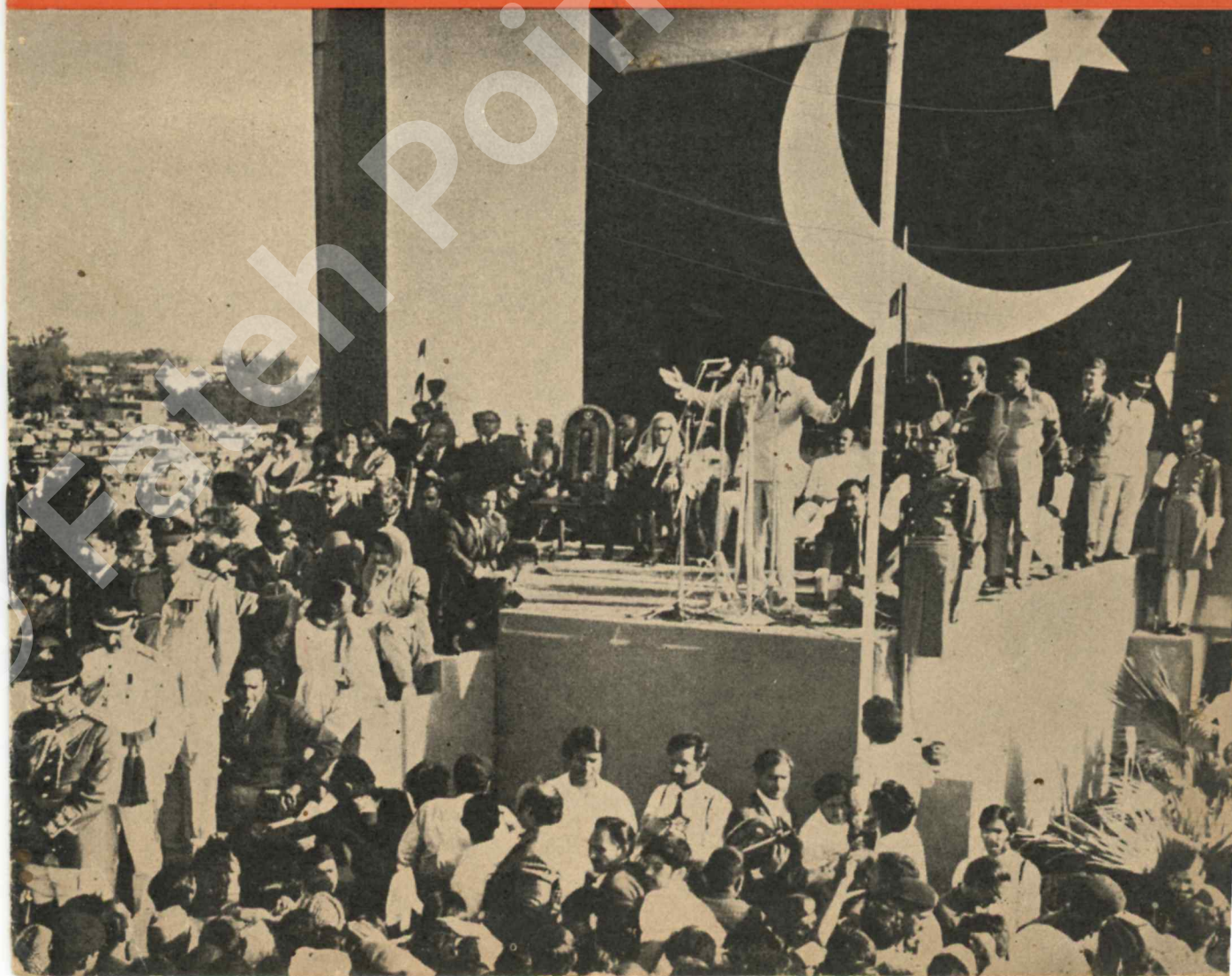


# PRESIDENT USHERS IN PEOPLE'S RULE

MR. ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO'S SPEECH AT THE  
OATH TAKING CEREMONY

APRIL 21, 1972



سید مظفر علی شاہ  
آجیت رشید و گج ضلع لاہور

*Dyed Muzafar Ali S.A.*

P.O. Raahid Wagan  
Distt Larkana.

**TRANSLATION OF  
PRESIDENT BHUTTO'S SPEECH  
DELIVERED AT  
THE PUBLIC OATH TAKING CEREMONY**

Rawalpindi, April 21, 1972

My dear friends, elders, peasants, workers and students

*Assalam-o-Alaikum:*

I have made many public speeches in my life. I have been taking part in discussions and debates from my school days. I have made speeches not only in Pakistan but have also taken part in discussions in international forums in many foreign countries. This is not my first public speech in Rawalpindi, any way.

You would recall that before the elections and during and after the elections I made many public speeches here. But I find myself at a loss for words today. So overwhelmed

I am by the significance of this day. This is an extremely auspicious day not only because it is Juma't-ul-Mubarik but also a day on which we commemorate our great national poet Allama Iqbal. Not only that, it is also the people's day because the people of Pakistan have got today their Constitution. After a struggle of 25 years, the country has seen today the dawn of a truly democratic era, and the elected representatives of the people have given you a Constitution. Now this is your Constitution—albeit it is an Interim Constitution, which has ushered in the country people's rule, by bringing an end to Martial Law. And for this reason on this auspicious day I wish to congratulate you and thank all those friends who in response to our invitation have assembled here. I am grateful to all of you.

*People's day*

Let me assure you and through you all friends that it shall always be my endeavour to consolidate national unity. Indeed, national unity can be strengthened only by acting on principles, when we extend due respect to opposition, and struggle for realisation of people's aspirations and their prosperity. I wish to assure the leaders of the various parties who have assembled here that if need be, I shall travel from Karachi to Khyber to strengthen national unity and to bring about greater co-operation among us. This is the need of the hour and the demand of the country that there should be greater national cohesion at this juncture.

*Need for national unity*

Friends, perhaps those who are given to criticism, those who always criticise, will say where was the need for this pomp and show and extravagant spending on this occasion for a poor and a backward country. But I wish to tell the critics that this is no mere pomp and show. This is a people's gathering. There is no greater strength than the people themselves. When the moneyed people and the capitalists gobble up crores and crores of nation's money, nobody

protests. But when the poor people are invited, when they are saluted on their day of victory, the narrow minded say what is the need of all this. I fervently believe—this is my way of thinking—that I will not take any basic step without permission, indulgence and co-operation of the poor.

So this is not the Government's day. It is the people's day, the poor man's day. It is the labourers' day, the farmers' day and the students' day. I have invited you to participate because it is through your efforts that this day has been possible. This is the fruition of your struggle. I, therefore, thought that it would be proper if the Government and the opposition both combine to pay their homage to you and to say how grateful they are to you. It is your victory, Pakistan's victory and the people's victory.

*People's victory*

And for this reason, I believe that in future we will progress day by day, *Insha Allah*. Whatever the Government has already done is very little. I will never say that we have done a great deal. But whatever we have been able to achieve during the last months is commensurate with our capabilities and the national resources that were available to us. But I promise you that if we get the time and if you bear with us, you will see that, *Insha Allah*, we will fulfil each and every promise that we made.

*Every promise will be fulfilled*

My friends, we respect the Constitution because we know that it is the fundamental law. The Constitution is a legal frame-work without which the country's affairs cannot be managed properly and we cannot progress. You have got an Interim Constitution after 25 years but it is your Constitution. Besides, you have struggled for democracy, we have all struggled for it.

Pakistan today has not only a people's Constitution but has seen the beginning of an era of democracy. And

*End of Martial Law*

as a result of the people's struggle, Martial Law has been buried. *Insha Allah*, it shall be our endeavour never to allow in this country an anti-people era. You should bear in mind the hardships and injustices which you have undergone under the Martial Law regime, the injustices and the cruelties you have suffered. If you are not vigilant and if you do not handle things carefully, if the politicians make mistakes, and if we indulge in petty matters, go along destructive channels or fight among ourselves, it is just possible that the bygone era might recur. So you should be vigilant. We all should be vigilant. We have to defend democracy like one man. I have told you before that while one man can destroy a nation, no one can build it single-handed. If we are to reconstruct and rebuild, it has to be a co-operative effort, a co-operative struggle. It is not my duty alone; it is not the Government's duty alone; it is not the duty of the opposition parties alone. It is the duty of the whole nation, the responsibility of the whole nation. So you should remember, my dear friends, that we have to make a success of this democracy. We have to draw up a final constitution after this Interim Constitution. And after this, the most important and vital thing is that we have to bring about economic justice in the country. It is only a Government based on justice which can bring about economic justice.

*Let us make a success of democracy*

On this occasion, on this auspicious occasion, I pay homage not only to the people of Pakistan but to the brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and their officers, I salute them. We are proud of our brave Armed Forces. The injustice done to Pakistan in the past which led us to trouble was not the fault of our brave Armed Forces. There were selfish people who usurped the Government and exploited the nation, the people, and also exploited the Armed Forces. It was not a military Government, it was an oligarchy. There were a few people who wanted to lord it over and usurp

Pakistan. The Armed Forces were not at fault. They were dragged into politics. The Armed Forces were exploited. There were people who got rich on bribes. See, what they have done to the nation. There were some individuals who did wrong to the country. The Armed Forces were not at fault, the people were not at fault. It was the system that was at fault. So with God's help bury this system and do not let it come again. We have to give a permanent Constitution to the country and to spell out the responsibilities as well as the rights of different sections of the people. The responsibilities of looking after the political affairs have been entrusted to the people while the Armed Forces have been asked to fulfil their own responsibilities. The people and the Government and also the opposition groups have to do constructive work. We have to build Pakistan. The Armed Forces are to defend the territorial integrity of the country, to defend the frontiers. And, *Insha Allah*, we will fulfil our responsibilities.

*Few individuals  
exploited the people  
and Armea Forces*

I had said that I will not make a long speech. I have no intention to make a long speech. But there are one or two things which I want to tell you. There were serious internal problems. With your co-operation and with God's grace we have, to some extent, found a solution for them. Besides, we have to give full attention to external problems and world events. But we have to pay the utmost attention to problems in our neighbourhood, in the neighbouring countries, specially India with whom we had a war. This was not our first war. Unfortunately, this was the third war in the course of 25 years. There are problems between Pakistan and India. War creates problems and no one is really a winner in a war. We have to give a great deal of thought to problems that have cropped up as a result of the war. In this connection I want to tell you that since we assumed power, it has been our endeavour to find

*External Problems*

an equitable solution to these problems.

You must have seen in the newspapers that an emissary of the Indian Government is coming to Pakistan on the 25th of this month. We will have discussions with him on many problems but the one problem which is uppermost in my mind relates to our prisoners of war. The war ended on the 17th of December. The formal ceasefire came on the 27th December. Today, it is 21st April that means four months have already passed since the end of the war. We have made it clear that we want to live in peace with our neighbours. The Indian Prime Minister has also said the same thing. Now that they also want a peaceful co-existence and so does Pakistan, then on what pretext are the Pakistani POWs held in India. This is against the international law and against the third Geneva Convention. It violates the resolution of the United Nations. And what sort of a resolution. A resolution of the General Assembly. A resolution of the Security Council.

*India violating third Geneva Convention*

My friends, the United Nations is not the voice of one nation. It is the voice of the whole world. It is the world court of law. We respect law. Even backward countries like ours respect law. The whole world should respect the United Nations and its resolutions.

We respect our courts of law. We have our High Courts and the Supreme Court. Who administered the oath of office to me ? It was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. We respect him. We respect his decisions. It was only yesterday that they decided that the previous regime was illegal and unconstitutional. We respect each and every verdict passed by them. When we respect and honour our courts of law, we expect others to respect and honour the verdict of the world court of law. The decision should be accepted by all. It is the decision of the Geneva Conven-

tion. Besides, 105 nations represented at the General Assembly of the United Nations gave the verdict in our favour which was in fact the verdict in favour of truth and justice that the war should end, aggression should end, and the armed forces should withdraw from the borders and go back to their respective countries and the POWs should be repatriated. We respect this verdict—the verdict of the Security Council. The five great powers represented at the Security Council enjoyed veto powers but none of them exercised it in favour of the above mentioned resolution. This was actually a referendum in favour of Pakistan and India should accept it. This is the voice of the whole world, a referendum of the whole world. Why does India not abide by it? I wish to tell India that we want peace and mutual relations based on justice. We do not want a war between our two countries. I would even go to the extent of telling the Indian Prime Minister that if she keeps our brothers as POWs without any justification and in spite of the verdict of the entire world, in spite of the fact that the war has ended, and she wishes to keep our prisoners as hostages, she will be committing a big mistake, we will not make a similar mistake, I am even prepared to repatriate the Indian POWs without any pre-conditions.

If despite perpetuating injustices to Pakistan, Mrs. Indira Gandhi wishes to keep Pakistani POWs as hostages for bargaining purposes, we will not be a party to it. We will not go against principles. Since two wrongs do not make a right. If India wants to keep our POWs in spite of the world's verdict against it and in spite of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, we will still respect the law. I will say to them, keep our POWs. They are brave Pakistani Muslims. I have just received a vote of confidence from the National Assembly. I wish to get a vote of confidence from you too. I know there are some



who do not like this procedure. But I will tell them that this is my way and if the people do not like it, they will throw me out and will not vote for me in the next election.

Now I ask you, do you approve that I should return the Indian POWs to their homes without pre-conditions? (This was reciprocated by resounding yes from the audience.) I have taken the approval of the National Assembly. I have taken your approval also. It is my proposal that even if the Indian Government does not want to release our POWs forthwith, I am prepared to go ahead unilaterally. If the Indian Prime Minister makes a request for the return of her POWs I am prepared to send them to Husaini Wala and Wagah border tomorrow. If our sisters, our mothers and our brothers have to undergo more sufferings on this account, there is no alternative, but I do not want the kith and kin of Indian POWs to suffer the same agony. I do not wish to be cruel to them since it is against the principles of justice.

*Indian POWs to be released without pre-conditions*

In the end I would like to say that I could take the oath of my office in a closed room but I wanted to take the oath in public and in front of my people. If you have been inconvenienced, I am sorry for it. But I am grateful to you all.

*Pakistan Paindabad. Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad.*

*Syed Muzafar Ali Shah*  
P.O. Rashid Wagan  
Distt. Larkana.

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