

The clarion call: Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani and the last years of the United Pakistan, 1969-1971

Zahid Ahmed

National University of Medical Sciences, The Mall, Rawalpindi,

Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui (1926-2003) who did not believe in separating religion from politics joined active politics in 1970. His journey from passive to active politics was gradual. Though he started taking part in politics by establishing 'National Guards' in 1940's to further the cause of All India Muslim League of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Indian Sub-continent, However, soon after the partition, following the footsteps of his father Maulana Shah Abdul Aleem Siddiqui (1892-1955), Maulana Noorani concentrated more on the missionary activities. Along with this he also participated in the Anti-Qadiani Movement in 1953 and later elected as the senior vice president of the Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP) West Pakistan in 1955. After the death of his father in the same year Maulana Noorani took full charge of his father's missionary work abroad (1955-1969) and remained fully committed to it. During this time period he remained unknown in Pakistani politics until, in 1970, he presided over a historical meeting of the leading *Ulama* and *Masha'ikh* of *Ahl-i-Sunnat wa Jammāt* held in *Darul ulum Hizb-ul-Ahnaḥ* Lahore, which resulted in the unification of various groups of the JUP and gave birth to a 'united' political party of *Ahl-i-Sunnat*. This paper had presented a critical review of Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani's early political career, showing that how he roused from the office bearer JUP Karachi to the position of JUP parliamentary leader and one of the leading political figures of the country. The paper also focused on his role in the victory of his party in 1970 election, strong opposition of socialism, propagation of Nizam-i-Mustafa, democracy and efforts to keep the country united.

Keywords: Nizam-i-Mustafa, Socialism, Sawad-i Azam, 1970 election, Ahl-i-Sunnat wa Jammāt, East-Pakistan, Jamiat-i- Ulema-i-Pakistan

After months of violent agitation against Ayub Khan's regime, the renewal of Martial Law by Gen. Yahya Khan on 25th March 1969 was greeted by most people in both provinces, but in Dhaka there were street demonstrations. Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani realizing the grave situation particularly in East Pakistan warned Gen. Yahya Khan about the role of M.M. Ahmed (*Qadiani*) by faith & vice chairman of the Planning Commission) in deteriorating the economy of Pakistan which could result in the separation of East Pakistan (Zia-i-Haram, 1974).

Soon Yahya Khan announced the Legal Framework Order (LFO) for the restoration of a federal parliamentary system in the country. The political parties contesting the fourth coming elections were required to contest the elections within the limits of LFO, which assured the direct elections based on the universal adult franchise and the formation of the future constitution by the elected representatives of the people.

After several unsuccessful attempts by the leading Ahl-i-Sunnat ulama to reorganize the divided and inactive *Markazi Jamiaat-i-Ulama-i-Pakistan* (MJUP), (Est.1948), Maulana Abul Barakat Qadari convened a meeting of Ahl-i-Sunnat ulama on 4th April 1970 at *Darul ulum Hizbul Ahnaf* Lahore. The meeting, presided over by Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani proved to be a success in bridging the differences among the different faction leaders of MJUP to form a united party (Faiz-i-Raza, 1970; Ahmad, 1993).

To attain the above mentioned aim the meeting appointed a twenty-five-member board by the name of *Majlis-i-Amal Jamiaat-i-Ulama-i-Pakistan*. The board was given powers to formulate party policies and

manifesto. Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani was appointed the chairman of a six-member manifesto committee while Allama Mahmood Ahmed Rizvi was appointed the convener of the *Majlis-i-Amal*. The meeting besides other things demanded the enforcement of shariat and pledged to work against communism, capitalism and socialism (Faiz-i-Raza,1970).

The enforcement of Islamic system in Pakistan remained one of the leading demands of the MJUP. In early 1970's there were certain parties in both the wings of Pakistan propagating socialism, which became the major concern for religious parties particularly of the MJUP. They considered it to be the biggest threat to Islam. To make the stand against socialism more emphatic and clear, a Fatwa (religious decree) was issued by 113 *Ulama* of different schools of thought in March 1970. It declared socialism 'against Islam' and to vote for the parties working for socialism 'unlawful under Islam'. Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani along with other leading *Ahl-i-Sunnat Ulama* signed the *Fatwa*. Further to counter the growing influence of socialism and the appeal of its economic system to common people, a twenty-three points program of Islamic economic system was proposed on 2nd June 1970 by more than one hundred *Ulama* of both the wings of Pakistan including Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani (Mujadidi, n.d.).

In order to mobilize *Ahl-i-Sunnat Wa Jamaat* support for the enforcement of Islamic constitution and counter socialism, the *Majlis-i-Amal* of the JUP decided to organize public meetings in different parts of Pakistan. The *Majlis-i-Amal* started its masses contact campaign by holding public meetings in Multan and Lyallpur (Faisalabad) culminating in the First All Pakistan Sunni Conference held at Toba Tek Singh District on 13th and 14th June 1970 (Faiz-i-Raza,1970).

The Sunni Conference was convened in response to the Socialist Kisan Conference organized by the National Awami Party's leader Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani in March 1970 at Toba Tek Singh. It also aimed at uniting *Ulama-i- Ahl-i -Sunnat* and to start JUP campaign to enforce Islamic System in the country (Malik, 1990).

The conference was attended by more than 3000 *Ulama* and *Masha'ikh* (spiritual leaders) and more than 300,000 people from all over the country. Father-in-law of Maulana Noorani, a leading *Alim* and *Sufi* Maulana Fazal ur Rehman Madni was specially invited from Madina-tul-Munawara (Saudi Arabia) to attend the conference (Sadiq,1977).

A large delegation of *Ulama-i Ahl-i Sunnat* of Karachi and Hyderabad under the leadership of Maulana Noorani attended the conference. Other eminent *Ulama* and *Masha'ikh* included Pir of Sial Sharif, Pir of Taunsa Sharif, Pir Muhammad Qasim Mashoori, Pir Abdur Rahim of Barchundi Sharif, Maulana Muhammad Ichhravi, Maulana Ahmed Saeed Kazmi, Maulana Arifullah Shah, and Sahibzada Faizul Hasan Shah. The main focus of the speeches of *Ulama* and *Masha'ikh* in two days conference was their strong condemnation of socialism, '*Maududiyat*' (Interpretation of Islam by Maulana Maududi of *Jamaat-i- Islami*) and Congressite (under the influence of the Indian National Congress) *Ulama*. (Nida-i-Millat,1970).

On the second day of the conference in a special meeting of the *Majlis-i- Amal* office bearers of the JUP were elected Khawaja Qamar-ud-din Sialvi as president, Allama Muhammad Ahmad Rizvi as *Nazim-i-Ala* (General Secretary), Maulana Noorani and Pir Muhammad Karam Shah as vice presidents respectively. The meeting finalized the manifesto of the JUP and also decided JUP's participation in general elections. Maulana Noorani, in his speech appealed to *Ulama*, *Masha'ikh* and common people to work hard for the enforcement of Islamic system in Pakistan. He also strongly criticized socialism (Alam, n.d.).

The First All Pakistan Sunni Conference was proved to be a great success. *Ahl-i-Sunnat Wa Jamaat* Movement entered into a new phase. It can be characterized as religio-political phase of *Ahl-i-Sunnat Wa Jamaat* because the JUP decided to participate as a political party in the upcoming general elections of 1970. After a very successful conference at Toba Tek Singh it was decided to organize the party at district level and to hold conferences in different cities of Pakistan for the propagation of JUP manifesto.

As mentioned earlier Maulana Noorani was appointed as the chairman of a six-member manifesto committee in the meeting of the leading *Ulama* at the *Darul-Uloom Hizbul Ahnaf*, Lahore. The manifesto of the JUP formulated by the above mentioned committee was approved in a meeting of *Majlis-i-Amal* on 30 May, 1970 in Lahore (Mashriq, 1970).

In different meetings of leading *Ahl-i-Sunnat Wa Jamaat Ualma* held on 8th May 1970 in Karachi and on 11th July, 1970 in Sukkur, Maulana Noorani was elected as convener of the *Majlis-i-Amal* Karachi Division and president of the six-member parliamentary board of the JUP respectively (Ahmad, 1993). He along with other leaders of the JUP and *Jamaat-i- Ahl-i Sunnat Pakistan* (JASP) addressed public meetings in different areas of Sindh to highlight JUP's manifesto. These leaders advised the people to vote for Sunni candidates in the upcoming election (Faiz-i-Raza, 1970).

Sindh and particularly Karachi remained the main focus of Maulana Noorani's political activities during the election campaign. He had a large following in Karachi and Hyderabad and was contesting election from one of the seats of Karachi. Maulana Noorani after being elected convener of the *Majlis-i-Amal* Karachi Division started working with other leaders of the JUP and the JASP to organize The Second All Pakistan Sunni Conference. The Conference was held on 8-9th August, 1970 at the Nishtar Park Karachi (Faiz-i-Raza, 1970).

The Second All Pakistan Sunni Conference was attended by more than 2,500 delegates from all over Pakistan. In addition, there were about 900 *Ulama* and *Masha'ikh*, including more than 700 local *Ulama*. It was a real show of strength by the JUP Karachi under the leadership of Maulana Noorani and his associates. They worked really very hard to make the conference a success because the other religious parties especially *Jamaat-i- Islami* (JI) was very active, organized and had a strong hold over the politics of Karachi.

Maulana Noorani, in his speech, made it clear that the Muslims of India got the country after countless sacrifices and they had to give such sacrifices to save it too. Criticizing socialism, he said that they had not faced so many hardships for migrating to Pakistan to live under any other ideology but Islam.

Maulana Noorani said that *Ulama* and *Masha'ikh* came out in the field to save Pakistan as nothing had been done for the enforcement of Islam by 'political jugglers' for the last 23 years. Maulana Noorani referring to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples' Party), said that he claimed to be the leader advocating socialism in fact he was a diehard capitalist, who had beaten about the bush on the secret of Tashkand and later on stubbornly declared that he could not disclose it because he was ordered by high officials not to do so. Maulana Noorani declared that how could such a leader take the seat of the prime minister who could not say truth without hesitation. He advised common people, who were under the spell of such leaders believed that socialism was a solution to their difficulties, to avoid such fraudulent traps (Faiz-i-Raza, 1970).

Though Maulana Noorani visited other areas of Pakistan for the election campaign of his party but his major focus remained on Sindh and particularly on the cities of Karachi and Hyderabad (Faiz-i-Raza, 1970). His father had a large following in these areas and was very well-known and respected personality of his time. Maulana Noorani after the death of his father remained busy in the missionary activities abroad till 1969. He emerged as the true successor of his father and in his youth established himself as an *Alim*, *Sufi* and great orator.

People liked to listen to his speeches and wanted to talk to him because his talks were supported by arguments and logic. His command of different languages made him popular not only in the circles of *Ahl-i-Sunnat* but also with educated urban middle class. Another factor of his popularity was his strict following of Islam and his wholehearted love for Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

The JUP, which was a new comer in the field of politics, took a solo flight in the elections of 1970 (Zia-i-Haram, 1970). It supported many like-minded candidates of other parties. For example it supported Air Marshal Asghar Khan President of the Pakistan Tehreek-e Istiqlal and his close associate Musheer Ahmad Pesh Imam (JUP

Krachi,1970). It was during the elections of 1970 Maulana Noorani and Air Marshal Asghar Khan come closer to each other and their association remained till the death of Maulana Noorani.

Eleven parties actively took part in first general election based on the universal adult franchise for the first time in Pakistan since independence. According to the election results the JUP won 7 seats of the National Assembly. It also secured 4 seats in Punjab and 7 seats in Sindh Provincial Assembly (Election Report,n.d.).

The overall performance of the JUP was not very impressive as it claimed to be the representative of *Sawad-i Azam* (the majority group). However, the JUP performed well in Sindh particularly in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur but in Punjab its performance was disappointing.

The lack of funds, improper publicity campaign and personal jealousies of some *Ulama* and *Masha'ikh* were some of the main causes of its poor performance. In spite this, the JUP emerged as a new political force on the political scene of Pakistan and its performance was much better as compared to other political parties which were in this field for many years having funds and other backings (Zia-i-Haram,1971).

After the elections Maulana Noorani emerged as a leading political figure of not only *Ahl-i-Sunnat Wa Jamaat* but also of the overall religio-political leadership of the country. Realizing it the JUP central working committee in the first meeting after the 1970 election, under the chairmanship of Khawaja Qamar-ud-Din Sialvi on 25th January 1971, elected Maulana Noorani as the leader of parliamentary party. The working committee, after reviewing the post election scenario appointed a ten-member committee including Maulana Noorani to discuss constitutional issues with other parties (Pakistan Times,1971).

The JUP contested the election mainly to enforce the Islamic system in the country. Maulana Noorani had a very clear stand on the future constitution, which was, to make it Islamic. Maulana Noorani, addressing the reception hosted in honor of the JUP MNAs and Members of the Provincial Assemblies (MPAs) declared that the JUP MNAs would resign from their seats, if the future constitution was not Islamic in character (Ahmad,1993).

On the one hand it was tragic that Bhutto was not willing to accept the role of the leader of opposition in the National Assembly, and did not wish to assume responsibility for forming provincial governments in Punjab and Sindh without control of the central government (Khan,2005). On the other hand Yahya Khan and generals had not foreseen that Mujibur Rehman would gain an absolute parliamentary majority in the polls. In January, 1971 Yahya Khan invited Mujib to Islamabad for discussions but, he declined to come to West Pakistan. Instead it was Yahya Khan who had to go to Dhaka to meet him (Mazari,1999).

On 3rd January 1971 Mujibur Rehman made a speech in Dhaka in which all the AL members of the national and provincial assemblies were required to take an oath that they would support the party program, provincial autonomy, interestingly the term of the oath did not actually mention the six points (Herbert,1975). On the other hand Bhutto assumed the so called mantle of the leader of West Pakistan (as if he had secured a majority in all the four federation units of the wings) and a posture of confrontation with the Awami League.

Yahya Khan visited Dhaka in mid January, 1971 in order to start a dialogue with Mujibur Rehman. Yahya Khan in an airport interview on his departure from Dhaka for Islamabad, told journalists that he had a very satisfactory meeting with the future Prime Minister of Pakistan, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. However, on his return from Dhaka on 17th January, flew to Larkana (home town of Bhutto) along with Gen. Hamid and Gen. Peerzada, for consultation with Bhutto. They stayed there for a few days and were entertained lavishly. Bhutto raised his concern about the implication of six points. As they stood, he thought the six points were bound to lead to secession. Bhutto's articulation of dangers arising from them to the country and to army must have a deep impression on the generals. He gave an impression to Yahya that the army was with him on this issue (Hassan,1996).

This meeting between Bhutto, Yahya and his generals, particularly in the home town of Bhutto must have created suspicions in the minds of Bengali officers about Bhutto trying to deprive East Pakistan of their electoral victory. It was in these talks that it was agreed in principle that force would be used in East Pakistan, if Mujib did not change his attitude (Mazari,1999).

Bhutto visited Dhaka on 27th January and had discussion for several days with Mujib on Six Points. On the date of summoning the meeting of the National Assembly the two of them differed. Mujib wanted the earliest possible session of the National Assembly, not later than 15th February, Bhutto disagreed on this and wanted delay. No clear understanding or agreement had reached (Khan,2005).

Maulana Noorani as the parliamentary leader of JUP was observing all these developments carefully. On 2nd February, he supported the demands of summoning of the National Assembly on 15th February. He also strongly criticized Bhutto for his involvement in some sort of a conspiracy to forge a West Pakistan front against East Pakistan. To remove the misunderstanding which Bhutto was creating between East and West Pakistan regarding constitutional matters on the invitation of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, Maulana Noorani and his JUP delegation met him at Dhaka on 3rd February. They discussed in detail the general political situation of the country and matters relating to the future constitution (Dawn,1971).

Mujibur Rehman told Maulana Noorani that the essence of Bhutto's mission was to share power with him. Bhutto had demanded deputy Prime Minister-ship among other things, and alluded to the fact that he not only represented the PPP but also the Army as well. After this meeting, Maulana Noorani told the press that the leaders of both parties had agreed that the National Assembly session should be convened at the earliest possible date and the future constitution should safeguard the integrity of Pakistan. In the press conference, the next day, Maulana Noorani supported the constitutional democratic right of the AL of framing the constitution and strongly condemned those who were at work to frustrate the process of transfer of power to the people's representatives peacefully (Ahmad,1993).

On 13th February, Gen. Yahya announced that the National Assembly would meet in Dhaka on 3rd March, 1971. Few days later Bhutto announced that the PPP would not attend the National Assembly session unless there was an understanding between Mujib and him on the future constitution (Dawn,1971).

On 16th February Maulana Noorani who was keenly observing the political developments strongly criticized Bhutto's decision to boycott the Assembly session (Jang,1971). The next day Bhutto who was inflaming the political scenario with his provocative statements went a step further and declared that the 3rd March session of National Assembly in Dhaka would be a 'slaughter house' for West Pakistanis (Ahmed,2015).

To discuss the prevailing situation Gen. Yahya invited a delegation of the JUP leaders. Maulana Noorani led the delegation of the JUP. Maulana Noorani informed Gen. Yahya that the MNAs of the JUP would participate in the Assembly session at Dhaka. He told Gen. Yahya that discussing the political matters outside the Assembly was undemocratic. He also demanded the removal of M. M. Ahmad from the office. The delegation rejected the proposed army action in East Pakistan (Zia-i-Haram,1972 ; Qaiser,2001).

By this time, Bhutto took an antedated resignation from his party MNAs during meeting with them on 20- 21st February. Surprisingly, the very same day (20th February) the LFO was amended with immediate effect allowing elected members to resign before the Assembly session. It was a clear example of a collision between Bhutto and Yahya and his janta. Now, Gen. Yahya and his janta started pressurizing the West Pakistan politicians to join Bhutto in boycotting the National Assembly meeting.

The working committee of the JUP met in Sargodha under the chairmanship of Khawaja Sialvi on 24th February 1972. By majority votes it was decided that the MNAs of the JUP would not participate in the Assembly session on 3rd March, at Dhaka until Mujib made appropriate changes in his Six Points. However, it was Maulana Noorani who disagreed with this decision. He was of the view that the JUP must attend the Assembly session and keep its doors open for a compromise with the AL. He thought it necessary for the unity and integrity of Pakistan

that West Pakistani elected members must attend the Assembly session to show their solidarity with East Pakistani brothers (Siddiqui,1988).

The working committee of the JUP's decision of 24th February was reviewed in the meeting of the JUP parliamentary party held on 27th February in Karachi and on the same day a delegation of the MNAs and the MPAs elected from Sindh met Gen. Yahya under the leadership of Maulana Noorani. In the meeting, Gen. Yahya informed the delegation that Z.A. Bhutto and Mujibur Rehman told him (Gen.Yahya) that they would not have any objection on his continuation as the President of Pakistan. But he would not like to be a (ceremonial) president like Varahagiri Venkata Giri (the Indian President). Maulana Noorani before the start of political discussion, informed Gen. Yahya about the anti-state activities of Qadianis and particularly East Pakistani Muslims hatred against Qadianis and M. M. Ahmed. Maulana Noorani also mentioned the negative impact of the speeches and statement of Bhutto which were causing the feeling of mistrust among the two wings. Similarly, Maulana Noorani warned Gen. Yahya of grave consequences in case of army action in East Pakistan.

On the inquiry of the delegation regarding the postponement of the National Assembly session of 3rd March, Gen. Yahya replied that he had two tickets one for Rawalpindi and the other for Dhaka. If Mujibur Rehman showed flexible attitude regarding the rights of all units of Pakistan, he would go to Dhaka to inaugurate the first session of the National Assembly otherwise he would postpone the session and would go to Rawalpindi (Ufaq,1970&1978)

The next day on 28th February Bhutto announced his refusal to go to Dhaka to attend the inaugural session of the National Assembly planned to be held on 3rd March. He threatened to take an action against those members of the National Assembly from West Pakistan who would attend the session of the National Assembly in Dhaka. He warned his own party's MNAs by saying, if any member of his party attended the session of the National Assembly in Dhaka, his legs would be broken. These words were ominous and set a stage for the breakup of Pakistan. On 1st March, Gen Yahya, in response to this demand, postponed the National Assembly session (H.Khan,2005).

An instant wave of public anger swept the whole East Pakistan, which Mujibur Rehman tried to contain through a non-violent civil disobedience movement started from 3rd March. The conclusions formed in East Pakistan regarding the postponement of the National Assembly session were:

- i. The Army was determined to frustrate all the effective moves towards the democratic transfer of power and ;
- ii. There was collision between Gen. Yahya and Z.A. Bhutto (Herbert,1975).

When Mujibur Rehman was asked by one of the leading politician what scenarios he visualized and how the settlement could be broken. Mujeeb replied that, the situation was very clear. Yahya Khan would come to Dhaka first, followed by M.M. Ahmed (head of the planning commission), who would be followed by Bhutto. Yahya would then order military action and that would be the end of Pakistan (Khan,2005).

The atmosphere in Dhaka was extremely charged. Mujibur Rehman gave a call for general strike which was successful and paralyzed Dhaka. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Maulana Noorani along with two MNAs of the JUP called on Mujibur Rehman at his residence and discussed the prevailing political situation. Mujib appealed to the delegation to inform the West Pakistani brethren about the 'drawing room' conspiracies being hatched against East Pakistan (Ahmad,1993).

The removal of Governor of East Pakistan Admiral Ahsan and subsequent resignation of Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, who was appointed Governor in place of Admiral Ahsan, further complicated the matter as these two wanted to resolve the matter by negotiation. On 3rd March, after consulting with Bhutto, Gen Yahya called for a conference of the parliamentary parties' leaders in Dhaka on 10th March. Maulana Noorani, in a press statement, declined to accept this invitation. The AL also refused to attend the proposed conference. It was to pressurize Gen. Yahya to announce the inaugural session. Finally, on 6th March, Gen. Yahya announced that the

inaugural session of the Assembly would take place on 25th March. The next day Mujib addressed a big rally at Dhaka Race Course, he laid down his terms for attending the National Assembly session scheduled for 25th March. He demanded

- I. Withdrawal of Martial Law
- II. An immediate transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people before the national assembly could meet and frame the constitution.
- III. A judicial inquiry into the loss of life caused by the army action in East Pakistan.
- IV. Immediate return of army to barracks.

As the influence of the PPP was manifested by the postponement of the National Assembly session, leaders of small parties in both East and West became critical of the activities of Bhutto and the PPP and collectively became supportive of Mujib's position on the transfer of power.

A meeting of the smaller political parties of West Pakistan was called by Mufti Mahmood on 13th March in Lahore. The meeting was attended by Maulana Noorani of the *Jamait-i-Ulama-i-Pakistan* (JUP), Mufti Mahmood of the *Jamait-ul-Ulama-i-Islam* (JUI), Mian Mumtaz Doltana and Shaukat Hayat Khan of the Convention Muslim League (CML), Professor Abdul Ghafoor of the *Jamat-i-Islami* (JI), and Maulana Zafar Ahmed Ansari and Sardar Maulana Somroo (independents). Wali Khan of the National *Awami* Party (NAP) was not present, but the conference had his backing

Everyone at this meeting accepted Mujib's four demands and called for an interim government to be established both at the center and in provinces along with the convening of the National Assembly on 25th March. The group also indicated that in its judgment, a great part of the present crises was due to the misunderstandings, and urged President Yahya to proceed to Dhaka to remove any misunderstandings, apprehensions and suspicions in frank and cordial talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman (Sisson & Rose,1992).

The next day, PPP Chairman Bhutto came forward with a proposal for the transfer of power to the two major parties. Addressing a rally at the Nishtar Park in Karachi he said that there could not be one majority party and if power was to be transferred to the elected representatives then it should be transferred to the AL in East Pakistan and to the PPP in West Pakistan. From this Bhutto's intention became very clear and all parties in West Pakistan readily realized it. To the West Pakistani political leaders, his statement, virtually called for 'Two Pakistans'.

A joint meeting held at Maulana Noorani's residence in which Maulana Noorani pointed out that the terminology of West Pakistan used by Bhutto did not exist. The meeting made an earnest appeal to Gen. Yahya to reject outright the 'mischievous' theory of Bhutto and urged him to take concrete steps for the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people, in accordance with democratic principles (Bhuiyan,1982).

Yahya Khan finally decided to travel to Dhaka to negotiate with Mujibur Rehman. Gen. Yahya arrived in Dhaka on 15th March and started negotiations with Mujib. Maulana Noorani and some other elected members of the National Assembly from West Pakistan other than those from the PPP, also assembled in Dhaka. Negotiations began on 16th March, Gen. Yahya appeared agreeable to considering the fundamentals of the Six Points of the AL. Later Mujibur Rehman and Gen. Yahya were joined by their advisors in the talks. Further talks took place on 19th March and presidential team then prepared a draft incorporating the items the teams had agreed upon. (Sisson & Rose,1992).

On 20th March, Maulana Noorani addressed a public meeting at Arambagh Karachi. In his address he alleged Bhutto as an American agent, who had created uproar and confusion between the two wings. He held Bhutto and some civil servants responsible for the political crises and said that they wanted to divide Pakistan (Qaiser,2001; Jasarat,1971; Ufaq,1978).

On the same day Maulana Noorani convened a one day convention in Karachi of the MNAs of the different political parties, including independents, except the PPP, in order to discuss 'minimum bases of unity

among them for the Assembly session due on 25th March (Noorani,1971).Maulana Noorani in his presidential address accused Bhutto of creating hatred against East Pakistan. He appealed to the delegates for the unity and struggle for the cause of Islam, safeguard the integrity of Pakistan, solve the political crises and work for the economic prosperity of the country. He asked those present to reach Dhaka by 24th March to attend the Assembly session (Ufaq,1978).

Before leaving for Dhaka, Maulana Noorani issued a statement and demanded the immediate transfer of power to the elected representatives, otherwise according to him no one can give the guarantee about the solidarity of the country (Ahmad,1993).

On 20th March, after the talks between Gen. Yahya and Mujib and those between the negotiation teams, Bhutto, who refused to go to Dhaka, announced that he and a team of constitutional and economic experts would depart for Dhaka the next day. On being shown the draft of agreement reached with Mujib, Bhutto took a stand that the martial law could not be lifted without the meeting of the National Assembly (Mazari,1999).

According to Bhutto this would create a 'constitutional vacuum' and a complete agreement must, therefore, be reached first. On 22nd March after Mujib was being persuaded to meet Bhutto, a formal meeting between Gen. Yahya, Mujib and Bhutto took place. Although on the next day there were armed rallies and demonstrations and Bangladesh flag was hosted, the constitutional discussions by the two teams continued (Hassan,1996).

As a last attempt, Gen. Yahya tried to enlist the help of some of the West Pakistani politicians present in Dhaka. In the evening five West wing leaders representing smaller parties tried to persuade Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to effect a change in the AL's draft proclamation (Siddiqui,1988).

On the evening of 24th March, the AL team met the president's team for what turned out to be the last meeting. AL demanded the implementation of Gen. Yahya-Mujib agreement. According to Tajuddin, Gen. Peerzada promised to telephone them to arrange a further meeting to finalize the terms of the amended draft proclamation but that call never to come across. The AL leaders were anxiously waiting for the final drafting session of the proclamation, but the expected call of Gen. Peerzada never came.

On the night of 25th March, the Pakistan Army began their 'Operation Searchlight'. The objectives were to neutralize the political power of the AL and re-establish the writ of the Army junta. Political activities were prohibited throughout the country and the AL was banned as a political party, censorship was also imposed on the press (Mahmood,1976).

Bhutto was the only leader from the West wing who openly justified the military action from its very outset. On his return from Dhaka, he announced, 'Thank God Pakistan has been saved'(Morning News,1971). Mujibur Rehman was taken into custody by the Army and was later brought to West Pakistan. The next day only Kamal Hussain surrendered while most of the AL leaders managed to evade capture and left for India whether by design or due to fear. However, the fleeing members of AL were successful in announcing a government in exile of Bangladesh in India. Meanwhile, a large number of people (mostly Hindus) also crossed over India as a result of the military action. The state of hostility which existed between Pakistan and India ensured that India could take advantage whenever the detrimental situation arose to the integrity of Pakistan. The refugee problem provided India with a pretext to intervene in East Pakistan. The *Mukti Bahini* (Liberation Army) started its activities were trained and armed by India.

Maulana Noorani, in a memorandum (1971) to the President, pointed out that due to the Indian involvement in East Pakistan, 'Jihad' against India should be declared and offered one million volunteers to fight for solidarity and integrity of Islam and Pakistan against Indian aggression. He also demanded ban on all 'secular movements' and to promote Islam because, according to him, it's the only bound of solidarity and unity between

East and West Pakistan. He also suggested establishing an advisory council of experts of modern law and the Quran and Sunnah and by ordinance promulgation of an 'Islamic Constitution'. He also brought attention of president to the speeches and statements of Z. A. Bhutto and Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan against the lesser political parties (including the JUP) of West Pakistan, which could result in disunity in the country.

Bhutto and Qayyum Khan kept on following their old course of criticizing other parties and creating political tension in West Pakistan. For instance on 14th April 1971 at a press conference at Karachi Bhutto said that the AL was rightly banned by Yahya Khan and criticized those political leaders who were supporting Mujibur Rehman just a few months back (Dawn,1971).

Abdul Qayyum Khan, the leader of the QML, suggested that there should be by-elections in East Pakistan, like Bhutto he too demanded that those political parties and elements which were paving the way for the AL to come to power and had been demanding immediate transfer of power to Mujibur Rehman should also be brought to book and banned (Bhuiyan,1982).

Maulana Noorani, who was facing criticism from Bhutto and Qayyum Khan for his support to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, was deposed from the leadership of the JUP Parliamentary Party by the party President Khawaja Qamar-ud-Din Sialvi. Maulana Noorani was charged with the activities repugnant to the 'solidarity' of the country and 'prestige' of the party (Zia-i-Haram,1971).

However, the decision was strongly condemned by the majority of the JUP leadership and Ahl-i-Sunnat intelligentsia. According to Maulana Abdul Mustafa Al-Azhari, Shibzafa Faiz-ul-Hassan Shah and 'his associates' were behind the decision. In mid April Khawaja Qamar-ud-Din Sialvi convened a meeting of *Majlis-i-Amla* in Rawalpindi. The meeting caused a rift in the party because a large number of *Ulama* and *Masha'ikh* of Ahl-i-Sunnat, considered this decision of Khawaja Sialvi as illegal and did not attend the meeting. Later on a meeting held in Lahore on 20th June under the chairmanship of Allama Abdul Mustafa Al-Azhari expelled Sahibzada Faiz-ul-Hassan from the party on the charge of causing rift in the party on the backing of PPP. Finally the rift in the party was bridged in a meeting, under the chairmanship of Pir Karam Shah, which restored Maulana Noorani's position as the JUP Parliamentary leader after accepting his explanation regarding his meetings with Mujibur Rehman (Al-Azhari,1971; Usmani,1971; Zia-i-Haram,1971).

By then Bhutto was also demanding transfer of power in West Pakistan. He was of the view that transfer of power in West Pakistan could not have any adverse effect on East Pakistan. Rather it would lead to democratization in East Pakistan. Bhutto in his meeting with Gen. Yahya suggested that, "since power could not be transferred without a constitution and since constitution could not be formed by National Assembly because there was no prospect of its meeting at an early date, the president should redeem his pledge of democratization by producing a constitution of his own" (Ahmad,1993).

Gen. Yahya in his address to the nation on 28th June announced By-Elections to fill vacant seats (by the AL) in the Assemblies, including his plan of political settlement. The PPP, Asghar Khan, three factions of the Muslim League (ML), The JI, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the JUP expressed their desire to contest the by-elections in East Pakistan (Herbert,1975).

To stabilize the political situation, the President had made some moves, he recalled Gen. Tikka Khan and appointed A.M. Malik as the new governor and Gen. Niazi became the martial law administrator of East Pakistan on 3rd September 1971. Two days later a general amnesty was announced by Gen. Yahya. The amnesty included the armed forces, East Pakistan Rifles (EPR), the police and the Mujahids (Washington Post,1971).

The By-Election schedule was announced on 19th September and accordingly polling was to be held for 78 seats to the National Assembly and 105 for the Provincial Assembly between 25 November- 9th December (Sisson & Rose,1992).

In the first week of October Maulana Noorani and Pir Karam Shah visited East Pakistan to see the possibilities of the JUP taking part in the by-elections. The two member delegation of the JUP met Mr. Noor-ud-Din, Khawaja Khair-un-Din, Professor Ghulam Azam and Governor Malik. They visited the migrant camps in Mirpur and Muhammadpur and met the leaders of the different sections of society and had formal and informal talks with East Pakistani journalists. The organizational matters of the JUP were discussed with Pir Sahib Maulana Abu Salah Muhammad Jafar and other *Ulama* (Noorani & Shah,1971).

Maulana Noorani, in a press conference on his return from Dhaka announced that the JUP would not contest the by-elections because the party was in its initial organizational stage in East Pakistan and the law and order situation had not come to normal despite the full efforts of the armed forces which made it impossible for his party to reach the masses directly. He said that the coalition of six rightist parties had been created and had finalized the division of the seats among themselves. For the sake of unity of the rightist parties' alliance the JUP left the field open for them to contest by-elections.

He highlighted the plight of widows, orphans and helpless people of East Pakistan and demanded the government to make a comprehensive plan and establish a high level organization for their rehabilitation. He demanded the audit of the '*Muhajir Fund*', collection of *Zakat* of the last 24 years from capitalists, free distribution of agricultural land to poor farmers and ban on illegal holdings.

Maulana Noorani also reiterated the demand of his party to declare *Jihad* against India. For the creation of good will and mutual trust among different sections of society in East Pakistan he suggested the patriotic leaders of defunct AL should be given chance to work, and for free and fair elections in East Pakistan cabinet should be dissolved a week before elections. He also pointed out the adverse impact of the decision of the general amnesty announced by Gen. Yahya. To devise out a plan, to meet the national emergency and overcome the crises, Maulana Noorani proposed the holding of the conference of national leaders at the earliest (Noorani & Shah,1971).

Later on, in October, the law and order situation deteriorated so much that it became impossible to conduct by-elections by the Martial Law Authorities. By November the government announced 58 members of the National Assembly and 105 members of the Provincial Assembly had been elected unopposed. The government announced that the elections on the remaining seats were postponed indefinitely due to the absence of governmental control on outlying areas (Sisson & Rose,1992). Maulana Noorani appealed to the nation to observe 19th November as a day of stability. He was of the view that India, Israel and the imperialist powers were working together to dismember Pakistan (Ahmad,1993).

The state of emergency was declared in Pakistan on 23rd November because the Indian troops began to cross the international boundary in East Pakistan. To counter Indian aggression Maulana Noorani demanded the declaration of *Jihad* against India and assured the government of full support of his party to save the country from Indian aggression (Ahmad,2000). However, on 16th December 1971 Lt. Gen. Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi signed the Instrument of Surrender in Dhaka and an independent state of Bangladesh was created on the world map.

The clarion call regarding the grave threats to the unity & sovereignty of Pakistan by Maulana Noorani, before and after the 1970's elections, was ignored by the military junta which resulted in the cessation of East wing of the country. As the parliamentary leader of JUP he did his utmost to save the unity of the country but failed. However, from the start of his political career due to his whole hearted commitment to the cause of Nizam-i-Mustafa, unity & sovereignty of the country and democracy, Maulana Noorani emerged as one of the leading political figure on the political map of Pakistan.

References

- Ahmad, M. (1993). *Jamiyyat Ulama-i- Pakistan 1948-1979*. Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research.
- Ahmad, M. (2000). The East Pakistan Crisis and the Role of Jamiyyat-i- Ulama-i- Pakistan: A Critique. *Pakistan Vision 1 (1)*, 29-38.
- Ahmed, Z. (2015). *Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui: A Political Study*. Ph. D Dissertation, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.
- Alam,S.(n.d.) *Kul Pakistan Sunni Conference*. (Karachi: n.p.)
- Al-Azhari, A. M. (1971, June 18). Press Statement [hand written]. *Maulana Jameel Ahmed Naeemi Private Collection*, Karachi.
- Bhuiyan, A. W. (1982). *Emergence of Bangladesh and Role of Awami League*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Dawn (Karachi), 3 February 1971.
- Dawn, 14 February 1971.
- Dawn, 17 February 1971.
- Dawn, 15 April 1971.
- Faiz-i- Raza (Layalpur/Faisalabad), May 1970.
- Faiz-i- Raza, July 1970.
- Faiz-i- Raza, August 1970.
- Faiz-i- Raza, September 1970.
- Faiz-i- Raza, October 1970.
- Hassan, Z. (1996). *The Separation of East Pakistan: The Rise and Realization of Bengali Muslim Nationalism*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Herbert, F. (1975). *The End of the Beginning- Pakistan 1969-71*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Jang (Rawalpindi), 17 February 1970.
- Jasarat (Karachi), 22 March 1971.
- JUP Karachi. (1970). Election pamphlet. Maulana Jameel Ahmed Naeemi Private Collection, Karachi.
- Khan, M. A. (2005). *We've Learnt Nothing from History Pakistan: Politics and Military Power*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Mahmood, S. (1976). *The Deliberate Debacl*. Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf.
- Malik, S. J. (1990). The Luminous Nurani: Charisma and political mobilization among the Barelwis in Pakistan. *Social Analysis: International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, (28), 38-50.
- Mazari, S. K. (1999). *A Journey to Disillusionment*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Memorandum.(1971).Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani to Gen.Yayha Khan Chief Martial Law Administrator/President of Pakistan. Copy in possession of author.
- Morning News, 27 March 1971.
- Mujadidi, M. A. K. (n.d.). *Koran aur Ma'ashi Nizam*. Lahore: Jamiyat Ulama-i- Jammu Kashmir.
- Noorani, S.A. (1971, March 10). Invitation letter. Copy in possession of author.
- Noorani, S. A., & Shah,P.K. (1971). JUP delegation report on East Pakistan By-elections. [Hand written] Copy in possession of author.
- Pakistan Election Commission, Report on General Election:1970-1971. Vol.11, (Islamabad: n.d.)
- Pakistan Times, 27 January 1971.
- Qaiser, M. H. (2001). *Aik Alam Aik Sayasatdaan*. Karachi: Al-Noor Publications.
- Sadiq, A. D. M. (1977). *Shah Ahmed Noorani*. Vol: I. Gujranwala: Maktaba Raza-i- Mustafa.
- Siddiqui, J. A. (1988). *Noorani Sayasat*. Karachi: Sabal Publications.
- Sisson, R. & Rose, L. E. (1992) *War and Secession: Pakistan, India and the creation of Bangladesh*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- The Washington Post, 6 September 1971.
- Ufaq (Karachi), 30 December-6January 1971.
- Ufaq,12-18 March 1978.
- Usmani, Z. A. (1971, April 23). Press Statement [hand written]. Maulana Jameel Ahmed Naeemi Private Collection, Karachi.
- Zia-i- Harm (Lahore), October 1970.
- Zia-i- Harm, February-March 1971.
- Zia-i- Harm, May1971.
- Zia-i- Harm, March 1972.
- Zia-i- Harm, December 1974.

Received: Jan 13th, 2018Revisions Received: May 11th, 2018