

❖ United Front Coalition and Election of 1954:

The United Front is a coalition formed by several opposition parties to contest the 1954 elections against the Muslim League. On 4 December 1953, the Krishak-Praja Party led by Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, the Awami Muslim League led by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, the Nezame Islami led by Maulana Atahar Ali and the Left Democratic Party led by Haji Danesh formed the United Front.

❖ Background of the United Front:

Muslim League was the oldest and largest party among the political parties in Bengal before the election of 1954. Besides, Muslim League was leading the provincial government of east Bengal. As a result, the newly formed parties in the east Pakistan planned to form coalition as a strategy to defeat Muslim League in the election in 1954. Resultantly, the decision to form United Front Coalition was taken at the council of Awami Muslim League in Mymensing on 14th November, 1953. The coalition consisted of four main opposition parties; Awami Muslim League led by Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Krishak-Praja Party led by A K Fazlul Haque, Nezam-E-Islami of Maulana Atahar Ali and the leftist Democratic Party of Hazi Danesh. The electoral symbol for the United Front Coalition was 'Boat'. The coalition declared 21-point charter of election manifesto by selecting the main demands made on the 42 point election manifesto of Awami Muslim League. Abul Mansur Ahmed was the main person to write the 21-point charter with the view to reflect the hopes and expectations from the mass people of East Bengal.

❖ 21-Points Charter of United Front:

1. To Establish Bengali as one of the state language of Pakistan
2. To dissolve the Zamindari System without compensation and distribute the surplus land among the landless people
3. To nationalize the Jute Industry.
4. To establish co-operative agricultural system to develop agriculture.
5. To set up salt factory
6. To generate employment for the mohazer-artist-technician class.
7. To eradicate flood and famine through digging canal and arranging irrigation. Language Movements and Afterwards Political Episode 139
8. To make the country self dependent on food and industry
9. To introduce free and mandatory primary education.
10. Education through mother language, reduce the gap between government and private schools and providing government assistance favoring every school.
11. To convert the University of Dhaka and Rajshahi University as autonomous body.
12. To reduce the administrative expenses. Ministers salary no to be more than Taka one thousand.
13. To take necessary steps to control bribery, corruption and nepotism.

14. To cancel the dark laws including Public Protection Act and Ordinance.
15. To separate the Judicial Department from the Administrative Department.
16. To make the chief minister's residence 'the Bardhawan House' as Bengali Language Research Center.
17. To construct a monument commemorating the martyrs of 52's language movement.
18. To declare 21 February as government holiday considering it as Shahid Dibosh.
19. To provide full autonomy to East Bengal as per 1940-Lahore Resolution.
20. In no way the validity of Legislative Assembly is extended.
21. If any seats in the Legislative Assembly become vacant, it should be filled in within three months by giving by-election.

❖ Results of the Election of 1954:

❖ Election Victory:

The United Front (Awami Muslim League 143, Krishak-Praja Party 48, Nezame Islami 19, Left Democratic Party 13) won 223 out of 237 Muslim seats in the provincial assembly elections and the Muslim

League won only 10 seats. Besides, out of 72 non-Muslim seats, United Front got 13 seats.

❖ Formation of government:

The United Front Cabinet was formed on 3 April 1954 under the leadership of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq. On 15 May 1954, the Awami Muslim League joined the cabinet and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was appointed Minister of Agriculture, Cooperatives and Rural Development.



❖ Importance and Significance of the election of 1954:

1. Bengali nationalism is strong.
2. A united public opinion was formed.

3. The influence of the middle class increases.
4. Political awareness increases in East Pakistan.
5. The boat gained recognition as a symbol of election.
6. Non-communal politics developed.
7. It inspired the war of independence.

❖ Reasons for the defeat of the Muslim League:

1. Formation of United Front and widespread support in East Pakistan
2. Failure to formulate the constitution of the Muslim League
3. Lack of competent leadership
4. Mass isolation of the Muslim League
5. Conflict of the Muslim League
6. Boundless inequality between East and West Pakistan
7. Boundless corruption and nepotism

❖ The Constitution of Pakistan in 1956:

Constitution is the supreme law of a country. The administration of a country is run by its constitution. Constituent Assembly was formed by the public representatives elected in 1946. The assembly was Language Movements and Afterwards Political Episode 141 responsible to act as the new parliament and write the constitution of Pakistan. But, the task of the assembly used to be disrupted by the disinclination of the ruling bodies. At last, to write the constitution of Pakistan; the constituent assembly formed a Committee of Basic Principle was formed on March 1949. On the various suggestions in the report the people of East Bengal were deprived in all aspects. As a result, when the report was published in September 1950, it caused huge protest in East Bengal and they denied the suggestions made by the report. Afterwards, the committee submitted its second report in 1952 and the third report in 1953. But, the adoption of the constitution remained unresolved. At last, the Governor General of Pakistan took the responsibility to draft the constitution for the country. The leaders from both of the dominion were able to reach an accord in this regard. On the basis of this the constitution was written on 1956. After adoption, the constitution was active for only two years. In 1958, when Ayub Khan clamped Martial Law in the country the constitution was declared unworkable and with this the constitutional rule came to an end in Pakistan. The first constitution was introduced in Pakistan on 23 March 1956. After nine years of efforts, Pakistan was successful in framing a constitution. The Constituent Assembly adopted it on 29 February 1956, and it was enforced on 23 March 1956, proclaiming Pakistan to be an Islamic republic

❖ Martial Law in 1958 :

President Iskander Mirza proclaimed martial law by compelling the parliamentary government of Malik Feroz Khan to step down on 7 October, 1958. Major General Omrao Khan was appointed the Martial Law Administrator in East Pakistan. The Martial Law of Pakistan in 1958 refers to the events between October 7, when the first President of Pakistan Iskander Mirza abrogated the constitution of Pakistan and declared martial law. After then October 27, Iskander Mirza himself was deposed by Gen. Ayub Khan, the commander-in-chief of the Pakistan army. After consolidating the power in 1958, General Ayub Khan initiated to bring about absolute changes in the government system and politics in Pakistan. It was based on a concept called 'Basic Democracy'. Basic Democracy is a sort of restricted democracy in which a few number of people would enjoy the privilege of electing the president. An ordinance was proclaimed to introduce Basic Democracy in 1959. Initially Basic Democracy had four tiers such as.

1. Union council (in the villages) and town and union committees (in urban areas)
2. Thana council in East Pakistan and Tahsil council in West Pakistan
3. District council
4. Divisional council. The councils were consisted of elected and nominated members as well.

There were 40000 electoral units in each part of Pakistan totaling the number to 80000 in the country. But People participation was limited in electing BD members.