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The Politics of Alliances During Ayub's Era of Controlled Democracy (1958–1969)

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Abstract: *The political system of Pakistan is comprised of a multi-party system; therefore, the formation of alliances and counter alliances by the political parties is a common feature of its political culture. Pakistan's political history reveals that alliances are formed against authoritarian military regimes. The alliances were also formed to cope with the civilian administration of popular leaders, as they are accused of benefiting from rigged elections, and authoritarian policies and being responsible for the economic crisis. During the military regime of Ayub Khan, the opposition alliances succeeded in removing Field Marshal Ayub Khan from the presidency as he failed to cope with its pressure in the late 1960s. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of these political alliances during the martial law regime of Ayub Khan. To what extent are they sincere in their cause of developing a viable political system in the country? What circumstances led to the formation of these alliances? What was the impact of these alliances on the Pakistani political spectrum? The present study has attempted to answer some of these questions.*

Key Words: Political Parties, Alliances, Political System, Opposition, Election, Authoritarian, Dictatorship.

Introduction

In every political system, political parties play an important role. They form the primary unit of democracy. Political parties are integral to the democratic process. No democracy can effectively function without political parties. They are instrumental in moving the democratic process forward and determining the particular shape it assumes. Moreover, parties provide a socio-political framework for tackling the societal problems of

society. Political parties are the symbols of a politician's political aims and purposes. In fact, modern politicians without a party, after all, resemble fish out of the water (Muzaffar, 2004).

In democracies where there is a lack of mainstream national political parties' alliances are in vogue as one party cannot form a government at the national level. So, to overcome this hurdle, compromise results in an alliance and, ultimately, coalition governments come into being. Even for

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running an election campaign and unseating an illegitimate government, alliances are formed (Aziz, 2001). Normally, the factors involved in the formation of political alliances are determined by the political culture prevailing in the very society in which they are formed. It is noteworthy that in countries where a multi-party system operates, the formation of political alliances and the emergence of coalitions have become a common feature of national politics. Though an alliance may come into being even in those countries where a bi-party political system exists, it is only in very rare cases (mainly in the time of national emergencies (Muzaffar, 2004). The word alliance has been defined by Anthony Kappa as: "A group of political parties or people who have agreed to work for shared interests or aims." Or it can also be defined as "a union or grouping of different political parties or individuals formed to pursue a shared and common agenda through joint action." They support each other on the basis of a common political objective and purpose. They need not have the same political ideologies (Mustafa, 2010).

Types and Composition Political Alliances

Due to the varying nature of alliances and the dynamics of the political process, there is no precise way of classifying the types of political alliances. But still, these may be roughly categorised as under:

1. Opposition Alliances
2. Electoral Alliance
3. Parliamentary Alliances (Governmental or Opposition alliances)

Opposition Alliances

Opposition alliances are usually shaped to cope with the totalitarian and dictatorial pressure of governments (Muzaffar, 2004).

Electoral Alliances

Electoral alliances are formed by the political parties prior to elections with the object of eliciting a favourable response. Thus, these alliances usually crop up in elections. In the electoral Alliance, the allied parties not only placed a unanimous

programme and agenda before the public of what they would do if they became the governing party, but they also put unanimous candidates in the elections (Younas, 1993).

Parliamentary Alliances

Parliamentary Alliances are those formed within the parliament by elected members; they do not require any agenda or programme to be presented to the masses. alliances may be governmental alliances or opposition alliances. Those which are made in support of the government to strengthen the government are termed governmental coalitions or governmental alliances. Those that are formed against the government in order to oppose the government within the parliamentary parameters are called opposition alliances. The latter works as a "watchdog" for the government party (Hussain, 2013). Parties' alliances vary greatly in form and degree; some are well-organized and long-lasting, while others are short-term and unorganized. Long-lasting alliances are usually the result of ideologically identical parties, having less or more of the same programme and agenda; they can easily accomplish their goals. On the other hand, alliances of political parties with opposing ideologies quickly disintegrate without achieving their goals. The organised and long-lasting Alliance presents itself as a stable and durable body, while the latter type portrays itself as a fragile and fleeting entity (Mustafa, 2010). The relationship among all sorts of political alliances is very complex because of the divergence in their doctrines, which they exhibit in different circumstances, and which are influenced by their interests and determined by their role in the political process (Hussain, 1979).

Martial law regimes, dictatorships, authoritarian, unstable and illegitimate governments are contrary to democracy. The channels of communication fail to function effectively in such situations. The institutional structures and processes fail to resolve conflicts among demands and implement policies, so the political system ceases to be responsive, which results in crisis. This situation ultimately led to the formation of an alliance to tackle the crisis. The above type of Alliance emerges to tackle the

undemocratic government's lack of legitimacy. Some alliances form in preparation for elections; others from within Parliament House in order to form an effective parliamentary group, and still others form in order to resolve critical national issues. As a result, the governing elites and the composition result in elite alienation, which is the primary cause of revolutions and other forms of violent political change, and they are the causes and reasons for alliances (Muzaffar, 2004). Like most third world countries, the political system of Pakistan also consisted of a multi-party system; hence the formation of political alliances remained an important and integral part of its political culture. The political history of Pakistan revealed that democracy had not been allowed to function, and the fountain of power is a single individual. It has been four times ruled by military generals, which covers half of its political life. Thus, during the military regimes, the political parties joined hands with each other and formed alliances in order to cope with the dictatorial and authoritarian regimes. Alliances are also forged during popular civilian regimes; thus, the formation of alliances is common in both civilian and military regimes. In post-independence politics, even the smaller and minor parties made alliances for the sake of their survival and to enhance their electoral success. In the early 1950s, the four minor political parties in East Pakistan, namely the Awami Muslim League (AML), later the Awami League (A.L.), the Krishak Sramik Party (KSP), the Nizam-i-Islami Party (NIP), and the Peasant Gantantri Dal Party (G.D.), united to form an electoral alliance, the United Front (Jugto front), to oppose the ruling Muslim League in the 1954 East Pakistan elections, throwing the league out of power. This Alliance proved to be a trendsetter for the future political alliances in the country, and to date, Pakistan has been encountering alliance politics. The Martial Law regime of Ayub Khan (1958–1969) was the worst regime in Pakistan's political history. During Ayub Khan's tenure, a number of alliances were formed to oppose and topple his government. These included the first opposition alliance, the National Democratic Front (NDF), in 1962. An electoral alliance under the name "Combined Opposition Parties" (COP) was formed in 1964 to support

Madar-e-Millat and Miss Fatima Jinnah in the Presidential Election of 1965 against General Ayub Khan. During the same era, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) (1967) and the Democratic Action Council (DAC) (1969) were formed to topple Ayub Khan's authoritarian regime. Ayub's authoritarian regime was followed by the martial law of Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan (1969–1971). During his rule, an alliance was formed in 1971, named the United Coalition Parties (UCP), to resolve the national crisis through peaceful means, but it ended in the fall of Dhaka.

Background

After a long period of the worst political crisis and instability, Pakistan experienced its 1st coup d'état, under General Ayub Khan (the then Commander-In-Chief of the Army). After establishing his authority in the country, Ayub Khan pledged to introduce major reforms in the government structure for the cleansing of government and maladministration. The ban on political parties was followed by the manoeuvring of politicians. For this purpose, in August 1959, Ayub Khan passed the Elective Bodies Disqualification Order (EBDO) to victimise the politicians, as it provided the politicians with the choice of being tried for a misdemeanour or disqualifying themselves from public life for at least seven years (Sayeed, 1967). The military ruler, in order to fulfil the vacuum of political institutions and legitimise his rule, introduced the concept of Basic Democracies (B.D.). The B.D. The system consisted of 80,000 Basic Democrats, equally divided between the East and West wings of the country. These Basic Democrats were used as an electoral college, which had the power to elect the legislatures, and the presidency, and have the authority to frame the future constitution (Sayeed, 1967).

General Ayub Khan also tried to fulfil his constitutional pledge and introduced the new constitution on June 8, 1962, which prescribed the presidential form of government, in which all the executive powers were vested in the hands of the president, and there was no space for political institutions or politicians. Somehow, in July 1962, the new legislature passed the Political Parties Act, which lifted the ban on political parties, and

resumed their activities; it also legalised the formation of new political parties. With the passage of the political parties act, Ayub Khan had also entered the political arena and paved the way for the formation of the Convention Muslim League (CML) in September 1962. Later on, in December 1963, Ayub Khan became its president. The CML enjoyed the patronage of all those politicians and ministers who supported the broad base structure of the Ayub Khan Constitution. On the other hand, the opposition political parties, who had already rejected the undemocratic, presidential form of the constitution, found an opportunity to create a broad-based alliance of political parties to resist Ayub Khan and restore Parliamentary Democracy in the country (Younas, 1993).

The Formation of the National Democratic Front (NDF)

Thus, on October 4th, 1962, the legendary politician from East Pakistan and one-time premier, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy (Founder of AML), after detailed negotiations with the opposition parties, devised a political alliance under the name National Democratic Front (NDF). It was supported by more than forty political leaders of different parties from both the eastern and western parts of the country (Afzal, 1987). The National Democratic Front, soon after its formation, demanded a democratic and parliamentary constitution for the country. They argue that the presidential constitution is against democratic principles, as it ignores the majority and negates the existence of political parties. During the short span of time, the front passed several resolutions in their meetings, including the January, 1963 resolution, in which the front demanded full democracy in the country. The front mounted pressure on the government the fulfilment of their demands. However, the front got a setback with the death of its founding leader, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, on December 5th, 1963. After the death of Suhrawardy, the front lost its effectiveness because he was the moving spirit behind its activities (Hussain, 2013).

In January 1964, the three opposition political parties, the Awami League of Mujib-ur-Rehman,

the National Awami Party (NAP) and the Council Muslim League (CML) joined the front and tried to re-generate it. They called for the establishment of "Full and Complete Democracy in the Country," but they failed to pressurise the government (Rizvi, 2011). The front was intact till June 1969 but ceased with the formation of the Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP), a merger of three political parties (Mahmood, 2000).

Ayub's Presidential Election and the formation of Combined Opposition Parties (COP)

Before the presidential elections, Ayub Khan adopted certain measures in order to secure his position and pave the way for the presidential elections. In the step resistance of the opposition, the second amendment to the constitution (June 1964) was passed, and the order of the elections of Basic Democracy (B.D.'s), the president, and the elections of the assemblies was changed. The November 1964 election for the B.D.'s will follow the presidential elections. All these steps were taken in order to fortify his position for the presidential election that was scheduled for January 1965 (Yousaf, 1980). By the middle of 1964, the situation in the country was firmly controlled by Ayub Khan, and now his focus was centred on presidential elections. For this purpose, Ayub Khan launched a country-wide election campaign in full swing. This also alarmed the politicians ranked with the opposition, and they also initiated their activities regarding the presidential elections. After a gruelling effort, Khawaja Nazim-Ud-Din (Chief of the Council Muslim League), convinced the opposition parties to forge a united force in the presidential election against Ayub Khan and later on put up common candidates for the national and provincial assemblies (Hussain, 2013). Thus, the opposition parties in the National Assembly entered into an alliance under the name, Combined Opposition Parties (COP). The Alliance was consist of, the Council Muslim League (CML) led by Khawaja Nazim-ud-din And Mian Muhammad Daulatana, the Awami League of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, the two factions of the National Awami Party (NAP), led by Abdul Wali Khan in the west wing and Maulana Bhashani in the East Wing of the country. The Nizam-i-Islami party

was led by Chaudhri Muhammad Ali and Jammat-i-Islami (J.I.) of Maulana Abu ala Maududi ([Yousaf, 1999](#)).

COP Manifesto (Nine Point Programme) for the Presidential Election of 1965

The Combined Opposition Parties, devised a unanimous nine-point programme for the fourth-coming presidential elections, whose distinguishing features are summarized below;

- i.** The restoration of the parliamentary system of government with direct election based on universal adult franchise
- ii.** Restitution of democratic constitution
- iii.** Independent foreign policy
- iv.** Independence of the judiciary with separation from the executive
- v.** Release of political leaders and workers
- vi.** Withdrawal of ban on political parties functioning
- vii.** Removal of economic disparity between East and West wing of the country within a period of ten years and equal distribution of wealth amongst the people rather than in the few hands
- viii.** Ensure full guarantee of basic rights and full guarantee for the rights of minorities
- ix.** The amendment of the family laws ordinance to bring it in accord with the Islamic laws and solution of Kashmir according to the U.N. resolutions ([Sayeed, 1967](#)).

The centre of interest in the election was the presidential candidate. The combined opposition forces appeared uncertain for a while about finding a candidate of sufficient stature to challenge the ruling party of Ayub Khan in the presidential countdown. However, after long and debatable negotiations, the combined forces put Miss Fatima Jinnah (the aged sister of the Father of the Nation) as their presidential candidate to oppose Ayub's presidential bid, instead of General Azam Khan, he could have been a strong rival and could have created difficulties for Ayub Khan as he had good support in both parts of the country. His candidature was rejected through the condition laid down by the chief of NAP, Abdul Hamid Bhashani,

that no one would be accepted to COP as a candidate for president who had been associated with the martial law of October, 1958 ([Yousaf, 1999](#)). The Jamaat-e-Islami (J.I.), the Awami League (A.L.) and other political parties set aside all their differences, and they accepted Miss Fatima Jinnah as their candidate only for the sake of putting a united front against Ayub's authoritarian regime. When Miss Fatima Jinnah decided to contest the election for the president's office, it was welcomed by the masses in both the East and West parts of the country, and the electoral landscape was abruptly changed, turning the elections into an event of first importance ([Yousaf, 1999](#)). Fatima Jinnah, Quaid's sister and also popularly acclaimed as the Madr-i-Millat (Mother of the Nation), was held in high esteem and came to symbolise the democratic aspirations of the people. The COP organised countrywide meetings and gatherings for their presidential candidate, but it was ironic that where she had gone, thousands of people would gather only to catch a glimpse of her. During her election campaign, she enjoyed wide public support throughout the country. It also shocked Ayub (the other presidential candidate) and his associates; this situation is very accurately described by Hamid Khan in his book "Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan" in the following words.

"The two Provincial Governors, who had maintained law and order with an iron hand and snuffed out all dissent, were bewildered by the ecstatic manner in which the people celebrated Miss Fatima Jinnah's decision to fight their hero, the soldier-statesman Ayub. She had no experience of government, no knowledge of administration, and no contact with world leaders. Nevertheless, she was the idol of the people, and thousands of people would gather only to catch a glimpse of her. She could speak hardly any of the national languages, but her charisma was irresistible. She was seen by the crowds as the only person who could bring down the Ayub's authoritarian rule and restore the democratic rights of the people" ([Khan, 2012](#)).

Ayub Khan, the other candidate in the presidential election, remained quite silent for a while because he had no courage to utter a word of criticism against Miss Fatima Jinnah, popularly known as Madr-i-Millat. Initially, he was very

disturbed about how to launch a campaign against her, and Ayub and his associates were limited only to exposing her inexperience and old age ([Hussain, 2013](#)).

The primary campaign issue of the election was the political system: whether Pakistan should have a parliamentary system or a presidential one. Fatima Jinnah and the COP defended the parliamentary system as politically and economically beneficial and called for its reintroduction to bring about a truly democratic era in the country. Ayub Khan, the other presidential candidate, stood for the presidential system and denounced the parliamentary system. He thought that it ensured administrative stability, economic development, and national prestige ([Afzal, 2001](#)). The election campaign was carried out with great intensity throughout the country, and people fully participated in it. Both the candidates addressed the large gatherings, rallies, and projected meetings

arranged by the Election Commission. But no doubt, the government candidate, Ayub Khan, made good use of state machinery for their election campaign, which raises many questions regarding the transparency of the election, but the overall election campaign was carried out in a peaceful way (Hamid, 2012).

The election was held on 2nd January, and the result of the election was announced on 3rd January 1965. In spite of massive support Madre-i-Millat, Miss Fatima Jinnah (COP) had secured only 28,691 (36.36%) votes, and Ayub Khan, presidential candidate of Con-ML had polled 49,951 (63.31%) votes. In West Pakistan, Ayub Khan secured 28,939 (73.3%) votes and Miss Fatima Jinnah capture 10,257 (26.7 %) votes, while in East Pakistan, Ayub Khan obtained 21012 (52.9%) votes and Miss Fatima Jinnah got 18434 (46.5%) votes (Mujahid, N.D.). The bellow table shows the results of the 1965 presidential elections.

Table 1. Result of Presidential Elections 1965

Candidate	Votes Polled		Total	Percentage of Vote Polled
	East Pakistan	West Pakistan		
Ayub Khan	21,012	28,939	49,951	63.31
Fatima Jinnah	18,434	10,257	28,691	36.36

Source: *Sharif-al Mujahid, Pakistan's first Presidential elections, Asian Survey, vol.5, No.6 June 1965*

The results of elections have remained disputed ever since, which affected the government's legitimacy from January 1965 onwards, and finally, after some time, the public turned against Ayub's government. The presidential election was followed by the National and Provincial assemblies' elections in March and May 1965, respectively. The elections were also based on indirect Electoral College (B.D.'s), the COP, and after the defeat in the presidential election, they were demoralised and did not contest these elections seriously. On the other hand, its presidential candidate, Miss Fatima Jinnah, after losing the election, did not take an active part in politics again. As a result, the Convention Muslim League of Ayub Khan won both the national and provincial assemblies' elections without facing hurdles from the opposition. Once the elections were over, the Alliance gradually

crumbled to pieces ([Khan, 2012](#)). While criticising the five opposition parties of COP, Ayub Khan described the COP as "five cats tied by their tails" ([Rizvi, 2011](#)).

The 1965 War, Tashkent Declaration and the Emergence of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)

The relations between India and Pakistan always remained hostile, but it was greatly increased during the 1964 and became tenser in the 1st half of 1965 over the cease-fire line in Kashmir eventually, these skirmishes led to Indo-Pakistan war 1965. With the U.N. interference, a cease-fire came into effect, but it was jeopardized by a series of violations by both sides. As a result, both the parties become agreed on the "Tashkent Declaration". The Tashkent agreement was concluded by president Ayoub

Khan on Behalf of Pakistan and Indian PM, Lal Bahadur Shastri, through the mediation of Soviet Russia. The provisions of the agreement signed in Tashkent, shocked Pakistanis, particularly West Pakistanis, who had expected something quite different. Hence after an impatient pause for a few hours, the jubilant Pakistanis, particularly the students, erupted massive demonstrations and rallies and exhibit a violent reaction to the Tashkent Declaration, which shattered the peace of the country (Khan, 2012).

The political parties showed diverse opinions about the Tashkent Declaration, and the political parties were divided on the agreement. The parties belonged to West Pakistan, such as Nizam-i-Islami of Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Hayat Khan (Council Muslim League), Jamaat-i-Islami and others, condemned every feature of the agreement while the parties from East Pakistan such as Awami League of Mujibur Rehman, NAP of Bhashani and NDF leading by Nor-ul-Amin considered the agreement in the best interest of the country (Khan, 2012).

The West Pakistani leaders, in order to thrash out the differences and evolve a common stand on Tashkent Declaration, convened a two-day National Conference on 5 and 6 February 1966 in Lahore. The conference ended with dismal failure and could not achieve any of the objectives for which it had been organized. It was in this conference that sheikh Mujib-Ur-Rehman presented his famous six point's programme, which later became the reason of an end of Pakistan's unity (Khan, 2012).

The post-conference scenario was resolved by repression and defence of Pakistan's rules. After the period of ban on EBD Oed politicians expired on December 31st, 1966, most of the politicians returned to politics and joined the anti-Ayub forces, providing ample opportunity for the opposition parties to unite in the form of an alliance and depose Ayub from power. As a result, the four opposition political parties, the Awami League of Nasr Ullah Khan (AL), the National Awami Party of West Pakistan (NAP), Jamaat-e-Islami, and the Convention Muslim League (CML), formed the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). Besides, all

the component parties of NDF (1962) also joined PDM. Nawabzada Nasr Ullah Khan was elected its president, while Chaudhri Muhammad Ali was elected Secretary General. The two veteran politicians from East Pakistan, Mujibur Rehman and Bhashani, did not join the Alliance and remained aloof (Murad, 2008).

On May 1, 1967, one day after its formation, the Alliance announced an eight-point programme calling for a federation of Pakistan with a parliamentary form of government with the legislature based on the direct election and adult franchise; independence of the judiciary; complete guarantee of fundamental rights; and complete regional autonomy vested in the governments of two wings. The Alliance also called for a federal list having defence, foreign affairs, currency, federal finance, and trade subjects. They also called for the removal of economic disparity and gave a time period of ten years for it. They also demanded separate foreign exchange for the earnings of provinces and the shifting of Naval H.Q. to East Pakistan (Rizvi, 2011).

The Alliance devised a multi-pronged strategy to overthrow the authoritarian regime of Ayub Khan. For this purpose, they organised country-wide meetings and gatherings. The leaders of the Alliance persistently demanded the restoration of the parliamentary form of government and the removal of inter-provincial and inter-wing disparity. Soon after, the government felt threatened by the opposition, and they warned the people about the demands and aspirations, labelling them as threats to Pakistan's unity and integrity. Initially, the Alliance's demands were merely constitutional, but by the fourth quarter of 1968, with the inclusion of students and some new politicians, the Alliance had transformed into a mass movement that the government saw as a threat and which Ayub Khan argued was "playing with fire" designed to destabilise the country. One of the Ministers in Ayub's Government termed PDM as the "Pakistan Death Movement" (Hussain, 2013).

In late 1968, the anti-government movement of PDM was also joined by the former chief of Pakistan Air Force, Air Marshall Muhammad Asghar Khan, and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (ex-foreign

Minister). The movement was further intensified by the joining of angry young people, and the gleeful students persistently demanded their resignation of Ayub. During their demonstrations and strikes, numerous deaths and casualties occurred. In its early phase, the strikes and demonstrations were confined to the western part of the country, but later on, they spread to the eastern parts as well ([Khan, 2012](#)). The violent movement continued unabated. In the meantime, the opposition political parties aptly exploited the situation and formed the Democratic Action Committee (DAC) in January 1969 ([Gauhar, 1993](#)).

Democratic Action Committee (DAC)

The Democratic Action Committee (DAC) is comprised of eight opposition parties, The Awami League (AL Sheikh Mujib group), the NAP (Wali Khan), JUI, NDF, JI, Coun-ML, NIP and A.L. of (Nasr Ullah Khan) the last five political parties of PDM were also the component of DAC (Younas, 1993). The DAC drafted a joint programme and presented them to the government. The Alliance insisted on the restitution of the federal Parliamentary system of government, direct elections based on adult franchise, immediate withdrawal of state of emergency and release of all political leaders from government custody, and withdrawal of all orders under section 144 of Cr. P.C., withdrawal of all orders on the press and restoration of all the presses and restoration of the labour rights. It did not mention the dismemberment of the One Unit scheme, and hence the National Awami Party (NAP) led by Bhashani in East Pakistan declined to cooperate with DAC and remained aloof, In spite of its decision to oppose the Ayub regime from a common front ([Rizvi, 2011](#)).

At the start of February 1969, Ayub Khan realized that his policy of confrontation and persistent use of forces would not settle the problem, thus, he turned into reconciliation with the oppositions. For this purpose, he extended letters to the opposition parties and invited them for the 17 February meeting, including the high command of DAC, the opposition leaders presented some pre-conditions for the dialogues noteworthy included,

the immediate withdrawal of the state of emergency and the release of all political leaders and workers ([Rizvi, 2011](#)).

The Ayub government accepted some demands of oppositions, including, the withdrawal of an emergency on 18th February and the release of political prisoners including Z.A Bhutto and others. In the meantime, Z.A Bhutto and some other politicians boycotted the talks and said that Ayub could not be trusted, which jolted the rhetoric of negotiations. In order to facilitate the talks, on 21st February 1969, Ayub Khan made an irrevocable announcement that he would not contest the next presidential election, at the same time, he also ordered for the release of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman and 34 other defendants of the Agartala Conspiracy case ([Gauhar, 1993](#)). These developments led to the resumption of Round-Table Conference (RTC), which started from 26 February 1969. In the RTC, Ayub Khan accepted the two demands of DAC; direct elections based on adult franchise and establishment of a Parliamentary set-up in the country; however the demands of regional autonomy and dismemberment of one unit must be decided by the new parliament "elected on the basis of the direct adult franchise". This created vehement differences amongst the DAC member parties and finally led to the disassociation of the Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman party from DAC. Thus, the conclusion of the Round Table Conference (RTC) was followed by the dissolution of DAC by its convener Nawabzada Nasr Ullah Khan. A few days later, on 25th march 1969, Ayub Khan resigned from his office and unconstitutionally handed over the reins of power to, General Muhammad Yaya Khan (C-in-C of Army) and once again placed the country under martial law ([Khan, 2012](#)).

Conclusion

With the advent of Ayub Khan Martial Law in October 1958, a ban was imposed on political parties and their functioning, which resulted in the demise of the Muslim League from the political landscape. Under the Martial Law regime of Ayub Khan, the political parties were left with no option other than the formation of political alliances to pressure the dictatorial and authoritarian regime and

to facilitate the process of democratization. Following the military coup of 1958, and especially after the adoption of the 1962 constitution, the opposition political parties banded together in the form of the NDF, COP, PDM, and DAC to fight for the removal of Ayub Khan and a vague interest in the restoration of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. It arose in response to Ayub's policies of containing Pakistani society's democratic potential through the imposition of the Basic Democratic System and the introduction of a distorted presidential system. The dissatisfaction of the COP with the conduct of the elections of 1965 left the opposition parties with the feeling that Ayub could

not be removed from the corridor of power through normal democratic methods. Later on, the movements of these opponents were triggered by an event involving many students. One thing is understandable from the politics of these opposition alliances: the leaders of these internally divided alliances and Ayub Khan could not agree on a mutually acceptable formula for changing the system. The weakening grip of Ayub Khan over the reins of power due to the protracted opposition movement against him, the breakdown of law and order, and the failure of dialogues gave an opportunity to Yahya Khan (C-in-C of the Army) to take over power.

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