

The Federal Cabinet of Pakistan and Politics of East Bengal/Pakistan¹, 1947-1958

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Abstract It is general perception in Pakistan that only few individuals such as governor general, president and military chiefs played important role in the policy-formulation process. This article is an attempt to review the existing perception and brings to light the fact that the institution of federal cabinet always played its role, minor or greater, in respects especially in dealing with the issues, politics and provincial governments of East Pakistan. Besides dealing with the performance of the Cabinet with regard to defence of East Pakistan, language crisis and electorate issue, the role of the cabinet in dealing with the politics and political forces of East Pakistan has also been analyzed. The most important aspect of the article is the newly declassified cabinet record which has been used extensively. This record brings such facts to light which had not been touched by the historians of Pakistan yet.

I. INTRODUCTION

This article examines the role of the Federal Cabinet of Pakistan in dealing with the politics and the issues, raised in East Bengal (later called East Pakistan) from 1947 to 1958. The article seeks how Federal Cabinet intervened the provincial political matters on different occasions, how delaying tactics were used to solve East Bengal's problems, how the policies of West Pakistan based Governor-Generals, prime ministers and the influential ministers created sense of alienation among East Bengalis.

Long discussions were held in the meetings of the Cabinet on East Pakistan's issues including language crisis, defense of East Pakistan, representation in the national legislature, electorate issue and various political problems including installment of Abu Husain Sarkar's government in place of Awami League²'s government, which held majority and was led by Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, passing the budgets, imposing Governor's rule in East Bengal, release/detention of political prisoners, appointment of Governors etc. The Cabinet took decisions on some important but controversial bills, passed by the East Bengal/East Pakistan's legislature, statements issued by some chief ministers of East Bengal etc. The Federal Cabinet and sometimes Governor General later President had upper hand in power politics of ex-province of Pakistan in place of the local political forces. The extra involvement of federal Cabinet in the provincial matters resulted in chaos and provincial political situation gradually went from bad to worst. During Muslim League's Cabinet regime (1947-1954), the Federal Cabinet always tried to impose its decisions on the provincial government of East Bengal. If any policy like joint electorates was considered as an anti-Muslim League policy, reverse action was taken. On the other side, Governor General was more powerful to deal with the Provincial issues during absence of representative Cabinet i.e. Cabinet of All Talents.³ The situation reached at its climax during coalition Cabinet's regime from 1955 to 1958.

This article has been produced mostly on the basis of primary source material including minutes and decisions of the Cabinet meetings, summaries presented to the Cabinet, some letters written to Prime Ministers (PM) or Governor Generals by political leaders, Chief Ministers or Governors of East Bengal, which were read in the Cabinet meetings and files of some ministries especially of ministry of interior affairs etc. This source material reveals the true value of the institution of the Federal Cabinet in policy-making and decision-taking towards East Bengal/East Pakistan which has rarely been brought to light.

¹ East Bengal's name was changed as East Pakistan after introduction of One Unit in West Pakistan in 1955. The paper names Eastern part of Pakistan as East Bengal from 1947 to 1955 and later it has been named as East Pakistan.

² Awami League was the first Opposition Political Party, established in March 1950 by Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy. Begum Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, *Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy: A Biography* (Karachi: OUP, 1991), 76.

³ On 24 October 1954, the Governor General abrogated the CAP and imposed Governor General's rule which was almost similar to the British colonial type of system of Government. The Cabinet during this period was like Viceroy's Council and it was answerable to the Governor General only.

II. DEFENSE OF EAST PAKISTAN

The issue of defense of East Pakistan had remained an important matter of concern for East Pakistanis since creation of Pakistan. They felt deprived because of the attitude of the central government in ignoring the defense of the province. Noor Ahmed, an East Bengali member of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP) continuously demanded for establishment of at least one regional malayshian force, further to open a military college and a naval school in Eastern region of Pakistan.⁴

The Cabinets of the period of this study had taken up the issue on different occasions but no final decision was taken and just lingered on the issue time and again. PM Liaquat Ali Khan while addressing the Cabinet said that in his opinion the government should maintain at least one division of force in East Bengal not only to meet the communist threat from Burma and China but also to prevent the spread of trouble from West Bengal into East Bengal.⁵ Cabinet agreed that a single division would not perhaps be sufficient as a defense against attack by India; even then it would enhance the moral of the people there.⁶ The related problems of new division, its training, accommodation and other issues including resources to provide to the force were also discussed but no final decision was taken in this regard.⁷

The same question was discussed by the Cabinet of PM. Choudhury Mohammad Ali. He said while addressing the Cabinet that at this stage he would like to clear a misapprehension. It was sometimes argued in East Bengal that since the major portion of the armed forces were stationed in West Pakistan, so it was injustice to East Bengal. He said while talking to his cabinet, "in case of War, armed forces fight not only to occupy territory but also to destroy the armed forces of the enemy."⁸ The armed forces themselves had to be placed in a certain area because of strategic consideration, and not where the layman thought they ought to be. He believed that the disposition of the armed forces should always be left to experts.⁹ The Cabinet approved the following policy statement on the issue of defense:

We were opposed to colonialism and were willing to throw our weight in support of those who were fighting for independence or who were being treated unjustly. This had been our policy for the last eight years and we propose to pursue it.¹⁰

The point of view of PM and the policy statement of the Cabinet clearly identified West Pakistani biases.

Almost similar question was raised by PM Malik Feroz Khan Noon. He told to the Cabinet that he had discussed the recommendations made by Aziz Ahmad's committee regarding the reorganization of the civil armed forces. The government of West Pakistan accepted but East Pakistan suggested vital amendments.¹¹ It was suggested that all efforts should be made that East Pakistan government must accept the proposal. The defense committee of the cabinet decided that the president should be refused to use his good offices to persuade the government of East Pakistan to accept the re-organization of civil-armed forces during his forthcoming visit to East Pakistan.¹² All discussions remained incomplete and the institution of Cabinet could not introduce any practical formula for the defense of East Pakistan till 1958. The neglect of this vital issue enhanced sense of disaffection among East Pakistanis.

III. QUESTION OF NATIONAL LANGUAGE

The question of national language was an important issue taken up by the Cabinets of the period under study. East Bengalis wanted Bengali as the national language. Students had taken out many demonstrations in February-March 1948 to upgrade Bengali as national and official language.¹³ It was direct source of tension between the Centre and the people of East Bengal, since Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had announced on 28 March 1948 that Urdu would be the National language.¹⁴ The issue was settled for the time being but emerged again in January-February 1952 when students started campaign for giving national stature to Bengali

⁴ *Pakistan Times*, 3 December 1947 and Zahid Choudhury, *Pakistan Ki Siyasi Tarikh, Vol. 1: Mashriqi Pakistan Ki Tehrik-i-Alehdagi Ka Aghaz, 1947-51* (Lahore: Idara-i-Mutala-i-Tarikh, 1996), 61.

⁵ Cabinet Meeting (Mtg), 20 July 1949, 207/CF/49, National Documentation Centre (NDC), Islamabad.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cabinet Mtg, 31 August 1955, 240/CF/55, NDC, Islamabad.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Policy statement, 31 August 1955, 240/CF/55, NDC, Islamabad.

¹¹ Cabinet Mtg, 22nd April 1958, 34 CF/58, NDC, Islamabad.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Farooq Ahmad Dar, *Jinnah's Pakistan: Formation and Challenges of a State* (Karachi: OUP, 2014), 211.

¹⁴ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1991), 85.

language. Public reaction came to the forefront when several student demonstrators were killed in East Bengal.¹⁵ Governor of East Bengal Malik Feroz Khan Noon requested for the discussion of the issue in the coming session of the Legislature. He wrote to the PM on February 28, 1952:

...during the coming session of the Central Legislature this Bengali language question must be settled once for all, and I do not think that you can get out of it without accepting Bengali as one of the State languages, but it must be Bengali written in the Arabic script. The sooner this resolution is passed the sooner this controversy be settled.¹⁶

Nazmiuddin suggested that the Cabinet must plan the course of action on the language question which would be raised in the CAP and the legislature in the forthcoming session. If the question is raised "Government side must try to postpone it till April 1952,"¹⁷ when Chief Minister (CM) of East Bengal would be in the capital and better line of action could be followed then. In case the language question was raised by the Opposition, the ministers would say that the Basic Principles Committee had already raised the question besides other Committees and that the issue would be addressed in the Constitution. Constitution-making must be dealt as a whole. The Cabinet agreed that the unity of the country could come under danger on the question of language so time must be gained for reaching any final decision.¹⁸ Besides it, Governor's rule was imposed on East Bengal after dissolution of ministry.

Cabinet once again resorted to delaying tactics on the question of Bengali language on November 15, 1953. It was decided that appropriate time had not yet come to decide Bengali language issue because elections were going to take place in East Bengal. Precarious situation might be created in case the issue was raised, so it would be better to discuss it after elections.¹⁹ After a year's delay, the Cabinet of PM Bogra decided that in the party meeting of April 19, 1954 PM would announce the appointment of a committee to examine the question of the adoption of Bengali as a State language. The Committee was comprised of PM Bogra, Finance Minister Choudhury Mohammad Ali, Nurul Amin, ML's leader from East Bengal and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, ML's leader from West Pakistan.²⁰ Eventually, Bengali was accepted as one of the state languages in May 1954.²¹ Bogra's Cabinet passed an amendment to the Basic Principles Committee's Report to the effect that Urdu and Bengali should be recognized as State languages which was adopted by the CAP.²² The issue of language was settled in the 1956 Constitution when Bengali was declared as a state language besides Urdu.

IV. THE QUESTION OF PARITY AND THE ELECTORATE ISSUE

The question of parity or equal representation had been remained an important issue of conflict between East and West Pakistan. The Cabinet had also taken up this question time and again. Unfortunately, delaying tactics were used to settle the issue of representation in the Central Legislature. The formulas, approved by the West Pakistanis' dominated Cabinets, were rejected by the Bengalis. It was due to pro-West Pakistan strategy of the Muslim League dominated Cabinets that the Muslim League gradually lost popularity in East Bengal. One more reason of routing out Muslim League from East Bengal was absence of Bengalis from Civil Services.²³ The issue was highlighted for the first time by finance Minister Ghulam Mohammad in 1947. He wrote about East Bengalis: "They feel themselves as neglected... As well as induction in services is concerned, the Bengalis are agitating on induction of non-Bengalis..."²⁴ In response to this letter, PM, in place of solving the issue, suggested that detailed propaganda campaign in favour of unity and against provincialism must be started.

¹⁵ Kausar Parveen, *The Politics of Pakistan: Role of the Opposition, 1947-1958* (Karachi: OUP, 2013), 290.

¹⁶ From Governor of East Bengal Malik Feroz Khan Noon to PM Khawaja Nazimuddin, 28 February 1952, 2(1)-PMS/52, NDC, Islamabad.

¹⁷ Cabinet Mtg, 12 March 1952, 73/CF/52, NDC, Islamabad.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Decision of the Cabinet, 15 November 1953, 108/CF/53, NDC, Islamabad.

²⁰ Decision of the Cabinet, 11 April 1954, 302/CF/52, NDC, Islamabad.

²¹ Hasan Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan: The Rise and Realization of Bengali Muslim Nationalism* (Karachi: OUP, 1994), 27.

²² Khalid Bin Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan* (Karachi: Civil and Military Press; paperback edition, 1987), 73.

²³ Decision of the Cabinet, 11 April 1954, 302/CF/52, NDC, Islamabad.

²⁴ Memorandum on "Bengali non-Bengali Question in East Bengal attached in the letter of Ghulam Muhammad written to Liaquat Ali Khan, 22 December 1947 F.N. 3(3) Prime Minister Secretariate, Government of Pakistan, Prime Minister Secretariat Branch, Karachi. NDC, Islamabad.

The two formulas devised by the Basic Principles Committee in 1950 and 1952 were rejected as no satisfactory solution had been taken out of the representation of both parts of Pakistan. Anti Basic Principles Committee (BPC) movement was started in East Bengal in 1950, which was vehemently opposed by AL. In response to BPC report, the Grand National Convention issued alternative constitutional proposals, which demanded for maximum provincial autonomy. Only defence and foreign affairs were assigned to the federal government.²⁵ Mohammad Ali Bogra formula had given concept of parity whereas East Bengal's population was larger than West Pakistan's region. Mohammad Ali Bogra said while giving details of the formula, "We then proceeded to make special provision that neither of the two parts of Pakistan may apprehend domination by the other."²⁶

Unfortunately, West Pakistan dominated cabinets had not thought about parity in the fields of civil administration, armed forces, judiciary, foreign exchange earnings and so on. The formula was rejected, except of ML of East Bengal, by political parties and masses. Public meetings were held against the formula²⁷ but it was incorporated in the 1956 Constitution of Pakistan.

Summary regarding the number of seats in East Bengal provincial legislature was presented in the meeting of the cabinet on 14 November 1951. The number of seats suggested by the provincial government was 312. The Cabinet amended it and 309 seats of the East Bengal legislature were confirmed.²⁸ Law minister said that the above Bill must be presented in the forthcoming session of the legislature.²⁹ The question of separate electorates for scheduled castes was discussed. The Cabinet did not take final decision on it.³⁰ Generally, most of the members wanted to give right of separate electorates to them.

The Minister of law informed the Cabinet that the bill to amend the 5th to 6th schedule to the Government of India Act 1935 to prepare the way for elections in East Bengal was ready and he wanted cabinet's permission for giving notice of it in the CAP.³¹ Law Minister informed the Cabinet that joint electorates would ultimately be harmful for the ML as Hindus would strengthen the opposition parties who would very likely admit them to membership which is denied to them by the ML. The Hindus would be in a better position to influence Muslims in that case. The cabinet, at that time in 1952 had not taken final decision on the question of the right of separate electorates for all communities.³² However, the Cabinet had approved the bill of elections in East Bengal.³³

Besides it, PM Khawaja Nazimuddin said that the law ministry should prepare a Paper showing the actual distribution of population of caste Hindus, scheduled castes Muslims and other communities on Union Board basis. He advised that the Working Paper must be prepared at earliest so the matter could be discussed till 12 March, 1952, before the arrival of CM of East Bengal.³⁴

The Cabinet had taken final decision on the right of separate electorates for provincial legislature's elections on 18 March 1952. The cabinet agreed that the Ministry of law should submit a bill providing for separate electorates for Muslims, Hindus and scheduled casts in the next elections in East Bengal.³⁵ A Bill regarding devolution of the East Bengal Assembly was also approved.³⁶ It would be stand dissolved on 15th March, 1953 as it would complete its five years.

The question of electorates for federal Legislature's elections was not even solved in the 1956 Constitution as it created more controversies so it was delayed. PM Suhrawardy, who led AL and Republican coalition government tried to solve the problem on earliest basis. After getting approval of the bill of joint electorates in East Pakistan from the Cabinet, he himself moved the bill in the CAP. He delivered a long speech to convince the members that introduction of joint electorates was not negation of two nation theory.³⁷ He had mentioned in his two nation theory:

²⁵ MD. Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, *Emergence of Bangladesh and Role of Awami League* (Ghaziabad: Vikas Publishing House, 1982), 27.

²⁶ Badruddin Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh: Class Struggle in East Pakistan (1947-1958)* (Karachi: OUP, 2004), 246.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Bill to Amend the Government of India Act 1935, Cabinet Mtg, 14 November 1951, 200/CF/51, NDC, Islamabad.

²⁹ Cabinet Mtg, 14 November 1951, 200/CF/51, NDC, Islamabad.

³⁰ Cabinet Mtg, 17 November 1951, 200/CF/ 1951, NDC, Islamabad.

³¹ Cabinet Mtg, 28 February 1952, 200/CF/51, NDC, Islamabad.

³² Further discussion on said issue may be seen in next few pages.

³³ Cabinet Mtg, 28 February 1952, 200/CF/51, NDC, Islamabad.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cabinet Mtg, 18 March 1952, 200/CF/51, NDC, Islamabad.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Dawn*, 12 October 1956.

I had been an uncompromising protagonist of separate electorates when the Muslims were fighting for their rights in United India. But, after the creation of Pakistan, there was no such need...if anyone had right to ask for right of separate electorates or special representation it would be the Hindus. But they gave up this right and preferred the system of joint electorates...The East Pakistan Legislature voted solidly, in favour of joint electorates; the West Pakistan Legislature voted overwhelmingly in favour of separate electorates.

ML members of the CAP opposed the bill but it was passed from the CAP on 11 October 1956. It provided joint electorates in East Pakistan and separate electorates in West Pakistan.³⁸

After the fall of Suhrawardy's cabinet, new ML-Republican coalition cabinet of I. I. Chundrigar could remain in office only for few days due to reopening of electorate issue. The ML ministers of his Cabinet wanted to present the bill of separate electorates in the CAP. ML brought up the issue for discussion in the cabinet meeting on 22 October 1957. PM Chundrigar told the cabinet that a bill substituting separate electorates for joint electorates for the elections to the national and provincial assemblies with immediate effect would be moved in the National Assembly during its November 1957 session.³⁹ Republican and KSP ministers were not ready to approve the PM's idea, so the cabinet had delayed final decision on it. The Republican ministers started criticizing the move openly and the rift had come out of the Cabinet meetings. Because of this situation I. I. Chundrigar had to tender his resignation on 11 December 1957.⁴⁰ The next coalition Cabinet led by Feroz Khan Noon of the Republican Party carried on with the same adjustment, introduced by Suhrawardy's Cabinet.

V. THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE POLITICAL FORCES

This section of the article deals with the role of the three types of the federal Cabinets with regard to East Bengal's politics, political forces and the governments. There were three types of the cabinets during the period of this study i.e. single party cabinets, cabinet of All talents and coalition cabinets.

a. Single-Party Cabinets

The relations between the provincial government of East Bengal/East Pakistan and the federal government of Pakistan had remained an important matter of concern for the federal cabinets of the period under study. Liaquat Ali Khan's early years after independence observed good working relations between the federal government and the provincial government of East Bengal under Khawaja Nazimuddin.⁴¹ One view is that the conservative and landlord wing of ML was given priority over liberal leaders. Khawaja Nazimuddin was appointed as CM of East Bengal in place of more dominant Suhrawardy. Nazimuddin was considered more suitable as he was yes man. The trust of Jinnah and Liaquat in Nazimuddin as well as federal government's support to him were two key factors in strength of Nazimuddin's government. However, there is an opinion that Nazimuddin was not a popular figure in the province and was not a capable Chief Minister.⁴² The faith of PM Liaquat in Nazimuddin's government is identical in one of the letters of Liaquat Ali Khan, written to Suhrawardy in which he said:

I am afraid I cannot agree with you that Khawaja Nazimuddin is complacent about the position of the Hindu minority in East Bengal. His government had been doing everything possible to give protection to and safeguard the legitimate rights of the Hindu minority in East Bengal.⁴³

However, central government, in order to have control on East Bengal's government, asked Governor to appoint Nurul Amin as Chief Minister in September 1948 though Suhrawardy was more popular figure than him.⁴⁴ His government continued till the establishment of the new one after Provincial elections on 3rd April 1954. Suhrawardy's seat of Provincial Assembly was cancelled under PRODA. Amin's only opponent in his cabinet, Hamid ul Haq Choudhury, the Commerce Minister, was also dismissed from Cabinet in 1949 under PRODA. So with the interference of Centre, Amin's government continued which failed to settle many issues

³⁸ Ibid. and Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 44.

³⁹ Cabinet Mtg, 22 October 1957, 422/CF/57, NDC, Islamabad.

⁴⁰ From United Kingdom High Commissioner (UKHC) Karachi to Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) London, 11 December 1957, DO 35/8935, National Archives (NA), London and *Nawa-i-Waqt*, 16 December 1957.

⁴¹ Anwar Dil and Afia Dil, *Bengali Language Movement to Bangladesh* (Lahore: Ferozsons (pvt) Ltd., 1999), 75.

⁴² Farooq Ahmad Dar, *Jinnah's Pakistan: Formation and Challenges of a State*, (Karachi: OUP, 2014), 214.

⁴³ From Liaquat Ali Khan to Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, 13 July 1948, F.N. 23(21)-PMS/41, Government of Pakistan, Cabinet Secretariat Prime Minister's Secretariat Branch, Karachi, NDC, Islamabad.

⁴⁴ Hamid Yousuf, *Pakistan: A Study of Political Developments 1947-1997* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1999), 40.

including language issue and food shortage. It generally adopted totalitarian approach.⁴⁵ Due to all these reasons, the Muslim League lost elections in East Bengal entirely and United Front accomplished success. The prominent partners in the United Front were KSP and AL. They joined hands together to defeat the ML.⁴⁶ Muhammad Ali Bogra's Muslim League dominated Cabinet issued its policy statement two months after the announcement of the results of East Bengal's Elections 1954. It dismissed the results on the basis that Unity of Pakistan would be in danger in case of formation of government on the basis of election results.⁴⁷ This approach was undemocratic as it went against the decision of the masses.

Fazlul Huq, leader of United Front, formed ministry in East Bengal as CM in May 1954. His belligerent statements, shortly after his appointment as CM, while on his state visit to India created difficult situation for him. In one of his statements he expressed the hope "to remove the artificial barriers that had been created between the two Bengals as Bengali are bound by common language and heritage."⁴⁸ While taking up the same issue, Minister of law A. K. Brohi informed the Cabinet that his colleagues must read the statement made by Mr. Fazlul Huq, the CM of East Pakistan which he issued during his stay in Calcutta. It did a great deal of harm to Pakistan. He would like to draw the attention of his colleagues to section 123-A of the Pakistan Penal Code under which it was a criminal offence to make such a statement.⁴⁹ The cabinet decided that the Governor General should find out from the CM of East Bengal whether he had been correctly reported or not by the Indian newspapers; if the press reports were incorrect an immediate contradiction should be issued. At this stage, it was not necessary to bring section 123-A, of the Pakistan penal code.⁵⁰ PM sent a telegram to the CM with the approval of the Cabinet while drawing Mr. Fazlul Huq's attention to statements, made by him in Calcutta bearing on partition and the significance and ideology of Pakistan and relations between the two Bengal as reproduced in times of Indian and other Indian papers and morning news of May 7th and ascertain from him whether he has been correctly reported. If not correctly reported, the Cabinet requested the PM to ask the Governor:

you should impress upon him the necessity of issuing an immediate and unequivocal contradiction in view of the serious misgivings and dismay that these statements have created in Pakistan and the damage they are doing to our cause abroad.⁵¹

In response to this decision of the Cabinet Fazlul Huq denied to say such words and explained that his words were published in news after distortion.⁵² In the Cabinet meeting of 11th May 1956, PM informed the cabinet that the above telegram had been leaked out to the press. The cabinet decided that an enquiry should be made to investigate how this decision of the cabinet had been leaked out.⁵³

Huq's brief tenure as CM of East Bengal observed bad law and order situation. Riots were incited in Adamjee Jute Mills at Narayanganj and Karnafuli Paper Mills at Chittagong. It is mentioned that the riots were planted by industrialists who were fearful of their fate as they supported and financed the ML in 1954 elections whereas AL and UF were successful in the elections.⁵⁴ Besides it, Fazlul Huq could not develop cordial relations with the Federal Cabinet. His talks with the PM and the Cabinet on constitutional formula were failed badly. He was further not successful to convince the PM; during his visit to the capital that communists were not involved in the riots occurred in Adamjee Jute Mills. In fact, if action had been taken against communists on this issue two of his Ministers, Mujeeb ur Rehman of AL and Yusuf Ali of KSP, could come under scrutiny.⁵⁵ PM Bogra, while briefing the CAP about his talks with Huq, mentioned that Fazlul Huq had, "categorically declared that his ultimate goal was independence of East Bengal and he was prepared to concede foreign affairs, currency and defence to the central government only temporarily."⁵⁶ Due to all these factors Governor General dismissed the government of United Front even before one month of its inception.⁵⁷ Muhammad Ali Bogra's Cabinet remained silent or endorsed the Governor General's order of introduction of section 92-A in East Bengal,

⁴⁵ Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 57.

⁴⁶ After elections both these Parties came in open conflict on distribution of portfolios and other issues. Khalid bin Sayeed, *The Political System*, 85-86.

⁴⁷ Keith Callard, "The Political Stability of Pakistan" *Pacific Affairs* 29 (1956): 18.

⁴⁸ M. Rafique Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan, 1947-1958* (Islamabad: NIHCR: 1986), 122.

⁴⁹ Cabinet Mtg, 7th May 1954, 107/CF/54, NDC, Islamabad.

⁵⁰ Cabinet Decision, 7th May 1954, 107/CF/54, NDC, Islamabad and Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan*, 122.

⁵¹ Telegram Grade 1, No. 1907, 8th May 1954, From PM (Karachi) to Governor East Bengal, 107/CF/54, NDC, Islamabad.

⁵² Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan*, 122.

⁵³ Cabinet Mtg, 11th May 1956, 107/CF/54, NDC, Islamabad.

⁵⁴ Stanley Maron, "The Problem of East Pakistan," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XXVIII, 1955, 134.

⁵⁵ *Dawn* 15 May, 1954.

⁵⁶ *Dawn*, 29 June 1954.

⁵⁷ Bhuiyan, *Emergence of Bangladesh*, 31.

introduced on 30 May 1954. Provincial legislature was dismissed and press censorship was imposed.⁵⁸ Governor's rule continued from 30th May 1954 to August 1955. On the other side, on declaration of Governor's rule in East Bengal AL dissociated itself from the UF to get political benefits in future as Martial Law had to be ended.⁵⁹

Federal government was fearful of the strength of United Front (UF) government in East Bengal. Choudhury Khaliqzaman, the governor of East Bengal was also dismissed by the Governor General immediately after dismissal of UF government and Iskandar Mirza was appointed as new governor of East Bengal. Keith Collard has mentioned that Iskandar Mirza was appointed as Provincial Martial Law administrator.⁶⁰ He handled the issue sternly and arrested 1051 communists, including two ex-ministers of UF ministry, till June 1954.⁶¹ Governor's rule continued till the appointment of Cabinet of All talents at the centre. Federal Cabinet remained an important policy-making institution on East Bengal's politics during the period 1947-1955.

b. Cabinet of All Talents

Governor General Malik Ghulam Mohammad dismissed federal legislature on 24th October and formed a new Cabinet without Legislature which worked till September 1955. This Cabinet was named as the 'Cabinet of all Talents'⁶² by Muhammad Ali Bogra as he claimed that it had included all experts and qualified people in their respective fields. During this period GG, not the Cabinet, remained decision-making power with regard to East Bengal. PM Bogra, who had support of UF, appointed nominee of Fazlul Huq; Abu Hussain Sarkar, Minister of Health in the Cabinet, in January 1955.⁶³ It was in the same month that AL had been formally separated from UF.⁶⁴ Mr. Suhrawardy was taken in the Governor General's Cabinet in June 1955. This arrangement was done to bring East Bengali leadership for acceptance of parity formula,⁶⁵ integration of West Pakistan, division of offices of GG and PM between East and West Pakistan and regional autonomy for the two wings of Pakistan. He successfully brought AL leadership and public in favour of parity between both wings. However, UF and Krishak Sramik Party remained against this understanding.⁶⁶

PM Bogra had rivalry against Suhrawardy and he knew that he could remain in office if he would be elected as representative of East Pakistan in CAP. He signed an agreement with Fazlul Huq, if he would be elected as Bengal's representative, then 92-A could be lifted from Bengal. To materialize the agreement, Abu Hossain Sarkar was invited to form "United Front or Krishak Sramik Party's government in East Bengal only two weeks before second CAP's elections on 6 June 1955. Abu Hussain Sarkar was appointed as new CM. This deal opened the way for League-United Front coalition at the Centre in future.⁶⁷ The other opinion is that the Cabinet government was restored in East Pakistan under Abu Husain Sarkar majorly because CAP's elections were needed.⁶⁸ As per decision of Usif Patel vs Crown's case, new Constitution could not be prepared by the Governor General or by his Cabinet. It could only be prepared by the CAP. Governor General had to arrange for the elections of the CAP.⁶⁹

In East Bengal, the United Front had been split into two parties. Suhrawardy established a nation-wide political party with the title of Awami League. A.K. Fazlul Huq emerged as leader of the United Front. Both claimed that they had majority and were in position of instituting a new government.

c. Coalition Cabinets, 1955-1958

In result of the elections for second CAP, no political Party could win clear majority so coalition Cabinets were formed after it. Before the elections there was general speculations and according to some historians⁷⁰ there were clear signs of the appointment of Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy as the next PM but that had not happened. Some demands, raised by Suhrawardy such as to upgrade Bengali as national language, to

⁵⁸ Asaf Hussain, *Elite Politics in An Ideological State* (Kent Dawson and Sons Ltd., 1979), 71

⁵⁹ Lawrence Ziring, *Bangladesh: From Mujib to Arshad; An Interpretive Study* (Karachi: OUP, 1992), 24.

⁶⁰ Keith Callard, *Pakistan: A Political Study* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1958),

⁶¹ Afzal, *Political Parties*, 124-25.

⁶² Callard, *Pakistan: A Political Study*, 67 and *Dawn*, 31 October, 1954.

⁶³ Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 38.

⁶⁴ S. Mahmood Ali, *Understanding Bangladesh* (London: Hurst and Company, 2010), 18.

⁶⁵ Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 39.

⁶⁶ Bhuiyan, *Emergence of Bangladesh*, 34-35.

⁶⁷ Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 210.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁹ M. Rafique Afzal, *Pakistan: History and Politics 1947-1971* (Oxford: The University Press, 2001), 149.

⁷⁰ Safdar Mahmood, *Pakistan Divided; study of the factors and forces, leading to the breakup of Pakistan in 1971* (Lahore: Jang Publishers, 1993), 19. Ikramullah, *Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy*, 82-84.

grant provincial autonomy in Federal Republic of Pakistan and that 'joint geographical constituencies replace the confessionally determined and divisive separate electorates'⁷¹ were unacceptable for West Pakistani leadership. So after the elections of second CAP, Choudhury Mohammad Ali was invited to form the Cabinet in coalition with Huq's KSP. His appointment as PM was a matter of extra bitterness for East Pakistanis as this time the tradition, that if Governor General was from West Pakistan, PM must be from East Pakistan, was violated. Besides it, the appointment and contamination of UF ministry under Abu Hussain Sarkar further aggravated the situation.⁷² Huq was appointed as Home Minister and his party established government in East Pakistan under Abu Hussain Sarkar as CM of East Pakistan.

Political instability increased in East Pakistan after 1955. Ch. Mohammad Ali's government was established with the support of United Front. Fazlul Huq was appointed in the Central Cabinet and he also served as the provincial leader of his party, Abu Hussain Sarkar was appointed as Chief Minister of East Pakistan undemocratically. This arrangement had been done to reward the UF which gave approval to the 1956 Constitution unconditionally unlike most of the political parties of East Pakistan.⁷³ Sarkar announced after swearing in ceremony that release of political prisoners would be priority of his government.⁷⁴ The government of Sarkar was kept in power while not calling the session of the Provincial Legislature to take vote of confidence. Later Fazlul Huq was appointed as Governor of East Pakistan. PM mentioned that he intended to propose that Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq, Minister of interior be appointed as Governor of East Pakistan. It was clarified that under the new Constitution Mr. Fazlul Huq would cease to be a member of the NA as from the 23rd March, 1956⁷⁵ and he preferred to work as the Governor of East Pakistan.

UF government in East Pakistan had to face loss of support from some of its partners and it was uncertain of its strength in the legislature. Ultimately, the session of the legislative Assembly had to be convened to pass the budget on 20 May 1956. But on raising a question on point of order by an AL member, the speaker adjourned the Assembly sine die.⁷⁶ The federal Cabinet discussed the situation arising out of the action of the speaker of the legislative Assembly of East Pakistan in not allowing the budget to be presented and adjourning the assembly sine die. It reached to the conclusion that the action had been taken on a flimsy ground and this coupled with other circumstances showed that it was probably the result of a conspiracy between the speaker and certain leaders of the Awami League.⁷⁷ Though, under the constitution, the speaker had the power to adjourn the assembly, the adjournment in this case was an abuse of that power inasmuch as while the objection taken was that the time allowed for discussion of the budget was inadequate. The effect of the speaker's action was that there was no discussion at all. The fact that this conspiracy had become necessary also showed that the opposition did not have a majority in the house. It was agreed that the law Minister should examine the constitutional position and the cabinet would meet to discuss the matter subsequently.⁷⁸

Ch. Muhammad Ali's government (11 August 1955- 8 September 1956) used undemocratic measures to continue his coalition with the United Front. However, he took his cabinet in confidence on all important issues related to East Pakistan. In the Cabinet meeting of 25th May 1956, the PM read out a telegraph by the Governor of East Pakistan to the President, with a copy to the PM. He had written:

that after the ruling of the speaker there were no mean of passing the budget by 31st May even though the ministry enjoyed the confidence of the house that fresh elections could not be held until the requirements of Article 145 as regards the principle of election had been met, that the only course open was to issue a proclamation under Article 193 and that after the budget had been certified, the said proclamation under article 193 should be withdrawn and the assembly could then be called to pass a vote of no confidence in the speaker and consider and decide the principle of election under article 145.⁷⁹

The Governor also said that the ruling given by the speaker was ultra vires and was given in collusion with and at the instance of the Awami League, that the Awami leaguers had entered into a pact with political malcontents including *zamindars* (Landlords), it was further said that the *zamindars* had spent a lot of money in bribing the members of the provincial legislatures.⁸⁰

⁷¹ Ali, *Understanding Bangladesh*, 19.

⁷² Mahmood, *Pakistan Divided*, 19.

⁷³ Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 41.

⁷⁴ *Pakistan Observer*, 6 June 1955.

⁷⁵ Cabinet Mtg, 2nd March, 1956, 98/CF/5, NDC, Islamabad.

⁷⁶ *Dawn*, 23 May, 1956.

⁷⁷ Cabinet Mtg, 23rd May 1956, 38/CF/56, NDC, Islamabad.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Telegraph by the Governor of East Pakistan to the President, read and discussed in the Cabinet Mtg, 25th May 1956, 38/CF/56 NDC, Islamabad.

⁸⁰ Cabinet Mtg, 25th May 1956, 38/CF/56 NDC, Islamabad.

P.M. next read out a letter from Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy to the President in which he had claimed that the AL commanded a majority in the provincial assembly and should be called upon to form a ministry. It was agreed by the cabinet that there was no alternative but to suspend the government and issue proclamation under Article 193. The question was whether the suspension of the constitution should be total and include suspension of the ministry or it should be only in respect of a few powers like certification of the budget. It was generally agreed that it would constitute an undesirable precedent if under the circumstances the ministry continued in office and action was taken under article 193 merely to pass the budget.⁸¹ However, it was decided that proclamation under article 193 be issued immediately and it should include suspension of the ministry. The question whether on the revocation of the proclamation the old ministry would revive automatically or would it be necessary to form a new ministry, was left over for consideration later.

The next question discussed was whether the budget should be certified for the full financial year or only for a few months. As under article 83 the provincial assembly was bound to meet within two months of the appointment of the CM on the revocation of the proclamation it was decided that the budget should be certified for the period of three months only.⁸² On recommendation of the Cabinet, Governor delayed the budget session of East Pakistan Provincial Legislature for three months. Sarkar's ministry was dismissed under Centre's orders in 1955 temporarily while having mutual understanding and Governor approved budget provisionally. Later Sarkar was restored and had to call Assembly session for four days in May 1956 for passing the budget. One opinion is that Ch. Muhammad Ali did not appreciate this entire move but he had to accept these steps to secure his government.⁸³ On 1st June 1956, it was agreed by the Cabinet that the proclamation issued by the president under Article 193 of the government should be resolved with effect from today.⁸⁴ In this connection the Minister of Law read out an extract from a letter from Suhrawardy, leader of the opposition, addressed to the PM in which the former had suggested.

- a. The government of East Pakistan should be asked by the central government to convene a meeting of the provincial legislature within ten days of the restoration of parliamentary government in the province.
- b. The ministry had to be restored when the suspension of the assembly was withdrawn.
- c. It should be made clear that the central government was determined to establish democratic principles and that in doing so it would back any particular party.⁸⁵

The Minister of Law stated that none of the above proposals could be accepted. As regards the proposal, 'the constitution laid down that the assembly should be convened within two months of the restoration of parliamentary government, it was for the CM to advice the Governor and there was no need to issue any directions to the Governor in this regard.'⁸⁶

It was opined that the allegations, made by the leaders of the opposition, regarding federal government's interference in local politics were baseless. As regards the second proposal of the leader of Opposition, the minister for law stated that the decision to restore the ministry in East Pakistan was a political and not a legal decision. It was stated that the central government was determined to establish democratic principles. In reply to a question, minister for law stated that it was for the provincial governor to consider the legal implications of the revocation of the proclamation. However, the Cabinet decided that the central government would be glad to issue an advice to the governor if he might wish to have in this regard.⁸⁷

The PM said while discussing a case related to new rules framed by East Pakistan assembly that according to Minister of Law, the new rules were not only ultra vires but were devoid of any sense. It was suggested that the provincial government should be asked to withdraw such rules at once. The Cabinet agreed with the suggestion of the PM.⁸⁸ It was further decided by the Cabinet that the PM would take up this question with the provincial government during his forthcoming visit to East Pakistan.⁸⁹ He visited Decca in August 1956 and session of the Provincial Assembly was called. Here Ch. Muhammad Ali, while having approval of his Cabinet, asked Sarkar either to take vote of confidence from the Assembly or to resign. Till that time Sarkar government remained in office due to interference and support of the federal Cabinet whereas it did not have majority in the provincial legislature. He did not convene the provincial legislature even once during his thirteen

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Talukdar, *Memories of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy*, 94 and Callard, *Pakistan; A Political Study*, 31.

⁸⁴ Cabinet Mtg, 1st June, 1956, 247/CF/56, NDC, Islamabad.

⁸⁵ Letter of Suhrawardy to Ch. M. Ali, Discussed in the Cabinet Mtg, , 1st June, 1956, 247/CF/56, NDC, Islamabad.

⁸⁶ Cabinet Mtg, 1st June, 1956, 247/CF/56, NDC, Islamabad.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Cabinet Mtg, 27 April 1956 / 201/ CF / 56 NDC, Islamabad.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

months in office.⁹⁰ He and his Cabinet were haunted by the prospect of being thrown out of power if they convened a session of the provincial legislature. That's why even budget was not passed by the legislature. Secondly, East Bengal observed food shortage and then famine in 1954-55 due to mismanagement of the issue by the Sarkar government. The PM while briefing the Cabinet about his visit to East Pakistan said that he had fully discussed the political situation of East Pakistan with the provincial governor, Provincial Chief Minister and other political leaders. On the assessment of the situation, as emerging from the discussions, it was decided that a statement clarifying the position of the central government should be issued. The draft statement was read out by the PM and was approved by Cabinet with certain modifications.⁹¹

Finally, federal Cabinet decided not to support that government any more. Besides it, the Awami League and the ML joined hands to oust Sarkar government from the office in East Pakistan. Mirza invited Sarkar, Fazlul Huq and Suhrawardy in Karachi for talks.⁹² After which Sarkar had to resign and Awami League's ministry was formed under Aatur Rehman in September 1956.⁹³ The other view is that at the time of dismissal of Sarkar government, both Iskandar Mirza and Suhrawardy were in Decca and the dismissal had taken place on order of the President by the governor of East Bengal, Fazlul Huq. Aatur Rehman's ministry remained in power till March 1958.

Besides the change of government in East Bengal, Federal Cabinet was also changed. On 12 September 1956, new coalition government of AL and Republican Party was formed after observing crisis in the provinces. Second reason for the resignation of Ch. M. Ali was formation of Republican Party from within the ML undemocratically.⁹⁴ PM Suhrawardy said, while addressing to the first meeting of the Cabinet that he placed the stability and integrity of Pakistan above everything else and he would be ruthless where the interests of Pakistan were concerned. He further said:

There had been in the past some tension between the two wings of the country. There were certain problems on which the two wings did not see eye to eye with each other. It would be the endeavor of his government to remove this tension to cement the bonds of unity between the two wings. We should not forget that we were one country and one nation. We were all Pakistanis. Unfortunately, geographically, we were separated from each other but psychologically, there should be no gap between the two wings. We should make every effort to bring them closer and closer together in action, in ideas and to see that the happiness, welfare and progress of both wings were equally secured. We must have a clean administration and clean politics; there should be no favouritism towards friends or victimization of foes.⁹⁵

Suhrawardy's Cabinet reversed some decisions of the previous Cabinet. The Cabinet of Ch. Muhammad Ali took decision on issue of political prisoners. PM Ali read out a telegram from the CM of East Pakistan in which he said that his government had decided to release about seventy security prisoners in order to obtain the support of certain political groups. The cabinet considered it as an imprudent step. The PM said that it was a serious matter as it could affect the security of the state. The Constitution did not permit the central government to direct the provincial governor in this regard. However, the Cabinet issued direction to the provincial governor under article 126 to re-arrest the same persons.⁹⁶ Meanwhile, the government was changed and the new Cabinet under PM Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy reversed the decision of the previous Cabinet with regard to the release of the political prisoners. It was stated that the provincial government was perfectly all right in its step to release the prisoners and the central government did not have authority to issue article 126, so that direction of the federal government must be withdrawn. Surveillance of such persons could be done by the central government through the director of intelligence decision. The above article was withdrawn.⁹⁷

Overall, good working relations prevailed between the federal Cabinet and the provincial government of East Pakistan during premiership of Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy (1956-October 1957) as both were of AL led governments. Federal government had given open hand to Ata ministry to handle with the provincial problems without any kind of involvement of the federal cabinet. Large state funds were given to East Pakistan to develop its infrastructure and the grant of import license was readjusted in favour of businessmen from East Pakistan.⁹⁸ It was, in fact, the only regime during first parliamentary period which was free from bitterness

⁹⁰ Kamruddin Ahmed, *A Socio-Political History of Bengal* (Dhaka: np, 1995), 123.

⁹¹ Cabinet Mtg, 23rd August 1956, 38/CF/56, NDC, Islamabad.

⁹² Ali, *Understanding Bangladesh*, 20.

⁹³ Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, 235 and Bhuiyan, *Emergence of Bangladesh*, 38. This government could also not solve the problem of food shortage, later famine.

⁹⁴ Craig Baxter, *From Martial Law to Martial Law* (Lahore: Vangaurd, 1985), 356.

⁹⁵ Cabinet Mtg, 12 September 1956, 391 / CF / 56, NDC, Islamabad.

⁹⁶ Cabinet Mtg, 25th May 1956 / 239 / GF /56 NDC, Islamabad.

⁹⁷ Cabinet Mtg, 19 December 1956, 239/CF/56, NDC, Islamabad.

⁹⁸ Talukdar Muniruzaman, "Group Interests in Pakistan Politics, 1947-1958" *Pacific Affairs* 39 (Spring-Summer 1966): 90 and Husain, *Elite Politics*, 118.

between the two wings.⁹⁹ However, the demand of joint electorates from Atta ministry created problem for Suhrawardy led Cabinet as West Pakistan decided in favour of separate electorates. Fortunately coalition Cabinet of Suhrawardy came to a compromise on this issue and decided in favour of demanded modes of elections in both the wings of Pakistan.¹⁰⁰ Besides it, AL's president Bhashani did everything to destabilize Atta ministry by adopting extreme positions on the issue of regional autonomy. He even intended to go on hunger strike.¹⁰¹ In April 1956, the East Pakistan Legislature passed a resolution demanding full provincial autonomy. On this move, Suhrawardy found him in a difficult position. His Interior Minister Ghulam Ali Talpur said relentlessly that East Pakistan resolution was threat to the unity of Pakistan and must be smashed.¹⁰² The division of Suhrawardy's Cabinet became public but Suhrawardy said while showing patience that no one must be misled as it was only a political stunt and a slogan.¹⁰³ He publically denounced the resolution. The alliance of Bhashani, Fazlul Huq and Iskandar Mirza against Suhrawardy proved successful and his days in the government were numbered. He had to resign under the threat of dismissal.¹⁰⁴

The next coalition government was formed by four political parties; ML, Republican Party, Krishak Sramik Party (KSP) and Nizam-i-Islam Party (NIP), led by the ML under the premiership of Ibrahim Ismail Chundrigar on 18 October 1957. PM I.I. Chundrigar said in his first address to the first meeting of the Cabinet that he was a refugee for both East and West Pakistan. His main concern would be to win over the people of East Pakistan. It was not his intention to reduce the number of ministers from East Pakistan in the cabinet. Some posts had been kept vacant for East Pakistani ministers and these would be filled in as soon as possible.¹⁰⁵ However, huge difference of opinion among coalition partners brought the fate of this Cabinet to an end on December 11, 1957. It was dissolved within two months because of severe disagreement on the issue of electorates.

During period of the last Cabinet under Malik Feroz Khan Noon, Krishak Sramik Party gave tough time to the provincial government of Ataur Rehman. The firm majority of Atta government was crumbling in East Pakistan's legislature. The heavy taxation which was proposed in the Bill gave opportunity to the Krishak Sramik Party to pressurize the Awami League government. The Atta ministry, under pressure, had to circulate the Bill for getting public opinion. The Governor, Fazlul Huq (founder of Krishak Sramik Party) thought that it was rejection of the bill, so he dismissed Awami League coalition ministry, In spite of the instructions from the federal government to avoid any impression of partisanship.¹⁰⁶ Krishak Sramik Party's ministry was formed under Abu Hossain Sarkar.

On receiving this news, Federal Cabinet held an immediate meeting to discuss the issue. After discussion, Cabinet of Noon gave the right of dismissal of the Governor to the President.¹⁰⁷ The President under the decision of the Cabinet dismissed Governor Fazlul Huq and appointed new acting Governor. Safdar Mahmood had claimed that Suhrawardy pressurized federal Cabinet to dismiss Governor Fazlul Huq.¹⁰⁸ The new Governor was Chief Secretary of the Sindh government who under Noon's supervision dismissed Sarkar's government even before formation and recalled Ata ur Rehman's government. Awami League's support was crucial for existence of Noon's government, so he was trying to work with Awami League government in East Pakistan. Ata ur Rehman's government could not get vote of confidence from the legislature, Sarkar's government was recalled which, too, could not get vote of confidence. Federal Cabinet took action and President's rule was imposed which continued for two months. After two months, in May 1958, Ata was once again called but political conditions were worsened even more and during one of the fighting's in provincial legislature deputy speaker got severe wounds, who later on died.¹⁰⁹ CM of East Pakistan, in order to pass the Budget, appointed fifty 'sergeants at arm' who did not permit the speaker to leave his office so to attend the Assembly session. The deputy speaker was brought in to hold the session but was severely wounded by

⁹⁹ Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 46.

¹⁰⁰ Ali, *Understanding Bangladesh*, 21.

¹⁰¹ Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, 45.

¹⁰² *Dawn* April 5, 1957.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, April 7, 1957.

¹⁰⁴ Dil, *Bengali Language*, 101-102.

¹⁰⁵ Cabinet Mtg, 18th October 1957, 405 / CF/57, NDC, Islamabad.

¹⁰⁶ K. K. Aziz, *Party Politics in Pakistan, 1947-1958* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1976), 43.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Mahmood, *Pakistan Divided*, 22.

¹⁰⁹ Hasan Askari Rizvi, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan 1947-1986*, (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1986), 83.

opposition members.¹¹⁰ While using the plea of worst political circumstances, Iskandar Mirza invited Ayub Khan to impose Martial in Pakistan on 8 October 1958

VI. CONCLUSION

During first parliamentary period, federal Cabinet took undue interest in politics of various provinces, including East Bengal/Pakistan. This great interest had not been resulted in positive development always. Many issues such as defense of East Pakistan were never settled, though brought up for discussion, in the Cabinet meetings, time and again. Some other issues including status of Bengali language, electorate issue and membership of central legislature were just delayed to be settled and in most of the cases pro-West Pakistan approach was followed. Unfortunately, all federal cabinets except of Husain Shaheed Suhrawardy were West Pakistani dominated cabinets. Ministers in all such Cabinets always neglected rights of and the true picture of East Pakistan. In some cases, Governor General and later President also played active role to manipulate East Pakistan's politics. Governor General Malik Ghulam Mohammad with his inner Cabinet in place of the Federal Cabinet started taking decisions regarding provincial government and politics during 1954-55. PM Noon's cabinet itself gave the right of dismissal of government of East Pakistan to the President which he used. This comparative analysis of the three types of Cabinets of the first period i.e single party Cabinets (1947-54), Governor General's Cabinet (1954-1955) and Coalition Cabinets (1955-1958) shows that Centre gradually became stronger than provincial governments and its hold on provincial politics gradually increased, which resulted in aggravating the situation only and was harmful for democracy.

¹¹⁰ *The Times London*, 26 September, 1958.