**Nostalgia Benazir Bhutto return**

[Syed Ishrat Husain](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/syed-i-husain/)

December 13, 2020

June is the middle of the year that belongs to Benazir Bhutto, while December leaves the year with Benazir Bhutto.

Although the people of Pakistan have spent a great deal of their time in martial law regimes, be it 1958, 1969, 1977 or 1999. But there is one school of thought in Pakistan that still believes that democracy must be pursued in any form. The prominent figure in Pakistan who has been vocal against the regime of martial law was Benazir Bhutto, without whom Pakistan&#39;s democratic history is incomplete. This was her role in the MRD, where she fought against the regime of General Zia ul Haq and mobilized the Pakistani nation to get rid of the dictatorship and re-established democracy.

It was Salman Taseer who received Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto when he left General Ayub’s government and arrived in Lahore to form Pakistan People’s Party. And it was Salman Taseer again in 1986 who was there to greet the daughter of the first elected prime minister of Pakistan, who later became twice the first female head of state in the Islamic world.

For more than a week, political workers were hustling through the countryside chanting “Chalo Chalo Lahore Chalo.” For the Jiyalas of Punjab, April 10, 1986 was a celebration day, after over two years in exile, having left Pakistan on January 10, 1984; Benazir Bhutto was returning to Pakistan and landing in their capital city Lahore. In August 1985, she was permitted to return to Pakistan to bury her brother Shahnawaz Bhutto, on one condition that she would not participate in politics. But she was arrested on August 29, for making political speeches and sentenced to 90 days of house arrest.

She was released on November 4, after the United States protested, and she returned to Europe later that month.

The streets of Lahore, where the charismatic daughter of the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto arrived from London for her first political mission, were encircled by thousands of supporters.

Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to Lahore from all over the country, many piled up on the rooftops of buses embellished with the red, black and green flag of the Pakistan People&#39;s Party of Bhutto. The black, green and red of the PPP appeared to be the only colors of Lahore that day.

People wore red, green and black vests, dupattas, shalwar khameez, caps. She did not feel any fear of violence, not because of the presence of the police and the army, but because of the shelter of the crowd itself. Although she was completely exposed on the truck, she did not feel any danger.

The 10-mile route from the airport to Minar-i-Pakistan generally takes 15 minutes. But on the unimaginable day of April 10, it took her ten hours. The number of people at the airport grew to millions when it reached Minar-i-Pakistan. Across the streets there were pictures of her and her father, a charismatic politician from Sindh province. Several banners carried her father’s quotations,

“I shall rule this country from my grave.”

“Pakistan awaits a messiah. The people here can&#39;t do better than the daughter of Bhutto. Pakistan awaits her to give deliverance. Nothing else explains the euphoria and anticipation,” said Dr Mubashir Hasan.

A number of factors contributed to her immense popularity early in her political career. She was young, charming, and well educated; she commanded sympathy throughout the country as the daughter of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto whom many believed had been unfairly hanged. She was also admired for her refusal to comply with the autocratic rule of General Ziaul Haq despite cruel harassment.

For months, politicians have openly questioned whether she had the support to lead the opposition. Even her own party, the Pakistan People&#39;s Party, was divided over whether to co-operate with General Zia ul Haq&#39;s regime or face it. The largest coalition of parties opposed to Zia ul Haq was equally divided on the opportunity to accept her leadership. But with her rally on that day, she brushed aside all doubts and opened a new chapter in the tumultuous history of the country. The size of the crowd surpassed the expectations of many politicians, diplomats and other analysts who had doubted that Benazir Bhutto could galvanize the type of support his father was famous for.

At one point, telling the crowd, she cried out: Seeing you, the people, make me feel that, Bhutto is alive before my eyes. He told me when we last met in Rawalpindi prison that I had to sacrifice everything for my country. It is a mission that I will live and die for.

She told the crowd that 1986 was “a bad year for dictators” as a result of what happened in the Philippines and Haiti. Marcos left, the president of Haiti left, and now another dictator has to leave, she said as the crowd roared with joy.

The tone of her speech was emotionally charged, but she did not call for a public uprising or confrontation with the government. I have returned because I want to serve the people, not seek revenge. I put an end to revenge. There are no such feelings in my heart. My goal is to build Pakistan.

The time has come to be united and push out the dictator who has ruled us for these nine years.

Do you want freedom?  
Do you want democracy?  
Do you want revolution?  
Yes, the roar came back every time, million voices shouting as one.  
Do you want Zia to stay?  
No, the sound wave roared.  
Do you want Zia to go?  
Yes, the roar mounted.  
Then the decision is Zia Jaavay!  
Zia must go. Jaavay! Jhaavay! Jaavay!  
Millions of voices cried into the darkening sky. Hundreds of thousands of hands reached skywards in  
frenzied clapping rhyming with the slogan…  
&quot;Ajj tey ho gayee Bhutto Bhutto