Presidential Elections: Sharif al Mujahid's Version[*]

Elections are an exciting affair anywhere, but particularly in a country such as Pakistan in which political activity has been quiescent since the fall of l958 and in which presidential elections were being held for the first time. More significant was the fact that President Ayub Khan, who had ruled Pakistan with feeble, if any, opposition, for most of his six years in office, was being challenged seriously for the first time by a national figure of consistently high repute in public estimation, whose emotional appeal with the masses had remained unabated since independence in 1947.

President Ayub came to power in October 19S8. He collaborated with the then President Iskander Mirza in scrapping the 1956 constitution (and the constitutional apparatus that went with it) and in imposing martial law, Three weeks later the senior partner was summarily ousted, and Ayub became President. Between the twin authors of martial law, Ayub's name was untarnished while Mirza's was notorious, and hence detested, for his politicking; for pulling the strings behind the scene, for significantly augmenting the authoritarian trend in Pakistani politics initiated by his predecessor, Ghulam Mohammed; and, above all, for a good deal of confusion and chaos that were so characteristic of the Pakistani scene in the few months before the October 7 decree. On the other hand, the Mirza-installed coterie in power, scheming and feuding all the time, had little grounding among the masses, while the more popular opposition parties and leaders, now in political wilderness, called for revolt and revolution. It was therefore, not surprising that

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∗ "Pakistan's First Presidential Elections", *Asian Survey*, June 1965, V:6, pp.280-294.

Mirza s exit and Ayub's ascension to supreme power were widely welcomed throughout the country. One of those who hailed this new development was ironically, Miss Fatima Jinnah who later was to become such a serious contender for the presidency against Ayub.

For a little less than four years Ayub ruled with a firm hand, but introduced several salutary reforms (such as those relating to land, agriculture and family laws I , toned up the administration and took peremptory measures against such social evils as corruption, hoarding, black-marketing and smuggling. Ayub had no intention of going back to the 1956 parliamentary constitution; hence, when he thought it expedient, he promulgated a new constitution (June 1962), which softened the martial law regulations, but retained "the purpose that lay behind them and the presidential power enforce them."[1] The intention was obviously to convert martial law "into a document which document which will form the basis of running the country."[2]

For an authoritarian regime, says Tocqueville, "the most dangerous moment" usually comes "when it begins to reform itself." And for the Ayub regime this was that crucial moment. While he considered the lilting of martial law and the promulgation of this constitution as sufficient concession to the protagonists of democracy, the latter took it as only the first of a series of steps toward full democracy. Ayub felt that the goals of "unity", "political stability" and "modernization" were enchanting enough to sell his new constitution—and his regime. The dictates of economic development are such, he argued, that developing countries like Pakistan cannot progress under the "strains and stresses of the western democratic system." Over the years, this argument has been reinforced by the telling fact that Pakistan's economic growth under the Ayub regime has not only been stupendous, but is even considered one of the most impressive in Asia.

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1 Khalid B.Sayeed, "Pakistan's Constitutional Autocracy", *Pacific Affairs*, XXXIV (Winter 1963-64)

2 Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, Speeches and Statements (Karachi: n.d.) vol.1, p.15. For two divergent views on the constitution see "the 1962 Pakistan Constitution: Two views". *Asian Survey*, II.6 (August 1962), pp.9-23.

As against this is the simple but cogent argument of all democrats in all ages—namely, there is no substitute for freedom, nor is freedom a half-way house. The clamour for the democratization of the constitution thus became increasingly student, and the opposition for a time seemed to carry everything before it. But, by a stroke of fortune, this "dangerous moment" for the Ayub regime synchronized with the dispatch, in the fall of 1962, of massive western, and especially U.S., arms' aid to India which posed a new threat to Pakistan's security. This emergency enabled Ayub to galvanize public opinion in his favour, and gave him the much needed respite to put the former politicians in "their proper place" through a new Political Parties' Ordinance. The fast-rising opposition tide was, thus, effectively stemmed, and a dangerous corner turned—at least for the time being.

"Democracy", according to Disraeii, "is inconceivable without political parties." And, in spite of his dislike of politicians, politicking and political parties, Ayub had to permit the revival of political groupings in the National Assembly. But "the firm policies of the Government and the disarray of the opposition groupings" had largely "inhibited political activity"[3] with the result that the opposition was "reduced to vocalizing in the National .Assembly, and there too the chorus" was fast "becoming discordant."[4] The new press laws served the purpose of a leash for the press and took care of "irresponsible" press criticism. The finishing touch to Ayub's control of the country's politics and political activities was given when he assumed in December 1963 the presidency of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), founded in September 1962 at a convention in Karachi. All this led a good many of even the "old guard" to jump on his bandwagon, and the ruling Muslim League party in the legislatures was vastly strengthened.

By winter of 1964, Ayub was in firm control of the internal situation, and his prestige as world statesman, chiefly because of a Gaullist policy in the context of Pakistani foreign affairs, had soared high—and with it, the country's presume abroad as well. The largest nation in Asia was won over ".o Pakistan's side—and close contact

3 Norman D. Palmer, "New Directions for Pakistan", *Current History* (February 1964).

4 *The Times*, (London), July 5, 1963.

was established with Djakarta and Colombo as well. And with Xehru's death in May 1964, Ayub emerged as an outstanding leader in the region: this status received confirmation at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference (July 1962) where his performance elicited favourable comment from the British press. Yet another plum was conveniently picked up when he initiated the Istanbul Pact of July 1964, by which the three Muslim members of CENTO agreed to launch the "Regional Cooperation for Development" (RCD) on the pattern of the Common Market in Europe. This move, which earned for Ayub the epithet of a "Moslem De Gaulle," was hailed in Pakistan as a concrete step towards the unity of the Muslim world, a goal cherished by all Muslim Pakistanis. All this was deftly exploited by his enthusiasts—and they were many—to call for Ayub's unanimous election for the next presidential term. Before long, a systematic campaign in its support was launched through speeches and statements which recounted in glowing terms his services and achievements. Ayub, it was argued, should be elected unopposed "in recognition of his unique achievement for the Muslim world," for the sake of "stability of administration and over-all development." for "political and economic stability," for ensuring "a bright and prosperous future for the country and unity in the Muslim world" and for a host of other reasons, some of them quite understandable, even convincing. When his candidature was finally launched by the PML, even *Dawn* "lent its enthusiastic support to the unanimous-election plea, since there was "no one else among the living personalities who could "present anything like the same credentials to the electoral college."[5]

Weak, faction-ridden, and effete though the opposition may have been, its ranks were still not altogether denuded of persons capable of upsetting the "unanimous-election" campaign. The person who accomplished this near miracle was Khawaja Nazimuddin, a former Governor General and Prime Minister, as well as a former Chief Minister of (united) Bengal and East Pakistan, and now President of the Council Muslim League (CML). a faction of the pre-marshal law Pakistan Muslim League, dominated by the

5 *Dawn*, (Karachi) August 21, 1964.

"old guard" and parliamentary system-oriented politicians. It took him several months of intensive travelling and manoeuvring to talk other opposition leaders through their own respective party workers into fighting the presidential elections jointly. Eventually, on July 21, 1964, five opposition parties merged into a Combined Opposition Party (COP), adopted a nine-point program as its election manifesto, and agreed to put up a single presidential candidate. Ironically, this development synchronized with Ayub's return from a "triumphant tour" which had occasioned an overflowing of the nation's gratitude and its appreciation of his "singular", "splendid" and "remarkable achievements." The five opposition parties represented in COP were the middle-of-the-road Council Muslim League (CML) headed by Khawaja Nazimuddin; the extreme left National Awami Party (NAP) headed by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani: the central-left Awami League (AL) headed by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan (President) and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (General Secretary, East Pakistan AL); the central-right Nizam-i-Islam Party (NIP) headed by Chaudhri Mohammad Ali, a former Prime Minister: and the extreme right Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), headed by Maulana Maudoodi.

The ruling party reacted quickly, bitterly, even somewhat maliciously to this election alliance. The COP was compared to the Jugto (United) Front, a confused jumble of heterogeneous parties which fought for spoils among themselves once it had toppled the Muslim League Government in the East Pakistan elections of March 1954 and the COP's nine-point program to the Jugto Front's utopian and parochial 21-point manifesto. The COP was characterized as an odd conglomeration of "tried and discredited leaders" and "frustrated politicians" who had brought the country to such "disgrace" in their own heyday, who had now joined hands to "elevate the disgrace to the national level," and who, above all, were actuated by nothing except the desire "to seize power."[6] They were "anti-social", their activities "nefarious", and their mission was "to create chaos" [7] Several ministers, among others, taunted the

6 *Ibid*., October 7, 1964.

7 *Ibid*., October 5, 1964.

opposition with having thus far failed to rind any national figure to head their ticket.

Nor was this taunt altogether unfounded. The opposition was in fact in search of a candidate for almost two months, and was hard put to rind one—for the simple reason that party and petty jealousies had heavily weighed with the five COP components in the consideration and rejection of several names. Finally, on September 19, the name of Miss Fatima Jinnah, the sister of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, was proposed and accepted unanimously. Miss Jinnah, though initially reluctant, finally yielded to the impassioned appeals of both Nazimuddin and his tactical adviser, Fazlur Rahman, in the name of the "nation", "democracy" and "patriotism." She felt compelled "to accept the nation's call" as a matter of "duty" and promised to "spare nothing in devotion, service and hard work in achieving the objectives for which the millions in Pakistan have been silently and devotedly yearning for the last few years."[8]

Why did the opposition nominate Miss Jinnah? Firstly, they were in search of a national figure whose patriotism, sincerity and integrity were above question, who commanded the respect and devotion of the entire nation, and who had the courage to her convictions. Furthermore, Miss Jinnah had held no office in the past and. therefore, could not be accused of inefficiency, corruption, maladministration, and a host of other charges which were levelled against other opposition leaders, with or without justification. Fearless and undaunted, she had a razor-sharp tongue which had spared none in the past, not even when she spoke on the government-controlled radio. The opposition was also apprehensive that any other candidate might be screened out by the ruling party under the constitutional proviso that there should be no more than four candidates, including the sitting President, in a presidential election. Above all, the opposition felt that it was necessary to "exploit" Miss Jinnah's great emotional appeal with the masses if its "mission" for the restoration of unfettered democracy and civic rights were to have any chance of success at all.

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8 *Ibid*., October 1, 1964.

Miss Jinnah's nomination caught the ruling party unaware. They knew that the opposition had been "hobnobbing" with Miss Jinnah and of her avowed views on such crucial issues as fundamental rights, direct vote, and parliamentary democracy, which she gave vent to time and again; but they felt that old, frail and somewhat broken in health as she was, she would refuse all overtures from the opposition. What did she stand to gain by playing into the hands of these discredited" leaders? Since her brother's demise, she had been almost looked upon as *Khatoon-i-Pakistan* (The First Lady of Pakistan) and *Madar-i-Millat* (Mother of the Nation). And she had filled the role of an elderly mother calling the erring children to the right track whenever the occasion demanded with singular distinction and grace. Would she, then, give up this "lofty eminence" in favour of the rough and tumble world of active politics? Would she, at 71, subject herself to a long, arduous election campaign? No sensible person in her position, it was felt, would by her own volition, condescend to become the centre of a bitter, gruelling controversy and that when she was to be pitted against a man of the stature of President Ayub. These considerations led the ruling party to assume that .she would refuse the nomination. They even sent emissaries to her—and some PML leaders publicly appealed to her "good sense" to keep herself away from the impending political controversy.

The reaction to her acceptance varied with the political orientation of the commentators. Phrases such as "unfortunate" "most sorrowful", "tragic" and "a cover for self-seekers and power-hunters" contrasted with such as "a great historic decision", "the conscience of the people, and "a great challenge to those among us who dream and crave for the establishment of a lean political and moral order."

In any case, soon after Miss Jinnah's crucial decision, the political scene in Pakistan underwent a sudden and sweeping change: it gave nerve and verve to the opposition; anti-Ayub sentiment, thus far silent out of either tear or expediency, became vocal almost overnight. The opposition's confidence was further bolstered by the courts' decisions declaring the government's ban on the Jamaat-i-Islami illegal and the West Pakistan Loud-speaker Ordinance void. This led most of the intellectuals, student and

workers' organizations and the bar associations almost without exception to come out openly in favour of Miss Jinnah. The list of opposition adherents was formidable and impressive in terms of both numbers and intellect and social status, as well as professional, middle and working class background.

It was a measure of the change in the political landscape of Pakistan that during the next three months strikes, demonstrations, and protest rallies swept the country from one end to the other. There were strikes by jute workers throughout East Pakistan for 53 days, erupting in serious riots in the Khalishpur industrial area (Khulna); by West Pakistan transport workers, paralyzing communications throughout the provinces; and by Bannu woollen mills workers in the Frontier. Strike notices were served by the East Pakistan Railway Employees' League and the Karachi Electric Supply Corporation employees. A new labour front called the East Paakistan Workers' Council was launched in October and a 15-point programme was formulated. Secondary school teachers in East Pakistan and primary school teachers in West Pakistan went on strike. And, above all, students' grievances, whether genuine or supposed, erupted into a strike throughout the western province, so intense in character that the government was, for the first time, forced to close down all educational institutions for an indefinite period in early December 1964. Pandora's box, it seemed, had been broken wide open.

When the opposition launched its campaign on October 1, there was some scepticism that it would continue the whole way. But the teeming, tumultuous receptions Miss Jinnah received all the way form Peshawar to Karachi in her eight-day tour of West Pakistan put hert inot the opposition camp, and made it increasingly bodl, vocal and determined. The welcome she received during her week-long East Pakistan tour was even more frantic: whole towns and villages came out to demonstrate their "smothering affection." The Green Arrow, East Pakistan's fastest express train, which carried her from Dacca to Chittagong, crawled along at the rate of seven miles an hour; it took more than 28 hours to cover the 196 mile journey, normally covered in seven hours. Everywhere the most characteristic feature of her receptions was there spontaneity and sincerity. The tour, however, ended on a sad note: Nazimuddin, the

architect of the COP and the inspiration behind Miss Jinnah's candidacy, died as a result of campaign fatigue on October 22. This setback seemed to unnerve even the fiery, determined campaigner, but only for the moment, Nazimuddin's exit doubtless affected the COP's chances at the polls, but since the campaign had got off to a good start, the newly found party was saved from a premature collapse.

Initially, Ayub seemed altogether unconcerned with what the opposition was doing or saying. During August and September, his references to the COP and its nine-point programme were scant and fleeing, but instead emphasized the need for "economic and political stability with a strong centre… for Pakistan's forward march" and argued that the Moghul dynasty's downfall in the subcontinent had resulted from a weakening of the central government after Aurangzeb.[9] But the unexpected response to his finally forced him to undertake an equally determined campaign in person. *The Manifestos:* The election manifestos[10] of the two candidates may be briefly noted here. Miss Jinnah's manifesto, the COP's nine-point programme, called for the achievement of a fully democratic constitution: the direct election of the national and provincial assemblies, and full legislative and budgetary powers for them; a federal parliamentary structure with built-in provincial autonomy consistent with the integrity of Pakistan and parity at the centre: curtailment of the presidential powers: separation of the judiciary from the executive and the supreme courts' right to determine the constitutional validity of laws: the withdrawal of the ban on political parties: release of all political detunes and repeal of all repressive laws. With respect to foreign policy, Kashmir, minorities, administrative reforms, inter and intra-wing developmental disparity, and Islamic content, it did not differ much from Ayub's manifesto.

Despite the adoption of a manifesto by the PML in the previous March, Ayub thought it expedient to issue his own personal manifesto. He pled for democracy, "based on pragmatism rather

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9 *Ibid*., August 16, 1964.

10 For "Ayub's Manifesto", see *ibid*., October 26, 1964, and for COP's, see *ibid*., October 11, 1964.

than dogmatism" and "the rule of law." The people "must themselves determine the form of government." but must be guided by "an enlightened approach based on practical realism rather than dominated by theorization"; they should "shed retrograde and antiquated traditionalism," in order to "usher in an era of true liberation; politically, culturally, socially, economically and intellectually." The country's sovereignty and unity could be "guaranteed only by a strong centre, capable of preventing the centrifugal forces to reassert themselves." Ayub also promised to "build up a strong rural community capable of looking after its own needs": "to work out a code of ethics for the Press": and "to advance the ideology of Muslim nationalism." In order to achieve these and other goals, Ayub urged the nation to develop patience, faith, moderation, a national outlook, and to work hard and selflessly. And in seeking re-election his sole aim was to achieve these objectives and "to establish sovereignty of the people and to work for the progress of Pakistan."

The analysis of their respective manifestos by the two rivals was interesting. Ayub characterized the COP's programme as a "bundle of lies", string of "catchy slogans based on sentiments of parochialism, regionalism and petty issues."[11] On the other hand, Ayub's manifesto was dubbed an "election bluff." His pragmatic approach, it was said, in effect meant nothing but "a superimposed constitution or an ordinance issued as fundamental law." He had "already practiced his pragmatism by rejecting the reports of the Constitution and Franchise Commissions. The omission of any reference to the method by which the people's will would be ascertained was denounced and a referendum on the question of direct polls demanded.

More caustic was Miss Jinnah's comment referring to Ayub's promise to safeguard "the basic rights" of the people under the rule of law, she asked whether the law he had in mind was the one that he would "ordain, promulgate and proclaim" as he had "been doing during the last six years"; "his armoury" consisted of nothing but laws such as "the Press Ordinance, exterment laws, Security Acts, and a host of other laws." She even accused him of "lack of faith in

11 *Ibid*., August 16, 1964.

the people" and dubbed him "a dictator" who was "now trying to wear the garb of a democrat."[12]

Voting Procedure: Under the Pakistan constitution, the voters delegate their right to choose the President and members of the national and provincial assemblies to 80,000 representatives—the "basic, democrats" who form the electoral college. The electorate is divided into 80,000 tiny constituencies each consisting of about 200-600 voters. Once these members of the electoral college (MECs) are elected, the voters have little hold over them with regard to their choice of presidential and assembly candidates, whatever their promises and predilections at the time of their own elections, Hence the PML's decision not to give tickets to the contestants at this basic tier, but to "own the person who wins the election"; the COP, on the other hand, did—perhaps to demonstrate its strength as well as to exert moral pressure on those elected on its ticket. In these circumstances, the preferences of the MECs were unknown until they had actually cast their votes.

The elections to this lowest tier were held in West Pakistan from October 31 to November 9 and in East Pakistan from November 10 to 19. About 2,725 candidates were elected unopposed in West Pakistan, and some 2,123 in the east wing; the rest of the seats were contested, usually by more than two candidates. In Karachi, for instance, 5,575 candidates riled nomination papers for 1,569 seats: in Dacca 2,158 nominations were received for 692 seats; in Lahore district 11,506 nominations were tiled by 7,291 candidates for 2,313 seats; and in Peshawar the candidates for 192 seats totalled over a thousand. Over 100,000 nominations were filled for the 40,000 seats in East Pakistan. A large number of candidates chose to disguise their political affiliation, thus avoiding indicating whether they supported President Ayub or Miss Jinnah. Even as the polling progressed, it was alleged that the procedure for the MECs' elections had "built-in loopholes, permitting large scale bogus voting and all manner of corrupt practices. The COP had earlier challenged the voters' lists, and had demanded the holding of elections in a particular city, town

12 *Ibid*., October 31, 1964.

or district on a single day to avoid bogus voting. Its 54-page White Paper, listing ten specific charges and demanding a judicial inquiry headed by a High Court judge, was brushed aside as an alibi to cover its failure at the polls. Even so, it was difficult in the end to say how each party had fared: both claimed an overwhelming majority of seats. Nominations for the presidency were called for on November 22 and this set off another bitter controversy between the two rivals and their parties. The 72-hour notice given for the filling of nominations was considered insufficient and an attempt to "obstruct" the opposition. The COP's fears that the government planned to screen out Miss Jinnah gained strength when it was 'learned that three members of Ayub's own cabinet—in addition to Ayub. Miss Jinnah and two other minor candidates—had filled nomination papers. Under the constitution only four candidates including the sitting President (who could contest a second term without being subjected to the screening process) can contest the election. Hence, even if the two minor candidates withdrew, the remaining five would still necessitate screening by the assemblies—in which case the immense PML majorities in the assemblies could screen out Miss Jinnah.

It was this that led the opposition to challenge the eligibility of President Ayub to contest the elections, charging that as a Field Marshal in the Army, he held an office of profit and was, thus, subject to the prohibition on such candidacies in Article 115 of the constitution. The government's notification that he had retired from service with effect from February 16, 1960 was disputed at length: the COP even threatened to move the courts in the matter. In the end, however, Miss Jinnah was saved from the screening process by the withdrawal of the three ministers, while Ayub was saved from a court reference with regard to his eligibility.

The penultimate, stage in the election campaign was the holding of the ten "confrontation" meetings to enable the candidates to project their views before the electors, in crowds of between 4,000 and perhaps 10,000. Miss Jinnah demanded a direct confrontation with Ayub but, under the procedures, the candidates did not meet each other but came in turn. She walked out of the first Rawalpindi meeting, preferring a series of charges against the administration and the Election Commission, which were stoutly

refuted. These meetings were important because a candidate's success at the polls in the ultimate analysis depended upon his ability to influence the MECs. The PML which had discreetly decided, on the one hand, against the issuance of tickets at this tier, and, on the other, upon "owning" the successful candidates, now made an all-out effort to attract COP supporters. Appeals were made to their good sense, their patriotism, even their self-interest. They were repeatedly told, for instance, that they were the "custodians of this [Basic Democracy] system" and that it was their "responsibility to guard it against those" who were out to "destroy" it and their "position in it."[13]

On this point the opposition's stand was somewhat awkward. Their leaders had in the past bitterly railed against this system, calling it a "base" democracy, designed to rob the people of their right to directly elect their representatives to the assemblies. During the campaign, however, they had somewhat changed their stand, repeatedly assuring the basic democrats that though they would no longer form the electoral college, they would be more than adequately compensated by the conferment of greater powers in the local self-government sphere and by being released from the present tutelage of the executive. These assurances, in turn, led to charges of insincerity, *volte face* and opportunism, designed to mislead the MECs. Ayub repeatedly told them that once deprived of their present electoral rights, they would be reduced "to a mere instrument of local self-government."[14] And, to be sure, such appeals paid Ayub huge dividends. It was also a measure of the "enlightened self-interest" of at least some of the basic democrats that during the projection meetings they repeatedly enquired about the emoluments they would get and the powers they would wield, in case of their election.

The Issues: The presidential contest was not merely a contest between two individuals; it was a contest between two ways of life of which they had become the most outstanding symbols. It was, by any standard, a battle of giants, and the debate was long, bitter,

13 Ayub's letter to the MECs: *Pakistan Observer*, November 12, 1964; see also Ayub's address at the Lahore projection meeting, *Dawn*, December 13, 1964.

14 Dawn, December 13, 1964.

sometimes even bordering on personal abuse and slander, but all the time providing a memorable lesson in political education and awakening.

There have been few elections in which the alternatives before the electors were so sharply opposed—and focussed. The issues as presented by Ayub and Miss Jinnah were, indeed, in terms of black and white, with no shades of grey in between— "stability versus chaos" and "democracy versus dictatorship." Ayub protested that dictators did not give constitutions nor hold elections, much less go begging for votes. But the fiery septuagenarian retorted that "the so-called constitution" was "promulgated by one man, made and administered by one man, who can appoint himself, dismiss himself, and go on pension whenever he likes as if Pakistan is an absolute monarchy."[15] Ayub asserted that his system ensured stability within and without, but Miss Jinnah retorted that what was desired was stability through a system and not through a person: "the stability of a country was not jeopardized by a change of government"; nor did it "depend on one man or a handful of persons." On the contrary, it "originates from the people" who "are the real foundation of a stable system."[16] Ayub, on his part, asserted that the country would be "demolished" if the opposition won.

The opposition adopted a united front approach in order to exploit the dissatisfied elements in the country. Hence its slogan of "democracy versus dictatorship." "Give me votes and I will give you democracy", said Miss Jinnah repeatedly. This approach was meant to make the people believe that the opposition stood for unfettered democracy; Ayub for unbridled autocracy. But diametrically opposite was the ruling party's strategy. Not only did it characterize the Ayub government as a democracy suited to Pakistani conditions, but it was determined to deflect the election campaign into side issues which were bound ultimately to hurt the opposition cause. The most crucial among these was India. The occasionally favourable Indian comments, understandable in view of India's traditional hostility to every government in Pakistan, was assiduously and continuously exploited by PML spokesmen to

15 *Ibid*., November 17, 1964.

16 *Pakistan Observer*, October 19, 1964; *Dawn*, October 20, 1964.

prove that the Indians desired a change in Pakistan because of their fear of Ayub and their hope of political instability in Pakistan following Miss Jinnah's victory. The opposition was even accused of wanting to "disarm Pakistan and sell it out to India."[17] India's armed strength, which was three times Pakistan's in 1960, had, thanks to western military aid, increased to five times Pakistan's; a vigorous and skilful leadership was therefore indispensable to frustrate recurring Indian designs, and such leadership could be provided by Ayub alone.[18]

Secondly, the National Awami party's association with the COP was interpreted by the PML to mean that the opposition stood for the disintegration of Pakistan. The NAP, it may be remembered, supports the dismemberment of One Unit in West Pakistan, complete provincial autonomy and two economies. Bhashani has often been charged with holding East Pakistan secession views: Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, another top NAP leader, is well-known for his advocacy of "Pakhtoonistan." For some inexplicable reason, Ghaffar Khan chose, during the election period, to visit Kabul as a state guest, where he was greeted with, in Pakistani views, the anathemic title of "Quaid-i-Pakhtoonistan" (the supreme leader of Pakhtoonistan). All this provided grist to the PML's propaganda mills. Miss Jinnah's repeated assurances that ail controversial issues such as the One Unit would be decided by the national assembly in case of her election, could not and did not dispel the doubts created in the public mind.

Midway through the campaign, Miss Jinnah, in the course of a rebuttal of the government's claims of success in the foreign affairs' sphere, charged it with "incompetence" in failing to restrain the United States, which was once claimed as "Pakistan's best friend." from giving aid to India. This remark was pounced upon to infer that Miss Jinnah and her supporters must be the lackeys of the State Department. In spite of several clarifications, this refrain was kept

17 *Dawn*, November 19, 1964, *Pakistan Observer*, December 13, 1964.

18 According to a report, most of the members elected on COP ticket in Karachi were understood to have told information Minister Khan Abdul Waheed Khan that in view of the external changes facing the country and the need for a strong leadership to thwart these dangers, they although elected on the COP ticket, were now for reelection of Ayub as President, Dawn, December 1, 1964.

up uninterrupted, and some ministers even went to the extent of accusing the opposition of "jetting assistance from foreign countries to dislodge the present regime." The Americans, it was alleged, were underwriting the opposition campaign in West Pakistan while the Indians were footing the bill in the East Wing.[19]

Provincial issues did not figure much in the campaign. Miss Jinnah had largely confined herself to national issues, but others did not. In a bid, perhaps, to exploit East Pakistani sentiment, Governor Monem Khan even accused the opposition of having failed to nominate an East Pakistani' as its candidate. The Commerce Minister charged that Miss Jinnah had failed to donate to the East Pakistani cyclone sufferers from funds at her disposal. An opposition leader, on the other hand, accused the government of failure to take effective measures for flood control in the east and a host of other things, although the Ayub government had gone out of the way to meet East Pakistani grievances in respect of development and inter-wing parity.

But the one issue that loomed large throughout the entire campaign and may have deflected considerable votes, especially in conservative and rural areas, against Miss Jinnah was whether a woman could become the head of an avowedly Islamic state. The fundamentalist, Jamaat-i-Islami, one of the opposition components, argued that she could under extraordinary circumstances, but a crop of *ulama* and *maskaikh* (religious dignitaries) conferences, soon after Miss Jinnah's nomination, issued *fatwas* (religious decrees against a woman becoming the head of a Muslim state). These decrees received wide publicity through speeches, statements, leaflets, pamphlets and posters. "Is there no man," asked Monem Khan in disgust, who can become the head of the state?[20] In the heat of the controversy, however, it was altogether forgotten that the issue has far deeper consequences, moral as well as social, than what a mere election fight signified. Nor was it remembered that Muslim history' includes several women as head of slate or commander of armies, and also that no Pakistani has ever demurred to the election of women legislators, the appointment of women

19 *Dawn*, December 8, 30 and 31, 1964, *Morning News*, (Karachi), December 30, 1964.

20 *Dawn*, October 13, 1964.

ministers and ambassadors, or to Pakistan's acceptance of a woman as the head of the Commonwealth.

And what about their *prima donna*, this high priestess of the opposition? She was "a venerable person," no doubt, but in allowing these elements "to hide behind her to promote their designs and disrupt, the country," she had made herself "a tool" in the hands of these "condemned politicians." [21] In easy instalments, but with mounting vehemence, she was accused of a great many things: of "ambition," of considering Pakistan her "personal property," of being "old, recluse and weak-minded." of articulating "what was whispered in her ears," of lacking "experience in statecraft," and. to top it all, of not making "the grade." even "if a bottom standard was set." How, then, "would she run the country" if returned to power? And, to the immense joy of Ayub's supporters. Miss Jinnah's somewhat laconic answers at the projection meetings seemed to confirm some of these allegations.

Miss Jinnah's troubles did not, however, end there. The opposition's demand for a caretaker government, for access of its candidate to the state-owned radio (which the President could freely use), for the reduction in She number of polling stations (especially in the west wing which had 218 stations, with some having only about 18-60 electors), and for the appointment of polling and presiding officers entirely from the judiciary, or, alternately, from the teaching profession, were refused for one reason or another. Its meagre financial resources inhabited the opposition from preaching its message in the countryside through leaflets, pamphlets, posters and newspaper ads to country PML's extensive publicity), or even to buy enough jeeps for electioneering purposes. The 64 jeeps sanctioned by the government in West Pakistan were considered insufficient for 218 polling stations, some of them in areas inaccessible by air or rail routes. And the opposition charges of the "kidnapping, coercion and arrests all over the country" of its voters, polling agents, workers and supporters mounted high in the last three days before the elections. [22] There were no end to

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21 *Ibid*., December 9, 1964.

22 *Leader* (Karachi) December 29, 30, 31, 1964 and January 1, 1965; *Dawn*, December, 4,24,28,30 and 31, 1964.

counter-charge either. Thus, tension, nervousness, even suspicion hung heavily in the air when the electors, having listened to the last-minute frantic appeals urging them to vote "fearlessly", conscientiously and "with faith in the destiny of the nation," went to the polls on January 2, 1965

The Elections: The results gave Ayub a clear, convincing, even thumping victory, and the opposition was stunned by the crushing defeat. Ayub secured 49,951 (62.7%) of the 79,700 votes cast, and Miss Jinnah 28,691 (36%); Ayub's majority of 21,260 votes was formidable by any standard. West Pakistan gave Ayub a massive 28,939 (73.3%) and Miss Jinnah a meagre 10,257 (26.7%), whereas Ayub received 21,012 (52.9%) votes in the east wing and Miss Jinnah 18,434 (46.5%). She carried only three of the country's sixteen divisions by meagre majorities; Chittagong, Dacca and Karachi. The "dummy" candidates, kamal and Bashir, polled a total of 183 and 64 votes respectively, and another 810 votes were declared invalid.

Ayub's 73.3% vote in the west was understandable: he secured the almost unanimous support of the 3,282 nominated members in tribal areas in the Frontier and Baluchistan (about 9% of the total west wing votes); about 75% of the votes in Sind where foreign Minister Bhutto, along with local landlords, yields immense influence; and a like majority in the Punjab which stood to lose by the possible dismemberment of One Unit in case of an opposition victory. But more surprising was his absolute majority in East Pakistan which was expected to go overwhelmingly in Miss Jinnah's favour. This underlines the success of the rural works programmes in the east wing. In addition, most of its 20% minority vote, and the entire refugee vote went to bolster Ayub's gains. The Ayub regime was thus saved from "an ominous identification" with the west wing, and eastern separatism was scotched—at least for a ion while.

In effect the vote meant that while the cities generally went with Miss Jinnah, Ayub's massive hold in rural areas was indisputable. Miss Jinnah's strength came from the protest vote of the professional and middle class in urban areas which generally consider Ayub's administration as being "altogether too paternal,

concerned no doubt, to give the peasant a better deal, but distrusting any involvement in public affairs by those who are politically mature" and who feel their "democratic instincts… frustrated by the insistence on a 'basic' democracy designed for the limited horizon of the uneducated."[23]

Ayub's victory meant a vote in favour of continuing stability and against an uncertain parliamentary democracy, so fiercely advocated by the opposition—an opposition which, in spite of a "common enemy," could not altogether curb their petty and personal jealousies (East Pakistan NAPs lukewarm attitude throughout the campaign even led to charges of "betrayal" by Mujibur Rahman).[24] But perhaps the largest single factor in the President's victory was the fact that in voting for Ayub "the electors were voting for themselves." Miss Jinnah's first indiscrete suggestion that they were the "creatures" of the President, and the opposition leaders' pledge to denude them of their crucial voting rights, were kept dangling before them all the while. In addition, about two-fifths of those elected were sitting basic democrats who, having enjoyed the benefits of the system, were averse to their curtailment. Above all, Miss Jinnah had perforce to fight Ayub under his own system and under his rules; worse still, she was fighting, not for an office, bat to demolish one.

President Ayub interpreted the heavy vote in his favour "as an expression of the instinct of self-survival in a society choosing orderly progress rather than chaotic regression,"[25] as an approval of both his internal and external policies as well as a mandate for his system and constitution. He thanked those millions who had voted him to power, but had also a kind word for those who had opposed him, especially for Miss Jinnah who "fought the elections according to her own lights" and for whom he bore "no personal grudge." The vanquished could not afford to be so charitable, especially when she felt "cheated" by the "fool-proof" system devised by her opponent. She levelled a series of charges, questioned the impartiality and fairness of the elections, but was "grateful to those thirty thousand

23 "Students Millitant" (editorial) *The Times*, December 12, 1964.

24 *Dawn*, December 25, 1964.

25 *The Times*, January 8, 1965.

electors who had the courage to stand by their conviction and have voted according to their conscience in spite of all kinds of pressure." She renewed her earlier pledge to continue to work for the restoration of the sovereignty of the people and true democracy in the country.

This means that the opposition, if and when it recovers from this setback, may renew its attack on the Basic Democracy system which, in its view. "Is calculated to make it immensely difficult to overturn a government." But Ayub would be the last person to compromise on this basic feature of his constitution, which, he believes, makes adult franchise and democracy meaningful at this stage of Pakistan's development. Both parties are equally vehement, but what could the opposition do except to rail against the system occasionally? More deeply entrenched than ever by the recent vote. President Ayub is in no mood to listen to opposition demands. Time is, one would suspect, on his side, and he can consolidate his position all the more. But there is also an opportunity for him to use the next five years to enhance his popularity by conciliating the opposition to the extent he thinks it. In any case, much of the criticism against the system would disappear if the major parties make it a rule to issue party tickets to the candidates at the lowest tier and they, on their part, hold fast to their election pledges in presidential and assembly voting. All told the elections were not only an exciting, but an educative affair as veil. The point is that they were held at all: this was something in Pakistan's dismal history. Some of the allegations levied by both parties might better have been left unsaid; neither President Ayub nor Miss Jinnah deserved some of the epithets cast against them by each other and by their respective supporters. The scars will remain for some time, but it is to Miss Jinnah's credit that she never let the campaign degenerate into parochial, provincial, and petty issues as usually happens in multi-racial, multi-lingual and economically disparate societies; in that way, her candidacy has helped national integration, rather than disintegration. It is another thing whether the political dialogue initiated during last fall will continue.