

CHAPTER VI

NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY

The circumstances leading to the emergence of the National Awami Party have already been partly recounted earlier. In the fourth chapter it was shown that the differences between Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani on the issues of regional autonomy for the province of East Pakistan and foreign policy led the latter to leave the Awami League with his followers and initiate the move that brought about the formation of the National Awami Party. It was also shown that the new party was created on 25 July 1957 in Dacca at what was described as a two-day All-Pakistan Democratic Workers' Convention.

A. FORMATION, OBJECTS AND PROGRAM

Presided by Maulana Bhashani who formally opened it with a scathing criticism of the then ruling Awami League headed by Suhrawardy for its adherence to military pacts and its failure to carry out the twenty-one-point program, the convention was reportedly attended by some eight hundred delegates from East Pakistan and one hundred from West Pakistan. Notable among the West Pakistan delegates were Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (leader of the Khudai Khidmatgar Organization), Khan Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai (leader of the Anjuman-e-Watan), Mian Iftikharuddin (leader of the Azad Pakistan Party), G. M. Syed (leader of the Sind Awami Mahaz) and Mahmudul Huq Usmani (former General Secretary of the Awami League). Aside from Maulana Bhashani, the leading delegates from East Pakistan were Mahmud Ali (Secretary General of the Ganatantri Dal and provincial minister), Haji Muhammad Danesh (President of the Ganatantri Dal), Akbar Ali Akhund, Sardar Fazlur Karim, Deven Das, Yar Mohammad Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, Mirza Ghulam Hafiz, Dewan Mahbub Ali, Ali Ohad and Mohammad Toha. These politicians were actually the prominent leaders of

the new party. They were also members of the forty-man Subjects Committee which approved the draft constitution and was assigned the mission of setting up the party firmly in the two wings of the country.¹

As stated in Chapter IV, pro-Awami League elements attempted to disrupt the convention, as a result of which a dozen persons including Mian Iftikharuddin were injured. But in spite of this the convention went on with its business, a part of which was the passage of resolutions. One of the resolutions passed concerned the convention's decision to form the new party. It was moved by Yar Mohammad Khan and seconded by Mohammad Toha. Better quoted than summarized, the resolution is given below.

This Convention of the representatives of democratic parties and groups and of all democratic elements from both the wings of Pakistan having reviewed the political, economic and social condition within the country and having realised the need for integrity of democratic forces within the country in order to consolidate the people of Pakistan into one strong and independent nation free from evils of communalism and provincialism, exploitation and imperialism, to ameliorate the economic conditions of the people and to establish by constitutional means democracy in the country and autonomy in the two wings of Pakistan hereby resolves to form a new party, dedicated to Pakistan and its people, and known as Pakistan National Awami Party.²

The National Awami Party was to function with headquarters at Karachi and a sub-office at Dacca. Its constitution had two main parts, one dealing on aims and objects and the other on organizational structure of the party.

The party was pledged to preserve the independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan. It would seek to establish through constitutional and peaceful means a democratic and social system free from foreign control and devoid of communal differences, oppression and exploitation. It would strive for equality of all the people be-

fore the law and a guarantee of their rights to employment, shelter, education, civil liberty and pursuit of religion. It would endeavor to promote patriotism among them and exert effort to weld the inhabitants of both East and West Pakistan "into one mighty Pakistani nation."³

The party envisaged the development of Pakistan into a welfare federal state on the basis of fully autonomous units of East and West Pakistan. Except defense, foreign affairs and currency which would be the responsibility of the Central Government, all other subjects were to be vested with the governments of East and West Pakistan. The provinces and other political subdivisions of the West Wing which had all been integrated into a single unit were to be reconstituted into autonomous provinces on the basis of cultural and linguistic homogeneity and geographical contiguity. These autonomous provinces would then form themselves into a Zonal Federation of West Pakistan, in the legislature of which no one province was to have more seats than the others put together, for the administration of such matters as would be agreed upon by the provinces. The party also committed itself to uphold the parliamentary form of democratic government and guarantee fair and free elections on the basis of joint electorate, universal adult franchise and direct voting.⁴

The items on the program⁵ of the National Awami Party were the following: (1) separation of the judicial from the executive branch of the government; (2) enforcement of such human rights as embodied in the United Nations Charter; (3) introduction of free and compulsory primary education, reasonable salaries for primary school teachers, expansion of all educational institutions, inexpensive education and use of local languages as media of instruction; (4) liberalization of education and abolition of all things aimed at the regimentation and control of intellectual development; (5) improvement of public health and sanitation; (6) cultural and social uplift particularly of

the people living in the rural areas; (7) freedom of expression, movement, association, etc.; (8) repeal of all repressive laws; (9) rehabilitation of those who had been suffering by reason of their involvement in the struggle for freedom and democracy and adoption of measures to honor those who died in the service of the nation; (10) grant to women of such political, economic and social rights as those being enjoyed by men; (11) adoption of social security measures; (12) full implementation of Urdu and Bengali as state languages and state assistance for the growth of other languages of Pakistan; (13) support for the people of Kashmir's right to self-determination and establishment of a democratic administration of Azad Kashmir.

The economic aspect of the party's program envisaged self-sufficiency in food and balanced economy. This called for plans and immediate execution of those plans for the prevention of floods and famines, conservation and reclamation of lands, bringing uncommanded lands under cultivation, promotion by the state of large-scale agricultural cooperatives, conservation and development of forest resources and providing the peasantry with such assistance as would make for agricultural development. Similarly, rapid industrialization was to be undertaken. In this respect East and West Pakistan were to have equal and fair opportunity for development. Priority was to be given to basic and heavy industries, the responsibility for the establishment of which lay in the state. Local industries were to be given assistance and protection from foreign competition, cottage industries were to be promoted and encouraged, and foreign enterprises and capital were to be controlled.⁶

Inherent in the economic development of the country was the institution of land reforms. In East Pakistan the zamindari system was to be abolished without compensation and the lands thus expropriated were to be distri-

buted to the tillers, priority being given to the landless and poor peasants. For the sake of those whose lands were to be expropriated appropriate rehabilitation measures were to be adopted. The certificate procedure was to be done away with, the burden of rentals and taxes was to be lessened, the share-cropping system was to be modified and steps to relieve the peasants from indebtedness were to be taken. The jute trade was to be nationalized and the peasants were to be guaranteed the payment of a reasonable price of jute, tobacco, sugar cane and other cash crops. In West Pakistan, the minimum acreage to be allotted to the peasants was such as would yield at least an income of Rs. 1,200 a year. For this purpose all crown lands were to be distributed among them and zamindaris with a yearly income of over Rs. 12,000 were to be expropriated with compensation. All jagirdari rights were to be nullified without compensation, but the jagirdar whose income from all sources was less than Rs. 1,200 per year was, on termination of his jagir, to receive so much amount of money as was equivalent to the net income thereof for five years. A uniform revenue system was to be introduced and tenancy rights were to be amply protected.⁷

To prevent industrial unrest and pave the way for industrial growth labor conditions were to be improved. All laborers were to have a fixed minimum wage based on cost of living. They were to be provided with proper housing, medical aid, bonuses and social insurance. Women workers were to be granted maternity leave and other benefits. The workers were to have the right to form unions, strike and collective bargaining. Provisions were to be made for their cultural development and the International Labor Organization conventions were to be observed for their welfare. Existing labor laws were to be liberalized.⁸

The National Awami Party looked forward to giving the country a clean and efficient administration. It vowed to uproot corruption and other ills afflicting the govern-

mental machinery. It promised to take steps to prevent officials from getting involved in political and factional strife. Similarly, measures were to be adopted with a view to eliminating such social ills as prostitution, gambling and the like.⁹

On foreign policy, the party aimed at pursuing the kind that would strengthen Pakistan's independence, enhance her international prestige, and promote world peace. To attain its aim the party would rescind all the military pacts and alliances entered into by the government and live up to a policy of non-alignment or neutralism. The party would work for international peace and brotherhood and the right of self-determination of all peoples under colonial or semi-colonial status. It would seek for friendly and equal relations with all countries particularly those of Muslims as well as those of Asia and Africa.¹⁰

It may be interesting to observe that the aims and program of the National Awami Party did not have anything whatsoever of the sort of Islamic content that was invariably found in varying degrees in those of other political parties. Unlike the Awami League, in particular, which was non-communal but nevertheless committed to the enactment of only such laws as were not violative of the Quran and Sunnah, the National Awami Party was not only non-denominational but silent as regards the observance of Islamic principles, injunctions, and the like. As a matter of fact, its constitution guaranteed religious freedom and laid stress on equality of all the people before the law regardless of geographic considerations, religious beliefs, caste, community, race and sex. The National Awami Party, therefore, may be regarded as a political organization with a doctrine that was affected with a secular character. Its program was quite radical and progressive, too. It sought to abolish the feudalistic nature of the country's economy by replacing landlordism with what may be

called peasant-ownership. Instead of sticking to the practice of individual farming the party would want to develop the cooperative kind of agricultural system.

In industry the hand of the state, as envisioned by the party, would be much in evidence. In accordance with its plan for rapid industrialization not only would the state be responsible for the establishment of heavy and extractive industries but be made to assist and encourage existing ones. Labor rights were likewise to be realized through state intervention and initiative.

One wonders, however, if the program of the National Awami Party was not impractical. In the first place, did the party expect to stay in power long enough to carry out such an ambitious program? Rapid industrialization which, according to the party planners, would be undertaken hand in hand with agricultural development--and with equal and fair opportunity for the East and West Wings at that--certainly cannot be accomplished overnight. It took the People's Republic of China about twenty years to transform the country from a backward state into what may be called the jump-off stage of mass production. This was made possible because of the availability of adequate and varied natural resources, industrial capacity and technological know-how, and such other equally important factor as an efficient socio-political system made all the more workable by a strong, competent and determined leadership. Similarly, the U. S. S. R. became industrialized only after about the same period and because of the presence of practically the same such factors as had enabled China to industrialize rapidly. In the process of industrial development the Soviet Union had to establish priorities. The national economic policy concentrated on the building of heavy industries instead of those for consumers' goods. In short, the policy was "machinery first before butter." The point being driven at is whether the National Awami Party believed it could keep itself in power for quite

a time once that is achieved and, if so, whether it thought it would be strong enough to channel the country's resources, which were by no means unlimited in quantity and kind, under the democratic and social system it sought to build and the state structure it proposed to lay out. The state structure envisaged a weak Center, the national government being responsible only for defense, currency and foreign affairs. All other matters were to fall under the jurisdiction of the federating units or provinces--one in East Pakistan and six (Punjab and Bahawalpur, Sind and Khairpur, Federal Capital, Kalat Division, Quetta Division, and North-West Frontier Province including the tribal areas and states) in West Pakistan. Therefore, industrialization would become decentralized as responsibility thereof would rest on the federating units. As a consequence, resources and efforts would likely be dissipated and the provinces would tend to carry out industrialization and other nation building tasks on a to-each-its-own basis. Like the program of the Pakistan Muslim League which was too ambitious to be feasible, therefore, the National Awami Party's line of action was too unrealistic, if not fantastic, to serve as a genuine and reliable basis of hopes for the nation's redemption from social and economic thralldom.

The organizational structure of the party had only a slight variation from those of other political parties. While in other parties the President nominated the members of the Working or Executive Committee, in the National Awami Party it was the National Council which elected them. In the former no limitation was imposed as to the re-election of office-bearers to the posts they had been occupying; in the latter, an office-bearer was not eligible for re-election to the office he had held for more than two consecutive terms. And, finally, the party structure was different from that of others with regard to the composition of the central council. The Pakistan Muslim League

Council, for example, did not observe initially the parity of representation between East and West Pakistan. The Council of the National Awami Party, on the other hand, was composed of 105 members each from both wings of the country, 100 of whom were elected respectively by the two regional councils. The Regional Council for West Pakistan was made up of six provincial councils corresponding to the six autonomous provincial units which the party envisioned on the basis of language. The various councils of the Muslim League in West Pakistan were not organized along linguistic lines.¹¹

The National Awami Party was formed by the merger of Maulana Bhashani's followers including a number of Democratic Youth Leaguers and former members of the Awami League, the Ganatantri Dal and the Pakistan National Party. Our account of the National Awami Party would therefore be more complete with an examination of the two political parties that were integrated into it--the Ganatantri Dal and Pakistan National Party.¹²

B. COMPONENTS

Ganatantri Dal

In East Pakistan the emergence of a secular and non-communal political party with a radical economic program, like the Ganatantri Dal, could not have come as a surprise. The socio-economic order there was essentially one in which the "haves" constituted only a small fraction of the population while the "have-nots" formed the mass of the inhabitants. The gap between them was conspicuous by its dimension. Famine was a chronic problem but apparently no serious attention or lasting solution was given to it. This could only result in discontent of the existing order and a desire to replace it by another with a radical character. The plutocrats wielded the political power but before long there emerged and developed a middle class which, in the natural course of things, acted to wrest that power

from them. Its members, however, had had no unanimity of attitude with regard to the place of religion or Islam in political life. There were those who liked to give it a dominant role, others desired only a modest place for it, and still others wanted nothing of it at all. This was why their respective political parties took on an Islamist, moderate or secularist nature. Another consideration was that East Pakistan's population had a large Hindu minority. For every five persons in the East Wing one was a Hindu. In pre-Partition times it was the Hindu, not the Muslim, who called the shot, be it economic or political, educational or what not. With the achievement of Pakistan, however, Hindu hegemony disappeared although from a political viewpoint the Hindu segment of the population was still too much of a factor to be ignored. To these and other conditions were inevitably drawn the consciousness of the young elements of East Pakistani Muslims and before long they joined their elders in the exciting game called politics.

In April 1952, just two months after the heat and flurry generated by the language movement had subsided, a group of young East Pakistanis sounded a call for the formation of a non-communal political party with an economic program. This group included Mahmud Ali, Aftab Ali, Kamruddin Ahmad, and Kafiluddin Choudhury.¹³ They were all leftists, perhaps not in the sense of being socialistic according to the western definition but in the sense that they wanted change, an overhauling of the existing socio-economic order.

Things began to assume a more definite form when the group and some other like-minded young men took up the preliminaries on the formation of just such a political party. It was suggested that the organization should be patterned after the British Labour Party. The idea was well taken but when the mechanics of the party organization was being spelled out the group found itself without any unanimity

of mind. Aftab Ali was said to have proposed that the party should have a council, fifty per cent of the strength of which should be trade unionists. Some of the members of the group, however, particularly those who were not identified with trade unionism, felt that the proposition was not without a serious flaw. With fifty per cent of the total membership of the proposed party council coming from the trade union sector the inevitable result, so it was feared, would be the control of the organization by the trade unionists as against all other elements of the party. Consequently, the proposition did not hold water. Aftab Ali, the proponent, apparently felt that the rejection of the proposition was quite a vital matter and broke away from the group.¹⁴ In any case, the remaining members of the group decided to call a convention at which a political party would be formally constituted.

Delegates from nine districts of the province trooped to Dacca to attend the three-day convention which was inaugurated on 17 January 1953 at the Armanitola Maidan with all the necessary fanfare and publicity. Heading the Reception Committee was Dewan Mahbub Ali. He was also the Convener. The convention was graced by the presence of some politicians from West Pakistan, like Mian Iftikharuddin and Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan, two of the top leaders of the secular, non-communal, and socialistic-oriented Azad Pakistan Party.¹⁵

The convention was presided by Dabirul Islam Chaudhury and, after the formal announcement of the formation of the Ganatantri Dal (Democratic Party), took up other business. A Working Committee of twenty-one members was set up and the office-bearers were elected. Haji Muhammad Danesh was elected President, Mahmud Ali became the General Secretary and Mirza Ghulam Hafiz was designated as the Treasurer of the party.¹⁶

Initially, the Ganatantri Dal was to operate only in East Pakistan. But at a later stage when conditions war-

ranted it would convert itself into a national political party. In anticipation of this the Working Committee was given the authority to enter into negotiations with the Azad Pakistan Party with a view to setting up a joint party machinery which would formulate policies and take decisions on matters affected with an all-Pakistan character.¹⁷ But why with the Azad Pakistan Party? The answer is quite evident. The Ganatantri Dal and the Azad Pakistan Party had similar aims and objects. Their programs were practically the same and their ideological orientations were identical. It was not accidental that Mian Iftikharuddin and Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan were the guest speakers on the occasion of the Ganatantri Dal's founding.

The convention adopted a manifesto which not unexpectedly reflected the new party leaders' critical view of the ruling Muslim League. The Muslim League was accused of helping some rich people to grow richer and not tolerating the existence of any opposition. The Muslim League Government, it was asserted, was incapable and made a "mess of everything."¹⁸ "The Muslim League regime had completely accepted slavery of the British capital"¹⁹ and had shown "enthusiasm to keep Pakistan included in the Sterling Bloc to preserve the interests of imperialism."²⁰ The ruling party, it was further claimed, failed to adopt a definite policy with regard to the liberation movements in the Middle East and the Far East.²¹ And, finally, it was blamed for the fact that Pakistan was still feudalistic, that the abolition of zamindaris with compensation did not solve at all the peasant problems and that the government had not taken any step with a view to giving lands to the tillers of the soil. In view of all this, the party leaders concluded, "a great need to change the present social, political and economic structure of the country" was in order. They pledged to "wage war against imperialism and feudalism."²²

The points of the manifesto were (1) the difficulties

being encountered by jute growers and the manipulation by foreign capitalists and their brokers to keep prices low, (2) "calamitous" condition under which laborers were living, (3) setbacks in education for boys and girls because of adherence to an imperialistic education policy, (4) the Muslim League authorities' use of "religion as their armour for propagation among the unconscious illiterate public for the reactionary policy,"²³ (5) dissolution of the present Constituent Assembly and its reconstitution by adult franchise, (6) acceptance of the principle of joint electoral system in the country, (7) press and individual freedom and no detention without trial, (8) Bengali as one of the state languages, (9) East Pakistan as an "autonomous unit for military and economic affairs," (10) distribution of land among the landless laborers, and (11) compulsory military training.²⁴

The Ganatantri Dal was anti-West. It was also anti-imperialist. It expressed sympathy for the wars of national liberation in Asia and for the peasants in East Pakistan who were allegedly groaning under an oppressive system of land tenure. Mahmud Ali, in a personal interview with the writer, stressed two fundamental aspects of his party's economic program: nationalization of the major forces of production and equitable distribution of wealth. Are all these sufficient to lead one to the earnest conviction that the Ganatantri Dal was socialistic or leftist? Were its leading members for a socialist system or were merely liberal democrats? Mahmud Ali would not say the party was socialistic or leftist. He did say, however, that it was secular and aimed at democracy. It had an economic program which, if we were to use the words of Dewan Mahbub Ali, the Convener, would "enable every citizen of Pakistan to get his share in the prosperity of the country."²⁵

The party adopted a constitution which was more or less of the same pattern as that of other parties. It had

a banner which was half red and half blue. On the red portion was the figure of a plow and on the blue section were three stars. Red stood for progress and the plow signified the agricultural economy of the country. Blue symbolized peace and the achievement of the aims of the party by peaceful and constitutional means. The three stars suggested the unity of interest among the peasantry, working class and national bourgeoisie (middle class) which the party sought to represent and fight for.²⁶

It should be noted that the convention that occasioned the formation of the party was just the first phase of what may be called its checkered career. Up to this point it had nothing but a paper existence which it had yet to translate into more concrete terms. Steps were thus taken to enrol members and build a mass base which, among others, meant campaigning throughout the breadth and depth of the province. This had to be undertaken if the party should be "sold" at all to the public. Things, however, were not easy for the party. Its means were so limited that it could not grow as rapidly and strongly as desired. Perhaps because of its radical outlook which was more close to that of the Communist Party than any other, the Ganatantri Dal party-men became suspect, like the Communists, in the eyes especially of the bureaucrats. And as subsequent events showed, they were continually harassed by arrests and imprisonments and their offices unceremoniously searched, ransacked or sealed.²⁷

The Ganatantri Dal joined the United Front and won several seats in the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly.²⁸ But, with the imposition of Governor's rule in the province shortly after the formation of the United Front ministry headed by A. K. Fazlul Huq, there followed the arrest of political workers and leaders of the United Front. These included almost if not all the Ganatantri Dal leaders as well as a sizable number of its workers. They were detained in jail, to languish therein for about fourteen

months without trial. Its offices were forced open and party documents, literature and other papers were carted away or otherwise confiscated and taken to a place or places only the police perhaps knew. Then, after Governor's rule was lifted and parliamentary government was once more restored, they were released from detention and thus were enabled to resume their political activities.²⁹

As a component of the United Front the Ganatantri Dal gave it support in the province as well as at the Center. Chaudhri Mohammad Ali succeeded in forming a government at the Center because he was able to get the Muslim League and the United Front into a coalition. The strength of the United Front at the Center during this time was made up not only of its own MCA's (Member, Constituent Assembly) but also those of the non-Muslim parties and the Ganatantri Dal. And so long as the United Front gave no indication of acts of commission or omission against the twenty-one-point program which it was committed to carry out and to which the Ganatantri Dal was a signatory the latter had no reason to withhold support from it.³⁰ Thus, it was only when the United Front was felt to be remiss in its commitment that the Ganatantri Dal severed its ties with it. Two items of the twenty-one-point program were the release of political prisoners and the repeal of the Public Safety Acts in East Pakistan. But after several months in power in the province the United Front had not done anything about them, which was why the Ganatantri Dal --keenly interested in these items--felt constrained to break away from the United Front in December 1955.³¹

With the fall of the Sarkar Ministry in 1956 and the consequent installation of the Aatur Rahman Khan Cabinet, the Ganatantri Dal found an opportunity to be represented in the provincial government of East Pakistan. Mahmud Ali was designated as one of the provincial ministers. From then on the party tided itself along the political current and it was not until July 1957 when a significant turn in

its existence occurred. At its three-day (21-23 July) Council meeting in Barisal, the party decided that it would not only send delegates to the All-Pakistan Democratic Workers' Convention but merge with the projected National Awami Party. Ganatantri Dal Vice-President Mirza Ghulam Hafiz, however, did not like the party to be amalgamated and so he and his adherents broke away from it.³²

With its merger with the National Awami Party the Ganatantri Dal slipped into anonymity and the party that started with a bang ended with a whimper.

Pakistan National Party

For an understanding of the emergence of the Pakistan National Party it may be well for us to remember that with the coming into force of the Pakistan Constitution on 23 March 1956 the political pot began to simmer. Political parties looked forward to the national and provincial elections and, as a consequence, became preoccupied with maneuverings inside and outside the Legislative Halls at the Center and in the provinces. Shifting alignments, plots and counter-plots, forging alliances or mergers were ventured upon in order that in the political free-for-all which was being anticipated they would reap the laurels of victory and thus survive the test of strength which it really was supposed to be. To the small and weak political parties it was clear that unless they pooled their forces their chances in the elections--and hopes for survival--were indeed very slim if at all. Which points out why representatives of six small parties in West Pakistan met in Lahore and after almost a week of deliberations agreed on 9 September 1956 upon the amalgamation of their organizations into a new party, the Pakistan National Party.³³ These six organizations were the Azad Pakistan Party, of the Punjab, the Sind Awami Mahaz, the Sind Hari Committee, the Ustaman Gul of Kalat, the Wrore Pakhtoon of Baluchistan, and the Khudai Khidmatgar of the North-

West Frontier Province. Formal announcement of the new party's formation, however, was deferred to 17-18 November 1956 when the new party had a conference.³⁴

The Pakistan National Party held its first convention in Lahore from 30 November to 2 December 1956. It was presided by Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, the Sind Awami Mahaz leader, and attended by some one hundred delegates and three hundred observers. Prominent among those who attended were Khan Amir Mohammad Khan (President of the former Khudai Khidmatgar Organization which had been banned), Khan Abdul Wali Khan (son of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan), Abdul Rahman Kurd (a leading member of the Ustaman Gul), and Syed Mohammad Kaswar Gardezi (a leading member of the Azad Pakistan Party).³⁵ There were several important matters decided on in the three-day convention. The new party's constitution and program were adopted, a six-man Organizing Committee was constituted and a number of resolutions was passed.

As expressed in its constitution the Pakistan National Party was non-communal and open to all citizens of Pakistan. Through constitutional means, it would strive to establish a democratic Federal Republic free from foreign domination and exploitation. It would work for the restoration of the provinces of West Pakistan as autonomous units on cultural, linguistic and geographic basis, the abolition of feudalism and introduction of far-reaching reforms, promotion of social justice and truly democratic institutions, establishment of the rule of law, promotion of civil liberties, protection of basic human rights and a guarantee for fair and free elections as well as for equal and full rights of citizenship to the minorities.³⁶ The party envisaged an independent foreign policy based on Pakistan's national interest, promotion of world peace and security, peaceful settlement of international issues, better and closer relations particularly with the peoples of Africa and Asia, and support for the liberation move-

ment of colonial and oppressed peoples.³⁷ The social and economic aspect of the Pakistan National Party's program was practically the same as that of the National Awami Party. As a matter of fact, the aims and objects, program and constitution of both were so identical that the impression is that the one was merely inspired by the other. There is therefore no more need for us to examine the former's program and organizational structure.

In general, the resolutions passed during the convention were an expression of the party's concern with the deteriorating economic situation of the country which was felt to have been caused by the absence of planning and coordination and the reactionary agricultural governmental policy that was allegedly calculated to maintain and strengthen the feudal nature of the country's economy.³⁸ The resolutions made the following suggestions for the government to undertake: (1) implementation of recommendation by the Planning Board as regards fixed ceilings for owner cultivation and landlord holdings; (2) state ownership of all uncultivated lands and their distribution at easy instalments to tenants; (3) fixed land revenue in accordance with a uniform sliding scale throughout East Pakistan and complete non-taxability of all uneconomic landholdings; (4) levying of water rate on the basis of quantity of water supplied instead of the crop system; (5) outlawing of ejection of tenants; (6) making the exaction of feudal dues a criminal offense; (7) grant of licenses to bona fide businessmen and removal of all political considerations for such grant; (8) grant of opportunity to newcomers in business; (9) efficient system of controls to check the rise of prices; (10) protection and technical and financial aid to cottage industries; (11) planning and coordination in the development of large- and small-scale industries; (12) control of profits through fixed prices of commodities; (13) strengthening of collective bargaining and guarantee of freedom for trade union activities;

(14) fixed minimum wages; (15) improvement of the administrative machinery to eliminate black marketing and hoarding as well as red tape in the execution of the development program; (16) representation of local bodies and political parties in district and divisional development boards; and (17) opening of technical training schools.³⁹

The Organizing Committee was composed of Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Khan Amir Muhammad Khan, Shazada Abdul Karim, Muhammad Hasham Ghilzai, Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi, and Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri. The Committee's task was to organize the new party in the whole of West Pakistan as soon as possible. For this purpose, it was to tour the entire region and set up provincial organizing committees.⁴⁰ These committees were to organize the branches of the party and pave the way for the organization of the party's National Council. In charge of the organization of the party in North-West Frontier Province was Khan Amir Muhammad Khan; in Sind and Karachi, Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi and Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi; in Kalat, Shahzada Abdul Karim; in Quetta, Muhammad Hasham Ghilzai; and in the Punjab, Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri.⁴¹

The first half of 1957 was to be devoted to an intensive membership drive and holding of elections for the village, district, provincial and regional organs of the party. Elections were to be completed by the third quarter, immediately after which the first meeting of the National Council was to take place.⁴²

The organization of the different units, from the provincial to village level, did not have to begin from scratch. All that the provincial organizing committees did was to improve upon the already existing organization of the six political parties which made up the Pakistan National Party. This is why it should also be necessary for us to examine how these six components came to be what they were prior to their amalgamation into the Pakistan National Party. We have already touched on two of them in

Chapter II--the Khudai Khidmatgar Organization and the Sind Hari Committee. We only now have to account for the four remaining elements to complete our survey of the Pakistan National Party. These were the Azad Pakistan Party, Sind Awami Mahaz, Ustaman Gul, and Wrore Pakhtoon.

Azad Pakistan Party. It will be recalled that by the third quarter of 1950 there had already come out five political parties in opposition to the ruling Muslim League on the occasion of the election for the members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. These were the Awami Muslim League, Jinnah Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islam League, and Communist Party. The election was exactly four months away when the number of opposition parties was brought to six with the formation in Lahore of the Azad Pakistan Party on 10 November 1950.

The sponsors of the new party were Mian Iftikharuddin, Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan, Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Sheikh Mohammad Rashid, and Khwaja Mohammad Afzal.⁴³ They were all former Muslim Leaguers who were expelled or otherwise broke away from the organization for one reason or another. We have already mentioned why Mian Iftikharuddin resigned as the Punjab Minister for Refugees and Rehabilitation. Together with Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan who was also one of his colleagues in the provincial ministry, Mian Iftikharuddin was expelled from the Muslim League for five years for "flagrantly violating the discipline of the Party."⁴⁴

The Pakistan Times, owned by Mian Iftikharuddin, editorialized the formation of the Azad Pakistan Party as "no surprise" because it was but the "natural result" of the Muslim League's failure to liquidate gradually the social, economic and political ills of the country. The Muslim League, it said, betrayed the people and its leaders' desire to feather their own nests "expressed itself in factional struggles within the Party, fought out with the weapons of intrigue, jobbery, and bogus enrolment of members."⁴⁵ The party sponsors, too, rationalized its emer-

gence by what they claimed to have been the three years of misrule by the Muslim League and the oppression which the people suffered under the Muslim League-sponsored safety acts more than they had had under the British in pre-Partition times. It was absolutely necessary, they averred, that with the disintegration of the Muslim League there should be formed a political party with a program of economic, social, and political advancement of the country.⁴⁶ And, waxing candid about the party's raison d'etre, Mian Iftikharuddin, the real power behind the party, in the first public meeting sponsored by it, said more or less, "I am pained to see that after three and a half years freedom, liberty and economic prosperity are still the exclusive privilege of a few rich people, among whom I am one."⁴⁷

The objective of the Azad Pakistan Party was not, according to its founders, merely to participate in the Punjab general elections and get a few individuals elected to the Provincial Legislative Assembly. It was to provide the people a program with a socio-economic content which, if carried out, would eliminate the "rotten feudal system" and bring about economic justice, liberty, and democracy; in brief, real freedom which was symbolized by the party's very name--Azad or Free Pakistan Party.⁴⁸

The party program visualized what was said to be the completion of the task of political liberation and the inauguration as well of the task of economic regeneration. The first task involved the following: (1) restoration of full civil liberties, (2) replacement of the Constituent Assembly with a new one through fresh elections on the basis of adult franchise in all the provinces, as well as promulgation of a democratic Constitution of Pakistan with provision among others for fundamental rights and social welfare services, (3) severance of ties with the British Commonwealth of Nations, (4) conclusion of treaties of friendship with all friendly neighbors and the big powers,

and (5) formulation of a completely independent foreign policy which would make Pakistan equally friendly to all.

The second basic task called for (1) the abolition of the feudalistic nature of the country's economy, raising of the standard of living of the rural people, and rehabilitation of refugees; and (2) the creation of industries, nationalization of all foreign-controlled enterprises as well as industries connected with national defense and foreign banks, and state control of all profits, prices of all essential commodities and all foreign trade.⁴⁹ The party program did not overlook the plight of the working class. It said:

The real producer of industrial wealth is the working class; the happiness and welfare of a nation's workers must have top priority in any scheme of social justice. They must be assured of full protection of trade union rights, minimum living wages and reasonable hours of employment, social security, amenities for civilised living and opportunities for advancement. Technical institutes and technical scholarships must be established on an extensive scale for the benefit of actual workers, artisans and draftsmen.⁵⁰

In view of its radical if not socialistic program the Azad Pakistan Party was regarded by a number of people as communist-inspired. The leaders of the party were invariably tagged as "fellow travellers." Mian Iftikharuddin was several times insinuated to have been afflicted with the communist bogey by the Civil and Military Gazette.⁵¹

The very short time left before the elections for the Punjab Provincial Legislative Assembly members were to be held made it abundantly clear that the Azad Pakistan Party and the other parties in opposition needed to combine their forces to increase their chances at the polls. But, as mentioned in the fourth chapter, attempts to bring about a common front did not materialize.

Of the more than thirty candidates which the Azad Pakistan Party fielded, only one won a seat. This was quite

a discouraging showing and very much worse than had been expected. Mahmud Ali Kasuri, the President of the party during its entire life-time, had an explanation. The party, he said, did have much appeal particularly to the workers and peasants, but just the same whether they liked it or not they had to vote for their landlords or industrial bosses or those whom the latter desired to be voted for.⁵² It may also be added that even after the elections the party achieved very little success in setting up units or branches in the entire West Pakistan area. It did not have any mass base worth the name and could only count on the labor groups in Lahore, Lyallpur and Karachi as well as the peasants in and around the first two stated cities. Many of the peasants and laborers who gave their support to the party were actually Mian Iftikharuddin's tenants and employees. In short, the Azad Pakistan Party was confined only to some sections of West Pakistan.⁵³

After four years of existence the party suffered its first serious organizational setback. Two of the founding members, Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan and Sirdar Assadullah Jan, broke away from the party and rejoined the Muslim League allegedly on personal differences with Mian Iftikharuddin.⁵⁴ But hardly had the party recovered from this unfortunate development when another more serious blow struck its integrity. On 18 June 1954, thirty-one out of the seventy-two members of the Azad Pakistan Party Council resigned from the organization. Their resignation was reportedly the culmination of two years of intra-party conflict between Mian Iftikharuddin and his group on the one side and Sheikh Mohammad Rashid and his followers on the other. The quitting Council members alleged that the party "was being controlled by the Communist, undemocratic and dictatorial elements whereas they stood for democracy, nationalism and socialism."⁵⁵ Mahmud Ali Kasuri, on the other hand, gave the version⁵⁶ that the Mian Iftikharuddin-Sheikh Mohammad Rashid tussle stemmed from the latter's

desire for a more radical program of action particularly on landlordism. Sheikh Mohammad Rashid wanted the abolition of landlordism without any exception. The property of any landlord--categorized as such if he owned even only a fraction of an acre of land--was supposed to be expropriated. This meant that if his desire were given due consideration almost everyone having a piece of real estate in his name was to be deprived of it. Moreover, he also wanted collective farming to be compulsory. On the other hand, Mian Iftikharuddin believed that petty landlords did not have to be divested of their property and collective farming should be on a voluntary basis. For this reason, Mahmud Ali Kasuri pointed out, Sheikh Mohammad Rashid and his men suspected Mian Iftikharuddin and his group as "rightists." In any case, the quitting of the thirty-one Council members, whatever may have been their real reason for breaking away from the party, shattered it so badly that unless Mian Iftikharuddin and the remaining party stalwarts acted effectively to save it, the Azad Pakistan Party's days were numbered. In this connection, the hostile Civil and Military Gazette reported that Mian Iftikharuddin offered, not long thereafter, complete control and leadership of the party to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan although the latter rejected the proposition.⁵⁷

As if to compound the reverses that had befallen the party, the government authorities searched and sealed its Karachi office and arrested a number of party-men in both the North-West Frontier Province and Punjab in the first week of August 1954. This was a part of the overall government action against communists and communist suspects immediately after the Communist Party of Pakistan was declared illegal on 24 July 1954. Mian Iftikharuddin had to send a telegram to the Governor General to complain about the "uncalled for and unjustified attacks by the Administration on the Azad Pakistan Party." He gave the assurance that the "Azad Pakistan Party is an entirely nation-

alist party differing conscientiously, for patriotic and democratic considerations, on national problems from the Muslim League which, in our view, is influenced today by selfish, sectarian and sham as distinguished from genuine religious considerations."⁵⁸ The end of the party came two years later when it joined the Pakistan National Party.

Sind Awami Mahaz. The Sind Awami Mahaz (Sind People's Front) originated as an electoral alliance of four small political organizations in the province of Sind which was formed on the eve of the elections for the members of the Sind Legislative Assembly held in the first half of May 1953. Formed largely through the efforts of Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi,⁵⁹ it was composed of the Sind Jinnah Awami Muslim League, Sind Hari Committee, Sind Dastoor Party, and Sind Awami Jamaat.⁶⁰ The Sind Dastoor Party was a branch of the All-Pakistan Dastoor Party which was founded in 1949 and headed by Maulana Asadul Qadri. The party was aimed at the achievement of an Islamic constitution for Pakistan and the development of brotherly feelings between the muhajirs and the ansars. Instead of a federal system the party desired a unitary form of government for Pakistan to achieve greater homogeneity between the two wings of the country.⁶¹ The Sind Awami Jamaat or Sind People's Party was actually the Sind members of the People's Party (or Organization) that was organized by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan on 8-11 May 1948.

As an electoral alliance in opposition to the ruling Muslim League, the Sind Awami Mahaz sponsored fifty-one candidates,⁶² seven of whom emerged victorious in the Sind elections.⁶³ After the elections attempts were made to make the Sind Awami Mahaz a permanent political body,⁶⁴ but the Sind Hari Committee, one of its components, felt that that would mean its end and so it decided to dissociate from the alliance and began reorganizing itself. By the end of 1953 the Sind Hari Committee had reportedly enlisted about a hundred thousand members.⁶⁵ Likewise, the

Sind Jinnah Awami Muslim League, headed by Pir Ilahi Bakhsh, did not seem to have had any enthusiasm to secede from its mother organization and join the Sind Awami Mahaz permanently. In fact, as already mentioned, Pir Ilahi Bakhsh rejoined the Muslim League on 20 October 1953.⁶⁶ In sum, the Sind Awami Mahaz as an electoral alliance disintegrated after the Sind elections.

On 26-27 September 1953, however, G. M. Syed initiated a convention at Nawabshah (Sind). Attended by more than a hundred political workers, the convention decided to set up an opposition political party. It was named Sind Awami Mahaz. So as not to be confused with the erstwhile electoral alliance, G. M. Syed, the Convener of the new party, had to emphasize that it was to be a separate political organization and not a federation of various Sind political parties which were opposed to the Muslim League.⁶⁷ As a distinct political entity, the Sind Awami Mahaz's membership was open to all Sind citizens who were also free to retain their membership in other parties provided the latter had such aims and objects as were similar to the new party. Elected President of the Sind Awami Mahaz during the convention was Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi. Kazi Faiz Mohammad was chosen as the General Secretary.⁶⁸

The Sind Awami Mahaz intended to confine its activities only in Sind, Karachi Federal Area and Khairpur. Its purpose was to establish an independent democratic federal republic in Pakistan. It would work for the equality of status of Sind with the other federating units. It would strive for full and unimpaired autonomy and the absorption by Sind of all adjacent areas having linguistic, historical and cultural affinity with that province. It would ensure to all citizens such fundamental rights as were based on equality, freedom of expression and association, etc. And, finally, the Sind Awami Mahaz would endeavor for social, economic and cultural uplift of the masses.⁶⁹

The party's organizational structure was virtually

the same as those of other provincial political parties.

Before the end of 1953 the party announced its decision to contest the elections for the members of the Khairpur State Legislative Assembly.⁷⁰ As matters developed, however, only a two-day notice was given for the filing of nomination papers of candidates and only ten days were allowed for election campaigning. The party complained that nomination papers of its candidates were "rejected on flimsy grounds." For all this, the Sind Awami Mahaz was not able to participate after all in the elections.⁷¹ On 17 February 1954 the Khairpur State's first Muslim League ministry headed by Muntaz Hasan Kazilbash was sworn in.⁷²

In the first week of April 1954 the party launched a mass contact campaign and a move for the merger of Sind and Khairpur, as well as the making of Sindhi as one of the state languages. How well the Sind Awami Mahaz came out with all this is not known. On 21 September the Constituent Assembly adopted the Basic Principles Committee Report which embodied the "Mohammed Ali Formula." As a reaction to it and, more importantly, as a means of expressing its strong feeling against the projected unification of the whole of West Pakistan into a single unit by the government, the Sind Awami Mahaz Working Committee formulated a resolution. This resolution provided that the party would oppose any Constitution of Pakistan that did not envisage a federal system under which the existing provinces would be autonomous and the Federal Center clothed with powers to be agreed upon by the provinces.⁷³ A few days later, party leader G. M. Syed was arrested under the Security of Pakistan Act.⁷⁴ He was released in the latter half of March 1955 only to be interned in his home town.⁷⁵ On 27 October 1956, in pursuance of the agreement entered into by representatives of the party and those of the other five political parties on the formation of the Pakistan National Party, the Council of the Sind Awami Mahaz decided its dissolution and consequent merger

therewith.⁷⁶

Ustaman Gul. In the State of Kalat there was a political body called Ustaman Gul. It was organized and led by Shahzada Abdul Karim, the brother of the Khan of Kalat. It was to collect the Baluchis under its wings and make Baluchistan an autonomous province.⁷⁷ There was yet another political organization in the State--the National Party of Baluchistan. Formed by supporters of the Khan (Ruler), Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, and former members of the Indian National Congress, it generally acted to give expression to the policies of the Khan. For this reason, the party may be regarded as royalist. It stood for Kalat remaining independent of Pakistan except in matters of defense, foreign affairs, and communications.⁷⁸

Wrore Pakhtoon. The sixth political party that joined the Pakistan National Party was the Wrore Pakhtoon. It was founded in Baluchistan, but its emergence was rather shrouded in obscurity. It was associated with the Anjuman-e-Watan leader, Abdus Samad Khan. As mentioned in the second chapter, he was imprisoned in 1949, released from jail in January 1954, and put behind the bars again in February 1956. He was not set free until late January 1957. It is possible that during the two years that he was free (between January 1954 and February 1956), Abdus Samad Khan might have initiated the organization of the Wrore Pakhtoon in place of the Anjuman-e-Watan. In any case, whether or not it was he who caused its formation, the fact remained that the adherents and objects of both parties were apparently one and the same. This may be gleaned from the resolution of the Wrore Pakhtoon's Organizing Committee on 3 February 1956 which reiterated the party's policy of non-violence and "truth." In the same resolution the Wrore Pakhtoon demanded the setting up of a permanent Bench of West Pakistan High Court at Quetta, protested against the detention of some of its prominent members and criticized the banning of some of its publica-

tions by the Government.⁷⁹

Now, to go back to the National Awami Party. It is easy to think and tempting to conclude that in terms of its aims and program, the party was not only secular and autonomist but leftist and neutralist. On the basis of personal background of its leaders, however, it becomes compelling for us to raise the question of **whether** the party was really serious and determined about its radical and ambitious program or was merely willing to pay lip service to it. There is no doubt that the party President and Convener, Maulana Bhashani, who counted his support from and stood for the interest of the peasants and laborers and whose name had always been associated with popular causes, was quite keen about it. But what about the leaders of the party in West Pakistan? Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, G. M. Syed, Shahzada Abdul Karim, and Mian Iftikharuddin had had something in common and it was that they were all big landlords. Would it not be against human nature if they were to undertake such measures against their interest as abolition of landlordism and grant of rights to tenants and laborers at their own expense? Since this is believed to be so, then, we can only agree to the observation that the West Pakistan party leaders' real purpose in joining the National Awami Party "was the setting up of autonomous provinces in their respective spheres of influence and their temporary acquiescence in a radical programme was dictated by the desire to secure country-wide support."⁸⁰ In this connection, it may be pointed out that they were opposed to the unification of West Pakistan into a single unit; not only opposed but so opposed that when Maulana Bhashani decided to extend support to the Awami League-run government in East Pakistan without first getting a definite assurance for the dissolution of the One-Unit scheme from the Awami League, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Sindhi and Baluch leaders threatened to break away from the National Awami Party.⁸¹ Maulana Bhashani

had to make a trip to West Pakistan to placate them.⁸²

The opposition to the One-Unit scheme, as a matter of fact, became an article of faith of the National Awami Party. Indeed, it constituted the warp and woof of its strategem inside and outside the legislative bodies from its very inception to the time of its abolition, along with the other political parties, in October 1958.

NOTES

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2. Quoted in Morning News (Dacca), loc. cit.
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4. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
5. Ibid., pp. 3-5.
6. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
7. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
8. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
9. Ibid., p. 9.
10. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
11. Ibid., Part III, pp. 10-12.
12. Morning News (Dacca), loc. cit.
13. Personal interview with Mahmud Ali in Dacca on 26 June 1969.
14. Ibid.
15. Morning News (Dacca), 17 January 1953.
16. Morning News (Dacca), 19 January 1953.
17. Ibid.
18. Pakistan Times (Lahore), 18 January 1953.
19. Pakistan Times (Lahore), 19 January 1953.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.; Morning News (Dacca), 17 January 1953.
23. Pakistan Times (Lahore), loc. cit.
24. Quoted in ibid.
25. Morning News (Dacca), loc. cit.
26. Dawn (Karachi), 13 December 1953.
27. Personal interview with Mahmud Ali.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Dawn (Karachi), 7 August 1955.
31. Dawn (Karachi), 14 December 1955 and 4 January 1956.
32. Dawn (Karachi), 6 September 1957.

33. Pakistan Times (Lahore), 10 September 1956.
34. Dawn (Karachi), 15 November 1956.
35. Dawn (Karachi), 3 December 1956.
36. Aims and Objects, Programme and Constitution of the Pakistan National Party (Lahore: Jalali Art Printing Press, 1 December 1957), Publication No. 3, pp. 1-2.
37. Ibid., p. 2.
38. Dawn (Karachi), loc. cit.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.; Aims and Objects, Programme and Constitution of the Pakistan National Party, op. cit., p. 1.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Pakistan Times (Lahore), 11 November 1950.
44. Personal interview with Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan in Lahore on 17 May 1969; Dawn (Karachi), 11 April 1950.
45. Editorial in the Pakistan Times (Lahore), 12 November 1950.
46. Ibid.
47. Quoted in ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. The Azad Pakistan Party: Statement on Policy, Aims and Objectives (Issued by the Convening Committee of the Azad Pakistan Party, Lahore: Pakistan Times Press, n. d.), pp. 6-8.
50. Ibid., p. 8.
51. As an example, see Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore), 6 June 1954.
52. Personal interview with Mahmud Ali Kasuri in Lahore on 28 May 1969.
53. Personal interview with Sardar Shaukat Hyat Khan.
54. Ibid.
55. Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore), 19 June 1954.
56. Personal interview with Mahmud Ali Kasuri.
57. Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore), 17 June 1954.
58. Quoted in Dawn (Karachi), 7 August 1954.
59. Dawn (Karachi), 25 June 1953.
60. Mushtaq Ahmad, Government and Politics in Pakistan (Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House, 1963), p. 149.
61. Morning News (Dacca), 14 April 1954.

62. Dawn (Karachi), 14 April 1953.
63. Dawn (Karachi), 13 May 1953.
64. Dawn (Karachi), 25 June 1953.
65. Dawn (Karachi), 21 September 1953.
66. Dawn (Karachi), 21 October 1953.
67. Dawn (Karachi), 30 September 1953.
68. Ibid.
69. Sind Awami Mahaz (People's Front): Its Aims, Objects and Constitution (Karachi: The New Sind Press, n.d.), pp. 1-2.
70. Dawn (Karachi), 25 December 1953.
71. Dawn (Karachi), 23 January 1954.
72. Dawn (Karachi), 18 February 1954.
73. Dawn (Karachi), 8 November 1954.
74. Dawn (Karachi), 13 November 1954.
75. Dawn (Karachi), 21 March 1955.
76. Dawn (Karachi), 29 October 1956.
77. Dawn (Karachi), 7 October 1958.
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79. Dawn (Karachi), 5 February 1956.
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81. Dawn (Karachi), 13 September 1958.
82. Dawn (Karachi), 21 September 1958.