

# Sardari System Abolished by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1976 A Historical Document

Compiled and edited by  
**Sani Hussain Panhwar**  
Member Sindh Council, PPP



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**Prime Minister's Speech**  
**at Quetta,**  
**April 8, 1976**



My dear friends, colleagues, brothers, sisters: Assalamo-Alaikum,

I began the tour of your province on the 26th of last month. It has been an extensive tour. I have addressed three Party conventions during this period. One of these was held in Sibi, the other in Khuzdar and the last one in Quetta on the 3rd and 4th of this month. However, I did not come here only to take part in my Party conventions. This fortnight's tour has not been undertaken only for the organization of my Party. My primary objective was to review the present political situation in Baluchistan. I held talks with the local Government concerning important matters that could not be ignored.

At the first convention in Sibi, some important points were raised relating to the administration of the Province. To consider these, the Governor his Advisers and senior Government officials got together in a meeting with me. Thus at least as much time was devoted to the conduct of public business as to the convention. This is what took place in Sibi. Likewise, in Khuzdar, my dear friends, along with Party work we devoted ourselves to your problems in consultation with the administration. Many important decisions were taken, most of them of a fundamental nature. On the 6th, we discussed the Party problems, on the one side, and the problems of administration and the political conditions of Baluchistan and the rest of the country on the other. We exchanged views on international matters, defence matters and all aspects of development and progress of the area.

The talks in Quetta lasted from morning till evening and those who took part in the talks included the Governor, his Advisers, Federal Ministers and Ministers of State, Federal Officials and provincial Government officials. All the conclusions that emerged from this fortnight's assessment of facts, exchange of views, Party conventions, talks with the administration and all the important and special meetings and interviews were considered.

Now I am here to talk to you about them. I am here to tell you about my views on matters relating to Baluchistan. I thank you very much for being here. I know you have taken a lot of trouble to attend this meeting and to make it great success.

My dear friends: Since our Government came into power, I have toured this province many times. I come to Baluchistan several times every year. But this was my longest stay with you. Friends and comrades: what have I seen in Baluchistan? What is happening in Baluchistan? What developments have taken place in the past? What is going on now and what are our hopes for the future? I want to talk to you about all these questions.

Comrades, dear friends, brothers and sisters: the first point which we must remember is that we are all passing through a change. Herein Pakistan, especially in Baluchistan, we are passing through a delicate transition. The past is dying out,

the past which persisted ever since the time of the Mughals, through British rule and during the 28-year old history of independent Pakistan. That past has suffered a terrific jolt. The legal tender of two hundred years or more has become valueless. You cannot ignore the fact that the old pattern is now being transformed into a new one. Though the picture of the new pattern has not yet emerged clearly, there is no doubt that the old shape of things, the status quo, is now breaking up. The old centers of power are fading out. They are weakening. Yet, there is still some life in them, though full of sickness and pain.

We are all looking forward to a new order. This means that the power and rights of the privileged class are to be transferred to the common people. Those privileged are not yet entirely within the people's grasp. But as the result of the struggle of the youth, of the toiling masses, of the poor and the disadvantaged, the privileges which had been usurped by a particular section of capitalists, feudalists, sardars and princes who were exploiting the people, are now being wrested away from their hand. But, as I said, they are not yet in the hands of common people. This is a transitional phase. In fact, this is our struggle; this is our revolution.

When the roots of a system which is exploitative and anti-people are shaken, the spirit of revolution is born. When the status quo is challenged, the vested interests summon the power of the past in an effort to maintain their existence. This happens everywhere. But an outworn system pitted against the people can be only on its last legs. Always, the masses gradually overcome the enemy. There was a time when the people had no power and no strength. When it was so, it seemed that nobody could shake the vested interests, no one could alter the status quo. The people were helpless, voiceless. The masses appeared to have no courage. They had no heart, no leadership. Therefore, they were crushed. Warrants were issued against them and it was declared that the powers of the privileged classes would continue in perpetuity. They claimed the mountains and the valleys to be theirs. They thought that their masters could not be shaken by any one, much less changed by these oppressed people in tattered clothes, the worker, the farmer, the poor, the illiterate, the disorganized, those whose children lacked education. "How can these people fight us?", the privileged one asked. Their power overshadowed the whole countryside. Nobody could challenge them. Nobody could raise a finger against them. All that power was united, the power of the reactionaries, the Sardars and the Nawabs. The other power, the power of the majority, the power of the people, could not be felt; it was hidden from view. It had not been organised. It was without a voice. Being unseen and unfelt, it was no power at all. To mobilize the inherent strength of the people, to bring it to surface, to install self-confidence in them required time.

We spent 28 years in thinking how to put on its feet this power of the people and to deploy it against the power of the reactionaries. It was for this purpose that the

People's Party was established to mobilize the power of the people. We proclaimed that the sources of all power are the people. We drew up a new manifesto so that we could go to the people, awaken them and give them strength. When this new power grew, the struggle began.

Baluchistan today is passing through a perilous transitional phase. The power of the worker and the cultivator has risen against the old vested interests. A veritable front has been organised against the Sardars, the feudalists, the Waderas and the landlords. The struggle has begun. If a system can persist for two hundred years, it is but natural that the period of change should also last for sometime, may be three or four years. During this period the people have to make sacrifices, acquire new strength and spread the awakening.

What are we doing? We are struggling against this reactionary system of the past. One phase of the struggle is over and you have seen it yourselves. It was the struggle that took place before the elections and continued for sometime afterwards.

Now, the situation in Baluchistan is that the two elements of power are clashing with each other. On the one side, there are the reactionary elements, the capitalists, feudalists and Sardars. On the other, it is the people, their strength, and the Government, which is supporting them. This then is the primary fact.

Now the question is: How shall we build on what we have achieved? It is true that eventually you will triumph. But the urge we feel is to accelerate your victorious march. This only can be achieved through the economic progress of Baluchistan. I do not want to go into details of the efforts which have been made for allocations for your development, for your roads, for your hospitals, for your schools, for your colleges, for your water supply, for tube-wells, for electricity and for factories.

My friends, the people of Baluchistan will recall that until 1970 the budget allocations of the Province were equivalent to the allocation to one Division say Sargodha, only about 20 million. But now you are receiving larger funds. The area of Baluchistan is vast, 140 thousand square miles. We are giving our full attention to its progress and the development programme is making rapid progress. We are also concerned paying with your social order. The old order wanted to keep you backward. That order was anachronistic. But we want it changed. In the last four years, 11 colleges have been opened here. Communications are being opened in the areas of Bugti, Jhalawan and Sarawan. Roads are being constructed and other development facilities provided. Mosques are being built, hospitals set up, water resources located. So, we are trying to take you forward towards your goal. In this struggle we are not only paying attention to your economic development but also to awakening a new social consciousness.

To achieve freedom for the people, to break their shackles, to end their exploitation, we have also called upon the women of Baluchistan to come forward and work and take part in this struggle.

My friends, along with all this we are doing our best for democracy. We believe in democracy. We cherish democracy. We know we have struggled a lot for the autonomy of Baluchistan. You know that, in the past, Baluchistan enjoyed no autonomy. There is no autonomy before Pakistan was established. Even after the establishment of Pakistan, no autonomy was allowed to this Province for 24 to 25 years. Now is the first time in the history of Baluchistan that it is an autonomous province. It was not so during the period of Ayub Khan, nor during the Yahya Regime; not during the time of Ghulam Mohammad or Mohammad Ali Bogra or of Suhrawardy. Autonomy has been granted to Baluchistan only under the government of the People's Party.

This autonomy is for you, for the representatives of this area, for the residents of this region. We have made all efforts to give effect to this autonomy, to sustain democracy and to maintain it successfully in Baluchistan. It was for this purpose, that we installed in power the NAP government. We gave the NAP both the Government and the Chief Ministership. They did not have a majority. If they had, why would they form a government in coalition with JUL Having no single party majority, they had to coalesce with the JUL Still we let them do so. We treated them correctly. Their Governor was given the powers of Martial Law.

In my speeches in Jhalawan, Khuzdar and here also I explained the grounds on which differences developed with them. We had installed them in the Government: they were running the administration. During the 25 years of Pakistan, they had never done so. They had been put in jails during the time of the Quaid-i-Azam, the Quaid-i-Millat, Ch. Mohammad Ali, Suhrawardy, Bogra, Ghulam Mohammad, Iskander Mirza and Ayub Khan. In our time, we released them. We removed all restrictions from them. We handed them over the government, not only here but in the Frontier, both the Governorship and the Chief Ministership. Then why did they quarrel with us? Had we been treacherous to them? Were we faithless with them? We treated them in a manner in which they had never been treated in the past. Then why did they try to defy us? It was because their quarrel was not with me personally. Their fight, the NAP's fight, was not with my Party. Their conflict was not with my government. Their fight was against Pakistan.

They were against Pakistan from the outset. They belonged to the Indian National Congress. After the establishment of Pakistan, they set up a new Party, gave it a new name: NAP. The name could be changed but the attitudes did not. The deep-rooted characteristics could not be changed, the mentality did not change the heart did not.

They were opposed to Pakistan. They were opposed not to me, nor to my group, nor to my Party. They were opposed to our State from the very beginning. I can assure you that if they would support Pakistan and bear loyalty and unstinted allegiance to it, they would be running the government even today. No one would have wished to remove them. But they had a fundamentally different orientation.

I have stated in my speeches that politics can be interpreted in terms of the laws of economics provided your political analysis takes into account the historical dimension. Their effort and their campaign had two aspects. Their political viewpoint was that they opposed to Pakistan and do not wish it to survive. This was their political thinking and that is why they had fought the establishment of Pakistan. That is why they continued to subvert Pakistan even after its establishment. And when they were given power in Pakistan's largest Province, they still continued to work against Pakistan's interests. They continued to remain agents of foreign interests. They did not view things from the national angle but from a foreign one. They used to say, "We are struggling for a free Baluchistan." They were not struggling for a free Baluchistan, or for an autonomous Baluchistan. As I told you before all they wanted to do was to safeguard their own system and keep their own reactionary organization intact. They wanted to maintain this reactionary, capitalistic, feudalistic and Sardari system in its place. It was for this reason that they struggled against Pakistan. In Pakistan the power of the people was increasing, the people's power was ready to offer them battle. The main device they could employ was to raise deceptive slogans. How could Baluchistan be free if they were conspiring to push it into the slavery of some other country? Could Baluchistan be free that way? How could it be free if a neighbor's suzerainty was established over it or some other country was to exercise its domination over Baluchistan? Can Baluchistan be free if it is dominated by Afghanistan? (Shouts; No, No.). If Baluchistan comes under the domination of any other country, can it be free? I ask again, No, never. They wanted to drag Baluchistan back into slavery, the same way as they did when these Sardars led the British from Kashmore, Kundkot and Dera Ghazi Khan to Sandeman.

Why had they brought the British to Baluchistan? Because the British had promised them that they would maintain their Sardari system. So they entered into treaties with the British and crushed the people of Baluchistan. They allowed the people to be suppressed by colonial rule. The colonial power oppressed the common people and ruled over Baluchistan. But it maintained these Sardars as the local rulers in their respective areas. The British did not touch their local administration. When the British went away, these people began looking for a new patron and protector, a new supporter, a new power that would let them continue their Sardari system and crush the common people. They wondered



whether India could provide them with such a safeguard, or would it be Afghanistan, that could give them security and safety or would it be some other country. So, nothing in their searching was for a free Baluchistan.

An independent Baluchistan cannot exist. It lacks the essential strength for maintaining independence. Do they wish to gain independence through the help of some bigger power? Pakistan is strong enough to defeat this conspiracy. But why this talk of independence when you are free and full participants of the independence and sovereignty of Pakistan. These people who have been shouting for an independent Baluchistan want to maintain their own system and their freedom to treat the common people of Baluchistan as their slaves just as they did during the days of the British.

The freedom I want for Baluchistan as elsewhere is the freedom of the common man.

This is the difference, the diametric opposition. They talk of a free Baluchistan which will preserve and perpetuate slavery and which will be dominated by other countries. But I envision a Baluchistan in which the poor Baluch is free and in which he is not exploited. I say that the system of exploitation—the reactionary system which has kept the poor Baluch backward and in chains should be brought to an end. I want you to be free. This is our struggle, our aim that you should enjoy the fullness of freedom within Pakistan, that the shackles of these Sardars and these Jagirdars in Pakistan should be broken by us. We should remove the fetters, destroy the chains and make you free. I want the common man to be free. They want the common man to remain in bondage.

They are shouting for the freedom of the region. But regions do not get freedom: it is the people who do so, the poor who achieve liberty. It is not the clay or the dust or the trees or water that gains liberty. Freedom is achieved by men. Men who have a soul, who have aspirations, who can strive for a better life. I want this liberty to be yours. I want that the Baluchs, Brohis and the Pathans should be free. I am fighting for your freedom. They were fighting for your slavery. I am talking of Pakistan. They are talking of a supposedly free Baluchistan, but they dread the freedom of the men and women who make Baluchistan. They realize it full well that an independent Baluchistan cannot exist. But to maintain their own system, they are prepared to pawn the people and the land to some other big country or neighbours. Is this not destroying the roots of democracy? Is it not revolting to our pride? Does it not offend our self-respect as a free nation that we call upon some other government—a foreign government—to come and rule our country? The problems are our own, internal ones, and we will solve them within our own sovereignty. We abhor what they want. Our Government, our people will never allow the sway of the foreigner over an inch of our land or a microscopic segment of our affairs. I pledge to you: Never, Never, never! Under no condition will this

be allowed to happen. Let any powers join against us, this will never be permitted! Never.

I will never allow Baluchistan to be destroyed, the people of Baluchistan to be crushed. This is my crusade; this is our struggle against these Sardars, against these Jagirdars, against these capitalists and feudal lords.

My dear friends and comrades, I have told you now what is the situation in Baluchistan during this transitional phase. Briefly, they are fighting for themselves, for their own system; they are struggling to maintain the status quo. They are prepared to accept the domination of external powers in the same way as they accepted the British bondage. The British have gone away, but other foreign states are there. To them they direct their aspirations. But with the help of God Almighty, and with the help of the Pathans, Baluchs and the Brohis, who live here, with the help of you all, with your courage and your cooperation, we will defeat their conspiracy, wholly and completely. We shall crush their underhand activities.

This is what our political struggle is all about and nothing else. Political struggles, I repeat, are usually linked up with economic problems. To maintain their economic domination, Sardars prefer political slavery. Their politics is the politics of bondage.

Let me give you some proofs. When the NAP government was formed, I asked them to abolish Shishak. They said, "What are you saying?" I said to them, "I want Shishak to be abolished". They said, "Why should we abolish Shishak?" They refused to abolish it. Then I said, "In the manifesto of the NAP, you have stated that you have a right to take your share (batai) from the crop, a share from the poor toiling, sweating farmer who ploughs his land from morning till night, works 24 hours and struggles to increase his production. You perform no labour, yet you claim a share of the crop. Over and above that Shishak is demanded and dominance is sought to be imposed! Do you want to continue the tyranny and maintain the old feudal ways also. In your manifesto you stated that you would abolish Shishak." The NAP government, at that time, told me, "Our manifesto is not the manifesto of the People's Party; it is the manifesto of the NAP and if the NAP wants to go against its own manifesto, there is nothing you can do about it!" I told them, "It is my responsibility, because I am the Chief Executive of the country" – (at that time I was the President), and I have to do justice to the whole country! That is why it is my affair." They said, "We are not prepared to abolish Shishak in any case." They had promised to abolish Shishak in their manifesto because it was different from Batai. But their Government told me, "Do whatever you like, but we are not prepared to abolish Shishak!" I said, "This is rebellion against the Federal Government and this is also against morality and your own manifesto." They said, "This is our affair, and that of the people of Baluchistan."

Now you know how many people were arrested by them in Nal and Wadh and Quetta. You are the people of Quetta. Do you know how many Baluchs, poor Baluchs and Brohis were arrested by them who refused to give Shishak. These were the people who said that NAP had made promises in its manifesto and in its election speeches and now its government should not ask for Shishak. Ninety persons were arrested only in Nal, about 120 were arrested in Wadh. There were young men, students, children of the farmers among those arrested. Were they not Baluchs? Were they not poor? NAP leaders did not remember Baluchism at that time. The poor man is neither a Baluch nor a Pathan nor a Punjabi nor Sindhi; it meant just nothing to them. But when there is a question of deriving benefit, then they remember religion and Punjabism and all that kind of thing. When the question comes up of setting up factories and making profit, then all those things come to mind. But they are forgotten when they arrest Baluchs and exact Shishak from them. This is where our attitude differs totally from theirs.

We abolished Shishak. We also abolished "Ushr" in the Frontier Province. After that came agricultural reforms. Everybody's land holdings were cut up because the extent of ownership of land was reduced. All over the country, people filed their declarations. Not so the Sardars of Baluchistan. They ignored these reforms. What arrogance! What disregard for law. Law is there for the whole country. But the Sardars do not think that there is any law for them. They said, "We won't fill up the forms. There shall be no agricultural reforms in this land".

But for whom were these reforms enacted? I was not taking away their lands; my friends were not taking their lands. The land was for distribution among the poor, among the Baluchs and Pathans and Brohis. Twenty-two Sardars have not even yet filed their declarations. How can they maintain this refusal? The whole country has come under the purview of the Reforms but they think that they have a birthright to be exempt. Are the Sardars so much above the law, are they so big, so high and mighty that the law can apply to you and to me and the whole world but it cannot apply to these Brahmans? Land Reforms shall be implemented, let them twirl their moustaches as much as they like. Land Reforms shall be enforced in every area. They are being implemented and God willing they will be implemented in the whole of Baluchistan also. From the land surrendered, neither I nor my companions will get any. It will be given to the workers, the laboring haris and farmers.

Now about the Pat Feeder land. These people wanted to grab land around the Pat Feeder. They wanted to evict the poor people and so in Pat Feeder area they produced counterfeit documents. They had no rights. We examined the record. It is not their land. It is the land of the Imranis, of poor people. Where did these people pop up from? They come from Dera Bugti, from the Marri area and the Zahri etc., etc. They came to claim the lands in the Pat Feeder Area under false

documents bearing the thumb impression of the Khan of Kalat. Well, we can all present a thumb impression and say this is the thumb impression of the Khan (applause). That was not the Khan's thumb impression. That was not the seal of the Khan. The Sardars are now at loggerheads with the Khan. Now they are producing the certificate of the Khan dating from the time of Sandeman. That was the quarrel about the Pat Feeder lands.

Then there was the question of land settlement. They did not want settlement first as they did not want any land reforms. They thwarted survey of land. They refused clearance of arrears. Do you know why? They said this is a different type of area. But how is this area different? You can have survey here. There can be Patwaris here. They made the pretext that this was mountainous area and dangerous. The simple fact is they did not want settlement because they were opposed to land reforms.

Thus there were differences on Shishak, on the Pat Feeder land, on Land Reforms and the carrying out of land settlement. In short they wanted to run the Government through fraud. We cannot permit it. They got a resolution passed in the Baluchistan Assembly that the Sardari system should be abolished. They know that it was only a resolution. It could not have the strength or effect of law. They just had the resolution passed. A Sardar is under the Federal Government as well as the Provincial Government. But they pretended that they had no power to implement the resolution. If they really wanted to abolish the Sardari system, they could do so by passing a law. Their intent was to mislead the people. They wanted to show that they wished to finish the Sardari system without actually doing so. How could the Sardari system be abolished through a resolution?

This Sardari system is a most cruel system. It is a system which exploits more than the landowner does; more than the Jagirdar, more than the Nawab, more than the Pirs and Makhdoods. You know the illiterate people say that they can take an oath on the Quran but they dare not do so in the name of Sardar! This is the limit of backwardness. To abolish this most reprehensible Sardari system, they just passed a resolution. But why did they not pass a law? They make an enactment concerning the Sardars in their Province if they wanted to abolish the system. They passed a resolution because they wanted to hoodwink the people into believing that they had fulfilled an election promise. They said many things. They said they were themselves Sardars, so how could they abolish the Sardari System?

When did the system begin? It was in existence even before the British. It prevailed during the Mughal times in the days of Babar and Humayun. It was there in the time of Ahmad Shah Abdali. But it was under the British that legal protection was first provided to the Sardari System. Before their time, during the days of Mughals and the Maratthas there was no legal sanction for them. The



British provided it; they distributed the respective areas to the Sardars. They said they would not enter these areas nor would anybody else enter there. They concluded treaties with the Sardars and they charged them to protect the areas allotted to them; this Sardar was to protect Bolan and that one was to look after the areas of Jhalawan and Salwan, while that Sardar was to cover the Marri area and the Bugti area. In this way the British provided legal protection to them and increased the power of the Sardars. The British thus put a seal on the power which the Sardars derived from tribalism and backwardness. This seal was considered such that it could not be broken. So through the last 150 years, from the time of Sande-man, the British Government strengthened the roots of the Sardars and the Sardari system.

Comrades and friends: After the British, no one could even touch this Sardari System. After Pakistan came into being and the British departed, this Sardari System was not touched for 28 years. Nobody tried to abolish it. But I want to tell you that as long as the system is not abolished, as long as it is not crushed, as long as it does not end, the freedom of Baluchistan, the freedom of common people, the freedom of the poor, can never be achieved. And so I declare that from today, legally, the Sardari System is ended.

From today onwards there is no Sardar in Pakistan. The System is finished in the whole of Pakistan. It has come to an end. The most cruel, the most tyrannical, the most autocratic system, which has existed for centuries has expired with this law. It has been destroyed, eradicated totally and completely. The Sardars of this place are no longer Sardars. They may be "Mister", if not Mister then "Janab". If they want Sardari, let them go to India and meet the Sardarjis there. If they want to be called Sardars, then they can go to Afghanistan and meet a great Sardar Sahib. But Sardari is liquidated in Pakistan.

By the grace of God, this is a big and bright day for us. Let us Salute this day! It is your day! It is the day on which you have achieved a great victory. Tomorrow there will be a holiday all over Pakistan, because this is the biggest reform that we have effected during the four years of our Government. There can be no bigger reform than this. I thank the Almighty Allah that this reform has been brought about during the period when this sinner is shouldering a responsibility that He has given me strength to see this day, and to take this step. What better service can I render to the poor people of Baluchistan, the proud and good people of Baluchistan, than that I should tear out the Sardari system from its very roots and destroy it by law. (Applause). So I congratulate you, I congratulate you all, and I extend the warmest congratulations to the Khan-i-Azam, the Khan of Kalat, that in his time, Sardari has come to an end. Congratulations. (Applause, Slogans). Khan-i-Azam is no longer Khan-i-Azam but Khadim-i-Azam. Let us pray that this tyrannical System is destroyed for ever and that there may prevail the rule of the people, the rule of the poor, that democracy should blossom and the sway of

the Brahmans is a thing of the past. Amen! In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.



*Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto waving to the audience before addressing the public meeting at Quetta on 8 April, 1976.*





*A section of the huge crowd listening to Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Quetta, on 8 April, 1976, where he made the historic announcement abolishing the Sardari System.*





*A prisoner tortured in a private jail of a former Sardar showing his leg wound.*

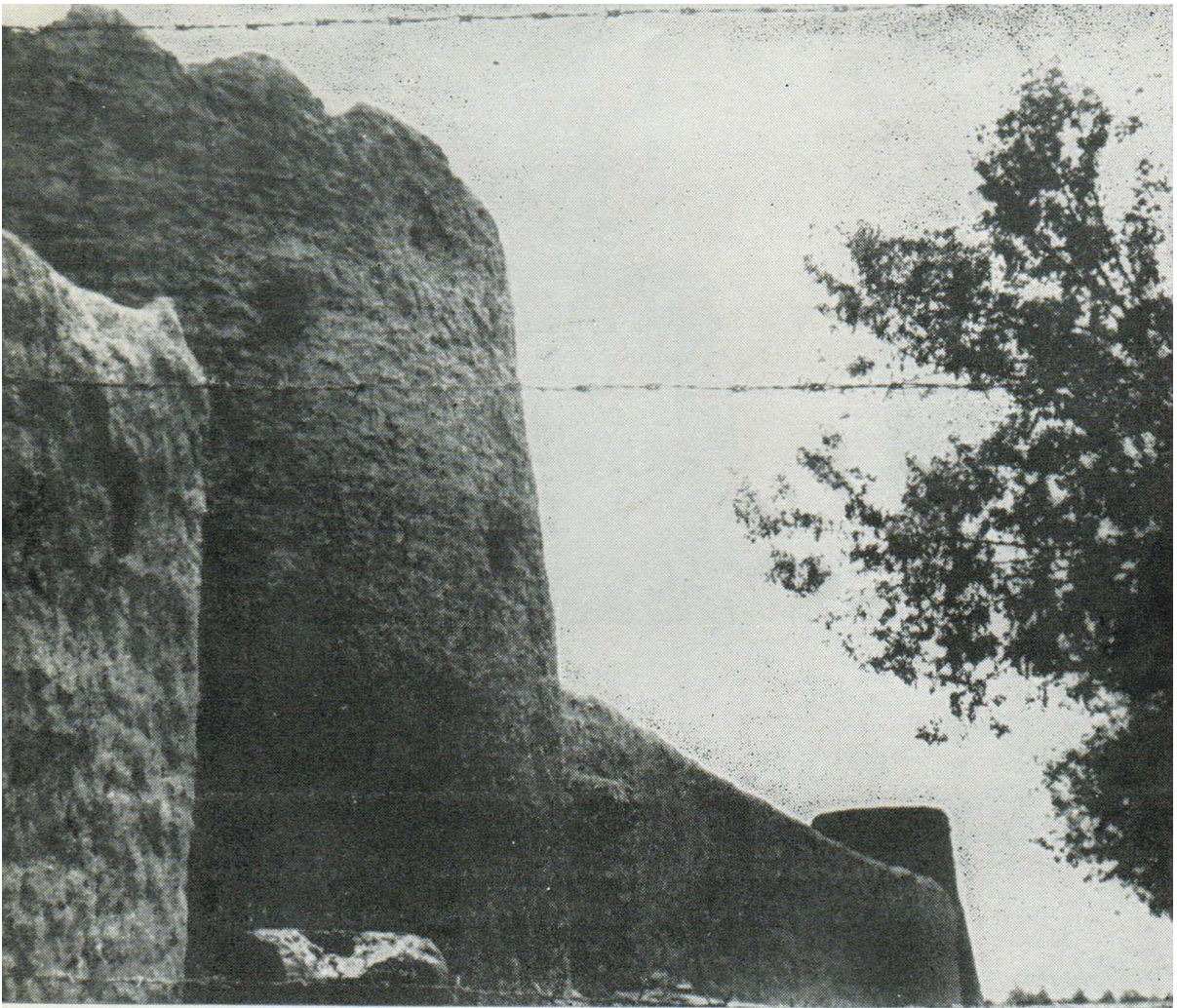




*Two other private jails in  
gti area. All such jails stand smashed  
with the abolition of  
Sardari System.*







*Another private jail maintained by former Sardars,  
in Wadh, Baluchistan.*

# **The Ordinance**

**April 8, 1976**

*Following is the text of the Ordinance on the abolition of the Sardari system promulgated by President Fazal Elahi Chaudhry on April 8, 1976.*

“Whereas the system of Sardari, prevalent in certain parts of Pakistan, is the worst remnant of the oppressive feudal and tribal system which, being derogatory to human dignity and freedom, is repugnant to the spirit of democracy and equality as enunciated by Islam and enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and opposed to the economic advancement of the people.

And whereas the proclamation of emergency referred to in Article 280 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is in Force.

And whereas the National Assembly is not in session:

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 89 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the President is pleased to make and promulgate the following Ordinance:

- (1) This Ordinance may be called the Commencement and Application System of Sardari (Abolition) Ordinance, 1976.
- (2) It extends to the whole of Pakistan.
- (3) It shall come into force at once.

### **Definition**

2. In the Ordinance unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context, Sardar' means a person who is recognised as a Sardar, Tumandar or chief of the tribe or who, under any custom or usage or otherwise, exercises any of the powers as mentioned in Section 3 of this Ordinance.

### **Abolition of System of Sardari**

3, Notwithstanding any custom or usage, as from the commencement of this Ordinance, system of Sardari shall stand abolished and no person shall:

- (a) Exercise any judicial powers not expressly conferred on him by or under any law for the time being in force, or
- (b) Maintain any private jail, or
- (c) Save as provided in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898), or any other law for the time being in force, arrest or keep in custody any person, or
- (d) Take free labour from any person or compel any person to labour



against his will, or

(e) Demand or receive, by reason of being or having been a Sardar, any tribute or any other payment whether in cash or in kind.

### **Saving**

4. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Ordinance, Government may grant to any person such individual service allowance as it may deem fit and require such person to discharge such duties and perform function as the Government may, from time to time, direct.

### **Penalty**

5. Whoever contravenes any provision of this Ordinance shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees, or with both.







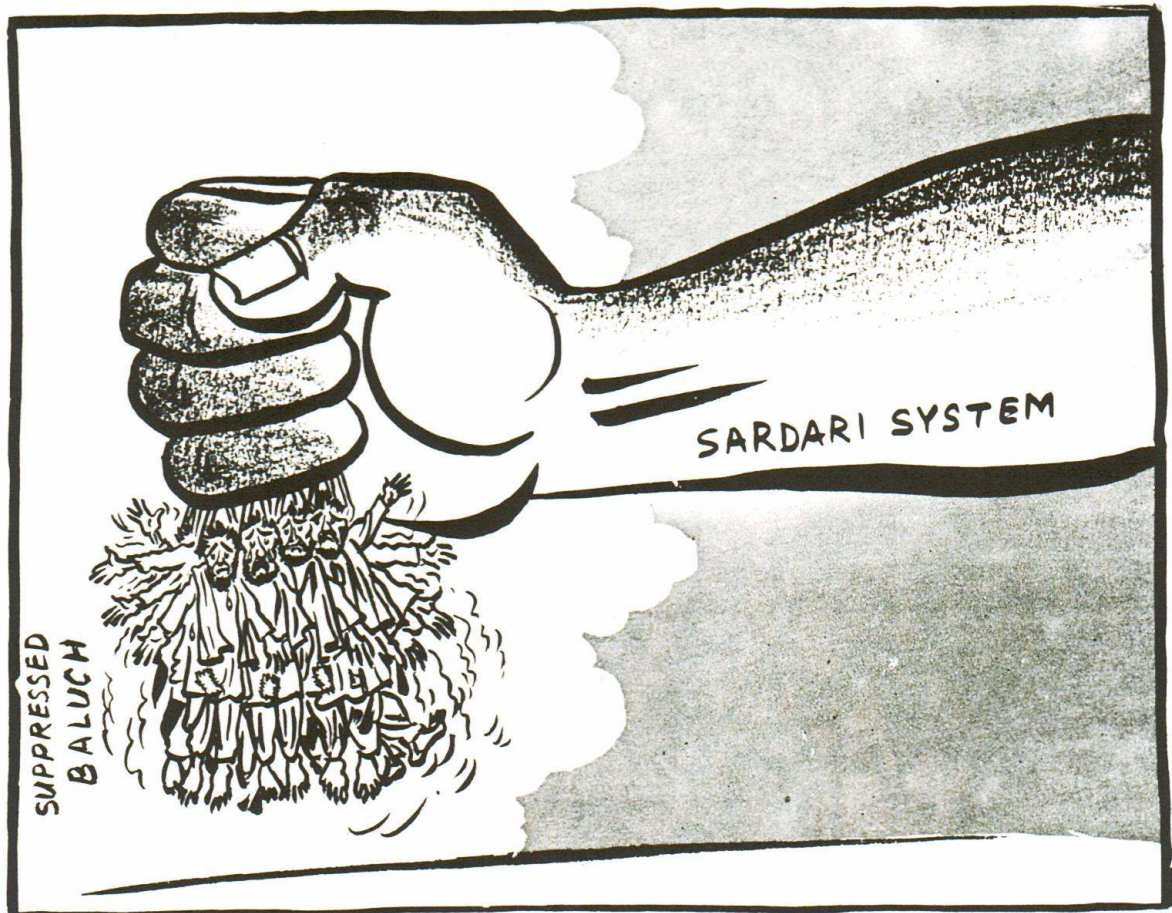


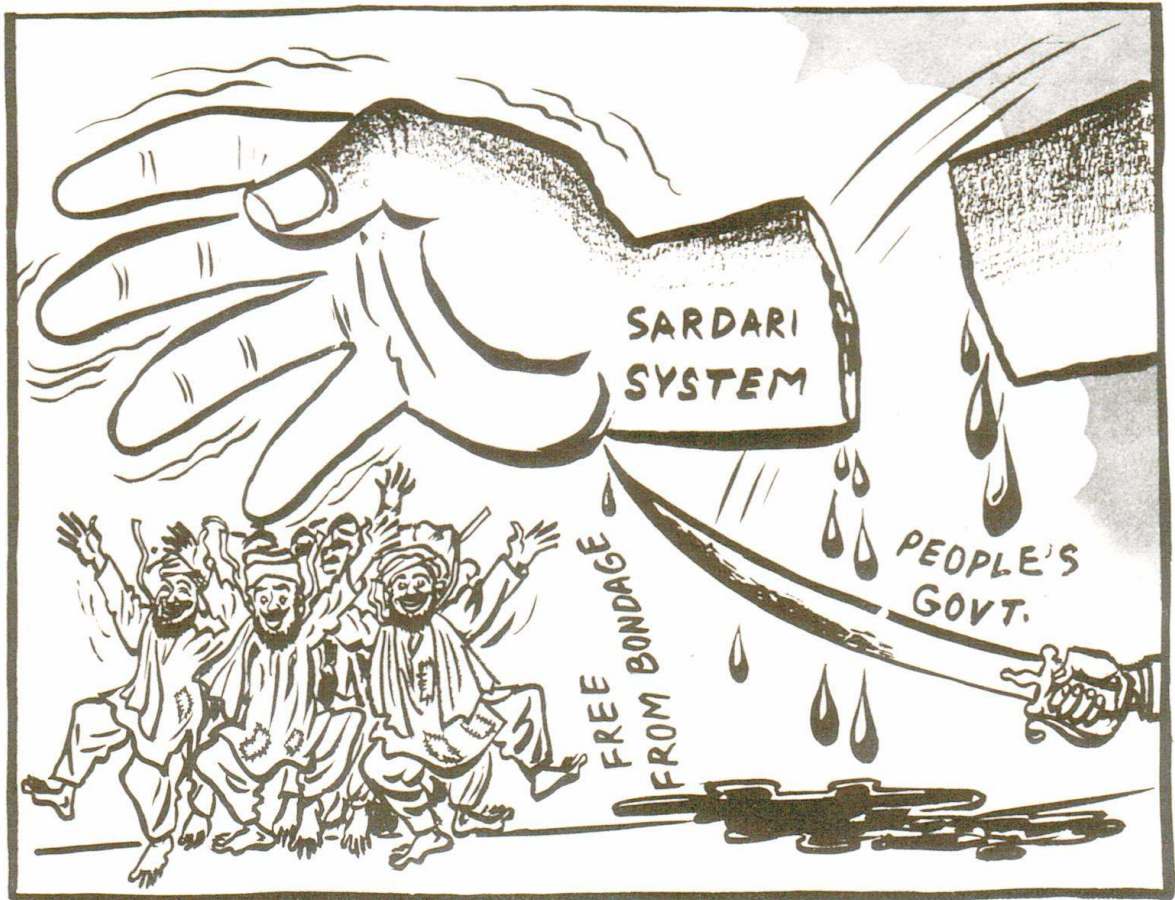












# **The Press Release**

**April 8, 1976**



*Press Release issued after the Prime Minister's address to the Public Meeting at  
Quetta on April 8, 1976.*

Ever since its inception, the People's Government has upheld and promoted the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, social justice and dignity of man as enunciated by Islam and as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan. During the last four years the People's Government has pursued a relentless struggle throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan to achieve these aims and fulfill the aspirations of the people of the country.

In Baluchistan and some other less developed areas of Pakistan, the Sardari system (which was the worst remnant of the oppressive feudal and tribal system) vehemently challenged and resisted the efforts of the People's Government to realize these noble objectives. The vested interests resisted the emancipation of the common man even by insurgency. No effort was spared by some of the Sardars to oppose the resolve of the Prime Minister, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, to liberate the masses of the exploited areas. The People's Government faced the challenge posed by these elements with resolve and fortitude. During the last four years the People's Government prepared the people and created the necessary infrastructure to usher in a stable administration capable of enforcing the writ and authority of the Government in these neglected and impoverished areas.

The ground and framework for change thus having been prepared, the People's Government is now in a position to respond to the will and aspirations of the people to break the shackles of bondage and suffering. As announced by the Prime Minister today, the evil and despised Sardari system has been abolished with immediate effect. An ordinance to this effect has been promulgated by the President. This major and revolutionary step reflects the abiding dedication of the Prime Minister and the People's Government to economic welfare and social progress of the people of Pakistan.

In certain areas, Sardars controlled the levies although they were paid by the Government. The Levies, who will still continue to be the law enforcing agency in such areas, will now operate under the direct control of the Government to enforce its writ and authorities. The Levies will continue to receive the same pay and allowances directly from the Government. It may be mentioned that out of the total strength of 5,649 Levies men, 2,960 are paid by the Federal Government and the remaining 2,689 are paid by the Baluchistan Government.

Similarly, the persons in receipt of individual service allowance, granted by the Government, may continue to receive the said allowance and may be assigned such functions and duties as the Government may, from time to time deem fit.

**The End of Sardari System**

**New Era Begins**

The vast concourse at the Quetta public meeting sat tense and expectant. Excitement mounted as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto drew towards the close of his hour-long speech.

Then all at once the flood-gates of an emotional groundswell opened as the nation's chief executive announced that "from tomorrow (April 9, 1976), the Sardari system stands abolished". An historic hour had struck. With one stroke, Mr. Bhutto was lifting a primitive curse from the brow of Baluchistan, ending a feudal relic and banishing an unjust system that had blighted the lives of people for centuries.

Inevitably, the nation rejoiced to hear the shackles break. A brave new world was opening for the province of Baluchistan and its 2.4 million people. A new chapter was being written, for the first time in the 28-year old history of Pakistan.

For the Sardari or tribal chieftaincy system was rooted in the dim past and embedded in the fabric of a tribal society. The Sardar or the chief must have surfaced when the tribe, before the dawn of history, needed someone strong enough to shield it from a more powerful rival tribe or agile enough to lead it into forays in fresh fields and pastures. With the passage of time, the leader and mentor of the tribe, freely chosen by the tribesmen, assumed hereditary character, more feared than respected—and maintained in pomp by the tribes through land-grants and nazaranas or tributes.

## **Mughal Times**

Even before the entry of the Mughals in the South Asian subcontinent, Baluchistan had its Sardars or Tumandars and the lesser hierarchy of Mukkadams, Motabars and Waderas heading its five hundred tribes, clans and sub-clans. The Mughal emperors in the sixteenth century left the institution pretty much alone, accepting the usual tributes from the Sardars in token of submission to the imperial suzerain. Some of the Mughal Princes like Humayun and his brother Mirza Kamran even sought some Sardars' help in staking rival claims to the throne at Delhi.

Product of a society where no holds were barred and called upon to tame wild tribesmen, the Sardar learnt among his first lessons the difficult art of survival. This was particularly so at times of local or regional unrest.

The last days of the Mughal empire, for instance, and the advent of the British imperial power on the scene, with the inevitable clashes, diplomatic intrigues and wars, found the Baluchistan Sardars playing the exerting game on a wider field and for much higher stakes.



Mir Ahmed Yar Khan Baluch, former ruler of Kalat state (“ the biggest Sardar of them all”) and the present Governor of Baluchistan in his book Inside Baluchistan (1975) sketches a part of the Sardars' role at that time:

*“Internally, Mir Mehrab Khan (ruler of Kalat 1831-39) was faced with the cunning intrigues of selfish Sardars of his court who were playing a double game. On the one hand, they pressed him to fight the British and the King of Afghanistan; and on the other, they spied for these powers and coaxed them to invade Baluchistan”.*

### **British Connection**

The British in their wars against Afghanistan and in their attempts to contain Czarist Russia thus found in the Sardars willing allies. They therefore proceeded to clothe the Sardar, already sanctified by custom, usage and “rewaj”, with the sanction of law also. They were to do Britain's bidding, provide the British army with guides, scouts, men and provisions and maintain order in their areas. In return, they could continue to hold their feudal sway over the tribesmen, who were turbulent and truculent anyway. Mir Khuda Bakhsh Bijarani, Marri Baloch, a judge of the High Court of Sind and Baluchistan in his book Searchlights on Baloches and Balochistan (1974) describes the status of the Sardars under the British:

*“The tribal Chiefs and headmen were allowed to maintain their positions on condition of loyalty to the British Government. Any doubt on that count used to result in immediate removal and replacement of the unwanted tribal Chief by a relative or another tribesman. Sometimes even new Chieftainships would be introduced and scrupulously maintained...”*

*In return for certain privileges and monetary payments through pensions, the tribal Heads proved useful in keeping peace among their respective tribes. No restrictions were put on such Chiefs in the matter of burdening the tribesmen on various excuses by imposing taxes on threat of sending them to British jails in case of non-compliance. Here we see the unfortunate people of Baluchistan deprived of educational, political, social and economic development, with constant threats of facing long terms of imprisonment at the sweet will of the (British) Political Agent, or through him, of the tribal Chiefs. The ugly part of this double-edged policy was that while it served the purpose of the British Government, it also helped them wholesale to keep intact the helpful' illiteracy and ignorance of the people, which plan kept the tribesmen in a calculated state of perpetual disunity and inter-tribal warfare”.*

A classic example of these tribal fueds and strife which have continued down to our own times is the 30-year Rind-Lashari war, sung in Baluchi ballads, between the Lashari tribe led by Mir Gwaharam and the Rinds led by Mir Chakar Rind in

the sixteenth century.

### **Lord Irwin**

The British who had constituted the Sardars into petty governments with wide powers must have found the gory preoccupation of the tribes and their complete insulation from the mainstream of life in the Indian Empire, highly profitable and propitious.

In 1930, in a speech at the Sibi Darbar, the Agent to the Governor-General in Baluchistan, Sir Beauchamp St. John told the Sardars that *“At this time when India is racked by political controversies, it behoves you to see that your house is in order .... to keep bright the escutcheon of honourable traditions inherited from your ancestors so that you, in your turn, may hand it on, bright as ever, to your descendants”*.

Earlier in 1927 the power of the Sardars was referred to at Quetta by no less a person than the Viceroy and Governor-General of British India, Lord Irwin:

*“You Sardars and Motabars enjoy the inestimable privilege of Government, I might almost say, of self-government by an ancient code of laws handed down from generation to generation from immemorial times....”*

### **From 1947 till 1976**

Indeed, so pervasive and powerful was the “Sardari Hukumat”, even when it had outlived its time, that it continued to flourish, unchecked and untrammelled, throughout the last 28 years from the birth of Pakistan on August 14, 1947 till April 8, 1976. The Sardars managed to defy successive Governments of Pakistan and cock a snook, at all their edicts. In fact, let alone the Pakistan Government's laws and lawmen, even its road-builders could not enter the Sardari areas. Because the law was on the Sardar's side; and nobody dared change the law. Nobody that is, until April 8, 1976's Quetta public meeting. Out of Baluchistan's area of 134,050 square miles—about equal to the combined size of Punjab and Sindh—the Pakistan Government's writ ran only in 134 square miles! The rest were “special areas” where the Sardar's word was the law; his minions the lawmen and his dungeons the official jail.

The land reforms introduced in Pakistan in 1959 fixing the ceiling on individual landholding at 500 acres were ignored with impunity by the Sardars. About 22 of the big Sardars even refused to file the declarations of their landholding as required under the land reforms announced by the present Government on March 1, 1972 which had slashed landholding to 150 acres. They are now being

prosecuted. Their land in excess of the ceiling will be resumed by the state, without any compensation, and distributed, free of charge, among the landless cultivators.

The Sardars even sparked an insurgency in Baluchistan to block the twentieth century catching up with the tenor of life ordained by them.

Prime Minister Bhutto is on record that some of the Sardars had conveyed to him that he could have anything he wanted in Baluchistan provided no roads or schools were built in the Sardari areas. It was an understandable reaction. For though feared by his tribesmen, the Sardar himself dreaded nothing more than the wind of change which roads, schools, and electricity heralded. He feared the revolution of rising expectations of his bondsmen. He knew, of course, that his little world was crumbling all around him but sought to delay the inevitable as long as was possible. For the Sardar who is described in the Sardari Abolition Ordinance, 1976 as “a person who is recognised as a Sardar or chief of tribe and who under any custom or usage or otherwise” exercises judicial and administrative powers given to him by the British colonial administration, was in his fiefdom, the policeman as well as the magistrate and judge. He operated private jails, could arrest or detain any tribesman at will, exact free labour from him and receive an annual tax or “Shishak” in cash or kind. The Sardars even controlled the 5,650-men levies which were paid from the federal and provincial exchequers.

And what did these levies do? Pakistan Television has given its viewers an unforgettable insight into the recesses of the “black holes of Baluchistan”, the mud-built dungeons in the Marri-Bugti areas which served as private jails of the Sardars where 40 “convicts” served their terms. Some of the contraptions fabricated to pin them down resembled the stakes of the Middle Ages. The private jails the “Bastilles of Baluchistan” were dismantled and their prisoners freed following a 48-hour ultimatum given by Prime Minister Bhutto on April 10, to close them down. The “prisoners” were as dazed at their sudden freedom as they were when they were hauled into them in the first place, months and even years ago.

## **Oppressive System**

And if the worth and dignity of man weighed so little in the Sardari scale of values, the women were treated as worse than chattels.

Mr. Yahya Bakhtiyar, Attorney-General of Pakistan, who comes from Baluchistan has stated in a television interview that he knew of several Sardars who frequented the posh clubs of Karachi and Lahore but who every year sold



hundreds of women, declared as “siahkar” (evil-doer) by one tribe to members of other tribes in distant areas of Baluchistan. Under the Sardari system, even the most elementary human rights were denied to the women—as well as the men—doomed to live in Baluchistan and in the adjoining districts of Sindh and Punjab. Not without reason does the preamble to the Sardari Abolition Ordinance denounce the system as “the worst remnant of the oppressive feudal and tribal system... derogatory to human dignity and freedom ... repugnant to the spirit of democracy and equality as enunciated by Islam and enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and opposed to the economic advancement of the people”.

### **New Vista**

Prime Minister Bhutto has himself described the system as “the apex of feudalism” and the “bull's eye of the tribal system”. With its abolition, a serious stumbling-block has now been removed from the path of bringing Baluchistan speedily to the level of socio-economic advancement now underway in the three other provinces of Pakistan. A link has now been forged in the chain of other steps taken to wipe out feudalism, ensure the rule of law, beef up the economy, expand educational facilities, and hasten Baluchistan's big leap forward.

An overnight miracle, of course, should not be expected. A centuries-old institution will have to be replaced by a modern system of administration and justice. Police stations, courts, Deputy Commissioners' offices, in short, the law of the land, will now have to enter about 100,000 square miles of territory which had so long known no law except the Sardar's word. A modern, democratic administration, responsible to the people and responsive to their needs will have to be built quickly on the debris of the Sardari system.

A new vista of progress and of economic and political opportunities now opens up before the people of Baluchistan. The old order of inequity died with the Sardari system on April 9, 1976. Today, they welcome the dawn of a new era, as equal partners with the people of the three other provinces, in the reconstruction of a progressive, dynamic, modern society in Pakistan, wedded to human welfare and dignity.

**Comments:**

**Foreign News Agencies,  
Newspapers and Radio**

### **Daily “Ayendagan”, Iran**

The existence of “little states within the State of Pakistan”, especially when the realm' of every Khan or Sardar was by itself counted as an autonomous territorial unit, it was impossible that it should not have come to the particular notice of a statesman like Mr. Zulfikar All Bhutto.

These Sardars and Amirs in their bid to prolong their short-lived authority over their tiny territories, had no fear if their infinitesimal unit was lost or the entire expanse of the country was lost. But Mr. Bhutto knows as well as understands all this full well. In order to safeguard the territorial integrity of the whole country, it became imperative for him to liquidate the whole lot of these little 'realms'.

Undoubtedly Pakistan and Mr. Bhutto have taken a very bold step. They will have to face stubborn resistance and internal opposition. Outside the country also there are forces who would encourage these oppositions.

In such an eventuality the support of Iran to Mr. Bhutto's courageous action would not be limited to mere verbal or oral support. Iran supports this action with all possible resources at its command. It likewise supports every other action which is taken for strengthening and maintaining the territorial integrity of Pakistan, and for its economic and social progress.

*--April 17, 1976*

### **Weekly “Tamasha”, Iran**

Looked at from the angle of the Social Revolution of Iran, the abrogation of the Sardari order in our neighbouring country of Pakistan, is a very welcome step, because in our country, with the commencement of the land revolution in the first year of the Shah-People Revolution, the Iranian peasants became the owners of their land, and the rule of the landlord over the tenant collapsed. In the light of the experiences gained in Iran, the abolition of the Sardari system in the Baluchistan Province of Pakistan and the downfall of the Khans should be considered a step towards political stability, national solidarity, and the rule of law. For this reason the Government and the people of Iran are happy at the crumbling of the Sardari system, and heartily support this progressive step of the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

*—April 17, 1976*



### **“Kayhan International”, Iran**

Pakistan Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has adopted a bold but very vital step by abolishing the antiquated land tenure system in Pakistan. It has had a decidedly negative influence on the social and economic development of Pakistan. Its abolition will pave the way for the emancipation of Pakistani farmers and their full participation in national affairs.

*Report Pakistan Times, Rawalpindi, April 22, 1976*

### **“Ittela'at”, Iran**

In the neighbouring, friendly and brotherly country of Pakistan, the centuries-old rule of Sardars has been abolished. The Government of Pakistan has boldly and firmly put an end to the Sardari system in Baluchistan, and the rest of Pakistan. We on our part fully support and hail this vital decision which would undoubtedly be the fore-runner of basic reforms and for which we heartily congratulate the people of Pakistan.

*— Report Pakistan Times, Rawalpindi, April 22, 1976*

### **“Paigham-i-Imrauz”, Iran**

Pakistan has toppled down an anti-social order which was also posing a threat to the solidarity of the country itself; and thus brought to a close a system of the master and the slave and of the powerful overlords and of their insolent might. We laud this bold and progressive step of the reformist Prime Minister of Pakistan, and regard it not only in accordance with social justice in that country but also as a dire need of the time. We are confident that under the shadow of this reform, Pakistan will make rapid strides towards great social progress.

*— Report Pakistan Times, Rawalpindi, April 22, 1976*

### **“Rastakhiz”, Iran**

This affords a befitting opportunity to the people and the Government of Pakistan to implement effectively their programme of reforms, fundamental social changes, and land reforms in this large Province (Baluchistan) ..... the people of Baluchistan can now lay afresh the foundation of a happy and prosperous life in a free and unhindered atmosphere without any choking and strangulating influence of the past.

—*Report Pakistan Times, Rawalpindi, April 22, 1976*

**“Teheran Journal”, Iran**

A handful of feudalists held communities and sometimes regions at bay. The people were backward, and on the whole region lacked progress. Only a few stood to gain at the expense of the masses ..... The Sardars of Pakistan had plundered the country as the Khans had done here.....It is a matter of gratification that Pakistan, an ally, neighbor and friend of Iran, has taken this step to do away with this outrageous sacrilege of humanity... We are today reaping the benefits of the farsighted leadership of the Shahanshah, and there is no doubt that Pakistan, too, will benefit from this.

—*Report Pakistan Times, Rawalpindi, April 22, 1976*

**Radio Teheran**

*Message from Mr. Amir Abbas Hoveida,  
Prime Minister of Iran.*

“Respected friend and dear Prime Minister,

I have been very happy to be informed about the decision in connection with the abolition of Sardari System in Pakistan which will help develop democracy and trust among the brotherly people of Pakistan. I believe that this will lead to the progress of the people of Pakistan living in rural areas. This wise step, which displays your statesmanship, will enable millions of Pakistani brethren to participate in the mainstream of national life for the first time. With the abolition of the feudal system, an important step has been taken for the brotherly people of Pakistan for achieving their aims. This is a victory for the constructive and progressive elements of this region.

In this connection while offering sincere greetings I would like to lay stress upon the everlasting ties of friendship, existing between the peoples of Iran and Pakistan for the cause of peace and development.”

—*April 12, 1976*

**Weekly “Al-Liwa”, Amman**

A historic decision in its impact on basic human rights was announced by Pakistan Prime Minister, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in Quetta on 8th April when he announced the abolition of the repressive Sardari system.

Under this system, certain tyrannical elements posing as leaders of tribes in Baluchistan had for centuries exploited the innocent tribes. In a manner which did not have many precedents or parallels in other parts of the world, these people kept the tribes under their whiplash by maintaining private jails, imposed their own sentences for alleged offences and extracted for their own use a major share of the agricultural and other economic products of the people.

Unlike the tribal system in other parts of the world where the tribal leaders acted as the head of the tribal family and looked after their interests, the Baluchi tribal system was oppressive in the extreme. Over the years it had taken deep roots in the absence of any democratic forms, economic development and means of communication. It had become a major challenge for any Government to uproot this Sardari system.

The Government of Prime Minister Bhutto showed not only social conscience but also courage in following up its dedicated efforts for development of the economy and communications network in the province by putting an end to this Sardari system which had acted as a great barrier to the quick development of the province in its economic as also human potential. The results of this move should be evident in the progress that we hope that province will make in the years to come.

*– April 21, 1976*

### **Daily "El Moudjahid", Algeria**

The paper prominently reported Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's decision to abolish "Sardari" system, under the heading "Abolition of old system of sardars".

The paper referred to the Prime Minister's historic decision and said that it would not only apply to Baluchistan but to the whole country. It also mentioned that April 9 had been celebrated as a day of rejoicing in the country.

Speaking of the Ordinance, it referred to the abolition of "this diabolical and detested system of Sardars". It said that sardari system resembled the feudal set up of medieval Europe which was introduced on the west bank of Indus in the sixteenth Century and had been strengthened under the British rule.

Until Prime Minister's decision to abolish it, the system had considerable



importance in Baluchistan and NWFP. The sardars had personal militia and levied taxes, the most important of which was 'Shishak' which had been officially abolished two years ago and according to which peasants were obliged to surrender one-sixth of their crops or other products of their labor to sardars.

The newspaper referred to the Khan of Kalat having been "the Sardar of sardars" before the abolition of the Sardari system and the Prime Minister's decision to now make him "the great servant".

### **Daily "El-Seyassah", Kuwait**

The success of the Prime Minister in demolishing centuries old anachronistic and oppressive feudal system in one sweep proved his firm hold on this hitherto troubled area.

The smooth implementation of the provisions of the Ordinance and liquidation of private prisons, the historic decision of Mr. Bhutto's government is the culmination of a process of modernization introduced by him in the Province. Opposition to the Prime Minister's progressive policies, on the part of vested feudal interest, was at the root of the trouble in Baluchistan. With the Federal Government devoting maximum attention to economic development of the area, the feudal chieftains appeared to have lost their battle against the forces of progress and enlightenment.

*— April 23, 1976*

### **Daily "Kuwait Times", Kuwait**

The measure is "the biggest reform yet brought about by Mr. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party's Government since it took office in 1971". The Prime Minister's readiness to strike at an ancient tradition is enough evidence of his firm hold on the Province.

*-- April 26, 1976*

### **"Christian Science Monitor"**

Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has acted to remove a longtime thorn from the side of his Government—and to boost his personal political stock at the same time—by ordering an end to Pakistan's system of tribal chieftains.

The Prime Minister, addressing an April 7 public meeting in Quetta, Capital of

the troubled province of Baluchistan, announced, “from this day onward, there are no Sardars (Tribal Chieftains) in Pakistan.” The announcement was greeted by thunderous applause from a large crowd at the meeting.

Mr. Bhutto described the new measure as the most radical and daring reform of his 4½ year old administration. Indeed, the system has endured since the establishment of the Mughal Dynasty (1526-1857) on the Indian Sub-Continent and the chieftains have enjoyed considerable status and prestige. The chiefs, especially those in Baluchistan, have exercised life and death power over their tribes, run private jails and armies, levied and collected taxes and no Government officials dared to enter their territories without explicit permission.

The tribal chiefs—there were nearly two dozen, mostly in Baluchistan and in an adjoining district of the Punjab—were ordered to close their jails, free their prisoners, and disband their armies within 48 hours. The nearly one million tribesmen under their control were told to stop paying taxes to the chieftains.

*—May 4, 1976*

#### **“The Guardian”, London**

Pakistan had a national holiday today to celebrate the end of a tribal system described in a Presidential Order as the worst remnant of the oppressive feudal and tribal system, derogatory to human dignity.

The President, Fazle Elahi has taken away all powers and privileges of the Sardar chiefs, most of whom ruled their tribes in a primitive manner in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province..

The Prime Minister, Mr. Bhutto, proclaimed the holiday on the last day of his two-week tour of troubled Baluchistan. Now no tribal chief will be allowed to exercise any judicial power, to maintain private prisons, or deny free labour to any citizen; and none can demand or receive any tribute or other payment.

Contravention of the ordinance will be punishable by imprisonment of upto three years, or a fine of as much as £1,000, or both.

While the abolition of the detested Sardari System has been universally welcomed, Mr. Bhutto was the first to acknowledge that it would take some time to vanish altogether.

Old habits die hard and perhaps the tribes would find it difficult to shoot their way through from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century. The passage of

law against a medieval system is nevertheless a welcome step.

— April 10, 1976

### **“Do Standard”, France**

Pakistan's Prime Minister, Mr. Bhutto, has promulgated a decree in order to put an end to the absolute power of the tribal chiefs, the Sardars, in Baluchistan, Pakistan's least developed province. Bhutto called the system of the Sardars the worst remainder of the feudal ages. Up to now the Sardars used to do justice themselves for their tribe, to have their own private jails, to arrest whomever they wanted and to have the tribesmen work for them without pay. They opposed the building of roads and railways in their territory and against anything liable to get their subjects into contact with the outer world.

Offence against the decree, Bhutto announced, would be punishable with three years of imprisonment.

Earlier Bhutto had already created a revolution in the morals of the Baluchistan tribes by inviting, to a meeting of members of his Pakistan People's Party in this province, the women who work for the party. According to the tribal rules women, who have to be veiled, are not allowed to join men on public or private meetings and have to stay in separate rooms.

Bhutto had insisted that at the party's meeting in Quetta the women would leave their separate hall. “To finish the oppression and exploitation by the Sardari system also women's exploitation should be rooted out”, he said.

— April 10-11, 1976

### **“Het Bedang Van Limburg”, Belgium**

Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan abolished the ancient feudal system of the “sardars”. The sardars who have been deprived of their title and privilege by this decree may be punished with three years of imprisonment and/or high penalties when they offend this prohibition.

The Sardari system, still solidly rooted in the two Pakistani provinces of Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province, goes back to the 16th century, the time of the first Mogul rulers. It more or less covers the feudal system of our European Middle Ages. Feudal lords and vassals are known who are in their own territory equal to sovereign rulers. In exchange for their duty to defend the population they can collect taxes, demand labour service and do justice.



Due to the way in which the British governed their colonial Indian empire, the so-called "Indirect rule", in which much was left to the native rulers, these gentlemen have had the opportunity to preserve their position up to now.

Bhutto however stated last Thursday, in the presence of a cheering crowd in Baluchistan, that this "diabolic and disgraceful Sardari system has been abolished".

*—April 10, 1976*

### **Daily "Journal Novo", Lisbon**

The Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto announced in a public meeting of 30,000 people held in Quetta that the feudal system in the Province of Baluchistan was abolished. He stated that some of the tribal leaders (called Sardars), who had administrative powers and could apply duties on the people of their areas, sentence them to prison and could form armies in their mountainous dominions, had subjected many of the two million people of the Province of Baluchistan to "brutal oppression" and had filled their prisons with them.

The abolition of the feudal system is the biggest reform introduced by the People's Government of Pakistan, which took office in 1971 under Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

*—April 9, 1976*

### **B.B.C., London**

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Bhutto, has announced the abolition of Feudal Law in Baluchistan Province. He gave this announcement at a rally in the Provincial Capital describing the move as the government's biggest reform since he took office in 1971. The new Law switches away the centuries old Feudal System which permitted tribal chieftains to raise taxes and administer penalties.

*—April 9, 1976*

Soviet News Agency, Tass

The Soviet news agency, Tass, has lauded the abolition of Sardari system in

Pakistan as “a progressive step which has met with approval among the progressive public opinion.”

In a dispatch, correspondent Alexander Prorok who is based in Pakistan, said that since it came to power, the Pakistan People's Party had waged a consistent struggle to uproot hangovers of feudalism in the country.

He pointed out a number of measures taken by the Pakistan Government to curb the power of the Sardars and said “now the Government has decided to put an end to the system altogether.”

He has also taken notice of the punishment for violating the law enacted in this connection. The correspondent said the Sardari system had until recently survived mainly in Baluchistan and in the rugged north-western border areas where it was a serious obstacle in the way of socio-economic reforms.

In another dispatch from Islamabad, the Tass correspondent reported that after the Pakistan Government decided to abolish the Sardari system and Federal privileges for tribal chiefs, Prime Minister Bhutto had ordered the authorities of Baluchistan to immediately start the land reforms.

*—Report Pakistan Times, Rawalpindi, April 18, 1976*

### **Radio Moscow**

According to an ordinance issued by the President of Pakistan, Sardari System has been abolished in Baluchistan. The Sardars had their own judiciary and jails. The Sardari System permitted them to raise taxes and administer penalties.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, has announced the decision of abolishing the Sardari System at a public meeting in Quetta, the Capital of Baluchistan. Mr. Bhutto has also asked the concerned officials for the implementation of land reforms in Baluchistan.

*—April 10, 1976*

### **“Politika”, Belgrade**

One who does not know what the Sardari system meant in Baluchistan and in the regions of the north-western Pakistan border—where it was very diffused—cannot understand the excitement caused by Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's decision to abolish it.

In Pakistan, it was judged as a real revolution that will be marked with golden letters in the contemporary history of the country.

It was neither easy nor simple to decide to abolish Sardari system. Sardari opposition was feverishly strong and used all sorts of obstacles. They spoke in favour of defence of honour, traditions and national values of Baluchistan, but, in fact, they wanted to protect their privileges.

However, Premier Ali Bhutto, who used to say at the beginning of his career: "None Pakistani mothers carried a more revolutionary child than I am", had to deal with the Sardari system also so that he could start with the "new phase" in the progressive development of Pakistan.

*—Joint Issue, April 30, May 1 and 2, 1976*

### **Weekly "Lumea", Bucharest**

The Sardari system recently abolished in Pakistan was similar to the feudal system in mediaeval Europe. The sardars were a sort of feudal chieftains who exercised influence. The system dates from the time of the Moghuls. It was introduced on the western bank of the Indus in 16th Century and was continued by the British colonialists at the time when they were penetrating into the South-Asian subcontinent. The system maintained a considerable importance up to now in two Pakistani provinces and in Afghanistan. It consisted of vassal type links within one and the same territory. The Sardars maintained their private police and exercised protection over the people of territories under their vassalage, in return for taxes and duties out of which the most important was "Shishak" (officially abolished two years ago) by virtue of which the peasants were supposed to give to the feudal lords one sixth part of their crop or newly born cattle. The Sardars used to exercise legal rights and maintained their own prisons.

A Presidential Ordinance issued in the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad, emphasized that "the diabolical and scornful system of Sardars has been abolished", providing for heavy punishments for all those who would use in future the old feudal titles. And that because in spite of the fact that the Sardars have lost much of their economic influence in the recent years they still had a certain religious and political influence. Announcing the abolition of the Sardari system, at the end of a 14-day tour of Balochistan, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto said that the day of the decision, April 9, will be a national holiday, meant to celebrate the event.

*--May 6, 1976*



## **Daily “Nation”, Nairobi**

Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has abolished Pakistan's centuries-old tribal chieftaincy system, which he described as “engine of exploitation”.

The Sardari Abolition Ordinance (1976) describes a Sardari (not to be confused with the honorific titles carried by Sikhs in Kenya or Pakistan) as:

“A person who is recognised as a tribal chief who by custom or otherwise exercises a wide range of judicial and administrative powers given to him by the British Colonial Administration.

The chiefs had powers to control and maintain levies, enforce law and order, arrest and detain people, operate jails, obtain free labour from tribesmen and to receive taxes.

Contravention of the ordinance is a criminal offence punishable by a jail term of up to three years or fine of 7,000/-, or both.

The Sardari system dates back to the times of the Mughal kings in the 16th century. It's mainly in the Baluchistan province which borders Iran and Afghanistan. It had the sanction of law since the colonial government recognised the chiefs and granted them land in exchange for the maintenance of law and order.

Over the years, however, the chiefs became to be identified as conservative, who blocked all the development efforts. They refused building of schools, roads or water schemes in their areas.

The ordinance describes Sardari system as “the worst remnant of the oppressive feudal and tribal system derogatory to human dignity and freedom repugnant to the spirit of democracy and equality as enunciated by Islam and enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan and opposed to the economic advancement of the people”.

Bhutto, at a news conference in Lahore, wondered how the African countries would tackle the problem of tribalism and tribal chiefs, which he said drags social and economic progress.

Pakistan's own experience has been bitter. In 1962, for instance, when President Ayub Khan introduced the country's first ever land reforms that ceiled landholding at 500 acres of irrigated land, he kept Baluchistan out of the purview

because the chiefs could not surrender their excess land.

Even Mr. Bhutto's land reforms ten years later, which lowered the individual ceiling to 150 acres, were defied by the chiefs.

The Prime Minister has revealed that about 22 major chiefs have refused to declare their landholdings as required under the Land Reforms Regulation of 1972.

He said they better file their declarations now. The land in excess of the ceiling, he said, will be taken over by the state and distributed to the landless free.

Under the Sardari Abolition Ordinance tribal levies will now come under the control of the government.

Mr. Bhutto has asked the chiefs to close their private jails in Baluchistan and on the border regions of Punjab and Sind. They should free all the prisoners except those convicted of murder or robbery, which should be handed over to the district authorities, he said.

If the chiefs refuse, he said, the security forces would go and close the jails by force.

The National Awami Party, whose government in Baluchistan was dismissed by Mr. Bhutto in 1973, had its whole leadership drawn mainly from the Sardars. The party was banned last year after its agents were held responsible for the assassination of a Minister in the North-West Frontier Province.

The ban was subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court since the NAP was "acting in a manner prejudicial to the security, sovereignty and integrity of Pakistan, in league with Afghanistan".

Two former governors of Baluchistan, Mr. Ghous Buksh Bizenjo and Mr. Akber Bugti, a former Chief Minister, Mr. Ataullah Mengal were chiefs.

The present Governor of Baluchistan, Mr. Ahmed Yar Khan of Kalat is also a sardar and, in fact, the biggest of them all.

Mr. Bhutto announced the abolition at a mammoth meeting in the Baluchistan capital of Quetta on April 8.

The Prime Minister asked the governor to announce that from now instead of being the Khan-e-Azam (the Great Chief) he would be the Khadim-e-Azwn (the Great Public Servant). "We'll love him all the more for that," answered the huge

crowd.

April 9 was declared a public holiday in Pakistan to celebrate the end of the "Sardari system". The Press said the new move "opens up a new chapter of democratic reconstruction and modern progressism in Pakistan.

*--April 26, 1976*

**Daily "Voice of Islam", Sri Lanka**

A new chapter has now been opened by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who has by the abolition of the Sardari system laid the foundations for the revolution of a truly egalitarian state. Abolition of the Sardari system required wisdom, courage and vision of the highest order. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has acted with great statesmanship which has been amply demonstrated by endorsement from every quarter of the world.

*— April 23, 1976*



## **Pakistan Press Comments**

### **Daily "The Sun", Karachi**

The abolition of Sardari system, announced by Prime Minister Bhutto in Quetta yesterday, was hailed all over the country as another great step forward in nation's march towards a socio-economic order free from exploitation.

The people's government's decision to bury this centuries-old oppressive system is also another big blow to the forces of exploitation.

*— April 9, 1976*

### **Daily "Zamana", Quetta**

The people of Baluchistan continued to suffer in the bondage of Sardars. The plight of the oppressed people in the area under this system is reflected in their unhappy lot. A major portion of the grains produced by these people through hard work and labour was usurped by the Sardars in the form of taxes, and the tillers of the soil were denied the basic amenities of life. They had neither enough food nor proper clothing, nor were medicines for their treatment available to them. Their tale of woe does not end here. The poor tribesmen were subjected to inhuman atrocities which the Sardars considered as their privilege to inflict on them. It was not un-common that the tyrant Sardars did not even hesitate to shed the blood of these poor people.

In view of these facts the People's Government has taken special steps to spread education among the masses and bring about social change in the tribal areas. Since the Sardari system has now been, legally abolished the efforts to awaken and instil awareness in the masses would prove more effective.

This is a historic decision and we believe that it would go a long way in protecting for ever the suppressed and backward tribal people from oppression and exploitation, and play a vital role in restoring to the tribesmen the basic human rights. Prime Minister Bhutto has no doubt taken a bold step for which he deserves the gratitude of the whole nation.

*— April 9, 1976.*

### **Daily "Morning News", Karachi**

Prime Minister Bhutto has taken a truly historic step in abolishing the oppressive Sardari system in the country forthwith. It is a major milestone in the continuing revolution ushered in by the People's Government under the radical leadership of

Mr. Bhutto. It is a triumph of the masses and a victory for democracy, and a stunning defeat for the forces of oppression, and inherited but indefensible privilege. It shows that no area and no privileged group can remain immune to the revolutionary upsurge in the country, and exploitation in all its forms will be progressively eliminated from the country. In abolishing the abominable Sardari system, the Premier has not acted in haste. He gave the sardars a long time to mend their ways and fall in line with the general progressive trend in the country. But they did not. They presumed that if they could remain impervious to the military regimes, they would be equally disdainful of the people's rule as well. But they are sadly mistaken....

Now the Sardars will not have their private jails or the power to arrest anyone, they wanted. Neither will they exercise judicial powers nor the right to demand free labour or any form of tribute. The land reforms will also be implemented in full in the province, and justice will be done to the farmers in the Pat Feeder area instead of the usurpers being assisted in any manner. These are indeed far reaching measures, and certainly far more than anticipated by the people of Baluchistan who have endured the abuses of the Sardars for centuries ....

— April 10, 1976

### **Daily “Pakistan Times”, Rawalpindi**

The Prime Minister has characterized the end of the Sardari system as the biggest of his reforms considering the nature of past achievements, that is some indication of how momentous the present measure is. The system was the worst instrument of slavery yet devised by man. It was serfdom at its cruelest, it's most inhuman. It did not treat the serfs on a par with animals: that would have been kindness, it made them worse than animals .... The Sardari system rested on doing just this. The tribal was not just a bonds man: he had nothing that was really his own – and that included his life and limb, his wife and children....

....The anti-Sardari Ordinance could have been promulgated earlier, but Mr. Bhutto rightly chose the other far surer way – of breaking the hold of the system first and legally outlawing it afterwards.

There can be no doubt thus, that this is a historic achievement. It literally frees a virile people from a legacy of unmitigated slavery, and opens up a vast immeasurably rich region for the first time to the winds of change. Democracy, rule of law, and economic development, resolutely barred for so long, will now have freer access and should enable the province to begin to move rapidly into the twentieth century. Mr. Bhutto's Government can legitimately feel proud of its revolutionary accomplishment. It literally took centuries to come.

—April 10, 1976

**Daily "Dawn", Karachi**

The final abolition of the Sardari system, one of the remnants of the feudal order, is a momentous decision for the country and for Baluchistan. The accomplishment of this vital task of socio-economic renovation will pave the way for all-round development and for the setting up of a modern administration. In course of time it will enable the biggest province of Pakistan to play a more significant role in the economic, cultural and political life of the country. The elimination of this institution, which gave a sort of legal sanction to social parasitism and which acted as a drag on economic development, was long overdue....

A system which had long since outlived its utility, the Sardari order was not only contributing nothing but actually retarding the effort to improve the people's livelihood through greater production....

The reform will create conditions which are conducive to a transformation of the social, economic and political life. Though Thursday's Ordinance has the potential of launching the province on the path to the twentieth century.....

—April 10, 1976

**Daily "Tameer", Rawalpindi**

We understand that by strengthening further its hold had without any limit the Sardari system during the last 24 to 25 years had seized very firmly the masses in its clutches. The erstwhile leadership at the Centre with their specific exigencies before them were busy in intrigues, with the result that politically the beneficiaries of such a situation were none else than the Sardars of Baluchistan and Khans of the Frontier. Few years before the establishment of the People's Government the Sardars and the Khans in their respective areas had touched new extremes in perpetrating suppression and excesses. But the period of tyranny is always a brief one, the storms of terror pass away instantly. Now the masses will see how these age old myopic tyrants are being swept away like straw in the flood of revolutionary reforms. The epilogue of their story has already been finalized. The masses will now replace the Sardars and the Khans to impose the law, and the masses will themselves act as the ruler and the ruled.

We proudly declare that the People's Party in Baluchistan with its historic and ceaseless struggle has brought about a change in the life, in the thinking and in



the attitude of the people. The workers of the People's Party in Baluchistan have in the past been severely harmed by the Sardars, but they withstood the shocks, and they successfully crossed the hurdles placed in their way by the Sardars and at long last they (the workers) paved the way for restoring the supremacy of the people. Their spirit, their zeal, their sincerity, their determination and their moral is exemplary for workers of the Party in other provinces. The Sardari system is no more anywhere though, yet there surely survives the mentality. It is therefore imperative for the undaunted and spirited workers of the Party to work for projecting the real role of their revolutionary party.

— April 10, 1976

### **Daily “Nawa-i-Waqt”, Rawalpindi**

Prime Minister Bhutto's announcement regarding the abolition of the Sardari system in the whole of the country—for implementation of which an Ordinance has also been promulgated,, the application of which though practically applies only to Baluchistan and tribal areas where alone, after the liquidation of states and Jagirs, the hereditary Sardars, Maliks and Khans had a special influence and authority by virtue of their tribal customs and official privileges that had been showered on them, is no doubt a significant constructive reform. This step (abolition of the Sardari system) will, in consonance with the contemporary trends, bring about solid but stage by stage strength to the process of socio-economic justice, political freedom and democracy in Baluchistan and the tribal areas. In this manner not only the despicable aspect of an indirect subjugation will end but it will greatly help the deprived people of the backward areas to stand shoulder to shoulder with compatriots of the other regions, and by all standards make them an equal citizen. All this change in socio-economic order as a result of the end of the Sardari system there will herald the dawn of a new era of economic and social progress.

In Baluchistan the Sardari system is centuries old. The British not only continued it for their own colonial ends but by giving the Sardars the grants and judicial powers made them much more influential and strong also. Whereas to suppress and make the masses loyal to them the Sardars created hurdles in the path of their social progress and awakening—as by opposing the establishment of schools and construction of roads, etc., they (the Sardars) also continued to strengthen their own family and racial roots of domination by imposing a variety of (Sardari) taxes all to keep the masses poor and deprived. That is, the Sardars' unchecked oppression and atrocities on their own people was made a means to show their loyalty to the British....

In Baluchistan the work of road construction started only in the past three or four years, and due to the opposition and resistance of the opportunist Sardars, the

major responsibility of this national service (road building in the remote and cut off areas) had to be shared by the Army. Any way, on complete abolition of the Sardari system, it can be hoped that the process of bettering the lot of the backward areas and of its deprived people will now find a fillip. With the building of roads and provision of better means of communications not only the far flung areas of Baluchistan will be suitably linked with other regions of the country, but also the support that will be available to them (the people) on complete abolition of a number of taxes imposed by the Sardars will greatly help to remove the economic backwardness of the common people, and it will play a vital role in their socio-cultural progress.

— April 10, 1976

### **Daily “Maghrabi Pakistan”, Lahore**

In one respect Prime Minister's tour of Baluchistan proved to be an extremely significant and revolutionary one as it was this tour during which he took steps not only in rescuing the Baluchi people from the inhuman tyrannies and exploitation but by announcing the abolition of the Sardari system in the country, he has opened the portals for a bright, new future. The Prime Minister made the historic announcement it while addressing a mammoth gathering at Quetta's Liaquat Park, and called it the result of the people's struggle and a revolutionary step against the primitive, oppressive and exploitative system of the past. Mr. Bhutto said, “the source of strength are the masses, and every system clashing with them will be shattered.” He told that in Baluchistan the power of laborers, peasants and of the toiling masses has risen against waderas and landlords. The revolutionary front has now been opened. But to end the labour-landlord confrontation and to put the last nail in the coffin of the tyrannical, antediluvian system the masses will have to struggle further”.

Before the abolition of the Sardari system the Government of Baluchistan had declared Shishak and all other Sardan taxes as illegal. Now through an ordinance the President of Pakistan has liquidated private jails, disallowed forced labour and banned the practice for receiving tributes and taxes (by Sardars), and these who violated the law will be liable to imprisonment for three years or a fine of Rs. 10,000, or both. The Ordinance says that the Sardari system which has been prevalent in some parts of the country is the remnant of the worst type of an oppressive serfdom and tribal system which is not only derogatory to human dignity and freedom but it is directly in clash with the Islamic principles of equality which have been mentioned in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The system was a hurdle in the economic progress of the nation ....

The facts that have come to fore with the announcement by the Prime Minister,

the Ordinance by the President of Pakistan and Government Press release show that by abolishing the Sardari system the Government has followed the principles of democracy, freedom, equality and social justice and Islamic teachings on which is framed the Constitution of Pakistan, and by doing away once for all with such a system (Sardari) the Government has provided for the protection of human dignity and self-respect. This step, which translates into practical terms the manifesto of the Pakistan People's Party, is at the same time a promise of socio-economic welfare and progress and is one of the far reaching revolutionary changes for the people of Baluchistan—for the present Government devoted to the cause of rescuing the people from the exploitative forces wishes to give a momentum to the struggle for attainment of democracy, equality and social justice. The Pakistan Peoples Party manifesto and the Constitution of Pakistan mention in unambiguous terms that in all the provinces of the country will be established a homogenous socio-economic order and that special attention will be paid to the uplift of those regions particularly which have since centuries been victims of backwardness, illiteracy, oppression and exploitation. So, Baluchistan, which in comparison with other provinces of the country, is extremely backward, and in order to bring this province at par with others it was imperative (for the Government) to end the Sardari system there, to enable its people to come out of the darkness of poverty and illiteracy and to lead them to the path of educational, social and economic progress. The Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in his public address at Quetta announced that the Government was not only providing crores of rupees for the development of the province (Baluchistan) but that in implementing the Land Reforms there all the lands in excess will be distributed among the pool farmers. It means that after the abolition of the Sardari system this province will enter a new era of progress and prosperity.

— April 10, 1976

### **Daily “Wifaq”, Lahore**

For the whole of the country in general and Baluchistan in particular the end of the centuries old Sardari system is, in fact, a historic step, revolutionary and of far reaching significance. Only after the end of the era of the Sardari system in a proper manner, the gratifying ushering in of a democratic order would be possible. So far a number of powerful Sardars have been evading even the implementation of the land reforms and, according to the disclosure by the Prime Minister, twenty-two Sardars have not yet filled up the prescribed forms and furnished to the Government. The Prime Minister has announced that howsoever powerful a landlord and feudal lord he may be, he is never above the law of the land. It will be worthwhile if the Government after abolishing the Sardari system does not put a check on the right kind of political activities in Baluchistan, so that the goal of people's supremacy is made possible. The benefit of the right steps the Government has taken in this regard would after all accrue to the people. The

result of restoring an unimpeded political activity will be that no group would ever complain that it could not have the independence for action. It can be hoped that the latest decision would prove to be a significant step in bringing Baluchistan at par with other provinces and there, with its stepped up level of political consciousness, it will prove to be a cause for enfolding the province in the larger national mainstream .....

*— April 10, 1976*

### **“Daily News”, Karachi**

At last Sardari system has come to an end. Prime Minister Bhutto by abolishing the cursed system has kept his promise to the exploited people of Baluchistan who had been suffering untold miseries since centuries.

The historic decision heralds a new era and ushers in a phase in which lot of painstaking efforts shall have to be made to thwart all conspiracies of the sardars who would definitely resist the revolutionary decision of the Prime Minister.

Now is the time for the people of Baluchistan to make the best of it and they should resist tooth and nail, shoulder to shoulder with the government, the attempts of the sardars to sabotage Prime Minister Bhutto's measures to end exploitation by feudalism in that province.

The best way to move forward against feudal resistance would be to get united and put hard work with the sole objective of creating a society which should be free from feudal exploitation and wherein greatest good of the largest number could be ensured.

*--April 10, 1976.*

### **Daily “Leader”, Karachi**

The decision of Prime Minister Bhutto to abolish the Sardari system is a major event in the history of Pakistan. It will rid the people of social and economic sufferings in areas where this system was prevalent.

The political and economic implications of this step will be far reaching. The Sardars have been stripped of the authority they had been wielding to impose their will on the people. Most of the political ills in Pakistan since the Independence have been the result of the power and authority the Sardars, big landlords and Jagirdars exercised on the people to achieve their political ambitions.



The people in the Sardari and Zamindari dominated areas were not free to vote according to their choice. They had little say in any matter. They had been denied the fruits of Independence by their tribal chiefs. These tribal Sardars impeded the development and progress in their areas with the result that the people continued to be economically backward. The abolition of the Sardari system will free the people from the centuries old bondage and put these areas on the road to progress. The people now can exercise their franchise freely. They will have a greater sense of participation in the affairs of their areas and the country and this will have a big stabilizing effect on the democratic system.

— April 11, 1976

### **Daily "Na'ara-i-Haq", Quetta**

"And from now onwards there will be no Sardar in Pakistan". These are the historic words of the Prime Minister by virtue of which the Sardari system was abolished. Not only the people of Baluchistan but the people of the whole country welcome this historic declaration whole-heartedly, and consider it as a milestone in the path of progress and prosperity of the nation. The bold step taken by the Prime Minister will infuse a new spirit in the people of Baluchistan, and will take them out gradually but surely of the darkness of ignorance, poverty and backwardness and lead them to the path of progress and prosperity. The existence of the Sardari system in Baluchistan had not only thrown the people economically, financially, politically and intellectually into the deep ditches of backwardness but had spoilt and ruined them from the point of view of the religion also. It was therefore, imperative that some bold and daring personality should rise to the occasion and deal a severe blow to shatter it to pieces. The former governments did not find it worthwhile to free the captive masses from the clutches of oppression and atrocities. But how long the tyranny and oppression could be tolerated? A day was destined for it (abolition of the Sardari system) which at long last reached and smashed this antiquated system with one stroke.

The need is there of the economic development, of the social security, of the light of education, of lessening the prevalence of outdated customs and traditions, and of the change in the outlook. These objectives can only be achieved gradually. Until and unless these objectives are achieved the implementation of the Land Reforms, and so also the abolition of the Sardari system, can not bear the desired fruits and result in a manner genuinely expected of them. These reforms and declarations have placed great responsibilities on the shoulders of the educated, progressive and well-to-do classes of Baluchistan. It is their duty now to come forward and try to fulfill to the utmost the obligations imposed upon them by the

nation. We hope that they will respond to the call of the nation and they with full confidence will march forward trampling down all the obstacles in their way (to achieve this noble cause).

– April 11, 1976

### **Daily “Jang”, Quetta**

Of all the reforms and laws introduced so far by Prime Minister Bhutto and his government ever since the ushering in of a new era in 1971, the reason for it (the abolition of the Sardari system) is quite obvious. The Sardari system had assumed the form of the worst type of tyranny and exploitation, of social injustice and inequality, and under this system had grown a privileged class of landlords, Waderas and Tumandars.

Generally the people in almost all the parts and provinces of the country were exploited under this tyrannical system but to the people of Baluchistan its oppression and tyranny was at its extreme....

If the democracy was allowed to flourish in Pakistan from the very beginning and if the dictatorship would have not intervened for quite a long time, the reforms might have come about earlier, as such bold steps can only be taken by those governments which come into power through the will and determination of the people. The basic reason for Mr. Bhutto to take this and similar other bold decisions is that he has come into power directly through the approval of the people, and the edifice of authority rests on the will of the people. On this basis alone it can be concluded that in the struggle against an oppressive system the abolition of the Sardari system is a great success of the people of Pakistan in general and the people of Baluchistan in particular.

– April 11, 1976.

### **Daily “Hurriyat” Karachi**

If we closely examine the Sardari system and its social, economic and psychological implications we would then not hesitate for a moment to reach the conclusion that it was the worst symbol of tyrannical landlordism and tribal system, and if the Ordinance proclaiming the abolition of this system and the public speech of Prime Minister Bhutto at Quetta are studied together, it would be sufficient to explain in clear terms the evils of the system not only to Pakistanis but to the whole world, What at all were those conspicuous aspects in the system which should have not been acceptable to the civilized world? On a cursory

glance of it, as has been maintained by its advocates it appears to be a system that suits the conditions of the area. It is possible that such an advocacy for it might appear to be effective during the mediaeval age or till the British rule; but if in an independent sovereign state where the principles of democracy are reigning supreme, where the rate of economic progress instead of being in collision with the future is setting trends for compromise, and if on the other hand the blockade of social, economic, educational and cultural progress under the guidance of Sardars in some parts of the country continues, how can this situation be acceptable? The Sardari system could have been abolished much earlier, but what if the policies of the governments in the past were identical to the unrealistic trends of mediaeval age and to the colonial ends of the British, then there can be nothing except an expression of sorrow and protest. The abolition of the Sardari system in one stroke has resulted in the psychological and logical freedom of millions of the people from the cruel clutches of the past, and with Prime Minister Bhutto's historical decision all the patriotic Pakistanis will be gratified and happy. We, on Prime Minister's announcement, rightly considering it to be a historic decision, congratulate the suppressed people groaning under the bondage of Sardari system. We hope that the process of abolishing the Sardari system initiated through the legal enactment would ultimately result in the economic, educational and cultural development of the people in Baluchistan,

—April 11, 1976

#### **Daily "Elan", Karachi**

Abolishing the Sardari system in Baluchistan the Quaid-i-Awam, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan, has erased the slur from the face of Pakistan that was customary in the form of a tyrannical rule and that we had inherited from the past. There was no justification for continuing such a system of the mediaeval age. It is a curse which could not be thought of in this modern age. In spite of all good intentions and wishes, it could not be found possible to do away with the system of oppression of man by man, and this system continued during all the regimes of the past. The credit of heralding a new people's era in its real meaning however rightly goes to Quaid-i-Awam, and the manner in which the Pakistan People's Party put an end to the exploitative forces, was such that a new spirit has been infused in the dead body of the people in Baluchistan. The ninth of April will always be remembered in the history of Pakistan for the fact that on this day millions of its people were freed from the slavery of its own people. Today a new people's era has begun in Baluchistan, which in the real sense can be declared as the era of people's independence. Today, every person in Baluchistan can raise his head high. Without any exaggeration a new Baluchistan has taken birth today.

—April 11, 1976

### **Daily "Aman", Karachi**

In the whole of the country the centuries old exploitative Sardari system has been lawfully abolished, a system which was the ugliest symbol of exploitation of man at the hands of man; a system extremely derogatory to human dignity and freedom, and repugnant to the spirit of democracy and equality and which in the civilized and progressive world of today was a grave slur on the forehead of humanity. That slur has now been erased for ever. And on this occasion there is no limit to the rejoicings by the nation, and however intensely the nation bows to God in gratitude on the liquidation of this curse, it still will remain in correspondence with the great bestowal (in the form of the end of the Sardari system). It is a matter of pride and satisfaction for the whole of the nation. By abolishing this ugly system which could not be abolished during the reigns of the great Mughals and the British and even during Pakistan's former regimes, new vistas of progress and prosperity have been opened up for the hundreds of thousands of people, the path of progress for whom was kept blocked for centuries. Whatever reforms and achievements have been made during this short period under the leadership of Prime Minister Bhutto the biggest of all has been achieved in the form of abolishing the Sardari system completely....

*—April 11, 1976*

### **Daily "Siyasat", Lahore**

...Undoubtedly with Quaid-i-Awam's revolutionary and epoch-making step the people of Pakistan in general and Baluchistan in particular have been freed from this (Sardari system) centuries old primitive system and from the worst kind of exploitation and slavery. On abolition the masses that were being crushed under the wheels of this exploitative system for centuries will for the first time in their life be able to attain economic and political freedom, and will thus be enabled to direct their potentialities to turn Pakistan into a prosperous and progressive society.

The Sardari system in Baluchistan is centuries old; the British allowed it to continue for their own ends and they by pleasing the Sardars deployed them to suppress the masses. After the creation of Pakistan the governments that took the reins of the country could not take any action to abolish the system. When Pakistan People's Party came to power, Chairman Bhutto, soon after taking over the reins, lifted the ban on the National Awami Party, and, afterwards, in a democratic spirit, he provided an opportunity to the National Awami Party and Jamiat-ul-Ulma-i-Islam to form coalition governments in the Frontier and Baluchistan. It could not occur to these governments (in the two provinces) to



recommend for the abolition of the Sardari system to the Federal Government, rather they helped the system (Sardari) to strengthen its roots, and took such steps as to deprive the masses of their right and suppress their hopes and aspirations, and by collaborating with the external enemies they participated in conspiracies against the unity and solidarity of Pakistan. The result of it all was that their (NAP-JUI) governments were dethroned and the National Awami Party was banned.

The history had already picked up Quaid-i-Awam Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for the execution of this creditable job (abolition of the Sardari system) and thanks God, he was thus privileged to take this step. The Sardari system was the fountainhead of the reactionarism and exploitative process. And now such a system can not be thought of in today's democratic order and in an era of universal brotherhood and we believe that man will no more be chained by man in slavery and exploitation. The People's Government has already taken many a step for the good of the masses, as in the construction of roads, establishment of educational institutions and hospitals and by way of providing employment to the masses. We are hopeful that the masses will now be able to heave a sigh of relief, and by retrieving now their lost fundamental rights will be able to play a distinguished role in the reconstruction of the country and nation. This step (abolition of the Sardari system) of the People's Government will be welcome throughout the country, and no doubt for taking such a revolutionary step the Quaid-i-Awam and the Pakistan People's Party deserve the gratitude of the whole nation.

— April 11, 1976

### **Daily "Inquilab", Peshawar**

In a special article the Chief Editor of the Daily "Inquilab", Syed Shahzad Ali Shad, has said that the abolition of the Sardari system is a link in the chain of the revolutionary and progressive reforms initiated under the inspiring leadership of Quaid-i-Awam Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This bold step of the Quaid-i-Awam reflects as to how sincere the People's Government has been towards fulfilling the promises made by it to the people before its coming into power. This courageous and memorable step taken by the Quaid-i-Awam is also proof of the unflinching confidence of the people in his leadership. This epoch-making decision also exhibits as how intense is Quaid-i-Awam's love and concern for the people and how devotedly he is making efforts for their welfare. If the Sardari system is analysed in its historical perspective (then it will be found) that it was no easy job to abolish it. What to say of abolishing it, none of the earlier governments before the People's Government could even dare to think about it, but it was only Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who with one full stroke of the Zulfikar (Zulfikar means sword) smashed the idol of the Sardari system, and relieved hundreds of

thousands of the poor from the centuries old tyrannical, oppressive and a dishonest system. From now onwards there will be no Sardar. Now no Sardar will be able to make any poor person a target of his oppression and excesses. The grip which had in it the necks of the poor has been loosened now. The iron chains that clasped tightly hundreds of thousands of the poor into bondage has been smashed into pieces with one stroke. Due to this revolutionary decision a new era of prosperity will usher in Baluchistan and other parts of the country, and thus all the people of the country will benefit equally from the boon of democracy and will find all the opportunities for socio-economic progress. With this bold and important decision the exploitation of the poor masses at the hands of the privileged few has been done away with, and the country has been rescued from an antiquated system. The fact known to all is that Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is engaged in efforts for the great advancement of the country as was wished by the Founder of Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam, and it is also a fact that with this decision (the abolition of Sardari system) the dignity of mankind has been redeemed, and in the history of Pakistan this step will be written in golden letters.

— April 11, 1976

#### **Daily "Watan", Peshawar**

The other day the President of Pakistan has issued an ordinance, which will be known as Sardari System (Abolition) Ordinance, and will be deemed forthwith effective throughout the country. In future, (by virtue of the promulgation of the Ordinance), neither the Sardars will have the power for adjudication, nor will they be able to arrest the people; nor will they establish private jails; nor will they be able to exact forced or free labour, and nor will they be able to receive tribute in cash or in kind. The violation of this Ordinance will be a criminal offence punishable with imprisonment upto three years or fine upto Rs. 10,000, or both. Besides, a Sardar has been defined elaborately in the Ordinance. As per its definition, a Sardar is one who has been recognised as a Sardar or Tumandar and whose Sardari has been recognised through some custom or practice. In the Ordinance, the Sardari system has been mentioned as the worst remnant of the oppressive feudal and tribal system, and it is said that the system was derogatory to human dignity and freedom, and was against the spirit of democracy and equality as endowed by Islam and enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, and was totally opposed to the aspirations of the people and against the economic advancement. On seeing the details that have come to fore with the announcement of the abolition of the oppressive Sardari system one can say with certainty that Prime Minister Bhutto's People's Government is not only concerned with the country's progress and stability but has a concern for the people's rights and human dignity also. And, it will not be out of place to say that by abolishing the cruel system the People's Government has severely hit the last blow to the exploitative forces. If the word Sardar was not so comprehensively defined in the

Presidential Ordinance its application could have been attributed to only a few parts of the country. But after it has been so elaborately defined it is now clear that it (the Ordinance) will be applicable to the whole country, for there are also such areas in the country where for the word Sardar another title is in use, and their (Sardar's) approach for exploiting the poor masses is also different. But after a thorough definition of the term (Sardar) in the Presidential Order, no such person will now be left in the country who could be exempt from the purview of the law to ever build himself up at the cost of human dignity, be those Sardars, Maliks, Khawaneens, Rajas, Waderas, Jagirdars or in whatever form they may be, all of them are included.

— April 11, 1976

#### **Daily “Al-Falah”, Peshawar,**

By taking a historic decision with regard to the abolition of the Sardari system the Prime Minister, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, has set a precedence for the whole of the world. The nations of the world will hail this decision about a system by virtue of which the Sardars took the people as no more than sheep and goats and deployed them as animals. And in return for their labour they (the people) were given tattered cloths to put on, dark and dirty houses to live in, and grass and fodder to eat. The rest of their income was also taken back (by the Sardars) in the name of Shishak. Because of the Sardars' excesses on the poor the chastity and modesty of their daughters and womenfolk could not be protected. This tyrannical system was given by the British so that by awarding lands to the Sardars, they could rule there through them. During the tenure of the previous governments in Pakistan too there was no head of the state that had the power to face the Sardars. Even Ayub Khan's Martial Law was unable to abolish the Sardari system. The British had kept Baluchistan hidden from every body. No outside person could go there on visit and nobody was allowed to know the situation (of the province), but Mr. Bhutto has demolished the walls (of isolation) erected by the British.

— April 11, 1976

#### **Daily “Jihad”, Peshawar**

By abolishing the centuries old Sardari system Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has performed a revolutionary feat of Pakistan's history. Although according to the announcement the Sardari system has been abolished in the whole of the country, yet it should be made clear that this oppressive system was prevalent in its real form only in Baluchistan, and the people there were passing their life

under duress and with cruelties perpetrated on them by the Sardars. The way this step has been hailed throughout the country shows clearly that imposition of the Sardari system, in Baluchistan- was equally disliked by other provinces as well, and it was every body's desire that Baluchistan is rescued from this horrible system...

— April 11, 1976

### **Daily “Mashriq”, Quetta**

Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has declared the abolition of the centuries old Sardari system from the country. As a result of it the people of Baluchistan have been freed from the worst kind of exploitation and slavery. For this purpose a Presidential Order has been issued according to which the private jails maintained by the Sardars and the Sardari taxes of all kinds and exaction of free labour, have been prohibited. The administration of Leveis will now be under the control of Government instead of the Sardars. In order to derive full benefits from the abolition of the Sardari system, the Land Re-forms in Baluchistan will be duly implemented. Thus, thousands of acres of land to be recovered from the Sardars will be distributed among the poor people ....

Viewed in this background this claim is undoubtedly true that this action of the People's Government is the greatest of all the reforms implemented earlier, and consequently it has brought for the first time social, economic and political freedom to the people of Baluchistan, and has thus also enabled the people living like slaves to have the blessings of human dignity. Obviously a people crushed for centuries under the chains of an exploitative system will on freedom apply independently their energy for the evolution of a prosperous and democratic society, and (with this change in Baluchistan) there in Baluchistan on its mountains will dawn the morning of a real freedom, democracy and provincial autonomy. No doubt the abolition of the Sardari system is the most shining chapter of the history of political and social development of Pakistan. This honour rightly goes to Quaid-i-Awam Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who has now become a symbol of revolution and progress in Pakistan.

This is yet another miracle of the political wisdom of the Quaid-i-Awam that he has created suitable conditions for historic and progressive change, and by taking the right action he has made the people the real source of strength in its real meaning.

— April 12, 1976

### **Daily “Mizan”, Quetta**

Baluchistan is the most under-developed area in the whole of Pakistan and the



primary reason for its backwardness was the Sardari system. For centuries a few Sardars and Nawabs were the masters of the fate of this province. After the establishment of Pakistan a number of governments came into power but the credit for enacting an ordinance abolishing the Sardari system goes only to the People's Government. Like other parts of the country this action would also help to accelerate the pace of development in the Baluchistan province, and the people of this unfortunate province would be saved from exploitation. By taking the historic decision - which the governments in the past could not take, the Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has won the hearts of the people. With the abolition of this system the mission of the Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah has been accomplished, who wanted to see prosperity in this province. The abolition of the Sardari system has brought to an end a long and dark period. Now a new era in the province is ushering in. The abolition of the Sardari system will go a long way to better the socio-economic conditions of the people here.

— April 12, 1976

#### **Daily "Imroze", Lahore**

Side by side with the abolition of the Sardari system, Prime Minister Bhutto by issuing instructions for the full implementation of the land reforms in Baluchistan and also by ordering for the immediate abolition of the private jails, has provided the basic and effective means for the over all development of the Baluchistan province. Prime Minister Bhutto is undoubtedly correct to say that the Sardari system is the root of Jagirdari system, and with a view to do away with the Jagirdari system it is a must to abolish the Sardari system, The only effective way to make the former Sardars subservient to the law of the land and to make them honour the constitution and the law, is to make them realize that they will now no longer be allowed to act according to their own wishes nor will they be allowed to perpetuate suppression and excesses on the people. They would also not be allowed to take the law into their own hands and they would at no time be allowed to live in the false vanity of upper handedness. History has endorsed whatever actions Prime Minister Bhutto has been taking to abolish the Sardari system and the people through their jubulations and rejoicings have bestowed the certificate of approval on the decision. And the fact is that the heavy chains on the feet of the masses have been broken, and for the people it will not be difficult now to march ahead with leaps and bounds.

April 12, 1976.

#### **Daily 'Sarhad', Peshawar**

By abolishing the Sardari system in the whole of the country the Quaid-i-Azam, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has freed the hundreds of thousands of the oppressed

and exploited people from the chains of cruel slavery. To the Prime Minister, we, on this historic and courageous decision, offer our sincere gratitude. We know it for sure that it is all because of Mr. Bhutto's love for the people, it is all for his understanding and thinking, farsightedness and political acumen that the persecuted people of Baluchistan are free today. The sky-kissing walls of the private jails maintained by the Sardars of the imperialistic era stand demolished today. The people are saved from making payments of all kinds of Sardari taxes and they are free from the slave-labour, and the dark days of terror and threat, of highhandedness and fraud of the Sardars and of the influential people are over for ever. . .

— April 13, 1976

### **Daily “Al-Jamiat Sarhad”, Peshawar**

Ever since the People's Government came in power, successful efforts were made to bring in prosperity and to bring the Baluchistan province at par with the other provinces, that is, efforts not alone in fields of mineral exploration and extraction in the province, and in road building, in setting up industries, and in provision of educational facilities and in better irrigation facilities, but there was a struggle to uplift the whole of the community. But with the announcement of the abolition of the Sardari-Jagirdari system the portals of prosperity in the province have been opened completely. For in the efforts to protect the people from exploitation the Sardari system was a great hurdle. The abolition of the Sardari system was a must, which Prime Minister Bhutto did the other day by implementing the reforms constitutionally and lawfully

— April 13, 1976

### **Daily “New Times”, Rawalpindi**

The Sardars also had instruments of torture, the most common of which was the Kath, that is, a wooden mechanism into which an offender was cast and his body rudely pressed so that he suffered indescribably. With a directive from Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, all that has gone. The jail-birds, at least in dozens of cases, were flown out in freedom.

The end of the Sardari system, in Baluchistan is one of the greatest events of our times. Bhutto has uprooted a structure which was as old as Moenjodaro — a hillock of the dead — whereas what we have in Baluchistan was a conglomerate of the living as good as dead. Through the course of centuries, black and perfidious, these humans had been reduced to the status of slaves. A Spartacus could lead a revolt in Rome but in Baluchistan the average man had been so metamorphosed that he could not even raise his hand in protest for the moment

that was done, the hand was cut.

— April 15, 1976

**Daily “Musawaat”, Lahore,**

Saving poor masses from the tyrant capitalist, Jagirdars and Sardars has been a creditable mission of the Pakistan People's Party. Therefore ever since the People's Government came into power, whatever good work the Quaid-i-Awam, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, has done for the welfare of the poor, workers, farmers, labourers and students, is exemplary and has no parallel even during the times of the many a previous government. All along with the capitalism and Jagirdari system the Sardari system for the whole of the country in general and Baluchistan in particular was a curse of the gravest nature. But the historic manner in which the Quaid-i-Awam has scrapped the Sardari system like a wrong word will never be forgotten by the Pakistani nation. On this crusade in the name of action the nation by saying God is Great bows in gratitude with extreme humility before the Creator; for Quaid-i-Awam has given a new life and a new inspiration to great humanity's grand mission. Baluchistan is richly endowed with the mineral wealth. Now with the changed circumstances it can be hoped that the masses on getting endowed with higher education will make efforts to probe into the hidden natural wealth. These days the Government of Pakistan is trying a great deal to lead the masses of this province (Baluchistan) to the path of progress. And if the people of the province cooperated with the Government and if extreme hard work remains their ideal then surely the pace of progress will get accelerated further. And only then the people of Baluchistan will know how daringly and courageously the Quaid-i-Awam, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had worked for the cause of freedom and welfare of the people of the province, and how by rescuing the masses from the clutches of slavery of tyrant Sardars and Jagirdars (he) had accomplished a grand mission and it was due to his (Mr. Bhutto's) efforts that they (the people of Baluchistan) were able to find an honorable place in the developing society of Pakistan.

— April 16, 1976