CHAPTER V
After the 1954 election, the United Front ministry, with A.K. Fazlul Huq as Chief Minister, was formed on April 3, 1954. This was the first non-Muslim League ministry in Pakistan. On April 2, Fazlul Huq announced that the first measures of his Government would be to make Bengali one of the State Languages of Pakistan; to release all political prisoners in the Province; to ensure economic price to the primary jute grower for his crop and to revoke the visa system for travel between East Pakistan and India. These were some of the items of the 21-Point Programme to which the United Front was committed to. For the 21-Point Programme, the United Front leadership would have to show great imagination, courage and unflinching devotion to the ideals of the people. It also needed the help and co-operation of the Central Government. More important was unity in the United Front, failing which the opponents' view that the Front was an "opportunistic combination of heterogeneous elements," would be proved. Moreover, the people of

---

1As per the pre-election commitment the United Front Parliamentary Party in its first meeting on April 2, unanimously elected Fazlul Huq as its leader. The total strength of United Front rose to 222 with 8 of the 12 independents joining it. The meeting, presided over by Moulana Bhashani, was attended by all members except one. *Dawn*, April 3, 1954.

2Ibid.

3*Pakistan Times*, May 16, 1954.
Pakistan, both in the East and West entertained great expectation from the United Front. Pakistan Times, in an editorial wrote: "Every forward stride taken by the people of East Pakistan under the United Front will add to the strength of the democratic forces in the west."  

The signs of disunity in the United Front were, however, seen the very day Huq assumed office on the question of the composition of the Ministry and the choice of Ministers. The Cabinet announced by Huq comprised of representatives from Krishak Sramik Party and Nizame-I-Islam Party. Awami League and Ganatantri Dal were excluded from it. This, according to Awami League, was a betrayal for there was an understanding that there would be equal and fair representation of the Awami League in the Cabinet which was a major partner in the United Front. Both the Awami League and the Ganatantri Dal expressed their dissatisfaction over the choice of the Cabinet. They even threatened to boycott the Cabinet in protest against the inclusion of Ashrafuddin Choudhury, a NIP nominee in it. Awami League accused

---

4 Pakistan Times, April 5, 1954.
5 Dawn, March 26, 1954. Also See, Ataur Rahman Khan, Two Years of Ministership (an autobiography in Bengali), Dacca, 1969, p.83.
6 Interview with Zahiruddin. The day Huq formed the Government, the General Secretary of the Awami League, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, mobilized the University students and demonstrated against the non-inclusion of Awami League. Interview with Abdus Salam, former Editor of Pakistan Observer and Krishak Sramik Party member of the 1954 Assembly, on 11 July 1974.
Huq of favouratism in the selection of ministers.\textsuperscript{6} It was the infighting between the Krishak Sramik Party and the Awami League that delayed the formation of a fullfledged Council of Ministers. Prominent leaders of the United Front – Huq, Suhrawardy and Bhashani – failed to resolve this issue.\textsuperscript{9} Fazlul Huq wanted to include in the Cabinet more of his nominees and at the same time refused to accept nominees of other parties.\textsuperscript{10} Further, it was stated that the Chief Minister wanted to take a particular man from his own party as a Minister, a move strongly opposed by other parties.\textsuperscript{11} As a countermove, Suhrawardy suggested his own candidate for inclusion in the Cabinet.\textsuperscript{12} Suhrawardy held several meetings with Fazlul Huq regarding the expansion of the ministry.\textsuperscript{13} The main reason why these efforts failed, according to Huq, was his refusal to give a large slice of the ministry to the Awami League and its "Young


\textsuperscript{10} Morning News, April 6, 1954.

\textsuperscript{11} Pakistan Times, May 6, 1954. It was Azizul Huq whom Fazlul Huq wanted to take in the Cabinet.

\textsuperscript{12} Party's General Secretary, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was his candidate. It should be noted that neither Suhrawardy nor Fazlul Huq wanted him to be a minister. Interview with Zuhur Hussain Choudhury, a prominent journalist of Bangladesh. Also see, K.A. Kamal, Op.cit. p.36. Details see Abul Mansur Ahmad, 50 Years of Politics, Op.cit., pp.261-264.

\textsuperscript{13} See Morning News, April 9, 12, 14, 17, 1954.
inexperienced and extremist" members. Suhrawardy did not compel Fazlul Huq to take more Awami League ministers in the Cabinet because this may weaken the Unity of the United Front. It would be difficult for Suhrawardy to achieve his objective of further weakening the Muslim League in West Pakistan. With a view to dispel the impression of a rift in the United Front, Suhrawardy accused the provincial Governor, Choudhury Khaliquzzaman, of manoeuvring the delay of the completion of the Cabinet. But Fazlul Huq, in a rejoinder exonerated the Governor and held Suhrawardy responsible for the delay.

Meanwhile, there were serious differences between the radicals and conservatives in the United Front the Ganatantri Dal and Nizame-I-Islam. In this conflict, the Ganantri Dal was supported by the Awami League and the NIP had the implicit support of the Krishak Sramik Party. It is significant to note that Fazlul Huq being hostile to communism, decided not to include any communist in his cabinet. This policy was reflected in the Statement of NIP minister, Ashrafuddin Choudhury.

---

16 See Morning News, April 23, 1954.
17 Ibid.
who, said that the Communists had become "quite a problem" in East Pakistan and that the new Government would keep a close watch over them. In an obvious reference to Ganatantri Dal, the minister assured the West Pakistani businessmen that no communist or communist Party was associated with the United Front which, he claimed, comprised of only Awami League, Krishak Sramik Party and NIP. This was refuted by the General Secretary of the Ganatantri Dal, Mahmud Ali, who claimed that his party, which first mooted the idea of United Front, was a component part of it.

Besides, there is reason to believe that Fazlul Huq was used as a pawn by the Muslim League Government at the Centre whose main objective was to keep themselves in power by splitting the United Front so that there would be no united stand by them on issues like dissolution of the National Assembly and scrapping of the military alliances. They thus made earnest efforts to win over the extreme right elements in the United Front. This was also the American strategy because the Awami League

---

21 Ibid., pp.130-31. However, the Working Committee of the Ganatantri Dal had decided to support the Huq's Cabinet in the Assembly as long as it implemented the 21-Point Programme. _Dawn_, April 3, 1954.
22 See his statement, _Dawn_, April 14, 1954.
and Ganatantri Dal were openly opposed to the western military alliance. Even Fazlul Huq's own Partymen believed that there was some understanding between "a few of our stalwarts and Mr. Mohd Ali of Bogra on the eve of the General election." And the understanding was that once elected, the Krishak Sramik, Nizame-I-Islam groups in coalition with the Muslim League and to the exclusion of Awami League and other parties would form the Government in East Bengal. Forgetting the fact that the United Front was essentially against the Muslim League, Fazlul Huq declared in Karachi "our conflict with Muslim League ended." He refused to demand the dissolution of the constituent Assembly or the resignation of its Muslim League members from East Bengal. This demand was also opposed by the Nizam-I-Islam. Thus, the Central Government was successful in creating dissensions among the partners of the United Front.

---

24 Pakistan Times, May 6, 1954.
26 Ibid., This was also the reason why Huq repeatedly rejected the co-operation of Suhrawardy and his Awami League.
29 The Nizame-I-Islam, in its conference held in Dacca, called upon the Assembly to hurry up with the making of a constitution. It is significant that the conference was inaugurated by Mr. Fazlul Huq. See Pakistan Times, May 6, 1954.
Fazlul Huq's reported statements in Calcutta had created some controversy in Pakistan. The New York Times quoted him as saying: "Independence will be one of the first things to be taken up by ministry." In his reply, Huq said that "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." But this had created strong resentment among the people. Finding his position weak and also because of mounting pressure from within the United Front, Fazlul Huq ultimately included some Awami Leaguers in his cabinet on May 13, 1954. The main reason why Awami League joined the Huq cabinet was to preserve the unity of the United Front for implementing the 21-Points and also to fight

---

30 He said that separation of West and East Pakistan by more than 1000 miles of India and several cultural and economic points of disagreement between the two zones were the reasons for the 42 million Bengalis wanting their freedom. The New York Times, May 23, 1954.

31 Dawn, May 25, 1954. Also see his Statement to the Press clarifying his speech. Pakistan Observer, May 10, 1954. It was also alleged that Huq's statements in Calcutta were deliberately distorted by the Newspaper. See Oli Ahad, Pakistan Observer, May 29, 1954.


33 The party-wise break-up of Huq's 14 member cabinet was as follows: Krishak Sramik Party 7, East Pakistan Awami League 5 and NIP 2. Details see Pakistan Observer, May 14, 1954.
against the reactionary Muslim League. But on 15 May, serious riots broke out between the Bengali and the non-Bengali workers at Adamji Jute Mill, then largest in the world at Narayanganj, in which more than 400 persons were killed and over a thousand were injured.

The Central Government was looking for some excuse to topple the Provincial Government. They put the entire blame on the Communists and Bharat Hindus and Huq Government's failure to take precautionary measures against its recurrence. It was also interpreted by the Central Government as a conspiracy of the United Front to sabotage the industrial growth of East Bengal. During his talks in Karachi with Prime Minister, Mohammad Ali, Huq not only refused to take action against the Communists but also exonerated them. As against this the generally accepted view was that it was the outcome of the deep rooted conspiracy of the

---


35 Pakistan Observer, May 16, 1954. Also see D.N. Banerjee, East Pakistan, Op.cit., p.70. Earlier on 30 March 1954, riots occurred in the Government owned Karnaphuli paper Mill at Chandragona in Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is significant to note that both these riots synchronised with the swearing in and further expansion of the United Front Government.


37 The Times of India, June 30, 1954. But the Central Government never held any judiciary enquiry into the circumstances in which they occurred. The Muslim League itself could not disown responsibility for allowing the tensions between the Bengalis and non-Bengalis to grow during its rule.

mill management, some Government officials and defeated Muslim Leaguers in order to discredit the United Front Government and also to create obstacles in its smooth working. Suhrawardy alleged that the Newspapers in West Pakistan carried on a crusade against the United Front and had deliberately misconstrued and maligned the Party and its leaders and who had also carried on the most sinister kind of vendetta against the ministers of East Pakistan. There were demands in West Pakistan for promulgating Section 92-A and martial law in East Bengal. Industrialists in East Bengal who financed the Muslim League in the last election felt nervous, though they had assurances of security from the Central Government. It was also feared that the disturbances in East Bengal would frighten off investors and upset Government developmental plans for the expansion of industry. The U.S. imperialists, especially after the signing of the US-Pakistan military aid in April 1954

39 Reactions of Awami League, Ganatantri Dal, Communist Party of Pakistan and various student associations in East Bengal.
See Pakistan Observer, May 16 and 19, 1954.
According to a well-known journalist, this conspiracy was hatched in the Morning News office in Karachi by Aziz Ahmad, Khwaja Noruddin, Proprietor of the Morning News and brother-in-law of Nurul Amin (settled in Karachi) and Currim, General Manager of Adamjee Jute Mills. Interview with Zuhur Hussain Choudhury.

40 Pakistan Times, June 6, 1954.


had taken active interest in the internal affairs of Pakistan and even advised the Central Government to dismiss the United Front Government. 44

It was in this background that Huq and members of his Cabinet had talks with Prime Minister and his colleagues at Karachi on the East Pakistan situation and also the future federal structure especially the relationship between the Centre and the Province.

The joint statement issued by Huq and his colleagues after the talks on May 29, 1954 would indicate the nature of the talk. According to them "a great deal of misunderstanding created against the United Front ministry of East Bengal in the West Pakistan Press and public opinion." They also stated "we want to make it clear once for all that we are true Pakistanis and stand for the unity and strength of Pakistan." On the question of federal structure, Huq reiterated the United Front's stand on regional autonomy which conceded three subjects -

44 The then American Ambassador in Pakistan, Mr. Hildreth, openly declared that there was no need of changing the Central Ministry as a result of East Bengal General Elections. Mohammad Ali Govt. at the centre failed to lodge a formal protest against it.

See General Secretary of East Pakistan National Awami Party, Haji Mohammad Danesh, Answer to Janab Ayub Khan (46, Kaptan Bazar, Arfan Press, Dacca), pp 7,15. Also see the joint statement of Oli Ahad, Publicity Secretary of the Awami League and three others, Pakistan Observer, May 29, 1954.


46 Ibid.
On the contrary, Prime Minister, Mohd Ali stated that the main reason for the breakdown of the talks was Huq's insistence that the ultimate objective of 21-Point Programme was "complete independence." They therefore, dubbed him as a traitor and dismissed his ministry on 30 May 1954.

The Central Government's action in dismissing the Huq Ministry which enjoyed the confidence of the legislature was arbitrary and undemocratic. This action was interpreted, particularly in East Bengal, as denial to East Bengal the right to self-government, and the right to select its own rulers. The United Front and the programme on which they fought the election had the full approval of East Bengal's people. Nor can it be said that the party had been given sufficient time to tackle the various problems with which it was confronted.

If the United Front had insisted on its programme especially regional autonomy and refused to compromise its principles inspite of the pressure from the Centre, it would show its responsiveness to public demand. It is admitted that the United Front also was not free from blame. They played double game. But this should not

---

48 Dawn, June 29, 1954.
50 Pakistan Times, June 1, 1954.
justify the dismissal of a Government which enjoyed
the confidence of the legislature and of the people.
The Centre's action simply accentuated bitterness,
antagonism and suspicion of the Bengalis towards the
Central Government. The real reason for the dismissal
of the Huq Government was the fear that League's hegemony
both in the Centre and in the Provinces would be jeopar-
dised Panjabi interests would be offended. For, it
should be noted that East Bengal on the basis of popula-
tion would have more seats in the Reconstituted Constituent
Assembly and thereby control the Central Government. Above
all, United Front's demands for a regional autonomy and
scrapping of Military aid and pacts with the USA were
an anathema to the Central Government.

There was hardly any opposition to the Central
Government's action from the United Front, though the
Central Government was apprehending a mass upsurge in
East Bengal. Even the decision to start a civil dis-
obedience movement and court arrest taken by 150 MLA's
of the United Front was dropped at the instance of Huq
who, partly because of his fear of drastic Governmental
action and partly because he contemplated some

51 Stanley Mason, "The Problem of East Pakistan",
52 Dawn, June 3, 1954.
53 The Central Cabinet and the Muslim League
Parliamentary Party discussed this for several times
on May 27, 1954.
compromise. The real reasons for the failure on the part of the United Front to organise resistance against the action of the Central Government were several. First the Leader of the United Front who was anxious to remain in power was for a compromise at the cost of cherished principles. Therefore he was opposed to any direction action. Second the United Front was a disunited Front. It was a conglomeration of disparate political groupings, bound together by one common objective of ousting the Muslim League from power. It was a movement and did not have solid organisation behind it. Therefore, it lacked organisational cohesion and capacity to launch a mass movement. Thirdly, the people were disgusted and disillusioned with the behaviour of the various units of the Front. Therefore the people were not prepared for any direct action. Finally, the leadership of the United Front was concentrated largely in the middle class. The Proletariat had no faith in it.

The United Front, after the dismissal of its Government simply floundered. The rift within it gradually widened and differences between its two major components - Awami League and Krishak Sramik Party - were fully


55 Interview with Zuhur Hussain Chowdhury.
exploited by the Central Government which tried to win over one or the other parties of the United Front by playing one against the other. The support of the United Front was crucial for the Central Government because it would provide its rule in East Bengal with a semblance of legitimacy.\textsuperscript{56} There was also power struggle within the establishment which also forced them to come to terms with the leaders of the United Front. The Governor General, Ghulam Mohammad, was a bureaucrat and had no political base. But he had the support of the Punjab group which controlled the levers of power in Pakistan. The Bengali group within the establishment was working against Ghulam Mohd because it was he who dismissed Khawaja Nazimuddin and his cabinet in April 1953. Since then, the Nazimuddin group was waiting for an opportunity to overthrow him.\textsuperscript{57} The Prime Minister, Mohd. Ali was of course loyal to Ghulam Mohd, but as President of the Muslim League, he had close link with Nazimuddin group. The strength of the Nazimuddin group lay in the constituent Assembly. Using their majority in the Constituent Assembly, the Nazimuddin group adopted a bill on September 21, 1954, which amended sections 9, 10, 10A, 10B and 17 of the Government of India Act of 1935 by which the Governor-General


was deprived of his power to dismiss his minister who would no longer hold office during his pleasure but would instead he vested in the office of the Prime Minister. This political victory of Nazimuddin group proved to be short-lived. The legislative challenge became ineffective mainly because of the fact that the power structure dominated by bureaucracy was well-entrenched in Pakistan. In a bid to remove the threat from Nazimuddin group, Ghulam Mohd. turned to Suhrawardy and his Awamis in East Bengal for support. It was through Mahmudul Huq Osmani, the General Secretary of Pakistan Awami League, that Ghulam Mohd tried to get Awami League's support. The talks between him and Ataur Rahman Khan, the leader of parliamentary group of Awami League and also senior vice-President of the East Pakistani Awami League resulted in some understanding by which the Awami League agreed to support Ghulam Mohd. Ataur Rahman Khan, addressing a press conference at Karachi stated that the Governor-General had power in law to dissolve the constituent Assembly. Earlier Suhrawardy, in a statement from Zurich demanded the dissolution of


constituent Assembly and the framing of a fresh constitution after new election by the present provincial legislature as electoral colleges. After assuring Ghulam Mohd of his support, Ataur Rahman went to Switzerland to discuss the matter with Suhrawardy who was convalescing in a hospital in Zurich. Ghulam Mohd promised that Suhrawardy would ultimately be made the Prime Minister of Pakistan, though to begin with he would have to join as a minister. Suhrawardy was also informed of the warning that if Ghulam Mohd was not supported in Bengal, he would hand over administration to the army. Naturally, the Awami League responded positively to such a gesture. This had strengthened the position of Ghulam Mohd who retaliated by dissolving the constituent Assembly on October 24, 1954. This action of the Governor-General was described as undemocratic, although it had been accepted by the people.

As a result of this, the Governor-General had

64 Ibid., p.117.
65 The Governor-General, Ghulam Mohd, also declared a State of emergency throughout Pakistan and ordered fresh election to the Constituent Assembly. Pakistan Observer, October 25, 1954.

It is true that the Constituent Assembly had long ago forfeited its democratic credentials. Its dissolution was demanded by all political parties in East Pakistan except the Muslim League whose representatives were in that body. It should have been dissolved at least immediately after the election in East Pakistan. When it attempted to curb the undemocratic and arbitrary powers of the Governor-General it was dissolved.
assumed dictatorial powers and the Government over which he presided was responsible to no representative body. The Hindu wrote:

"But the fact remains that the Federal legislature has ceased to exist and all its wide powers have been taken over by one person, namely, the Governor General himself. It is true that a cabinet is still there, but its only responsibility could be in the absence of a Legislature, to the Governor General himself. He may still purport to act on the advice of the ministry, but it is a ministry which has no popular backing in the shape of enjoying a majority in the legislature."

The Prime Minister, Mohd Ali, did not like the action of the Governor-General in dissolving the Constituent Assembly just at a time when it was about to finish its work. He also did not like Governor-General's overtures to Suhrawardy and his Awami League - because of the fear that once inducted into the Ministry, he would try to depose him as Prime Minister. It was

68 The Hindu, April 2, 1955.
69 While addressing the nation on April 1, 1954, Prime Minister, Mohd. Ali Said that the Constituent Assembly which was a sovereign body and had been elected for the specific task of framing constitution of the country, could not be dissolved nor could any of its members resign until that task had been accomplished, Morning News, April 12, 1954.
70 General Ayub Khan (Defence Minister) and General Mirza also opposed to Suhrawardy who if shared power, would take steps to release all those army generals who were convicted for the attempt to stage a corp against Liaquat Ali Khan's Government. This is known as the Rawalpindi conspiracy case in which Suhrawardy defended them during their trial.

this fear that brought Mohd. Ali closer to Fazlul Huq whom he called previously a traitor. Mohd. Ali assured Huq that he and his Krishak Sramik Party could get the power in the Province and share powers in the centre if he were willing to challenge the credentials of Suhrawardy and the Awami League as a representative of the people of Bengal. After the talks with Mohd Ali in Karachi, Huq declared that he had full confidence in him. Both the leaders of Bengal, thus, fell into the trap of the ruling clique whose main aim was to break the United Front by keeping the two major components of the United Front - Krishak Sramik Party and Awami League - apart in order to remain themselves in power. This is evident from the rival reception committees formed by the Awami League and Krishak Sramik Party in honour of the Governor-General, Ghulam Mohd's visit to East Pakistan and the way their leaders waited at the airport for hours to garland him.

After returning from Zurich, Suhrawardy held consultation with his Awami League supporters both from East Bengal and other provinces in West Pakistan who

73 The Reception Committee - one headed by Ataur Rahman Khan and the other by Huq - were later dissolved. It was decided that the United Front Party under the leadership of Huq would give the reception. Huq and Ata issued similar statement to this effect. Details see Pakistan Times, November 15, 1954. Also see Kamruddin Ahmad, Op.cit., p.120.
had given him full powers to determine Party's line of action. Ghulam Mohd and Mohd Ali carried on their separate discussions with the leaders of Bengal. Ghulam Mohd also had separate meetings with Huq and Suhrawardy. But at the same time, the relationship between Huq and Suhrawardy was so strained that they did not meet each other. During his talks with Governor-General, Ghulam Mohd, Suhrawardy made three conditions for his party's full co-operation with the regime. They were: (1) Parliamentary regime should be restored in East Bengal immediately; (2) a provisional constituent Assembly be set up elected present provincial Assemblies acting as electoral colleges and (3) a dead line be set for general elections. On acceptance of two of his demands by the Governor-General, Suhrawardy joined the Mohd Ali of Bogra's Cabinet on December 20, 1954, as Minister for Law, Parliamentary affairs and Elections. The main objective of Suhrawardy in joining cabinet was to take steps to frame constitution to establish democracy in the country by preventing military rule. The main criticism against him was that he

---

74 Pakistan Observer, December 16, 1954.
75 See Pakistan Observer, December 16, 17 and 18, 1954.
76 This Provisional Constituent Assembly should among other things lay down rules and procedure for fresh elections. Pakistan Observer, December 16, 1954.
77 His demand for the restoration of constitutional Government in East Bengal had not been accepted. Pakistan Observer, December 21, 1954.
Also see Pakistan Observer, December 21, 1954.
joined the Central Cabinet without the consent of the Awami League. But the calculation of Suhrawardy was different. He had come to the conclusion that the way to Prime Minister's house in Karachi did not lie in an organised people's movement but through cooperation with the powerful sections of the Muslim League organisation. The strategy of the ruling coterie became clear when, on the initiative of Prime Minister, Mohd. Ali, Abu Hussain Sarkar, a nominee of Fazlul Huq, joined the Central Cabinet on January 4. This was done without even consulting Suhrawardy who, therefore, felt that he was trapped by the ruling clique.

Meanwhile, the United Front Parliamentary Party could not hold its meetings partly because of the ban imposed by the Government and Partly because of the refusal on the part of Huq to do so. Awami League criticised Huq for not calling a meeting of the United Front Parliamentary Party. The ruling clique at the centre wanted the United Front to elect a new leader in place of Huq as a pre-condition for the restoration of constitutional Government in East Bengal. They felt that the United

---


Front would break down on the issue of succession of leadership to Huq.\footnote{Pakistan Observer, July 29, 1954.} As a result of Huq's repeated mistakes and continued hobnobbing with Mohd. Ali, the United Front Party with Awami League as one of its components had almost ceased to exist. Pakistan observer quoted an influential Awami League leader saying that the Awami League was determined to stand on its own foot and would not allow East Bengal to be let down by any disgraceful self-styled leader.\footnote{Pakistan Observer, Nov. 12, 1954.} A political observer rightly described the situation within the United Front at that time as follows:

"The fight between the Awami League groups led by Suhrawardy and the rest of the United Front Party has at last come in the open; the bickerings have now become open warfare. Every opportunity is taken advantage of to abuse each other. Every small incident or supposed move of the one is misrepresented by the other to discredit the opponent publicity."\footnote{A Political Observer, "Political Situation in East Bengal - A view", Pakistan Observer, January 9, 1955.}

It was in this background that the Awami League, through its units and workers, launched a campaign for removing Huq from the leadership of the United Front Party. Provincial Party Working Committee in a resolution passed in its meeting on February 15, 1955, supported the move made by a large number of members of the United Front Party for the same. It also sought the support of other parties for this move.\footnote{Pakistan Observer, February 16, 1955.} It was alleged that...
Prime Minister, Mohd Ali visited Dacca before the meeting with the aim of influencing the decisions of the Party in favour of Huq. The United Front Parliamentary Party, in its meeting on February 17, 1955, reiterated its faith in the leadership of Huq. This was a real set-back for the Awami League whose 29 members led by Abdus Salam Khan voted against the Party working Committee's decisions. While commenting on the United Front meeting, Abdus Salam wrote:

"It is a pity. Many of us who had entered politics for the first time through the grace of the United Front had hoped that we should combinedly usher in a period of healthy democratic conventions and principles. Neither the country nor the new entrants among the MLAs wanted the old wine of Muslim League power politics in the new bottle of the United Front...."  

According to Awami League, Mohd Ali secretly bribed many Assembly members saying that parliamentary Government would soon be established in East Bengal if they supported Huq. They were also promised ministerial positions in the Provincial Cabinet. See Annual report of General Secretary, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, East Pakistan Awami Muslim League Annual Council Conference, 1955, Op.cit., pp.19-20. 

In fact, there were simultaneous meetings presided over by Huq and the other by Moulana Tarkabagish. After the meeting, both the groups claimed majority support to their respective points of view. But the meeting was not held according to the recognised conventions and procedures. However, out of the total strength of 219 members of Party, 196 attended. 13 of them remained neutral. Of the rest, 111 members votes for the confidence resolution. Details see Pakistan Observer, Feb. 18, 21, 1955. 

All of them were later expelled by the Party's Working Committee. See Annual report of General Secretary Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, East Pakistan Awami Muslim League Annual Council meeting, 1955, Op.cit., p.20. 

The United Front was completely broken on April 22, when a meeting of that body decided to suspend Ataur Rahman Khan and Abul Mansur Ahmad, both Vice-Presidents of the Awami League and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, General Secretary of the Party. A resolution was also passed in the meeting severing all connections with Suhrawardy. This gave to the Central Government the necessary excuse to prolong its rule in East Bengal.

Meanwhile, the Central Government dominated by Punjab, ostensibly for administrative reasons, decided to integrate West Pakistan into one province and to devise a constitutional formula on the basis of parity and equal partnership of the two wings. Through concessions and safeguards, they managed to enlist the support of the

91 Details see Pakistan Observer, April 24, 1955.

It should be noted that unlike East Bengal, the West Pakistan consisted of Punjab, Sind and North West Frontier Province, each of them having an individuality of its own. The leaders of Punjab, in fact, had been advocating this for quite sometime, though indirectly. They felt that an integrated West Pakistan rather than a divided one would be an effective counterpoise to East Bengal. Punjab, being the largest of the Provinces in West Pakistan, would also be able to dominate it. But for the smaller States, it would mean the total obliteration of their identity and also political power in their provinces. Similarly, its objective was to deprive East Bengal of its position as a majority province in Pakistan.

small provinces in West Pakistan to this scheme. For East Bengal's support, the ruling clique again sought Suhrawardy's help who extended his support to one unit scheme and the formula of parity. Suhrawardy now set himself with the task of making the East Pakistan Awami League accept these principles. Initially, Moulana Bhashani and other leaders of the Party were unwilling to surrender the claim of the numerical superiority of the Province. But after persistent efforts Suhrawardy succeeded in persuading the party Working Committee to accept the Parity formula. It accepted this in the interest of friendship and co-operation with West Pakistan so that the integrity, stability and welfare of Pakistan

97 Related by Syed Allaf Hussain, Member of the Party Working Committee in 1955. Suhrawardy argued that regional autonomy was possible only if one wing would not be dominated by the other, and to achieve this object parity was an obvious and logical conclusion. In the framing of the constitution, agreement between various members and sections and groups and provinces and regions was most essential because a constitution approved by majority votes against the determined opposition of a minority could not be imposed upon the country. See Full Text of the Statement, Pakistan Observer, April 27, 1955.
as a whole might be promoted. It is significant to note that the Party accepted this principle not only in the National Assembly but also in industry, commerce, services, in other words, all fields of the state life.

Except in the composition of the Second National Assembly, this parity principle was not implemented.

After the dissolution of the first constituent Assembly, the Central Government decided to frame a constitution whose composition would be based on the principle of parity of representation between East and West Pakistan. Suhrawardy who was then Law Minister, was party to this decision. But both the East Pakistan Awami League and the United Front led by Huq initially opposed the proposal on the ground that all their legitimate demands including the restoration of Parliamentary Government in East Bengal were not conceded by the Central Government. The United Front led by Fazlul Huq even

---

99. Ibid., p. 22.
100. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman later regretted that like Suhrawardy and Fazlul Huq, he had also committed a blunder by accepting parity. Pakistan Observer, January 12, 1970.
102. Suhrawardy was severely criticised for this decision. According to the critics he had violated the mandate of the 1954 Election which was fought on the ground that no unrepresentative body like the old constituent Assembly was entitled to frame the constitution of the country; that the constitution should be framed not by the executive authority like the Governor-General but by a freshly elected constituent Assembly. Details see. A Citizen, "Will Mr. Suhrawardy please advise?", Pakistan Observer, April 20, 1955.
103. This also included the withdrawal of the ban on the entry into Pakistan of Moulana Bhashani, President of EPAL. See Pakistan Observer, April 18 and 20, 1955. Suhrawardy persuaded the Centre to permit Moulana to come back.
threatened to organise a country-wide movement for the realization of their demands. Moulana Bhashani, who was then in Calcutta, declined to go to Karachi to discuss issues in regard to the Constitutional convention with Suhrawardy. He, instead demanded that the Constituent Assembly be reconstituted. Suhrawardy, Iskander Mirza and Abu Hussain Sarkar, three Central Ministers, came to Dacca on April 19, to persuade the Awami League and the United Front led by Huq to participate in the convention. Suhrawardy even threatened to impose upon the people of East Pakistan military rule if the Awami League and United Front failed to accept the constitution framed by ordinance. The United Front led by Huq stuck to its position. Subsequently as a result of the deal with the Prime Minister, Mohd Ali, under which Parliamentary Government was restored in East Pakistan, the United Front agreed to accept it. The EPAL also began to change its earlier stand. Later, Awami League made four demands (1) The 21-Point Programme of the United Front party must be the basis of the

---

104 Pakistan Observer, April 21, 1955.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid., April 19, 1955.
107 Ibid., April 21, 1955.
108 The main objective of Mohd Ali was to strengthen his position in the New National Assembly to become P.M. and also to weaken Suhrawardy's position.
109 EPAL Working Committee authorised Ataur Rahman Khan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Yar Mohd Khan to discuss the matter with Moulana Bhashani who was in Calcutta at that time. A prominent Awami League leader said that "they cannot desert Mr. Suhrawardy." Pakistan Observer, April 22, 1955.
constitution, (2) restoration of Parliamentary Government in East Bengal, (3) release of all political prisoners and (4) joint electorate. The participation of Awami League in the constitutional convention would depend on the assurance from the Central Government. Suhrawardy accepted these demands. The East Pakistan Awami League after a joint meeting of the MLAs of the Awami League and the Working Committee of the Party, announced on April 27 its decision to participate in the constitutional convention.  

In the meantime, the Governor-General's efforts to frame a constitution by convention had to be dropped when the Federal Court opined that the constitution should be framed by the Constituent Assembly and that the Governor-General, by virtue of his powers under the Independence Act, 1947, had the power to summon a new Assembly. Thus, it was decided that the new Constituent Assembly would be formed on the same way as the first Constituent Assembly. The only novel feature in the structure of the Assembly was the principle of parity of representation between East and West Pakistan. The number of members of this Assembly was restricted to 80, each

110 The Pakistan Observer, April 28, 1955.

111 Moulana Bhashani said that this decision was taken not only to avoid chaos in the country but also to prevent the imposition of something worse than Section 97-A. The Pakistan Observer, April 28, 1955.

wing having 40 members who would be elected indirectly by the members of the Provincial legislatures by the method of proportional representation with the single transferable vote.  \[113\]

Accordingly, the election to the New Constituent Assembly held in June, 1955, brought about a radical change in its composition.  \[114\] The Muslim League lost its absolute majority which it enjoyed in the first Constituent Assembly. Still, it emerged as the single largest party in the new Constituent Assembly. It could get only one seat from East Bengal where it had only 10 members in the 309 member legislative Assembly.  \[115\] In fact, East Bengal brought about this change in the composition of the Assembly.

The Constituent Assembly members from East Bengal belonged mostly to the Awami League and the Krishak Sramik Party.  \[116\] This was a significant development which

---


\[114\] The party position in the Assembly was as follows:

- Muslim League - 25
- United Front - 16
- Awami League - 12
- Noon Group - 3
- Pakistan Congress - 4
- Scheduled Caste Federation - 3
- United Progressive Party - 2
- Independent Muslim - 1
- Others - 6


\[115\] Prime Minister, Mohd Ali, who was also President of the All Pakistan Muslim League, was the Muslim League Member.

\[116\] Names of Awami League members of the Constituent Assembly were: Suhrawardy, Ataur Rahman Khan, Abul Mansur Ahmed, Zahiruddin, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Nurur Rahman, Deldar Ahmad, Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish, Abdur Rahman Khan, Muzaffar Ahmad, Mostem Ali Molla and Abdul Khalique.
brought together for the first time the regional political parties and their leaders especially Huq and Suhrawardy into the National Political arena. But this changed situation was undoubtedly advantageous for the ruling clique at the centre. For, "in any manoeuvre or intrigue these parties could be played one against the other by alternating patronage and disfavour." 117

In the National Assembly no single party was in a position to command a majority to form the Government. As a result, the ruling clique started negotiations with different political groups especially from East Bengal. The possibility of a rapprochement between the United Front and Awami League was ruled out. 118 On 7 August, the Muslim League Parliamentary Party which was now dominated by Punjab, elected Choudhury Mohd Ali, formerly Secretary-General and Finance Minister as its leader. 119 Choudhury Md. Ali decided to form a Muslim League - Awami League coalition Government. 120 The Awami League put-forward five conditions. They were: (1) The Governor-General

---

118 See East Bengal Chief Minister, Abu Hossain Sarkar's statement on 1 June 30. Pakistan Observer, July 2, 1955.
119 Prime Minister, Mohd Ali resigned his office immediately after the election of the leader and later went to US as Ambassador. Pakistan Observer, August 8, 1955.
and the Prime Minister should not be from the same wing; (2) Parity in all respects; (3) Provision for regional autonomy; (4) acceptance of Bengali as a State Language; (5) joint electorate. \(^{121}\)

While discussions between the Muslim League and the Awami League were progressing, there was a sudden break down of talks. \(^{122}\) The main reason for the break down was the refusal of the Awami League to surrender Governor-Generalship and Prime-Ministership to West Pakistan and refusal to accept the principle that quantum of autonomy would be decided by the majority votes of the coalition after it was formed. \(^{123}\) But, according to Suhrawardy, the Muslim League refused him this high office mainly because of their fear that he would not tolerate corruption, nepotism, bribery and injustice. \(^{124}\)

Meanwhile, the United Front led by Huq agreed to form a coalition Government at the Centre with the Muslim League and to support its leader, Choudhury Mohd Ali as

---


\(^{122}\) See Suhrawardy's statement on August 26, Pakistan Observer, August 27, 1955.

\(^{123}\) See the statement issued by the 12 Awami League Members of the Constituent Assembly. Pakistan Observer, August 12, 1955.

According to a political Commentator, Suhrawardy had made only one condition while negotiating with Muslim League that he should be made the Prime Minister.


Prime Minister of Pakistan. Huq also could muster the support of all the nine Hindu members from East Pakistan. Apart from the tempting offer of Prime-ministership to Muslim League, it was the support of the Hindu members that suddenly changed the political balance in favour of the United Front vis-a-vis Awami League. They wanted only the exclusion of Awami League from the Government and regional autonomy for East Bengal in exchange for its support to parity and the one unit scheme. Since the Muslim League also wanted to keep Suharwardy out of the Cabinet, it accepted the United Front. The most important reason why the Muslim Leaguers did not accept Suharwardy as the Prime Minister of Pakistan was that the powerful section of the Muslim League in West Pakistan would not be willing to accept a position in which they would occupy a secondary position in the administration. Suharwardy had a will of his own but not Mohd Ali. Suharwardy would impose his will and monopolise all power for himself. The Muslim League suspected that Suharwardy's cooperation with it was just to become the Prime Minister. The League also feared that Suharwardy's Prime Ministership may lead to its complete annihilation in West Pakistan and increase in the strength of the Awami League. All these reasons

125Pakistan Observer, August 8, 1955.
126Pakistan Times, August 18, 1955.
led to the formation of the Muslim League–United Front coalition Government led by Choudhury Mohd Ali on 11 August 1955. Fazlul Huq, leader of the United Front, joined the Md Ali Cabinet as minister for Interior. Awami League moved into the opposition with Suhrawardy as its leader. Suhrawardy accused the Muslim League of "usurping power" by grabbing the two offices of the Governor-General and the Prime Minister which was a violation of the convention that the two offices should not be held by persons from the same wing.

The Muslim League–United Front coalition Government gave the country a constitution which was adopted on the 23 March 1956. Earlier, the attempt to bring about an East-West agreement on some controversial issues resulted in the signing of the Murree Pact in 1955 by the Muslim League, the Awami League and the United Front. The leaders of East and West Pakistan according to the pact, agreed on five fundamentals which should be the basis of the constitution. These were: (1) full regional autonomy; (2) parity between two wings in all respects;

127 On August 7, Iskander Mirza became the acting Governor-General in place of Ghulam Mohd who had gone on leave. Mirza supported the Muslim League–United Front coalition Government on the condition that he would be made the first President of Pakistan under the new constitution.


128 Pakistan Observer, August 27, 1955. On this ground, Awami League even offered its support to Huq to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan Suhrawardy also appealed to Huq not to surrender to the Muslim League and to join hands with the Awami League so that they could negotiate with the Muslim League from a position of strength.

The draft constitution presented on January 8, 1956, by the Constituent Assembly, was however, strongly criticised by the Awami League for it blatantly violated the 21-Point Programme especially regional autonomy, Bengali as State language and joint electorate. As a result, a last effort between the United Front and the Awami League was made to explore the possibility of arriving at an agreed formula in the matter of amendments of the draft constitution. During the talks, Awami League made it clear that this unity should have nothing to do with the Ministry, either at the centre or at the province and that the party would make any sacrifice to save democracy in Pakistan in general and the interests of East Pakistan in particular. Provincial Party President, Moulana Bhashani, blamed the United Front leaders - Huq and Sarkar - for the failure of the unity talk.

---


130 It opposed the inclusion of the following subject in the Federal list: trade and commerce, posts and telegraphs; Industries, foreign exchange, excise duty, sales tax and purchase tax. Awami League also alleged that no specific provision had been made to allocate revenues, foreign exchange and foreign aids on the basis of parity between the two wings of Pakistan. See Pakistan Observer, January 11 and 17, 1956.

131 The Hindustan Times, January 30, 1956.

132 Details see Moulana Bhashani’s statement on February 7, 1956, Dawn, February 8, 1956.
organised a powerful campaign including demonstration, public meetings, a 'Resistance Day' strike in East Pakistan against the Draft Constitution. Moulana Bhashani, President of East Pakistan Awami League, was reported to have threatened even secession. Suhrawardy proposed to the Government a round table conference to hammer out an agreed constitution. When this was ignored, Awami League led by Suhrawardy walked out and did not sign the constitution.

Meanwhile, with the restoration of Parliamentary Government in East Bengal, Abu Hossain Sarkar, a nominee of Huq, formed the second United Front Government on June 6, 1955 initially with representation from the Krishak Party, the breakway group of Awami League and Nizam-e-Islam.

134 Ibid., pp.98-99.
136 See P.M. Mohd Ali of Bogra's statement, Pakistan Observer, June 4, 1955. Also See Pakistan Observer, June 7,1955. Abu Hossain Sarkar was not elected by the United Front Party as its leader but chosen by Huq. The restoration of Parliamentary Government was the product of a deal between Prime Minister, Mohd Ali and Huq by which the United Front minus Awami League would be allowed to form a Government in exchange for its support to Mohd. Ali's candidature in the election to the National Assembly form East Bengal. This was done at a time when both the Governor-General, Ghulam Mohd and Suhrawardy, leader of Awami League, were out of the country. Again, the Governor of East Bengal, Shahabuddin, resigned in protest, for he was not consulted in this matter by the Prime Minister, Mohd. Ali.

The only political organisation within the United Front Party left unrepresented in the skeleton cabinet was the Ganatantri Dal. The Awami League had already severed its connection with the United Front. The ruling alliance also managed to obtain the support of the minority parties like Congress, Scheduled Castes Federation and the United Progressive Parliamentary Party without which the Sarkar Ministry could not have commanded a parliamentary majority to form the Government. Naturally they got representation in the Ministry.

However, the United Front Ministry had certain obvious disadvantages. Firstly, it was only a section of the original United Front which defeated the Muslim League under the leadership of Huq, Bhashani and Suhrawardy. The Awami League, its major component, had completely dissociated from it. Thus, it was deprived of Awami League's mass support and also the popularity of its leaders like Bhashani and Suhrawardy. In fact, the ruling section of the United Front had to face a formidable challenge from the Awami League which had moved into opposition. Secondly, it did not have the services of its able and experienced leader, Fazlul Huq who decided to play a role at the centre. The Chief Minister, Abu Hussain Sarkar, was no comparison.

\[137\] It is stated that Huq signed an agreement with the minorities parties promising them joint electorate and a secular and democratic constitution. See Jyoti Sen Gupta, History of Freedom Movement in Bangla Desh, Op. cit., pp.72-75. Also see Hindustan Times, Feb. 17, 1956.
to him. He possessed neither the attributes of a
dynamic leader nor the ability of an administrator. 138
Finally, the Sarkar Ministry had to face a powerful
Punjabi dominated bureaucracy which had tasted power,
unfettered by ministerial control, during the 92-A rule.
Naturally, the support and co-operation it received from
the bureaucracy was not quite encouraging.

The main task of the United Front Government was
to release political prisoners and to implement the 21-
Point Programme "as far as practicable."139 For realising
this objective, it was imperative on the part of the
United Front to show cohesion and team work within the
party as well as within the Cabinet. But this was totally
absent in its functioning. Pakistan Observer in an
editorial entitled "pursuit for power" wrote that the
United Front Government had failed "to work as a team or
as a Government with a coherent stable and strong policy
of its own."140 After withdrawing their support from the
ministry, 29 members of the Assembly and 5 former ministers
in a statement, criticised the Government on the same
ground.141 They also stated, "with the result that the

139 See Chief Minister, Sarkar's statement, Pakistan Observer, June 7, 1955.
141 Ibid., July 14, 1956.
ministers, Parliamentary office-bearers and MLAs carried little weight with the officers. This had brought the administration of the Province to a very low ebb. 142

Again, the failure of the Government to ensure unity in its functioning was also due to the undemocratic nature of taking decisions within the ruling United Front. It was alleged that the major policy decisions were taken by Sarkar and his coterie without taking the party into confidence. 143

The United Front ministry had no tangible achievements to its credit. Even the measures taken by the Government - release of political prisoners, writing off revenue to the tune of crores, increase of public expenditure and the appointment of a commission to consider the nationalisation of jute - were aimed at embarrassing the next Government. 144 It had done nothing to implement the important items of the 21-Point Programme. 145

142 Pakistan Observer, July 14, 1956.
143 For instance, policy-decision on development, Jute, Education and the landing over of the food administration to the army etc. were taken without reference to the party. See the statement of 29 members of the Assembly including 5 former Ministers, Pakistan Observer, July 14, 1956.
144 Dr M.A. Choudhuri, Government and Politics in Pakistan, Op. cit., p.238. Also see Report on the Constitution Commission,(Pakistan, 1961), p.11. It should be noted that all these decisions were taken by the ministry on August 28, just two days before its resignation. Pakistan Observer, August 29, 1956.
Ministry failed to take steps to avert famine by solving the shortage of food grains. Besides, during the period the Government had flouted the provisions of the constitution and also the established convention and practices of Parliamentary democracy.

The support of the Minority Parties was crucial for the survival of the United Front Government. As stated earlier, they supported the Government on the basis of their agreement with Huq. Here it is important to note that the parties or groups that supported the United Front ministry differed with one another with respect to the constitutional proposals, electorates and the Islamic character of the State. The Chief Minister, Sarkar, wanted the Central Government to accept the joint electorate as it was supported by majority of the United Front members. As an alternative, Sarkar even suggested that if the coalition Party was unable to make up its mind the question should be left to the Provincial legislature.

146 As a result of the failure of the Provincial administration, the food administration was entrusted with the army whose personnel were invested with magisterial powers. Pakistan Times, July 2, 1956. As D.N. Banerjee wrote: "it meant not only that the Army was being inducted into civil administration but also clearly showed how little confidence president had in Governor Huq his ministers and the civil bureaucracy which after the departure of N.M. Khan, was increasingly being manned by East Pakistan officers at the middle and district levels." Op.cit., p.89.

147 For instance, Krishak Sramik Party stood for joint electorate, while the Awami Muslim League (Abdus Salam Khan group) and Nizam-e-Islam opposed to it. Pakistan Observer, January 4, 1956. Also see Abdus Salam, "The Political Scene," Pakistan Observer, February 28, 1956.
for decision. But the United Front leaders like Huq, for the sake of power, had completely surrendered to the Central Government as far as the constitutional proposals were concerned. They did not resist the Government's draft constitutional proposals. In fact, Huq not only violated the agreement he entered with the minorities parties but also advised the Governor-General against the joint electorate system.

This had created strong resentment among the constituent units of the United Front ministry in East Bengal. The Ganatantri Dal, a constituent of the United Front, submitted 5-Point Ultimatum to Sarkar Ministry on December 11, 1955. The demand were:

1. unconditional release of all political prisoners;
2. immediate holding of bye-elections;
3. setting up of a steering committee consisting of representatives of different parties supporting the United Front Government;
4. summoning of the East Bengal Assembly by January 15, 1956 and to give notice for repeal of the East Bengal Public Safety Act in the Session;
5. a categorical declaration by the United Front leaders in favour of a democratic constitution embodying therein the system of joint electorate, provision for full regional autonomy and recognition of Bengali as one of the State languages of the State.

148 The Chief Minister, Sarkar, had hoped that the legislature would accept joint electorate with an overwhelming majority. See Pakistan Times, February 19, 1956.


150 Pakistan Observer, January 4, 1956.
The Sarkar Ministry failed to take action on these demands. Consequently, the Working Committee of the Ganatantri Dal, in a resolution on January 3, 1956, unanimously decided to withdraw its support from the United Front Party of which it was a component.  

Similarly, the minority Parties also withdrew their support from the Ministry because of its failure to meet the non-Muslim demands in relation to the constitution including the introduction of joint electorates. The Awami Muslim League (Abdus Salam Khan) minister along with 10 Parliamentary and Political Secretaries had also resigned from the United Front Government. Nearly 29 members of the Assembly including 5 former ministers withdrew their support from the Ministry. Later, Nizam-e-Islam minister also resigned from the United Front Ministry in protest against the undemocratic action of proroguing the Assembly by the Governor.

As a result, the United Front Ministry was faced with a serious crisis. The Chief Minister, Abu Hossain Sarkar made frantic efforts to wean away some members of the minorities by the lure of office. Consequently,

---

151 Pakistan Observer, January 4, 1956.
152 The Hindustan Times, February 17, 1956.
153 Pakistan Observer, July 12, 1956.
154 Ibid., July 14, 1956.
155 Pakistan Observer, Aug. 16, 1956. The action of the Governor, Fazlul Huq, who assured the office on March 9, 1956, was intended to keep his men in power in East Bengal.
three more ministers were inducted into the cabinet. The Awami League leader, Suhrawardy alleged that Sarkar tried to hold on to power by unfair means by the appointment of 42 ministers, Parliamentary secretaries and other office bearers and by distributing relief funds through individual MLAs. The Central Government was also criticised by the Awami League for allowing the United Front Ministry to continue in power without its strength being tested in the legislature.

Meanwhile, the Awami League and its leader, Suhrawardy sought the support of the Congress, the United Progressive Parliamentary Party (UPPP) (Dhirendra Nath Dutta group), the scheduled castes Federation and the Ganatantri Dal. The Congress Parliamentary Party assured the Awami League of the support of a minority group of about 25 members in the Provincial Assembly consisting of Congress, the UPPP, the Scheduled Castes Federation and independents. Besides, the support of 7 out of 9 minority members of the National Assembly was also assured. The Ganatantri Dal also pledged its

---

They were: Provash Chandra Lahiri (United Progressive Party), Ahmad Hussain, Awami Muslim League (Abdus Salam Khan group) and Memoranjan Sikdar (Scheduled Caste). Pakistan Observer, July 1, 1956. The United Progressive Party thus split and its leaders, Dhirendra Nath Dutta and his followers supported the Awami League, Jyoti Sen Gupta, History of Freedom Movement in Bangla Desh, Op.cit., p.87.

159 Pakistan Times, July 2, 1956.
support to the Awami League. The Working Committee of the East Pakistan Awami League allowed two of its expelled Assembly members - Abdul Awal and Emdad Ali - to rejoin the Party by revoking the suspension orders against them. Durga Mohan Roy, an Assembly member belonging to the Scheduled Castes Federation joined East Pakistan Awami League on May 25, 1956. The Chief Minister, Abu Hossain Sarkar, in a statement criticised Suhrawardy for roping in the Ganatantri members and minority Parties with a view to securing majority. The opposition led by Awami League was thus ready to challenge the Government on the floor of Legislature.

Wisdom dawned and the Sarkar Ministry resigned on 30 August 1956.

---

164 The Chief Minister alleged that Suhrawardy promised to scheduled Caste members joint electorate with reservation of seats, to 5 UPPP members unadulterated joint electorate and to congressites joint electorate with reservation of seats for all minorities. He also alleged that the understanding between Awami League and Congress was arrived at in the house of the Deputy High Commissioner for India in Dacca. Both the Awami League leader, Suhrawardy and the Deputy High Commissioner for India refuted this statement of the Chief Minister. See Pakistan Observer, May 28, June 1 and 3, 1956.
165 See Suhrawardy’s statement, Pakistan Observer, August 24, 1956.
166 The Central Government asked the Chief Minister to advise the Governor to convene the Assembly so that the confidence of the house in United Front Ministry could be tested before 31 August, failing which the Governor would take immediate action under Article 17 of the constitution to form an alternative Government. Pakistan Observer, August 24, 1956.