



BENAZIR

BHUTTO

PAKISTANI PRIME MINISTER AND ACTIVIST



BY
**Mary
Englar**

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LIVES



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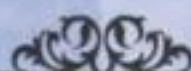
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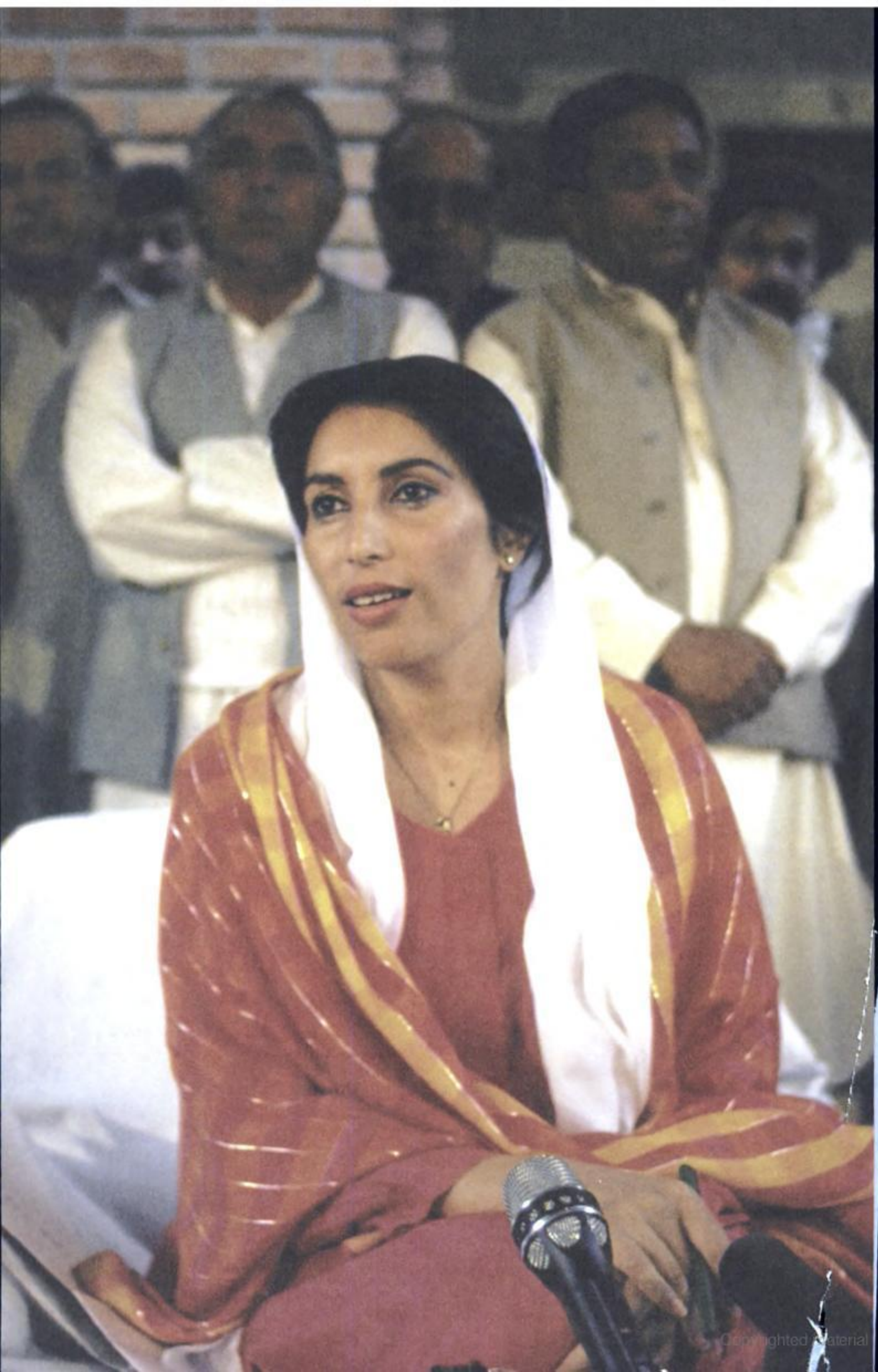


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Chapter

1

FIRST WOMAN PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN



Dressed in a green silk *shalwar kamiz*, with a white scarf covering her dark hair, Benazir Bhutto climbed the wide steps at the presidential palace in Islamabad, Pakistan, and entered the audience hall on the arm of the president. Guards dressed in white uniforms and gold turbans escorted the pair. On either side of the red carpet, army generals, Islamic leaders, and politicians watched as Bhutto approached the front.

Her political party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), had won the first free elections in 11 years. Now, on December 2, 1988, she stood before supporters and critics alike to be sworn in as prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. When she placed her hand on the Pakistani constitution

Benazir Bhutto spoke to reporters following her historic election as the first female prime minister of Pakistan.

Bhutto's groundbreaking election as prime minister of Pakistan has opened doors for many women in politics. South Asia, a region of the world to which Pakistan belongs, has become known for its women in leadership positions within the government.

to take her oath of office, Bhutto became not only her country's first woman prime minister, but also the first woman in the world to lead an Islamic nation.

At the time of her inauguration, Bhutto was 35 years old. Married for only a year, she had given birth to her first child just two months before the election. She had never run for political office before, and she had never planned to become a politician. Though she had grown up

in a political family, as the daughter of Pakistan's first democratically elected leader, she recalled, "When I was a child, there were many attempts on my father's life. Politics scared me." She knew that in Pakistan, political beliefs might lead to death. She had already spent more than seven years in prison or under house arrest for her active support of democratic elections. But when the Pakistan People's Party asked her to run for office, she felt a duty to both her father and her country to accept the challenge.

For many in Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto reminded them of her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had founded the PPP and served as Pakistan's leader. The connection reminded them of a time in their history when they felt hopeful for their young



Bhutto's father was her hero, as well as being a hero to many Pakistanis.

nation. But for her critics, Bhutto was a threat to their Islamic values. In Pakistan's conservative Islamic society, women did not leave the house without an escort. The idea of a woman prime



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before she left for London. They promised to meet after her surgery.

When Bhutto arrived in London with her sister Sanam, a huge crowd of Pakistanis met her at the airport. London police were called in to control the crowd. Bhutto felt like she was back in Pakistan during a happier time. The people called her name and her father's name as she moved through the crowd. News reporters asked her if she had gone into exile and left Pakistan for good. She answered, "I was

Bhutto had become familiar with London during her time as a student in Oxford, England.





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shroud. Bhutto and Sanam took his body home to be buried at Al-Murtaza. General Zia blocked the roads. He did not want a huge crowd gathering to greet the Bhuttos. But when their plane approached the airport, Bhutto saw thousands of people lining the roads leading to the airport.

After death, the dead are washed and wrapped, according to Islamic law.

Shah was buried near his father in the family graveyard. In her sadness, Bhutto remembered her father teaching her about loyalty to Pakistan. She wrote, "As children we had been taught that no price was too high to pay for our country. But the personal price to our family had been high." ❧



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about him in foreign newspapers.

Her Pakistani friends met her at the terminal and led her to a brightly painted truck. She climbed up on the truck to ride to a nearby park to speak. Bhutto had never seen such a crowd, not even with her father. In her autobiography, she wrote:

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 lampposts, walking alongside the truck ... was more like an ocean.

It took more than 10 hours to drive the short distance to the park. The crowd grew along the way. Millions of Pakistanis came to hear Bhutto speak that day.

Bhutto continued to tour Pakistan, and she spoke to crowds at every stop. People lined the roads between the cities. Though she was arrested and placed in jail for three weeks that August, Bhutto immediately returned to her work at her home in Karachi. She met with the leaders of all the political parties that opposed General Zia. She called for democratic elections and asked her supporters to work peacefully. She did not want any violence.

Bhutto was 32 years old when she returned to



Pakistan. Already she had lived a very unusual life. Most Pakistani women her age had been married for many years. During her college years, her mother and aunts had looked for a suitable husband for her, but Bhutto thought she would meet someone and marry for love. After her father's death and her years in prison, however, Bhutto began to listen to her mother. She agreed to think about an arranged marriage.

Benazir Bhutto was very famous in Pakistan. Many Pakistanis thought of her as their sister or daughter. She did not have the privacy to go on dates and get to know possible husbands. She worked long hours on party business. She had dedicated her life to bringing

Benazir Bhutto spoke to a crowd as leader of the Pakistan People's Party.

*Bhutto greeted
crowds in the
street as she
campaigns
for the PPP.*



freedom back to Pakistan, and she needed a husband who understood the importance of her career. But she did not think any Pakistani man would agree to marry a woman who wanted a career and a family.

In July 1987, Bhutto agreed to meet Asif Zardari, a man her aunt wanted her to consider for marriage.



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PRIME MINISTER
BENAZIR BHUTTO



In 1988, Pakistan experienced violence and protests in nearly every part of the country. General Zia appeared unable to control the ethnic and regional conflicts. In May, he dismissed the prime minister and dissolved the National Assembly. He blamed the violence on his political opponents. He announced that a general election would be held in the fall.

Bhutto did not believe the news. She was certain that General Zia would find a way to prevent the PPP from participating in the general election. Around the same time, Bhutto and Zardari announced that they were expecting a baby. Her family joked that General Zia announced elections because she would be unable to campaign. But Bhutto continued campaigning throughout Pakistan. Her pregnancy

When Benazir Bhutto became prime minister, she was only 35 years old, making her one of the youngest heads of state in the world.

hardly slowed her down.

In August, General Zia and most of his generals were killed in a plane crash. Investigators believed the plane had been blown up, but no one knew who had planned the murder of Zia. Pakistan was suddenly without a government. According to the constitution, the president of the Senate would form a temporary government until elections could be held. But everyone waited to see if the army would take over once again.

After General Zia's death, people displayed posters to commemorate his rule.





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Zardari named him Bilawal, which means “one without equal.” Five days after her baby was born, Bhutto went back to work.

On November 16, Bhutto and her family returned to Al-Murtaza to vote. It was the first time she had ever voted in an election. The PPP won all of the seats in her home province of Sindh, as well as 92 of the 215 seats in the National Assembly. Though it was not a majority, it was more than any other party won, and it allowed the PPP to name the next prime minister. On December 1, 1988, Bhutto became the first woman prime minister of Pakistan.

Pakistani citizens rallied to support Bhutto in her new role as prime minister.



know for sure what Pakistan's capabilities were. From her point of view though, India was Pakistan's largest enemy. Many Pakistanis feared that India would attack them if they did not have the same weapons. And if India attacked Pakistan with nuclear weapons, they believed they needed the same kind of weapons to protect their country.

Bhutto's party also had many opponents in the National Assembly. The strongest party, the Pakistan Muslim League, wanted Pakistan to follow strict Islamic laws. The leader of the Muslim League, Nawaz Sharif, argued constantly with Bhutto about the future of Pakistan. Finally, in August 1990, the president dismissed Bhutto and the National Assembly. The president said that her government had not been able to bring law and order to Pakistan, and the economy was worse than when she took over. Sharif accused her government of corruption as well.

Pakistan and India had raced to develop a nuclear weapons program since India first tested a nuclear device in 1974. In May 1998, India conducted the first test of the country's newly developed nuclear weapons. Though world leaders asked Pakistan not to test weapons in retaliation, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif declared that India "had radically altered the strategic balance in our region," and Pakistan needed its own nuclear weapons to restore the balance of power. Two weeks after India's tests, Pakistan proved its nuclear capabilities by conducting the first underground nuclear tests in the country's history.

In the new elections, Nawaz Sharif and other Islamic parties won a majority of votes. Bhutto remained in the National Assembly as the leader of the opposition. Sharif, now prime minister, proposed a program to improve Pakistan's economy. He also cut most ties with the United States. This caused more trouble in the economy, and the violence in Pakistan became overwhelming. Terrorists bombed mosques and Christian churches. Illegal drugs came into Pakistan from Afghanistan, and many drug runners carried machine guns to defend the drugs.

By July 1993, the government was at a standstill. The politicians could not agree on a path to return law and order. The army told both the president and Prime Minister Sharif to resign for the good of the country. On July 18, both resigned, and a temporary prime minister tried to clean up the government before the next election.

Through all the chaos, Bhutto believed she could bring democracy to her country. In October 1993, she became prime minister once again. This time, she included opposition leaders in her government. She looked for compromise so that the government could work on Pakistan's problems, instead of fighting.

In her second term, Bhutto worked to improve education by building more schools. She made sure Pakistani children were vaccinated against polio. She made a plan to bring electricity to every house



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LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK



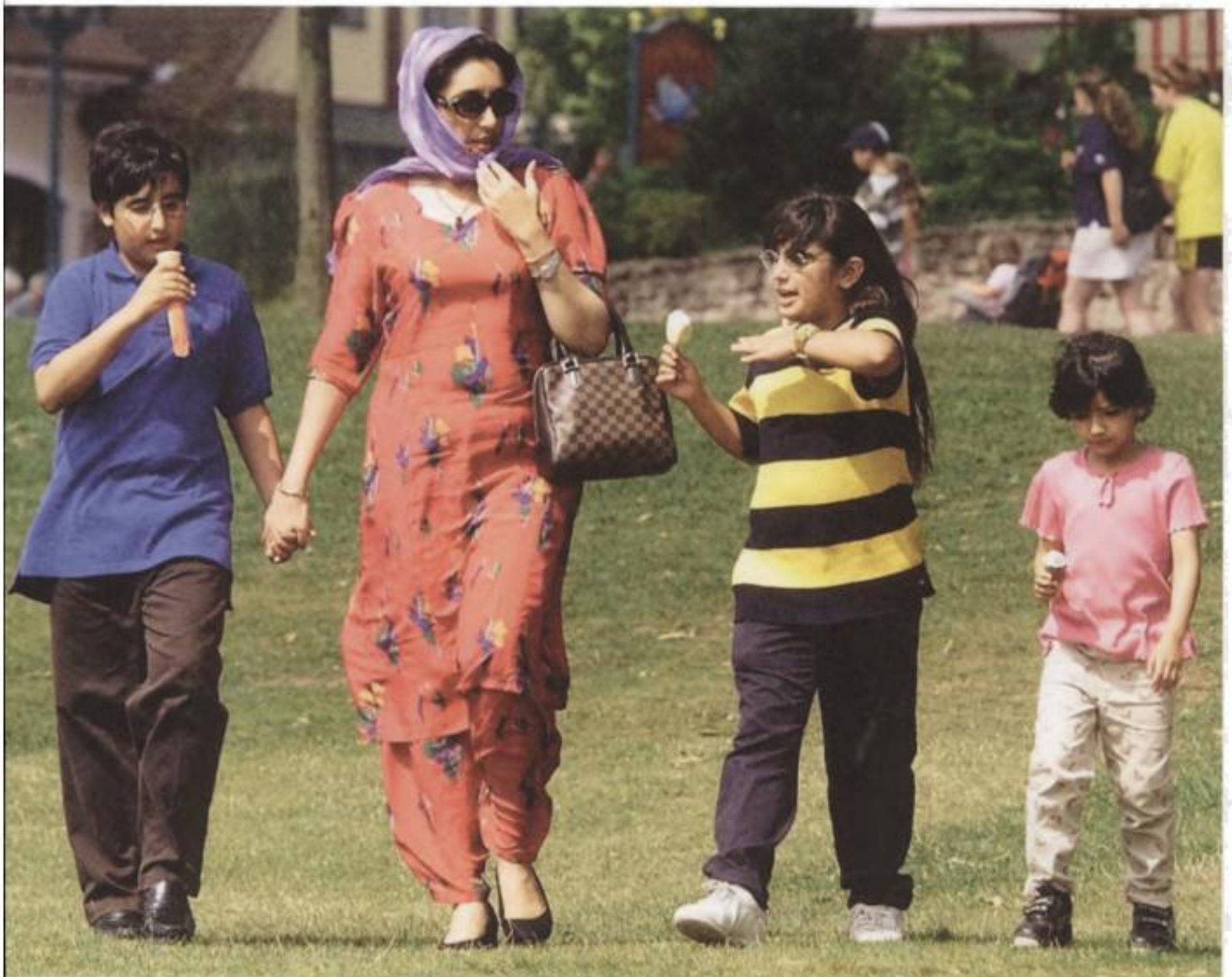
In an interview in 2000, Benazir Bhutto looked back at her life. She acknowledged that she had made mistakes while governing, but she learned from them. She knew Pakistan had always had problems with corruption in the government, but at the time she was prime minister, it did not seem as important as the violence in the streets or the poverty of the people. Looking back, she said, “I wish I had tackled the so-called corruption issues more deeply.” She wonders whether she might still be working in Pakistan if she had paid attention to government corruption right away.

But Bhutto has many enemies in Pakistan who believe that she knew about the corruption. They claim that she and Zardari grew rich on the money

she stole from Pakistan. Zardari was accused of taking bribes and pocketing money from government contracts. She is accused of using the money to buy expensive jewelry and a house in England.

Whether the corruption charges are true or not, Bhutto cannot return to Pakistan until her name is cleared. Today she lives in England and Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates with her son and daughters, Bakhtawar and Asifa. Her husband was finally released from prison in December 2004 and now lives with his family in exile.

*Bhutto enjoys
a more relaxed
life in England
with her family.*



Bhutto enjoys the time she spends with her family, but as she says, "My personal happiness has always been subordinated to the greater happiness of the 150 million people of Pakistan."

And so she continues to be active in issues of peace and human rights. She keeps a busy schedule of appearances and speeches. Though in self-exile from Pakistan, she continues to travel throughout the rest of South Asia, where she has been given a number of honorary degrees, fellowships, and awards.

Bhutto has not given up on democracy in Pakistan. She remains optimistic that someday democratic elections will be held again. If the current president of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, changes his mind and allows free elections, Bhutto hopes to return to her homeland. If she cannot run for office, she will help the Pakistan People's Party continue the fight for human rights and democracy.

A recent earthquake that devastated her country in October 2005 has given Bhutto hope for

Pervez Musharraf (1943–), the president of Pakistan in 2005, has been a military man all his life. He attended Pakistan Military Academy, and became an officer in 1964. Just one year later, he fought in the war between India and Pakistan. He received medals for his heroism. He rose through the ranks to become general and army chief of staff in 1998. In 1999, he took over the government from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He announced that new elections would not be held until law and order returned to Pakistan. In 2005, he refused to allow Benazir Bhutto to return to Pakistan.

relief fund for earthquake victims, is now being urged to return. Until that time comes, however, Benazir Bhutto continues her struggles from abroad. She has dedicated her life to fighting for Pakistan, and she will continue. When people ask her how she can be optimistic when Pakistan is again under a military dictatorship, she replies that she must continue for her father and mother. "There could be 10 people who are bad," she said in an interview, "but there are 90 people who are good." She believes that her family has fought for the good people of Pakistan, and she must continue that work.

Despite her privileged upbringing, Bhutto has had many obstacles in her path. Through imprisonment, exile, and personal tragedy, however, Bhutto has remained committed to her ideals. She has said:

In life there are challenges, but I think leadership is very much predicated on the capacity to absorb defeat and overcome it. Now, after having been in politics for more than two decades, I have come to the strong conclusion that the differ-

Benazir Bhutto and the Pakistan People's Party continue to encourage Pakistan's current government to hold free and open elections. They want Pakistan to move toward a democratic society. The military government, however, continues to delay elections and make laws that prevent Bhutto from returning to Pakistan and running for office.



Though in exile, Bhutto still has many supporters in Pakistan.

ence between somebody who succeeds and somebody who fails is the ability to absorb a setback.

Her achievements, especially in the face of devastating setbacks, have inspired young women all over the world. In a 2000 interview, Bhutto said that her election to the position of prime minister “was a victory for women everywhere.” Her success has motivated young women around the world to strive for leadership roles in their countries and governments. And though she never planned

to become a role model, her commitment to the ideals of democracy and human rights has influenced the lives of many people of both genders.

Bhutto knows how difficult life can be. Still, she has great hope for the future. She hopes for:

a world of peace that provides people opportunities to prosper. Each individual is given life once to lead, and each individual deserves a chance to succeed. ... People need peace and they need opportunity, in Pakistan and everywhere else. That's the world I'd like to see.

Benazir Bhutto has written two books, *Foreign Policy in Perspective* (1978) and *Daughter of Destiny* (1989), her autobiography. Many of her speeches have been collected and published in book form, and she has contributed essays and articles to numerous books and magazines. She continues to actively speak and write on behalf of political and human rights issues.

Benazir Bhutto will always speak out against violence, injustice, and abuses of human rights. She hopes that someday soon we will all live in a better world—one with equal rights for everyone, including women, the poor, and especially the people of Pakistan. ❧

Life and Times

BHUTTO'S LIFE

1953

Born on June 21 in Karachi, Pakistan

1965

India and Pakistan go to war over Kashmir



1967

Father founds Pakistan People's Party



1950

1953

The first Europeans climb Mount Everest



1966

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is established to work for equality between women and men

WORLD EVENTS



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MODERN WORLD

From 1900 to the present day, humanity and the world have undergone major changes. Drastic shifts in theories and practice tested the standards of personal freedoms and religious conventions as well as science, technology, and industry. The new mind-set of the modern world includes a focus on humanitarianism and the belief that a global economy has made the world a more connected place.

After the execution of her father, who founded the Pakistan People's Party, Benazir Bhutto became an outspoken advocate of democracy and human rights. She spent many years in prison or in exile before finally leading the party to victory in 1988. When Bhutto became prime minister of Pakistan she was the first woman ever to head an elected government in an Islamic nation.



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