

# Pakistan: Musharraf's Got To Go!

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General/President Pervez Musharraf's days are numbered. He is on his way out. Only a miracle can save his presidency. This will be the best news that the Pakistani working class will have heard for a long time. A military dictator humiliated by the parliament is just what is needed in a country like Pakistan.

Musharraf survived after December 27, 2007, thanks to the leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party. After Benazir Bhutto's murder on that day, Musharraf was at his weakest. The masses had taken over Pakistan for five days. It was a mass reaction of an unprecedented level. "Musharraf must resign" that was all that what was needed at the time. A demand for Musharraf's resignation by Pakistan Peoples Party leaders would have been sufficient to force him out of power. However, PPP went for general elections instead, giving Musharraf a breath of relief.

The Pakistan Peoples Party leadership took government eight months before accommodating to such a popular demand. This was a real crisis of leadership in PPP. What a waste of time and popularity by PPP! Asif Zardari soon became a leader losing popularity at record speed. The PPP leadership only went on to demand Musharraf's resignation when they reached their lowest level of popularity.

## PPP has not restored the judges

Implementing the neoliberal agenda, the PPP have annoyed the masses as much as they could. They have not restored the judges. They did not do anything that was worth mentioning. It was all going wrong. They could not bring the Inter Services Intelligences (ISI) under civilian rule despite a public official notification.

Then, it was all of sudden "Musharraf will go first, then we will restore the judges" was the agreement of the ruling alliance of four political parties after countless indoor and in-the-shade meetings spread over three days. The lawyer's movement leaders rightly criticized the decision linking the restoration with impeachment of president. The restoration of judges would have given a tremendous moral boost to the ruling alliance in their struggle to overthrow Musharraf. However, Asif Zardari is still afraid of their restoration. He wants every move to remain under his control. This was real feudal-style politics on display. "If he wants, then it will be done", is Asif Zardari's philosophy.

Why the wait for all of eight month to come to a decision that could have been done on day one of their electoral victory? Rather than a consolidation of power by PPP at the centre instead we saw it losing power at a fast speed. This waiting time meant more chance for a regeneration of power by Musharraf. His tone began to change. He was once again threatening to go the same way as he has

gone on November 3. He was meeting opposition Pakistan Muslim League Q leaders telling them to be ready within two months. A weak dictator was flexing his muscles, once again, thanks to the PPP leaders wasting time for no reason.

### **Deal traumatized**

Perhaps a dirty deal was the reason of this wait - a deal that was agreed by Benazir Bhutto and Musharraf before she returned to Pakistan on October 18, 2007 for a power sharing formula. All the corruption charges against Benazir Bhutto and Zardari were withdrawn under the controversial National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO). While PPP leadership faithfully abided with the deal, it was Musharraf that was taking the liberty to do something more than that.

But with Benazir gone, the deal was already in traumatized. It was an unnatural, unholy, unrealistic and unworkable deal. It was deal to deceive each other. It was deal of the ruling class, by the ruling elite and for the ruling class. It was a compromise against democracy and against the people.

With Benazir gone, Musharraf could have gone long ago. The murder of Benazir Bhutto was not an ordinary murder and was not an ordinary incident. However, by sticking to participating in the election under Musharraf, the PPP leaders took an ordinary decision in the political sense. "Democracy is best revenge" was the first public statement of Bilawal Zardari Bhutto, the newly elected leader of PPP. However, it was not democracy that was taking revenge against the dictator but democracy was taken from the masses by not removing the dictator then.

### **Failed dictator**

Musharraf has lost the power to do anything like he's done in the past. He is a dictator on his way out. What a tragedy that he has power to suspend the parliament yet he cannot do that any more. He is facing failure after failure. He tried to remove the chief justice. He failed. He tried to silence the lawyer's movement by dictatorial measures, he could not do that. He tried to rig the general election of February 18, he failed. He tried to build his political party PMLQ by pumping in a massive amount of money in the name of "development". But he failed.

Musharraf is a failed dictator. He is not any more a family friend of Bush as both claimed in the past. Continuing their traditions of using dictators like tissue papers, the American imperialism is decaling the impeachment as "an internal matter of Pakistan". Musharraf has lost the ability to use 58/2B, the dictatorial constitutional right of the president to suspend the parliament. Who will implement that orders? A bloody military coup is needed to implement that sort of dictatorial order in the face of rising social and political movement against the dictatorship.

The count down has started in real terms. With Musharraf gone, there is no way that the ruling alliance will be able not to restore the top judges. Musharraf's departure and the restoration of judges will open a new phase of class struggle in Pakistan. The ruling alliance will be tested by the masses when they will insist to go along with neoliberal agenda. The PPP led ruling alliance will be naked in their exploitation of the working class. The ruling alliance will be seen rightly as the ruling elite by the masses. A more determined fight by the working class will be seen in future with a new leadership of those who have fought consistently against the imperialism, religious fundamentalism, militarization, for the restoration of judges and for the rights of the working class. The Left parties can see a new possibility of a new popularity if they stood united and in a militant way.

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**P.S.**

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