmenting the influence of politicians by ousting the leader of the bureaucratic-military coterie, i.e., Iskander Mirza, to match the latter in influence and intrigues. Suhrawardy made an alliance with Governor Gurmani of West Pakistan, although the latter had proved himself to be a sworn enemy of East Pakistan's aspirations at the time of constitution-making. Both tried to oust President Mirza by impeachment. Mirza moved quickly and dismissed Gurmani. Suhrawardy also incurred the hostility of Dr. Khan Sahib, the leader of the Republican Party. He tried, in collusion with Gurmani, to dislodge Khan Sahib from his position of leadership of the Republican Party, but failed. With the help of the newly formed National Awami Party, the Republican Party proceeded to undo One Unit for West Pakistan by passing a resolution to that effect at the West Pakistan legislature on 17 September 1957. Suhrawardy, who reversed his earlier stand on this issue and now opposed the dismantling of One Unit, found himself more and more isolated on account of manoeuverings by Khan Sahib and Iskander Mirza. In a reckless strategy to bolster his influence, Suhrawardy toyed with the idea of exchanging the support of non-Muslim

legislators for that of a KSP faction. But later he concluded that the non-Muslims were more reliable than KSP Muslims. A KSP faction, led by Syed Azizul Haq, was tired of total exclusion from power, and was pining for an alliance with Suhrawardy's Awami League. But the price that this faction demanded, namely, the dropping of non-Muslims from the coalition, was much more than Suhrawardy could afford.[32]

Khan Sahib was sick of maintaining Suhrawardy in the office of the Premier. In course of one year of his tenure Suhrawardy spent two hundred days abroad. He also ensured that the Ministers belonging to his Awami League would enjoy many foreign trips by rotation. Suhrawardy practised corruption on a large scale to enrich his followers. Suhrawardy thought that Mirza could be ousted if a General Election was arranged. He, therefore, started a campaign for General Election when his rift with Republicans came into the open. Suhrawardy sometimes attacked Republicans in his public speeches although he had become and remained the Prime Minister with their backing. The Republicans withdrew their support from Suhrawardy. Immediately afterwards, on 11 October, Mirza called upon Suhrawardy to resign. Suhrawardy asked for a chance to face the National Assembly and demonstrate his claim that he still enjoyed the support of the majority. Mirza refused to yield. Suhrawardy had to quit. In East Pakistan the Awami League called a *hartal* as a protest against the dismissal of Suhrawardy. The *hartal* was a complete failure because of a lack of public sympathy for Suhrawardy. The one bright spot in the Suhrawardy regime was the acceptance of joint electorates for East Pakistan in October 1956, and then for East and West Pakistan in April 1957. Suhrawardy's fight for joint electorates showed that at times he could enthusiastically struggle in support of a worthy cause. On this issue, however, Republicans, who ousted Suhrawardy, did not show any consistent regard for principles while substituting other alliances for the alliance with Suhra-

wardy's Awami League. Suhrawardy put up a vigorous and well-argued defence of the Electorate Act, 1956, which was passed by the National Assembly in its Dacca session on 12 October 1956. This Act stipulated that East Pakistan would hold elections with joint electorates, and West Pakistan, whose provincial legislature had earlier voted overwhelmingly for separate electorates, would have separate electorates. On the eve of his departure to Dacca, on 8 October, Khan Sahib declared that his Republican Party would advocate separate electorates for the two Wings. This declaration, if acted upon by the Republicans in the National Assembly, would have deprived the Awami League of the support of non-Muslim legislators and precipitated its loss of power in East Pakistan as also at the Centre. Within a day, on 9 October, Khan Sahib changed his stand and accepted separate electorates for West Pakistan alone, thus helping the passage of the Electorate Act, 1956. The Electorate (Amendment) Act, 1957, went a step further and prescribed joint electorates for both East and West Pakistan. In course of the debate on this Amendment Act, Suhrawardy combated the views of Muslim Leaguers by offering a memorable defence of joint electorates. He emphasized, among other things, that it was untenable to brand joint electorates as un-Islamic when other Muslim countries could do without separate electorates and when there was no reason to look upon Pakistani Muslims as the only true Muslims. A danger in trying to identify separate electorates with Islam, added Suhrawardy, was to provoke the very explosive controversy about who is and who is not a Muslim, and to incite bloody outbreaks such as the anti-Ahmadi massacre of 1953. Moreover, Suhrawardy asserted, the prevalence of two different systems of electorates in the two Wings of Pakistan would merely strengthen a suspicion that there were certain divergences between them which were irreconcilable, and that the two Wings could not, therefore, survive long as parts of the same country. It might encourage forces favouring

the political separation of East and West Pakistan. The Electorate (Amendment) Act, 1957, could not be passed without the support of Republicans. But when Suhrawardy was to be ousted and a new coalition formed, Republicans did not hesitate to promise the replacement of joint electorates by separate electorates and thereby draw the Muslim League into the coalition. Simultaneously, the Republican Party earned the support of a KSP faction, led by Hamidul Haq Choudhury, with a written pledge to the latter that the Republican Party would not alter the system of joint electorates. The departure of Suhrawardy, thus, did not, in the least, mean an advent of healthy politics.[33]

Mr. I. I. Chundrigarh became the new Prime Minister at the head of a Republican-Muslim League coalition. He made the revival of separate electorates the primary condition for his continuance in office. He appeared to be the spokesman of that section of fanatics who had fantastic fears of Hindu domination under a system of joint electorates. The imaginative excesses, to which they were prone, were amply illustrated by a pamphlet, published probably in 1958, by Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, having the title *White Paper on The Electorate Issue*. This White Paper preached the astonishing thesis that, in a system of joint electorates, the Hindus would acquire decisive influence upon East Pakistan politics and, thereby, upon the Central Government. The queer line of argument, in support of the thesis, ran as follows. Hindus were in a majority in fourteen constituencies of East Pakistan. In other thirty-five constituencies, the non-Muslims had a population strength, ranging from 36% to 49.19%; but they could get their own candidates elected in these constituencies because the non-Muslims would consolidate their votes while the Muslims would not; because a large number of Hindu women would vote, while only a few Muslim women would exercise their franchise; because Hindus were much more politically conscious than Muslims, in general, and cast their votes in far larger numbers than the latter. Next,

the pamphlet goes on, in another eighty-nine constituencies, Hindus would control votes varying from 20% to 35.45% of the total, and would win the elections by securing in their favour Muslim votes to the extent of only .05% to 12.1%. The White Paper further asserted that joint electorates would encourage the forces of Bengalee nationalism and pave the way to a merger of East Pakistan with West Bengal (in India). The fear of joint electorates unifying Bengalee Hindus and Muslims and setting them, under the banner of Bengalee nationalism, against West Pakistan's design for domination, had earlier been expressed by the Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami himself, i.e., Syed Abul Ala Maudoodi. His analysis drew pointed attention to the situation that, in case of representation according to population and, more so, in case of parity of representation between the two Wings, the East Pakistani Muslims would have to depend on the support of Hindus in order to counteract the influence of a unified West Pakistan. In a system of joint electorates the mutual dependence of Bengalee Hindus and Muslims would be institutionalized and stimulate Bengalee nationalism. Chundrigarh probably accepted such notions and became an uncompromising advocate of separate electorates. He thus stirred up a turmoil all over Pakistan immediately after assuming the office of the Prime Minister. The Republican Party found it impolitic to revive the issue of electorates, and wanted to dishonour its commitment to Chundrigarh. Hence it contrived to despatch a Fact Finding Mission to East Pakistan with a view to ascertaining the wishes of the majority there. The National Awami Party set up an All-Parties Committee of Action for Joint Electorate. The Awami League did not join this Committee and launched a separate agitation, trying to win back its lost popularity. It organized meetings to express the fidelity of East Pakistanis to joint electorates. In one such meeting Suhrawardy threatened that, in case of imposition of separate electorates, the Hindus in Pakistan could legitimately claim that they should

have a separate homeland in areas where they constituted a majority and merge those areas with India. The state of Pakistan, Suhrawardy argued, was the product of the theory that Hindus and Muslims were two nations. But, once Partition was effected and the two states of India and Pakistan emrged, the Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India were required to stay on in their homes. The two-nation theory could no longer be the basis of administration of Pakistan, for that would justify the demand of Hindus to carve out of Pakistan a separate homeland for them. The Fact Finding Mission advised against the restoration of separate electorates. Chundrigarh resigned.[34]

Malik Firoz Khan Noon became the next Prime Minister. Meanwhile, Mirza had reduced politicians to an insignificant position by constantly playing off one against the other. In the past he had weakened the Muslim League by boosting the Republican Party. Later, Mirza began to woo the Muslim League in order to minimize the influence of Republicans. The curious play of intrigues and counter-intrigues enabled Suhrawardy to gain some prominence under Noon's Ministry. Noon had to depend on Suhrawardy and his Awami League followers at the National Assembly. Although, at the provincial level, the clash between the Chief Minister, Ataur, and Mujibur (who wanted to become the Chief Minister) ate into the vitals of the Awami League, at the National Assembly, Suhrawardy still commanded the solid support of the Awami Leaguers. Suhrawardy, therefore, succeeded in exercising some influence over Noon who was in a precarious position and needed Suhrawardy's support. Suhrawardy felt that a General Election was the only means by which he might be able to eliminate Mirza's overmastering authority. He continued to campaign for a General Election in the country. Mirza, on the contrary, made many speeches accusing politicians of incompetence and corruption, and expressing serious doubts over the utility of elections. In one such speech on 27 December 1957, he asserted that Pakistan was the

victim of a character-crisis since politicians were busy sacrificing all principles of private and public conduct for the sake of self-aggrandizement. Politicians, other than those belonging to the Awami League, also felt restive on account of the undue delay in the holding of General Elections. After the formal inauguration of the Constitution it was the first duty of the National Assembly to arrange General Elections at an early date. The more the Elections receded, the more the Assembly members lost their representative character, and the less became their authority to challenge the machinations of the bureaucratic-military coterie. The National Assembly passed the Voters' Qualification Bill as late as April 1957, and the Peoples' Representation Bill as late as August 1957. It is true that one chief cause of delay in General Elections lay in the trick of the ruling clique to keep a vacuum in the Constitution on the issue of electorates. Later, President Mirza helped Suhrawardy in prescribing joint electorates for both East and West Pakistan. Afterwards, again, in course of his game of weakening politicians of different political parties by playing them off against one another, Mirza began to woo the Muslim League and tried to undo the system of joint electorates, not because he wanted separate electorates but because he wanted to postpone elections as long as possible, and consolidate his position at the apex of the bureaucratic-military coterie after reducing politicians to absolute powerlessness. The successive Prime Ministers, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, Suhrawardy, Chundrigarh, all promised General Elections; none came near to realizing it. Changes in Ministry meant that almost each of the members of the National Assembly became a Minister for some time. But the task of holding Elections did not proceed far. For instance, as late as 29 January 1958, complained Mujibur in the National Assembly, the East Pakistan Government did not receive any order from the Central Government or the Election Commissioner for the printing of voters' lists. Politicians suspected that the

hidden hand of the bureaucratic-military coterie was responsible for the delay in Elections, and that it might even prevent the Assembly from completing the urgent task of holding a General Election by dissolving the Assembly. Shaikh Mujibur Rahman declared on the floor of the National Assembly: "But why, after passing the Constitution three years back, general elections have not been held. Where is the invisible hand; where is the ghost hand? What is the ghost playing behind the Government that whenever any Government tried to hold the elections, some sort of bottleneck must be created. Whenever there is serious thinking for holding the general elections, the invisible hand from behind the curtain plays the game." Sardar Fazlul Karim made the following significant remark in the National Assembly: "An impression has been created in the country that the present National Assembly also, I mean we ourselves, are going to shape like the previous Constituent Assembly which neither completed its responsibilities in the matter of framing a Constitution and giving general elections to the people nor did it agree to dissolve itself: and later on, Sir, it was dissolved."[35]

In December 1957 the government took a long stride towards military dictatorship by means of the O.C.D. (i.e., Operation Close Door). The ostensible aim of the O.C.D. was to check smuggling across the India-Pakistan border of East Pakistan. The real aims were perhaps to discredit further the politicians, to weaken the Awami League-led coalition in the province, to tighten the grip of the military over the civil administration, and to keep the mind of the people prepared for an ultimate military takeover. In the past Awami Leaguers had strongly condemned Chief Minister Abu Husain Sarkar for calling in the military in the field of food administration. But now Chief Minister Ataur Rahman of the Awami League played into the hands of the ruling clique by requesting the military to conduct anti-smuggling operations. It was an indirect ad-

mission of the failure of his Government, and provided an opportunity to the ruling clique to demonstrate the superiority of an administration guided by military officials to an administration supervised by professional politicians. But, in the name of anti-smuggling operations, the military officials practised plain terrorism, especially on non-Muslims. Thus they created further instability in the East Pakistan political situation by alienating non-Muslim legislators from the coalition Ministry led by the Awami League, and facilitated the later emergence of a military dictatorship promising the end of political instability. The military acted as if they had to wreak vengeance on the people irrespective of any crime committed by the people. It was not a case of the civil administration being assisted by the military; it was a case of the civil administration watching passively and thus endorsing all the excesses committed by the military. An army official frequently concentrated in himself the powers of a policeman, a judge and a magistrate. He imposed disproportionately heavy punishment for unproved charges that were not legal offences or even for patently frivolous accusations. As a top-ranking lawyer, Hamidul Haq Choudhury had to look into such cases some of which he revealed at the National Assembly. For instance, a man was harassed because he possessed a few pen-holders dating back to pre-Partition days; a shopkeeper was persecuted for owning certain articles which he had stocked under government permits. Moreover, the O.C.D. overlooked the basic economic factors causing smuggling. For centuries East Pakistan's North Bengal region had been importing cattle from the northern parts of India, i.e., the Hariana cattle. Partition disrupted the normal trade relations, and East Pakistanis were compelled to smuggle Hariana cattle for meeting their urgent requirements. South Bengal in East Pakistan produced huge quantities of betel-nuts which, before Partition, had a very profitable market in India. Betel-nut producers of East

Pakistan preferred smuggling to destruction of their produce. As regards Jute, again, there was a marked disparity in its price in East Bengal and the neighbouring territory of India, and it was clearly profitable for poor East Pakistanis to engage in smuggling. In all such cases the Government utterly failed to solve the economic problems of the people, and merely tortured the people for resorting to smuggling which was a substitute for healthy trade relations with the neighbouring country, against which the Government set its face dogmatically. Anti-smuggling operations, thus, could be interpreted as the punishment of the poor people for the sins of their rulers. Hamidul Haq Choudhury suggested at the National Assembly that the economy of East Pakistan would collapse if anti-smuggling operations were not coupled with the creation of alternative markets for the smuggled products. Much anti-Indian propaganda accompanied the heat and blast of the O.C.D. But no attempt was made simultaneously to solve the real issue. Hamidul vainly told the National Assembly: "After all you cannot create emotions and feed the people on them. They want reality also."[36]

The O.C.D. spelt the doom of the Ataur Ministry. It was sometimes used to victimize Ataur's political opponents. But it also mowed down his friends. The O.C.D. compelled non-Muslim legislators to withdraw their support from the Ataur Ministry which did nothing to protect innocent non-Muslims from the severe onslaughts of army personnel. Under cover of the O.C.D. the military wantonly destroyed and looted Hindu houses and property, molested and kidnapped Hindu women, and even the children were not spared. The O.C.D. turned out to be mainly a vast campaign of anti-Hindu atrocities, revealing the old design of the ruling clique to squeeze out minorities. On 17 March 1958, a Hindu member of the provincial legislature tabled an adjournment motion condemning the O.C.D. that unleashed a reign of terror on the innocent citizens. Mah-

mud Ali (of the National Awami Party) suggested in course of the debate on the adjournment motion that Ataur was capitulating before the dictatorial designs of the military by allowing the O.C.D. Mahmud appeared to be correct. For the military officials went on consolidating their control over the civil administration while politicians were busy outwitting one another. But Ataur stunned the critics of the O.C.D. by exonerating the excesses committed by the military and by equating the accusations against the military to market-place gossips. Ataur even voiced the typical propaganda of the ruling clique by dismissing the critics of the O.C.D. as the enemies of Pakistan. Large-scale defections of non-Muslim legislators could no longer be avoided, and on 22 March the Ataur Ministry confronted a crisis when the Government motion of closing a debate on expenditure was opposed and pressed into a division. The Ataur Ministry was about to collapse when the National Awami Party legislators came to its rescue. They abstained from voting, along with a few others. The Ministry survived. If the National Awami Party wanted to pull down the Ministry by marshalling its resources and exercising its influence over a few other legislators, it could easily succeed. In fact, Maulana Bhasani directed the NAP (i.e., National Awami Party) legislators to combine with other Opposition elements and oust the Ataur Ministry. This was also the strategy recommended by the West Pakistan NAP and the Central Organizing Committee of the NAP. It is interesting to note why the NAP legislators repudiated the course of action chalked out by Bhasani, who had been biding his time for an assault on his erstwhile Awami League colleagues whom he accused of betrayal. The Opposition elements in the provincial legislature, e.g., the KSP and the Muslim League, joined hands with the worst communalists in a desperate bid to oust the Awami League, and, if they came to power, East Pakistan might present a ghastly scene of communal violence. Moreover, after the exit of the Ataur Ministry, political insta-

bility in the province might worsen and the Central Government might get an opportunity to suspend parliamentary government. These considerations decided the NAP legislators against outvoting the Ataur Ministry But this move, as will be shortly apparent, only served to delay the fall of the Ministry.[37]

Within a few days East Pakistan's politicians showed how prone they were to bungling, how they were enabling the Central Government to toy with their reputation and authority, and how dangerously they were tempting the military to take over. On 31 March, when the budget was yet to be passed and the provincial legislature had already decided to continue its business up to 16 April, Chief Minister Ataur instructed the Governor to prorogue the legislature. Governor Fazlul Haq rejected Ataur's recommendation, expressing his belief that Ataur's ministry had ceased to command the confidence of the legislature. The Chief Minister retaliated by immediately passing on to the Central Government a recommendation for the dismissal of the Governor. Fazlul Haq hit back by dismissing Ataur and appointing Abu Husain Sarkar as the Chief Minister in the night of 31 March. Haq went further and, accepting Sarkar's recommendation, promptly prorogued the provincial legislature. Suhrawardy, in course of the same night, intervened to save his followers. He telephoned Premier Noon and threatened that the Awami League would withdraw its support from the Noon Ministry unless Noon dismissed Fazlul Haq immediately. Noon wanted to continue in office with the help of the Awami League. He, therefore, within a few hours of the dismissal of Ataur, dismissed Fazlul Haq, and appointed Mr. Hamid Ali, the Chief Secretary, as the Acting Governor. On 1 April Hamid Ali, a non-Bengalee member of the C.S.P. (i.e., Civil Service of Pakistan), dismissed Abu Husain Sarkar, who could thus hold the office of the Chief Minister for about twelve hours. In an hour after assuming the office of the Acting

Governor, Hamid reappointed the Ataur Ministry. The avalanche of appointments and dismissals seemed to be over when that very day a resolution, moved by Mujibur and extending support to the Ataur Ministry, was approved by the provincial legislature.[38]

But a crisis continued to brew. Within a few weeks, on 18 June, the Ataur Ministry suffered a defeat at the provincial legislature, and resigned the next day. Abu Husain Sarkar became the Chief Minister on 20 June. On 22 June the Sarkar Ministry faced the provincial legislature and a no-confidence motion. At once a chaotic and near-violent situation developed in the provincial legislature. Outsiders joined legislators in magnifying the disorder amidst which the no-confidence motion, moved by Mujibur, was passed. Sarkar resigned without any delay. Suspension of parliamentary government in East Pakistan seemed unavoidable. A Presidential proclamation of 25 June brought about this suspension. The Awami League, however, continued to pressurize Noon for reinstating the Ataur Ministry in East Pakistan. Its efforts were successful, and the Ataur Ministry came back to life on 25 August 1958. Meanwhile, the Awami League carried on its campaign for elections and against President Mirza. It also tried to restore its popularity by hammering upon the injustices done to East Pakistan by the Central Government in the matter of development grants and loans, and expenditure from Central revenues. Suhrawardy's earlier announcement, that the demand for regional autonomy was a stunt and that it was mostly conceded by the Constitution, was forgotten while his followers started a campaign for provincial autonomy with only Currency, Defence and Foreign Affairs left to the Central Government. Mujibur even asserted that President Mirza was the biggest problem for Pakistan, and that he had to be removed if democracy was to survive in Pakistan. Suhrawardy regretted that while India had held two General Elections since Partition, and was preparing for a

third, Pakistan could not hold even one.[39]

In September 1958 President Mirza affixed his signature to a bill stipulating that the first General Election in Pakistan would be held in February 1959. But the very month of September saw the East Pakistan legislature plunged in confusion and riot which appeared to foretell an early disappearance of parliamentary government. The Awami League, the nucleus of the ruling coalition in East Pakistan, was eager to remove the Speaker who no longer commanded its support. The Awami League grew more and more apprehensive that the Speaker, Abdul Hakim, originally belonging to the KSP, might conspire with the KSP-led Opposition to bring about the fall of the Ataur Ministry. Several no-confidence motions against Hakim, sponsored earlier by the Ataur Ministry, were of no avail because the Ministry itself was defeated on 18 June and went into oblivion for a few months. In the September session of the provincial legislature the Awami League was all set to remove Hakim from his office. On the other hand, Hakim and the KSP-led Opposition pooled their resources for a showdown : they were prepared to create a crisis that would mean the fall of the Ataur Ministry, and, for this, they were willing to pay the price of the suspension of parliamentary government and the imposition of the President's Rule. Syed Azizul Haq was the leader of the KSP group that mustered Opposition support for Hakim. Azizul placed the overthrow of the Awami League above the retention of parliamentary government. In his manoeuverings he was spurred by a deeply personal animosity towards Hamidul Haq Choudhury, his old rival in the KSP, who suddenly became friendly with Suhrawardy and managed to secure a Ministerial job under Noon. Azizul calculated that he could easily humiliate Hamidul if he succeeded in pulling down the Awami League-led Ministry in East Pakistan. The Awami League committed a gross violation of parliamentary conventions by allowing six of its MPAs (i.e., Members of the

Provincial Assembly) to hold the offices of the Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors. According to a verdict of the Election Commission, the seats of the legislature occupied by the six Awami Leaguers were to be treated as vacant. But Suhrawardy used his influence over Premier Noon to procure a Central Government Ordinance setting aside the aforesaid verdict of the Election Commission. The Opposition caught hold of this issue when the provincial legislature met on 20 September. They demanded the expulsion of those six Awami Leaguers from the legislature in order to weaken the support behind the Ataur Ministry. The Speaker announced that he would give his ruling on this issue on 23 September. Disturbances broke out. The Speaker ordered some members to get out. His order was disobeyed. A supporter of the Government read out a motion of no-confidence in the Speaker which the latter promptly disallowed. Members of the Assembly Secretariat and a batch of East Pakistan Rifles were present in and around the House. Some supporters of the Ministry attempted to force the Speaker out of the House. The Assembly was transformed into a battle-ground. MPAs fought one another or the Secretariat staff. It was a complete pandemonium. Some outsiders, too, joined the fight. The Speaker left the House. Afterwards, the no-confidence motion against him was passed. Another motion, declaring the Speaker to be insane, was also passed.[40]

When the provincial legislature met on 23 September, the Opposition strength was depleted, for, in the mean time, the Awami League bought off a few KSP members. The Opposition, deprived of the means to outvote the Ataur Ministry, adopted the tactics of provoking a crisis that would lead to the President's Rule. The Ministry wanted Mr. Shahed Ali, the Deputy Speaker, to exercise the functions of the Speaker. The Opposition was determined to prevent Shahed Ali from doing that. The Ministry, with the help of Sergeants-at-Arms loaned by the East Pakistan Rifles and posted on duty inside the legis-

lature, succeeded in preventing Abdul Hakim's entry into the legislative chamber. Shahed Ali could enter the hall and occupy the chair of the Speaker. The Opposition demanded that Shahed Ali should immediately vacate the chair of the Speaker. Shahed Ali, guarded by a number of Sergeants-at-Arms, refused to yield. The Opposition became furious and threw chairs, microphone rods, paper-weights, etc., at Shahed Ali, who became unconscious and was rushed to a hospital. The Inspector-General of Police led a large police contingent, kept in readiness by the Ministry apprehending a serious disorder, and proceeded to restrain the belligerent deputies many of whom were dragged out of the House. The Ministry, however, had the legislative transactions carried on with the help of another person belonging to the panel of chairmen. The legislature was prorogued on 24 September. On 26 September, Shahed Ali died in the hospital.[41]

The days of parlimentary democracy in Pakistan were numbered. Prime Minister Noon repeatedly reshuffled his Ministry in order to combat continuous political crises emerging out of multiple alliances contracted by the members of the National Assembly and the consequent quick changes in the clientele of a particular Ministry. The Awami League, although exercising a tremendous control over Noon, refrained from joining the Ministry because their demand to elevate Suhrawardy to the office of the Premier was not conceded. At last, on 2 October, the Awami League revised its position and joined the Noon Ministry. Six of them became Ministers, three being included in the Cabinet. Noon became so much enmeshed in political trading for keeping his Ministry alive that at one point of time Pakistan had two Finance Ministers : Mr. Amjad Ali and Mr. Hamidul Haq Choudhury, the latter being then an ally of Suhrawardy. This anomaly was removed on 7 October, when there was a reshuffling of the Ministry again, and Hamidul was switched over to the portfolio of Commerce. On

that day, the Awami League had a set-back, for its nominees were excluded from the Cabinet. It threatened to withdraw its support from the Noon Ministry which had twenty-six members drawn from six political parties. The Awami League did not carry out its threat because it was aware of the precarious position of the Ministry, and had the misgiving that the ruling clique would completely destroy parliamentary government if the Noon Ministry was toppled a few months before the General Elections. Too soon did this misgiving become a reality. The night of 7-8 October saw military officials in hectic activity, arresting politicians and posting troops at the strategic points of principal cities. The army officials marched into newspaper offices and placed copies for next morning's headline news. On 8 October newspapers announced that President Mirza had promulgated Martial Law throughout Pakistan. Mirza abrogated the Constitution, abolished the National and Provincial Assemblies, and dismissed the Ministries at the Centre and the provinces. He appointed Commander-in-Chief General Muhammad Ayub Khan the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Aziz Ahmed, the chief architect of the 1950 communal massacre in East Bengal, became the Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator. Later on Mirza appointed Ayub Khan the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Within three weeks, however, Mirza resigned, and Ayub became the President of Pakistan. Ayub then abolished the office of the Prime Minister, concentrating all powers in the Presidency. He also announced that he had dismissed Mirza.[48]

For long Mirza played off politicians against one another, reducing them almost to total impotence, with a masterliness that even Ghulam Muhammad could envy. "In contrast to those of Ghulam Mohammad, Mirza's methods were much more subtle", wrote K. B. Sayeed. Perhaps Ayub Khan waited, before he decided to stage the military take-over, till Mirza used all his talents to keep politicians prostrate and disunited

by means of systematic intrigues. For one biographer of Ayub Khan, Mohammad Ahmad, has stated definitely that Ghulam Muhammad had asked Ayub several times to take over the Government. This biographer further states that Ayub was the principal author of the One Unit plan for West Pakistan. It is significant to note that throughout 1958 the anti-One-Unit movement in West Pakistan gathered greater and greater momentum, all the parties excepting the Awami League of East Pakistan lending powerful support to the movement, and at one point Ayub sent a clear instruction to Mirza that the One Unit must not be split up before the General Election. In the opinion of Z. A. Suleri, the unified province of West Pakistan would actually have disintegrated but for Ayub's military take-over in time. It was apparent that the Government did not want the country to go through a General Election that might enable politicians to reassert their authority and give a fair trial to the parliamentary system. Mr. K. J. Newman correctly stressed the reasons why the General Election should have been held in spite of political instability in the country, and gave the subtle hint as to why the ruling clique wanted to avoid the Election, when he wrote : "The Constitution had only been completed in 1956; it was not yet fully implemented. Were two and one half years a long enough test for its workability? Had Democracy really become unworkable, or did President Mirza act mainly because he feared for his own re-election under democratic conditions ?" Ghulam Muhammad had struck at politicians at a moment when the Constitution was about to be adopted. Ayub swooped down upon politicians (including Iskander who had to leave Pakistan in no time) in October 1958, while elections were to be held in February 1959. It is not perhaps plausible to argue, as the votaries of military dictatorship readily do, that the politicians were responsible for the dismemberment of democracy in Pakistan. As a matter of fact, the politicians did not have the chance to operate democracy

on account of repeated, almost continuous, interference by the military-bureaucratic complex. Wilcox rightly commented: "The later hypocritical charges that the assemblies were overcome with factionalism are quite true but the executive authorities were hardly innocent in sponsoring it. People would later say that Pakistan's democracy didn't stumble, it was pushed. It might be added that the bullies then accused the injured party of being clumsy and unsuited to walking."[43]

All the while, during the period under review in this Chapter, 1954-58, East Bengal continued to suffer from the cultural-economic-political strangle-hold of the West Pakistani ruling coterie. In the economic sphere, the lot of East Pakistanis could not be improved because the Provincial Government had neither the requisite resources nor the power. The Central Government allocated a meagre sum, compared to the sum for West Pakistan, for East Pakistan's economic development. Even that sum could not be spent because the Ministry of Finance, headed and staffed almost entirely by non-Bengalees, deliberately rejected schemes or sanctioned them too late. And then the Central Government would start accusing the Provincial Government of the latter's failure to spend the allocated amount. Mujibur did some plain talking on this problem at the National Assembly. He said : "Nobody has enquired why the money cannot be spent by the Provincial Government ! They have to come to the Director-General of Civil Supplies and nothing happens here and the money comes back to Karachi and all the blame you know goes to the Provincial Government ! The bottleneck is everywhere. Do you know how many *darwazaz* [doors] we have to knock before we can start a scheme. Take any industry: it goes to the Finance Department; Ministry of Economic Affairs, then the Planning Board and this Department and that Department, and ultimately the scheme is not approved. If it is approved, the time passes and the money lapses !" The Central Government studiously re-

frained from promoting any scheme for large-scale industrialization of East Pakistan. When Suhrawardy was the Prime Minister of Pakistan, he secured an international grant to set up fifty-eight industries in East Pakistan (and also execute some schemes in West Pakistan). The West Pakistani businessmen and newspapers mercilessly decried this international deal which would mitigate the injustice so long done to East Bengal's need for industrialization. The entire project, undertaken by the Government, was dropped after the fall of Suhrawardy Ministry. Not to speak of big projects, even on small matters, the Central Government obstructed the efforts of the East Pakistan Government. Firoz Khan Noon once revealed on the floor of the Constituent Assembly that the East Bengal Government wanted to purchase a few water-pumps, costing about three to four rupees, which it could not procure because the Central Government rejected that scheme. The Provincial Government was thus in a great difficulty because it did not have the power to purchase any machinery, however inexpensive, except through the Stores Department of the Central Government. The Central Government even tried to shirk its responsibility over certain basic necessities of East Pakistanis by simply asserting that these necessities did not exist. When, however, these unfulfilled necessities drove East Pakistanis to extra-legal means, the Central Government cracked down upon them. For instance, the O.C.D. was launched to prevent smuggling across the East Pakistan-India border. But East Pakistanis living in border areas were often compelled to engage in illicit trade with adjacent Indian territory because they did not have roads to carry on trade with contiguous areas in their own country. The Central Government went through the misleading gesture of an enquiry commission, consisting of West Pakistani experts with little knowledge of the peculiar problems of communication in East Pakistan, to look into this difficulty. These experts, testified Muhammad Abdul Khaleque at the National

Assembly, "toured over the country, got their T.A. [Travelling Allowance] and D.A. [Daily Allowance] and resided in palatial hotels and then after a time came back and according to the desire of their master, they submitted a report to the effect that roads are not necessary in East Pakistan." East Pakistanis protested against such evil designs on the floor of the Constituent Assembly and the National Assembly, but to little avail.[44]

The Central Government spent, from 1947-48 to 1955-56, Rs. 705.70 crores on Defence Services and Civil Administration. Almost the entire expenditure was incurred in West Pakistan, for Karachi was the seat of the Central Government, and the headquarters of the Defence Services were all in West Pakistan. East Pakistan was deprived of the multiplier effect of this huge expenditure by the Central Government, although its contribution accounted for nearly two-thirds of this expenditure. On 16 January 1956 Abul Mansur Ahmad quoted figures from a book published by the Information, Advertisement and Film Department of the Government of Pakistan, and revealed to the members of the Constituent Assembly that East Pakistanis were receiving Rs. 1½ per head per year from the Central Revenues, whereas West Pakistanis were receiving Rs. 32 per head per year. The composition of the top-tier personnel at the Central Secretariat, too, provided an index of concentration of Cenral Government expenditure in West Pakistan. As the situation obtained in the beginning of 1956, there was not a single Bengalee Secretary out of a total of 19; there were only two Bengalee Joint Secretaries out of a total of 50, 10 Bengalees out of a total of 135 Deputy Secretaries, and only 30 Bengalees out of a total of 530 Under Secretaries. Over the years this disparity persisted even on the level of Assistant Secretaries. As late as March 1958, 16 East Pakistnis, as aginst 151 West Pakistanis, held the post of Assistant Secretary. On 3 March 1958 the Central Minister for Broadcasting and Information affirmed that in his Department the Secretary, two Deputy Secretaries

and four Under Secretaries were all from West Pakistan, there being only one Under Secretary from East Pakistan. Similarly, in the Press Commission, all the nine members were from West Pakistan; there was no East Pakistani even among the three Research Officers and seven Superintendents. The perpetuation of this disparity frustrated young East Pakistanis some of whom began to believe that their grievances could not be redressed unless East Pakistan broke away from Pakistan to form a separate state. On 4 March 1958, Muhammad Abdul Khaleque, an East Pakistani member of the National Assembly, issued a warning : "Placed as we are, our Provinces are far flung : one is far away from the other. These two Provinces have got all the appearance of two countries and still we have elected to be one country; we have elected to live as parts of one country, to survive as one country. Our decision is irretrievable but, sir, people must see that the writing on the wall is there. My Prime Minister knows thoroughly well that elements are there who are trying to take advantage of these grievances, to take advantage of these perennial grievances of East Pakistan and, sir, if the demand for secession comes from youths of that part of the country, a hundred Awami League organizations will not be in a position to prevent that demand."[45]

The Central Government did not allow East Pakistan to spend its foreign exchange earnings, always higher than those of West Pakistan, for East Pakistan's own economic development. At the Constituent Assembly, on 31 August 1955, Abul Mansur Ahmad quoted from the *Statistical Bulletin* of the Government of Pakistan to prove this point. Jute enabled East Pakistan to earn a very high amount of foreign exchange a large part of which was appropriated by West Pakistan for imports speeding up industrialization in West Pakistan. In this way, according to Mr. Muzaffar Ahmed of Dacca University, East Pakistan lost Rs. 34 crores 12 lakhs and 50 thousands every year from 1947-48 to 1954-55. "It means", Muzaffar wrote,

"that East Bengal sends out goods in return for which she gets nothing. It means a continuous economic drain of a magnitude and dimension unknown in any civilised country. East Bengal is being sucked dry of the life-blood of her economy. Regional autonomy means, in this context, the complete reversal of this process." Sometimes East Pakistan's interests were neglected not because of any fixed design on the part of the Central Government, but because of the weird geography of Pakistan. The result, however, was the same, namely, the conviction of East Pakistanis that they needed full regional autonomy for properly ministering to their necessities. As Muzaffar argued : "It is neither feasible nor practicable for the Central Government at Karachi to attend to the increasing needs of this vast humanity. The geography renders it impossible. On the other hand, the Provincial Government, either for lack of authority or of resources or for the lack of both, is unable to satisfy many of the legitimate demands and needs of the people. This creates a difficult and critical situation. This is another unfailing key to appreciate the demand for regional autonomy which is unanimous in East Bengal."[46]

The fate of East Pakistan's jute-growers graphically illustrated how indifferent was the Central ruling clique to the basic necessities of East Pakistan. East Pakistanis belonging to the Constituent Assembly and the National Assembly repeatedly regretted how East Pakistan as a whole, and the very large number of jute-growers of that province in particular, suffered terribly on account of a wrong currency and trade policy pursued by the Central Government vis-a-vis India. It almost ruined the economy of East Pakistan of which jute was the mainstay. In 1949, Britain devalued its currency and India had to follow suit. Pakistan refused to devalue its currency and India drastically reduced its purchase of jute grown in East Bengal. East Bengalees could easily detect that the Pakistan Government stuck to non-devaluation because, after all, it brought untold suffer-

ing to poor East Bengalee cultivators but not to the West Pakistani industrialists, who benefited from non-devaluation at a time when the Central Government fostered industrialization only in West Pakistan to a complete neglect of the East Wing. The policy of non-devaluation facilitated the imports needed for the industrialization of the West Wing. The people of the East Wing naturally resented this policy which was not accompanied by any measure to ameliorate the lot of millions of peasants left with huge, undisposable stocks of jute. In 1948-49, India was eager to enter into a 25-year agreement with Pakistan for the purchase of jute, which would enable India to avoid increasing its jute acreage. But, as attested by Hamidul Huq Choudhury, who played a leading role in this trade negotiation, the Government of Pakistan adopted a wrong policy and the negotiation failed. India was then compelled to look for areas where it could grow jute. India gradually expanded its production of jute, and its purchase of East Pakistani jute came down to about one-third of its purchase before the devaluation of Indian currency in 1949. All this, declared Hamidul on 26 February 1957, was a result of the "pig headed attitude" and the "short-sighted policy" of the Government of Pakistan. Instead of formulating measures to help out the jute cultivators of East Pakistan, the Central Government issued the Jute Ordinance in 1949, converted into a Bill in 1957, that only added to the misery and harassments of jute-growers. The Government introduced permits and quotas that hindered the free movement of and trade in jute. The system enriched government officials issuing permits and fixing up quotas. It impoverished the peasants who had huge surplus stocks and who could only sell to permit-holders. The bargaining power of the peasants was low compared to that of permit-holders who ignored the minimum price fixed up by the Government, paid the peasants much less, while compelling the peasants to write an inflated amount in the receipts. The Government sometimes

employed agents to go to villages and destroy large quantities of jute with a view to keeping up the price. But, on account of the unscrupulous methods adopted by permit-holders, which the Government did not attempt to check, the price of jute stagnated at a very low level. The Government forced down the area under jute cultivation. But some lands were only fit for jute cultivation, and the peasants suffered enormously. In a legislative session of the Constituent Assembly on 17 March 1956, Mr. Abdur Rahman Khan declared: "The British and the Hindu banyas [businessmen] combined could not exploit the cultivators during the last fifty years even one-fourth of what the objective currency policy has done to the cultivator of the country. I have worked out the loss which has been forced on the cultivators of East Bengal due to non-devaluation during the last seven years. It is scandalous indeed. The non-devaluation policy has ruined the common man of the country."[47]

The same apathy of the Central Government towards East Pakistan's vital needs was illustrated in the case of floods of unprecedented dimensions hitting East Pakistan in 1954 and 1955. Floods not only killed numerous people but led to famine conditions killing many more. Floods deposited silts and raised the river-bed by five to six feet, thus making adjacent lands more vulnerable to floods. Year after year, however, the Central budget shocked East Pakistanis by providing no scheme for the control of floods in East Pakistan. Food crises, resulting from floods, and the inadequacy of relief measures undertaken by the Central Government, compelled many Muslims of East Pakistan to leave their homes and migrate to India. Nevertheless, when East Pakistani legislators voiced complaints on these issues, they were dubbed as provincialists and unequal to the spirit of Islam. Shaikh Mujibur Rahman said on 18 March 1956: "If the Government want proof, I can prove that hundreds of Muslims are leaving their hearths and homes and are going to India because of the economic conditions of the

country.... I ask, is there any provision in the Budget to prevent flood. If you point this out and demand anything, it is provincialism. It is said after all we are Mussalmans. Some Mussalmans enjoy and others die of starvation, that is your Islam!" East Pakistanis grew afraid that a recurrence of floods would mean the gradual extinction of their province. They were extremely perturbed to note that the Central ruling coterie was going ahead with a scheme to build a new capital, located in the West Wing, at an enormous expense, while it did not bother to spend a small fraction of that expense on anti-flood measures in East Pakistan. This thought was all the more galling because the old capital, i.e., Karachi, was built largely by the export surplus of East Pakistan earning a huge amount of foreign exchange diverted to the development of a modern capital city in Karachi. Karachi was to be donated to the reconstituted province of West Pakistan. As Ataur Rahman Khan observed: "You do not wish to spend a few crores of rupees for the poor people in East Bengal when they are suffering from the ravages of flood. You have given only 25 to 30 lakhs of rupees for the suffering humanity in that part of the country. You cannot give 2 crores of rupees to the people of East Bengal who are suffering under water, floating, suffering and dying of cholera and you have the pleasure and luxury of having a Capital at a new place by spending several thousand crores of rupees leaving the present Capital to West Pakistan."[48]

It was the fixed policy of the Central Government not to encourage East Pakistan's industrialization, and to try to vest the control of the few industries of East Pakistan, set up under Government patronage, in the hands of West Pakistani industrialists. The Central Government helped set up a few industries in East Pakistan in a vain attempt to dispel the notion that it was deliberately neglecting that remote province. Under the Constitution of 1956, Industry was a Provincial Subject. This was surely a tactics to hoodwink the people and incite

them to direct their wrath against the Provincial Government in case of a lack of industrialization. Actually, the province had no resources to undertake large-scale industrial development. Even for spare parts costing Rs. 3 or so East Bengalees had to run to Karachi for a permit unless they happened to have an office in the capital also. The Government of East Pakistan had no control over the allotment of foreign exchange, and, therefore, it could not promote industrialization depending, at the initial stage, on imported capital goods and technical know-how. The allotment of foreign aid to the two Wings of Pakistan would also decide the pace of industrialization. During 1947-55, the Central Government spent Rs. 1,126 crores worth of foreign aid on development projects, East Pakistan receiving only Rs. 126 crores out of this total. The Constitution of 1956, supposed to enshrine the principle of parity between the two Wings, did not provide any safeguards for the economic interests of East Pakistan in the matter of distribution of foreign exchange, foreign aid and development grants of the Central Government. The Constitution set up a National Economic Council with the Prime Minister of Pakistan as the Chairman, three Ministers of each Provincial Government and four Central Ministers. It was not stated whether two Central Ministers from each province would join the Council. East Pakistanis suspected that here was a weapon retained by the Central ruling clique for timely use against East Pakistan. When Mr. Amjad Ali, the Finance Minister in the Suhrawardy Cabinet, announced the Central budget for 1957-58, he declared that allotment of foreign exchange would be so effected as to promote the utilization of the maximum capacity of existing industrial units. This meant virtually sealing off the growth of new industries in East Pakistan for boosting the already established numerous industries of West Pakistan. It happened at a time when Suhrawardy, an East Bengalee, was the Prime Minister. East Bengalees began to suspect that

Amjad Ali was an agent of Chaudhri Muhammad Ali who was well-known for his opposition to industrial development in East Pakistan. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, the predecessor of Suhrawardy, wanted to destroy the popularity and prestige of his successor, it was alleged. Hamidul Haq Choudhury attested this allegation at the National Assembly on 12 February 1957 The Central Government persisted in pursuing policies which were detrimental to the growth of industries in East Pakistan. For instance, the East Bengalees complained, the Central budget of 1958-59 withdrew certain concessions to industries to be established after 1 April 1959. East Pakistanis could not hope to establish many industries before that date and enjoy those concessions. The Central ruling clique employed an artifice to maintain a show of partiy in the annual development programmes for the two Wings. East Pakistanis saw through it and exposed it on the floor of the National Assembly. For instance, the programme for 1958-59 envisaged an expenditure of Rs. 45 crores 97 lakhs 52 thousands for East Pakistan, and Rs. 54 crores 40 lakhs and 50 thousands for West Pakistan. This semblance of parity, however, vanished when one took into account the separate programme for the Central Government, costing double the amount earmarked for West Pakistan, for the entire amount would be spent in and for West Pakistan.[49]

The transparent negligence of the Central Government towards East Pakistan aroused a feeling in the minds of the people of that province that they were treated as Bengalees and not as Pakistanis. They began to express doubts as to whether it was in their interest to stay within Pakistan. If they were treated as aliens, they could very well think of forming a separate state. Appointments to the Supply and Development Directorate of the Ministry of Industries convinced East Pakistanis that they were going to be neglected in the foreseeable future. On 21 March 1956, Muhammad Abdul Khaleque voiced a complaint at the Constituent Assembly that Article 31 of the

1956 Constitution, enjoining parity of representation between the two Wings of Pakistan in all the Central Services, was violated in the aforesaid appointments. The Director-General, all the four Deputy Directors-General, 26 out of 27 Directors, 47 out of 49 Deputy Directors, and 86 out of 98 Assistant Directors happened to be West Pakistanis. The Central Government set up the P.I.D.C. (i.e., Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation) for the promotion of industries in the country. The Chairman of the P.I.D.C., all the Directors, the Secretary, and all the six Operation Directors were non-Bengalees. There was only one Bengalee among 90 officers in the Head Office, and only 7 clerks and 5 peons, out of a total of 700 members of the subordinate staff, were from East Pakistan. The P.I.D.C. awarded only two scholarships to Bengalees out of a total of 150. A West Pakistani, posted in East Pakistan, was given a zonal allowance; an East Pakistani, posted in the West Wing, did not get it. The P.I.D.C. did not hold interviews for jobs in East Pakistan; candidates from that province had to come to Karachi; their number was automatically restricted because they did not receive any travelling allowance and few had the capacity to pay for East-West travel by sea or air. The P.I.D.C. had given a pledge to the East Pakistan Government that in its establishments in the East Wing it would employ local recruits for 75 percent of the vacancies. But this pledge was not honoured even in the lower cadre of labourers, not to speak of the higher cadre. In course of a legislative debate on 21 March, Mujibur said: "If the Minister of Industries goes there [to East Pakistan], he will find that local people do not get any chance due to manipulation and machination of high officials of the head office. Sir, are the people of Bengal also not Pakistanis?" He further said that, out of 61 projects launched by the P.I.D.C., only 17 were planned for East Pakistan. On the same day, Zahiruddin quoted from the Explanatory Memorandum, attached to the Central budget for 1956-57, and drew

the attention of MCAs to the fact that out of 16 completed projects of the P.I.D.C., only three were in East Pakistan. He then asked: "What justification they can have for East Pakistan to remain in Pakistan if you continue to pursue a policy to the detriment of East Bengal people. . . ."[50]

As to the industrial projects undertaken by the P.I.D.C. in the East Wing, the financial control vested almost exclusively in West Pakistanis, few or no shares being held by East Pakistanis. Moreover, the projects, when completed, were handed over to West Pakistani industrialists. In the eyes of East Pakistanis, therefore, the P.I.D.C. served the interests of a few rich people of West Pakistan. These industrialists, after taking over a completed P.I.D.C. enterprise, began to practise discrimination against East Pakistanis by prescribing different wages for East and West Pakistanis for the same job. This only stepped together with various discriminatory practices resorted to by the Central ruling coterie for the purpose of impeding East Pakistan's economic development. Mujibur pointed out on 21 March 1956 that not even one Bengalee got the government permit to purchase coal from other countries. The office of the Coal Department in East Bengal had no right to issue permits. East Bengalees spent large sums on coming to Karachi, staying there, for vainly appealing to the bureaucrats for such permits. The Central Government was niggardly in the supply of newsprint to East Bengalees whose dailies had four to six pages. Towards West Pakistanis the Government was quite liberal and some of their newspapers had 32, 36 and even 56 pages. The Central Government channelized some of the facilities for businessmen through the recognized Chambers of Commerce which were absolutely dominated by West Pakistanis refusing to help East Pakistani businessmen trying to compete with better-placed West Pakistani businessmen. The Central Government persisted in completely neglecting the commercial interests of East Pakistanis by reserving permits, licences, etc.,

mostly for West Pakistanis. It often tried to hide this injustice under the plea that the experienced persons were to be entrusted with responsibilities in these matters. This plea, suggested Zahiruddin at the National Assembly on 11 March 1958, merely evaded the basic issue. He warned: "This policy is creating differences between the East and West and is having very bad political repurcussions and has given rise to fissiparous tendencies." East Pakistani traders faced difficulties with regard to the allocation of shipping space needed for transporting certain commodities (e.g., cooking spices) from West to East Pakistan. They had to pay a black market price sometimes going higher than treble the amount paid by West Pakistani traders carrying articles from East to West Pakistan. The Government took away the authority of the ship-owners in 1957, and set up a Shipping Allocation Board comprised of representatives of the Government. But the Board did not mend matters and, as Farid Ahmad testified on 11 March 1958, the working of the Board merely served to intensify the disrespect of East Bengalees towards the discriminatory practices of the Central Government.[51]

On 17 March 1956, Zahiruddin told the Constituent Assembly that he was delighted to have a document, i.e., the White Paper on the Central budget for 1956-57, which confirmed the contention of East Bengalees that their province was being neglected in the sphere of industrialization. The White Paper recorded an impressive rise in the industrial production of West Pakistan, while East Pakistan went on with its primitively agricultural economy. East Pakistan was one of the most densely populated areas of the world, the average density ranging well above 800 per square mile. The delta land of East Pakistan was too extensively cultivated. There was no scope for adding to the area of cultivated land. Industrialization was the crying need. In West Pakistan, on the contrary, there were large areas to be brought under cultivation. But the Central

ruling coterie neglected East Pakistan's industrialization and the problem of unemployment was aggravated in that province. The researches of Mr. N. A. Qureshi revealed that, in 1955-56, the unemployed persons numbered 17 per cent of the total labour force in East Pakistan, and only 4.7 per cent in West Pakistan. The Central Government did not bother much about the worsening employment situation in East Pakistan where it operated only 5 Employment Exchanges. In West Pakistan, having about 45% of the people of the country, the Central Government operated 13 Employment Exchanges. Both in towns as well as in villages East Pakistan's problem of unemployment was much more severe than West Pakistan's.[58]

The disparity in the economic growth of the two Wings of Pakistan was inevitably reflected in the general standard of living and in the consumption of certain commodities in particular. The annual per capita consumption of the number of cigarettes in 1951-52 stood at 76.0 and 5.0 for West and East Pakistan respectively; in 1959-60 the figures were 183.3 and 33.0 for West and East Pakistan respectively. The annual per capita consumption of yards of cloth stood at 1.4 and 1.7 in 1951-52 for West and East Pakistan respectively; in 1959-60 the figures were 9.0 and 3.0. With regard to coal the comparative figures for West and East Pakistan were 87.0 and 46.0 pounds in 1951-52, and, in 1959-60, 66.0 and 28.0 pounds. With regard to electricity, the figures were 8.6 and 0.5 kilowatts in 1951-52, and, in 1959-60, 28.8 and 1.6 kilowatts. In the case of kerosene, the estimates were 0.5 gallons for both the Wings in 1951-52, and, in 1959-60, 0.9 and 0.6 gallons for West and East Pakistan respectively. In the case of petrol, the figure for East Pakistan remained 0.1 gallons in 1951-52 as also in 1959-60; but in West Pakistan the figure went up from 1.0 to 1.3. In regard to tea, similarly, the figure for West Pakistan shot up from 0.5 pounds to 1.0 pound, while that for East Pakistan stayed at 0.1 pound in 1951-52 and also in 1959-60. The aforesaid estimates, arrived

at by Mr. S. U. Khan, demonstrated that East Pakistanis were poorer than West Pakistanis, and that the rate of industrial development in East Pakistan, illustrated very well by the consumption of fuel and power, was proceeding at a far slower pace than in the other province. It further demonstrated that the launching of the First Five-Year Plan in 1955 did not arrest the aggravation of income disparity between the two Wings. This naturally inspired the belief in many East Pakistanis that the two unequal provinces of Pakistan could not possibly continue as parts of the same state. On 19 March 1956, Ataur deplored the lack of any special provision in the Central budget for mitigating this disparity, and affirmed : "There cannot be any association or union between two grossly unequal partners. The inequality is glaring, alarming and appalling. The two Wings are two wheels of the coach; one wheel is completely broken down; you cannot make the coach run with one wheel, howsoever strong or gilded or of iron or stone you make one wheel it would not work; actually you have thrown out the other wheel .... You have pushed East Pakistan to the verge of frustration and starvation and economic ruination. Now the bond that existed has been broken. You have broken the tie; it is for you to restore the tie and the confidence and faith of East Pakistan. ... People have lost faith in the Central coterie; God knows how long they will continue in this way by manipulating themselves into power."[8]

The 1957 census of manufacturing industries in Pakistan revealed the small share of East Pakistan in the industrial programmes of the country. East Pakistan, according to this census, had only 18 per cent of the total number of industrial establishments, 26 per cent of the gross value of products and 30 per cent of the average daily employment. The disparity in industrialization of West and East Pakistan had its effects on the pattern of trade between the two provinces. East Pakistan tended to import more from West Pakistan than it could export.

Mr. Nurul Islam calculated that, during 1948-49 to 1951-52, the annual average of East Pakistan's imports from West Pakistan was valued at 225 million rupees, that of West Pakistan's imports from East Pakistan at 49 million rupees. For the period 1952-53 to 1954-55, the annual average of East Pakistan's imports from West Pakistan was worked out at 303 million rupees, that of West Pakistan's imports from East Pakistan at 165 million rupees. In other words, much more was drained out of East Pakistan than was pumped into it. The magnitude of this outflow was tremendous if one added the impact of inter-wing trade to that of remittances to West Pakistan of West Pakistani civil and military officials posted in East Pakistan, and of the transfer of profits of business and industries in East Pakistan controlled by West Pakistanis. In a speech of 31 January 1956, Suhrawardy asserted : "As I said, Sir, I do not want to juggle with figures, but can it be denied that more money has come out of East Bengal than has been put in ? ... Has it been forgotten that the main brunt of our charge against the British was that our country was getting impoverished because money was being sent out of the country to England. And this is exactly what, unfortunately, is happening in East Pakistan. Money is going out from there and it is not being replenished; our people, there, are getting poorer and poorer." As years passed by, East Pakistanis began to suspect that their province could not hope to attain prosperity by means of industrialization, unless they could win real regional autonomy and shape their own destiny, free from the manoeuverings of the Central ruling coterie. As Zahiruddin told the Constituent Assembly on 8 February 1956 : "... It is after long eight years that in this august House people from this side have demanded greater autonomy and greater development of East Pakistan industries." East Pakistanis grew afraid that, later on, even if they got certain facilities to start new industries, e.g., cotton textiles, they might be the victim of dumping tactics resorted to by the

established industries in West Pakistan. They could not imagine the Central Government to be alert in checking such tactics. For the Central Government too readily responded to the needs of West Pakistani manufacturers, and forbade the entry into Karachi of hand-made cloth of East Pakistan without permit. Deldar Ahmad referred to this regulation, affecting adversely the cottage textile industry of East Pakistan, and asked : "Are we two countries, or, are we one country ?"[54]

The state of Pakistan provided a test case for nascent nationalism. The rulers had to display rare political acumen and a genuine love for the masses inhabiting two geographically remote and culturally distinct areas in order to weld them into a nation. The rulers were not showing any such quality. For instance, they could have relieved the pressure of population on East Pakistan by planning a migration of efficient, hard-working East Bengalee peasants to empty lands in West Pakistan. But the rulers did not even talk about such measures for eliminating the confidence-gap between East Pakistan and the Central ruling coterie. The gap widened as East Pakistanis came to know that the report of a very eminent economist, Dr. Colin Clark, entrusted by the Government of Pakistan with framing policy recommendations for the economic development of Pakistan, was not published because it laid stress on industralizing East Pakistan. According to the disclosure made by Zahiruddin, Colin Clark "said that emphasis should be laid on industrialization of East Pakistan and agricultural development of West Pakistan. It is such a big truth that they will realize it ultimately at the cost of Pakistan. Sir, why this report has been kept a secret. It is not published because it contains truth". East Pakistanis, therefore, started accusing the Central Government of trying to perpetuate the role of East Pakistan as a colony of the West Wing, as a permanent consumer of products turned out by industries in West Pakistan. On 1 March 1958, Abdul Latif Biswas, an ex-Central Minister, dec-

lared that West Pakistan treated East Pakistan as its "colonial possession" and the people of East Pakistan as "pariahs and untouchables". Next day, Muhammad Abdul Khaleque referred to the unpublished report of Colin Clark and the fixed design of the Central ruling coterie to preserve "East Pakistan as a perpetual market of the finished goods of West Pakistani industries". All this arrested the development of national unity binding East and West Pakistan, and produced the feeling in East-Bengalees that they should get out of Pakistan. The feeling was represented by Bhasani's warning, already noted in this Chapter, that, unless the exploitation of East Pakistan by West Pakistan was stopped, East Pakistan would have to say good-bye to Pakistan. According to Hamidul Haq Choudhury, "Maulana Bhasani's 'Assalamo-alaikum' [i.e., good-bye] is an expression of frustration. ... To an ordinary layman this is very catchy, this is a very emotional and rousing expression that the West had been exploiting East. ... And to a certain extent there has been some draining off from East to West and West is growing at the cost of East and that is why Maulana Bhasani in his exasperation—I should say, honestly, has said that we have to bid good-bye."[55]

It appeared to East Bengalees that Pakistan had two separate economies for the two Wings of Pakistan. The frustration caused by this awareness only heightened the alienation born of the existence of two different cultures in West and East Pakistan. Even Mian Daulatana, one of the staunch supporters of anti-Bengalee strategy adopted by the Central ruling coterie, once conceded on the floor of the Constituent Assembly that the people of Bengal had genuine reasons of frustration. He said: "Now, Sir, I know that the people of Bengal in the past have felt a deep feeling of frustration and I think when a whole nation, a whole people, begin to feel frustrated you cannot say that it is due to some misunderstanding. A whole people cannot be wrong. Therefore we are conscious that those fears and

suspicions may be due to genuine causes." Daulatna said this on 26 August 1955. Only a few days later, on 6 September 1955, Ataur revealed how deeprooted were the fears and suspicions, and how the Central ruling clique and its West Pakistani associates exacerbated those fears and suspicions. Ataur emphasized that Bengalees never disregarded Urdu, but that they wanted a legitimate official status for the Bengali language, and that they even laid down lives for this cause in February 1952. Ataur related a very significant incident showing the utter callousness of West Pakistani leaders to the cultural aspirations of the Bengalees. One day in Lahore Ataur was saying his prayers when four Panjabi leaders, who could mould public opinion in their province, came to his house. They said that Ataur was a Muslim because he was saying those prayers, and, therefore, Ataur should forget the demands about the Bengali language. Ataur commented : "I was surprised to hear this. That means that if I am a Mussalman and say my prayers and call the name of Allah, I should not be allowed to talk about Bengali language." Ataur went on to describe how the Central authorities neglected the Bengali language and alienated the Bengalees over many matters. For instance, announcements at the Dacca airport were made in English and Urdu, not in Bengali, although there were Bengalee passengers. In the Passports, again, there was no word in Bengali, while English, French and Urdu words were used. Government forms and records employed English and Urdu, but never Bengali. The official gazettes, even the Dacca gazette, did not contain a word of Bengali. The seal of the Constituent Assembly contained Urdu and English words only. "All this," said Ataur, "shows a complete disregard to the sentiments of the people and a total absence of sympathy for the language as also to those who fell as martyrs and whom you prefer to call as rioters." He then regretted that the Central Government refused to hold a proper investigation of the episode on 21 February 1952. The Government merely set up a

tribunal to find out whether, on that day, police firing was justified, and the tribunal decided in the affirmative. The tribunal was made to bypass the crucial issue of whether the Government was justified in imposing a ban on meetings and processions and in ordering the police to march into the University campus and commit atrocities.[56]

That the Central Government did not bother much about the psychological-cultural frustrations of Bengalees was apparent in course of the deliberations at the Constituent Assembly next year, i.e., 1956. Mujibur complained that the Orders of the Day, issued by the office of the Constituent Assembly, were brought out in English and Urdu, but not in Bengali. Ataur repeated the accusation that announcements at the Dacca airport were being made only in English and Urdu, although there were Bengalee employees who could, without adding to the expenses of the Government, make some announcements in Bengali. It sometimes created a great difficulty for Bengalee passengers who did not know either English or Urdu. Once, as Ataur disclosed on 19 March 1956, he told the Prime Minister about it, and the Prime Minister immediately telephoned an official and instructed him that all announcements at the airport and in the aircraft were to be made in English, Urdu and Bengali. Even after this, announcements were not made in Bengali. Ataur, therefore, ventured to suggest that either the official did not carry out the instruction of the Prime Minister, or the Prime Minister did not really want it to be carried out. "That characterises the attitude of contempt of these gentlemen towards Bengal and its interests and anything concerning the people of Bengal, whether it is language, food or anything else," said Ataur. How acute was the feeling of alienation in East Bengalees could be gauged from Ataur's confession that he had the excruciating sensation of living in a foreign country when he came from Dacca to Karachi. West Pakistan's newspapers aggravated this sensation by persistently

publishing false reports about affairs in East Pakistan. The Central ruling coterie directed West Pakistan's newspapers to do that. "I did not feel as much when I went to Zurich, to Geneva or Switzerland, or London as much I feel here in my own country [in Karachi] that I am in a foreign land," Ataur admitted on 19 March 1956. This need not be treated as a sentimental outburst. After all, as Zahiruddin stated on 22 March 1956, the Central Government went so far as to declare that West Pakistan had no surplus rice and stopped all exports to foreign countries in order to avoid the responsibility of sending West Pakistani rice to alleviate the famine condition in East Bengal. The declaration was false, and actually thousands of maunds of rice were being exported from West Pakistan, as the figures collected by Zahiruddin from the Buyers and Shippers Chambers' Bulletin indicated clearly. Ataur was not being unduly pessimistic when, in his speech of 19 March 1956, he added: "You write it out and take note of this, lest you forget that a small man from East Bengal administered this warning and God forbid, if what I fear does happen one day, it is you [the Central ruling coterie] and nobody else who would be blamed because of the behaviour towards the people of East Bengal." In his book, *Ojarotir Dui Bachchar,* Ataur dealt at length with the contemptuous attitude of the West Pakistanis towards East Pakistanis and their eagerness to thrust their way of life on Bengalees. West Pakistanis wanted, in particular, the East Pakistani Muslims to give up the language or even the foods that made them, along with East Pakistani Hindus, share the common Bengali culture, and, at once, differentiated them from West Pakistanis. Ataur regretted that this attitude was not confined to a few individuals or a particular section among West Pakistanis. He found the attitude ventilated, with slight variations, by politicians, lawyers, businessmen, students and religious leaders.[57]

In the sphere of defence, too, the Central Government adopted

a policy that alienated East Pakistanis. It spent too little on the defence of East Pakistan although East Pakistan was exposed to possible attacks from giant neighbours such as India and China. Whatever little was spent on East Pakistan's defence went mainly to enrich West Pakistan, for few East Pakistanis were recruited to the defence forces. Through nine years after the birth of Pakistan only two battalions of the East Bengal regiment were raised. Up to the time of the military take-over in Pakistan in 1958, less than two per cent of military officers were East Bengalees. Once the Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan, Muhammad Ayub Khan, stated that East Bengal could not defend itself and that it could be defended only from West Pakistan. This statement made Bengalees indignant and inflamed their fears and suspicions about the Central ruling coterie. Bengalees felt that the so-called policy of defending East Pakistan from West Pakistan made no sense unless the coterie decided to give away East Pakistan to foreign invaders. As Ataur Rahman Khan observed: "Sir, the Central coterie, the ruling coterie, has never understood the strategic position of East Bengal and once our Commander-in-Chief had told that East Bengal is indefensible. If it is indefensible, Sir, why bother about it all.... Throw it away if you do not want to have it. Do not say that it is indefensible and on that plea you will not spend a farthing for East Bengal.... In East Bengal, Sir, one thing has been forgotten that Communist China is just on the North of India and North of East Bengal and Tibet has come in the possession of China." East Bengalees demanded a parity of representation in the armed forces as a means of removing economic disparity between the two Wings. They also wanted to earn the satisfaction of defending their own home. They clamoured for military bases, ordnance factories, pre-Cadet and Defence Colleges. During the discussion on the Constitution Bill they put forward these demands quite emphatically. But the Central budget for 1956-57 merely gave

a vague assurance for the establishment of a naval base at Chittagong without giving in detail the capacity of that base. The Central Government made some announcements from time to time in a vain effort to allay the suspicions of Bengalees. For instance, in December 1955, the Pakistani Premier announced that a pre-Cadet College was going to be established in East Pakistan. But the land for that College was acquired as late as January 1957. This was disclosed by Farid Ahmad on 12 February 1957, when Farid regretted further that the Central budget for 1957-58 did not provide for a Defence College in East Pakistan. Because East Pakistanis were mostly excluded from defence forces, the troops posted in East Pakistan had the character of foreign soldiers thrust upon the people there. As Peter Paul Gomez commented: "What do we find in East Bengal? The armed forces are stationed there, but they have practically no connection with the people. The people of that area do not feel as if the forces are one of them or of the country. They have the idea that probably they are occupational forces, because people of that area have not been recruited in large numbers and they have not been made to feel it is their own army."[58]

During 1954-58, East Bengalees also continued to suffer terribly from political repression. As previously noted in this Chapter, even the military was employed, by the end of 1957, as an instrument of political repression and for fomenting political instability by terrorizing the non-Muslims. Army manoeuverings contributed enormously to East Pakistan's political instability in 1958, which, again, supplied the pretext for imposing Martial Law. During the entire period of 1954-58, arbitrary detention without trial of persons supposed to be in a position to challenge the authority of the ruling clique continued relentlessly. They became easy victims of the Safety Act. Political opponents of the ruling coterie were freely labelled as being anti-Pakistani for purposes of repression. On

7 January 1958, at the National Assembly, Sardar Fazlul Karim aptly commented: "People are used now to call the Safety Act as an Act not to maintain the safety of the country but the safety of the gaddi [i.e., seat] of the persons in power. Sir, Government after Government has used the words 'Anti-State', 'Anti-Pakistan agent' and such other words with such laxity and with such liberalism that these words have lost all their dictionary meaning in our country. They have in lightness come to be used as words of jest and laughter and in seriousness words connoting the best of the patriots. Such has been the result of our Government's policy of playing with the civil liberty of the people and the security of the country." On the same day, Hamidul narrated that in 1952, during the language agitation, he was unwarrantedly imprisoned, and his newspaper, *Pakistan Observer*, was wrongfully suspended for supporting the legitimate claims of the Bengali language. On that day Mahmud Ali emphasized that the arbitrary use of the Safety Act severely curtailed the freedom of expression and movement of even the legislators. The Safety Act made a mockery of many heroes in the struggle for Pakistan who were unnecessarily harassed by this Act after the achievement of Pakistan.[59]

While one closes Chapter III of this book, one cannot but suggest that the bureaucratic-military clique in Pakistan roused the forces of cultural and economic nationalism in East Pakistan, and kept the troops ready for containing those forces. The policy was anything but statesmanlike. Pakistani statesmen were called upon, as Abul Mansur Ahmad put it, to create one nation out of "two peoples", for they were entrusted with the unique job of governing a state consisting of "two countries". The two peoples, barring minorities, had a common religion, and were linked by a common struggle for the achievement of Pakistan. "With the exception of these two things", Abul Mansur asserted, "all other factors, viz., the language, the tradi-

tion, the culture, the costume, the custom, the dietary, the calendar, the standard time, practically everything, is different. There is, in fact, nothing common in the two Wings, particularly in respect of those factors which are the ***sine qua non*** to form a nation."[60]

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43. SAYEED, n. 17, p. 135. SULERI, n. 9, p. 141. K. J. NEWMAN, "Pakistan's Preventive Autocracy and its Causes", *Pacific Affairs*, March 1959, p. 31. WILCOX, n. 20, p. 203. MOHAMMAD AHMAD, *My Chief* (Lahore, Longmans, 1960), pp. 3-5, 85-93, 97. TENDULKAR, n. 19, p. 513. For a confirmation of Mohammad Ahmad's observation by AYUB himself, see *Friends Not Masters*, pp. 52, 58, 186-88.

44. Speech by FIROZ KHAN NOON, *CAP Debates*, 25 August 1955, Vol. I, No. 11, p. 316. Speech by MUHAMMAD ABDUL KHALEQUE, *NAP Debates*, 2 March 1958, Vol. II, pp. 565-66, 568-69. Speech by SHAIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN, *NAP Debates*, 3 March 1958, Vol. II, p. 676. Speech by SARDAR FAZLUL KARIM, *NAP Debates*, 4 March 1958, Vol. II, p. 771. Speech by HAMIDUL HAQ CHOUDHURY, *NAP Debates*, 12 February 1957, Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 145-46, 149-50, 157-58. HAMIDUL remarked : "You have created hell for the people within 10 miles of the border and they cannot move in the evening after dusk.... This is too much. These poor people do not get even justice before a court of law."—*Ibid.*, p. 158.

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46. Speech by ABUL MANSUR AHMAD, *CAP Debates*, 31 August 1955, Vol. I, No. 13, pp. 381-82. Speech by ABUL MANSUR AHMAD, 16 January 1956, Vol. I, No. 51, pp. 1822-23. Speech by FAZLUR RAHMAN, *CAP Debates*,

25 January 1956, Vol. I, No. 56, pp. 2049-50; FAZLUR quoted extensively from a series of articles written by PROF. MUZAFFAR AHMAD.

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49. Speech by ABUL MANSUR AHMAD, *CAP Debates*, 17 January 1956, Vol. I, No. 52, pp. 1846-47, 1867. Speech by HAMIDUL, *NAP Debates*, 12 February 1957, Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 142, 144, 147. Speech by KHALEQUE, *NAP Debates*, 3 March 1958, Vol. II, p. 636. Speech by ZAHIRUDDIN, *Ibid.*, pp. 710-11. Speech by MUJIBUR, *CAP (Legislature) Debates*, 21 March 1956, Vol. I, No. 6, p. 311. Speech by DELDAR, *Ibid.*, 320.

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55. Speech by ZAHIRUDDIN, *CAP (Legislature) Debates*, 21 March 1956, Vol. I, No. 6, p. 307. Speech by HAMIDUL, *NAP Debates*, 12 February 1957, Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 148-49. Speech by KHALEQUE, *NAP Debates*, 8 January 1958, Vol. I, pp. 191-92. Speech by LATIF, *NAP Debates*, 1 March 1958, Vol. II, pp. 491-93. Speech by KHALEQUE, *NAP Debates*, 2 March 1958, Vol. II, pp. 563-64.

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58. Speech by ZAHIRUDDIN, *CAP (Legislature) Debates*, 17 March 1956, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 55-56. Speech by ZAHIRUDDIN, *CAP (Legislature) Debates*, 20 March 1956, Vol. I, No. 5, pp. 273-74. Speech by MUJIBUR, *Ibid.*, p. 275. Speech by PETER PAUL GOMEZ, *CAP (Legislature) Debates*, 22 March 1956, Vol. I, No. 7, pp. 332-33. Speech by ATAUR, *CAP Debates*, 27 January 1956, Vol. I, No. 58, p. 2131. Speech by FARID AHMAD, *NAP Debates*, 12 February 1957, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 193.

59. *NAP Debates*, 7 January 1958, Vol. I, No. 1—Speech by KARIM pp. 82-83; Speech by HAMIDUL, pp. 86-87; Speech by MR. MAHMUD ALI, p. 100.

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CHAPTER 4

UNDER THE MARTIAL LAW

The people of Pakistan were not expecting the imposition of the Martial Law. On the contrary, they were preoccupied with the campaigns for the ensuing General Elections. "The people were inspired", Khondkar Abdul Khaleque wrote, "by a new hope. Now perhaps the politics of conspiracy from the top would disappear for ever from Pakistan, perhaps a fair and well-ordered democratic environment would emerge. But one day, like a bolt from the blue, the Martial Law was suddenly promulgated throughout the country." Nor did it appear that newspapers were prepared for the Martial Law, for only a few days ago they had condemned the military take-over in Burma. The Burmese example might have inspired the authors of the Martial Law in Pakistan, but it did not strike the people of Pakistan as something inevitable in their country. Apologists of the Martial Law called it inevitable. In the interview with foreign correspondents on 9 October 1958, Mirza declared that during the past year he came to believe firmly in the impossibility of sticking to democratic ways. In the same meeting with the correspondents Ayub added that he was aware for long that Martial Law, which he christened as a revolution, was coming, although he was not sure till 7 October as to when precisely it would arrive. He then emphasized that the military had the ultimate authority and responsibility in taking care of the political ills of the country. On the contrary, in another interview on 15 October, Mirza suggested that the rule by the military would be allowed for a short period only. The discordant notes struck by the two architects of Martial Law cast doubts on the concept of inevitability, and would prompt one to make further enquiries about its root causes.[1]

Mirza surely wanted to avoid elections. At that moment, after months of political manoeuverings in which he continually played off one party against another and alienated even the Republican Party that he himself brought into being, Mirza did not have the backing of a single political party. He wanted to enjoy power without going through the hazards of an election. He began to propagate the view that fair elections were not possible and that the holding of General Elections would merely plunge the country into bloodshed and chaos. When he said this once to Ataur Rahman Khan, after the proclamation of Martial Law, Ataur contested Mirza's view by citing the example of 1954 elections in East Pakistan which did not involve violence and disorder. Ataur then asked Mirza plainly whether the latter resorted to Martial Law in order to prevent General Elections. Mirza replied in the affirmative, while adding that he had to discharge his responsibility to the country. As indicated in the previous paragraph, Ayub also laid stress on his responsibility, and, in the interview on 9 October, Ayub declared that he would not hesitate to act himself, in fulfilment of his responsibility, if Mirza happened to behave senselessly. It was apparent within a few weeks that Ayub was far more able than Mirza to discharge his responsibility. Mirza had to leave Pakistan. The view, therefore, that Ayub pressurized Mirza to declare Martial Law gains a lot of justification. Dr. I. H. Qureshi, for instance, wrote that Ayub "had taken the initiative in staging the October revolution".[3]

Ayub and his followers claimed that they had accomplished a bloodless revolution. This claim did not tally with facts. A correspondent of the *Daily Mail* (London), stationed in Karachi, went out of Pakistan in order to avoid censorship, and filed, within a week of the military coup, a despatch revealing that Ayub's seizure of power could not be executed without bloodshed. The *Daily Mail* correspondent affirmed that Ayub had to kill some military officials who were opposed to his

coup. Some opposed it because Ayub did not at first expell Mirza along with the politicians; others opposed it because they were steeped in the British tradition of insulating the military from politics. Moreover, as Sardar Ataullah Khan of Baluchistan revealed later on the floor of the National Assembly after the lifting of Martial Law, the Baluchis revolted against the imposition of Martial Law. The atrocities committed by Ayub's troops on Baluchis proved that the coup of October 1958 was not bloodless at all. Baluchis preferred to stick to democracy instead of being swamped by a military coup. According to Sardar Ataullah, Baluchis revealed a passion for democracy without which a country would be converted into a stage for 'revolutionary free-style wrestlers'. In one respect, however, Ayub carried out a bloodless revolution. In order to safeguard his supremacy in a regime of military dictatorship, he compelled some of the high military officials, close to him in military rank and influence, to retire, and switched over a few others to civilian jobs so that they might not use the military establishment to thwart Ayub's political ambitions. "It is worth noting that President Ayub has sacked or shunted 13 generals, all former comrades, since he took over", wrote Stephen Barber. As part of the same strategy, Ayub shifted his capital from Karachi to Rawalpindi so that the military headquarters at Rawalpindi might not experience any loosening of his grip occasioned by his presence far away in Karachi. Ayub, furthermore, graced himself by a promotion that gave him the rank of a Field Marshal.[3]

The Martial Law regime had certain significant achievements to its credit. It carried out land reforms in West Pakistan by abolishing the Zamindari system and fixing up a ceiling on land holdings. It also successfully accomplished a vast scheme of resettlement of refugees. These feats of the Martial Law regime almost entirely benefited the West Pakistanis. The

latter, furthermore, benefited enormously from the location of the capital in Rawalpindi and the consequent launching of large building projects and additional jobs for West Pakistanis. It is, therefore, easily explicable as to why East Pakistanis were not very much enamoured of the exploits of the Martial Law period. Eulogists of Martial Law claimed that the administrative system was being cleaned up by dismissing corrupt civil servants and persecuting politicians. It was, however, clear that corruption brought penalties only when the corrupt civil servant did not belong to the coterie led by Ayub. As to politicians, the Martial Law regime went to an extreme by unleashing a systematic campaign of character-assassination against all politicians. As Ataur noted : "An all-out war was declared on politicians. Impossible, fantastic and sinister were the allegations against them. They were subjected to slanders everywhere. Persons were employed, on payment of cash, to go about from shop to shop and spread calumnies against politicians."[4]

The Martial Law period assumed a new significance for East Pakistanis when Lieutenant General Azam Khan became the Governor of their province and began to act with great energy and determination for the economic regeneration of East Pakistan. During 1960-62, Azam Khan won the gratitude of Bengalees by earning the status of a pioneer in developmental activities in their province. His sincere attempts at the economic betterment of East Pakistan were largely responsible for averting political agitation in the province. On 16 April 1963, Qamarul Ahsan testified that "the untiring development works of General Azam kept down agitation. He was really a pioneer of development work and his activities kept down agitation in this part of the country [i.e. East Pakistan]." Azam used his influence at the Centre to procure development funds. He used his influence and energy to cut through red tapes, forestall bureaucratic machinations and spend those funds in time.

During Azam's tenure East Pakistanis could not be accused of a failure to use the money sanctioned by the Central Government while the bureaucratic machinery persisted in creating all sorts of difficulties liable to lead to that failure. The cyclone of 31 October 1960 revealed how genuine was Azam Khan's desire to ameliorate the lot of East Pakistanis. This cyclone disrupted communications and isolated Chittagong from the rest of East Pakistan. Within a few days, however, the city and the port of Chittagong got back to normal functioning, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Azam who also compelled others to work hard for the same purpose. His relief measures were planned and executed so well that supplies were distributed to right persons and the victims of cyclone were confined to relief camps in their areas without being allowed to move to neighbouring towns where they might create problems of law and order. According to Easwar Sagar, an Indian correspondent, Azam Khan at that time "got everybody to move at the double and accomplished what seemed almost impossible. ... The General himself is reported to have been at the job 18 hours a day touring every corner of his territory."[5]

Azam Khan devoted serious thoughts to minimizing the ravages of recurrent floods and cyclones in East Pakistan. He was planning to have coastal embankments, pucca shelter houses and roads in the entire coastal belt. But he had to vacate his governorship before he could implement these plans. Azam might have succeeded in bridging the gulf of mistrust and suspicion between the two Wings of Pakistan. This was all the more necessary in a regime that had no underpinning of popular consent as expressed through universal adult suffrage in a parliamentary democracy. The Ayub regime later claimed credit for many accomplishments in East Pakistan which actually belonged to Azam Khan. But Ayub became envious and nervous of Azam's soaring popularity with East Pakistanis. Ayub removed him. East Pakistanis, as Qamarul Ahsan observed on 18

June 1962, could only "lament that whoever comes to do them good has to make the exit quickest". Azam Khan gradually replaced non-Bengalees by Bengalees in key civilian posts. The first Bengalee Chief Secretary of East Pakistan took office when Azam was the Governor. Azam had a head-on clash with Ayub because Azam pleaded for economic equality between the two Wings of Pakistan. East Pakistanis expressed deep sorrow over his removal and even wept at farewell meetings. For this, East Pakistanis were accused by the Press, completely controlled by Ayub, of engaging in subversive activities and playing into the hands of Indian agents. Vorys wrote : "The national news service (APP) saw fit to imply that Communists and Indian agents were behind the rousing and tearful farewells the General [i.e. Azam Khan] received. Taking its cue from this report the *Pakistan Times* felt compelled to editorialize on 'the dark hand of subversive political intrigue' in East Pakistan." Stephen Barber commented that Azam "fell in love with the Bengalis and they have reciprocated to a startling degree. The inevitable happened : Gen. Azam fell out with President Ayub. He resigned."[6]

The Martial Law regime claimed to bestow democratic rights on the people by means of a political innovation enshrined in the Basic Democracies Order of 1959. The claim appeared to be insubstantial. The scheme of Basic Democracies was not an unprecedented experiment, nor did it restore democratic rights to the people. It was a five-tier pyramidal scheme beginning with the Union Council, going through the Tehsil Council, the District Council, the Divisional Council, and ending up with the Provincial Advisory Council. Elections on a limited franchise to the Union Councils gave some opportunity of popular participation. To each of the four other tiers the members of the Council in the tier immediately below it sent their representatives, which precluded any exercise of democratic rights by the people. The Basic Democracies Order, as Nurul

Amin pointd out on 4 August 1965, "was built on the ashes of as many as 17 Acts of Bengal, Assam, Bombay, Punjab, Sind and other provinces" of India under British rule. Those 17 Acts, representing the fruits of struggle for freedom in a period of foreign domination, were repealed by the B.D. Order [i.e., Basic Democracies Order]. It is, indeed, surprising that the B.D. Order was denuded of some democratic features contained in the earlier Acts. The Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919 set up Union Boards which earned the name 'Union Councils' under the B.D. Order. The Union Boards came into existence in 1920 and were headed by Presidents called Chairmen by the B. D. Order. Initially, elections to Union Boards were held on a limited franchise, later giving way to adult franchise. It is true that more money would be made available to the Union Councils than to the Union Boards of the past. But the Union Boards could have been retained and granted more money, obviating the necessity of a B. D. Order. The explanation for replacement of Union Boards by Union Councils appeared to lie in an attempt on the part of the Martial Law regime to impose more of official control and camouflage the control by an attractive phrase. The officials did not have the power to remove Union Board members or the President according to their sweet will. The procedure for their removal was kept so complicated that officials could not oust them by a stroke of the pen. The B.D. Order eliminated this safeguard against official tyranny. This Order empowered officials to remove Union Council members or Chairman on the undefined charge of non-cooperation with the Government. This provision was nothing but an attempt to keep Union Councils under complete subservience to the officials. The District Council, again, was an inferior replica of the District Board operative in undivided Bengal and East Pakistan since 1885. Only an official could be the Chairman of a District Board at the outset. In 1920, however, the people acquired the right to elect a non-

official as the Chairman of a District Board. But the B.D. Order took away this right and made an official the Chairman of a District Council.[7]

Some observers appeared to be overenthusiastic about the popularity of the Martial Law regime. Early in 1959 K. J. Newman commented : "if there were free elections today for the office of President, the result would be a foregone conclusion. It testifies well, therefore, for General Ayub's political integrity that he has spurned an easy victory by way of a referendum." Newman went so far as to say that Ayub did not rely on any 'propaganda machine' to boost his popularity, forgetting that almost the entire Press was regimented and continually sang a chorus in praise of the great hero of the October Revolution, i.e., Ayub Khan. Nevertheless, Ayub knew better and went ahead to stage the show of an election demonstrating popular support behind the Martial Law regime. He organized and completed the first elections to the Union Councils by February 1960. They brought into being 80000 Union Councillors or Basic Democrats who soon expressed their confidence in Ayub's Presidency and authorized Ayub to appoint a Constitution Commission and promulgate a Constitution for their country. Elections were held in the safety conferred by PODO (i.e., Public Offices Disqualification Order) and EBDO (i.e., Elective Bodies Disqualification Order) which kept out politicians with a mass following who were potential rivals of Ayub Khan. Subdivisional Officers and Circle, Officers exercised a close supervision over the elections, which actually meant the exertion of influence bordering on control with a view to averting any setback for Ayub in the Presidential ballot.[8]

Ayub appointed the Constitution Commission in the same month, i.e., February 1960. The Constitution Commission toured East and West Pakistan and tried to ascertain public opinion. It issued a questionnaire and interviewed well-known persons including politicians. The first question in this ques-

tionnaire made an axiomatic announcement that the 1956 Constitution had to be abrogated on account of the failure of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan, and then enquired about the causes of that failure. Ataur Rahman Khan, a witness before the Commission, replied by challenging that axiom. The 1956 Constitution was not abrogated because parliamentary democracy had failed; on the contrary, Ataur asserted, the abrogation of that Constitution closed the door to the success of democracy in the near future. He added that democracy suffered on account of the suspension of elections which were to be held in 1959. The self-complacency of the Martial Law enthusiasts received a severe jolt when the evidence of witnesses appearing before the Constitution Commission started coming out in the newspapers. Opposition to the Martial Law and preference for a parliamentary democracy got a wide publicity. Ayub, therefore, abandoned the procedure of inviting journalists to hearings before the Commission. Nevertheless, the intelligentsia in both East and West Pakistan expressed strong disapproval of the military dictatorship and demanded parliamentary democracy. Ayub then banned the publication in a newspaper of any adverse opinion on his rule. The Constitution Commission was impressed by the strength behind the demand for parliamentary democracy in the two Wings of Pakistan. It also became deeply acquainted with the demand for substantial provincial autonomy in East Pakistan. The Constitution Commission, although its members were chosen by Ayub himself and quite aware of Ayub's predispositions, recommended in its report, submitted in 1961, a parliamentary system for Pakistan. But, in the words of Richard V. Weekes, "President Ayub disagreed and challenged the suitability of the parliamentary system", and "behind the scenes ... he prepared another version which became the new Constitution on March 1, 1962." In his essay entitled "The Development of Pakistan", Qureshi slurs over this important fact and merely reports 'some

delay' in the announcement of the new Constitution.[9]

The delay was due to the fact that Ayub wanted to issue a Constitution that would safeguard his personal supremacy by creating a powerful President and an impotent legislature called the National Assembly. Since the Constitution Commission failed to oblige him by writing such a Constitution, he did it himself with the help of his friends. The basic democracies, as Qamarul Ahsan later remarked, were "the finest examples of controlled democracies" dominated by officials reducing them to "so many electrified dummies". These dummies chose representatives to the National Assembly under the Ayub Constitution during the period of Martial Law. Such a National Assembly was not expected to exert any real authority. Nor did the Constitution allow it. The President appointed his own Cabinet whose members were only responsible to him and not to the National Assembly. Begum Roquyya Anwar complained : "The members of the Cabinet are not responsible to the legislature, they are responsible to the President, because, they are the paid servants of the President. They are nothing but salaried officers. This state of affairs can very well be described as another name for slavery." It is significant to note that, despite the severely restrictive provisions of the PODO and EBDO, some East Pakistanis, determined to expose the real character of the Martial Law regime and to fight for the establishment of parliamentary democracy, got themselves elected to the National Assembly. They were quick to express their despair over a national legislature that did not have the power to vote on the budget, except a few items of new spending, and had to accept the dictates of the Finance Minister who, again, was a creature of the President. Mahbubul Haq deplored that no self-respecting legislator could reconcile himself to such a situation, and that the budget session of the National Assembly became "almost meaningless and a luxury".[10]

East Pakistanis did not witness any serious attempt on the

part of the new regime to redress their grievances, cultural, economic and political, during the period of Martial Law. The West Pakistanis who continued to dominate the administration treated Bengali in a step-motherly fashion. Urdu was a compulsory subject in the schools of East Pakistan, but Bengali was not granted such a status in the schools of West Pakistan. The announcements in East Pakistani airports, even for journeys within East Pakistan, continued to be made in English and Urdu, and never in Bengali. Mr. Ebrahim Khan remarked : "It may well be that the Pakistan International Airlines wish to make East Pakistanis familiar with Urdu by making announcements in Urdu. If that be correct, then announcements made in the plane in a journey from Rawalpindi to Lahore should be in English and Bengali, and Urdu should not be used because the people of this part have a right to know something of Bengali." In East Pakistan Urdu, along with English and Bengali, were used on signboards for roads, shops, buses, etc. But West Pakistan neglected Bengali for similar purposes. Major Mohd. Afsaruddin commented : "I will not be surprised if some of the Honourable Members [of the National Assembly] coming from East Pakistan go in female latrine instead of male latrine because they connot read Urdu which is used in West Pakistan." Everybody in the Army was required to pass an examination in Roman Urdu, but not in Roman Bengali, in order to qualify for promotion. Even the members of the East Bengal Regiment were not required to pass Roman Bengali. From time to time the West Pakistani newspapers preached the inferiority of the culture of Bengalees to that of West Pakistan. Vorys attested : "In the schools students are pressured into taking Urdu; in government offices Urdu appears to be preferred : and finally the national government's allocation for the propagation of Urdu language and culture far exceeds that of the allocation for any other language, including Bengali. As if this were not enough, there is periodic sniping in the West

Pakistani press about the inferiority of Bengali culture."[11]

The Martial Law regime played havoc with the freedom of the Press. East Pakistanis were appalled to note how pressmen having the courage to point out the deficiencies of the Ayub regime or preach democratic values were harassed, intimidated and even imprisoned. The judiciary did not come to the rescue of journalists by issuing proper writs. On the contrary, it appeared to flatter the Martial Law regime by inventing a doctrine to justify the behaviour of this regime. Muhammad Munir, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, enunciated that doctrine, in course of a judgement, as follows: "A victorious revolution itself becomes a law-creating fact because thereafter its own legality is judged not by reference to the annulled Constitution but by reference to its own success."[12] On 9 December 1958, a *Pakistan Times* correspondent interviewed Lieutenant General Azam Khan, the Minister for Rehabilitation. He found himself sentenced, according to a Martial Law Regulation, to seven years' rigorous imprisonment because, during the interview, he revealed a critical attitude towards the Government and put questions in such a manner as "to create alarm and despondency among public and thereby prejudice good order and public safety." The journalist appealed to the West Pakistan High Court against this sentence passed by the Additional District Magistrate at Montgomery. The High Court dismissed the appeal on the ground that it had no power to challenge convictions for the violation of a Martial Law regulation.[13]

Journalists with views not conforming to the needs of the Martial Law regime were even stopped at the airport, while they were about to leave for a trip abroad which they had been able to arrange by dint of their merit. The most popular and widely circulated dailies in East Pakistan, *Ittefaq* (in Bengali), *Sangbad* (in Bengali) and *Pakistan Observer* (in English) were blacklisted for purposes of advertisements and subscriptions given by Government and semi-Government agencies. As these

newspapers refused to toe the line of the West Pakistani ruling coterie, the latter hit upon the device of trying to starve the newspapers financially. "These are the tactics", observed Mahbubul Haq, "which were followed in old days when we were under foreign rule." The three popular newspapers used to fetch monthly Government advertisements worth Rs. 40,000 which they had to forego. Of course, they did not yield. On the contrary, there were newspapers having a circulation of less than 2000 per day which enjoyed Government patronage to the extent of Government advertisements worth Rs. 20000 per month, because they slavishly followed the dictates of the Ayub regime. The *Ittefaq, Sangbad* and *Pakistan Observer* regularly voiced the genuine grievances of East Pakistanis and fought for parity between the two Wings of Pakistan. They had to suffer.[14]

The record of the Martial Law regime in the matter of removal of disparity between East and West Pakistan was nothing impressive. The appointment of a few East Pakistanis as Central Ministers was not sufficient for the purpose of bringing about parity or for removing the distrust born of disparity. Unless East Pakistanis attained parity with West Pakistanis in the services of the Central Government, any talk about parity remained meaningless, especially at a time when the bureaucrats and the military were ruling the country. A few figures, valid up to 1 January 1961, would show that the Martial Law did little to mitigate the disparity between the two Wings in the services of the Government of Pakistan. Of 19 Secretaries, there was none from East Pakistan. Of 46 Joint Secretaries, only 7 were from East Pakistan. Only 24 Deputy Secretaries, out of a total of 124, were East Pakistanis. Only 88 Section Officers, out of a total of 763, belonged to East Pakistan. In non-gazetted posts too East Pakistanis were in a very bad shape. The Ministry of Finance employed 40 East Pakistanis out of a staff of 337 persons. The Ministry of Industries had 39 East Pakistanis on its staff of 187 persons. The strength of East Pakistanis in the

President's Secretariat was only 3 out of 72; in the Ministry of Commerce 28 out of 142; in the Pakistan Forest Institute 18 out of 284; in the Central Labour Directorate 2 out of 32. The frustration of East Pakistanis and their rising hatred towards the ruling clique was easy to fathom if one prefaced these figures by the fact that there was terrible unemployment in East Pakistan whose graduates were seeking appointments even as Lower Division Clerks. Mahbubul Haq cited these figures, and commented : "If there were parity in the services of the Government of Pakistan much of the ills of today, the disparity and the resultant heart-burning would have disappeared long before. I would venture to suggest that if we had parity in services which it is very easy to achieve, this disgust, distrust and hatred as have generated over the years would have all disappeared."[15]

Nor did the Martial Law regime make any serious effort to improve agriculture in East Pakistan. East Pakistan's lands were fertile, but a large part of them remained idle for several months in a year on account of a lack of availability of sweet water through irrigation canals or water reservoirs. There were relatively inexpensive methods by which this problem could be solved and food shortage in East Pakistan averted. If two tube-wells, and some canals, could be constructed in each Union (of villages) in East Pakistan, the problem would be fairly tackled, suggested Mahbubul Haq. A sum of only Rs. 20 crores would be sufficient for this purpose, but the Government did not care to make this relatively modest sum available to the more populous province.[16] At the same time, East Pakistan was given only 34% of the Commodity Aid coming from the United States, and only 4% of that coming from other countries.[17]

East Pakistan's problem of agricultural unemployment became chronic. By publishing their researches on the problem, East Pakistani intellectuals, indirectly but effectively, drew the attention of the Ayub regime to the economic maladies in their

province, and simultaneously focussed public attention on the alleged negligence of the regime towards East Pakistan. Some members of the Bureau of Economic Research, Dacca University, carried out an intensive survey of the village of Sabilpur in the district of Noakhali for a whole year, i.e., July 1961 to June 1962. The project, under the supervision of Professor A Farouk and the over-all direction of Professor M. Habibullah, sought to discover the exact nature of unemployment and underemployment in the rural economy of East Pakistan. The reasearch team interviewed exhaustively the heads of 129 families in Sabilpur, and watched, for a whole year, the activities of the villagers. Each family possessed 1.1 acre of highly fragmented land on an average, and much less than one unit of cattle. About 10 percent of the families had their own plough. Villagers could utilize only about 69 percent of the available man-days in gainful employment; illness, rains, social ceremonies, etc., accounted for another 6 percent; 25 percent remained unutilized. Out of the 69 percent of man-days profitably used, agricultural work claimed only 42 percent, garden work about 7 percent, and various types of non-farm work about 20 percent. Farmers as well as landless agricultural labourers were baffled by the non-availability of profitable jobs throughout the year, and augmented the problem of pressure of population upon East Pakistan. The findings of the survey of Sabilpur were published in 1962. It was a piece of sophisticated research. But it could easily be employed as a propaganda tool to rouse popular consciousness. The *Pakistan Observer* wrote a long comment on this survey and emphasized "the absence of satisfactory measures for effectively tackling the chronic problem of agricultural unemployment." It added: "It is to be hoped that a survey like this will lead to serious deliberations in proper quarters for the development of rural economy".[18]

Jute was the mainstay of East Pakistan's economy, and the biggest source of foreign exchange for Pakistan as a whole. But

the jute growers did not find themselves properly looked after by the Government before or during the Martial Law period. The Jute Board, established in 1949, did not ensure any fair price for the cultivators, although its activities helped the jute traders to some extent. Often the cultivators had to sell jute at a price far below the actual cost of production. The Martial Law regime did not effect any improvement in the working of the Jute Board; it did not try to fix up a minimum price in order to ameliorate the lot of the jute growers who often remained half-starved. East Pakistani leaders were afraid that such a state of affairs, if allowed to persist, would result in the extinction of the jute cultivators of their province. As Md. Serajul Islam Miah affirmed, "if the Government is willing to justify the existence of this Jute Board, they must see that Jute Board does something tangible and is of real help to the growers. They must fix the minimum economic price of jute to save the growers from total economic annihilation."[19] Intermediaries, operating at various levels starting from village *haats* and ending with exporting companies, went on bargaining for their profits. The actual growers, however, had very little bargaining power largely because they could not stock the produce. They required money immediately for the purchase of daily necessaries, for paying back the loans contracted during the last sowing season, and for arrangements to produce the next crop. The poor farmers did not also have storage facilities. Their low bargaining power explained the enormous disparity between the price per five maunds (1 bale) of jute paid to the growers and the price at which it was sold in Sterling countries. As noted by Muhammad Osman Hasan at Narayanganj on 12 October 1961, the disparity was as great as Rs. 60 per bale for growers, and Rs. 275 per bale for sale in Sterling countries. Hasan said: "The price squeeze on the farmer leads to much smuggling of jute through the borders." While in East Pakistan jute was selling at Rs. 12 to Rs. 14 per maund, Indians were

ready to offer Rs. 35 to Rs. 40. East Pakistanis, therefore, risked their lives to the border patrol in order to sell jute to Indians. This was surely an important factor affecting the Martial Law regime's capacity to exercise authority by methods short of coercion, for a substantially large number of East Pakistani farmers engaged in jute sales.[30]

Jute was the most important determinant of East Pakistan's economic destiny. East Pakistani intellectuals turned their attention to the problem of marketing of jute that indicated the role the Government could play in order to help jute growers. A research team of the Dacca University Socio-Economic Research Board, under the direction of Professor A.F.A. Husain, carried out a scientific sample survey on this problem. The results of the survey, published in 1961, made many implicit references to the Government's faults of commission and omission. The existence of numerous intermediaries, unable to expand their business and operate on a more economic scale, inevitably reduced the price earned by growers. A costly, slow, primitive and seasonal system of transportation, depending on boats, bullock carts, horses, etc., made it impossible for lower intermediaries to operate on a more efficient scale. They were, furthermore, afflicted by the non-availability of credit without which they could not enlarge their business and introduce economies by handling a large volume of jute. The Government did not make any provision for supplying credit to the small intermediaries who had to secure loans from friends, relatives or buyers. The report of the Dacca University research team laid a strong emphasis on the need to improve transportation in rural localities. "Transportation for movement of jute in the rural areas is thoroughly inefficient. Transportation, according to the available evidence, has become more difficult since independence. Efficiency of the existing system of marketing of jute is substantially dependent on improvement in transportation."[31]

Ayub's government remained largely impervious to the needs

and aspirations of East Pakistanis, while researches by West Pakistani and foreign scholars also began to reveal the economic injustice continuously perpetrated on East Pakistanis. One such research-study of an eminent West Pakistani scholar, Dr. Mahbub Ul Haq, deserves a special mention.[22] In an extremely cogent and non-partisan fashion he argued that the economic disparity between East and West Pakistan, indicated by the difference in regional incomes, largely resulted from a net transfer of real resources, explicit as well as implicit, from the East to the West Wing. From 1951-52 to 1959-60, regional income increased by 20 percent in East Pakistan, and by 36 percent in West Pakistan. The growth of population was faster in West Pakistan than in East Pakistan, yet the disparity in per capita incomes rose during 1951-52 to 1959-60. West Pakistan's per capita income was higher than East Pakistan's by 18 percent in 1951-52, and by 29 percent in 1959-60. The actual disparity was much larger if one took into account the difference in prices of the same commodity in the two Wings, and the difference in prices of two commodities (rice in East Pakistan and wheat in West Pakistan) having the same nutritional value and a decisive importance in shaping the standard of living. As Mahbub Ul Haq emphasized, if one considered these factors, the disparity in per capita incomes of the two Wings in 1959-60 could be estimated at about 60 percent. For instance, the price of rice per ton (average for the period 1949-50 to 1952-53) was Rs. 518 in East Pakistan and Rs. 334 in West Pakistan, of wheat Rs. 517 in East Pakistan and Rs. 267 in West Pakistan. The difference in the prices of rice, the staple food in East Pakistan, and of wheat, the staple food of West Pakistan, was thus significant.[23]

The difference in the per capita consumption of certain commodities in the two Wings would illustrate that the actual disparity in living standards was higher than that indicated by the difference in per capita incomes. The per capita consump-

tion of electricity in West Pakistan was about 20 times more than that in East Pakistan; of cars, 10 times more; of tea and petrol, 8 times more; of radios, 7 times more; of cigarettes, 6 times more; of cloth and sugar, 3 times more; of paper and coal, twice as much. Mahbub cited these figures and commented: "No wonder that disparities in consumption level seem so obvious to an East Pakistani and that his sense of grievance is not truly measured by a comparison of per capita incomes ! . . . The fact that these disparities are concentrated in the traditionally vocal urban areas makes them more significant politically."[24]

The East-West disparity in income was caused by West Pakistan's ability to invest much more than East Pakistan. West Pakistan made the investments not out of its own savings but out of an explicit transfer of resources from East Pakistan via the surplus in inter-Wing trade. East Pakistan purchased more from West Pakistan than it could sell. West Pakistan could invest more than it saved also because of an implicit transfer of resources from East Pakistan. An inequitable distribution of foreign assistance and foreign exchange earnings, favouring West Pakistan and depriving East Pakistan of its legitimate share, led to this implicit transfer. For East Pakistan would have taken important strides in industrialization if it was given the due share of foreign aid and loans and foreign exchange earned by itself. Industrial progress in East Pakistan, again, might have reoriented the pattern of inter-Wing trade and arrested the outflow of resources from East Pakistan. East Pakistan's imports from West Pakistan constituted 34.2 percent of its total imports for the period 1948-49 to 1952-53; the percentage rose up to 47.6 percent for the period 1955-56 to 1959-60. The comparative estimates for West Pakistan went up from 5.8 percent to only 17.7 percent during the same period. The exports of West Pakistan to East Pakistan, during the same period, rose up from 21.8 percent of its total exports to 47.9 percent. The corresponding figures for the exports of East to West Pakistan

were 8.2 percent and 22 percent. Dr. Nurul Islam cited these figures for inter-Wing trade, and concluded : "Generally speaking, the importance of West Pakistan as a source of imports for East is not only significant but also has grown over time ... It is clear that East Pakistan as a market has been consistently and considerably more important for West Pakistan than West as a market for East." According to the calculations of Mahbub Ul Haq, the transfer of real resources from East to West Pakistan amounted to Rs. 210 millions per year in the period before 1955 (i.e., before the inauguration of the First Five Year Plan) and Rs. 100 millions per year in the period after 1955. Dr. John H. Power puts the amount of total transfer during 14 years from 1948 to 1961 at Rs. 2500 million, i.e., about Rs. 180 millions per year. This transfer was not matched by any immigration of labour from East to West Pakistan. Consequently, East Pakistan's gross investment amounted to only 5 percent and 6 percent of its gross domestic product in the pre-Plan and Plan periods respectively, although, in both the periods, its gross domestic saving was about 7 percent. On the other hand, West Pakistani's gross saving was only 7 percent in the pre-Plan period and 5 percent in the Plan period, but its gross investment was about 12 percent during 1951-1960. East Pakistan lagged behind in industrial development and faced the problem of soaring unemployment.[25]

It was, of course, impossible for the Martial Law regime to wipe out the economic disparity between the two Wings within 44 months of its existence. But East Pakistanis could rightly complain that this regime did not initiate certain vigorous measures and indicate its strong determination to remove that disparity. On 18 October 1961, President Ayub himself admitted at a public meeting in Dacca that the complaint about East Pakistan's rate of development being slower than that of West Pakistan was a genuine complaint. He declared that a commission to investigate the issue of equitable allocation of

revenue between the Central and Provincial Governments, with a view to facilitating a balanced economic growth of the two Wings, would be set up soon. Accordingly, in December 1961, a 10 man Finance Commission was appointed. It is significant that the divergence of views between East Pakistani and West Pakistani members of the Commission was so acute that the Commission failed to submit a joint report. East Pakistani and West Pakistani members submitted two separate reports. East Pakistanis demanded a reallocation of resources on the basis of population, which did not find favour with West Pakistanis. East Pakistanis firmly advocated a reshaping of the Second Five Year Plan so as to decrease the economic disparity between the two Wings. The President and the Cabinet considered the two separate reports and decided upon a new scheme of allocation of resources between the Centre and the provinces. This new award superseded the Raisman Award of 1951, and, according to a declaration of Finance Minister Mr. Shoaib on 28 January 1962, East Pakistan would receive about 11 crores and West Pakistan about 2 crores more of revenues under the new award. But, as Professor G. W. Choudhury observed: "There is no doubt that the new fiscal arrangement will increase the financial resources of the provinces and it is also to be pointed out that this arrangement is fairer to East Pakistan as compared to the previous one. The main criticism of the new arrangement is, however, that while it improved the situation with regard to revenue allocation, it did not make any improvement in the sphere of allocation of development funds and foreign exchange without which the disparity between the two Wings cannot be removed."[26]

It was not possible for the Government of East Pakistan to wipe out the disparity by its own endeavours. The Central Government had a complete control over the major portion of tax revenue, public borrowing and foreign aid receipts. "Local government, even provincial government, is financially

at the mercy of the Centre", noted Vorys. Moreover, the non-Bengalee officials of the Central Government adopted many contrivances to sabotage the development projects of East Pakistan. Ataur Rahman, when he was the Chief Minister of East Pakistan, was baffled by the requirement that the provincial government was to submit 75 copies of development schemes to the Central Government. The Planning Commission, during the First Five Year Plan, as Vorys attested, "rejected or delayed approval on a large number of proposals [submitted by the Government of East Pakistan] simply because they were not submitted in the proper form!" The Second Five Year Plan was prepared through two and a half years covering the last few months of the First Republic and the initial months of the period of Martial Law. The provincial government, despite many meetings between its officials and the Central Government officials, failed to incorporate any major change in the draft prepared by the Planning Commission in accordance with the designs of the Central ruling coterie.[27]

The Martial Law regime propagated the myth that the financial difficulties facing Pakistan were the creations of politicians before the advent of Martial Law. On 18 June 1963, Mr. S. Zaman, an eminent accountant of East Pakistan, referred to this myth and pointed out that, in the pre-Martial Law period, the West Pakistani bureaucrats like Ghulam Muhammad and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali controlled the finances of the country for many years. There were other "finance officers who are now supplying information and advising the present Finance Minister [i.e., Mr. Shoaib]" and they, Zaman reminded, "were the people who advised and guided the EBDOed politicians." They included such persons as the then Chairman of the Planning Commission and the State Bank Governor. Another myth circulated by the Martial Law regime was that the inter-Wing economic disparity was caused by the malfunctioning of the pre-Martial Law regimes. Zaman, however, challenged Finance

Minister Shoaib to produce the figures of actual expenditure in East and West Pakistan since 1958. These figures, Zaman affirmed, would reveal that "more disparity was caused during the Martial Law regime and if anybody is responsible, I charge that Mr. Shoaib is responsible because he was the Minister for Finance during those days."[28]

The First Five Year Plan provided for the establishment of some industries in East Pakistan, e.g., four sugar mills, D.D.T. factories, Streptomycin factory, a steel mill, etc. These industries could not be established on account of the familiar machinations of West Pakistani bureaucrats as regards approving schemes and releasing funds. The Martial Law period started when the third year of the First Plan was to run off. The new regime, however, did not correct these malpractices of the earlier regime. Those industrial projects were not taken up by the Martial Law authorities for prompt execution during the remainder of the First Plan period. Nor were they carried over into the Second Plan period, i.e., 1960-65. East Pakistanis, therefore, could not be blamed if they denounced the Martial Law regime for accentuating the economic disparity between the two Wings of Pakistan. They suspected that the Martial Law regime was trying to perpetuate the status of East Pakistan as a colony for the industrial products of West Pakistan. Zaman, for instance, referred to the schemes of West Pakistan's steel industry, located in Karachi. This industry was producing corrugated tins and galvanized iron sheets which were mostly consumed by East Pakistanis. A steel factory should, therefore, have been established in East Pakistan, thus enabling East Pakistanis to purchase those articles at a considerably less price by avoiding, at least, the inter-Wing transport charges. The ruling coterie sometimes spread the notion that the availability of raw materials in East Pakistan should determine the location of industries there. So far as the steel factory was concerned, this requirement could have been waived because West Pakistan did

not have locally produced raw material for that factory. Similarly, West Pakistan had a cable and wire factory, and there were proposals to set up another there, while East Pakistan went without even one. The Haripur Telephone Factory in West Pakistan supplied telephones and spare parts to East Pakistan having no such factory. "When we complain to Telephone Department in East Pakistan for inefficiency of service", observed Zaman, "they tell us that what they could do when sometimes they get second-hand spare parts, dismantled telephone apparatus from here [i.e., West Pakistan], for East Pakistan." East Pakistan had also to depend on West Pakistan for the supply of its chief cooking oil, i.e., mustard oil, and medicine. But these articles were highly adulterated and then sent to East Pakistan. "To this extent", Zaman affirmed, "East Pakistan has become a colonial market for the sub-standard goods and adulterated foods and medicines of West Pakistan. You go and open a medicine bottle; you will find most of them are adulterated. They bear the label of foreign concerns—they have some arrangements with them—but the medicines are adulterated. Similarly the food-stuffs. Take the case of mustard oil. It is adulterated. Sir, disparity is increasing and at all levels."[29]

The negligence of the Martial Law regime towards the economic plight of East Pakistanis was brought into sharp relief by the fact that East Pakistan's development projects were behind the schedule and being implemented at a horribly slow pace. The Ganges-Kabodak scheme provided a leading illustration. As per Government announcements, the scheme should have been completed by the end of 1954. But the White Paper on 1962-63 Central Budget stated that only about Rs. 10 crores, out of an estimated cost of Rs. 19.78 crores, would have been spent by the end of 1961-62. "Compared to this", lamented Qamarul Ahsan, "mark how many of the West Pakistan giant projects were completed within a few years of their beginning. Why this lethargy, this indifference, this criminal faulty plan

in our part of the country [East Pakistan] ?" The Ganges-Kabodak scheme was expected on completion to alleviate East Pakistan's food shortage.[30]

The following figures, supplied by the Parliamentary Secretary on behalf of the Central Minister for Commerce in reply to a question, revealed how the policy of the Martial Law regime was in line with that of the earlier regime in the matter of impeding East Pakistan's economic development by preventing the use even of the foreign exchange earned by that province itself. Exports from East Pakistan amounted to Rs. 88.10 crores in 1958-59, Rs. 107.96 crores in 1959-60, Rs. 125.92 crores in 1960-61, and Rs. 130.06 crores in 1961-62. East Pakistan's imports during these years amounted respectively to Rs 55.38 crores, Rs. 65.53 crores, Rs. 101.45 crores and Rs. 87.29 crores. On the other hand, exports from West Pakistan amounted to Rs. 44.44 crores in 1958-59, Rs. 76.30 crores in 1959-60, Rs. 54.01 crores in 1960-61, and Rs. 54.28 crores in 1961-62; but West Pakistan's imports during these years, amounted respectively to Rs. 102.46 crores, Rs. 180.57 crores, Rs. 217.32 crores, and Rs. 223.62 crores.[31]

Certain other evidences of the apathy of the Central Government towards East Pakistan's economic interests disheartened East Pakistanis. The number of foreign trade delegations visiting Pakistan was 7 in 1959, 8 in 1960, 8 in 1961 and 15 in 1962; but of these only 2 were allowed to visit East Pakistan in 1959, 2 in 1960, 1 in 1961, and 6 in 1962. These figures were supplied by the Government in reply to a question at the National Assembly. The question, put by an East Pakistani, indicated how sensitive East Pakistanis had become to any expression of inter-Wing disparity.[32] To take a more convincing instance, the Government decided, as it went ahead with building a new capital in Islamabad near Rawalpindi, to hand over the city of Karachi to the province of West Pakistan. It did not consult, about this transfer, the people of East Pakistan whose

hard-earned foreign exchange, diverted to the development of Pakistan's first capital in Karachi, was mainly responsible for the phenomenal growth of that city after 1947. The transfer of Karachi to the control of the West Pakistan Government meant an instantaneous gain of more than Rs. 300 crores of assets for West Pakistan and an annual addition of about Rs. 13 crores to the revenues of the West Pakistan Government. East Pakistan was not offered any compensation, and its people could not be blamed if they accused the West Pakistani rulers of a step-motherly treatment towards them.[33]

At the earliest opportunity after the lifting of the Martial Law, some East Wing members of the National Assembly of Pakistan confronted the Ayub government with facts and figures telling the story of dire contrasts in the Government's efforts to industrialize the two Wings of Pakistan. On 20 June 1962, Syed Abdus Sultan (of East Pakistan) summarized this story for the preceding fourteen years by quoting figures some of which are placed below. East Pakistan's share of the Government sector development expenditures stood at Rs. 300 crores, West Pakistan's at Rs. 998 crores. East Pakistan's share of the disbursement of the Pakistan Industrial Credit Investment Corporation (PICIC for short) stood at 24%; of the Industrial Development Bank. (IDB for short) at 20%; of the House Building Finance Corporation at 12%. As regards foreign loans and credits, only 16% went to East Pakistan; as to foreign development aid, only 20%. Foreign exchange earnings of East Pakistan were Rs. 1125 crores in contrast to West Pakistan's Rs. 815 crores; but East Pakistan was allowed to spend foreign exchange worth only Rs. 540 crores in contrast to Rs. 1400 crores granted to West Pakistan. The Martial Law regime, therefore, could not escape the responsibility for continuing the policy of earlier regimes in regard to neglecting the industrialization of East Pakistan. The view, sometimes propagated by the ruling clique, that East Pakistan did not have resources for industrial development, was not of

much significance because East Pakistan was deprived of its legitimate share of foreign exchange and foreign assistance crucial to the initial phase of industrialization. West Pakistan received much more than its legitimate share in this matter, and that was the chief reason why it could beat East Pakistan in industrial development. Mahbub Ul Haq wrote: "Leaving aside cotton textiles and jute goods, industrial development is, for the time being, based largely on imported raw materials, and, as such, its efficiency depends not so much on the relative natural endowments of the two regions as on the relative efficiency of labour, entrepreneurial ability and administrative skills. The latter, of course, is a matter of building up the infrastructure." Here, again, the following figures of Syed Abdus Sultan would point out how the Central ruling coterie continued to neglect the development of an infra-structure in East Pakistan by withholding the opportunities of training under international arrangements. Only 100 East Pakistanis, as against 732 West Pakistanis, were trained up under United Nations schemes; 150 East Pakistanis and 1431 West Pakistanis were trained up under the Colombo Plan. Another factor, stressed by Sultan, that impeded balanced economic growth in the two Wings was the enormous disparity between the non-development expenditures by the Government in the two Wings: in West Pakistan, Rs. 3000 crores; in East Pakistan, Rs. 500 cores.[34]

Defence expenditures claimed more than half of the budget of the Central Government. Moreover, the Government received a huge amount of military aid from the United States. But the beneficial economic effects of these military expenditures remained confined almost exclusively to West Pakistan. The Martial Law regime did not shift any of the Military Headquarters to the East Wing or establish any ordnance factory there. Even the defence of East Pakistan was almost completely neglected. No attempt was made by the Martial Law regime

to erect suitable military installations in the East Wing which could repel or strike back an aggressor. The history of territories forming East Pakistan holds an alarming lesson for its inhabitants; it can be and has been attacked from almost all sides. A West Pakistani writer, Mr. Aslam Siddiqi, surveyed this history from the sixteenth century up to the Japanese invasion during the second world war, and concluded that East Pakistan "can be invaded from all sides" and that its "defence arrangements must, therefore, provide for fighting all along its frontier line of 2932 miles". In a moment of crisis, according to East Pakistanis, it was futile to expect that, across a long air route and a much longer sea route, West Pakistan would send troops to East Pakistan for the latter's defence. If, therefore, West Pakistani rulers had any intention to secure the defence of the East Wing against aggression, they had to make the East Wing nearly self-sufficient in defence. That, again, would have brought immense economic gains to the East Wing, improved the employment situation, made possible a balanced growth of the two Wings, and eliminated much of the suspicion and hatred of East Pakistanis towards West Pakistani rulers. Syed Abdus Sultan expressed the frustration of East Pakistanis on this point when he said: "The policy of the Government of Pakistan in respect of East Pakistan has been absolutely cold, callous, absolutely of sloth and slumber and of extreme indifference .... Make East Pakistan self-sufficient in matters of defence. It has been our long cry; we have been crying hoarse for it but it has always fallen on deaf ears. It is a tragedy." East Pakistanis felt particularly bitter about it, because, as Syed Abdus Sultan added, their contribution to the achievement of Pakistan had been far greater than that of West Pakistanis in terms of active struggles and sufferings. The Central government not only ignored this contribution but also propagated the lie that East Pakistanis lacked the martial spirit and hence were not taken in large numbers in the armed services. In fact, the districts of Chitta-

gong, Noakhali and Sylhet could boast of a long tradition of acting as the supply centre of bold and efficient sailors. The past history of areas forming East Pakistan, apart from the fact that they were the homes of revolutionaries initiating a terrorist movement to oust the British rulers, could show up an impressive list of valiant generals commanding brave, disciplined armies. Syed Abdus Sultan mentioned, for instance, the name of Isa Khan who had scored a crushing victory over the Commander-in-Chief of Akbar, the Great Moghul.[35]

The share of East Pakistanis in the expenditure on military services never went beyond 5%, and the cadet training facilities, as also methods of recruitment and promotion, were such as to keep their representation at a low level, whether in the cadre of officers or in lower ranks. West Pakistan had many cadet colleges, including three maintanied out of the defence budget, which would train up potential army officers. There was only one such college in East Pakistan. As to recruitment, adequate publicity was not done in East Pakistan. Interior parts of various districts were frequently unaware of whether or when recruitment was taking place. In matters of promotion, East Pakistani military officers were the victims of unjust and deliberate discrimination. There were cases where a highly placed East Pakistani was superseded by a West Pakistani or was siphoned off to a civilian job, in order to prevent him from occupying a top military post that accrued to him automatically on account of his age and qualifications. "On the one hand we say we can't find suitable officer material from East Pakistan and on the other hand we supersede and send out of the Defence Services those who joined in the British days and came up for higher ranks after years of training and experience," commented Major Mohd. Afsaruddin. "This incongruity", suggested Afsaruddin, gave rise to the suspicion that there existed perhaps a policy of excluding East Pakistanis from controlling positions in the armed forces.[36]

All this was insulting to East Pakistanis who had only two battalions raised for them, one in 1948, and another in 1949, even though the performance of the two battalions, as attested by Pakistani and foreign experts, was as good as that of any other Pakistani battalion. These two battalions acquitted themselves creditably in both the Wings of Pakistan under varying climatic and topographical conditions. Afsaruddin quoted the following from the published remarks of a senior military official belonging to a country allied to Pakistan : "... They performed their duties in an outstanding manner. Their discipline, military courtesy and attention to duty illustrate the fine training I have observed among Pakistani military establishments. I trust that the replacement unit will be as capable as the East Bengal Regiment." President Ayub tried to console East Pakistanis by merely announcing on 23 March 1961 that two more battalions of the East Bengal Regiment would be raised.[37]

The Martial Law regime could not improve upon the record of previous regimes in the matter of treatment of minorities. The emphasis on writing an Islamic Constitution, added to oppression by unsocial elements in the majority community aided and abetted by officials, created a panic among the minorities and caused fresh waves of migration to India since 1953. In the month of February 1956, more than fifty thousand non-Muslims migrated from East Pakistan to India. This figure shot up to more than fifty-five thousand in the month of March 1956. Mrs. Zinkin, in one of her despatches to *Manchester Guardian*, after the promulgation of the 1956 Constitution, wrote: "In India, Moslems are citizens like the rest; in Pakistan Hindus are second class citizens not entitled to the same justice as other people. For example, cases of rape and abduction are not very large but the honour of East Pakistan Hindu women rests not on the fear of law but of neighbourly goodwill, for in every single case where a family has complained of abduction the judge has given guardianship of the girl to the abductor so long as

the case was sub-judice. Then after considerable delay giving time for bogus marriage and conversion certificates to be produced he has pronounced in favour of Cupid. Whenever there has been a case of forcible conversion of some Hindu—and these cases are not very infrequent—there is an enquiry and the verdict is always that the Hindu has been overwhelmed with the wisdom and divine nature of Islam and never that there has been compulsion. When a Hindu is evicted from his house or business and he complains no action is taken by the Government. It is this deep sense of uncertainty which is responsible for the exodus." Mrs. Zinkin also suggested that West Pakistani administrators "are keen to see East Pakistan's population reduced to parity with West Pakistan so that they can never have the upper hand in politics and claim more than their constitutional parity. Getting rid of eight million more Hindus would more or less achieve this gambit." Next year, in September 1957, the *Atlantic* discussed Pakistan in the 'Atlantic Report on World Today'. "The position of the nine million Hindus in East Pakistan is shocking", the report stated. It also said that the necessity "to escape the constant police and official tyranny" was one chief reason why "last year, 320,000 Hindus fled to India", and that "exodus currently averages about 10,000 a month".[38]

Certain pronouncements[39] by Ayub and his Foreign Minister, Mr. Manzur Qadir, raised hopes that minorities would receive a fair treatment during the Martial Law regime. Their utterances indicated that the new regime would possibly rise above religious fanaticism and interpret the good of all human beings as the aim of a religion, and, therefore, would stop the oppression of minorities in East Pakistan. But these hopes were soon belied. The Martial Law regime did not take any step to prevent the cases of oppression of minorities assuming various forms as listed in the preceding paragraph. On the contrary, it completely unnerved the minority communities by a policy of

indiscriminate arrest and detention of their leaders. Hooligans and corrupt officials were too prone to take advantage of the feeling of helplessness afflicting the minorities. Apart from innumerable instances of small-scale assaults on minorities, there were at least two major massacres in the Martial Law period. One took place in May-June 1961 at the Gopalgunj subdivision of the Faridpur district, the other at Rajshahi in April 1962. In both cases, official connivance was glaring. Gopalgunj was mostly inhabited by Hindus of the Namasudra sect who were noted for their physical valour and courage. They successfully resisted attacks by Muslim mobs only to face a full-fledged offensive by the East Pakistan Rifles (E.P.R. for short). The E.P.R. used firearms, inflicted heavy casualties, and allowed the Muslim mob to set fire to the houses of Namasudras. According to an announcement of India's Deputy Minister for External Affairs, the Indian Deputy High Commissioner at Dacca carried out an enquiry in Gopalgunj and reported that about five hundred Hindus had been injured, killed or missing. As to the Rajshahi holocaust, the instigation came directly from Lt. Gen. Azam Khan, the Governor of East Pakistan, who, on 22 April 1962, delivered an inflammatory public speech with fantastic stories of torture meted out to minorities in India. The Pakistan Radio had also been pouring out such false stories and setting the stage for a massacre of minorities. The holocaust started on 23 April and lasted several days when the District Magistrate of Rajshahi did not take any measure to avert the atrocities on non-Muslims committed before his eyes. The massacre was stopped only after India's Assistant High Commissioner at Rajshahi (whose office was later closed down by the Government of Pakistan) intervened on behalf of the minorities, and the troops were called in. More than three thousand non-Muslims died. Abduction of women, looting of property and burning of houses accompanied these deaths.[40]

The morale of non-Muslims received a rude shock as the

Martial Law regime adopted the tactics of publicly humiliating their leaders. For instance, Mr. Monoranjan Dhar, an ex-Minister of Finance and Minority Affairs in the East Pakistan Government, was arrested and compelled to walk, wearing hand-cuffs, through the streets of Mymensingh, his home town, while he was taken to the prison. The Martial Law regime kept all non-Muslim leaders under strict surveillance. The behaviour of the Intelligence Branch towards them amounted to a house-arrest. Those leaders were watched whenever they went out of the house, and their houses were guarded by I.B. (i.e., Intelligence Branch) watchers. The ordinary non-Muslims, in the habit of seeing their leaders for the redress or ventilation of grievances, were interrogated and harassed before they entered the house of a leader and also after they came out of it. The non-Muslims were thus deprived of an important source of inspiration and psychological support. As to actual help by the leaders, that was sometimes possible as long as the 1956 Constitution was in force and the non-Muslim politicians were, at least, able to voice the grievances of minorities at the legislature. Under the Martial Law regime, minorities felt more helpless as non-Muslim politicians were no longer in a position to make themselves heard in a legislature. Many of them were subjected to a mock trial and debarred from holding any elective office for a period of six years. In other words, the advent of Basic Democracy, as the Martial Law regime manipulated, must not allow prominent non-Muslim politicians to assert themselves and make a public disclosure of the assaults on minorities in East Pakistan.[41]

Not to speak of minority politicians, the Martial Law regime imprisoned hundreds of Muslim political workers and leaders without caring to arrange any fair, public trial. Maulana Bhasani and Suhrawardy fell seriously ill in the jail. East Pakistanis could not reconcile themselves to the fact that the prisoners included some eminent Bengalee politicians without

whose efforts Pakistan could never have been born. Nor could they accept with equanimity the lack of trust in the people on the part of the rulers and the absence of universal adult suffrage under the Martial Law. To them the Martial Law appeared to be the negation of their contribution to the formation of Pakistan. Had not the Bengalee Muslims voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Muslim League candidates in the election of 1946, there would not have been a new state of Pakistan. The Martial Law regime seemed to wipe out this political glory of the East Pakistanis. MNAs from East Pakistan expressed these viewpoints on many occasions after the lifting of the Martial Law.[42]

The Martial Law regime's eagerness to put politicians behind the prison bars was surely conditioned by its fear of a challenge emanating from popular leaders. It, however, mistook the capacity of East Pakistanis to tolerate all such arrests for an indefinite period of time. When Suhrawardy was arrested on 30 January 1962, East Pakistanis started an agitation for his release. Dacca University students took a leading part in clamouring for the release of all political prisoners including Suhrawardy. They also made it a part of a broader campaign for the restoration of full democratic rights to the people of East Pakistan. The arrest of Suhrawardy came so late in the career of the Martial Law regime that it could not but appear to be somewhat mysterious. It was difficult to explain why Suhrawardy was not arrested earlier except by referring to his friendship with the diplomats of the United States whom Ayub could not afford to annoy. For many leaders, far lower in stature and influence and far less capable of thwarting Ayub's supremacy than Suhrawardy, were promptly imprisoned after the promulgation of the Martial Law. The arrest of Suhrawardy came at a time when Pakistan was drifting close to Communist China and Mr. William R. Rountree, the United States Ambassador to Pakistan, had decided to leave Pakistan because his relations with

Ayub were strained by the latter's overtures to China. After the promulgation of Martial Law, Suhrawardy wanted to go to the United kingdom and settle there. But he could not secure the passport or foreign exchange for that purpose. Later, when he wanted to go to the United States for medical treatment, he got the passport and as much foreign exchange as he wanted. During the Martial Law period, Suhrawardy remained in close touch with the United States Embassy, and attended almost all the parties arranged by the U.S. Ambassador or his officials. Suhrawardy was sending out invitations for a farewell party to be held on 3 February 1962 in honour of Rountree, who was retiring from his Ambassadorship, when he was arrested.[43]

A likely explanation of why Suhrawardy was arrested on 30 January was Ayub's fear that Suhrawardy might stir up an agitation against the Constitution he was about to promulgate, which contained many features disliked by East Pakistanis. Ayub probably felt nervous about terminating the Martial Law, for he had announced at least a dozen times the target date for inaugurating the Constitution, and then postponed it. He was perhaps hesitant to forego the conveniences of the Martial Law, and apprehensive of the reaction of East Pakistanis to a Constitution that did not visualise a restoration of parliamentary government even in the remote future. All the top officials of the Martial Law regime, including Ayub Khan, assembled in Dacca for a conference towards the end of January. On 31 January, Ayub announced in Dacca that Suhrawardy's treasonable activities were directed towards disrupting East Pakistan first, and then the whole of Pakistan. Ayub charged that Suhrawardy was in league with enemy agents trying to bring about the disruption of Pakistan. The official press release, giving the reasons of Suhrawardy's arrest, accused Suhrawardy of endangering the safety and security of Pakistan and referred to his activities after Partition which, according to the press relase, harmed the interests of Pakistan. In his Dacca announcement,

too, Ayub condemned Suhrawardy's activities following Partition which caused some delay in his moving over to Pakistan permanently. Neither the press release nor the Dacca announcement of Ayub clarified what these activities were. When Suhrawardy came over to Pakistan some time after Partition, he faced a propaganda by rival politicians branding him as an enemy of Pakistan with reference to his earlier support for a plan to set up a sovereign state of Bengal outside both India and Pakistan. Suhrawardy's rivals completely ignored the fact that Jinnah himself had accepted the plan of a sovereign Bengal and instructed Suhrawardy to pursue it. Later, the Indian National Congress rejected the plan, and Suhrawardy was no more concerned with it. It is to be noted, however, that Jinnah did not try to stop the propaganda against Suhrawardy by mentioning his support for the plan of a sovereign Bengal. Perhaps the official press release on the arrest of Suhrawardy on 30 January 1962, and Ayub's announcement in Dacca next day, sought to refer implicitly to Suhrawardy's association with the plan of a sovereign Bengal. The press release also said that Suhrawardy's activities in Pakistan greatly contributed to political instability and made the revolution of 1958 inevitable.[14]

On 1 February, students of Dacca decided to go on strike in protest against the arrest of Suhrawardy while Ayub and his top associates were present in that city. The students of the Medical College, who had led the language agitation of 1952, first arrived at this decision, and were then joined by other students belonging to Dacca University. Students pasted posters on the walls inside the college campus outlining their demands. They demanded the termination of all repressive measures, complete restoration of democratic rights to East Pakistanis, and the immediate release of all political prisoners including Suhrawardy. The students' strike was as important landmark in the history of the Martial Law regime. Political life in East Pakistan lay at a standstill since the advent of the Martial Law.

Now it seemed that the long spell of political inertia was broken.[45]

The Government instructed the Press not to publish reports on the Dacca students strike. It then prevailed upon the University to close down for a month. The University authorities announced that the one-month holiday was needed for an important religious reason, i.e., Ramzan. This holiday was expected to empty the six halls of the University and help in cooling the agitation. Students, however, were not impressed by this unprecedented concern for Ramzan. They saw through the tactics and held on 6 February a meeting in which they passed a resolution condemning the holiday announcement that violated normal customs. They also passed resolutions demanding the restoration of democracy and the release of political prisoners. The students then started a procession that was involved in a clash with the police. Several students and policemen were injured. Students set fire to a bus used by the police. The Deputy Commissioner of Dacca ordered firemen not to take any action, because any interference by firemen might provoke the students. The skirmish with the police did not stop the students from taking a procession through the streets of the old city. The processionists called out for a general strike next day. They also threatened to attack newspaper offices if newspapers would not publish next day what the students did on 6 February. Demonstrators tore off, trampled down and burnt hundreds of photographs and paintings of Ayub Khan. This was a sure instance of the unpopularity of the Ayub regime in East Pakistan which was not always revealed in a study of reports in newspapers kept under strict censorship.[46]

Next day, on 7 February, many members of the public joined student demonstrators. But the Government kept the disturbances in check by a liberal use of tear gas, by a massive show of force in which military personnel and vehicles covered the city, a strict censorship of newspapers which prevented some people of the city even from knowing that violent demonstrations

took place on 6 February, and prompt arrests of some political leaders and many students. Mr. Abul Mansur Ahmad of the defunct Awami League, the Central Industries Minister for some time, was arrested; so were Mujibur Rahman, the ex-General Secretary of the East Pakistan Awami League, and Mr. Tofazzal Husain, a former Secretary of the Dacca District Awami League and the editor of the *Ittefaq*. So strict was the censorship that *Ittefaq*, now without an editor, came out with four pages instead of usual six pages on 7 February, and was not even permitted to announce regret over this curtailment. Newspapers printed only an official Press Note on the disturbances of 6 February; they were required from the night of 7 February to submit for censorship certain news items in duplicate. The success of official tactics was apparent on 8 February when there was no disturbance in Dacca. Police and military guards stationed in the vicinity of the Curzon Hall, where thousands of students could meet and form a procession, were greatly reinforced and prevented a rally of students. Military guards, posted at the residential halls, isolated the students of one hall from those of any other hall, and also from outsiders who were refused entry into these halls. The Government inoculated other educational institutions in Dacca against the infection of demonstrations by University students as it closed all of them compulsorily. This was a master stroke aimed at averting an expectedly massive demonstration on the tenth anniversary of the Martys' day, i.e., 21 February 1962. Arrests of students, journalists and political influentials continued. Censorship of newspapers was unabated on 8 February. The *Ittefaq* had to submit all its matter to censorship before and after linotype composition. This double censorship made it impossible for the *Ittefaq* to resume the publication of full six pages. The *Statesman* (from India) was not granted public circulation since 4 February 1962.[47]

While the city of Dacca remained quiet students staged de-

monstrations in Barisal and Chittagong. The Government initiated another move to suppress the youthful elements in East Pakistan. It sent a circular to all District Inspectors of Schools directing them to report names of all teachers to the district police so that the latter might investigate the political leanings and antecedents of teachers. This circular caused an apprehension that a large number of relatively younger teachers, suspected to lack much enthusiasm about the Martial Law regime, would be deprived of their jobs.[48] The Ayub-led coterie was perennially afraid of the educated East Pakistani youths with their pronounced inclination towards a restoration of parliamentary democracy. Such an inclination could be ventilated uninhibitedly on 18 February in London far away from the clutches of the military dictatorship in Pakistan. Hundreds of East Pakistanis, mostly students, joined by West Pakistanis, held the first big public demonstration against the Ayub regime in a street parade and a mass meeting. Prominent Labour members of the British Parliament backed the meeting in the Saint Pancras Town Hall, a notable venue for progressive gatherings. Mr. Davis Ennals, Secretary of the International Department of the Labour Party, took the chair. The meeting received congratulatory messages from many members of the Labour Party belonging to the British Parliament. The Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Pakistan arranged this meeting. Ennals praised Pakistanis who risked the displeasure of the Ayub regime by organizing the Committee and attending this meeting. He related his experience in Pakistan last year when he did not have the courage even to ask certain questions and to speak freely. Ennals said that Pakistanis had no freedom of expression and that, during his stay in Pakistan, he experienced the feeling of living in a totalitarian dictatorship. Pakistani speakers sketched the development of the unrest in Pakistan that led to the repression of students in East Pakistan. The meeting gave way to a procession that went through the heart of London

to the Office of the Pakistan High Commission. Demonstrators carried placards with the following slogans: 'Down with military dictatorship in Pakistan', 'Basic Democracy is a basic fraud', 'Release political prisoners in Pakistan', 'Reopen Dacca University', etc.[49]

The *New York Times* and the *Times of India* News Service, in a report from Dacca dated 20 February 1962, stated that "a potentially explosive political crisis in East Pakistan" confronted the Ayub regime. According to it, "East Pakistani intellectuals chafe under martial law. In private conversations they deplore curbs on the press and strictures against political activity. They strongly dispute President Ayub's contention that Pakistan, because of her economic backwardness and high degree of illiteracy, is not suited to Western type democracy."[50] The strength of the feelings among East Pakistanis had a dignified demonstration on 21 February when, despite the closure of all educational institutions in Dacca, members of the public joined a large number of school and college students in observing the Martyrs' Day. The tenth anniversary of the Martyrs' Day was, in fact, observed with due solemnity throughout East Pakistan. In Dacca, students took out a silent procession, and marched to the graveyard of the martyrs. Later the processionists assembled at 'Shahid Minar' (i.e., Martyrs' Tower) in the Medical College area and offered wreaths and flowers. Some students delivered short speeches and then the marchers dispersed. Processionists coming to the Shahid Minar wore black badges and carried illustrated placards. The placards called for the restoration of democratic rights, especially freedom of speech and expression. The Dacca University Law Association and the Medical College Students Union jointly organized a symposium as part of the Martyrs' Day programme. Ataur Rahman Khan, an ex-Chief Minister of East Pakistan, addressed the symposium. A resolution, requesting the Government of Pakistan to provide a democratic constitution establishing a

parliamentary system rooted in adult franchise and extending complete provincial autonomy to East Pakistan, was passed at this symposium held at the Curzon Hall. At the entrance to the hall and inside the hall, there were placards demanding the termination of autocracy, in general, and of curbs on freedom of speech and press, in particular.[51]

Discontent among East Pakistani students had been simmering since the inauguration of the Martial Law regime. It grew when, in December 1960, a non-Bengalee administrator from Karachi replaced the Bengalee Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University. The Ayub regime clamped down repressive legislation on the University in 1961, adding thereby to discontent among students. The appointment of the Constitution Commission in 1960 raised high hopes among students of a return to parliamentary democracy. For the Commission was entrusted with assessing public opinion, to be translated into a new Constitution, by means of a questionnaire, and public opinion, the students were aware, would favour that return. As K. J. Newman wrote, "public opinion was disappointing to the [Martial Law] regime: over 90 percent of those questioned seemed to have called for an immediate return to parliamentary and federal government." This was opposed to Ayub's design, clearly reflected in the questionnaire, to have a centralized Government with Presidential supremacy. The reaction of the Martial Law regime to this expression of inconvenient public opinion was indignant; it forbade any more public discussion of the coming Constitution. Students were further enraged. The arrest of Suhrawardy provided them with a long-awaited opportunity to launch an agitation against the Martial Law regime and the Ayub Constitution to be announced on 1 March. Student discontent erupted in February 1962. Their defiant attitude was clearly expressed on 3 February when Manzur Qadir, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, visited the Dacca University campus, and students refused to meet him and listen to him

unless the Press was granted the right to publish the questions asked by students and the answers of the Foreign Minister. "There is a close connection", observed K. J. Newman, "between the new Pakistan Constitution, promised by President Ayub Khan's Cabinet for today [i.e., 1 March 1962], Mr. Suhrawardy's arrest, and the recent Dacca riots."[52]

The Ayub regime, however, must be credited with great tact in the handling of the February agitation. On 7 February, while Ayub was proceeding towards the Tejgaon airport at the end of his Dacca trip, some persons, students being in the majority, staged demonstrations against Ayub. The authorities arrested eleven participants of this demonstration, including nine students, who were accused of being members of an unlawful procession, shouting anti-state slogans and damaging Government property. The processionists had damaged a ceremonial gate, erected in honour of Ayub, at Tejgaon. The accused were handed over to a Special Military Court for trial according to Martial Law regulations. They were all convicted, but granted pardon by East Pakistan's Martial Law Administrator, Maj.-Gen. Khwaja Wasihuddin. The offenders had to execute a bond of surety the violation of which would cancel the pardon, and enable the sentence of conviction to be carried into effect. Perhaps the show of leniency to students was prompted by a desire to arrest an aggravation of student unrest. It was almost certain that an execution of the sentence of conviction would spark off a conflagration in the student community of East Pakistan. The editorial, captioned "Dacca Pardon", in the *Pakistan Times* of 13 March 1962, said: "The approach adopted towards recent manifestations of student unrest in Dacca differs markedly from that which was sometimes adopted in the past, with results that were almost catastrophic."[53]

A different interpretation of the leniency towards students was also possible. Probably it revealed a vital difference in the outlooks of Ayub and Azam. According to Newman, Azam, the

Governor of East Pakistan and the Chancellor of Dacca University, remained virtually silent and inactive while students launched anti-Ayub demonstrations. He hinted at a power contest between Ayub and Azam, who was "known to consider himself as a likely successor to Ayub." "This may well carry in itself the seeds of an even greater danger to the regime than popular resistance. Oligarchies have been more vulnerable from within than from without." According to Stephen Barber, Azam did not approve Ayub's decision to arrest Suhrawardy. "This action [i.e., arrest of Suhrawardy] led to student riots in Dacca, which he [Azam] dealt with too mildly for some tastes."[54]

The announcement of the Ayub Constitution on 1 March 1962 was expected to stir up fresh agitation in East Pakistan. The Martial Law regime took precautionary as well as punitive measures against that. It imposed a wholesale ban on public discussion of the new Constitution. East Pakistani students and youths were in no mood to observe the ban, and gathered in convenient corners, e.g., tea stalls, to ventilate criticisms against the Constitution. The I.B. watchers shadowed the young men and, on their reports, military units rushed to the small gatherings of youths, arresting some and dispersing others. 80,000 Basic Democrats chose members of the two provincial assemblies and the National Assembly, all the three assemblies being powerless under the Ayub Constitution. In the words of Stephen Barber. "President Ayub has retained for himself [under the new Constitution] wider powers than even Charles I possessed." To East Pakistanis, the new Constitution was a camouflage for the perpetuation of a military dictatorship. The military, however, took stringent security measures to prevent a probable popular upsurge. It was not possible to prepare a full-scale protest movement against the Constitution. But Dacca University students appeared to be determined to express their protest in some way in the near future. On 15 March they staged a lightning strike for a day following the distribution, on 14

March, of printed handbills among students calling for that strike. The strikers organized a meeting at the Medical College premises and burnt two copies of the summary of the Ayub Constitution. They adopted a strongly worded resolution at the meeting, which demanded the restoration of fundamental democratic rights to the people, the abrogation of repressive legislation and of the ban on political parties, and the release of all political prisoners. Under these circumstances, the verdict of Professor Rushbrook Williams, that there was a negligible opposition in Pakistan to the new Constitution, appeared to be somewhat odd. Perhaps there was very little else that the Professor could say in an exclusive interview to the Government-owned *Pakistan Times*. On this point, the comments of the *Guardian* seemed to be very realistic. It said: "President Ayub Khan's constitution seems unlikely to dissipate the political restiveness that has been growing in Pakistan over recent months. On the contrary; for the restiveness has been largely due to disapproval of what it was feared the Constitution would contain, and now—at least, on the major points—President Ayub has shown those fears to be justified. He has insisted on a presidential form of Government [devoid of freely functioning political parties and direct secret ballot] whereas there is a strong yearning among many educated Pakistanis for the parliamentary form, more usual in the Commonwealth."[55]

The Pakistan Government sought to minimize its responsibility for the agitation in East Pakistan, spearheaded by students and directed towards the fulfilment of some legitimate demands, by portraying agitators as being influenced by Communists and by elements inside and outside Pakistan trying to disrupt the political integrity of Pakistan. Syed Hashim Raza, Secretary to the Ministry of National Reconstruction and Information, declared in Lahore on 19 March that outside elements, aiming at the disruption of unity among Pakistanis, incited the students of East Pakistan to cause dis-

turbances. Raza admitted, however, that Communists were active not only in East Pakistan but also in West Pakistan. It was idle to pretend that student demonstrations, related to vital constitutional issues, were merely the result of machinations by Communists and foreign agents, including not only Indians but also non-Muslims in Pakistan, to whom the Ayub-led coterie tried persistently to divert the wrath of East Pakistanis arrayed against him. This tactics cannot always eliminate deep-rooted discontent. In East Pakistan, too, it did not succeed. Student disturbances did not remain confined to Dacca. In Kusthia, for instance, student processionists raised anti-Ayub slogans and burnt copies of the Constitution on the river bank till the police came, lathi-charged and dispersed them. Ayub required the cooperation of Government officials in order to enforce repressive measures and thus prevent a mass upsurge against his Constitution. The Martial Law regime, therefore, consulted the reports of Central Intelligence agents in East Pakistan on the reliability of East Pakistani officials for the execution of repressive steps. According to these reports, a number of East Pakistani officials was transferred to the West Wing. West Pakistani officials, willing to enforce the repressive measures, would fill up their places. This was an additional factor provoking unrest among East Pakistani students who never welcomed the intrusion of West Pakistani officials in their province. Nevertheless, Ayub stuck to the bogey of foreign machinations. Either he was trying to deceive Pakistanis, or he was being too self-complacent. Ayub told a Press conference at Lahore on 22 March that Communists in Calcutta and Agartala [both in Indian territory] were engaged in subverting law and order in East Pakistan. On 28 March, in his Convocation Address to the Peshawar University, he lashed out at conspirators, with bases in Calcutta and Kabul, who were corroding the patriotism of Pakistanis and thus threatened Pakistan with disruption. In an obvious reference to non-Muslims, and per-

haps to instigate a communal riot, and thereby throttle the demonstrations against him, Ayub declared : "Even today there exists, in our midst, some element which never believed in the concept of Pakistan and now that it has become a reality is still keen to destroy it."[56]

Ayub thus specified in his Peshawar University Convocation Address what remained a broad hint in his Manifesto, proclaimed on 23 March and emphasizing "anti-Pakistan elements in the country who aim at disruption and subversion to suit their personal interest or to act as the tools of foreign interest hostile to Pakistan." According to the Manifesto, these anti-Pakistan elements at first wanted to isolate East Pakistan from West Pakistan, and then pave the way to a complete destruction of Pakistan. The Manifesto stressed that disintegration was inevitable if the two Wings failed to stay united. In order to promote unity between the two Wings, Ayub even favoured the introduction of a common script for Bengali and Urdu. Ayub suspected that the current Bengali script, also employed in West Bengal, India, brought East Pakistanis under the influence of Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal. Ayub expressed this suspicion, and recommended the replacement of the current Bengali script in a meeting with Pakistan's newspaper editors.[57] He said : "If you ask me and if I were an East Pakistani, then in order to get away from the cultural domination and grip of Calcutta I will change the script. That will give tremendous psychological freedom to the people in East Pakistan from the forces of Hindu culture and influence." This proposal was thoroughly irksome to East Pakistanis. An East Pakistani editor challenged the President's view, and complained that East Pakistanis were being misunderstood. Whenever they aired any grievance in the past, they were held guilty of succumbing to the influence of Calcutta. The East Pakistani editor vigorously denied that Calcutta could influence his province because of the Bengali script. The editor also disputed the view constantly

propagated by the Central ruling coterie that Indian agents and Communists, deriving their inspiration from Calcutta, were moulding the thoughts and actions of East Pakistanis. This was a reflection on the patriotism of East Pakistanis, the editor regretted. Ayub, of course, assured that this was not a reflection on the patriotism of East Pakistanis but only a warning against the danger facing them. As to the script, he gave an evasive reply by adding that it was not an issue to be decided by him or the editor, but by the people.

On 1 April, in his speech to a delegation of Dacca University teachers and heads of colleges, held at the President's House in Dacca, Ayub again revealed that he either failed, or deliberately refused, as a propaganda tactic, to recognize the student unrest in East Pakistan as part of the long-cherished ambition in East Pakistanis for cultural-economic-political autonomy. Ayub simply asserted that student agitation was an inheritance from the past when students were used by political leaders in pursuit of selfish designs, that students were mentally immature and, having no purpose in life, they indulged in indiscipline. Ayub then added what would be totally disgusting to East Pakistani students noted for their political consciousness. He said that students had no knowledge of constitutional problems and, therefore, they should not try to interfere in constitutional matters.[58]

On 2 April, Ayub further estranged East Pakistanis by some of his comments made before a gathering of local journalists at the President's House in Dacca. He warned the people of East Pakistan that they would be enslaved by Hindus unless they lived as honourable partners with West Pakistanis. That partnership could alone safeguard the security and sovereignty of Pakistan, Ayub said. He repeated the view that Communists in Calcutta and Agartala posed a real threat to East Pakistan. He tried to whip up anti-Indian feelings by proclaiming that Calcutta wanted again to have East Pakistan as its hinterland,

for Partition deprived Calcutta of the benefits of using East Pakistan as a hinterland. One journalist asked Ayub whether student unrest sprang from frustrations of the past. Journalists had no right to criticize the Martial Law regime. Therefore, they could only suggest criticisms vaguely. When the journalist spoke of frustrations of the past, he surely did not exclude several years of Martial Law from the past. But Ayub could take advantage of the journalist's lack of freedom of expression, brush aside the implicit criticism, and plainly reply that he was not responsible for what happened in the past. Ayub further irritated East Pakistani students by portraying them as tools of self-seeking persons doing back-stage manoeuvers to foster unrest among students. An interesting highlight of this meeting was Ayub's expression of surprise over why the people did not discuss the achievements of the Martial Law regime.[59]

It is true that the Ayub Constitution granted the status of national language to both Urdu and Bengali. It made Islamabad the principal seat of the Central Government, and Dacca the principal seat of the National Assembly. The new Constitution further provided that provincial Governors and Ministers must belong to the respective provinces. "This should quiet the murmurs that are heard today at the predominance of Punjabis and Pathans in the administration of the eastern wing", wrote Hugh Tinker, thus echoing the views of the Ayub regime. Such an analysis was not only superficial but debunked the democratic urges of the educated East Pakistanis and East Pakistan's vital necessity for substantial provincial autonomy which alone could do away with the economic-political stranglehold of the West Pakistani coterie led by Ayub. To build up a second capital in Dacca was a mere promise that remained thoroughly empty for years after the termination of the Martial Law. A Bengalee Governor, appointed by Ayub and solely subservient to Ayub, could not solve any vital problem for East Pakistanis. Ayub's Constitution, vesting supre-

macy in the President and retaining legislatures as showpieces devoid of authority, provided a democratic claptrap for the perpetuation of military dictatorship. Ayub could anticipate that East Pakistanis would try to resist the imposition of this Constitution. He, therefore, made elaborate military arrangements to forestall resistance. He also resorted to vehement anti-Indian propaganda as a diversionary move. In March, Ayub sent Mr. K. H. Khurshid, the President of Azad Kashmir, to East Pakistan where he undertook an extensive lecture tour, and tried to create an anti-Indian hysteria among East Pakistanis by focussing their attention on the Kashmir issue. East Pakistani students were not very much worried about Kashmir, and, soon after Khurshid left Dacca, students of Dacca University launched their demonstrations against the new Constitution. On 24 March, Dacca University students went on a lightning strike once again, and there were demonstrations protesting against the Constitution and demanding the restoration of full democracy and the release of political leaders. The police fired teargas shells to disperse processionists who were alleged to have retaliated by throwing brickbats on the police. According to an official Press Note, 207 students, accused of participating in an unlawful procession, were arrested; of them, 130 were soon released on the execution of bonds for good behaviour in future.[60]

It was clear that the small bribes offered to East Pakistanis (which appeared to be very substantial, at least, to Hugh Tinker) failed to satisfy the educated persons of East Pakistan. The Martial Law regime, therefore, stepped up its 'hate India' campaign. In a report from Karachi, dated 3 April 1962, Mr. Inder Jit of the *Times of India* noted : "Hardly a day has passed during the last fortnight when Pakistan's rulers or its Press has not maligned India and sought to paint its leaders as power-drunk scheming individuals who are still not reconciled to partition and will stop at nothing to annul it and swallow up Pakistan. Diplomatic observers here are not surprised. The

'hate India' campaign, which is widely accepted as part of this country's political landscape, has helped Pakistan's rulers tide over the internal difficulties repeatedly in the past and should do so again in regard to the mounting unrest in East Pakistan." In a lengthy editorial on 3 April, *Dawn* enlightened the young men of East Pakistan with the lie that Hindus of West Bengal were habitual slayers of Muslims simply because they were Muslims, that they were the most dangerous enemies of East Pakistani Muslims. The editorial preached the fantastic thesis that West Bengalee Hindus showed fake sympathy for East Pakistani Muslims with a view to separating the East Wing of Pakistan from the West Wing, and then proceed to exploit East Pakistan. *Dawn* admitted that East Pakistan had "very genuine grievances against West Pakistan", that East Pakistan should fight for its right and wrest them from the unwilling hands of West Pakistan, and that East Pakistan might have to wage a "sharp and bitter struggle" for that purpose. Yet, *Dawn* advised East Pakistanis, this struggle was an internal issue for Pakistan, and East Pakistanis did not have to depend on the sympathy of West Bengal in that struggle.[61]

On 4 April, the Dacca University students called off their strike continuing for twelve days. They held a meeting on that day reiterating their demands, already communicated to the Vice-Chancellor in a memorandum, for the release of arrested students, withdrawal of arrest warrants, release of political prisoners and the guaranteeing of civil democratic liberties. The students, furthermore, laid an emphasis on continuing the use of the current Bengali script. On 16 April, however, Dacca University students resumed a three-day strike. They held a meeting in the University campus and repeated their demands noted above. The University authorities issued a notification on that day deploring certain incidents at the Arts Faculty classes of the University, including disturbances directed to-

wards stopping classes, and suspending the classes till the end of the session, i.e., upto 31 May 1962. An editorial in *Dawn* on 18 April condemned the strike resorted to by the students. It called the activities of students 'incomprehensible', this being also the caption of the editorial, although it conceded that "arrests and detentions without trial are always unpalatable and there is some doubt about the wisdom of the Government's recent actions, beginning with the detention of an ex-Premier." *Dawn* urged a review of cases of persons in East Pakistan detained without trial. Seven eminent politicians of East Pakistan, including three former Chief Ministers of the province and a former Central Minister (i.e., Nurul Amin, Abu Husain Sarkar, Ataur Rahman Khan and Hamidul Haq Choudhury), issued on 14 April a statement asking for the release of all political prisoners, including students. Basic Democrats of Gujranwala, West Pakistan, issued a statement that welcomed the statement of the seven East Pakistani leaders, and urged the Government to meet the demands of Dacca University students so that inter-Wing relations in Pakistan might improve.[62]

The government continued its campaign of vilification against the Dacca students, condemning the latter as stooges of politicians and as the vanguards of a secessionist movement. Mr. Muhammad Enaitur Rahman, the General Secretary of the Dacca University Students Union, was wise to combat this propaganda by issuing a statement on 23 April. Enaitur expressed surprise and alarm over the misrepresentation of the recent student movement. His statement firmly rejected the view that the student movement was an instrument in the hands of political leaders with ulterior motives. The students, affirmed Enaitur, would resist any attempt by politicians to exploit them. He also stressed that students wanted to stick to peaceful methods, although police provocations, especially the police invasion of the college premises, sometimes involved students in

unhealthy incidents. Another highlight of Enaitur's statement was a forthright assertion that students were fervently patriotic and were not initiating any anti-state or secessionist campaign. In London, on 30 April, the Committee for Restoration of Democracy in Pakistan held a meeting asking for an immediate release of all arrested students and other political prisoners, and for the resumption of classes at the Dacca University. The meeting condemned the Martial Law regime for ruthlessly oppressing those who agitated for the re-establishment of democracy in Pakistan.[63]

The unbending determination of the East Pakistani students to carry on their agitation perhaps impelled Ayub to soften his attitude towards them and grant some concessions. The results of the election to the National Assembly at the end of April further strengthened the hands of the dissident students and, correspondingly, weakened Ayub's authority. More than a hundred members of the National Assembly, with 150 elected members, were former politicians enjoying much popular support in the pre-Martial Law period, and belonging mostly to the old Muslim League. Officially, there was no political party. But it was clear that the politicians, sought to be banished by Ayub from the political arena, staged a remarkable come-back in an election that was rigorously controlled and master-minded by Ayub. It was a unique election that showed how the popular thirst for democratic institutions could pierce a military dictatorship and upset the calculations of the supreme ruler. A little dose of democracy, applied to the Martial Law regime of Pakistan, exposed the amount of popular faith in the regime. It pricked the balloon of continuous boastings about the popularity of the Martial Law regime. The finances and organizational capacity of this regime were entirely devoted to ensure that Ayub should get a majority of supporters in the National Assembly. The results of the election, however, threw him into a minority, and demonstrated anew that the popular passion

for democratic institutions makes itself felt even if it is given a slight opportunity for expression. In a similar fashion, the results of elections to the provincial assemblies also shattered Ayub's calculations. Stephen Barber commented : "Dismounting from a tiger is a notoriously hazardous operation. Restoring democracy, even on the instalment plan, after a period of military dictatorship however benign is no less so." The *Times* wrote : "President Ayub is not the first authoritarian ruler who has had to take account of the stubborn desire for representative government. British colonial administrations have found the same thing again and again. Men chosen locally for reliability and conformity to established standards turn out to want something more than the function of interpreting national policies downwards to the people. They want a share in devising them. And Pakistan is not, after all, a colonial territory under tutelage .... The very concept of basic democracy, with the rulers of the country separated by tiers of limited responsibility from the individual citizen, runs counter to the most modest ideas of political maturity which educated Pakistanis have inherited."[64]

These elections to the National and provincial Assemblies were both farcical and profoundly significant. These were farcical because the whole governmental machinery was employed to make Ayub's supporters victorious. These were significant because the results completely upset the expectations of Ayub and his supporters. The results, indeed, supplied a good deal of credence to the following comment in the *National Herald* : "The simple fact is that he [Ayub] changed nothing except the locus of political power by simple appropriation under an umbrella of fear so intimidating that a hush descended on the scene formerly festering with a wild scramble for the fleshpots." One special feature of the election was that, unlike in the Constituent Assemblies and the National Assembly of the pre-Martial Law period, there was no Hindu member in

the newly elected National Assembly. In the East Pakistan provincial Assembly there were only three non-Muslims, two from the Scheduled Castes and one from the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Hindus became political outcastes in a more real sense under the Ayub regime than under the previous regimes.[65]

It was not difficult to understand that Ayub's ceaseless banters against politics and politicians merely signified that he wanted to do politics in his own way without encountering any restraints exercised by politicians and democratic institutions. The results of the elections must have shocked him and rudely shaken his self-confidence. For he proceeded to extend a few concessions to East Pakistanis. It was clear that the elections failed to soothe, even temporarily, the political sensibilities of East Pakistanis. Politicians returned to the legislature began, without any delay, to clamour for the revival of political parties. Some members of the National Assembly, including such notable politicians as Mr. Tamizuddin Khan and Mr. Abdullah Zaheeruddin, began to press the Martial Law regime for relaxing its attitude to the students. They assured East Pakistan's Martial Law Administrator that, as elected representatives of the people, they would assume the responsibility for the good behaviour of the students in future. They urged upon the Martial Law regime to take a sympathetic view towards students arrested under Martial Law regulations. Ayub took a very tactful decision by bowing down to the wind of change and granting a general amnesty to students arrested for the violation of Martial Law regulations during the recent anti-Ayub demonstrations. *Dawn* commented that this was an act of clemency and that "the President has again given proof of his high statesmanship and large-heartedness". A tactful response to the pressure of unwholesome circumstances could surely be characterized as an act of sensible power-craft, but perhaps not of real statesmanship or, far less, of generosity.[66]

Ayub further placated East Pakistani sentiments by setting

up two Central Boards, one for the development of Urdu, and another for the development of Bengali. He was the patron of each of the Boards. The Boards would develop the two languages especially in order to enable them to keep pace with the progress in natural and social sciences and technology, and to become the vehicle of instruction at higher levels. Ayub, however, was not the person to use concessions alone for the purpose of coping with the agitation in East Pakistan. He released other weapons too. In April-May 1962, his regime engineered communal outbreaks in Dacca, Rajshahi and Pabna in order to divert public attention away from an agitation directed against him. He also whipped up an anti-Indian war-hysteria by air-transporting troops from West to East Pakistan, and putting the Indian Deputy High Commissioner's Office under military guard. The Pakistan Government made it impossible for the officials of the Indian Deputy High Commission to go out and collect information about the onslaughts on non-Muslims. Even the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Rajeswar Dayal, who came to Dacca, was not allowed to go to Rajshahi and Pabna, where the assaults on non-Muslims were much more serious than in Dacca, and was thus prevented from making an on-the-spot investigation. Ayub, moreover, refused to take any more chances with Azam Khan whose popularity in East Pakistan was in sharp contrast to the unpopularity of Ayub in that province. Azam ceased to be the Governor of East Pakistan with effect from 11 May 1962, when another West Pakistani, Mr. Ghulam Faruque, an ex-Chairman of the PIDC, became East Pakistan's Governor. Even the *Pakistan Times*, virtually a propaganda instrument of Ayub, wrote that "touching scenes were witnessed when thousands of people, grim and gloomy, some sobbing and crying, bade farewell to the outgoing Governor of East Pakistan, Lt.-Gen. Azam Khan at Barisal and Chandpur yesterday [i.e., 6 May 1962] at the end of his farewell tour of the districts of East Pakistan." What happened at

Barisal and Chandpur, it should be stressed, was a mere repetition of what took place in other districts. The riots, the war frenzy, and the removal of Azam Khan showed that Ayub would combine strong-arm tactics with other appeasing moves in order to quell the disturbances directed at him.[67]

The Martial Law regime was drawing to an end. East Pakistanis tended to look back upon the nearly four-years-long period of Martial Law with a feeling of shame. They cannot forget that while the military-bureaucratic clique sabotaged democracy by throttling every time the General Elections about to be held, it issued a Constitution under the terror-umbrella of the Martial Law, and also staged the show of an election in the Martial Law regime. This is considered by East Pakistanis to be a serious affront to their political consciousness and capacity. On 9 July 1962, about a month after the lifting of the Martial Law, Mr. Abul Kasem Khan (of East Pakistan) voiced the feelings of his province as he declared : "We have often heard people saying that democracy has not proved a success in this country. I beg to differ on this point with those gentlemen who say so. We have not given democracy a real chance to work in this country Only about six or eight weeks before the first Constitution was going to be launched, the Constituent Assembly was dissolved [by Ghulam Muhammad] for reasons known to the Members of this House. Again when the general elections were in sight, for reasons also known to the Members of this House and to the general public, Martial Law had to be imposed and for the first time in fifteen years, general elections could be held in this country under the cover of Martial Law and the New Constitution could be introduced in this country under the cover of Martial Law. Is it not a matter of shame?"[68]

Rulers of the Martial Law period frequently hurled invectives on politicians for their corruption and favouritism. East Pakistanis wondered how far the government headed by a military commander was justified in condemning the politicians

whose alleged vices it was quick to adopt and practise with no less brazenness. Karl Von Vorys has rightly observed that a military commander trying to enlist the support of the bureaucracy has to purchase that support by rewards, monetary or others of personal necessity. The Martial Law regime was guilty, in fact, of spending much more on civil administration than the earlier regime. The same trend persisted after the lifting of the Martial Law. East Pakistanis thought that this was necessitated by the compulsions of an authoritarian rule. The annual expenditure on Civil Administration, attested Ch. Fazl Elahi, a West Pakistani MNA, rose by about 11 crores of rupees during the Martial Law regime. It shot up from about 29 crores to about 40 crores, and never came down. The Ayub regime went on "creating more posts", said Mahbubul Haq, "to strengthen the steel frame of new fascism by creating white elephants, new corporations, to fit not only the near and dear ones, but to fit those who are strong and iron-willed to maintain this fascist Government in power by means, fair or foul." Mr. Ramizuddin Ahmed, an East Pakistani MNA and an ex-Central Minister, complained that if cases of corruption and nepotism involved, in the pre-Martial Law period, a sum of one hundred or one thousand rupees, in the period following it, sums of lakhs and crores of rupees were involved in such cases.[69]

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67. Despatch from INDER JIT in Karachi, *The Times of India,* 30 April 1962. *The Pakistan Times,* 2, 3, 8 May 1962. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 5 May 1962. *The Pakistan Times,* 3 June 1962.

68. *NAP Debates,* 9 July 1962, Vol. I, No. 22, p. 1219.

69. VORYS, n. 6, p. 296. Speech by CH. FAZL ELAHI, *NAP Debates,* 14 June 1963, Vol. II, No. 9, p. 474. Speech by RAMIZUDDIN AHMED, *NAP Debates,* 17 June 1963, Vol. II, No. 11, p. 567. Speech by MAHBUBUL HAQ, *NAP Debates,* 27 June 1964, Vol. II, No. 24, p. 2046.

CHAPTER 5

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF BASIC DEMOCRACY

The Martial Law was lifted on 8 June 1962 when President Ayub Khan inaugurated the first session of the first National Assembly of the Second Republic of Pakistan. The twin pressures of Martial Law and Basic Democracy failed to set up a legislature that would carry out Ayub's dictates without any protest. On the contrary, the old politicians packed the legislature, either themselves or by proxy. Many of the former politicians had been debarred by the Ayub regime from contesting elections. They, however, succeeded in pushing their nominees to the legislature. Ayub, therefore, had to engage in political manoeuverings in order to keep himself in office and, at the same time, to maintain a show of democratic government. He appointed a Cabinet consisting of ten members a majority of whom, including all the five East Pakistani Ministers, were drawn from the National Assembly. According to the Constitution, Ayub was not obliged to choose his Ministers from amongst the MNAs. But he possibly did so in order to divide and rule the politicians, who held a clear majority in the Assembly, and who would be able to create a thoroughly embarrassing situation by quashing all measures initiated by the Cabinet appointed by, and responsible to, the President. Ayub began to back ex-Muslim Leaguers in an attempt to buy off a majority of MNAs. For instance, he made Muhammad Ali (of Bogra), an ex-Muslim Leaguer and a former Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Minister for External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations. He enticed MNAs into his fold by appointing a disproportionately large number of Parliamentary Secre-

taries, thus ensuring a majority support for the Treasury Benches within the National Assembly. Otherwise, there was no necessity for the creation of Parliamentary Secretaries in a system that insulated the Cabinet from the vagaries of legislative will by making it absolutely subservient to the President. The National Assembly could not oust the Cabinet; the President could. But Ayub wanted the MNAs to decorate him with a democratic ornament. Hence these political baits. *Dawn* observed: "This [appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries] in itself would suggest that the old method of ensuring support for the Government inside the Legislatures by holding forth inducements of office to the largest possible number has not yet been discarded. This is not a good augury for the future." Ayub further showed his proficiency in out-politicking politicians, for instance, by rehabilitating Mr. K A. Sabur, convicted and sentenced by the Martial Law regime to rigorous imprisonment, and making him the Central Minister for Communication.[1]

Perhaps Ayub could have avoided such political manoeuverings but for the challenge coming from the East Pakistani MNAs. It is significant to note that the average standard of their accomplishments was much above that of the MNAs from the former Panjab (which, incidentally, supplied the two non-MNA members of the Ayub Cabinet), and foretold an efficient fulfilment of the parliamentary roles. The *Times* (of 3 May 1962) wrote: "One significant feature of the newly elected 150-member National Assembly is the low standard of education of many members. The most disappointing record in this connexion is among members from the former Punjab. The former North West Frontier Province and East Pakistan have sent quite capable members, whose average intelligence and qualifications are well up to parliamentary standards. Sind has also elected a few good members." Once again it was thus confirmed that the political maturity of East Pakistanis was an important

living force that could not be totally ignored by a ruling coterie in Pakistan. Soon after the inauguration of the National Assembly, the East Pakistani members displayed their political strength by unanimously supporting the candidature of Tamizuddin Khan for the Speakership of the National Assembly. In contrast, West Pakistani MNAs showed deep discord in the matter of choosing the Senior Deputy Speaker. Ayub's followers made a covert attempt to set up Mr. Habibur Rahman, an ex-Information Minister at the Centre, as a contestant to Tamizuddin. But East Pakistani MNAs made it unequivocally known that they were solidly backing up Tamizuddin, the Chairman of the First Constituent Assembly and an eminent leader of the former Muslim League. Habibur finally stayed out of the contest. Tamizuddin easily became the Speaker. The *Pakistan Times* commented: "Our brethren from East Pakistan have lived up to their reputation for possessing greater political acumen and consciousness. They all gathered behind Moulvi Tamizuddin's candidacy for Speakership and left little choice for West Pakistani Members of the National Assembly. Contrarily, the matter of election of the senior Deputy Speaker has become a bone of contention among West Pakistanis." That this incident stirred up certain misgivings in the minds of Ayub and his followers would be inferred from what the *Pakistan Times* added to the above comment: "We would, however, very much like West Pakistani politicians in general and Members of the National Assembly in particular to take a leaf out of the East Pakistani book of politics for raising a like banner of unity. Besides sparing unnecessary heat, it will help to thrash out national problems in true partnerships between the two wings. Any kind of weakness in the one is harmful for the overall national image. A bi-zonal state as we are, unity in each zone is a pre-requisite for balanced relationship."[2]

Ayub, of course, took care to keep the Departments of Finance, Industry, Economic Affairs, among others, out of the

hands of East Pakistani Ministers. This could be interpreted as an attempt to forestall any attempt on the part of East Pakistanis to improve their economic destiny by far-reaching measures to cancel out the effects of neglect in the past. As *Dawn* felt it, "some might argue that all the Ministries connected with the development of the country namely Finance, Industry, Economic Affairs (though technically under the President) have been concentrated in the hands of persons from one part [i.e. West Pakistan] only and should have been divided between the two wings." In spite of this severe curb on their power to cater to the special requirements of their province, East Pakistani MNAs evoked fear in the Ayub-led coterie by displaying their determination to fight for the long-standing demands for their province. They were probably instrumental in compelling Ayub to remould the political system that he wanted to build up by means of the new Constitution. Muhammad Ali (of Bogra) demanded that he should be allowed to retain his membership of the National Assembly if he was to be expected to accept Ministership. The Constitution dictated clearly that an MNA, on being appointed a Minister, had to relinquish his seat at the National Assembly. But Ali did not want to deprive himself of legislative as well as popular support by becoming a Minister. Ayub, in order to destroy the unity of politicians, passed an Order within four days of the inauguration of the Constitution that made a vital amendment and allowed Ministers to retain their National Assembly seats. But, on the same day the five East Pakistani MNAs took office as Ministers, an overwhelming majority of East Pakistan MNAs, 62 out of 78, virtually disowned the five Ministers by passing a resolution that condemned these Ministers for accepting offices without consulting the MNAs from their province and without obtaining any guarantee that the longstanding demands of their province would be satisfied[3]

This resolution was at once a defeat and a victory for Ayub and his Government. It was apparent that East Pakistani

MNAs were determined to play the role of an opposition and might succeed in depriving the Cabinet of the support of a majority of legislators. The *Pakistan Times* ventilated the worry of the Government : "The censure motion passed by the 62 East Pakistani members of the National Assembly against the acceptance of Ministerships by the five MNAs from their province, is a significant commentary on the new Presidential Cabinet. .... If these members stick to opposition and some from West Pakistan also choose to keep out of the bloc of Government supporters, the new Ministry's position will be pretty shaky." Such an attitude flowed from the confusion about the position of the Presidential Cabinet created by the President's order amending the Constitution and enabling Ministers to remain MNAs. This amending order put up a show of the Cabinet being democratically rooted in the legislature. This show could not be maintained unless Ayub could ensure that the Cabinet was not being outvoted in the Assembly. The behaviour of East Pakistani MNAs indicated this danger of the Cabinet being outvoted in the Assembly. That would not, of course, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, disturb the tenure of the Cabinet, far less of the President. The Constitution was quite clear on this point. But that discomfiture of the Cabinet would take away its democratic appearance, which President Ayub was fond of preserving. In other words, the confusion about the position of the Cabinet was created not by the Constitution but by President Ayub's concern for supplying it with a democratic garb. The resolution of the majority of East Pakistani MNAs, directed against the five East Pakistani MNAs-cum-Ministers, was a partial defeat for Ayub in as much as it revealed a decision, despite a period of Martial Law, on the part of East Pakistani politicians to defy Ayub. It was also a victory for the President who succeeded in sowing disunity among East Pakistani politicians who posed the biggest potential challenge to his authority under his Constitution.[4]

The government could easily sense the extent of the political challenge emanating from East Pakistanis. Its strength was obvious, being rooted in certain legitimate demands of East Pakistanis (discussed at length in previous Chapters) and not in motives of self-aggrandizement. Even the *Pakistan Times* (of 16 June 1962) conceded that although one might not agree to the demands upheld by East Pakistani MNAs, "it is impossible to withhold from them admiration for their stand. The demands are after all not for personal gain—indeed office is being refused on their account—but reflect a concern for and identity with public issues. And is not their ventilation the role for which elected representatives are cast? Actually much of the misunderstanding between the East and the West arises from the sharp differences in the character and disposition of the representatives of the two Wings. East Pakistanis, of all schools of thought, put their province before their individual interests and are thus obliged to frame and define its needs and requirements." In contrast, according to this newspaper, West Pakistani representatives cared only for their selfish interests, not for the interests of their province as a whole. Ayub went ahead with meeting the political challenge of East Pakistanis by a policy of the carrot and the stick. Offices of Parliamentary Secretaries, adjudged to be "wholly superfluous" by the *Pakistan Times* (of 15 June 1962), were the carrots. The sticks were the President's warnings conveyed by him personally or through rumours inspired by his followers. He met prominent East Pakistani (and West Pakistani) MNAs and emphasized that any rebuff to the Cabinet, by means of cut motions, for instance, would be a personal assault on him, and he would take a serious view of it. Rumours ran that the Martial Law might return if the MNAs behaved improperly, i.e., started violating or circumventing the will of the President. Politicians, under these circumstances, should perhaps tone down their challenge, and try to cling to whatever little authority was

granted by the President instead of precipitating a reimposition of the Martial Law.[5]

East Pakistani MNAs revealed their political strength, within two weeks of the inauguration of the National Assembly, in course of the discussion on the adjournment motion about the release of political prisoners. The East Pakistani Ministers like Muhammad Ali (of Bogra) did not have the courage to speak against the motion calling for the release of political prisoners, which commanded universal support among the people of East Pakistan. The cogent arguments put forward by the supporters of the motion were worth noting. Mr. Mashiur Rahman, who, along with Farid Ahmad, was emerging to be the leader of a group of East Pakistani MNAs that refused to be swayed by the dangling of Presidential favours and continued unflinchingly in the role of the opposition, said : "you know, Sir, that there might have been some controversy about the release of all political prisoners without trial. But since 3½ years the Government have failed to form a tribunal and arrange the things for their trial. So it is no use after 3½ years to form a tribunal and create a farce of trial They have already suffered detention and their detention should not be longer on the plea of establishing a tribunal." Qamarul Ahsan (of East Pakistan) referred to the case of Suhrawardy and doubted the accusation that Suhrawardy was engaged in anti-state activities and had links with agents of hostile foreign states. Qamarul asserted that the people of the country treated this accusation as entirely fabricated because it was not proved. He pleaded that political prisoners should either be tried immediately by a regularly constituted court or be released immediately. Otherwise, he warned, the situation in East Pakistan, already 'in ferment', would be still 'more aggravated'.[6]

This adjournment motion received apparently an overwhelming support from the MNAs, and a vote on it might have landed the Ministry in a fiasco. The division, however, was tactfully

avoided by the Speaker; the MNAs talked out the motion. But the Ayub-led coterie felt alarmed. Ayub intervened, talked to MNAs, and hatched up a gentleman's agreement that would save the prestige of the Cabinet. According to this agreement, no cut motion on the budget would be pressed to a division. This agreement merely indicated that the military-bureaucratic coterie, habituated to a position of unrivalled dominance, would not tolerate any restraint exercised by politicians. But East Pakistanis soon demonstrated their courage by violating the agreement and defying the President. They sponsored a cut motion on the demands for grants of the Defence Ministry, headed by Ayub himself, and pressed it to a division. East Pakistanis condemned the policy of the ruling coterie in perpetuating inadequate representation of East Pakistanis in the armed forces, subjecting them to inequitable treatment after recruitment, and taking no steps to make East Pakistan self-sufficient in defence against potential aggression. Qamarul Ahsan declared : "Let me tell you in the clearest possible terms that the people of East Pakistan feel most acutely that they have been let down by successive Governments in this matter. It will be a folly of the greatest magnitude if steps are not taken to remove this grievance of East Pakistan and make East Pakistan self-sufficient in Defence." East Pakistani MNAs came out with important facts sustaining East Pakistan's grievance in this matter. They emphasized the military capabilities of the small number of East Pakistani recruits to the defence forces, citing the testimonies of high military officials of the West Wing and of a foreign allied country in support of their contention. Major Mohd. Afsaruddin said, "the object of this cut motion (by rupee one only) is to rouse consciousness to the facts brought out." There were sharp exchanges between the President's deputy, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and East Pakistani MNAs who retaliated by insisting on a division. The Cabinet won; the invisible hand of Ayub saw to it. But the East-versus-

West feelings mounted because, excepting three, all the West Pakistani MNAs were against the motion. Although there was no defeat, the Ayub-led coterie felt aggrieved. Its mouthpiece, the *Pakistan Times*, called the whole episode an "Unfortunate Lapse" making this phrase the caption of an editorial. "Honest differences of opinion among various elements in a country's political life are a sign of good national health; and their ability to express their views fearlessly is an essential condition for national progress. But such expressions are, by a tacit understanding among all patriots, subject to certain self-imposed limitations and considerations of propriety. . . . The members of the National Assembly who pressed to the point of division their cut motion on the demand for the defence services clearly transgressed these limitations," wrote the *Pakistan Times*.[7]

Ayub's search for a Cabinet that enjoyed the halo of popular support, and not its substance, drove him to modify further the system of government set up by his Constitution as regards the functioning of political parties. All through the Martial Law era he went on heaping contempt and ridicule on politicians and political parties. His Constitution provided that the National Assembly should codify punishment for persons carrying on election campaigns under party banners. A few days before the termination of the Martial Law, Ayub appeared to judge this provision to be inadequate, and he issued an Ordinance explicitly forbidding the revival of old political parties and making the formation of new political parties subject to a sanction from the National Assembly. In his inaugural address to the National Assembly on 8 June 1962, Ayub reiterated this attitude towards political parties by stressing his personal opposition to political parties that, by their shifting alliances, supplied instability to a parliamentary executive. Yet, within a month of the end of Martial Law, the Ayub regime introduced at the National Assembly a bill legalizing, with certain restrictions, of course, the political parties. The ceaseless clamour of

politicians, finding a ready response from the people at huge public gatherings, especially in East Pakistan, for the revival of political parties, surely forced the Ayub regime to reconsider the revival of political parties. The more important reason, perhaps, of Ayub's decision to legalize political parties stemmed from his intention that his Cabinet should receive the support of a stable majority at the National Assembly. With this aim, probably, he amended the constitutional provision and allowed Ministers to retain their seats in the Assembly. But this innovation could not do the trick. Ministers, despite their continuance as MNAs, failed to attract the loyalties of a stable majority of MNAs. While political parties remained refrigerated, the Treasury Benches had to go on canvassing support from members forming different groups which, but for the official ban, might have transformed themselves into rival political parties. Muhammad Ali (of Bogra) led the Democratic Group with about 35 members; Sardar Bahadur Khan led the Independent Group consisting of about 30 supporters of the old Muslim League; Mian Bari headed the Muslim Progressive Group comprised approximately of 30 ex-Republicans; Mashiur Rahman and Farid Ahmad controlled the voters of about 30 East Pakistani MNAs. These estimates were furnished by the *Pakistan Times* (of 17 July 1962), which further suggested that while Mian Bari's Group extended unwavering support to the Treasury Benches, the Group of Mashiur and Farid offered an unflinching opposition, and the votes of other Groups, along with those of members not belonging to any Group, were split.[8]

The President's ordinance permitting Ministers to remain MNAs, instead of helping Ministers to receive the support of a majority of MNAs, merely created a confusion about the nature of the Presidential Cabinet by impelling the Cabinet to engage in campaigns for the votes of MNAs in favour of the official measures. It is true that Ayub's cautious use of patronage and threats insured the Cabinet against a defeat on the floor of

the National Assembly. It is also true the Cabinet, even if it was defeated, did not have to quit. As *Dawn* (of 18 July 1962) commented : "Although an adverse vote of the legislature cannot bring about the downfall of governments it would have been an untenable position if, on any major issue, the majority of the Parliament had cast such a vote." On certain major issues the Cabinet, in fact, won by a dangerously narrow margin. President Ayub had to think of forming a political party of his own in order to rescue his Cabinet, almost reduced to the position of politicians in a parliamentary system minus the assured backing of a ruling political party producing the support of a stable legislative majority, from the perennial uncertainty of hunting votes at the National Assembly. A political party, formed and led by Ayub, and backing his Cabinet after recruiting for itself the majority of MNAs, seemed to be an inescapable necessity if Ayub wanted his version of the presidential system to work successfully. "So, the only practical question that faces the President is how to make the Constitution a success, indeed how to make the Presidential system operative ?" wrote the *Pakistan Times* (of 19 July 1962), and added : "The question allows of only one answer—that he should become the effective head of a country-wide political party."[9]

The failure of Ayub's Ministers to command the support of a stable majority inside the Assembly was matched by their inability to captivate public support outside the Assembly. They failed to reduce, let alone stamp out, by building up their own public following, the gathering momentum of popular opinion, more potent in the East than in the West Wing, that condemned the arrest of East Pakistan's Suhrawardy and, for instance, of West Pakistan's Khan Abdul Qaiyum Khan, formerly the President of the Muslim League, and demanded the introduction of the parliamentary system. The removal of Martial Law restrictions prompted politicians, including those

EBDOed, to launch an assault on Ayub's Constitution in public meetings and to influence public opinion in favour of the installation of the parliamentary system. It appeared to Ayub's followers that the EBDO would be meaningless if, by a regular use of public platforms, the EBDOed politicians succeeded in infecting the public mind with aversion towards Ayub-style presidentialism, and, on the other hand, cemented public support for politicians, free from EBDO, advocating a parliamentary government. Ayub's followers appeared to be thoroughly deficient in using public meetings for the defence of the system planted by Ayub, while politicians opposed to the system systematically arranged public meetings to mount assaults on that system. On 8 July, for instance, Dacca witnessed a meeting that, according to the *Pakistan Times* (of 10 July 1962), was 'mammoth' and 'lent a sharp point' to the demand for the establishment of the parliamentary system in Pakistan. This newspaper added : "The demand sounds the more insistent because while united platforms have been raised to give it vent by the disgruntled and disqualified political leaders, no forum exists for tapping, expressing and recording the undoubtedly wide support and approval which the presidential form of government enjoys in the country. This one-way contest is likely to create many unnecessary and avoidable political problems." The *Pakistan Times* exhorted Ayub to form and lead a political party, which could then be an effective platform for the dissemination of Ayub's political philosophy, expressed in his Constitution, and could avert the 'monstrous landslide' engineered by 'parliamentary-wallahs' against him. Ayub and his followers became afraid of an imminent collapse of the presidential system they sponsored, and hoped to avoid the collapse by rearing up a political party headed by Ayub and capturing mass support by a generous use of the President's authority and resources. In other words, Ayub was to convert himself into a full-fledged politician by throwing off the apolitical mask he

chose to wear for a long time. This move had the additional advantage of enabling Ayub, once political parties came into being, to play off one politician or political party against another. He could thus try to dissolve the alliance of politicians, formerly rivals to one another, who could make a common cause as long as they were all debarred from building up political parties and address common gatherings in opposing the Ayub regime, but who were likely to compete with one another again after the re-establishment of political parties.[10]

Nevertheless, the Ayub regime could not go in for an unmuzzled revival of political parties which was destined to thwart the very safety of authority it was craving. The President, indeed, traversed a long way as he allowed the passage of the Political Parties Bill by swallowing his dogma about the banefulness of parties. He surely understood how he was being forced to retreat, and how, despite a retreat, he could manage to ensure the supremacy of the coterie headed by him. The Political Parties Bill swarmed with restrictions aimed at paralyzing certain potentially powerful political groups which might successfully challenge the strength of Ayub the politician. Ayub was apprehensive of the growth of the separatist feeling in East Pakistan which could be capitalized by a political party. The Bill, therefore, prohibited the formation of a political party working against the 'integrity' or 'security' of Pakistan. Similarly, the Communists were the likely target of a ban on the formation of a party aided by a foreign state. Another restriction, aimed at paralyzing non-Muslims politically, enjoined that a political party could not come into being unless it believed in Islamic ideology. Mashiur Rahman condemned this provision, referring to the famous statement of Jinnah declaring both Hindus and Muslims to be Pakistanis in the political sphere. Mashiur pinpointed the inherent outrageousness of this restriction by asking how the Pakistani Muslims would feel in case in a foreign country Muslims were call-

ed upon to abstain from forming any party that did not uphold Hindu ideology. All these restrictions on the formation of political parties underlined Ayub's acute awareness of multifarious difficulties likely to confront him in whatever steps he wanted to take for the purpose of maintaining even an empty etiquette of democracy. A *Times of India* editorial said : "The Ayub regime is at last discovering to its dismay that there is no easy half-way house between dictatorship and democracy."[11]

Perhaps the most important restriction on the functioning of political parties was the exclusion of politicians who were the victims of the EBDO or the Security Act. They were not permitted to join any political party. Ayub thus intended to keep out of the political contest those politicians who were potentially the most powerful rivals. East Pakistanis decried the expulsion of EBDOed politicians from the political arena for a number of reasons. The EBDO proceedings were not conducted by properly constituted tribunals manned by purely judicial personnel. The politicians, against whom proceedings were instituted, were neither given the chance to defend themselves nor the opportunity to appeal against the decision of the improperly constituted tribunals. The Security Act, too, operated in an arbitrary fashion and chastized politicians often for no other reason than that they organized demonstrations against the Government. It was used by the ruling coterie to clear the political tracks of powerful opponents. The Ayub regime merely extended the operation of the Security Act when it inserted a provision in the Political Parties Bill preventing persons detained for six months under the Security Act from joining a political party. East Pakistanis welcomed the realization, though delayed, of Ayub that no democracy could work without political parties. But they regretted the curbs on the functioning of political parties that defeated the purposes of democracy. Mr. Nasrullah Khan of East Pakistan declared : "The [Political Parties] Bill in its present form is a clever attempt at

ignoring the basic requirements of democracy. We see that the Bill in its present form gives with one hand and takes away with the other. While drafting the Bill, it appears the Government had an eye on certain individuals whom they considered as their rivals or adversaries in the political field." The huge Dacca meeting of 8 July 1962 passed a resolution condemning the Bill that attempted to throttle public opinion and atrophy the growth of free political organizations embracing the masses. Big meetings at places such as Karachi, Lahore, etc., passed similar resolutions. Without substantial amendments doing away with the curbs on the functioning of political parties, attested Mahbubul Haq, neither the intelligentsia nor the masses of Pakistan would find the Bill acceptable. What tormented East Pakistanis most was that the bureaucratic-military coterie once again refused to leave politicians in the hands of the people who, in a democracy, reserved the right to promote or demote politicians. The Political Parties Bill showed that the bureaucratic-military coterie usurped that right and reminded East Pakistanis that this usurpation led in the past to the repeal of Elections exactly when those were imminent and should have allowed the people to decide the destiny of politicians. Moreover, East Pakistanis did not believe that exiling some politicians from the political contest would remove corruption automatically from public life, or that it was a better substitute for General Elections as a remedy against corruption. Farid Ahmad remarked : "My own humble submission is—and I am confident when I make this assertion—that the politicians ought to have been left to their destiny with their own people. Had there been two or three general elections as has been in the neighbouring country of India you would have seen that much of the corruption would have been eliminated from public life."[12]

The first session of the National Assembly ended in mid-July. The Martial Law had terminated only a few weeks ago.

Pakistanis, whether inside the Assembly or outside, made full use of the right to criticize the Ayub regime won after 44 months. Inside the Assembly, election on a restricted franchise failed to inhibit the capacity of members to criticize the Government. MNAs refused to be reduced to rubberstamps legitimizing official decisions. Stormy debates, colourful walk-outs, troublesome and toughly backed adjournment motions, characterized the Assembly proceedings. It was significant, as the *Pakistan Times* assessed, "in the matter of exchanges in the House, debates and procedural battles, the Government lost often than it demonstrably won." In this matter, the contribution of East Pakistani MNAs, who tended much more than West Pakistani MNAs to vote with the Opposition, appeared to be more crucial than that of West Pakistani MNAs. *Dawn* wrote : "Inside the Legislatures—particularly the Central Parliament—views have been expressed with a candour and vehemence not surpassed even in the days before Martial Law was imposd." *Dawn* considered this to be an "extremely healthy development" and felt "gratified that even the restricted electorates (specially from the East Wing) have returned such vocal elements to the country's new Parliament." The reasons behind the difference in the performance of East and West Pakistani MNAs were thus analyzed by the *Pakistan Times* : "First of all, West Pakistanis temperamentally are not quite the talking type. Secondly, they did not start their political expositions from a foundation of grievance. Thirdly, they came from an area which is not traditionally agitational. Fourthly, by and large, West Pakistan MNAs sprang from a more comfortably placed section of the society—a class to which firebrand politics does not come very naturally." This analysis clearly outlined the dangers the Ayub regime confronted and anticipated, so far as East Pakistanis were concerned, because of its attempt to organize an exhibition of democracy. While the expression of criticisms by Pakistanis, especially East Pakistanis, seemed to

be uninhibited, despite the background of Martial Law and the threat of its reimposition, there was a possibility that the reaction of the Ayub regime to such criticisms might be inhibited. It might feel upset and panicky, and adopt extraordinary methods to stifle criticisms, for instance, by detaining political leaders without any reference to the ordinary law courts. Extraordinary measures would whet suspicions and tarnish the image of the regime in the popular mind. Especially after a period of Martial Law, when the people could not say a word against the Government, the ruling coterie could be oversensitive to criticisms and retaliate by emergency laws, wrongly equating ordinary acts of criticism to subversive or treasonable activities. "From this point of view", wrote *Dawn*, "the arrest of Khan Abdul Qaiyum Khan has been most unfortunate and is the one big fly in the Government's otherwise wellscented ointment since the end of Martial Law. By the same token the continued detention of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy is equally to be deplored."[13]

The Ayub regime faced a very difficult situation indeed. If it kept eminent leaders under detention, the people would organize meetings and demonstrations demanding their release, and add to the unpopularity of the regime, marring its democratic appearance. If, however, the leaders were released, they would vigorously participate in political activities and try to mobilize public opinion against the undemocratic regime. For instance, Mujibur Rahman, immediately after his release, began to engage in sharply criticizing the regime without caring for the possibility of re-arrest. Even the ageing Suhrawardy, soon after his release, harnessed his popularity and leadership to the cause of building a national front with the principal aim of democratizing the Constitution. Many top-ranking leaders of the two Wings of Pakistan rallied round him at a time when Ayub went ahead with boosting up the Conventionist Muslim League which later he would formally join. In August, with active

encouragement from Ayub Khan, who needed a political party to supply a democratic smokescreen to his Government, the Muslim League was revived, although its President, Qaiyum Khan, remained in prison. Many prominent, Muslim Leaguers, e.g., Nurul Amin, the ex-Chief Minister of East Pakistan, were opposed to the revival of the Muslim League in deference to the restrictions of the Political Parties Act. But the Government went ahead with the scheme of revival. Ministers arranged at Karachi the first Convention of the Muslim League on 4 and 5 September 1962. Nurul Amin and his followers stayed away. The East Pakistani Central Ministers exercised special care in selecting delegates to the Convention from their province. But the political consciousness of the East Pakistani delegates upset the calculations of Ministers. Soon after the inauguration of the Convention, East Pakistani delegates raised a storm by demanding the release of Qaiyum Khan. When Mr. Fazlur Qader Chowdhury scolded them next day for staging noisy scenes, the East Pakistani delegates started jeering at him. Their solidarity secured the passage of a resolution for the release of Qaiyum Khan despite a strong opposition from the West Pakistani delegates. Mr. Habibullah Khan, the Central Home Minister, a rival of Qaiyum and directly responsible for Qaiyum's arrest, tried his best to defeat the resolution, but failed. Of course, the resolution did not signify any defiant attitude towards the Government of Ayub, for the Government itself sponsored the Convention in order to demonstrate that the Muslim League (to be designated as the Conventionist Muslim League) extended its support to the Government. This could not be hidden by an amendment of the Muslim League's Constitution, adopted by the Convention, restraining Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries from occupying party posts. Another vital amendment to the Muslim League's Constitution accepted parity as the basis of representation of the two Wings in the League Council, the Working

Committee and the Parliamentary Board. The East-West tension burst out into the open on this issue as also on the demand of East Pakistanis that highest party posts should also be distributed in accordance with this principle of parity.[14]

In the same month, i.e., September 1962, Suhrawardy was found busy in conducting talks with members of the now-defunct Awami League, National Awami Party and some top-ranking ex-Muslim Leaguers, e.g., Sardar Bahadur Khan, Mian Mumtaz Daulatana, who stayed away from the Conventionist Muslim League. Suhrawardy himself was debarred from holding any elective office or joining any political party. But he succeeded in establishing a national front which, as he declared, would strive to introduce a parliamentary system. The front would try to replace the current Constitution of Pakistan, dictated by one individual, by another based on popular sovereignty. According to Suhrawardy, Ayub had been misled by his advisers in the matter of framing a Constitution. He, therefore, suggested a round-table conference of national front leaders with Ayub for this purpose. The front, claimed Suhrawardy, commended the support of all East Pakistanis and of 95 percent of West Pakistanis. Suhrawardy dismissed the idea that the national front represented a provincial move on the part of East Pakistani leaders, although, spurred by the greater political consciousness of East Pakistanis, their leaders took the initiative in this matter.[15]

This national front, formally designated as the National Democratic Front (NDF for short) needed a leader who, unlike Suhrawardy, was not disqualified from joining any political party or holding any elective office. By the middle of March 1963, it appeared that Maulana Bhasani, released from house arrest a few months ago, would assume the leadership of the Central Committee of the NDF which had previously established provincial committees in the two Wings of Pakistan. Bhasani's National Awami Party enjoyed mass following in

both the Wings of Pakistan. He was expected to bind together NDF members from East and West Pakistan. Bhasani, again, was strongly advocating the creation of a mass movement under the guidance of a political party chalking out a specific programme. He agreed to bow to the wishes of the East Pakistani sponsors of the NDF who did not want to revive political parties under the crippling provisions of the Political Parties Act. Bhasani, however, insisted on the acceptance of his programme by the NDF; that would enable him to join the NDF. His programme, stressing the popular demands for a parliamentary government, removal of inter-Wing economic disparity, etc., was not difficult for the NDF to adopt. Moreover, the NDF, suffering from a lack of dynamism caused by an absence of a clear-cut programme, would benefit much from the acceptance of this programme. On 17 March 1963, Nurul Amin presided over a meeting held at the Paltan Maidan in Dacca under the auspices of the NDF. A resolution, adopted at the meeting, called for a democratic Constitution which would permit the representatives of the people, elected on the basis of adult franchise, to exercise the powers of the State. It demanded maximum autonomy for the two Wings of Pakistan within a federal framework, and the elimination of inter-Wing economic disparity. The meeting demanded that East Pakistan should be made self-sufficient in defence, both as to personnel and materials It condemned the persistent repression by the Ayub regime of its political opponents, and asked for the release of all political prisoners including students, trade unionists, etc. The meeting requested the Government to repeal or amend certain acts and ordinances so as to confer the freedom of thought, expression and association on the citizens. Many eminent politicians, e.g., Hamidul Haq Choudhury, a former Foreign Minister, Mahmud Ali, a leader of the National Awami Party, Shah Azizur Rahman, a leader of the Muslim League opposed to its revival, addressed the meeting. Nurul Amin un-

equivocally rejected the suggestion that East Pakistan was taking a secessionist move. Mujibur Rahman was so sure about the unpopularity of the Ayub regime that he declared that he and his colleagues would abandon the fight for a new Constitution if Ayub held a referendum on the Constitution and could demonstrate that a mere 10 percent of the people backed the Constitution.[16]

The challenge to the Ayub regime, emanating from East Pakistani students, grew more and more serious during 1962-63. Student demonstrations and meetings met with lathi-charge or shooting by the police, or assaults by hired hooligans let loose by the supporters of the ruling coterie. To take a few instances. On 14 January 1963, Mr. Khan A. Sabur, an East Pakistani Central Minister, tried to hold a meeting at Rangpur. Students, with active cooperation from the members of the public, foiled his attempt. Many riffraffs, supporters of Sabur, then started attacking the students with knives. On 10 April 1963, Mr. Md. Serajul Islam Miah tried, but failed, to raise at the National Assembly an adjournment motion on this oppression of Rangpur students. Even on Pakistan Day, 23 March 1963, the police shot at students, and killed one. Begum Roquyya Anwar (of East Pakistan) moved at the National Assembly an adjournment motion on this occurrence on 4 April; the motion was disallowed. The Ayub regime excessively interfered in University affairs, threatening academic freedom and tranquillity without which no educational institution could run efficiently. Official intrusions enraged students all over Pakistan, and especially those in East Pakistan. Unrest was widespread and almost interminable. Even the Dacca University Convocation was cancelled with Ayub himself in the city. Students at Rajshahi, too, demonstrated against the President when he went there. All these constituted the subject matter of an adjournment motion at the National Assembly moved by Syed Abdus Sultan on 11 April 1963. The motion was ruled out of order. On the same

day, the Government further aggravated the already acute student unrest in East Pakistan. Dacca students, holding a peaceful meeting in the Curzon Hall premises to mobilize public opinion in favour of their demands, were attacked by the police. An adjournment motion focussing public attention on this incident of police atrocities, moved at the National Assembly on 12 April 1963, was disallowed. Strikes and demonstrations by students caused a virtual collapse of the educational system in East Pakistan.[17]

Perhaps the innate fears of the ruling clique in a dictatorial regime had much to do with this development. Such a clique has always been afraid of extending democratic rights to the people, except in such a way as to render their exercise by the people harmless to the perpetuation of its dominance. The Ayub regime promulgated the Pakistan Penal Code (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 1962 in June 1962, when the elections to the National Assembly were completed and the Assembly was to meet within a short period. The Ordinance should have awaited the inauguration of the National Assembly. It did not. Moreover, the Ordinance provoked students all over Pakistan, who found their freedom of thought, expression and association stifled by the Ordinance. It would hinder the realization of democratic ideals and make it impossible for the students to develop their talents and culture in the right direction. Students in various Universities of Pakistan launched a prolonged agitation against this Ordinance which threatened to reduce them to slaves in their own country. They were reminded of Jinnah's invocation to the students to leave colleges and plunge in the struggle for independence so that in a free country they would reap the benefits of proper education in an atmosphere of freedom. The aforesaid Ordinance, students were anxious to observe, would nullify Jinnah's promises. Mahbubul Haq, trying unsuccessfully to get the Ordinance repealed, said: "Sir, as you are probably aware, after the promulgation of this

Ordinance since June, 1962, and thereafter the students community in East Pakistan and West Pakistan almost in all the Universities of Pakistan—Dacca, Karachi, Lahore and elsewhere —have been agitating that this is a curb on their way of developing themselves in a healthy atmosphere, in a healthy manner. You will remember, Sir, for this agitation in Dacca University there were processions, there were strikes, there was shooting, there was killing of students. You are aware, Sir, for this movement in Karachi University a large number of boys were arrested, a large number of University students externed, and a large number of boys had to suffer. In Lahore University, Sir, the students came out in processions; hundreds of them were arrested; they were beaten; and what not? As a matter of fact, an absolute reign of terror is reigning supreme in the areas of all the Universities of Pakistan, in all the colleges of Pakistan, because of the promulgation of this Ordinance."[18]

While the agitation by politicians and the students in East Pakistan became more and more powerful, Ayub's Government persisted in tactics designed to give the form of democracy without the introduction of any substantial democratic element into the political system and to keep the game of politics free from the entry of eminent politicians who might be able to defeat him in that game if they were granted a fair opportunity. In March 1963, the Government introduced the Constitution (First Amendment) Bill in an attempt to soothe popular sensibilities. The move was deceptive; Opposition MNAs could easily expose the deceptions. The Bill was debated for six days, and the Opposition succeeded in impressing on the public mind the authoritarian character of the Ayub regime. The debate wound up with a decision to refer the Bill to a select committee composed of the Central Law Minister and nine MNAs from the Government and the Opposition benches. The Bill sought to earn popularity for the Ayub regime by adding 'Islamic' to the nomenclature of the state of Pakistan. Opposition MNAs

ridiculed this attempt by pointing to the figures for the import of foreign liquors which were on the increase, and required 33 lakhs of rupees of foreign exchange in 1962. Since Islam completely forbade the drinking of alcohol, and the Government failed to honour this vital Islamic tenet, Farid Ahmad complained that the 'spirit of alcohol' substituted the 'spirit of Islam in Pakistan'. He asked: "In this way, how far are we going from Islam? Is this the way that you intend really to protect Islam? Is this the way that you want to name this country as 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan'. How is that the Government pleads its inability?"[19]

This Constitution (First Amendment) Bill also tried to appease the people by pretending to confer fundamental rights which previously had been incorporated in the Constitution in the form of principles of law-making. This conversion of law-making principles into fundamental rights, however, was a camouflage. Many East Pakistani MNAs forthrightly disclosed how the talk of fundamental rights was merely intended to hoodwink the people. The people remained deprived of the most fundamental among the fundamental rights, i.e., the right to choose representatives controlling the Government. According to the provisions of the Bill, laws and regulations, totalling about a thousand and encroaching upon almost all the fundamental rights, passed by the Martial Law regime, remained valid and would not be affected by the Bill and subjected to judicial review. Mahbubul Haq pointed out that "the Government now by bringing this Bill wants to get sanction of this House in an indirect way by giving life to these Ordinances or Orders" of the Martial Law period, thus making the enjoyment of fundamental rights impossible. Begum Roquyya Anwar commented: "Pleading for the retention of the laws imposed upon the people during the period of the Martial Law from 1958 to 1962 the Law Minister states that the laws should remain in force as before. I would like to ask him, what he is giving us then. He

claims that he is providing for fundamental rights; but why this sort of bluffing and cajoling?" Continuance of severe restrictions on the freedom of thought, expression and association in general, and on the Press, politicians and political parties, in particular, enforced rigorously by means of the aforesaid Ordinances and Orders, made a mockery of fundamental rights proclaimed by the Constitution (First Amendment) Bill. Perhaps the Ayub regime would not have come forward with this paper proclamation but for the crisis it was about to face. Qamarul Ahsan declared: "Let not the Government suppose that people will be taken in by mere words or paper resolutions. That time is gone. Let us now realise that we have arrived at a cross-road in our history. Behind this talk of fundamental rights, here is a growing feeling that the country is on the verge of a crisis such as it has never faced before, a crisis, which, let us admit frankly, may affect its continued existence as a single unified state. If you care to read newspapers carefully or listen to the discussions among people everywhere, you would appreciate the gravity of the issues involved. Desperate remedies are now-a-days openly advocated and this by people whose moderation was never in doubt."[20]

The Government sought to avert the crisis by means of the Political Parties Ordinance (No. 1 of 1963). This Ordinance aimed at debilitating politicians still more and facilitating Ayub's tactics of playing off one politician against another. Of course, the inherent lack of self-confidence of an undemocratic regime was illustrated by the fact that the Ayub regime by-passed the National Assembly and took resort to an Ordinance. The ruling coterie was apprehensive of a mass movement that might be directed against them by politicians. Thousands of persons greeted politicians, including the EBDOed, in meetings addressed by them in villages and towns, especially in East Pakistan. The people could not forget the contributions of many EBDOed politicians, also known as EBDOnians, to the

very creation of Pakistan, and the explicitly totalitarian characteristics of the Ayub regime. Too many politicians were the victims of EBDO on frivolous and reckless charges. Mr. Azizul Haq, a well-known politician, for instance, was guilty, under EBDO proceedings, of presiding over a meeting of the Class IV employees of the East Pakistan Government that was, actually, presided over by a different Mr. Azizul Haq. EBDO charges even included the performance of routine, constitutionally permitted, legislative activities such as opposing, in the pre-Martial Law era, the passage of the Finance Bill. No wonder, therefore, that the people refused to attach any great importance to EBDO proceedings and verdicts, and they extended support to EBDOnians in large public meetings. The Paltan Maidan in Dacca witnessed many such meetings which struck fear in the hearts of the ruling coterie. It is significant to note that from June 1962 (when Martial Law was lifted) to April 1963 (when the Political Parties Ordinance, 1963, was placed before the National Assembly for approval), Ayub's followers, despite their boasting that the Paltan Maidan was not a forum to be monopolized by the Opposition elements and their fixation of dates when they would address meetings at the Paltan Maidan, failed to arrange any meeting there. This was an excellent index of the popularity of the Ayub regime, and of the necessities spurring the promulgation of the Political Parties Ordinance, 1963. This Ordinance added to the crippling effects of the Political Parties Act, 1962, upon politicians. The Act prevented EBDOnians from being office-bearers or members of any political party. This was not sufficient to restrain politicians from addressing public meetings and forming, for instance, the NDF EBDOed politicians like Suhrawardy could go ahead attracting public support away from the ruling coterie. The Ordinance, therefore, in order to frustrate these efforts of EBDOnians, provided that the EBDOed politicians could not associate themselves with political parties in other ways, that the Central

Government could debar an EBDOed politician from addressing any public gathering or a Press Conference or even issuing to the Press a statement of a political character.[21]

Qamarul Ahsan condemned these totalitarian characteristics of the Ordinance, and suggested that EBDOnians in East Pakistan might be able to sweep the polls in case of a grant of adult franchise. He observed that the Ordinance was "obviously directed against the EBDOed politicians and the National Democratic Front. I know that the leaders of the National Democratic Front condemn one man rule. I know that they are not enamoured of the Constitution that has been granted by President Ayub." This Ordinance also empowered the President to pardon any person convicted and found guilty under EBDO and to reduce his period of sentence. Ayub was thus designing a weapon that could be freely used to rehabilitate some EBDOnians and disrupt their solidarity which might bring about a mass upsurge against his regime. In other words, Ayub decided to apply those very tactics against politicians which had been liberally used in the pre-Martial Law period by such mentors of the Central ruling coterie as Ghulam Muhammad, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, and Iskander Mirza, and, consequently, generated enormous political instability in Pakistan. The National Assembly approved the Political Parties Ordinance (No. 1 of 1963) on 17 April 1963 by a vote of 71 to 62.[22]

One of the surest means to control the politicians, or to neutralize their opposition, is to control the Press. Ayub, therefore, proceeded to gag the Press. On 2 September 1963, identical ordinances were simultaneously issued in the two Wings of Pakistan. The ordinances empowered the Speaker to pass on to the Press the copy of the authorized version of the proceedings of the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures. Newspapers could only publish the authorized versions for the benefit of the Government. Moreover, the Government acquired

the power to order any newspaper to publish, fully or in part, Government handouts, Press Notes, and Assembly proceedings. Punishment for defaulters might go up to the cancellation of the newspaper's publication licence. The Ordinances further provided that headlines should conform to the body of the news item; this provision could easily be manipulated to harass newspaper editors and compell them to publish headlines conveninent for the Government. Newspapers, moreover, were subjected to the perennial threat of the appointment of commissions to scrutinize their accounts. The Government could set up the commission to find out whether a newspaper was receiving subsidy from a domestic or foreign source. The commission would also be competent to find out whether a newspaper was utilizing its funds appropriately and running efficiently. This provision, too, could be utilized by the Government to take to task a newspaper that was not proving very friendly to the Government. A deputation of the East Pakistan Union of Journalists met Mr. Abdul Monem Khan, the Governor of East Pakistan. Monem told journalists that no newspaper in the province would be nationalized for the time being.[23]

Ayub further revealed his skill in the game of politics by partially winning over Maulana Bhasani by playing upon the pro-Peking sympathies of Bhasani. Ayub could impress Bhasani by the pro-Peking stance of his foreign policy. In the pre-Martial Law period Bhasani set an example by refusing to play into the hands of the bureaucrats and by always urging upon politicians such as Suhrawardy to resist the temptations of office held out by the Central ruling coterie for the purpose of weakening politicians. Bhasani, however, failed to keep himself totally above the machinations of Ayub. The President succeeded in bringing Bhasani within his fold and thus considerably corroding the strength of East Pakistani politicians agitating for full provincial autonomy and a parliamentary system. Bhasani thought of joining the NDF and moulding

it into a well-knit political party. He later decided to revive his own NAP (i.e., the National Awami Party). Even before the revival of the NAP, Bhasani started a campaign on the basis of a six-point programme that stressed the demands for provincial autonomy for East Pakistan and restoration of fundamental rights. He even issued an ultimatum that he would launch a civil disobedience movement unless his demands were fulfilled by 15 December 1963. Simultaneously, however, he was seeking reapproachment with President Ayub. In late September 1963, Ayub placed him at the head of a Government-sponsored seven-man delegation to China. Instead of setting the stage for the civil disobedience campaign, a threat issued only a few weeks back, Bhasani left for Peking to attend the Chinese Republic Day celebrations on 1 October.[34]

After Ayub formally became a member of the Conventionist Muslim League, politicians opposed to him were seriously handicapped in carrying on their campaigns. Supporters of Ayub's party became ruthless and, with the connivance of government officials, disrupted many meetings and processions organized by politicians opposed to Ayub. These politicians felt extremely insecure because Ayub's followers might start showering stones and brickbats on any meeting addressed by them, and the police would not punish the miscreants. Chaudhri Muhammad Hussain Chattha, a West Pakistani MNA, declared on 18 June 1963 that, because of the violence unleashed upon Opposition politicians in public gatherings, the National Assembly remained the only venue where they could ventilate feelings and thoughts safely. Therefore, Chattha commented, although the powers of the National Assembly were not merely restricted but non-existent, and although it thus illustrated the great difference between pure democracy and Basic Democracy, its existence was essential to Opposition politicians who could treat it as their 'Wailing Chamber'. Members of the Conventionist Muslim League felt free to trespass on the property of public institutions

and use their buildings for party activities. As attested by A. K. Md. Yusuf (of East Pakistan) on 17 June 1963, they occupied forcefully the room of the Headmistress of the Government Girls' High School in Rawalpindi, and the Qaid-e-Azam Memorial Dispensary in Sialkot. Ayub himself used in an unconstrained fashion the machinery and funds of the Government for boosting the fortunes of his party. He campaigned for his party in meetings arranged at Government expenses. Radio Pakistan, the A.P.P. (i.e., Associated Press of Pakistan), the P.I.D. (i.e., the Press Information Department), all gave ample coverage to these meetings which were but propaganda platforms of the Conventionist Muslim League. Mahbubul Haq commented: "After this two-anna member [i.e., Ayub] has joined the party [i.e., the Conventionist Muslim League], the Press Information Department comes out with its handout saying as to who has joined the party and what the manifesto of the party is and what it should be as suggested by that member. Is it possible in any other democracy? Is it tolerable anywhere? Here everything is possible; this is called Pakistani democracy."[25]

In course of public campaigns on behalf of his party, Ayub sometimes lashed out at MNAs, who, according to him, failed to assume any responsibility and do any useful work. They were only fond of criticizing the Government, and Ayub compared their critical zeal to that of football fans. Such comments piqued East Pakistanis demanding a parliamentary system which could vest responsibility as well as power in legislators and enable them to perform useful services. Syed Husain Mansur, an East Pakistani MNA, referred to Ayub's derogatory comments on legislators, and said: "I agree with him but most emphatically I also remind this Government that within this Constitution we cannot do anything. We have come here just to speak the nation's mind." Syed Husain Mansur stated that MNAs, fully aware of the powerlessness of the National Assem-

bly, contested the elections because by becoming MNAs they could publicize the defects of the Constitution and its 'utter futility'. Outside the Assembly, moreover, politicians had to submit to so many restrictions that it was almost impossible to carry on fruitfully the tasks required to be performed by the Opposition. The Pakistan Penal Code prescribed severe punishments for any person trying to bring the Government of the day into hatred or contempt. The punishments included transportation for life. Mr. Muhammad Abdul Haque, an East Pakistani MNA, introduced an amendment to this provision in the Pakistan Penal Code which was being misused at random by the Government for persecuting the Opposition politicians. Ayub's political opponents were greatly apprehensive of this provision and failed, therefore, to play their normal political role. They were afraid of publicly announcing the errors and deficiencies of the Government lest they should be the victim of the aforesaid Penal Code provision. Mr. Muhammad Abdul Haque's amendment move, however, did not succeed.[26]

Despite the numerous and heavy fetters on the working of politicians and parties, the agitation in East Pakistan for substantial provincial autonomy grew more and more powerful. For, not to speak of economic and political grievances, which were far more difficult to remove, the Ayub regime did not redress some of the cultural grievances of East Pakistanis. About this, a simple illustration may be noted. Radio Pakistan continued to pay much less attention to the needs of Bengalee listeners than they deserved. Urdu programmes absorbed a large proportion of broadcasting time at East Pakistan stations, while the share of Bengali programmes in the broadcasting time at West Pakistan stations was disproportionately smaller. The same disparity appeared in regard to news broadcasts. Begum Shamsoon Nahar Mahmood (of East Pakistan) pointed out: "Urdu news are broadcast all over East Pakistan, but similar treatment is not given to Bengali news on the national hook-up." Shamsoon

Nahar, an MNA, was associated with Radio Pakistan in an advisory capacity over a long period.[27]

Ayub was unable to stop the agitation for autonomy in East Pakistan by such concessions as the establishment of a Bengali Development Board or the appointment of a Bengalee, i.e., Monem Khan, as the Governor of East Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan were quite aware that Monem Khan, a briefless lawyer, was chosen by Ayub simply because he would agree to be Ayub's henchman and implement Ayub's ruthless policies, including instigation to communal violence, in order to safeguard the interests of the coterie led by Ayub. East Pakistanis were not to be won over by favours which failed to meet their economic and political grievances. Nor could they be cowed down by restrictions on the operation of political parties and the persecution of politicians and students. From the very beginning of the inauguration of the new National Assembly in June 1962, East Pakistani MNAs made it quite clear that their province would fight to the last for the elimination of economic disparity between the two Wings of Pakistan which was bitterly resented, in particular, by East Pakistani students. On 18 June 1962, Qamarul Ahsan reflected the mood of his province, especially the students, when he declared: "We shall judge every Budget by this yardstick only: whether it tries in an effective way to meet the basic requirements of East Pakistan." Ahsan expressed dissatisfaction over that year's Central budget which "falls short of East Pakistan's aspirations because it gives no idea of the steps proposed to be taken to bring East Pakistan on par with West Pakistan within the shortest possible time." This point was hammered day in and day out by East Pakistani MNAs on the floor of the National Assembly. Mr. Azizur Rahman (of East Pakistan) testified on 19 June 1963: "I do not know of a day or of an hour when the question of disparity was not raised and discussed. But the Government has been sitting tight as if

determined to turn a deaf ear to this problem". He added: "Disparity is appalling. It is a malady; it is an obnoxious sore and this disparity is responsible for all the unrest in East Pakistan particularly students unrest."[28]

Ayub, no wonder, failed to quell the agitation for autonomy in East Pakistan by persecution and a few concessions. In January 1964, the Ayub regime deliberately incited communal passions and initiated a large-scale one-sided slaughter of non-Muslims in East Pakistan, including Buddhists, Christians and Hindus. Ayub's aims in sponsoring this holocaust appeared to be two. He probably intended to divert popular attention away from the autonomy movement. He also wanted perhaps to incite communal disturbances in India which might spread in different parts of India, and engulf Kashmir, thereby making it easier for him to pounce upon Kashmir. The Hazratbal incident, i.e., the theft of the sacred Relic of Muhammad, the Prophet, from a mosque in Kashmir on 27 December 1963, supplied a handy pretext. The watchman, who was to guard the Relic, was absent for a few hours when the theft occurred. Although the Relic was recovered within a few days (on 4 January 1964), the Government of Pakistan, its Radio and the controlled Press (excluding such progressive, communally unbiased newspapers of East Pakistan as *Ittefaq, Pakistan Observer* and *Sangbad*) poured out venomous propaganda, bristling with numerous lies, depicting the theft as a mark of persecution of Muslims in India. Even after the recovery of the Relic, the Pakistan Government, its Radio and the servile section of the Press condemned the recovery as a fraud, and succeeded in whipping up mob frenzy that had ready targets among thousands of non-Muslims in East Pakistan, the other Wing of Pakistan being almost totally emptied of non-Muslims. A large-scale exodus of non-Muslims from East Pakistan, it might further be suggested, would help the Ayub regime in moving towards a population parity between the two Wings of Pakistan, thus reducing the bargain-

ing power of East Pakistan in any future scheme of representation in the Central legislature according to population.[29]

There were many evidences to prove that the massacre of non-Muslims in East Pakistan in January 1964 was directly engineered by the Ayub-led coterie and its East Pakistani henchmen such as Khan A. Sabur, the Central Communication Minister, and Monem Khan, the Governor of East Pakistan. Sabur and Monem played an enthusiastic role in heightening communal passions in East Pakistan, especially among the non-Bengalee factory workers residing in that province. They took great initiative in observing 3 January as a day of protest against the Hazratbal incident. On that day Sabur spoke at a meeting in Daulatpur (near Khulna), the majority of the audience being non-Bengalee factory workers. These non-Bengalee Muslims listened to inflammatory speeches, including that of Sabur, and immediately afterwards took out a procession that looted and burnt non-Muslim houses, killed non-Muslims, and abducted and raped non-Muslim women without any interference by the police. On the same day, i.e., 3 January 1964, Monem Khan spoke in a meeting at Bagerhat (near Khulna), and hardly he left by a helicopter when the attacks on non-Muslims started in that place. The military, without any orders to shoot, began patrolling only after atrocities subsided, presumably because the marauders needed rest or were unable to find out profitable targets. As non-Muslims started crossing the borders, they did not meet with any opposition from the Pakistani officials who wanted to use them as carriers of communal virus that should infect the neighbouring province of India, i.e., West Bengal, according to a reported master plan of the Ayub regime. It was also maintained by one commentator that the Ayub regime employed agents in West Bengal to foment communal outbursts which might enable it to step up the hate campaign against India and the terror campaign against minorities in East Pakistan.[30]

It is a matter of great pity that certain lawless elements in West Bengal played into the hands of Ayub and his supporters in West Bengal. Communal outbursts started in Calcutta as a reaction to the Khulna holocaust. Unlike in Pakistan, however, the military, with orders to shoot, was immediately deployed in Calcutta, and the situation was brought under control without any delay. The military even committed excesses in checking the riot by, for instance, shooting at innocent Hindus having no connection whatsoever with the riot and out in the street on some urgent domestic business. Despite the immediate suppression of the Calcutta disturbances, and the quick recovery of the Prophet's Relic, Pakistan's ruling coterie went on abetting hatred towards India and non-Muslims in Pakistan. Its machinations bore fruit on 14 January when anti-minority arson, loot, rape, murder and abduction convulsed different areas of East Pakistan. There were four major storm-centres in which outbreaks occurred almost simultaneously. All these four areas, namely, the Adamji mills area in Narayanganj, the Nishat mill area of Tangi (18 miles north of Dacca), the Muhammadpur colony of Tejgaon, and the Nawabpur area of the old city of Dacca, were dominated by non-Bengalee workers of factories owned by non-Bengalee industrialists. These industrialists and the non-Bengalee labourers (apart from many of the Basic Democrats) were, in East Pakistan, the supporters of the Ayub-led coterie. Too readily did they cooperate with the Ayub regime in causing the explosion upon minorities. It is significant that on 13 January, the day before the explosion, the non-Bengalee mill-owners had a conference with the Chief Secretary to the Government of East Pakistan. They declared 14 and 15 January as holidays in advance for the mills whose workers played a leading role in the massacre of minorities. They also supplied the workers with the weapons used against non-Muslims, e.g., iron rods, daggers, petrol cans and sprayers, fire-arms. The non-Bengalee industrialists further helped the rioters with motor vehicles. The non-Bengalee rioters, including many unemployed

Muslims, derived a great impetus from the propaganda that their problems of job, food and housing would disappear after the non-Muslims were driven out.[31]

The non-Bengalee industrialists supplied their non-Bengalee employees with military uniforms, and even transported them from the Dacca-Narayanganj area to as far as Chittagong. Hindus in the town of Chittagong were awe-struck to find in the morning of 14 January that their houses bore cross marks, obviously stamped during the previous night, thus differentiating them from Muslim Houses. Mrs. Nellie Sengupta, the wife of Mr. Jatindra Mohan Sengupta, an ex-President of the Indian National Congress, still commanded great respect among many Pakistanis. She put in long-distance telephone calls to some influential Pakistani politicians who responded to her appeal for help. The holocaust in Chittagong was averted. Mr. Fazlul Qader Choudhury, the Speaker of the National Assembly and a Bengalee Muslim, played a laudable role in preventing this holocaust.[32]

Many Basic Democrats, including the Union Council Chairmen, assisted the rioters and pursued their plans of self-aggrandizement, e.g., exacting money from non-Muslims by terrorizing them, or driving them out and seizing their property. As a matter of fact, the Ayub regime, much earlier than the 1964 riot, contrived to keep alive a state of permanent riot in many rural areas as an insurance against a loss of support from the Basic Democrats. Even many Union Council Chairmen, assured of the backing of the Ayub regime, went on enriching themselves at the expense of non-Muslims. Some accounts of their assaults on minorities came out in the progressive newspapers of East Pakistan and the interviews of hundreds of refugees from East Pakistan conducted by the Committee of Enquiry appointed by the Indian Commission of Jurists. The Union Council Chairmen made it a regular practice to bring Muslims, who were or pretended to be deportees from India, and exacted

money or other favours from non-Muslims by threatening otherwise to install those Muslims in the houses of non-Muslims. Even where such installations took place, non-Muslims were ordered to satisfy financial or other demands of the Union Council Chairmen; the penalty for non-compliance with this order was that Muslim residents would be incited to damage or destroy the property of the non-Muslim compelled to share the house with Muslims. The chosen agents of the Ayub regime, the Basic Democrats, assiduously began to help the hooligans during the 1964 massacre of minorities. But their efforts were counteracted, at least partially, by the Muslim intelligentsia that had rapidly grown up since the large-scale exodus of the Hindu intelligentsia after the 1950 riot. The Muslim intelligentsia, especially the students, teachers and journalists, worked unceasingly to stop quickly the assaults on non-Muslims. About a hundred Muslims laid down their lives in attempts to save their non-Muslim neighbours. This was a unique moment in the history of East Pakistan; the Muslims had learnt, at a great cost, that non-Muslims were not their real enemies, that non-Muslims were not responsible for their economic and political serfdom to the West Pakistani ruling junta. Leaders such as Ataur Rahman Khan, Mujibur Rahman, Hamidul Haq Choudhury, Shah Azizur Rahman (an ex-Secretary of the East Pakistan Provincial Muslim League, who within a few months joined the revived Awami League) played an important role in minimizing communal tension and helping innocent non-Muslims at a considerable risk to their lives and property. Hamidul brought out one-page *Sangbad,* circulated even in distant villages, that laid bare the conspiracy of Rawalpindi to drive out Hindus and thereby wipe out East Pakistan's population advantage over West Pakistan. Within a few weeks of the 1964 massacre, Hamidul secretly visited Calcutta, bringing copies of his *Sangbad* (not to be confused with the popular daily, *Sangbad*), and solicited the cooperation of West Bengal's

newspapers in a continued fight against communal tension It is to the credit of West Bengal's newspapers that, as acknowledged by *Ittefaq's* editor Tofazzal Husain, they, with one or two exceptions, tried their best to combat the forces of communalism.[33]

One must emphasize, however, that the role played by the Bengalee Muslim intelligentsia and the independent newspapers of East Pakistan, voicing the feelings and ideals of that intelligentsia, in checking and stopping the 1964 massacre, should serve as a source of inspiration to people in any part of the world fighting for justice. In a military dictatorship, ever ready to use all methods of persecution of dissidents, they staked their lives and properties in order to stop the atrocities on non-Muslims and protect the non-Muslims from the brutal onslaughts of the Ayub-led coterie. Monem Khan was out in Rawalpindi while major acts of violence against non-Muslims swept East Pakistan during 14, 15 and 16 January. He returned to Dacca in the evening of 16 January. Journalists rushed to meet him immediately. Meanwhile, the non-Bengalee rioters became bold enough to attack the offices of *Ittefaq* and *Pakistan Observer* which were ceaselessly preaching against communal violence and publishing reports that countered the Government's claim that there was no communal violence, and that also revealed the activities of the Bengalee Muslim intelligentsia directed towards ending the holocaust. Journalists warned the Governor of East Pakistan that Bengalee Muslims might initiate reprisals against non-Bengalee hooligans unless the Government checked the attrocities on non-Muslims. The Governor was fully aware of the influence of the progressive newspapers upon East Pakistanis, and took seriously the implications of this warning by journalists. He requisitioned the assistance of the military that prevented a clash between Bengalees and non-Bengalees and also terminated large-scale violence on minorities. But the Ayub regime was quick to unleash repression on the

progressive Bengalee Muslims who tried to protect non-Muslims. The progressive Bengalee Muslims formed a Riot Resistance Committee and issued an appeal for communal peace. The police proscribed the appeal and seized all the copies. The Ayub regime harassed the progressive Bengalee Muslims by arresting or searching the houses of some of their leaders. Peace and anti-riot efforts had to be continued for a long time for the purpose of wiping out the sense of insecurity in the minds of non-Muslims evidenced by the rush for migration to India. East Pakistani social workers, political leaders and newspapers were compelled to relinquish such efforts because of the barrage of restrictions put up by the Ayub regime on these peace efforts. These restrictions were lifted as late as 23 February. This, however, did not mean any liberalization of the policy of the government. For, within a few weeks (on 28 March), the East Pakistan Government, on the strength of the highly arbitrary Press and Publications Ordinance of 1960, served a notice on the editor of the *Ittefaq*. The notice asked why a security deposit of Rs. 25,000 should not be submitted by Tofazzal Husain, the Keeper of the New Nation Press, where the *Ittefaq* was printed, and also the editor of that newspaper. The offence for which this penalty was to be imposed was the publication of a news item and an editorial on the Dacca and Narayanganj riots in the *Ittefaq* of 17 January 1964. What the *Ittefaq* of 17 January did was to expose the falsehood in the contention of the Government that there was no riot, to reveal how progressive Muslims were being punished by non-Bengalee rioters for trying to help Muslims, how the idleness of the Government encouraged the rioters. The *Ittefaq* of 17 January also reiterated the plea for resisting the rioters and establishing communal peace.[34]

Nevertheless, progressive Bengalee Muslims persisted in making efforts, circumscribed though they were, to maintain communal harmony and instill a sense of security in the minds

of non-Muslims. In an editorial on the Id Festival, the *Ittefaq* of 14 February clearly condemned the January 1964 atrocities on non-Muslims. Seven editors of East Pakistani newspapers, including those of the *Azad, Ittefaq, Dacca Times, Pakistan Observer* and *Sangbad,* issued a joint statement on 22 February 1964. This statement urged upon the enlightened sections in both Pakistan and India to restrain the anti-social elements interested in wrecking communal peace. Mosafir went further (in the *Ittefaq* of 24 February), and affirmed that, irrespective of what happened in Calcutta or West Bengal, East Pakistanis should take all steps to maintain communal peace. Students preparing for the observance of the Martyrs' Day (i.e., 21 February) emphasized the unity of students needed for combating the reactionary communal policy of the ruling coterie. The insistence on communal amity lent a new significance to the Martyrs' Day celebrations of 1964. The Ayub regime, on the contrary, continued to encourage the persecution of non-Muslims by its agents, i.e., non-Bengalee Muslims and Basic Democrats in East Pakistan. On 17 February 1964, it issued the East Pakistan Displaced Persons Ordinance that, on the one hand, made it impossible for a non-Muslim to sell his property at the moment of need without the permission of an official who could act as a Magistrate, and, on the other hand, enabled miscreants to prey upon non-Muslim property with the connivance of such an official.[35]

An important feature of the 1964 massacre of non-Muslims in East Pakistan was the large-scale persecution of Christians. Agents of the Ayub government carried on loot and arson among Christians on an unprecedented scale. About a lakh of Christians migrated to India. American and Italian missionaries, among others, confirmed the reports of atrocities on Christians. This was possibly a reason why some Western newspapers, e.g., *the Washington Sunday Star* and *the New York Times,* gave cautiously mild support to the fact that the

Government was guilty of backing the massacre of non-Muslims.[36]

On 14 February 1964, Mother-e-Milat Fatima Jinnah, the sister of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, delivered her Id-Day message at Karachi. This message inspired East Pakistanis fighting for full democratic rights and provincial autonomy at a moment when the Awami League and the National Awami Party were about to be formally revived. Fatima condemned the efforts of the government to keep Pakistanis deprived of the right of direct, adult suffrage, although Pakistan itself was born of the exercise of that right. The invention of the ruling coterie that Pakistanis were unable to exercise that right was, therefore, baseless. Fatima further condemned the tendency of the ruling coterie to complain of lack of political education in the country, and added that the institution of direct, adult suffrage was the best means of political education. She deplored that the ruling coterie judged itself to be the repository of all intelligence and patriotism, created political instability in the country by its own misdeeds, and then blamed it all on the people who, after all, wanted Pakistan for realizing a democratic system and created Pakistan democratically. Abdul Waheed Khan, the Central Information Minister and the Secretary-General of the Conventionist Muslim League, issued a stern rejoinder to Fatima's Id-Day message. According to Waheed, Fatima should not have dabbled in politics on the occasion of a religious festival, and her comments were unjustified in view of the inability of Pakistanis to make a proper exercise of the right of direct, adult suffrage, the external threat to Pakistan's territorial integrity and the condition of Muslims in India and Indian-occupied Kashmir. East Pakistan's political and intellectual circles condemned Waheed's remarks as arrogant and unwarranted. Khwaja Nazimuddin, a former Premier of Pakistan and now the President of the Councillors Muslim League, the National Democratic Front and Shaikh Mujibur

Rahman issued statements welcoming Fatima's message and denouncing Waheed's rejoinder. Mujibur pointed out that spokesmen of the Government almost everyday during the last six years of their rule, referred to the external danger to the territorial integrity of Pakistan, and thus themselves nullified their own claim that they were able to achieve political stability. According to Mujibur, only the people of Pakistan, trusting and being trusted by democratically elected rulers, could safeguard Pakistan's territorial integrity. But the continuous affirmation by the ruling coterie that Pakistanis were unfit for the right of direct, adult suffrage, could not develop such mutual trust. Mujibur took this opportunity to announce unambiguously the support of the Awami League for direct, adult suffrage, and its unflinching determination to carry on the struggle towards that goal. The NDF (i.e., National Democratic Front) equated the attitude of the Government to that of the British rulers of undivided India. The British rulers declared Indians to be unfit for self-government, while the present government of Pakistan judged Pakistanis to be incapable of exercising direct, adult suffrage. In fact, the NDF's statement emphasized, Pakistan's government appeared to be obsessed with the tactics of constantly preaching the incapability of Pakistanis.[37]

The state of affairs at the provincial legislature of East Pakistan served to harden the determination of East Pakistanis to fight for full democratic rights. There was no Act to safeguard the privileges of legislators, and the Opposition members were being shabbily treated by the officials on the insinuation of the Ayub government. In order to buy the support of legislators, this Government appointed as many as thirty Parliamentary Secretaries in the provincial legislature, not only squandering thereby the resources of a poor country but making a travesty of parliamentary institutions. The calibre of persons appointed as Parliamentary Secretaries did not matter; what mattered was their support to the Ayub regime. These Parlia-

mentary Secretaries, frequently lacking requisite capabilities for a proper discharge of their duties, furnished vague replies to important questions, and then, pressed by the Opposition, retreated and admitted facts they had set out to deny. The provincial legislature failed to acquire the dignity of a law-making body, for the Ayub regime virtually converted it into an 'ordinance factory', avoiding enactment of laws on many crucial issues. A consequence of this failure was the occasional tendency of the legislators on the Government side to use foul language against an Opposition member.[38]

On the Martyrs' Day, i.e., 21 February 1964, East Pakistanis reiterated their determination to carry on a struggle for the achievement of democratic rights and provincial autonomy. The student leaders, who organized the Martyrs' Day programmes, made every effort to distinguish that year's Martyrs' Day from that of previous years. In 1964, declared those student leaders, the Martyrs' Day earned a special significance as it inspired the development of a resistance movement against the designs of the Ayub government trying to deprive Pakistanis of the right of direct, adult suffrage by means of a Franchise Bill to be introduced shortly before the National Assembly. Without such a resistance movement East Pakistanis could not hope to acquire democratic rights and provincial autonomy. The acts of repression of the Ayub regime, including the torrent of ordinances, the orders of expulsion served on students, throttling newspapers, tortures and imprisonment, etc., could be restrained only when democratic rights and provincial autonomy were realized. The meetings and processions all over East Pakistan on 21 February 1964 gave the stirring call for a unified movement to realize direct, adult suffrage and do away with all kinds of repression unleashed by the Government. Bhasani, resting in a remote village, came to Dacca on that day. He and Mujibur proclaimed the need for a struggle to acquire democratic liberties in the meeting organized at the Shaheed Minar

near the Medical College in Dacca. Resolutions adopted by this meeting laid stress, among others, on the following : the introduction of a democratic system in the country, universal adult franchise, direct election, fundamental rights and provincial autonomy, release of political prisoners, use of Bengali at all stages of education and in the offices, withdrawal of the repressive University ordinance, removal of economic disparity between the two Wings of Pakistan, and the declaration of 21 February as a national holiday.[39]

Students significantly furthered the cause of the struggle for adult suffrage and direct election by playing a leading role in the formation, on 11 March at Dacca, of an All-Parties Action Committee. The meeting, at which the establishment of this Committee took place, declared that a nation that had shattered the shackles of foreign domination could not be enchained again. The Committee issued a call for the observance of 18 and 19 March as adult suffrage and direct election days. The National Awami Party was formally revived on 29 February and the Awami League on 5 March. Rivalries between these two parties and the NDF were apparent, but these were also signs of vitality among politicians coming out of a prolonged stalemate. Students must be credited with forging some unity among competing political parties by helping the establishment of an All Parties Action Committee. The NDF, of course, stayed out of this Committee, gave a separate call for the observance of a Demands Day on 15 March. But the demands were virtually the same as those of the Committee, and, consequently, the movement for democratic rights in East Pakistan stood to gain from this competition between different political organizations. President Ayub, as usual, condemned the movement and used abusive language against Opposition parties and groups. He referred to all the political parties, excepting the Conventionist Muslim League (which was alone in not demanding adult suffrage and direct election), as being merely 'hired

mules'. On 8 March, Mr. Muhammad Ibrahim, an ex-Central Minister, pointed out, at the twelfth annual conference of the East Pakistan Journalists Union, that mules were industrious and possessed a great capacity for endurance, and only mules could put up with the intolerable agony and distress characterizing the nation's life. He added that it was better to be a mule than to be a Conventionist Muslim Leaguer. On 13 March, Ayub lashed out again at the Opposition parties, accusing them of divisive and subversive activities. On 15 March, Ayub declared that the Opposition parties, if they came to power, would shake the country's foundations, for some of them wanted to separate East Pakistan, some wanted to spoil the unified existence of one province in West Pakistan, while others wanted to impose foreign domination on Pakistan. These malafide attacks, however, could not daunt the Opposition parties going ahead to strengthen the movement for democratic rights. They could remind themselves of the success of East Pakistanis in the movement against Liaquat's B.P.C. Report and the imposition of Urdu as the sole state language. Concerted effort was the key to those successes. The All Parties Action Committee strove to make such an effort.[40]

Students and political workers, including students of girls' colleges, began to haul up black flags, organize meetings and processions, in putting forward the demands for adult suffrage and direct election, on and from 15 March 1964. The Ayub regime retaliated by the familiar methods of repression. It employed goondas to break up meetings and beat the organizers; this happened, for insance, in Rajshahi on 15 March. Many political leaders and students were arrested in different parts of the province. The programmes for 18 and 19 March, drawn up at the initiative of students, included street-corner meetings and small processions on 18 March, and an all-out hartal, a big procession and a big meeting on 19 March. The Deputy Commissioner of Dacca, however, unwarrantedly castigated these

programmes, even before they were fully executed, as organized by goondas and as the efforts of anti-social elements trying to create chaos. He said so in his notice of 18 March, followed up by the posting of steel-helmeted policemen in street-crossings, and the patrolling by the police and the E.P.R. (i.e., East Pakistan Rifles) men. To condemn thus a peaceful movement for the achievement of the most elementary of democratic rights was indeed deplorable. But the military dictatorship, headed by Ayub, could go much further. In the evening of 18 March, some of its agents jeeped through different parts of the city of Dacca and made a false announcement by a loudspeaker that was an act of unsurpassable political villainy. The announcement said that the All Parties Action Committee cancelled the hartal to be held on 19 March. It was made at a time when meetings and processions, held throughout the day, convinced shopkeepers, vehicle-drivers and others that the hartal would surely be staged on 19 March. When this move of 18 March failed, the leaders of the Conventionist Muslim League, including Ministers, moved about in the city in Government jeeps trying to upset the programmes of 19 March. Their efforts were largely responsible for about 18 shops remaining open for some time; but these were also closed down soon. This failure only added to the wrath of those who were in power and this was ventilated that day through repeated lathi-charging and tear-gassing of students in Dacca. All these, however, could not prevent a mammoth procession, the biggest in memory, going around the city, that flowed from a huge meeting at the Paltan maidan, presided over by Maulana Bhasani. The hartal, the procession and the meeting were a grand success. But the Government's Press Note observed characteristically that there was no response to the call for a hartal on 19 March.[41]

Students, acting as the vanguard of the democratic movement, were pitilessly persecuted by the Ayub regime. The estrangement of East Pakistani students from the ruling coterie

was clearly evidenced at the Convocations of Rajshahi and Dacca Universities in the same month, i.e., March 1964. The Rajshahi University Convocation, to be held on 2 March, was shifted to 16 March. This Convocation would award Graduate and post-Graduate degrees for 1960 and 1961. 3800 holders of Graduate and post-Graduate degrees were invited to attend the Convocation; only 1200, of whom three-fourths were government employees, were actually present. On 15 March, hooligans caused some damage to the Convocation pandal. It was clear to everybody that the agents of the Ayub regime hired these hooligans to procure a pretext for persecuting student leaders of the Rajshahi University who were participating in the movement for democratic rights, and who were expected to ventilate their grievances against a Government that trampled down University autonomy at the time of the Convocation. At three in the morning of 16 March, 11 student leaders, including the Vice-President and General Secretary of the Central Students Union, were arrested at the students' hostel. They were alleged to have damaged the Convocation pandal. The Government would release them on bail for not less than 1 lakh 10 thousand rupees which could not, as the Government calculated, be guaranteed by anybody. Those students, therefore, failed to secure their release on bail. The Convocation pandal was surrounded on 16 March by 500 policemen; a tear-gas force was kept ready. All these, however, could not succeed in preventing anti-Government demonstrations inside the pandal. While Monem Khan (whom the students hated because he was Ayub's henchman), the Governor of the province and the Chancellor of the University, proceeded with the ceremonial procession towards the dais for delivering the Convocation address, the degree-holders shouted anti-Government and anti-Monem slogans. They hoisted a black flag inside the Convocation pandal; it remained there during the Convocation. Another interesting feature of the Convocation was that prize-winning

students got worm-eaten books and torn papers (wrapped up attractively) as University prizes. A greater surprise was the later request from the authorities, when these prizes had been already thrown to the dust-bins, that prizes should be returned. New prizes would be given, the request added.[42]

Rajshahi University students observed a total strike on 18 March in protest against the repression of students and demanding the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor, who, they alleged, had damaged the sanctity of the University by allowing the entry of policemen into the campus. Dacca University students, too, observed a total strike on 18 March in denouncing the repression of Rajshahi students. Dacca's student leaders issued on 17 March a statement that drew pointed attention to the Government-sponsored goondaism against students during recent months in different parts of East Pakistan, and to indiscriminate arrests of students.[43]

Dacca students ventilated their grievances against the Government at the Convocation arranged on 22 March. The rehearsal was held on 21 March. But, unlike in previous years, the certificates were not distributed among the degree-recipients. This was done to avoid a boycott of the Convocation ceremony by the students, an overwhelming majority of whom considered it beneath their dignity to attend the Convocation and listen to Chancellor Monem Khan at a time when Monem's backers were trying to crush the democratic movement in East Pakistan by force. In 1962, as also in 1963, there was a vigorous opposition among students against the award of degrees by Monem Khan, a stooge of Ayub. In both these years, i.e., 1962 and 1963, the Convocation ceremony was cancelled at the last moment, although certificates had been distributed earlier. On 21 March 1964, a car of the Fire Brigade was standing near the gate of the Curzon Hall, quite close to the Convocation pandal. Moreover, on that day, an ultra-modern tear-gas vehicle and a num-

also quite near to the Curzon Hall. A remarkable feature of the 1964 Convocation was the distribution of invitation cards (for the Convocation) by the publicity department of the provincial government. Journalists complained that the government officials appeared to be extremely miserly in the distribution of invitation cards. Students confronted on 21 March another typical move of the ruling coterie to batter down opposition by violence. Hired hooligans entered the University campus and assaulted students whose intention to boycott the Convocation was well-known.[44]

On the day of the 38th Convocation of the Dacca University, i.e., 22 March 1964, degree-holders got the certificates before the actual ceremony began. But, in order to compel them to attend the ceremony, they were forbidden to leave the Curzon Hall premises. A large number of policemen guarded the premises and kept a watch to prevent the entry of students who were not to receive degrees that year. For the first time in the history of the Dacca University, the ceremonial procession moved (although behind schedule) under heavy police guards. But the graduates ignored numerous policemen armed with rifles, sticks and the tear-gas equipment, and wearing steel helmets. They revolted, and the Convocation pandal became the scene of a battle between the police and the students, barring a few who supported the Ayub regime out of fear and self-interest, and wanted the Convocation ceremony. The discontent of East Pakistanis, especially the students, against an authoritarian regime revealed itself too clearly as students fought the police with chairs and flower tubs, tear-gas shells exploded, and the Convocation pandal was rent by anti-Ayub and anti-Monem slogans. Yet, Chancellor Monem delivered his Convocation address in a pandal where the chairs were either broken or empty, excepting a few occupied by some students and police officers. The Convocation ceremony itself was reduced to a farce, although its importance in indicating the depth of feel-

ing against a totalitarian regime must not be underestimated. More than 300 students were arrested. Three journalists, having proper identity cards, were arrested, while they came to ascertain the news about the Convocation.[45]

Developments following the pandemonium at the Convocation once more indicated the belief of Ayub and his Ministers that a policy of repression was the answer to any expression of dissatisfaction on account of the absence of democratic rights in the country. The Government won over a small minority of Dacca University students by holding out temptations and threats. This minority, assisted by hired rogues, created disturbances within the University campus, and, to the amazement of the large majority, these disturbances were seized by the authorities as an excuse for closing the University for an indefinite period, while no steps were taken against the miscreants. On the contrary, a meeting at the Iqbal Hall to condemn the behaviour of those miscreants led to police intervention and the arrest of a large number of students.[46]

In an attempt to quell the agitation in East Pakistan for direct, adult franchise, the Ayub regime put hundreds of political workers under detention according to the Security Act. Students were persecuted at random; in some cases, their academic degrees, earned years ago, were revoked. The ruling coterie also went ahead with preparing the Electrical College Bill which would try to put the final stamp on depriving Pakistanis of the right of direct, adult franchise. This Bill, drawn up in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Committee of the National Assembly, which had been set up to suggest suitable legislation on the report of the Franchise Commission (of 1962), was introduced at the National Assembly on 21 March 1964. It is remarkable that the Government Members, forming a majority at this Special Committee of the National Assembly, briefly designed as the Franchise Committee, thoroughly rejected the recommendations of the Franchise Com-

mission (of 1962) from the very beginning, instead of discussing those recommendations. The reference of the report of the Franchise Commission (of 1962) to the Franchise Committee thus appeared to be useless; the report was not considered at all. This report prescribed direct, adult suffrage for elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies as also the office of the President, although, in an obvious attempt to calm the susceptibilities of Ayub Khan, it recommended, for the next Presidential election only, indirect election by means of an electoral college The Franchise Committee, however, discarded direct, adult suffrage without even discussing it. Seven Opposition members of this Committee recorded their views in a separate note of dissent that unequivocally rejected indirect election endorsed by the Government Members of the Committee. The Opposition members' note commented that indirect election was a blessing to an unconscientious ruling coterie; to the people, however, it was a ghastly nightmare. It further commented that the people of Pakistan were being deprived of a right they had enjoyed even under foreign domination. The Electoral College Bill, drafted in accordance with the report of the Franchise Committee, sought to perpetuate a dictatorship under a thin democratic disguise. The Bill was passed by the National Assembly on 14 April 1964. It should perhaps be added that Ayub succeeded in procuring this democratic garb for his dictatorial regime partly because many politicians, especially Basic Democrats, suffered from an excessive greed for personal prizes, whether jobs or permits or licences. On 26 March, Ghulam Zilani Malik, an Opposition member from West Pakistan, declared that the present Government was a Government of the B.D. (i.e., Basic Democrats), by the B.D. and for the B.D. He regretfully commented that the hopes and aspirations of the nation were being bartered away for a few jobs and permits as the National Assembly seemed sure to enact the Electoral College Bill. Tofazzal Husain wrote on 15

April that the unbounded opportunism of a group of people, dictating them to oppose even the minimum popular demand for direct, adult franchise, was at the root of the peoples' misfortune.[47]

Repressive measures, however, did not seem to inspire confidence in the Government. On the contrary, its attempts to control the publication of news only revealed how acutely conscious it was of its weakness and lack of popular support. An amendment of the 1960 Press and Publications Ordinance, adopted in October 1963, completely did away with the freedom of the Press, and made it impossible for the newspapers to publish vital news items that spoke against the Government. The strangest aspect of the Governmental behaviour was that the new restrictive amendment was not even allowed to be printed in newspapers. The *Azad, Ittefaq,* and *Sangbad* were asked to show cause why each of them would not furnish a security deposit of Rs. 25,000 for publishing news reports and editorials on student activities in the last week of March 1964. The Government thus demanded from the *Ittefaq,* twice in course of the same week, security deposits amounting to Rs. 55,000 (the other demand being concerned wih the publication of the truth about the massacre of non-Muslims in January 1964). Moreover, the ruling coterie imposed restrictions on the publication of many news items at the last moment, leaving sometimes no alternative but to cancel the publication of the newspaper to be out next morning. On the following day, within a mysterious box-heading, an announcement would be made that the previous day's newspaper could not be brought out for a very special reason. Everybody could take the hint, and realize that the Ayub regime was trying to crush popular dailies having the courage to narrate facts about his government. This was a pertinent fear especially when one took into account the formation, under visible Government initiative, of an Advertisig Corporation and the National Press Trust. The

Advertising Corporation would ensure the flow of advertisements from Government and semi-Government undertakings to newspapers prepared to back the Ayub regime. The National Press Trust, composed of industrialists patronizing and being patronized by the Ayub regime, appeared to be a machinery for outrivalling, and ultimately eliminating, newspapers pinpointing the vices of those who are in power. Government patronage can always become the most crucial factor in the growth or decay of a newspaper. The National Press Trust and the Advertising Corporation could always combine to boost newspapers fanatically devoted to the Ayub regime, while wiping out of existence the newspapers bent upon a critical evaluation of that regime.[48]

Despite such insuperable obstacles to constitutional politics, the Opposition parties, with the aim of unseating Ayub and his supporters in the forthcoming election of Basic Democrats, members of the National and Provincial Assemblies, and of the President, started negotiations for coming together. Prospects for an alliance between Opposition parties of both the Wings seemed probable because many areas of West Pakistan had been terribly suffering from political repression and economic exploitation since the military take-over of 1958. MNAs from areas belonging to former Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province, and Sind ventilated on many occasions the sufferings of their areas at the National Assembly. But the Government members either prevented their discussion, or took no steps to remedy the evils underlined in such a discussion. East Pakistani leaders, e.g., Mujibur Rahman and Khwaja Nazimuddin, toured those areas of West Pakistan only to notice a reign of terror. Even on the Id-Day of 1964, the Ayub regime dropped bombs on disaffected Baluchis opposed to Ayub's military dictatorship. An adjournment motion on this incident was raised at the National Assembly. But the Government members opposed the motion and torpedoed the discussion.

It was not unexpected, therefore, that the Opposition parties of the two Wings would try to forge a common front and oppose Ayub and his followers at the forthcoming election. By the end of July 1964, the COP (i.e., Combined Opposition Parties), binding both the Wings of Pakistan, came into existence with a comprehensive nine-point programme that stressed the establishment of full democracy and provincial autonomy.[49]

The manoeuverings of Ayub, however, left very little possibility for the success of the COP at the ensuing election. It was clear to the ruling clique that its policies and actions forfeited popular support, especially in East Pakistan, for the Conventionist Muslim League. If the Conventionist Muslim League ventured to participate in the election (of BDs) to the Union Council under the party banner, it would be routed. For the people in villages had seen through their machinations which ignored the vital developmental needs of villagers and poured crores of rupees in unproductive projects mainly to purchase the support of BDs. The Works Programme, for instance, involved primarily the building of unmetalled roads which would often be washed away in the next rainy season, and, at the same time, postpone the construction of metalled roads. Townsmen and villagers could easily find out how the Works Programme provided the BDs with a source of personal profit. Ayub and his supporters, therefore, could not feel safe even under the protective cover of Basic Democracy, so carefully designed by them. They decided not to join the election to Union Councils under the banner of the Conventionist Muslim League. The Working Committee of the Conventionist Muslim League adopted this decision at a meeting in Rawalpindi on 20 August 1964. The Working Committee further made the significant declaration that the nomination for seats in the National and Provincinal Assemblies would be granted only to Leaguers who had previously demonstrated their capacity in pushing forward to victory their own candidates at the

election to Union Councils. This only underlined the determination of Ayub to rely, as usual, on underhand practices and back-door methods substituted for genuine popular support. Back-stage manoeuverings might not succeed in winning over the masses of voters to the Conventionist Muslim League at the election to Union Councils. But these manoeuverings might work with the small number of Basic Democrats after the election. Distribution of patronage, intimidation and pressures could be proficiently executed by the ruling clique to tame the newly elected Basic Democrats, and thus pave the way to its victory at the elections to Provincial and National Assemblies, and, finally, to the office of the President. The practised ease with which the Ayub-led coterie applied such tactics in the past, surely foretold its success at the forthcoming election.[50]

The Government even passed certain bills, i.e., the National and Provincial Assemblies (Elections) Bill, 1964, and the Presidential Election Bill, 1964, incorporating many provisions that would facilitate its election manoeuverings. Government contractors and others having business relationship with Government agencies were permitted to contest the elections. A candidate for the National Assembly or a Provincial Assembly was allowed to spend for electioneering eight times the amount that had been previously sanctioned. The maximum amount previously sanctioned for a National Assembly candidate was two thousand rupees, and, for a Provincial Assembly candidate, only one thousand rupees. To raise the amount of permissible expenses by as much as eight times indicated one aspect of the probable manoeuverings by the ruling coterie in the coming election. Its patronage created a new class of businessmen depending on government contracts, permits, licences, etc., who, in their turn, were prepared to help the ruling coterie in the ensuing election, either by themselves bcoming candidates, or by contributing generously to the election funds of Government-backed candidates. The Governor, an agent of the Presi-

dent in office, was allowed by law to canvass for candidates at the election; this was a way of utilizing the entire governmental machinery for enhancing the electoral prospects of the ruling coterie. All sense of propriety was sacrificed by the Ayub government when it enacted a law violating the secrecy of vote and compelling the voter to show the Presiding Officer at a polling booth (always an agent of the ruling coterie) the back of his ballot paper before he would cast it in the ballot box.[51]

A Presidential candidate was granted certain privileges which further revealed the election machinations of Ayub. The law did not provide for any election expenses return to be submitted by a candidate for the Presidency. This was ridiculous in view of the legal requirement that National Assembly and Provincial Assembly candidates were to submit such returns. Nor did the law provide for any election dispute in the Presidential election, although it was provided for in the elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies. It was thus possible for the party in power to upset the victory of an Opposition Assembly candidate by fabricating an election dispute, while the Opposition would have no means to raise a dispute and seek a remedy in case, say, the Government prevented a group of voters forcefully from coming to the polling booth and casting their votes in favour of the Opposition Presidential candidate. The Election Commission itself was not an independent body; the Government, including the President, had the legal authority to interfere in its activities. The law provided for the screening of Presidential candidates with a view to limiting the number to three, excluding the President in office. This provision could be utilized to screen out an eminent Opposition candidate. It sounded dangerous in an environment where the COP was even apprehensive of making an early announcement of the name of their Presidential candidate, lest the candidate was kidnapped, prosecuted under a false charge, or murdered. Each Presidential candidate would receive from the Government one lakh of

rupees to meet election expenses. As the Opposition politicians calculated, this provision might hit them hard by enabling the ruling party to setup two dummy candidates, screen out rivals, excepting one, and then secure three lakhs for one candidate, i.e., the sitting President, by a simple device. The dummies had only to announce at the last moment that they were not seeking election, that they were informally withdrawing their candidature, for the date of formal withdrawal was over, and the entire sum of three lakhs could be spent for the sitting President. A Presidential candidate, moreover, was not required to submit an account of his personal assets. The Opposition MNAs tried to remove legal provisions making a mockery of the Presidential election; they failed. They also failed to incorporate provisions, e.g., making it obligatory for a Presidential candidate to declare all his assets, which might make the election more healthy and less undemocratic.[58]

Under these circumstances it was difficult to expect that the agitation for democratic rights in East Pakistan would succeed in the near future. Nevertheless, the agitation continued. On 29 March 1964, for instance, East Pakistanis indicated their concern for democratic rights by attending a mammoth meeting at the Dacca Paltan Maidan presided over by Maulana Abdul Rashid Tarkabagish, President of the provincial Awami League. It was remarkable that the meeting was about to be marred by heavy rains which struck fear in the minds of organizers. As soon as the rains stopped, however, the organizers were pleasantly surprised by the huge masses of people advancing towards the meeting place. They all joined in uttering slogans for democratic rights. Students, too, went on fighting repression. On 18 August 1964, forty student leaders belonging to the Rajashahi University Central Students Union, Dacca University Central Students Union, and to different student organizations, sent an ultimatum to the East Pakistan Government and allied authorities. The ultimatum incorporated 13-

point demands, which, if unfulfilled by 24 August, would, the ultimatum said, lead to province-wide strike by students as the first step to a wider movement. Students demanded, in general, the elimination of the prevalent unnatural environment in the educational realm, and the creation of another conducive to modern, scientific education conforming to the requirements of the country. The ultimatum demanded, in particular, the cancellation of orders, aimed at political victimization, such as those expelling students, revoking University degrees, etc. The Government did not proceed to satisfy these demands. On 29 August, therefore, Dacca students observed a token strike, and tried to take out a procession in support of the 13-point demands. The entire University campus, however, was surrounded by the police, and although there was no order prohibiting processions on that day, the police lathi-charged, teargassed and brick-batted the students trying to form a procession on the street in front of the University. Some students and a Press photographer were seriously injured. Twenty-two persons, including a few wayfarers were arrested. Students, failing to bring out the procession, hurled brickbats on the police. Later the all-parties action committee of the students announced that on 31 August students all over East Pakistan would hold meetings condemning police repression and supporting the 13-point demands.[53]

Guardians and members of the public felt alarmed over the repression of students which was never confined to Dacca. In mofussil areas, such as subdivisional towns, a reign of terror was unleashed on students who suffered frequently from teargassing, lathi-charges, arrests under the Security Act, the award of forced transfer certificates, etc. A conference of guardians, initiated by the students, was scheduled to be held on 23 August at Tangail. The conference was to devise ways and means to enable students to carry on their studies in a proper environment. The conference was to be held at the Tangail stadium.

Organizers sought the permission of the S.D.O. (i.e., Sub-Divisional Officer) for the use of the microphone and of the stadium. The S.D.O. refused permission, and also tried to take steps to ensure that the conference would not be held anywhere else. Organizers turned to the Bar Library authorities who permitted the holding of the conference at the Bar Library. The S.D.O. promptly summoned the President and the Secretary of the Bar Library, and pressed them to withdraw the permission. The Bar Library authorities did not yield to this governmental pressure. Nevertheless, here was just one important example showing how Ayub and his supporters continued, and hoped to continue, in power.[54]

Journalists were smarting under severe curbs. On 25 September, in response to the call by the East Pakistan Journalists Union, the working journalists of the province observed a 3-hour token strike in pressing the demands for the removal of suffocating restrictions on the Press and the release of arrested journalists. A few days later, i.e., on 29 September, came a highly sifinificant expression of popular disgust at the authoritarian rule of Ayub Khan. The COP's call for the observance of an Anti-Repression Day on that date was a resounding success. An all-out strike took place on 29 September : not a plane flew, nor a bus or a train moved. The river-going vessels stood still, as did scooters, rickshaws and private cars. The chimneys of factories stayed smokeless. Educational institutions were already closed for the autumn recess. Students and teachers, factory workers and peasants, non-factory workers and private citizens, political workers and their leaders, all joined in huge processions and raised sky-rending slogans for the attainment of democratic rights. Maulana Bhasani presided over the big meeting held at the Paltan Maidan, and declared that the people, who had achieved Pakistan at an enormous sacrifice, were not going to rest till they secured full democratic rights. According to many experienced political observers, the spon-

taneous expression of popular feelings on 29 September 1964 could only match that on the first observance of the Independence Day in 1947. The Anti-Repression Day saw a few clashes between the students and the police in different parts of East Pakistan. In Chittagong, however, the supporters of the government employed goondas, armed with lethal weapons, who attacked processionists, and many workers and students were seriously injured, some even losing their ears, noses and fingers. In the West Wing, the observance of the Anti-Repression Day was quite encouraging to the COP, although it was far less impressive than in the East Wing. The Government imposed, only two days before the Day, a ban on meetings and processions in Karachi, thereby recording its alarm over the COP's popular support.[55]

Ayub and his party, however, carried on their election manoeuverings in an extremely systematic fashion. The manifestations of popular support behind the COP perhaps impelled it to plan its manoeuverings in a relentless way and execute them without any regard for the canons of fairplay. The ruling clique sent directives to D.C.O.s (i.e., Development Circle Officers) requiring them to act in accord with the wishes of the Conventionist Muslim League leaders in their respective areas so as to ensure the electoral success of that party in the coming election. The D.C.O.s were directed to reconstruct the electoral units for the same purpose. Consequently, D.C.O.s began to delimit afresh the boundaries of electoral units, and constructed electoral units with awkward and unrealistic boundaries. By the middle of August 1964, more than ten thousand complaints against such arbitrary reconstruction of electoral districts came before the courts. A few complaints were redressed here and there, probably to keep up a show of impartiality on the part of the ruling clique. Moreover, the voters' lists were so much tampered with as to make a mockery of the whole election. For instance, the voters list for No. 1 Siddik-bazar Union Com-

mittee excluded more than 50% of the eligible voters. The voters' list for Narayanganj town committee, ward No. 3, excluded 194 eligible voters belonging to the premises No. 26, Sonaton Pal Lane, while the names of 8 voters, who had never resided in the said premises, were included as residing there. Instances such as these could be multiplied to any number.[56]

On 26 September 1964, obviously at the behest of Ayub, twenty-three prominent theologians issued a statement at Karachi declaring that no woman could become a head of the state in accordance with Islamic law. This propaganda move, however, could not exercise any visible influence on East Pakistanis who gave Fatima Jinnah, the Presidential candidate of the COP, a tumultuous reception everywhere she visited in East Pakistan in the month of October and later. Masses turned up in meetings addressed by her and listened to her quietly. In contrast, at the first meeting addressed by Ayub at the Dacca Paltan Maidan as part of his election campaign in the East Wing, the people threw banana skins and shoes at the President. A public holiday was declared at the anniversary of the October coup of 1958, and Ayub got an opportunity to improve his pre-election image and impress it on the people. National flags were hoisted at all government buildings. East Pakistanis, however, observed the anniversary of the so-called October Revolution as Death of Democracy Day. Students hoisted black flags on school buildings and took out processions demanding the establishment of democracy. No wonder, therefore, that although Ayub spent about three-and-a-half lakhs of public funds on his election tour in the East Wing, and although the entire governmental machinery was thoroughly mobilized to boost his campaign, the reception that could be arranged for him was far overshadowed by that accorded to Fatima.[57]

The Presidential candidate of the COP was not given any opportunity to conduct the election campaign with the aid of the Radio and Television, both controlled by the Government

and directed not to extend any such opportunity to Fatima or to COP stalwarts. On the contrary, the radio not only ignored the campaign speeches of Fatima, but also ridiculed her in one of its programmes. The APP, managed by the Government, either distorted the news and views of the COP, or paid no attention to them. The Government-sponsored National Press Trust also played the same game by issuing necessary directives to the newspapers under its control. The Ministry of Information boosted Ayub's election campaign by going to the length of commissioning, at a very handsome remuneration, dozens of articles singing Ayub's praise. Ayub used many other tricks to prevent a free expression of public opinion at the polls. Shortly before the election began, an ordinance was issued debarring the teachers of schools, colleges and universities from active participation in the election campaign. The COP was thus deprived of the assistance of one of its principal group of supporters forming an enthusiastic section of the intelligentsia. The polling time was so fixed as to shut out a large number of voters. Voting would take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. only, and that too on weekdays. Many people working in offices and factories, on whom the COP counted, would thus be compelled not to vote. In order to vote, they might have to lose their jobs, or, at least, a day's wage.[58]

Even the adoption of all these stratagems failed to inspire any confidence in the heart of Ayub. He, therefore, issued a stern warning at a press conference in Dacca on 8 November 1964. Ayub warned that the people would dig their own graves if they voted 'stupidly' and paved the way to another revolution whose consequences would be far more severe than those of the 1958 revolution. Stupid voting, of course, meant voting in such a way as to overthrow Ayub. According to him, the 1958 "revolution" was mild, for it spared politicians; this time the revolution, if it took place, would not spare them. Ayub made this comment in reply to a question as to whether he would

obey unhesitatingly the verdict of the people in the coming election. The question had its roots in the suspicion among many East Pakistanis that, as in 1954, the ruling coterie would again abuse its power and nullify an electoral verdict going against it. The suspicion was surely strengthened by Ayub's reply. The press conference ended abruptly in five minutes. Ayub left the conference after answering only four questions and refusing to extend any opportunity for more questions and answers.[29]

The election of Basic Democrats began in East Pakistan on 10 November 1964. Reports flowing from different parts of the province showed that the ruling coterie's pledge to hold a free and impartial election was but a myth. In some cases, the enthusiasm of the agents of the ruling clique was responsible for actual voting by a larger number of persons than in the voters' list. Agents of Government-backed candidates were allowed to carry on propaganda within 2-3 yards of the polling booth at the time of election, and also to enter into the polling booths. Such activities were illegal, and, of course, the COP candidates could not claim such facilities. The ruling clique, furthermore, resorted to false votes, intimidation and goondaism. Yet, in all parts of the province, the popular verdict went against candidates known to be supported by the Conventionist Muslim League. In some cases, an ordinary candidate put up by the COP, for instance, a poor milkman, won against an influential and rich Union Committee Chairman backed by the Government. These reverses, however, did not deter the Ayub-led coterie from starting the manoeuvers, hinted at earlier in this Chapter, to win over the Basic Democrats. As an initial step to the exercise of governmental pressure on B.D.s, the office of President Ayub Khan began to release a letter to the newly elected B.D.s. This letter recorded a praise for the system of Basic Democracy, an eulogy of Ayub as the originator of the system, and solicited the support of the B.D.s for

enabling Ayub to continue the system. Signed by Ayub and issued by the President's Office at governmental expense, this letter amazed and aggrieved COP circles who could not counter this election machination on the part of the ruling coterie. The COP apprehended that it would have to confront worse manipulations in the near future.[60]

Such manipulations became more and more intense and widespread as the date of the Presidential election, i.e., 2 January 1965, drew near. There was perhaps no alternative for Ayub's supporters who failed to answer the criticisms levelled against Ayub Khan by the COP, in general, and Fatima herself, in particular. Fatima declared publicly that in 1947 Ayub was to be court-martialled for some major offences, but, on the request of a few persons, Jinnah pardoned him. She demanded that Ayub should declare his personal assets; but there was no response from her rival. The Opposition spokesmen charged that since the military take-over in 1958 Ayub acquired assets worth fifty crores of rupees. They also pointed to the fabulous fortunes built up by Ayub's son Gaohar Ayub, a retired Army Captain heading the Gandhara Industries. Unable to meet these allegations, the Ayub-led coterie multiplied repression. Persecution of COP leaders and workers increased. They were arrested in large numbers in different parts of East (and West) Pakistan. The police frequently used lathis, bayonets and bullets to spoil the election campaigns of the COP. Hired goondas assisted, and were assisted by, the police in this exercise. At Bagerhat on 8 December, for instance, during a visit of Central Minister Sabur, the police and goondas assaulted students staging a peaceful demonstration against Sabur. The police-backed goondas also attacked the Bar Library, the COP office and also a local hospital, causing considerable damages. On 22 December, the police and the goondas (backed by the Conventionist Muslim League) together attacked the mass of people assembling at the Rajshahi railway station to receive

Fatima. More than two hundred people, including many students, were injured. Almost everyday in some part or other of Pakistan the ruling party's fear of defeat produced such explosions, and the COP's election campaigns were seriously handicapped. An all-out mobilization of the governmental machinery was accomplished to ensure Ayub's victory. The District Magistrates issued circulars to subordinates who were directed to carry on election campaigns in favour of Ayub. A copy of one such official circular, dated 14 December 1964, was printed in the *Janata* of 23 December.[61]

The ruling clique even appeared to toy with the desperate remedy of screening out the Presidential candidate of the COP. Three Central Ministers—Bhutto, Shoaib and Sabur—filed their nomination papers for the Presidential election. Later, they withdrew. The law on the Presidential election, limiting the number of Presidential candidates to three, excluding the sitting President, could be applied to screen out Fatima. This was apprehended by the COP circles. But Ayub had other apprehensions which probably led to the abandonment of the screening tactics. Some eminent followers of Ayub, it was reported, advised Ayub secretly that Fatima should not be screened out. For, this screening out would cause disappointment throughout the country, and law and order would completely break down. This calculation perhaps was responsible for the withdrawal of candidature by the three Central Ministers. That the calculation was realistic could be confirmed by the outbreak of large-scale student disturbances in both the Wings of Pakistan in the some month, i.e., December. Police firings on students in both the Wings caused widespread demonstrations by students. On 10 December, educational institutions all over Pakistan were closed for twenty-five days. The reopening date, 5 January 1965, would come after the termination of the Presidential election. Arrest and persecution of students, a main prop of the COP, did not, however, stop.[62]

The nervousness of Ayub and his party on the eve of the Presidential election was manifested in the show of force they resorted to. On 25 December, Monem Khan, the Governor of East Pakistan, announced that he would mobilize the police, the E.P.R. and the military in order to forestall any attempt by the COP to create disturbances. Next day, he announced that he had already ordered the deployment of troops. An official Press note of 29 December said that at many parts of East Pakistan the military had already been posted so as to prevent disturbances during the Presidential election. The mobilization of troops not only indicated the panic in the ruling coterie but also its tactics to dissuade by a show of force the voters from going against Ayub and to impress upon voters the certainty of another military coup in case election results dislodged Ayub. An election could not surely be free under the omnipresent shadow of the military machine. On the eve of the election a very interesting procedure of exerting official pressure on B.D.s came to light. The Central Ministry of Information and Broadcasting sent a letter, and a form, to the newly elected B.D.s. Each B.D. was requested to fill up the form asking information about his income, profession, membership of a political party, participation in activities for popular welfare, etc. The ingenuity of the ruling coterie lay in arranging a unique lottery for those B.D.s who would send their forms, properly filled up, by 31 December. Sixty prizes, worth 100 rupees each, would be awarded on the basis of this inimitable lottery.[63]

Ayub could congratulate himself on his success in the ingenious campaign, because he won the contest against Fatima. Perhaps the B.D.s, too, could be congratulated on acting in their narrow self-interest. After all, it is not entirely unexpected that a majority of B.D.s would choose to vote against Fatima, who, if elected, might cast away the system of Basic Democracy and install a genuine parliamentary system rooted in direct, adult suffrage. They acquired, and learned to covet, certain privileges

flowing from Basic Democracy. They could not easily renounce those privileges, especially when their votes in the Presidential election earned high prices in hard cash. The price varied from two thousand to seven thousand rupees per vote of a B.D. The handsome contributions by industrialists to Ayub's election fund brought these purchases within the reach of the ruling coterie In various polling booths, as the COP alleged, the Presiding Officers openly worked for Ayub, and even went to the extent of marking ballot-papers. The police harassed and prevented voters, who would vote for Fatima, from reaching the polling booths; they also arrested Fatima's polling agents so that many election booths went without COP polling agents. When COP polling agents protested against the malpractices of the Conventionist Muslim League agents in and around polling stations, they were expelled from the polling stations. Their protests against the highhandedness of the Presiding Officers, enhancing Ayub's chances of victory, produced the same result. These allegations against official interference in the election were of no use. Ayub's authoritarian regime did not have to pay much attention to these allegations. The supreme fact was: Ayub won the Presidential election. This statement, however, would be fundamentally false unless supplemented by the following statement: there was no democratic election.[44]

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48. *Compass* (Bengali weekly, Calcutta), 18 April 1964, pp. 50-52. *Ittefaq*, 29, 30, 31 March, 3 April 1964. *Sangbad*, 29 March, 3 April 1964.

49. Speech by GHULAM MUHAMMAD WASSAN, *NAP Debates*, 13 June 1963, Vol. II, No. 8, p. 425; Speech by MUFTI MAHMOOD, *Ibid.*, 14 June 1963. Vol. II, No. 9, pp. 465, 467; Speech by AMIR HYDER SHAH, *Ibid.*, 17 June 1963.

Vol. II, No. 11, pp. 602-3. WASSAN, MAHMOOD and SHAH all belonged to West Pakistan. *Ittefaq*, 13 April, 1, 2, 8, 10 August 1964.

50. *Ittefaq*, 12, 31 March, 19, 21 August 1964.

51. *NAP Debates*, 8 August 1964, Vol. III, No. 8, pp. 519-22.

52. *Ittefaq*, 18, 30 August 1964. *NAP Debates*, 18 August 1964, Vol. III, No. 15, pp. 988-90, 992-93, 1006-7, 1014-15. Special Correspondent, Rawalpindi Commentary, *The Patriot*, 25 August 1964.

53. *Ittefaq*, 30 March, 19, 30 August 1964.

54. *Ibid.*, 25 August 1964.

55. *Janata*, 30 September 1964. *The Indian Express*, 1 October 1964.

56. *Ittefaq*, 8, 19 August 1964.

57. *Morning News* (Dacca), 27 September 1964. *Janata*, 21 October, 4 November 1964. Special Correspondent, Dacca Commentary, *The Patriot*, 5 November 1964.

58. *The Hindustan Times*, 15 October 1964. *Janata*, 14 October 1964. *The Patriot*, 5 November 1964.

59. *Janata*, 11 November 1964.

60. *Ibid.*, 11, 18, 25 November 1964.

61. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 November 1964. *Janata*, 2, 9, 16, 23 December 1964.

62. *The Statesman* (New Delhi), 10, 11, December 1964. *Janata*, 2, 16 December 1964. *The Nagpur Times*, 26 December 1964.

63. *Janata*, 30 December 1964. *The Hindustan Times*, 31 December 1964—AP despatch from Karachi, dated 30 December 1964.

64. *Pakistan Observer*, 4 January 1965. *Anandabazar Patrika* (Bengali daily, Calcutta), 6 January 1965. *Janata*, 25 November 1964. *Compass*, 9 January 1965, pp. 17-18—a commentary by its own correspondent who visited East Pakistan for making a study of the Presidential elections.

CHAPTER 6

THE MOVEMENT FOR AN AUTONOMOUS EAST BENGAL

The retention of the Presidency by Field Marshall Muhammad Ayub Khan could not put an end to the movement for autonomy and democracy in East Pakistan, although, it must be admitted, the movement had a major set-back. The grievances, which spurred the movement, persisted, and the Ayub regime did very little to remove, or even minimize, those grievances. Instead, the Central Government tried, since the inauguration of the 1962 Constitution, to manipulate certain symbols to cope with the grievances, whether political or economic, aired by East Pakistanis. The entire system of Basic Democracy could be regarded as a symbol used to oppose the demand for democratic rights. Other symbols were used to meet the agitation for removal of economic disparity between the two Wings of Pakistan. One such symbol was the National Economic Council set up under Article 145 of the 1962 Constitution. The Council was entrusted with the task of reviewing the over-all economic development of the country. It was also to formulate economic plans in such a way as to remove disparity between provinces with regard to per capita income and allocation of foreign exchange within the shortest possible time. The National Economic Council was further required to submit annually a report to the National Assembly on the progress being achieved in the eradication of economic disparity between the provinces. Each provincial legislature would receive a copy of that report. Such concern expressed by the 1962 Constitution for the removal of

inter-Wing economic disparity was surely welcome to East Pakistanis. But it did not take them long to get disillusioned of an empty gesture. The constitutional provision for a National Economic Council meant little when the Central Goverment refrained from taking any substantial measure to eliminate inter-Wing economic disparity. As to how the National Economic Council discharged its duty, the following observation by Mahbubul Haq, made at the National Assembly on 13 August 1964, may be noted: "Now, Sir, 1962 is gone, 1963 is gone, and 1964 is going. Although it is a constitutional obligation that the National Economic Council must submit a report to the National Assembly every year, it has not been done even once, and this is the way we are working our Constitution."[1]

Another economic symbol wielded by the Pakistan Government was the National Finance Commission. Constituted by the President from time to time, this Commission had to report on how much progress the provinces were making in the attainment of economic parity, and to recommend measures towards that end. The uselessness of such a Commission was easy to understand on such occasions as the publication of the Outline of Pakistan's Third Five-Year Plan. The Outline conformed to the pre-existing trend by the allocation of a much lesser amount of development funds for the East Wing than for the West Wing. That the Government merely wanted to talk about the removal of inter-wing economic disparity was thus proved. It was essential to base the allocation of development funds on a correct estimate of the regional disparity in per capita incomes. A National Income Commission was appointed in April 1963. But the Outline of the Third Five-Year Plan was drawn up before the preparation of the report of the National Income Commission. Framers of the Outline, therefore, could not convincingly point out as to how they approached the problem of regional disparity, and could devise effective steps for its elimination. As a matter of fact, the Government proposed to spend Rs.

492.00 per head in East Pakistan, and Rs. 766.00 per head in West Pakistan, during the Third Plan period (1965-70). Yet it went on claiming that at the end of the Third Plan period the inter-Wing disparity in per capita income would be reduced by one-fifth of the total. Such a promise on the part of the rulers was entirely unwarranted in view of the above-mentioned disparity in the allocation of development funds which was sure to enhance inter-Wing economic dispartiy by the end of the Third Plan period. Nevertheless, it was not unexpected that a Government having no respect for democratic rights would come out with such misleading promises at random.[2]

Instead of trying to remove the economic grievances of East Pakistanis, the Central Government tried to hookwink them. In order to remove these grievances the Central Government had to endeavour to bring about parity between the two Wings. That, again, implied that, for some years at least, the Central Government was to go beyond parity and grant priority to East Pakistan's development needs so that, after some years, parity would be established. But the Government merely made a show of parity in the Budget by allocating equal development expenditure for the two-Wings, sometimes even providing a few crores more for the East Wing. East Pakistanis, however, were quick to expose the trick played upon them. They pointed to other expenditures to be incurred by the Central Government in West Pakistan, which were huge sums and deliberately kept out of such allocations in order to create an illusion of parity. For instance, the Central Budget for 1963-64 allocated Rs. 196 crores to West Pakistan and Rs. 201 crores to East Pakistan. The Central Budget for 1964-65 provided for an expenditure of Rs. 205 crores for East Pakistan and Rs. 195 crores for West Pakistan As to the Works Programmes, East Pakistan was granted by this Budget Rs. 25 crores (perhaps because the B.D.s had to be propitiated in the election year), and West Pakistan Rs. 15 crores. But Rs. 73 crores were set apart by the same Budget for projects

located in the Central Government territory which all lay in the West Wing. Thus there was no parity between the two Wings even in regard to schemes included in the Budget. Moreover, there were big projects for West Pakistan costing enormous sums and lying outside the Budget. For example, there was the Indus Basin project costing about Rs. 8500 crores. More than half of the Central Budget, again, was appropriated by the Defence Services in which the share of East Pakistanis was absolutely scanty.[8]

The Central Government, furthermore, embarked on a vast project of desalinization of sea water in the West Wing costing Rs. 800 crores. East Pakistanis felt all the more exasperated because a small portion of such expenditures, incurred exclusively for the benefit of West Pakistan, would have been sufficient to prevent the cataclysmic ravages of floods and cyclones in their province. These occurred almost every year and tended to wipe out whatever economic advance the province made in the preceding months. Floods and cyclones threatened the very existence of East Pakistan; in 1962 alone the province was hit four times by cyclones; but the Ayub-led coterie was not prepared to take any significant step to prevent them or minimize their effects by means of permanent measures. It undertook temporary relief work on a very small scale each time the calamity took place. On 11 May 1965, a devastating cyclone came, affecting 10 millions of people. Tidal waves washed away about 30 thousand persons. Private property damage was estimated at Rs. 200 crores, the cost of repairs for Government buildings stood at about Rs. 300 crores. The Governor of East Pakistan did not visit the affected areas in a week. A grant of Rs. 1 crore and 75 lakhs only was made for purposes of relief work. This showed the apathy of those who were in power at the Centre to the incalculable distress of East Pakistanis. Coastal embankments and walls were urgently needed to protect East Pakistanis from the havoc caused by cyclones. But the Central Government refused to pay any serious attention to such projects. Syed Muhammad Habibul

Haq, an East Pakistani MNA, declared on 17 June 1963: "If the Government can undertake a gigantic project of desalinisation of sea water in West Pakistan at a cost of 800 crores, would it be possible for me or for anyone else to belive that the Government could not build embankments at the coastal belts in East Pakistan by ¼th of the money spent on desalinisation? If the Government wants it, it is possible." On 17 June 1965, Shah Azizur Rahman told the National Assembly: "The relief provided is too meagre to mitigate sufferings. It is a matter of deep distress for all of us. You remain in Karachi and Rawalpindi, can go on holidays to Murree [a hill station] completely forgetting the plight of the East Pakistani people. Season in and season out every year they have been subjected to the ravages of the nature and to the cruelties of the nature." Such feelings in East Pakistanis were only intensified when the authorities made a show of attempting to solve the problem of cyclones. The WAPDA (Water and Power Development Authority), for instance, drew up a plan for erecting a 3000-miles long wall of mud along the coastline. The experience of East Pakistanis indicated that such a wall was sure to collapse before a mild assault of the cyclone.[4]

It is true that new houses and roads were being constructed in urban areas, especially in places like Dacca, and lent a deceptive appearance to East Pakistan's economic plight. The economic condition of the rural people, constituting about 90 percent of the total population, continued to deteriorate. Such projects as the Ganges—Kabodak Project did not take into account the needs and experiences of the people, and its implementation (through more than a decade) revealed the incompetence of so-called experts, the resulting misery for peasants, as also the corruption of the authorities. Almost every year contractors started work, such as digging canals for the Ganges—Kabodak project, in the rainy reason, so that they had to stop their work within a short period. The rains washed away whatever little

work had been done, while payments were made for the whole job, despite the fact that only a small portion of it had been actually performed, and that too had vanished. Similarly, the earthen structures set up as parts of the Works Programme mostly failed to withstand one rainy season, although the proteges of the Ayub-led coterie paraded the concern of the coterie for East Pakistanis by reference to the Works Programme. These proteges, moreover, should be reminded that the Ayub regime did not initiate the Works Programme out of its own magnanimity or volition. A systematic use of pressures and persuasion by Dr. Richard Gilbert of the Harvard University Advisory Group (attached to Pakistan's Planning Commission) led the Ayub regime to divert, to the Works Programme, funds accumulating from the sale, in the open market in Pakistan, of surplus foodstuffs donated by the United States.[5]

Spokesmen of the Central Government frequently publicized their intention to accelerate economic development in East Pakistan. Realities, however, contradicted such an intention. For instance, it came to be known in October 1964 that the Central Government sanctioned the establishment of nine new industrial projects all to be located in the West Wing. This decision was taken after a consideration of thirty new industrial projects. Simultaneously, it was decided to expand one industrial unit in East Pakistan; not a single new industrial project was sanctioned for the East Wing. An example from the field of import trade may also be produced here. The Government made a short-lived gesture of accommodating East Pakistanis into that field in 1960. Till then, import trade was monopolized by a few rich West Pakistani businessmen. In 1960, rules and regulations were liberalized, and many East Pakistanis of moderate means entered the arena of import trade. But gradually East Pakistanis were screened out on some pretext or other, and, by 1966, regulations were revised so as to enable rich West Pakistani traders to control import trade and squeeze out poor

East Pakistani traders. It was essential for East Pakistanis to have a large share of the import trade if the industrialization of their province had to be speeded up. Nevertheless, the Central Government seemed to be bent upon impeding capital formation in the East Wing.[6]

The Government continued to adopt policies designed to hinder East Pakistan's economic development and to thwart the emergence of a class of East Pakistani industrialists. East Pakistanis were thoroughly embittered by the calumny spread by the Central Government that their province did not have the capacity even to absorb funds allocated in the Budget, and large sums remained unspent. The Central Government deliberately held up the supply of such key items in development projects as cement and iron rod, thus compelling East Pakistan to stop or suspend many projects, and then it spread that calumny. On 17 June 1963, Ramizuddin Ahmad declared at the National Assembly : "There is shortage of cement, there is shortage of rods, there is shortage of sanitary equipment and fittings, because these were also not allowed to be imported for East Pakistan. The other day when I had a talk with an important official of the Department of Communications he told me that he could not finish the building work because of the shortage of cement and rods. ... Whatever allocation the Finance Minister has placed in the Budget, the amount will not go to East Pakistan."[7]

When East Pakistani industrialists started utilizing the facilities offered by the P.I.C.I.C. (i.e., Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation) for the establishment of medium-sized industries in their province, the Government issued an order (in March 1963) curbing the powers of the P.I.C.I.C. and stopping the entry of East Pakistani industrialists in that field. The field of big industries was dominated by the E.P.I.D.C. (i.e., East Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation), and no East Pakistani could venture to enter that field. The

E.P.I.D.C., when it established an industry and tried to disinvest, passed it on to a West Pakistani industrialist. In this way, several industries established by the E.P.I.D.C. came under the ownership of fortunate West Pakistani industrialists. The P.I.C.I.C. was initially authorized to finance loans for projects requiring more than Rs. 10 lakhs, the I.D.B. (Industrial Development Bank) being concerned with loans below that limit. The Government order of March 1963 revised the lending limits of these two institutions so as to stop the growth of medium-sized industries in East Pakistan owned by East Pakistanis. This order raised the loan-giving power of the I.D.B. covering loans up to Rs. 25 lakhs, and restricted that of the P.I.C.I.C. to projects requiring more than that amount. That it was a conspiracy directed against East Pakistan was easy to affirm. The P.I.C.I.C., as Mahbubul Haq testified before the National Assembly on 1 August 1963, had been almost exclusively responsible for advancing loans with a large foreign exchange component. East Pakistanis were in a position to utilize these loans to industrialize their province rapidly. Since March 1963, however, it became impossible for them to secure loans of foreign currency because they did not have the capacity to undertake projects requiring more than Rs. 25 lakhs, and were automatically debarred from approaching the P.I.C.I.C. At the same time, East Pakistani industrialists could not secure any effective assistance from the I.D.B. which lacked the requisite resources, especially foreign exchange. The I.D.B., moreover, had only a theoretical power to grant loans up to Rs. 25 lakhs; its actual capacity fell far short of that. As Abdul Muntaquim Choudhury of East Pakistan declared on 1 August at the National Assembly: "Sir, by this curb imposed on the P.I.C.I.C., they have passed the medium-sized industries to I.D.B., the industries in which we are solely interested because through these medium industries alone East Pakistan can have a real beginning in capital formation. As a result of this ban these indus-

tries in private sector in East Pakistan have been most badly hit. Sir, the argument on the Government side is that I.D.B.'s limits have been raised and I.D.B. may look after the field from which P.I.C.I.C. has been taken away. Now, Sir, this argument does not hold good inasmuch as the Industrial Development Bank has limited resources at its command and when it comes to coming to the aid of the growing medium-sized industries in East Pakistan, I.D.B. has hopelessly failed."[8]

In diverse ways the Central ruling coterie persisted in obstructing East Pakistan's industrial growth. The ingenious devices it adopted for this purpose could not but excite wonder. Some of these are indicated below. In March 1966 the National Assembly passed the Sixth Constitution Amendment Bill. This Bill empowered the Assembly to impose, in lieu of excise duty, income tax and sales tax, taxes on production capacities of industrial concerns. East Pakistanis were resentful of this Bill which was destined to eliminate East Pakistanis owning new industrial establishments. A new industrial establishment often failed to utilize fully its production capacity on account of shortage of labour, of power, of marketing facilities and a variety of other reasons. Only the well-established industrialists could benefit from the Bill, while newcomers would be severely handicapped. East Pakistani MNAs belonging to the Opposition characterized the Bill as a 'conspiracy' or a 'calculated' effort on the part of the Government to exterminate East Pakistani industrialists who were new entrants in the field. Even a member of the Conventionist Muslim League, Mr. Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, regretted that the Bill was opposed to needs of industrialization of the country, and that he would have voted against it if he was not a disciplined member of the party. It should be added here that the Central Budget for 1965-66 imposed a 12½ percent tax on capital goods. This too threatened to oust the new entrepreneurs of East Pakistan and impede the industrialization of that province. Opposition

MNAs from East Pakistan raised their voice of protest against this tax which served to strengthen West Pakistani industrialists exercising a monopolistic control with Government patronage.[9]

As late as the end of April 1966 it was reported that East Pakistan was suffering from an acute shortage of coal owing to the suspension of coal imports from India since the India-Pakistan hostilities of September 1965. East Pakistanis could accuse the Central Government of apathy towards them, for the cotton mills, inland water shipping services and construction works in their province were gravely affected by this shortage. The brick industry in East Pakistan nearly collapsed, this in turn producing unemployment on a large scale. In the same month, i.e., April 1966, it came to be known that the manoeuverings of the Central Government totally deprived East Pakistanis of any opportunity to establish letters of credit for commercial imports of dyes and chemicals under Free List for the current shipping period. In accordance with the shipping policy of that period, any registered importer, under the Free List programme, could establish letters of credit for the import of dyes and chemicals of Rs. 10,000 each. Till 19 April, however, on account of an acute paucity of foreign exchange, the State Bank of Pakistan did not make any allocation of foreign exchange for the said imports. On 19 April, the State Bank released the foreign exchange. On 23 April, Banks in East Pakistan were informed that, on a first-come-first-served basis, importers in Karachi were granted the entire foreign exchange to be used for the said imports. The Muslim Commercial Bank of Karachi was designated as the controlling bank entrusted with the processing of imports of dyes and chemicals. This Bank and its branches, a foreign Bank, and all the branches of the Habib Bank, the National Bank and the United Bank were authorized to act as banks for purposes of opening of letters of credit. No bank established in East Pakistan was granted this autho-

rity. It was thus obvious that the ruling coterie was practising discrimination against East Pakistanis.[10]

Many examples from the period after the inauguration of the 1962 Constitution could be furnished to prove the determination of the ruling coterie to perpetuate, and perhaps enhance, the economic disparity between the two Wings. On 15 June 1963, Md. Serajul Islam Miah of East Pakistan told the National Assembly that the House Building Finance Corporation sanctioned, up to 31 January 1963, Rs. 2,80,41,000 for East Pakistan, Rs. 3,97,84,000 for West Pakistan, and Rs. 9,92,22,000 for Karachi, which received separate allocations even after it was handed over to West Pakistan. Serajul also pointed out that out of 16 members of the Inter-Services Selection Board for recruitment to military services, only one was an East Pakistani. He, therefore, ridiculed the provision of Rs. 50 lakhs in the Central Budget for the promotion of love and friendship between the two Wings of Pakistan. Such friendship could never grow up in an environment of acute disparity.[11]

Two oil refineries were to be set up in the two Wings of Pakistan during the Second Plan Period (i.e., 1960-65). In East Pakistan, the oil refinery was to be set up at Chittagong. In West Pakistan, it was to be established at Karachi. The oil refinery at Karachi was duly established. By March 1964, there were reports of good progress on a second oil refinery coming up in Karachi, while the Chittagong oil refinery remained a mere talk.[12]

Banks and insurances companies are important agencies of capital formation. The Central Government did not appear to help East Pakistanis in opening new banks. On the contrary, as Mr. Akhtaruddin Ahmad informed the National Assembly on 27 June 1964, the Government pigeonholed the applications of East Pakistanis for the establishment of new banks. This was reprehensible in view of the fact that out of 18 Scheduled Banks in Pakistan, 16 were in the West Wing, and 2 in the

East Wing. As to insurance companies, out of a total of 33, only 3 companies had their head offices in East Pakistan, and all the others in West Pakistan. The Government introduced a National Co-Insurance Scheme that threatened to eliminate the 3 small companies of East Pakistan struggling hard to expand their business in competition with the much stronger companies of the West Wing. According to this Scheme, the Insurance Corporation would pool together all the Government advertisements and distribute them among different insurance companies in accordance with the investment and premium earnings of different companies. Moreover, insurance companies with their headquarters in West Pakistan could have invested large sums in the East Wing. But the trend of investment was completely otherwise; out of a total of Rs. 28 crores invested in Pakistan, Rs. 26 crores were invested in the West Wing, and only Rs. 2 crores in the East Wing.[13]

It was reported in late October 1964 that the Gandhara Industries, owned by a son of President Ayub Khan, secured the permission to establish a factory for the production of buses and trucks in the West Wing. Previously the Central Government permitted the establishment of six such factories in the West Wing. East Pakistan went without even one such factory.[14]

The Central Government ignored the needs of several cottage industries in East Pakistan, and thereby aggravated unemployment in that province. The handloom industry was exposed to an unfair competition with the cotton textiles industry receiving a good deal of patronage from the Government in the form of tax-holidays, etc. The cotton textiles industry tried to capture the market served for generations by the handloom industry. Influential West Wing businessmen in the cotton textiles industry placed many obstacles in the way of the handloom industry. In particular, their manipulations were responsible for the excessively high price and irregular

supply of threads which throttled the operation of the handloom industry.[15]

About 25 lakhs of East Pakistanis were employed in the manufacture of *bidis* of *tendu* leaves imported from India. The Central Government did not want East Pakistanis to be dependent on imports from India, although it did not allow East Pakistanis to import those leaves from another foreign country. It tried to stop imports from India by progressively enhancing the import duty. The duty was 35 percent in 1955, rose to 60 percent in 1963, and to 125% in 1964. Many establishments were then forced to stop the manufacture of bidis, and their workers became unemployed. But the imports continued. The Government, therefore, passed an ordinance prohibiting the production and sale of bidis of tendu leaves in the East Wing. That the Central Government was indifferent to the welfare of East Pakistanis was obvious from the fact that it allowed manufacturers in the West Wing to import tendu leaves (from sources other than India) and manufacture and sell bidis of tendu leaves. Even the unused stocks of tendu leaves in East Pakistan were seized and despatched to the West Wing for the benefit of West Pakistani traders. The Government did not provide any alternative source of employment to the bidi workers thrown out of their jobs as a result of the ordinance issued by the Government.[16]

A favourite propaganda theme of the Central Government was that East Pakistan lagged behind West Pakistan in economic development because East Pakistan had a much fewer number of persons with higher education, without whose active participation, industrialization was sure to be delayed. Some spokesmen of the Government went so far as to suggest that East Pakistanis were of inferior calibre and, therefore, failed to keep pace with the West Pakistanis in economic advancement. East Pakistanis did not accept, although they were pained by, the lie about their intellectual inferiority to West Pakistanis,

and compared it to the myth circulated by the British about Bengalees (in undivided India) being unmartial. The British wanted to keep Bengalees away from the armed forces simply because they dreaded the love of freedom in Bengalees and the ability of Bengalees to launch an independence movement. The West Pakistani ruling coterie, similarly, tried to preserve East Pakistan in economic serfdom to the West Wing. East Pakistanis admitted the disparity in the number of persons with higher education in the two Wings of the country, but they attributed it to the policy pursued by the ruling coterie since the inception of Pakistan. According to the Census figures, the percentage of literacy was higher in East Pakistan than in West Pakistan. In 1951, the number of Matriculates in East Pakistan was 2,82,158; it rose by 6.3 percent to 2,99,767 in 1961. In West Pakistan, the number of matriculates in 1951 was 2,39,698; it rose by 143.7 percent to 5,84,181 in 1961. The disparity in the number of graduates grew still more acute. East Pakistani graduates numbered 41,484 in 1951, and 28,069 in 1961; the number decreased by 32.33 percent. West Pakistani graduates numbered 44,504 in 1951, and 54,000 in 1961. The number of East Pakistanis with post-graduate qualifications was 8,117 in 1951, and it dwindled by 12 percent to 7,146 in 1961. The number of West Pakistanis with post-graduate qualifications leapt by 68 percent from 14,729 in 1951 to 24,324 in 1961. These figures had agonizing implications for East Pakistanis who concluded that the policies of the Central ruling coterie were responsible for the accentuation of inter-Wing disparity in the field of higher education. It was easy to find evidences of how the Government neglected the cause of education, including secondary education, in East Pakistan. A very large section of the secondary schools in West Pakistan were run by the Government; in East Pakistan only 44 schools (as reported in March 1964 in the *Ittefaq*), out of a total of about 3,500, were run by the Government. Secondary education in East Pakistan,

therefore, suffered terribly on account of a paucity of funds. Many teachers gave up their jobs in secondary schools which failed to pay them a living wage. In his Presidential address before the ninth annual conference of East Pakistan Teachers' Association, Dr. Aleem-al-Rajee declared that 2,748 teachers of secondary schools in East Pakistan left their jobs on that ground during 1957-61, when 9,813 teachers in West Pakistan adopted the same vocation which was far more remunerative in their province. Only a few colleges in East Pakistan were run by the Government; in West Pakistan the Government ran 99.5 percent of the colleges. Since 1947, the Government established and generously financed a far larger number of institutions of higher learning in the West Wing than in the East Wing. Consequently, many East Pakistanis aspiring after higher education were debarred by sheer lack of facilities. This was all the more deplorable for East Pakistan in view of the fact that an overwhelming majority of its students came from poor families depending on agriculture, and a large number of them did not simply have the means to have education beyond the matriculation stage. In the West Wing, a huge majority of students came from rich or middle class families whose higher education was not held up by family poverty, nor by a lack of institutions admitting them. During 1948-49 to 1962-63 (according to a survey report cited in the *Ittefaq* of 13 March 1964), the income of the agricultural population of East Pakistan, constituting about 85 percent of the total population, dwindled by about 10 percent. The ability of East Pakistanis to secure higher education, therefore, was seriously impaired, especially in contrast to that of West Pakistanis whose income rose steadily since 1947. This, in addition to the Government's policy of restricting opportunities of higher education in the East Wing, supplied a plausible explanation of why, between 1951 and 1961, the number of East Pakistanis with graduate and post-graduate certificates decreased markedly.[17]

Spokesmen of the Pakistan Government expressed from time to time their concern for increasing the number of technical personnel among East Pakistanis who could assist in the economic development of their province. That was a facade behind which the ruling coterie adopted various tactics to perpetuate the disparity in the number of technical personnel between the two Wings, and to enable West Pakistani technicians to gain, without substantial competition with East Wingers, the facilities for higher training abroad and the government jobs. The only institution for training up technical personnel in the East Wing was the Engineering and Technical University at Dacca. The pressures by the Central Government, to which the provincial government and the Vice-Chancellor of the Engineering University yielded, led to the application of many nasty regulations at this University, which were denounced by students as black regulations. These regulations were not enforced at the engineering colleges of the West Wing. Dacca students demanded the repeal of these regulations which led to a large number of failures, produced a small number of graduates with first class marks, and thus perpetuated some of the factors causing economic disparity between the two Wings. These factors were as follows : the number of engineering graduates remained much smaller in East than in West Pakistan on account of a large number of failures at the Dacca Engineering University (as also on account of the location of a larger number of engineering colleges in the West Wing); the number of East Pakistani engineering graduates with first class marks was far smaller than West Pakistani engineering graduates, and the East Pakistani engineers thus faced an adverse competition with West Pakistanis while applying for government jobs or scholarships for higher training abroad. To take a glance at the results of the Dacca Engineering University and the Karachi Engineering College for 1965 : out of 140 Dacca candidates for the Bachelor of Civil Engineering Exami-

nation, 40 got plucked and only 12 secured first class marks; out of 127 Karachi candidates nobody failed and 126 secured first class marks. When the demand of Dacca Engineering University students for the abolition of the black regulations was not heeded by the authorities, the students observed a token one-day strike on 28 June 1966 in a last attempt to attract the Vice-Chancellor's attention to their grievances. The authorities, however, reacted to this one-day strike with a thoroughly repressive zeal. Students residing in hostels were asked to vacate by 12 O'clock in the night of 28 June, and the University was closed down for an indefinite period. A delegation of students met the Vice-Chancellor for an immediate resumption of classes. Their appeal was rejected and the University remained closed for months. The Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca Engineering University went so far as to send on 4 July a secret circular to teachers asking them to watch and report to him the names of students leading the agitation. All this was a vivid example of how the Central Government intended to obstruct the increase of technicians among East Pakistanis so that the disparity in the economic development of the two Wings could be conveniently blamed on the supposed failure of East Pakistanis to produce an adequate number of highly skilled manpower.[18]

On 23 and 24 May 1968, the National Economic Council considered the Report on Economic Disparities betweeen East and West Pakistan. This Report, prepared by a Committee of the Planning Commission, gave an incorrect view of the causes of disparity, and indicated the typical manner in which the Central Government continued to mislead Pakistanis, and especially foreigners, about those causes. It could conceal its own faults in this matter only by publicizing some accounts based on a clear misrepresentation of facts. It was expected, therefore, that the deliberations of the National Economic Council would be, and were actually, of no use in removing economic disparity.

The East Pakistan Government, although compelled to follow the dictates of the Central Government in almost all matters, found it possible to challenge the fundamental contention of the Report as to the causes of economic disparity between East and West Pakistan. This contention pinpointed "a number of factors in West Pakistan—a lower density of population, a higher degree of urbanization, at least 2.2 times larger and more efficient labour force in large-scale industry, a higher productivity of more ample capital, combined with superior entrepreneurial and technical skills—outweigh the advantages which East Pakistan enjoys in respect of the productivity of agricultural land and labour." The East Pakistan Government, in its comments of 21 May 1963, squarely disputed the validity of this contention. It observed: "It is not understood how all the factors mentioned in this statement [quoted above] can be taken as causes of economic disparity; these should really be considered as indicators of disparity. Higher degree of urbanization, larger labour force in large-scale industry, and greater capital investment in West Pakistan are the results of various government policies making the economy of West Pakistan grow faster than that of East Pakistan. The real causes of disparity are, therefore, those government policies which gave rise to the factors, not the factors themselves." In his long speech of 13 August 1964, Mahbubul Haq drew the attention of the National Assembly to the Report on Economic Disparities, the comments of the East Pakistan Government on that Report, and also a note of dissent prepared by a few members of the Committee drawing up that Report. Mahbubul Haq then provided a sharp summary of the causes of inter-Wing economic disparity based on those three documents.[19]

Mahbubul declared: "In respect of agriculture, transport, industry and other sectors, everywhere the position was in favour of East Pakistan in 1947 which has been reversed by 1964. There is a pure colonial practice today. There is a sort

of colonisation of East Pakistan by different ways which I would enumerate in brief...."

"1. By transferring East Pakistan's surplus foreign exchange resources with which West Pakistan meets her consumption and capital goods requirements.

"2. By buying raw-materials from abroad with East Pakistan's foreign exchange, reprocessing these raw-materials into finished products and exporting these manufactures to East Pakistan instead of drawing directly upon the raw-materials from East Pakistan.

"3. By directly concluding bilateral barter deals with individual countries to obtain development goods for West Pakistan in exchange of East Pakistan's jute.

"4. By importing, in some cases, raw-materials from East Pakistan, processing them into finished products and sending these back to East Pakistan market for sale. This is happening in the case of hides and skins and leather goods in particular.

"5. By 'sheltering' the East Pakistan market against competition from abroad because of which East Pakistan has to pay higher prices for West Pakistan manufactures.

"6. By transferring the profits of West Pakistan business enterprises and industrial establishments [located in the East Wing] to West Pakistan.

"7. By employing more West Pakistanis in various government, semi-government, trade and commercial agencies in East Pakistan and transferring a part of their monthly income to West Pakistan." Finally, Mahbubul Haq referred to the accentuation of disparity by the entirely disproportionate share of East and West Pakistan in the Central Government's expenditures.[20]

East Pakistanis could get rid of the economic stranglehold of West Pakistan only if they could enjoy political autonomy. The movement for autonomy (and democratic rights), therefore, continued unabated during 1965 despite the re-election of Ayub

to the Presidency. This movement, waged predominantly by the intelligentsia, was non-violent. It apparently had little chance of success against a ruling coterie that did not shrink from a ruthless use of force at any time. Nevertheless, the movement could assume a formidable dimension if the masses of industrial workers joined hands with the intelligentsia. During 1964-65 there were evidences suggesting the formation of such a coalition of forces against the Ayub-led coterie. As the labourers pressed their demands, the Ayub regime used relentless terror to crush the agitation by workers and showed its determination to back up the West Pakistani industrialists in the East Wing against whom the East Pakistani workers were struggling. The industrial labourers could easily find out that they could not hope to secure their legitimate demands as long as the Government itself was totally undemocratic and did not have to worry much about the interests of labourers. The votes of labourers were not important in a Basic Democracy. Much more important was the financial aid from West Pakistani industrialists needed to buy off Basic Democrats. It was likely, therefore, that the movement for autonomy and democratic rights in East Pakistan would be greatly strengthened by the participation of a large mass of industrial workers. Ayub, however, had another weapon in reserve, which he was ready to use in order to prevent such an amalgamation of forces against him. That was fomenting troubles with India, and, if necessary, starting a full-scale war. Ayub actually unleashed this weapon in 1965, as we will note in this Chapter.

Some instances of the growing labour unrest in East Pakistan during 1964-1965, and the reactionary government measures to deal with it, should be placed here. In July 1964, more than 50 thousand workers of 5 jute mills in Dacca and Narayanganj went on a strike. Various labour organizations held meetings and processions in support of strikers throughout the province on 2 August, which was the nineteenth day of the strike. It

was reported on 4 August that workers of a few other jute mills joined the strike. Next day, it was reported that workers called off the strike on being granted an interim pay-rise and a few other facilities, and on being assured that the Government would announce within two months an award on all demands of workers by means of negotiations. These negotiations failed, and more than a lakh of workers belonging to 16, out of a total of 18, jute mills of East Pakistan began a strike on 12 October 1964. That very day hundreds of unarmed and peaceful workers lost their lives at Khulna where the police and hired hooligans pounced upon them. As a reaction to this barbarous assault on innocent workers, the entire province observed a Protest Day on 3 November. Workers in all factories observed a token strike on 3 November, hoisted black flags, and participated in meetings and processions wearing black badges. The Government, in obvious collusion with the West Wing industrialists, did not intervene to consider the demands of workers, and the strike lasted many weeks. The East Pakistan Labour Council, formed at a conference in Dacca (held on 24 and 25 October 1964), attended by 279 representatives and 187 observers from 118 trade unions of the province, issued a declaration that emphasized the difficulties confronting the labour movement. It became impossible, this declaration said, to conduct a healthy labour movement in the country because, during the Martial Law regime, all laws and regulations related to labour were rendered reactionary to the utmost limit, and the endeavour to further the interests of labourers was confined, as in the 19th century, to submitting petitions and appeals. The situation, according to this declaration, did not improve after the lifting of the Martial Law.[21]

No enquiry was held by the Government into the bloody atrocities on Khulna workers on 12 October 1964. Hundreds of jute mill workers in the province lost their jobs for participation in that strike. Hundreds of others faced trials in the court for the same reason; the millowners and the Government

framed various charges against them. All this, however, could not kill the labour movement in East Pakistan. Within a few months railway workers launched a strike. At a time when politicians found themselves nearly atrophied by a military dictatorship, the labourers had to come forward and take a major load of the battle against that dictatorship. Railway workers pressed for the realization of eleven demands and decided, if the demands were not fulfilled, to launch a strike on 27 May 1965. Spokesmen of the Ayub-led coterie harped on the imaginary threat from India in order to stop the agitation. Nevertheless, the workers were animated by a strong consciousness of their rights and could not be hoodwinked by the bogey of an Indian attack upon East Pakistan raised by Ayub's henchmen including the Governor of East Pakistan. The government declared the strike as illegal on 18 May, arrested many leaders of the workers, and attacked their offices. Yet the strike could not be halted. On the contrary, as a reaction to the persecution of workers by the Government, there was a token strike at Chittagong as early as 20 May 1965. The strike commenced on 27 May; there were lathi-charges by the police at several places. Next day, the police fired at striking workers in Chittagong, killing one and seriously injuring several. On 29 May, students and railway workers took out in Chittagong a procession in protest against yesterday's police firing, and they were lathi-charged by the police. Dacca University students observed a protest day on 29 May.[22]

At the same time, East Pakistani MNAs kept up the pressure on the government while they continued to preach the cause of full regional autonomy as the means to stop the accentuation of inter-Wing economic disparity by governmental policies. Since the very inception of Pakistan, the East Pakistani MNAs argued, the Finance Ministry was dominated by non-Bengalees who neglected the interests of East Pakistan and promoted capital formation in the West Wing only. For years East Pakistanis

were in the dark about the machinations of non-Bengalee bureaucrats, for, as Nurul Amin, the Leader of the Opposition, observed on 21 June 1965, East Pakistanis trusted the non-Bengalees whom they considered to be their partners. When, however, the conspiracy of the non-Bengalee bureaucrats was unveiled, the East Pakistanis had to start an agitation for parity. They consistently pleaded on the floor of the Central legislature that the Central Government should adopt effective measures to eliminate what was its own creation, i.e., economic disparity between the two Wings. Their pleadings went largely unheeded. The share of East Pakistanis in the Central Government's expenditure continued to be negligible. By the middle of 1965, for instance, out of a total of two lakhs of Central Government employees, only twenty thousand were East Pakistanis. East Pakistanis expressed their agony, as did A. H. M. Kamaruzzaman on 21 June and Nurul Amin on 22 June 1965, by affirming that they were not beggars while they insisted on the attainment of parity with West Pakistan, they were merely claiming their rightful due. Proteges of the Central Government sought to misrepresent the cause of East Pakistan's economic backwardness, and thus oppose the views of East Pakistani MNAs. For instance, the editor of *Dawn*, which became a blind supporter of the Ayub-led clique with Ayub's assumption of leadership of the Conventionist Muslim League, wrote that the British and the Hindus exploited East Pakistanis so much in the past that their present economic plight was bound to be deplorable. Such a bluff would not influence East Pakistanis. The *Ittefaq* of 24 June 1965 wrote editorially that *Dawn's* observation was entirely false and motivated. It pleaded that at the time of the birth of Pakistan, the East Wing was ahead of the West Wing in many respects, and that the Central Government, patronizing a few West Pakistani capitalists, created the situation in which East Pakistan was reduced to a mere colony of West Pakistan. Inside the National Assembly, spokes-

men of the Government tried, as did Major Zulfiqar Ali Khan Qizilbash on 17 June and Fida Muhammad Khan on 21 June 1965, to distract the attention away from the pleadings of East Pakistani MNAs by talking about an imaginary threat of aggression by India and concentrating on how to meet that threat.[23]

Such tactics on the part of the Central Government were quite familiar to East Pakistanis struggling for autonomy and democratic rights. The struggling East Pakistanis were apprehensive that the Central Government was bent upon stirring up a trouble with India. On 13 December 1964, for instance, a columnist (using the pseudonym 'Bhimrool', meaning in Bengali a venomous wasp) of *Ittefaq* expressed this apprehension in clear terms. Nevertheless, stories of negligence and injustice to East Pakistan, which could not be remedied except by regional autonomy, were regularly carried by the popular newspapers of East Pakistan, and kept alive the demand for autonomy and democratic rights. Mosafir, writing in the *Ittefaq* of 3 August 1965, spoke of the colossal economic disparity between East and West Pakistan, and deplored the accusations and counter-accusations hurled on this point by MNAs inside the National Assembly. He advocated the introduction of complete regional self-government which would facilitate an independent economic growth in the two Wings of Pakistan. This would be, suggested Mosafir, in accordance with the Lahore Resolution of 1940, and do away with the exploitation of one Wing by another. Both *Ittefaq* and *Sangbad* seized the Independence Day, i.e., 14 August 1965, as an occasion to mourn the absence of democratic rights in the country, and to preach that Pakistanis deserved those rights. On 19 August 1965, the *Ittefaq* wrote that the cultivation of jute, the mainstay of East Pakistan's economy, might vanish owing to the negligence of the Government. The production of jute came down from 68.73 lakh bales in 1947-48 to 53 lakh bales in 1964-65. The share

of East Pakistani jute in the total world production came down from 80.58 percent in 1947-48 to less than 35 percent in 1964-65. This situation, Mosafir affirmed, was brought about by the refusal of the Government to look after even the minimum needs of jute cultivators. The Dacca Press flashed on 22 August 1965 a complaint by East Pakistani traders that banks run by West Pakistani cartels were transferring to West Pakistan funds deposited in East Pakistan by statutory institutions. These funds had been deposited for future investment in the projects for the economic development of East Pakistan. Consequently, when the time for investing those funds in East Pakistan's economic projects arrived, the withdrawal of those funds from the banks became impossible. Mr. Abul Kasem wrote an article in the *Azad* of 24 August 1965 in which he emphasized that East Pakistani entrepreneurs were discriminated against by banks and insurance companies which favoured the West Pakistani cartels in the matter of granting advances. Even the State Bank of Pakistan practised discrimination against East Pakistani industrialists. The sums deposited by East Pakistanis in banks and insurance companies could not, therefore, be utilized for the economic development of their province. The *Azad* of 25 August 1965 frontpaged a Staff Reporter's story revealing that Pakistan's insurance companies realized 40 per cent of the life insurance premia from East Pakistan, while it invested till then only 7 percent in that province.[24]

The *Ittefaq* of 28 August 1965 exposed the hypocrisy of the ruling coterie in the matter of caring for certain essential needs of East Pakistanis. Rural areas of East Pakistan were tremendously short of health centres. The second Five Year plan provided for the establishment of 150 health centres in those areas. But, while the Plan period came to an end, not more than 50 centres were actually set up in the East Wing, although, in the West Wing, having a much smaller rural population, about a hundred health centres were established. The *Ittefaq* ceaselessly

emphasized one basic reason behind East Pakistan's economic backwardness, i.e., the manoeuverings by the ruling coterie, which explained why results of planning fell short of the Plan itself, and funds sanctioned for projects in East Pakistan remained unutilized. The *Ittefaq* of 30 August 1965 quoted official statistics to indicate inequality in production in the two Wings of the country. As of 30 June 1965, East Pakistan had the capacity to generate two lakh Kws of electricity, and West Pakistan seven-and-three-quarter lakh Kws. The cause of this inequality, the *Ittefaq* emphasized, was that, till 31 December 1964, only 7 crores and 8 lakhs of rupees were invested in the generation of electricity in East Pakistan, and as much as 23 crores and 8 lakhs of rupees in West Pakistan. The newspaper deplored that this disparity in power production was likely to grow during the Third Plan period. East Pakistanis became indignant also at the patent desire of the Central Government to obstruct the growth of a powerful community of industrialists in their province. The E.P.I.D.C., for instance, refused to hand over certain industrial establishments to East Pakistanis willing and able to run them. This was in contrast to the earlier readiness of the E.P.I.D.C. to hand over such establishments to West Pakistani industrialists.[8]

These selections from Dacca newspapers for the month of August 1965 have been incorporated here to indicate the mood of the East Pakistani intelligentsia at a time when the Central Government was enacting anti-labour laws, stepping up a hate-India campaign, and preparing for a war against India. The mood of East Pakistanis fighting for autonomy and democratic rights must have exercised some influence over the Ayub-led government while it decided to launch an aggression upon India in September 1965.

In August 1965 the East Pakistan Government placed six laws before the provincial legislature that would extinguish all democratic rights of the working class. One, The East Pakis-

tan Labour Disputes Bill, was passed on 3 August; another, The Trade Union Bill, was passed on 8 August. These laws supplied blanket powers to the Government for suppressing all workers' movements and even forestalling their growth. The Government acquired the power to declare any strike as illegal, and to prohibit the association of workers of Government and semi-Government undertakings with a trade union federation that embraced workers of private undertakings. These laws enabled the Government to punish workers severely for resorting to a strike, and inflict a nominal punishment on employers violating labour laws. The Government even assumed the power to reject, wholly or partially, the award of a labour court. The I.L.O. (International Labour Organization) Conventions enshrined the right to strike and the right to form unions as some of the fundamental rights of the working class. Although the Government of Pakistan had earlier proclaimed its loyalty to I.L.O. Conventions, it was now dismantling those Conventions. The Labour Minister of the East Pakistan Government, in his unbounded zeal to flatter those in power at the Centre, went so far as to declare before the provincial legislature that Pakistan was not obliged to obey the I.L.O. Conventions.[26]

The Central Government utilized the Farakka Project (in West Bengal, India) to whip up anti-Indian feelings in East Pakistan. Spokesmen of the Government began to preach that the Farakka Project had been deliberately undertaken by India to reduce seven districts of East Pakistan to a desert and to cripple East Pakistan's economy by destroying inland navigation and trading. Actually, the Farakka Project, when completed, would withdraw only 40000 cusecs of the discharge by the Ganges, and divert the same away from the Padma in the East Pakistan to the Hooghly (or Bhagirathi) in West Bengal. It would thus save the Calcutta Port from being silted up. The problem of East Pakistan was not too little but too much of water during the monsoon resulting in large-scale devastation

by floods. This has been occurring for many decades; while rivers in West Bengal have been drying up, the floods in the rivers of (what is now) East Pakistan have been increasing in intensity. As a matter of fact, similar problems can be fruitfully solved only if the rivers affecting both East Pakistan and West Bengal are jointly tamed by the Governments of Pakistan and India. The Farakka Project could easily provide the opportunity for initiating this cooperation. But the Government of Pakistan chose to use the Farakka Project as a propaganda weapon to combat its own unpopularity in East Pakistan. The projects in East Pakistan, e.g., The Ganges-Kabodak Project, Faridpur-Barisal, Pabna and southern Rajshahi Projects together contemplated a withdrawal of only 26,000 cusecs from the Ganges whose monsoon discharge was more than two million cusecs at Farakka. The Farakka Project should, indeed, have been welcomed by Pakistan, for it might reduce the scale of devastation by floods in East Pakistan.[27]

The Kashmir issue, of course, continued to be a propaganda weapon used by the Central Government to influence East Pakistani opinion against India. It should be emphasized, however, that East Pakistanis were not prepared to swallow, without any resistance, the manipulations of the ruling coterie as to, e.g., combatting the labour movement by outrageous laws, and campaigning against India on the Farakka Project or the Kashmir issue.

An East Pakistan Anti-Labour Laws Resistance Committee came up quickly to oppose the imposition of reactionary laws. It organized on 3 August a huge rally at Dacca attended by workers of Narayanganj, Postagola and Dacca. The rally issued a call for the observance of a province-wide strike on 6 August unless the Government withdrew the anti-labour bills. The *Pakistan Observer* of 5 August commented that these bills would take away, in principle, the rights which the workers were not enjoying in actuality. Workers throughout East Pakis-

tan observed a token strike on 6 August, and protested against the Government's policy towards them by demonstrations, meetings and processions. About one lakh workers joined a meeting at the Paltan Maidan in Dacca on that day and expressed their deep resentment over the policy of the Government that deprived them of certain rights enjoyed even during the British rule. Speakers at the meeting denounced this policy, and got an opportunity (that surely terrified the Ayub-led coterie) to build a bridge between the workers' movement and the movement for autonomy and democratic rights, when they stressed that the workers could not expect any better treatment from a Government that did not permit the people to exercise democratic rights. The Government tried to sabotage the workers' movement by stirring up rivalries among workers, and by hiring hooligans to oppress workers agitating against the Government. The employers also adopted these measures to divide and destroy the labour movement. The East Pakistan Labour Council issued on 28 August a communique condemning these measures implemented by the employers and the Government. Such measures, however, might add to the frustrations of workers, deprived of certain fundamental rights, and drive them to the path of disorder. The threat of such a disorder loomed large in early September when Pakistan was about to launch an attack upon India.[58]

Educated East Pakistanis were not inclined to quarrel with India over the Farakka Project. They preferred to have a peaceful settlement with India on the rivers affecting East Pakistan and India. The *Ittefaq* of 9 August disputed the contention of the Government that in the past India had never offered any opportunity for a peaceful settlement. This daily stressed that the problem of rivers affecting India and West Pakistan could be solved on the basis of the offer made by India. The *Ittefaq* urged upon the Government to stop accusations and counter-accusations and accept India's gesture of cooperation for resolv-

ing the issue of rivers affecting East Pakistan and India. Educated East Pakistanis, similarly, were not prepared to postpone the fight for autonomy and democratic rights despite incessant propaganda by the Pakistan Government about India's aggressiveness over the Kashmir problem. In the *Ittefaq* of 24 August 1965, Mosafir referred to appeals by the spokesmen of the ruling coterie asking Pakistanis to rally behind Ayub in solving the Kashmir problem, and commented that the denial of democratic rights to Pakistanis was a much more important issue than the old and imaginary Kashmir problem. In late August and on the first two days of September 1965, the annual conferences of the Khulna, Mymensingh and Jessore branches of the East Pakistan Students League, an extremely influential organization, passed resolutions demanding immediately complete self-government for East Pakistan. These resolutions reiterated the determination of the students to fight relentlessly till democracy was established, to lay down their lives, if necessary, for the attainment of democracy. Five-and-a-half crores of East Pakistanis could no longer be kept in chains, the students warned.[29]

It was not surprising, therefore, if Ayub and his colleagues pondered that, short of a full-scale war with India, they could not disengage the attention of East Pakistanis away from the struggle for autonomy and democratic rights. The twenty-two days' war of September 1965, however, tended to exercise just the opposite effect. The war with India served to strengthen the demand for autonomy and democratic rights in East Pakistan. It intensified, in particular, the demand for making East Pakistan self-sufficient in defence which was, again, a part of of the demand for autonomy. East Pakistani MNAs were quick to impress upon the ruling coterie by their speeches at the National Assembly that East Pakistan was without any defence during the war with India and lay entirely at the mercy of India. Yet, they emphasized, the Opposition politicians and

students joined the Government in carrying on propaganda to maintain the morale and patriotic zeal of the people. The Government, however, arrested many East Pakistanis who were aiding the war-efforts. Newspapers run by the National Press Trust (controlled by the Government) even condemned East Pakistanis as unpatriotic. The *Dainik Pakistan*, for instance, in its issue of 3, 5 and 6 September 1965, unwarrantedly criticized the *Ittefaq* for taking an unapatriotic stand. East Pakistani MNAs deplored this wrong response of the Government to the patriotism of East Pakistanis who forgot the political differences with the ruling coterie and joined the war-efforts. During the war with India, East Pakistanis felt acutely helpless because they had no ordnance factory producing sufficient ammunitions for a full-scale war. At the end of the war, therefore, East Pakistani MNAs strongly urged upon the Government to establish military colleges and ordnance factories in their province so that, in a future emergency, the province would have within itself an adequate stock of weapons and military personnel, and would not have to depend on the supply of troops from the West Wing which might always fail.[30]

East Pakistanis were not interested in a war with India which damaged the economic interests of India and East Pakistan in regard to trade, and prevented the settlement of such common problems as the control of rivers. Moreover, the East Pakistani intelligentsia were able to discern, a war provided an opportunity to the ruling coterie to withhold democratic rights and fan the flames of reactionary communalism, and was, therefore, opposed to their needs and ideals. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Crush India Day, organised by the ruling coterie in the East Wing on 22 October 1965, proved to be a flop. East Pakistanis had laughed at Radio Pakistan broadcasts, during the war, spreading false accounts of the bombing upon Chittagong, Dacca and Khulna. (Such bombings never took place.) On the Crush India Day, the Conventionist Muslim League

failed to stage any demonstration. On the contrary, despite a strict vigilance observed by the police and the military, road-side walls in different towns of the province were full of posters demanding friendship between India and Pakistan, friendship between Hindus and Muslims in East Pakistan, the end of Ayub-Bhutto militarism, and the termination of Ayub's colonialism in East Pakistan.[31]

The distrust of the Central ruling coterie towards East Pakistanis deepened. This was reflected in some of the measures adopted by the coterie after the war with India. The Chief Secretary to the Government of East Pakistan, a Panjabi Muslim, was the principal agent of the Central Government who ensured the observance in East Pakistan of the coterie's fiats. At the end of the war, another Panjabi Muslim was appointed the Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of East Pakistan. This was a move to strengthen the grip of the ruling coterie upon East Pakistan. The Government promulgated an Ordinance that banned the printing and sale, without prior permission, of any book or periodical published in a foreign country. Offences under the ordinance were non-bailable, and punishable with two years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1,000. This ordinance merely confirmed the hysteric fear in Pakistan's ruling coterie about the effect of Bengali writings produced in West Bengal, India, upon East Pakistanis. Such writings, it was scared, might intensify the prevalent disaffection in East Pakistan against the Ayub regime. What the ruling coterie failed to understand was that a repressive ordinance merely inflamed public disaffection, especially when the Panjabi overlords persisted in treating East Pakistanis daily with arrogance and contempt. To take a recent instance, the Chairman of the Dacca Improvement Trust, a Panjabi Muslim, allotted the plots in a prized area called Gulshan to Panjabi Muslims. Bengalee Muslim applicants were carefully excluded by the Chairman, who told some of the applicants that he did not

want uncivilized Bengalee Muslims to be accommodated in the same place along with civilized Panjabi Muslims. The domineering behaviour of the Panjabi bureaucrats posted in East Pakistan infuriated even the members of the Conventionist Muslim League Party of East Pakistan. There was a split in the Executive Committee of the East Pakistan branch of the ruling party, for some of the Committee members failed to restrain themselves from publicly criticizing the high-handed conduct of the West Pakistani bureaucrats. This led Ayub Khan to suspend the Executive Committee, several weeks after the cessation of the September 1965 hostilities with India, and issue an order appointing an ad hoc Committee.[32]

East Pakistanis hailed the Tashkent accord with relief and approbation. The *Ittefaq* and *Sangbad* took the leading part in the campaign for making the accord a success, and maintaining peaceful relations between Pakistan and India. On 11 January 1966, the *Ittefaq* and *Sangbad* flashed the news of the Tashkent Agreement in frontpage banner headlines, and also wrote editorials welcoming the Agreement; the *Sangbad* put the editorial on the first page. The *Azad,* too, gave frontpage banner headlines to the news of the Tashkent Agreement; but its editorial, proving once again that the newspaper was pro-Ayub in certain respects, struck a discordant note by expressing a strong dissatisfaction over the failure of the Tashkent talks to solve the Kashmir problem. The reaction of West Pakistanis to the Tashkent accord was different from that of East Pakistanis. Dissatisfaction over the Tashkent talks, expressed by West Pakistanis, gave rise to disturbances which were about to nullify the Tashkent agreement. The East Pakistani intelligentsia, whose views were amply reflected in the *Ittefaq* and *Sangbad,* blamed the disturbances on unbridled propaganda by the ruling coterie which, in the past, convinced many West Pakistanis that the Kashmir problem could be solved only by a war, and the Tashkent Agreement, unable to solve

the Kashmir problem, was prima facie unwelcome to men of such convictions. Educated East Pakistanis were alarmed by the demonstrations by West Pakistanis against the Tashkent Agreement, for such demonstrations only encouraged the enemies of communal harmony and democracy. Nurul Amin, the Chairman of the NDF, S. A. Husain, the General Secretary of the East Pakistan National Awami Party, Mujibur Rahman, General Secretary of the East Pakistan Awami League, the Central Council of the East Pakistan Students Union, the Chairman and the Secretary of the East Pakistan Students League, the East Pakistan Workers Council—all welcomed the Tashkent Declaration. Nurul Amin declared that war would not solve any problem between Pakistan and India, and, in course of the same statement, pleaded for complete regional autonomy. Mujibur said that his party believed in living in peace with all nations, especially India, the nearest neighbour. A lesson of the war with India, according to him, was that a grant of full self-government to East Pakistan could alone ensure national unity and solidarity. Mujibur insisted that, in tune with the Lahore proposals of 1940, East Pakistan should be made self-sufficient in all spheres—in economic, political as also defence arrangements.[33]

The impact upon West Pakistanis of incessant war-like propaganda by the Government, about the Kashmir issue, was reflected in the conference convened by the Awami League, Councillors Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islam and Nizam-e-Islam at Lahore on 5 and 6 February 1966. The conference was organized by those who had earlier taken a leading part in the demonstrations against the Tashkent Declaration. The conference clearly brought out the disunity among Opposition parties, and between East and West Pakistan. The NDF and National Awami Party boycotted the conference that expectedly turned out to be an anti-Tashkent Declaration venue. The sponsors of the conference invited 800 persons. 740 attended, of whom 719

were from West Pakistan, and only 21 from East Pakistan. Members of the East Pakistan Awami League, led by Mujibur, attended the first session of the conference, and then completely dissociated themselves not only from the proposals passed by the conference but from the conference itself. On his return to Dacca, Mujibur declared that he had to do so because he could not sacrifice the interests of East Pakistanis, while the mentors of the conference were not willing to discuss the demands of East Pakistanis, nor even to listen to them. A political commentator of the *Sangbad,* writing on 10 February 1966, deplored the militarist attitude towards India conveyed by the proposals of the conference. He wanted the leaders of the Lahore Conference to note that an armed conflict only complicated the Kashmir issue and made its solution much more difficult. He also added that to heighten tension between Pakistan and India was to strengthen the opportunists who throve on fomenting communal troubles and strangulating democratic forces. Mosafir wrote in the *Ittefaq* of the same date (i.e. 10 February 1966) that even if one advocated the right of self-determination for Kashmiris, one could not but agree that it was unpractical for Pakistan to risk a war for establishing that right.[34]

Militant West Pakistanis seized the spontaneous support of East Pakistanis for the Tashkent Declaration as a pretext for vilifying the people of East Pakistan. A very influential Urdu daily of West Pakistan, *Nawa-i-Waqt,* wrote editorially on 1 February 1966 that East Pakistanis supported the Tashkent Declaration because they were interested in smuggling goods to India. The *Nawa-i-Waqt* advocated in the same editorial the application of pressure upon India by denying India the facilities of certain East Pakistani rivers so that India might be compelled to agree to a settlement of the Kashmir issue on Pakistan's terms. It should be pointed out here that smuggling often takes place because long-established trade ties are

arbitrarily snapped by the iron hand of an autocrat, and that the same *Nawa-i-Waqt* had in the past referred to cases of smuggling of wheat from West Pakistan to India. As the Rawalpindi correspondent of the *Pakistan Observer* commented on the aforesaid editorial in the *Nawa-i-Waqt*: "... it would be sheer nostalgic partiality to say which wing beats the other in the game of smuggling." In its editorial of 6 February 1966, the *Sangbad* explained why the people of East Pakistan, irrespective of party affiliations, supported the Tashkent Declaration : they could not ignore the lesson of experience that war could not solve the problems affecting both Pakistan and India. On the same date, a frontpaged correspondent's despatch to the *Sangbad* referred to the aforesaid *Nawa-i-Waqt* editorial, and affirmed that Dacca's intellectual, political, student as also labour circles deeply resented the aspersions cast on their patriotism [35]

The Tashkent Declaration provided an opportunity to East Pakistanis to renew their campaign for autonomy and democratic rights. Spokesmen of the Awami League, the National Awami Party, the NDF and various student organizations began to clamour for the end of the state of emergency occasioned by the war with India, the release of political prisoners many of whom remained under detention without trial for as long as eight years, the elimination of curbs on freedom of speech and expression, and the grant of full regional self-government. Resolutions passed by the Working Council of the East Pakistan Students' Union, a few days after the signing of the Tashkent Declaration, said, for instance, that it did not believe in any compromise with autocracy, that the Tashkent Declaration, opening up possibilities of a peaceful solution of all disputes with India, made it possible to terminate the emergency, that it would continue the fight for full provincial autonomy and democratic rights. On 17 February 1966, Maulana Bhasani, addressing a huge meeting of workers and peasants, strongly

demanded an immediate termination of the emergency, the release of political prisoners, the grant of fundamental rights and full regional self-government. The National Awami Party sponsored a Revoke Emergency Day that was observed on 26 February by means of meetings, processions and distribution of handbills and leaflets. Mosafir, writing in the *Ittefaq* of 14 February 1966, said that the state of Pakistan was characterized by widespread and unprecedented corruption on account of the operation of a system that vested, in only 80,000 out of a total of 5 crores of eligible voters, the right to exercise some decision-making power. Mutual understanding and exchange of views, and not oppression, could solve the problems affecting the country and its regions. The problems of East Pakistan, Mosafir added, could be solved only when they were duly recognized and not arbitrarily denied.[36]

The East Pakistan Students League sponsored the Bengali Language Propagation Week with effect from 14 February. Reports in the Dacca Bengali Press confirmed that the observance of the Week was a success. The aim was to press the demand for the introduction and use of the Bengali language in all spheres of public and social life. The Week was followed by the observance of the Martyrs' Day on 21 February. The *Dacca Times* wrote that day that Bengali was a state language in name only; it was not yet an official language, nor the medium of instruction at all stages of education. The weekly newspaper added: "The sovereignty of the people has been usurped, and they do not even have the right of direct adult franchise. The masses are daily going down the vicious process of destitution in the hands of the few who have amassed the enormous wealth of the country,. . . .In one word, the promises of Pakistan have been belied in all fields." The *Ittefaq* of the same date declared that the language movement of 1952 was the father of the democratic movement in East Pakistan. The demands of the language movement were later transformed and

expanded into the demands for democratic rights and self-determination which permeated the emotions of East Pakistanis of all walks of life.[37]

The movement for autonomy and democratic rights in East Pakistan received a big boost from the announcement of the 6-Point Plan by Mujibur Rahman in February 1966. Mujibur earned enormous applause at big public meetings while analysing the Plan. In March 1966, Dacca saw the publication of two important booklets expressing the aims of autonomists (who fought for democracy as well as full regional self-government), and their staunch determination to face all sorts of repression for the realization of those aims. One was by Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, the other by Mr. Abul Kalam Azad, a B.A. student of Dacca University. *Amader Banchbar Dabi* (i.e. *Our Right to Live*) was the title of Mujibur's booklet; Azad's booklet had the title *Pakistaner Ancholik Boishamyo* (i.e. *Regional Disparity in Pakistan*). The latter provided detailed statistical estimates of how for years East Pakistanis were being severely exploited by the ruling junta; these are not being reproduced here for, earlier in this book, various such estimates have been incorporated. What should be emphasized, however, is the conviction of Abul Kalam Azad that the problem of regional disparity could not be solved by mere cries on one side or pitiful concessions on the other. Only a firm resistence on the part of Bengalees could yield a solution. The book was published by the Central Committee of the East Pakistan Students League whose Chairman, Syed Mozaharul Haq, wrote in the preface to Azad's book that East Pakistanis did not want that national unity and solidarity which meant the colonization of one region by another. Mujibur's booklet had the sub-title '6-Point Programme'. Point 1 referred back to the Lahore Resolution of 1940, and called for the establishment of a Federation with a parliamentary system of government formed by universal adult suffrage and direct election, and vesting sovereignty in the

legislatures. Point 2 reserved only two subjects, Defence and Foreign Relations, for the Central Government, the remaining subjects being left to the Provinces, which were to be designated as States. Point 3 pleaded for the introduction of two separate, though easily convertible, currencies for East and West Pakistan. Point 4 vested all powers for collecting taxes in the Regional or State Governments. Point 5 prescribed the maintenance of separate financial accounts by the Regions and the control of foreign exchange by that very Region which earned the same. Point 6 demanded the formation of a militia for East Pakistan manned by East Pakistanis.[38]

The sound economic realism behind Mujibur's 6-Point Programme could hardly be over-emphasized. It brought to a sharp focus the fact, which had been pointed out several times in the past by East Pakistani MNAs, that Pakistan had two economies in the two Wings, the one of the East serving the interests of the West Wing economy, and that a complete bifurcation could alone release the East Wing from the West Wing's economic stranglehold. Mujibur's Programme envisaged the exercise of independent political and economic powers by East Pakistan in order that trade and currency regulations could be so framed as to ensure East Pakistan's economic growth. As long as the entire legislative and administrative structure remained dominated by West Pakistanis, who favoured monopolists of their Wing, a colonial relation between the two Wings was bound to flourish. Unless the East Pakistan Government gained a sufficient amount of political independence, as granted by Mujibur's Programme, the West Pakistani business interests would continue to exploit the East Wing as a market for exports and imports.[39]

An unrestricted operation of market forces always creates regional disparity in economic development. Historical or geographical accidents, including the location of a capital or a port, often result in the establishment of some industries in one

region and not in the other. That is followed by a cummulative process attracting new industries to the more developed region on account of the naturally greater economic advantages in the more developed region. This, in fact, happened in Pakistan where Karachi, being the capital for a long time and an important port, offered unparalleled commercial advantages accelerating the economic development of the West Wing. East Pakistan was too far away to benefit from the radiation of such advantages. The East-West disparity widened, moreover, because the Central Government sponsored the establishment of many industrial projects in the West Wing even when the locations were uneconomic. Some of these projects, heavily subsidized by the Government, showed profits on paper. On the contrary, the ruling coterie refused to locate new industries in East Pakistan even when, according to the recommendations of experts, the economic advantages enjoyed by East Pakistan justified their location in that province. This was true of both the petro-chemical industry and the sugar industry which the Government decided to set up in West Pakistan, although their location in East Pakistan would have been more economical. The Government began to spend large sums on how to grow jute in West Pakistan and decided to set up jute mills in West Pakistan although, on economic considerations, it should have set up more such mills in East Pakistan. East Pakistanis were able to diagnose the motive behind such attempts; the West Pakistani ruling clique was trying to make West Pakistan economically self-sufficient without caring for the needs of East Pakistanis. The suspicion became deeper among East Pakistanis that the ruling clique wanted to perpetuate the existence of two economies, one being the slave of the other. Mujibur's 6-Point Programme insisted on the formal and complete independence of two economies, each free to chalk out its destiny, and unable to exploit, or be exploited by, the other.[40]

The deficiency of East Pakistan in minerals must not lead

one to suppose that its industrial development will suffer if it has to operate an independent economy. After all, many of the crucial industrial units of West Pakistan thrive largely on imported raw-materials which, again, could be supplied to them because of the favourably discriminatory practices of the Government as regards licences and imports. Thus, 61.7 percent of the raw materials for the chemicals and petro-chemicals industry of West Pakistan, 64.4 percent for the electrical machinery, 69.8 percent for the basic metals, 75.4 percent for the metal goods, and 86.1 percent for the transport equipment, were imported. An independent economy could always utilize its own foreign exchange resources to import raw-materials from foreign countries. If necessary, one Wing of Pakistan could import some raw-materials produced in the other Wing for its own industrial units, and even then it would be better off than if it had to import the finished product straightway from the other Wing. This was because the transport costs between the two Wings were exceedingly high. In fact, the prohibitive transport costs make it entirely uneconomical to impose a regional economic balance upon the two Wings. The costs of production for a particular industrial unit may be higher in the one than in the other Wing; yet this discrepancy in cost may be more than compensated by the avoidance of costs of transporting a product from one Wing to another. Both East and West Pakistan can mould their industrial set-up in accordance with the needs of consumers in their territories rather than in accordance with the availability of raw-materials. East Pakistan, if allowed to have an independent economy, may profitably import raw-materials from India, South-East Asia and East Asia. West Pakistan can, similarly, import raw-materials from India and West Asia. An independent economy of East Pakistan can easily claim viability since it is endowed with cheap labour, immensely rich forest and water resources, agricultural raw-materials, etc. East Pakistan has special facili-

ties for the development of industries in the following fields : cigarettes, cotton textiles, jute, leather and footwear, matchsticks, refractories, rice milling, saw milling, and sugar.[41]

Mujibur's 6-Point Programme could then be viewed as realistically opening up a way out of the cultural-economic-political exploitation of East Pakistanis by the West Pakistani ruling coterie in collusion with the West Pakistani business elite. To give one instance among many, at a big public meeting in Mymensingh, Mujibur impressively explained the significance of his Programme as he pointed out that West Pakistan enjoyed the benefits of three capitals, namely, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, of the headquarters of all the Central Government Departments and the three wings of the armed forces, and of the foreign diplomatic missions. All these, situated in West Pakistan, enabled it to have a far higher rate of economic growth than East Pakistan. This trend could be altered only if East Pakistan gained full regional autonomy on the lines of the 6-Point Programme. West Pakistanis, Mujibur suggested, would have come out with a much sterner plan than his Programme if they had been deprived of the aforesaid benefits like East Pakistan. Mujibur asserted that the exploitation and extortion of East Pakistanis during the last 18 years by the West Pakistani ruling clique exceeded those during 200 years of British rule. East Pakistanis began to look upon the 6-Point Programme as their Freedom Charter. Mujibur and his supporters were fully aware that the Ayub-led coterie would condemn the Programme as amounting to treason and a move for secession. While Mujibur and his supporters emphatically denied that they favoured seccession, they said they were prepared for such a campaign of vilification on the part of the Central ruling coterie that did not in the past spare even such architects of Pakistan as Suhrawardy and Fazlul Haq.[42]

True to their apprehensions, proponents of the 6-Point Programme were soon assailed by the President in a series of

speeches on 16, 18, 19, 20 March, 1, 18 April, 1966, which unwarrantedly dubbed them as trying to disrupt Pakistan and create a sovereign state of Bengal uniting East Pakistan and the adjacent province of India, i.e., West Bengal. The Programme spoke of equal rights and powers for the two Wings of Pakistan in a loosely knit Federation. But Ayub distorted the Programme and warned the people against being captivated by the horrible dream of a sovereign Bengal woven, according to Ayub, by the proponents of the 6-Point Programme. In an attempt to dissolve that dream, created by Ayub himself, the speeches of Ayub concocted the nightmarish vision of a sovereign Bengal, being gobbled up by India and of Muslims being enslaved by Hindus. Ayub reminded East Pakistanis that the Muslims had been dominated by Hindus in the British era. He suggested that India might never allow a sovereign Bengal to come into being. Ayub thus left no stone unturned to vilify the 6-Point Programme and its promoters. The latter organized a public meeting at the Paltan Maidan in Dacca on 20 March, and reitereted the demand for full regional autonomy including self-sufficiency in defence. Mujibur spoke at this meeting and observed that his 6-Point Programme was not a novel scheme and was essentially a restatement of the old demand of East Pakistanis for autonomy. He challenged Ayub's contention that the implementation of his Programme would weaken, and ultimately disrupt, Pakistan. His Programme aimed at strengthening both the Wings of Pakistan, and could not render Pakistan weak. He requested Ayub not to hurl abusive slogans on East Pakistanis who had courted enormous sacrifices for the achievement of Pakistan. Jahiruddin, another speaker at the meeting, advised President Ayub not to disseminate dangerous ideas by way of slanderizing the autonomists.[43]

Ayub's henchmen were also quite active in denouncing the 6-Point Programme. On 29 March, Monem Khan told a public gathering that the demand for autonomy, which was also a part

of the 21-Point Programme of the United Front of 1954, was nothing but a device to hoodwink the people. He, like Ayub on many occasions, took shelter behind the platitude that the removal of inter-Wing economic disparity was a definite obligation under the Constitution of 1962, and, consequently, the demand for autonomy was misguided. On 18 April, Monem went so far as to suggest absurdly and deceitfully that the Lahore Resolution of 1940, embodying the demand for the creation of 'states' of Pakistan, contained a printing mistake and the word 'states' should have been replaced by the word 'state'. Like Ayub on many occasions, Monem repeated the plea that East Pakistan was enjoying maximum provincial autonomy. In an editorial on 5 April 1966, the *Pakistan Observer* labelled such pleas of the ruling oterie as "obscurantism", and added : "In a system where all powers, legislative and executive, emanate from a single source, there can be autonomy only at one point". This "one point" was, of course, the Presidency. In an editorial of 20 April 1966, bearing the title 'Neither Fair Nor Politics', the *Pakistan Observer* criticized Ayub's tactics of maligning Opposition politicians at will. It declared : "President Ayub Khan has now changed his old stand that political parties cannot function in the country. He himself is the Chief of a political party. As such, will it be logical and convincing for him to decry politicians simply because they do not think alike?..... Characterizing legitimate grievances against the glaring fact of disparity as evil designs of disruptionists is not a healthy attitude. The words 'politicians' and 'disruptionists' are being abused ad nauseum. For the sake of justice and fairplay it should be stopped."[44]

Despite Ayub's slanders, the movement of autonomy in East Pakistan continued to gain momentum. It was not, as Ayub imagined and preached, the brainwave of a few self-seeking politicians. It was rather a translation of the sense of injustice implanted in the heart of East Pakistanis. Western observers, e.g.,

correspondents of the *New York Times*, the *Observer* (London) and the *Times* (London), so long refusing to pay any attention to autonomists in East Pakistan, perhaps found it impossible to shut their eyes. Their despatches (of April-May 1966) bore out the strength of the autonomy movement. Nevertheless, they emphasized their interpretation that the movement was a direct consequence of, or derived the greatest impetus from, the India-Pakistan hostilities of September 1965 when East Pakistan lay defenceless and cursed the Government of Pakistan for leaving it at the mercy of India. When later, Foreign Minister Bhutto claimed that India did not attack East Pakistan because of the fear of Chinese retaliation against India, East Pakistani autonomists discarded Bhutto's claim as a dangerous gossip. It was a gossip because China did not intervene actively in the war in Vietnam lying at its doorstep, and, therefore, the intervention of China in a Pakistan-India war was unlikely. It was dangerous because East Pakistanis did not want their territory to be the pawn in a game of Big Powers that might issue from Chinese intervention in a Pakistan-India war. Autonomists also pointed out that East Pakistan did not have to covet any more its links with West Pakistan if, in fact, its escape from an attack by India was caused by the accidental enmity between China and India. It was undoubtedly true that the September 1965 hostilities underscored East Pakistan's need for self-sufficiency in defence, but the demand for it was much older. East Pakistani MNAs took every opportunity to put forward this demand. Immediately before the outbreak of hostilities, in June and July 1965, for instance, East Pakistani MNAs vigorously pleaded for making East Pakistan self-sufficient in defence. Speeches of Nurul Amin on 22 June 1965, of Hasan A. Shaikh and A. B. M. Nurul Islam on 10 July 1965, provide good examples on this point. They dismissed the idea favoured by the ruling coterie that East Pakistan's security could be guaranteed by concentrating military strength in West

Pakistan so that, in case of an Indian attack upon East Pakistan, troops from West Pakistan would march upon and occupy New Delhi. To East Pakistanis, it was immaterial whether New Delhi was captured or not, when its own independence was destroyed. Moreover, East Pakistanis could not expect their independence to survive the despatch of troops and materials from West Pakistan across a very long air or sea route after the outbreak of hostilities. Even a warning was issued on the floor of the National Assembly on 10 July 1965, that East Pakistanis of future generations might not forgive the ruling coterie for its sin of keeping East Pakistan defenceless, and might bid farewell. It was not then entirely accurate for the correspondents of the *New York Times,* the *Observer* (London), and the *Times* (London) to plead that the autonomy movement in East Pakistan was almost an immediate result of the Pakistan-India hostilities of September 1965. Such an assessment represented either a clear misunderstanding of the situation in East Pakistan, perhaps caused by the language barrier that put Bengali newspapers out of the access of these observers, or probably an attempt to cover up the failure to give the autonomy movement in the pre-September 1965 period the attention it deserved.[45]

In this connection the remarks of Dr. John E. Owen, United Nations Sociology Adviser at the University of Dacca during 1960-63, merit a special mention. He is one of the few foreign observers who has been able to assess the situation in East Pakistan with requisite impartiality and a penetrating insight. He wrote a long article, entitled "Frustration of East Pakistanis", that was published in *The Hindu,* and reprinted in *The Pioneer* (Lucknow) of 14 November 1965. Owen argued that Ayub's concentration on accumulating military might was responsible for his failure to improve the welfare of Pakistan's masses, especially in the East Wing, and alienated East Pakistanis from the West Wing which was far more pros-

perous. The Ayub regime, Owen was convinced, rested on military power and growing repression. This regime persisted in treating East Pakistan as a colony of West Pakistan. Many Bengalee Muslims told Owen that East Pakistan was poorer than what it was in 1947. Many eminent West Pakistanis told him that they would have been "glad to ditch East Pakistan if it were not for the jute". Continued "unrest born of hunger and rebellious frustration" created, in 1962, and after, a situation in East Pakistan that "was steadily becoming ripe for revolt". Owen then observed : "Was not Ayub's war in Kashmir [in September 1965] merely a means of diverting East Pakistan's attention from its own internal troubles? This is an old tactic of dictators to foment foreign adventures and thereby distract attention from domestic problems. The Ayub regime is by any relevant criterion a dictatorship of the Presidential type, a police state in which freedom of the Press does not exist, in which an atmosphere of feudal intimidation is widespread and where minority rights are not respected, as the forced exodus of approximately one million Hindus, Buddhists and Christians from East Pakistan to India in the last twenty months attests." The agitation of East Pakistanis against economic exploitation and lack of democratic rights encountered more and more repression. This revealed clearly that Ayub's "Government has become afraid of its own citizens, holding power over them only through oppression."[46]

Actually, in his speech before the concluding session of the Pakistan [Conventionist] Muslim League Council in Dacca on 20 March 1966, Ayub made it quite clear that he would not shrink from the use of extreme terrorist methods against autonomists whom he called 'disruptionists'. Ayub raised the spectre of a 'civil war' and declared that he would use "the language of weapons" against autonomists. As early as 20 February, the *Azad* disclosed that it was asked by the Government to show cause why it would not furnish a security deposit of Rs. 20,000

for publishing a statement by Mujibur that constituted an indirect indictment of the Government. Even a pro-Government newspaper like the *Azad* could not escape discomfiture on account of a slight inadvertence. Very soon the Government served an order on the *Ittefaq*, the allied evening paper, the *Awaz*, and the English weekly, the *Dacca Times*, prohibiting the publication of statements and news about the political activities of students and also of those likely to create misunderstanding between the two Wings. The aim was to stop the publication of news and views on the autonomy moment in which students, under the leadership and inspiration of Mujibur, were playing an enthusiastic role. With totalitarian thoroughness the Government asked newspapers not to publish even the news of this ban imposed on three newspapers. Dacca saw many posters issued, as the posters indicated, by the 'Student Community' asking for the withdrawal of the ban. A wave of arrests started on 8 May when a few topranking leaders of the East Pakistan Awami League, including Mujibur, the President of the party, were detained. Within a few weeks, many leaders and prominent political workers campaigning for the 6-Point Programme were arrested under the D.P.R., i.e., Defence of Pakistan Rules. Those arrested included the Vice-President of the East Pakistan Awami League, the General Secretary, the Social Welfare Secretary, and the Presidents of the Dacca District Awami League and the Dacca City Awami League. The autonomy movement suffered tremendously because the Ayub regime took the easy way of dragging to the prison all the executives of the East Pakistan Awami League. The Government's patent determination to stifle forcefully the agitation for the 6-Point Programme led Mosafir to comment (in the *Ittefaq* of 5 June 1966) that East Pakistanis were not going to realize any desired result from their appeals or pleadings.[47]

The *Sangbad* of 13 May 1966 declared that the arrests of

Mujibur and his associates demonstrated the Government's resolve to use the state of emergency in order to eliminate the political opponents. The whole of East Pakistan observed a Protest Day on 13 May, organizing meetings and processions which condemned these arrests. A large meeting, held at the Paltan Maidan in Dacca on that day, endorsed the 6-Point Programme. The entire province appeared to seethe with resentment over the Government's settled policy of repression. The Awami League and the student community went ahead with their campaign for the 6-Point Programme despite the arrest of leaders. The Awami League declared a hartal (i.e., an all-out strike) on 7 June 1966 in order to impress upon the Government the popular support behind the 6-Point Programme, and the popular feeling against the repressive policies of the Government. The Government arrested workers on a large scale, baffled them by , e.g., seizing posters from the printing press, but could not sabotage the preparations for the 7-June hartal. On 5 June, Governor Monem addressed a public meeting at Narayanganj. The meeting began to dissolve as soon as Monem attacked the autonomy movement, and provoked a large section of the crowd who raised slogans in favour of the movement, and left the meeting in a body.[48]

The 7-June hartal was a complete success. There was an absolute cessation of work in all offices, Government and non-Government, factories and educational institutions. All transport vehicles lay motionless, and the people could not come to their respective places of work. Meetings and processions throughout the province testified to the strength of popular support behind the 6-Point Programme. The Government retaliated by engineering hooliganism and then opening fire on its opponents. The newspapers were not allowed to publish anything except the official version of the incidents on 7 June. The *Sangbad*, in a special evening edition on 7 June, blamed the Government for the ugly incidents on that day producing

deaths. It was not proper for the Government, the *Sangbad* said, "to face the challenge posed by a political question by the show of inflated muscles instead of solving it politically." The newspaper added: "It is the misfortune of the people of this country that while an old and worn-out broom has some value, no value is attached to human lives. ... At the feeblest voice of protest, firings are resorted to here and there, lathis are swung, tear gas shells are exploded, arrests take place and the steam-roller of repression is let loose." Next day, as a protest against police firing and the curb on news publication, the *Sangbad* did not bring out any issue. The *Ittefaq* of 7 June deplored the reign of terror unleashed on automists, but did not even mention anything about the province-wide hartal occurring on that day. The *Pakistan Observer* of 8 June inserted the official Press Note on yesterday's incidents, and added that, on account of unavoidable reasons, it could not publish the account of hartal given by its staff reporter. It printed a seven-column heading only to indicate that this Press Note was being printed below! In an editorial on that day, the *Pakistan Observer* served another blistering sarcasm on the Government's policy of repression; in that editorial on 'catching sleep', it discussed what varieties of mangoes were efficacious in inducing sleep; 7-June incidents did not figure anywhere.[49]

The hartal led the Government to intensify repression; it resorted to mass arrests and summary trials which were held in police stations or on the roads even after midnight. In his broadcast of 15 June, Governor Monem threatened that autonomists would be dealt with stronger measures. He repeated the accusation against autonomists that they were agents of a hostile foreign state. The Government very soon revealed how they would proceed to take tougher measures against autonomists. East Pakistanis, however, were not to be cowed down. They were only reminded, as Mosafir observed on 9 June, that their legitimate rights, like those on the language issue, were

conceded by the ruling coterie only after a hard struggle involving bloodshed. East Pakistanis began, on 17 June, to observe three Protest Days up to 19 June. On 16 June the *Ittefaq* published an editorial about 7-June incidents which could not be printed on 8 June on account of restrictions imposed by the Government. The Government forfeited all the copies of the 16-June *Ittefaq* and arrested its fearless editor, Tofazzal Husain, on the same night under the D.P.R. The Government next seized the New Nation Printing Press which printed not only the *Ittefaq* but also the *Dacca Times* and the Bengali Cine Weekly *Purbani*. As repression failed to restrain the autonomy-minded newspapers, the Govrenment sacrificed all sense of propriety to eliminate them by naked force. On 20 June, a complete strike was observed by the working journalists and Press workers of East Pakistan who thus protested against curbs on newspapers, arrest of journalists under the DPR, and the forfeiture of the New Nation Printing Press. It is a commentary on the political consciousness of the common people of East Pakistan that newspaper hawkers did not touch the small edition of the pro-Government newspapers, the *Azad, Dainik Pakistan* and *Morning News,* which were brought out under police protection and in violation of the strike decision. Copies remained unsold.[60]

By the middle of July, however, the repressive measures had perceptible effects on the Opposition Press in East Pakistan. A survey of the Press for the week ending on 14 July 1966 would clearly show how the Press was compelled to retreat, and refrained from hammering at the issues of regional autonomy and regional disparity. Government pressure led the proprietor of the *Janata* to dismiss the autonomy-minded editor, Mr. Anwar Zahid, and the entire staff of working journalists. the *Sangbad* was refused Government advertisements. No wonder, therefore, that editorials in the *Sangbad* began to be confined to such innocuous subjects as the cholera and floods and

avoided suggestions of the indifference of the ruling coterie towards East Pakistan's vital needs. The *Ittefaq* sought refuge in a small private printing house and began to appear in one sheet from 12 July. But the Government rejected its application for 'authentication of fresh declaration' needed by the change of printers. The skeleton- *Ittefaq* ceased to appear from 27 July 1966. The *Awaz* of that day criticized the rejection of the *Ittefaq's* application, and commented that the country had enjoyed greater freedom during the British rule. In a similar vein, Syed Qamarul Ahsan, in an article entitled 'Pakistan's Basic Ailment', that was published in the *Pakistan Observer of* 11 August 1966, argued that the British administration in India "had a standard of morality which our Pakistani administrators could not yet equal." The Dacca High Court declared illegal the Government's forfeiture of the New Nation Printing Press; the same verdict was upheld later by the Supreme Court. But the machinery of the totalitarian regime moved with astounding rapidity, and, within 24 hours of the announcement of the Supreme Court's decision, assumed new powers under the Secucurity Act to bypass the order of the Supreme Court.[81]

The Government's unflinching determination to suppress the autonomy movement forcefully was evident from Ayub's speeches delivered during his 6-day visit to East Pakistan in early August. He called out for a 'Jehad' against autonomists and threatened to use 'other methods' to put down their agitation. He characterized the agitation as 'artificial', originating from a few who put forward 'irresponsible' demands. Yet the Ayub regime had to arrest thousands of political workers and leaders in order to quell this agitation. Autonomists faced an insuperable problem. They found it impossible to keep the minimum number of workers out of prisons unless they confined the campaign to the level of symbols and rituals. The families of arrested persons were about to die of starvation. Another wave of arrests, similar to that immediately before and after 7 June,

might atrophy the campaign entirely. The Awami League, therefore, declared that the second phase of its movement would begin from 16 August, and assume the form of a mass signature campaign. But the Government refused permission to the Awami League for holding a meeting at the Paltan Maidan on 16 August. The Government failed to command tolerance for a movement that shrank to a negligible limit.[58]

Disunity among the Opposition parties, especially the rivalry between the two principal Opposition parties, the Awami League and the National Awami Party, eroded the strength of the autonomy movement. When the Government was bent upon using limitless repression, a non-violent movement could preserve its vitality only when all the Opposition parties mastered unity. This unity was lacking, although different political parties joined the autonomy movement with their separate programmes, agreeing essentially with the 6-Point Programme but not going as far as the latter in seeking to establish an independent economic set-up for East Pakistan. The Jamaat-e-Islam joined the movement for autonomy in late June 1966. Its General Secretary, Ghulam Azam, wrote a booklet entitled "Which Way Lies the Emancipation of East Pakistan", and elaborated therein a programme for the realization of regional autonomy and democracy doing away with the injustices to East Pakistan in matters of economic development and defence preparedness. The Councillors Muslim League adopted on 31 July a 7-Point Programme for securing democracy and provincial autonomy. On the same day, there took place in the house of Nurul Amin a meeting of the representatives of various Opposition parties and Independents. The meeting aimed at formulating a programme of a united campaign for the establishment of democracy in the country. A communique, issued at the end of the meeting, said that the discussions were fruitful and that further discussions would be held in future.[59]

At a Press Conference of 18 July in Dacca, Maulana Bhasani,

the President of the National Awami Party, declared specifically that he would not join hands with the Awami League, although he would try to achieve provincial autonomy. In fact, the National Awami Party not only did not cooperate with the Awami League while the latter was organizing the 7-June hartal, but also tried to play down for some time the impact of the 7-June episode. This could not be explained by a mere reference to political differences between Mujibur and Bhasani dating back to the Kagmari Conference of 1957. A more important explanation was the manoeuver by Ayub to strengthen and retain the support of the pro-Chinese faction of the National Awami Party, headed by Bhasani. With this aim Ayub released from prison a large number of Communists, all with pro-Chinese affiliations, soon after the hostilities with India in September 1965. It is significant to note that the ban on the Communist Party of West Pakistan stayed, and that many of the pro-Peking Communists operating in East Pakistan, who alone were released, belonged originally to the Communist Parties of Bihar and U.P. in undivided India. Since the Ayub regime was enjoying the blessings of China, the pro-Chinese faction of the National Awami Party was not inclined to baffle Ayub by supporting the 6-Point Programme of the Awami League. But the large-scale participation of workers, among whom the National Awami Party was known to be most influential, in the 7-June episode, shocked the National Awami Party into launching a movement for autonomy. Nevertheless, it refused to act together with the Awami League and publicized a 14-Point Programme. The movement began on 14 August, which was sought to be countered by the Conventionist Muslim League calling for the observance of a "National Integration Day' on that very day. The failures of the Government party in evoking popular support for its programme on 14 August was in sharp contrast to the success of the National Awami Party.[54]

With the Awami League leaders rotting in jails, it was possible for the National Awami Party to capture the initiative and leadership in the autonomy movement. It made some attempts to do so. It took a leading role in organizing a 'Demands Day' on 4 September throughout East Pakistan. The demands included quick provision of relief and shelter to flood-affected people, introduction of full rationing, immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, establishment of freedom of speech and expression, and regional autonomy. The devastating floods, beginning a few days earlier, provided a good opportunity for organizing the Demands Day. About six months later, several districts of East Pakistan were the victims of famine conditions. The National Awami Party, therefore, observed another 'Demands Day' on 2 April 1967, and thus launched a province-wide movement for food, employment and increased wages for workers. The Government unleashed repression on the National Awami Party by arresting a large number of its leaders and workers as also labour leaders, teachers and students joining the movement. Haji Muhammad Danesh, the Vice-President of the National Awami Party, and S. A. Husain, the General Secretary, were arrested. Mr. Nasiruddin Ahmed, the printer and publisher of the *Sangbad,* was arrested under the DPR. A heavier blow on the *Sangbad,* the organ of the moderate (or non-pro-Chinese) section of the National Awami Party, could be anticipated. It came a few weeks later. The Government rejected the application of its new editor for taking office after the resignation of the former editor, and the *Sangbad* was compelled to close down its publication with effect from 25 May 1967. This was a calculated move to wipe out, one by one, the Opposition newspapers.[59]

Attempts at forging a unity among Opposition parties and facilitating thus a combined struggle against the ruling coterie for the achivement of democracy and regional autonomy

appeared to be nearly successful by the end of April 1967. There were secret talks between leaders of different parties, and, on 30 April, meeting at the residence of the NDF leader Ataur Rahman Khan, the representatives of the Awami League, Councillors Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Nizam-e-Islam and the NDF inaugurated an alliance styled as the Pakistan Democratic Movement. The PDM (i.e., Pakistan Democratic Movement) adopted an 8-Point Programme aiming at the revival of the 1956 Constitution; a parliamentary-federal system set up by direct adult franchise; vesting all powers in the regional government except those of defence, foreign relations, currency, federal finance, central banking, foreign trade, and inter-regional communications; equal defence preparations for both the Wings of Pakistan; the transfer of the Navy headquarters to East Pakistan; ban on the flight of capital from East Pakistan to West Pakistan; etc. The PDM's Programme included the demand for the establishment of 4 Boards, composed of an equal number of members from the two Wings, which would exercise control over currency, central banking, foreign exchange, inter-regional trade and communications, and foreign trade. It also recommended the establishment of a similarly composed Board entrusted with accomplishing parity in defence preparations between the two Wings. The PDM's Programme fell short of Mujibur's 6-Point Programme inasmuch as it did not announce the need for a completely independent economic set-up for each Wing. Nevertheless, the biggest weakness of the PDM Programme was that the National Awami Party stayed out of the alliance. Spokesmen of the National Awami Party declared that their abstention was due to the imprisonment of a large number of their leaders which made it impossible for them to arrive at a decision on such an important issue; that leaders of other parties behaved coolly with them, and that the PDM was a conspiracy hatched up by agents of United States Imperialism. The frivolity of such explanations indicated that

the National Awami Party was looking for an excuse to disengage itself from a responsible move against the Ayub-led coterie.[56]

Relentless repression by the Government and disunity among the Opposition forces made it impossible for East Pakistan's autonomists to secure any of their major policy goals. Their agitation was only perhaps instrumental in securing some marginal benefits for the province. For instance, this agitation surely goaded the Ayub-led coterie to wield symbols attesting their concern for developing East Pakistan. The work on the establishment of a second capital in Dacca was, therefore, expedited and a number of huge buildings was constructed in Dacca. An assemblage of multi-storeyed buildings in or around Dacca, passing as the second capital and named 'Ayubnagar', may impress a foreign visitor and mislead him about the grievances of East Pakistanis. But, such a *nagar* (i.e., city), unaccompanied by the transfer of Central Government Departments, moulding the peoples' economic destiny, to that city and the exercise of control by East Pakistanis over those Departments, is an apology for a capital. It cannot confer those economic benefits which West Pakistanis enjoy and East Pakistanis covet. Despite such gestures on the part of the West Pakistani ruling clique, therefore, the major cultural-economic-political grievances of East Pakistanis were not remedied, for they could not be remedied without the achievement of full regional autonomy as conceived, for example, by Mujibur's 6-Point Programme. The West Pakistani ruling coterie could persist in pursuing its own policy goals in disregard of the legitimate aspirations of East Pakistanis in the fields of defence preparations or language or capital formation. An instance from each of these fields may be provided here; these will be fresh evidences of how the Ayub-led coterie follows the fixed path of combining a policy of plain repression with bluffs and manoeuverings in order that East Pakistanis may not be able to

realize their legitimate aspirations. Khan Abdus Sabur, the Central Communications Minister, declared at a public meeting in Dacca on 10 April that two ordnance factories were being set up in East Pakistan, and that production of arms already began in one. This was the bluntest kind of bluff that one could resort to. The Dacca Bengali Press could not but challenge, in a mild manner, the authenticity of the information supplied by Sabur, for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Defence Ministry had stated as late as 14 March 1966, in course of a reply to a question at the National Assembly, that one ordnance factory would be set up in East Pakistan in future. The *Ittefaq* (of 12 April), therefore, could not but express surprise over Sabur's statement that came within 26 days, and was not corroborated by officials with whom enquiries were made. Officials were unable to supply any clue to the location of the two factories mentioned by Sabur. The *Azad* (of 12 April) suggested editorially that public misgivings on this issue could be allayed if representatives of newspapers were taken to the site of the ordnance factory that was said to have already started production.[57]

The *Sangbad* of 26 August 1966 sharply criticized the proposal by the Chairman of the Central Urdu Board that the 'Urdu' language should be renamed the "Pakistani" language. This showed that the ruling coterie did not abandon the machination of claiming Urdu alone as Pakistan's language. The Urdu-speaking group formed an insignificant minority among the various linguistic groups in Pakistan. The Urdu-speaking West Pakistanis constituted a very small fraction of the Urdu-speaking people in the world. The *Sangbad,* therefore, asked: "Is this another vile move of those who are constantly engaged in slandering the people of this province and their mother-tongue by terming 'Bengali' as the language of the Hindus and 'Bengalee' as 'Hindu'?" The innate tendency of the West Pakistani ruling coterie to persecute the Bengali language was

again manifested in June 1967 when Radio Pakistan was asked to prohibit the songs of Rabindranath Tagore, universally loved by the people in two Bengals of India and Pakistan. The Central ruling coterie has always been trying such devices to snap the invisible cultural bridge between the two Bengals. The existence of this bridge cannot be a threat to the power of the military dictatorship. But a military dictatorship, conscious of the lack of popular consent, always acts upon some grotesque fears and unnecessarily tortures the people.[58]

The *Pakistan Observer* of 5 September 1966 prominently featured a report that revealed how the Central ruling coterie obstinately stuck to manoeuverings which would harm East Pakistan's economic upliftment and perpetuate West Pakistan's stranglehold over East Pakistan's economy. The NSC (i.e National Shipping Corporation) floated its shares worth twenty lakhs of rupees on 5 September. It was extremely unlikely, however, that East Pakistanis would have the chance to buy them. When the NSC Ordinance was being debated at the National Assembly, it was stated on behalf of the Government that a main objective was to enable East Pakistanis, including the poorer section, to buy 50 percent of the shares priced at ten rupees each. But the Karachi office of the NSC saw to it that East Pakistanis, even those belonging to Dacca, not to speak of mofussil areas, did not have a fair chance to buy those shares. According to usual practice in such matters, bankers all over East Pakistan should have received the share application forms from Karachi at least eight days in advance of the date of floatation. But only two Dacca banks—the Habib Bank and the Union Bank—received application forms, and that too as late as 3 September, a Saturday. Other Banks in Dacca and elsewhere could not procure the application forms. Applications would be accepted in the two Dacca banks only during the banking hours of 5 September. There was no upper ceiling on the purchase. In other words, the scheme of the West Pakis-

tani ruling coterie was to enable some rich West Pakistanis to get hold of a few forms from two Dacca banks, and monopolize the NSC shares, to the exclusion of East Pakistanis, a few of whom might succeed in purchasing a small number of shares.[59].

Despite the relentlesss repression and brazen manoeuvers resorted to by the Ayub-led coterie, East Pakistan's autonomists are not expected to give up the struggle. An important reason for this is that their leaders, e.g., men like Shaikh Mujibur Rahman and Tofazzal Husain, have resisted the temptations of power and rejected the baits offered by the ruling coterie as prizes for a promise of abstention from the autonomy movement.[60] This is in sharp contrast to the behaviour of Pakistani politicians which actually enabled bureaucrats and the military officers to consolidate their power by liquidating the power as well as prestige of legislator-politicians in the pre-1958 period. The tactic of Ayub Khan to buy off leaders has, however, succeeded in partially drying up one vital source of leadership for the autonomy movement, i.e., the student community. The Ayub regime has offered attractive jobs at Universities and government departments to students who had been in the forefront of the struggle for autonomy immediately after they passed the final University examinations. Mr. Pranab Ranjan Ray, a Calcutta statistician, who visited East Pakistan four times during 1960-64 and met dozens of such personalities, showed this author a long list of these lost politicians. It is not, of course, opportune to disclose the names. Others, again, have been severely punished and simply blown off the political scene. The Ayub-led coterie knows too well how to mix rewards with punishments so as to debilitate, if not smother, a popular movement. Autonomists, however, are leading a mass upsurge in East Pakistan akin to a nationalist upsurge. It is fed by genuine cultural, economic and political grievances, which have formed the staples of all nationalist movements in history. The

new Muslim middle class, absent in the pre-1947 era when the middle class in East Pakistan was composed of Hindus, can act as the fountain of leadership for this upsurge.[81] If, therefore, Ayub shrinks (although he has not done so till now) from the systematic use of force and propaganda, the autonomy movement will tend to grow from strength to strength. Mere tact will not then enable him to tide over the crisis. He will have to command compassion for the legitimate needs and aspirations of East Pakistanis. If he does not, the consequences are anybody's guess. The present writer, instead of himself suggesting those consequences, could quote two East Pakistani leaders and an eminent scholar on nationalist movements.

Abdul Mansur Ahmad declared on 22 March 1956: "I am in my last sentence. Now, Sir, I shall finish my speech with this warning to my brothers. In the past they exploited East Pakistan without any Constitution. This exploitation and this injustice they are now going to perpetrate in the name of new Constitution. If they do that, I would remind my friend of that historic warning given by that illustrious son of England, Edmund Burke. Sir, Edmund Burke cried hoarse about America. Edmund Burke thundered in the Parliament with his uncommon oratory, but could not persuade the then British politicians to listen to his advice. Edmund Burke failed, his oratory failed, but, Sir, the American people did not fail. The ocean that divided England and America could not be dried up and so geography played its part and created history when politicians failed. In the case of East Pakistan and West Pakistan I give the same warning. I warn my brothers: 'if you ignore geography, history will not forget you. If you overlook geography, history will ignore you and firmly intervene and, you know, Sir, when history intervenes, it only repeats itself'." About ten years later A. B. M. Nurul Islam announced: "I feel that we shall have to take on us the sole responsibility of defending ourselves. But so far as depriving us of this human

right is concerned, we have been put under an intrigue by a particular group of rulers. It is my firm conviction that if you want to snatch away this genuine right we may not do anything, but a day will come when our future generations—our young brethren, boys and girls will be compelled to say 'good-bye'." Lastly, Professor Rupert Emerson: "The case of Pakistan came close to sustaining the theory that a nation is whatever can get away with establishing its claim to being one; and if East Pakistan were now to break off into a separate national existence it would be idle to seek to deny its claims on theoretical grounds."[62]

The Ayub regime, however, has enormous prison-space and fire-power at its disposal. It has also proved its readiness to use both to bury popular demands. The goals of East Pakistanis fighting for democracy and cultural-economic salvation remain, therefore, as distant as ever. So remains the emergence of a strong sense of nationalism spontaneously binding the two Wings of Pakistan.

The Ayub regime is sustained by force. The centre of power is held by West Pakistani military leaders and the senior civil servants. Some of them, like Ayub, have converted themselves into full-fledged politicians. This ruling group, aided by a few henchmen politicians of the two Wings, has imposed a colonial rule on East Pakistan with all the cultural-economic-political frustrations usually accompanying such a rule. The excuses offered by the rulers for perpetuating this colonial domination are quite familiar to students of colonial practice. These are as follows: East Pakistanis are unfit for the exercise of rights the champions of autonomy demand; the plans of autonomists reflect the misconceived dreams of a few; autonomists are agitators backed up by a country hostile to Pakistan. Enough evidence has been furnished in this book to prove the illegitimacy of such claims on the part of Pakistan's present rulers. This writer should affirm that he has taken care

to collect evidence (apart from interviews of persons living behind the Green Curtain[63] who cannot be named) from sources which have been either largely ignored (e.g., Bengali newspapers) or inadequately tapped (e.g., Constituent Assembly and National Assembly Debates) by writers in this field.

Pitted against a regime that does not stop short of exercising unmitigated terror and absolute control over communication media, East Pakistanis will perhaps have to reconcile themselves to seeing their just demands unfulfilled in the near future. They cannot use force to repel the violence used by a military dictatorship. It is not possible for them to manufacture armaments secretly for this purpose. Nor have the neighbouring countries, the only possible source of arms aid, shown any interest in such a venture. The United Nations, a silent spectator of the demolition of basic human rights in many parts of the world, cannot be expected to help the movement for autonomy in East Pakistan. An intervention by Big Powers may be expected to take place, but it is not welcome, for it may, by the inevitable thrusts and counter-thrusts of Big Power rivalries, turn East Pakistan into a second Vietnam. East Pakistanis should perhaps prefer to wait for a resurgence of democratic ambitions in West Pakistan which may help them in sweeping off the barriers to the realization of their legitimate aspirations.

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63 The name is derived from the green colour of Pakistan's flag.

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