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Pakistan

PPP refuses to break with feudal traditions

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Appointment of 19-year-old Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the new chair of Pakistan Peoples Party is an attempt to keep the feudal traditions of politics in South Asia.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/bhutto.jpg>] **Bilawal Zardari, with his father Asif Ali Zardari, left, and party president Amin Fahim**

The PPP central executive committee approved the appointment of Bilawal Asif Zardari, unanimously in its meeting on 30th December at Nuedero Sind. He is son of Benazir Bhutto who was assassinated on 27 December, nominated him.

According to the will of Benazir Bhutto read out in the meeting, Asif Zardari, husband of Benazir Bhutto, was to be appointed as chair of PPP in case Benazir Bhutto is not there. However, Asif Zardari then went on to suggest his son Bilawal as new chair.

A student of Oxford University, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is the eldest and the only son of three children of Benazir Bhutto. Born in Pakistan but never lived here after he went to school.

Asif Zardai will be co-chairperson of PPP. By these developments, PPP has effectively been again in the total control of Bhutto family.

PPP leadership had kept the same feudal traditions during the last 40 years of existence. After Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged on July 4 1979, his wife Begum Nusrat Bhutto took over. When Begum Bhutto wanted her son Murtaza Bhutto to take over PPP in 1996, she was deposed by Benazir Bhutto and became the life long chairperson of PPP. Murtaza Bhutto was killed in a police encounter in September 1996 while Benazir Bhutto was still the prime minister. She lost her power a month later.

The executive committee meeting also decided to take part in the general election of 8 January 2008 and rejected the government version of the assassination. This was despite a massive movement against the military dictatorship of General Musharaf. All over Pakistan, hundreds of thousands have demonstrated against the regime and all the banners and flags of the ruling Muslim League were torn apart. The movement forced the Muslim League supporting General Musharaf to hide everywhere from the public.

A move to boycott the general elections and an announcement to launch a movement to overthrow the military dictatorship by PPP leadership at this moment would have forced the regime to resign. Instead, PPP leadership played on the massive sympathy waves to capitalise through general elections under Musharaf regime. A precious moment of history to get rid of military intervention into politics by a power mass movement has been lost by this decision to participate in the elections.

By appointment of Bilwal Bhutto, PPP has refused to break the feudal traditions of politics in South Asia. It has kept the undemocratic traditions of few families controlling the politics. The heriditic hegemony of politics has been kept and feudalism will be more strengthen by this decision of PPP in general.