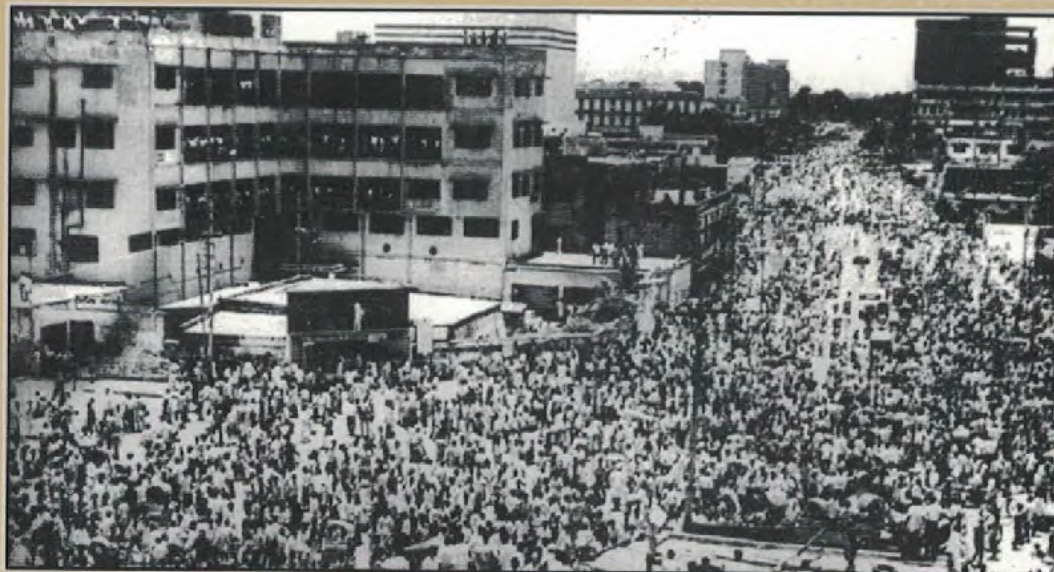
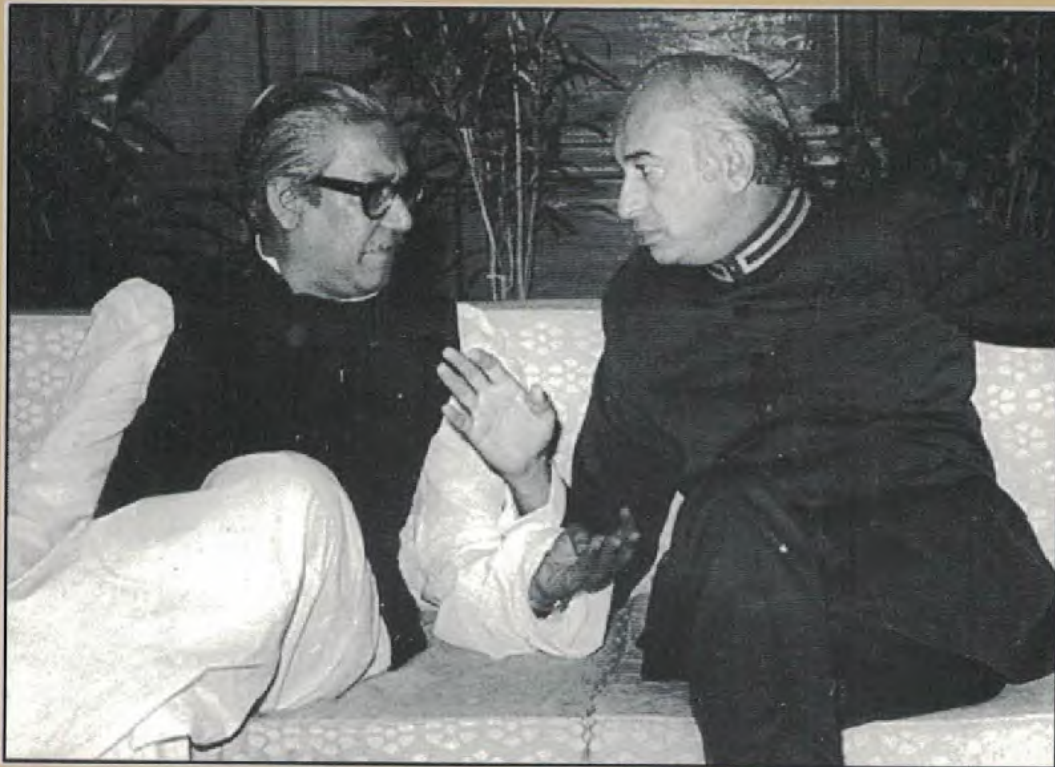


# Z. A. BHUTTO AND



# The Historiography of 1971

Muhammad Reza Kazimi

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To my elder brother  
I. R. Kazimi  
who lived in Dhaka throughout  
the events covered here

The historiography of 1971 is wedged in between denial and wishful thinking. Those who are in a mode of denial attribute the separation of East Pakistan basically to Indian intervention and the influence of Hindu teachers. Those who indulge in wishful thinking, limit the period of crisis from the 7 December 1970 elections to the 16 December 1971 surrender, believing that the transfer of power to the Awami League would have forestalled the secession of the country's east wing.

At the centre of the controversy is the role of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the most popular leader of West Pakistan since the generation of the founders, and equally the *bête noir* of the privileged class. Since it was he who assumed power after the fall of Dacca, he is perceived to be the beneficiary of the debacle. The writers seeking to absolve Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan of blame, and instead implicate Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, overlook the equation of 1971. General Yahya Khan had the power; Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had the majority. Had it simply been a question of the transfer of power, how could Z.A. Bhutto have acquired the leverage to prevent it, unless the crisis had been constitutional in nature?

What is also overlooked in retrospect is the discrepancy between the Legal Framework Order of the Martial Law authorities and the Six Point programme of the Awami League. An emotional argument is also advanced. Since all the civilian protagonists—Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto—died violently, and only the soldier Agha Mohammad

Yahya Khan died in bed, this is adduced as proof of the latter's innocence. Such estimations have filtered down to the common man and have even influenced published accounts.

The literature pertaining to the loss of East Pakistan is vast and varied: declassified documents, memoirs of the participants, and secondary works on the events of 1971. These are also subdivided according to viewpoints of authors: works highlighting the atrocities of the Pakistan Army, works focusing on the ethnic cleansing of the non-Bengalis, and finally, strategic analyses of the Indian invasion.

Intersecting with these are the books on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Already, there are more books on Bhutto than on any other leader of Pakistan, with the sole exception of the Founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. At the end of the list are *The Great Tragedy*, Bhutto's version of the events, published in September 1971, and *Bhutto and the Breakup of Pakistan*, minuted by Mohammad Yunus, containing Bhutto's version of the events as given to the heads of Muslim states in 1972.

It shall be necessary to access the above mentioned sources item-wise, and under the following heads (I) Z. A. Bhutto's stance after the 1970 elections, (II) his part in the Dacca Tripartite Negotiations in March 1971, and (III) his role at the UNSC during December 1971. Conclusions regarding the trends and biases of the surveyed accounts shall be made according to the factual evaluation of the sources.

This exercise shall enable us also to revisit the Great Man theory, another facet of historiography likely to yield results. Because of differing author profiles and affiliations, books belonging basically to the same category have achieved uneven prominence

and repute. This being so, some recent books looming in the public eye as revisionist, are actually not so. In addition to the literature produced as a consequence of the events; there are two documents that frame the events preceding the elections. They are: The Six Point Programme of the Awami League (5 February 1966), and the Legal Framework Order (30 March 1970) of the Martial Law authorities.

The first of the Six Points held that the government would be federal and parliamentary. Only this point corresponded to a provision of the Legal Framework Order; and this point too was heavily qualified by subsequent provisions. The powers of the central government would be confined to defense and foreign affairs. Currency would be added only if separate regional reserves were maintained, otherwise not. Even within the domain of defense and foreign affairs, units (as provinces were termed in the Six Points) would maintain their own militias, and deal directly with foreign aid and trade. The Centre would have no powers of taxation and its expenses were to be met by donations by the units.

Thus the Six Points of the Awami League were anomalous. Although the first point called for a federal parliamentary system, the powers of parliament were to be so limited that a federation could not function. No business of the state could be conducted by such a circumscribed parliament. Presently, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would make a statement which would reveal that he envisaged the central parliament to function not as a national assembly, but a constituent assembly which could define its territory *de novo*. Eventually, even this function was left behind.

The LFO was likewise defective. The basic provision was that the "territories be so united in a federation that the independence,



the territorial integrity, and the national solidarity of Pakistan are ensured, and the unity of the federation is not in any way involved.” In contrast to the Six Points which spelt out concrete demands, the LFO carried vague concepts like integrity and solidarity, which were open to diverse interpretations. The LFO provision that the Constitution be framed within 120 days was a rather unusual one, but it has a history. The first Constituent Assembly had existed from 11 August 1947 to 24 October 1954 without producing a constitution. The second Constituent Assembly had taken two years. Why Z.A. Bhutto wanted this provision removed is not clear, unless he thought that a compromise was possible if the time frame was extended. This demand could have been realistic only if Bhutto was hopeful of some outside intercession. In the March Dacca negotiations, the Awami League went further from the Six Points. To Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the 120 days limitation was irrelevant, as he had a draft constitution which could be pushed through in a day.

Notwithstanding the fact that the first of the Six Points and paragraph 20 of the LFO were compatible, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman clearly understood that the substantive five points and the LFO were at odds. On 1 May 1970, speaking at Hatiya, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman demanded that the National Assembly be declared a sovereign body. He regretted that certain provisions of the LFO were undemocratic. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman pointed out that:

The coming elections were not for achieving power, but to frame the country’s constitution.<sup>1</sup>

This public statement of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, made months before the elections, is ignored by those writers who hold that

the crisis occurred because power was not transferred to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Among such writers is Mohammad Yunus, who enjoyed proximity to Z.A. Bhutto, and later recorded his version of the crisis. Neither these words of Mujibur Rahman, nor the competing concerns of the two would have mattered had there been a provision of two-third majority for framing the constitution. So natural was this expectation that two writers actually berate Bhutto on the ground that such a provision was in place. Lieutenant-General Kamal Matinuddin writes:

One could not prevent Mujib from advocating Six Points formula. But he would have to get that passed in the National Assembly where he would have to obtain a two-third majority.<sup>2</sup>

And this is how Salman Taseer explains the position:

Bhutto chose to play up the horror of a secessionist constitution being pushed through the Assembly. He did not want his supporters to consider too carefully that a two-third majority was not easy, especially for a constitution based upon Six Points in its original form.<sup>3</sup>

It surfaces that this was not an oversight. His military advisors had pressed Yahya Khan for a sixty per cent majority, to which he initially agreed, but dropped from the LFO at the last minute.<sup>4</sup> When Bhutto was asked in his March 1971 press conference at Dacca, whether the Awami League with its absolute majority was competent to frame a constitution, he replied:

Bhutto said legally speaking, they can, but the question has to be decided by the House, whether the

constitution shall be adopted by a simple majority, or a two-third majority.<sup>5</sup>

From the above references, two facts emerge: first, that though the expectations of Kamal Matinuddin and Salman Taseer were based on convention, they were not based on facts; and second, that bias cannot be computed on the basis of affiliation. Major-General Fazal Muqim of the Pakistan Army is sympathetic to the stand taken by Bhutto<sup>6</sup> while a Pakistan People's Party stalwart, Salman Taseer, is not.

## I

Following the results of the 7 December 1970 elections, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto made a number of speeches and statements by which the political atmosphere became charged. The overall majority had been gained by the Awami League: of the 163 seats out of the 161 seats allotted to East Pakistan, one seat each were won by Raja Tridev Roy and Nurul Amin. In the western wing, the PPP won 81 seats, this number due to independent candidates gravitating to it, increased to 88. During the electoral process the Awami League and the Pakistan People's Party had not set up candidates against each other, but after the results, because of their conflicting mandates, the two parties confronted one another. The party obtaining the third highest results, the National Awami Party, put its weight behind the Awami League during the Dacca negotiations.

In the speeches that Bhutto made immediately after the election results were known, he made no reference to the Awami League or the Six Points. On 11 December 1970, he simply stated that "his party was determined to bring about basic changes, so that the people should lead an honourable and prosperous life."<sup>7</sup>

It is clear that his immediate concern was to consolidate his election victory against his West Pakistan opponents. One week later, speaking at Sukkur, he tried to heal the breach, caused during the election campaign between Sindhis and Muhajirs—the people who had migrated from India in the wake of the Partition riots. Z.A. Bhutto said:

“Our main mission is to strengthen the fraternal bonds between all sections of the people.” Pakistan was his faith. He had a sentimental commitment with Pakistan. “As such how can I forget Muhajirs who made supreme sacrifices for Pakistan?”<sup>8</sup>

On the other side, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was focused only on the Six Points. Speaking at Chittagong on 12 December 1970, he re-affirmed that “the constitution of the country would be based on the Six Point programme, which he described as a panacea.”<sup>9</sup> In Dacca, the next week, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman spoke not only of the Six Point programme, but also in terms of Bangladesh alone:

The Awami League chief, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said that he firmly believed that he would be able to realize the Six Point demand of the people of Bangladesh. No power on earth would be able to frustrate the legitimate demands of Bangladesh.<sup>10</sup>

The Six-point program had been the subject of debate between Mujib and Bhutto, much before the elections were held, but when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman spoke exclusively of Bangladesh without any reference to Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto could no longer look the other way.

Speaking outside the Punjab assembly building, on 20 December 1970, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto asserted that West Pakistan could not be neglected either while forming a government or framing the constitution. This was a fair demand, but he went on to call the Punjab and Sindh “bastions of power”. These words were ill chosen and it was because of them, that Bhutto’s critics count his ambition as a factor in the dismemberment of Pakistan.

However, Z.A. Bhutto’s choice of these words find no reference in his speech as carried in the press, but in *Marching towards Democracy* and in Tajuddin Ahmad’s rejoinder issued the next day. Since the controversy centres round this speech of Bhutto, we shall have to cite it at length from the leading English language newspaper of Pakistan, although the owners of *Dawn*, the Haroon family, had lost to the PPP in a bitterly contested constituency—Lyari:

Z.A. Bhutto said his party was a force to be reckoned with in national politics, and any move to frame the constitution or form a government at the centre without the backing and blessings of his party would prove to be a futile attempt.

Making an oblique reference to the Awami League, he said that he had great regard for the majority, but “majority alone was not everything”.

Mr. Bhutto told the crowd that his party would not like to sit *permanently* in the opposition at the centre, because in that case, it would not be in a position to fulfil the promises made to the people. He particularly referred to the problems of the rising cost of living,

economic reforms, and independent foreign policy. These are the matters on which the People's Party had made definite commitments, which it could fulfil only if it shared power.<sup>11</sup> (Emphasis added.)

Considered carefully, this does not sound like a fighting speech, but since the speech was in Urdu, there are textual variants that we shall later have to consider.<sup>12</sup> The Awami League rejoinder, issued by its general secretary, appeared the next day:

Tajuddin Ahmad has said that it was incorrect on the part of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to claim that neither the country's constitution can be framed, nor a central government could be formed without the active co-operation of the Pakistan People's Party. Criticizing the reported statement of the PPP Chairman, he said Punjab and Sindh can no longer aspire to be "bastions of power". The democratic struggle of the people was aimed against such bastions of power.<sup>13</sup>

In tracing comments on Bhutto's stand we shall cite works chronologically, but from two categories, one after the other. Firstly, from the books on the breakup of Pakistan, and, then, from the biographies of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Raunaq Jahan's *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*, hit the stands almost simultaneously with the creation of Bangladesh. Her comments:

The crisis of 1971 that led to the final disintegration of Pakistan was precipitated by Bhutto and his People's Party. After the Awami League's overwhelming electoral victory, the mood in East Pakistan was one of

confidence, and there was no talk of secession... But for Bhutto and the West Pakistan political leadership in general, it was difficult to accept Mujibur Rahman's domination of the centre...hence Bhutto came out with a power sharing arrangement with Mujib.<sup>14</sup>

Raunaq Jahan at this juncture, does not mention the constitutional aspect, and while Bhutto did come up with a power sharing formula, she faults the West Pakistan leadership which was critical of Bhutto for making such a demand. There is strong evidence that Mujibur Rahman was preferable to them over Bhutto, even some members of the PPP were ready to accept Mujibur Rahman as their leader. No floor crossing laws were in place, but Bhutto was able to nullify such moves by stressing the constitutional aspect, and this mood is reflected by some writers, mainly those on the spot writers, who are not in the mainstream of discourse. Fazal Muqim Khan we have already mentioned.<sup>15</sup> A.M.S. Maswani, a journalist settled in Dacca wrote:

It is surprising that after all that happened in East Pakistan, before and after 25 March 1971, there are some political parties who have been accusing Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for being responsible for the dismemberment of Pakistan. So far as East Pakistan was concerned, it was a foregone conclusion that it would have separated under Mujib's leadership. The question was of the dismemberment of West Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

Two aspects of Maswani's assessment need to be noted. Firstly, this book had been published in between Bhutto's overthrow and execution, when the Pakistani press had undertaken a vilification campaign against him. Secondly, it gives us the

perspective of a non-Bengali, a migrant to East Pakistan from India. To him, political intrigues of West Pakistani politicians were abhorrent, because they were turning a blind eye to the atrocities the non-Bengali population was being subjected to. To these people the prospect of power being transferred to the Awami League was a nightmare. For them even the constitutional squabbles were a non-issue, as only survival was uppermost in their mind.

Matiur Rahman also wrote from an East Pakistan perspective, with the difference that he was ethnically a Bengali, not a migrant. He did concern himself with political moves in West Pakistan, but he was not as sympathetic to Bhutto's role as Maswani had been. Matiur Rahman expounded two aspects of the political standoff:

Leaders opposed to Z.A. Bhutto...offered their help to Mujibur Rahman in forming a ministry which would keep Bhutto out, little realizing that their man was not interested in power at the centre at all. Bhutto, for his part, resorted to tactics which appeared to give credence to the Awami League contention that West Pakistan did not really wish to part with power.<sup>17</sup>

The leaders, who offered their help to Mujibur Rahman in forming a ministry, would perforce strengthen his hands on the constitutional front also. They would vote with Mujibur Rahman on the Constitutional Bill, enabling him to claim that Six Points had the sanction of both wings of Pakistan. In later historical estimates however, this isolation of Bhutto was not adequately reflected. Rose and Sisson recount that:



Bhutto's first sally came in a speech on 20 December in Lahore in which he declared that no constitution could be framed, nor any government formed at the national level without the cooperation of the PPP. He stated bluntly that the People's Party was not prepared to occupy the opposition benches, and that it would not wait for another five years to come to power, it had to come to power now.<sup>18</sup>

It is not that Rose and Sisson were oblivious to the compulsions driving Bhutto, but they were not sympathetic to them. What they do is to derive a conclusion, they do not quote Bhutto verbatim, otherwise the word Bhutto had employed, namely "permanently" gives another complexion to his speech. If it had been only a bid for power, under the Six Points the PPP would get in two provinces the power the Awami League would get in one. They do not expound upon the role of Bhutto's West Pakistan's rivals to the same extent as Matiur Rahman, but they probe the nature of the PPP deeper than Matiur Rahman:

The major objective of the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party was to keep the loyalty of the diverse body of members elected to the National Assembly on the Party ticket. Both party loyalty and organizational scaffolding were as yet, untested.<sup>19</sup>

The fact is that in view of the Six Point structure the formation of a central government was bound up with the framing of the constitution, but when Bhutto focused on power sharing, he became more vulnerable to the barbs of his critics, than when he focused on the framing of the constitution. His critics did not scruple to distort his demands as we shall presently see; at the very least they added a stridency to Bhutto's speech which

had not been there. Kamal Matinuddin paraphrases Bhutto's 20 December speech thus:

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was not prepared to sit in the opposition. No constitution could be made without the Pakistan People's Party's cooperation. His lust for power and his determination not to be overlooked made him make statements which increased tensions in East Pakistan.<sup>20</sup>

Hasan Zaheer, on the other hand, emphasizes the constitutional aspect of the crisis:

It would not be fair to blame Bhutto for the postponement of the National Assembly session, unless it is conceded that the Six Points were acceptable to the army, the establishment and to West Pakistan in general.<sup>21</sup>

Siddiq Salik repeats the 20 December speech, adding only that Tajuddin issued a sharp rejoinder.<sup>22</sup> G.W. Choudhury, before joining Yahya Khan's cabinet, had been Professor of Political Science at the University of Dacca, therefore he could put Bhutto's speech in a wider context:

An analysis of Bhutto's speeches during December 1970 and January 1971 reveal that he took the initiative in expounding the "two-nation theory" within Pakistan, while Mujib was preparing to assume the role of father of a new nation. If Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had to make a choice between power and Pakistan, he would chose the former.<sup>23</sup>

His last sentence regardless of whether its mechanics could be worked out or not, completely discounts the constitutional aspect. Had Bhutto listened to the nationalists of his province, he could have, pleading the ideals of democracy, come back from Dacca with a Sindhu Desh. The whole question revolves around whether the Six Points were secessionist or not. At the very least, they were confederal, and not federal, as stated in the first of the six points.

Alexander Hamilton in his *Federalist Papers* No. 27, mentions among other provision: "The regulation of commerce with other nations, and between the states—the superintendence of our intercourse, political and commercial with foreign countries." Since the Awami League insisted on making foreign aid and foreign trade provincial subjects, and further by providing for separate currencies or separate reserves, they went beyond the purview of a federation. Nevertheless, one writer from Pakistan, Syed Shahid Husain maintains that the 6 Point programme was not secessionist at all:

A careful reading of these points does not suggest anything more sinister than a demand for greater provincial autonomy. Even if the effect was to create a confederation, it was still a preferable solution in comparison to the bloody mess the military imposed. In a desperate bid to retain power, and justify his (Yahya's) unprovoked attack on the East Pakistanis...but all he (Yahya) could accuse Mujib was of obstinacy, obduracy and refusal to talk sense.<sup>24</sup>

It is this passage that best exemplifies wishful thinking. To turn a federation into a confederation has wide ramifications. If secession without resistance is preferable to secession with

resistance, then it means that every country would have to let any part go, whenever there was such a demand. The effect of such a step on those parts, which wished to remain, would be one of compulsion. The army action could hardly have been due to Yahya's desperate bid to retain power, since all along he had been taking steps to facilitate the victory of the Awami League.

It is true that Yahya's decisions were not unilateral, but it was he who undid One Unit and Parity which straightaway gave a majority to the East Wing. Ayub Khan's RTC of 1968 had shown that no leader of the East Wing could defy the Six Point programme. It had a predecessor in the 1954 Twenty-One points, and even in the unlikely event of a split mandate in East Pakistan, the parties would vie with each other by demanding more autonomy, not less. This prognosis, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani would confirm; and any way, with Bhashani's boycott of the electoral process, the prospects of a split mandate vanished for all, especially for Yahya and Bhutto to see. The only device to retain power, albeit a short-term device, would have been to delay the elections. Once the results were out, the die was cast. Syed Shahid Husain is also not accurate when he says that the military action was unprovoked. As can be seen from the accounts of A.M.S. Maswani and Matiur Rahman, the action was to prevent the complete decimation of the non-Bengali population. The plight of these unfortunate victims has been highlighted by two later historians, Sarmila Bose and Yasmin Saika; both express sympathy for the Biharis, both are hostile to Bhutto. Sarmila Bose simply states: "Bhutto on his part demanded power without having won the election."<sup>25</sup> Yasmin Saika says of the junta's refusal to countenance the results that: "Several of them, most importantly Bhutto, refused to attend the inaugural session of the National Assembly."<sup>26</sup> A

similar disregard for the constitutional implications is demonstrated by Ikram Sehgal:

Bhutto refused to accept the premiership of Mujibur Rahman. This refusal by vested interests in West Pakistan to allow the Awami League to form the government, as was their due right contributed to further alienating the East and West Pakistanis.<sup>27</sup>

So far we have been discussing Bhutto's speech of 20 December only. In this speech he had not spoken of a boycott, or refusal to attend the inaugural session. It is not for us to offer excuses for Bhutto's stance since that would involve imputing motives to him, which is beyond the mandate of a historian. However, before we go on to the speeches Bhutto made in February 1971, we shall have to take into account the West Pakistan reaction, and what better example can there be than the editorials of Faiz Ahmad Faiz?

Now if Mr. Bhutto in his rejoinder to the Awami League says that no constitution can be framed in the country without the co-operation of the People's Party, nor can a democratic government be set up, how is he wrong?

In this manner, political strength has been divided into three angles of a triangle, and it is the lesson of geometry that two angles can join and become greater than the remaining angle.

But with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's continued insistence on the Six Points of the Awami League, and now, the refusal of Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to attend the National

Assembly, the political crisis has grown so grave, that unless the Awami League shows some flexibility, there shall be no respite from either Martial Law, or the bureaucracy.<sup>28</sup>

What is to be noted is that Bhutto was making these speeches in public; he was not intriguing against the Six Points in drawing rooms. Bhutto had more supporters among the masses, and enemies among the elite, for any of his extravagant claims to go unchallenged. Before we go on to his later speeches, we shall have to retread the same path by quoting from the books on Bhutto.

Dilip Mukerjee's book, *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: Quest for Power*, is perhaps the first of this series. He first asserts that the Agartala Conspiracy case was concocted by the Government of Pakistan and the people believed in Mujib's innocence. He also recounts the effects of Bhutto's 20 December speech without adding anything substantial. The new material he introduces is Major-General Ghulam Jilani's cyclostyled article to the effect that Mujibur Rahman had been willing to compromise on Six Points:

The Awami League was thus willing to go quite some way to meet Bhutto's wishes, but he (Bhutto) was not prepared to accept any compromise, unless it also gave him and his party a place in the central government.<sup>29</sup>

But how much Mukerjee himself credited Jilani's version can be seen from the passages that follow:

The mood in Dacca precluded a compromise on the autonomy issue, not least because of the assurances offered by Mujibur Rahman to the people that there would be no departure from the Six Point Programme.<sup>30</sup>

Dilip Mukerjee also discounts the suggestion that the issue of sharing power was more important to Bhutto than the constitutional impasse:

Bhutto's response was a statement that he was not rejecting the Six Points but endeavouring to find a solution as close to the Awami League formula as possible.<sup>31</sup>

Victoria Schofield does not highlight Bhutto's 20 December speech, but gives an overall summary of the outcome:

Bhutto's enemies blamed him for the breakup of Pakistan, regardless of the impasse on both sides. They felt that Mujib's Six Points should at least have been tried... But when it came to the crunch, it was felt that few in the West would have favoured Mujib's proposals.<sup>32</sup>

Philip E. Jones who has concentrated on Bhutto's rise to power, sits on the fence, and is quite undecided and seems to rely more on intuition than the records that he among all of those writing on Bhutto had seen more closely:

Undoubtedly, Bhutto's intransigence, rhetoric and conniving with the generals had something to do with the descent into civil war and national tragedy in March 1971. But he was by no means the main player. The orders that pushed the country off the cliff were not his, although he probably welcomed them and clearly sought to benefit politically by them.<sup>33</sup>

We have already mentioned that Salman Taseer, on the erroneous

premise that a provision of two-third majority was in place for framing the constitution, had accused Bhutto of scaremongering over the Six Point programme. Taseer does not mention Bhutto's 15 February speech, in which he had voiced his refusal to attend the inaugural session called for 3 March. He goes directly to Bhutto's demands in his 28 February 1971 speech:

That Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should give some indication that on three of the Six Points—currency, taxation and foreign trade—he was prepared to reach some agreement, before the National Assembly meets, or, the National Assembly session should be postponed, or, that the LFO provision that the constitution should be framed within 120 days should be waived.<sup>34</sup>

Salman Taseer also concedes that “Bhutto's role in the breakup of Pakistan stopped short of active connivance with the army.”<sup>35</sup> Maleeha Lodhi is another contributor whose name is associated with a PPP regime. Her criticism of Bhutto at this point is that “while rejecting the Six Points, the PPP did not outline its own proposals for resolving the problem of regional autonomy other than the vague declaration that the remedy of the national problems lay in socialism.”<sup>36</sup> Actually, Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri had a draft constitution ready, but there was no opportunity in the charged atmosphere of Dacca to put them across; only had the National Assembly actually met that these proposals could be debated. Maleeha Lodhi however concedes that the Six Points had implications for West Pakistan also, and that Yahya Khan could have waived the 120 days limitation, rather than postpone the National Assembly session. What is highlighted in her account is that in his 28 February Press Conference, Bhutto made a further concession than he had made in his 15 February speech. On 15 February he was ready to concede two



points, on 28 February he was ready to concede three. Only on taxation, he was unable to compromise.<sup>37</sup>

This point was not spelt out in the Awami League formula, but it was clearly implied that the proposed centre would subsist on contribution rather than taxation—quite in line with the 12 May 1946 All-India Muslim League's proposal to the Cabinet Mission. Although Maleeha Lodhi's lack of sympathy with Bhutto is somewhat startling, considering her one time affiliation to the PPP, objectively, she has been fair:

Recognition of the fact that Yahya's hawkish colleagues were pressuring Yahya to take a stronger stand against Mujib does not necessarily mean that Yahya was acting on Bhutto's behalf.<sup>38</sup>

Another biographer of Bhutto, Shahid Javed Burki is in total sympathy with the Six Point programme:

The Awami League's Six Point Plan promised the Bengali middle class political benefits if they loosened their links with Pakistan. This deep difference explains both Bhutto's frustrations with Mujib, as well as his intransigence in dealing with him.<sup>39</sup>

The political benefits Burki outlines, relates to the clauses pertaining to separate currency, foreign trade and foreign aid. The infrastructure put into place following the first Partition of Bengal in 1905, had laid the foundation of a middle class, and the industrialization of the half province following the Partition of 1947 had empowered it. It was only after securing an industrial base that the economists of the Dacca University led by Abu Nasr Mahmud began expounding the two economies

theory. Nothing else can explain the demand for economic separation during the time cotton had replaced jute as the largest foreign exchange earner, and synthetics had not yet been decried for their being an environmental hazard.

Anwar Husain Syed does not go into the details of economic imperatives, but rather blames Bhutto for his failure to tell the people that East Pakistan now wanted to be separate and independent, that it could not be kept in the Union by force.<sup>40</sup> Considering the fact that Bhutto has been blamed for forcing independence on an unwilling province, Syed's apportioning of this blame to Bhutto is rather banal.

What was actually behind what Burki terms Bhutto's frustrations and intransigence is covered by Stanley Wolpert. He cites excerpts from Bhutto's 14 March 1971 speech:

The Awami League alleges that West Pakistan owes Rs.31 billion to East Pakistan, but I cannot accept the position that West Pakistan should agree to repay this amount. And there is a total of Rs.40 billion loan in foreign exchange. The Awami League contends that West Pakistan will have to pay Rs.38 billion. Now, if I had compromised with them, you would have questioned my integrity, and since East Pakistan is in a majority, I would have been unable to do anything.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, the implications went deeper than the Six Point programme. With Stanley Wolpert's citation, we find ourselves in a phase beyond Bhutto's 20 December speech. In spite of the support he was getting from leftist circles, Bhutto became more guarded in his speech and made no further mention of bastions of power. He also made clear that he had called for

the Awami League and the PPP *together* in the central government. Nevertheless the constitutional issue continued to occupy centre stage. Z.A. Bhutto visited Dacca to meet Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, but except for expressions of loyalty, nothing had resulted.

In action, however, Bhutto hardened his position. What has been implicitly conveyed through a survey of the related literature has now to be repeated explicitly. On 15 February he stated that he would not attend the National Assembly session scheduled for 3 March 1971. Bhutto held that unless his viewpoint was accommodated, the endorsement of a pre-drafted constitution would be futile. Since this stance had invited adverse reactions, Bhutto started offering options for attending the National Assembly session. On 28 February, Bhutto delivered another speech in which he set forth three options for attending the National Assembly session. What Zulfikar Ali Bhutto said was seen and heard directly by a crowd of a hundred thousand, and by millions through the agency of the radio and the press, yet it has been reported variously in secondary sources. This is the essential reason why we have placed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at the centre of this historiographical inquiry.

Kamal Matinuddin states that the three options Bhutto offered were (1) that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should give some indication of reaching an agreement on three of the Six Points—those pertaining to currency, taxation and foreign trade, (2) the National Assembly session should be postponed, or, (3) “Let the two make separate constitutions, each for their own wings.” The third condition he gives on the authority of Safdar Mahmud without realizing that this third condition would make the earlier two conditions redundant. Even with regard to Bhutto’s 14 February speech, Kamal Matinuddin says:

Bhutto made a public statement in which he stated that power should be transferred to both the majority parties. This could be an indication of his acceptance of the separation of, or a con-federation between the two wings.<sup>42</sup>

Kamal Matinuddin makes this accusation in the face of Bhutto's assertion that he wanted power transferred to both parties together. Here is a former army officer projecting Bhutto's efforts for avoiding a split, as an attempt to cause the split. Certainly the third provision according to Matinuddin, that there be two constitutional conventions or a confederation were Awami League demands unveiled in the very last phase of the Dacca negotiations. There would have been no need to summon Bhutto to Dacca were it only a question of Mujibur Rahman agreeing to Bhutto's public demand. Bhutto's actual third condition was to lift the 120 days limitation.

Ardeshir Cowasjee's version is even more interesting:

On Bhutto's speech made on February 28, 1971 at a public meeting at Lahore; where he offered Mujibur Rahman a carrot in the form of three alternatives—agreement on three of the Six Points, or postponement of the National Assembly meeting—or a waiving of the Legal Framework Order.<sup>43</sup>

Maleeha Lodhi observes with regard to Bhutto's conditions:

Yahya decided to exercise one, rather than the other option presented by Bhutto. After all, the 120 day limit could also have been waived.<sup>44</sup>

In his deposition before the Hamoodur Rahman Commission, General Yahya Khan had agreed:

Zulfiqar Bhutto had a valid point when he said that while power could be transferred to a political party having a simple majority, it could not be permitted to frame a constitution entirely at its own discretion.<sup>45</sup>

On this point, Bhutto had the reluctant and private support of Ayub Khan as well. His endorsement of Bhutto's stand is embedded within revealing and hostile comments:

Bhutto was supposed to be out of favour (with Yahya Khan) but he too is being wooed again now that he has done so well in the elections in West Pakistan.

Basically, Bhutto's stand is logical in view of Mujibur Rahman's uncompromising attitude, but his object is difficult.

Bhutto has assumed tremendous responsibility in refusing to attend the constituent assembly and therefore keeping the country in a state of flux.<sup>46</sup>

As Yahya's deposition shows, Bhutto after his bastions of power speech had started speaking almost exclusively on constitutional issues. His 20 December 1970 speech had been followed by direct talks with Mujibur Rahman, but, as Ayub noted, his refusal to attend the National Assembly was of graver import.

## II

For the final round, for the tripartite talks, the scene shifts to Dacca. Here we need to access accounts of the military commanders. We should not be surprised that their versions differ. Brigadier Siddiq Salik says that: “Yahya had asked Mujib for himself to be retained as President,”<sup>47</sup> while Admiral S.M. Ahsan contends that Mujib had offered the Presidency to Yahya, but Yahya refused.<sup>48</sup> On the constitutional issue, S.M. Ahsan records his impression after a meeting with Yahya:

It seemed that the provision of the 120 day life of the Constituent Assembly was sacrosanct, and therefore it was imperative for all controversies to be settled before the Assembly met.<sup>49</sup>

There appeared to be in Bengal at that time a kind of metaphysical rebellion against the total environment itself.<sup>50</sup>

Until then, except for a *hartal*, which was called immediately after the announcement of the postponement, no incident of arson, murder or loot was reported.<sup>51</sup>

Ahsan offers no explanation for the fact, as recounted by him that while Yahya was willing to compromise on Six Points, he was not willing to budge from the 120 days limitation. What was the purpose behind such incomprehensible priorities? We do not know whether this explanation was sought by the Hamoodur Rahman Commission or not. It is S.M. Ahsan who tells us that, after being briefed by Mujibur Rahman, Yahya said

he had no objections to the Six Point programme, but, “you will have to carry the West Pakistan leaders with you.” Mujib replied, “Of course, Sir, kindly call the Assembly as soon as possible.” Mujibur Rahman assured Ahsan that the Awami League would not bulldoze their constitution without bothering about West Pakistan.<sup>52</sup>

S.M. Ahsan has been commended for his conduct during the crisis, but going by his deposition, it is difficult to determine what it was. Ahsan noticed a kind of metaphysical rebellion, but any incidence of physical violence escaped his notice. His phrase “until then” presupposes that violence started later. Exactly when, Ahsan does not specify. One part of Ahsan’s deposition was confirmed by Yahya, that is, he had no objection to the Six Point programme:

My strategy was to fight mass paranoia with total trust... A stage came when his Six Points had become totally irrelevant. Even he realized this. I was prepared to accept confederation, or even any other variation on the theme so long as the Pakistan Army could operate in East Pakistan, as if it were its national soil.<sup>53</sup>

Thus there was no Yahya-Bhutto collusion, but a Mujib-Yahya understanding; Yahya’s minimum being less than Bhutto’s minimum. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in view of Yahya’s next step, was to become irrelevant: “I offered to appoint him (Mujib) the Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator then and there. He laughed and rejected the idea as too ridiculous.”<sup>54</sup>

In his deposition, Yahya Khan censures both S.M. Ahsan and Yaqub Khan.<sup>55</sup> Yaqub Khan was not privy to the decision to make Mujibur Rahman the Deputy Chief Martial Law

Administrator. In Yaqub Khan's version, Yahya does not come through as being in a conciliatory frame of mind. Regarding the events of 3 March 1971, Yaqub Khan records that:

Mujib's proposal is that a provisional government be allowed to be formed by the majority party as early as possible under a Presidential Order within the framework of the 1962 Constitution; pending finalization of the new constitution which may take considerable time... His party is power hungry... Subject to overall considerations, the proposal has merits including the important one that its implementation shall take the pressure off constitution-making.<sup>56</sup>

Yaqub Khan's reference to the 1962 Constitution, though puzzling, is attested to also by Bhutto. It was because power was to be transferred to the Awami League under a *provisional* government that Bhutto had staked the claim of his party. The 1962 Constitution, on the face of it, was a major concession by Mujibur Rahman. Why Yahya Khan, who was prepared to transfer power under Martial Law, prevaricated over transferring power under the 1962 Constitution, is not clear, unless he feared that the revival of the 1962 Constitution would nullify his proclamation of Martial Law. One Unit and Parity were common to both the 1956 and 1962 Constitutions, but the 1956 Constitution was parliamentary in nature which would have been a better referral. Far more intriguing is why Mujib would say that constitution-making would take considerable time. This was the stance of Bhutto, not of Mujib.



The possible solutions earlier discarded, included the postponement of the inaugural session, if the attendance of a major party was not secured.<sup>57</sup> This is exactly what Bhutto was asking for. Yaqub Khan also discards the practicability of the President refusing to authenticate a constitution democratically framed. This was also in accord with what Bhutto told Yahya Khan. Yaqub Khan admits that:

Either of these actions could bring about an uprising leading to the same results, but we would at least be satisfied that we had done everything in our power to defer escalation before launching an action that would certainly end up in the breakup of Pakistan.<sup>58</sup>

When Sahabzada Yaqub Khan's solutions were in accord with that of a politician, we need to enquire just what was the political solution up his sleeve to remove the political deadlock? As far as can be discerned from his letter of resignation, his solution was no more than prevarication, and the shifting of blame from the armed forces to the civilians:

Let political leaders assume, or at any rate share the responsibility for the actions which would lead to the breakup and the resultant consequences. West Pakistan leaders must make up their mind regarding the "price" they are prepared to pay for integration.<sup>59</sup>

There was a price to be paid. If the Six Point programme was endorsed, then the matter would not be confined to the eastern theatre, regardless of the gratuitous suggestion that the two wings have two separate dispensations. S.M. Ahsan and Sahabzada Yaqub Khan saved their reputations, but they due to their posture, lost Pakistan the propaganda war by disregarding the

violent nature of the Awami League agitation. Bhutto does not name the Baloch leader in Dacca who sought not two, but five constitutional conventions, but Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo comes forward in his own memoirs that:

I proposed to General Yahya that... Let us not create the impression that we are two separate countries whose Assemblies are meeting to draft separate constitutions. Let there be five Assemblies, or better call them five constitutional committees to prepare five different constitutions. These Constitutional Committees should then meet in a joint session to frame the country's federal constitution.<sup>60</sup>

This was a reference to the last stages of the tripartite negotiations in Dacca when the Awami League overstepped the Six Point programme and demanded two Constitutional Committees or Conventions which would meet later to seek a confederation. The Six Point programme was a device for the gradual disintegration of Pakistan; Bizenjo's suggestion made it a device for immediate disintegration. Mujibur Rahman had asked for power to be transferred directly to the provinces, as such, there was no option but to resist. A glimpse of the situation on the ground has been given by Mubashir Hasan:

Yahya was referring to an incident in March 1971 in Dacca, East Pakistan, now Dhaka, Bangladesh, when Bhutto sent Khar to talk to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Dhaka's environment was extremely hostile and Yahya had correctly advised Bhutto not to take a risk with Khar's life.<sup>61</sup>

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto earned great obloquy for saying on his arrival from Dacca: "By the Grace of God Pakistan has at last been saved." Since Bhutto's presumption proved false, no one paid heed to the words "at last". Without these two words, Bhutto's statement would mean that army action was taken to prevent secession, or, to put the worst construction on Bhutto's words, to prevent the transfer of power. The words "at last" mean that the Pakistan Army had prevaricated initially, in spite of the violence. Whether it was better trying to halt the violence faced by non-Bengalis, or saving one's personal reputation is a question that has to be faced in view of criticism coming from Bhutto's own party men, Rafi Raza for one:

He could have attracted less blame if he had attended the Assembly in the first place. He could have there objected to the Awami League constitution, and the majority party would have been then fully responsible for the results. In that event, it would have been the President's responsibility to refuse to authenticate a Six Point constitution which was contrary to the provisions of the LFO.<sup>62</sup>

Political maneuvering could hardly be a consideration within the crucible of the last stages of negotiations. That is why Bhutto did not remain non-committal on his return from Dacca. His statement about Pakistan having been saved was a clear but needless endorsement of the army action. What prompted army action is another question. In view of Rafi Raza's legal acumen, it can be asserted that even if secession could not be thwarted, acquiescence in it would not be a viable option. If East Pakistan was lost in battle, the possession would be lost. If East Pakistan was surrendered in a negotiated transfer, the title would be lost. The loss of title would unravel the constitutional basis of West Pakistan. As Kamal Hossein has

admitted: "Bhutto's account confirms the basic position that was maintained by Bangabandhu."<sup>63</sup>

This point is most important in view of the ideological import of our inquiry. According to S.M. Zafar the mindset of people who could belong to any one of the Muslim League parties functioning in Pakistan, was firstly that he or she would always consider M. A. Jinnah to be the supreme leader, and secondly would hold the PPP and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto responsible for the 1971 dismemberment of the country.<sup>64</sup>

### III

The last phase in this context relates to the role of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the UN Security Council in December 1971. Here the grading of the versions is simpler: which writer has blamed Bhutto for tearing up the Polish Resolution, and which writer has not. As far as can be determined, this story first surfaced in *War and Secession*. Rose and Sisson carried Yahya's version, that when he phoned Bhutto, asking him to accept the Polish Resolution, Bhutto pretended that the line was disturbed,<sup>65</sup> and later tore the Resolution up.<sup>66</sup> That Yahya Khan was the primary source for this piece of wishful thinking is clear. It is equally clear, that he had not himself read the Polish Resolution. Yahya Khan, though not the primary source, was nevertheless responsible for spreading the canard that Bhutto had said: *Idhar Ham, Udhar Tum* (we here, you there) in his post-election speech.<sup>67</sup> I need not dwell upon the veracity of this charge, as it has been exhaustively refuted by Aftab Ahmad, then Additional Secretary, Information.<sup>69</sup> The story of Bhutto having torn up the Polish Resolution has been relayed by Shahid Javed Burki,<sup>70</sup> and Kamal Matinuddin.<sup>71</sup>

What was the import of the Polish Resolution? Did it really carry the provisions to support the contention of Yahya Khan,

that it could have prevented the dismemberment of Pakistan? It was the Permanent Representative who rejected the Polish Resolution on the ground that it required Pakistan to first withdraw from its own territory; only then, at an unspecified time, the occupying Indian forces would be withdrawn.<sup>72</sup> Other authors have noted that it mentioned no cease-fire on the western front,<sup>73</sup> and that it was the most stringent and specific of all the resolutions so far moved.<sup>74</sup>

#### IV

What remains to be seen now, is how the persona of Bhutto has been reflected by his contemporaries. G.W.Choudhury says:

Another complicating factor in a Mujib-Bhutto understanding was their divergent attitude towards India. Mujib was in favour of friendly relations with New Delhi, while Bhutto was still regarded as anti-Indian.<sup>75</sup>

It was not a mere complicating factor, it was the defining factor; the reason why Bhutto was apprehensive of the 6 Point formula, and why he did not wish to become a “double hostage”. It was because of the steps that Bhutto had taken to thwart secession that he became vulnerable to the charge that he was responsible for the dismemberment of Pakistan. From which quarter this charge originated shall presently be made plain, but first we need to show how his role was perceived by the Awami League. As one sympathizer complained:

Nor had anyone dropped a word of caution that we were crossing the limits beyond which lay death and destruction. I asked, “Do you think that there was still some hope left after the confederation proposal had been made?” He replied, “That is where we

miscalculated. We thought and our sources inside the government confirmed that the army was giving in. So we pressed on, completely forgetting that Bhutto had arrived on the scene.<sup>76</sup>

Specifically, this assessment meant that while Yahya was prepared to go on giving concessions to the point that the Pakistan Army could be stationed in East Bengal, Bhutto understood that peaceful co-existence between a Pakistani Army and a Bangladeshi Militia would be problematic. In the Indian mind too, Bhutto's presence loomed as a threat. Ikram Sehgal, though he accuses Bhutto of refusing to accept Mujibur Rahman as prime minister, has this confidence to share:

He tried to convince me that all that had taken place was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's fault, and if he carried on in this way, it would mean the destruction of Pakistan. I told him that if this was the case, the Indians should be happy with Bhutto, since the Indians had the aim of destroying Pakistan. I told him that since the Indians thought this of Bhutto, the opposite was probably truer... From my conversations with Malhotra, I gathered that the Indians were particularly allergic to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Also China was one of Malhotra's nightmares.<sup>77</sup>

Not only for India, but also for the conservative parties, Bhutto's rule was a nightmare. Led by the Information Minister Sher Ali Khan, they led a campaign against him, and to intensify their vilification, they suppressed news of the violent nature of the Awami League agitation. By launching a socialist manifesto, Bhutto made powerful enemies. They protested the nationalization undertaken by Bhutto, never the nationalization undertaken by Mujibur Rahman. What Bhutto had faced can be gathered by this assessment of his personality by Yahya

Khan: "Mukhtar Ali Qazilbash, the then Finance Minister, once told me that a foreign diplomat had said, Zulfikar Bhutto is so ambitious that if he did not get power within two or three years, he will go mad."<sup>78</sup> Bhutto did not go mad even when deprived of power, or even in the death cell, as his letter to Syed Hashim Raza proves.<sup>79</sup>

Because of hostility in his home province, Bhutto could never explain what he had meant by saying "at last", because that would strengthen the case for repatriating the stranded non-Bengalis. Neither S.M. Ahsan, nor Yaqub Khan factor in this aspect of the struggle. Both are honoured for recommending a political, rather than military solution. *What* that political solution could be, apart from surrender, they do not say. What the repercussions of the surrender would be on the west wing, they do not seem to care.

Finally, let us consider the verdict of the Hamoodur Rahman Commission on Bhutto's role in the 1971 crisis. At Text 6, No. 103, the Commission has reasoned that Bhutto's demand for consensus had created the dissension that led to dismemberment:

Inherent in Mr. Bhutto's demand for consensus on the framing of the constitution, was the two majority theory, namely that the Awami League in East Pakistan, and the People's Party in West Pakistan. This theory was also the basis of the demand made by the People's Party for a "grand coalition" at the centre.

No. 104. It is clear therefore, that the demand made by Mr. Bhutto at a public meeting in Karachi on 14 March 1971 amounted to the acceptance of the idea of confederation, rather than its outright rejection.<sup>80</sup>

This portion of the Commission's Report pre-supposes that the Six Point programme was not intrinsically confederal, and only Bhutto's demand for a grand coalition made it so. As Bhutto explained in his press conference, that in a confederation, the majority party of one confederal unit, does not constitute the majority party of another confederal unit. Unless Sheikh Mujibur Rahman compromised to the extent of making the Six Points federal in nature, he could not become the prime minister. The suggestion of a "grand coalition" was to neutralize the operation of a confederation, rather than create one. The Commission was putting the cart before the horse when it interpreted Bhutto's stand as a demand for creating a confederation, instead of opposing it. In Text 20, No. 83, the Commission held that:

We have also not been impressed by the explanations given by the People's Party and its Chairman about the refusal of the party to join the session of the Assembly called for on 3 March 1971. If it neither made the Six Point programme an election issue, nor campaigned against it in the elections, then it is difficult to appreciate how it, after the elections in which the Awami League was returned on that programme, insist upon the Awami League declaring before going into the House that it was prepared to abandon, or even compromise upon its mandate.<sup>81</sup>

The Hamoodur Rahman Commission took no cognition of the fact that even before the elections, Bhutto had opposed the Six Point programme publicly and repeatedly. To make the Six Point demand an election issue for West Pakistan constituencies, as the Hamoodur Rahman Commission had demanded, would have been ineffectual and futile. It would blot out even the token opportunity for negotiations. The Awami League itself realized that the Six Point programme ran counter to the LFO.



Moreover the Hamoodur Rahman Commission did not record its appreciation that the course it prescribed would have ensured a Six Point constitution for the whole of Pakistan. If this objective was set before the Commission in its terms of reference, it is another matter; however, if Bhutto had gone along and participated in the Constituent Assembly as Rafi Raza also desired, and the Awami League had passed the Six Point constitution in his presence, Bhutto would have lost the right to oppose it, or even its extension to West Pakistan as Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo had demanded in Dacca.

These strictures belie the impression gathered by General Niazi and others that the Hamoodur Rahman Commission was influenced in its findings by Z.A. Bhutto.<sup>82</sup> Constitutional Law is an established component of any Law syllabus. Despite this, political moves and not constitutional conventions have guided the Commission's judgment. Let us now hear what Bhutto said in his defense. Bhutto implicitly recognized the impetuosity of his 20 December speech by excluding reference to it in his *The Great Tragedy*. However, his later speeches find reference. It was on the basis of the Six Point programme being confederal that Bhutto had asserted the rights of his constituents:

The principle of majority could be applied in a federal, but not confederal structure; under a federal arrangement the roles of majority are reversible, but this is not so in a confederal arrangement.<sup>83</sup>

The most revealing portions of this booklet are about what went behind the scenes in the Dacca tripartite negotiations. This was also the last occasion when Bhutto would mention the charged nature of the atmosphere surrounding the talks:

The refugees who had fled from India in 1947 were once again uprooted in 1971... All these [West Pakistan]

politicians are equally to blame for the carnage that has followed.<sup>84</sup>

It was under these threatening circumstances that terms were being conveyed by the Awami League. Bhutto describes in some detail, the last minute proposals of the Awami League, and his reaction to them:

The salient features of the [Awami League] proposal were that Martial Law be withdrawn immediately and power transferred in the five provinces without effecting a similar transfer in the Central Government... It was also proposed that the National Assembly be divided *ab initio*... It would then be the task of the National Assembly to discuss and debate the proposals of both the Committees, and find ways and means of living together. Under an interim arrangement, which was to be an amended form of the 1962 Constitution, East Pakistan would be given autonomy on the basis of Six Points and the provinces of the west wing would have powers as provided in the 1962 Constitution, but would be free to work out their quantum according to a mutually acceptable procedure subject to the President's approval.<sup>85</sup>

These proposals of the Awami League, apparently made after due deliberation, nevertheless lacked clarity viewed either from the viewpoint of secession or federation. What would be the purpose of discussion between two committees or conventions? It would be back to square one, because in substance, these discussions could hardly be different than the earlier discussions between the Awami League and the Pakistan People's Party. The only difference which seems not to have been a calculated one, would be a greater voice to the National Awami Party.

The reference to the 1962 Constitution is a somewhat mystifying one. As mentioned, both the 1956 and 1962 Constitutions were equal as far as the clauses relating to provincial powers were concerned: Parity and One Unit, the 1956 Constitution would be closer to the LFO as it had a parliamentary form of government.

The proposal regarding the 1962 Constitution had been conveyed to General Yaqub Khan as well, but while during his incumbency it could have been considered a window for compromise, after splitting the National Assembly, it could not. The purpose the 1962 Constitution served, of nullifying the Martial Law proclamation, also considered above, would become infructuous at this stage. And, why was the President's assent still sought after the LFO had been shot to pieces? What would the office of president mean after parliament had been bifurcated? The only possibility was that Mujibur Rahman was privy to the minimum requirement that Yahya Khan had later deposed before the Hamoodur Rahman Commission. The 1962 Constitution did not provide for any prime minister. All in all this demarche of the Awami League was incapable of being put into practice. Bhutto clearly foresaw it:

The Six Point Arrangement only envisaged joint defense and foreign affairs, less foreign trade and aid as subjects. By any objective standard, it is clear that this made the National Assembly redundant, let alone any opposition within it.<sup>86</sup>

This is substantially what Bhutto, upon assuming the office of president, told the Middle Eastern heads of state or governments. The minutes of these conversations, were recorded by Mohammad Yunus, and have recently been published. The burden of Bhutto's discourse was on the course of the 1971 War and the role of foreign powers during the UNSC debates,

both of which need separate discussion. But since one of Bhutto's objectives was to stall the recognition of Bangladesh, he had to give an account of how the post-election crisis developed.

Z.A.Bhutto told his counterparts about his meeting with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7 January 1972, but since this was a conversation with a prisoner, not much could be gained by dwelling on it. To the Shah of Iran, President Cevdet Sunay of Turkey, President Houari Boumeddine of Algeria, to President Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria, and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Bhutto said in sum total that he had asked for postponement of the National Assembly session, or the removal of the 120 day limit for producing a Constitution. Bhutto blamed Yahya for not setting a new date, which though factual, was hardly fair.<sup>87</sup>

S.M.Ahsan had advised Yahya to set a new date<sup>88</sup> but whether a new date would have been satisfactory to Bhutto's purpose is open to question, since 3 March had been set without his approval. Bhutto spoke mainly about the secessionist nature of the Six Points, and his opposition to the two committee/conventions proposals, as it would mean bypassing the National Assembly.<sup>89</sup> To some, Bhutto gave one part of his explanation, to others another part, depending on the audience. He did not, and could not, deviate from what had been reported in the foreign press.

Disregarding what Yunus has written about Bhutto in other contexts, such as the 1965 War, which shows that the foreign minister and the Foreign Office were not on the same page, we have to focus on the following opinion of the rapporteur:

Bhutto's presentation of Mujibur Rahman's position as well as his attitude eventually turned out to have been factually inaccurate. I have no intention of questioning Bhutto's motive.<sup>89</sup>

If Yunus has written this about Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's position, when he was a prisoner in West Pakistan, he has not heard the 7 January 1972 tape. If, however, Yunus means that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's final proposal for a confederation was not secessionist; he too is indulging in wishful thinking.

Yunus even while refusing to question Bhutto's motive, does him an injustice. While Bhutto may have condensed his own role, or amplified Yahya's responsibility, his representation of Mujibur Rahman's attitude in the meetings Yunus attended, is accurate. Even before the outbreak of the 1971 War, even before the surrender, Bhutto had set up a criterion to determine the truth:

If history confirms that there was a secessionist movement in East Pakistan, spearheaded by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League, then there will be one verdict. If however, the future decides that the Six Points was not a concealed scheme for secession, but only a demand for autonomy under the framework of one Pakistan, the verdict will be different.<sup>90</sup>

The future has revealed that Mujib had indeed gone to Agartala.<sup>91</sup> This is confirmed by two Bangladeshi writers, Badruddin Umar, and S.A. Karim. The latter recounts that Sheikh Mujib would not call it "a conspiracy, but a striving for independence". The fact that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wanted independence is the national narrative of Bangladesh, but some Pakistani authors still cling to the opinion that the Agartala Conspiracy Case was concocted by Ayub Khan.

Now, in conclusion, let us revisit the narrative that we have encountered. It is held firstly, that the Pakistan Army had not expected any party to obtain a clear majority. This cannot be true, because the election results were a consequence of military decisions. It was the LFO that had done away with inter-wing parity. Under the principle “one man, one vote”, it had given a clear majority of votes to the east wing. Yahya had shied away from imposing a two-third majority to frame the constitution. The results were inbuilt as far as the regional allocation of seats was concerned.

If the party position had not become clear earlier, it became crystal clear after the National Awami Party (Bhashani) boycotted the elections. There remained no credible challenge to the Awami League, as the precedent of the 1954 Jugto Front victory heavily underlined. S.M. Ahsan had confirmed this assessment, in his deposition.<sup>91</sup>

It is a unique phenomenon in historiography that the narrative of the antagonist has been adopted by the protagonist. This was not done altruistically, but to serve post 1971 political interests. The role of the conservative parties has been discounted to remove from the narrative, the pressure mounted on Bhutto through the agency of the Information Minister Sher Ali Khan. The suffering of a hundred thousand non-Bengalis is discounted to represent the Awami League action as peaceful and non-violent.

The role of the Pakistani press has been ambivalent. Writing under the heading “Quest for Truth”, Akhtar Pyami describing the March 1971 events in 2000:

It would be travesty of facts to suggest that the army action against the unarmed people of East Pakistan followed the emergence of the hard core Mukti Bahini.

Not at all. The disillusioned people of the eastern wing were not yet mobilized and organized to launch a militant movement against the powerful armed forces of Pakistan. Not till then, the non-Bengali population of East Pakistan had been made victims of brutal assault.<sup>92</sup>

Since Akhtar Pyami was living in Dacca during those momentous times, he cannot be contradicted, except of course by himself. Writing under the heading: "The Nightmare that Was" in the same newspaper six years earlier, Akhtar Pyami had written:

Violence was unleashed on a frightful scale. Those who were suspected to be supporters of West Pakistan became targets of wrath and fury. The Urdu speakers who had been forced by circumstances to migrate to East Pakistan, or had chosen to settle there, became objects of hate. For these weeks the province witnessed an orgy of murder, loot and arson.<sup>93</sup>

The battered, tortured, insulted and trampled people of Pakistan have not known whom to believe. Now they have the added burden of not knowing whom to believe and when.

A very prominent Human Rights activist has dismissed the murder, arson and loot of these unfortunate creatures of conscience as "irrelevant".<sup>94</sup> Since his human rights record is impeccable, it follows that he does not consider the non-Bengali population as human.

It is only here that we notice a dissonance between Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the cadre of the Pakistan People's Party. While Bhutto repatriated a few non-Bengalis at his personal expense in March 1971, his party was adamantly opposed to their re-settlement in Sindh. This inhibited Bhutto's defense of his

stance after he had assumed power. His indiscretion had been limited to his 20 December 1970 speech. In subsequent speeches and statements, although he kept raising the stakes, he spoke basically in constitutional rather than political terms. The *udhar tum, idhar ham* story was concocted, as was the myth that the Polish Resolution was favourable to Pakistan or that Bhutto had torn it up.

There is another uncommon aspect to the historiography of 1971. That the non-Bengali population was subjected to atrocities is covered by writers other than Fazal Muqim, A.M.S. Maswani and Matiur Rahman since the mid nineteen seventies. However their accounts were able to gain credibility only after 2011, when Sarmila Bose and Yasmin Saika published their findings. Wars have been lost by other nations also, but the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War was the first in history in which faith had also been lost.



## Notes

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**Z. A. Bhutto's  
Speech at the UN Security Council, New York  
December 15, 1971**

We have met here today at a grave moment in the history of my country and I would request the Council kindly to bear with me and to hear the truth, the bitter truth. I know the United Nations, I know the Security Council, I have attended their sessions before. The time has come when, as far as Pakistan is concerned, we shall have to speak the truth whether members of the Council like it or not. We were hoping that the Security Council, mindful of its responsibilities for the maintenance of world peace and justice, would act according to principles and bring an end to a naked, brutal aggression against my people. I came here for this reason. I was needed by the people of Pakistan, and when I was leaving Pakistan I was in two minds whether to: go to the Security Council to represent the cause of my country, to represent the cause of a people that had been subjected to aggression, or to remain with my people, by their side, while they were being subjected to attack and violence. However, I felt that it was imperative for me to come here and seek justice from the Security Council. But I must say, whether the members like it or not, that the Security Council has denied my country that justice. From the moment I arrived we have been subjected to dilatory tactics.

It will be recalled that when the Indian Foreign Minister spoke and I spoke after him, I said that filibustering was taking place. That was my immediate observation. The Security Council, I am afraid, has excelled in the art of filibustering, not only on substance but also on procedural matters. With some cynicism, I watched yesterday a full hour of the Security Council's time wasted on whether the members of the Council would be ready to meet at 9.30 a.m. or that bed and breakfast required that they should meet at 11 a.m.



The representative of Somalia referred to the population of East Pakistan as 56 million, but later on he corrected himself to say that the population of Bengal—of Muslim Bengal—was 76 million. If he had waited for a few more days he need not have corrected himself because millions are dying, and it would have come to 56 million if the Council had kept on filibustering and discussing whether it should meet today or tomorrow or the day after tomorrow—whether the lines of communication between New York and Moscow and Peking and other capitals would permit the members to obtain new instructions. Thus, we could have gone on and on. That is why I requested you, Mr. President, to convene a meeting of the Security Council immediately and I am thankful to you for having convened this meeting, because precious time is being lost. My countrymen, my people, are dying. So I think I can facilitate your efforts if I speak now. Perhaps this will be my last speech in the Security Council. So please bear with me because I have some home truths to tell the Security Council. The world must know. My people must know. I have not come here to accept abject surrender. If the Security Council wants me to be a party to the legalisation of abject surrender, then I say that under no circumstances shall it be so. Yesterday my eleven year old son telephoned me from Karachi and said, “Do not come back with a document of surrender. We do not want to see you back in Pakistan if you do that.” I will not take back a document of surrender from the Security Council. I will not be a party to the legalisation of aggression.

The Security Council has failed miserably, shamefully. “The Charter of the United Nations”, “the San Francisco Conference”, “international peace and justice”—these are the words we heard in our youth, and we were inspired by the concept of the United Nations maintaining international peace and justice and security. President Woodrow Wilson said that he fought the First World War to end wars for all time. The League of Nations came into

being, and then the United Nations after it. What has the United Nations done? I know of the farce and the fraud of the United Nations. They come here and say, "*Excellence, Excellence, comment allez-vous?*" and all that. "A very good speech—you have spoken very well, *tresbien.*" We have heard all these things. The United Nations resembles those fashion houses which hide ugly realities by draping ungainly figures in alluring apparel. The concealment of realities is common to both but the ugly realities cannot remain hidden. You do not need a Secretary-General. You need a chief executioner.

Let us face the stark truth. I have got no stakes left for the moment. That is why I am speaking the truth from my heart. For four days we have been deliberating here. For four days the Security Council has procrastinated. Why? Because the object was for Dacca to fall. That was the object. It was quite clear to me from the beginning. All right, so what if Dacca falls? Cities and countries have fallen before. They have come under foreign occupation. China was under foreign occupation for years. Other countries have been under foreign occupation. France was under foreign occupation. Western Europe was under foreign occupation. So what if Dacca falls? So what if the whole of East Pakistan falls? So what if the whole of West Pakistan falls? So what if our state is obliterated? We will build a new Pakistan. We will build a better Pakistan. We will build a greater Pakistan.

The Security Council has acted short-sightedly by acquiescing in these dilatory tactics. You have reached a point when we shall say, "Do what you like." If this point had not been reached we could have made a commitment. We could have said, "All right, we are prepared to do some things." Now why should we? You want us to be silenced by guns. Why should we say that we shall agree to anything? Now you decide what you like. Your decision will not be binding on us. You can decide what you like. If you

had left us a margin of hope, we might have been a party to some settlement.

But the Indians are so short-sighted. Mr. President, you referred to the “distinguished” Foreign Minister of India. What may I ask is so “distinguished” about a policy of aggression he is trying to justify. How is he distinguished when his hands are full of blood, when his heart is full of venom? But you know they do not have vision.

The partition of India in 1947 took place because they did not have vision. Now also they are lacking in vision. They talk about their ancient civilisation and the mystique of India and all that. But they do not have vision at all. If I had been in his place, I would have acted differently. I extended a hand of friendship to him the other day. He should have seen what I meant. I am not talking as a puppet. I am talking as the authentic leader of the people of West Pakistan who elected me at the polls in a more impressive victory than the victory that MujiburRahman received in East Pakistan, and he should have taken cognizance of that. But he did not take cognizance of it. We could have opened a new page, a new chapter in our relations.

As I said, if the French and the Germans can come to terms, why cannot India and Pakistan come to terms? If the Turks and the Greeks can still talk sensibly as civilised people over Cyprus, why cannot India and Pakistan do likewise? If the Soviet Union and the United States can open a new page in their history, if China and the United States can open a new page in their history, why can we not usher a new era in our relations? We could have done so. But as it was said about the 1967 Arab-Israel War, the military victory of Israel made it more difficult for Israel and the Arabs to reach a settlement. If you want to subjugate Pakistan militarily, you will find it more difficult to bring peace. I say that the choice for us is either to accept living

in the same subcontinent and co-operating for peace and progress, or to be implacable enemies of each other forever.

The Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union does not like my reference to the Roman Empire. I do not know what objection he has to it, unless he sees some similarity between his empire and the Roman Empire. I do not really see why he had any objection to that. But I shall again refer to the Roman Empire, and I hope that the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union will have no objection to it because we want to have good relations with the Soviet Union and we want to open a new chapter with the Soviet Union because we are neighbours. I go back to the Roman Empire and I say what Cato said to the Romans, "Carthage must be destroyed." If India thinks that it is going to subjugate Pakistan, Eastern Pakistan as well as Western Pakistan—because we are one people, we are one state—then we shall say, "Carthage must be destroyed." We shall tell our children and they will tell their children that Carthage must be destroyed.

So please, Mr. President and members of the Security Council, realise the implications. The Pakistani nation is a brave nation. One of the greatest British generals said that the best infantry fighters in the world are the Pakistanis. We will fight. We will fight for a thousand years, if it comes to that. So do not go by momentary military victories. Stalingrad was overwhelmed. Leningrad was besieged for a thousand days. People who want to be free and who want to maintain their personality will fight and will continue to fight for principles.

We were told about the realities; to accept the realities. What are the realities? Realities keep changing, the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union knows that once the reality was that the Nazis were outside the gates of Moscow, but you fought valiantly, bravely, and the world saluted the Soviet Union for having resisted the realities that were sought to be imposed

on it. The reality was that China was under the occupation of Japan, that Manchuria was taken—half of China. That was the reality. Since the Opium War, China has seen reality. The reality for France was that it was under occupation. But there were great men like President de Gaulle who left France and fought from across the seas. Ethiopia was under Fascist domination. But the Ethiopians fought. The Emperor of Ethiopia left his country and sought asylum in Britain. Ethiopia is free today. The realities that matter are those which are not temporary phenomena which are rooted in historic principles. The principle is that Pakistan is an independent, sovereign state which came into being because of the volition of its people. That is the basic reality which has existed for 24 years. Pakistan would not have faced dismemberment like this if it had not been attacked by another country. This is not an internal movement. We have been subjected to attack by a militarily powerful neighbour. Who says that the new reality arose out of free will? Had there been the exercise of free will, India would not have attacked Pakistan. If India talks about the will of the people of East Pakistan and claims that it had to attack Pakistan in order to impose the will of the people of East Pakistan, then what has it done about Kashmir? East Pakistan is an integral part of Pakistan. Kashmir is a disputed territory. Why does India then not permit it to exercise its will?

But yesterday I saw how the Security Council was pandering to India. Even the great powers are pandering to India, saying to us, “Do not misunderstand,” “Would you please let us know,” and “Would you please answer the following questions; I am not insisting on those questions, but if you do not mind.” India is intoxicated today with its military successes.

I told the Indian Permanent Representative in 1967 that we wanted good relations between the two countries—but based on principles, based on justice, based on equity, not based on exploitation and domination, because such relations cannot be

lasting. What we want is a lasting, a permanent solution. I do not say this just today; I said that in 1967 to their Permanent Representative who was then the High Commissioner of India to Pakistan. I said that to the Foreign Minister of India when we were negotiating on Kashmir, "Let us settle this problem on the basis of equity and justice, so that we can live as good neighbours." And I add today: we can still live as good neighbours, as friends. Do not wipe out that possibility by military conquest and military power.

This has been the worst form of aggression, of naked aggression. Even Poland was not invaded by Germany in this fashion. Even in that case there were some pretenses, some excuses that were made. Here the excuse was, "We have refugees, so we must invade another country." We said, "We are prepared to take those refugees back." If we had said, "We are not prepared to take them back," then you could have said, "Well, you will be sunk." India's population rises by 13 million a year. The number of refugees was alleged to be 9 million, 10 million. According to our estimate they were 5 million. But that is not important; figures are not important. The point is that we were prepared to take them back. If India's population can grow by 13 million a year, then with all the aid and assistance that India was getting for the refugees, it could have held on for a short period till Pakistan had a civilian government to negotiate the return of the refugees. I told the United States Ambassador in Pakistan that once a civilian government came into power in Pakistan, I was prepared to go to the refugee camps myself to talk to them. But India pre-empted it all because the refugee problem was used as a pretext to dismember my country. The refugee problem was used as a pretext, an ugly, crude pretext, a shameful pretext to invade my country, to invade East Pakistan.

The great powers will forgive me. I have addressed them in this moment of anguish, and they should understand. The great powers or the super powers—the super-duper-powers, the

razzling-dazzling powers—the super powers have imposed their super will for the moment. But I am thankful to the people and the Government of the United States among the super powers, for the position it has taken. The people of the United States, to some extent have been misled by massive Indian propaganda. Because we had no paraphernalia of popular administration and government in Pakistan, there was a political vacuum. The Indians took advantage of that political vacuum and they spread out fast to project their point of view. As a result, American public opinion and public opinion in Great Britain and France and other countries was influenced. Unfortunately, nothing was said of the massacres that took place between 1 March and 25 March. No doubt there were mistakes on our side. I said yesterday that mistakes were made, and the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union said that I had admitted mistakes. Well, that is not a sign of weakness, is it? Do we not all make mistakes? Are India and the Soviet Union the only two countries that have never made mistakes? I have made mistakes personally. But mistakes do not mean that my country must be destroyed, that my country must be dismembered. That is not the consequence of mistakes of government. Which government does not make mistakes? But if some government has made a mistake, does it follow that the country itself must be dismembered, obliterated? Is that going to be the conclusion of the Security Council if it legalises Indian aggression on the soil of Pakistan?

So you will see now: this is not the end of the road, this is the beginning of the road; this is not the end of the chapter, a new chapter has begun, a new page has been written in international relations. This is gunboat diplomacy in its worst form. In a sense, it makes the Hitlerite aggression pale into insignificance because Hitlerite aggression was not accepted by the world. If the world is going to endorse this aggression, it will mean a new and most unfortunate chapter in international relations. A new chapter may have begun in India and Pakistan, but please do

not start a new dreadful chapter in international relations. For us, it is a hand-to-hand, day-to-day, minute-to-minute fight. But do not do that to the rest of the world. Please do not permit this kind of naked, shameful barbaric aggression to hold sway. In the old days great warriors swept over the world—Changiz Khan, Subutai Khan, Alexander, Caesar, coming down to the great Napoleon. But this is worse, this is much worse than all that was done by the great conquerors of the world in the past. If the United Nations becomes a party to this kind of conquest, it will be much worse than all that has been done in the past. You will be turning the medium-sized and the small countries into the harlots of the world. You cannot do that. It is against civilised concepts, it is against all the rules of civilisation and of international morality and justice.

The United States Government was criticised for supporting the position of Pakistan. What crime has the United States Government committed? It has taken a position identical to that of the whole world on the India-Pakistan conflict. That position was supported by 105 countries—it was 104 officially, but it was really 105 because one representative did not press the right button. That was the voice of the world. It was an international referendum. You talk about the election of 1970. Well, I am proud of the election of 1970 because my party emerged as the strongest party in West Pakistan. But here was an international poll and India flouted it. With such an attitude towards international opinion, how can India pretend to be sensitive to a national election in another country? The same India that refuses to hold a referendum in Kashmir?

The Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union talked about realities. Mr. Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union look at this reality. I know that you are the representative of a great country. You behave like one. The way you throw out your chest, the way you thump the table you do not talk like Comrade Malik; you talk like Czar Malik. I see you are smiling.



Well, I am not because my heart is bleeding. We want to be friends, but this is not the way to be friends when my country is decimated, sought to be destroyed, wiped out.

Why should China and the United States be criticised when the whole world is for Pakistan? You know that we have won a great political victory. We might have suffered a military defeat, but a political victory is more important than a military defeat because political victory is permanent while military defeat is temporary. The United States Government has acted according to its great traditions by supporting Pakistan, and I will go to the people of the United States before I return home and tell them the truth. The United States has stood by the traditions of Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, right down to Roosevelt and Wilson by supporting Pakistan as an independent state, its national integrity and its national unity. What wrong and crime has the United States committed? Why is the Indian delegation so annoyed with the United States? The Indian delegation is annoyed with US—can you imagine that? If it had not been for the massive food assistance that the United States gave to India, India would have had starvation; its millions would have died. What hope will India give to the people of East Pakistan? What picture of hope is it going to give when its own people in Western Bengal sleep in the streets, where there is terrible poverty, where there is terrible injustice and exploitation, when the parliamentary rule in West Bengal has been superseded by presidential rule? Is India going to do better for East Pakistan, for Muslim Bengal, than it has done for West Bengal? Thousands of West Bengali people sleep in the streets of Calcutta. The people of West Bengal are the poorest. India goes hat in hand to the United States for six million tons of food. If they are going to impose presidential rule in West Bengal, in their Bengal, how can they do any better in our Bengal? They will not. And time will show that they will not.

So the United States has taken a correct and moral position. Thomas Jefferson once said, "I have sworn eternal hostility against any form of tyranny practised over the mind of man." This is a vast form of tyranny practised over the mind of man and over the body of man. So the United States has adhered to its tradition. And if some misguided Senators were here, some young, misguided Senators who have been overtaken by Indian propaganda—and if the Permanent Representative of the United States were not from Texas—I would have told those young Senators that I was setting up the headquarters for a republic of Texas and making the former President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson, the chief of that republic, in order to spread the cult of Bangladesh everywhere. Why can Texas not be free? Let there be a republic of Texas. We did not buy Bengal as Alaska was bought by the United States. We did not pay money to get our territory. We did not pay dollars to acquire territory. The people of the United States should appreciate the position taken by their Government.

Muslim Bengal was a part of Pakistan of its free will, not through money. We did not buy it as Alaska was purchased. Why do the people of the United States not see that? And we are beholden and thankful to the great People's Republic of China. We shall always remain thankful for the position it has taken. It has taken a position based on principles of justice. And I thank the Third World for having supported a just cause, a right cause.

And now in the Security Council we have been frustrated by a veto. Let us build a monument to the veto, a big monument to the veto. Let us build a monument to the impotence and incapacity of the Security Council and the General Assembly. As you sow, so shall you reap. Remember that Biblical saying. Today, it is Pakistan. We are your guinea pigs today. But there will be other guinea pigs and you will see what happens. You

will see how the chain of events unfolds itself. You want us to lick the dust. We are not going to lick the dust.

Britain and France have abstained from voting in order to play a role. I said the other day, with all due respect to those two great powers, that they have really exhausted their position in trying to play a role because now the only role they can play is to accept a shameless *fait accompli*. Britain and France abstained, and that abstention has cost us dearly. Gallic logic and Anglo-Saxon experience, whatever it is, have cost us dearly. If Britain and France had earlier put their full weight behind the verdict of the international community rather than sitting on the fence, the issue might have been different. There is no such animal as a neutral animal. You take positions. In that respect we admire the Soviet Union; it took a position, a wrong position, but it took a position. You have to take a position on these matters. You have to be either on the side of justice or on the side of injustice; you are either on the side of justice or on the side of injustice; you have to be either on the side of the aggressor or of the victim. There is no third road. It is a black and white situation in these matters; there is no grey involved. You are either for right or you are for wrong; you are either for justice or for injustice; you are either for aggression or for the victim. If the United Kingdom and France had earlier put their full weight behind the verdict of the international community, I think that we would not have reached this position. But Great Britain and France want to come back into the subcontinent as Clive and Dupleix, in a different role, the role of peacemakers. They want a foot here and they want a foot there. I know that British interests in East Pakistan required this kind of opportunistic role because in East Pakistan they have their tea estates. They want the jute of East Pakistan. So that is why they sat on the fence. And I am sorry at France's position because with France we had developed very good relations, extremely good relations. But they took this position. And now, today,

neither Britain nor France can play a role because their resolution has been overtaken by events. There is a lot of goodwill for France in Pakistan, and they will not get the same goodwill in East Pakistan because in East Pakistan already the clock is now moving in another direction. Everyday that the Indian Army of occupation stays there, it will be a grim reminder for Muslim Bengal that they are under Hindu occupation, and you will see the result of it. You will see how it will turn out. Let them stay—why not? Let them stay. Let them swagger around. If they want to take East Pakistan, let them stay as an army of occupation. They are an army of occupation; how can they be called liberators? They will stay, and they will see how the clock is going to move in a different direction.

Finally, I am not a rat. I have never ratted in my life. I have faced assassination attempts, I have faced imprisonments. I have always confronted crises. Today I am not ratting, but I am leaving your Security Council. I find it disgraceful to my person and to my country to remain here a moment longer than is necessary. I am not boycotting. Impose any decision, have a treaty worse than the Treaty of Versailles, legalise aggression, legalise occupation, legalise everything that has been illegal upto 15 December 1971. I will not be a party to it. We will fight; we will go back and fight. My country beckons me. Why should I waste my time here in the Security Council? I will not be a party to the ignominious surrender of a part of my country. You can take your Security Council. Here you are. I am going.

**I**t was in the autumn of 1967 that Muhammad Reza Kazimi called on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. There was an air of despondency in the country. The failure of the Tashkent Declaration and the floating of the Six Points had brought the country to the crossroads, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the only leader who held out hopes for democracy with integrity. The author maintained contact whenever Z.A. Bhutto visited Dacca, and he saw and foresaw many of the developments he describes here.

Muhammad Reza Kazimi (b. Bombay, 1945) obtained his MA in Islamic History and Ph.D in Pakistan Studies from the University of Karachi. From 1970-2000 he taught at St. Patrick's College and the University of Karachi as Visiting Professor. Since late 2000 he has been a professional editorial consultant. He is present Visiting Professor, Area Study Centre for Europe, University of Karachi. He wrote the pioneering treatise on Pakistan's first Prime Minister, titled *Liaquat Ali Khan: His Life and Work* (Karachi, 2003) and is the author of *A Concise History of Pakistan* (Karachi, 2009). In his primary discipline of Islamic History, he has written *The Blood of Husayn* (Karachi, 2011). A literary critic of Urdu as well, his latest book is *Ma'ariz-i-Izhar* (The State of Expression) (Karachi, 2013), which surveys the literary criticism of creative writers.



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