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Friday, Jan. 15, 1965

A Sorry Beginning

In Karachi last week, a long motorcade streamed through the streets in celebration of Mohammed Ayub Khan's election as President of Pakistan. It was no small thing. Truckloads of Ayub supporters waved at the cheering crowds; auto-rickshas carried still more. In the rear were hundreds of wiry, turbaned Pathans from Ayub's own frontier district, who brandished clubs and joyfully fired homemade pistols.

Tempers flared as the long column wound through the Liaquatabad quarter, largely inhabited by Moslem refugees from India who had strongly backed the opposition's spinster candidate, Fatima Jinnah, 71. Soon, the Pathans poured from the trucks to attack passersby, loot shops and set fire to homes. By the time the rioting ended, 33 people were dead, 300 wounded and more than 2,000 homeless.

It was a sorry beginning for Pakistan's first try at democracy since 1958, when Ayub Khan seized power in a military coup d'état. Under his benign but dictatorial eye, a new form of indirect democracy was conceived. The nation's voters last November elected 80,000 "basic democrats" who last week cast their ballots for a President.

Ayub Khan won handily with 61% of the vote. Plucky Fatima Jinnah, sister of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the late father of Pakistan independence, took defeat badly. She snapped, "There is no doubt that these elections have been rigged." Of the massacre of her followers, she declared tartly, "Nowhere in the civilized world can such acts of barbarism be allowed to happen." Handsome Ayub Khan had been badly rattled by opposition attacks during the campaign. When he heard he had won, he cried, "Thank God! The country has been saved." In a nationwide broadcast, he took a conciliatory line. After thanking all who had worked for his election, he added, "I must not forget those who differed with me. They too have served the cause of democracy." As for Fatima Jinnah, "She fought the election according to her lights. I have no personal grudge, and I wish her well."

With Ayub's imposing victory, the government-controlled press began soft-pedaling the strident anti-Americanism that it had found a useful tool in the campaign. One top official, Ghulam Nabi Memon, blandly denied having made his widely published charge that the U.S. was financing the Jinnah campaign. After all, Ayub had now been elected to a five-year term, and he badly needed continued U.S. aid—which has totaled nearly \$5 billion since 1951.

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