

## **Pakistan - MQM: a neo fascist organization**

Monday 12 September 2011, by [TARIO Farooq](#) (Date first published: 12 September 2011).

I started visiting Karachi in the mid-1990s after the Labor Party established a group there. Whenever I came to speak to a public meeting, comrades advised me to avoid verbal attacks on the MQM. "We have to live here" was the usual justification.

After the National Trade Union Federation was formed in 1998, I was one of the key speakers at the annual May Day rallies in Karachi. And whenever I ignored the advice and called the MQM a neo-fascist organization, I received maximum applause. It seemed that among the Karachi working class there was tremendous antagonism against the MQM, but not many were prepared to speak publically against this organization.

On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2011, speaking on GEO television, Mustafa Kamal, the former mayor of Karachi, responded to the criticism of some who talked to Hamid Mir by commenting, in coded language, of retaliation against those who dare to be critical. He falsely compared Bangladesh's struggle for independence struggle with the situation of Karachi. One was a struggle by an exploited nationality against the atrocious treatment of the West Pakistan civilian and military establishment while in Karachi today there is a struggle to break the shackles of the neo-fascists, who have attempted to strangle working people for over three decades.

I distinctly remember 12 May 2007, when I was going to speak at a peasant rally in Punjab. I received several calls from Karachi, one from Azra Perveen, a female activist of the Labour Party. She had been part of a group organized by LPP to go to a rally at the airport and welcome the chief justice. Shots rang out while buses were still arriving. The main victims were ANP activists, whose bus had to stop and let the passengers rush to find safe places. Azra, whose white dress was drenched in blood, was forced to hide behind a pole as she tried to help the wounded.

I tried to contact Eidhi, the BBC and other media to aid activists encircled by MQM thugs. Earlier in the morning, I was informed that all the transport arranged by LPP had been withdrawn on the instructions of the MQM. No one was willing to risk their transport. In fact the previous day, even commercial painters refused to prepare the LPP banners because of the fear of retaliation by MQM. Nevertheless brave activists of the LPP, ANP and some other parties attempted to get the airport. They found containers blocking the roads and were fired on at several places.

On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2011 night, I was very angry to hear Mustafa Kamal denying that the MQM played a role in shedding blood in May 2007. Earlier in the press conference from his exile cage, Altaf Hussain, the "leader" accepted the MQM the "negligence" by the local chapter of MQM. And what a negligence, over 50 were killed, chief justice was unable to come out from the airport, all the main roads were blocked by the heavy containers and so on. This was an act of fascism. MQM believes in fascist philosophy that means the physical elimination of political opponents.

It was no accident that when Benazir Bhutto visited our bookstall in Lahore in 1992, she bought all fifty copies of a booklet "FASCISM What It Is and How To Fight It." The booklet was written by Leon Trotsky and translated in Urdu by Dr. Khalid Javed Jan. Benazir Bhutto must have felt the need to arm the activists of PPP with this booklet. And what a historical paradox that her husband Asif Ali Zardari is trying his best to go along with this terrorist organization instead of fighting it in an effort

to win a “peace” in Karachi and other cities of Sindh.

You cannot have peace by compromising with the fascists. That is a lesson evident from studying the political history of the fascism. All the social democrats and even the communists who tried to compromise with Hitler, Mussolini, and Franc, the fascist leaders of Germany, Italy and Spain, became their victims. Fascists are not democrats. They do not believe in democracy. For them democracy is just an opportunity to spread their influence.

What is fascism? It is a system of government characterized by rigid one-party dictatorship, forcible suppression of the opposition, private economic enterprise under centralized governmental control, belligerent nationalism, racism, and militarism. It is a mass movement, with its leaders employing a great deal of socialist demagoguery. Its base is the petty bourgeoisie, the middle class.

Karachi has been in the grip of a one-party dictatorship for long time. The MQM talks of revolution, instead of Socialist demagoguery. It has always had close links with the military establishment; they always make efforts to smooth over any differences. The MQM gave full support to General Musharraf.

MQM has always used the race issue to unite the groups around it. Racism may be defined as the hatred of one person or group by another because of skin, color, language, customs, place of birth or any other factor. This reveals the belief that one is less than human establishes an unequal power relationship that is perpetuated through wars, slavery, the formation of nations, and legal codes.

In order to popularize its message, the MQM propagated the “discriminated” attitude of the Sindhis, Punjabis, Pushtoons and Baluchis against Urdu-speaking migrants. It uses the racist card to divide the working class in Karachi, the main industrial city of Pakistan. MQM members make jokes about the native Baluchis and Sindhis, revealing a contemptuous attitude that these people are not “civilized” enough to be equal to other people.

When journalist Hamid Mir asked a question Hyder Abbas Rizvi, a MQM representative of MQM, why the party pressurized the AAJ television channel to sack Nusrat Javed, one of the channel’s main anchor people who was sacked during a programme when he was criticizing MQM fascist tactics, , he responded by denying the charges, stating that no one from MQM called the AAJ owners. That may be so, but the sheer fear of MQM retaliation might have forced the owners to sack this reputed journalist.

What had Nusrat Javed said? He simply reacted to the three-hour press conference by Altaf Hussain, the chief of MQM by stating the whole nation was kept hostage for five hours. Yet the MQM representative slyly remarked that the MQM did not force the media to broadcast the entire conference but only gave out a press release announcing the conference. Yet it is the fear of retaliation by MQM that forced all the media to carry the entire the press conference live for over 5 hours.

Recent developments have forced the neo-fascist MQM retreat from their ambitious plan to expand nationally. All their sloganeering against feudalism is rolled back to their original political stand that to maintain their base among the Muhajirs, taking refuge in Karachi.

The case of the MQM exposes the failure of Pakistani state to address the question of racism and fascism. In fact, the Pakistani state is deeply rooted in religious bigotry and racist superiority where some nationalities are dominant and others are oppressed. It has tried to impose the Urdu language on the Bengalis as early as 1948. Sindhis have had to wage a struggle for their linguistic rights. The emergence of the MQM in the mid-1980, with the help of the military dictator General Zia Ul Haq was mainly based on the supposed superiority of the Urdu language. Different institutions of the

state played vital role in bringing this monster up in the air and the MQM has very cleverly used this attitude against all other local, indigenous and other languages.

Today the MQM-PPP alliance reveals a crisis of bourgeoisie democracy. The PPP government is facing one of the most real crises it has faced so far during the three and half year of power. It is both the crisis of the system and the leadership. The so-called clever, smart, witty, intelligent, gifted and chic leadership of Asif Ali Zardari has to confront one of his most trusted handpicked Zulfiqar Mirza. The crisis has weakened the grip of PPP leadership from its own apparatus. It has weakened their basis in Sindh. That is a result of their policies of conciliations with the neo-fascists MQM. You can never gain by allying with your own enemies.

The working class must not have any illusions in Zulfiqar Mirza's fight against the fascists. He wants to reap the anger of the working people of Sindh against MQM and put it back to PPP or to the military establishment but he cannot wage a serious fight against the fascists.

What is the way forward? It is revealed in the current struggle of the workers at Karachi Electric Supply Corporation (KESC) for jobs and against privatization. Here we see the MQM and the PPP united to crush the heroic struggle of the KESC trade union with state repression. We must support this struggle and demand an immediate release of the workers, organizing strike support actions. Building the working-class movement in Karachi is the answer to the present crisis.

It is with the present political scenario that the forces of the Left can expose the real nature of the neo-fascist forces and the danger it presents for the working class in Pakistan. At different times religious fundamentalists or the neo-fascist MQM have been promoted by state institutions and bourgeoisie in order to divide and conquer and thus maintain rotten capitalism. Both, along their master, deserve rejection by the working people of Pakistan.

**Farooq Tariq**

spokesperson

Labour Party Pakistan

---