

Pakistan: Program of Awami Jamhoori Tahreek (National Leftist Forum)

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Awami Jamhoori Tehreek (Peoples Democratic Movement) is a broad based platform that has been formed to bring an end to the anti-people, repressive and opportunistic socio-economic and political system and to build a pro-people social order in the country. This platform welcomes all those political forces who consider the ruling junta's tall claims of progress and development farcical and deceptive, have a will to change the status quo and want to join the struggle to liberate millions of people of different nationalities of the country and to transform them into a positive and effective political force.

The prevailing anti people and anti democratic order is based on the following factors:

Over sixty percent of the country's total population is under the grip of the feudal system based on big land holdings granted during the British colonial rule and the tribal and Sardari system connected thereto. The landless peasants, sharecroppers and small time cultivators are suffering from abject poverty, backwardness and socio-political subjugation while feudal lords, sardars and waderas are masters of the lives of these downtrodden masses. Private jails, unlawful Jirgas, humiliation of women folks and dehumanization of the working people are crude reflections of this oppressive system. The major political parties of Pakistan directly and indirectly safeguard the interests of the feudal lords, sardars and waderas. The civil and military bureaucracy that has gained government lands is an ally of the said exploitative forces as absentee landlords. This social order is inherently opposed to rule of law, human rights and democratic order. The establishment and the terrorists groups under its patronage have dominated the political process, have usurped the right of free expression of the people and have deprived the nationalities of their natural resources and their historic, economic and political rights. No pro-people and democratic process can be launched unless these vested interests are eliminated.

The Establishment in Pakistan, the dominant part of which is military bureaucracy, has practically ruled the country since 1958 on security paradigm and has now dominated the economy by directly or indirectly holding big slots in the economic structure of the country. It is no more a mere institution of salaried state functionaries. The Armed Forces have developed their own vested interest in this unjust system. They have a strong hold on external and internal policies of Pakistan.

The military establishment has ruled over Pakistan since 1958 directly except a short period of time. The military rulers have rendered the country's constitution a laughing stock and have crippled it with mutilating effect of Seventeenth and Eighteenth constitutional amendments. They have thus consolidated their hold over the basic socio-economic and political structure of the country. The ruling class in the name of defense of the country consumes the major chunk of the national revenues and the funds received through foreign loans. The defense budget is not presented to or discussed by the people and their elected representatives. In the present national scenario the President who is serving Chief of Army and his military advisors are the sole administrators and arbiters of nation's internal and external affairs. The constitution, the democratic system, the people's rights, the federation and the parliament stand all marginalized.

The global capitalism through its institutions such as IMF, World Bank and World Trade

Organization has a strong economic control across the world especially over the third world countries. It has deep influence not only over Pakistan's economy but also its administrative and legal structure. Our country's national budget and tax structure is framed in consultation with these institutions of global capitalism. The privatization of our strategic national establishments and flourishing industrial units is also under the instruction of these institutions. The policy of Privatization has its impact in the field of health and education and the State is withdrawing from its social responsibility to provide these basic facilities to the people.

Globalization, which in fact is a new imperialist formation of the world capitalism in its multidimensional onslaught against third world countries, is draining their natural resources and robbing their people for cheap labour. The laws for the protection of the working class and their trade union rights are being ruthlessly violated. In consequence to these imperialist policies while unemployment is on the rise and Pakistan society is being rendered as a consumer market. The main consumers of the market belong to the upper class and those neo rich who are connected with and are serving the multinationals and promote globalization. The technological development or industrialization of Pakistan is not within the framework of imperialist machinations. People of all nations are up against corporate globalization. We express our solidarity with the global anti-imperialist movement and resolve to support the struggle against different facets of globalization.

We consider that the religious extremism and militancy has grown beyond proportion, and is a new form of fascism. These forces blunt the people's social consciousness and keep them out of political process that resultantly facilitates exploitative forces to maintain an unjust and oppressive social order. The world imperialist forces have time and again used the religious extremists for their objectives. The ruling establishment in Pakistan has deep relationship with these forces, which have been extensively deployed within and beyond Pakistan by them. This anti people lobby is responsible for promoting aggressive religious sectarianism in the country. and they havoc played on Pakistan society in the name of religion. They are responsible for permanent military infiltration in our constitution and administrative structure. Their collaboration with the military junta has seriously prejudiced national independence and democratic image of the Pakistan state.

Pakistan was formed as a multi-national federal state. This federation could sustain itself only if socio-economic and political rights of its constituent units were respected and protected. Pakistan establishment with military bureaucracy as its strongest component has not recognized the federal democratic system in the country. It has always been thrusting centralism through martial law or its own form of democracy under the patronage of armed forces. The policy to negate federalism and democratic order has been responsible for cessation of Pakistan's eastern wing that is now a new state of Bangladesh. This policy of centralism is in fact the cause of frustration and alarming commotion amongst the constituent units of this federation today, which is being suppressed through brute military force. Deliberate withdrawal from federalism and democratic order is responsible for disputes over water distribution of common rivers, control over natural resources of the provinces and the building of mega projects. Military rule or its centralism cannot run a democratic order and a federation. Today Pakistan's parliamentary democratic system is under total command and control of Gen. Pervai Musharaff. The command and control does not end with General Musharaf. It goes up to Washington to which all concerned look for approval. Pakistan's present economic system and its political structure promote poverty, price hike, backwardness, humiliation of women, lack of safeguards for minorities, and religious and sectarian extremism and nationality contradictions. While the present system prevails, Pakistan cannot become a free, progressive, prosperous and democratic State. The establishment of Awami Jamhoori Tehreek is meant to build a broad based democratic struggle to change the status quo.

This movement has been launched to accomplish in particular the objectives stated hereunder:

1. In order to build a true federal parliamentary democracy the country's constitution has to be reshaped. The federal powers should be restricted to defense, currency and foreign affairs. All federating units should enjoy equal status among themselves. The issues of water and natural resources should be settled in consultation with all units according to established international and democratic norms. The guiding principles stated by of Qaide Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah stated in his speech of 11th August 1947 were neither recognized nor put into practice by the rulers of Pakistan. (The contents of the historic speech were deliberately not made public and thus the rulers negated the objectives for which this country was formed).
2. In order to restore parliamentary democracy in the country the electoral laws should be appropriately amended so that election process remains transparent and free from corruption, abuse of authority and high handedness of ruling class. The right of adult franchise should be unqualified. The Election Commission should enjoy financial and administrative independence and should be free from its dependence on the government. There should be no obligation to appoint a High or Supreme Court Judge as the Election Commissioner. Election should be held forthwith.
3. In order to maintain independence of judiciary a Judicial Commission Consisting of members of the Judiciary, the Bar, the government and the opposition should be constituted for the appointment of judges of the superior courts. The tenure of office of the judges should be seventy years. They should not be given any other office during service or after retirement.
4. There should be complete ban over appointment of serving or retired members of the armed forces for any civil post.
5. The overthrowing of elected government may that be on the basis of law of Necessity or any other such hypothesis should be declared a crime under Article 6 of the Constitution of Pakistan.
6. Genuine and effective land reforms be made so that feudal system is brought to an end. Maximum agricultural unit per family should be fixed at 50 acres. And the rest of the land including available State land should be distributed amongst the landless cultivators, tenants and haris. The jirga system, sardari system and tribal system should be totally abolished.
7. Instead of making Pakistan a mere consumer society it should be industrially developed.
8. Instead of privatizing state institutions the State should play its role in developing basic and public utility industry. Workers be associated with the running of State enterprises.
9. The rights of the working class should be safeguarded according to laws and recommendations made by the International Labour Organisation. The right of strike and right to form a trade union should be legally safeguarded. The minimum wage should be fixed at Rs.8000/- per month and the amount should relate to price hike and rate of inflation. Industrial Relations Ordinance of 2002 should be immediately scrapped down. All labour laws should be reframed according to the principles laid down by ILO and with the consultation of the representatives of the labour.
10. All discriminatory laws against women and minorities including Hudood Laws be repealed.
11. The budget relating to defense should be presented before the elected members of the parliament for debate. The defense budget should be cut and such funds should be used for social welfare and development.
12. Pakistan is strategically located at the crossroad of Middle East and South Asia areas simmering with conflicts and in order to develop it as a peace region steps be taken to end arms race including nuclear weapons.

13. With the objective of developing national economy relations be developed on broader perspective with the Middle East, South Asia and Central Asia. In order to have safeguard from the imperialist designs of globalization, steps should be taken for regional cooperation and a common struggle. Implementation of new liberal agenda should be stopped forthwith.

14. The state should be responsible to guarantee basic educational and health facilities to the citizens. There should be uniform curricula for education based on modern science and free from religious bias.

15. The right to profess and practice religion, faith and creed is an inalienable right of every citizen. Discrimination and sectarian divide present in the constitution and the state affairs should be eliminated.

16. All regional languages should be recognized as national languages.

This document has been agreed and signed by the following National Leaders of the Progressive Parties of the Pakistan:

Rasool Bux Palijo - Awami Tahreek

Farooq Tariq - Labour Party Pakistan

Abid Hassan Minto - National Workers Party

Afzal Khamosh - Pakistan Mazdoor Kissan Party

Tufail Abbas - Pakistan Mazdoor Mahaz

Mehraj Mohammad Khan - a progressive leader

Taj Murree - Inqalabi Workers Committee (Pakistan)

P.S.

* <http://atsindh.blogspot.fr/p/awami-jamhoori-forum-national-leftist.html>