

SPECIAL REPORT

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and 'the

Awaiting death verdict, he reveals junta's torture in documents

The *Executive Intelligence Review* has received from confidential sources copies of two documents smuggled out of Pakistan from the jail cell of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, overthrown by a military coup on July 4, 1977. Mr. Bhutto, the foremost civilian leader in the history of Pakistan and a renowned leader of the Third World, sits in his cell awaiting the verdict of a Pakistan Supreme Court tribunal which, under the watchful eyes of the military junta, is considering an appeal of a death sentence imposed on Mr. Bhutto by a lower court. That verdict, which convicts Bhutto of murder in a case recognized by all objective observers as patently fraudulent, is hanging over his head.

According to well-informed sources in Pakistani exile circles, the junta aim to conclude their kangaroo court this month, and rapidly hang Mr. Bhutto before world opinion has a chance to affect their desperate aims. For three weeks, according to these same sources, no one has been allowed to see Mr. Bhutto. As the documents printed here dramatically demonstrate, Mr. Bhutto is being held in the most barbaric conditions, his health deteriorating rapidly, as he "wither away in his Death Cell."

The fate of former Prime Minister Bhutto, the only constitutionally elected political leader in Pakistani history, has great bearing on events in the region stretching from India to the Middle East. The overthrow of Bhutto is understood in informed circles to be part of the pattern which included the removal of Mrs. Indira Gandhi from power in March of 1977 and is now culminating in the threat to the stability of Iran and the rule of the Shah. The London *Financial Times* two days ago in a feature article proclaimed the situation as: "Tinder boxes all in a row in Central Asia." The leadership of Bhutto, Mrs. Gandhi, and the Shah collectively stood for political stability, regional detente and cooperation, and economic development; their destabilization means instability, chaos, regional tension, economic collapse and possibly war.

The junta, and its backers abroad, are determined to murder Bhutto, knowing full well that he remains the most popular leader in Pakistan and more so as the days of the junta's brutal misrule continue. These

documents are the first of a larger series which have come into the hands of the *Executive Intelligence Review* and together tell an incredible story. The first installment of "the Pakistan Papers" here consists of a telegram from Mr. Bhutto to UN Secretary General Waldheim, given to his jailers but never delivered by them; and an incredible account from Mr. Bhutto's hand of the conditions of his incarceration. Due to the conditions under which these documents made their way out of Pakistan (where thousands of Bhutto's supporters, including his wife and daughter, are also imprisoned), there are some slight gaps in the following document.

—Daniel Sneider
Asia editor

'The aim is that I wither away in this Death Cell'

Following is a copy of an Oct. 9, 1978 letter by Mr. Bhutto to the superintendent of the Rawalpindi District jail, where Bhutto is presently incarcerated in the Death Cell, detailing his treatment by the Pakistani junta since his arrest on Sept. 3, 1977. Gaps, apparently of two or three lines, in the photocopy of the letter obtained by Executive Intelligence Review, are indicated: (...).

In my urgent telegram to the Secretary General of the United Nations dated September 21, 1978 and sent through you, I did not mention the maltreatment inflicted on me in the various jails ever since my imprisonment on September 3, 1977. It is being done briefly in this separate complaint.

(1) In the early hours of September 3, 1977, in the month of Ramzan, our residence at 70 Clifton, Karachi was raided in massive strength by Commandoes, Army Jawans and personnel of the Federal Investigative Agency (F.I.A.) and I was dramatically

Pakistan Papers'

smuggled from prison

arrested at the points of sten guns and other automatic weapons. My young children were rudely awakened and harassed. My servants were given severe beatings and our house was ransacked.

(2) I was flown to Lahore and taken to an Army bungalow in the Cantonment. A Colonel and two Majors were in charge. The bungalow was fully guarded and barricaded. Military vehicles and light artillery were visible in the park opposite the bungalow. About fifteen to twenty Army Jawans paraded in the compound in rotation right around the clock. The ceaseless sound of their goose steps on the gravel and the noise of digging at nightfall made it impossible to get a wink of sleep. It reminded me of what Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman had told me in January 1972 about the digging done outside his prison cell. Every night, during his incarceration. He told me that it was a part of the psychological warfare to break his nerves. The bungalow was wiretapped. Except for a small blue bulb in every room, the place was a blackout. I was not allowed newspapers. I was not allowed to contact anyone, not even my lawyers. The colonel in charge was the nephew of General Yahya Khan.

(3) I was taken to a Magistrate on the night of September 3, 1977 for remand but without notice and without the aid of my lawyers. The Magistrate was falsely told that I was in the custody of F.I.A., whereas I was in the custody of the Fourth Corps of the Army. On September 4, 1977, Abdul Khaliq, the Deputy Director of F.I.A., warned me bluntly that if I did not "cooperate," I should be prepared to face the painful consequences. On hearing this crude threat, I lost my temper and gave him a bit of my mind. Thereupon he hastily apologised. Under the orders of Mr. Justice Samadani of the Lahore High Court, my lawyers were allowed to see me on September 5, 1977. On the following day, I was transferred to the Lahore Jail of Kot Lakhpat under heavy Army and Police escort.

(4) It would be difficult and time consuming to reproduce all the physical and mental tortures I had to endure in solitary confinement from September 3, 1977 to March 18, 1978. Fifty odd lunatics were lodged in the ward next to mine. Their screams and shrieks in the

dead of night is something I will not forget. About ten days before the Judgement of the Trial Court, the Military presence and activities in the Jail increased conspicuously and menacingly. The gallows were inspected on a number of occasions and given spring cleaning for the benefit of foreign and local photographers who were to be permitted to take photographs after the event. Ack-ack guns were placed on the towers of the Jail. The place was floodlit and turned into a concentration camp.

(5) These measures were followed by a total ban on political activities. It was announced that the slightest violation of the total prohibition would be visited by lashings and rigorous imprisonments handed down summarily by military tribunals. To demonstrate its earnestness, the regime made wholesale arrests. (...)

(...) to hear the anticipated Judgement, I was astonished to see the brute and naked show of force. After being gleefully told that I will hang by the neck until I die, on my return journey, the policemen in the van encircled me with automatic weapons. The barrels were touching my temples and my chest. Helicopters flew overhead. The Army had come in full strength outside the jail. Camps were put up in the open spaces and the road barricaded. When the gates of the Jail opened for the van to enter, the place was full of troops.

(6) The same afternoon, I was taken to the Death Cell and kept chained for twenty three hours out of twenty four. I still carry the marks on my ankles of those happy days. On April 21, 1978, Commandoes did some exercises on two separate occasions during the night. They stood provocatively on top of the Cell and also on top of the walls. The same war games were repeated on April 25, 1978. During the sweeping arrests, my Dental Surgeon, Dr. Zafar Niazi was arrested, with the result that my dental treatment was discontinued. Much earlier, my physician, Dr. Naseer Shaikh, had been arrested. In the Death Cell at Lahore, perhaps due to excessive heat, the unhygienic conditions, the suffocation in a tiny cell filled with flies and mosquitoes, I suffered an attack of vomiting, accompanied by high temperature which kept me in agony for two nights. This notwithstanding, the Public

Prosecutor told the Supreme Court that three rooms and a Courtyard had been placed at my disposal and that it was a misnomer to call the Death Cell a death cell. Even before being shifted to the Death Cell, I had two serious attacks of malaria and influenza during the winter. I was frequently troubled by stomach upsets and acute headaches. In addition, I developed severe pains in the chest. On three occasions, (...)

(...) Jail Authorities in inflicting psychological and physical torture on me. I was therefore compelled to go on a hunger strike on two occasions in the last four months. The other alternative was death. On the orders of the Supreme Court, a Board of two doctors was constituted to examine me. I believe that the Board of Doctors submitted their report on August 4, 1978 and recommended that about seven to nine thorough tests were required. It is obvious to the

meanest intelligence that such tests cannot be done in any place other than a hospital, most certainly not in a Death Cell. Since conditions in your Jail are far worse than those in the Lahore jail, and due to my debilitating physical condition, I am susceptible to recurring spells of fever, vomiting and bleeding.

(8) On the night of August 25, 1978, I found my gums swollen and bleeding. Pus was oozing out of them. When in the course of a weekly interview, my daughter met me on the morning of August 26, 1978, I was hardly able to open my mouth to talk to her. I was in considerable pain. She was aghast to see my condition. On her insistence, the Deputy Superintendent of Jail was called to see that I needed urgent dental treatment. The same night, Major Hanif Khattak, an Army Dentist, came to examine me. The Army Dentist said it was a serious condition. He gave

Bhutto appeals to UN for human rights

The following is a telegram which former Prime Minister Bhutto gave to his jailers for delivery to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, which was never delivered.

Urgent

Sept. 20, 1978

To: His Excellency Dr. Kurt Waldheim,
Secretary General, United Nations
United Nations Headquarters,
New York, USA

Excellency: As yet another session of the General Assembly convenes in New York to discuss issues of war and peace and presumably human rights, it must know that the elected leader of Pakistan is being subjected to brutal hardships ever since the coup d'état of July 5, 1977. By now friend and foe alike know that a false murder case has been fabricated against me in which I have been in solitary confinement for over a year and in a miserable death cell for over six months in appalling conditions. I am not receiving proper medical treatment although I am urgently in need of it. The conditions are so unbearable that on two occasions I was compelled to go on hunger strikes to protect my honor. My wife was shamelessly attacked and injured on Dec. 16, 1977 at Lahore Gaddafi Stadium. Since January 1978 she has been in detention and solitary confinement. My young daughter was also under house arrest for over six months. My three younger children and a number of close party comrades are in virtual exile. Party leaders of the Pakistan Peoples Party and our workers are in jails by the thousands. Along with journalists, they have been mercilessly whipped in

public. To silence the working classes, the laborers in Multan were savagely killed in January this year.

The conscience of the world community gets aroused when the representative of a firm is arrested for alleged blackmarketing of currency but what happens to the same world community when the undisputed leader of his people is subjected to physical cruelty and mental torture for inter-alia waging a dauntless struggle against oppression, for valiantly upholding the banner of justice for the Third World and for equipping an Islamic state with nuclear capability?

Without exaggeration, I will tell you Mr. Secretary General that I have been treated worse than a Jew would be treated by Nazis or the victims of apartheid in Africa. I would request you to circulate this message to the debonair diplomats at the current session of the General Assembly.

Relevant world leaders are aware of the documentary evidence as to why my life hangs in the balance. This unimpeachable evidence of the last 14 years will show them beyond doubt that my blood, if it spills, will surely stain their hands and that in history they will owe me a debt of blood.

With my highest considerations,

Yours truly,
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Sent through the
Superintendent of Jail,
Rawalpindi District Jail
Rawalpindi

me an ointment and antibiotics and said that in a few days, he would visit me again to see if the swelling had reduced to give the necessary laceration in a dental clinic. When the ointment had finished and the antibiotics consumed, I reminded the Jail Authorities on September 3, 1978 to request the Army Dentist to see me again as assured by him on August 26, 1978. However, on the same evening of September 3, 1978, yet another dentist was brought to see me. I explained to the Jail Authorities that it was not fair to keep changing doctors on each occasion.

(...) ignored. The truth of the matter is that any doctor who has the professional integrity and courage to recommend that I should be shifted immediately to a hospital, falls foul of the regime. He is promptly stopped from treating me.

(9) As the condition of my teeth and gums was getting no better, I agreed to be treated by yet another dentist. As a result, a civilian dentist, Dr. Rashid, of the Provincial Administration was sent to my cell on September 9, 1978 at about 6 p.m. After having one look at the state of my teeth and gums, Dr. Rashid told me that there was no doubt that I needed to be shifted to a hospital for treatment. He added, that it was not professionally possible to treat me in the Death Cell. He assured me that he would make the necessary recommendation to the regime. After that visit of Dr. Rashid on September 9, 1978, I have not seen him again. Nor have I heard anything about my transfer to the hospital. In the meantime, the condition of my teeth and general health is deteriorating further. I am in genuine need of urgent treatment in a proper clinic. I am not asking to go abroad. I want to be shifted to a hospital in my own country. The Army can surround the hospital with tanks and armoured cars. It can bring the Armoured Division from Kharian to the hospital. No risk is involved but even if the hospital is not guarded, I will not run away. I do not know what is meant by running away. I cannot run away from my own people.

The aim is that I should wither away in this Death Cell. When senior civil servants have been detained and tortured to give false evidence against me and to become Approvers, when two of my personal doctors have been arrested and tortured, it is very difficult for individuals to come forward and speak on my behalf. The terror of Martial Law is all pervasive.

I have given this long account as I might have to take a decisive decision in the coming days. Before I conclude, I would like to mention the following:

(a) During the month of Ramzan, I discovered that the noises that I heard at night, after being shifted to this Jail were:

- i) throwing of stones on the roof of the Death Cell, and,
- ii) jumping on the tin of the parapet next to the Cell.

These noises occurred intermittently throughout the night from 1 a.m. to about 5 a.m. in the morning. I could not sleep at all during Ramzan right through the nights. With concentration and some discreet enquiries from my attendant, I was able to solve the puzzle. It was no longer a question of being suddenly awakened by the noises. It was a matter of waiting for them. The irritation of "rolling stones" increased in frequency when the Supreme Court adjourned on August 22, 1978. Since the night of September 15, 1978, a day before the Supreme Court was to reconvene, this menace stopped, and the other noises also ceased.

(b) In addition to my other ailments, I have developed boils and rash all over my face and body.

I have seen in an Urdu Daily that the Authorities intend to bring dental equipment into the narrow passage between the Death Cell and the toilet for my teeth to be treated. This is a degrading absurdity. The only object is to make propaganda to deceive public opinion. It is imperative that I be shifted to a hospital for proper medical attention, as recommended by the doctors. The regime and its collaborators will be responsible for any dire consequences.

It seems that my urgent telegram of September 20, 1978, for the Secretary General of the United Nations, has not been sent to him. You are duty bound under International Law to send it to him.

As the author of the Constitution of 1973, I am melancholy over its formal burial. Who ever is the Approver of this burial is a partner in the crime from the inception to the end. The Provinces did not enter the Federation to get raped in Nawabshah, Lahore, Mardan or Khuzdar. Nor did the people make the Nation to be driven by desperation to burn themselves in their youth to death. The gruesome realities of the moment have surpassed the worst fears of the pessimists.

On the morning of September 25, 1978, you were gracious enough to let me hear the cries of music of those who were whipped in this Jail on that fine morning.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
Rawalpindi District Jail