POLITICS OF POWER, AWAMI LEAGUE GOVERNMENT
IN EAST PAKISTAN

After the failure of several attempts to form a new Government under the leadership or in alliance of the United Front, the Governor of East Bengal, A.K. Fazlul Huq, on September 4, 1956, requested the leader of the opposition in the East Bengal Assembly, Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan, to form the Government. Thus, the first Awami League coalition Government with Ataur Rahman Khan as the Chief Minister was formed in East Bengal on September 6. The East Pakistan Awami League was the principal constituent of this coalition Government as such important posts were in its hands. The Ganatantri Dal, the Pakistan National Congress, the Scheduled Caste Federation, the United Progressive Party of Dhirendra Nath Dutta and the Krishak Sramik Party (dissidents) group led by Kafiluddin Choudhury were represented in the ministry. It should be

1 Initially the strength of the Ministry was only 5 which was later increased to 12. The Awami League held portfolios like Home, Education, Planning, Commerce and Industries, Agriculture, Jute and Food.


For names of Ministers and their portfolios See Pakistan Observer, September 6, 9, 10, 1956 and Jan. 28, 1957.
noted that a week later, the Awami League leader, H.S. Suhrawardy also became the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Thus, unlike the previous United Front Governments, the Awami League Government in East Bengal was able to function with the support of the Central Government. With the formation of Awami League Governments both at the centre and in the Province, East Bengal gained a sense of participation in decision making which it never had before.³

The new Government, like the previous United Front Government was committed to the 21-Point Programme. The East Pakistan Awami League had a fairly clear programme, considerably radical in character, and it also enjoyed the first flush of popular support as a reaction against the dismal record of the Sarkar Ministry. But the Party could not maintain this popularity without implementing its programme. Party President, Moulana Bhashani rightly warned the Government that "while the Muslim League Government had lasted seven years and the United Front 14 months the Awami League might not last longer than six months if they failed to implement the 21-Point Programme for the people."⁴ He also threatened to launch a civil disobedience movement if the Government

⁴ Pakistan Observer, September 7, 1956.
failed to solve the food problem in 15 days.\textsuperscript{5}

In his first broadcast on 7 September, the Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan, gave a preview of his Government policies on various matters.\textsuperscript{6} The Government promised to hold a judicial enquiry into the firing on food demonstrators in Dacca on September 4 and would pay compensation to heirs of victims. The Chief Minister assured the people that "in our targets of priorities food occupies the highest place to the exclusion of all others." The Government had taken steps according to him, to arrange food supplies and gear up food administration. It also felt the need for reorganising the administrative set up and taking practical measures to rid the administration from graft and corruption. The Chief Minister said that the integrity and honesty of the permanent services must be restored and any political interference in the day to day administration would not be tolerated.\textsuperscript{7} Release of all political prisoners, repeal of all repressive laws, eradication of corruption, restructuring of the educational system were some of the objectives of the Government. For minorities, the Chief Minister assured that "in our schemes of things in the Government, they will not only


\textsuperscript{6}See Full Text of C.M.'s broadcast, Pakistan Observer, September 9, 1956.

\textsuperscript{7}Details regarding the character and functioning of Bureaucracy. See Ataur Rahman Khan, Two Years of Ministership (an Autobiography in Bengali) (Dacca, 1965), pp. 136-177.
get equal opportunities to serve this country but we promise to create such a climate so that the progress and practice their religion in the fullest sense of security just like their Muslim compatriots."

The most important and immediate task before the Provincial Government was to find a solution for the critical food situation in East Pakistan. The food crisis could not be solved unless radical agrarian reforms were carried out in the province. The Awami League Government, instead of carrying out agrarian reforms, took number of palliative measures in order to ease the food problem. The Central Government and Provincial Government together spent about Rs.38 crores in order to develop agriculture.  
An Agricultural Development Corporation was set up. The Government initiated a broad propaganda campaign advocating modern agricultural methods. In addition to exhibition and training centre, several State farms and nursery gardens as well as mobile and stationery veterinary colleges were organised in the countryside. In order to increase the fertility of the soil, the Government imported one lakh maunds of oil cakes, 55000 maunds of bone meal and other manures. These were distributed to peasants at reduced prices. Five thousand and two hundred acres

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of fallow lands were brought under cultivation with the help of 52 tractors throughout the province which was expected to yield about 1 lakh and four thousand maunds of food grains.\textsuperscript{11} Arrangements had been made to irrigate 13000 acres of boro lands by pumps. In February, 1957, Rs. 34 million were allocated to carry out 64 small irrigation (or drainage) schemes in the province which would bring ten lakh acres of land under cultivation and expected to give an additional yield of 50 lakhs maunds of food grains.\textsuperscript{12} Agricultural loans were made available to the farmers to carry out various agricultural improvements.\textsuperscript{13} It should be noted that in the absence of radical agrarian reforms, only the top layer of tenants with hereditary rights and landlords who farmed their land with a view to make profit were benefitted by the governmental measures.\textsuperscript{14}

The Government took various measures to improve the supply of food grains to deficit areas to check smuggling of food grains across the border and to prevent black marketing.\textsuperscript{15} It also tried to create food reserves and compelled the landlords to sell grain at fixed prices.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.,
to the State. Although the purchase price was usually fixed above the market price obtaining at harvest time, the Government efforts failed because the landlords preferred to sell their surplus grain in the black market.\textsuperscript{16} The result was that the Government partially failed in its efforts to stock foodgrains in the province. The provincial Government received complete cooperation from the Central Government led by H.S. Suhrawardy to tide over the food crisis and also to avert a repetition of the 1943 famine.\textsuperscript{17} Necessary foreign exchange was made available to the provincial Government by the Central Government for importing food grains. Rice and wheat worth Rs.56 crores were purchased from foreign countries.\textsuperscript{18} While Pakistan imported 2.42 million tons of grain between 1947 and 1956, the grain imports in 1957 alone amounted to 1.12 million tons.\textsuperscript{19} The main difficulty faced by the Government for importing foodgrains was the non-availability of shipping space. With the result the food grains from foreign countries were brought even by tramp ships.\textsuperscript{20} The Government distributed them freely as well as at specially

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Y.V. Gankovsky, Op.cit., p.282.}
\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Presidential Address of Moulana Bhashani, East Pakistan Awami League Special Council Session, Kagmari, Op.cit., p.16.}
\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ten Years of Pakistan, 1947-1957, Karachi, 1957, p.106.}
\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Kamruddin Ahmad, A Social History of Bengal, Op.cit., p.132.}
reduced prices to persons who could not afford to purchase at the ordinary subsidised price. The Government opened gruel kitchens at number of places.\textsuperscript{21} \textbullet 13 crores were spent for test relief works and to construct new roads and to repair the damage done by floods as well as to dig about 2000 canals.\textsuperscript{22} Modified rationing was introduced throughout the province. An All Party Food Conference was held at the initiative of the Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan in May 1957 in Dacca. This Conference recommended to the East Pakistan Government for the formation of a high-powered provincial Food Council which would advice the Government on measures to be adopted to tackle the food problem and on matters concerning the grow more food campaign.\textsuperscript{23} The Government attached great importance to grow more food campaigns in order to achieve self-sufficiency in food.

However, the Awami League Government failed to check the increase in prices of essential commodities.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{23}The 42 member Food Council comprised of representatives of eight political parties. Government officials and the general officer commanding (Eastern region). Chief Minister would be its Chairman and the Food Minister its Vice-Chairman. Each of the eight political Parties would have two representatives on the Council Moulana Bhashani, President of EPAL, also would be in the Council. Dawn, May 30 and June 1, 1957.

\textsuperscript{24}Details of the Price Situation between 1956 and 1957.

Moreover, the rural people who were mostly agriculturists were not getting economic price for their cash crop, Jute. The result was that the purchasing power of the people was zero. They were unable to buy even the rationed rice. In the Provincial Assembly the opposition made scathing criticism against the Awami League Government on these grounds. Even Moulana Bhashani, President of the ruling party criticised the Government for its failure to solve the food problem.  

Flood Control was another most important and urgent problem that the Provincial Government had to face. The Central Government led by Suhrawardy, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, appointed a mission under Krugg to find ways and means to prevent floods. Some of the schemes of the Flood Commission such as the establishment of an autonomous organisation mainly to deal with floods were implemented. Moreover, the Provincial Government accepted a plan for controlling floods by their own engineer, Mosharaff Hussain and took steps to commence work. But Rs.400 crores were required for the implementation of the Scheme. Therefore the


28 The Pakistan Observer, February 8 and Sept. 6, 1957.

Province was exposed to the ravages of floods.\textsuperscript{30}

The Awami League Government tried to implement the 21-Point Programme. Soon after the assumption of power in East Pakistan, the Government released all political prisoners. It also took positive measures to cast away some of the more oppressive fetters on the rule of law. On September 20, the Awami League Government rid the province from its statute Book of the so-called Public Safety Act.\textsuperscript{31} The Assembly passed a bill providing for the separation of the judiciary from the executive. The Bill provided for the creation of a Judicial Magistracy to take over from the executive all judicial functions except those relating to preventive section of the criminal procedure code. The independence of the Judicial Magistracy had been guaranteed by putting them directly under the administrative control of the session judge.\textsuperscript{32}

The Government respected the well established democratic traditions and principles. It did not hesitate to face the Assembly, whenever necessary.\textsuperscript{33} By-elections were held within three months of the formation of the

\textsuperscript{30}See the editorial, The Pakistan Times, November 13, 1957.
\textsuperscript{31}Pakistan Observer, September 21, 1956. Also see the full text of Chief Minister's broadcast on Sept. 5, 1957. Pakistan Observer, Sept. 6, 1957.
\textsuperscript{32}Pakistan Times, November 13, 1957.
Awami League Government. As Suhrawardy said "trust in the democratic process resulted not in a loss but in a distinct gain of strength for the ministry."\(^{34}\)

**Education**

An Education Reforms Commission was appointed by the Awami League Government with a view to reorganise the entire educational system and reorient educational policies.\(^{35}\) The Government could not implement the report of the Commission as Marshal Law came in 1958. The control of Primary Education had been taken over by Government, the distinction between compulsory and non-compulsory schools had been abolished and Model Schools had been established in the province. Pay of Primary school teachers, dearness allowance and provident fund contribution of non-Government Secondary School teachers and dearness allowance to Non-Government Madrasa Teachers had been increased.\(^{36}\) Bengali Academy had been made an autonomous body and black laws relating to Dacca and Rajshahi Universities had been abrogated.\(^{37}\) Government also took necessary steps to set up two medical colleges in Rajshahi and Chittagong.\(^{38}\)

\(^{34}\) Out of the Seven by-election, Awami League won six. *Ibid.*

\(^{35}\) *Pakistan Observer*, Feb. 8, 1957.


\(^{37}\) These acts prohibited the participation of university teachers in the Political Life of the Country. *Pakistan Observer*, Sept. 6, 1957.

Bengali was made one of the State languages of Pakistan. A Shaheed Minar had been erected to keep alive the memory of the martyrs of the language movement and February 21 had been declared a public holiday.\textsuperscript{39} The pay of the low-paid employees had been enhanced.\textsuperscript{40} As promised in the 21-Point Programme, the Minister in the Awami League Government in East Pakistan drew a salary of Rs.1000 per month.\textsuperscript{41}

Land Reforms

The East Pakistan Awami League stood for the abolition of Zamindari without compensation. It was also committed to the 21-Point Programme of the United Front which demanded "the abolition without compensation all rent-receiving interest in land and to distribute the surplus land among the landless proletariat and bring down the rent to a fair level and abolish the certificate procedure for realising rent." The Land Acquisition Act which existed in East Pakistan when the Awami League came to power was a piece of legislation which the Muslim League Government brought into existence in 1951.\textsuperscript{42} The Muslim League, being an organisation of the landed gentry,
brought about the East Bengal State Acquisition Act not
to protect the interests of the tenants or the bulk of
the population of this province but to protect the
interest of the class it represented. This Act, there­
fore, aimed at the abolition of zamindari system with
compensation. Moulana Bhashani, President of East Pakistan
Awami League, described it as "zamindar's Property
Purchasing Bill." The Pakistan Times, in its editorial
wrote, "The State Acquisition and Tenancy Act gives a
long lease of life to Parasitism in agriculture by allowing
big landholders a rate of compensation which it is well-
high impossible for an impoverished country to pay." The
Act also fixed the ceiling of 100 bighas (about 33
acres) per family or 10 bighas per family member. But
the Muslim League Government practically did nothing to
acquire or to prepare for acquisition of the properties
of the Zamindars which the act contemplated. The United
Front ministry which succeeded it lasted only for a few
weeks and it could not take any action to implement or
to change the provisions of the Act in the light of the
21-Point Programme to which it was pledged. During Abu
Hossain Sarkar's regime, it decided to acquire all the

43 The Muslim League abolished Zamindari because it
was British sponsored institution as well as one dominated
by an alien minority, the Hindus. Moreover, the most
important defect of the system during British rule, was
the growth of a fantastic proportion (number) of interme­
diaries between the Government revenue office and the farmers.
Details see Hang-Chao Tai, Land Reforms and Politics:
A Comparative Analysis, University of California Press,
44 Pakistan Times, 16 October 1955.
landed interests or the rent-receiving interests but actually made no arrangement for making necessary preparations for the purpose.\(^4^5\) It was necessary to prepare the record of rights, rent rolls and even to pay compensation to the rent-receivers. But nothing of that sort was done. Immediately after the wholesale acquisition some of the rent-receivers went to court which issued stay orders and the Government was debarred from taking any action.\(^4^6\) But the Government later hastily prepared preliminary rent rolls which had to be scrapped later by the Awami League Government in deference to protests from all section of tenants and landlords that they were completely unworkable.\(^4^7\)

The Awami League Government in East Pakistan tried to implement the Act. The Act provided for compensation to the Zamindars which was contrary to the party's declared policy. Amendment of the Act was therefore, necessary to give effect to the party's programme of abolition of Zamindari without compensation. Moreover, if the aim of the act was to bring about equitable distribution of wealth in the country-side, the rate of compensation and the rate of interest provided in it must be


\(^{4^6}\)Ibid.

\(^{4^7}\)Times of India, April 2, 1958.
abolished. The Government must also see to it that no rent-receiving interests survived the reform and that fool-proof guarantees were provided against the accumulation of land through its purchase by moneyed interests. Despite the commitment, the Awami League Government could not give effect to the acquisition without compensation principle because of constitutional difficulties. Article 15 of the 1956 constitution laid down that there would be no acquisition of property without payment of adequate compensation. The provincial Government wanted to amend this article so that there would be no legal complications. Till the amendments of the constitution, the Awami League Government was therefore, bound to pay compensation to former rent-receivers whose properties had been acquired by the State.

The Government could not proceed as the case was pending in the Dacca High Court. Later the High Court delivered judgement in favour of Government. Then the matter was taken to supreme court which, in its judgement, on 15 January, 1957, upheld the Act. The Government

48 See the Statement of Mahmud Ali, Provincial Revenue Minister. Pakistan Observer, April 12, 1957.
49 Ibid.
50 It should be noted that by 1956 about 471 Zamindaris were acquired. The remaining Zamindars and Talukders were asked in April 1956 to hand over their estates on or before April 14. About 80 writ petitions were filed by the Zamindars against it.
51 East Pakistan Assembly Proceedings, Vol. 16, March 24, 1957, p. 61. Also see Pakistan Observer, Jan 18, 1957.
adopted various measures to resolve various problems arising out of the whole-sale acquisition of rent-receiving interests. It set up the State acquisition advisory Committee consisting of the representatives of the Public and legal experts to examine afresh the provisions of the Act.\textsuperscript{52} Measures had been taken by the Government to remove the "inaccuracies which existed in the Preliminary rent-rolls. The Government, through "the East Pakistan Estate Acquisition (Ad-Interim Payment) ordinance, 1957", paid ad-interim payment to former rent-receivers.\textsuperscript{53} Certificate procedure for realising rent was abolished and established Debt settlement Boards which liquidated the debts of the rural peasantry.\textsuperscript{54} By 1957-58, the acquisition of zamindari had almost been completed.\textsuperscript{55} But there was still no statutory protection of the tenants. Share-cropping which was widely prevalent in East Pakistan was not abolished. The Government had promised an early enactment of a law modelled on the West Bengal Tebhagha Act which would fix the fair rent at one-third of the gross produce.\textsuperscript{56} But during its regime no such law was passed.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[52]Times of India, April 2, 1958.
\item[53]Pakistan Observer, April 12 & Aug. 31, 1957.
\item[56]Times of India, April 2, 1958.
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The Act, however, had failed in its major aims. It was hoped that the abolition of the zamindari system would lead to a considerable increase in land revenue which was initially estimated at Rs.12 crores. But the actual amount realised from the Acquired Estates was less than the amount expected.\(^57\) But at the same time, the expenditure in connection with the collection had almost doubled from the original Rs.1.50 crores.\(^58\) Again, though the Awami League Government abolished the Zamindari system it failed to implement the land ceiling provision in the Act. The most important reason why Awami League Government failed to implement land ceiling was the emergence of a new class of landlords consisting former jotdars who offered considerable resistance to any move towards ceiling.\(^59\) These jotdars who were members of the Awami League threatened to leave the Party.\(^60\) It was presumed that the Awami League Government was anxious not to offend this powerful class because of the approaching General Elections. Thus the abolition of Zamindari system in East Pakistan had not led to the creation of peasant Proprietorship.

\(^{57}\) The collection was Rs.3.15 crores in 1955-56 and Rs.5.16 crores during 1956-57. See *East Pakistan, 1957-58, One Year of Progress*, Op.cit.

\(^{58}\) *Times of India*, April 2, 1958.

\(^{59}\) See *Times of India*, April 2, 1958.

\(^{60}\) Related by Habibur Rahman, an Awami League Member of the 1954 Provincial Assembly.
Though the Government established Debt settlement Boards, it failed to provide an alternative scheme for providing rural credit to the poor agriculturists. 61

Ashutosh Singha said:

"As a result, Sir, a new class of more rapacious and unscrupulous money lenders in another shape have come into the field and if the Government does not take any step against them in the matter of liquidation of debt any scheme or any project which may be undertaken for the improvement of agriculture will have no effect, nor will our famished peasantry be freed from indebtedness." 62

The co-operative banks could have usefully and effectively supplanted the traditional money lenders. But, according to the East Pakistan Government, the entire co-operative movement in the State had been vitiated by corruption and mismanagement. 63 By dissolving insolvent societies and appointing its own officers as Chairman of co-operative Banks, the Government had tried to keep alive the co-operative movement in the State. 64

Jute

The East Pakistan Awami League, in its programme promised nationalisation of jute industry, abolition of Jute licensing fee and a fair deal for the jute growers with a

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61 As a result of the migration of Hindu Money lenders, the rural credit system in the Province had entirely collapsed.
63 Times of India, April 2, 1958.
64 Details see, Ibid.
view to stop smuggling of jute on the border. During its regime, it established a Jute Marketing Corporation for protecting the interests of the landlords and rich peasant, who were jute growers. In 1957, Government considered a new scheme for determining the jute acreage and Jute Production. Under this scheme, work with six acres of land on an experimental basis had started. The Central Jute Committee approved in the same year the proposal to establish another farm on 400 acres of land in Dinajpur District and would produce 1000 maunds of quality seeds. A Jute Research Institute was established. A Committee had been appointed for making arrangements to remove difficulties in the transportation of jute from the interior of the province to the port. The Central Government led by Suhrawardy sanctioned $2,000,00 in 1957 for completing the construction of the jute roads that had been left incomplete in 1952 due to lack of funds.

The Jute Marketing corporation failed to provide reasonable price for the jute growers. It was alleged

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65 According to Government this Corporation would also lift border jute grown within five mile border belt and would stop smuggling of jute outside the country. This would also do away with foreign exchange racketeering. See the Budget Estimates of the Government of East Pakistan for the year 1957-58. East Pakistan Assembly Proceedings, Vol. 16, 11 March, 1957, p.36. Also Ibid. 17 March 1957, pp. 211-212.

66 See Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan's report to the Awami League Council at Kagmari on February 7, Pakistan Observer, February 8, 1957.

67 Ibid.,

68 Ibid.,
that most of the agents that were appointed by this corporation had no knowledge of the jute trade and had no financial resources.\textsuperscript{69} Moreover, within the prescribed limited belt the price fixed by Government was much lower than the price that was obtainable in the market outside.\textsuperscript{70} This naturally led to smuggling of Jute by the cultivators for a better price.

The Government abolished Jute licensing fee. It did not nationalise Jute trade which according to the Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan, was a "very complicated matter with serious repercussions in internal trade and in our domestic economy."\textsuperscript{71} The result was that the jute market continued to be dominated by the West Pakistan industrialists which meant that the foreign exchange earned from the export of East Pakistan Jute was not spent there. Thus the jute growers were deprived by a fair price for their product.

\textbf{Industrialisation}

East Pakistan was industrially backward. This was the result of continuous neglect for years by the

\textsuperscript{69}Ashutosh Singh said in the Assembly. See East Pakistan Assembly Proceedings, Vol. 17, 26 Sept. 1957 pp. 26-27.

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{71}See Full Text of Chief Minister's broadcast on September 5, 1957. Pakistan Observer, September 6, 1957.
Central Government. Mr. Collin Clarke, the famous Australian Economist, who was called in by the then Muslim League Government advised them that industrialisation should be emphasised in East Pakistan and agriculture in West Pakistan. But the Government acted quite contrary to this advice and emphasised industry in West Pakistan but not agriculture even in East Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Provincial Commerce and Industries Minister, said: "During the last nine years, the policy pursued by the previous Government had created a situation in which the commerce Department had become a cipher and its existence a complete misnomer." He further added: "The Provincial Government was gradually diverted of practically all authority in regard to industries. It surrendered one by one the functions and responsibilities which should have appertained to them. The culminating point was the enactment of the Federal control of Industries Act which invested the central Government with all powers and functions in regard to 27 industries. This list of 27 industries included almost everything." In

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73 Ibid., pp.110-111.
74 Pakistan Observer, November 21, 1956. Also see Ataur Rahman Khan's, Two Years of Ministership, op.cit., pp.250-264.
75 Ibid., Besides, Trade was in the hands of the Centre. For import and export, East Pakistan was depended upon the policy of Karachi. Even the export and import Board was located in Karachi.
East Pakistan industrialisation could progress only if Government assisted it, because it had no big industrial houses to finance industrial development as in West Pakistan. The Pakistan Development Corporation had not done enough to promote industrial development of East Pakistan because the top officials of that body were West Pakistanis. It was alleged that the industries which were set up in West Pakistan by the PIDC became the private properties of those few industrialists who were controlling them. As a consequence many industries were established in West Pakistan but none worth the name in the East Pakistan. Further there was "internal colonialism" by which the raw materials of East Pakistan were taken to feed the industries in West Pakistan. There was no capital formation in East Pakistan. The result of all this was the general deterioration in the economic condition of the people of East Pakistan.

The Awami League Government in East Pakistan demanded that the provincial Government should be given powers in matter of commerce, trade and industries as

77 Ibid., p.13.
78 Pakistan Times, November 21, 1956.
provided in the constitution. It wanted its opinion to prevail as far as the issuance of import licence, allocation of shipping space and fixing of priority. Besides, the Provincial Government also demanded 50 per cent share of Pakistan's total earning of foreign exchange and foreign aid. Addressing the industrialists and Business magnates from all over the province on October 3, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Provincial Industries Minister, explained the Industrial policy of his Government. He said that private capital operating under a planned and balanced programme of industrialisation would constitute the base of the Province's industrial economy. By private capital he also meant foreign investment and added that the fruitful participation of such investments in the industrialisation programme of the Province would be welcome, particularly because of the limited foreign exchange resources, essential for industrial expansion. There would be no nationalisation of Industries "in the forseeable future" and assured all investors of the security of their capital.

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80 In the past East Pakistan had not been getting more than 10 per cent as her share of foreign aid. See Pakistan Observer, November 21, 1956.
82 Ibid., East Pakistan Awami League stood for the nationalisation of industries and against foreign capital which, if accepted, would lead the country into political and economic slavery which was the main objective of imperialist countries. Details seeShamsul Huq, East Pakistan Awami Muslim League Draft Manifesto, Op. cit., pp 22-23.
The Awami League coalition Government received full co-operation and support from the Central Government led by H.S. Suhrawardy in its efforts to industrialise the province. The Central Government's industrial policy was clearly oriented towards East Pakistani traders and industrialists. The Provincial Government was given greater power to decide questions concerning the economic development of the region. Large State funds were allocated for the development of Power stations, industry and transport in the eastern wing of the country. Greater allocation of foreign exchange was given to the province for importing raw materials and spare parts for its industries. Import licences were distributed to favour the East Pakistani businessmen. The Government also tried to create condition in the Province which were likely to induce the landlords, merchants and rich peasants to invest their capital in the industrial sphere.

The Provincial Government planned to set up, in the Public Sector, important industries like Fertilizer Plant, Gas, Sugar, Pharmaceuticals and antibiotics, Steel Mill, shipyards, newsprint, Rayon Mill, Jute looms, Steel melting etc.. Similarly in the Private Sector, the Government had decided to expand and set-up about


84Pakistan Times, December 19, 1956 and January 4, 1957.
33 new industries during 1957-58. The criteria followed by the Government in selecting these industries was (a) industries based on locally available raw materials; (b) Industries earning foreign exchange and (c) Industries for consumer goods needed in the Province. Of the new industries as many as 72 were to be licensed by the Controller of Licence and would be completed by the end of 1958.

Inspite of Government's assurance against nationalisation of industries, the Private and foreign capital was shy of investment in East Pakistan. It might be that the industrialists did not like to cooperate with the regime or the climate did not encourage the capitalists to invest their money because of the strong demand of autonomy for East Pakistan. Moreover, they were also probably watching the result of the struggle within the ruling Awami League between the elitist tradition led by Suhrawardy and the populist tradition led by Moulana Bhashani. This culminated in the latter leaving the East Pakistan Awami League with his leftists followers.

It was also significant that the Americans who had

86Ibid.
established close rapport with the elitist tradition within the Awami League wanted the party to be rid of the leaders of the populist tradition which was responsible for its radical programme. 89

Another important factor which prohibited investment in East Pakistan was its primitive and inadequate communication facilities. Her entire Railway system was less than 1700 miles. It was estimated that any improvement and extension of Railways to cover other parts of the Province would cost nearly Rs.70 crores. 90

Again, the 3000 miles of navigable rivers and their channels offered a partial solution to the transport problem. The Government spent Rs.8 crores for dredging navigable channels, development of inland ports, improvement in terminal facilities etc. The Awami League Government established an autonomous organisation known as Inland Water Transport Authority for solving the inland water transport problem. However, an effective reorganisation of inland navigation would demand an outlay of more than Rs.100 crores. 91

Again, the Government also tried to solve the urbanisation problems especially in Dacca, the capital city and Chittagong, the port and commercial city, by setting up two autonomous organisations

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90 _Pakistan Times_, November 13, 1957.

91 _Pakistan Times_, November 13, 1957.
known as Dacca improvement Trust and Chittagong Development Authority. As a result, roads began to be built and old roads were widened and cleaned.  

The basis feature of the constitutional system that had evolved in Pakistan was the centralisation of powers in the hands of the Centre. The Provinces had very little financial powers, though most of the development activities had to be executed at this level. This was more pronounced in the case of East Pakistan. The most important problem the East Pakistan Government had to face since 1947 was the chronic deficits on revenue account. "The static provincial sources of revenue coupled with the inequitable distribution from the collection of the jute export duty, income-tax and the Central Excise duties is responsible for the chronic revenue deficit of the Provincial Government." Apart from the limited resources of the Province, the deficit on revenue account was also due to the heavy drainage


93 It should be noted that the distribution of financial resources had been changed to the advantage of the Central Government. The demands from East Pakistan for greater share or control of its own resources were ignored. Even under the 1956 constitution major sources of revenue were under the Central Government.


94 The accumulated deficit on the revenue account up to the end of the year 1955-56 were nearly 8.22 crores. This huge deficit was not caused, according to the Government by any ambitious Plan or programme of national building activities of Government. This was caused by the usual gap existing between the normal collection and the barest minimum requirement of the administrative machinery of the Government. Details see The Budget Estimate of the Government of East Pakistan for the year 1957-58, East Pakistan Assembly proceedings Vol.16, March 11,1957,pp.22-29.
of funds on account of food subsidy.\textsuperscript{95} The Chief
Minister of East Pakistan, Ataur Rahman Khan emphasised
the disparity between the two wings in the matter of
financial help including loans and grants from the
Central Government. According to him, up to 1956-57
revenue receipts from East Pakistan had been over 227
crores and Central expenditure in East Pakistan had been
only 63 crores whereas revenues from West Pakistan had
been 811 crores against the expenditure of 1005 crores,
for defence, in East Pakistan the expenditure had been
18 crores whereas in West Pakistan the expenditure over
the same period had been 480 crores. He further stated
that up to 1958-59 whereas East Pakistan received 26.52
crores grant, West Pakistan received 52.58 crores. In
respect of loans also the Province was not treated fairly
upto the year 1957-58, while West Pakistan got 94.23
crores on development, East Pakistan's share was 45.77
crores only.\textsuperscript{96} The Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan
disclosed that permit for 18 new industries was given
but the Central Government did not give sanction for the
purchase of machinery for them.\textsuperscript{97} The East Pakistan
Government failed in its efforts to get financial assist-
ance from the Centre to tide over problems created by
drought and floods.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{95}East Pakistan 1957-58, "One Year of Progress"
Pakistan Observer, August 14, 1958.
\textsuperscript{96}See the full text of the statement of the Chief
Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan, Pakistan Observer, June 5, 1958.
\textsuperscript{97}Pakistan Observer, May 22, 1958.
\textsuperscript{98}The Statesman, September 10, 1958.
Moreover, the National Finance Commission provided under the constitution which was entrusted with the task of making suitable recommendation as to the distribution between the centre and the provinces of net proceeds of some important taxes, such as, export duties on jute and cotton, taxes on income and on sale and purchases and any other specified tax, was not appointed. The Railways, which were given to the Province under the constitution had not been transferred. The Awami League Government demanded the transfer of the sources of revenue such as sales tax and taxes on jute etc. and all provincial subjects to East Pakistan. It should also be noted that though certain industries were given to the Provinces, the control over the revenue there from was still with the Centre. The Province could not over-come its financial difficulties, according to Ataur Rahman Khan, unless revenue and other subjects were transferred to it. He said, "we cannot keep going to the Centre every year with

101 Morning News, February 22, 1958, and Pakistan Observer, March 1, 1958. The Awami League Government was criticised in the Provincial Assembly by the opposition for its failure to get the sales tax, jute tax, etc. under the control of the Province. See East Pakistan Assembly Proceedings, Vol.18, 30 March 1958, p.39.
102 Pakistan Observer, March 1, 1958. The Provincial Government did not have any control over the Tea Plantations, 91 per cent of it were with the British who took away annually about 8 crores from East Pakistan. East Pakistan Awami Leage proceedings Vol.18, March 18, 1958, p.39.
a begging bowl for assistance to keep the provincial budget balanced.\textsuperscript{103} With the limited resources at its disposal, the provincial Government could not ameliorate the condition of the people unless necessary help and cooperation were received from the Central Government. But the attitude of the Centre towards Eastern Wing according to Ataur Rahman Khan, was hostile and desired to shatter East Pakistan economy.\textsuperscript{104} The Awami League Government, therefore, reiterated the importance of regional autonomy for East Pakistan for progress and prosperity.\textsuperscript{105} The provincial Finance Minister, Manoranjan Dhar, made out a strong case for financial autonomy for the Province.\textsuperscript{106}

Corruption

The Awami League promised to abolish the top heavy administrative system and to root out corruption.\textsuperscript{107}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{103} Pakistan Observer, March 1, 1958.
\item\textsuperscript{104} The Statesman, September 10, 1958.
\item\textsuperscript{105} Pakistan Observer, May 18, 1958.
\item\textsuperscript{106} During the year 1956-57, the total income derived by the Centre from East Pakistan was Rs.113,9387000 and the total expenditure there was only Rs.52,1861000. Details see East Pakistan Assembly Proceedings, Vol. 18, March 71, 1958, pp.82-83.
\item\textsuperscript{107} Sheikh Mujibur Rahman General Secretary of the ruling Party and also Minister in charge of Anti-corruption Department said that corruption was the greatest of evils and was blocking the progress of the country. Everybody from top to bottom, according to him, was corrupt. Dawn, September 13, 1956.
\end{itemize}
An Anti-corruption Department, independent of the Police Department was set up. Legislation was enacted for this purpose. The Bureau of Anti-Corruption expanded its area of operation all over the Province, in the District and sub-divisions. An order was issued that corrupt officers should be sent to jail forth with law or no law, and if possible, flogged too. The Government however, failed not only to root out corruption but also to streamline the administrative machinery. Instead of rooting out corruption, the Awami League facilitated corruption on a large scale. This was due to the character of party members who had shown general susceptibility to corruption when the Party came to power. For them, Political Power was a means to enrich themselves.

The Awami League used administrative machinery for the benefit of its own partymen and the members of other ruling front partners. This was evident from the circular reported to have been issued by the Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan to his Cabinet colleagues and other concerned, i.e. the Party members deprecating such a tendency. Abdus Salam wrote:

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108 See the full text of Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan's broadcast on September 5, *Pakistan Observer*, September 6, 1957.

109 *Dawn*, 13 September 1956.

110 See the editorial of the *Pakistan Observer*, February 8, 1957.
"...Ever since they took office evidences began to accumulate tending to show their obsession with consolidation of political powers by exploiting every economic friction and imbalance, social and political maladjustments to their own purpose. Instead of building up a healthy political machinery they have constructed a monster of racketeering."\textsuperscript{111}

During its rule, political considerations and undisguised nepotism influenced the administration. The Government appointed about 40 MLAs belonging to the ruling Awami League as special Border officials at Public expenses to check smuggling on the border areas.\textsuperscript{112} Relief and food Committees, anti-corruption boards and Municipal and local boards were filled with the members of the Awami League.\textsuperscript{113} Licences and permits for exports and imports were freely issued to the ruling partymen. In a statement on August 27, 1957, Oli Ahad, Joint Secretary of East Pakistan National Awami Party said "Permits and licences are being mainly given these days to the relatives of Awami League ministers and selected supporters of Awami League in disregard to the claims of established firms of long standing."\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{111}Abdus Salam, "The Political Scene", Pakistan Observer, July 2, 1958.
\textsuperscript{112}B.D. Habibullah said in the Assembly. See East Pakistan Assembly proceedings, Vol.16, 15 March 1957, p.104.
\textsuperscript{113}Bogra Sub-division Awami League Working Committee even passed a resolution demanding that Awami Leaguers should be given preference by the Government in filling vacancies in the Provincial administration. See Pakistan Observer, January 2, 1957.
\textsuperscript{114}Pakistan Observer, August 28, 1957.

Nurul Amin alleged that among the agents appointed by the jute Marketing Corporation for lifting jute from the five mile border belt were the relatives of Awami League minister and leaders. Quoted from a Dacca Bengali Daily the "Sangbad" Details see Morning News, October 7, 1957.
Applicants affiliation with the ruling party was the main criteria adopted by the Government in issuing licence to 51 applicants out of over 8000 for new small-scale industries. A permit for establishing a modern soap making factory in East Pakistan was given through the intervention of some Awami League big bosses to a Karachi Party ignoring the legitimate claims of well established soap manufacturers of Dacca. Several members in the East Pakistan Assembly charged the Awami League coalition Government with nepotism and favouratism in the matter of distributing licences for setting up industries. Abu Hossain Sarkar alleged that "Awami Leaguers are realizing high rates of subscription from shopkeepers and industrialists. Big industrialists give them lakhs of rupees as subscription who in their turn are making money by fleecing the poor people of this country. Even the established firms were threatened with the loss of their permits and licences if they did not support the ruling Awami League."

The magnitude of the corruption perpetuated by the Awami League became evident from the fact that

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115 Pakistan Observer, August 30, 1957.
119 Pakistan Observer, August 28, 1957.
virtually all the Awami League leaders got themselves allotted lands in Dhanmandi Residential area and built quite ostentatious houses. After leaving the Provincial cabinet, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took over as Chairman of the Tea Board which was created in order to accommodate him. As Chairman of the Tea Board he was entitled a free car, free quarter and a salary of ₹3,000 per month.

Political influence and pressure was exerted on the Government officials. And those officials who refused to serve the interests of the Party leaders were transferred. They also had to suffer many inconvenience in other forms. The result was that clean administration became an absurd proposition.

It was alleged that Awami League, as a ruling Party, followed the same undemocratic tactic which was followed by the Muslim League Government. It employed coercive measures and pressure tactics against their political opponents. The opposition Party meetings were

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120 B.D. Habibullah said in the Assembly: "Sir, it is known to you that in the city of Dacca some men have built houses which are better than the Government house and some have purchased properties worth lakhs of rupees."

East Pakistan Assembly Proceedings, Vol. 16, 2 April, 1957, p.78.

It should be noted that East Pakistan Bureau of Anti-corruption arrested on October 12, 1958, ex-ministers Abul Mansur Ahmed, Mohd Abdul Khaleque, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for allegedly acquiring vast properties disproportionate to their known sources of income.

See Pakistan Observer, October 13, 1958.

disturbed. The Pakistan Observer, in its editorial wrote:

"The Awami League coalition Governments have used the same weapons of violence, employed coercive measures and pressure tactics against their political opponents, suspended parliamentary democracy, clamped Section 144, extended the life of the Safety Act, tried to curb freedom of the press by demanding security deposit from newspapers, distributed official patronisation among their partymen and shown similar proneness to nepotism and favouritism."

After the split in the Ruling Awami League and the formation of National Awami Party by its dissidents led by Moulana Bhashani, the Provincial Government's position in the Assembly became shaky. In fact, the National Awami Party posed a threat to the Awami League Government. With a view to strengthen its position, the Awami League made

122 In the Provincial Assembly, Mahamud Ali said: "Sir, the ruling Party took upon themselves the task of breaking the law. They wanted to take the law into their own hand, they wanted to become like the storm troopers of Nazi Germany, they wanted to adopt the hooliganism of Mussolini, they wanted to suppress all opposition in the country by force."


123 The Pakistan Observer, September 6, 1957.

All see the Statement of Yar Mohd Khan, MPA and Vice-President of National Awami Party.

Pakistan Observer, August 26, 1957. The Awami League Government served an order on the publisher and printer of the opposition Bengali daily "Sangbad" to deposit security to the amount of Rs.1000 under sub-section 3 of Section 7 of the Press (Emergency Power) Act, 1931 for publishing the news related to some starvation deaths alleged to have occurred in Sylhet.

efforts to form an alliance with the Krishak Sramik Party. But the talks between Awami League and Krishak Sramik Party led by Azizul Huq ended in failure. Apart from the dwindling strength of the Awami League coalition Government there was also power struggle within the Awami League between the Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan and General Secretary, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman claimed that the Awami League Party, being the parent body had the right and power to dictate policy, even individual administrative acts to the ministry i.e. the Chief Minister. In other words, he wanted to

Krishak Sramik Party had 64 members in the Provincial Assembly and 7 members in the National. But it should be noted that there were two faction within the Krishak Sramik Party, one led by Sayyid Azizul Huq supporting a coalition with the Awami League and another headed by Hamidul Huq Choudhury and Abu Hossain Sarkar opposing it. It was reported that the Azizul Huq group did not enjoy the support of more than 25 members. Similarly the Awami League too was divided on this issue. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his group opposed coalition with Krishak Sramik Party on the ground that it was responsible for breaking up the United Front. The other group in the Awami League led by Suhrawardy Ataur Rahman Khan and others wanted coalition with the dissident Krishak Sramik Party men.

Details see Dawn, April 20, 1957. Also Pakistan Observer, September 10 and 13, 1957.

The talks failed mainly because the Krishan sramik Party leaders who were conducting it did not command a majority in their own party and despite that were placing a high price for their cooperation. The Awami League leader, H.S. Suhrawardy said that Krishak Sramik Party wanted the replacement of Ataur Rahman Khan as Chief Minister by one from the Krishak Sramik Party. Secondly, a good number of Awami Leaguers had reacted unfavourably to these negotiations. And, thirdly congress and minority parties opposed Awami League's move to form a coalition with Sayyid Azizul Huq and his group of Krishak Sramik Partymen.

establish the Supremacy of the organisation over the Cabinet. It was also reported that Sheikh wanted to oust Ataur Rahman Khan and to become Chief Minister himself.\textsuperscript{127} Ataur Rahman Khan, on the other hand, was strongly opposed to interference in his administration by Partymen.\textsuperscript{128} Here, it is significant to note that Ataur Rahman Khan had hardly any personal following within the Party before he became Chief Minister and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's influence among the Awami League membership was palpable. But Ataur Rahman Khan because he was the Chief Minister, certainly commanded an influence and prestige within the Party that rivalled Sheikh's. Besides, there was also the question of a clash of temperaments. The Pakistan Observer wrote:

"The young General Secretary of the Party is impulsive, and has been trained in the School of agitation politics. By contrast, Ataur Rahman Khan, an experienced lawyer, must be considered as a sober and stolid person, and while on occasion the Chief Minister would, like to proceed with caution in a judicious spirit, the young Sheikh would like to act first and think afterwards."\textsuperscript{129}

Characteristic of his temperament, Sheikh threatened to burn down the 'Ittefaque' office to prevent Manik Mian

\textsuperscript{127} Jyoti Sen Gupta, \textit{Eclipse of East Pakistan}, Op.cit. p.379. Also Interview with Abdul Hamid Choudhury, who was organising Secretary and later during 1957-58 was acting General Secretary of the East Pakistan Awami League on 26 April 1974.


\textsuperscript{129} Pakistan Observer, November 8, 1957.
from doing propaganda in his paper in favour of the Ataur Rahman group. He had demanded the resignation of two Awami League ministers - Khairat Hussain and Abdur Rahman Khan and of the political Secretary to the Chief Minister, Zamiruddin Ahmad. When the Chief Minister resisted the demand Sheikh tendered resignation from the post of General Secretary of the Party. It should be noted that after Moulana Bhashani's departure it was only Sheikh who could keep the Party United. His resignation as General Secretary of the party, therefore, could have serious repercussions on its future. In its meeting on April 5, 1958, the majority of the provincial Working Committee members expressed themselves in favour of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as they considered him irreplaceable as General Secretary. But the Working Committee could not come to any decision with regard to his resignation. However, on April 6, the Party Working Committee, with the help of Suhrawardy, who attended it, evolved a compromise formula and unanimously requested Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to withdraw his resignation which he did.

As a result of this formula Zamiruddin Ahmad, Political Secretary to the Chief Minister, was replaced

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132 East Pakistan Awami League President, Moulana A.R. Tarkabagish on April 2, confirmed this. See Pakistan Observer, April 3, 1958.
133 Pakistan Observer, April 6, 1958.
134 Ibid., April 7, 1958.
by a member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA). As regards his other demands the matter had been left to Suhrawardy who would decide about the allegation against the two ministers.  

Besides this, the Provincial Government agreed with the Central Government to call in the Army to help civilian administration to stop smuggling about 1700 miles of East Pakistan's border with India. It should be noted that food, imported goods, and capital worth 800 million rupees were being drained away from East Pakistan's economy. In December 1957, armed with wide powers, the army launched its famous "operation close door". A number of Hindu members of the Assembly vehemently criticised the Government against this policy as it meant that a number of Hindu families who were engaged in sending their capital and valuables out of Pakistan, would be adversely affected. The Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan, not only defended the action but also declared that all those who criticised the army were the "enemies of Pakistan." As a result, on March 21, 1958, 22 member (11 Awami League and 11 Scheduled Caste Federation) of the ruling coalition Party withdrew their support from

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138 Pakistan Observer, April 6, 1958.
Meanwhile, the two factions of the Krishak Sramik Party united under the parliamentary leadership of the Abu Hossain Sarkar. Soon the opposition parties like the Krishak Sramik Party, the Nizem-i-Islam and Muslim League groups worked out a strategy to overthrow the Awami League Government and to capture power. This could be achieved only with the support of National Awami Party for which they even agreed to offer the Chief Ministership to the leader of that Party. The National Awami Party, since its inception, had been playing a crucial role in the provincial Legislature. With 29 members it, in fact, held the balance of power in the provincial legislature. Initially, National Awami Party had decided to support the Awami League Government and had negotiated with it to formulate a minimum programme to work in alliance.

139 Pakistan Observer, March 22, 1958.
140 See Pakistan Times, March 27, 1958.
141 The National Awami Party held talks with the Awami League coalition Government on the basis of the following programme:

1. to hold general election according to schedule on the principle of joint electorate system;
2. to root out corruption and set up a commission to go into the undue accumulated wealth of officials and non-officials;
3. to ensure full civil liberty and to release all the political prisoners and to withdraw cases against them;
4. abolition of certificate system and to withdraw essential certificate Bills;
5. to protect the interests of Ziratia tenants in border areas;
6. to bring down prices of essential commodities;
7. to realise provincial autonomy according to 21-Point Programme;
8. to set up a district advisory committee to set the development works in the district;
9. to reinstate retrenched trade union workers.

In fact, on March 22, 1958, the National Awami Party sustained the Government by abstaining from voting in the first trial of strength between the Government and the opposition and on March 30, its defeat was averted by their support. Similarly, in its meeting on March 24, the National Awami Party decided not to overthrow the Awami League coalition Government in the larger interest of the country and to function as an opposition party by supporting the Government in its good work and opposing its bad work. It also decided to remain neutral during votings against the Government. While deciding this course of action the Party had taken into consideration all the important factors. It was the considered opinion of the Party that every feasible alternative to an Awami League ministry would be far worse than the existing set up. Moreover, the overthrowing of the Awami League Government, according to the Party would either lead to the imposition of Article 193 or the constitutional Government composed of elements that were neither interested in early elections nor in a national programme of work.

Earlier on March 13, 1958, the Awami League coalition

142Ibid., These decisions were taken by the Party in spite of opposition from its President, Moulana Bhashani, who wanted to oust the Awami League Government as it violated the Party's policies and programmes.

143See Pakistan Times, March 27, 1958.
The Communist Party which was a distinct and small group in the Provincial Assembly was also opposed to toppling down the Government.
Government presented the budget to the provincial Assembly. But it failed to pass the budget and had merely been able to get a “vote on account” for three months. At the same time, National Awami Party, in order to gain time to press the Awami League to accept its programme, on March 30, 1958, moved that the Finance Bill be circulated to elicit public opinion on it by April 30. The Chief Minister, Ataur Rahman Khan, had to accept the motion to save his ministry. The acceptance of this motion was interpreted by the opposition as a vote of non-confidence in the Government. On March 30, Governor, Fazlul Huq, directed the Chief Minister to get a vote of confidence from the House the next day, the last day of the financial year and proceed on with the budget demands. But the Chief Minister, instead of complying with such a decision, asked the Governor to prorogue the Assembly. To this, the Governor replied that since they had already presented the budget to the House and there was full agenda up to April 16 and since they had withdrawn such an important measure as the Finance Bill for consideration as was originally scheduled and an analysis of the division list in the

145 Pakistan Observer, April 1, 1958.
147 Pakistan Observer, April 1, 1958.
Assembly, it was clear that the ministry had lost the confidence of the majority in the House and that in the circumstances, he had the constitutional right to decline the advice of the ministry for prorogation.\(^{148}\) The Governor asked for his resignation and when this was refused dismissed the cabinet and commissioned Abu Hussain Sarkar, the leader of the opposition to form a new Ministry on March 31.

By this action, the Governor not only defied the Centre's directive but also acted in complete disregard of normal democratic procedure. He also sought to install the leader of the Krishak Sramik Party as Chief Minister without even caring to make sure whether he enjoyed the confidence of the Provincial Assembly. There was no disguise about his partnership. While refusing to prorogue the Assembly at the request of Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan, he readily agreed to adjourn it to suit the convenience of his own nominee for Chief Ministership. The Central Government described Governor's action as unconstitutional.\(^{149}\) The Awami League was suspicious of the intentions of the Governor, Fazlul Huq, whose sympathies were clearly with the opposition led by Krishak Sramik Party. This was the reason why Awami coalition Government on March 30, 1958 asked the Central Government led by Feroz Khan Noon

\(^{148}\) The Pakistan Observer, April 1, 1958.

\(^{149}\) Ibid.
to remove the Governor. Accordingly the President, on the advice of the Prime Minister had removed the Governor and had appointed the then Chief Secretary, Hamid Ali, a Acting Governor, pending the arrival of a permanent incumbent. It was the fear that the Awami League would withdraw its support from the Feroz Khan Noon's cabinet which forced his Government to follow the dictates of the Awami League. The Acting Governor dismissed Abu Nossain Sarkar and reinstated Ataur Rahman Khan as the Chief Minister. With the full support of the National Awami Party, the Ataur Rahman Ministry obtained a vote of confidence of the Assembly. And the House, which met on April 3, was prorogued.

Meanwhile, the National Awami Party, fully conscious of the balancing role in the legislature, formulated a five-point programme as a basis for any future negotiations. They were: (1) early election on the basis of joint Electorate; (2) regional autonomy; (3) independent foreign policy; (4) implementation of remaining points of 21-points programme; and (5) dissolution of one unit in West Pakistan.

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150 Pakistan Observer, April 1, and 2, 1958.
151 The Awami League General Secretary, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, moved the motion of confidence on Ataur Rahman Khan Ministry. The Krishak Sramik Party and Muslirn League members of the opposition were absent for the House, while the Nizam-i-Islam and three members of the National Awami Party group opposed the resolution. Details see The Pakistan Observer, April 2, 1958.
152 The Hindu, June 26, 1958.
League negotiations failed mainly because of the latter's rejection of these points, particularly points relating to one unit and foreign policy.\textsuperscript{154} As a result, the Parliamentary Party of the National Awami Party directed its MLAs not to support the ministry.\textsuperscript{155} Ten members of the Congress Party and 5 members belonging to the Awami League withdrew support from the Government.\textsuperscript{156} On June 18, 1958, the Awami Coalition Government was defeated in the Assembly on a cut motion.\textsuperscript{157} The same day, the Ataur Rahman Khan's Ministry resigned.\textsuperscript{158} On June 20, Abu Hussain Sarkar, was sworn in as the Chief Minister. On the

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Hindustan Standard}, June 22, 1958.

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Pakistan Observer}, June 17, 1958.

\textsuperscript{156} In a letter to the Chief Minister, the Congress members accused the Awami Government of "planned distribution of patronage and unashamed favouritism, of deliberate weakenings of the administration, of replacement of neutral minded by obliging officials in many key posts... Our economic level has sunk so low.... Artisans, weavers, fishermen, are almost deprived of their means of livelihood. Government contracts, permits, licenses are practically reserved for those who label themselves as the Awami League Workers. Rapidly growing indiscipline and inefficiency in the lower levels, rampant corruption and persistent interference in internal administration have brought the administrative machinery on the verge of a breakdown."


\textsuperscript{157} National Awami Party members (19) who were present in the Assembly remained neutral.


\textit{Also see The Statesman (Calcutta)} June 30, 1958.

same day, a no-confidence motion against him was moved by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of the Awami League.\footnote{Morning News, June 21, 1958.} The next day, the National Awami Party Parliamentary Party reconsidered its earlier neutral stand and had decided to support the Awami League coalition party when the latter had agreed to try to fulfil the former five point programme.\footnote{Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Mohmud Ali, General Secretaries of Awami League and National Awami Party respectively in a joint statement on June 20 stated that they had considered the five points advanced by National Awami Party and arrived at an understanding to the mutual satisfaction on those five points. \textit{Morning News, Dacca, June 21, 1958.}} Thus, the Awami League for the sake of power, soon changed its earlier stand. This was sheer opportunism. On June 23, the three day old Krishak Sramik Party coalition Government led by Abu Hossain Sarkar was defeated by the Awami League with the support of the National Awami Party.\footnote{Details see \textit{Morning News, June 24, 1958.}} The Awami League had a majority of 14, but it was not allowed to form the ministry. On the recommendation of the Provincial Governor that any ministry formed either by the Awami League or the Krishak Sramik Party would not be stable, the Central Government, imposed Governor's Rule in the Province.\footnote{Morning News (Dacca) June 25, and 26, 1958.} H.S.Suhrawardy leader of the Awami League criticised the imposition of Section 193 rule on East Pakistan as a "step against democracy" and if this was not resisted a time would come...
when the authorities would not hesitate to declare a
state of emergency in the country.\textsuperscript{163} Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, General Secretary of the East Pakistan Awami League, criticised President Mirza who according to him wanted to delay the elections by playing the politicians belonging to parties other than the Awami League to his tune.\textsuperscript{164}

After the imposition of Governor's rule, the Political Parties started a campaign for the restoration of Parliamentary Government in East Pakistan. There was also the power struggle between the two main Parties - the Awami League and the Krishak Sramik Party, each party claims majority and demanding the formation of a ministry headed by its own leadership.\textsuperscript{165} However, the Governor's report to the Central Government put the Awami League strength at 152 and that of the Krishak Sramik Party at 146.\textsuperscript{166} Thus, an Awami coalition Government led by Ataur Rahman Khan was sworn in on August 25, 1958, when Governor's rule was lifted by the centre.\textsuperscript{167} On Sept. 20, 1958, when the Assembly met, the Government moved a motion of no-confidence in the speaker Mr. Abdul Hakim, mainly

\textsuperscript{163}Pakistan Observer, July 5, 1958.
\textsuperscript{164}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{165}See Dawn, July 5, 6, 8, 27, 1958.
\textsuperscript{167}The National Awami Party again supported the Awami League leadership because it wanted to keep the Krishak Sramik Party led coalition comprising of communal elements like the Muslim League and Nizam-e-Islam out of power in the interests of joint electorate, civil liberty and early general elections.

because the Government suspected that the speaker was supporting the opposition. The Speaker, while giving the ruling on the above motion, named several members of the Awami League for disorderly conduct. Thereupon the Legislative Assembly witnessed disgraceful scene of riot in which the speaker was assaulted and Government and opposition members attacked one another with chairs, microphone stands and other missiles. The Awami League retaliated by declaring the speaker 'insane' and demanding the appointment of a Committee of inquiry to determine his sanity.

On September 23, the Assembly again became the scene of physical violence in which the Deputy Speaker was so severely beaten by the members of the opposition that he died a few days later. Several MLAs were injured. On the orders of the Government the members of the opposition were removed from the House. The Government was thus able to have all its budget demands passed. The Awami League and the opposition parties showed utter disregard for democratic principles and processes. They adopted all unscrupulous means to remain in power. In their lust for power, they reduced parliamentary democracy to a farce.

168 Earlier the Govt., by a notification deprived the speaker of all his discretionary powers including the concerning no-confidence motion against him or the Deputy Speaker. Dawn, Sept. 18, 1958. Also see The Statesman, Sept. 21, 1958.
170 The Deputy Speaker, Shaid Ali, who was a member of the Awami League, ruled that the Govt. motion, saying that Abdul Hakim (the Speaker) was of unsound mind, had been carried.