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BENAZIR
BHUTTO

A Multidimensional Portrait

Anna Suvorova

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To my son Kyrill

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Acknowledgements

This book does not aim to say anything new or sensational about Benazir Bhutto, as this is the privilege of those who knew her well during her lifetime. My book arose through a 'slow' or 'focused' reading of Bhutto's own books, articles, and speeches, which sometimes uncovers unexpected aspects of her motives and behaviour. Virtually her entire life has been recounted and commented on by Benazir herself and by the international media. Her days were full of events of international importance and unfolded before the eyes of many people who are still alive. Nevertheless, Benazir's destiny bears the undeniable mark of mystery—an ineffable duality of myth that will never be exhausted by the commentaries of analysts and the recollections of eyewitnesses. There is, above all, the mystery of her personality, which one can begin to uncover only by attentively reading her own words. As a result, my book abounds in Bhutto's citations, leading to an inter-textuality between her writings and mine in the post-modern sense of the term.

My goal was to follow the chain formed by 'living' history, individual biography, autobiography, and cultural myth. The latter reconnects to history seen as a cultural phenomenon. Although Bhutto virtually never distorts confirmed facts in her books, the emphases, nuances, repetitions, omissions,

and interpretations of these facts are a product of her self-reflection and make it possible to read much between the lines. This self-reflection uncovers a living person who never thought in linear or sequential terms despite her highly rational and sober intellect.

This explains why my book is not a historical or political biography. Instead, it is an anthropological portrait, a picture that is multidimensional, like the works of certain European Old Masters, who depicted their subjects in full face, profile, and three-quarter views on a single canvas. For this reason, my book does not make any judgments about Bhutto's professional activities or political heritage. For me, she is not so much a successful politician or, even less, a corrupt government official, of whom there are so many in the world today, but a rare bird for our times: a tragic heroine who sometimes attains the intensity of ancient tragedy. Standard criteria and judgements are not applicable to heroines of such stature.

This book was initially intended for the Russian reader, who knows little about Pakistan in general and Benazir Bhutto in particular. When it later became clear that the book met with success precisely due to its approach as an anthropological portrait, I came to the conclusion that my image of Benazir Bhutto that emerges at the intersection of history, culture, and myth-making differs from the images that I have seen in books by Pakistani and western authors. This is why I decided to offer an English translation of the book to a broader readership.

I would like to express my special thanks to Victoria Schofield. Our meetings and conversations gave me a living bridge to my protagonist Benazir Bhutto.

I am grateful to Daniel Dynin, whose assistance made the English translation of this book possible in a short time.

Many Pakistanis have provided informational and financial support for the realisation of this project. Some of them are not known to me personally, which makes their participation all the more valuable. I would like to express my gratitude to them individually. They include, first and foremost, my old friends Shakil Ahmad of London, and Dr Durre Ahmed of Lahore, as well as Dr Tariq Chaudhry of Sabina Pak Ltd., Mr Nadeem Khalid of Herbion International Inc., Dr Arshad Shahid of North Atlantic Services, and Mr Zaheerullah Khan of Rupa International Ltd.

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Anna Suvorova

Foreword

Benazir Bhutto remains one of those charismatic figures like John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Rajiv Gandhi, whose book of life was cut short. Assassinated in Rawalpindi on 27 December 2007, aged fifty-four, while campaigning to become Prime Minister of Pakistan for the third time, we will never know how the remainder of her natural life would have been spent. Most probably she would have succeeded in becoming Prime Minister of Pakistan in the general elections scheduled for early 2008, but would she have been able—where others have failed—to institute peace with India thereby improving the lives for all in South Asia? Would she have managed to curtail Pakistan's burgeoning terrorist networks which—in the near decade since she has been gone—have torn the country asunder? How would she have dealt with fractious neighbouring Afghanistan? Would she—as her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, also pledged—have created a society where deserts bloom and people don't die of hunger and humiliation?

And then, having served as Prime Minister for a third time, would she have continued to contest for political office or instead become a respected 'elder stateswoman', taking up an international role as, for example, Secretary General of the United Nations or the Commonwealth, both positions

for which she would have been ideally suited? Perhaps she might even have withdrawn from public life and become principal of a university or college as we sometimes talked about when we visited our alma mater, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Tragically, any crystal-ball gazing can now only ever be speculative. What we witnessed of Benazir Bhutto's life is the sum total of her achievements. No more chapters can be written. Of all those who were privileged to have known her, most will describe Benazir Bhutto as an exceptional woman who made a lasting impression. When she entered a room, heads proverbially did turn. Both as a young woman fighting military dictatorship in the 1980s or as the seasoned politician she subsequently became, Benazir appeared like a force of nature cutting a dazzling swathe across less vibrant humanity.

As I witnessed, her empathy with others was no contrived gesture but one that came naturally to her after a lifetime in the public eye, her first exposure being during her father's own meteoric rise as a politician in the late 1960s, becoming President and then Prime Minister of Pakistan in his mid-forties before being deposed in a military coup in 1977. Then came his trial for conspiracy to murder a political opponent, when she began to emerge as a politician in her own right. Having lived with her during some of the dark days of her father's incarceration, I saw first hand her transformation from carefree student to fierce campaigner, honing her oratorical skills and endurance.

Where other political leaders might have tired of the unrelenting interaction, for Benazir it became her life

blood. Having put behind her the traumatic experience of her father's execution in April 1979, and her own periods of solitary confinement, in jail or under house arrest, she relished contact with people. The advent of the internet created an entirely new arena for communication. When emailing first became the continuous activity it now is, she enthused over its benefits, sending me my first email: 'now we can always be in touch'.

Benazir's ability to make everyone she met feel special was one of her rare gifts, inspiring great loyalty. Sometimes only a brief encounter was sufficient to make people steadfast friends, devoted political followers, or committed associates. When you listen to the words of her last speech at Liaquat Bagh on that fateful day, 27 December 2007, although addressing thousands, it is as though she is speaking to each individual. 'This is *your* country,' she says, 'I need *your* help.'

After her death I was touched by how many people contacted me wanting to tell me the story of their friendship with Benazir, outlining the details of their various meetings, highlighting kindnesses she had shown them as well as the interest she had taken in their lives. Invariably their narratives were accompanied by an album of photographs, showing their beaming faces next to Benazir standing in a dignified posture by their sides.

Others, especially her party supporters and political workers who had admired and adored her as their 'leader' without ever having met her could only mourn her loss. 'You are fortunate you knew our leader,' one party worker said to

me shortly after her death, 'I only ever saw her from afar.' I often found—and still do—that because I knew her so well, albeit as an 'Angrezi' foreigner, I too have received their respect, since I represented one encounter away from having met her themselves.

Anna Suvorova only met Benazir once in 1995 when she was inaugurating a conference of writers and intellectuals in Islamabad. 'I was deeply impressed by her opening speech,' she told me, 'she was absolutely informal and refined.' After the conference Suvorova spoke to her. 'We talked about Lal Shahbaz Qalandar and Shah Abdul Latif as my presentation was on the legacy of the Sindhi Sufis and Saints.' Having met numerous other presidents and prime ministers, Suvorova confessed that 'none of them was listening to an interlocutor the way she was.' Such was the impact of that meeting that she too became drawn to gaining a greater understanding of this incomparable woman—whom she describes as a 'heroine'.

Suvorova's quest has culminated in this powerful narrative of Benazir's life, published first in Russian and now in English. It is an insightful and moving account, highlighting both the highs and lows of Benazir's political and personal career and putting her life in the context of her Sindhi background, her position in her family and also as a woman in a male-dominated Muslim society.

Emphasising both Benazir's strengths and weaknesses, there remains the undeniable feeling of missing text in an unwritten sequel. As Suvorova remarks, even her political

enemies showed remorse at her passing, realising perhaps that they had not valued her contribution to Pakistan's political development while she was alive. 'After her death, everyone suddenly realized that she was the most outstanding Pakistani politician of the preceding 30 years,' Suvorova writes. And so she was, exhibiting courage and commitment beyond the normal demands of public service.

Victoria Schofield

1

Women and Power

Democracy is the best revenge

— *Benazir Bhutto*

Other than monarchic dynasties, there are few families on earth whose lives are directly and intimately connected with the histories of their countries. In contemporary Asian history, influential family clans, such as Nehru-Gandhi, Bhutto, Sukarno, Bandaranaike, Mujibur Rahman, Aquino, and several others, have played a unique role, moulding the political course of India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. The family chronicles of these political dynasties recreate contemporary world history. To be precise, history intrudes into the private lives of the members of these families and into their relationships, provoking collisions and forging character, as if preparing them to shape the present and future of their countries.

The change of the gender make-up of power elites and the appearance of female presidents and prime ministers marked the start of a new historical era in the development of South and South East Asian countries. This has led international politicians and political scientists to examine the gender factor in democratization, liberalization of legal

norms, and the social orientation of states, which many scholars attribute to the influence of women.

The lives of women presidents and prime ministers are marked by a common family or hereditary component: most of them are widows or daughters of 'Fathers of Nations', founders of new states, and charismatic leaders in the struggle for national independence or democratization. The real merits of the patriarchs of political dynasties, enhanced by their charisma and indisputable authority, evoked collective national love that could go as far as adoration. Their widows and daughters, who came to power on the heels of the 'Fathers of Nations', were identified in the popular consciousness with their great predecessors and diffused their reflected light, inheriting not only their political stances but also the allure of their family name that passed to them by the laws of close kinship.

The authority of women leaders did not always or entirely depend on their professional and political abilities, their personal contributions to national and international politics, or the success of their reforms. In the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the common people, they bore the magical mark of 'selectness' and charismatic power that they acquired not through free suffrage but through the irrational right of inherited merit: a right that might not be called divine yet is not entirely legal or logical. In these countries with republican political systems, women came to power by a traditionalist, non-republican route that in fact confirmed the cardinal principle of a patriarchal society:

the value of a woman is determined by the merits of her husband or father.

The power of Asian women leaders is simultaneously assured by the three types of legitimacy set forth by Max Weber in his famous conception. As one knows, Weber identified three 'pure' types of legitimacy of authority in accordance with the types of social action: (1) the traditional type that exists in patriarchal and feudal society; (2) the charismatic type, in which the ruler acquires legitimacy through holiness or other personal qualities; and (3) the legal-rational type that is based on rationalism and the rule of law. The legal-rational type of authority eventually leads to the emergence of democratic institutes.¹

The rise of one type of legitimacy in a specific society can weaken other types. The advancement of revolutionary ideas by a charismatic leader or the consolidation of rational-legal principles undermines traditional notions of power. Revolutionary charismatic movements can crystallize into traditional order or, in contrast, bureaucratize into a formal rational organization. Finally, irrational powers that mark tradition or charisma sap the rational-legal foundations of authority.

Weber's interpreters have noted that in the 'empirical' reality of the present-day world, the 'pure types' exist only in mixed or hybrid form. The social and cultural substrate of the countries in question clearly still retains the authority of 'ever-past' customs and notions that are hallowed by primordial traditional significance. During

military or political *coups d'état*, which are frequent crises in these countries, charismatic leaders often come to power, brandishing their own 'authority formulae' based on the people's total trust and devotion to the leader on account of his heroism, sacrifice or 'martyrdom'. Finally, legal institutions were created in all these countries during the post-colonial period, assuring the rationally founded transfer of power.

Retaining authority and governing the country in the conditions of a mixed or 'three-layered' popular notion of legitimacy is a unique phenomenon and one of the traits of female political leadership in Asia during the second half of the twentieth century.

The classic example of a woman leader who astutely used and even increased the political heritage of her father is, of course, Indira Gandhi (1917–1984), the only daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964), the first Prime Minister of independent India, head of the Indian National Congress, and a true 'Father of the Nation'. Indira not only served twice as prime minister of her enormous country, but also became one of the most authoritative political figures of the modern age. From her childhood, Indira was at the epicentre of Indian political life and could have hardly been at its periphery. She truly grew along with the national liberation movement, and the propagandistic slogan 'India is Indira, and Indira is India', which many poke fun at, arose for good reason.

All in all, the Nehru-Gandhi family is the undisputed leader among the world's political dynasties in the duration and intensity of its influence on contemporary history and the international political process. This family gave India five generations of outstanding political and public figures, including three prime ministers. It is a model of the unprecedented continuity of political experience and the incredibly stable succession of power that is democratically elected rather than monarchical.

Nehru died of natural causes (a heart attack), while his daughter Indira and his elder grandson Rajiv (1944–1991) were victims of political assassinations. Indira's younger son Sanjay died earlier in an air crash. The price paid by the Nehru-Gandhi family for its almost fifty-year rule of India was extravagantly high. Nevertheless, this triple tragedy created around the family a force-field of continuing general interest, mass recognition and adoration, as well as heated criticism and debate. This will continue to influence new generations of the family.

History shows that the death of a political leader is not a private affair but an important milestone in a political career that can have a considerable impact on the future. Indira Gandhi was right in saying that 'martyrdom does not end something, it is only the beginning.'² This explains the passionate love of the masses for the female heirs of founding fathers whose death was considered to be a feat or sacrifice and who fell in the struggle for national independence or democratic transformation. The halo of martyrdom also spread to widows and daughters. When

they gained victory on the wave of protest movements provoked by the assassination of male leaders, they obtained an unlimited credit line of popular trust.

For example, Sirimavo Bandaranaike (1916–2000), the first female prime minister in the world, came to power in 1960, immediately after the assassination of her husband Solomon Bandaranaike, Prime Minister and founder of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (the country was called Ceylon at the time). Sirimavo remained at the helm of the country for forty years and retired at the age of eighty-four, being the oldest woman politician at the time. The heir of the Bandaranaike political dynasty was her daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga (b.1945), who won the 1994 presidential elections. In turn, Chandrika's legitimacy derived not only from the charismatic 'aura' of her parents but also from the martyrdom of her husband Vijaya Kumaratunga, who founded the Sri Lanka People's Party and was killed in 1988 by a Tamil terrorist.

Another example of power succession on the basis of blood ties with a 'martyr' and an ideological leader is Sheikh Hasina Wajed (b.1947), daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920–1975), Bangladesh's first President (1971–1975) and 'Father of the Nation'. Mujibur Rahman, founder of the Awami League, waged a determined struggle to secure the independence of East Pakistan from West Pakistan and to create a new state of Muslim Bengalis, Bangladesh. He was killed during a *coup d'état* in 1975. Mujibur Rahman's authority in South Asia remains remarkably high: according to a 2004 poll by BBC Bangla,

he is considered to be the 'greatest Bengali of all times' in Bangladesh and India, outstripping even Rabindranath Tagore.³ Clearly, the fame and reputation of the father had an impact on the fate of his daughter, who was three times prime minister of the country.

Nevertheless, the 'most august' daughter Hasina Wajed had an eternal rival in the person of the 'dowager queen' Khaleda Zia (b.1945), who was also twice elected Prime Minister of Bangladesh. Khaleda inherited the charismatic 'right' to power from her husband, Ziaur Rahman (1931–1981). He was a hero of the war for independence, rose to the rank of general, and organized the military coup in 1975 which led to the death of Mujibur Rahman. Already the de facto ruler of the country, Ziaur Rahman was elected president in 1977. Khaleda Zia became the First Lady of Bangladesh yet did not participate in politics at the time. To consolidate his power, Ziaur Rahman founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which was subsequently chaired by his widow. In 1981, Ziaur Rahman was killed by a group of officers who attempted yet another military coup.

One can only try to imagine what a difficult mix of emotions united (or, more precisely, separated) these two women, Hasina Wajed and Khaleda Zia. Acute political rivalry and all the other classical themes of a sensational story come together here: murder, treachery, bloody *coups d'état*, vengeance, revenge, comeback, and grief for a killed father or husband.

Corazon Aquino (1933–2009), the first female president in Asia,⁴ also came to power as a result of the death of her husband, Benigno Aquino (1932–1983). Leader of the opposition to the dictator Marcos, Benigno was killed on the day of his return to Manila from emigration. The presidency of Corazon Aquino became a symbol of democratic reform. Aquino herself was named ‘Woman of the Year’ by *Time Magazine* and nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. During Aquino’s term in office (1986–1992), a new constitution was adopted for the Philippines, and legislative reforms were made in many areas, including agriculture. She managed to secure the withdrawal of American military bases from the country. Despite her markedly democratic style of politics, Aquino was also the founder of a political dynasty: in 2010, her son Benigno, Jr., became President of the Philippines.

Although Prime Minister of Thailand, Yingluck Shinawatra (b.1967) began her political career in somewhat less dramatic circumstances, it was still a time of crisis for her country. Yingluck is the youngest sister of ex-Prime Minister and billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra. After a 2006 military coup, Thaksin was forced to flee the country and seek asylum in Great Britain. His sister took over her brother’s business in Thailand and his oppositional Pheu Thai Party. With their financial and political support, she won the 2011 elections and became prime minister.

As the following example shows, a female politician can lack outstanding personal qualities if she has a powerful ‘dynastic’ factor behind her. Megawati Sukarnoputri

(b.1947) is the daughter of Ahmad Sukarno (1901–1970), who was the founder of Indonesian nationalism, the ‘Great Leader of the Revolution’, and the first and ‘lifetime’ President of Indonesia. Although Megawati Sukarnoputri served as President of Indonesia in 2001–2004, she remains a mysterious political figure to this day. Commentators and analysts disagree about her political preferences, worldview, and her independence in taking decisions, as well as her breadth of knowledge (she had sought higher education twice, yet was unable to finish college). Nevertheless, one thing remains clear: Megawati Sukarnoputri has more supporters than any other Indonesian political leader, simply because she is her father’s daughter.

Finally, the heroine of this book, Benazir Bhutto (1953–2007), also entered politics as the daughter of an extremely popular democratic leader whose execution in 1979 evoked an upsurge of international protest. During the early stages of her active political career, Benazir was apparently guided primarily by filial feelings: initially, the desire to save her father; then, the striving to avenge him and to restore his reputation; and, finally, the determination to save his political heritage and especially the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) that he had founded. As she said herself on several occasions in public, it was her father’s execution that made her a politician.

Nevertheless, a long struggle against the dictatorial regime, lengthy imprisonment, and the death of two brothers, several assassination attempts, exile and emigration, and the humiliating charges of corruption all hardened this dainty

oriental beauty. By the end of her short life, she conveyed the impression of an intrepid person who was ready to consciously sacrifice her life for her convictions.

Bhutto herself set her political activities into a 'dynastic' context: 'Other women on the subcontinent had picked up the political banners of their husbands, brothers, and fathers before me. The legacies of political families passing down through the women had become a South Asian tradition: Indira Gandhi in India; Sirimavo Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka; Fatima Jinnah and my own mother in Pakistan. I just never thought it would happen to me.'⁵

Benazir Bhutto's assassination in 2007 gave rise to a real family cult in Pakistan. As any cult, it is fueled by various apocrypha, rituals, and relics. A glimmer of family 'grace' also fell on Benazir's widower Asif Ali Zardari. Despite his extreme unpopularity in Pakistan, he was elected president of the country in 2008 thanks to the aforementioned 'law' of succession to power through the 'martyrdom' of close relatives. The dynastic factor will also most likely determine the fate of Benazir's son Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who was proclaimed the successor to the family's political heritage at birth and who is currently the PPP Chairman.

In the twenty-first century, the rise of a woman to power in an Asian country is no longer considered to be a landmark event and is not necessarily accompanied by sensational or tragic circumstances. An example is the brief yet calm term of Han Myeong-sook (b.1944) as Prime Minister of South Korea in 2006–2007. Pratibha Patil (b.1934) was

the first woman to be elected president of India in 2007 (not without difficulty). Nevertheless, times have clearly changed, as shown by Patil's argument that her candidacy should improve the position of Indian women on the sixtieth anniversary of Independence. At the same time, the real reason for Patil's electoral victory was her loyalty to the Nehru-Gandhi clan and the support of her candidacy by the Indian National Congress (INC).

Just as at the end of the twentieth century, women are frequently removed from power under the pretext of corruption and abuse of power. Corruption charges, which are fairly difficult to refute, have been levelled at different times against Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Corazon Aquino, Benazir Bhutto, Khaleda Zia, Tansu Çiller, and Han Myeong-sook. It has become a routine tactic in the political struggle against female leaders.

The list of names of famous Asian female presidents and prime ministers should also include a woman who should have become prime minister yet did not do so, gaining enormous international fame and prestige in the process. We are referring to the Burmese politician Aung San Suu Kyi (b.1945), chairperson of the National League for Democracy and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize (1991). In keeping with the aforementioned 'laws' of the female succession to power, Aung San Suu Kyi is the daughter of Aung San, a Burmese national hero and freedom fighter who was assassinated in 1947. At the 1990 elections, her party received over 80 per cent of the seats in the Myanmar parliament, yet the military junta in power ignored the

election results. Instead of becoming Prime Minister, Aung San Suu Kyi was put under house arrest, where she spent over twenty years in all. Over these years, she became a real icon for champions of democracy and civil rights all over the world. In 2011, the famous French film director Luc Besson released the biographical movie, *The Lady*, that described the life and struggle of this contemporary heroine.

In most cases, women leaders do not come to power immediately after the death or assassination of their fathers or husbands but only following a bitter struggle with the dictatorial or military regime of the 'usurper' who removed the patriarch. The victory of the 'lawful heiress' in this power struggle is considered to be the righteous revenge, the restoration of violated justice, and the triumph of good over evil, while the return to democratic forms of government turns out to be the best vengeance against the dictator and murderer.

For example, before becoming Prime Ministers of Bangladesh, Hasina Wajed and Khaleda Zia fiercely opposed the regime of General Ershad, who first served as chief of army staff and then as president of the country. As leaders of the main oppositional parties, both women were imprisoned on numerous occasions. Many considered Ershad to be the true organizer of Ziaur Rahman's assassination, and so the motif of vengeance may well explain why it was his widow Khaleda Zia who managed to bring about international sanctions against the regime and Ershad's subsequent resignation in December 1990.

Corazon Aquino began her political career by speaking out in her husband's defence and then continued to struggle against Marcos' dictatorship. She was a candidate for the presidential elections that were held in February 1986. The electoral campaign was marked by acts of violence and assassinations by the regime in power and resulted in the declaration of the victory of incumbent President Marcos. Nevertheless, Aquino's supporters did not recognize the results of the election, and the united protests of a broad oppositional coalition forced Marcos to resign. The same year (1986), Corazon Aquino became president.

Benazir Bhutto also began her political career by organizing oppositional support for her father. In 1977, Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq had headed a military coup, seized power and introduced a military regime in the country. Deposed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was arrested and put in prison. In 1979–84, after her father's execution, Benazir was put several times under house arrest and in prison, where she was detained in very harsh conditions until she was finally permitted to leave for Great Britain. While in exile, she headed the PPP that had been founded by her father. Shortly before Zia ul-Haq's death in an air crash in 1988, Benazir was finally allowed to return home. The same year, the PPP gained victory at the first democratic parliamentary elections in over a decade, and Bhutto became prime minister.

Megawati Sukarnoputri also became president after a long struggle: in 1996, as chairperson of the Indonesian Democratic Party (IDP), she harshly criticised the

'New Order' of President Suharto, who had previously usurped her father's authority. Megawati was ousted from party leadership, and her supporters organized mass demonstrations that were disbanded by the police. In 1998, after Suharto's resignation, Megawati founded and headed an alternative IDP and launched a campaign against the unpopular regime of President Abdurrahman Wahid, who managed to alienate a broad range of political and religious groups, including senior military officials. The Indonesian parliament unanimously voted for President Wahid's impeachment, which precipitated Megawati Sukarnoputri's rise to power in 2001.

Nevertheless, political dynasties are found not only in 'traditionalist' Asia: they are not rare in the 'modernist' West, either. In particular, the election to office of different members of the same family in the USA is not considered to be nepotism or a violation of the laws of democracy or legal or ethical norms. Americans believe that young people in such families get used to political discourse from childhood and, the longer a family stays in power, the more chances it has of bringing new leaders to the political arena. It suffices to recall US presidents: father and son John Adams and John Quincy Adams; William Henry Harrison and his grandson Benjamin Harrison; the relatives Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt; father and son George Bush and George Bush, Jr.; and the Kennedy clan.

Still, American politicians who were relatives by blood did not always share the same views or were ideological

successors. For example, Theodore Roosevelt was a staunch Republican, while Franklin Roosevelt was a convinced Democrat. After all, top government positions are not transferred automatically from father to son in the US, in contrast to North Korea; politicians are elected in fierce (if not always fair) electoral struggle. No matter how famous a family is, its new members have to propose something that will attract the voters.

Things are quite different in the political dynasties of Asian countries: successors often flaunt their adherence to the precepts of the 'founding fathers' and to the continuation or, more often, restoration of the ideological and political course of their predecessors. The instrument of the transfer of authority, influence and power ideology is the political party that is created by the 'patriarch' and bequeathed to the 'descendant'. The political party is a modern democratic institution that is connected with the rational-legal type of power. However, Asian political dynasties use parties as a channel for the transfer of charismatic or irrational legitimacy. Before becoming presidents or prime ministers, all the aforementioned female leaders headed parties founded by their grandfathers, fathers, or husbands.

Benazir Bhutto became the first female prime minister of a predominantly Muslim country in modern history. As she said herself with overt pride, '[My] election was the tipping point in the debate raging in the Muslim world on the role of women in Islam.'⁶ The female leaders of other major Muslim states such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Turkey came to power later, following the path traversed

by Bhutto. Despite widespread notions of the powerlessness of women in Muslim society, history shows that women have frequently occupied top governing posts in Islamic countries. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of female leadership has always been questioned from the standpoint of religion and traditional society and continues to evoke heated debate.

Islamic conservatives, Islamic liberals, and the champions of Muslim feminism adopt arguments for or against female empowerment from the Quran and Hadith texts and early Islamic history, basing their tenets not on modern political science but on ontological considerations. Supporters of the view that the Quran allows women to participate in public life and speak out freely refer to Sura 58 ('The Pleading Woman'), in which a woman argues with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) himself (58:1).⁷ The opponents of the participation of women in politics cite the Hadith: 'When Allah's Apostle was informed that the Persians had crowned the daughter of Khosrau as their ruler, he said, "Such people as ruled by a lady will never be successful."⁸

It is curious that Muslims recall more often and more willingly the Hadith about the daughter of the Persian king than the Quranic legend about the Queen of Sheba, ruler of the fabulously rich country of Sheba: 'Indeed, I found [there] a woman ruling them, and she has been given of all things, and she has a great throne' (27:23). The Quranic text shows that the Queen of Sheba managed to avoid war through diplomacy and to bring her people to the true faith through wisdom and so did not rule badly at all.

Opponents of the participation of women in politics cite the historical precedent of the conflict between the Prophet's widow Aisha and Caliph Ali, which led to the so-called 'Battle of the Camel' in AD 656.⁹ After Aisha's supporters lost the battle and thousands of Muslims fell at each other's hands, Ali sent a letter to Aisha saying: 'You have left your home in direct contravention of the commandments of God and His Messenger, and now you are sowing seeds of civil war among the Muslims. Just pause for a moment and think about this: What do you have to do with armies and wars? Is it your job to fight? Your place is in your home. God has commanded you to stay in your home. Therefore, fear Him, and do not disobey Him, and return immediately to Medina.'¹⁰ Or, according to other sources, 'when all the confusion of the battle was over, Ali came to her and asked her how she fared. Finding that she was all right and had escaped without injury, he reproachfully said to her, "Had the Prophet directed thee to behave in this way?"'¹¹

The Muslim feminist Fatima Mernissi has said in this regard that, in contrast to Ali, the numerous Muslim supporters of Aisha were not troubled by the sex of their leader. As to the outcome of the battle, the Prophet himself once lost the battle of Uhud (AD 625), yet no one has ever imagined connecting his defeat to his sex.¹²

We should note in passing that a cult of the warrior goddesses has long existed in Hinduism, and many female rulers of Indian principalities such as Rani Durgawati of Gondwana (1524–1564), Maharani Tarabai of the Marathas (1675–1761), and Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi

(1828–1858) have personally participated in military activities. As a result, India's victory in a 1971 war with Pakistan during Indira Gandhi's term of office, which led to the formation of the new state of Bangladesh, only confirmed in the eyes of Indians the lawfulness of women's traditional participation in power and political leadership.

The Quran explicitly points out differences in the gender roles of men and women: 'Men are in charge of women by right of what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend for maintenance from their wealth' (4:34). At the same time, the Quran emphasises the equality of men and women before God by addressing 'Muslim men and Muslim women' (33:35). As women do not have financial obligations to support their families, men have more property rights, and testaments must give a son a share equal to 'the share of two daughters' (4:11). Nevertheless, Muslim women have historically had property rights that were sanctified by religion: 'For men is a share of what they have earned and for women is a share of what they have earned' (4:32). These rights were inalienable: 'It is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take back part of what you gave them' (4:19).

The Quran and Sunnah do not forbid women to work or to engage in business. An example of a successful and well-to-do businesswoman was the Prophet's first wife Khadija, who is one of the main role models for Muslim women. Nevertheless, most Muslim countries are marked by gender segregation in the public and industrial domains, which

is visible in the differentiation between 'male' and 'female' professions and in the lower educational and professional levels of women in comparison with men.

The reason for this phenomenon indirectly stems from the behavioural models dictated by the precepts of Islam. For example, it is characteristic of Muslim families to have many children that clearly hinder women's advancement along the career ladder. Most Muslim women attach primordial importance to having many children, planning their lives and choosing their professions in such a way as to devote themselves predominantly to their families and children rather than to work and careers.¹³

Nevertheless, the exclusive importance that Islam attaches to childbearing in the gender role of women is not a hindrance to political activity, as the example of Benazir Bhutto shows. The conservative opposition and religious circles in Pakistan accused Bhutto that her participation in politics allegedly prevented her from fulfilling the duty of Muslim women to bear and raise as many children as possible.

In actual fact, Bhutto entered the electoral campaign for prime minister in 1988 while pregnant with her first child. Zia ul-Haq's regime tried to take advantage of her condition when fixing the election date. Bhutto kept her pregnancy due date secret, while Zia's agents tried to get access to her medical records. By a lucky turn of events for Benazir, her son Bilawal was born five weeks ahead of

schedule, which made it possible for the young mother to recuperate in time for the electoral campaign.

Bhutto gave birth to her younger daughter during her second term as prime minister in 1993. This was a difficult time for her and for Pakistan—a three-year period marked by an escalation of ethnic violence, mass killings in Karachi, and a growing Taliban threat. Benazir miraculously escaped a hired assassin and weathered an attempted military coup. Despite such ordeals, she became the first woman to give birth while heading a government.

In addition to problems connected with childbearing, Islamic fundamentalists considered the segregation of sexes prescribed by religion to be an insurmountable obstacle to the political activity of women. Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi (1903–1979), a Pakistani religious activist, one of the ideologists of Islamic fundamentalism, and the founder of the ultra-conservative Jamaat-e-Islami party, declared that women cannot hold power, as this makes them openly associate with male strangers and thereby violate the laws of Muslim ethics and the modesty prescribed by the Quran.

Nevertheless, in the new political situation, Maududi himself actively supported the candidature of Fatima Jinnah, sister of the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in the 1965 presidential elections. Called the 'Mother of the Nation', Fatima Jinnah (1893–1967) headed the opposition to President Ayub Khan, who had come to power after a military coup. Maududi said that, although he did not recognize the right of women to political leadership,

he made an exception for Fatima, as only her charismatic popularity and blood ties with the 'Great Leader' Jinnah could serve as an impediment to the military dictatorship.

It is true that the lifestyle of a female politician and, all the more, a president or prime minister, with daily meetings, talks, public appearances, receptions, and foreign visits, requires extensive publicity and is hardly in keeping with the Prophet's prescription for women to 'stay at home', which Ali accused Aisha of violating.

The rejection of seclusion and traditional female clothing was the main charge levied against the only female ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, Sultana Razia (reigned 1238–1240). According to the laws of the Delhi Sultanate, Razia's rule was legitimate: her father Sultan Iltutmish personally bequeathed the throne to her, as he considered his three sons to be unfit to rule.

In his chronicle *Nizāmu-t Tawārikh* (Arrangement of Histories), the medieval historian Sa'id Abdullah Baizawi (d.1300) described Razia as an astute ruler who generously patronized scholars, delivered justice, cared for her subjects and showed military talent. Moreover, he notes, 'She was endowed with all the qualities befitting a king, but she was not born of the right sex, and so in the estimation of men all these virtues were worthless.'¹⁴ As a result of the intrigues of courtiers and the military elite, Sultana Razia was deposed, imprisoned, and finally killed.

The attitude of Muslim society towards women in power has apparently changed little over seven centuries: what

disturbed the Turkic military elite in Razia's image and behaviour also irritated senior army commanders with regard to Bhutto. One knows that, when Benazir became prime minister, high-ranking officers were seriously troubled by the prospect of saluting a woman, which seemed fundamentally unthinkable to them.

Modern political scientists usually relate the growing empowerment and political activity of women in Islamic countries to Westernization. Nevertheless, scholars have pointed out that the history of female rule in the Islamic world goes back to the Middle Ages. Evidence is provided by the Arabic language itself, as terms denoting rulers (*sultan, malik*) also have feminine forms (*sultana, malika*). It is true that most women exercised their power in the name of men, their husbands or sons. Examples of such rulers 'from behind the *pardah*' include Empress Nur Jahan (1577–1645), who ruled over the enormous Mughal Empire in the name of her husband, Emperor Jahangir, and the mothers of the Turkish Sultans who controlled the Ottoman Empire from the harem for over a hundred years in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (the so-called 'Female Sultanate'—*Kadınlar Saltanatı*).

At the same time, women also stood alone at the helm of Islamic states as sovereign rulers during certain periods. There were at least twenty such female rulers besides Sultana Razia, among them Sultana Shajar ad-Durr (Egypt, the thirteenth century); Malika Asma and Malika Arwa (Yemen, the eleventh to twelfth centuries); four female rulers of the Ache Sultanate (Indonesia, the seventeenth

century); Syuyumbika, who ruled over the Kazan Khanate (the sixteenth century); three women from the Begum Nawabs dynasty of the Bhopal Principality (India, the nineteenth to twentieth centuries), and some others. When one takes into account that some of them stayed in power fairly long, minted their own coins, and were mentioned in the Friday *khutbah* (which was considered to be an indisputable mark of legitimacy), it becomes clear that the Islamic societies of the time accepted female political leadership without overt protest.

Only today has the participation of women in politics and government begun to meet with fierce opposition from fundamentalists. The only thing that evokes greater resistance in society is the striving of Muslim feminists for spiritual leadership and their pretension to the right to be imams and lead prayer. This situation already arose in the Middle Ages, when outstanding women mystics began to play a leading role in Sufi brotherhoods.

In the 1980s, during the implementation of the Islamization policy in Pakistan by Zia ul-Haq, the so-called 'Ansari Commission'¹⁵ formulated three conditions of female participation in political life. A Pakistani woman could engage in politics only after the age of fifty (i.e. after menopause), with the permission of her husband and in the presence of a male blood relative who would always accompany her during official meetings and trips. Although the dictator rejected even these recommendations as being too liberal, the conclusions of the 'Ansari Commission' pointed to the age-old conflict between a woman's public

role, on the one hand, and her fertility and practice of seclusion, on the other.

Female Muslim presidents and prime ministers have observed all the external requirements that Islam imposes on women. All of them were married (Megawati Sukarnoputri even three times) or widowed (Khaleda Zia), had several children (including sons, who are considered preferable in traditional societies), and wore traditional women's clothing (except for the Turk Tansu Çiller, who, in contrast to South and Southeast Asian women leaders, dressed in European clothes). The female leaders of Pakistan and Bangladesh have always appeared in public with covered heads as required by Sharia law. Benazir wore her 'trademark' white *dupatta* (scarf), which became part of her image. Khaleda and Hasina covered their heads with the ends of their saris in accordance with Indian custom.

The style of dressing of Bangladesh prime ministers evoked heated public debate during the 1996 parliamentary elections. Khaleda Zia was in power at the time, while her eternal political rival and leader of the opposition boycotted the elections. Shortly before these events, Sheikh Hasina had made a Hajj to Mecca and began to appear in public in a traditional black head hijab that completely covered her hairline. Islamic circles instantly declared her to be a 'better' Muslim than Khaleda, who only put the end of her light sari over her opulent hairdo, which was declared to be the practice of 'infidels'. At the same time, liberal mass media accused Hasina of populism and playing on the emotions

of the faithful, as the Awami League that she directed had always declared itself to be secular party.

The Islamic social model is frequently said to be patriarchal. Nevertheless, the main features of patriarchy (patrilineality, patrilocality, monogamy or polygyny, and the concentration of property rights and the control of family economic life in the hands of men) are just as characteristic of other societies (in particular, societies that are based on Abrahamic religions).

It is another matter if one speaks of a masculine-dominant or masculine-oriented society, where the 'masculine' gender role is demonstratively aggressive, predominates over the 'feminine' role, and intentionally discriminates against it. In such sexist social models that exist today in a number of Muslim countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and certain Arab states), women continue to see their constitutional rights and liberties violated, including the right to participate in political life.

The legal inequality of women is also aggravated by the existence of a patriarchal political culture that has traditionally emerged in many Asian states (including states with a predominantly Muslim population). Such political culture is characterized by the orientation on the personality of the ruler as the 'father of the nation', paternalism, weakly developed civic society, a close connection between political and religious interests, and relics of tribal culture, with its emphasis on the values of the clan and the family. Nevertheless, it would be more appropriate today to speak

of mixed types of political culture such as the patriarchal-activist type in Pakistan, Egypt, and Iran.

Nevertheless, if the male ruler symbolizes the advantages of patriarchal political culture, he also bears responsibility for its main flaws: authoritarianism, dictatorship, repression, and corruption. In this context, the election of a female head of state does not simply represent a gender change in the make-up of the ruling elite. In the expectation of the masses, a woman leader should act in accordance with her gender role, which is marked by 'motherly' care, less harsh than 'fatherly' guidance; peacefulness and the lack of aggression; sensitivity to the interests and problems of other people. According to Benazir Bhutto, 'women leaders are more generous and forgiving, male leaders tend to be more inflexible and more rigid.'¹⁶ In other words, the range of 'feminine' qualities, that women bring to political authority are related to the democratization of society, although these expectations are often disappointed.

The emergence of female presidents and prime ministers in Asia coincides with the second and third waves of feminism. The first wave refers to the suffrage movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth century in which the key issue was women's right to vote. The second wave involved the ideas and actions of the women's liberation movement that began to gain force in the 1960s and championed the legal and social equality of men and women. The third wave began in the 1990s and was also called 'post-colonial feminism'. It was a continuation of the second wave and a reaction to its failure.

The proponents of post-colonial feminism speak out against the depiction of women of non-Western societies as silent and passive victims in contrast to Western women, who are portrayed as modern, educated, and endowed with civil rights. At the same time, post-colonial feminism also fights against gender discrimination in native cultural models of society and not just in models imposed by Western colonisers. Islamic feminism has been developing in the framework of post-colonial feminism since the 1990s. In this movement, a group of female scholars and theologians have declared existing interpretations of the Quran with regard to women's rights to be 'patriarchal' and have proposed a new reading of the sacred text from a 'women's perspective'. A Muslim feminist Amina Wadud has called their movement 'gender Jihad', a fresh, re-evaluated look at gender within Islam.¹⁷ The feminists have done a lot to change the attitude of Muslim society to politically activate women, although their works are only accessible to educated people on account of their academic discourse.

Muslim feminism has had particular success in Indonesia, where the average man today supports the idea of gender equality and is proud if his wife has made a career. Economically active women account for 52 per cent of the female population in Indonesia and only 16 per cent in, say, Pakistan.¹⁸

Although a key goal of Muslim feminists and their organizations has been the creation of conditions for female empowerment, they have not always supported Muslim women in power. For example, Pakistani women's

organizations refused to cast their support for Benazir Bhutto in the 1997 elections, which she lost. They based their stance on the fact that Bhutto, despite her electoral promises, did not abrogate the draconian laws introduced by Zia ul-Haq that greatly limited the rights of women.

The reasons for the criticism levied by feminists against Megawati Sukarnoputri before and during her presidential term were totally different: they believed that Megawati takes the traditional Muslim stereotypes of 'femininity' too literally and, as a result, is subject to influence and does not show competence or decisiveness when it comes to solving concrete political problems. Finally, feminists accused Sheikh Hasina of being a populist, exploiting the religious feelings of the electorate, when she spoke out for passing a law requiring women to wear the hijab—a custom that has not been observed by Bengali women historically.

As we see, female political leadership has been a constant stumbling block in contemporary Asian societies: a bugbear for both civil and military 'male' governments, a battlefield between liberals and conservatives, a domain of heated debate, and a target for criticism from many different 'camps'. Female leaders face particularly virulent opposition in Islamic countries, where they have to resist not only the bullying of fundamentalists but also the prejudices of the masses that still live by the laws of traditional patriarchal society.

In this atmosphere of confrontation and overcoming amid political turmoil and military coups, in alarming highly-

contrasted colours and sharp angles, the age created a portrait of Benazir Bhutto, a heroine for whom democracy became the best revenge.

Notes

1. Max Weber, 'The three types of legitimate rule', in *Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions*, 1958, 4 (1), 1–11.
2. Indira Gandhi's Quotes—http://www.lifequoteslib.com/authors/indira_gandhi_2.html
3. Sabir Mustafa, 'Listeners name "greatest Bengali"', *BBC News*—http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3623345.stm
4. Strictly speaking, Aquino was not the first female head of state in Asia. In 1953–54, the Head of the Mongolian parliament (Great Khural) was Sükhbaataryn Yanjmaa, widow of Sükhbaatar, leader of the Mongolian Revolution.
5. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East: An Autobiography*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2007, 116.
6. Benazir Bhutto, Op. cit., v.
7. 'Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues with you, [O Muhammad (ﷺ)], concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing'—<http://quran.com/58>
8. Sahih al-Bukhari (5.59.709)—http://www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_5_59.php
9. *Harb al-Jamal* (Battle of the Camel) was a battle between the army of Caliph Ali and bands of rebels headed by Talhah and Az-Zubayr. The 'talisman' of the rebels was Muhammad's (ﷺ) widow Aisha. The cause of the rebellion was the slow investigation of the murder of Caliph Uthman, which led people to accuse Ali of complicity with the killers. The decisive conflict took place around the camel on which Aisha was sitting, giving the battle its name. As many as 10,000 people were killed. Aisha was taken prisoner and subsequently released, spending the remainder of her life in seclusion.

10. The Battle of Basra—<http://www.al-islam.org/restatement-history-islam-and-muslims-sayed-ali-asgher-razwy/battle-basra-battle-camel>
11. Ali The Magnificent—<http://www.qurannetwork.com/abuturab/camel.html#Tidings%20to%20Ali%20of%20Ayesha%E2%80%99s%20revolt>
12. Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights*. New York: Basic Books, 1991, 201.
13. Basim Mussalam, *Sex and Society in Islam: Birth Control before the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 29.
14. H. M. Elliot, *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period*, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1964, 134.
15. Sangh Mittra, Bachchan Kumar, eds., *Encyclopedia of Women in South Asia: Pakistan*, Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2004, 54–5.
16. Benazir Bhutto, *Selected Speeches. 1989–2007*—http://bhutto.org/Acrobat/BB_Speeches_Book.pdf
17. Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2006.
18. Susanne Schröter, 'Female leadership in Islamic societies: past and present', in Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam and Andrea Fleschenberg, eds., *Goddesses, Heroes, Sacrifices: Female Power in Asian Politics*, Berlin: Lit, 2008, 69.

2

Heiress to a Glorious Clan

The Bhuttos are ethnic Sindhis, a people that has traditionally lived in the Indus valley and the historical Sindh province in Pakistan and India. The name of the region and people derives from the word *Sindhu*, the ancient Indian name of the River Indus. The Sindhis have their own language, which is also called 'Sindhi', and is spoken by over sixty million people; it belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-European family. The Sindhi language is written in Arabic-Persian script in Pakistan and in Devanagari script in India. Most Sindhis are Sunni Muslims, although many of those living in India are Hindus.

The Bhuttos stem from the feudal landed gentry called *Waderos* in Sindhi. In general, the last names of most Muslim Sindhi families coincide with the name of the tribe or clan from which they stem. The Bhutto family is no exception; it is a branch of a large tribal clan (also called 'Bhutto') that moved to Sindh in the late seventeenth century from Jaisalmer (present-day state of Rajasthan, India). Thus, the Bhuttos may be right in tracing their genealogy back to the Rajputs, a large military and farming class, part of which converted to Islam at one point.

In terms of caste, the Bhutto tribe belonged to the *Arains*, a Muslim farming caste that was widespread in Punjab and Sindh and that gave rise to a lot of rich *Zamindars* or hereditary landowners. The name of the first Bhutto who settled in Sindh (Sethi Khan) points to the clan's Hindu origins. *Sethi* is the self-designation of a regional (Punjab) military sub-caste that turned into a proper name common among Hindus and Sindhis. During the rule of the Sindhi dynasty Kalhoro (1701–1783), people from the Bhutto tribe settled in the Larkana District, where they got allotments of fertile land on which they grew cotton, rice and sugarcane. This branch of the clan came to be known as 'Bhutto of Larkana', and their first land plots laid the foundations of the family patrimony.

During a subsequent Sindhi dynasty of the Talpurs (1783–1843), a certain Pir Bakhsh Bhutto settled in the village of Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, where the Bhutto family mausoleum is located. In addition, the family owned several neighbouring villages that have become towns in our day: Ratodero, Naudero, Pir-Bakhsh-Bhutto, Mirpur-Bhutto, etc. The Bhuttos built houses and estates in all these towns and villages, yet their primary family residence is located in the district capital of Larkana. No matter where Benazir subsequently lived—the family mansion in Karachi, in America, in England, or in Dubai—she always considered Larkana to be her true home.

She never forgot her father's words: 'Remember, whatever happens to you, you will ultimately return here. Your place is here. Your roots are here. The dust and mud and heat of

Larkana are in your bones. And it is here that you will be buried.’¹

Sindh is one of the cradles of human civilization. Here, only thirty kilometres from Larkana, are the excavations of Mohenjo-Daro, the centre of the oldest Indus Valley (or Harappan) civilization, which was a contemporary of the civilizations of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Children in the Bhutto family were inculcated with a sense of belonging to the country’s history. Benazir wrote, ‘My brothers, sister and I took great pride that we had been raised in the shadow of Mohenjo-Daro, that we lived on the bank of the Indus which had been bringing life to the land since the beginnings of time. In no other place did we feel such continuity with the past, for our ancestors were directly traceable to the Muslim invasion of India in AD 712.’²

Indeed, Sindh was the first territory into which Islam penetrated in South Asia. It is no coincidence that it is called the ‘Gateway to Islam’ (*Bab al-Islam*) in Muslim history. In AD 711, an expeditionary corps led by the seventeen-year-old commander Muhammad bin Qasim disembarked in Port Daibul (near present-day Karachi). The formal reason for the Arabs’ disembarkation and subsequent conquest of Sindh and the Punjab was the liberation of Muslim prisoners and their ships that had been captured by the Sindhi king Raja Dahir. Although Sindh was annexed to the Omayyad Caliphate as a result of the Arabic campaign, the stay of the ‘marines’ in India was short-lived and did not lead to any mass conversions

to Islam. The Arabs simply founded their capital city of Mansura and introduced a poll tax on infidels (*jizya*).

Nevertheless, Pakistani schoolbooks of the 1980s called Muhammad bin Qasim the 'first Pakistani', while the 'Great Leader' Muhammad Ali Jinnah also acclaimed the Pakistan Movement to have started when the first Muslim put a foot in the Gateway of Islam.³

If Muhammad bin Qasim had foreseen the results of his military expedition, he would have hardly invaded Sindh. As the Sindh medieval chronicle *Chachnamah* relates, he sent two daughters of the slain Raja Dahir to the Caliph's harem as a military trophy. To avenge their father, the girls falsely accused Muhammad bin Qasim of having raped them. The furious Caliph ordered that the military commander be arrested, sewn up in the hide of a flayed bull and brought to Damascus. Muhammad bin Qasim, who was only eighteen years old, did not try to absolve himself, meekly obeyed the order, and was suffocated to death a few days later on the way to Damascus. Subsequently, when the deceit of the king's daughters came out, the Caliph bitterly regretted his hasty decision and ordered that the vengeful girls be punished by immurement alive.⁴

An insignificant percentage of Sindh inhabitants who call themselves 'noble' (*Ashraf*) trace their genealogy back to these first Arabic conquerors. This was the case with the Bhutto clan: 'We were either descended from the Rajputs, the Hindu warrior class in India which converted to Islam at the time of the Muslim invasion, or from the conquering

Arabs who entered India through our home province of Sindh, giving it the name, 'The Gateway to Islam'.⁵

After the Arab 'marines' left Sindh, the Omayyad Caliph appointed his vicar Aziz al-Habbari as ruler. He and his successors (known as the Habbari Dynasty) continued to rule until AD 1024 when Sultan Mahmud Ghaznawi conquered India. In the meantime, the Omayyads were replaced by Caliphs from the Abbasid Dynasty, in the name of whom the vicar Al-Khafif from Samarra ruled Sindh. After Abbasid Baghdad was sacked by the Mongols in AD 1258, the descendants of Al-Khafif declared themselves to be independent rulers of the Soomra Dynasty, as their native city of Samarra (in present-day Iraq) was called in Sindhi. The Soomra ruled Sindh for almost a hundred years, assimilated many local customs, and laid the foundations for the tribal and masculine-belligerent culture that has marked Sindh for centuries.

By the early fourteenth century, the Soomra became vassals of the Delhi Sultanate. In AD 1339, Jam Unar, chief of the Rajput tribe of Samma, rebelled against the ruling dynasty and declared himself Sultan of Sindh. The heyday of the Samma Dynasty was the rule of Jam Nindo (1461–1509), during which the capital Thatta was adorned with many beautiful buildings and the famous funerary complex on Makli Hill took shape. The Samma sultans (Jams) were enlightened rulers who patronized art and literature. With their participation and under their patronage, the literary norm of the Sindhi language took shape, the system of Sufi orders emerged, and the first mystic poets Qadi Qadan

(1463–1551) and Makhdum Bilawal (1451–1530), the founders of the national poetic tradition, flourished.

The Samma never controlled all of Sindh: a third of it was still ruled by the Delhi Sultans, while another third was in the hands of the Turkic-Mongol conquerors Arghuns and Tarkhans. The invaders eventually conquered and sacked Thatta, putting an end to the Samma Dynasty. The repressive rule of the Arghuns and Tarkhans was extremely unpopular. For this reason, the Sindh aristocracy (*Amirs*) and the masses enthusiastically greeted the troops sent by Babur, founder of the Great Mughal Empire, under the pretext of protecting the Muslim population from state persecution. Sindh voluntarily passed under the jurisdiction of the Great Mughals, and the most famous Great Mughal, Emperor Akbar (1542–1605), was born here in the Fortress of Umarkot.

In 1701, Mian Yar Muhammad Kalhoro, Chief of the Kalhoro tribe and founder of the dynasty of the same name, became the Mughal overlord in Sindh. Although the Kalhoros had to fight constantly to resist the invasions of the Persian Nadir Shah and the attacks of the Marathas and Sikhs, they made life a lot better in Sindh, reorganizing the transport infrastructure, fortifying and founding towns (including their capital of Hyderabad), and constructing an irrigation system. In contrast to earlier rulers, the Kalhoros were ethnic Sindhis and understood the tribal laws of their country better than the Mughals.

The Talpurs, a Baloch tribe, also vied for domination over Sindh. In 1782, a Talpur army defeated the army of Abdul Nabi Kalhoro in the Battle of Halani. The Mughal Emperor Akbar Shah II recognized the Talpurs' victory and issued a *farman* to Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur for ruling the province. Sindh was controlled by the Talpurs until the British conquest.

When the British were expanding their dominion in India in the beginning of the nineteenth century, they realised that Sindh was an easy prey on account of the unstable domination of the Talpurs—in contrast to, say, the Punjab, which was effectively ruled by the Sikhs and was capable of putting up determined resistance to the colonial forces. General Charles James Napier (1782–1853), Commander-in-Chief of the British Armed Forces in India, deployed troops from the Bombay Presidency, one of the provinces of British India, to the borders of Sindh. The Talpurs engaged in talks in an attempt to halt the advance of the British by offering favourable concessions. An agreement was apparently reached, and, when Napier began to withdraw his troops, the Talpur leader Mir Sher Muhammad Talpur, known as the 'Lion of Sindh', let his guard down. On his way back, Napier unexpectedly turned his troops around and quickly marched on the Talpur's capital Hyderabad.

On 17 February 1843, the eight-thousand-strong Talpur army was routed by the British at the Battle of Miani. In March of the same year, the 'Lion of Sindh' gathered all his reserves and tried to regain ground at the Battle of Dubbo (near Hyderabad) yet was defeated once again.

Sindh was annexed; Napier sent to London his famous dépêche consisting of just one Latin word '*Peccavi*', which means 'I have sinned'. In contrast to what some modern Pakistanis believe, this phrase was a pun rather than a sign of repentance: 'I have sinned' is a homophone of the phrase 'I have Sindh'.

In the early twentieth century, a real medieval feudal system continued to exist in Sindh. At its extremes stood the *Waderos*, who boasted of their unbridled power, family honour, and tasteless luxury, and the countless tenants (*haris*) who meekly put up with the arbitrary behaviour of their lords. Although modern ideas began to penetrate into Sindh literature and culture as far back as the late nineteenth century, Sindh continues to be extremely reactionary today. Patriarchal submission and obedience, harsh mores, and cruel and quasi-barbaric tribal customs were in keeping with the general backwardness of society. A code of 'male honour' was observed in all spheres of life; blood feuds flourished everywhere; property and everyday disputes were settled exclusively with the help of weapons.

For centuries, economic exploitation and class dependence have inculcated servility among Sindh's inhabitants: even today, foreigners are often astonished by the sight of waiters, taxi drivers or vendors in places such as Thatta or Sukkur fawning in order to please a descendant of a *Wadero*. This can be seen in towns; in villages, *haris* continue, just as in past centuries, to greet their landowners with a profound bow, touching the feet with their fingertips. These humiliating manifestations of devout feelings were

often seen as signs of popular love and did not shock even such progressive individuals as Benazir and her father and brothers, who were educated in the West.

The traditions of feudal Sindh influenced the lifestyle of members of the Bhutto family regardless of their true or declared beliefs. In America and Europe, where Benazir, her brothers, children and nephews studied and lived for long periods of time, they behaved 'like everyone else'. During her studies in Oxford, Benazir willingly drove a car, bought groceries and cleaned her room. In Pakistan, surrounded by an army of servants, party activists and voluntary assistants, she immediately turned into a *shahzadi* (princess), for whom it was unseemly even to pour herself a cup of tea.

According to the code of the *Wadero*, the distribution of worldly goods is determined not by the rights or merits of the person who receives them, but by the generosity and benevolence of the person who grants them. In the domestic politics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his daughter, one often saw an atavistic favouritism in which high-ranking positions, profitable contracts and public concessions were given to people from one's own clan or family circle in return for acts of personal devotion.

Both Bhutto father and daughter did not forget or forgive offenses; were fond of demonstratively lavish acts, and scrupulously respected the 'code of friendship' and the 'family honour'. These also seemed to be vestiges of feudal ethics absorbed at the subconscious level. On all occasions, even at official talks and cabinet meetings, Zulfikar Ali

Bhutto backed his assertions up with anecdotes (whether real or imagined) about warring Sindhi clans, recalling their scandals, conflicts, and family gossip. Benazir had the same predilection for drawing analogies between contemporary political life and family stories.

Pakistani politicians often call the Sindhis a ‘warrior race’. This title has been given to various ethnic groups in South Asia: Nepali Gurkhas, Rajputs, Sikhs, and Pashtuns. It is true that the Sindhis have fought a lot over their history. Proud of the military glory of their forefathers, they continued to cultivate purely ‘male’ interests in peacetime: hunting beasts of prey, handling weapons, distinguishing horse breeds, participating in sports competitions and fights, and, most importantly, showing scorn for all weakness. The downside of this aggressive masculinity was sexism, which became a social norm. In Sindh, women were overtly considered to be inferior.

For this reason, the freedom of wives and daughters was greatly limited—in particular, by observing the custom of the *pardah* or seclusion and the segregation of sexes. Benazir recalled that, even in the 1960s, none of her aunts living in Naudero and Hyderabad had ever left the house: ‘[In] landowning families . . . young women were guarded zealously and rarely, if ever, allowed to leave their homes without a male relative. Our tradition holds that women are the honour of families. To safeguard their honour, and themselves, a family keeps their women in *pardah*, behind the four walls and under the veil.’⁶

Marriages were concluded exclusively between cousins. Such endogamy was explained not only by tribal law but also by property and 'landed' interests. The Bhuttos respected the provisions of Sharia law, according to which women could not be divested of property rights. For this reason, daughters sooner or later inherited land, yet the family was not willing to part with it: the land was kept in the family through close-kin marriages, which were often arranged against the will of the bride and groom.

Many women in a clan had to remain single due to the lack of suitable kinsmen of the appropriate age. After a marriage was concluded, the bride was sometimes considered to have served her purpose and was sent back to the home of her parents, where she lived out her days as a 'grass widow'. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's first marriage was concluded only on paper. He had turned merely thirteen the year of his marriage to his cousin Amir Begum, who was ten years his senior. As Zulfikar Ali Bhutto later told the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, he agreed to the marriage only after he was promised a new cricket bat. He recollected, 'I didn't know what it meant to have a wife, and when they tried to explain it to me I went off my mind with anger, with fury. I didn't want a wife, I wanted to play cricket.' Nevertheless, this fictitious marriage was never annulled, and Bhutto had two lawful wives to the end of his life. In exchange, his family got a large plot of land in Naudero.

At the same time, even less affluent Pakistanis who, unlike the Bhuttos, have no landed property, prefer to arrange marriages between cousins, as this gives them reliable

information about the origins and property of the bride or groom.

The political attitudes and spiritual hopes of the illiterate and lawless majority in Sindh were controlled by the Pir Pagaro. This was the hereditary title of leaders who combined the functions of tribal chiefs and religious elders of the Hur ('free from British slavery') military mystic community. They were considered to be political criminals by the English, and Benazir and her father subsequently had to deal and fight with them, too. Pir Pagaro's followers believe 'death in the service of their leader will enter a passage to heaven'.⁸

The geography of Sindh may be called sacred: according to tradition, about 125,000 saints are buried on Makli Hill near Thatta alone. When the Afghan warlord Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded Sindh in 1747, the Kalhoros' Hindu minister (*diwan*) Gidumal gave the conqueror the country's most precious treasure: a bag with dust from the tombs of local saints. These spiritual mentors and Sufi poets were quite unlike the militant Pir Pagaro. Their poems were sermons of divine love and inter-religious harmony that were directed at the depths of the human soul.

The tombs of these great mystic poets of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries are considered to be holy and are visited and venerated by countless pilgrims. The best known are the shrines of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan, Shah Abdul Latif in the village of Bhit Shah (near Hyderabad), Makhdum Nuh in Hala, Sachal Sarmast in the village of

Daraza (near Ranipur), and Shah Inayat Shaheed in Jhonk. Another venerated tomb, where Shah Abdullah Ghazi is buried, is located very close to the Bhutto home in the Clifton area of Karachi.

The Bhuttos considered the cultural traditions of Sindh to be their spiritual heritage and emphasized their Sindhi identity. Having completed his studies in the USA and England, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto 'unlike many graduates freshly returned from long sojourns in the West, found no difficulty in adapting to his native environment. Sindhi and family traditions were too deeply part of his make-up. He could spend long periods in Larkana, Sukkur, and Jacobabad simply enjoying being there. Speaking fluent Sindhi, he easily mixed with old family friends and politicians. Shahnawaz has often emphasized to his son the importance of sustaining his roots. The lesson was well learnt and later passed on to his own children. Bhutto always insisted that they should spend time in Larkana and other parts of Sindh to develop that feeling of identification with their homeland which he regarded as essential.'⁹ Shortly before his death, Bhutto asked his daughter to go to Sehwan and pray for him at the shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.

After the British conquest, Sindh became part of the Bombay Presidency. At that time, the *sardar* or tribal chief Dodo Khan became the head of the clan of 'Bhutto of Larkana' and greatly expanded the family estate. Dodo Khan was 'regarded as the virtual Nawab (ruler) in the area. . . . Dodo Khan's efforts firmly established the Bhuttos among the elite families in Sindh'.¹⁰ There was a family

story that, when Napier was travelling about the province on an inspection visit, he asked the coachman to wake him up where the Bhutto lands ended; when he opened his eyes a few hours later after a good sleep, he was surprised to find out that he was still riding through the boundless estates of Dodo Khan.

Dodo Khan constantly fought with the *sardars* of the Baloch tribes for control over the vast water reservoir (*wah*) on the border of Balochistan and the Upper Sindh and eventually got the upper hand. Unlimited access to fresh water, that was so important for irrigation and farming on the arid plains of Sindh, gave the Bhutto family considerable advantages over other local *Waderos*. Despite his bellicosity, Dodo Khan was a loyal subject of the British crown, as shown by a letter of recognition that has been preserved in the family archives. Signed by Governor General Lord Dalhousie, the letter expresses, in the name of Queen Victoria, gratitude to Dodo Khan for his loyalty and good service as a landowner.

Dodo Khan divided his lands between his three sons, who were the progenitors of the main branches of the Bhutto clan. His eldest son, Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto, built the family mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, which his great-granddaughter Benazir rebuilt and expanded a century-and-a-half later. In turn, his son Ghulam Murtaza (d.1896) built the main family residence in Larkana that is called 'Al-Murtaza' ('Chosen' in Arabic) in honour of Imam Ali.

The city of Larkana was founded in the eighteenth century, when a major irrigation canal called Ghaar-Wah was dug out at the order of Shah Ali Muhammad Kalhoro on the site of the reservoir controlled by the Bhutto tribe. The name of the city stems from a tribe living in the vicinity: *larik*. Thanks to the canal, Larkana is mentioned by many European travellers who visited Sindh.

In his description of Sindh, the famous British Oriental scholar Richard Burton wrote, 'Beyond Sehwan is Larkhana, the chief town of a well-watered and well-cultivated district; and apparently, with the exception of Kurrachee, the most prosperous place in Sindh.'¹¹

The British officer Thomas Postans, who served in Sindh in the 1840s, noted: 'Beyond Sehwan is the large town of Larkhana, containing about 5000 inhabitants, the capital of one of the most fertile districts in Sindh. . . . Larkhana, like most of the towns in Sindh, presents a miserable and dilapidated appearance, though it bears evident marks of having been at one time a place of considerable size and importance; a large canal from the river affords means of water communication during the floods.'¹²

In a nutshell, Larkana had clear advantages over other districts of the Upper Sindh: it had the most fertile soil, thanks to the navigable canal, and a good irrigation system that had been built by the Kalhoros. Until the land reforms of 1959, the Bhuttos owned the greater part of the arable land in the district. Nevertheless, until the mid-twentieth century, Larkana was a typical provincial hole, a hot and

dusty township with clay huts and one-storey houses surrounded by high fences.

Larkana changed radically from 1971 on during the terms of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as president and prime minister. Offices of banks and major national companies and corporations opened in the city, and new buildings, including hotels, hospitals, a railroad station, and a stadium, were built. Mohenjo-Daro Airport was constructed next to the city, connecting it with other Pakistani towns.

Finally, a pompous monument to the Indonesian leader Sukarno was built next to the Bhutto residence, and, further on, an obelisk dedicated to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founding father of modern Turkey. Both monuments clearly reflected the political and ideological preferences of Bhutto himself.

The Bhuttos were long known for their unruly and militant temperament: the aforementioned Pir Bakhsh already had to send his eldest son as a hostage to the court of the Talpurs for five years to convince the rulers that he was not planning to rebel. The bellicose Dodo Khan also caused a lot of trouble to his neighbours. Nevertheless, the greatest number of family legends about the familial bravery and daring of the Bhuttos are linked with Benazir's great-grandfather Ghulam Murtaza.

In his youth, Ghulam Murtaza fell in love with a married Englishwoman, the wife of a British officer, and ran away with her. To put the rescue party off its track, he crossed the Indus with one group of his associates and hid the

Englishwoman in a cave together with other associates. When he parted with his friends, Ghulam Murtaza told them not to surrender his beloved to the British on any account, as this would stain his honour. Thus, when the pursuers finally found the lady, Ghulam Murtaza's associates, remembering their word, simply killed the unfortunate woman to avoid the humiliation of delivering her to their enemies. Ghulam Murtaza, true to his code of honour, escaped from his pursuers and found refuge in Afghanistan. The British had nothing left but to confiscate his lands and house in Larkana.

Benazir's account of the confiscated property of her great-grandfather gives an idea of the family's lifestyle in the late nineteenth century: 'Our family home was auctioned. Our silk carpets were auctioned. Our sofas made of the imported silks, satins, and velvets of the old days, our plates made of pure gold and silver, the huge cooking pots used to cook for the thousands of family followers on religious holidays, the embroidered tents set up for celebrations were all sold.'¹³

The conflict was subsequently settled, and Ghulam Murtaza was allowed to return home. Here, however, he began to wither away and soon died from slow acting poison. After his death, it turned out that the water in his *hookah* (a water pipe similar to the *ghalyan*) had been poisoned. Either the British officer managed to take revenge for his wife in the end, or this was the work of one of Ghulam Murtaza's 'associates' who had also suffered from Bhutto's escapades.

In any case, this family story, which seemed so romantic to Benazir in her childhood, shows that Bhutto's forefathers followed the tribal custom of 'honour killing' (*karo-kari* in Sindhi), according to which a man had the right to kill a woman to avoid shame or restore his good name in the eyes of society.

At the same time, there is a more prosaic version of these events. According to this version, a British district collector initiated a criminal case against Ghulam Murtaza, whom he falsely accused of murder. Bhutto hired an English lawyer, to whom he paid an enormous sum for the time, and managed to get acquitted.

Nevertheless, Ghulam Murtaza's enemies did not give up and brought new evidence of his crime to court. Bhutto fled on the eve of his inevitable arrest. He changed his appearance, let his hair and beard grow, and, pretending to be an itinerant Sikh hermit, went through Peshawar to Kabul, where he lived under a false name.

Several years later, tired of hiding, he returned to Sindh, where he surrendered to the British authorities that had confiscated all his property in the meantime. After a lot of tribulations, he managed to obtain a pardon and the restoration of his property. Nevertheless, his enemies did not leave him alone and killed him by putting poison in his smoking vessel. Although less romantic, this version of the family story also points to the Bhuttos' recklessness and daring.

Wealth and influence inevitably drew the members of the Bhutto family into politics and public administration. Generally speaking, all *Waderos* carried out the functions of judicial and executive authority on their estates. During their visits to Larkana, Benazir and her brother Mir had to settle civil suits and even criminal cases of local inhabitants, pronouncing their judgements (*faislo*) that had the status of judicial verdicts. With her European education, Benazir was somewhat troubled by the need to pronounce judgment in place of the law, considering it to be 'a hangover from feudal times when the heads of clans held sway over every decision affecting their people'.¹⁴

Dodo Khan's youngest son Illahi Bakhsh (d.1910) was appointed honorary magistrate of the Larkana district. His eldest son Wahid Bakhsh (1898–1931), chief of the entire Bhutto clan at the time, was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly and Bombay Council in 1927. As most men in the family, Wahid Bakhsh died young (many of his forefathers did not live to the age of thirty); people said that he was poisoned by his political enemies. His cousin, Nabi Bakhsh Bhutto (Member, Central Legislative Assembly) also died young. In conversations with his children and close associates, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto always expressed concern about the series of early deaths in the Bhutto clan and said that he had to hurry to realize all his plans before the age of fifty. As one knows, his presentiments turned out to be correct, and he died at the age of fifty-one.

The political career of Benazir's grandfather Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto (1888–1957) was considerably more successful. He was the eldest son of the reckless Ghulam Murtaza, who had brought up several sons and daughters despite his affair with the Englishwoman, his years of exile, and his early death. Shah Nawaz was born in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh and spent his early years during his father's exile in the family of his uncle Rasul Bakhsh Khan. He got his primary schooling at a *madrasa* in Karachi and subsequently studied at St. Patrick's School there.

To his great regret, on account of his father's early death, Shah Nawaz was unable to continue his studies. As coincidence would have it, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, had studied in the same *madrasa* some years earlier. Moreover, the *madrasa* belonged to a certain Haji Effendi, the maternal grandfather of Benazir's husband Asif Ali Zardari.

In 1920, Shah Nawaz was elected in the first elections to the Imperial Legislative Assembly and, a year later, became president of the Larkana District Council. At the same time he was appointed honorary magistrate in the district. The English valued Shah Nawaz's merits highly: he was awarded the Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and the Companion of the Order of Indian Empire (CIE) and bore the title of Khan Bahadur¹⁵ (1921). Finally, he was knighted in 1930 and added to his long list of titles the word 'Sir', so coveted by many Indians. Since then, in formal letters he had been addressed as 'Khan Bahadur Sir Shah Nawaz Khan Bhutto, Kt, CIE, OBE'.

Shah Nawaz was the first Bhutto to violate the tradition of endogamous marriage and, moreover, chose his bride himself for his second marriage. In 1924, he married an attractive yet poor Hindu girl by the name of Lakhi Bai. Before the wedding, she converted to Islam and took the name of Khurshid Begum. This was an extremely imprudent act, even for an influential feudal *Wadero*. The Bhutto family and clan boycotted Shah Nawaz's choice, and the wedding took place in the palace of the Khan of Kalat in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, rather than in Larkana.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto never forgave his relatives their hostility towards his mother. 'Poverty was her only crime', he often said about his mother.¹⁶

Still, the clan's rejection did not affect Shah Nawaz's love for his wife, who created an atmosphere of domestic happiness in the home. Nevertheless, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was reminded of his origins during the trial which led to a death sentence for him: among many other charges, he was accused of being 'non-Muslim', as his mother was born a Hindu.

In politics, Shah Nawaz was fond of backstage manoeuvres and intrigues. When one of his political opponents was considered for the post of minister in the Bombay Government in 1928, Shah Nawaz criticised the candidate in a letter to Bombay Governor Leslie Wilson and hinted that he could do the job better. The governor replied, 'I always understood that you did not want a post in

government being a very busy man with great interests and influence in Sindh; but if I read your letter right, I fear I must have been mistaken. I naturally am aware of the claims that you have with regard to social status and influence as compared with others whom you mentioned.”¹⁷

As a result, Shah Nawaz became a minister in the Bombay cabinet in 1934. He moved with his family to Bombay and lived for some time next to Jinnah on Malabar Hill, the most prestigious locality of the city.

As many Indian politicians of the older generation, Shah Nawaz was a conservative who did not endorse radical opposition to British rule. He did not approve of the activities of the Indian National Congress (INC), doubtlessly, under the influence of Jinnah, with whom he maintained friendly relations for many years. The Sindh United Party was also conservative and simultaneously nationalist; Shah Nawaz was its co-founder and its vice president from 1936 on. The party championed the autonomy of Sindh in British India while maintaining ties between Muslims and Hindus.

Generally speaking, only a small and privileged minority of Indians engaged in politics during the ‘Golden Age’ of the Raj, as the British rule in India was called. All the same figures that made up the narrow circle of the political elite were on different commissions, committees, and councils. Besides the Bhuttos, the Sindhi elite included Abdullah Haroon (1872–1942), a prominent figure in the Muslim League; Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah (1879–1948), the

first prime minister of Sindh during the British rule and its first governor after the foundation of Pakistan; Ghulam Murtaza Syed (1904–1995), the founder of modern Sindh nationalism and a proponent of secularism; and Muhammad Ayub Khuhro (1901–1980), who was twice chief minister of the province after Independence.

While real power was in British hands, all of these politicians made up an aristocratic club of sorts, whose members kept together, almost like a family, despite mutual intrigues and plots. For example, Hidayatullah was a guest of honour at Shah Nawaz's wedding and his close associate on the committee for the separation of Sindh; yet he resolutely opposed his colleague in the 1937 elections. Bhutto, Haroon and Syed co-founded the Sindh United Party in the mid-1930s, yet became fierce opponents during the final stage of the movement for the creation of Pakistan.

Shah Nawaz Bhutto became a nationally recognized politician as a result of his ten-year campaign for the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency. Shah Nawaz's arguments resembled those used by Jinnah during his struggle for the creation of Pakistan. Bhutto affirmed that Sindh had always differed from the rest of the Bombay Presidency in cultural, linguistic, and ethnic aspects. It was annexed to the province without good reason and almost by chance and was located very far from Bombay, hampering communication between the centre and the periphery and hindering normal governance.

Nevertheless, the main argument was religious in nature: the Hindu population of the Bombay Presidency greatly surpassed the number of Sindh Muslims, which inevitably resulted in the latter's rights being violated.

Shah Nawaz participated twice in the Round Table Conferences, in 1931 and 1932, where he openly disagreed with British Prime Minister James Ramsay MacDonald by asserting that the rights of Sindh were constantly violated. In 1933, Bhutto's efforts bore fruit: the British government backed down and let Sindh separate from Bombay.

The future consequences of Shah Nawaz's politics seemed unpredictable in the 1930s yet turned out to be favourable in the long run. During the partition of India in 1947, inter-communal conflict and religious strife did not take such extreme forms in Sindh as in Punjab, and, as a separate province with an already accepted status, it was wholly incorporated into Pakistan without major territorial or boundary problems.

Of all her grandfather's merits, Benazir singled out his role in the reconstitution of Sindh's autonomy: 'My grandfather, as representative (or mayor) of the Larkana Board, had long struggled for the separation of Sindh from Bombay. The British said that the waterlogged, saline Sindh lacked sufficient revenues to be independently governed as a separate administration. My grandfather then initiated the Sukkur Barrage project to turn the arid lands of upper Sindh fertile. . . . He was successful, and Sindh once again emerged as a separate entity under British rule. . . .

By separating Muslim Sindh from Hindu India, my grandfather played a critical part in what was to become the Pakistan Movement.¹⁸

Subsequent events in Shah Nawaz' life brought to light certain personality traits that he passed on to his descendants: excessive self-confidence, blinding arrogance, and a tendency to underestimate his rivals. In 1937, the Sindh United Party (whose Vice President was Shah Nawaz) competed with the Sindh Muslim Party (headed by Hidayatullah) at the elections to the Sindh Legislative Assembly. In essence, the parties had similar programmes: both of them represented the interests of major landholders, whose personal and property conflicts were transformed into party strife.

Bolstered by his success in the struggle for autonomy, Shah Nawaz was confident of victory. When he learned that the candidate of the competing party was the second-rate politician Abdul Majeed Sindhi, he spoke of his opponent with haughty disdain: 'A jackal is entering the lion's den'.¹⁹ Continuing to live in Bombay, Bhutto instructed his relatives in Larkana to manage his electoral campaign, yet they were not up to the task. Shah Nawaz lost the elections as a result of this short-sightedness and considered his political defeat as a personal humiliation and a result of the betrayal of relatives and colleagues and the ungratefulness of voters, who did not recognize his services to Sindh. Bhutto's dejection was so great that he left the party and abandoned public politics once and for all.

Although Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was only a child in 1937, he preserved unpleasant memories of his father's defeat to the end of his life: 'We were staying at the Chief Minister's residence as my father was Advisor to the Governor of Sindh at the time. Normally, the house was full of guests and cars with people coming and going. I remember arriving home and finding everything deserted. . . . I asked our old family servant Babu, "What happened? What's the matter?" and he replied, "Sir, Sahib has lost his election."²⁰

Zulfikar took revenge at the 1970 elections by routing Ayub Khuhro, who had participated in the plot against his father.

Shah Nawaz's great-granddaughter Fatima Bhutto also describes the episode as an offense to family honour: 'A complete unknown, Sheikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi, defeated Sir Shahnawaz at the polls. Sindhi was not a resident of the district; he was an outsider with no reputation to fall back on. It was rumoured at the time that Sindhi was brought in and backed by a section of the Bhuttos themselves, who were desperate to relieve Sir Shahnawaz of his local power.'²¹

When Shah Nawaz opted for the calm life of a senior government official in Bombay instead of political intrigues and party bickering, he did not realize that the most difficult part of his career still lay ahead. In 1947, he accepted the invitation to become the *Diwan* or prime minister of the princely state of Junagadh (in the present-day Indian state of Gujarat). He was invited to Junagadh

by his old friend, the tiny state's ruler Nawab Mahabbat Khanji III (1900–1959).

During the partition of the subcontinent into the Indian Union and the Pakistan Dominion, 562 princely states that were not formally a part of British India were allowed to choose the country they would join. Despite the theoretical possibility of choice, the partition scheme was subject to geographic limitations according to Lord Mountbatten's plan: most principalities were to be annexed to India, and only those that directly bordered with Pakistan could join the latter. The overwhelming majority of Junagadh's inhabitants were Hindus, and Junagadh was far from the Pakistani border. Nevertheless, Nawab Mahabbat Khanji, a Muslim, decided to join Pakistan in the autumn of 1947, evoking the fierce opposition of the principality's Hindu population and the indignation of the Indian government.

In the meanwhile, there were exchanges between the governments of India and Pakistan. Pakistan told the Indian government that the accession was in accordance with the Scheme of Independence announced by the outgoing British and that Junagadh was now part of Pakistan. While this exchange of correspondence was going on, India closed all its borders to Junagadh and stopped the movement of goods, transport, and postal articles. In view of the worsening situation, the Nawab and his family left Junagadh for Karachi.

During this crisis, Shah Nawaz acted boldly and decisively, fully confirming his family's reputation for bravery.

Foreseeing that the annexation to Pakistan would result in massive bloodshed, Bhutto, when all hopes for assistance from Pakistan were lost, turned to the Indian government and invited it to take power in Junagadh, officially informing the regional commissioner of the government of the Indian Union.

Pakistan protested, as the *Diwan* had exceeded his terms of reference by taking a decision that was in contradiction of the will of the ruler. Pakistanis cited the precedent of Kashmir, which bordered on Pakistan and yet was annexed to India exclusively by the will of the Hindu Maharaja despite the desire of the Muslim majority of Kashmir to join Pakistan. In the end, the government of the Indian Union satisfied the *Diwan's* request, and Indian troops entered Junagadh, which became part of the state of Saurashtra (later Bombay state, and now Gujarat).

Shah Nawaz's life and origins and his circle of associates, which included Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of Pakistan, and Iskander Mirza, the first Pakistani president, leave no doubt that his personal choice would have been to join Pakistan. Nevertheless, he took the decision of annexing the Principality of Junagadh to the Indian Union despite his personal preferences and religious views, as shown by his subsequent ironic remark, 'Handing over the administration to the Indian Union was comparable to inviting a thief to tea.'²²

Being a *Diwan* turned out to be so traumatic for Shah Nawaz that, when he returned to Pakistan, he abandoned

politics once and for all and settled down in Larkana, where he led the comfortable and leisured life of a *Wadero* until the end of his days.

Although Benazir was only four when her grandfather died, family stories about him played an important role in her upbringing. She was convinced that the love for education, reforms and democracy in her family stemmed from Shah Nawaz. As she later wrote, 'My grandfather was considered very progressive. He educated his children, even sending his daughters to school, an act that was considered scandalous by the other landowners. . . . By educating his own children, Sir Shah Nawaz tried to set an example for the other Sindhi landowners so that after the partition of India in 1947 and the establishment of independent Pakistan, our society would not stagnate.'²³

In an interview to *The Guardian* in 2002, Benazir indirectly tied her successful governance of Pakistan to her forefathers' experience as landowners: 'I find that whenever I am in power, or my father was in power, somehow good things happen. The economy picks up, *we have good rains, water comes, people have crops*. I think the reason this happens is that we want to give love and we receive love.'²⁴

Notes

1. Bhutto, Benazir, *Daughter of the East: An Autobiography*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2007, 17.
2. *Ibid.*, 28.
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan_Movement

4. *The Chachnamah*, tr. Mirza Kalichbeg, Barachi: Printed at the Commissioners Press, 1900, <http://persian.packhum.org/persian/main?url=pf%3Ffile%3D12701030%26ct%3D0>
5. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 28.
6. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 161.
7. Cited from Salman Taseer: *Bhutto: A Political Biography*. Lahore: Asia Book Corp of Amer, 1980, 19.
8. Salman Taseer, op. cit., 6.
9. Salman Taseer, op. cit., 31.
10. Salman Taseer, op. cit., 10.
11. R. Burton, *Sindh and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of the Indus with Notices of the Topography and History of the Province*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1998 (reprint), 302.
12. T. Postans, *Personal Observations on Sind*. Karachi: Indus Publications, 1973 (reprint), 29–30.
13. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 30.
14. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 161.
15. Khan Bahadur is an honorary title that colonial authorities awarded to Indian Muslims for special services to the British Crown. The equivalent titles for Hindus and Sikhs were Rao Bahadur and Sardar Bahadur, respectively.
16. Cited from Taseer, op. cit., 16.
17. Cited from Taseer, op. cit., 12.
18. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2008, 163.
19. Cited from Taseer, op. cit., 51.
20. Cited from Taseer, op. cit., 55.
21. Fatima Bhutto, *Songs of Blood and Sword: A Daughter's Memoir*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2010, 43.
22. Cited from Taseer, op. cit., 58.
23. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 31–2.
24. Benazir Bhutto, 'I never asked for power' in *The Guardian*, 15.08.2002.

3

Being a Woman in Pakistan

Although Benazir Bhutto was never a feminist in theory or in practice, the sexism of Pakistani society invariably provoked her indignation. 'We learned at an early age that it was men's interpretation of our religion that restricted women's opportunities, not our religion itself. Islam in fact had been quite progressive towards women from its inception,' she wrote.¹ Indeed, the lives of Pakistani women seem to flow between two opposing currents: the dynamic liberal movement stemming from the enlighteners and Muslim reformers of the late nineteenth century, who had spoken out for women's education and socialisation, and the rigid conservative movement where the taboos of tribal consciousness augment, like a magnifying glass, the limits set down by Muslim tradition.

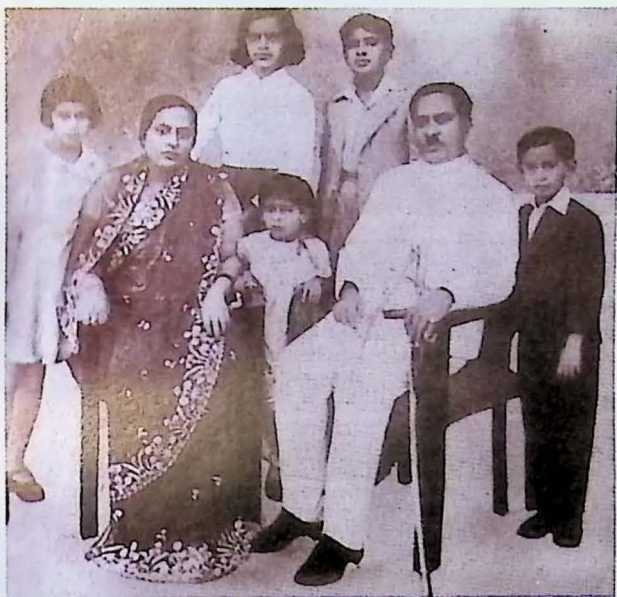
Jinnah's famous words about the need to raise the social status of women were also dictated by his dissatisfaction with the customs of this society rather than by religion: 'No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you. We are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of their houses as prisoners. There is

no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live.’²

Gender relations in Pakistan are based on two fundamental principles, only one of which (the dominant position of the man in the family) directly stems from the Abrahamic religions. Another no less important principle, according to which the honour of a man and the honour of a family (*ghairat*) are primordial social notions that directly depend on the behaviour of women, is a vestige of tribal consciousness and is, at best, only indirectly tied to Islam.

To assure that women do not stain the family honour, society not only limits their sexuality (while encouraging their fertility) but also their mobility, including their travel and activities outside the home, and their contact with members of the opposite sex. As a result, the social and economic spheres become exclusively male domains, while women spend their lives in their homes and backyards. One can say that the segregation of the sexes leads to a division of space, whether everyday or symbolic, leaving women little room outside the limits imposed by *purdah*.

Naturally, the restrictions on female mobility are not absolute and the same in different regions, in urban and rural settings, and, above all, in different social groups. Female seclusion is most strictly observed in Balochistan and the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (the former North-West Frontier Province), where women rarely leave the home. At the same time, women in Sindh, and



Family of Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto



The Bhutto siblings



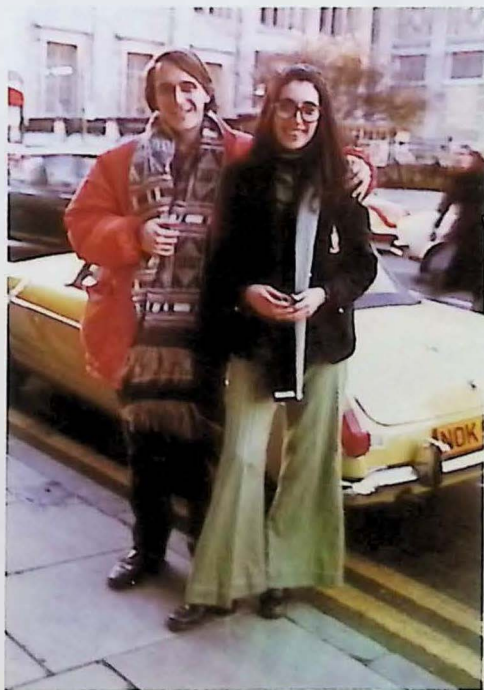
The Bhuttos with Zhou Enlai in the 1960s



Benazir as a schoolgirl



In Harvard



With Peter Galbraith



In Oxford



In Simla, 1972. Benazir, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Swaran Singh, Indira Gandhi



The Bhutto family

especially in Punjab, openly work in the fields, keep small livestock, and vend at bazaars.

The improvement of a family's social status always leads to a reinforcement of female seclusion. At the same time, the observance of *purdah* by the middle and upper classes of cities depends on the individual traditions of families. Pakistani women who are lucky enough to be born in liberal and well-to-do families get a higher education (many study abroad), teach at universities, engage in business, participate in politics, travel to different countries, and even hold senior government positions.

Benazir was born in just such a rich, influential and open-minded family. Her choice of lifestyle and career paths surpassed the possibilities of the average Pakistani woman from the start. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto categorically rejected endogamous marriages for his children, not wishing his daughters to be buried alive by relatives in their homes. He also insisted that his daughters not be forced to wear *burqa*, an enveloping outer garment that fully hides women's facial traits and body contours. 'I became the first Bhutto woman to be released from a life spent in perpetual twilight,' proudly wrote Benazir.³

Nevertheless, during her political career as prime minister and oppositional leader, Benazir repeatedly faced prejudice and even hostility from her milieu with regard to her gender and got to know at first-hand what it means to be a woman in Pakistan. In 2011, the American agency Thomson Reuters Foundation compiled a ranking of

the five most dangerous countries for women.⁴ Pakistan ranks third on the list after Afghanistan and Congo and before India and Somalia. As this ranking shows, neither Islam (as one knows, most Congolese are adherents of Christianity or local cults, while most Indians are Hindus) nor even the level of democracy in society (after all, India is clearly a democratic country) have a lot of influence on the essentially tribal custom of violence and discrimination against women.

The most serious and most frequently mentioned danger for women in Pakistan is so-called 'honour killings', in which Pakistan is the world's leader. 'Honour killing' is a term used by scholars and lawyers to denote a type of crime against women. In Pakistan, honour killing is expressed by different words in different languages. In Sindhi, it is denoted by the word *karo-kari*, where the word *karo* means a 'black' or sinful man, while *kari* means a 'black' or fallen woman. The terms *kala-kali* in Punjabi, *tor-tora* in Pashto, and *siyah kali* in Balochi have the same meaning. Words denoting 'black' refer to the stigma of infamy marking the victim of an honour killing.

Human Right Watch defines honour killings as 'acts of vengeance, usually death, committed by male family members against female family members, who are held to have brought dishonour upon the family'.⁵ The honour killing refers to the murder of a girl or married woman sanctioned by custom and performed by a close relative (father, brother, or husband) for her 'dishonourable' or unseemly behaviour (from the male standpoint).

'Dishonour' usually refers to culturally prohibited actions of a sexual nature: conjugal infidelity, pre-marital sex, the rape in which a woman was victim, an attempt to get a divorce, the refusal to marry a candidate of the family's choosing, or even a violation of the traditional dress code. Sometimes relatives force a woman to commit suicide, which is also a common form of honour killing.

In principle, men who violate traditional notions of morality can also become victims of honour killings. For example, 245 women and 137 men were victims of honour killings in 2002 in Sindh.⁶ Nevertheless, men are often subject to lighter penalties, such as exile or the possibility of ransoming their lives.

Honour killings are based on a characteristic feature of traditional Pakistani consciousness: misogyny, the contempt for female 'weakness' and 'impurity', and the attitude towards women as property with which men can do as they see fit. Honour killings may be performed out of mere suspicion of pre-marital sexual ties or on the basis of unverified rumours or slander of relatives and neighbours.

An honour killing may simply be motivated by a girl smiling or saying a few words to a stranger. If an honour killing is performed by a close relative, a knife or axe is often used. Sometimes, a living woman is sprinkled with gasoline and set on fire. If an honour killing is performed by a crowd, the woman is publically stoned to death in a square.

Before Asian diasporas arose in Western countries, honour killings were mostly mentioned by scholars in their discussions of the barbaric cultural traits of certain Asian societies. Nevertheless, the practice of honour killings has a long history all over the world. According to anthropologists, killings for the purpose of restoring a clan's honour were customary in many agrarian societies (China and India, including present-day Pakistan), tribal societies (Near East, and the Mediterranean countries), South Europe and Latin America.

Notions of the security and prosperity of a family, clan or community were ubiquitously connected with the fertility of women and thus with their sexuality. Society needed to have control over women as a source of reproduction to assure the legitimacy of property inheritance, the rights of fathers and elders in a clan, and the continuous transmission of inherited rights to land, titles, and power. As a result, the virginity of girls and the purity of married women were considered an imperative: for centuries, men killed not only to retain their lands and power but also to protect their women. However, if the woman herself became a threat to the status quo, a man could also kill her in order to preserve the code of social relations.

The ubiquitous tie between property, conjugal infidelity, and the murder of women is reflected even in English common law, which viewed women as movable property (chattel), while conjugal infidelity was treated as an encroachment on property rights and as material damage.

Nevertheless, the status of women in patriarchal society, whether feudal or tribal, was not unequivocal. On the one hand, women were among the main material values of men. In Farsi, these values are denoted by the 'three z': *zan*, *zar*, *zamin* or 'woman', 'gold', and 'land'. On the other hand, as animate values, women were repositories of male honour, which refers to a broad set of notions: military bravery, male strength, social maturity and respect, personal valour, and conformity to the demands of the clan or community.

As all valuable property, women could be exchanged or used for regulating property and territorial disputes or as ransom and compensation for committed crimes. Such a woman, given in compensation to the aggrieved party to settle disputes, is called *chatti* by Punjabis, *swara* by Pashtuns, and *wanni* by Sindhis and Baloch. All of this gave the code of honour a real material foundation. Women could also be used to pay off debts: in the Sindhi custom of *pait* (lit. 'belly'), an unborn girl is promised in marriage to the creditor.⁷

Among the Pashtuns, if a man guilty of adultery (*tor*) flees and hides, the wronged husband has the right to kill not only his unfaithful wife (*tora*) but also any woman from the family of the seducer.⁸ Blood feuds can be regulated through the tribal custom of *watta-satta*, in which two clans exchange women in marriage for the purposes of reconciliation. In most cases, these marriages are arranged by tribal chiefs without regard to the wishes of the women involved.

In Western countries, adultery has long ceased to be considered a crime, while the murder of an unfaithful wife is certainly a criminal act. Nevertheless, our contemporaries who kill their wives for adultery in Scotland or Canada, say, can significantly soften their penalties by invoking the law of 'grave and sudden provocation', which exists in the criminal codes of a number of countries belonging to the British Commonwealth, including India and Pakistan.

'Grave and sudden provocation', if upheld, reduces a crime from murder to culpable homicide not amounting to murder, and therefore carries a significantly reduced sentence.⁹ Although men continue to kill women all over the world (such murders are usually qualified as 'crimes of passion' committed in a state of emotional disturbance), these murders are no longer justified by secular or religious law. This is quite different from the honour killing, in which a woman is killed with the whole-hearted support of the family and society, and the indifference of the state.

Today, honour killings mostly occur in the Middle East and South Asia. They are not exclusively characteristic of Muslim countries. In fact, such killings are extremely rare in a number of countries with dominant Muslim populations, such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the sub-Saharan African countries. In recent decades, honour killings have begun to occur with increasing frequency in immigrant communities in Germany, Great Britain, Canada, and the USA. Still, honour killings are not considered legal in any country, and their perpetrators can get real prison sentences if the case comes to court.

Nevertheless, honour killings are still considered a family affair in rural areas of Pakistan and are therefore not brought to court. Moreover, certain Pakistani politicians openly approve of honour killings as part of the country's spiritual heritage. Ex-minister of defence and member of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani was accused of involvement in *chatti*, offering a total of five young girls as blood money in two separate cases. Most of the girls were under seven years old. Police neglected to follow up on the order and, after keeping his head low for some time, Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani became Federal Minister of Education.¹⁰

In our days, a person convicted of honour killing can be sentenced to up to seven years in prison by the Pakistani criminal code, yet this law does not work. Lawyer and human rights activist Asma Jahangir, who was Human Rights envoy of Pakistan up until recently, asserted that over 10,000 honour killings were committed in the country in 2004-05 and that only 3,500 of them were actually brought to court.¹¹

One should keep in mind that honour killings are often masked as accidents or suicides and are therefore not reported for what they are. Generally speaking, any murder in Pakistan is qualified, not as a breach of the law, in which the state brings the action, but as a crime against the victim. As a result, a criminal case is not launched automatically but only if the victim takes legal action. The state simply acts as an intermediary, and often as a corrupt adversary, between the parties.

The traditional centres of honour killings in Pakistan have been the tribal districts of Balochistan. Even here, an accusation of infidelity against a woman had to be investigated, proven and corroborated by reliable witnesses. If a girl was guilty of pre-marital relations, a tribal council, or *jirga*, preferred to marry her off to her seducer rather than killing both of them. In our days, 'honour killings do not appear to be governed by any of the rules that were part of the Baloch tribal code in the past. Mere suspicion, rumour, hearsay is sufficient to condemn a woman to death for adultery. . . . It is enough for a man simply to have dreamt in his sleep that his wife had been unfaithful to kill her upon awaking.'¹² Moreover, honour killings are increasingly performed on women who are clearly not guilty of adultery: pre-pubescent girls and old women are sometimes killed because their families cannot feed them.

The British tried to stop honour killings in their day, just as they tried to prohibit the Hindu custom of self-immolation of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres (*sati*) and the killing of newborn baby girls among the Rajputs of Northern India. When Charles Napier became Governor of Sindh, he told the *sardars* that every case of *karo-kari* will be punished by the death of all the men in the clan. In response, a wave of female suicides masking honour killings swept across Sindh.

Only a *sardar* could save the life of a dishonoured woman, provided she managed to take asylum in his house. However, the subsequent life of such a woman (called *saam*) was unenviable, as she became the lifelong slave of the

sardar. According to Amnesty International, *saam* women are auctioned at annual cattle markets in Balochistan.¹³ Although *sardars* or members of *jirgas* do not consider killing women to be a crime, their goal is to regulate hostility between the families of the clan in order to avoid blood feuds and revenge (*badlo*) that can arise from the loss of property in the form of women. To this end, they seek a decision or judgement (*faislo*) that will resolve the conflict.

Sometimes honour killings are used to conceal property crimes in cases when a family does not want to lose property, especially land, owned by a woman who marries a man from another clan. Even rich heiresses of *Wadero* families in which no direct male heirs remain can become victims of *karo-kari*. There are cases when even childless widows and old maids (who abound in *Wadero* families) were accused of indecent behaviour.

Human rights activists and the public at large began to take an interest in honour killings in the 1990s, when these crimes began to occur in Asian immigrant communities in Europe and North America. The victims of honour killings became women that tried, against the will of their families, to integrate into Western society, get a Western education, and make a career outside the home. The investigation of these crimes was made difficult by the unwillingness of family members to cooperate with police officials.

In the early 2000s, the release of two documentary films about Pakistani honour killings literally caused uproar in Western society. Produced by the BBC, *Murder in Purdah*

and *License to Kill* got numerous awards at international film festivals and acquainted Western viewers with a shocking aspect of the lives of their new neighbours, members of Pakistani diasporas.

The latter film focuses on the sensational story of the Pakistani woman Samia Sarwar, who was assassinated in 1999. For her attempt to divorce her tyrannical husband, she was gunned down directly in the office of her lawyer in the centre of Lahore. The hired killer was personally brought to the lawyer's office by Samia's mother, a doctor by profession. The killing was commissioned by Samia's father, a major businessman and the chairman of the Peshawar Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This story shows that honour killings are not limited to lower rural classes but occur in all strata of Pakistani society. The hired killer's second bullet was intended for the lawyer, Hina Jilani, but the gun misfired. The assassin was killed by the guards, yet the accomplice (the victim's mother), the person who ordered the killing, escaped arrest and court proceedings.

After Samia Sarwar's murder, which evoked a demonstration and protest actions in Lahore, PPP Senator Syed Iqbal Haider tried to pass a resolution condemning honour killings in the Upper Chamber of the Parliament. However, Senate speaker Wasim Sajjad said, with the support of the parliamentary majority, that there is no room for discussion when it comes to honour. The resolution was dismissed, and only in 2006 did the Senate and the Supreme Court of Pakistan recognize that honour killings are a custom that is contrary to the spirit of Islam.

The scandal surrounding the murder of Samia Sarwar also had consequences for her defenders. At the initiative of the victim's father, the police launched a criminal case against the lawyer Hina Jilani and her sister, human rights activist Asma Jahangir for 'abducting' Samia. They were accused of 'misleading women in Pakistan and contributing to the country's bad image abroad'.¹⁴ Muslim organizations demanded that both women be arrested and issued a *fatwa* against them, promising a reward to anyone who killed them.

Faced by crimes that are new in Western criminal practice, European courts punish perpetrators of honour killings with all the rigour of the law. In 2006, a British court gave life sentences to the brothers of Sumaira Nazir, a student of Pakistani origin who fell in love with an Afghan immigrant during her studies at Oxford. While her brothers killed her, her mother held her by her feet. The same year, a whole Pakistani family of nine people got major prison sentences in Denmark for organizing the killing of Ghazala Khan, who had married a Shiite; her family was Sunni. This was the first case when not only the direct perpetrator but also all the accomplices of an honour killing were punished.

In the twenty-first century, honour killings left the boundaries of tribal territories and remote rural districts and began to occur with increasing frequency in Asian, American, and European megalopolises. They are a 'black' stain of barbarism on the reputation of the male part of mankind regardless of the national and religious identity of the killers. Nevertheless, honour killings are not the only

ordeal that has been in store for women in Pakistan. Acid attacks are another form of violence against women that are no less traumatic. The goal of acid attacks is to spare a woman's life while maiming her to such an extent that she would have preferred to die.

Isolated acid attacks against women as an extreme manifestation of male jealousy or vengeance occur all over the world. However, only in South and Southeast Asian countries have they become a real social and gender problem that reflects women's lack of rights and the discrimination against them in society. In these countries, acid attacks are performed against women for their refusal to marry or to wear a hijab, for their desire to get an education or make a career, and for unpaid dowry or any disobedience in family life. Just as in the case of honour killings, acid attacks may be perpetrated against women not only by their husbands and their relatives but also by blood relations as punishment for the 'shame' or blemish inflicted on family honour.

Acid Survivors Trust International asserts that about 1,500 such crimes are committed annually.¹⁵ Although the laws of most countries prescribe severe punishment for acid attacks, this legislation does not work everywhere, while vengeance is inexorable. In Bangladesh, the former world's leader in the number of acid attacks, the legislation was changed in 2002 (thanks, in part, to the efforts of Hasina Wajed and Khaleda Zia), and perpetrators convicted of acid attacks began to receive death sentences.¹⁶ The statistics say there are more attacks here than anywhere else in the world, but that may only happen because Bangladesh documents its

cases more thoroughly than other countries. The number of such crimes has fallen annually by 15–20 per cent since the institution of the death penalty.¹⁷

In contrast, the number of acid attacks is inexorably growing in India, Pakistan, and Cambodia. Most of these crimes pass unnoticed, as many victims do not declare them. In contrast to Western countries, where society feels pity for the victims of acid attacks, they rarely evoke public compassion in South and South East Asia. In contrast, victims tend to be ostracized and stigmatized as fallen women who got what they deserved for staining their families' honour. To avoid being thrown out on the street and becoming outcasts, women usually make peace with their tormentors and bury themselves in their homes for the remainders of their lives.

For a long time, people who perpetrated acid attacks in Pakistan were tried according to the Sharia law of *Qisas*, i.e. equal retribution along the principle of 'an eye for an eye'. A man who disfigured a woman with acid was subject, according to this law, to having several drops of acid poured into his eyes so as to blind him. Nevertheless, this law was hardly ever applied, as most victims, for lack of protection from the state and the law, sooner or later 'forgave' their offenders, and the cases in question were dropped.

In 2011, the Lower Chamber of the Pakistani Parliament passed the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Bill under public pressure. In accordance with this law, sentences for acid attacks were considerably toughened:

they now range from fourteen years to life terms in prison. However, controlling acid manufacturing and limiting its availability are a more difficult matter.

Fabric dyeing is widespread in Pakistan, even in rural areas. Dyeing pots are ubiquitous in Pakistani towns and villages, and a considerable percentage of inhabitants work in this industry. As one knows, dyeing processes employ both hydrochloric and sulphuric acid, and it is not clear for the time being whether small producers can control their stocks. Thus, only time will tell whether the new law is effective.

In February 2012, the most discussed non-political event in Pakistan was the Oscar awarded to the US-Pakistani film *Saving Face* (2011) in the nomination 'short documentary'. The film was made by the Pakistani-Canadian Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy (b.1978). The film's main female characters are two Punjabi women who experienced acid attacks: the forty-year-old Zakiya and the twenty-year-old Rukhsana, who were not afraid to describe the terrible details of the crimes committed against them before the camera and did everything they could to obtain punishment for their criminal husbands from the Pakistani judicial system.

The film's main male character is the saviour of these women, the Pakistani-born British plastic surgeon Dr Muhammad Jawad. He left for some time his practice in a prestigious London clinic on Harley Street and came to Pakistan to perform reconstructive surgery for the victims free of charge.

In many languages, the words 'face' and 'honour' are synonyms, as the Chinese and Japanese idioms 'to lose face' or 'lost face'. This gives the film's title a double meaning. The surgeon literally saves the victims' faces, giving the women a new hold on life. However, the title 'saving face' is also a word-for-word translation of the Urdu expression *munh bachana*, which has the idiomatic meaning 'to cast off disgrace', 'to preserve one's honour'.

Pakistani analysts and journalists had mixed feelings about the film and voiced doubts about the political motivations of the American Academy of Motion Pictures, which awarded an Oscar to it. 'Unless you believe that the US government funds work only out of a pure love of culture, the fact that [Obaid-Chinoy] has received hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding from the US . . . only shows how useful they consider these kinds of documentaries. . . . [This] means that only certain types of injustices will receive the international attention that has been bestowed on . . . *Saving Face*. Produce anything on militancy and, at the very worst, you will get a pat on the back. Try and produce a documentary on, say, the victims of drone attacks or labour abuses and make sure you stock up on battery-powered torches and imperishable food items as you wait in the dark for NGO cheques and gold statuettes.'¹⁸

Nevertheless, official circles in Pakistan were enthusiastic about Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy's victory at the Oscar ceremony, viewing it as a long-awaited international recognition of Pakistani art and culture. All the more so, as Pakistan's eternal rival India has already received Oscars

in different nominations. The government gave Obaid-Chinoy the Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Crescent of Distinction), one of the highest Pakistani state awards. In addition, she got a score of awards and prizes from Pakistani non-governmental organizations. One of them was conferred by Pakistani Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani-Khar.

The portraits painted by Pakistani media of these two women, the minister and the Oscar-winning film director, have a lot in common. Indeed, both Rabbani-Khar and Obaid-Chinoy are attractive young ladies of roughly the same age, daughters and wives of wealthy people, and alumni of prestigious American universities, who have lived for a long time in the US. This is apparently why both of them are exhibited as a showcase of opportunities that Pakistani society allegedly accords to women. In keeping with the laws of advertising, the media show them with a halo of success and glamour at diplomatic receptions and on the red carpet, wearing diamonds and designer clothing. It suffices to recall Hina Rabbani-Khar's extremely expensive bag by Hermes that she took along on her official visit to India and that evoked a wave of indignant reaction in the press and on social networking sites of Pakistan.

Nevertheless, this wonderful female success story has a 'skeleton in the closet'. Ten years ago, Hina's cousin Bilal Khar, the son of former Punjab Governor Ghulam Mustafa Khar, splashed acid in the presence of witnesses on his wife Fakhra Younus for her attempt to divorce him. After long and unsuccessful treatment in Italy, the deformed woman returned to Pakistan, where, subject to ostracism, she

committed suicide. No charges were brought against Bilal Khar at the time or since.

Thus, the touching picture of one social beauty, the cousin of a criminal who performed an acid attack with impunity, presenting an award to another social beauty, a director who shot a film about the victims of such attacks, was viewed with grim irony by many Pakistanis.

The stories of Hina Rabbani-Khar and Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy show that there are women in Pakistan who have high social status and enjoy national authority and international recognition. It would be impossible to simply list the names of all living Pakistani female writers, actresses, artists, journalists, lawyers, human rights activists, philanthropists, and party activists, each of whom could be the subject of an entire book or at least an article. Although these influential women are unlikely to become victims of honour killings, they are not secure from domestic violence, harassment by obscurants, or attacks by extremists.

As many examples show, wealth and high social status do not guarantee a woman's security in Pakistan. A case in point is the writer Tehmina Durrani (b.1953). Daughter of the former Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, she had the misfortune of marrying the aforementioned Ghulam Mustafa Khar, for whom it was his sixth marriage. Tehmina lived with her husband for thirteen years and gave birth to four children. After a scandalous divorce, she published the autobiographic novel, *My Feudal Lord* (1991), which

became an international bestseller, although it was initially banned in Pakistan.

In her novel, Tehmina recounts how women live behind the walls of elite mansions. The book narrates how Khar, a wealthy landowner and an influential politician, physically beat Tehmina, kidnapped their children, had a heart breaking affair with her sibling, and even forced her to strip naked when she disobeyed his orders. Tired of beatings and humiliation, Tehmina filed for divorce, only to see her entire milieu, including her own parents, turn its back on her. She was stripped of the custody of her children, her share of family property, and, most important, her status of a decent woman. In their reviews of Tehmina's book, Pakistani media unanimously accused her of staining the good name of her family by disclosing family secrets.

Still, the story had a happy ending: Tehmina was lucky enough to get married again to Punjabi Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and regain high social status. She has established a private foundation to assist female victims of home violence and has done a lot to rehabilitate her relative, Fakhra Younus, who had suffered an acid attack.

There were quite a few Pakistani women of the older generation who played an important role in the country's politics and the women's liberation movement. We have already mentioned the 'Mother of the Nation' (*madar-e-millat*) Fatima Jinnah, who had contested for president and who founded the All-Pakistan Women's Association in 1947. Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz (1896–1979) began

her career before the Partition of India as an activist of the Muslim League and a supporter of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. After the creation of Pakistan, she spoke out for reforming laws on marriage, divorce, and polygamy, which led to the adoption of the relatively liberal Muslim Family Code in 1961. When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was in power, he declared on several occasions that Begum Shahnawaz was in his opinion the best candidate for the post of president.

The politician and diplomat Shaista Ikramullah (1915–2000) was a Member of the First Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan (1947), an ambassador to a number of Arab countries, and a member of the UN Committee for Drafting the Human Rights Declaration (1948). Mahmuda Salim Khan (1913–2007) was a minister in the government of Ayub Khan (1958) and the co-founder and chairperson of many charity organizations. Finally, former ‘First Lady’ Raana Liaquat Ali Khan (1905–1990), known as the ‘Mother of Pakistan’, lived a long and tumultuous political life. A leader of the Women’s Wing of the Pakistan Movement and a close associate of Jinnah, she was the chief adviser of her husband, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan; the first Pakistani female diplomat; and Governor of Sindh.

These influential women had a lot in common: aristocratic descent, excellent (and often European) education, and good looks (an important factor for female success in a patriarchal political culture oriented towards men and their interests). Paradoxically, despite strictly restricting female sexuality and forcing women to hide their faces and figures

under traditional clothing like the *burqa*, Pakistani society continues (perhaps by coincidence or in compensation) to bring the most attractive representatives of the 'fair sex' to the political pinnacle.

Without speaking of Benazir Bhutto herself, who resembled a *pari* (fairy), such notable political figures as Fehmida Mirza, the acting speaker of the National Assembly, Sherry Rehman, former Minister of Information and former Pakistani ambassador to the US, and the aforementioned Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani-Khar are all extremely elegant and attractive women. Still, one of the beautiful women in power, Zille Huma Usman, Minister of Social Affairs of the Punjab, was killed at a meeting in 2007 by a fanatic who was irate that she did not wear the hijab and appeared before male strangers. To an extent, the abundance of beautiful women in South Asian politics may be shaped by the powerful myth-making cinema, with its cult of 'stars', which continues to engender mass stereotypes, value criteria and ideals in the countries of the subcontinent.

During the relatively liberal regime of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1970–77, women got greater opportunities for participating in central and municipal government. About 10 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly were reserved for women. The new constitution of Pakistan, ratified in 1973, guaranteed gender equality and the protection of families, mothers, and children, and also encouraged the participation of women in all areas of national life. In 1975, an official Pakistani delegation took part in the First World Conference on Women in Mexico,

which led to the creation of the Pakistan Women's Rights Committee.

Nevertheless, all the achievements of Pakistani feminists came to naught after the 1977 military coup by Zia ul-Haq and the beginning of his Islamization programme in 1979. This programme essentially aimed to bring civil and criminal laws fully into line with the Sharia. The apogee of Islamization was the introduction of *hudud* or 'prescribed punishment' applied to individuals who committed the most serious crimes (from the standpoint of the Sharia), such as theft, burglary, adultery, false accusation of adultery, blasphemy, and the consumption of alcohol.

The laws on adultery (*zina*), which included not only conjugal infidelity and extramarital sexual relations but also rape, were discriminatory in nature. A man and a woman who had sexual relations while married to other people were punished for adultery by stoning to death. If an unmarried man and an unmarried woman entered into intimate relations, they were given a hundred lashes each.

The Zina Ordinance included *zina-bil-jabr*, the category of forced intercourse. If the woman who accused a man of *zina-bil-jabr* (rape) could not prove to the judicial system that she was raped, she faced adultery charges. In order for a rapist to receive *hadd*, the maximum punishment provided for under the Quran, either the rapist must confess to the rape, or four pious adult Muslim men must witness the 'act of penetration' itself and testify against the rapist. Under *Qanun-e-Shahadat* (the law of evidence), a

woman's testimony was not weighed equally to that of a man. Thus, if a woman did not have male witnesses but had female witnesses, their testimony would not satisfy the evidence requirement. The perpetrator may be acquitted and the victim may face adultery charges. The threat of being prosecuted discourages victims from even filing complaints.¹⁹

Over ten years, Pakistani judges pronounced over twenty death sentences for *zina*; in half the cases, the accused were raped women, mainly from poor families, who were unable to prove the fact of 'forced penetration' or simply to hire a lawyer. However, none of the sentences was executed, and the women simply languished for years in prison. Already, in the 1980s, the first protests against the repressive Zina Ordinance and the 'law of evidence' were held in big cities. These isolated actions led to the establishment of the biggest and most influential women's movement in Pakistan: the Women's Action Forum.

During her election campaign, Benazir Bhutto promised to abrogate the draconian *hudud* laws. Nevertheless, she failed to do so, both during her first term as prime minister (1988–1990) and during her second term (1993–1996). Benazir virtually had no supporters in Muslim circles, which clung tenaciously to Sharia law, while the fragile civil society, on which she could have leaned, was more worried by the growing corruption problem that emerged during her second term.

The main target of corruption charges was not Benazir herself but her husband Asif Ali Zardari, nicknamed, 'Mr Ten Percent', for the size of the bribe that was allegedly collected from every major deal or transaction in Pakistan. Unfortunately, Bhutto's failure to keep her electoral promises on abrogating the *hudud* alienated politically active female voters, spoiled her relations with numerous women's and human rights organizations, and evoked criticism from liberal circles.

Immediately after becoming prime minister in 1988, Benazir had to deal with a scandalous case that came under the purview of the Zina Ordinance. A married couple, Shahida Parveen and Muhammad Sarwar, was accused of adultery. Shahida had previously obtained an official divorce from her first husband and married for a second time after respecting the time period prescribed by the law. Her first husband, who had not received the divorce certificate in time, decided a year later to bring his wife back and filed a court complaint that her new marriage with Sarwar was not legitimate. Not only was the couple's marriage declared void, but they were also judged guilty of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning. The public criticism led to their retrial and acquittal by the Federal Shariat Court.

Subsequently, looking back on her work as prime minister, Bhutto wrote, 'The PPP Government made dramatic reforms in women's rights. I appointed several women to my cabinet and established a Ministry of Women's Development. We created women's studies programmes

in universities. We established a Women's Development Bank to give credit only to enterprising women. . . . And we legalized and encouraged women's participation in international sports, which had been banned in the years of the Zia military dictatorship. It was a solid start in a society where Islam had been exploited to repress the position of women in society for a bitter generation.'²⁰

All of this is true, yet the access to bank loans and university programmes, just as the opportunity to participate in Olympic Games once again, could not compensate for the threat looming over ordinary Pakistani women of prison terms, public whippings, and stoning to death as a result of *zina* accusations. Benazir failed to turn the women's liberation movement to her advantage.

Only in 2006 did President Pervez Musharraf release 1,300 women who had been convicted of *zina* crimes over the years from prison and initiated the adoption in parliament of the Women's Protection Bill that partially abrogated or softened the most discriminatory *hudud* laws, in particular items that concerned rape victims. These long-overdue legal reforms were precipitated by the story of a Punjabi village girl called Mukhtar Mai aka Mukhtaran Bibi (b.1972), a story that shocked the entire civilized world.

Mukhtar Mai's family lived in the village of Meerwala (near Muzaffargarh, South Punjab) that is settled by members of two tribal clans: Tatla (to which Mai's family belonged) and Mastoi. The latter clan was wealthier and more influential than the former. In 2002, one of Mukhtar Mai's brothers

was accused of committing fornication with a girl from the Mastoi clan. The men of the Tatla clan proposed to settle the conflict peacefully by concluding a marriage between the lovers and ceding a land plot to the wronged party.

However, the Mastoi tribal *jirga* rejected the Tatla's peace overtures, ruling that the case had to be settled by the law of 'equal retribution' (*Qisas*) and insisting that illicit sex must be settled with illicit sex, according to the principle of an eye-for-an-eye. By the order of the *jirga*, Mukhtar Mai was raped by a group of men from the Mastoi clan in the presence of her father, after which she was paraded naked around the village before the eyes of hundreds of people. When the police came to the village, the chief of the Mastoi clan declared that he considered the conflict to be settled and that he had withdrawn all charges from Mukhtar Mai's brother.²¹

This quasi-banal story of using a woman as 'atonement' for a 'crime of honour' would not have come to public notice or become an extraordinary event had it not been for the behaviour of Mukhtar Mai herself. She refused to commit suicide, as prescribed by tribal custom for victims of gang rape, and did not keep silent. She showed unheard-of energy, tenacity and willpower for a semi-literate village girl and fought for years for her rights and for the conviction of the evildoers. The Pakistani press launched a broad campaign in defence of Mukhtar Mai, which was picked up by international media.

The BBC and *New York Times* covered the Mukhtar Mai case for a long time, regularly informing readers about the progress of her court case for several years on end and the obstacles put in her way by Pakistani authorities, who confiscated her passport, refused to let her leave the country, and repeatedly arrested her in the course of trials.

Nevertheless, Mukhtar Mai became internationally famous. Her book, *In the Name of Honour* (2004), was published all over the world in 23 languages. She was the personal guest of First Lady Laura Bush in the US and was received by Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy in France. She spoke at the UN and the European Council, which gave her a special award for her contribution to human rights. She became the subject of five documentaries, including the film, *Land, Gold and Women* (2006), by Canadian director Terence McKenna.

Mukhtar Mai's main victory was the legislative amendments passed in 2006 by the Lower Chamber of Parliament, which took cases of rape out of religious law (*hudud*) and brought them under the jurisdiction of the criminal code, separating rape and adultery in the process. The 'law of evidence' was abrogated, and rape victims no longer needed to find four pious men as witnesses. Evidence for rape cases began to be collected in the same way as in most other countries, including the study of the rapist's DNA. At the same time, sentences for adultery became more lenient: it is now punished by a fine and a prison term of up to five years instead of the death penalty. All of these legislative

reforms became part of the Women's Protection Bill that was signed by President Musharraf in 2006.

Mukhtar Mai's perpetrators have still not been punished: six rapists have been arrested and released several times. The Supreme Court initially sentenced them to death and then accepted their appeal on the grounds of 'insufficient evidence', replacing capital punishment by lifelong imprisonment. In 2011, they were acquitted altogether, and the main defendant became the chief of the Mastoi clan, who was sentenced to ten years in prison for instigating and organizing the crime.

Mukhtar Mai's lawyers have filed yet another appeal, though her thirst for vengeance has apparently abated somewhat. Mukhtar Mai moved from the village to the town of Multan, got major financial compensation from the state, was awarded the Fatima Jinnah Medal for courage, founded the Mukhtar Mai's Women Welfare Organization, married a police constable, and gave birth to a son. As in the case of Tehmina Durrani, Mukhtar Mai's personal story had a happy and almost fairy-tale ending.

Tehmina Durrani and Mukhtar Mai represent two poles of Pakistani society: a rich aristocrat and spouse of the chief minister, on the one hand, and a semi-literate village woman and wife of a policeman, on the other. They have only one thing in common: when they became victims of violence, whether domestic or tribal, they did not keep silent or conform to the traditional code of behaviour of Pakistani women but tried to obtain justice, involving

numerous people from all over the world in their problems. One could say that they have survived and preserved themselves as individuals because they heeded the appeal of the great Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz—‘*Bol*’ (Speak):

Speak, your lips are free.
 Speak, it is your own tongue.
 Speak, it is your own body.
 Speak, your life is still yours.

(Translated by Azfar Hussain)

Notes

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4

Myths and Facts

The autobiographies of politicians sometimes follow the pattern of a mythological narrative: their protagonists and antagonists symbolize Good and Evil; the plot resembles the Legend of the Holy Grail, with ordeals, feats, and exile; and, finally, the axiological modality of the story strives to convince the reader of the moral superiority of the hero, a champion of universal values. In these modern myths, the narrator is usually separated from the real author, as the latter, being a ghost writer, prefers to remain anonymous. However, if the protagonists and antagonists belong to a culture where the word still preserves its magical incantatory powers, as is the case in Pakistan, autobiographical tales can become products of pure myth-making.

In the West, academic discourse, political jargon, and the verbal liberty of mass media have long muddled the purity of the source from which this genre draws its mythologems. The contradictory complexity, multiplicity of motivations, and pragmatism of western politics leave little room for heroic feats; good and evil have become blurred; and the majority of political figures have removed outright moralizing and unconditional evaluations from

their lexicon, replacing them with 'national interest' and 'political correctness'.

Of course, some western political autobiographies also belong to the mythological genre to an extent. For example, after temporary political isolation ('exile'), Winston Churchill returned to power to lead the struggle against Fascist Germany ('dragon', Universal Evil) in the name of the triumph of universal freedom and democracy ('Grail'). Nevertheless, the perception of political activity as a personal feat is only possible in the context of global catastrophes, such as world wars. Moreover, Churchill, who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953, evidently created his own myth (such as in his book series *The Second World War*) and was, for this reason alone, a clear exception to the rule.

In contrast, the autobiographical works of Pakistani politicians play quite clumsily on the theme of the 'cultural hero' who saves the nation from the hostile forces of chaos and the intrigues of foreign and domestic foes. Examples include the memoirs of the military dictator and President Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters*; the recollections of another dictator and President Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*; and the recent book of the oppositional leader Imran Khan, *Pakistan: A Personal History*. Despite all the efforts of the anonymous ghost writers to give the two military dictators and the sportsman-playboy the status of mythical heroes, the results are far from convincing.

Even before it turned into the autobiographical book *Daughter of the East*,¹ Benazir Bhutto's biography was marked by a certain absolutism of good and evil, which is difficult to contest or debunk. On the one hand, Benazir ran across monstrous tyranny and witnessed the medieval execution by hanging of her father, the long dictatorship of the usurper and quasi-mythological 'dragon' Zia ul-Haq, and her own incarceration, persecution, and exile. On the other hand, she courageously fought for her rights, and the dictator's unexpected death in an air crash appeared as heavenly punishment and a sign from above that she was right. Her triumphal homecoming in a halo of victory over evil and the salvation of the nation was a discovered 'Grail' of sorts.

In Benazir's life, the number of extraordinary events and sensational facts was a lot higher than average; they were more than sufficient to give good grounds for mythologizing her autobiography. Her life includes the mythologems of Electra and Antigone (her vengeance for her father and brother) and astounding vicissitudes that bring ancient Fate to mind.

In her books, and especially in her collection of speeches, messages and interviews, *The Way Out*, intended for a local Pakistani audience, Benazir uses the corresponding rhetoric of the genre. These include such expressions as 'clarion calls', the 'night of the tyrant', the 'streets painted in blood' and other lofty metaphors that are the hallmarks of poetic rather than political style.

‘We must face the oppressor, the Tyrant, the Usurper, the Unjust in whatever fashion or manner he manifests himself. The martyr is the life of history and history is woven of the threads of revolution. . . . But how fragile it is. How easily it is crushed. How easily the crystal that dazzled the rainbow colour in the morning light vanishes,’ she says, as if trying to emotionally mesmerize or cast a spell on the reader or listener.²

The martyr (*shaheed*) is, of course, her father, whose execution became the source of many of Benazir’s attitudes and actions. She continues to pile on the hyperboles: ‘The same dedicated workers whose courage is higher than the mountains and whose dedication is deeper than the oceans are even now ready to come forward and to sacrifice, inspired by Shaheed Bhutto, and in the manner of sacrifice known only to the political descendants of Muslim Martyrs.’³ The purely political murder of Benazir’s father was always seen by her and her associates as martyrdom for faith, the highest spiritual feat in Islam: this was the main mythologem that she used when speaking before a Pakistani audience.

Moreover, she made this mythologem more concrete, rendering it as clear as possible for her fellow countrymen and Muslims all over the world: ‘In every generation, Shiite Muslims believe, there is a Karbala, a re-enactment of the tragedy that befell the family of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), after his death in AD 640. Many in Pakistan have come to believe that the victimisation of the Bhutto family and our supporters was the Karbala of our generation.’⁴

Benazir is speaking here about the main historical event of Shiite Islam: the death of Imam Hussain, the Prophet's grandson, and a small group of his relatives and associates in an unequal battle with the army of Caliph Yazid, whom the Shiites consider to be a villain and usurper. The battle took place on the tenth day (*ashura*) of the Muslim month of Muharram in the year AD 680 in Karbala (a city in modern Iraq).

The Shiites assert that 'every day is *ashura* and every land is Karbala', suggesting that a person must remain in constant readiness to fight and die as a martyr for the faith. For Shiites, Hussain was not a simple fighter and martyr for the faith. He was, above all, an Imam or a rightful successor of the Prophet endowed with divine grace, i.e. the incarnation of Islam. His martyrdom is widely interpreted by Shiites as a symbol of the struggle against any injustice, tyranny, and oppression. They believe the Battle of Karbala was between the forces of Good and Evil—with Hussain representing Good—while Yazid represented Evil. In Shiite Islam, Imams are the true leaders of the Muslims, models of piety, and the authentic transmitters and interpreters of Quranic knowledge. The first Imam was the Prophet's son-in-law Ali, a military hero who killed the enemies of Islam with his double-edged sword Zulfikar, in honour of which Benazir's father was named.

Divine grace passed from Ali to Hasan and Hussain, his two sons from the Prophet's daughter Fatima who had been designated as Muslim leaders at birth. The death of the Imams (all the Imams were killed, except for the twelfth

and last Imam al-Mahdi, who mysteriously disappeared) enriched Shiite Islam with the notion of martyrdom for the faith, and the motif of suffering became an integral part of their mourning rituals. For Benazir, this mythological interpretation of the early history of Islam was literally bred-in-the-bone, as her mother was a Shiite Iranian. The metaphor of Karbala was realized several more times in Benazir's life: during her triumphant procession down the streets of Pakistani cities, her jeep was surrounded by a 'living shield' of young people who called themselves *jaan-nisar-e Benazir*, i.e. ready to sacrifice their lives for Bhutto. That's why she had good reason for identifying this mythologem of Shiite Islam with the biography of her family without foreseeing, of course, that her own death would provide new evidence for this identification.

The recognition that her mission was to restore democracy came to Benazir as a certain mystic experience of obtaining secret knowledge or a blessing from a deceased relative that was, moreover, received at the cemetery: 'Now, in the nightmare that had engulfed Pakistan, his cause had become my own. I had felt it as I stood by my father's grave, felt the strength and conviction of his soul replenishing me. At that moment I pledged to myself that I would not rest until democracy returned to Pakistan.'⁵ Tellingly enough, Corazon Aquino also said that it was the spirit of her deceased husband that had blessed her to fight dictatorship when she was praying at his grave on her knees.

Nevertheless, Benazir Bhutto presented herself in such a mythological guise only in Pakistan. This was her image

'for domestic purposes' or, so to say, her *desi* image. This polysemantic word *desi* is employed by South Asians to denote everything that is local, national, and regional, as opposed to universal, cosmopolitan, and global. Benazir took on a totally different image before the international community and mass media and before Oxford intellectuals and American senators. She appeared as a modern and broad-minded democratic leader, who clearly formulated her convictions, spoke the language of western political scientists, advocated the modernization of Islam and its reconciliation with western ideology, and showed her determination to be a reliable partner for the US in its fight against terrorism—in a word, she positioned herself as the outpost of universal liberal values in conservative Pakistan.

Whereas Benazir preached democracy and social equity 'within Islam' to her compatriots, she requested that western readers separate her as a politician from all negative associations with Islamic countries and their leaders: 'I am a woman proud of my cultural and religious heritage. I feel a special personal obligation to contrast the true Islam—the religion of tolerance and pluralism—with the caricature of my faith that terrorists have hijacked. I know that I am a symbol of what the so-called 'Jihadists', Taliban and al-Qaeda, most fear. I am a female political leader fighting to bring modernity, communication, education, and technology to Pakistan.'⁶ Here, the words 'Taliban' and 'al-Qaeda' are catchwords to evoke the understanding and sympathy of western readers.

As we see, one can make a 'realistic' and objective portrait of Benazir Bhutto only by superimposing the two images. Naturally, Bhutto did not consciously try to mislead her compatriots or foreign readers. Patriarchal and modern-activist types of political cultures (to both of which Bhutto belonged) simply speak different languages and understand the same meanings in different ways. For example, in Pakistan the word 'secularization' always has the connotations of 'atheism' and 'infidelity', which are a real bogey for Muslims.

The view that secularization is not the persecution of religion but simply the lack of state or social compulsion to practice religion was dismissed as atheistic casuistry by Bhutto. When she attended philosophy courses at Harvard, Bhutto was surprised to learn that one of the sources of secularism was the teaching of the great twelfth-century Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes), who introduced the notion of the 'double truth' in philosophy. Double-truth theory is the view that religion and philosophy, as separate sources of knowledge, might arrive at contradictory truths without detriment to either.

As the creator of her own myth, Benazir had three main motifs at her disposal. The first motif, deeply rooted in her biography, was connected with the martyr cult of Shiite Imams and was partly understandable: the number and gravity of the losses that she suffered led her to view her spiritual mission as *shahadat* or martyrdom for the faith. This was all the more true as her desire to sacrifice herself for a lofty cause stemmed from her father. In 1945, several

years before the creation of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, still a schoolboy, wrote a letter to Jinnah with the following words: 'Being still in school, I am unable to help the establishment of our sacred land. But the time will come when I will even sacrifice my life for Pakistan.'

The second motif was the presumption of honour understood as a traditional and absolute value in her family and passed down from generation to generation. Benazir wrote, 'I loved hearing these family stories, as did my brothers Mir Murtaza and Shah Nawaz, who naturally identified with their namesakes. The adversities faced by our ancestors formed our own moral code, just as my father had intended. 'Loyalty. Honour. Principle.'⁸ This motif was also part of the family milieu in which she was brought up and which still lived to an extent by feudal and tribal customs.

Benazir's third autobiographical motif was the most difficult to mythologise. She formulated it as follows: 'I was a symbol of democracy, and that responsibility weighed heavily on my shoulders.'⁹ Moreover, she emphasised that democracy was just as hereditary and innate to her family as the readiness to sacrifice oneself for lofty causes or the notion of honour. She considered the years of her father's leadership to be the Golden Age of Pakistan, and himself the ideal model of a democratic leader. She wrote, 'In 1972, we climbed the highest mountains and built the biggest bridges because of our leadership. We had a brilliant leader, a popular leader, a strong leader, a man who, for his

principles and his motherland, would fight and fight and fight.’¹⁰

Here, Benazir was exaggerating, to say the least. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto did indeed come to power through democratic elections rather than a military coup. Nevertheless, he was not a democrat in a true (western) sense but a proponent of tough measures, as shown by his crackdown on Baloch nationalists. Earlier, Bhutto had categorically refused to recognize the victory of the Bengali nationalist leader Mujibur Rahman at the 1970 elections and threatened to ‘break the legs’¹¹ of every parliamentary member from the PPP who dared to attend the opening of the National Assembly where the Bengali party Awami League (AL) had received the majority of the seats.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s political ideals are shown, not only by the monuments that he erected in Larkana but also by the reading list that he recommended to his daughter and that included Napoleon’s memoirs together with the works of Bismarck, Lenin, Atatürk, and Mao Zedong. None of these was a model democrat. Bhutto considered Napoleon to be ‘the most complete man in history’ and continued to read his memoirs during his last prison term.

Benazir apparently recalled Napoleon’s habit of sleeping on the floor as a true soldier when she recounted at different meetings how her father refused to sleep on a bed during the Indian-Pakistani talks in Simla. “I cannot sleep in a bed in India,” he [told me], “when our Prisoners of War have nothing to sleep on in the camps but the ground.”¹²

Given Bhutto's well-known sybaritic habits and his passion for French cologne, antique furniture, and expensive clothing, it is difficult to believe this story of his asceticism.

Curiously enough, Bhutto's reading list did not include the speeches of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, whom he had held in profound respect since his youth. Still, in real politics, he preferred to emulate Ataturk and Sukarno, who were not just 'fathers of nations' but also military men, cult heroes and 'supermen'. The leftist British journalist and analyst Tariq Ali notes that, 'In Pakistan's military academies the usual soldier heroes are Napoléon, de Gaulle, and Atatürk.'¹³

Benazir could distort historical facts to support her father's policies. In particular, speaking of a past religious harmony in Pakistan, she wrote, 'For my generation in Pakistan, the differences between the sects of Islam seemed insignificant. We were brought up to believe that all Muslims believe in one Islam, face in one direction to pray, recite one Quran, and follow the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as the last Prophet. Tolerance within our own religion, and with other religions, was the touchstone of our belief.'¹⁴

Nevertheless, anyone who is familiar with Pakistani history knows that in 1974 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto banned the Ahmadiyya community from professing Islam, in an effort to obtain the support of religious parties and the financial assistance of Saudi Arabia, and even made an amendment to the constitution to this end. Ahmadiyya read the same Quran, revered the Prophet, and observed all the precepts of Islam, yet their founder

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) considered himself to be the ‘Promised Mahdi’, who shall come before the Last Judgment according to Muslims, and the ‘Promised Messiah’.

Bhutto’s harsh and opportunistic decision led to the oppression and the violation of the civil rights of members of the Ahmadiyya community and opened the way to persecution of other religious minorities in Pakistan, including Christians and Hindus—a practice that continues to this day. Of course, no ‘unified’ Islam had ever existed since the split of the early community into Sunnites and Shiites, yet Bhutto did his share in aggravating the conflict between different religious groups within Pakistan.

Founded on personal authority and charisma, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s style of leadership weakened the spirit of his party, encouraged the rise of careerists and sycophants, and opened the way for his enemies, including Zia ul-Haq. Bhutto became the victim of a terrible injustice; death washed all superficial negative traits from his image and turned him into a martyr. For over thirty years after his execution, the entire country and especially its poorest citizens bemoaned his fate.

As a result of this tragedy, the PPP began to be treated as a ‘family heirloom’ (in the words of Tariq Ali), which benefited neither the party nor the country. This situation gave the members of the Bhutto family—Benazir, her mother, and her brother Mir Murtaza—major opportunities and resources, including votes. However, the trauma of

Bhutto's trial and execution radicalised his daughter and marginalised his sons, giving their political activities a deeply personal and preconceived motivation (something 'human, all too human', to cite Nietzsche). Thus, the conception of the structure of modern democratic society that Benazir got from the well-known Harvard professor John Womack became intermingled in her consciousness with the Muslim tradition and 'tribal' legends.

Benazir Bhutto's autobiography offers a 'mythological' interpretation only of those facts and events that are connected with her political career, period of struggle, ordeals, victories, and defeats. When she recalls her carefree childhood and youth, she, just as other memoirists, idealizes the past and colours it with the gentle pastel tones of nostalgia while preserving an intonation of heartfelt sincerity.

Born in Karachi on 21 June 1953, Benazir was the eldest child in the family. The same year, her father returned from Oxford, where he had read law at Christ Church (he had previously studied at the University of California in the USA). Benazir's mother, Nusrat Ispahani (1929–2011), hailed from a family of rich industrialists of Iranian origin, whose views were a lot more liberal and cosmopolitan than the feudal code of the Sindhi *Wadero*.

Benazir usually took pride in her Iranian roots, particularly in the fact that her mother's family came from Isfahan, which Pakistanis consider to be the model of a cultural capital. However, when the political circumstances

required it, she could slightly correct the nationality of her mother, as was the case when she spoke before émigré Kurdish politicians in Rome in 2003. She said at that time, 'My mother's Kurdish culture played a big role in my becoming prime minister. I naturally have a great interest in the problems of the Kurdish people, and a solution of democracy and peace absolutely has to be found'.¹⁵

In her mother's family, women did not observe the *purdah*, did not wear the hijab, and drove cars themselves. Zulfikar and Nusrat met at someone's wedding, fell in love, and got married in 1951. Zulfikar had to show great firmness of character to make his parents accept the fact that he was marrying a Shiite girl of his own choice.

Nusrat was a tall and slim beauty and passed down her graceful stature and good looks to her elder daughter. From her, Benazir also inherited fair skin, which is considered beautiful in South Asia, and a rosy complexion. This explains Benazir's childhood nickname 'Pinkie', which was used by her close friends and family to the end of her life. Benazir's parents were unlikely to have ever seen (even in reproduction) Thomas Lawrence's classic portrait *Pinkie* (1794), which depicts a lovely dark-haired girl of the age of ten or so. Otherwise, Benazir would have certainly mentioned this origin of her nickname.

Immediately after Benazir was born, her grandparents built a spacious two-storey mansion near the seashore in Karachi, which became the family's city residence. In Pakistan and abroad, the mansion is simply known by its

address '70 Clifton'. Zulfikar and Nusrat's four children, Benazir, Mir Murtaza (1954–1996), Shah Nawaz (1958–1985), and Sanam (b.1957), grew up here in a tropical garden cooled by breezes from the Arabian Sea. Benazir, whose name means 'without peer', was named after an aunt who died young, while the boys were named after their grandfather and great-grandfather.

Benazir got an English primary and secondary education, and her first language as a child was English. 'At three I was sent to Lady Jennings' nursery school, then at five to one of the top schools in Karachi, the Convent of Jesus and Mary (CJM). Instruction at CJM was in English, the language we spoke at home more often than my parents' native languages of Sindhi, Persian, or the national language of Urdu.'¹⁶

Benazir and her younger sister Sanam spent several years in a girls' boarding school of the former British Mission in the Murree Hills, where they were taught by Irish nuns. Nevertheless, all Bhutto children got a traditional education, reading the Quran and learning Arabic at home in the evenings under the guidance of a *maulwi* teacher. Such a 'western-eastern' educational system still exists in well-to-do Pakistani families, making the children of the elite bilingual and giving them a dual cultural identity.

In 1963, Bhutto became Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Benazir's interests ceased to be infantile. Her father took her along to meetings with official delegations visiting Pakistan and wrote letters to her at her boarding school,

explaining the political situation in the world. 'Safely back at home, the talk turned to politics even more. Terms such as "cold war" and "arms embargo" had already become part of our dimly understood vocabulary as small children. We were as familiar with hearing the results of roundtable conferences and summit meetings as other children were with World Cup Cricket scores. But after my father broke with Ayub Khan in 1966, the words "civil liberties" and "democracy" were the ones that came up most, words which were mythical to most Pakistanis.'¹⁷ The main 'message' of this excerpt is that democracy allegedly became a key and very real notion for Benazir, a thirteen-year-old girl at the time. If this is no exaggeration, then one can say that the Bhutto children were politicized extremely early.

From this time on, events began to speed up in Benazir's life as in an accelerated video. In 1966, her father resigned on account of differences with Ayub Khan; in 1967, the PPP was founded, and the house at 70 Clifton was turned into the party's headquarters; a year later, Bhutto was arrested. Released after a few months, he went with his family to Larkana. Here, sitting in the car next to her father, Benazir heard for the first time the crowd shouting '*Jiye Bhutto!*' (Long Live Bhutto!).

This noisy slogan (*na'ra-e-Bhutto*) would accompany her as a battle cry and blessing for the remainder of her life. Later she wrote, '*Jiye Bhutto*. It's a lovely word. It's warm and wonderful. It lifts the heart. It elevates the spirit. . . . It means so much to us; it drives us on. It makes us reach for the stars and the moon.'¹⁸ She was also witness to the

first assassination attempt against her father. In 1969, Ayub Khan resigned on account of mass protests, ceding power to the new military dictator Yahya Khan, who declared martial law in Pakistan.

Nevertheless, Benazir's life turned in another direction at this time: after graduating from school, she enrolled in Harvard University and left tumultuous Pakistan for a few years. Benazir, who had not yet turned sixteen, enrolled at the university with the help of the prominent economist and former US ambassador to India John Kenneth Galbraith (1908–2006), whose son Peter, a diplomat, subsequently came to Benazir's aid on several occasions at the most dramatic moments of her life.

Before Benazir's departure for the US, Bhutto gave her several exhortations which she interpreted, as was her wont, as evidence of her father's democratic principles: 'Never forget that the money it is costing to send you comes from the land, from the people who sweat and toil on those lands. You will owe a debt to them, a debt you can repay with God's blessing by using your education to better their lives.'¹⁹ In her father's words, which deeply moved her, one senses the patronizing paternalistic attitude of a landowner towards his dependent tenants, as the improvement of their living conditions depended wholly on the *Wadero* and did not require a Harvard degree.

Benazir entered Radcliffe College, which had been founded in 1879, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at a time when girls were not accepted to Harvard. In 1904, a popular historian

wrote of the college's genesis: 'It set up housekeeping in two unpretending rooms in the Appian Way, Cambridge. . . . Probably in all the history .of colleges in America there could not be found a story so full of colour and interest as that of the beginning of this woman's college. The bathroom of the little house was pressed into service as a laboratory for physics, students and instructors alike making the best of all inconveniences. Because the institution was housed with a private family, generous mothering was given to the girls when they needed it.'²⁰

Famous Radcliffe alumni included the American writer Gertrude Stein, the Canadian feminist writer Margaret Atwood, the deaf and blind political activist and public figure Helen Keller, the actress Edith Sedgwick (Andy Warhol's muse), and the current Japanese crown princess Masako. Radcliffe students stood out for their independent views, wit, intellectuality, and a marked indifference to outer appearance. This image was embodied on the screen by the Radcliffe student Jenny, the main character in the movie *Love Story* (1970) by Arthur Hiller. The film was shot at Radcliffe and Harvard and got an Oscar for Francis Lai's hit song, *Where Do I Begin?*

At Harvard, Benazir experienced a feeling of freedom for the first time in her life. At home, she had lived in a restricted circle of relatives and family friends in a hothouse atmosphere. American students knew very little about Pakistan and nothing at all about the Bhuttos. 'I relished the first anonymity I had had in my life. In Pakistan, the Bhutto name always brought recognition and with it a

sense of shyness for me. I never knew whether people were approaching me on my own merit—or for my family’s name. At Harvard, I was on my own for the first time.²¹ It was in America, as Benazir later said herself, that she ‘experienced democracy for the first time’. She called the time spent at Harvard the ‘happiest years’ of her life.

Benazir changed her appearance, going about with her long straight hair uncovered and wearing sweatshirts and jeans. She felt flattered when her classmates compared her with the well-known singer and pacifist Joan Baez. Apple cider and peppermint-stick ice-cream, ardent discussions of Kate Miller’s book *Sexual Politics* that became the bible of feminists, Professor Womack’s seminars on ‘Dictatorship and Revolution’, and garden parties at the Galbraiths’, whom she considered to be her mentors, gave her life a sense of novelty and joyful excitement.

For the first time in her life, she could speak with ‘male strangers’, including Peter Galbraith, whose appearance shocked her during their first meeting: ‘His hair was long, he was dressed in old and untidy clothes and he smoked cigarettes in front of his parents’.²² No one could foresee at the time that, many years later, Peter would play a key role in Benazir’s liberation from prison in Pakistan.

Another notable classmate mentioned by Benazir in her autobiography is Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the elder daughter of Senator Robert Kennedy; she subsequently became Vice Governor of Maryland. At Radcliffe, Kathleen wore the parka of her father, who had been assassinated

in 1968. This motif recurs later in the book when Benazir recounts the tragic details of her life.

After her father's execution, Benazir was given his personal belongings, including his shirt, which still smelled of Bhutto's favourite cologne, 'Shalimar'. For several months, Benazir slept with this shirt under her pillow. This autobiographical detail, one of the most poignant in the book, is also meant to draw a parallel between the Bhutto family and the powerful Kennedy clan: 'The scent of his cologne was still on his clothes, the scent of Shalimar. I hugged his *shalwar* to me, suddenly remembering Kathleen Kennedy who had worn her father's parka at Radcliffe long after the Senator had been killed. Our two families had always been compared in terms of politics. Now, we had a new and dreadful bond. That night, and for many other nights, I too tried to keep my father near me by sleeping with his shirt under my pillow.'²³

As the English saying goes, 'the devil is in the detail', and I should say that the story about 'Shalimar' puzzled me for a long time. 'Shalimar', the ingenious creation of the French perfumer Jacques Guerlain, is a sensual, spicy, and purely feminine perfume, with no male equivalent. As a dandy and bon vivant who lived in Europe for a long time, Bhutto surely knew this. I racked my brains for a long time about the peculiarity of this choice until finally one Pakistani friend told me that men in Pakistan sometimes use their wives' eau de toilette. So 'Shalimar' was most likely Nusrat's choice and shows the profound affinity that her husband felt for her.

Still, such an insignificant detail as eau de toilette can also become a family myth: in the memoirs of Benazir's niece Fatima, her assassinated father's memory also has the scent of 'Shalimar', which hardly fits such an aggressively macho personality as Mir Murtaza Bhutto.

While Benazir was still studying at Harvard, a series of events took place that radically changed her life and the life of her country. As a result of the Bengali war of independence in East Pakistan and the 1971 war with India, Pakistan lost part of its territory, and the new state of Bangladesh came into being. The same year, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became president of Pakistan. 'Pinkie from Pakistan', as Benazir was called at Harvard, instantly became a president's daughter, subject to the wary and critical attention of the entire world.

As a result of the short war with India, Pakistan lost some of its territory, half its navy, part of its treasury, and 93,000 prisoners of war who had been captured by the Indian army. United Pakistan, which had been founded by the 'Great Leader', had ceased to exist after the establishment of Bangladesh. A top-level summit in Simla in 1972 was meant to regulate the consequences of the war and the relations between the warring parties. Bhutto took his daughter, on vacation from Harvard, to the talks. He strictly told her, 'Don't look sad and don't look happy.'²⁴

This was not the first lesson in diplomacy that she received from her father. A year before the Simla summit, Benazir had accompanied her father to the UN Security Council

where the emergency situation in East Pakistan was being discussed. Benazir sat in the hotel room and answered the phone. 'Interrupt the meetings,' my father tells me. 'If the Soviets are here, tell me the Chinese are calling. If the Americans are here, tell me that the Russians are on the line or the Indians. And don't tell anyone who really is here. One of the fundamental lessons of diplomacy is to create doubt: never lay all your cards on the table.'²⁵

The talks proceeded with difficulty: India spoke to Pakistan from a position of strength. Finally, the Simla Accord was reached, and Indira Gandhi, the Indian prime minister at the time, agreed to return either the conquered Pakistani territory or the prisoners of war. Bhutto's priority was to secure the withdrawal of Indian forces from the 5,600 square miles of territory they had occupied in the Punjab and Sind.²⁶ So, behaving like a true *Wadero*, he chose to take the land, reckoning that the prisoners would become a humanitarian problem for India and that the latter would try to get rid of them itself. This basically cynical approach to the lives of fellow countrymen, who had fought for the integrity of Pakistan, bore fruit and, after spending a few years in Indian POW (Prisoner of War) camps, the prisoners were released in 1974.

At the Simla summit, as in the case of Kennedy's daughter, Benazir tried to imagine herself in the role of a famous political dynasty. She was offended by Indira's cold and aloof attitude, and she inwardly tried to find something in common between them: 'Perhaps she was recalling the diplomatic missions on which she had accompanied

her own father, I thought to myself. Was she seeing herself in me, a daughter of another statesman? Was she remembering the love of a daughter for her father, a father for his daughter? She was so small and frail. Where did her famed ruthlessness come from?²⁷

Later, in a letter to his daughter from prison, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto made a more determined comparison between Benazir and Indira Gandhi: 'The similarity, if any, lies in the fact that you, like Indira Gandhi, are making history. . . . I respect her qualities very much but I have not been one of her greatest admirers. . . . True, she became the Prime Minister of India and remained in that high office for eleven years. She might well again become the Prime Minister of India. She was called a goddess when she seized East Pakistan. Knowing all these things, I have no hesitation in saying that my daughter is more than a match for the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, the goddess of India. I am not making an emotional or subjective evaluation. It is my honest opinion. . . . Both of you are made of pure damascene steel.'²⁸

Here we are entering once again the shaky ground of 'myth-making': the feelings of a loving father are understandable, and the comparison with Indira Gandhi undoubtedly flattered the young girl that Benazir was in the 1970s, all the more as the contrast between external 'fragility' and the 'ruthlessness' of character subsequently became part of her own public image.

Nevertheless, Indira Gandhi herself, who was almost forty years older than Benazir, evidently believed that, as a politician and human being, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was no match for her father Nehru. Soon after the 1971 war, Indira had given an interview to the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci in which she made certain deprecatory remarks about Bhutto: 'You know Bhutto is not a very balanced man. When he talks, you never understand what he means.'²⁹ The comparison with the girl that blushed under Indira's intent gaze at receptions in Simla would have seemed ridiculous to her.

Generally speaking, Benazir liked to see her reflection in the lives of famous people. She wrote about her similarity to Corazon Aquino: 'We were both women from well-known landowning families who had been educated in the US. Both of us had lost loved members of our families to dictators—Mrs Aquino her husband, and I, my father and brother. Mrs Aquino had fought Marcos with "people power" to orchestrate a peaceful revolution just as I was hoping to do in Pakistan.'³⁰

Benazir's studies at Radcliffe were coming to an end, yet she did not want to leave America. She begged her father to let her do her Masters at the Fletcher Institute of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University near Harvard, yet her father insisted that she study at Oxford, his alma mater. Bhutto was afraid that Benazir would put down roots in the USA if she stayed longer. Benazir complied, yet she left America with tears in her eyes, singing to herself the words

of a popular American song, 'I'm leaving on a jet plane, don't know when I'll be back again'.

While Harvard and Radcliffe are just famous names to me, I can imagine Benazir's stay at Oxford and, in particular, at Lady Margaret Hall, down to the smallest detail. The atmosphere and customs there were very different from Harvard. On the one hand, the residence halls were Spartan: small student rooms, communal bathrooms, and no personal phones. The discipline was stricter, and one had to study harder, writing two essays a week. The student make-up was also different: classmates included scions of the British upper class, whose behaviour and clothes had little in common with the casual Harvard style. One did not see any students who looked like Peter Galbraith at Oxford. As Benazir said herself, seeing students in dark suits with carnations in their lapels made her abandon her jeans in favour of silk dresses by Annabelinda.³¹ Peter Galbraith, who came to Oxford to do his Masters, also had to change his style of dressing.

On the other hand, Oxford offered pastimes and leisure activities that had not existed in the US. On weekends, students went for picnics and boat rides on the calm river Cherwell, on whose banks Lady Margaret Hall stands. During the annual boat race on 'Eights' on the Thames, tea parties were held in the boathouses, with young men in boaters and blazers; and girls in broad-brimmed hats and flowery dresses. Festive dinners were regularly held at colleges, bringing together professors (men wore dinner jackets and women evening dresses) and a few lucky

students. A special dress code existed for exams: female students wearing white blouses, black skirts, and black gowns, walked down campus while passers-by smiled and wished them good luck.

The patriarchal simplicity of Oxford life is essentially the simplicity of aristocracy and, despite her passionate love for democracy, Benazir was fond of this lifestyle. She drove around town in her yellow MGB convertible and took friends to Shakespeare plays at Stratford-upon-Avon or for a peppermint-stick ice cream in London. In contrast to Harvard, there were many Asian students at Oxford, including Imran Khan, who was formerly a well-known cricketer and is currently a politician and leader of the political party the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (Pakistan Movement for Justice).

Just like Benazir, Imran Khan read PPE, an abbreviation that stands for 'Philosophy, Politics, Economics'. Benazir's friend Bahram Dehqani-Tafti, a talented musician and son of the Anglican Bishop of Iran, also studied in this programme. Soon after graduating from Oxford, Bahram was brutally killed in Iran, and Benazir was deeply affected by the news of his death. Oxford University has perpetuated his memory by establishing in 1981 a Bahram Dehqani-Tafti fund and scholarship at Jesus College.³²

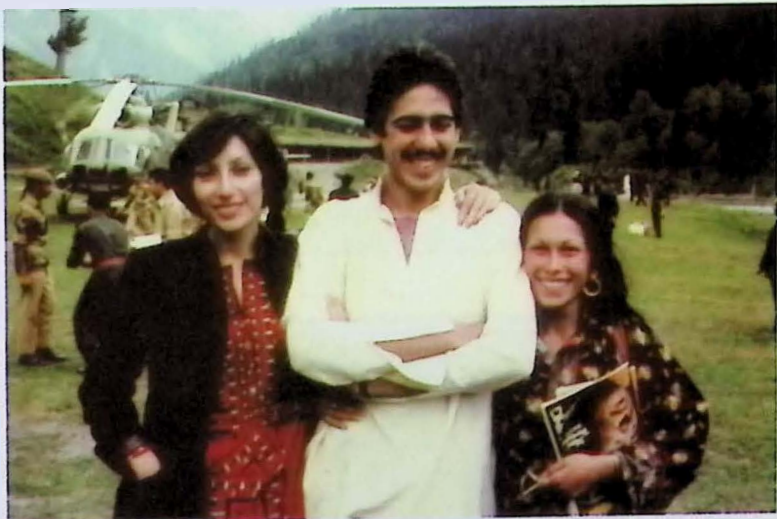
While studying at Oxford, Benazir travelled a lot, accompanying her father on state visits. At talks in the US, she received a compliment from Henry Kissinger, who called her an 'intimidating' opponent. She went to

Georges Pompidou's funeral in France and also travelled to China, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and other countries. After obtaining her Masters degree, Benazir realised that she was interested in diplomacy rather than politics and dreamed of making a career at the Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs as soon as possible. Nevertheless, her father insisted that she put in another year of post-graduate studies to receive clear-cut qualifications, so that no one could accuse him of favouritism. During her last year at Oxford, Benazir read International Law and Diplomacy.

At that time, she began to sign her letters and, in particular, her postcards to her brother, who entered Oxford a year later than her, with the English initials 'BB'. These initials may be understood as a homonym of the word *Bibi*, which is used as a polite form of address to a woman in Urdu. Benazir Bhutto is still called by this abbreviation in Pakistan.

Lady Margaret Hall, at which Benazir studied for three years, was the first women's college in Oxford University. It was founded in 1878 and named after Lady Margaret Beaufort, the fifteenth century mother of King Henry VII and patroness of several colleges (all of which were in Cambridge rather than Oxford, however). The college was established by Bishop Edward Talbot, and its first principal was Elizabeth Wordsworth, the great-niece of the renowned British poet William Wordsworth.

Lady Margaret Hall is located in the northern (residential) part of Oxford, far away from the noisy commercial streets



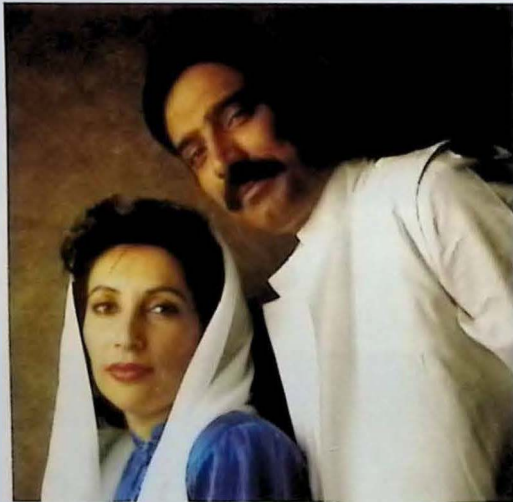
With Mir Murtaza and Sanam



In London, 1984



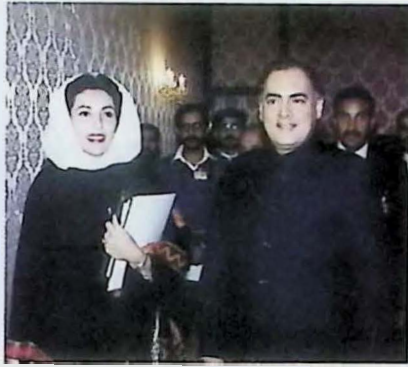
The Marriage of Benazir and Asif



With Asif Zardari



Family woman



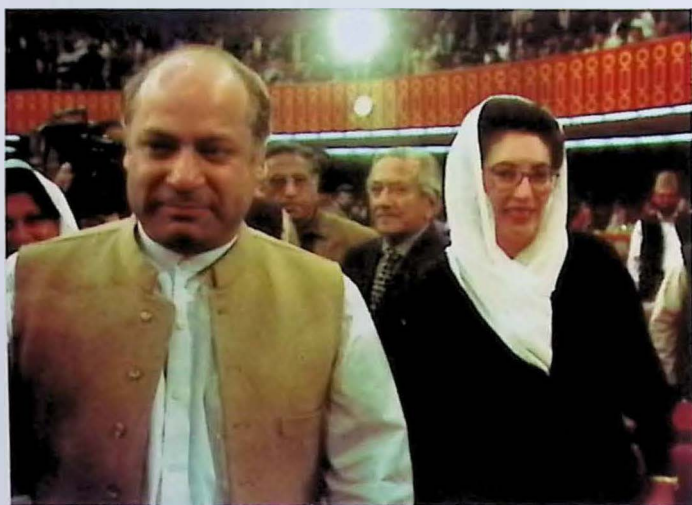
With Rajiv Gandhi



With President Bush, Barbara Bush,
and Zardari



With President Clinton



With Nawaz Sharif



At the rally

and tourist routes. It is not easy to find: it is literally shut up at the dead end of its only access alley and surrounded by manicured gardens, golf courses, and tall hedgerows, which hide its buildings and residents from outsiders. When Benazir was studying there (and until 1979), Lady Margaret Hall admitted only girls, many of whom came from the British upper classes, which explains the attention given to privacy. The alumni of Lady Margaret Hall include many writers and journalists. Although they may be not as famous as Gertrude Stein, a good half of them bear the title of Baroness or Countess.

In the centre of the college stands a castle-like complex built in red brick with white stone facings in the seventeenth-century French Renaissance style. The main structure is the Talbot Building, which contains a spacious hall, a library, and a Byzantine-style chapel in the form of a Greek cross; the three other buildings house students and tutors. The college's double-height hall decorated with carved oaken panels is a real work of art. Its walls are covered with portraits of former deans, patronesses, and principals painted by well-known British artists.

In Oxford, Benazir made many friends, including Victoria Schofield, who became her associate and kindred spirit for the rest of her life. Daughter of Brian Betham Schofield, Vice Admiral of the British Navy and a World War II hero, Victoria is a well-known political journalist, historian, and writer, who specializes in 'hot spots': warring Afghanistan, restless Kashmir, and problem-ridden Pakistan. She has written many books on armed conflicts in these regions, as

well as the first book to be published about Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's trial and execution. With the exception of family members, Victoria Schofield appears more often than anyone else in Benazir's autobiography.

Victoria and Benazir simultaneously joined the Oxford Union, the oldest British debating society, which was founded in 1823 and which members included many famous political figures. This elite club of debaters and public speakers, mentioned by Dickens on many occasions, is a quintessence of British traditionalism and, at the same time, a bulwark of human rights, including the freedom of speech. It holds both closed debates and open competitive discussions and also invites orators.

Election as president of the Oxford Union almost automatically signifies a public or political career. The list of past presidents of the Oxford Union has included Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India; British Prime Ministers William Gladstone, Herbert Asquith, and Edward Heath; Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury; Boris Johnson, the current mayor of London; and prominent ministers and members of parliament.

People from former British colonies sometimes became presidents of the Union, too. The first Pakistani to be elected to this position was Tariq Ali in 1965. From the early 1970s, women began to ballot for president of the Oxford Union. Victoria and Benazir took up the challenge and began to vie for the presidency. Benazir won the elections on her second try, to her great delight: 'My

victory in December of 1976 upset what was really an old boys' club, where only ten years before women had been restricted to the upstairs gallery and where the membership ratio still ran at seven men to one woman, and surprised everyone, even my father.³³

Benazir was not the first female president of the Oxford Union,³⁴ and so her words about 'upsetting an "old boys' club"' were somewhat exaggerated. Nevertheless, she became the first Asian woman on this post and took pride in it for her entire life. When she appeared at the Oxford Union as an invited speaker in 2000, she said, 'I was in England when Margaret Thatcher was the first woman to head a major political party, threatening to overthrow a male-dominated preserve. I was determined to do the same in Pakistan. I was told that the Oxford Union was a mini House of Commons. So I joined the Oxford Union. I was told that politics, everywhere in the world, was summed up in two words: push and pull. So I did and became President of the Oxford Union. And then I went on to become Prime Minister.'³⁵

In accordance with the club's statute, Benazir served as president of the Oxford Union for three months in 1977 and was then replaced by Victoria Schofield. Victoria is visibly the daughter of a British admiral: she is not afraid of anything or anybody and has stood at her friend's side even in the most dangerous moments. She used every means at her disposal to attend Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's trial and subsequently incorporated her first-hand notes and observations into her book, *Bhutto: Trial and Execution*

(1979). After the trial, she accompanied Benazir on a dangerous trip through the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), where Benazir spoke out in her father's defence before PPP activists and tribal chiefs. During Benazir's imprisonment, Victoria launched a broad campaign in Great Britain and beyond in her support, wrote articles for the mass media and sent letters to members of parliament.

On Benazir's thirtieth birthday on 21 June 1983, the members of the Oxford Union came together at Victoria's initiative and observed a minute of silence in honour of the 'prisoner of conscience'. 'An honour normally afforded an ex-president only when he or she dies,'³⁶ noted Benazir. Finally, Victoria was next to her friend during the first assassination attempt against Benazir, the bomb attack in Karachi in October 2007. They were sitting in the same armoured truck when two powerful blasts occurred, as a result of which 180 supporters of Bhutto were killed and 600 were injured. Benazir and Victoria escaped death by a miracle.

While working on this book, I met a lot of politicians, journalists, and diplomats who had known Benazir Bhutto closely. Naturally, each of them had their own recollections and assessments of Bhutto, ranging from adoration to total rejection. I found Victoria Schofield's position, which combines a personal affection for Benazir as a person with a sober attitude towards her political heritage, to be the most objective and was influenced by it when developing my own attitude.

In June 1977, Benazir's studies at Oxford came to an end. All her classmates whose names were in her address book came to the farewell party in the gardens of Queen Elizabeth House. 'Over bowls of strawberries and cream, we reminisced and exchanged addresses,' recollected Benazir.³⁷ The next day, she and her brother Mir Murtaza left London for Rawalpindi. Her younger brother Shah Nawaz came home from a Swiss boarding school and her sister Sanam returned from Harvard. This was the last time that all the members of the family came together.

Notes

1. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, London: Simon and Schuster, 1989. The book was also published with the title: *Benazir Bhutto: Daughter of Destiny*, New York: Touchstone Books, 1990.
2. Benazir Bhutto, *The Way Out: Interviews, Impressions, Statements and Messages*, Karachi: Mahmood Publications, 1988, 135.
3. *Ibid.*, 137.
4. *Ibid.*, 164.
5. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 18.
6. *Ibid.*, vi.
7. <http://www.bhutto.org/bhutto-trial-1.php>
8. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 31.
9. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2008, 191.
10. Benazir Bhutto, *The Way Out*, 178.
11. Salman Taseer, *Bhutto: A Political Biography*, Lahore: Asia Book Corp of Amer, 1980, 122.
12. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 117.
13. Tariq Ali, *The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power*, London: Pocket Books, 2009, 166.
14. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation*, 56.

15. 'Benazir Bhutto announces she is Kurdish', <http://www.saradistribution.com/butto.htm>
16. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 33.
17. Ibid., 40.
18. Benazir Bhutto, *The Way Out*, 77.
19. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 45.
20. Mary Caroline Crawford, *The College Girl of America*, Boston: L. C., 1904, 99–100.
21. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 48.
22. Ibid., 50.
23. Ibid., 5.
24. Ibid., 60.
25. Ibid., 57.
26. 'Indo-Pak Shimla Agreement: 40 years later', <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/indopak-shimla-agreement-40-years-later/268913-3.html>
27. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 63.
28. 'My dearest daughter: a letter from the death-cell', http://www.bhutto.org/Acrobat/Dearest_Daughter%5B1%5D.pdf
29. Cited from Salman Taseer, op. cit., 136.
30. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 316.
31. A brand of women's clothing created by the British fashion designer Belinda Harty; its headquarters and boutique are located in Oxford.
32. <http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/current-students/bahram-dehqani-tafti-memorial-prize-for-an-essay-on-ppe>
33. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 76.
34. Geraldine Jones became the first woman to be elected president of the Oxford Union in 1968. She was followed in 1971 by Susan Kremer, who subsequently became member of the British parliament. Bhutto was the third.
35. Benazir Bhutto, 'Is Islam compatible with the West?', <http://www.ppp.org.pk/mbb/speeches/speeche35.html>
36. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 310.
37. Ibid., 312.

5

A Life Not Chosen

Benazir's autobiography begins with the words, 'I didn't choose this life; it chose me.' They are a good reflection of the vicissitudes of her fortunes after 1977. For many years she, like the protagonist of some ancient tragedy, resisted the blows of destiny, showing remarkable strength of mind for a young woman of her origins. Disregarding the cliché 'you can't rewrite history', a forecast based on Benazir's ancestry, talents, and high-quality education suggests that she had a very promising life ahead.

Had there not been a military coup in Pakistan and had her father remained at his post, Benazir would have quickly advanced her diplomatic career and might have either become ambassador to her beloved US, like Sherry Rehman, or minister of external affairs, like Hina Rabbani-Khar. Most likely, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto would have made his elder son his political successor while giving Benazir the freedom to lead a less risky and stressful life. In any case, the burden of 'dynastic responsibility' would have been divided between her and her brothers.

Benazir was caught in the mincing machine of her country's history when she was only twenty-six, an age that is considered already ripe for a Pakistani bride yet still

leaves some room for manoeuvre. The years during which other young women get married and start a family, she spent in prison. Her father would have hardly permitted her to marry someone of her own choice: her brothers and sister did, yet none of their marriages were long-lasting. Nevertheless, her parents would not have forced her to marry, either; they would have found her a good match, someone well educated, and not loathsome. Moreover, she would not have faced the necessity of marrying simply in order to have the proper status for a Pakistani woman.

Nevertheless, if Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had not been martyred, his daughter would have stood no chance of heading a political party and becoming prime minister, although she would have probably lived longer. Her pre-programmed course of life was abruptly halted and changed by two events: the military coup and the execution of her father. 'On the day my father was arrested, I changed from a girl to a woman. . . . On the day he was murdered, I understood that my life was to be Pakistan, and I accepted the mantle of leadership of my father's legacy and my father's party.'¹

One of the first people that Benazir met upon her return to Pakistan from Oxford was her family's evil genius, General Zia ul-Haq. To his own woe, Bhutto had appointed him Chief of Army Staff. Recalling this meeting, Benazir arranged everything on the scale of good and evil, as was her custom: 'The General standing in front of me was a short, nervous, ineffectual-looking man whose pomaded hair was parted in the middle and lacquered to his head.

He looked more like an English cartoon villain than an inspiring military leader.²

On 5 July 1977, this 'cartoon villain' whom Bhutto had mocked openly, referring to him as his 'monkey general', organized a military coup that led to the imposition of martial law in Pakistan and the arrest of Bhutto, the legitimate prime minister. The military coup was preceded by an economic downturn, a crisis of power, growing tension in society and numerous protest actions by the consolidated opposition that had joined to form the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA).

By the end of Bhutto's rule, Pakistan lived in an atmosphere of mutual hatred. Separatists in Balochistan contested the central government; feudal landowners and tribal chiefs fought against reformers; religious fundamentalists opposed modernizers; Sunnis clashed with Shiites, and socialists with capitalists; poor provinces envied the rich Punjab; 'native' inhabitants loathed the *muhajirs* (migrants from India), while speakers of regional languages hated the official Urdu language.

Above this chaos of irresolvable contradictions stood the army, the only well-organized and working structure in the country. In 1977, thirty years after Independence, Pakistan continued to be an artificial and patched-up state that was, moreover, losing its initial energy of resistance to external and internal pressures.

This energy of resistance that had been imparted to Pakistan by Jinnah's iron will was mentioned by Bhutto in his political testament *If I Am Assassinated*: 'I entirely agree that the people of Pakistan will not tolerate foreign hegemony. On the basis of the self-same logic, the people of Pakistan would never agree to an internal hegemony. The two hegemonies complement each other. If our people meekly submit to internal hegemony, a priori, they will have to submit to external hegemony. This is so because the strength and power of external hegemony is far greater than that of internal hegemony. If the people are too terrified to resist the weaker force, it is not possible for them to resist the stronger force. The acceptance of or acquiescence in internal hegemony means submission to external hegemony.'³ In this excerpt, Bhutto was obviously referring to the dominance of Washington as 'external hegemony' and that of the Pakistani army as the 'internal' one.

Bhutto believed that the army supported him, yet the military 'did not want Bhutto to win the new elections, which would mean a throwback to his authoritarian rule, notorious populism with the use of the socialist phraseology, catering to the votes of workers and peasants and encouragement of the illusions of the lower strata of the society.'⁴

Bhutto's fatal mistake in appointing his future hangman to such an important position was wholly in keeping with the family tradition of overestimating one's forces

and underestimating the possibilities of one's opponents. Just as his father Sir Shah Nawaz had once called his political opponent a 'jackal' while comparing himself to a 'lion', Zulfikar Ali Bhutto considered Zia ul-Haq to be a simpleton and martinet who was personally devoted to him and incapable of conspiracy or any other independent decision.

The government of Zia ul-Haq was the third military regime in Pakistan (after Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan), yet it was a lot harsher and longer-lasting than the preceding juntas. Zia declared that, as Pakistan had been founded in the name of Islam, an Islamic system of legislation (the notorious *hudud* laws) and governance had to be introduced. Islam became the dominant ideology, supplanting the 'Islamic socialism' of the preceding period. 'Bread, Clothing, and Home' (*Roti, Kapra, Makan*), the populist and socially oriented motto of the Bhutto government, was replaced by army motto 'Faith, piety, and struggle in the way of God' (*iman, taqwa, jibad fi sabil Allah*). Representatives of religious parties, including the Jamaat-i-Islami, got top positions in government bodies, while military men got high civilian posts. This alliance between the government, army and religious fundamentalists turned Pakistan into an international centre of political Islam and, to all intents and purposes, a theocratic state.

After seizing power in the country, Zia ul-Haq suspended the constitution, promising to hold 'free and fair' elections within 90 days. Unsurprisingly, elections were postponed time and again for an indefinite period. This was largely

due to the Afghanistan factor, which helped to consolidate the military regime, with all its repression and its bans on democratic liberties, including the right to elections. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, Pakistan turned into a 'frontline state and started to take an active part in the affairs related to Afghanistan. Due to Islamabad's all-round support for the cause of the Afghan Mujahideen for fighting the new Kabul government, . . . it secured assistance from the United States and the entire Western world.⁵ Western media began to whitewash the image of the dictator, while Margaret Thatcher went so far as to call Zia ul-Haq 'the last bastion of the free world'⁶ after visiting an Afghan refugee camp in Pakistan.

Bhutto was arrested, arousing the indignation of his supporters (especially PPP members) and the jubilation of his opponents. Benazir recalled her father's arrest in detail; this was the first time in her life that she had felt so lost. She saw her family honour being attacked. In her description of how military men searched their home, Benazir's natural feelings of fear and anxiety for herself and her family were neutralized, in the Bhutto familial style, by irony and a demonstrative contempt for danger: 'The man who had jumped around my room destroying things is now jumping around my parents' room, trying to wrestle my father's crossed ceremonial swords off the bedroom door. . . . In an image that seems particularly grotesque, a fat thug of a man is lolling on one of Mummy's delicate blue and white brocade Louis XV chairs.'⁷

The 'fat thug' was Saghir Anwar, Head of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA); previously, Zia ul-Haq was an 'English cartoon villain'. The arrogant character of the Bhuttos manifested itself in such reactions: in the face of violence, they deride and disparage their offenders from the height of their innate superiority. On the one hand, Benazir describes the hideousness of Pakistani life: the 'fat thug of a man' who intruded into their home and the 'short man with pomaded hair'; on the other, she mentions Louis XV furniture, Napoleon's memoirs, Guerlain perfumes, and other artefacts that had become a precious part of her private life.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was released and then arrested once again: it was clear that the regime lacked serious grounds to do away with him once and for all. And here an old case about the murder of a certain Mohammed Ahmed Kasuri, father of the parliamentarian Ahmed Raza Kasuri, resurfaced. A former supporter of Bhutto and a member of the PPP from its inception, Raza Kasuri was an eccentric person, and for this reason, was often derided by his party colleagues. With his characteristic manner of poking fun at the people that he didn't like, Bhutto mocked Kasuri as 'absolute poison'.⁸ Disillusioned by Bhutto, Kasuri founded his own faction, calling it the 'Raza Progressive Group'. In 1972, he left the PPP altogether. He criticised the project of the new constitution as being 'anti-Islamic' and accused Bhutto of usurping the authority of the 'Great Leader'.

In a word, Kasuri's public behaviour became a headache for Bhutto. At one parliamentary session, Bhutto lost his temper

and publicly attacked the offensive politician by saying that he would not tolerate Kasuri's 'nuisance'.⁹ During the trial, this incident was invoked as evidence of Bhutto's dislike for Kasuri and a motive for the assassination attempt.

In November 1974, unknown people fired on the car in which Kasuri was riding at night with members of his family. His father, who was sitting in the front seat, was killed. At the police station, Kasuri declared that the assassins had tried to kill him and that his father had been hit by mistake. When asked whom he suspected of trying to assassinate him, Kasuri unequivocally accused Bhutto. The police refused to record such an accusation against the prime minister, yet Kasuri was a well-known politician and got his own way. Nevertheless, the case was not brought to court but was left in the police office archives until its time finally arrived.

In October 1977, proceedings were launched against Bhutto in the Lahore High Court, where he was accused of criminal conspiracy, premeditated murder and attempted murder. Although the first two articles of the Criminal Code stipulated the death penalty for such crimes, Pakistanis considered the trial to be purely political and thought that Bhutto would be acquitted for lack of evidence after spending some time in prison or that, at the worst, the charges against him would be altered.

This was the first case in South Asian history where a lawful head of government has appeared before a civilian court on charges of murder committed while he was in

office. Something similar happened in Turkey when Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was ousted during a 1960 coup, arrested, tried on the charge of corruption, sentenced to death, and hanged. However, Menderes was tried by a military tribunal, according to martial law, and not by a civilian court.

The US lawyer and human rights activist and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark (who subsequently defended Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic) assisted at the Bhutto trial. He called the trial a parody and described its atmosphere as follows: 'I [Ramsey Clark] do not believe in conspiracy theories in general, but the similarities in the staging of riots in Chile (where the CIA allegedly helped overthrow President Salvadore Allende) and in Pakistan are just too close. Bhutto was removed from power in Pakistan by force on 5 July, after the usual party on the 4th at the US Embassy in Islamabad, with US approval, if not more, by General Zia ul-Haq. Bhutto was falsely accused and brutalized for months during proceedings that corrupted the judiciary of Pakistan, before being murdered, then hanged. As Americans, we must ask ourselves this: Is it possible that a rational military leader under the circumstances in Pakistan could have overthrown a constitutional government, without at least the tacit approval of the United States?'¹⁰

As his daughter and other biographers affirm, Bhutto was convinced from the first minute of his arrest that Zia was out to kill him and that it was useless to hope for justice. Nevertheless, he refused to escape from the country while

this was still possible and remained stoic to the end. 'I'm prepared to meet God whenever He calls me,' he wrote from prison. 'My conscience is clear. What is most important to me is my name, my honour, and my place in history. And I am going to fight for that.'¹¹ And Benazir took up her father's cause: 'The fight to save his honour became my own.'¹²

Three months after the start of the trial, Bhutto protested against the nature of the proceedings, as the judge, Mushtaq Hussain, who held an old grudge against Bhutto, was clearly biased and behaved offensively towards him. The most serious witness against Bhutto was Masood Mahmood, former director of the Federal Security Forces (FSF). He declared that Bhutto had personally ordered him to kill Kasuri. Four other suspects confirmed Mahmood's testimony. During the trial, the government organized a major domestic propaganda campaign, trying to discredit the prime minister in the eyes of his countrymen by publishing 'White Papers' with the names of the victims of Bhutto and his government. In February 1979, the Pakistan Supreme Court upheld by a vote of four to three the death verdict against Bhutto.

Many heads of state made petitions in Bhutto's defence and sent requests to alleviate his sentence, including USSR General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, US President Jimmy Carter, UN General Secretary Kurt Waldheim, and Pope John Paul II. The most energetic attempt to save Bhutto was made by Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. He sent his presidential plane, together with Prime Minister Jallud,

to Pakistan with an offer to take Bhutto away to Libya. However, the prime minister and the plane waited in vain for a whole week: Zia ul-Haq refused.

Nevertheless, Bhutto's family and supporters hoped that the dictator would heed the requests of the international community at the last moment and commute the death penalty to life imprisonment. This did not take place and, at dawn on 4 April 1979, Bhutto was hanged in prison. It is said that his last words were 'Oh Lord, help me, for. . . I am innocent'.

For Zia ul-Haq, it was not enough to execute Bhutto: his family was not allowed to participate in the funeral. That day, soldiers secretly took away the prime minister's body on a 'plane to Larkana and buried it in the family graveyard at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. By an ironic twist of fate, the only family member who was allowed to pay a last tribute to Bhutto was his first, forgotten wife Amir, who lived in nearby Naudero.

Immediately after Bhutto's death, a cult began to grow around him. Two reasons for this 'beatification' (the Catholic term is used tentatively here) were on hand: Bhutto had a lot of power and popularity during his life; he died a violent death and was considered by many to be a martyr, which was sufficient to ascribe special grace (*baraka*) and miracles (*karamat*) to the deceased man. People said that the hangman who executed Bhutto went mad the same day and that the pilot of the plane that transported Bhutto's

body suddenly lost his sight and that the crew had to make an emergency landing mid-way and call for help.

Finally, it was said that a crippled boy that was brought to Bhutto's tomb suddenly stood up and started walking, while the sterile wife of a cemetery guard gave birth to a baby boy. Muslims began to make pilgrimages (*ziyarat*) to the tomb. The mausoleum that was later built by Benazir did not exist at the time, and an awning was simply stretched over the tomb. People picked up wilted rose petals from the tombstone and put them in their mouths as objects that had been in contact with a relic and that had acquired some of its grace (*tabarruk*).

'The local administrators have torn down the sign pointing to the graveyard isolated in the desert,' Benazir recalled, 'But still the people come. Police and army patrols harass them, demanding their names, writing down their number plates if they've come by car or truck, their addresses if they've made the journey on foot. Often their food is confiscated and the jugs of water put out for them by local villagers smashed. But still the people come, heaping framed photos of my father and strings of roses and marigolds on his grave in the desert.'¹³

In the years that her father spent in prison, Benazir lived between hope and despair, making feverish attempts to save his life. She was put from time to time under house arrest in Karachi, Larkana and Lahore, yet, when she was released, she travelled around the country, speaking at meetings in her father's defence. At this time, she learned

to speak before large audiences in Urdu, a language that she had not known well up until then. In the last months of his life, when the outcome of the trial became clear to him, Bhutto ordered his sons to discontinue their studies and go to Afghanistan, as he understood that they would be next on Zia's list.

The choice of Afghanistan as a place of asylum was not accidental. It was partly determined by family tradition: Bhutto's grandfather Ghulam Murtaza once hid in Afghanistan from the colonial authorities. Ubaidullah Sindhi (1872–1944), a leader of the Deoband School and one of Bhutto's historical heroes, fought British colonialism from Afghanistan. Many Baloch and Pashtun nationalists who fought different Pakistani regimes, including Bhutto's own government, had found asylum in Afghanistan. Pakistani political emigrants felt more at ease here, from the religious and ethnic standpoints, than in India or Bangladesh.

In this way, no male family members remained in the house of Bhutto in 1979, and thus all the difficult issues relating to the trial, the preservation of the party, the management of land and property, and everyday survival, were borne by Benazir. 'There was little room left in my life, in any of our lives, for tradition. In a way I had transcended gender. There was not a person who did not know the circumstances that had forced me out of [this] pattern.'¹⁴ As usual, Benazir emphasises that she had no choice.

As far back as June 1978, Bhutto wrote a long letter from prison to his daughter; it resembled a survey of modern politics, similar to Nehru's book, *Glimpses of World History*, that was compiled from his letters from prison to his daughter Indira. In his letter, Bhutto recalled, 'In the winter of 1957 when you were four years old, we were sitting on the terrace of Al-Murtaza. It was a fine morning. I had a double-barrel gun in my hand. . . . Without thought, I shot a wild parrot. When the parrot fell to the ground near the terrace you cried your eyes out. You had it buried in your presence. You cried and cried. You refused to have your meals. A dead parrot in the winter of 1957 in Larkana made a little girl weep in sorrow. Twenty-one years later, that little girl has grown into a young lady with nerves of steel to valorously confront the terror of the longest night of tyranny. Truly, you have proved beyond doubt that the blood of warriors runs in your veins.'¹⁵

For many years and on numerous occasions, Benazir would use these metaphors of the 'longest night of tyranny' and the 'blood of warriors' in her speeches. This was, no doubt, another part of the heritage that she had received from her father, as were the readiness to sacrifice herself for a higher goal and the loyalty to her family's honour.

Benazir gradually consolidated her position within the PPP, insisting on uncompromising yet peaceful resistance to the junta. In particular, she and Nusrat Bhutto, now the official PPP leaders, entered into talks with Bhutto's sworn enemies, the PNA (Pakistan National Alliance), that had opposed Bhutto at the 1977 elections. This was the origin

of the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD), which promised to become the main force opposing the regime.

Benazir's brothers, whose spiritual and ideological mentor was Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, behaved in a different manner. They organized an armed group 'Al-Zulfikar', named after their father and after the legendary vindictory sword. The group's declared aim was to 'harass and weaken the regime by targeting "traitors who had collaborated with Zia."'16

Nevertheless, the true goal of founding Al-Zulfikar was to take revenge for Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The organization was joined by hundreds of young people from the most radical wing of the PPP who managed to avoid the persecutions of the regime and make their way to Afghanistan, where training camps were set up for them in 1980.

Judging from Fatima Bhutto's book, which was based on the recollections of her father Mir Murtaza, the Bhutto brothers lived fairly well despite civil war and the entry of Soviet troops. The Afghanistan government knew about the mission of the 'elusive avengers' and did not oppose their efforts to create the Al-Zulfikar group. The brothers' 'curator' was the future Afghan president Muhammad Najibullah (1947–1996), who headed the 'state information service', i.e. the state security service, at the time. The brothers were given a house in the diplomatic district of Kabul and a car with a driver. In a spacious backyard of the house, they had barbecues, played badminton, and received guests.

The brothers could go about as they pleased and flew all over the Arab world in the search for new allies and financial support. Moreover, Mir Murtaza had his mistress Della Roufogalis, wife of Greek Junta member General Roufogalis (in prison at the time) visit him on several occasions in Kabul. The brothers tried to settle down and soon married the sisters Fauzia and Rehana Fasihuddin, daughters of a high-ranking official of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the start of the 1980s, daughters were born in both young families: Fatima to Murtaza and Fauzia, and Sassi to Shah Nawaz and Rehana. Clearly, such comfortable exile was quite unlike the conditions in the Pakistani prison where their elder sister was kept at the time.

In March 1981, Mir Murtaza and Shah Nawaz Bhutto were placed at the top of the list of Pakistan's most wanted criminals. 'Al-Zulfikar' operatives hijacked a Pakistani international airliner soon after it took off from Karachi Airport. An electrical blackout paralysed the X-ray machine, allowing the hijackers to smuggle weapons aboard the plane. The pilots were forced to fly to Kabul. There, Mir Murtaza took matters into his own hands and demanded that the Pakistani junta liberate political prisoners. One of the hostages, a young military officer, was shot to death by his captors.

After refuelling in Kabul, the plane headed for Damascus, where General Holi, a Syrian supporter of the Bhutto brothers, assumed responsibility for the operation and promised that there would be no more bloodshed. The presence of American passengers on board the plane greatly

worried Zia ul-Haq and, as a result, he liberated fifty-five Pakistani political prisoners, who were soon brought to Tripoli. Nevertheless, thousands of new prisoners of conscience soon took their place.

This operation was declared successful, and the PPP in Pakistan felt solidarity with it. After this, people began taking the Bhutto brothers' organization much more seriously. A key target for the brothers within the country was the above mentioned Mushtaq Hussain, Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, who had chaired the Bhutto trial and whose behaviour at the trial had shocked even those who had been overtly hostile towards Bhutto. He had even accused Bhutto of pretending to be a Muslim as his mother was a Hindu convert.

Mushtaq Hussain was returning to his house in an elite Lahore neighbourhood in his friend's car when Al-Zulfikar gunmen opened fire on him. The judge was not killed, yet his friend and the driver died. The judge's assassinated friend was one Choudhry Zahur Elahi, who had begged Zia ul-Haq to give him the 'sacred pen' with which he had signed Bhutto's death sentence.

Although Choudhry Zahur Elahi might not have been on Al-Zulfikar's list, the Bhutto brothers, upset that they had missed the judge by a hair, declared that they had sentenced Elahi to death as well, which may have been true. Assuming responsibility for this assassination, the brothers only aggravated the difficult plight of the Bhutto family members still remaining in Pakistan.

In the meantime, the hijacking and the international outcry that it evoked began to worry the Afghan regime, and the Bhutto brothers were asked to find themselves another place of refuge. They hastily left the country with their wives and children and, after a short stay in Syria and Libya, under the protection of their father's friends Hafez Assad and Gaddafi, settled down in Europe. For the moment, it seemed that the brothers had gotten away with the hijacking of the plane, the murder of Choudhry Zahur Elahi, and the assassination attempt against the Chief Justice. Benazir was taking the brunt of the blows from the regime.

Several days after the hijacking, Benazir was arrested and put in a solitary cell of Sukkur Central Jail. She did not know anything about the fate of her mother, who was arrested the day before. The hijacking was a real boon for the Zia ul-Haq regime: Al-Zulfikar group was declared the PPP's military wing, and thousands of rank-and-file party members who had still been at liberty were arrested, while the party's leadership (Bhutto's widow and daughter) were accused of terrorism.

Benazir found herself in a real Asiatic torture chamber, a torrid cell seething with scores of insects and with nothing but a hammock and a hole in the stone floor. The Pakistani penitentiary system had never been considered particularly humane, yet it worsened further during Zia ul-Haq's rule, when floggings were officially introduced at prisons and the torture of inmates became commonplace.

Despite her strength of mind and spirit, Benazir turned out to be physically fragile and unprepared for the hardships of confinement. She could resist the constant psychological pressure and intimidation, yet the harsh living conditions rapidly affected her health. She suffered from a chronic purulent inflammation of the middle ear, which led to intense headaches and temporary hearing loss. Her hair fell out; her gums got swollen; she could not eat anything; and she became emaciated. She began to suffer from a gynaecological disorder, and the prison doctors told her (allegedly in secret) that they suspected that she had uterine cancer. The diagnosis turned out to be wrong, yet she was subjected against her will to a diagnostic operation from which she barely recovered. Her most ardent desire was fresh water, yet nothing was let through to her.

The situation of Nusrat, who was confined in a Karachi prison, was somewhat better, as this was her home city with numerous friends and acquaintances, and the prison in the provincial capital was somewhat more 'comfortable' than the one in godforsaken Sukkur.

'The winds blew constantly through the open sides of my cell, winds heated to 110 degrees, 120 degrees, by the surrounding desert of interior Sindh. A constant dust storm swirled in my cell. Sticky with sweat, I was often coated with grit. My skin split and peeled, coming off my hands in sheets. More boils erupted on my face. The sweat dripped into them, burning like acid. My hair, which had always been thick, began to come out by the handful. . . . Grasshoppers. Mosquitoes. Stinging flies. Bees. They were

forever buzzing in my face or crawling up my legs. I flailed my arms to keep them away, but there were so many it was often useless. Insects came up through the cracks in the floor and through the open bars from the courtyard. Big black ants. Cockroaches. Seething clumps of little red ants. Spiders. I tried pulling the sheet over my head at night to hide from their bites, pushing it back when it got too hot to breathe. Water. I dreamed of cool, clear water.’¹⁷

A few months after her arrest, Benazir’s mother began to suffer from a stomach ulcer and pulmonary haemorrhages. At the doctors’ insistence, she was transferred from prison to house arrest at 70 Clifton. Rumours circulated that she may be let out for treatment abroad. Benazir was transferred to her mother’s cell in Karachi, where at least a ceiling fan worked a few hours a day and food was brought from home.

Benazir was visited in prison by her sister Sanam, who told her the latest family news: she was planning to celebrate her wedding, while both of her brothers had already married. Benazir had mixed feelings about the news, and her reaction is quite understandable: her mother was about to leave the country, and her brothers and sister were busy with their private lives. She felt lonely and abandoned. ‘My family seemed to have reconciled themselves to my being permanently in jail. They were carrying on with their lives and having wedding celebrations as if I didn’t exist.’¹⁸

This is the only place in Benazir’s autobiography where she lets a feeling of resentment against her family show

through. Nevertheless, one cannot help thinking about what was clear to everyone: Benazir had simply lacked the opportunity to personally aggravate the regime and became a hostage to the political undertakings of her brothers, especially Mir Murtaza. While she was putting up with inhuman conditions, the true culprits were enjoying freedom and domestic happiness. The tense relations between her and her brother Mir Murtaza after the latter's return to Pakistan in the 1990s were most likely rooted in this situation, in which Benazir had to pay a high price for the behaviour of others.

After ten months of solitary confinement, Benazir was taken from prison and put under house arrest, first in Larkana and then in Karachi, where she spent the next two years. A lot had changed in the world during this time: a public committee for saving the women of the Bhutto family had been created in England, while a campaign for Benazir's liberation was gaining momentum in the US under the direction of Peter Galbraith, who served on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and with the active support of the Committee's Chairman, Senator Claiborne Pell. The first victory of the international supporters of the Bhutto women was the permission granted to Nusrat, who had been diagnosed with lung cancer, to travel to Europe for treatment.

Senator Pell, who was a prominent human rights activist, opposed expanding US aid to Pakistan, which had been frozen under President Carter but was renewed under President Reagan. Every time the Senate considered

Pakistan, Peter Galbraith and he raised the issue of human rights violations in this country and, in particular, of Benazir Bhutto's imprisonment.

When Zia ul-Haq came on an official visit to the US in December 1982, Pell asked him during a reception at the Senate about Benazir's state of health. Furious, the General retorted that Miss Bhutto was living in a house that the Senator had not dreamed of and was freely receiving guests and making telephone calls. Peter Galbraith, who was at the reception, immediately called up 70 Clifton, and an unidentified man told him that Miss Bhutto was under house arrest and could not speak on the phone. Thus Zia was publically caught lying yet another time.

Several years after Benazir's assassination, her niece Fatima, whose feelings towards her were a heady mix of hatred, admiration, and envy, found the diary that Benazir had kept in 1979–1981 at Al-Murtaza while under house arrest. Quite in harmony with Zia ul-Haq, Fatima asserts that Benazir's conditions of confinement were excellent, citing one of the diary entries: 'Waking at noon. Massage for an hour. Lunch. Massage for another hour. Wash up. Dress. Make up. Read a book. Tea at four. Feed the deer. Walk. Wash the windows or walls. Play Scrabble. Read a bit. Dinner at 8:00. Read/Scrabble. What a waste.'¹⁹

All of Benazir's attempts to fight solitude, discipline herself, and put her life in order so as not to fall into despair or apathy seemed to Fatima to be only a desire for comfort. What can one then say about the Afghan 'exile' of her own

father, which was full of trips, barbecue parties, and dates with his girlfriend?

Under pressure from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the resistance of the Pakistani government was weakening. In early 1984, Peter Galbraith went on an official visit to Pakistan to talk with Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan. He was carrying a letter signed by Senator Pell and several of his other colleagues, in which they once again expressed their concern about Miss Bhutto's conditions of detention. When he had completed his business in Islamabad, Peter went straight to Karachi, only to discover that the house at 70 Clifton was shut up and that the police booths had been removed. Evidently tired of the stubborn young diplomat, the Pakistani authorities decided to forestall new complaints and demands from the Americans. Benazir was allowed to leave the country: on the eve of Peter's arrival, she and her sister Sanam left for Europe. Almost five years of captivity at the 'dragon den' had come to an end.

Only at London's Heathrow Airport, where she was jubilantly welcomed by the Pakistani diaspora, did Benazir realise that a new period of life was beginning for her as a leader of the opposition in exile: 'My years in detention and my family's treatment by the military regime had elevated me in the eyes of many Pakistanis to superhuman status. The publicity surrounding my release and my arrival in England had catapulted me into being a public figure there as well.'²⁰

If truth be told, this was Bhutto's own choice. Peter Galbraith arrived soon afterward in London to meet his friend, whom he had not seen for seven years. He tried to convince her to abandon politics for some time and settle down in the US, where a fellowship at the Harvard Centre for International Affairs could be organized for her. Here, she could devote some time to her health and private life. Nevertheless, South Asian freedom fighters and nationalists had come to live in London since the days of colonial rule, along with their leaders: Dadabhai Naoroji, Nehru, Jinnah, Savarkar, Ambedkar, and many others. Some of them even stayed in the same prestigious locality of Hampstead. In the 1970s and 1980s, the capital of the erstwhile metropolis housed the cream of Pakistani society: well-known writers, scholars, journalists, and businessmen who had refused to collaborate with dictatorship. Bhutto preferred to stay here, rather than abandoning politics, even for a short time.

As soon as Benazir recovered from ear surgery, she began to participate actively in the international campaign for defending political prisoners in Pakistan, who numbered over 40,000 by the mid-1980s. She went to Washington, where she spoke in Congress, at the Carnegie Foundation, and at other eminent tribunes. Faithful Peter helped her to establish new ties on Capitol Hill, which would help her in the future as well.

Bhutto met with her saviour, Senator Claiborne Pell; Ramsey Clark, who had assisted at her father's trial; Senators Edward Kennedy and George McGovern; members of the State Department and the National

Security Council; and influential congressmen. She gave interviews to major newspapers and magazines.

With her halo of 'prisoner of conscience' and 'hope of democracy', she attracted the close attention of politicians and the press. During her years of isolation and involuntary silence, she had missed communicating with people, speaking before interested audiences and making public appearances, of which she had been so fond during her presidency at the Oxford Union.

The American journalist Carla Hall wrote in her political profile of Bhutto: 'Benazir Bhutto talks as if making up for lost time. Sentences shoot out in her vaguely British accent, well-ordered but racing off her tongue, accompanied by a flutter of hands, which are swathing her forehead, raking her hair.'²¹ Bhutto's eloquence, her British accent, aristocratic stance, and good looks gave her clear advantages over tongue-tied Pakistani generals/dictators like Zia ul-Haq or Pervez Musharraf.

Benazir was satisfied with the results of her visit to the US and believed herself to be responsible for changes in the American stance on financial aid to Pakistan. She summarized the success of her mission as 'ambassador for democracy' as follows: 'Whether I had ever wished it or not, I was the leader of not only the Pakistan Peoples Party but the entire democratic opposition in Pakistan. . . . I used my time after I was released from prison to organize the democratic opposition from London and to lobby for Pakistani democracy throughout Europe and in the United

States. I walked the halls of the House of Commons and pounded the paths between the US House of Representatives and the Senate. I cultivated the civil society network all over the world and met almost continuously with the international press that cared about the future of South Asia.’²²

Upon her return to London, Bhutto settled in Barbican, a popular residential area of the British capital. A Roman outpost once stood on its site, which gave rise to the name Barbican, or fortified gateway. The term derives from the Medieval Latin *barbecana*, ‘outer fortification of a city or castle’, which stems, in turn, from the Persian *bab-khaneh*, ‘towered gateway’.

Up until World War II, this district mostly housed workshops and warehouses. In 1940, Barbican was fully destroyed by German bombers. With the shortage of housing after the war, the government decided to build there a modern residential area with a cultural centre, inner gardens, and other services. In this way, a unique residential complex appeared in the very heart of London, next to St. Paul’s Cathedral. Incorporating the latest achievements of architecture and technology, it provided housing for 6,000 people. Today, the complex is mostly known for the Barbican Arts Centre and the Museum of London.

The small apartment that Bhutto rented was located at the top storey and soon turned into the PPP headquarters in exile. ‘Her tiny Barbican flat in the heart of the old city became a centre of opposition to the dictatorship, and here

we often discussed a campaign to take on the generals,' recalled Tariq Ali.²³

Benazir's life in Barbican was simple and frugal. She got up early, cooked her own plain food, such as lentil soup, and cleaned up in the flat, as she had no servants. Still, volunteers came to collect information about political prisoners in Pakistan and send it to the UN General Secretary, US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, ministers of foreign affairs, and members of parliament. In its activities, Bhutto's group closely worked with Amnesty International and other human rights organizations. Benazir constantly travelled to European countries where political emigrants from Pakistan were living and gathered new information about prisoners of conscience.

In emigration, Benazir got acquainted with the nature of the Pakistani diaspora with its intrigues, silly rumours, and 'denunciatory' letter-pamphlets that were distributed on every imaginable occasion. Benazir was particularly annoyed by the elder generation of PPP members who had worked with her father: with condescending irony, she called them 'uncles'. The 'uncles' belonged to different factions, were primarily concerned with their private interests, fought for leadership in the party, denounced each other, and clamoured for their merits to be recognized, distributing seats in parliament ahead of time. Some of them entered into talks with the Pakistani regime behind Benazir's back.

Bhutto believed that such behaviour betrayed the common goal: 'I felt my anger grow, a compendium of all the wasted

hours I'd spent listening to the bickering of the special interest groups. . . . This was the old way of Pakistani politics. Angle for yourself. Throw your weight around. Grab every office you can. Blackmail. Threaten. I had had it with the old ways.'²⁴

In late 1984, a referendum was held in Pakistan in order to assess the results of the Islamization policy and, in the process, determine whether Zia ul-Haq should stay in power. 'The referendum proposition contained only one question, which was formulated in a very complicated and confusing manner. . . . In fact, this question consisted of three questions, which were: evaluation of the Islamization process, restoration of representative institutions of the state power, and indirectly, election of Zia ul-Haq for a new term. Participants in the referendum were not given a chance to state their opinion about each of those questions. Therefore, the answer constituted an 'integrated' evaluation of different matters.'²⁵

With the question posed in such a way, voting against Zia ul-Haq meant voting against Islam. In a country with a 95 per cent Muslim population, the outcome of such a referendum was clear. The united opposition, including the PPP and some religious parties, boycotted the referendum as well as the elections to the National Assembly that were held soon afterwards in February 1985, all the more as political parties were not allowed to participate in the latter.

After winning the elections, Zia made amendments to the constitution, including the sacred 'Eighth Amendment',

according to which all decrees and orders of the military administration had the force of state law. In this way, the president became part of the legislative branch, while his powers grew considerably at the expense of the powers of the prime minister. The president obtained the right to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and his cabinet members. Benazir would later feel all the brunt of the Eighth Amendment, which would prevent her from repealing the *hudud* laws introduced by the military regime, while both of her terms as prime minister were cut short at the president's decision.

The feeling of security that Benazir enjoyed at Barbican turned out to be ephemeral: Zia ul-Haq did not forget the Bhuttos, and his next victim on the family list of martyrs was Shah Nawaz. In the summer of 1985, the entire family got together for the first time in years on the French Riviera at Cannes, where Shah Nawaz was living with his wife and daughter. As it befits a loving sister, Benazir idealized her younger brother in her memoirs, writing about his inherent generosity and democratic outlook. Just as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had slept on the floor in Simla out of solidarity with Pakistani prisoners of war, the young Shah Nawaz allegedly slept for weeks in a straw hut that he had built in the yard of the house at 70 Clifton so as to get a feeling of the privations experienced by poor people. This is yet another family story in the *desi* style.

In actual fact, Shah Nawaz was the typical offspring of a *Wadero*, a charming, frivolous, and indolent loafer who preferred Parisian nightclubs, casinos, and expensive shops

to studying. He called himself an 'expert shopper' and a connoisseur of elite brand names such as Louis Vuitton. In Al-Zulfikar, he was responsible for 'military supplies', guerrilla training, and intelligence, and life in Kabul left a mark on him. At the time of the family reunion, he was an unstable and nervous 27-year-old, who was experiencing, according to some reports, drug and alcohol problems. Shah Nawaz suspected (with good reason, as it turned out) that his life was in constant danger: he went around in a bullet-proof vest and carried a vial of poison so as to prevent his enemies from catching him alive.

His relations with his wife were quite tempestuous: they separated twice, and he once told his sister that he was planning to get a divorce. Benazir replied, 'There's never been a divorce in the family. Your marriage wasn't even an arranged one, so you don't have the excuse of saying it didn't work out. You chose to marry Rehana. You must live with it.'²⁶

After a few happy days of family vacation in Cannes, Shah Nawaz was found dead in his flat. His wife, who looked too calm for a widow, asserted that he had taken poison, yet none of the family members believed this story, as one could see traces of the room being searched: someone had rummaged through Shah Nawaz's papers. Moreover, Benazir had seen her brother the day before: he looked happy and had been making plans for joint outings. The Pakistani press, controlled by Zia ul-Haq, also did not believe in suicide and ascribed Shah Nawaz's death to an overdose of alcohol or drugs.

There was no direct evidence against Rehana, yet this did not ease the Bhutto family's suspicions. They filed a complaint, which led the French court to open a criminal case. Rehana was put in prison for three months on the charge of violating the 'Good Samaritan Law': she was tried for not providing assistance to a dying person. The case was tried for almost two years; an autopsy confirmed the fact of violent death, and the stigma of having committed suicide was lifted from Shah Nawaz. Nevertheless, Rehana was acquitted on grounds of insufficient evidence. After her release, she moved to California with her daughter. She categorically refused to keep in touch with the family of her deceased husband.

The mystery of her brother's death continued to haunt Benazir. 'Had the CIA killed him as a friendly gesture towards their favourite dictator?' she asked herself.²⁷ She also considered another version: could the Fasihuddin sisters have collaborated with ISI? The matter would never be clarified.

The scandalous circumstances surrounding the death of Shah Nawaz broke up the marriage of his elder brother as well: under pressure from his family and public opinion, Mir Murtaza soon divorced Fauzia, got custody of their daughter Fatima, and moved with her to Damascus. A year later, he met Ghinwa Itaoui, a dance teacher who had fled from Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of that country. Ghinwa comforted him and became a good mother for Fatima. They were married in 1989, and their son Zulfikar Bhutto Jr. was born a year later.

Pakistani authorities permitted that Shah Nawaz be buried in the family graveyard, and, given that Mir Murtaza was prohibited from entering Pakistan, Benazir had to accompany her younger brother's body. Although the causes of Shah Nawaz's death never became clear, most Pakistanis, and Benazir too, considered him a martyr who fell in the fight with the regime of the 'usurper'. '*Shaheed*, the *Shaheed's* son!' chanted the crowd that accompanied the coffin to the cemetery in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. There were cries, moans, wailing, and heads pounding against the coffin lid. Shah Nawaz was buried in the traditions of Shiite mourning.

Shah Nawaz's death once again led Benazir to compare the story of her family with the Shiite tradition: 'The victimization of the Bhutto family . . . was the Karbala of our generation. The father was not spared. The mother was not spared. The brothers were not spared. The daughter was not spared. . . . Yet, like the followers of the Prophet's grandson, our resolve never faltered.'²⁸ With every new personal loss, Benazir went on thinking within the mindset of myth.

Notes

1. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2008, 187–8.
2. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East: An Autobiography*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2007, 78.
3. 'My dearest daughter: a letter from the death-cell', http://www.bhutto.org/Acrobat/Dearest_Daughter%5B1%5D.pdf
4. V. Belokrenitsky and V. Moskalenko, *A Political History of Pakistan 1947–2007*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013, 252.

5. Belokrenitsky and Moskalenko, op. cit., 273–4.
6. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 218.
7. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 106.
8. Cited from: Salman Taseer, *Bhutto: A Political Biography*, 177.
9. Ibid., 176.
10. 'CIA sent Bhutto to the gallows', http://sixhour.com/cia_sent%20bhutto_to_the_gallows.htm
11. Cited from Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 123.
12. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 123.
13. Ibid., 158.
14. Ibid., 160.
15. 'My dearest daughter: a letter from the death-cell', http://www.bhutto.org/Acrobat/Dearest_Daughter%5B1%5D.pdf
16. Tariq Ali, *The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power*. Pocket Books, 2009, 170.
17. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 193–4.
18. Ibid., 204.
19. Cited from: Fatima Bhutto, *Songs of Blood and Sword. A Daughter's Memoir*, 186.
20. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 253.
21. Carla Hall, 'The April of her freedom five years later, Benazir Bhutto's plea for Pakistan' in *The Washington Post*, April, 04, 1984.
22. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West*, 191.
23. Tariq Ali, op. cit., 170.
24. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 269.
25. Belokrenitsky and Moskalenko, op. cit., 289.
26. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 285.
27. Cited from: Tariq Ali, op. cit., 172.
28. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 299.

6

Triumphal Return

In December 1985, martial law was lifted in Pakistan, and Benazir decided that it was high time for her to return: after all, her father was still not avenged, and his assassin flourished, amassing supreme civil and military power in the country into his hands. This clearly did not suit her. Nor did she want to continue being the leader of the opposition in exile: 'I reached a point where I recognized that my fight for democracy in Pakistan could not continue to be run from abroad. If I were to win the battle against dictatorship in Pakistan, it was time for me to return home and confront the Zia-ISI-jihadist axis, irrespective of the dangers that were entailed.'¹

Bhutto decided to begin her return to Pakistan from Lahore, a city she viewed with mixed feelings: 'I had flown into Lahore many times. I had spent many happy times here. But it was also the city where my father had been condemned to death. Now I was coming back to challenge his murderer.'² In all likelihood, 'challenging the murderer' was her main motive at the time, as she categorically denied that she was vying for power: 'Whatever my aims and agenda were, I never asked for power. I think they need me. I don't think it's addictive. I think, if anything, it's

the opposite of addictive. You want to run away from it, but it doesn't let you go.³ Many Pakistanis who had been deprived of their family, friends, freedom, and civil rights by Zia ul-Haq's regime felt a need for Benazir Bhutto, as shown by the triumphal welcome that she received in Lahore.

On 10 April 1986, the 'plane on which Benazir was flying, with a group of close associates and an international 'corps' of journalists, landed at Allama Iqbal Airport. Already on the eve of her arrival, the city had been decorated as if it were a national holiday. Sweets and fruit were distributed free of charge in the streets; people sang, danced, and played drums; and green, red, and black PPP flags were hung on balconies and lamp-posts. By morning, a million people had gathered at the airport, waiting for their heroine, as if expecting the end of the notorious long night of tyranny. Greetings and slogans resounded in the air: 'Benazir—my sister, your sister!' (*Benazir meri babin teri babin*), 'Benazir will come, revolution will come!' (*Benazir ayi hai inqilab layi hai*).

As Bhutto's autobiography shows, no event from her subsequent life could compare in emotional intensity with this triumphal welcome in Lahore in 1986. Benazir would compare all her various ceremonial trips, state visits, welcome processions, meetings with the masses and public speeches, which were frequent during her years as oppositional leader and prime minister, with her Lahore homecoming, usually giving preference to the latter.

The 'triumph' as a public celebration to welcome a returning victorious commander or emperor and his army has existed in Western culture since ancient Roman times. Triumphs were later replaced by official parades, welcome ceremonies, and ceremonial receptions for national heroes. In South Asia, there existed local versions of triumphs, such as pompous and noisy palace processions (*sawari*), which were demonstrations of wealth and power. *Sawari* were held to mark all kinds of occasions, from a ruler's military victory to the beginning of a hunting excursion. Their routes were strictly fixed. For example, ceremonial processions began in Lahore from the Fort, where the Mughal emperor resided. From there, they always passed through the Roshnai Darwaza (Gate of Light), whose name referred to the splendour and glory of temporal power. The procession protocol reflected the fundamental medieval category of the 'exchange of gifts' between higher and lower strata: the procession was a metaphorical 'gift', drawn out in space and time, by the ruler to his subjects in exchange for their loyalty and admiration.

Benazir's memorable procession through the streets of Lahore was a variation on the traditional royal *sawari*; the only difference was that she did not ride in a closed palanquin, as would have befitted a noble Muslim lady in the past, but on an open platform mounted on the back of a truck. 'There are moments in life which are not possible to describe. My return to Lahore was one of them. The sea of humanity lining the roads, jammed on balconies and roofs, wedged in trees and on lamp-posts, walking alongside the

truck and stretching back across the fields, was more like an ocean. . . . Hundreds of coloured balloons soared into the sky as the airport gates opened. Rose petals, not tear gas, filled the air, showering onto the truck until they rose above my ankles. Garlands of flowers flew through the air. I saw a girl whose brother had been hanged and threw a garland to her. More garlands were thrown onto the truck, as were hundreds of handmade *dupattas* and shawls. . . . When I waved, the crowds waved. When I clapped my hands over my head as my father had done, the crowds clapped back, their upraised arms undulating like ripples on a vast field of wheat. . . . Though I was totally exposed on the truck, I felt no danger. Only someone who was willing to be torn apart by the crowd could harm me.’⁴

Benazir was tragically mistaken about the latter: twenty-one years after her welcome in Lahore, during another ceremonial procession down the streets of Karachi, a huge throng of people would be unable to avert an attempt on her life, during which many people were killed and injured.

Benazir Bhutto’s triumphal procession through the city did not follow the old route of Muslim rulers. She moved down the principal thoroughway of new colonial Lahore: Mall Road (now Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam), the former ceremonial façade of British rule. She moved past the Governor’s House, where her family used to stay during visits to the Punjabi capital, through the crossroads where a statue of Queen Victoria had stood before Zulfikar Ali Bhutto replaced it with a marble Quran, and past Zamzama, Kim’s legendary cannon immortalised by Rudyard Kipling

in his novel. The procession ended at Iqbal Park, which houses the monument Minar-e-Pakistan, a tower built to commemorate the adoption of the Lahore Resolution of 1940 which had proclaimed the establishment of the independent Muslim state of Pakistan.

Moving through the dense human mass surrounding the truck, Benazir's cortege took ten hours to make its way from the airport to Iqbal Park, a distance that usually takes half an hour by car. Here, after pushing with difficulty through the crowd, Benazir made her first public speech in her new role of the saviour of her country from the fetters of tyranny: 'I have willingly taken the path of thorns and stepped into the valley of death. . . . Here and now, I vow I will make every sacrifice to secure people's rights. . . . I have returned because I want to serve the people, not to seek revenge. I put an end to revenge. I don't have any such feelings in my heart. I want to build up Pakistan.'⁵ Here Bhutto uses her trademark rhetoric: 'valley of death', 'make every sacrifice', and 'serve the people'. At the same time, the word 'revenge' is repeated twice, which speaks for itself.

When Benazir returned to Pakistan from political exile in Dubai in October 2007, she recalled this moment of supreme popular recognition and hoped to repeat it. For a whole month before Benazir stepped on board the 'plane flying from the United Arab Emirates to Karachi, the PPP recruited volunteers all over the country to welcome her. Almost 200,000 people lined the streets of Karachi, yet this was a drop in the bucket in comparison to the crowd of over a million that had gathered in Lahore in 1986

when Benazir returned to issue a challenge to the tyrant usurper and 'new Yazid'. The reasons are clear: before her second return, Benazir had twice served as prime minister and had made as many enemies as friends. Moreover, there was no comparison between Musharraf's regime, which she opposed this time, and the horrors of Zia ul-Haq's rule.

After Lahore, Bhutto continued her journey around the country, visiting nineteen towns in all four provinces. She perfected her speaking skills, addressing each new audience with words that were understandable to it. Of course, it was easiest for her to appear in Sindh, where her family name had magical power. Speaking to Sindhi audience, Bhutto simply told family stories about her grandfather, who had secured the separation of Sindh from Bombay, her great-grandfather who had fought British colonialism (his affair with the wife of an English officer was apparently tantamount to participating in a national liberation movement), and her distant forefather Dodo Khan, a brave warrior. These family legends were very successful with her audiences.

When Benazir spoke in capitals and large cities, she focused on the restoration of democracy and civil rights. In contrast, before militant and virile Pashtuns in the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), she spoke the 'male' language of war, citing the heroines of Islamic history as her role models: 'People think I am weak because I am a woman. Do they not know that I am a Muslim woman and that Muslim women have a heritage they can well be proud of? I have patience of Bibi Khadija,

the wife of the Prophet (PBUH). I have the perseverance of Bibi Zainab, the sister of Imam Husain. And I have the courage of Bibi Aisha, the Prophet's (PBUH) youngest wife, who rode her own camel into battlefield at the head of the Muslim Army.⁶ For Bhutto, the 'battlefield' naturally referred to the election campaign: 'I am your sister as well, and I challenge my opponents on the field of democratic elections.'⁷

Nevertheless, her rhetoric was not always apt or appreciated. For example, in the economically most backward province of Balochistan, Benazir declared somewhat rashly at a meeting that her father had built the transport and energy infrastructure in this province, considerably improving the everyday life of the Baloch, who had lacked electricity and roads up until then. The next day, all newspapers published in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, responded to her words with a commentary that the undeclared war against Baloch nationalist rebels by the Pakistani army that had been inflicted on the province at the order of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto not only resulted in thousands of deaths but also totally destroyed the existing primitive infrastructure.

No matter the province or venue at which Bhutto spoke, she always ended her speech by asking the audience, 'Do you want Zia to go?' Thousands of voices in chorus replied affirmatively and repeated the slogan after Benazir: 'Zia must go!' Sometimes meetings at which Bhutto spoke were almost immediately disbanded by the police, and Benazir only had time to shout into the crowd, 'You are all my brothers and sisters! Zia must go!' It would be hard

to imagine a more direct challenge to the government and the president.

The challenge was accepted, and Benazir was arrested after mass demonstrations in Karachi on Independence Day 1986 which had led to skirmishes with the police and casualties among demonstrators. Now she had reliable protection, however: foreign journalists accredited in Pakistan followed her on her heels, covering her every step and every action of the government against her. At the same time, her American friends Pell and Kennedy immediately threatened Zia ul-Haq that they would boycott additional financial aid to Pakistan. Several days later, Benazir was released.

The more actively Benazir performed her duties as PPP leader and the more she travelled around the country and spoke at meetings, the more she became aware of the ambiguity and fragility of her situation: a young unmarried woman, engaging in public politics in a Muslim patriarchal society, risks becoming talked about negatively. In every interview, whether at home or abroad, she was asked why she was not married yet, a question that greatly irritated her. For her, it was too late to find a partner of her own choice. At the same time, the example of her brothers and sister, whose 'love marriages' had fallen apart very quickly, was not particularly inspiring.

Moreover, after becoming a national political figure, she simply could not permit herself to have 'off-the-job' contacts with men without offending the predominant

moral code or staining the family honour, whose violation can even lead to death in Pakistan, as we have seen above. 'In a Moslem society, it's not done for women and men to meet each other, so it's very difficult to get to know each other, and, my being the leader of the largest opposition party in Pakistan, it would have been a lot of rumour to the grist and bad for the image if I had chosen another course,' she said.⁸ In a word, Benazir understood from first-hand experience that, in a world controlled by men, an unmarried woman has even fewer rights and that all the people around are convinced that 'something is wrong' with her.

Although the question of Benazir's marriage had constantly been in the air, her life circumstances had led her to reject offers of 'good matches': first, her father was in prison; then, her family respected the year-long mourning period after his execution; and, finally, she was in prison herself, recovering after her operation, engaging in party work, and mourning for her brother. In 1986, when the last mourning period had elapsed, Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir's paternal aunt Manna tried to convince her to accept the offer of the Zardari family of Sindhi landowners, who wished to marry off their only son Asif.

The Zardaris were a Baloch tribal clan stemming from Iranian Balochistan. The tribe's chief was the groom's father Hakim Ali Zardari. The family had settled in Sindh a long time before and owned land in the Nawabshah District (renamed the Shaheed Benazirabad District in 2008). The groom's origins and, in particular, his 'feudal' roots, ties with

the land, and knowledge of local customs were significant advantages in the eyes of Benazir's Sindhi relatives.

Nevertheless, Zardari's education evoked some doubts. According to his documents, he had finished high school in Karachi and then had studied at a certain Pedinton School in London before getting a Bachelors from London Business School. When Asif Ali Zardari became president in 2008 and western journalists scrutinized his biography, it turned out that no Pedinton School had ever existed in London. His Bachelors degree was also suspicious. An educational requirement existed in Pakistan since 2002 for candidates to parliament: they had to have a university degree. Immediately after the parliamentary elections in 2008, which were won by the PPP under Zardari's leadership, the Pakistan Supreme Court abrogated this requirement. People concluded that there was undoubtedly something wrong with the degree of the presidential candidate and leader of the ruling party.

Asif Zardari was otherwise a typical *Wadero* offspring, who loved noisy parties, as well as being a semi-professional polo player (he even maintained his own polo team called the Zardari Four), and a decent boxer. As other Sindhi feudal children, Zardari grew up in a male environment. He was always surrounded by numerous friends, to whom he gave expensive gifts and whom he took for drives in his Mercedes. Asif's father owned the Bambino, a popular cinema house in Karachi, and his fellow classmates often came to see his favourite movies (*Ben Hur* and *Lawrence of Arabia*) free of charge. Asif began to live it up with friends

in restaurants and clubs and, as their recollections show, the get-togethers were often quite rowdy.

This male type was familiar and understandable to Benazir: her own brothers had similar tastes and spent their time in similar ways. When she asked mutual friends about Zardari, she was pleased to learn about his penchant for risk (he had broken his leg several times while playing polo and, as a result, limped slightly), magnanimity, and loyalty to his friends. Someone described him by citing the Sindhi proverb: 'He's a friend's friend, and an enemy's enemy.' 'The description reminded me of my brothers,' concluded Benazir. Still, in contrast to the Bhutto brothers, who had lived abroad for long periods of time, Zardari was only a slightly westernized *desi* man who wore his colourful Sindhi costume and an ethnic hat called *Sindhi Topi* even when he was in London.

Although Benazir understood the need for starting a family (last, but not least, for political reasons), two considerations made her hesitate and delay. On the one hand, it was extremely difficult to find a Pakistani husband who would accept her public lifestyle, frequent trips, meetings lasting until late at night, and business contacts with other men. In a way, this lifestyle violated the very foundations of the Muslim marriage.

On the other hand, on account of Bhutto's tragic fate, her supporters, PPP members, and people at large viewed her as a quasi-saint, who lived by different rules than ordinary people and had to sacrifice her personal happiness for

the sake of other people. Many Pakistanis were ready to protect and care for her as if she were their own sister in compensation for her lack of male relatives. Benazir was afraid that her marriage would disappoint and alienate these people, who formed the core of her electorate.

On the first point, Zardari was ready to agree to all the conditions, if only to assuage his would-be bride's doubts. It turned out that he did not object to his wife engaging in politics, travelling around the country alone, speaking with whomever she wished, and living separately from his relatives. Nevertheless, despite her mother's pleas and the determination of her groom's family, Bhutto kept hesitating.

As usual, everything was decided by chance. In London, where Benazir and Asif finally met, Bhutto was stung by a bee. An allergic reaction began, and her hand became greatly swollen. Asif immediately arrived, took her to the best private clinic, and arranged the necessary medical care. Strange though it may seem, such attention was new for Benazir: although she had plenty of servants and assistants, she always had to take decisions on her own. 'For once, I am not the one in charge. I am the one being cared for. It was a very nice and unaccustomed feeling,' she wrote later.¹⁰ Seven days after this meeting, Bhutto and Zardari got engaged.

The event that the Pakistani press called the 'wedding of the century' took place in December 1987 in the Clifton Palace gardens. Many of Benazir's relatives and friends came to Karachi from abroad: her mother, her sister and

nephews, Victoria Schofield, and other Oxford friends. Only Mir Murtaza was absent, as he was still afraid of coming to Pakistan. To Nusrat Bhutto's dismay, numerous foreign journalists also came: Benazir could no longer imagine her life without them.

The wedding was quite modest by local standards: only a few hundred invitees. In South Asia, a wedding is the most important event in a person's life; families spend their life's savings on it and take loans that they pay off over many years. People with very modest means are ready to undertake enormous expenditure only to uphold their 'family honour'. As a modern woman and politician, Benazir viewed such customs with disdain: 'We broke with more traditions as well, trying to set an example for the rest of the country. The wedding was to be dignified and simple, not the week-long lavish affairs many families in Pakistan feel compelled to hold.'¹¹ Nevertheless, the example was not followed: today, a Pakistani wedding is still attended by several thousand guests.

With her status as a national celebrity, Bhutto could not limit herself to a private wedding reception in her family mansion. As a result, a mass reception was held the same day for 100,000 people at a stadium in Lyari, a low income city district that was considered to be a PPP stronghold. Just as at other popular gatherings, loud music played, and people sang and danced, threw flowers in the air, launched fireworks, and shouted the slogan, '*Jiye* Bhutto!' Speaking at her wedding as if it were a meeting, Benazir confirmed that nothing had changed in her life and that she was still

ready to make every sacrifice for democracy and for her people. The main thing she tried to bring across to the audience was that her marriage would not disappoint their hopes and desires and that their interests would always come first for her.

'For me the choice was not between a love marriage or an arranged marriage but between agreeing to this or not getting married at all. An arranged marriage may seem traditional, but what is not traditional is the fact I'm not abandoning my identity or my career. If I had thought it might hurt my political career, I know I would never have taken this step. I would never have gotten married at any stage. I would have never sought personal happiness at the cost of my country. If people have given their lives for the cause of freedom and constitutional rule, then I surely could have sacrificed marriage and children,' Benazir said in an interview on the eve of her wedding.¹²

And this was the truth: her family interests never became a hindrance to her political aims. In the early 2000s, Zardari was in prison on charges of corruption and began to experience heart problems. General Musharraf, who was in power at the time, proposed through intermediaries that Bhutto leave politics for ten years in exchange for the liberation of her husband. Benazir categorically refused, invoking, as usual, the authority of her father: 'I couldn't do it. I thought of my father in the squalid death cell and how he had refused to abandon the people of Pakistan at the cost of his life.'¹³

Bhutto and Zardari's conjugal life became the subject of writing and gossip of virtually all of Pakistan. All Pakistanis gladly recount anecdotes about this couple, which are based first and foremost on the odious reputation that Zardari earned when his wife was prime minister. At the same time, Benazir always spoke of her husband with profound respect in her public appearances and memoirs.

She described the ties that united them on the eve of their wedding in a dignified and sincere manner: 'We didn't really love each other yet. . . . Instead there was a mental commitment between us, a realization that we were accepting each other as husband and wife totally and for always. In a way, I realized, that bond was stronger than love. We were coming into our marriage with no preconceptions, no expectations of each other, other than goodwill and respect.'¹⁴

Here the authors of 'political profiles' of Bhutto that have appeared in great numbers in the West usually begin to analyze the motives for her choice. The British journalist Christina Lamb, who attended Bhutto's wedding, cited Benazir's statement of her conscious preference for a traditional arranged marriage: 'Conscious of my religious obligations and duty to my family, I am pleased to proceed with the marriage proposal accepted by my mother.'¹⁵ For Lamb and some western journalists it was a departure from the image of a 'progressive' and modern-minded woman and a concession to the religious traditions of Pakistani society.

Nevertheless, Bhutto was right to say that she had transcended gender. She behaved precisely the way that a Pakistani male politician would have done in her place: she concluded a marriage that was in keeping with her status and the expectations of society and the electorate while being convenient and not burdensome for her career and other activities outside the family. An exception to this pattern was the marriage of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which was concluded out of love and against the will of the bride's parents and subsequently became the subject of many legends. The history of this marriage is so unusual that we shall make a small aside to describe it.

Jinnah's family history is unique, just as the entire life of Pakistan's founding father. It is also revealing in many ways: it shows, in particular, that love marriages have little chance of success in traditional Muslim society. Jinnah's second wife and the mother of his only child was the young beauty Rattanbai Petit (1900–1929), more often known as Ruttie. His passion for her reveals a different side of the Great Leader, who is otherwise known for his stern and grim image.

Ruttie was the daughter of Jinnah's friend and client Sir Dinshaw Petit, a rich textile magnate who had been made a Baronet by the British. The Petits belonged to the religious community of Bombay Parsees, who had come to India from Iran in the twelfth century. Ruttie grew up like a fairy-tale princess in an atmosphere of luxury and general adoration. Extraordinarily beautiful and intelligent by nature, she got an excellent education, freely spoke several languages, and had a wide range of interests, from English Romantic poetry to contemporary Indian politics.

Ruttie and Jinnah met in 1916, when she was sixteen and he was forty. Nevertheless, such a big age difference did not dismay them. Jinnah fell in love with Ruttie at first sight and immediately decided to ask for her hand. He understood that the main hindrance to his domestic happiness would be differences in religion rather than wealth: Ruttie belonged to the Parsee community, while Jinnah was a Muslim.

When Jinnah, who was already a successful lawyer and politician at the time, asked for Ruttie's hand, her father categorically refused. Petit broke all business and friendship ties with Jinnah for good and forbade his daughter to see her beloved. The prohibition only served to further kindle Jinnah and Ruttie's mutual passion, and they patiently and stubbornly waited for the bride to reach the age of maturity and, all hindrances notwithstanding, married soon after she turned eighteen. Ruttie left her parents' home and was rejected by her family.

The long-awaited marriage took place on 19 August 1918, at Jinnah's Bombay home South Court. Ruttie converted to Islam and was given the Muslim name of Maryam, which she rarely used. The wedding was attended by only a few friends of Jinnah, including the Raja of Mahmudabad, who gave the groom an expensive ring which he presented to the bride as a wedding ring. No members of the Petit family came to the wedding, and Sir Dinshaw mourned for his daughter as if she had died.

In 1919, Dina, the Jinnahs' first and only child, was born in London. Ruttie's father did not soften even after the birth of his granddaughter and still refused to recognize the marriage. Life in London, of which Jinnah had been fond since his youth, was happy and carefree; the couple often went to the theatre and entertained friends at home. Nevertheless, despite

all the attractiveness of London, everything that made up the meaning of Jinnah's life (political activity and a successful legal practice) remained in India. Upon their return to Bombay, Jinnah plunged into politics, giving his wife and daughter less and less attention with each passing year. This inevitably led to tensions within the family.

Marrying against the will of her parents, Ruttie had lost everything that constituted the living environment of an Indian woman of her class, including close contacts with and support from her large family clan. After losing all her relatives overnight, she suffered from loneliness and had a profound need for her husband's attention and company. Spoiled from childhood on by the adoration of her father, Ruttie was extremely demanding, and Jinnah, despite all his love for her, could not meet her high expectations. Moreover, all the qualities that had attracted Jinnah in his beautiful bride, such as childlike immediacy, sensitivity, and impulsiveness, did not suit the wife of a major political figure.

Having to content herself with brief encounters with her husband, Ruttie gradually lapsed into a protracted depression and the illusory world of mysticism, fantasy, and whim. For example, she adopted a number of cats, which she nourished and cherished as if they were her own children, and could cancel an important meeting when one of them fell ill. Ruttie believed in magic and amulets, wore 'enchanted' rings and bracelets, and took an interest in theosophy, séances, and mysticism, at all of which Jinnah poked fun. She tried her best to make her husband take an interest in her passions, giving him different books on occultism. Out of condescension to his wife's weaknesses, Jinnah pretended that he read them. Nevertheless, one can only imagine the attitude of such a rational and sober-minded person to literature of this kind.

With the passing years, the age difference between Jinnah and Ruttie became increasingly apparent to them. Ruttie was still a beautiful young woman, while Jinnah was already fifty and looked gaunt and grey. His growing conservatism and Islamic self-awareness, as well as his obsession with the idea of Pakistan and his mission, created an ideological rift between them. Nevertheless, Ruttie, just as during the early years of their marriage, entirely accepted her husband's political views and supported all his public actions and speeches. Hoping to give new life to his marriage, Jinnah took his wife with him on a long foreign journey in 1926; they visited London, Paris, Canada, and the US. Unfortunately, far from becoming a second honeymoon, it was the couple's last trip together. Upon their return to India, Ruttie's health began to deteriorate rapidly, she rarely left the house, and spent days on end in the company of her numerous pets. Her daughter Dina spent most of her time in school, while Ruttie did not get on with her husband's beloved sister Fatima.

A year later, Jinnah and Ruttie broke up quietly. Memoirists remain silent about the immediate cause of the rupture. An important factor was undoubtedly the fact that Jinnah began to come less often to Bombay and spent a lot of time in Delhi, where the headquarters of the Muslim League had moved in 1927. Ruttie moved to the Taj Mahal Hotel yet continued to keep in touch with Jinnah and follow his activities.

On 20 February 1929, Ruttie Jinnah died on her 29th birthday. The cause of her death was tuberculosis, which would also kill her husband twenty years later. Nevertheless, her biographers asserted that she died of a broken heart. Jinnah learned of his wife's death while in Delhi, where Sir Dinshaw Petit called him up from Bombay. This was his first conversation with his father-in-law since the day in 1916

when he asked for Ruttie's hand. The funeral was held at the Khoja Shia Isna 'Ashari Cemetery in Bombay. Ruttie's father did not attend the funeral, as he opposed his daughter being buried with Muslim rites.

M. C. Chagla, a renowned Indian jurist and diplomat, who served as Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, recalled the funeral: 'Jinnah sat like a statue throughout the funeral but, when asked to throw earth on the grave, he broke down and wept. That was the only time when I found Jinnah betraying some shadow of human weakness. It's not a well-publicised fact that as a young student in England it had been one of Jinnah's dreams to play Romeo at The Globe. It is a strange twist of fate that a love story that started like a fairy-tale ended as a haunting tragedy to rival any of Shakespeare's dramas.'¹⁶

As one knows, Jinnah did not get married again and assiduously avoided the company of women, fully entrusting himself to the care of his sister Fatima. His family drama reflected the age-old love story between a man and a woman, who continued to feel a strong passion for each other and yet were unable to preserve their marriage, into which politics had forcefully intruded.

Jinnah's marriage could have hardly served as an inspiring example, and Benazir, clearly afraid of mixing political and personal interests, preferred to build her family on sturdier foundations than love. Subsequently, after many years of marriage with Zardari and the birth of three children, she declared, 'I found joy and fulfillment in marriage despite difficult circumstances. I am proud of my husband for his courage and loyalty in standing by me through nineteen

years of marriage. During these years, he lived either in the Prime Minister's House or as a political prisoner held hostage to my career. And I found our relationship strengthened despite the physical separation and the attempts to turn us against each other.¹⁷ This unreserved avowal is quite sufficient to silence all gossipers, in my opinion.

Just before returning to Pakistan, Benazir went on *Umrah*, or minor pilgrimage to Mecca. This is what a religious pilgrimage to the chief Muslim holy places at a time other than the month of *Zul-Hijjah*, which is set aside for the *Hajj*. Bhutto had wanted to visit Mecca as far back as 1978, when her father was in prison, but Pakistani authorities refused to let her out of the country on two separate occasions. 'I felt my burdens lighten as we performed the rituals of the *Umrah*. At each stop, I prayed for my father, for the other martyrs struck down by the regime, for my brother Shah Nawaz, for the men and women still in prison. I felt uplifted by the religious experience, and stayed an extra day to perform the *Umrah* a second time for myself. Spiritually cleansed, I returned to the world of politics.'¹⁸

Either Allah had heard Benazir's prayers or the Shiite martyrs and Sindh saints that her family revered so much decided to reward her for all the tribulations. An event that radically changed the history of the country and Benazir's own life took place in 1988. It was something that no one could have foreseen: on 17 August 1988, Zia ul-Haq died in an air crash when returning from a military

base in Bahawalpur. Another thirty people died with him, including high-ranking military and civil officials and US ambassador to Pakistan Arnold Raphel. After eleven years of dictatorship, Pakistanis had forgotten that the 'dragon' was also mortal, and so people did not immediately believe the news of his death, thinking that Zia ul-Haq had simply fled the country.

When the news was confirmed, popular rejoicing broke out in the streets. Bhutto, to her credit, condemned any expressions of joy over the death of a person: 'I was concerned that national sense of celebration was unseemly. Not only did I want to keep our behaviour distinct from Zia's, but, as Muslims, we were not supposed to rejoice in death. Many others died on the 'plane, and for their families, the sense of jubilation was not right. . . . A message was sent to PPP leaders all over the country to urge restraint.'¹⁹ This was Benazir's official and quite pious reaction as a leader of the opposition in response to the death of her chief enemy. At the same time, one can only guess about the feelings that she experienced at the time.

Although the causes of the air crash and the president's death are yet another secret of Pakistan's history, most analysts believe that it did not take place by chance. 'Many theories were put forward regarding the cause of the crash of the aircraft. . . . Allegations could be heard that the crash was caused by 'external forces'—the secret services of the United States, India, the USSR, and Israel. . . . Suspicion also fell on 'internal forces', including the military who were dissatisfied, not so much by the policy pursued by Zia

ul-Haq, as by the fact that he 'outstayed' his term as the supreme commander, thus preventing other army leaders from rising in their career.'²⁰

Despite the abundance of different speculations, most Pakistanis, including Benazir herself, were convinced that Zia ul-Haq's death was the result of the intervention of a Higher Power as punishment for the murder of Bhutto and other victims of the regime. Shortly after the dictator's death, the foreign press wrote that, after Bhutto had been avenged, the ambitions of his daughter and the struggle of the PPP for power had lost their main motivation. Benazir retorted, 'For years people had interpreted my political opposition to Zia as a platform for avenging my father's murder. But it was not the case. You can't be fuelled by bitterness. It can eat you up, but cannot drive you.'²¹

In September 1988, Benazir gave birth to her son Bilawal, who was her namesake of sorts: both 'Bilawal' and 'Benazir' mean 'one without equal'. The long-awaited elections took place on 24 November, and the PPP won the largest number of seats in the parliament. PPP's ally in the elections was the influential Karachi-based party, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), headed by Altaf Hussain; it called for the recognition of *muhajirs* as the fifth main ethnic group in the country. Nevertheless, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan kept delaying inviting Bhutto, the leader of the victorious party, to form a government.

Then Benazir, who would now settle for nothing less than the prime minister's chair, used her tried and true approach

of appealing to the international community. Journalist Mark Siegel, co-author of her books and articles, helped her to send letters to every US congressman and every member of the British parliament. 'The democratic world responded,' wrote Bhutto. 'The US and other countries began pushing for President Ishaq to call upon the PPP, as the largest party, to form the government. After an indecent delay, and finding no cracks within my parliamentary party, President Ishaq accepted the will of the people.'²²

Bhutto, who was only thirty-five years old, became the youngest prime minister in the world at the time. She describes her official inauguration with unabashed pride: 'Dressed in the green and white colours of Pakistan's flag, I walked down the red carpet in the Presidential Palace underneath the bright chandeliers. This was not my moment, but the moment of all who had made sacrifices for democracy. The people of Pakistan had rejected bigotry and prejudice in electing a woman prime minister. It was an enormous honour, and an equally enormous responsibility. For me, taking the oath of office was a magical, surreal moment. . . . I had not asked for this role; I had not asked for this mantle. But the forces of destiny and the forces of history had thrust me forward, and I felt privileged and awed.'²³

This was the magical moment of attaining her 'Grail', a reward for years of losses and ordeals. The fact that Benazir obtained reward and compensation during her lifetime, after a determined struggle, was proof of her true electiveness.

There are many accounts of Bhutto's first term as prime minister; as usual, they are contradictory and even mutually exclusive. Tariq Ali recalled, 'Benazir became Prime Minister, but was hemmed in by the army on one side and the President, the army's favourite bureaucrat, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, on the other. She told me at the time that she felt powerless. They wouldn't let her do anything. "Tell the people," was my advice. Tell them why you can't deliver on your promises to provide free education, proper sanitation, clean water and health services to improve the high infant mortality rate. She didn't tell them; in fact she did nothing at all apart from provide employment to some of her supporters. Being in power, it seemed, was satisfaction enough.'²⁴

Despite his competence in the matter, Tariq Ali was not entirely fair. Of course, Bhutto was unable to overcome the *hudud* laws and the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution. Nevertheless, she did a lot in her field of competence by reinstating civil liberties and a democratic climate in the country. With her first decrees, she liberated all political prisoners, including Baloch and Pashtun nationalists whom her father had fought against. Bhutto fully restored freedom of speech for printed and electronic media and permitted oppositional parties to use them; allowed CNN, which was the only international TV channel, to broadcast over Pakistan at the time; lifted restrictions on the activities of NGOs, including women's and human rights associations; and removed a ban that had been imposed by the military regime on labour and student unions. In other words, the

most successful initiatives of her government were aimed at building civil society in the country. These initiatives were opposed from the start by conservative circles as concessions to the 'atheistic' West and attempts to 'westernize' Pakistan.

Another sphere of activity, in which Bhutto had taken an interest from her youth, was diplomacy, and thus she devoted a great deal of attention to foreign affairs. Benazir came to power at a time when the Soviet Union was withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan, and she was naturally concerned about the consequences of this event for her country and the whole region. In 1989, she came (in the company of her husband) on an official visit to the US, where she tried to convince President Bush that 'the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan was not sufficient for solving the Afghan problem and that vis-à-vis that country, Pakistan retained its salient geopolitical significance.'²⁵ Expressing solidarity with US policy with regard to the USSR, Bhutto, nevertheless, opposed supporting the Afghan *mujahedeen*, whom she called 'America's Frankenstein'.

As Benazir said herself, she 'was determined to use [her] time in office to leave a legacy of peace' and, in December 1988, met with Rajiv Gandhi in Islamabad at the Fourth Summit of the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). At the time, Gandhi was Prime Minister of India, Pakistan's main 'historical enemy'. India and Pakistan signed their first agreement on not attacking each other's nuclear installations. On the photographs of this meeting, Benazir and Rajiv are so young and sparkling that they seem to be representatives of a new race of the

future. Bhutto, as usual, described the meeting with the help of tragic family comparisons: 'Rajiv and I were both children of political dynasties whose parents had been assassinated. We were both young and children of the post-Partition subcontinent.'²⁶

Bhutto's negotiations with Gandhi evoked the displeasure of her eternal opponents, the Muslim League and the Jamaat-e-Islami party, who accused her, not only of being a protégé of the West, but also an Indian agent. Relations did not soften: Kashmir, the eternal stumbling block, spoiled matters once again. Delhi accused Islamabad of fuelling the domestic conflict in Kashmir and providing assistance to Kashmiri insurgents and terrorists. In 1991, Rajiv was assassinated, and Benazir came to his funeral to pay her last tribute.

Given the similar age, origins, and education of Benazir and Rajiv Gandhi, direct contacts between them might have led to a rapid restitution of the most acute problems between India and Pakistan. Nevertheless, these hopes were in vain. 'I sometimes think that South Asia and possibly the entire world would have been a much different place if Rajiv had lived and I was allowed to finish my term. We understood each other and could work together.'²⁷ Here, once again, following Bhutto, we are trying to model the might-have-beens of history. Similarly, many Pakistanis continue to wonder what their country would be like today had Jinnah lived longer.

In 1989, a major scandal broke in Pakistan in connection with the disclosure of a conspiracy to overturn Benazir's government: a 'sting' operation with the codename, 'Midnight Jackal', exposed a conspiracy by certain officers of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) to prepare the ground for another *coup d'état*. They were unhappy with the corruption in the government and allegedly had evidence that Asif Ali Zardari had taken bribes. The goal of the conspirators was to bring Bhutto's rival Punjab Chief Minister Nawaz Sharif to power. From the start, Nawaz Sharif had refused to submit to Bhutto's government and declared that he would 'make [Bhutto] the "Prime Minister of Islamabad"'.²⁸ The conspiracy was unearthed by the influential military intelligence officer Masood Khattak, a friend of the Bhutto family. Khattak had been Zardari's friend and classmate from Cadet College, Petaro. The same year (1989), Benazir faced an attempt by the opposition parties to pass a Motion of No-Confidence. She accused Osama bin Laden himself of masterminding the operation, alleging that he had allocated ten million dollars to bribe members of her parliamentary group to remove her from power. Although the Muslim League's Motion of No-Confidence was rejected by parliament, Bhutto constantly felt herself to be under siege. The army leadership and Muslim fundamentalists kept reminding her that, as a woman, she was holding her post unlawfully and against the statutes of Islam.

Benazir was even shocked by the fact that, during prayer breaks in cabinet meetings, male ministers demonstratively

left the room, leaving her all alone. Bhutto considered this to be discrimination, because men and women pray together at the Kaaba, the holiest Muslim site, which she visited during her *Umrah*. Bhutto's opponents tried to persuade the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to exclude Pakistan from membership, because it was governed by a female prime minister. Religious authorities from different countries issued *fatwabs* on this matter, yet, to Benazir's luck, most member states of the OIC did not agree that her leadership was 'anti-Islamic'.

On 6 August 1990, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, seeing that most of his powers had passed to the prime minister, decided to use the sacramental 'Eighth Amendment' that had been introduced by Zia ul-Haq and that gave him the right to dissolve the government and hold early elections. Bhutto's government was dissolved on charges of corruption and nepotism. As a matter of fact, this was the usual Pakistani practice: at various times from 1985 on, all Cabinets, including the governments of Mohammed Khan Junejo, Nawaz Sharif, and Benazir Bhutto, were dissolved on the usual charges of 'incompetence and corruption'. Most Pakistanis put the blame for Bhutto's dismissal on her husband, whose financial malpractices had made him a target for her rivals.

Nevertheless, if we analyse Benazir's successes and failures during her first term as prime minister, it becomes clear that the powerful resistance to her reforms and initiatives stemmed from a very simple reason: her gender. To overcome deconstructive misogyny and, in particular,

the deep-seated rejection of female leadership, one must reform the traditional political culture, which will require a new generation of Pakistanis—perhaps the generation of Benazir Bhutto’s children.

Notes

1. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy & the West*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2008, 191.
2. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2007, 322.
3. Benazir Bhutto, ‘I never asked for power’ in *The Guardian*, 15 Aug. 2002.
4. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 325–6.
5. *Ibid.*, 325.
6. Cited from: Rafiq Zakaria, *The Trial of Benazir*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan Private Limited, 1989, 6.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Howell Raines, ‘Benazir Bhutto to Marry, in a Pact by 2 Families’, *NYTimes.com*, 07/31/1987.
9. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 354.
10. *Ibid.*, 357.
11. *Ibid.*, 360.
12. Tyler Marshall, ‘Political Maverick Bows to Muslim Custom’ in *The Los Angeles Times*, 7 Aug. 1987.
13. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*, 223.
14. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 359.
15. Christina Lamb, ‘My 20-year friendship with Benazir Bhutto began at her wedding’, *TimesOnline.co.uk*, 10/21/2007.
16. M.C. Chagla, *Roses in December. An Autobiography*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1974, 119.
17. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, vi.
18. *Ibid.*, 318.
19. *Ibid.*, 314.

20. V. Y. Belokrenitsky and V. N. Moskalenko, *A Political History of Pakistan 1947–2007*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013, 297.
21. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 317.
22. Ibid., 391.
23. Ibid., 392.
24. Tariq Ali, *The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power*, 173.
25. Belokrenitsky and Moskalenko, op. cit., 317.
26. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 394.
27. Ibid., 395.
28. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*, 200.

7

The Clash of Civilizations

Bhutto belonged to a segment of the Asian elite that was made up of people particularly close to the West, who had studied at Oxford, Harvard, or the Sorbonne, and had absorbed the western lifestyle and values from childhood on. As a rule, the populations of these countries retained an unbroken tie with their traditional cultures and saw western influence as a threat to their identity. The process of the de-westernization of elites and their return to their own cultural roots was not so intense in Pakistan as, say, in Iran, Afghanistan, or certain Arab countries.

Bhutto's national and religious identity was clear: she had always considered herself to be an ethnic Sindhi, a Pakistani, and a Muslim. As to her cultural identity, Bhutto belonged to two worlds: she had naturally absorbed the paradigm of her native culture from birth, yet, thanks to her education and life in the USA and Great Britain, she felt at home in the codes and meanings of western culture. In particular, as a staunch supporter of modernization and democracy and as a native speaker of English, she could identify with the West, at least from the linguistic and ideological standpoints.

She wrote as follows about her western education and worldview: 'Our exposure to life at Harvard and life in the United States empowered us and fundamentally changed our lives. When we returned to our homelands, whether to be educators, scientists, or prime ministers, our exposure to democratic values and institutions would ripple forth from us into our own societies.'¹ Victoria Schofield wrote the same thing in her obituary of Bhutto: 'As a liberal western woman and believer in the political process—something she had imbibed during her education at Harvard and Oxford—she genuinely believed she could make a difference.'²

For this reason, the theory of the inevitable conflict between Islam and Western civilization that was set forth by Samuel Huntington in his article 'The Clash of Civilizations?' (1993), and which was the subject of heated debate in the 1990s, interested Bhutto as a politician and a human being so profoundly that she devoted most of her book, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West* (2008) (written with the help of the American journalist and political scientist Mark Siegel), to this problem. As we see, even the title of the book expresses a polemic with Huntington: 'reconciliation' instead of 'clash'. I should say in passing that no South Asian female politician before or after Bhutto has ever analysed the problems of international politics so deeply and comprehensively.

Samuel Phillips Huntington (1927–2008) was an American scholar, analyst, social philosopher, political scientist, and founder of the leading US political science journal, *Foreign Policy*. The stages of his career included numerous positions

at universities, research organizations, and government agencies. He was president of the American Political Science Association and, at the end of his life, directed the Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University.

Huntington's book under reference was his conceptual work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), which expanded upon his aforementioned article and described changes in contemporary foreign relations through the prism of civilizational processes and the ensuing conflicts. Huntington considered civilization to be the supreme cultural entity, which united people and gave them a certain level of cultural independence. From this standpoint, civilization is determined both by general objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, and societal institutes and by the subjective self-identification of people.

According to Huntington, civilizational identity will play an increasing role over time. The world will develop to a great extent through the interaction of several major civilizations and the aggravation of the differences between them. The biggest conflicts of the future will take place at cultural boundaries separating these civilizations. Huntington mostly concentrated on the growing conflict between western civilization and the rest of the world. The growth of civilizational self-awareness stems from the bifurcation of the West's role. On the one hand, the West is at the apex of its power. On the other, non-western civilizations are returning to their own roots (perhaps precisely for this reason). One increasingly hears about Japan's 'return to

Asia', the end of the influence of Nehru's ideas and the 'Hinduization' of India, the collapse of the western ideas of socialism and nationalism, and the re-Islamization of the Middle East.

Huntington's article and book evoked much heated discussion in scholarly circles and are among the most often cited works in political science today, all the more as a series of Huntington's predictions have been quite impressively confirmed, especially after the upsurge of terrorist acts conducted by Muslim extremists in Western countries.

Bhutto declared from the start that she disagreed with Huntington's theory, which she called, in a mystical vein, a 'self-fulfilling prophecy of fear' that provoked the very conflict it predicted.³ Entering the discussion, Bhutto identified herself with 'Islamic civilization' and expressed her indignation at the distortion of Islam in Huntington's article and, in particular, his assertion that Islam contradicts the main democratic values and freedoms. Bhutto rejects the view that the term 'democracy' is a synonym of 'western democracy' and argues that Huntington's theory denies the universality of democratic rights and freedoms.

Nevertheless, Huntington himself is willing to criticize the West for its haughtiness and desire to subordinate the entire world to its interests: 'The very phrase 'the world community' has become the euphemistic collective noun (replacing 'the Free World') to give global legitimacy to actions reflecting the interests of the United States and other western powers. . . . The West in effect is using

international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain western predominance, protect western interests and promote western political and economic values.⁴

Although Bhutto tries to take an academic approach to her discussion of Huntington, she seems at times to take personal offense at his 'preconceptions' about Islam. For example, she writes, "Though Huntington uses examples of conflict in the former Yugoslavia, China, and Japan he focuses on conflicts related to Islamic civilizations because "Islam has bloody borders."⁵

She is referring to the following passage in Huntington's article: 'In Eurasia the great historic fault lines between civilizations are once more aflame. This is particularly true along the boundaries of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc of nations from the bulge of Africa to central Asia. Violence also occurs between Muslims, on the one hand, and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, Buddhists in Burma and Catholics in the Philippines. Islam has bloody borders.'⁶

Bhutto believes that a weak point of the 'Clash of Civilizations' thesis is the fact that it gives religion the role of a defining variable and separator of peoples. At the same time, she confirms the validity of this thesis, focusing on issues of secularization that, in her opinion, are 'offensive to Islamic culture'. For Muslims, says Bhutto, 'Western secularism, irreligiosity, and hence immorality are worse evils than the western Christianity that produced them.'⁷

Bhutto apparently considered the notion of secularization to refer exclusively to a detriment for religion rather than to a boon for society, in contrast to the approach of Huntington and most other westerners. The eminent Russian-British philosopher and Asian scholar Alexander Piatigorsky (1929–2009) has written about such an understanding of secularism: ‘What matters here is the phenomenon and notion of secularism. When speaking of secularism within the context of Early Modern and Modern History, one should always keep in mind that this notion refers not only to the declining role of religion in society and the state but also (and even more importantly) to the declining religiosity of religion itself. Thus, it would be phenomenologically more correct to speak about the secularization of religion than about the secularization of the society that professes this religion. In any case, it would be historically justified to say that the former secularization precedes the latter and serves as its cause. Then it becomes clear that the legal and constitutional forms of the interrelationship of religion and the state are highly conditional and say nothing per se about the existence or extent of secularization.’⁸

Clearly, despite her philosophy classes at Harvard, Benazir remained an opponent of the secularization of Muslim society, in contrast to her father’s idols Ataturk and Sukarno. Generally speaking, Benazir asserts that Huntington does not understand the essence of Islam (the usual charge levelled by Muslim politicians and public figures against their Western colleagues) and does not differentiate between moderate Muslims and extremists. However, the

high level of generalization used by Huntington simply could not entail such distinctions and 'particularities'.

As a 'citizen of two worlds' (though not two civilizations), Benazir was more attracted by the traditional thesis of the peaceful coexistence of different cultures based on educational and cultural exchange between peoples and countries. 'My personal experience suggests to me that educational and cultural exchange leads not to conflict but to the opposite. My years of studying and lecturing abroad have not only sensitized me to other cultures and societies but have sensitized those I have interacted with on all levels to my culture, nation, and religion.'⁹

Here Bhutto brings the debate to the level of personal experience, which is always unique and often goes against general principles and patterns. Of course, under her influence, personal friends such as Victoria Schofield, Peter Galbraith, and Mark Siegel began to take a professional interest in Pakistan and Islam, although they naturally remained members of western civilization. In contrast, the mutual sympathy between Benazir Bhutto and Rajiv Gandhi, who had so much in common (or so it would seem), did not have a major impact upon Indian-Pakistani relations or could even narrow the gap between their positions on the Kashmir problem, which, from the standpoint of the Huntington theory, can be described as a civilizational conflict.

Bhutto herself recalled how an armed conflict almost erupted between Pakistan and India in 1964 when a

hair of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was stolen from the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar, and Hindus were accused of desecrating this great Muslim relic. Hazratbal became once again an apple of discord in 1993, when it was seized and occupied for a month by armed Kashmiri separatists. Bhutto, who was prime minister at the time, appealed to the international community to draw attention to the events in Kashmir and put pressure on the Indian government. The boundary between Islam and Hinduism passing through Kashmir was constantly stained with blood, confirming Huntington's theses.

Finally, during her second term as prime minister, Bhutto and her government supported in 1996 the seizure of Kabul by the Taliban, whom she had repeatedly called 'America's Frankenstein' up until then. Such support 'convictions notwithstanding' confirmed another one of Huntington's theses about 'civilization rallying' or the 'kin-country syndrome': 'Groups or states belonging to one civilization that become involved in war with people from a different civilization naturally try to rally support from other members of their own civilization.'¹⁰

'Belonging to two worlds' was more than just an aspect of Bhutto's personal experience; she had seen civilizational contrast with her own eyes at home and abroad: 'I was positioned between two worlds, the world of dictatorship and the world of democracy. I could see the power of the people in a democracy and contrast it to the lack of political power in my own country. I saw that people in America

took their rights for granted. . . . In my country people were killed or imprisoned fighting for these freedoms.’¹¹

Nevertheless, her negative experience notwithstanding, Bhutto continued to believe in an ‘optimistic’ development scenario of political history and was convinced that the future of the Islamic world lay in democracy and modernization (even if it was a ‘modernization without secularization and westernization’) rather than dictatorship. In contrast, Huntington believed that, ‘At a superficial level much of western culture has indeed permeated the rest of the world. At a more basic level, however, western concepts differ fundamentally from those prevalent in other civilizations. . . . In the political realm, of course, these differences are most manifest in the efforts of the United States and other western powers to induce other peoples to adopt western ideas concerning democracy and human rights. Modern democratic government originated in the West. When it has developed in non-western societies it has usually been the product of western colonialism or imposition.’¹²

Bhutto retorted, ‘While Islamic and western societies are different from one another, the differences are less about political attitudes toward elections, governing, and parliamentary democracies than about social and cultural matters. Significantly, western and Islamic societies both show equal zeal for democratic ideals and democratic governance.’¹³

Although the international non-governmental organization Freedom House considers Indonesia to be the only truly democratic Muslim country in the world, Bhutto asserted that many Islamic states went through periods of democratic development in the twentieth century: among them were Pakistan during her father's rule and when her own government was in power. At the same time, a poll conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2012 in six Muslim countries showed that Pakistan was the absolute leader among them in predisposition towards Sharia law: 82 per cent of the population favours the total correspondence of law to Islamic norms (in Lebanon, the corresponding figure is only 17 per cent).¹⁴

In one thing Bhutto was totally right: the evident social and cultural differences between the West and, say, Pakistan have not led to serious contradictions between them in the political arena, where Pakistan has remained a steadfast ally of the USA, including in its war on terror. Nevertheless, at the interpersonal level, the evident dislike of America among the masses in Pakistan, just like the attitude of many western people towards the Pakistani diaspora as a source of danger, harbours latent possibilities for a clash of civilizations.

Passing to the subject of 'War on Terror', Bhutto insists that this war reflects the conflict between moderate and radical forces within the Muslim world, rather than a conflict between Islam and the West. Bhutto devoted many articles, interviews and public speeches to this issue. She declared on numerous occasions that democratic states never sponsor

terrorism and so the further development of democracy can eliminate a source of support for terrorists in the Islamic world.

Still, Bhutto's attitude to western democracy was ambivalent, insofar as she believed that its diffusion in Islamic countries harboured an ethical problem. Admiring the different manifestations of democracy in the USA and Europe, she nevertheless asserted that the West has turned democracy into a quasi-religious value, 'using rhetoric about liberty being a 'God-given' right. And western nations often take that standard abroad, preaching democratic values like missionaries preaching religion.'¹⁵

At the same time, even if democracy is not a religion, for Bhutto it was a panacea from the political diseases of the modern world and a 'universal value'.¹⁶ Such a 'glorification' of democracy explains the meaning that Bhutto put into her motto 'Democracy is the best revenge', which has come down to us in the words of her son Bilawal.¹⁷ She evidently meant that democracy not only creates (by building civil society, say) but also destroys the main social vices: autocracy, dictatorship, extremism, religious fanaticism, discrimination, and the deprivation of rights.

It is interesting to compare how the relations between the West, Islam, and democracy are seen by former Oxford student Tariq Ali in his book, *Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity*. He believes that, after the end of the Cold War, the USA has begun to play the role of a new world empire. As every empire, it hinders the

development of national self-awareness both in the centre and at the periphery. Creating a single space for a multitude of different ethnic groups and religions, it upholds certain universal values that are considered obligatory for all nations in the 'empire'.

In the modern world, such values are embodied in the 'American credo'—a set of principles that are aggressively inculcated all over the world: protestant ethics, civil liberties based on individualism and the ideology of personal success. Nevertheless, the stiffening of the political course and rhetoric in the centre of the 'empire' provokes the renaissance of fundamentalist attitudes all over the world. As a result, the dialogue between equal nations has been replaced in the modern world by the clash of different types of fundamentalism.

It should be said that, unlike Bhutto, Tariq Ali mostly analyses history rather than the modern political landscape. For example, he entirely overlooks the experience of Turkey, a Muslim country that, despite its imperial past, has showed successful modernization and involvement in globalization processes. Still, his book describes modern imperialism as an aspect of the clash of civilizations and explains the sources of religious extremism. At the same time, Tariq Ali does not discuss any ways of overcoming the contradictions between Islam and the West.

In contrast, Bhutto in her book *Reconciliation* proposes a new 'Marshall Plan' that would be implemented by Europe and America for improving the life of people in poor

Muslim countries in order to remove the foundations for the clash of civilizations. In her opinion, target financial, social, and humanitarian programmes would radically change the attitudes (that are evidently negative today) of ordinary Muslims towards the West.

Bhutto sincerely believed that education, personal ties, familiarity with other cultures, and other humanitarian activities would eradicate xenophobia and lead to a dialogue of civilizations. This was her own experience: she had lived for many years in the West, where she freely travelled about, made lifelong friends, and did not encounter any form of racism or discrimination. Moreover, people listened respectfully to her when she spoke before audiences in the West. As in many other respects, Bhutto was lucky here, and her encounter with the West was trouble-free or even salutary, as during her life in Barbican after her liberation from prison in Pakistan.

Nevertheless, observing the life of fellow Muslims in Great Britain at first hand, Bhutto could not fail but notice that western anti-Islamic feelings, about which Huntington spoke, had their causes: 'Those relations are also complicated by demography. The spectacular population growth in Arab countries, particularly in North Africa, has led to increased migration to Western Europe. The movement within Western Europe toward minimizing internal boundaries has sharpened political sensitivities with respect to this development. In Italy, France, and Germany, racism is increasingly open, and political reactions and

violence against Arab and Turkish migrants have become more intense and more widespread since 1990.’¹⁸

Here Bhutto places most of the responsibility on the West that, in her opinion, must make an effort to bridge the ‘civilizational gap’ between itself and Islam. ‘The West must be ready to acknowledge the residual damage of colonialism and its support for dictatorships during the Cold War. The West, and especially the United States of America, must be ready to revisit the rippling impact of the so-called global war on terror, which is perceived by perhaps hundreds of millions of Muslims as a “global war on Islam.” . . . Introspection is never easy and almost always uncomfortable. But in the current international environment, a period of introspection by the West is necessary.’¹⁹

Bhutto does not address the question of how westerners should view the numerous terrorist acts committed in their countries by Muslim extremists. Apparently, inhabitants of western countries should patiently wait for democracy to triumph in the Islamic world and for ‘moderates’ to get the upper hand over ‘radicals’. At that point, according to Bhutto, terrorism shall disappear of its own accord.

Nevertheless, in contrast to Huntington and other western political scientists, Bhutto was acquainted with terrorism at first hand: terrorists had made numerous attempts on her life and did ultimately assassinate her. During the 1993 election campaign, she survived two assassination attempts perpetrated by the well-known international terrorist Ramzi

Yousef, who made the first attempt to blow up the World Trade Centre in New York. Ramzi Yousef was supported by Al-Qaeda. While preparing the terrorist act in New York, he was dogged by mishaps. In particular, his car, packed with explosives, got into an accident in the street, while his associates, who were apprehended immediately after the act, were unable to prepare the necessary amount of explosives, which led to a relatively small number of victims.

The assassination attempt against Bhutto was just as badly organized. Ramzi Yousef had planned to park a car packed with explosives and equipped with a remote-controlled detonator near her residence, Bilawal House. While he was parking the car, he was stopped by the police. Taking the terrorist for a loiterer, the police let him go, ordering him to remove the car. Yousef tried to defuse the bomb but lost a finger in the process. He attempted to assassinate Bhutto a second time during her speech at a meeting at Nishtar Park in Karachi. This time, the ill-starred terrorist was let down by a late train that was bringing special armaments to Karachi from the Al-Qaeda arsenal in Peshawar. The Pakistani authorities extradited Ramzi Yousef to the USA, where he is serving a life sentence in prison.

Up until a certain point, providence protected Benazir: she was pregnant during the assassination attempt (as during the 1988 election campaign), yet her tribulations did not prevent her from giving birth to her younger daughter Asifa in February 1993. Her elder daughter Bakhtawar was born in 1990 during Bhutto's first term as prime minister. By the age of forty, she was the mother of three children,

which is considered sufficient in Europe yet is far from being the limit in Pakistan. Nevertheless, Benazir's further family plans, if any, were hindered by the arrests and prison sentence of Asif Ali Zardari. When he was finally liberated in 2004, it was too late for the couple to think about any more children.

As Bhutto was pregnant more than once during election campaigns, reporters, with their usual tactlessness, often asked her whether she was expecting another child. Once she sent a lady reporter about her business by replying, 'I am not pregnant. I am fat. And, as the prime minister, it's my right to be fat if I want to.'²⁰

Her husband's imprisonment and their separation were difficult for Benazir: 'I believe [his imprisonment] is another example of the sexism that still pervades society. Would a wife ever be imprisoned for eight years without evidence or conviction, held hostage to her husband's political career? Of course not.'²¹ Benazir was fortunate enough not to have lived in a society where the wives of 'enemies of the people' were made fully accountable for the activities of their husbands, although, she herself and her mother became hostages in the 1980s to the politics of the male members of their family.

The early 1990s when Benazir became leader of the opposition were a difficult period for her. The industrial magnate Mian Nawaz Sharif (b.1949), who replaced her as prime minister, was the leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-(N), and was considered to be Zia ul-Haq's

‘spiritual son’. He was not only Benazir’s political opponent but also felt personal enmity towards her for a number of reasons: as a ‘real man’ towards a woman whose place was ‘in the kitchen’ rather than in politics; as a ‘local’ towards a ‘western protégé’ (Sharif himself, despite his decent education by Pakistani standards, postured as a *desi* type of man); as a Muslim traditionalist towards an advocate of modernization; and as a Punjabi towards a Sindhi, uncovering old contradictions between different Pakistani ethnic groups.

After the 1988 elections, during Bhutto’s first term, Nawaz Sharif retained his post of Punjab’s Chief Minister. But, throughout that period, he ‘conducted an implacable campaign against Benazir Bhutto and her party. That struggle caused surprised comments from western observers, puzzled at why the two leading political forces could not agree on observing the rules of parliamentary political struggle.’²² This made all the more surprising the contrast between Sharif’s behaviour during Bhutto’s lifetime and his public appearances after her death, when he called the day of Benazir’s assassination ‘the darkest, gloomiest day in the history of this country’²³ and swore to continue her struggle against Musharraf’s dictatorship.

After coming to power, Nawaz Sharif immediately stopped many social programmes launched by Benazir. In Benazir’s opinion, ‘Nawaz’s agenda was socially and politically reactionary.’²⁴ In her book, she claims that Nawaz subjected the media to censorship once again, prohibited student unions, and greatly reduced financing for education. Benazir

was particularly upset that all her reforms in the domain of women's rights were abolished to cater to the religious parties that supported Sharif; in particular, women's health and family planning centres were closed. Bhutto writes that Sharif 'was seeking to give constitutional cover to his 'Islamicization' bill and publicly praising the Taliban society as one for Pakistan to emulate.'²⁵ As the leader of the opposition, Bhutto spoke out vehemently against this bill, which was finally voted down by the Senate.

While Nawaz Sharif was in power, a new wave of violence broke out in Pakistan. The zenith was the armed 'Operation Clean-Up' (or 'Operation Blue Fox') aimed against the fighting supporters of two factions of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) party. For two years (1992–1994), a near civil war raged in Karachi with endless explosions, murders, and abductions. Bhutto connected on several occasions (sometimes unfairly) the start of the 'age of terrorism' with the second term (1997–1999) of Nawaz Sharif, whom she accused of recognizing the Taliban government and even supporting the Al-Qaeda.

Bhutto may have been presumptuous in thinking that no major terrorist acts took place in the world while she was prime minister. 'The nascent international terror cabal feared Pakistan when it was in my control. They saw my government, with its pro-people aims, as a threat to their ideological and theocratic agenda. And I stood in their way. I believe that there is at least some degree of causality in the fact that most of the major terrorist attacks in the world took place when my party and I were out of office. . . . I

believe that if my government had continued for its full five-year term, it would have been difficult for Osama bin Laden to set up base in Afghanistan in 1997, when he established the Al-Qaeda.²⁶

Even if Bhutto somewhat exaggerated her influence on international politics, western countries and especially the US undoubtedly considered her to be the more reliable partner in the 'War on Terror'. After her second state visit in 1995, the US Congress passed an amendment repealing many sanctions against Pakistan that had been introduced in 1990 on account of the country's nuclear programme, opening the way to revival of economic aid and military cooperation. This was the result of the great impression made by Benazir on Americans and, in particular, on President Clinton, an admirer of female beauty.

In the busy year of 1993, a constitutional crisis developed in Pakistan.²⁷ President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed Nawaz Sharif's government on the traditional charges of corruption, and dissolved the National Assembly, appointing a new government and scheduling new elections. Early elections held in October 1993 led to the victory of the Pakistan Peoples Party. Bhutto got a second chance to form a government.

This time, Benazir hastened to restore the social programmes she had launched during her first term as prime minister and that had quite a lot of success this time. She was proud that, during her second term, 48,000 new schools were opened, 100,000 women were trained

and employed in the domain of healthcare and family planning, and a record amount of 20 billion dollars of foreign investments were attracted to the country. Most of the investments went to the power industry. It is no secret that frequent power outages greatly affect the quality of life in Pakistani cities, including the capital. Nevertheless, no government has managed to solve this problem up to now.

Once again, Bhutto did all she could to socialize women and broaden their participation in society. Her government signed the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and established special women's police stations to give confidence to women to report crimes committed against them. These police stations with female police officers still exist today, making it possible to register and bring to court at least some of the crimes against women that had not been registered previously. Moreover, during Benazir's second government, family courts headed by women judges were established to hear issues related to child custody and family issues.²⁸ In 1994–95, for the first time in Pakistani history, two women judges, Khalida Rashid Khan and Majida Rizvi, became members of the Supreme Courts of Peshawar and Sindh. Moreover, Majida Rizvi subsequently became a judge of the Federal Supreme Court.

Despite her liberal gender policies, Bhutto, as we have already mentioned, did not support feminism and, in particular, denied the right of women to abortion. Speaking at the International Conference on Population and Development that took place in Cairo in 1994 under the

aegis of the UN, she somewhat unexpectedly accused the West of 'seeking to impose adultery, abortion, intercourse education, and other such matters on individuals, societies and religions which have their own social ethos.'²⁹

Bhutto managed to implement a number of other social programmes. For example, by the mid-1990s, polio was eradicated (alas, temporarily) in Pakistan; previously, one out of five children had had polio. Bhutto herself set an example to Pakistanis, letting TV cameras film doctors giving polio vaccine to her baby daughter Asifa. For her achievements in the domain of healthcare, the World Health Organization (WHO) awarded Bhutto a gold medal. At the same time, fundamentalists did not let her iodise salt to prevent mental retardation among children. In mosques, mullahs and imams clamoured that iodised salt leads to sterility among women and impotence among men and that this initiative is a conspiracy by the 'godless West' to reduce the Pakistani population. 'I found this so sad, that we as a nation politicised every simple issue including those affecting the nutrition of our children,' Benazir said with frustration.³⁰

Such difficulties that Benazir ran up against time and again did not just stem from the resistance of the military, opposition or religious circles. Her associates, the members of the party that she headed, had changed a lot since the 1980s. Back then, the PPP hierarchy mostly consisted of people that had personally known her father, had fought against Zia ul-Haq's dictatorship, and had been tortured and imprisoned. They supported Benazir out of ideological

considerations, rather than for career or financial reasons. Now, the old party officials had retired or been dismissed, and their place in the PPP was over taken by businessmen and entrepreneurs who pursued their own (mostly financial) interests.

As we have already said, Bhutto felt particularly at home in the diplomatic and foreign policy arena as well as in the domain of political propaganda and public campaigning. 'She was considered far less successful in administrative matters and beneficial compromise, which is closely associated with interparty and interpersonal relations. Meanwhile, the stability of the coalition established as a result of the November 1993 elections depended to a large extent on such matters.'³¹

Tariq Ali, who was sarcastic about Bhutto's policies (his attitude towards her opponents was no better, however), wrote as follows about her second term as prime minister: 'By the time she was re-elected in 1993, she had abandoned all idea of reform, that she was in a hurry to do something became clear when she appointed her husband Minister for Investment, making him responsible for all investment offers from home and abroad. . . . The high command of the Pakistan Peoples Party now became a machine for making money, but without any trickle-down mechanism. This period marked the complete degeneration of the party. . . . In foreign policy her legacy was mixed. She refused to sanction an anti-Indian military adventure in Kargil on the Himalayan slopes, but . . . her government backed the Taliban takeover in Kabul.'³²

In Pakistan, Bhutto's second term was assessed in different ways. It is no coincidence that journalists gave her two ambiguous nicknames: 'Pakistan's Iron Lady' (after Margaret Thatcher), and 'Black Rose' (it should be said that this is one of the emblems of anarchism in the West). We do not know whether Benazir liked these nicknames or not. Judging from the title of her autobiography, she preferred to call herself 'Daughter of the East' (by analogy with the 'Daughter of India', Indira Gandhi), or 'Daughter of Destiny', probably because a person does not choose his destiny any more than he chooses his parents. Be that as it may, the words of Tariq Ali cited above seem to me to be excessively subjective and categorical.

After she became prime minister for the second time, Bhutto did not abandon the idea of reforms, contrary to what Tariq Ali believes. She took a liberal approach to privatizing industrial plants and directed financial flows to the implementation of social programmes. Thanks to her efforts in the social domain, illiteracy began to decline among the country's population. Moreover, Bhutto greatly increased state expenditures on education and healthcare. 'We funded the electrification of villages in Pakistan, . . . the building of roads and availability of safe potable water to our people. . . . What I was attempting to do was to jump-start Pakistan into the modern era,' writes Bhutto.³³ During her stay in office, the country's rate of economic growth was higher than in neighbouring India, and Pakistan entered the list of the world's top ten developing capital markets,

which paved the path to the country's integration into the international economic system.

Bhutto's reforms were appreciated not only within the country but also abroad. In 1996, she made it into the Guinness Book of Records as the most popular international politician of the year; she received a Doctor Honoris Causa from Oxford University, the French Legion of Honour, and many other awards. In foreign policy, Bhutto tried to be independent, although not always consistently. She continued to finance the nuclear weapons programme. Using Afghan Taliban, she tried to stop the heavy drug trafficking in the region. She even showed goodwill in the strained relations with Russia by liberating Russian soldiers who had been in captivity since the Afghan War.

The rise of the Taliban coincided with the growth of religious extremism in Pakistan, which made Bhutto's work as prime minister a lot more difficult. From the start, Islamists rejected her policies as being pro-western and 'atheistic' and, even more importantly, censured her for violating Sharia rules on behaviour befitting a woman. Neither her marriage and children, nor her traditional clothes, nor her respect of all religious customs could change this attitude.

Threats were voiced against Bhutto not only in Pakistan. Islamists organized demonstrations against her and her government in other countries. In particular, during one of her visits to London, a large crowd of radically-minded Pakistani immigrants surrounded the Dorchester Hotel,

where she was staying, and shouted offensive slogans every time she appeared. In a conversation with British Prime Minister John Major, Bhutto, in her own words, tried to tell him that 'perhaps he should check out these masjids where imams (who had supported the Afghanistan Mujahideen) preached, as they could be preaching hatred and violence to Pakistani émigrés and second-generation British Pakistanis. I remember his eyes went blank. The extremist threat was evident to me in Pakistan because I had to deal with the terrorists and extremists every day. But it was still a big unknown in the West. That would soon change.'³⁴

Extremist feelings also penetrated into the army. In 1995, a conspiracy by pan-Islamists was uncovered. Headed by Major General Zahirul Islam Abbasi, the conspirators sought to establish 'Islamic rule' in the country and to kill Bhutto. The conspirators called upon the people to unite with the Afghan Taliban under the banner of Islamic Revolution and do away with all divisions in the Islamic world. Abbasi's group was plagued by the same misfortunes as Ramzi Yousef: the weapons sent to them were intercepted by the police, and the conspirators were apprehended. However, Bhutto was constantly informed about plans of military officials wanting to topple her government.

Luck seemed to have finally abandoned Benazir. Discontent about economic difficulties, new and higher taxes, and the rapid growth of inflation mounted in Pakistan. The adoption of the 1995 budget was accompanied by strikes and demonstrations. International organizations published

information about the high level of corruption in Pakistan, venality of officials, embezzlement, and bribery. Society considered Asif Ali Zardari, whom Bhutto had appointed Minister of Investments, to be responsible for these abuses.

Pakistani President Farooq Leghari, a member of Bhutto's party, repeatedly warned the government that he would use his right to disband the cabinet unless the ministers put an end to corruption and started to take effective measures against the economic crisis. In an attempt to save the situation in late October 1996, Bhutto ceased to perform the duties of minister of finances and dismissed almost all her economic advisers while continuing to put the responsibility for the poor state of the national economy on the preceding Nawaz Sharif's cabinet.

During the night of 5 November 1996, President Leghari officially accused the Bhutto government of corruption, incompetence, and organization of political assassinations, and dismissed it. Fearing the resistance of PPP supporters, the president took this step late at night, while the army assured the security of key government buildings in Islamabad. Nevertheless, no serious disorders occurred. Zardari tried to leave Pakistan but was arrested and imprisoned.

Still, it was not the economy or even corruption that finally destroyed the Pakistanis' idealized image of Benazir. This traditional society did not forgive her fierce confrontation with Mir Murtaza Bhutto, who had returned to his homeland in 1993. The enmity between brother and sister

ended in 1996, in a murder that has not been investigated yet.

Notes

1. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy and the West*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2008, 271.
2. Victoria Schofield, 'Benazir Bhutto: A great and brave friend', in Javaid Laghari ed., *Reflections on Benazir Bhutto*, Karachi: SZABIST, 2008.
3. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 237.
4. Samuel P. Huntington. 'The Clash of Civilizations' in *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, 39–40.
5. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 241.
6. Huntington, op. cit., 34–5.
7. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 244.
8. Piatigorsky, Alexander, 'Ethnicity or Religion?' (in Russian), <http://vasilievaa.narod.ru/mu/csipfo/metod/etnoreg.htm>
9. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 250.
10. Huntington, op. cit., 35.
11. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 269–70.
12. Huntington, op. cit., 40–1.
13. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 262.
14. 'Most Muslims Want Democracy', Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/07/10/most-muslims-want-democracy-personal-freedoms-and-islam-in-political-life/>
15. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 82–3.
16. 'Born leader who lived and died by her unfailing conviction', in *The Scotsman* (28 Dec. 2007).
17. Mary Fitzgerald, 'Democracy is the best revenge, says Bhutto's son', in *The Irish Times*, 31 Dec. 2007.
18. Huntington, op. cit., 32.
19. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 301.
20. Lyse Doucet, 'Benazir, the Steely and Vulnerable', in *BBC News*, 29 Dec. 2007.

21. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2007, xiii–iv.
22. V. Belokrenitsky, and V. Moskalenko, *A Political History of Pakistan 1947–2007*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013, 322–3.
23. ‘What now for Pakistan?’ in *The Independent* (28 Dec. 2007).
24. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 423.
25. Ibid.
26. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation*, 207.
27. Before 1993 parliamentary election, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, with the support of the Pakistan Army, dissolved the National Assembly and appointed the interim prime minister. When the news reached Nawaz Sharif, he forcefully rejected this act and moved to the Supreme Court. On 26 May Sharif returned to power after the Supreme Court ruled that the Presidential Order was unconstitutional and reconstituted the National Assembly with immediate effect. However, a political standoff was instigated between president and prime minister. Finally, Sharif resigned under pressure from the Pakistan Armed Forces but negotiated a settlement that resulted in the removal of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan as well. In July 1993, Chief of Army Staff General Abdul Waheed Kakar forced the president to resign and subsequently ended the political standoff. Under the close scrutiny of the Pakistan Armed Forces, the new interim and transitional government was formed and new parliamentary elections were held after three months.
28. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 414–15.
29. Ertelt, Steven, ‘Assassinated Pakistani Leader Benazir Bhutto Was Strong Abortion Opponent’, in *Lifenews.com*, 12/27/07.
30. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 414.
31. Belokrenitsky, V. and Moskalenko, V., op. cit., 340.
32. Tariq Ali. *The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power*. New York: Scribner, 2008, 173.
33. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 397.
34. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 418.

8

Sibling Position

Benazir was the oldest of the four children of the Bhutto family, and many of her personality traits and actions were determined by this birth order. Psychologists refer to the 'sibling position', the behaviour pattern of an individual with regard to his brothers and sisters or people playing these roles in their lives.

The eminent Austrian psychologist and philosopher Alfred Adler (1870–1937), the creator of individual psychology and the term 'inferiority complex', came to the conclusion that there is a close connection between sibling position and personality development. Adler conjectured that the position of a child in the family (only child or elder, middle or younger brother/sister) creates specific problems, each of which is solved in different families in a similar way. This means that the experience stemming from the birth order leads to a certain type of personality development. As many notions about life depend on the position occupied in childhood among brothers and sisters, one experiences the least problems in adult life when he occupies a similar position to what he had in his family in his childhood.¹

For example, as the third out of six children in his family, Adler believed that the position of the middle sibling most

often engenders an 'inferiority complex', as the middle child is under constant pressure from both sides, striving to overtake his older brothers and sisters and fearing that he would be overtaken by his younger siblings, and, as a result, experiences insecurity and difficulties in building self-esteem.

According to Adler, competition between siblings in the struggle for superiority and recognition is inevitable, and one of its forms is the competition between brother and sister. In their youth, Benazir and Mir Murtaza Bhutto studied in the same schools and universities in the same fields; as adults, they worked in the same profession; and both of them had the same goal: political power. Thus, competition between them was inevitable *a priori*.

The Bhutto children were born one after the other, and only Mir Murtaza and Sanam had an age difference of three years. According to Adler, such a birth order is ideal for interaction and mutual influence between siblings yet is the most problematic from the standpoint of conflicts. The oldest child, regardless of gender, has an advantage over younger children for the simple reason that he or she participates together with the parents in the organization of family life over a period of time. When another child appears in the family, the older children get additional advantages by acting as a teacher to the younger brothers and sisters. This influence is greater when the age difference exceeds three years. Indeed, the authority of Benazir was a lot higher in the eyes of her younger sister and Shah Nawaz

than in her relations with Mir Murtaza, who was only a year younger than her.

Naturally, in such a well-to-do family as the Bhuttos, the older children did not have to help around the house or care for the youngsters: each of them had their own nannies and servants. Nevertheless, for the purposes of instruction, the parents left Benazir in charge of her younger siblings when going away. 'Look after the other children. You are the oldest,' they said.² When Benazir turned eight, her parents officially put her in charge of the household and gave her symbolic sums of money for expenditure, which she discussed every evening with the major-domo Babu.

In many of her personality traits, Benazir, or Pinkie, was a typical first-born with a heightened sense of responsibility, strong motivation, and the will to strive to control the situation at any cost. According to the US Census Bureau, more than half of US presidents were first-borns in their families.³

First-borns often identify themselves with their parents and assume their functions in crisis situations. As a result, they become guardians of the status quo, are the first to pass family traditions and morals to their younger brothers and sisters (as Benazir did when she tried to convince Shah Nawaz not to divorce his wife), and then try to disseminate them to the rest of the world. Benazir showed this during the imprisonment and execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: she became a substitute for her father and assumed responsibility for the family and control over the family

patrimony, including the PPP. When she became prime minister, she evidently continued to identify herself with her father. The resolve and determination with which she met this challenge, despite all her tribulations and personal losses, show the strong impact of the sibling position of the first-born upon her. The same considerations of primogeniture gave her confidence in her right to the spiritual and political heritage of her father and grandfather.

The arranged marriage, for which Benazir consciously opted, also fully corresponded to this sibling position. In their personal lives, first-borns are usually conservative to the point of rigidity and prefer not to break existing traditions. The other children in the family, as we have already seen, chose love marriages. Whereas Bhutto's brothers were put in a situation of choice by being separated from the influence of their family and roots for an indefinite period of time, her sister Sanam behaved in accordance with the position of a middle sibling.

Sanam, or Sunny, the third child in the family, often played with her brothers and participated in their pranks in childhood, in contrast to the marked distance adopted by Benazir. At the same time, Sanam was close to her elder sister: as teenagers, they secretly smoked in the closet, putting on gloves and winding wet towels around their heads to prevent their fingers and hair from smelling of smoke. Afterwards, Sanam was always loyal to her elder sister, being the only family member to visit her in prison, accompany her abroad, take care of her after her operation, and, in later years, bring up her children in London.

As most middle siblings, Sanam was submissive, not ambitious, and not bent on success in her studies or work. She never took an interest in the family profession of politics. When she was invited, immediately after Benazir's assassination, to head the PPP, she categorically refused. Sanam avoided all publicity and contacts with the press, did not give interviews, and refused to draw popularity from family tragedies. In the Anglo-American documentary *Bhutto* (2010), in which all family members and some of Benazir's friends and fellow students participated, Sanam is more uptight and terse than others.

Benazir wrote about her sister in her autobiography, 'She had always chosen to keep her circle of friends small, disliking the attention she got as a Bhutto and the constant questions about her father. She mixed now with only a handful of people she had known for years.'⁴

Nevertheless, according to Adler, middle children may feel deprived of love or fairness in a family yet often try to attain success in areas where they can outstrip their rivals. They are less anxious and behave in a more spontaneous and carefree manner than those who were born before or after them. Such an area, in which Sanam was more independent and spontaneous than her elder sister and followed the call of her heart, was marriage: she married out of love. Her choice was the businessman Nasser Hussein, who was the grandson of Abdul Qadir Mohammed Hussein, a former *Diwan* of Junagadh state, who had served at this post before Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto. Nasser studied at the same

school as the Bhutto brothers, and Sanam had known him from childhood.

Sanam's passionate desire to marry Nasser as soon as possible is shown by the moment that was chosen for the wedding: the bride's mother was under house arrest and her sister in prison, yet this did not affect the couple's matrimonial plans in any way. Still, the wedding, which was celebrated at 70 Clifton, was modest by Pakistani measures with only five hundred guests. For unknown reasons, the government, which had not allowed Benazir to attend her father's funeral some time before, unexpectedly let her out of prison for her sister's wedding (Zia ul-Haq may have considered a wedding to be a less politically dangerous event than a funeral).

On account of censorship, mass media could not cover any joyous events in the Bhutto family or even mention their names in a positive context. Nevertheless, the journalists found a way out by publishing the following headlines in the papers: 'GRANDCHILDREN OF TWO FORMER PRIME MINISTERS OF JUNAGADH STATE TO MARRY. SISTER ATTENDS SISTER'S WEDDING'.⁵ Pakistani readers were adept at reading between the lines and understood what had taken place.

Nasser Hussein's family objected to his marriage with a girl from a family in disfavour and predicted that the Bhuttos would ruin him. They were right to a considerable extent. After the wedding, the government began to create impediments for Nasser's telecommunications business.



With children



Benazir Bhutto



Benazir's mazar. (Courtesy, Victoria Schofield)



The aerial view of the Bhutto's mausoleum. (Courtesy, Victoria Schofield)



Wax figure of Benazir



Sanam, Asifa, Bilawal, and Bakhtawar Bhutto



Zardari with Benazir's poster in the background



Fatima, Zulfikar Ali Jr., Sassi, and Ghinwa Bhutto



Benazir Bhutto

He was forced to close his company in Pakistan and move to London, where he started again from scratch. Nevertheless, he was ultimately ruined by the corruption scandals around Zardari. In the early 2000s, after a long investigation, the Geneva City Court accused Zardari *in absentia* of laundering money and taking bribes in the amount of fifteen million dollars from the Swiss companies SGS and Cotecna. An offshore company belonging to Nasser participated in these transactions, getting over three million dollars in commissions. To hush up the scandal and avoid judicial inquiry, Nasser had to close the company. His marriage to Sanam broke up, unable to withstand the pressure. Sanam continued to live in London with her two children, leading a secluded life.

Just as the behaviour of Benazir and Sanam corresponded to their sibling positions, Shah Nawaz was a typical younger brother. Adler believed that the youngest child (last-born) was similar to the first-born, insofar as both of them are at the centre of the parents' attention and are often spoiled. At the same time, children who are born last often retain a childish attitude towards life and never acquire a sense of responsibility. They are apt to feel anxious and develop personality problems that are linked to their constant need to adapt. Moreover, they rarely get the possibility to assume responsibility for themselves.

At the same time, the youngest child can become a rebel, if his parents take too much care of him or guide him too much. This can eventually lead him to champion revolutionary ideas for reshaping society or protecting

the weak and the oppressed. He can begin to subvert social institutions and oppose the hierarchy. He usually has a penchant for risk and tries to use his charisma to manipulate others.

This description of the youngest sibling surprisingly resembles the personality of Shah Nawaz, who was dependent upon his elder brother his entire life and even got married out of solidarity with him, yet was nevertheless prone to revolt, insurgency, and risk. At the same time, Shah Nawaz was the most charming in the family. Benazir described him as ‘mischievous, . . . always full of laughter and light-heartedness. He was my favourite amongst the children and we had a special bond, he the youngest and I the eldest. I shook my head, smiling as I caught the female glances and the heads that turned to look at Shah. He was slim and athletic and I could never walk with him without noticing the admiring glances from passersby.’⁶

Shah Nawaz did not like to study and was the only Bhutto child who was unable to finish his bachelor’s studies at Harvard. He unsuccessfully searched for his place in life: at one point, he decided to become a military man and entered cadet school; he subsequently dropped out of it and began to work in the construction industry; afterwards, he took an interest in reconnaissance and began to train as an underground agent. Shah Nawaz was attracted by risk and, when he lived in occupied Kabul where a curfew was imposed, he was often away the entire night, causing his wife and brother to worry. He explained his absences by the fact that he could not train his guerrillas if he did

not show them a personal example. After surviving several assassination attempts, Shah Nawaz was apparently prone to constant fear and depression: he suffered from frequent mood swings, threw fits, quarrelled with his wife, and carried poison on his body. No matter what conspiracy was behind his tragic end, it was partly provoked by his personality type.

It is more difficult to define the sibling position of Mir Murtaza, who was the second child in the family yet the eldest son. Despite all their liberalism, the Bhuttos were nevertheless a Muslim family and considered sons, especially the elder son, to be an absolute value. Pakistani families with several daughters continue to have children until they finally get a son. The reason does not simply lie in the fact that the son inherits the family name and the greater part of the family property. Unlike western families, in which daughters provide care for aged parents, girls in Pakistan leave their parents' home when they marry. In contrast, sons, who usually start their own families, stay with their parents and care for them when they grow old. Both generations taken together constitute an 'extended family' of the patriarchal type in contrast to the 'nuclear family' that is common in the West.

Mir Murtaza was brought up as the eldest son and therefore acquired all the traits of a dominant leader. He liked to be in charge and to head different groups, be it a school cricket team or a terrorist organization. His leadership qualities would have shown through best in politics. According to Adler, the elder son tends to show his superiority and assert

himself at the cost of others. He is pedantic and strives for perfection in many different ways, from insisting on ideal order in the home to striving to win a game at any cost. Mir Murtaza, according to his daughter, was obsessed with order, he did not allow his family to touch anything on his desk, and even cleaned his shoes himself, as he believed that the servants could not do it right. The elder son directs others well (especially men) yet requires female care. He expects a lot from his wife yet gets little, which makes him disillusioned about marriage in general.

The latter was also true for Mir Murtaza, who preferred women that cared for him. In particular, his long-term mistress Della Roufogalis came to his aid on several occasions and saved him in dangerous circumstances. Although his marriage to Fauzia seemed to be a good match between equals, the thought about her possible participation in the murder of his younger brother shook Mir Murtaza so profoundly that he refused to remarry for some time afterwards. He had the reputation of a playboy, often changed companions, and only settled down and became a good family man when he met Ghinwa Itaoui, who lavished motherly care upon him. Outside his family, Mir Murtaza was gruff, short-tempered, and haughty even to his own detriment. From his great-grandfather, after whom he was named, he inherited fearlessness, a penchant for risk, and the propensity to fall in love.

Like his father, Mir Murtaza easily made enemies: he was often arrogant and scathing with people that he did not like. After the hijacking, he was put on the list of the most

wanted men in Pakistan. In a word, he had a lot of enemies, both personal and political. At the same time, as he had lived for many years abroad and had not participated in the political process. Mir Murtaza was not suspected of corruption or malfeasance and retained the image (at least, in the eyes of his supporters, who mostly came from Sindh) of a totally honest and uncompromising fighter against tyranny and venality in government.

As other members of the family, Mir Murtaza called himself a hereditary democrat and denied that the feudal lifestyle of a *Wadero* had had any influence upon his upbringing: 'I remember that as kids when we used to go to the village, we already knew that when somebody bows down to touch your feet, you should stop him before he gets there. So, no, we were not raised as the kids of a feudal family.'⁷ As a child he asked his parents to take him out of Aitchison College in Lahore because he found the lifestyle and values of the institution to be 'aristocratic'; pupils learned horseback riding, played polo, and had personal servants. Nevertheless, Benazir says in her memoirs that Mir Murtaza not only liked engaging in elite pastimes, such as hunting and equestrian polo, but also delivered justice in Larkana like a real *Wadero's* son.

In her book, Fatima Bhutto, about whose dislike for her aunt we have already spoken, tries to depict Benazir and Mir Murtaza's childhood relations as the envy of a sister towards her brother: 'Benazir always kept a keen eye on Mir. If he had a new tricycle, she wanted one too. It didn't matter that her parents told her that boys had separate toys

from girls or that her own play area was well stocked with dolls and the like. It must have been hard on her, because her brothers were so instantly likeable and charming and she was shy and introverted, so that she felt like an outsider when forced to compete with her male siblings.⁸

There is no need to comment on Fatima's words. No matter how things stood during their childhood, Benazir subsequently outstripped her brothers in all areas. After all, the very fact that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took his daughter rather than his eldest son along with him to summit meetings and included her in official delegations speaks for itself. It is difficult to say who Shah Nawaz would have become, as he died so young. As to Mir Murtaza, he lived an illusory life, pretending to be a Marxist and a professional revolutionary, participating in shadowy undertakings, and playing hide-and-seek with an invisible enemy. He was not fond of routine: he did not want to settle down in London and engage in business, although Benazir managed to get a residence permit for him during a meeting with Margaret Thatcher. Instead, he continued to move from place to place, taking advantage of the hospitality of Arab dictators. In contrast, Benazir lived in the real world, set socially meaningful goals, and did her best to attain them.

When Benazir and Mir Murtaza studied at Harvard and Oxford, they met rarely, preferring the company of their own friends. This is quite natural on the whole: students always take more interest in those that are older than them and overlook those that are younger. However, Fatima attributes this to the haughtiness and egoism of her aunt,

whom she called *Wadi Bua* (the Sindhi term for the older sister of one's father). Moreover, Fatima asserted that *Bua* hated all the girlfriends Mir Murtaza had during his student years.

Be that as it may, Benazir did not get on with either of Mir Murtaza's wives. She was reconciled with Fauzia only after her brother's death to spite her second sister-in-law. As for Ghinwa, who was considered a ballerina, she disdainfully called her a 'belly-dancer', an enmity that was explained first and foremost by the political rivalry between them and Ghinwa's aspirations within the party. Ghinwa replied in the same vein, spreading rumours that Benazir had originally intended to marry Yasser Arafat, who was her father's age.

Interestingly enough, Mir Murtaza wrote his undergraduate thesis at Harvard under the direction of Samuel Huntington, whom he called the 'butcher of Vietnam' (referring to the adviser's role that Huntington played during the Vietnam War) in his letters to his parents. In a word, the American scholar got it from the Bhutto siblings at different times.

After Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's overthrow and arrest, Mir Murtaza's carefree life came to an end. He dropped out of Oxford, where he was doing his Masters, and founded a committee for saving his father in London; he was assisted by Shah Nawaz, who copied him in everything. The brothers constantly travelled around the world, meeting with heads of state and influential politicians, asking them to put pressure on the Pakistani authorities.

Then they moved to Afghanistan, where they began to engage in illegal activities. At this time, their sister was already in prison. The siblings' paths diverged once and for all, as Benazir categorically refused to engage in armed struggle and terror in contrast to her brothers. Many years later, this difference of views and political positions made Fatima think (a view that was supposedly suggested to her by Jacques Vergès, the French lawyer of the Bhutto family) that Shah Nawaz' death was in the interest of his sister. The motive is not clear, while Fatima, who passionately hated her aunt, looked for any pretext, even the most unlikely, to discredit her.

When the PPP, led by Benazir, won the largest number of seats in the 1988 parliamentary elections, Mir Murtaza called her from Damascus and tried to convince her to remain in the opposition and not to become prime minister, as a protest against the election results, and to boycott the conditions laid down on her by the army and the president. According to Mir Murtaza, the small number of votes (or so he believed) that the PPP had received at the elections was an offense to the family honour: after all, he, too, considered the party to be family patrimony. After Benazir became prime minister anyhow, Mir Murtaza began to speak for the first time about his return to Pakistan. Indeed, the amnesty declared by Bhutto when she came to power made it possible for many political emigrants to return to Pakistan. Nevertheless, Mir Murtaza was a case apart: the hijacking of the plane and the assassinations committed

by the Al-Zulfikar group were state crimes that were too serious to remain unpunished.

Benazir describes this situation somewhat vaguely: 'Knowing that an indemnity would include my brother Mir Murtaza Bhutto, as well as thousands of others, President Ishaq decided to sow the seeds of family discord. He approved only a conditional amnesty which meant that my brother could still be prosecuted under certain conditions. . . . While I could and did give my brother a Pakistani passport, his return to Pakistan was still fraught with dangers.'⁹ It is not clear what Bhutto meant by a 'conditional amnesty'. Of course, Mir Murtaza and his family believed that his sister was hindering his return to his homeland as she was afraid of a powerful political rival.

After 1990, when Benazir headed the opposition, PPP members who were disappointed with the policies of her government increasingly began to say that the true heir (*asal waris*) was Mir Murtaza, because Bhutto, Sr, could be succeeded only by Bhutto, Jr, rather than Mrs Zardari. Bhutto, Sr, purportedly sent Mir Murtaza abroad to preserve his real political heir, leaving his daughter in Pakistan, as she could be sacrificed. Finally, they said that Benazir simply represented the family during the dictatorship and that the PPP victory at the elections was not her work. This version of the story satisfied Mir Murtaza and his supporters and generally corresponded to the patriarchal political culture that is predominant in Pakistan. He subsequently convinced himself that his sister usurped his rights as son and heir.

Benazir sometimes parried her brother's attacks from the standpoint of the sibling position, shifting the political problem into the domain of gender inequality. She said, 'Once my father died, I knew the day would come when, like all feudal families, they'd lock up the daughter so that the son takes over.'¹⁰

When Benazir came to power for the second time, Mir Murtaza decided to stop heeding his sister's arguments about his safety and to return to Pakistani politics. To this end, he participated from abroad in elections to the Sindh Legislative Assembly, as an independent candidate from Larkana. He was enthusiastically supported by his mother, who dreamed of seeing her only son return home. Nusrat managed his election campaign, went to neighbouring villages, and visited the homes of neighbours and tenants, asking them with tears in her eyes to vote for Mir Murtaza so that her son would come back. As a result, Mir Murtaza was elected and came in late 1993 to the Karachi he had left sixteen years earlier. He was arrested directly at the airport and put in prison, where he spent six months. Many of his supporters were arrested together with him; like him, they had fled to Afghanistan in the 1980s and were suspected of ties with 'Al-Zulfikar'.

Mir Murtaza's arrest and imprisonment were, apparently, Benazir's mistake, or more precisely, the weakness of her government and a concession to President Farooq Leghari, Sindh Chief Minister Abdullah Shah, and others who believed that the terrorist activities of her brother had to be either confirmed or dismissed in court. Generally speaking,

as a novice politician and a regional parliamentarian, Mir Murtaza could not compete with Benazir. She had much more serious rivals at the national level, especially Nawaz Sharif, who was always ready to challenge her.

After he was put in prison, however, Mir Murtaza acquired the right to denounce the shortcomings and arbitrary behaviour of the government. He did just this, contemptuously calling his sister 'Mrs Zardari' and denying her right to the glorious family name. He referred to the management of the party that she headed as 'robber barons', called for new party elections, and declared that 'the country would need 'open heart surgery' to treat corruption.'¹¹ Moreover, as a victim, Mir Murtaza began to get public attention and empathy even outside Pakistan. In particular, Tariq Ali, who shared Mir Murtaza's left-wing views and enthusiasm for Marxism-Maoism, spoke out on several occasions in his support.

Finally, her brother's arrest spoiled Benazir's relations with her mother, who cast her unconditional support for Mir Murtaza. This must have particularly hurt Benazir: after all the sacrifices that she had brought to the family altar and after all that she and Nusrat had gone through together, she could have hardly expected to hear her mother say about her in an interview, 'She tells a lot of lies, this daughter of mine. . . . She talks a lot about democracy, but she's become a little dictator,' Mrs Bhutto said. 'I can't forgive her. . . . Somehow she has gotten paranoiac about her brother.'¹² Benazir had previously been offended by her siblings' attitude, which she considered to be tantamount to

treachery: they enjoyed married life while she languished in prison. Now her own mother turned away from her.

Finally, the trial was held, and Mir Murtaza was acquitted of all charges of treason, sabotage and terrorism. He regained liberty with the halo around him of a national hero and a prisoner of conscience, which his arrest had given him, and settled with his family in the mansion at 70 Clifton, which lawfully belonged to him as the eldest son. He immediately immersed himself in politics. He established his own party faction PPP (SB), named after 'Martyr Bhutto' (*Shahed Bhutto*), travelled around Sindh, spoke at meetings, and attacked Chief Minister Abdullah Shah using the traditional family rhetoric. 'We aren't afraid of you Chief Minister, Abdullah Shah. . . . It is not possible for dogs to fight with lions,' he shouted into the crowd.¹³

Nevertheless, Mir Murtaza's chief target became his brother-in-law Asif Ali Zardari, towards whom he made no effort to hide his hatred. During his public appearances, he scornfully called Zardari and his associates 'Asif Baba and the Forty Thieves'. The roots of Mir Murtaza's hatred towards his brother-in-law are not as clear as it might seem at first glance and do not simply boil down to the political confrontation between a left-wing socialist and a corrupt capitalist, as certain scholars of modern Pakistan believe. Although Mir Murtaza and Asif belonged to the same social stratum, they represented two different types of Pakistani elite. Mir Murtaza was an adept of the code of honour of the old landed aristocracy that may have been feudal yet nevertheless had their own ideas of dignity,

including the rejection of the passion for gain and greed. As to Zardari, he was a successful businessman, who never passed over a chance for profit and who greatly boosted his family's fortune. His attitude towards his brother-in-law, who never earned money but lived off rent from family property or handouts from Arab dictators, could not have been respectful.

Finally, Mir Murtaza's animosity towards his brother-in-law also stemmed from his sibling position. As an elder brother, he saw his brother-in-law as a rival that ousted him from his sister's life and strove to take over as leader of the 'extended' family. He distanced himself from his sister, calling her by her husband's family name. Of course, Zardari's notoriety and the plethora of rumours and scandals around him made him vulnerable to criticism and gave Mir Murtaza additional advantages.

Immersing himself in politics, Mir Murtaza continued to make enemies. A civil war was taking place in Karachi: people were killed without trial or investigation in so-called 'skirmishes' with the police and rangers. Mir Murtaza was the only Sindhi politician to speak out in defence of the *muhajirs* and their party the MQM, which aggravated his conflict with Abdullah Shah and Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar, who was believed to be responsible for the killings in Karachi during 'Operation Clean-Up'. And, of course, Mir Murtaza accused his sister of all the mortal sins on every occasion. For example, he asserted that most of the schools which she established and of which she was so proud were 'phantoms': these schools were purportedly

opened on the funds of NGOs or donations from abroad yet had no equipment, teachers, or pupils.

The mutual enmity between Mir Murtaza and Zardari reached its peak. A lot of rumours circulate in Pakistan about what happened next, yet I shall cite Tariq Ali's account here, leaving the responsibility for possible speculations and exaggerations to him. Tariq Ali wrote, 'The incumbent chief minister of Sind was Abdullah Shah, one of Zardari's creatures. He began to harass Murtaza's supporters. Murtaza decided to confront the organ-grinder himself. He rang Zardari and invited him round for an informal chat sans bodyguards to try and settle the problems within the family. Zardari agreed. As the two men were pacing the garden, Murtaza's retainers appeared and grabbed Zardari. Someone brought out a cut-throat razor and some warm water and Murtaza shaved off half of Zardari's moustache, to the delight of the retainers, then told him to get lost. A fuming Zardari, who had probably feared much worse, was compelled to shave off the other half at home. The media, bemused, were informed that the new clean-shaven consort had accepted intelligence advice that the moustache made him too recognizable a target.'¹⁴

Pakistani politics and society often subsist on implausible rumours that give rise, in turn, to wild legends. It is therefore impossible to assert categorically that Tariq Ali's story corresponds to reality. Nevertheless, if it is true, it would be difficult to offend more deeply a person with feudal and tribal roots, such as Zardari. In South Asia, a moustache is not simply a man's adornment but also a symbol of

virility and military valour. The loss of a moustache, just as the removal of a woman's hair, signified disgrace and the loss of social status. When Mughal emperors conquered insubordinate local princes, they punished them for rebellion by shaving off their moustaches. After such humiliation, reconciliation between Zardari and Mir Murtaza would no longer have been possible.

On 20 September 1996, Mir Murtaza and his associates were returning from a political meeting in the Karachi suburb of Surjani Town. An ambush was waiting for them near the family residence on Clifton Road. Armed policemen under the command of four high-ranking officers stopped Mir Murtaza's car. Snipers were hiding behind nearby trees. The street lamps had been switched off. Mir Murtaza understood what was taking place and came out of the car with raised hands, forbidding his bodyguards to open fire. Instead, fire was opened by the police, who killed seven people and seriously wounded Mir Murtaza. Several bullets had been fired at him from close-up.

Shortly before, the police had surrounded the Bhutto mansion. Hearing the sound of gunfire in the street, Mir Murtaza's wife and daughter thought he had been arrested once again. The fourteen-year-old Fatima 'phoned her aunt at the prime minister's residence in Islamabad. Their conversation, which has been repeatedly cited by the international mass media, is known only from Fatima's words. Zardari purportedly answered the phone and refused to call Benazir, as the latter was hysterical. In reply to

Fatima's question about what had happened to her aunt, he answered, 'Oh, don't you know? Your father's been shot.'¹⁵

Fatima and Ghinwa guessed where the incident could have occurred and ran out of the house. No traces of the tragic event were visible in the street. The scene of the crime had been meticulously put in order, and no traces of blood or shattered glass could be seen. They went to the nearby Mideast Hospital, where the police had brought the wounded, but it was too late: Mir Murtaza had already died. It turned out subsequently that he had been left lying on the ground for almost an hour, bleeding profusely, and then brought to a hospital where no reanimation equipment could be found.

Although shooting and killing had become common events in the streets of Karachi, Mir Murtaza Bhutto's death was too serious a crime to be hushed up. Evidently, the operation was carefully planned yet, as often occurs in Pakistan, carried out in a slipshod manner. Subsequently, it was discovered that police records were forged, material evidence was lost, witnesses were arrested and intimidated, and a policeman was killed out of fear that he might speak. All of this suggested that the decision to kill Mir Murtaza had been taken at a very high level.

Nevertheless, Pakistanis still debate today whether it was a contract killing or an accident (the Karachi police occasionally fired at chance passersby) and who opened fire first, Mir Murtaza's guards or the police. In 2009,

thirteen years after the event, a Pakistani court acquitted the policemen who had participated in the shoot-out.

Of course, government authorities claimed that Mir Murtaza's guards opened fire and that the police were forced to shoot back without even knowing who was inside the car. Nevertheless, Mir Murtaza's companions who survived continued to assert that he came out of the car with raised hands and that the police opened fire in response. Fatima Bhutto openly accused Zardari of her father's murder. Members of the *Shabeed Bhutto* faction were more careful, yet blamed Benazir for passivity and a careless investigation. When she came to her brother's funeral at Larkana, local inhabitants (whose member of parliament had been Mir Murtaza) stoned her car.

Benazir's government convened a tribunal for investigating the circumstances surrounding Mir Murtaza's death. The tribunal, chaired by the chief justice of the Pakistan supreme court, interrogated witnesses presented by both sides. Mir Murtaza's lawyers accused Zardari, Abdullah Shah, and two senior police officers, of plotting the murder. Benazir, who had been removed from office by that time, recognised that a conspiracy had existed yet conjectured that President Farooq Leghari had been behind it. According to her, the plot aimed to 'kill a Bhutto to get rid of a Bhutto.'¹⁶ This sounded fatalistic, like recognition of the doom that was hovering over her and that had already killed all the men in her family.

The tribunal came to the conclusion that there was insufficient evidence of Zardari's involvement in the conspiracy yet admitted that it was a case of unlawful murder by the police and that such an incident could not have occurred without the approval of senior government officials. It should be said that, immediately after Benazir was removed from office, one of her brother's archenemies, Abdullah Shah, fled from Karachi by sea through the Gulf of Mexico to the USA. Things stopped there, yet questions about all the suspects remain.

Whereas Benazir devotes an entire chapter of her autobiography to the death of her younger brother, she speaks about Mir Murtaza's murder only in passing, as if reluctantly, simply saying that the crime was directed against her and her government: 'In the midst of this spiralling political uncertainty, tragedy once again struck my family. My father had been killed by the dictator Zia ul-Haq. My brother Shah Nawaz was poisoned to death in France. And then on 20 September 1996, my family was stunned by yet another murder. My brother Murtaza was killed in a police shoot-out in front of his home in Karachi. I was especially distraught, because we had just reconciled after some years of political estrangement and the family had once again been coming together. . . . I suspected that Murtaza's murder was part of the conspiracy to destabilise my government.'¹⁷ No other sources speak about the reconciliation between brother and sister on the eve of the murder.

Of course, Mir Murtaza's death did not give Benazir any advantages: he was not a serious political rival for her. On the contrary, her husband was suspected for a long time to come of being involved in Mir Murtaza's murder, which naturally had an impact on Benazir's reputation as well. Mir Murtaza's death also had tragic consequences for Nusrat Bhutto. Her shock at the news triggered the rapid development of the Alzheimer's disease, from which she suffered until her death in 2011. Nusrat's battle with dementia could be traced back to the brutal wounds inflicted on her in 1977 'by General Zia's thugs at Lahore, when . . . she was savagely beaten and suffered major head wounds.'¹⁸ Benazir considered that her mother 'seemed to almost literally lose her mind when confronted with Murtaza's murder.'¹⁹ Although Nusrat had taken Mir Murtaza's side in the conflict between her children, the responsibility of caring for her fell on Benazir's shoulders. Nusrat lived with Benazir's family in Dubai and never learned about her assassination in 2007.

Bhutto was hard hit by her mother's illness and spoke about her with great pain: 'I have watched my beautiful, glamorous mother, so charming, so graceful, slowly turn frail and weak. This strong woman, who battled military dictatorships and was a pioneer for women's rights, now hardly recognises anyone and cannot speak. She cannot tell me whether she is hungry or whether she has a toothache. It is heart-rending for me to see how helpless my determined mother has become. But I am blessed to have her live with me.'²⁰

Finally, Mir Murtaza's death radically changed the life of his daughter Fatima, whom we have mentioned so often in this book that we should devote a few words to her. The writer and journalist Fatima Bhutto, or Fati, as she is known in her family, was born in Kabul in 1982. She grew up without her mother, although, after settling in the USA, Fauzia tried to get custody only to meet with Fatima's outright refusal. Living together with her father, Fatima developed a tough and masculine personality. Her stepmother Ghinwa became a second mother for her, and both of them currently live in the family mansion at 70 Clifton, together with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Jr.

Becoming an orphan at the age of fourteen, Fatima grew up fast and set herself two goals: uncovering her father's killers and avenging him. In this respect, she almost fully repeated her aunt's biography. Nevertheless, there is a major difference between Benazir and her niece, which stems, first and foremost, from the calibre of their personalities. After beginning her political career as a daughter avenging her father, Benazir managed to overcome her personal tragedy and connect her experience of tribulation with the needs of her people. On this path, she suffered a lot and sacrificed a lot. During the last years of her life, Benazir paid little attention to her personal safety, as her terrible end showed.

In contrast, Fatima is fighting with her father's purported murderers at a safe distance and with other means, which include newspaper articles, interviews and memoirs that are published outside of Pakistan. Fatima directs most of her accusations, whether political or personal, against her aunt:

this is a sore subject for her. Only Benazir's assassination that shook the world led her to write the sentimental and partly penitential essay 'Farewell to *Wadi Bua*'.²¹

Of course, Fatima has no documentary evidence that the government that was in power back then or today was involved in her father's murder. Nevertheless, as a political journalist, she knows that even unverified scandals and sensations around people in power are always popular among readers. Fatima actively supports the extremely unpopular party PPP (SB), currently headed by her stepmother, yet does not want to engage in politics openly so as to try and change something herself.

'I don't believe in birthright politics,' she said. 'I don't think, nor have I ever thought, that my name qualifies me for anything. I am political through my writing. I have no interest in parliamentary politics for now.'²² Fatima's populist remarks supporting democratic choice and rejecting 'birthright politics' and 'dynastic' systems of power transfer contradict her own plans with regard to leadership in the PPP. From Fatima's standpoint, the party should be eventually headed, not by its current chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, but by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Jr., the son of the eldest son of the party's founder.

Moreover, Fatima considers herself, her stepbrother and their cousin Sassi (Shah Nawaz's daughter) to be the last 'real Bhuttos' and refuses this right to Benazir's three children as they bear the surname 'Zardari'. Fatima also refuses it to the children of her younger aunt Sanam

and Nasser Hussein. Coming from a left-wing journalist working for leftist and feminist periodicals, such a scheme of transmitting party leadership exclusively through the male line, as per feudal 'majorat' tradition, is a medieval anachronism.

Today, the younger generation of the Bhutto family consists of eight people, the eldest of whom (Sassi) is just over thirty. Women outnumber men among them. Fatima's appeal to cede leadership to sons of sons aggravates the differences between cousins. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto (b.1933), former Sindh governor and chief minister, has spoken quite critically about Fatima's pretensions. Today, he is the official head or *Sardar* of the entire Bhutto tribe, which comprises over 30,000 people. At one point, Mumtaz Ali helped his cousin Zulfikar to establish the PPP and therefore considers all subsequent party leaders from Benazir on to be usurpers. In other words, the schism in the Bhutto family passes down from generation to generation.

Although Fatima avoids thorny questions by invoking the menace hanging over her, she has clearly not met with any overt threats against her from the government. Although she regularly and harshly criticised President Zardari and the Pakistani government, she comfortably lives in the family residences in Karachi and Larkana, travels about the country unhindered, and spends part of the year abroad, going to conferences, charity events, social occasions and presentations of her books. Her rejection of all the advantages of belonging to the Bhutto dynasty notwithstanding, her family name serves as her safeguard.

The lives of other, less well-known dissidents are a lot more troubled in Pakistan.

In contrast to her father, who had to drop out of Oxford, Fatima got an excellent education. In 2004, she got a bachelor's degree from Columbia University (USA) and, a year later, a master's of political science from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. While she was still a student, Fatima began to engage in political journalism and today has her own column in the British weekly *New Statesman*. She writes intelligently, trenchantly, and even scathingly, although her style is overly subjective for an analyst. Moreover, she often gives interviews to respectable periodicals, serving as an expert on Pakistani politics. Her commentaries always have a highly critical and revelatory tone, which is reflected in the title of one of her interviews: 'Should I Die To Prove That Pakistan Is Dangerous?'²³

Above all, Fatima considers herself to be a poet and a writer of fiction. She published her first collection of poetry while still very young: *Whispers of the Desert*, dedicated to her father, came out in 1998. These teenage poems show that Fatima developed very early on an 'accentuated personality' that is obsessed with two themes: the love for her father as a noble knight of democracy and hatred for the ruling elite of Pakistan in the person of her aunt and her husband.

Fatima gained greater recognition not from her poetry but from her autobiography, *Songs of Blood and Sword: A Daughter's Memoir*, that I have cited on numerous occasions

already. It revealed family secrets, intrigues and other 'skeletons in the closet' of the Bhutto clan. Even the book's cover was designed in the corresponding style: the names of Fatima's relatives (her grandfather, father, uncle, and aunt) and the dates when they were murdered were written in red letters, as if in blood, against a black background. The book's official presentation, which was hosted by the popular British-Indian writer William Dalrymple, took place in Delhi before an audience of 1,500 people. Fatima found her most devoted fans in India, which is no surprise, given the hostile image of Pakistan that she creates in her book—an image in which many Indians believe. India, like a fairy godmother, rewarded the Pakistani Cinderella by sending her to a real ball or, more precisely, a triumphal tour of the country's largest cities where Fatima read excerpts from her book (usually the touching chapter about her father's death) before capacity crowds. In turn, Fatima tried to meet the expectations of the Indian public, appearing at her presentations with a *bindi* or red mark on her forehead. Though in modern times, wearing a *bindi* is not restricted to one religion or region, it still represents and preserves a symbolic significance that is integrated into Hindu mythology.

Fatima left India as a national sweetheart, a rising star of English-language literature (she does not write in the native languages of Urdu and Sindhi), and simply a 'beauty'. The glamour and intelligence that the Indians discovered in Fatima, along with her 'powerful' origins, suggested a completely crazy idea to the paparazzi: arranging a

marriage between Fatima and Rahul Gandhi (son of Rajiv and grandson of Indira Gandhi) so as to terminate the long-term enmity between India and Pakistan.²⁴ The fearless Fatima may well take such a risk. It remains to ask Rahul now.

The murder of Mir Murtaza split apart the Bhutto family, alienated (be it temporarily) Benazir from her mother, and turned her niece against her once and for all. It appears that she viewed her rivalry with her brother not as a family or political conflict but from the standpoint of gender disparity. Speaking about the fact that women are forced to show that they are not inferior to men in the political domain, she once said, 'We must emotionally protect ourselves from unfair, often vicious attacks made on us via the male members of our family. Sadly, many still believe that men control the women in their lives and by pressuring the man they will get him to pressure the woman.'²⁵ Neither the murder of her brothers nor the imprisonment of her husband could force Benazir to submit. Nevertheless, she undoubtedly sensed that the circle was closing in and that the family curse would strike her the next time around.

Notes

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9

Into the Same River Twice

After the death of Benazir Bhutto's brother and her dismissal from power, it seemed as if the entire world had turned against her: her husband was in prison, her mother was terminally ill, and she herself became subject to constant harassment. Journalists, whom she had previously considered to be her protectors, now hounded her, constantly publishing new revelations of corruption in her former cabinet and entourage, targeting her 'Achilles' heel'—her husband.

The well-known Pakistani writer and journalist Mohammed Hanif, who had often criticized Bhutto in his publications, believed that his journalist colleagues had gone too far: 'Her transformation from people's Princess to pirate's wife was swift. Journalists gleefully reported on the arrival of ponies from Argentina, private zoos in the Prime Minister House and how Zardari's cronies were bleeding the country's financial institutions dry. When they got bored with stories about graft and greed there was always her newfound spiritual quest to report. One month, she was visiting fortune-tellers and spiritual healers. Another, she was slaughtering black goats to fend off political intrigues.'¹

Bhutto fought corruption charges for over a decade. Given her pride and sensitivity about honour and dishonour, one can imagine how humiliating the constant necessity to justify herself was for her. The 1997 elections were a fiasco for the discredited ruling party PPP, which got only 18 seats in the National Assembly. Returning to power, Nawaz Sharif launched a series of judicial proceedings against his predecessor. He asserted that Bhutto had embezzled public funds and transferred them to Swiss bank accounts.

In June 1997, Pakistan officially requested the Swiss government to review the bank accounts of Bhutto and her relatives and Swiss judicial authorities headed by Attorney General Carla del Ponte blocked the accounts of Benazir, Nusrat and Zardari. Later, in 1998, Switzerland officially turned to the Pakistani government with a request to arrest Bhutto on charges of money laundering.

Bhutto's opponents derisively called her government a 'family commercial enterprise'. She was denounced even by recent associates, such as her former press secretary Hussain Haqqani, who declared, 'She no longer made the distinction between the Bhuttos and Pakistan. . . . In her mind, she was Pakistan, so she could do as she pleased.'² According to reports that appeared in the press, the former prime minister's family managed to transfer about a hundred million dollars to Switzerland during her stay in office. The main sources of illegal income were said to be arms deals.

The unlawful income of the Bhutto-Zardari family was transferred to the bank accounts of specially established offshore companies. .

In 1999, the Supreme Court in Lahore judged Bhutto and Zardari to be guilty and sentenced them to five years of prison, confiscation of property, and a fine of 8.6 million dollars. At that time, Zardari was still imprisoned in Pakistan, while Bhutto was living in London, and Pakistani authorities tried to secure her arrest through Interpol. Bhutto insisted that all corruption charges against her were initiated by her political opponents.

She actively promoted this point of view abroad: in 1998, she visited the USA and complained about unfair persecution from the Sharif government to First Lady Hillary Clinton. In 1999, Bhutto declared that she would appeal the court decision and return to Pakistan. Subsequently, the sentence was declared biased and annulled by a higher court: it was shown that the judge had been pressured. Nevertheless, Benazir did not return to her homeland and moved with her children and ill mother to the United Arab Emirates, where she lived for about eight years.

In addition to Switzerland, corruption scandals flared up around Benazir and her husband in Great Britain and Spain. A judicial inquiry was held in London to review fraud charges relating to real estate: Rockwood Manor in Surrey had been bought by offshore companies in Zardari's name and refurbished in accordance with his extravagant tastes. At first, Zardari denied that the estate belonged to

him. However, when the British court was about to order liquidators to sell the estate and return the money to the Pakistani government, Zardari admitted that it was his property. Still, Tariq Ali believed that Benazir did not have anything to do with this affair, as her husband ‘wasn’t thinking of spending much time there with her.’³

Another highly publicized case was initiated with regard to a diamond necklace worth 120,000 pounds that had been bought by Zardari in London in 1998. It was stored in a bank safe in Switzerland from where it was impounded as evidence by the court. The court investigated the case for six years (the poor Swiss taxpayers!) and came to the conclusion that it had been intended for Benazir, who, however, rejected the gift as ‘inappropriate’.

When she was planning her wedding, Benazir decided to limit the amount of jewellery given by the groom to the bride in Pakistan, to set an example of modest wedding expenditure. ‘I don’t live a life that calls for jewellery,’ said Bhutto at the time. ‘How many diamond necklaces can you wear to the office?’ “You have your whole life to give me jewellery,” I consoled Asif, who wanted to give me the best.⁴

After ten years of married life and two terms as Prime Minister, Bhutto’s views may have changed. She had become older and could have begun to take an interest in jewels. In any case, trustworthy people had met her on different occasions in Bond Street, the centre of the London jewellery trade. It is hard to understand why a woman who

had inherited land the size of an entire district and who moreover had retired from public office did not have the right to buy expensive jewellery, if she could afford it.

This is precisely what Bhutto had in mind when she countered charges about the necklace: 'I mean, what is poor and what is rich? If you mean, am I rich by European standards, do I have a billion dollars, or even a hundred million dollars, even half that, no, I do not. But if you mean that I'm ordinary rich, yes, my father had three children studying at Harvard as undergraduates at the same time. But this wealth never meant anything to my brothers or me.'⁵ When Zardari became president in 2009, he published information about his private fortune, which totalled around 1.8 billion dollars. With such resources, he could well afford to buy his wife a necklace.

Still, the press and public opinion inflated this jewellery affair to such an extent that, three years after Bhutto's death, her friend and then Pakistani ambassador to London Wajid Shamsul Hasan found it necessary to tell me that the notorious necklace was in fact an imitation. In a word, the commotion around Benazir's necklace reminded me of the famous historical affair of Marie-Antoinette's necklace on which Alexander Dumas based his novel, *The Queen's Necklace*.

As any person who is constantly in the public eye, Benazir often met with such cases of prejudice and even banal envy. For example, the international press asserted that her famous white head-scarves or veils that had become her

trademark were specially manufactured for her in Paris. Her detractors asserted that these scarves were made for Bhutto by the luxury designer Hermès. Benazir indignantly denied these rumours, explaining that she bought her *dupattas* at a market in Karachi. This may well be true, as the chiffon available in Pakistan is just as good as in France.

Sometimes, western scholars of Pakistan wonder why so many corruption scandals took place during Bhutto's terms in office. 'The reason we don't see very many dossiers on the financial corruption during General Zia and General Musharraf's regimes,' writes Mohammed Hanif, 'is that when Bhutto was in power the intelligence agencies went into overdrive documenting or sometimes inventing her misdemeanours. When the generals or their cronies are in power all the intelligence leaks just dry up.'⁶

Benazir's rehabilitation began only in 2006 when Pervez Musharraf was in power and Benazir lived in Dubai. It started with the publication of a report by the Pakistani auditor general that asserted that Bhutto's first dismissal from power in 1990 was the result of a 'witch hunt' organized by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan. He allegedly approved the recruitment of a large group of lawyers to fabricate corruption charges against Bhutto and Zardari. According to analysts, the publication of this report by the Pakistani government suggested that the Musharraf regime was preparing the ground for Bhutto's return to the country and was also trying to bring about a rupture between the supporters of two former prime ministers, Bhutto and Sharif.

In 1998, Nawaz Sharif appointed General Pervez Musharraf Chief of Army Staff, repeating the mistake once made by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had elevated Zia ul-Haq to this key army post. In 1999, the Kargil War broke out between Pakistan and India. Pakistani troops seized the town of Kargil, leading to what some scholars call the 'Fourth Indo-Pakistani War'. The Kargil operation fell through, demoralizing the Pakistani army and society, triggering another power crisis, and aggravating the antagonism between the civilian government and the military. This was one of the most humiliating moments in Pakistani history since the fall of Dhaka. The relations between Nawaz Sharif and Musharraf, who began to blame each other for the events, deteriorated to the point of total rupture.

Sharif decided to fire Musharraf at a time when the latter was returning to Pakistan from abroad. The general's airplane was not permitted to land at Karachi: Sharif hoped that he would land in another country and stay there. Soldiers loyal to Musharraf seized the airport and saved the general, whose plane could have crashed due to lack of fuel. Returning to the ground, Musharraf immediately mounted a coup, arrested the prime minister, and disbanded the parliament.

According to Benazir, this was 'classical military coup', although this assessment is not entirely fair. The coup put an end to over a decade of vain attempts to impose democratic rule in Pakistan. Those who are prone to blame Bhutto for her inability to rule the country should recall that, out of her two terms as prime minister, she

was allowed to hold office for only four-and-a-half years, instead of the ten years laid down by the constitution.

Musharraf began his career as head of state by making concessions to the spirit of the times: he called himself 'Chief Executive' instead of 'Chief Martial Law Administrator', as dictators had done earlier. Like his predecessors, Musharraf promised to hold power for only a limited period of time: he declared in 2003 that would resign as chief executive the next year (2004). And, also like his predecessors, he did not fulfil this promise.

The declaration of a 'state of emergency' is always accompanied by promises to introduce a new order that would do away with the arbitrariness and corruption that had stained the preceding government. This is precisely what happened at this time when the military removed the civilian government of Nawaz Sharif from power. Nevertheless, the 'new order' does not, as a rule, bring anything new: it is rather a tactical diversion that leads to the further weakening of the shaky foundations on which the country and all its institutions stand. One can be certain that, within ten years, the new ruler in military uniform would be deposed through yet another coup.

Musharraf's military regime, the fourth in Pakistan's fairly brief history, differed from its predecessors, at least in form. Musharraf kept repeating that the country needed a 'full-fledged democracy' and announced a campaign for protecting human rights in Pakistan. Musharraf declared a state of emergency, rather than martial law, and so a

military administration for ruling the country was not established. The constitution was not repealed but only temporarily suspended, and political parties continued to exist under certain restrictions. All of these particularities of the Musharraf regime stemmed from the changing attitude of the international community to dictatorships emerging from the overthrow of lawfully elected governments. What was still possible in the mid-twentieth century was considered unacceptable at the turn of the twenty-first century.

After 11 September 2001, Musharraf radically changed his foreign policy, ceased to support the Afghan Taliban and joined the international antiterrorist coalition. This allowed him to cast off the image of a 'usurper' and an 'outcast', while Pakistan's foreign debt was either forgiven or restructured, 'enabling Musharraf to create an aura of prosperity for Pakistan's business and military elites.'⁷ A referendum held in 2002 led to Musharraf being elected president, and civilian constitutional government reappeared in the country.

Musharraf tried to neutralise his most influential political rivals. Both Benazir and Nawaz Sharif had been sentenced by Pakistani courts, had left the country, and were living in exile. If they had returned and participated in an election campaign, they would have risked imprisonment. Moreover, people stripped of the right to participate in elections could not head political parties. In addition, Musharraf published an edict prohibiting people from serving more than twice as prime minister: this edict was targeted directly at Benazir

and Nawaz, as both of them had served two terms as prime minister.

In his memoirs, Musharraf wrote, 'Former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, who had twice been tried, been tested, and failed, had to be denied a third chance. They had misgoverned the nation. Furthermore, they would never allow their parties to develop a democratic tradition, as was clear from the fact that neither Benazir Bhutto's party nor Nawaz Sharif's had held internal elections. In fact, Benazir became her party's 'chairperson for life', in the tradition of the old African dictators! For both individuals, legal cases were pushing against them. . . . Both have chosen to avoid the rule of law by staying away.'⁸ Further, Musharraf emotionally called Benazir's and Sharif's terms in office the 'dreadful decade'.

In the meantime, Benazir's life in Dubai was neither quiet or easy: lawsuits and pervasive journalists found her here, too, and she lost sleep over worries about her family.' I slept very little, spending an inordinate amount of time discussing legal issues and preparing material for the press, to defend our reputations. This relentless pursuit, almost to punish us, went on for two-and-a-half years before judicial matters went back to their normal beat of hearings. . . . I worried about travelling in case anything happened to my mother or husband while I was away. I dreaded a phone call in case it was bad news related to them. I couldn't sleep at night, waking at any slight sound or imagining it in case something happened at night.'⁹

In 2004, Zardari was released from prison. His health was in a poor state, and he went to the USA for treatment. Benazir flew to the USA every three weeks to see her husband, continuing to fend off lawsuits, engage in party affairs, hold talks with the opposition and the press, give speeches about Pakistani democracy, raise her children, and care for her ill mother. During meetings with diplomats and politicians, she carefully yet persistently spoke about her safe return to Pakistan, which was unthinkable without preliminary talks with Musharraf. An important precondition for the talks was PPP's demand that Musharraf should resign from the post of army chief of staff. As an opponent of military dictatorship, Bhutto did not want to deal with a president in military uniform.

When Benazir was in New York in August 2006, Musharraf called her up and asked for her assistance in drafting a bill 'On the Protection of Women's Rights'. This bill, about which I have already spoken in Chapter 3, opened the way to talks, in which both sides totally mistrusted each other at first. The meeting finally took place in January 2007 in Abu Dhabi and turned out to be friendly, to Benazir's surprise. Musharraf made her a lot of promises; in particular, he said that he would take off his military uniform, resign on the eve of presidential elections, and even celebrate New Year with her at her 'Bilawal' estate. Benazir was quite mistrustful about these promises and asked for guarantees. Then Musharraf allegedly admitted that the charges against Bhutto and the members of her family had political motivations and had been aimed to harm her reputation. 'I

said that he must indicate that not only privately but also publicly,' writes Benazir.¹⁰

Pitiless towards his opponents and sarcastic, Tariq Ali compared the agreement between Musharraf and Bhutto to a marriage of convenience that had been arranged by the US State Department. 'Both parties made concessions. She agreed that he could take off his uniform after his "re-election" by parliament. . . . He pushed through a legal ruling . . . known as the National Reconciliation Ordinance, which withdrew all cases of corruption pending against politicians accused of looting the national treasury. . . . Many Pakistanis . . . were repelled, and coverage of 'the deal' in the Pakistan media was universally hostile, except on state television. The 'breakthrough' was loudly trumpeted in the West, however, and a whitewashed Benazir Bhutto was presented on US networks and BBC TV news as the champion of Pakistani democracy.'¹¹

It is hard to say whether Benazir was 'whitewashed' or not, yet many people in the West continued to view her as the only Pakistani politician who remotely corresponded to international standards for a democratic leader. For this reason, the US publisher HarperCollins paid her half a million dollars for her yet unwritten book with the working title '*Reconciliation*'.

In May 2006, Bhutto and Sharif, who was living in exile in Saudi Arabia, met in London to sign the 'Charter of Democracy' that was directed against Musharraf's regime. Nevertheless, their ways soon parted: Bhutto held talks

with Musharraf, while Sharif categorically rejected all arrangements with the regime in power. Bhutto declared in an interview in June 2007 that she had come to an oral agreement with Sharif, according to which the latter was ready to cede her the right to govern Pakistan for five years and then do the same himself for the same period. Official representatives of Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-(N) denied the existence of such an agreement. In September 2007, Sharif unsuccessfully tried to return to Pakistan. However, the authorities did not even let him out of the airport: they brought new corruption charges against him and made him leave the country once again. Sharif spent only a few hours in Pakistan.

Two events that took place in the first half of 2007 greatly aggravated the political situation in Pakistan. The first was the dismissal of the chief justice of the supreme court Iftikhar Chaudhry, which scandalised the country's legal community. People believed that the president removed the chief justice, who had a spotless reputation, because he could not count on his assistance for his re-election to the presidency. A real 'lawyer rebellion' began in the country, with the active support of the media. Lawyers and judges irate at Chaudhry's dismissal won the first round: the supreme court showed its independence from the executive government by restoring the chief justice to his post.

Independent TV channels such as Geo and Dawn aired broadcasts that openly challenged official propaganda. The journalists' reports greatly contrasted with the stories broadcast by American TV channels and BBC: whereas

western media behaved respectfully towards government officials, Pakistani journalists posed 'awkward' questions that disoriented viewers, according to the government. Musharraf was greatly troubled by the manner in which the press covered the 'lawyer rebellion' and undermined his authority in the process. A new 'protesting stratum' emerged in Pakistan: whereas discontent had been mostly voiced by the lower classes or the 'street' previously, the intelligentsia (lawyers, journalists, and human rights activists) now took their place. Well-dressed people in black jackets marching down the streets were a new phenomenon in Pakistan.

The second event that roused public opinion was the conflict around Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad, which was seized by armed Islamist fanatics. The guerrillas living in the mosque attacked 'incorrectly' dressed women in the streets, abducted people, destroyed video shops, and called for the introduction of Sharia law. To all intents and purposes, this conflict was the fault of the negligence and complacency of government authorities, who had closed their eyes for a long time on the rising extremist movement in the capital. The mosque was ultimately stormed, and over a hundred people (mostly mosque defenders) died.

In September, Bhutto announced the exact date of her return to Pakistan: 18 October. The Musharraf government warned her that the Taliban were preparing an attack against her and that they wanted to kill her as soon as she returned. The names of the killers were even announced: the Taliban field commander Baitullah Mehsud and Osama bin Laden's son Hamza. In a private conversation, Musharraf

advised Bhutto to return after the elections or, in any case, not to make a public event out of her homecoming.

Close friends also advised Benazir not to return to Pakistan. Peter Galbraith begged her not to go back, 'You've been Prime Minister twice, why do this?' he said.¹² Her friend and co-author Mark Siegel recalled that Benazir had told him before her return to Pakistan about the danger looming over her: 'I know there are security risks, people who want to kill me and to scuttle the restoration of democracy. But with my faith in God and trust in the people of Pakistan, I'm sure the party workers will be there and will protect me.'¹³ Recalling her first triumphal return and the 'living shield' of her supporters surrounding her truck, Bhutto apparently hoped that nothing would harm her this time, just as in 1986.

On 16 October, on the eve of Bhutto's departure for Pakistan, UAE and Saudi Arabian secret services warned her about the plot against her. She immediately sent a letter to Musharraf in which she listed the names of three suspected conspirators: her sworn enemies, chief minister of the Punjab Pervaiz Elahi, Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, and Brigadier Ijaz Shah, both retired directors of the Pakistani secret services. Musharraf treated Benazir's letter as yet another attempt to draw the attention of the West to herself and naturally did not take any action against these individuals.

The warnings coming from all sides notwithstanding, Benazir was obsessed with the idea of returning immediately.

Tariq Ali believes that, 'She wanted to demonstrate her popularity to the world and to her political rivals, including those inside her own fiefdom, the Pakistan Peoples Party.'¹⁴ To ascribe such primitive motives to Bhutto would be to distort her personality. No matter how vain, no person (and, all the less, the mother of three children) would ever risk his or her life in exchange for popularity. Clearly, Benazir's decision was influenced by her years of exile and hardship, stemming from lawsuits, attacks in the press, the betrayal of former companions, the constant necessity of defending herself, and the humiliating status of *persona non grata* in her own country.

Benazir had spent most of her life as a heroine, a fighter against tyranny, and the hope of her nation. It was humiliating for her to exchange this noble role at the age of fifty for the comic part of a fugitive politician caught with her hand in the till. Her return, despite the clear threats and dangers, could bring about her moral rehabilitation and allow her to regain her status as a national favourite. She had been fearless even when young, defying Zia ul-Haq. Now she had clearly overcome all her apprehensions and stopped thinking about her safety. 'Loyalty, Honour, Principle', the values that her father had bequeathed to her, were the true motive of her return.

'So as I prepare to return to an uncertain future in Pakistan in 2007, I fully understand the stakes not only for myself, and my country, but the entire world. I realise I can be arrested. I realise that like the assassination of Benigno Aquino in Manila in August 1983, I can be gunned down

on the airport tarmac when I land. After all, Al-Qaeda has tried to kill me several times, why would we think they wouldn't try again. . .? But I do what I have to do, and am determined to return to fulfil my pledge to the people of Pakistan to stand by them in their democratic aspirations. I take the risk for all the children of Pakistan.'¹⁵ The last phrase was clearly addressed to all those who blamed Bhutto for subjecting herself to mortal risk while being a mother of three children.

On the appointed day of 18 October, Benazir arrived in Karachi. Zardari and their daughters remained in Dubai, while Bilawal was studying at Oxford. Although she was risking her own life, Bhutto saw to the safety of her family members. 'As my foot touched on the ground of my beloved Pakistan for the first time after eight lonely and difficult years of exile, I could not stop the tears from pouring from my eyes and I lifted my hands in reverence, in thanks, and in prayer. I stood on the soil of Pakistan in awe. I felt that a huge burden, a terrible weight, had been lifted from my shoulders. It was a sense of liberation. I was home at long last. I knew why. I knew what I had to do.'¹⁶

Her arrival in Karachi was shown on Pakistani TV and on BBC and CNN all over the world. Benazir rode in a truck with a raised platform where she stood at a height of four metres so that people in the crowd could see her from a great distance. She was surrounded by a bullet-proof acrylic shield that could withstand a direct sniper's attack. Although Bhutto was entitled to intensified security measures as a former Prime Minister, the government did

nothing. Radio signals were not jammed, streets were not closed and were full of cars, and street lights went out after the onset of darkness.

The cortege surrounded by a huge crowd slowly moved down the streets of Karachi towards the tomb of Pakistan's founder Jinnah. As in 1986, Benazir felt safe 'in the enormous sea of love and support that surrounded' her. However, she was mistaken this time around. As one knows, it is impossible to step twice into the same river or even into the sea of people's love, just as it is impossible to repeat a past triumph.

Everything went wrong from the start. Bhutto recalled, 'A terrible explosion rocked the truck. First the sound, then the light, then the glass smashing, then the deadly silence followed by horrible screams. I knew it was a bomb. My first thought was 'Oh, God, no.' When the first explosion went off exactly parallel to where I was, I physically shook with the truck, as the others on top of the truck and inside the truck. . . . Then the second explosion—much louder, larger, and more damaging—went off. Almost simultaneously with the two blasts, something hit the truck. . . . Fire shot up around the truck. Blood and burning flesh and body parts seemed to be everywhere.'¹⁷ A total of 179 people were killed and 600 were wounded in the terrorist act.

About half an hour before the explosion, a man with a small girl in his arms began to make his way towards the truck. He gesticulated, asking the child to be given to Benazir so that she may bless her. The guards and policemen tried to

drive the man away, yet he kept standing there and asking that they let him through to the truck. Suddenly, a voice shouted through the loudspeaker on the police car, 'Don't let him through! Don't take the child!' At this moment, the first explosion happened, and everyone in the police car escorting the truck died. It became clear that the child's clothing was packed with plastic explosives, triggered from a mobile phone. The use of a child as a living bomb suggested that Al-Qaeda was involved in the terrorist act. Later, Benazir learned that three terrorists from Lahore got half a million dollars for organizing the blast. One of the terrorists died before he could run away; this was apparently the man with the child. This is how the circumstances of the Karachi explosions have been narrated in 'Reconciliation', but some eye-witnesses consider the two events, the appearance of an man holding a child and further explosions, to be quite unconnected in time. However the story of a terrorist with 'a living bomb' was one of the versions to explain what had happened in Karachi.

Al-Qaeda and the Taliban had threatened on numerous occasions to commit terrorist acts against Bhutto if she returned to Pakistan. Nevertheless, the most likely organizers of the explosions in Karachi are believed to have been radical supporters of Zia ul-Haq. The chief political opponents of Bhutto herself, just as her father's opponents earlier, tried to prevent her return to power. Many believed that President Musharraf, who had signed an agreement with Benazir in October, would agree to repeal the decree prohibiting a person from serving more than two terms

as prime minister. Bhutto could have then become prime minister once again on the condition that Musharraf would continue to be president. Such was the initial agreement, which was mediated by the USA that supported Bhutto's candidacy to the post of prime minister.

On 3 November, Musharraf, using his powers as commander-in-chief, suspended the constitution of 1973 and declared a state of emergency. He explained his decision as due to the growing threat from Islamic extremists and the non-constructive activities of the judiciary. All non-governmental TV channels were banned, the cellphone network was turned off, and the supreme court building was surrounded by special forces. The chief justice convened an extraordinary session, and its participants heroically declared that the restrictions imposed by Musharraf were unlawful and unconstitutional. They were unceremoniously expelled from the court building and put under house arrest.

Pakistani judges had always been docile. Those of them who had resisted military dictators in the past had soon lost their positions. Thus, the bold decision of the supreme court astonished the country and made Iftikhar Chaudhry the subject of general admiration. International media usually describe Pakistan as a country of militant generals, corrupted politicians, and bearded religious fanatics; the struggle for reinstating the Chief Justice to his position presented a somewhat different picture.

Several thousand party activists and organisations struggling for political and civil rights were apprehended by the police. Imran Khan, a fierce critic of the regime, was arrested by Islamist students from the organisation Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba directly in the building of Punjab University and accused of 'state terrorism'. Asma Jahangir, then UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion, was also put under house arrest.

Immediately after the declaration of the state of emergency, Musharraf appeared on television with poorly dyed hair and looking extremely anxious and tried to play the role of a leader who can act responsibly, i.e. calmly and prudently, under conditions of crisis. Nevertheless, he kept wiping the sweat off his forehead and rubbing his hands. On television, Musharraf made the impression of a distressed and tongue-tied dictator who feared for his political future.

His address to the nation, first pronounced in Urdu and then in English, was confused and incoherent. According to Mohammed Hanif, he declared in Urdu, 'Extremism bahut extreme ho gaya hai [extremism has become too extreme] . . . Nobody is scared of us anymore . . . Islamabad is full of extremists. . . There is a government within government . . . Officials are being insulted by the judiciary.' . . . When for the last few minutes of his speech he addressed his audience in the West in English, I suddenly felt a deep sense of humiliation. This part of his speech was scripted. Sentences began and ended. I felt humiliated that my president not only thinks that we are not evolved enough for things like democracy and human

rights, but that we can't even handle proper syntax and grammar.'¹⁸

I discuss Musharraf's address on the state of emergency in detail here, because I listened to it at the time in Lahore, just as Bhutto did in Dubai and Tariq Ali and Mohammed Hanif in London. This speech made a strong though shocking impression on all of us.

Violating her agreement with the president, Bhutto immediately joined the struggle against the state of emergency, which was, in her opinion, an attempt by Musharraf to acquire unlimited powers. She got into contact with the opposition that had been driven into a corner and declared that she would lead the campaign for ridding the country of the dictator. She tried to visit the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to express her support, yet she was not allowed even to approach his residence.

The agreement with Musharraf was broken, and 'Operation Reconciliation' fell through. If Benazir had stayed true to her deal with Musharraf, she would have lost her newly regained public support, yet, in compensation, the president would have assured a large number of seats for her party in the new parliament. Nevertheless, she could not make such a compromise with the regime, especially after the terrorist act in Karachi, which had turned her return to Pakistan into a bloodbath.

Bhutto demanded that Musharraf repeal the state of emergency and called upon the opposition to come out into the streets on 8 November and later to make a 'long

march' from Lahore to Islamabad. The following day, she was put under house arrest for one day: the authorities did not allow her to leave her residence, 'Bilawal House', in Islamabad and speak at the meeting in Rawalpindi. In this way, Musharraf's regime may have unwittingly postponed her death by over a month. The government declared that the 'long march' was illegal, and Bhutto said that she would not engage in any further talks with Musharraf under the circumstances.

Bhutto was liberated from house arrest on 10 November, and then arrested once again several days later on 13 November in Lahore. The decision of the authorities was motivated by the security of Bhutto herself: they said that another attempt could be made on her life during the 'long march'. In actual fact, Benazir was arrested because she had called upon Musharraf to resign and declared that she was no longer ready to work under his leadership in the new government.

As if in an attempt to disprove Bhutto's assertions, Musharraf announced that the elections would be held on 8 January 2008, and carried out his long-standing promise to the opposition by resigning from his military position on 28 November. The following day, Musharraf was inaugurated as a civilian president. On 15 December, the state of emergency was repealed, and the Constitution of Pakistan came into effect once again.

It so happened that I was in Pakistan during the 2007 state of emergency and could follow Benazir's triumphal

tour around the country, first on television and then at first hand when she arrived in Lahore. Crowds of jubilant people closely surrounding her cortege that slowly moved down the streets, brought to mind Benazir's memorable return to Lahore in 1986. '*Jiye Bhutto!*', 'Bhutto—our Prime Minister!', 'Benazir with us!' Such shouts and cries shook the old walls of the National College of Arts, where I was waiting for the 'Bhuttomobile' to pass through Mall Street. I was somewhat surprised at the enthusiasm of the crowd, because, as an ethnic Sindhi, Bhutto had not been particularly popular among Punjabis during her two terms as prime minister.

Almost at the same time as Bhutto, her political rival Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan from exile on 26 November. He came to his homeland with an expensive gift from the Saudi king: a bulletproof Cadillac. It was clear to everyone that Riyadh preferred Sharif to Benazir. As an ethnic Punjabi, who was born in Lahore, Sharif should have received a particularly warm welcome in his native city. For his first meeting, Nawaz Sharif chose the most holy site in Lahore: Data Darbar, the tomb of the city's patron saint Data Sahib, where crowds of pilgrims pray day and night. Although Nawaz did his best to gather his supporters and make speeches in two languages at once (Urdu and Punjabi), Benazir's success among the Punjabis surpassed all forecasts and expectations.

People now viewed the slim beauty in a fluttering white shawl, whose burning eyes and passionate words literally hypnotized crowds, to be not just a political leader or a

sister but the mother of the nation—an image that has always been very popular in South Asia. Her fearlessness and contempt for danger were astonishing. She had also changed outwardly. She was no longer the regal and stately lady with upswept hair and bright makeup that I had first seen in Islamabad in 1995.¹⁹ Now she tightly combed her hair under her *dupatta*, put on less makeup, and looked simpler, livelier, and more natural. Even her voice, which was always well trained yet somewhat harsh and shrill by nature, acquired a wealth of tones and nuances.

We shook our heads, observing how she kept sticking her head out of the sunroof of her crossover or the window of her car, to squeeze the hands of people reaching out to her from all sides: ‘Why take such risks? She’s a living target, after all.’ In those troubled November days of 2007, all who empathized with Benazir had the feeling that something would inevitably happen to her.

The balance of political forces in Pakistan on the eve and during the state of emergency greatly worried western countries and the US. I believe that one of the reasons for the political crisis in Pakistan had been Washington’s excessive trust in Musharraf and the Pakistani army. Support and financial aid from America had allowed the Pakistani president to do as he pleased. Nevertheless, the root of the problem lay in the ill-advised occupation of Afghanistan by western countries in 2001, insofar as instability in Kabul had had a direct impact on the situation in Peshawar and the so-called ‘tribal areas’ located between the two countries.

Musharraf viewed the state of emergency as a means of fighting the judiciary, oppositional parties, and independent media. All three groups cast doubt on Pakistan's official line with regard to Afghanistan and the 'war against terror', each in its own way. These problems were discussed in Pakistani media more openly than in the West. Musharraf justified the introduction of a state of emergency by the fact that civil society was allegedly sabotaging the 'War against Terror'. In actual fact, it was the war in the borderline territory that created tensions within the Pakistani army. Many Pakistani officers did not want to fight, as their mission seemed meaningless to them.

While Afghanistan sank into chaos, corruption and inflation ran rampant in Pakistan. The Taliban kept recruiting an ever greater number of supporters within Pakistan itself. The generals who had once told Benazir that controlling Kabul together with the Taliban would give them 'strategic depth' had retired, while their successors knew that Afghanistan would not accept long-term western occupation and hoped for the return of 'a whitewashed Taliban.'²⁰ The US wanted the Pakistani army to play the role of a permanent police force in Kabul. In Pakistan itself, every new government, whether military or civilian, that promised to make reforms and improve the everyday life of the people lapsed either into tyranny or oligarchy. In the foreseeable future Pakistan will apparently continue to vacillate between these two forms of government.

Notes

1. Mohammed Hanif, 'A BB Murder Fantasy' in *Newsline*, December 2009.
2. Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, 233.
3. Tariq Ali, *The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power*. New York: Scribner, 2008, 179.
4. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East: An Autobiography*, London: Simon & Schuster, 360.
5. Owen Bennett Jones, op. cit., 234.
6. Mohammed Hanif, 'A BB Murder Fantasy'.
7. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008, 213.
8. Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2006, 164–5.
9. Benazir Bhutto, op. cit., 224.
10. Ibid., 227.
11. Tariq Ali, op. cit., 160.
12. Cristina Lamb, 'Who murdered Benazir Bhutto?' in *The Nation*, 2 May 2010.
13. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/There+are+people+who+want+to+kill+me/1/2908.html>
14. Tariq Ali, op. cit., 161.
15. Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of the East*, 430.
16. Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation*, 1.
17. Ibid., 10–12.
18. Cited from: Tariq Ali, op. cit., 166.
19. William Dalrymple ironically described her hairdo: 'Her hair was arranged at a sort of baroque beehive topped by white gauze dupatta like one of those Roman princesses in *Caligula or Rome*' (Dalrymple, W., 'Family matters' in *Business Standard*, 23 Apr. 2010).
20. Tariq Ali, op. cit., 181.

10

The Story Ends; Begins the Legend

Some political assassinations are anticipated and foreseen, and the second attempt on Bhutto's life was a case in point. If one takes a close look at the period of November–December 2007, it becomes clear that Benazir's days were numbered from the moment that she broke off her voluntary exile and decided to return home.

On 26 December, a suspected suicide bomber was apprehended in the crowd when Bhutto was speaking at a meeting in Peshawar. Zardari called her up in the middle of the night, insisting that he would come to Pakistan to head the electoral campaign instead of her. 'You stay home and I'll go do the rallies. You're the mother.' But she said, 'What can I do? I have to go and meet my people.'¹ On Christmas, 25 December, the Pakistani ambassador Wajid Shamsul Hasan spoke for the last time with Benazir on the 'phone from London, begging her not to take off her bulletproof vest and to speak from behind a bulletproof shield. She replied just as she had done to her guards on several occasions: 'Is God inside the truck and not outside it?'²

Generally speaking, during the last months of her life, Bhutto often spoke like a convinced fatalist who had

fully entrusted her life to God in the spirit of the Islamic conception of *tawakkul* or total trust in Allah. Saying farewell to her children before leaving for Karachi, she said, 'Do not worry. Nothing will happen to me. God will protect me. Remember: God gives life and God takes life. I will be safe until my time is up.'³ Nevertheless, after the blasts in Karachi, the threat became very real, and Benazir said on several occasions, 'I know death comes. I've seen too much death, young death.'⁴

It is difficult for an outsider to judge Bhutto's religiosity. In Pakistan, one sometimes sees Marxists, feminists, and other 'freethinkers' pray five times a day, fast during Ramazan, and perform other Islamic rituals. Nevertheless, in the borderline situation between life and death in which Benazir found herself, her best choice was to entrust herself to God. Moreover, at the end of her life, she fully identified her own fate with the fate of her country. In her last speech at a meeting, a few minutes before her assassination, she said, 'I put my life in danger and came here because I feel this country is in danger.'⁵

In the evening of 27 December, Bhutto went to an electoral rally in Rawalpindi, a city that is considered a bastion of the Pakistani army. The gloomiest memories of her life were connected with this place, as her father had been executed here. The meeting took place in Liaquat Bagh, a national park where political meetings and public speeches are often held. This place is unlucky: on 17 October 1951, the first Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was killed here with two bullet shots in the chest. This assassination also

took place during a rally, and the park was subsequently named after him.

As fate would have it, a few hours before the last rally in her life, Bhutto met with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who was on an official visit to Islamabad, to discuss problems of terrorism, a victim of which she would soon become. After the conversation, Benazir replied to questions by a reporter from the *Voice of America*. According to her, President Karzai expressed concern regarding the growth of extremism in the region: 'I explained to President Karzai that the Pakistan Peoples Party hoped to win the elections and form the government and we look forward to working very closely with Afghanistan. We too believe it is essential for both of our countries and indeed the larger Muslim world to work to protect the interests of Islamic civilization by eliminating extremism and terrorism.'⁶

When the meeting in Rawalpindi was over, Benazir got ready to leave and got into her armoured car. At the last moment, she looked out of the sunroof to wave goodbye to her supporters. Immediately, gunshots resounded. Several bullets hit Benazir, and she fell into the car. A few seconds later, a bomb detonated nearby. The people surrounding the car, mostly young PPP volunteers, died on the spot. 'Suddenly I felt some pressure, she had fallen on me,' recalled Naheed Khan, Bhutto's political secretary, who had worked with her for twenty-three years. 'She was completely unconscious, her blood seeping over me.'⁷

Everyone who was inside the vehicle, as also Bhutto's press secretary Sherry Rehman, who rode just behind in her own car, later asserted that Benazir collapsed before the explosion resounded. The police car accompanying the cortege mysteriously disappeared. Bhutto's vehicle was damaged by the blast, so her bodyguards transferred her to Sherry Rehman's car and quickly took her to the hospital, where Bhutto died without coming to her senses.

The official investigation subsequently considered several different versions of what took place on the basis of eyewitness reports. According to one version, two motorcyclists opened fire on the crossover from Kalashnikov 47 guns. At the same time, a suicide bomber who had approached at close range detonated himself. According to another version, the same person fired the shots and detonated the bomb. At first, Bhutto's immediate cause of death was said to be a bullet wound in the neck. The evening of the same day, Pakistan's Interior Minister Hamid Nawaz declared that Bhutto had died from shrapnel wounds rather than from bullets. This information was subsequently refuted: the official account later released by Pakistan's government said that she had not been shot, but had instead died as a result of a skull fracture caused when her head struck a lever on her vehicle's sunroof as she ducked back into the vehicle during the attacks.

Neither Benazir's family nor her supporters believed the latter version. However, it turned out that no autopsy was performed in the chaos that followed the terrorist act and no official conclusion about the cause of Bhutto's

death was made. Pakistani authorities and some foreign analysts cynically declared that Bhutto should have avoided looking out of the sunroof of her car to show off before her supporters. They said that, if she had not been so imprudent and self-confident, she would have remained alive. As often happens in Pakistan and elsewhere, the responsibility for the murder was put on the victim.

In the meanwhile, Musharraf's regime in Islamabad began to panic. An hour after the terrorist act, the scene of the crime was meticulously pressure-washed with fire hoses in order to eradicate all evidence and traces. The same thing had been done after the first assassination attempt against Benazir and earlier after Mir Murtaza's assassination. This habit of Pakistani authorities of pressure-washing the scene of a crime out of sanitary considerations seems quite strange in view of the piles of rubbish that usually lie in the country's streets.

In Dubai, Benazir's family followed the events on television. When her death had been officially confirmed, Zardari ordered a plane and arrived in Pakistan with the children at about 1 a.m. The PPP leadership and Bhutto's supporters had wanted to carry her coffin to the mausoleum by hand. The government refused for fear of violence. As a result, the coffin with Benazir's body was brought by plane to Mohenjo-Daro Airport, from where it was taken by helicopter to Larkana. The following day, it was buried in the family mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. Most ordinary people who were mourning the death of their

leader simply could not make it to Larkana in time for the funeral.

Immediately after Benazir's death, it turned out that her worst enemies had loved her as their own sister. Musharraf addressed the nation with a heartfelt speech and, with a trembling voice, called upon his fellow countrymen to be restrained and united. He called 27 December 'a black day in the country's history' and declared a three-day national period of mourning. Nawaz Sharif put off his all activities and rushed to Rawalpindi General Hospital where Bhutto had died and spent some time next to her corpse in mournful silence. With tears in his eyes, Sharif said that he would fight the case of Benazir Bhutto's murder and vowed to complete her mission. He also summoned people to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections.⁸

Imran Khan, who had pitilessly criticized Benazir during the last years of her life and called her a kleptocrat⁹ (more precisely, this accusation was made against Bhutto by Imran's wife Jemima Khan), engaged in touching recollections about their student days. The acid-tongued Tariq Ali also said some kind words about Benazir, paying tribute to her courage: 'On a number of occasions she told me that she did not fear death. It was one of the dangers of playing politics in Pakistan.'¹⁰ In a word, everyone who had, in one way or another, poisoned her existence during her lifetime pretended to be her close friend after her death.

On 30 December, three days after Benazir's death, Zardari summoned an extraordinary meeting of the PPP central

executive committee, at which Bhutto's son Bilawal read out a handwritten letter from his mother to the party members, which was considered to be her political testament. Although many people have voiced doubts about the authenticity of this document, no one has ever challenged it openly. In this letter, Bhutto declared, 'I would like my husband Asif Ali Zardari to lead you in this interim period until you and he decide what is best. I say this because he is a man of courage and honour.' She wrote furthermore, 'He spent eleven and a half years in prison without bending despite torture. He has the political stature to keep the party united.'¹¹

After taking charge of the PPP, Zardari made a fairly astute move by declaring Bilawal to be his co-chairman and adding 'Bhutto' to his son's last name: now Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was the heir of the dynasty and the family patrimony. Moreover, Zardari declared that he would have never agreed to head the party if his son had already come of age by that time. In February 2008, the PPP carried the elections and formed a coalition government with Nawaz's Muslim League. The government began to make preparations for Musharraf's impeachment, in the meantime the president voluntarily resigned.

On 6 September 2008, Zardari was elected the eleventh President of Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto's death managed to accomplish the impossible: it cleansed her widower in the waves of popular mourning, turning him from 'Mister Ten Percent' and a public criminal into the country's ruler. The unwritten law of succession of charismatic power from a

‘martyr’ to members of his family also affected Zardari, the widespread dislike of his personal traits in society notwithstanding.

Fatima Bhutto wrote about this ‘law’ with her usual candour: ‘It is this corrupted and dangerously simple system that allows her husband to rule a country of 180 million people by virtue of having a close enough tie to the dead, to the corpses that demand—and receive—sympathy votes.’¹²

In the meantime, disorder began to mount in the country: people were irate at the powerlessness of the government that had been unable to protect Bhutto. Looting and clashes between the opposition and the police broke out in Islamabad and Rawalpindi immediately after the terrorist act. In Sindh, people burnt cars and overturned and smashed buses and even railway carriages, paralysing traffic between the towns of Upper Sindh and Karachi for several days.

Crowds of irate people looted banks and petrol stations, shouting, ‘*Tum Kitne Bhutto Marogay, Har Gali Se Bhutto Niklega* (How many Bhuttos will you kill, a Bhutto will emerge from every street).’¹³ During the riots, at least fifty people died and several policemen were killed. On the morning of 28 December, the police opened fire on demonstrators in Hyderabad. The same day, representatives of the Pakistani opposition reported that unknown men shot at a procession of Nawaz Sharif’s supporters in Islamabad.

The British newspaper, *Daily Mail*, added fuel to the fire by declaring that Bhutto had known who was planning to kill her. Journalists found an electronic letter that she had sent several months earlier to British foreign minister David Miliband. Bhutto believed that three high-ranking officials close to Musharraf whose names we mentioned above were intending to kill her. According to the newspaper, the British were asked to put pressure through diplomatic channels on Pakistani authorities to foil the conspiracy yet apparently had little success.

To ease the situation, the government hastened to announce the results of the investigation and name the perpetrator. Official TV channels declared on the day of the assassination that Al-Qaeda had assumed responsibility for the murder. 'We terminated the most precious American asset which vowed to defeat [the] mujahedeen,' allegedly declared the Al-Qaeda representative and well-known field commander Mustafa Abu al-Yazid.¹⁴

To confirm their claims, the Pakistani police declared on 29 December that Baitullah Mehsud, Al-Qaeda member and leader of the Pakistani branch of the Taliban, was responsible for Benazir Bhutto's assassination. The interior ministry also claimed to have intercepted a statement by Baitullah Mehsud, in which he congratulated his followers for carrying out the assassination.¹⁵ Moreover, a video shot by an unnamed bystander was shown at the press conference. It showed a hand pointing a gun at Bhutto. The person holding the gun fired several times before the explosion resounded.

In response to the accusation, Maulvi Omar, representative of the Pakistani branch of the Al-Qaeda, declared that he categorically denied the participation of his organization in the terrorist act. He explained why the Al-Qaeda could not have done it: 'Tribal people have their own customs. We don't strike women.'¹⁶ The next day, the government presented photographs that clearly showed that a young man wearing sunglasses and aged around twenty-five years had shot at Bhutto. He was wearing European clothes: a black vest and a white shirt. A second terrorist who subsequently detonated the bomb was believed to have stood behind him.

Twenty-two people besides Bhutto perished in the terrorist act in Rawalpindi. Most of them belonged to the so-called 'Martyrs for Bhutto'—young PPP members who followed the cortege everywhere it went and formed a living chain around the car to prevent terrorists from approaching it. In violation of the law, none of these murders was investigated nor autopsies of victims made.

The terrorist Baitullah Mehsud, whom Musharraf declared responsible for the assassination, was soon killed. Musharraf himself, whose associates had been accused by Benazir during her lifetime, fled Pakistan in 2008 and installed himself comfortably in London. In 2010, the UN commission for investigating Bhutto's assassination came to the conclusion that the Pakistani police had investigated the case ineffectively on purpose. Finally, after becoming president of Pakistan and acquiring unlimited power for conducting an investigation, Asif Ali Zardari preferred

to ask for assistance from Scotland Yard, saying, 'This is bigger than us.'¹⁷

Clearly, the weakness of the state in Pakistan, the absence of a civil society, and the unbridled power of the military, hinder the investigation of high-profile political assassinations. The only case that the Pakistani police investigated effectively was the assassination attempt against Musharraf on 25 December 2003: in the space of a couple of months, the terrorists were identified, arrested, and convicted before being hanged in 2005. It may be mentioned that even the famed Scotland Yard was unable to identify the causes of the plane crash in which Zia ul-Haq died or the people who arranged the assassination of Mir Murtaza.

After becoming President, Zardari continued to investigate his wife's murder. The new government did not abandon the version of Mehsud's involvement: in October 2010, they officially announced that he was responsible for Bhutto's assassination (the terrorist himself had been killed by an American missile in August 2009). In December 2010, a Pakistani court issued an arrest warrant for two police officers who were accused of not providing the proper protection to Bhutto and of pressure-washing the scene of the crime before the necessary evidence could be collected.

In February 2011, Musharraf was also accused of being an accomplice in Bhutto's assassination: a new round of investigation showed that he had had her guards changed shortly before the terrorist attack and had personally

ordered that the scene of the crime be pressure-washed after her death. This time, the main witness for the prosecution was Mark Siegel, who said that he had been witness to Musharraf phoning up and intimidating Bhutto, accusing her of breaking their agreement and returning to Pakistan before the parliamentary elections. When an upset Benazir put the phone down, she told Mark that the president would be responsible if anything unexpected occurred.

In 2011, the Pakistani anti-terrorist court brought official charges in the Bhutto case. The accused were the two policemen who had failed to ensure her security and five militants of the Pakistan branch of the Taliban. Everyone believed, however, that the organisers of the assassination had remained on the loose, while only its executors were brought to trial. Nevertheless, the case is still being investigated.

The lack of a reliable autopsy and the destruction of evidence on the scene of the crime made it difficult to say how Bhutto died. British investigators from Scotland Yard supported the official version that Bhutto died from a brain injury that she got from impact with the sunroof, rather than from bullets. Nevertheless, all the people who were in the car continued to insist that she fell dead before the blast occurred. If the issue of how Bhutto died remains unclear, the main question of who killed her is all the more subject to rumour and speculation.

The years that have elapsed since her death and the five million dollars spent by the UN commission on the investigation notwithstanding, Bhutto's assassination remains a mystery, although every Pakistani has his own version of the story. Similar to the tragedies of the Kennedy and Nehru-Gandhi clans, the unsolved assassination of Bhutto, just as the execution of her father earlier, have had a major impact on political events in Pakistan and South Asia as a whole. One can only hope that the investigation launched by Zardari during his presidency will continue.

Judging from the interview that Zardari gave to journalist Christina Lamb, he was not about to let the matter drop or to limit himself to the facts that lie on the surface: 'I don't want nine people strung up to avenge her death—it's the whole system. Only when we're prospering and we're Singapore will she be avenged.'¹⁸ In this case, one will have to wait a long time for truth and justice to triumph.

The Bhutto political dynasty did not disappear. Bilawal, who has now come of age, is considered to be the official head of the PPP, the protests of Mir Murtaza's widow and daughter notwithstanding. In 2007, he was a 19-year-old student at Christ Church College in Oxford University and admittedly took a greater interest in Facebook and American cinema than in politics. Nevertheless, four years after his mother's death, he said, 'My mother died fighting for a Peaceful, Prosperous and Progressive Pakistan. I will never give up on my mother's Pakistan. I will never give up on the woman who sacrificed herself so Pakistan could be

free. Her dreams are now my dreams—that is my promise to you; that is my promise to her.’¹⁹

At the same time, outsiders have also entered the ‘dynastic chain’. According to leaks published by the press, Zardari, fearing an attempt on his life, bequeathed that, if he is killed, the next Pakistani president would be his sister Faryal Talpur, who (together with her husband) was the official guardian of Bhutto’s minor daughters. Faryal is a PPP member of parliament. She has already participated in presidential elections and does her best to imitate her deceased sister-in-law, including wearing white head scarves. Official media obsequiously designated Mrs Talpur as Benazir’s political heir (*siyasi wari*), evoking the fury of Fatima Bhutto, who is extremely sensitive to issues of kinship and lineal succession.

A huge white marble mausoleum stands among the red scorched fields and clay huts of the village of Garhi Khuda Bakhsh. In its splendour, which is surprising and out of place in this harsh landscape, it resembles a mirage woven by the hot air of Sindh. In the mausoleum lie the members of Pakistan’s most famous family: the father, the mother, and three children. Among them, only Nusrat died a natural death. In the mausoleum, a tomb stands under a marble canopy resting on columns. It is enveloped with cloth embroidered with *ayats* from the Quran and covered with a living carpet of rose petals—the typical interior of a Saint’s tomb.

The interior decoration of the mausoleum is dominated by Pakistani kitsch: an abundance of artificial flowers, mirrors, sparkling mica, and multi-coloured tinsel. The walls of the mausoleum are covered by garish posters with the portraits of Benazir, her father, children, husband, and even sister-in-law. Bhutto's natural beauty shines through even on these 'naive' prints that are usually sold at political meetings and mini-bazaars next to pilgrimage sites and Muslim sanctuaries.

Fatima Bhutto, whose father is buried in the same mausoleum, has expressed her indignation at the kitsch in the mausoleum's interior: 'I was not prepared to see my father's graveyard turned into a fairground. . . . It was a graveyard not a shrine and some things, some places, are not campaign grounds.'²⁰ As she said herself, she tore the portraits of Zardari and his sister from the walls every time she came to visit the mausoleum. Indeed, PPP members and the president's supporters sometimes held party meetings in the mausoleum, which is quite strange, to say the least. Nevertheless, Nawaz Sharif, too, once held a political meeting at *Data Darbar*, the tomb of Lahore's patron saint.

It is not easy to get to Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, yet the inhabitants of Larkana, Naudero, Nawabshah, and surrounding villages regularly come to the mausoleum, leaving flower garlands and sweetmeats behind (offerings usually brought to Saints). A checkpoint stands before the mausoleum. The gate is lifted only for cars bearing members of the family and their guests. Other visitors have

to walk through a metal detector. Outside the gates snacks and drinks, kitschy posters, portraits in frames, and audio recordings of Bhutto's speeches are sold. 'It looks like the Disney version of the Taj Mahal,' says Fatima, 'It's macabre, but this is the shrine that Benazir built for herself; this is the afterbirth of her death.'²¹

In March 2009, I was visiting Liaquat Bagh of sorrowful memory. The site of Bhutto's assassination was a stone's throw away. It was simply marked by her portrait, framed in bright pink tiles, for some reason, and painted with aniline dyes. Dry rose garlands lay next to it. Someone had used a black felt-tip pen to write on the tiles of this very modest memorial, 'Benazir the Incomparable' (*Be-nazeer la-sani hain*), a play of words on the meaning of her name.

Like an unseen artist, death has brought together the different dimensions in Benazir's contradictory lifetime portrait. Her worldview was marked by extremes: the cult of Shiite martyrs and the latest theories of global conflict. She was no stranger to medieval superstitions, such as exorcism rituals, in which she took part. At the same time, she took a rational, somewhat dry and even stringent approach to politics, fearing that leniency or excessive emotionality could be held against her as a manifestation of female weakness.

She was, indeed, a woman of two worlds: people mourned her in her homeland as well as abroad. At the time of her death, she had not served as prime minister for over ten years, did not hold any government post, and on the

contrary, was subject to public ostracism and judicial persecution. Nevertheless, all major world leaders, including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Presidents George Bush and Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (during whose lifetime India fought three wars with Pakistan), expressed their condolences at her death. In 2008, she received a posthumous human rights award from the UN together with the human rights activist Ramsey Clark, who had played an important role in covering her father's trial.

The world had not forgotten or forgiven Bhutto's sins and errors. Many people believe that 'she was as much a central part of Pakistan's problems as the solution to them.'²² Nevertheless, even if some charges against her were true, she paid a terrible and disproportional price. After her death, everyone suddenly realized that she was the most outstanding Pakistani politician of the preceding thirty years. During this time, she stood at the helm of the state for less than five years; the rest of the time, she fought two military dictatorships, headed a major party, spent time in prison, lost almost all her close relatives, brought up three children and preserved her universally criticised marriage.

Along with 'democracy', the word 'party' was particularly dear to Bhutto. She was ready to make major sacrifices for the party: 'I would have done anything to spare my children the same pain that I had undergone—and still feel—at my father's death. But this was one thing I couldn't do; I couldn't retreat from the party and the platform that I had given so much of my life to.'²³

Benazir's sudden and terrible death has given a lot of food for thought to PPP leaders and members about the party's future. Today, Pakistan greatly needs a political party that could speak up about the social needs of the majority. The PPP was established on the wave of a mass movement and managed to secure the resignation of the military dictator Ayub Khan. Of course, any party can depend for some time on a single person or family. Nevertheless, for a political organization, this tends to be a sign of ideological and structural weakness rather than strength.

The PPP should cease to be the Bhutto family patrimony and become a modern democratic party that fosters honest discussion and debate, upholds the social and human rights of its members, and brings together different Pakistani democratic factions and groups—in a word, all those who seek a real alternative to military dictatorship. The PPP was originally intended to be just such a party, yet has still not met its goals. Bilawal's leadership will most likely be purely formal, and one cannot, in any case, expect any more sacrifices from the Bhutto family.

Benazir objectively assessed her role in history and, in particular, in changing female gender stereotypes: 'Few in this world are given the privilege to effect change in society, to bring the modern era to a country that had only the most basic infrastructure, to break down stereotypes about the role of women and ultimately to give hope for change to millions who had no hope before.'²⁴

As a born fighter, Benazir struggled against the prejudices of patriarchal society, predominant male sexism in religion and politics, discrimination against women, and Islamic extremism and fanaticism. She declared after the assassination attempt in Karachi: 'Despite threats of death, I will not acquiesce to tyranny, but rather lead the fight against it.'²⁵

With the word 'tyranny', Bhutto naturally meant more than just a concrete political regime such as Musharraf's government. She issued a challenge to all political forces that were hostile to change and renewal in Pakistan. She could not accept any arbitrary system or doctrine, and this probably explains why people (including myself) still consider her to be a heroine.

Just like people, countries have their own reputations, which are not always objective, and their own places in the world community, which are not always well deserved. The images or, more precisely, stereotypes of countries as seen by the outside world have formed over the centuries, whether in the labyrinths of historical and cultural development or in the political arena. Just like people, countries evoke different feelings among outsiders: some command respect, some are deemed unimportant, while some are simply feared. Pakistan is a difficult and not very popular country, as most people connect it with military juntas, dictators, explosions, terrorist acts, and religious fanaticism.

Of course, people who have visited Pakistan frequently and made friends there view this country in a much less one-

sided and stereotypical way. Such Europeans or Americans are still not numerous for the moment. The rest feel greater affinity for Pakistan's neighbours: colourful India with its 'unity in diversity' and 'poor and suffering' Bangladesh, which is constantly buffeted by natural catastrophes. Nevertheless, Pakistan has many attractive images, too. One of them is the brave hero and stunning beauty—Benazir Bhutto.

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BENAZIR BHUTTO

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PORTRAIT

Anna Suvorova

The book is devoted to the life and work of Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (1953–2007), the first female head of a Muslim state. In the late twentieth century, women leaders came to power in a number of states with predominant Muslim populations (Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Turkey). This destroyed the gender stereotype of traditional Muslim society and promoted its modernization and democratization.

Benazir Bhutto: A Multidimensional Portrait, makes an all-round study of this phenomenon of international politics, which has deep historical and cultural roots. She has been recognized the world over as a fearless fighter against dictatorship and extremism, and a staunch supporter of peaceful dialogue between Islam and the West. The charismatic personality and tragic fate of Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated in 2007 while campaigning for General Elections, are narrated against the backdrop of the story of the powerful political Bhutto family (to which Benazir belonged), and contemporary political and social life in Pakistan. The narrative is written in close conjunction with the lives of other well-known South Asian politicians.

The book is based on Bhutto's own books, articles, and speeches—and on the author's interviews with her close friends and colleagues.

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