

## ***Nawab Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani's Role in the Politics of Pakistan***

**Pir Bukhsh Soomro\***

Pakistan came into being on 14 August, 1947, as an independent sovereign state comprising Muslim-majority areas of British India. It was based on an Islamic ideology, seeking a separate homeland for the Muslims to order their lives according to their own faith, traditions and values. Its geography, too, was unique in the sense that it comprised two wings, East Bengal and West Pakistan. There was a hostile and unfriendly India located between the two wings. India did its utmost to create problems for the newborn state of Pakistan, ranging from the issues of distribution of financial assets to the accession of Kashmir to Pakistan. Kashmir, indeed, became one of the crucial tests for the new state at the very outset. The Kashmir problem required a strong leader to handle the situation.

On 3 January, 1949,<sup>1</sup> Nawab Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani was appointed by the Government of Pakistan as Minister without portfolio, to deal exclusively with the Kashmir problem.<sup>2</sup> In October 1949, he was also appointed Ambassador-at-Large and was made member of the Pakistan delegation to the Security Council of the United Nations to argue Pakistan's case for Kashmir.

On 7 November, 1949, Gurmani visited Egypt which was an important country in the Muslim World.<sup>3</sup> The Egyptian Government had not extended its support to the demand for Pakistan during the Pakistan Movement, and had even expressed reservations about it. Egypt saw the emergence of Pakistan, a big Islamic State, as a serious threat to its

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\* Lecturer in History, Government Post-Graduate College (Boys), Dera Ghazi Khan.

1 *Pakistan Times*, 4 January, 1949.

2 Gurmani's unpublished personal diary.

3 *Ibid.*

position and long-held claim as the leader of the Muslim world. In addition, King Farouq's regime was not favourably inclined towards any Islamic movement in the Muslim world.

To allay the Egyptian fears about Pakistan, Gurmani worked very hard. To begin with, he called on Abdur Rahman Azam Pasha, Secretary General of the Arab League.<sup>4</sup> Azam Pasha had been a friend of India but was in a chastened mood after the Palestine debacle. He was now appreciative of Pakistan's efforts for building up a united Muslim front. He even argued that Pakistan had a wonderful opportunity to shape up its constitution in conformity with the highest ideals of Islam.<sup>5</sup> Gurmani told Pasha that Pakistan was watching all the developments in the Middle East with keen interest, and indeed wanted that all the Muslim states, and particularly Egypt, should become strong internally and cooperate with each other for the improvement of the standard of life of their people and in matters of common interest. He briefed Pasha on the importance of Kashmir problem for the Muslim world and especially for Pakistan. He told Pasha that economically, geographically and culturally Pakistan was tied with Kashmir and, therefore, wanted the Kashmiris to exercise their right of self-determination as early as possible. As he put it: "We, in Pakistan, believe that our struggle would not be over until the same right of self-determination has been exercised in a free and impartial plebiscite by our 35 million brothers in Kashmir."<sup>6</sup> He appealed for the active help and cooperation of the Arab League in the peaceful solution of the Kashmir problem.<sup>7</sup>

Azam Pasha assured him that he and his other colleagues in the Arab League appreciated the viewpoint of Pakistan with regard to this problem and promised to give whatever support he could in the matter. He also expressed the hope that the Arab states including Egypt would not lag behind in this connection.<sup>8</sup>

The same day, Gurmani also attended a reception at the Soviet Embassy in Cairo, which had been arranged to celebrate the anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. He also met the Soviet Ambassador and discussed with him regional and international issues, with a special emphasis on the Kashmir problem.<sup>9</sup>

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4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

On the morning of 8 November, Gurmani, accompanied by an officer of the Pakistan embassy, called on Hussain Heikal Pasha, President of the Senate at the Senate House, and had useful discussions with him. Heikal Pasha promised to organize "the Friends of Pakistan Society" in Cairo under his chairmanship. He also agreed to act as Chairman of the Kashmir Committee of Egypt. Gurmani explained to Pasha the latest developments in the Kashmir case.<sup>10</sup>

Gurmani also met Karim Sabit Pasha, Press Adviser to King Farouq, who assured him that the King had strong friendly feelings for Pakistan, and that Egypt would help Pakistan to the extent possible. Pasha remarked that the Arabs were appreciative of Pakistan's strong support to their cause and entertained tremendous feelings of gratitude and respect for her.<sup>11</sup> In return, Gurmani assured him of Pakistan's wholehearted support for securing Egypt's election to the Security Council in spite of Anglo-American opposition.<sup>12</sup>

Karim Pasha attributed the Arab failure in Palestine to internal jealousies, lack of cooperation among the Arab countries and to the intrigues and treacheries of King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan. Gurmani informed him that King Abdullah wanted to pay a visit to Pakistan, but the Government had not yet extended an invitation to him. Karim Sabit Pasha was glad that the Government of Pakistan had not invited him.<sup>13</sup> Pasha explained that Chaudhry Khaliqzaman's visit to Egypt earlier was not looked upon with favour in the ruling circles as it was suspected that he was visiting at the behest of a foreign power (implying Britain) to undermine Egypt's position and the solidarity of the Arabs.<sup>14</sup> Gurmani strongly repudiated this insinuation<sup>15</sup> and told him that, firstly, neither Muslim League nor the Government of Pakistan were promoting an Islamic 'block', and, secondly, he asked, how could Pakistan which had only recently freed herself from the yoke of British imperialism be a party to any intrigue against the Muslim countries,<sup>16</sup> and added: "I personally did not believe that Britain had any need for launching a political movement to break the unity of Arab countries which did not

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10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

really exist.”<sup>17</sup> In fact, he went on to argue: “...it was in the best interest of the Anglo-American block to have unity and peace in the Middle East and I did not understand how it would be to their advantage to have dissensions and conflict in this important region.”<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Gurmani made it clear that Pakistan had no ambitions for leadership of the Muslim world and did not believe in the concept of domination over others.

Gurmani held a press conference later in the day to explain the Kashmir issue and Pakistan’s viewpoint. It was very well-attended and subsequently received a good coverage in the local newspapers.

Gurmani also called on Ibrahim Abdul Hadi Pasha, former Prime Minister of Egypt, at his house<sup>19</sup> and gave him a brief review of the present situation in the region and the problem of Kashmir in particular. He also emphasized that to ensure peace in the region, which was also quite important for the world at large, the Kashmir problem needed to be resolved. Hadi Pasha agreed<sup>20</sup> and pointed out that during Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s last visit to Cairo, “His Majesty, the King, had left him in no doubt about the opinion of his government on the subject.”<sup>21</sup> Gurmani noted that it would be very helpful if the Egyptian government could also make their point of view on Kashmir clear to the ambassadors of USA and UK in the country.<sup>22</sup>

On 9 November, Gurmani called on the Prime Minister of Egypt, Hussain Serri Pasha, at the Presidency.<sup>23</sup> After a brief discussion between the two leaders, Seth Pasha observed: “Pakistan hardly needs any assurance from us as we have all along worked together and I have always been on the side of Pakistan.”<sup>24</sup> He promised that the head of Egyptian delegation in the United Nations would support Pakistani stand over the Kashmir dispute.

Gurmani also met with Mustafa Pasha, ex-Prime Minister of Egypt and leader of the Wafa Party, and discussed with him, as with other leaders, the Kashmir issue at length. Mustafa Pasha too responded well. In view of these exchanges with the Egyptian leaders, it was quite

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17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid.*

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

obvious that Gurmani had succeeded in removing many misperceptions about Pakistan and had made them appreciate and understand better Pakistan's viewpoint on the, Kashmir dispute. In addition, he had laid the foundations for the development of friendly relations between Pakistan and Egypt.

From Egypt, Gurmani proceeded to New York to attend the Security Council meeting which was held in December 1949.<sup>25</sup> Before his departure for New York, Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, had informed the American Foreign Office that Gurmani was being sent by the Government of Pakistan on a special diplomatic mission to acquaint friendly countries with the position taken up by Pakistan in regard to the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.<sup>26</sup>

One of the first acts of Gurmani in the United States was to call on the Secretary of State Dean Acheson and tell him that: "Kashmir is an integral part of the basic concept of Pakistan and a continuation of the Muslim struggle for freedom. It is not just a matter of territory or economic gains, but an issue of basic human values involving the freedom of over [a] million human beings."<sup>27</sup> Gurmani also briefed him about the point of view of the Pakistan government on this important issue in the light of the latest developments.<sup>28</sup>

In 1951, Gurmani was appointed Minister for Kashmir, States and Frontier Regions. He held this portfolio till 7 April, 1953.<sup>29</sup> He even wrote a book on Kashmir entitled, "Kashmir, World's Biggest Question Mark,"<sup>30</sup> wherein he argued that the United Nations had failed in the efforts to bring about a truce between India and Pakistan. He maintained that the question of the accession of the State should be decided by the people of the State through an impartial and free plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the U.N.<sup>31</sup> "Today," he added, "there is no agency of the Security Council to deal with Indo-Pakistan disputes which according to the Security Council, 'present a grave threat to the World Peace'."<sup>32</sup> He assured the Kashmiris that Pakistan would never

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25 *Ibid.*

26 *Dawn*, 9 November, 1949.

27 Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, *Kashmir World's Biggest Question Mark*, (n.p., n.d.), p.10.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Pakistan Times*, 25 October, 1951.

30 Gurmani, *op.cit.*, p.15.

31 *Ibid.*, pp.51-54.

32 *Ibid.*, p.72.

compromise on their right of self-determination and would continue its efforts as long as this objective is not achieved.<sup>33</sup> When the Prime Minister of India said that the 'arbitration' clause in the Security Council resolution was a challenge to the self-respect of the people of Kashmir and India, Gurmani severely criticized the statement and argued that it was an affront to the principles of the United Nations.<sup>34</sup>

Gurmani firmly believed that Kashmir was not only a serious problem between Pakistan and India, but had much wider implications and as such the settlement of this dispute was of the utmost importance for peace and security in the region. Referring to Kashmir as the main cause of conflict between the two countries, he reiterated that: "We want to live in peace and friendship with all nations, especially with India with whose people we have long and close association,... if India should agree faithfully and sincerely to redeem her pledge which both India and Pakistan have given to the people of Kashmir."<sup>35</sup>

In spite of his best efforts to promote the Kashmir cause, there were many in Pakistan who were not impressed. Qudratullah Shahab, for instance, alleged that when the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs was established, and Gurmani became its minister in charge, instead of serving the Kashmiri people, he indulged in conspiracies and created unbridgeable divisions in the Kashmiri leadership and in this way damaged the cause of Kashmir.<sup>36</sup>

More controversies about Gurmani's political life and career were to follow, the most important being the assassination of the Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951. On 11 October 1951, Liaquat Ali Khan announced that he would leave Karachi for a five-day tour of the Punjab.<sup>37</sup> On 16 October, while he delivering a public speech in the then Company Bagh (now known as Liaquat Bagh) Rawalpindi, he was shot at from a close range as a result of which he died soon thereafter. His Afghan assailant, Syed Akbar, was also killed on the spot by a Police Inspector, Muhammad Shah, thus sealing the assassin's lips forever. Muhammad Shah had to face investigation, but no evidence could be extracted to indicate any conspiracy. There were rumours that Mian Mumtaz Daultana was involved in the matter to help facilitate a 'parity'

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33 *Ibid.*, p.79.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*, p.83.

36 Qudratullah Shahab, *Shahab Nama* (Urdu), (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1992), pp.427-28.

37 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 12 October, 1951.

formula with East Pakistan, a major constitutional device, devised supposedly to safeguard interests of the Punjabi leaders, which we shall explore shortly for a better understanding of Gurmani role in politics, both at the provincial and the national level.

As Daultana and Gurmani both were responsible for the safety of the Prime Minister during his visit to the province, Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination raised suspicions that both of them were involved in the tragic incident.<sup>38</sup> Incidentally, Gurmani, and his cabinet colleague, Ghulam Muhammad, both were in Rawalpindi on the day of the assassination.<sup>39</sup> General Ayub Khan, who subsequently took over the reins of government in a bloodless military coup in October 1958, thus recalled the assassination and its impact on top political leadership:

When I returned to Pakistan, I met several members of the new cabinet in Karachi — Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin, Chaudhari Muhammad Ali, Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani, and others. Not one of them mentioned Liaquat Ali Khan's name, nor did I hear a word of sympathy or regret from any of them. Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad seemed equally unaware of the fact that the country had lost an eminent and capable Prime Minister through the fell act of an assassin. I wondered at how callous, cold-blooded, and selfish people could be. It seemed that every one of them had got himself promoted in one way or another. The termination of the Prime Minister's life had come as the beginning of a new career for them. It was disgusting and revolting. It may be a harsh thing to say, but I got the distinct impression that they were all feeling relieved that the only person who might have kept them under control had disappeared from the scene. The political arena was now available to them for a free-for-all. The assassination of the Prime Minister caused universal anguish. There were all kinds of wild rumours and some cabinet ministers and highly placed individuals were accused of having plotted the murder. I did not for a moment believe that any one of them was directly or indirectly involved in a assassination. I know that Begum Liaquat Ali Khan still thinks the government did not try hard enough to investigate the assassination and bring the culprits to book. I have seen the report of the expert who was called from Scotland Yard: he could find no evidence to show that the assassination was anything but the act of an individual. Had there been any complicity or involvement of any

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38 Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997) p.115.

39 *Ibid.*, p.116.

kind, I have no doubt that it would have been discovered. These things do not remain hidden.<sup>40</sup>

However, writers continue to speculate that both Gurmani and Ghulam Muhammad were involved in the murder of Liaquat Ali Khan.<sup>41</sup> Fida Hussain, a former senior civil servant of the Government of Pakistan, revealed that once Gurmani had asked for the file of Liaquat Ali Khan's murder case, but when he returned it, the relevant papers were missing.<sup>42</sup> It must nevertheless be stressed that Gurmani had always refuted this charge and, had indeed claimed that there was an international conspiracy behind the murder.<sup>43</sup>

The controversy over the 'parity' formula for the future constitution of Pakistan sharply divided the central cabinet into what came to be known as the 'Punjabi' and 'Bengali' groups. The Bengali group was led by Fazlur Rahman, Minister for Commerce and Education, and was backed by Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin who succeeded Liaquat Ali Khan. The Punjabi group was led by Gurmani, new Minister for the Interior, States and Frontier Regions, and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, Minister for Finance, and was supported by the Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad.<sup>44</sup>

The tussle for dominance between these two rival groups became more conspicuous when, in January 1953, students demonstrating in Azad Jammu and Kashmir against the education policy of the government were fired at and the army had to be called in to restore law and order. Fazlur Rahman named Gurmani for the deterioration of the situation.<sup>45</sup>

The rivalry between the Bengali and Punjabi groups within the cabinet, however, came to a head with the Anti-Ahmadiya crisis. The Bengali group was quite prepared to accommodate the ulema's

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40 Muhammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.41.

41 Farooq Qureshi, *Pakistan ki Jumhuriyyat ka Zawal* (Urdu), (Lahore: Nigarishat Publishers, n.d.), p.202.

42 Munir Ahmad, *Pakistan: Siyasi Jawar Bhāta* (Urdu), (Lahore: Atish Fishan Publishers, 1988), pp.49-50.

43 *Nawa-i-Waqat*, 25 July, 1958.

44 Lawrence Ziring, "The Failure of Democracy in Pakistan: East Pakistan and the Central Government, 1947-58" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis), Columbia University, 1962, p.140.

45 *Dawn*, 31 January, 1953.



demand.<sup>46</sup> In fact, Nazimuddin argued that “the Ahmadiya sect should be declared a non-Muslim minority and Zafarullah dropped from the Cabinet.”<sup>47</sup> However, Ghulam Muhammad was not prepared to accept any of the demands of the ‘Maulanas’. These differences were highlighted and exaggerated by the Governor-General’s supporters, notably Gurmani and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali.<sup>48</sup>

The Punjab riots and the labour unrest of 1953-54 in East Pakistan affected the law and order situation severely. Prodded by Gurmani, Ghulam Muhammad was indeed convinced that only the country’s civil and military administrators could save the nation.<sup>49</sup> There was no other way out.

Thus, Ghulam Muhammad decided to act, and went on to dismiss Nazimuddin, and indeed his government, on 16 April, 1953. Muhammad Ali Bogra was appointed as the new Prime Minister of the country. However, a number of ministers, such as Dr. I.H. Qureshi, Sardar Bahadur Khan and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali retained their positions.

On 7 October 1953, Muhammad Ali Bogra announced his constitutional formula in the Constituent Assembly, according to which the elections for the Lower House were to be held on the population basis while the Upper House was to comprise equal number of representatives from all the five constituent units. In a joint sitting, each of the two wings would have equal representation.<sup>50</sup> This formula was appreciated by a wide section of people from both wings, but the Punjabi members of the Assembly, rejected it. Their apprehension was that unless West Pakistan was made into a unitary structure, Bengalis, in alliance with Sind and the North-West Frontier Province, would dominate the Central Government.<sup>51</sup>

With this development, a tug of war started between the Governor-General and the Constituent Assembly over the issue of power. In a meeting of the Assembly on 21 September, 1954, the opposition group led by Nazimuddin and aided by Fazlur Rahman, Nurul Amin, Abdul

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46 Yunas Samad, *A Nation in the Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-58* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.140.

47 *Ibid.*, pp.140-41.

48 Lawrence Ziring, *op.cit.*, pp.142-44.

49 Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century*, p.165.

50 Zareena Salamat, *Pakistan 1947-58: An Historical Review* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1992), p.55.

51 Yunas Samad, *A Nation in the Turmoil*, p.170.

Sattar Pirzada and Abdul Qayyum Khan,<sup>52</sup> attempted to curtail the powers of the Governor-General by repealing the Public and Representative Offices Disqualification Act (PRODA) and, indeed, rushed a Bill without the prior knowledge of the Governor-General to amend the Government of India Act, 1935, accordingly. They tried to make sure that the Governor-General could not use the Act in the future to dismiss any other ministry.<sup>53</sup> The Governor-General, Ghulam Muhammad, reacted swiftly and strongly, and dissolved the Assembly. On 2 October 1954, Muhammad Ali Bogra was asked to continue as Prime Minister. On 27 November, 1954 Gurmani was appointed Governor of the Punjab.<sup>54</sup>

There were four provinces, several princely states and tribal areas in West Pakistan. The public trend in both the wings was evolving in quite contrasting ways. In East Pakistan, the United Front, which was a coalition of different political parties, had won an overwhelming majority in the elections of 1954, and had formed a ministry in the province. However, soon thereafter, riots against non-Bengalis erupted in the province. As the provincial ministry failed to take any strong action for the restoration of law and order, the Central Government hastened to dismiss it, and on 29 May, 1954 Governor's rule was imposed in the province. All this caused considerable alarm in West Pakistani politicians, particularly among the so-called Punjabi group who proposed that all the provinces and areas in West Pakistan be integrated into a single political unit. This proposal was, of course, strongly opposed by an alliance of representatives of East Pakistan. However, the Central Government decided to push the merger plan with a greater force. On 22 November, 1954, Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Bogra announced a scheme for the formation of 'One Unit'. On 26 November, presiding over a meeting of the central cabinet, chief ministers of all the provinces of West Pakistan and Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan, Sardar Bahadur Khan, he strongly argued that it was very difficult to frame the constitution in the given circumstances and that it was essential for good administration and formulation of a viable constitution for the country that One Unit should be set up in West Pakistan.<sup>55</sup> However,

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52 *Ibid.*, p.171.

53 K.K. Aziz, *Party Politics in Pakistan 1947-1958* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1976), pp.22-23.

54 Notification No.78883-P-54/5012, 27 November, 1954. For details, see *Pakistan Times*, 28 November, 1954.

55 Hamida Khuro, *Muhammad Ayub Khuro: A Life of Courage in Politics* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1998), p.413.

most of the talking was done by Gurmani and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali<sup>56</sup> who urged the chief ministers to try to get the relevant resolutions passed by their respective assemblies.<sup>57</sup> Ayub Khuro, the chief minister of Sind, did not support the scheme. He said that he would consult his ministers first<sup>58</sup> who decided to talk to Gurmani and Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad<sup>59</sup> before committing themselves in any way. After holding discussions with Gurmani, the Sind ministers finally prepared the following list of conditions for presentation to Ghulam Muhammad:

1. Constitutional safeguards for Sind;
2. Income from the province of Sind to be spent on it;
3. Government jobs in Sind to be given only to Sindhis and to be overseen by Sind's representatives;
4. Agricultural land which was shortly to become available after the completion of the lower Sind Barrage to be given to local landless and permanent inhabitants of Sind of local or refugee origin;
5. Surplus land only, if any left over, to be sold off as the government decides;
6. Quota for Sind to be fixed in the Central Services;
7. Provision of adequate funds for the Sindhi language and culture for which Sind government had allocated initial amounts;
8. Reasonable share for Sindhis in Defence Services;
9. No law to be imposed on Sind against the wishes of the majority of its members;
10. Sind's share in the Indus system to be safeguarded;
11. Maximum autonomy to be given to the provinces and the Centre to keep only three subjects, i.e., Defence, Foreign Affairs and Currency.<sup>60</sup>

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56 *Ibid.*

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid.*

60 *Ibid.*, pp.413-14.

The Central Government accepted these conditions,<sup>61</sup> and on 22 November, Bogra announced that One Unit would come into force on 1st of January, 1955.

As a first step to the realization of the unification plan, the various provincial assemblies were required to accord their approval to the One Unit scheme. There was a widespread resentment against the scheme in the NWFP and Sind led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Abdul Sattar Pirzada, respectively.<sup>62</sup> But the Central Government told the provincial governments to do everything possible to mobilize general masses as well as the provincial assemblies in favour of the scheme.<sup>63</sup>

The NWFP's legislature was the first to consider a resolution in favour of One Unit, which was moved by Sardar Rashid on 25 November, 1954.<sup>64</sup> This was followed by resolutions of a Jirga of the tribal belt and the Frontier States. On 29 November, the Punjab Assembly passed its resolution.<sup>65</sup> The task was facilitated by one of the original sponsors of the scheme, none other than Gurmani, who had assumed the governorship of the Punjab on 26 November. This was followed by resolutions of acceptance by the Bahawalpur State, Khairpur State, Quetta Municipality, Baluchistan, the Shahi Jirga of Baluchistan and Baluchistan States and of the Karachi Municipality, the corporation.<sup>66</sup> On 11 December, the Sind Assembly met in Hyderabad and passed the One Unit resolution.<sup>67</sup> On 14 December, a conference was held, attended by governors, rulers of princely states and the cabinet members which also gave its approval to One Unit.<sup>68</sup>

On 16 December, the Governor-General issued an order establishing a Provincial Council for West Pakistan, with Gurmani as its Chairman.<sup>69</sup> The Council was assigned the task of bringing into existence the administrative machinery of the new unified province. Following the

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61 *Ibid.*

62 Rizwan Malik, *The Politics of One Unit, 1955-58* (Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, University of Punjab, 1988), p.113.

63 Ghulam Samdani, "Aik Unit ke Muharrikāt" (Urdu), (M.A. dissertation, Punjab University, Lahore, 1974), pp.79-80.

64 *Dawn*, 26 November, 1954.

65 *Dawn*, 30 November, 1954.

66 *Dawn*, 22 October, 1954.

67 *Dawn*, 12 December, 1954.

68 *Dawn*, 15 December, 1954.

69 G.G. Order No.6, 4 April, 1955, Governor-General orders file No.x 14(45) Punjab Archive, Lahore.

normal pattern of provincial administration, the new province was to have its governor, cabinet, a single chamber legislature and a secretariat.<sup>70</sup> For the tribal areas under its jurisdiction, a resident minister was to be appointed.<sup>71</sup> The Council finalized its report in February 1955.

In March 1955, the Governor-General issued an ordinance amending the constitution to form the province of West Pakistan. Gurmani was appointed the first Governor of this newly formed province.<sup>72</sup> But the whole matter was delayed for a while because of the battle being fought between the Speaker of the dissolved Constituent Assembly and the Governor which extended from December 1954 to May 1955. Indeed, the One Unit Scheme had to await the approval of a reconstituted Constituent Assembly.

The first session of the newly elected Constituent Assembly was held under the Chairmanship of Gurmani in Murree on 7 July 1955,<sup>73</sup> where various parties launched their efforts to stake claims in the new ministry. The Muslim League was largely dominated by the Gurmani-Daultana group in which Gurmani played the leading role and aligned himself with the leader of Awami League, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy. Gurmani wanted Suhrawardy as Prime Minister.<sup>74</sup> After hard bargaining, the Muslim League and Awami League reached an agreement which is known as the "Murree Pact". The Pact stipulated that if Shubarwady became Prime Minister, Gurmani would be appointed the Governor-General [President] of Pakistan.<sup>75</sup>

On 13 July, the following agreement was signed by the leaders of various parties. Prime Minister Bogra signed it on behalf of the Muslim League. Gurmani, Dr. Khan Sahib and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali signed it on behalf of West Pakistan. Maulvi A.K. Fazlul Haq was to sign on behalf of East Pakistan,<sup>76</sup> but he insisted on the signature of Abdul

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70 *Dawn*, 17 December, 1954.

71 *Ibid.*

72 Government of Pakistan, Cabinet Secretariat Notification No.2(9) 55-cord., *Gazetteer of Pakistan*, 5 April, 1955.

73 *Pakistan Times*, 7 July, 1955.

74 Syed Noor Ahmad, *Martial Law se Martial Law tak* (Urdu), (Lahore: Maktaba Aalia, 1993), pp.344-45.

75 Z.A. Suleri, *Politicians and Ayub: Being a Survey of Pakistan Politics from 1948-1964* (Lahore: Lion Art Press, 1971), pp.118-19.

76 Ahmad Saleem, *Isikandar Mirza: Rise and Fall of a President* (Lahore: Gura Publishers), p.208.

Rahman and Abdul Mansur Ahmad first. Gurmani made sure that all of them signed.<sup>77</sup> The agreement stipulated that:

1. West Pakistan was to be integrated into One Unit;
2. Each wing was to have full regional autonomy;
3. There would be a parity between the two wings in all respects, not merely in representation;
4. Election would be held through the medium of joint electorate; and
5. Both Bengali and Urdu would be the State languages.<sup>78</sup>

The Constituent Assembly met in Karachi on 7 August, with Gurmani, again, in the Chair. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali was appointed Leader of the House and Suharwardy, much to his frustration, found himself in the position of the Leader of Opposition.

The Governor-General, Iskandar Mirza, asked Chaudhri Muhammad Ali to form the new government which he did by 10 August, 1955. He kept Daultana out of the cabinet. Daultana felt that Gurmani had a hand in his exclusion from the ministry.<sup>79</sup>

After taking the oath of office, the first step of the new Prime Minister was to get the One Unit Bill passed by the Constituent Assembly. On 23 August, Sardar Amir Azam Khan formally moved the Bill in the Assembly. Gurmani made a strong case for the adoption of the Bill. In fact, he argued that the One Unit would result in a significant improvement of national political system. The scheme would eliminate party intrigues and parochial sentiments which in every province had brought the politics to the level of a District Board. It would also be “appropriate to open outstanding talent anywhere to service everywhere and not by a multiplicity of offices compel a scaling down of abilities.”<sup>80</sup>

Gurmani also criticized Feroz Khan Noon’s alternate scheme of ‘Zonal Federation’ and called it ‘illusory’. He argued that it offered no answer to the basic riddle of the constitutional problem which had baffled the people of Pakistan for so long. In the One Unit scheme, he was convinced, real power would get to the two units of West Pakistan

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77 *Ibid.*, p.209.

78 *Ibid.*

79 *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates*, 25 December, 1955, Vol.I, p.265.

80 *Ibid.*

and East Pakistan, where each partner would enjoy its share in full possession.<sup>81</sup>

The One Unit Bill was debated for almost a month and finally passed by the combined votes of the Muslim League and the parties of the United Front. 43 members supported the Bill, while 13 opposed it.<sup>82</sup> The Bill became a law in October 1955. On 5 October, 1955, the Governor-General issued a decree for the establishment of West Pakistan as a single province, with Lahore as its capital. Gurmani took oath of office as Governor and Dr. Khan Sahib was appointed the Chief Minister. An interim Government of West Pakistan having six ministers was appointed to administer the new administrative setup. The ministers were Sardar Bahadur Khan, Khan Qurban Ali Khan, Abdul Hamid Dasti, Mumtaz Daultana and Ayub Khuro.<sup>83</sup>

The Legislative Assembly of the unified province came into being in January 1956 and the Muslim League was returned with a majority. However, the Chief Minister, Dr. Khan Sahib, refused to join the Muslim League. The rest of the ministry was composed of members of the Muslim League party. This was to be the beginning of deeper and, at times, sinister involvement of Gurmani in the provincial and national politics of Pakistan till his resignation as Governor in August 1957.

In March 1956, Iskandar Mirza called a meeting at which Gurmani, Dr. Khan Sahib, Mumtaz Daultana, Col. Abid Hussain, and Ayub Khuro were present<sup>84</sup> to work out a compromise formula. Subsequently, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali also got involved. After lengthy discussions, it was finally agreed that Dr. Khan Sahib would work as a non-Muslim League Chief Minister and would not join any other party or make a new one.<sup>85</sup> He would be a 'neutral' head of the government and all other ministers would come from the Muslim League party until new elections were held within one year. It was also agreed that after the elections, the next Chief Minister would be from the Muslim League. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, Ayub Khuro, Mumtaz Daultana and a few other leaders signed this agreement.<sup>86</sup>

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81 *Ibid.*, pp.480-84.

82 *Dawn*, 1 October, 1955.

83 Musarrat Hussain Zuberi, *Voyage Through History* (Karachi: Hamdard Foundation Press, 1984), Vol.II, p.279.

84 *Dawn*, 19 March, 1956.

85 *Dawn*, 31 March, 1956.

86 *Ibid.*

Interestingly enough, on 19 March, 1956, Dr. Khan Sahib declared his intention to create and lead a new party to rule West Pakistan.<sup>87</sup> The possibility of a rival political party severely disturbed the leaders of the Muslim League. Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, who was at that time President of the League, Mumtaz Daultana, Ayub Khuro, Sardar Bahadur Khan, and several other politicians wanted to replace Dr. Khan Sahib with one of their own colleagues. Thus, at a meeting held at Lahore on 3 April, 1956, the Muslim League party in the Legislative Assembly of West Pakistan adopted a resolution stating that only a member of the Muslim League could become a minister or head of the provincial government.<sup>88</sup>

Dr. Khan Sahib immediately called Iskandar Mirza who was touring Azad Kashmir at the time. Mirza rushed to Lahore and conferred with Gurmani over the new development. Seeing no other way out, the two decided to form a party of their own, to run the province as they wished.<sup>89</sup> To reinforce the new party, they threw an open invitation to prospective defectors from the Muslim League to accept positions in the cabinet. In the meanwhile, Dr. Khan Sahib informed Gurmani on 6 April that he wanted Ayub Khuro, Mumtaz Daultana, and Sardar Bahadur Khan out of the cabinet.<sup>90</sup> Gurmani had already received the resignation of the three Muslim Leaguers.<sup>91</sup> A number of Muslim Leaguers who were against the agreement between the Centre and the Muslim League now jumped into the bandwagon and left their party. Dr Khan Sahib formed a new cabinet comprising eight members, all of whom, ironically enough, belonged to the Muslim League. Ali Nawaz Talpur, Kazi Fazullah, Abdus Sattar Pirzada and Ghulam Nabi Pathan were made ministers.<sup>92</sup> Other prominent Muslim Leaguers, such as Abdul Hamid Dasti, the former Chief Minister of the Punjab, and Makhdumzada Hasan Mahmud, the former Chief Minister of Bahawalpur, also joined the cabinet. President Mirza and Gurmani had succeeded in their efforts to retain Dr. Khan Sahib as Chief Minister, without realizing or caring about the damage they had done to the established parliamentary principles of representatives government. However, the League was not s to yield the ground. In a letter to the Governor, Sardar Bahadur Khan

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87 Y.V. Gankovsky, *A History of Pakistan 1947-58* (Lahore: Peoples Publishing House, 1973), p.270.

88 *Ibid.*

89 Syed Noor Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.350.

90 *Pakistan Times*, 7 April, 1956.

91 *Ibid.*

92 Hamida Khuro, *op.cit.*, p.426.



insisted that as leader of Muslim League's parliamentary party, he should be called upon to form a new ministry. Instead of responding directly, Gurmani forwarded the letter to Dr. Khan Sahib<sup>93</sup> who referred to the earlier promises made by prominent Leaguers,<sup>94</sup> and refused to cooperate. In fact, Dr. Khan Sahib had no desire to cooperate. He contended that being a non-Leaguer, he was not bound to follow the decision of the Muslim League parliamentary party.<sup>95</sup> He asserted that he could be removed only through a no-confidence vote in the House, which he intended to call soon to settle the matter.

Assured of President Iskandar Mirza's blessings, and Gurmani and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali's support, Dr Khan Sahib announced the formation of a new political party, called the Pakistan Republican Party on 23 April 1956.<sup>96</sup> Although many observers hold the Party to be a brainchild of Iskandar Mirza, he himself insisted that he had nothing to do with it. In fact, he claimed that he was at his residence in Karachi when a call came to him from Dr. Khan Sahib informing him that the Republican Party had been founded in Lahore. Dr. Khan Sahib insisted that Gurmani had generated the idea.<sup>97</sup> The fact of the matter was that the party was the work of all the three leaders, Mirza, Gurmani and Dr. Khan Sahib, in a common cause.

The first session of West Pakistan Assembly was called on 19 May, 1956. The session was meant to indicate the relative strength of the two parties, that is, the Muslim League and the Republican Party. Here, again the Central Government did the trick. Mumtaz Hasan Qizilbash was nominated as the Acting President of the Assembly. Voting took place on 20 May. The Muslim League nominated Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur and the Republicans nominated Chaudhry Fazal Ilahi as their candidates for speakership. During voting, there was a lot of confusion.<sup>98</sup> However, the Acting President declared that both parties had equal votes. Then, as expected, he used his casting vote in favour of the Republican candidate. In this way, the Republican Party gained a new life with the support of the Centre.

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93 Letter from Sardar Bahadur Khan to the Governor of West Pakistan, 3 April, 1957. For details, see *Pakistan Times*, 5 April, 1957.

94 Letter from Dr. Khan Sahib to the Governor of West Pakistan, 20 April, 1957. For details, see *Pakistan Times*, 22 April, 1957.

95 *Dawn*, 4 April, 1956.

96 *Pakistan Times*, 24 April, 1956.

97 Ahmad Saleem, *op.cit.*, p.432.

98 Syed Noor Ahmad, *op.cit.*, p.359.

The position of the Republican Party became precarious when on 20 March, 1957, about 30 members from the government benches joined opposition during a debate on grants for revenue. However, when he realized that he had lost the majority, Dr. Khan Sahib immediately asked the Governor to invoke his emergency powers and suspend the West Pakistan Assembly and the ministry.<sup>99</sup> Gurmani was more than willing to oblige. As he explained in a letter to the President:

I have been viewing with increasing concern the course of political events in this province for some time. Political elements in the Provincial Assembly had been busy making fresh alliances and trying to win over the support of members belonging to other than their own groups or parties by various means. The government, however, maintained safe majority in the House and got through its business. Under the circumstances, after consulting his cabinet, Dr. Khan Sahib decided to advise for the dissolution of the Assembly and prorogation of the Assembly session.<sup>100</sup>

Gurmani ordered the 'prorogation' of the session and advised the President to impose presidential rule in the province. The imposition of presidential rule "cut the roots of democracy. It also prevented the creation of a precedent that a legislature should be allowed to vote a ministry out of power, instead of either the legislature or the ministry is sacked."<sup>101</sup>

In spite of the presidential rule, the Republican Party did not succeed in mustering support of the majority. So the rule had to be extended for another four months, up to 20 September, 1957.<sup>102</sup> On 2 July, 1957, however, the Republican Party held a meeting, which was attended by 146 members, though the party claimed the support of 170.<sup>103</sup> In the same meeting, a resolution for the restoration of Republican ministry was adopted. However, the Republican Party was now divided on the issue of retaining Dr. Khan Sahib as President of the Party. Under pressure and to maintain unity among the ranks of the Republican Party, Dr. Khan Sahib abdicated in favour of Sardar Abdul Rashid Khan, a former Chief Minister of the NWFP. On 15 July, 1957, the Republican ministry was restored. On 16 July, Dr. Khan Sahib

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99 Letter from Dr. Khan Sahib to the Governor of West Pakistan, 20 April, 1957.

100 *Ibid.*

101 *Ibid.*

102 *Pakistan Times*, 17 April, 1957.

103 *Pakistan Times*, 3 July, 1957.

resigned,<sup>104</sup> and the Governor asked Abdul Rashid Khan to form the new government. On 17 July, the second Republican government of West Pakistan was sworn in<sup>105</sup> and the Assembly was recalled on 14 August, 1947.

Meanwhile, the National Awami Party, realizing that the chances of Muslim League being allowed to form the government were almost non-existent, decided to co-operate with the Republicans. In return for their support, the Republican government of West Pakistan agreed to push through a resolution asking for the dissolution of One Unit. Iskandar Mirza found this to be a good opportunity to get rid of the overbearing Gurmani as Governor of West Pakistan and also thereby weakened Suhrawardy whom he considered an old ally of Gurmani. Thus, Mirza forced Gurmani to resign, arguing that the Republican Party had demanded his removal on his reported refusal to help it anymore to stay in power without facing the vote of 'no confidence' in the Assembly.<sup>106</sup>

In August 1957, President Iskandar Mirza formally called Gurmani to Karachi and told him that leaders of the Republican Party had expressed some doubts in regard to their ability to maintain their majority in the Provincial Assembly in view of the new alliances which were being forged on the question of the breaking up of the One Unit of West Pakistan. They wanted an assurance that if they lost their majority in the Assembly he would support their request for action under Article 193 and will not allow the opposition to form the Government.<sup>107</sup> Mirza emphasized that "if the Republican Party was not assured of such support, they may withdraw their support from the coalition in the centre and a change in the central government may also become inevitable"<sup>108</sup> and he did not want that to happen.

Finding him less convinced, Mirza met with Gurmani, again on 27 August, and reiterated that the Republican leaders insisted, once again, that "unless I could give the assurance asked for they would demand resignation."<sup>109</sup> In the evening, however, without waiting for any response, Mirza sent him a letter saying that "the cabinet expresses its

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104 Letter form Dr. Khan Sahib to the Governor of Vest Pakistan, 17 July, 1957.

105 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 18 July, 1957.

106 Inamur Rehman, *Public Opinion and Political Development in Pakistan 1947-58* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.202.

107 Gurmani's statement before the EBDO Tribunal, *Pakistan Times*, 18 February, 1961.

108 *Ibid.*

109 *Ibid.*

desire that Mr. M.A. Gurmani, the Governor of West Pakistan, do tender his resignation. I request you to send in your resignation.”<sup>110</sup>

Left with no option, Gurmani sent his resignation, and the President wasted no time in acknowledging that:

I accept the resignation with great regret, and in doing so wish to bring on record your fine work at a time when the One Unit was in a formative stage. Future generation will remember your services in this connection with gratitude.<sup>111</sup>

While resigning, Gurmani made a public statement that, on relinquishing the charge of his office, he would tell the world the real reasons behind his resignation. He relinquished the charge on 2 September, 1957, and the next morning on 3 September, instead of his promised statement, the people saw the facsimile of a letter alleged to have been written by him to Sardar Patel on 23 August, 1947,<sup>112</sup> in *The Times of Karachi*, a local newspaper. Gurmani was shocked. He immediately served a notice, through his lawyer, A.K. Brohi, to all the parties involved, including Z.A. Suleri, Editor-in-Chief, Umar Qureshi, Resident Editor, and Khurshid Alam, Printer and Publisher of the paper,<sup>113</sup> to the effect that the contents of the letter published in the paper, in addition to being forged, were false and malicious. He, therefore, demanded that if within 24 hours of the receipt of the notice, an apology was not published in the paper, he will take appropriate action in civil and criminal courts against the persons<sup>114</sup> responsible for defaming him and his reputation.

On 7 September, the respondents explained that they still had high regard for him. The publication of the letter was an unpleasant public duty performed in the interests of Pakistan and its people.<sup>115</sup> “Our

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110 Letter from the President to the Governor, 27 August, 1957. For details, see *Dawn*, 29 August, 1957.

111 Letter from the President to M.A. Gurmani, 28 August, 1957. For details, see *Dawn*, 29 August, 1957.

112 *Pakistan Times*, 3 July, 1957. The text of the letter is as follows: “The bearer will explain to you the details. I have however got the consent of H.E. the Amir about the accession. This will be done as I have already indicated in my previous letter. I have removed all the difficulties and hope that my claim will receive due consideration.” *Pakistan Times*, 3 September, 1957.

113 *Pakistan Times*, 3 September, 1957.

114 *Pakistan Times*, 4 September, 1957.

115 *Ibid.*

position,” they stated, “is clear,”<sup>116</sup> and “it is therefore, impossible for us at this stage to accept the position that the facsimile is a forgery.”<sup>117</sup>

The same day, the complaint was put up before Hasnat Ahmad, the Additional District Magistrate, Lahore, who recorded a brief statement of the complainant. Gurmani insisted that those responsible for the publication of the defamatory letter were instigated by some person keen to injure his reputation.<sup>118</sup>

The Additional District Magistrate issued summons to the accused persons to appear to answer the charge levelled against them. However, soon the case was transferred to the High Court of West Pakistan on an application made by Gurmani for the purpose. The case was assigned to Justice Shabbir Ahmad. The first hearing of the case in the High Court took place on 6 January, 1958. Gurmani strongly denied the existence of any letter written to Patel. A statement of Sadiq Muhammad Khan Abbasi, the ruler of Former Bahawalpur State, was recorded on 6 April, 1958:

Abbasi was asked whether at any time Gurmani had advised him that Bahawalpur State should accede to India? Abbasi replied that he had never come across any such writing.<sup>119</sup>

However, this did not end the matter. On 10 March, 1958, the letter was shown to Mr. Charles Appel, a handwriting expert,<sup>120</sup> who came from the United States to appear as a defence witness in the case. In all 23 defence witnesses and 12 prosecution witnesses were summoned and examined by the Court.<sup>121</sup> Mr. Appel argued that “If a person signs on different dates, two signatures do not look as much alike as the signatures on these two documents.”<sup>122</sup> Hearings continued till 2 May. On that day, Justice Shabbir Ahmad of West Pakistan High Court reserved judgement in the case. However, on 28 May, the Press Information Department, Government of Pakistan, released the following press note, to settle the matter out of court:

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116 *Pakistan Times*, 7 September, 1957.

117 *Ibid.*

118 *Ibid.*

119 *Pakistan Times*, 10 September, 1957.

120 Letter from Foreign Office to Mr. Frank J. Halmes, International Police Services, Washington, 10 March, 1958. *Dawn*, 19 May, 1958.

121 *Morning News*, 2 May, 1958.

122 *Dawn*, 20 April, 1958.

In the political controversy going on at present in the Punjab, it has been alleged against the former Governor, Mr. M.A. Gurmani, that as Chief Minister of Bahawalpur he advised that state to accede to India. From the evidence available the records of the central Government, it is clear that this allegation is not correct. On the other hand, Mr. Gurmani was responsible for advising Bahawalpur to accede to Pakistan.<sup>123</sup>

On 7 October, 1958, Iskandar Mirza abrogated the 1956 Constitution, dismissed the central and provincial government, and dissolved all the assemblies. Martial law was proclaimed in the country, and General Muhammad Ayub Khan took over the as the Chief Martial Law Administrator. However, this arrangement did not last for long. General Ayub Khan got rid of Iskandar Mirza on 27 October, and also assumed the office of the President. One of the major steps taken by Ayub Khan to deal with the politicians, was the promulgation of the Public Offices Disqualification Order (PODO) on 21 March, 1959.<sup>124</sup> Later, on 17 August, PODO was replaced by the Elective Bodies Disqualification Order (EBDO), which applied to any person who had held any public office or position or had been member of any elective body, including an Assembly, a Municipal Corporation, a Municipal Committee, a Cantonment Board or a District Board.<sup>125</sup> The politicians were given a choice of either to face the trial under the EBDO or to abdicate voluntarily from all political activities for the next six years.<sup>126</sup>

Gurmani resented imposition of Martial Law in the country and in an exclusive interview with *Zindagi* magazine, claimed that President Ayub Khan, in connivance with Iskandar Mirza, had hatched a conspiracy to impose martial law in the country at the instance of the United States of America as early as 1957. He further claimed that they had also endeavoured to coax him into their scheme, but he spurned their advances.<sup>127</sup> To rationalize their moves, Mirza and Ayub Khan had told him that Suhrawardy's government had proved to be an utter failure. They alleged that the funds allotted to educational development in East Pakistan had been drained out by the Awami League without keeping a record.<sup>128</sup> They thought that it was the right time to impose the army

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123 Information Department Government of Pakistan, Press note E.N.2565.

124 *Pakistan Times*, 22 March, 1959.

125 Rafique Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan 1958-69* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1987), Vol.II, p.171.

126 *Ibid.*

127 Gurmani's Interview by Mujibur Rahman Shami, in *Zindagi*, 29 June, 1970.

128 *Ibid.*

rule.<sup>129</sup> Gurmani claimed that “this plan of these two persons terrified me.”<sup>130</sup> However, he warned them that the abrogation of constitution would set a dangerous precedent for the future.<sup>131</sup>

A number of politicians were disqualified under the EBDO, including Gurmani. The main charge against him was that he was responsible for the purchase of and renovation of a house in (44-G) Gulberg Lahore, from the government money.<sup>132</sup> It was further alleged that as Governor, he had abused his official position and powers and had attempted diversion or misapplication of public money in many instances. For instance, he had directed a Chief Engineer of the Irrigation Department to include his lands and those owned by members of his family in the area of village Thatta Gurmani. He had even encouraged a change in the Government record for the distribution of irrigation water to his advantage.<sup>133</sup> Another charge against Gurmani related to the appointment of Sardar Abdul Rashid Khan as Chief Minister of West Pakistan after the revocation of Article 193 of the constitution, which was against the law.<sup>134</sup>

All these charges were contested by Gurmani, but to no avail. He was promptly disqualified. However, on 19 November, 1963, Khan Abdul Sabur Khan, the then Communication Minister and a close political aide of Ayub Khan, promised that the EBDO restrictions might be removed from him if he favourably responded to his appeal to join the Convention Muslim League, the ‘official’ party, for strengthening the government. Gurmani showed little interest or inclination. In his own words: “I cannot participate there and I would not fit into the present scheme of things.”<sup>135</sup> Gurmani indeed criticized Ayub Khan and his policies towards the politicians and refused to join his party.

Gurmani came out more openly against Ayub Khan during the presidential election of 1964, by supporting Mohtarama Fatima Jinnah who was the joint candidate of a large number of political parties under the umbrella of Combined Opposition Parties (COP). The COP was formed on 14 July 1964. Its main objective was to oust Ayub Khan from power. In October 1964, the COP formally announced that Fatima Jinnah

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129 *Ibid.*

130 *Ibid.*

131 *Ibid.*

132 EBDO Allegation File No. *EBDO/1/60/-AL-IV.*

133 EBDO Allegation File No. *EBDO/1/60/-AL-II (1)/(e).*

134 EBDO Allegation File No. *EBDO/1/60/-AL-II (1)/(g).*

135 *Dawn*, 20 November, 1963.

would be their candidate for the office of President. On 24 December, the COP held a big public meeting at Dera Ghazi Khan, Gurmani's home constituency. Gurmani played a major role in making this meeting a great success. Unfortunately, Fatima Jinnah did not win the presidential election and Gurmani could not revive his political fortunes.<sup>136</sup>

During the War of 1965, however, Gurmani not only supported Ayub Khan but also offered his services and donated 23 squares of fertile land of his own and of his kith and kin for the families of those members of armed forces who sacrificed their lives for the country. 10 squares were donated by Gurmani himself, 10 by his brother, Mian Niaz Ahmad Gurmani, and 3 by Mian Ghulam Gilani Gurmani.<sup>137</sup> On 13 October, 1965, Gurmani and Niaz Gurmani also donated 500 acres of land towards the National Defence Fund.<sup>138</sup> On 28 December, Gurmani offered to donate 56 acres of land to the government for the proposed heavy engineering complex to be set up with the assistance of People's Republic of China in Tehsil Kot Addu in District Muzaffargarh. Gurmani made this offer during the visit of Chinese delegation to Kot Addu.<sup>139</sup> However, apart from these generous offers of donation and contribution to the war efforts, Gurmani remained generally inactive during the Ayub regime.

On 25 March, 1969, Ayub Khan resigned from the office, and handed over the reins of power to General Yahya Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, after a countrywide protest against his rule and policies. General Yahya Khan abrogated the 1962 Constitution, dissolved the national and provincial assemblies, dismissed the cabinets, and promulgated martial law, yet again, in the country. Elections to the National Assembly were scheduled to be held on 5 October, 1970. Elections for the provincial assemblies were scheduled for 22 October, 1970.<sup>140</sup> However, due to the cyclone in East Pakistan, the dates were shifted to December.<sup>141</sup> All political parties in the country jumped into the election campaign with their programmes and manifestoes, with prominent political leaders making tours of both the wings of the country to get support for their candidates.<sup>142</sup> The campaign indeed was the

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136 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 25 July, 1964.

137 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 22 September, 1965.

138 *Morning News*, 14 October, 1965.

139 *Dawn*, 29 December, 1965.

140 Rafique Afzal, *op.cit.*, p.23.

141 *Ibid.*

142 *Ibid.*



longest in the history of Pakistan. It spread to a whole year from January to December 6, 1970. Constitutional and economic issues dominated the campaign. The debate on these issues essentially revolved round the Awami League's Six-Point programme which envisaged at best a 'nominal' federation between the two wings.

In this election campaign, Gurmani supported the Jamaat-i-Islami of Pakistan. For this purpose, he toured the country, and tried to explain the Jamaat manifesto, although he did not formally join the party. In one of his addresses to the public at Multan on 15 June, he claimed that there were only two real political parties in the country, that is, the Jamaat-i-Islami and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bashani's NAP (National Awami Party). The other parties were merely political factions, which hardly had any clear and viable programme for the welfare of the masses. He said that he preferred the Jamaat since it wanted to introduce Islamic social order in the country).<sup>143</sup> Indeed, Gurmani argued in his speeches everywhere that Pakistan had been created to rid the Indian Muslims free from Hindu slavery and to establish a state in which Islamic laws could be enforced and the people could freely work to make the country a fully democratic state.<sup>144</sup> In a public meeting on 7 September, 1970, held at Jinnah Bagh Sargodha, Gurmani insisted that enforcement of Islamic laws and a constitution based on the Holy Quran and *Sunnah*, were the only solution for grave problems faced by the nation.<sup>145</sup>

Gurmani also strongly criticized the newly formed Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the front-runner in West Pakistan, and the past conduct of its chairman, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He blamed Bhutto for "high handedness, lawlessness and favouritism" in Sind when he was close to Ayub Khan and was an important minister in his government. Gurmani believed that the forthcoming elections were a test of patriotic and Islam-loving people to make use of their votes for the right cause on which the future of the country and nation depended.<sup>146</sup> He charged that Bhutto, during the eight years that he was a cabinet minister, never thought of the rights of the poor and was always engaged in strengthening the dictatorship of Ayub Khan. He was now hoodwinking the people of the country through his hollow slogans of "*roti, kapra aur makan*" only for

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143 *Dawn* 16 June, 1970.

144 *Pakistan Times*, 2 September, 1970.

145 *Pakistan Times*, 7 September, 1970.

146 *News Times*, 27 October, 1970.

regaining power. Bhutto, he claimed, wanted to establish personal dictatorship in Pakistan.<sup>147</sup>

Although the PPP won overwhelmingly the elections in West Pakistan and the Jamaat was badly routed, Gurmani remained sympathetic to its cause till his death in 1982. This was in spite of the fact that he never joined the Jamaat formally at all. In general, however, he remained aloof from active politics, and indeed never tried to involve himself in local and national politics after the 1970 elections.<sup>148</sup> He declined to accept Bhutto's offer to work with his government and also did not associate himself in any manner with the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) movement formed against Bhutto in 1977.<sup>149</sup>

After the promulgation of Martial Law, once again, in July 1977, he decided not to participate in any kind of political activity, in spite of his favourable inclination to the so-called process of Islamization launched by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in the country. In fact, in the end, Gurmani died on 21 August, 1982, without much political interest or support in the politics of Pakistan, which was, indeed, a tragic end to a career that seemed so promising and fulfilling in the beginning.

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147 *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 28 October, 1970.

148 Author's interview with Mian Muhammad Tufail, 12 September, 2000.

149 Akhtar Ali Baluch, *Baluchistan ki Mashhur Shaksiyyāt* (Urdu), (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1994), pp.48-49.