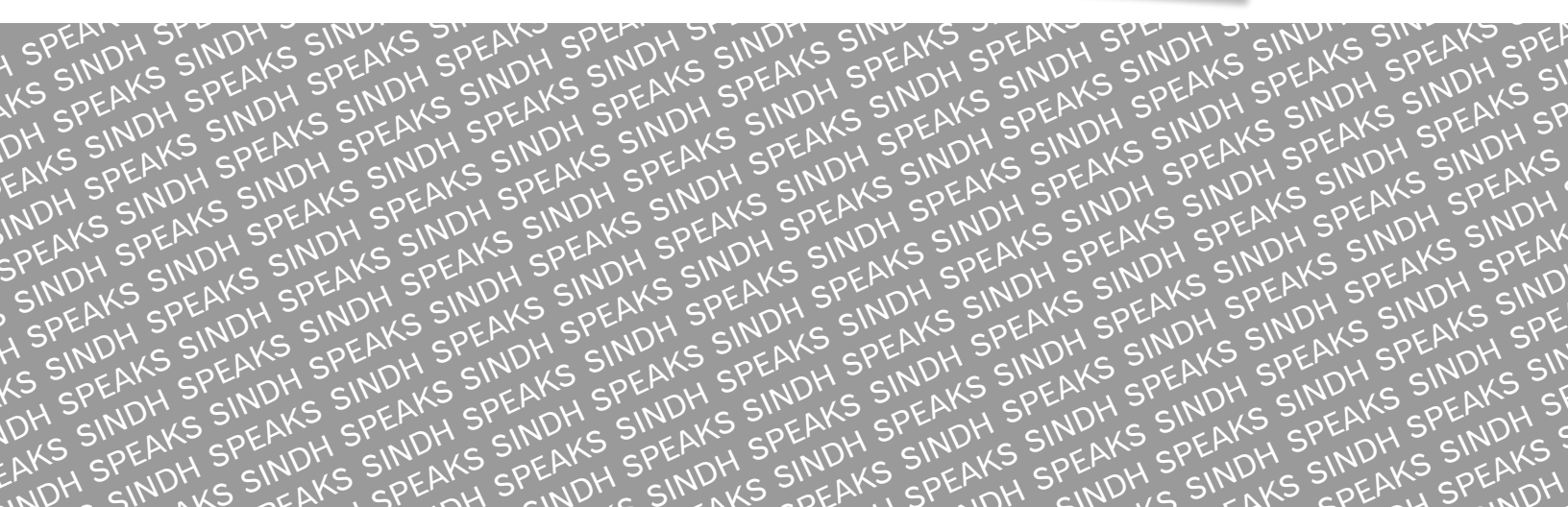
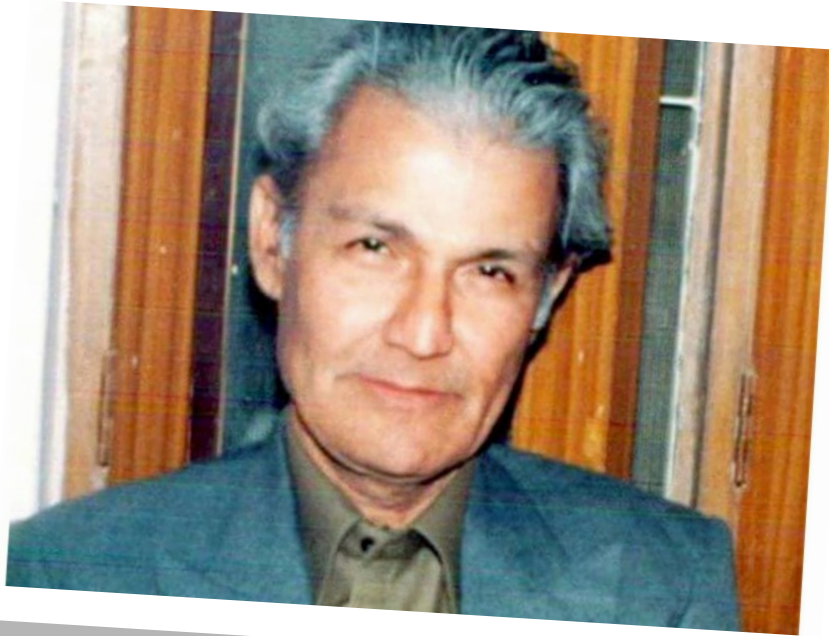


SINDH SPEAKS

(Articles, Interview & Letter)

By Rasool Bux Paleejo



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ABOUT RASOOL BUX PALIJO

Rasool Bux Palijo is a unique social scientist and a remarkable politician of South Asia whose work must be gauged by the extent to which his predictions are verified by history. In every nation some names stand out as the pioneers of uprisings, revolutions and movements and Rasool Bux Palijo is the most outstanding and exceptional thinker and leader of the twentieth century Sindh and Pakistan. Like all great intellectuals, scholars and leaders Palijo has been at times misunderstood, misinterpreted and misjudged not only by his die hard adversaries, but by his admirers as well. Palijo, one of the great original thinker of Sindh, is known as the *Quaid-e-Inqilab* (Leader of Revolution) because of the radical nationalist pursuits with which he has been challenging the rigid mindset of the dictators of his times and because only a powerfully original mind can emancipate itself as completely as Palijo's did from the tyranny of accepted but already obsolescent ideas of south Asian Politics.

Rasool Bux Palijo is a prolific writer, scholar, man of letters, Supreme Court lawyer and a seasoned politician. He is president of Awami Tahreek. He is an outstanding scholar and does enjoy great expertise and deep insight in world history and peoples movements, politics and history of political thought, pure literature and criticism. He was born on 21-09-1930 at Jungshahi, district Thatta, Sindh, Pakistan. He got his primary education at local *madarsa* and got his secondary education at famous Sindh Madarsatul Islam, Karachi. He did his law graduation from Sindh Law College, Karachi. He not only led many democratic and peoples movements in Sindh and Pakistan, but also made enormous contributions in progressive movements at national and Asia-pacific level. He was secretary general of Awami National Party and convener of Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) . He remained central executive committee member of Asia Pacific Peace Forum (based in Manila). He has written more than twenty books on politics, pure literature (short stories), literary criticism, history and political thought. He is a widely traveled scholar and had visited several times almost all regions across the world. As a visiting faculty, he has been delivering lectures at Jawahar Lal Nehru New Delhi (JNU), Delhi University, University of Chicago, University of Cambridge, University of Sussex, University of Essex, Kinston University, University of Milwaukee, Institute of Oriental Studies-Moscow, Houston University and number of other global academic institutions throughout the world.

His contribution to Pakistani politics and Sindhi literature, both quantitatively and qualitatively, stands out as a beacon of excellence and brilliance. His output is simply awe-inspiring. He has to his credit more than 30 published works of prose, poetry and translation. His writings are unique as they express the harmony between what he has seen outside with his naked eyes and what he has observed within by his inner eyes. He is the most revered *Hari* (farmer) leader and an extraordinary orator whose quotations and speeches are memorized and recited in community meetings because they reflect the

trials and triumphs of the common people in everyday life. He uses the mystic poetry of Shah Latif, Hafiz and romantic folk tales and simple beauty all around his land to convey a liberating message of revolution.

He is warm and soft and very down to earth. He had a broad forehead and dark attractive eyes, which often shown like brilliant candles. His innocent face is glorious effulgent and in his old age particularly reflects remarkable resplendence. Tall, handsome and distinguished-looking, Rasul Bux Palijo comes across as a soft-spoken person but speaks with conviction when he talks of downtrodden people, lower classes and his work, a good listener too. It is always a delight to sit with him and listen to his selections from Shelly, Keats, Virgil, Shakespeare, Kabir, Lorca, Mayakoviski, Rumi, Hafiz, Kalidasa, Ghalib, Iqbal, Faiz, Bulley Shah, Farid and other major poets of the world. The tribulations and sorrows of Sindh, thoughts of Sindhi society and its distinguishing features are his constant subjects. Nothing you would find borrowed from anywhere every sentence is his very own, the complex net of thoughts, the freshness of wind-catchers and the feelings, like Rajasthani dresses composite, perfect and mixture of colorful needlework. When he looks at what we have, he sees deserts, the sea and its life, rocky terrain, cities like Karachi, Hyderabad, Thatta, Larkana and Sukkur, and then there is our history which stretches even before the time of Alexander, the mighty conqueror who tasted defeat here. There are no wisps of nostalgia that cloud the picture. It is more of a candid shot. Though a great nationalist he has no contempt against anybody. Filled with love for beautiful valley of Mehran and the folks of Indus water he is not a hard-core and he loves humanity and common people from core of his heart.

Currently he heads Awami Tahreek and also enjoys positions of President Sindh Water Committee and member Anti-Greater Thal Canal Committee. Throughout his life, Mr. Palijo had been exhibiting his strong commitment to all democratic and progressive movements of deprived classes and nationalities through his actions and creative thoughts. He is an outstanding thinker and pro-people leader of down trodden masses of today's Sindh, Pakistan and South Asia.

A voracious reader, he says that he loves nothing better than reading. Palijo is conscious of the fact that the great ideology and literature of every language contributed to the collective and civilizational development of the people therefore he is one of the most well-versed and well-read persons specially in the field of literature of the east and the west. He has read almost all the great philosophers and poets of all the major languages of the world. Some he had read in original like the Persian, Urdu and English literature while he read the best of Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Greek, Latin, Russian, German French and Spanish literature in translation. Shah Latif is his role-model and he always copiously quote thought-provoking pieces from the best of the great philosophers, poets and intellectuals of the world in his articles and speeches.

Having experienced the delights, the emotional uplifting and cathartic effects of great literature, especially the poetry, he has consciously tried to achieve the same greatness and superb sublimity and no doubt he has achieved the greatness which he aspired. He has become a role model for political activists and writers of Sindh and Pakistan. His influence on the nationalists and leftists of his own, as well as later generations is overwhelming and far-reaching. Everyone in Sindh in the field of politics and literature affectionately refers to him as '*Daho*.' (top intellectual). History fascinates him. He says that history is all that is there in this world! Call it time if you will. It is a flowing sea in which our earth and all our galaxies are floating. The individual registers his name, but only for a moment. For media and intellectuals he is an enigma surrounded by controversies and shrouded in mysteries, more of a character than anyone from traditional works of fiction. Unconventional and nonconformist, his writings and speeches are imbued with a passion. He is fully preoccupied with being a genuine thinker.

This versatile genius was born in a lower middle class rural family of Thatta, Sindh, which had been, because of its peculiar geographical position, the greatest port of Sub-Continent. He always remained content with whatever dresses he got and whatever *Kharchi* (pocket money) he received from his father. His discontent lay elsewhere; from his very childhood, he was in quest of some real merchandise, or '*sacho wakhra*'. He grew up surrounded by the heroic struggles of his family members, from his father, who was forced to support his entire family on a low monthly salary of Rs 20 and to his mother who was an outsider in the family and had to take care of her five sons and three daughters. As was the practice in those days, Palijo was married off at an early age. After completing his initial education in Jungshahi and Thatta, he went to Sindh Madarsa Karachi even though his parents wanted him to stay in Thatta and look after the family. Then he did his LLB from Jinnah College and started the journey of successful law career. It was his outspokenness against the feudals and bureaucrats that made him popularity both in the masses of Thatta and outside of it. Even though this attitude brought him under attack from various Wadera's and Officers, he never flinched. He had also served in different newspapers and educational institutions for short durations before he became a distinguished criminal lawyer with a mastery in cross examination. It was when he was about 25 years old that he came into contact with radicals. He was already well versed in literature, now he benefitted greatly from great philosophical works of Kant, Hegel, Marx and Lenin. Besides revolutionary writings of the west, which forms the core of his struggle, he seems to have learnt many things from Chinese and South Asian leaders and writers like Mao, Gandhi and Jinnah. It was at this time that he also became an instant renowned writer in spite of not having a background in literature.

When vicious campaigns of slur and hatred were unleashed against Shaikh Ayaz, Palijo's first book *Andha Oondah Weg* appeared in 1965. Although a number of writers had written reviews and literary analytical works, this was the first book that changed

the balance between fundamentalists and radicals of Pakistan. In an era when Molvis and rightists held their sway in the world of literature, it was Palijo and Grami, who showed the wealth, vitality and poetic eloquence of Sindhi language, mystic tolerant culture and folk wisdom. It established him as ground-breaking critic. It was followed by *Subuh Theendo*, *Jakee Bangal San Thiyo*, *Dhararan Ja Dhak*, *Wattoon Weeh Thiyoon*, *Ghalihyoon Ganwaran Joon*, *Pasee Garha Gul*, *Awhan Jey Pujaran*, *Wihan Moon Ne Warau* and others. Yet another important feature of his career as a writer is *Kot Lakhpat Jo Qaidi*, his dairy of eight years imprisonment. His success as a writer can be attributed to his commitment to neglected masses, his choice of subjects and his spontaneous style. He himself attributes this success to his attachment to the simple, plain truth. It is not only the excellence of his diction and form in prose but also its content. The greatest achievement of Palijo is his total mastery of the Sindh language, he gave new meaning and content to otherwise quite plain words.

The One Unit, sinister and political fiends in the history of Pakistan left a deep and everlasting impact on his soul and political career. After partition, he accepted Pakistan as a fait accompli and as his homeland. But within Pakistan he was a great believer of the rights of all nationalities on an equal footing. It was in this background that he took up the cause of anti-one-unit movement in Sindh . He was arrested several times for arousing 'separatist' tendencies among the Haris and students of Sindh . He was also incriminated for infusing a communist movement in rural Sindh . The incarceration did not deter him from following the path he had chosen for himself as a political activist and writer and as an intellectual. He lashed out at the dictatorship of the time and lambasted the efforts made to silence him. The martial law used its extreme power over the impoverished lower classes and the persecution of Sindhi masses was the order of the day. He came to know the sociological rigidity of the tribal and feudal society in Sindh which resulted in cruelty and violence. He saw cruelty and violence at close quarters and it made him aware of the emotional instability of the people involved in criminal cases. He wrote some fascinating short stories like *Pasi Garha Gul*, *Jitey Bah Barey*, and *Bakhtawar* based on true facts and various tribal and feudal customs like *karo kari* and *Bado*. He established a personal rapport with his clients who would then open their hearts to him. He understood their emotional turbulence, their romances, their tribal loyalties overshadowing their compassion and above all the angularities of human relationship. Today, when the winds of free market are blowing away the idealism of the new generations it is bit difficult to reconstruct the picture of times and the ideas which led to the democratic and nationalist uprising of the country and also threw up the ideals which were to be the inspiration for the youth of the subcontinent. By the age of 38, he developed a great commitment to leftist democratic movement and actively participated and experienced the formation and working of NAP, Bazm-e-Sofia-e-Sindh and Sindh Mutehda Muhaz and came to the conclusion that working with Bhutto or G. M. Sayed was nearly impossible. In coming years his disagreement with Z. A. Bhutto on Bengal and Balochistan issue and with G. M. Sayed on his support of feudals and martial law forced him to establish Awami Tahreek (Peoples Movement).

For organizing this first newly born indigenous proletariat party of Sindh he traveled a lot along with few comrades sacrificed everything that he had, his family, friends and professional career. Thereafter, the world saw the emergence of a totally different Sindh imbued with defiance, the role of Awami Tahreek in 1983 movement and Anti Kalabagh struggle not only surprised the Pakistani establishment but whole western media His commitment was rooted in his deep conviction in the principles of democracy and socialism and was partisan to the interests of workers, peasants and the untouchables. His actions came to be based on deeper ideological understanding as he made a major advance in redefining the revolutionary actions. He brought a substantive change in the ideological and political atmosphere of Sindh and almost compelled the political parties to undertake the real issues of rural masses. He would encourage writers to write on economy, progressive literature and above all politics of lower classes and for this purpose he already launched Tahreek a remarkable monthly magazine. Thinking ahead of his times he went on to see the dangers of communal politics. Being thoroughly secular he understood the dangers of fundamentalism and communalism and termed it as dangerous as the colonial rule itself. It should not be surprising that in a way feudal and urban based communal politics was not only promoted by the establishment but also by so called radical and nationalist parties.

He has always been vehemently and emotionally debated and discussed. You may like him, or you may not, but to ignore him is inconceivable. To understand Palijo is to first understand his thought process and consciousness. A highly receptive sensibility, penetrative perception and persuasive eagerness to understand the ethos of the political, social, cultural and economic conflicts in proximity has elevated him from the ordinary individual to the realms of reverence. He has become the voice of suffering humanity and has arisen above petty politics. For undemocratic, fundamentalist and sick minds Palijo is a leftist separatist traitor but for downtrodden and neglected people he is a hero. The feudal stranglehold he says stifles the progress of the country. He talks about the *wadera's* exploitation and the *hari's* perspiration, his message conveys the spiritual unity of all living beings, values he expresses are so universal that everybody can find something in his message, he speaks of the basic equality, dignity of labor, peace for humanity, performance of good and virtuous actions, religious tolerance, hard work, union with the eternal truth through humility and humanity.

Palijo's journey from the Kohistan of Jungshahi to Gadi Khato, Hyderabad and from prisons of Hyderabad, Sukkur, Khairpur, Landhi and Kot Lakhpat to Berlin, London and New York has come full circle. In addition to being a role model for political activists, writers and lawyers fighting against a repressive society, he has proved that he is a hard nut to crack despite being saddled with the near-impossible task of improving the current abysmal standard of political culture, education and commitment. He can be described as a modern day combination of Latif's three characters Dodo, who fought to the death to defend his country and people, Diyach

who gave his head in charity in the name of art and music art and Marvi, the legendary Sindhi heroine who refused to let go identity of her own and of her people.

This restless spirit is a man of the moment, the eternal present who does not dwell on past glories. He is willing to explore hidden facets of her own personality and take on new challenges. He is confident about the new generation of youth and does not agree with the critics who proclaim 'the death of the progressive movement. "The struggle of the oppressed nations and people can never end, even if it does not get immediate results. Its form may change but the struggle never ends, it just cannot. It is society which is being swept by the winds of change. He talks about Sindh with the same timbre that his writings carry. Change will come. Revolutions come in a hundred to two hundred years, if they are not for us then they are for our future generations. Sindh is a country with roots in the Indus Valley Civilization. He believes the ancient wisdom, humanity and tolerance of its culture would ultimately reflect in a committed struggle and long-lasting achievement of the people. Is he a mere spokesman of the 'outdated' ideology of Marxism? As socialist states have withered away it is presumed that there is no relevance of ideas and ideals of those who 'wasted' their dreams on the socialist model of society? Surely in today's scenario where lopsided globalization of the Capital is ruling the roost, one concedes the temporary eclipse of the lofty ideals of socialism and the inability to comprehend the logic of the march of the society towards an egalitarian one. But surely it is as temporary as the earlier dark periods have been. So far as exploitation continues to be the underlying mode of relationship, the socialist ideals will bounce back, sphinx like, to be the savior of the underdogs. Also as if by design, the retrograde politics apparently based on the religion, is surging to the fore. The democratic ethos are on the firing line all around. The poor, marginalized and the exploited have no other hope for the future except the one based on real democracy, on Liberty Equality and Fraternity. And these are precisely the ideas which are under threat from the rising tide of capitalist Religion based politics. We salute Palijo and his friends for the visions and dreams, which they gave us and hope that the present dark phase of capitalist and fundamentalist politics and lopsided globalization will be overcome in due course by the force and logic of social movements.

INSTEAD OF EXILE

It was 15 October 1979, Zia-ul-Haq had been in power for two years and three months, It was a morning like any other except that I had woken up feeling very unwell after spending the night on the floor of the house of my friend and fellow party worker, Hussain Bakhsh, in Larkana. The news which greeted me that morning was a Martial Law proclamation in *Ibrat*, the Hyderabad - Sindhi daily which contained a list of 'absconding criminals who were evading lawful arrest and were ordered to appear before the summary court at Badin in Sindh on 16 October 1979. A number of those listed, belonged to my party, the Awami Tahreek. Husain's name was fifth on the list, mine was the last.

The Awami Tahreek (Sindhi Peoples' Movement) was founded in 1968 (announced on 3-3-70) in Hyderabad as a platform of struggle for genuine democracy, salvation of the exploited working classes, oppressed nationalities and for combating imperialist domination over our country. The peasantry in the province of Sindh to which I and my friends belonged, are among the most oppressed in the world. We concentrated on organizing them and leading them in their struggles against class and national exploitation and oppression. This did not please the Sindhi landlords, mainly the Islamabad bureaucracy, the immigrant manipulators and the establishment who had grabbed the best chunks of peasant land in Sindh. We had stirred a veritable hornets' nest. Instead of the usual token struggles reported in glowing terms by obliging journalists, there began genuine struggles with such leading bodies as "Stop the Land Auction", "Print voter lists in Sindhi" etc.

Zia's regime had me arrested for the first time shortly after the coup in 1977. I was taken to a major who told me he had received information that I was stirring up trouble by complaining that people were being unlawfully dismissed from government service.

I was later brought up before the Deputy Martial Law Administrator, Hyderabad. 'What did you think about the decision in the Bhutto Case?' I said that I did not agree with it and that the people regarded it as a political decision. 'What if the sentence of death passed on Mr. Bhutto, the deposed Prime Minister of Pakistan, was carried out?' There would be an unbridgeable gulf between the Martial Law Administration and the people, especially those of Sindh, I replied. Predictably enough, after these remarks, I was imprisoned first in the Hyderabad Central Jail and then transferred to the jail in Sukkur Both were full of political prisoners with harrowing stories of the atrocities that were being committed by the Martial Law against the people of Sindh.

People were being arrested on such a wide a scale in Sindh that Hyderabad and Sukkur jails were filled to capacity with political prisoners. I presented a petition to the High

Court of Sindh, which at that time still had the power to determine the legality of the detention of political prisoners under the Martial Law Regulations. I conducted my case personally and after numerous hearings the court held my detention to be illegal.

I was released only to be reasserted two days later on the same charges of which I had been exonerated. The only fresh allegation was that I had called for peace with Afghanistan, an amicable settlement with its government and the repatriation of the 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. I challenged that detention before the High Court of Sindh which, after many hearings, once more held my detention to be unlawful. This was around April 1979.

Just five months later I was summoned once more to appear before a Martial law court in October 1979. When I reached the in Badin I was handcuffed and placed in a tent with several other prisoners, all handcuffed. The entire atmosphere was one of fear, as if some foreign enemy had come and taken our land.

On my way from Badin station to the headquarters I had seen some wooden construction being erected in the bazaar. I did not understand their purpose at the time, but then it suddenly came to me. That was the contraption to which prisoners are tied before being flogged. Who was to be flogged and for what?

A policeman came and said he had orders to parade me handcuffed through the main street of Badin. The town knew me as an advocate, as a political leader who had addressed mass rallies. Now, they wanted to make an example of me in Badin by showing that political workers and leaders could be made to walk handcuffed through the streets like criminals.

You play a game with your captors. If you refuse to be humiliated, it frustrates their plan completely. So I behaved as if it was quite normal to be paraded through the streets handcuffed and with a police escort and saluted and called to everyone I knew until a small crowd gathered around me. Suddenly, the policeman no longer thought this was such a good idea.

Let's take our time,' I said, 'the jails won't close.' 'No, let's walk faster,' he replied. Soon the entire town knew that I had been arrested, but the terror they had wanted to inspire in its people was absent.

That evening in the sub-jail of Badin I learnt who the contraption in the centre of the town had been erected for. My friends and comrades in the Awami Tahreek had been flogged. One of them, a boy of twenty, fragile with tuberculosis, and vomiting blood, had come forward to be flogged first. Thousands of people had been collected to watch them pay the price of daring to participate in politics. After being flogged they raised

the sign of regime. Clearly, the punishment had not been severe enough, so the officer and his men, pummeled each of them again for his defiance.

The next day I was taken for a medical examination, in order to determine whether I was fit enough to be flogged. The law stated that a person above forty-five could not be lashed but they were simply obtaining false medical certificates from doctors. The doctor who examined me grew very pale at the thought of signing a certificate that I was young and fit enough to be flogged. He would be despised by the people of Sindh for doing that. Then suddenly my younger son Ayaz Latif arrived from Hyderabad with my passport which showed that I was more than forty-five. From there I was taken to headquarters, handcuffed as before, and produced before a fat, stocky major. 'Had you not become a criminal,' he said, 'you would now be sitting on the chair to which you are entitled as a member of the legal profession. You were fighting for the release of others, now you are handcuffed yourself. Last May, you surreptitiously gathered some 60,000 peasants in Rahoki and spoke against martial law.'

I explained that the Rahoki meeting had not violated any law, it was a peaceful non-political gathering discussing the violation of the economic rights of the people.

'You are a criminal,' the major repeated, 'and I am not going to allow you to speak. If you promise to behave I can recommend mercy for you but if not, you will be jailed again and we will teach you a lesson your coming generations will not forget.'

It then transpired that the senior officer himself would see me. A tall man in his fifties, he told me to sit down, and in a peremptory voice asked, 'What's all this business about rebellion?' I told him there had been no rebellion, there was no secrecy to the peasants' meeting, we simply did not have the money to advertise it in advance. 'Did you preside over the meeting?' I said I had. 'You must understand, the days of rabble-rousing are over. This is martial law; we will take care of everything and soon put you right.'

I was then taken to another major, whose manners were charming. Sit, smoke, tea. He respected brave and honest people. He had a good opinion about the Awami Tahreek. Had I presided over the Rahoki meeting? 'Yes,' I replied, 'I had'; and said that we had called for restoration of democracy and the end of martial law.

'There is no one more interested than us in seeing democracy restored, but the times are bad,' the Major said. 'The Indians are on the border, the Afghans are well within it. I only wish I could do something for you.'

'Could we get on with the trial,' I asked, 'so that I can cross examine the witnesses and convince the court that we have not broken the law?' In fact no specific charges had been supplied to me except that I had violated martial law.

'Let's not get so impatient for a trial,' he said and went away to speak to the senior. He returned saying, 'The matter has been decided, you are sentenced to one year's hard labor and a fine of thirty thousand rupees.'

'But where was the trial?' I protested. 'Why have a trial?' he replied, 'you have already admitted your guilt by saying you presided over the Rahoki meeting.'

'But I never said I had committed a crime. 'We don't go into such niceties, Mr. Palijo, this is a summary trial'. 'But have you forgotten the supreme courts, you must realize their powers of judicial review of martial law action continue to exist.'

'Forget about them; don't compel me to say something less than complimentary about the powers of the courts.'

That night I was taken to the central jail at Hyderabad. In the vocabulary of a political prisoner, moving from a sub-jail to a central jail is a promotion because you have contact with other political workers and politician. Hussain Baksh was there, so was the since martyred, Mohammad Fazil Rahoo who had been arrested and sentenced two days earlier by the same 'court' at Badin.

The court had ordered that I should be kept as a C class prisoner that is the lowest class of convicted criminal. The prison Superintendent, Noor Elahi, who had studied at the same college as me, apologized as he brought me the criminal uniform but insisted that I wear it immediately or the authorities would be very angry. I said there was no question of my being displeased; it was very kind of them to provide me with a uniform so promptly.

The food was maggot-infested meat or *dal*, but mostly it was just dirty water. As I developed stomach ulcers I came to know that the Chief of dealing with the inmates. When he inspected the prisoners he would place his hands on one of them and say, 'this man needs treatment.' This was the code for 'the man is too healthy and should be given a beating.'

There were about ten of us in the ward which subsequently came to be called 'Awami (People's) Ward' after we had stayed there. There were some fifteen others from other organizations. We were determined not to let them break our spirit. We could not write or receive letters and we were locked up at about 5 o'clock every evening. There was a reign of terror in the goal and martial law had given the jail authorities an opportunity to operate with a ruthlessness they would not have dared to employ in civilian days. Corruption was rampant.

We started to tell each other the story of how each one was arrested. When the police could not find the man they wanted, his parents were locked up and beaten by the police.

After a few weeks, I moved a petition before the High Court of Sindh against my illegal sentence. The Superintendent refused to send the petition but after my insistence, and with great hesitation, he agreed. I later found that the Martial Law authorities were very angry that the petition had been sent. I appeared as my own counsel.

There were several hurdles before a case could even be heard. There would first be a *kutch-peshi* which determined whether the petition should be considered for hearing. Since thirty to forty cases were fixed for *kutch-peshi*, the time for the hearing seldom came.

The judges knew what was expected of them under martial law. Occasionally there would be a judge such as Fakhruddin Ebrahim who would be inclined to take particular note of undecided detention cases on his roster and make a deliberate effort to dispose of as many of them as quickly as possible. But normally the three-month detention orders would keep piling up, while one rotted in the cells.

I acted as my own counsel so I would be sitting on the front bench, (as an advocate of the High Court I was entitled to do) handcuffed and in the uniform of the lowest grade criminal. I had been away from the Bar for so long because of my detention that some lawyers would tell me 'Your place is on the last bench; tell your lawyer to speak on your behalf.' Sometimes a judge who did not know me, would look at me and ask, when I stood up to address the court, 'Have you no lawyer?' Subsequently, the handcuffs were removed after the registrar told the police not to dare to bring me handcuffed.

I became severely ill in jail. It was impossible for me to eat. I was in constant pain from stomach ulcers. I became so sensitive to the cold that if I bathed I would immediately fall ill and take a week to recover. I developed a respiratory problem and would ask the policeman on duty to wait before closing the doors of the cell because at the time in the evening it became next to impossible for me to breathe. 'Orders are orders,' he would reply, and as he closed my cell I used to tell myself this might be the end, I might collapse. But you have to take it, there is no other way.

I moved an application for medical treatment. It took a very brave and reckless doctor to admit a political prisoner to hospital. There were prisoners who had gone blind waiting for treatment, people whose legs were so badly infected they were oozing with pus, people with tuberculosis. Their papers lay with the authorities for months and months. It was a slow death.

The chief Justice accepted my application for medical treatment and ordered that I be admitted to hospital. Twenty days passed without anything happening. So I wrote to the chief Justice informing him about the situation. Under orders of the High Court I was admitted and the doctor said that I was seriously ill and should have come in long ago. I was the first time since my arrest that I had seen jail, clean food, However, it was only after four hours that a police escort arrived and told me to get up.

'What for?'

'You have to go back to jail. The martial law authorities are very angry with the doctor who admitted you.'

'It was not the doctor,' I said, 'It was the High Court who ordered it.' 'We know nothing about the High Court.'

They took me back to jail but I refused to enter it and said that if anybody took me forcibly into jail I would proceed against him before the Chief Justice of the High court. 'Martial law may last twenty years but I assure you, that whenever it is lifted you will meet the result of your illegal action in disobeying the explicit orders of the High Court.' The Superintendent, Noor Elahi, said to me. 'Don't you understand, Mr. Palijo; there is no law in the country.' However, I refused to enter so I was taken to a police lock-up and later that night back to the hospital where I remained for twenty days.

At the High Court hearing I argued against my sentence on the grounds that even a summary military court has to follow a procedure and should provide a fair trial. The procedure for such a trial has been laid down in an enactment of the civil legislature. However, the judge came to the conclusion that my non-existent trial was perfectly in order.

So I was shunted off to Khairpur Central Jail, a place notorious for its bad water and intense heat. I was kept in solitary confinement in a cell with no doors or windows, just iron bars. My respiratory problems were severely aggravated by this, so I insisted that I should have a cell-mate who could at least call the doctor when I had an attack.

The jail authorities had perfected a method which I came to know. This was to let one fall ill and remain in jail without any treatment or under bogus treatment. In the meantime a circular correspondence would continue between the doctor and the Superintendent and the Inspector-General of Police and the Home Secretary. When one of the prisoners died, they had reams of paper to prove that they had taken the case seriously.

I have no explanation for my own survival except sheer will-power. I taught myself to forget the pain. I trained myself to forget that I had been awake all night in agony

because of the skin inflammation I had developed in those in-sanitary jail conditions. I could not tell anybody about it; in any case, what could my parents or my friends do? They could not advise me to betray the cause of my oppressed people and they could not help me. they could only worry themselves to death. Even in freedom I have had to work cruelly with my mind to make it forget. The negative side to that is that my memory has been damaged. Eventually my year's sentence ended but then they extended it by three months. they had photocopied copies of the same order which they would simply initial and say, here is your new order. Ultimately they got fed up with the whole routine and assumed I was in jail permanently and asked, 'Why do you need these orders. What are they for? You are here as long as there is martial law. Don't you, as an intelligent man, understand that?'

So I appealed to the High court again. The Martial law authorities were running the whole show themselves but they were pretending that there was a civilian government and a Constitution that civil laws could operate insofar as they had not been set aside. But in fact every little move down to who would be put in which cell was decided by them. The Superintendent, the Home Secretary and for that matter, the senior Minister of the Province were merely players in a farce. Since they did not want the petition to reach the High Court, the Inspector-General and the Home Department began to delay and frustrate it. I then moved a petition calling upon the court to take notice of this as contempt. Fortunately, the matter found its way to one of the judges who was inclined to take serious note of such things. He asked how a sick man came to be in so bad a jail as Khairpur and ordered me back to Hyderabad Central Jail.

While my petition against detention was pending, the Provisional Constitutional Order was promulgated in May 1981 whereby the High Courts and the Supreme Courts no longer had any power to determine the legality of actions under martial law orders. The judges were called upon to swear allegiance to martial law by taking another oath of office which, in my interpretation, implied their accepting martial law as legal. Those who were not administered the oath were, in effect, summarily dismissed. This state of affairs continued until the lifting of martial law in December 1985.

What is more, by a special amendment to the Constitution the power of these superior courts to determine, after the end of martial law, whether actions taken during martial law were illegal and improper was excluded. It was argued that there was thus no redress for what had happened during the martial law period.

I remained in this illegal incarceration until 1986 - that was how often the three-month periods were extended. It is difficult to determine which is the higher price to pay under a dictatorship, the price of participating in politics or that of going into exile. In truth, it is a difficult distinction to make because under detention one is so completely isolated that it is effectively a form of exile-and the physical and mental suffering and torture is immeasurable.

"WHAT WENT WRONG WITH PAKISTAN?"

One of the intriguing "ifs" of Pakistan history is "What would have happened if the founder of Pakistan had not been terminally ill at the day of Pakistan and had not died within a year and a month of its establishment?"

Intellectual Strait-jacket.

To those whom adequate study of the abundant fresh material on the evolution of socio-political thought and action in India in this century, which has become available in recent years, (for instance see "*Legend and Reality*" by H.M. Seervi "*The high politics of India's partition*" by Asim Roy in "*India's Partition*" edited by Mushirul Hassan, "*A History of Freedom Struggle*" by E.M.S. Namboodripad, "*The sole Spokesman, Jinnah....*" by Anita Indersingh, "*Indian's struggled for Independence*" by Bipan Chandra etc.) has liberated from the mental and intellectual straight-jacket of the one-sided and simplistic congress-league - CPP propaganda, whatever the short-comings and sins of omission and commissions of Mohd. Ali Jinnah after and before Partition, including those in such matters relating to the Provinces of Pakistan as endorsement of Liaquat Ali Khan coterie's usurpation of Sindh's sociopolitical, cultural-economic heart, the City of Karachi and the fatal refusal to accept in time Bengali as one of the State languages of Pakistan etc, one thing is absolutely clear about him. He was neither the reactionary religious fanatic of the congress propaganda version nor the modern version of Mohmood Ghaznavi and Ghazi Salahuddin that Muslim League propaganda painted him to be. The other day, on the 8th June 1995, to be exact, I was sitting with Professor Muzaffar Ahmed, President of Bangladesh NAP in his No. 50 Kakrail, Dacca house in Bangladesh. As usual on much occasions, he was questioning me in detail regarding my views about various political questions connected with the sub-continent. This time the subject was the genesis of the current situation of India-Pakistan and Bangladesh.

A man enters the house while we were conversing and spoke to the Professor in English. I noted that his English accent was unlike that common and told him so, later on, when he spoke to me. It transpired that he was a much traveled and a very well-read man. Explaining his English accent, he told me that one of the reasons was that he was fond of Shakespeare and read him aloud. That reminded me. I said "Do you know that a famous Indian Leader was also very fond of the great poet and used often to declaim his poetry." "Yes! I know," he said. "Mr. Jinnah was a unique man." Coming from a Bengali intellectual who was apparently nationalist and secular this statement extremely surprised me and He said "I too, at first, thought him to be only an opportunist, a rank reactionary and a British stooge. But he (Mr. Jinnah) did he had to

do, under the circumstances. He was never a communalist & never advocated theocracy.

No transfer and Burdens of Population envisaged.

No transfer of population was ever suggested or contemplated at any stage of the struggle for Pakistan. In fact the Pakistan Resolution of 1940 itself, which is the founding document of the struggle for Pakistan, does not envisage imposing population burdens upon the constituent Provinces. It does not oblige any Province to accept a single person from any other place including India. Much less does it envisage people having their historical homelands, turned into petty minorities in these very homelands by wholesale population transfers.

Nothing could be clearer on this point than Quaid-e-Azam's Famous historic inaugural speech to the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan's three days before the coming into existence of Pakistan, in which he directed the people of Pakistan to forget, nay, change the bitter past, bury the communal hatchet and treat all Pakistanis as equal citizens of Pakistan, so that the entire story of Hindu-Muslim strife and communal hatred may become a thing of the past.

The self-appointed inheritors and owner of Pakistan.

It is tempting to speculate how, if Mr. Jinnah had lived longer, peremptorily and summarily his no-nonsense nature would have dealt with the pompous pronouncements and arrogant edicts of British Deputy Commissioner's *darbar*-level feudal politicians, deputy and joint Secretary-level bureaucrats, Brigadier level uniformed "statesmen" and the self-proclaimed bearded viceroys of God in fancy beards, who overnight became the owners and masters of Pakistan by "inheritance" as soon as the founder of Pakistan closed his eyes.

An out of order ambulance, a swarm of flies - how Liaquat Ali Khan Coterie abandoned the dying Quaid.

Establishment on a war-Path against people of Pakistan.

Pakistan establishment has been on a war-path against the people of Pakistan from day one of the establishment of Pakistan. The unstated but implied political catechism prescribed by them went on something like this. "Are you a Muslim?" "Yes." "do you believe in Quran as the only word of God and the Supreme Law for Muslims?" "Yes..... and I want a democratic order ensuring my social, political and economic rights and liberties including the right of forming political parties, having a free Press, Fair and free elections in the country, human rights....." Show us where in the Holy Quran are all these things mentioned as required by God for a true believer!"

"But you see in the modern democratic world....."

" in the Holy Quran is the word democracy ever mentioned even in passing? Is the Holy Quran, as it is, not sufficient for you that you are asking for something about which there's not even a single mention in our sacred book".

Rule By Naked Sword, the whip, the dungeon and the fatwa.

In utter disregard, nay contemptuous rejection of the concept of the Quaid-e-Azam about Pakistan as a Human, liberal and democratic modern Muslim State, they dreamed of transforming it into a medieval slave-holders state run by the naked sword, the whip, the dungeons the fatwa of the unscrupulous obscurantist priest close who made the manufacture and sale of pseudo-religions edicts (*fatwas*) as their sole privilege and business-monopoly.

Instead of relying upon the democratic the and creativity of the people of Pakistan and on develop their untapped material resources , they relied upon rule by the iron rod ,by the discredited policy of divided and rule and upon the begging bowl , which last drew foreign comments this: "It is obvious from this approach Pakistan's request of Oct-Nov. 1947) that Pakistan was thinking in terms of the U.S. as a Primary source of military strength and that this would involve virtual U.S. military responsibility for the new dominion. Our reply to this Pakistan request was negative....." (Action taken by U.S. on Pakistan's request of Oct-Nov. 1947 - "*American-Pakistan Relations - Documents* edited by K. Arif p. 9 ")

Basis of Partition - Majority Provinces.

It may be noted here that the official basis of Partition of India and establishment of Pakistan was not that India was divided among Muslims or Hindus population of India, so that all Indian Muslims were meant to live in Pakistan and all Hindus were to live India. It was divided on the basis of majority provinces. Four Muslim majority provinces - Punjab, Bengal, Sindh and Frontier were allowed to form a separate State, which they named Pakistan and seven Hindu majority provinces remained with India. The Hindu population residing in those Muslim majority provinces was to remain there. Similarly the Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces were to continue residing there.

The existence of Hindu and Muslim majority Provinces, the old States, the ancient homelands of the peoples of India were the basic unit of constitutional and political give and take. These provinces occupied the center of the stage in the scheme of the Act of 1935, which started the electoral battles of the thirties and forties in India culminating in Partition with the elections of 1946 and the referendum of 1947. Victories in the

provincial election in 1937 gave Congress the first taste of power and accelerated the face of All-India political struggles. "All power to the majority provinces" was or less the crux of the matter in both the Cripps's offer of 1942 and the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946.

Pakistan Resolution referred to these Muslim majority provinces as would-be sovereign States. Quaid-e-Azam called the future Pakistan as a state and the four Muslim majority provinces as homelands of the people living there since centuries.

"They must have their homelands" Quid.

He said in his presidential address at Lahore in March 1940, during the historic Muslim league session in which the famous Pakistan Resolution was passed, "..... according to British map of India, 4 out of 11 provinces, where the Muslims dominate more or less are functioning.....Musalmans are nation according to any definition of nation and they must have their homelands, their territory and their State....." (The concept of "homeland" regarding above provinces used by Mr. Jinnah has now become anathema to pro-terrorist ideologue like Mr. M.B. Naqvi).

Maulana Azad also referred to these Muslim majority provinces as the guarantee of the security and prosperity of Muslims of India in the future Undivided India. In his presidential address at the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress in Dec. 1940, said "..... in four provinces out of eleven in India there is a Muslim majority, the other religious groups being minorities. If British Baluchistan is added, there are five Provinces with Muslim majorities..... the position of the Muslims is not that of a minority only. If they are in a minority in the seven provinces, are in majority in five."

Sindh - an ancient sovereign state for centuries.

The five Muslim majority provinces of former united India, which formed Pakistan, are the homelands of the Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashtoon, Bengali and Baloch people since centuries and even millennia. For instance Sindh was regarded as a country at par with India by the Arab Geographers in medieval times. It had attained statehood long before such famous states as Russia, England, Germany and France and was represented in the Battle of Maha Bharata by its Raja Jaidrath. It has existed as an state independent of any imperial power for centuries. It was independent when the British conquered it in February 1842 and later designed it as a Province. In all fairness, it became entitled, under international law, to resume its Previous independent states as a sovereign state in August 1947, when the British Raj came to an end.

Along with three other Muslim majority provinces out of the total of level provinces of India, Sindh chose to become a part of Pakistan.

Sindh Targeted for conquest and Subjugation.

As soon as Pakistan was formed however, one of the Muslim majority Provinces, to form Pakistan *viz.* Sindh Muslim majority province of Sindh was made a target for conquest and subjugation by U.P=C.P elite led by Khan Liaquat through planned demographic aggression represented by a flood of Indian, mostly illegal, immigrants directed at Sindh to transform the SINDHI majority into a tiny, obedient minority, to serve the super-civilized Indian immigrant masters and conquerors. First to be robbed from the Sindhi peoples was its most valuable piece of real estate *viz.* the City of Karachi, the capital of the province. Draconian, confiscatory black laws, called the Evacuee Laws, were used as a weapon for usurping Sindhi property worth billions of Rupees and for making them virtual aliens in their own towns and cities.

The illiterate Peasant and the bania.

In Sindh, as elsewhere, illiterate peasants and petty agriculturists used to purchase their daily necessities from the shops of Hindu village merchants. Whenever, the debt accumulated beyond a certain point, the merchant would tell the peasant or petty *abadgar* to go to the Tapedar with him and sign a statement acknowledging that such and such piece of land belonging to him was mortgaged without possession with the bania for such and such a sum. Under the relevant law of the land *viz.* Transfer of property Act and the Registration Act, signing of such statements was just meaningless, as the possession of the pieces of land in question was never handed over and no prescribed sale-deed according to law was executed before the concerned Registrar. The transaction was appropriately called "*Khokho khato*" *i.e.* empty transfer. Lacs of acres of land of peasantry was involved in such empty and meaningless transactions before the Revenue Tapedar without any sanctity in the eyes of the law of the land.

A family arrangement!

The central government, which controlled the operation of Rehabilitation and Evacuee Laws, had so arranged the matters that the establishment which implemented this law was totally dominated by Indian immigrants from top to bottom. One immigrant merely claimed by word of mouth that he had so many gardens, buildings, wheat fields in such and such province. Another immigrant said that the claim was correct. Third immigrant who was the Rehabilitation officer "investigated" and "verified" the claim. If someone wished to challenge the validity of such a claim, he had to go for a favorable decision from a higher official, who in most cases, was himself an Indian immigrant. So, as they say in Sindhi "The cook was the grandmother and those who ate the food were the grand children." It became an internal community affair. Property worth billions of Rupees which in law never belonged to Hindus and was lawfully owned and possessed by Sindhi Muslims, was overnight declared by such "family arrangement" as Hindu property and hence, further, a booty to be divided among the community and then sold

at fancy prices, not to one, but to more than one, two, and sometimes even three, four different purchasers, who then went on fighting in law courts for the same property for generations. The seller just vanished from the scene after collecting the amounts from all the duped purchasers.

The First Generation of Terrorists.

I cannot forget some of my encounters as an advocate with the immigrant officials who were supposed to be performing "Judicial" functions. One noted C.S.P. bureaucrats who terrorized Tharparker District for a number of years, as Deputy commissioner and who became a big Rehabilitation authority at Hyderabad, was sitting in the super store of the present sessions Court, Hyderabad, I went to him and stood before him for quite some minutes. He did not deign to look at me. Ultimately, I had to open my lips and say "Sir! I Wish to present my appeal. This is the last day. There is no one in the office of receive it." "What is your name? A told him "On whose behalf are you filing the appeal?" "On behalf of a poor peasant." "Appeal dismissed." He declared. "I was flabbergasted. I had no such experience before any other authority in my whole life of the profession. I took courage in my both hands and submitted humbly, "But sir, you haven't yet seen the memo of appeal and then I have to argue it." he extended his hand stiffly, half-snatched the application from my hand, noted something upon it and threw it into the waste paper basket, Lying under the table and said "Next case!". Later in the day, I read the noting in the office "Heard Advocate. No merit. Rejected." On another occasion nice-looking slim, officer with glasses heard me patiently for three four minutes in his office in saddar barracks at Karachi. I argues about the requirements of law for making a Muslim property a Hindu property and hence an evacuee property under the Transfer of Property Act, Registration Act and the relevant Evacuee Laws. While I was in the midst of my submissions, he looked at me intently and pointing to the wall behind me, said in a very measured, deliberate voice "Do you see that wall?" I said "Yes Sir!" "Go and strike your head against it! appeal dismissed!" Now that I recall these experiences I realize that these bureaucrats were the first generation of terrorists. They wielded the Law and the pen as weapons for their terroristic rampages.

A Regular Loot and plunder - A Racket of the Century.

For the type of officer law, propriety, fair, play meant less than nothing. They considered it below their dignity to evince anything but contempt for the law, justice and fair-play. They enjoyed parading their lawlessness and arbitrariness, free from all ethical, moral and level restraints. They had just conquered Sindh and Sindhi people and wanted everyone to know it.

It was a regular loot and plunder which went on for many decades, a racket of the century.

This whole crowd (the bogus ex-owners of fictitious gardens and palaces, left behind in India, battalions of regular "Witnesses" and "verifiers", the swarms of touts and *sifarishis*, the gangs of looters and robbers posing as upholders of law, fair-play and good conscience tall) robbed thousands of poor Sindhi people of their properties, lands businesses, even the graveyards of their fore-fathers and threw them out of urban centers of Sindh. In due course of time, some of our dear Indian immigrant guests from across the border, many of them illegal immigrants, have begun to claim not just one or a few properties but whole towns and cities of Sindh as their sovereign domain with the powers of life and death by horrible tortures and racial cleansing.

Criminalized politics - A Bunch of Moneys with swords In Hands.

Politics has been criminalized from day one in Pakistan. As if a bunch of monkeys have somehow got hold of swords and are striking at everything within their sight. Ethical, moral, social and political standards, legal and constitutional limitations, considerations of patriotism, of safety and welfare of the state and society, norms of self-respect and decency nothing has been spared.

A state at war with its people.

The state of Pakistan has been at war with and within itself these last 48 years of its existence its protective institutions charge cores of Rupees annually only to destabilize their own society and governments! The organs and agencies of state spend crores of their huge share of the national budget to enlist, train and operate cutthroats, gangsters, hooligans mass-murderers and torturers to sow confusion, despondency and terror in the hearts of the loyal and peaceful subjects of the state, whom it is their sacred and bounden duty to protect and cherish! The shepherds have taken on the roles of the wolf-breeders. This is over and above the cruel sufferings and calamities, the civil and military dictatorships have been themselves imposing upon the people during the last half a century.

A Matter of faith and geo-politics.

I firmly believe as a matter of faith based upon sound reason and a sense of geopolitics and history that the countries of *Al-Sindh* (now Pakistan) and *Al-Hind* (Now Bharat) are sisters and their peoples are brothers, despite the rich variety of our faiths and sub-cultures. We complement each other just as other neighboring countries like France and England do.

I also believe that short-sightedness and foul play is not the monopoly of any one of over two neighboring countries. We have no dearth of problems requiring urgent solutions. We have not a penny in excess of our immediate requirements to spend on perfecting the war machines for killing and maiming our brothers and sisters and our

children and parents. We do not have any real need to spend our meager resources for enlisting and training terrorists to torture innocent people living across our borders. Common sense, restraint, mutual accommodation and understanding, magnanimity of heart and mind and a realistic appraisal of our mutual possibilities and limitations are the only course of action realistically available to us. Amity and peace, not strife and war point the way out of the present impasse.

The Country in real danger from within and without.

I Also believe that thanks to the criminal misdeeds of our establishment during the last 50 years. Pakistan in real danger from within and without as it has never been before. I do not believe that it is in the real, long-term interests of the majority of our working masses and the democracy-loving people that the present crisis should be allowed to take its own course and become worse. It is high time that our thinking and conceptions pro-people forces awaken the people from their present state of apathy and despondency and persuade them to take up their destiny in their own hands and compel the powers that be, to resist from continuing with the irresponsible, course of action, they have hitherto been following.

As far as the vociferous pro-terrorist intelligentsia of Sindh is concerned, would like humbly to submit before them:

If you really believe.

If you really believe that through the torrent of media propaganda you can persuade the world at large that terrorism, torture by drilling machines, skinning fellow human beings alive etc. is a civilized democratic and legitimate mode of protest against perceived lack of perceived rights, deserving sympathy and support of civilized men and women, and if you think that by this kind of attitude of establishment and terrorists Sindh will become a colony of establishment and mostly illegal Indian immigrants, to be ruled through drilling machines, torture cells etc. You are welcome to your fantasies and day-dreams.

But if you really believe such a thing as that terrorism is the only course now left open to our Urdu-speaking brothers and sisters in Pakistan, I would humbly like to disagree. Most of us need peace to work, to study, to love.

After all we are all human beings. We are not all criminals, who can do nothing other than brutally kill and maim and mutilate fellow-human beings. Most of us are poor people who have to earn a meal or two for our children. Most of us need peace to work, to study, to live, to marry, to sing, to dance, to live like human beings with our share of pains and pleasures. Pursuing wild dreams of conquest, supremacy, hegemony, brutal power, enslavement of fellow human-beings, are to the only courses left to enterprising

and spirited men and women. Fellow-ship, mutual help and cooperation in peace and amity offer more job-satisfaction and rewards than running drilling machines and torture cells. Sindh will never bow down before any would-be Nadir Shah, Hitler or Mussolini, but Sindh's arms are open for all who approach it in peace and filial love.

To all our brothers and sisters speaking various languages including Sindhi, Punjabi, Urdu etc. I would like humbly and sincerely to say:

"Our brothers did not give birth to us to live in constant necessity of either killing some other human beings or being in constant danger of being killed. Let us refuse to remain prisoners behind the dark dungeons of hatred and violence. Let us look at the sun, the moon, the flowers, the flowing water, the eyes of the beloved and the loss of children. Let us recognize one another as what we really are fellow human-beings, compatriots, brothers and sisters. Why can we not differ stoutly without falling prey to brutal violence? Why can we not disagree and argue without endangering our lives and the lives of our loved ones?

Grievances against the Government, the State and the System.

As far as grievances, thousands of us have passed the best years of our lives in jails, during almost continuously in prison during both the Bhutto and Zia regimes. I have given no less than ten best years of my life to the worst prisons of Pakistan. I can never forget that injustice.

Almost every honest and working man and woman has serious grievances from the governments and establishment and socio-political system of our country.

It is only through exchanging our views and joining our hands in peace and friendship and struggling together that we can lessen the pains and sufferings of our lives.

I can assure you that the majority of the laboring masses of the people of Sindh are ready to embrace and clasp the hand of any and every one of his compatriots who is ready and willing to march forward with them on the path of a peaceful and democratic struggle for a better and fully satisfying life for all of us not excluding any one and including those who abandon the path of violence and strife and take the high road of unity of all oppressed and deprived people, of happiness for all people.

Why not give peace a chance for a change.

We are witnessing the wages of hypocrisy, hatred, violence, crime and terror. For once, for a change why not give sincerity, amity, peace, cooperation and joint peaceful democratic struggle for the rights of all our brothers and sisters a chance.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE

Iqbal Ahmed's article in the "*Dawn*" of 27th September 1992 entitled "The question of right" regarding frontier post's seminar "Resettlement of Beharis" held at Lahore on 20th of September 1992 needs some comment.

Truth is generally many sided and complex. One sided over simplification distorts its balance and transforms it into a falsehood. this fact is known to the human race since sources of centuries. "Every truth has two sides. It is well to look at both before we commit ourselves to either" (Aesop 6th B.C., "the Mule" fables. The American writer Henry ward Beecher was saying the same thing in the last century (1887) in different words "Pushing any truth out very far, you are met by a counter truth". The problem created by the demand for giving Pakistani citizenship to Lacs of Beharis and for bringing them to Pakistan is a grave multi-dimensional and complex national problem. Mr. Iqbal Ahmed has chosen to reduce it to a simplistic and legalistic question of the so-called "Right of Citizenship".

He chooses to ignore the most important aspects of the multi-faceted issue. For instance:

1- Grant of Pakistani citizenship to lacs of Beharis is a matter of concern not only to the government of the day but is a question of a grave national importance of historical proportions, being at the same time a question of life and death for over a crore of Pakistanis belonging to one of the four remaining founding peoples of Pakistan the Sindhis.

2- This earth is not just a no man's land and abandoned wilderness. The land, water and sub soil resources of the earth are not inexhaustible or ownerless. These are there simply because they have been possessed, protected and developed by individuals, communities, peoples and nations. Sizable number of people cannot go from one territory to another and take a share of its resources without reducing the share of those who are there since centuries with nowhere else to go and no other resource to share. One of the forms of uprooting historical owners of territories of the earth has been mass migrations of People complaining of being uprooted from their own historical homelands by more powerful neighbor as in the case of Arghoons, the Huns, the Scythians, the Aryans and the Mangols who begun as the invaded and the uprooted only to become the invaders and uprooters of others.

3- Sindh has just so much quality and quantity of resources which are less than sufficient for its own people who have been living here for over a score of

centuries and have been protecting, developing and preserving these meager resources with their sweat and blood during all these hard and merciless millennia.

4- The mass migration of Indian Muslims after the establishment of Pakistan to Sindh has already taken away a sizable chunk of Sindhi Peoples' historical national resources, reduced their percentage of the total of the population of the province and consequently their effectiveness as the owners of their historical homeland Sindh.

5- The People of Sindh did not play the prominent role in the formation of Pakistan order to be reduced to a minority and the status of third rate citizens in their 5000 year old own home-land and to become silent spectators of the plunder by all and sundry of its resources which they have defended throughout history against all comers the Greeks, the Arabs, the Arghoons, the Mughals and the British in order to retain them for themselves and their children as a national heritage and as their historical share of a slice of this good earth.

6- The Pakistan resolution which is the Political foundation stone of the struggle for Pakistan did not envisage putting of enormous Population burdens on and reduction of the economic Political and demographic status of the People who had volunteered to become parts of Pakistan. It may not be out of place to note that Sindhi people were the only People of those who eventually become Pakistani Peoples to have passed a resolution through their provincial Assembly in favor of the formation of Pakistan and in favor of their province becoming a part of Pakistan.

7- No people in the world including Biharis have any vested or moral right to go on changing their places of residence like shirts every other day at their sweat will, to go on abusing the hospitality of one people and thrusting themselves upon another whenever they like. They have had their choice after leaving Bihar, their birth place. They have had their chance to live in their new Bengali home in fraternity with their peaceful brothers, the Bengalis but for whose strong sense of religions solidarity, Idealism and valiant struggle for a separate Muslim home land in the sub-continent, Pakistan could never have come into being. That they failed to live or rather chose not to live with their Bengali Muslim brothers in peace and chose to help burn down their chosen homeland in fire and blood is not the fault of anyone else much less of the Sindhis so as to make them liable for the punishment of having a heap of human burning coals, which had already helped burn down half of Pakistan, to be thrown upon their already burning cottage.

8- To describe a person who has probably been born at or has at least passed the major part of his life at a place as being stranded at that place of his birth and breeding, residence and work would be the height of misrepresentation. Beharis have never seen what now Pakistan is; they have never set their foot on the soil of present Pakistan. They continue to live where they have always lived after the establishment of Pakistan and where a great number of them were born. How and where a great number of them were born. How and with what degree of justice can we arbitrarily invest such people with the title of "Pakistanis" and "Stranded Pakistanis" at that, defies imagination. Surely for being "Stranded" away from a place you must first have been there, at that place. To be "Stranded" away from what is now Pakistan, you must first have been living in what is now Pakistan must have gone out of it for short while for some temporary work, business or pleasure, must have suddenly and unexpectedly been help up there and become unable to return to your original place of residence in the present Pakistan, say Ghara, Toba Tek Singh, Karachi or Peshawar. May one venture to ask when and from which place of present Pakistan have these our Behari Islamic brothers gone to Bangladesh and then suddenly have become "Stranded" there and thus have become entitled to the oft-repeated title of "stranded" Pakistanis.

9- One may repeat an untruth a million time from the house tops but it remain an untruth. Yes, someone did say "the great masses of the people will more easily fall a victim to a big lie than to a small one". And yes, we are not very unlike the Americans about whom Edgar Watson used to say in the beginning of this century that they "detest all lies except lies spoken in public or printed lies". But surely men of conscience are expected not to forget what Aristotle told humanity more than a score of centuries back "Repetition does not transform a lie into a truth". Let us face it. The Beharis are neither Pakistanis nor "Stranded" out anywhere but continue to live at the same place where many of them have been born and bred and where most of them have passed the major part of their lives.

10- Without prejudice to what has been submitted above, there is yet another aspect of the question that too needs to be carefully considered. Everyone knows that a number of both Urdu-speaking and Bengali-speaking people in East Pakistan were supporters of General Yahya Khan's disastrous military action against the people of former East Pakistan. Everyone knows that whatever the reason, lacs of Bengali-speaking people of Bangladesh prefer residing in Pakistan to continue living in Bangladesh. In fact lacs of Bengalis have already reached Pakistan illegally and are living and working here and are demanding the right of citizenship and full civil rights and facilities as Pakistani citizens, declaring like Beharis, their condemnation of the formation of Bangladesh and their support of General Yahya's action and their love for Pakistan.

11- Islam does not permit unjustified discrimination between Muslims on the basis of tribal or linguistic differences among Muslims.

12- If we say that we are giving, Pakistani citizenship to Beharis and settling them in Pakistan because they are Muslims, because they supported General Yahya Khan's military action, because they have refused to live in the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh and because they want to be settled in Pakistan, then surely we who have been talking so loudly, glibly and exuberantly about Islam, Islamic brother-hood etc, cannot and should not be allowed to say that we are going to discriminate between those Muslims who speak Urdu and those who do not when both groups have the same credentials *viz* opposition to formation of Bangladesh, support to general Yahya's disastrous Military action, professions of love and support for Pakistan and the desire to be settled in Pakistan. If we don't wish to discriminate between one Muslim resident of former East Pakistan and another on basis of language, we have no moral or legal basis of language, we have no moral or legal justification to refuse Pakistani citizen-ship to anyone who professes as much vociferous love for Pakistan, as much support for General Yahya Khan's military action and as much condemnation of the formation of Bangladesh as any Behari or any of his Pakistan supporters.

13- In that case we will have to give Pakistani citizen-ship to and accommodate at least over a crore of people from Bangladesh crippling our sociopolitical-economic fabric forever.

14- Once a person is given the status of a Pakistani citizen there is no legal or constitutional justification or mechanism for restraining him from going and settling wherever he likes in the country. Experience shows that one immigrants legally or illegally come to Pakistan, they have always converged on Sindh causing torment and destruction to the People of Sindh in the form of over-strain on their already exhausted meager resources, economic stagnation and decline, increased lawlessness, insecurity, ethnic terrors and resulting Socio-politico-economy paralysis.

15- No government of Pakistan or another federative state has the moral or political right to take any decisions which are bound to result in threatening the very historical existence of the peoples but for those willing and ardent participation, the country could not have come into being.

16- I wish that instead of raising the question of citizen-ship in isolation to the pedestal of the super-god in utter disregard of all relevant historical, political, social and economic principles and considerations, people like Mr. Iqbal Ahmed would condescend to throw a glance at other relevant aspects of this grave and

complex matter including the threatened extinction of people who are the inheritors of one of the oldest civilizations of mankind i.e. the civilization of Mohan-jo-Daro and whose only fault is that they believed and had faith in a Pakistan in which no injustice will be done to any individual or any people, where all prosper in peace under just laws, and advance towards a bright future for themselves and their progeny.

I wish Mr. Iqbal Ahmed in his great wisdom and generosity of spirit which he has been extending in some recesses of his noble heart a little, ever so little a bit of pity for the Sindhi people also who feel betrayed, oppressed and tormented and find themselves at the verge of extinction as a historical social entity, in short a threatened social specie. Let us bear in mind the immortal words of the Italian Patriot Guiseppe Mazzini, "To be mistaken is a misfortune to be pitied but to know the truth and not to conform one's actions to it, is a crime which Heaven and Earth condemn."

ON GETTING RID OF EVIL TRADITIONS

It is always rewarding to read what one is deeply interested in, especially when written by those who are supposed to know what they are writing about.

The man on the horse-back has always been an object of curiosity, wonder and admiration for lesser mortals.

The writings of world renowned generals like sun Zu, Julius caesar, Babar, Napoleon, Rommel, Zhukov, Mao Tse Tung, and Giap have fascinated readers throughout the ages.

In Pakistan Ayub Khan, whatever else he was or was not, was a man of (good, bad, indifferent, whatever) ideas. He was also a man of what he regarded as (again good,, bad r indifferent, whatever) principles. He liked to articulate both.

"*Friends not masters*" was one result. More would be known about his thinking if and when his diary is published.

The debacle of East Pakistan shocked the nation as never before.

The impossible had happened. The "Cowardly Bania" had dared to compel our ever-victorious "*ghaziz*", the descendants of Khalid-Bin-Walid, Sultan Mohammad Ghaznavi, Taimoor, Mohammad the conqueror and Ahmed Shah Abdali to eat dust.

Some on simply had to explain. And a whole galaxy of our generals valiantly stepped forward to face the displaying varying degrees of professional capability intellectual range and moral courage and integrity.

The opening volley, however, was fired by a officer of a humbler rank.

It was major Siddik Salik's "*Witness to surrender*" which opened the pandora box and put everyone concerned on notice. Maj: Gen: (R) Fazal Muqeem Khan's "*Pakistan's Crisis In Leadership*" Maj. Gen: (R) Rao Farman Ali Khan's "*How Pakistan Got Divided*", Major Gen: (R) Tajamul Hussain Malik's "*The Story of My Struggle*", Ltd. Gen: (R) Kamal Matiuddin's "*Tragedy of Errors*", Ltd: Gen: (R) Gul Hassan Khan's "*Memoirs*" and Lt: Gen: A.K. Niazi's Urdu Book "*Main Ne Hathiar Nahin Dale*" (I did not surrender?) throw enough light on the affair to enable relatively more unbiased minds to piece together a more coherent and objective picture of what actually happened. They would do well to consult among other books "*Separation of East Pakistan*" by Hassan Zaheer which is perhaps a more wide ranging, balanced, thought provoking and scholarly work on the subject than any

other work on the subject written up to now. For the political back-ground Altaf Gohar's "*Ayub Khan*" would be found to the indispensable.

Articles in newspapers by writers belonging to the armed forces are read with keen interest. I have had the good fortune to read articles by Air Marshal (R) Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Gen (R) Khalid Mahmood Arif and others and I found them informative and thought-provoking.

So when I saw in today's (8th Nov. 94) "*Dawn*" an article by Gen: (R) Khalid Mahmood Arif entitled "*Hallowed Traditions to Preserve*", I read it with interest. I dealt with important matters affecting our fellow-Citizens in the defence services.

Who in Pakistan does not envy, if not fear, the military man? For most of us, the Pakistan military is represented either by "Chief-Martial Law Administrator type of awe inspiring Generals or by all powerful colonels and Majors running the military "COURTS" or by those who more or less "OWN" huge semi-autonomous, bodies, corporations and embassies after retirement or even before and rule over their fiefs and humble subjects like the famous *Nawabas* and *jagirdars* of the good old Mughal days.

In most cases it never occurs to us that a military establishment simply could not consist entirely of Chief Martial Law Administrators or for the matter, of mighty Martial Law Majors whose powers of life and death have during the greater part of Pakistan's history exceeded and superseded those of the highest courts of the country including the Supreme Court itself.

Obviously there are times, how so ever brief and transitory, in our beloved country, when there is neither Martial Law nor Martial Law Administrators or "Courts". And then, Martial Law or no Martial Law, there are always lakhs of ordinary soldiers with fixed pay and growing children and liabilities who dread the prospect of a too early retirement and that of having to live on a pittance for a pension, the real value of which gets less and less with growing inflation. If someone connected with government service needs relief more than anyone else, it is the poor pensioner. It is beyond comprehension, therefore, why pay and pension committee report 1994 has not been made applicable to the pensioners, as printed but by General Khalid Mahmood Arif in this article.

Another point to which the worthy General has pointed, is equally important. The humblest government employee has a right to know the actual date of his retirement much before the fateful day. That the Service Chiefs are entitled to this knowledge goes without saying. everyone will agree with General Khalid Mahmood Arif that the need for extending such a courtesy to the Service Chiefs is greater as they have to visit formations and troops to say good-bye to their commands".

Further on, he makes a point of even greater importance and wider applicability. "Needless to say that the retirement of service chiefs with Visible dignity (*italics mine*), promotes confidence of the troops in their commanders and of the people in the defence services....."

He laments "Strangely this tradition is not well followed in the country". This lament will find an echo in more hearts than perhaps even the good general himself may imagine.

For, "retirement with dignity" is the right, not only of service chiefs but of all public officials including the superiors of the Service Chiefs *viz* the Supreme Commander of Armed Forces/President of Pakistan and the Head of the Government of Pakistan/Prime Minister of Pakistan. It is, therefore, incumbent upon all concerned and responsible, that all public officials both in the civil and defence service are enabled to retire with "Visible dignity", so that confidence in national institutions is promoted.

That, as observed with sorrow by General Arif, "this tradition is not well followed in this country" is a fact too obvious to need any greater proof than a mere look at our history of nearly half a century.

Few of our Governor Generals/Presidents/Supreme Commanders of Armed Forces, Heads of Government /Prime Ministers, Chief Justice and Judges of the Superior Courts and Service chiefs have been enabled/allowed to retire from public service with any dignity whether visible or invisible.

The father of the nation, the great Quaid and the First governor General and Supreme Commander of the armed forces of Pakistan was allowed to lie dying on the road-side near Mauripur in a disgraceful and undignified condition with a broken down ambulance and two old ladies by his side. The first Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan was allowed to be murdered without any trace to this day of any investigation worth the name. His colleagues were found to be too busy distributing top jobs among themselves to find time to attend to matters relating to his burial. The second Prime Minister of the country, Khwaja Nazim-u-din, was sent packing without a moment's notice by Governor General Ghulam Mohammad who himself was thrown out of office in a state of semi-madness, uttering filthy abuses to all and sundry.

"the Governor General was lying in his bed room..... He was..... emitting volleys of abuse Choudhri Muhammad Ali ventured to say something and received a volley; then Iskandar Mirza said something and got another", (*'Friends not masters'* by Mohamamd Ayub Khan, P. 52).

Behind these mad and abusive bureaucrats stood the Army chief and it was he actually, who was calling the tune in Pakistan at the time "Ayub Khan was now recognized as the man behind the throne" ("*Ayub Khan*" by Altaf Gouhar P. 96).

Iskandar Mirza followed Ghulam Mohammad and a whole bunch of Prime Ministers was brought in and kicked out in disgrace till it was the turn of the Supreme Commander of the Pakistan Armed Forces. president of Pakistan, major General Iskandar Mirza himself to be booted out by his subordinate General Ayub Khan whom he, more than anyone else, had helped to become the Army Chief. "Brigadier Nawazish went to Mirza's bedrooms and knocked on the door..... As he entered the room Mirza said, "You know that has happened now" Begum Mirza.... walked upto Brigadier Nawazish and said "Is this what we deserve?"..... The President's house was surrounded by the army, the whole operation was under the control of Brigadier Bahadur Sher who was going around with a Pistol in his hand" ("*Ayub Khan*" by Altaf Gouhar, P. 154 - 155). Nor was the self appointed field Martial allowed to "retire with dignity" by his own subordinate generals.

"There he (information Secretary) found Yahya and three of his generals, Hameed Peerzada and Gul Hassan huddled around the radio set, listening to Ayub's broadcast (handing over power to General Yahya.) They looked like a bunch of thieves bending over the booty and were a little startled as if caught red, handed. "*Ayub Khan* by Altaf Gouhar" P. 477 - 478).

"Ayub Khan expected to stay in the President's house for three months and to retain his personal staff.... every morning Yahya and his staff officers would pass by the house and find the old man sitting on the lawn. His presence was a constant reminder of their crime (General) Peerzada conveyed it to Ayub that his presence was causing annoyance to the people and it was in his interest to leave..... Ayub came out of the house and walked towards the car looking lonely and abandoned. On his Sculptured face the dark lines of emotional stress were deeply engraved ("*Ayub Khan*" by Altaf Gouhar P. 481-482).

If a former Service Chief is to be believed, and there is no reason why he should not be, General Yahya's exit would have been even much more undignified and disastrous for Pakistan than it actually was, if what appeared to be an extremely sinister plot in offing, had not been foiled in time.

It appears that 3-days after the ignominious surrender at Dhaka an 16th December 1971, General Yahya had, on 19th December 1971, sent a plane to Rome to fetch Mr. Bhutto for the transfer of power to elected representatives. But had things worked the way some generals of General Yahya's staff, led by the chief of staff of the Army, appear to have been planning, what Mr. Bhutto received would have been something quite different from a guard of honor and the transfer of power he was supposed the receive.

It would be better to let Lt. General Gul Hassan himself tell his story of that dangerous plot on that fateful day:

"Around 2300 hours, I was thinking of packing up and going home, when I was informed that Brigadier Ghulam Mohammad wished to see me urgently.... He was then commanding our Special Service Group (SSG), the equivalent of commandos.... he was not quite his usual self..... He came out with a startling revelation to which I would not have readily attached credence had the person conveying it not been G.M. He said: 'About an hour ago I was sent for by the QMG, General Mitha... he wished a company of the SSG moved to Rawalpindi as soon as possible for the protection of the President, COS, and GHQ.... He then casually put in that the COS was aware of the matter and had under Scored its urgency. So I should instruct the company commander to report to him for directions. I regretted the unless sanctioned by the CGS, no SSG personnel could be moved. He cast a stern gaze at me and I decided that before any unpleasantness set in, I should leave.'

"I told GM he had done exactly what I would have, had I been in his place. Firstly, I, the CGS, knew nothing about the requirement. Two, I did not see the need for SSG to be employed to protect the personages in question, who were adequately guarded as it was. GHQ by no stretch of imagination required such highly specialized security. If he received any more such Summons from anyone, he should come to me first. At this, GM left my office, Somewhat relieved General Mitha had raised the SSG when we became the recipients of US military aid in the fifties, and he regarded himself as the father figure of that unit. GM had served under him. Mitha was a shrewd man.... He was on intimate terms with General Hammed and invariably referred to him as "Han".....

"After our meeting with the President earlier that evening, the COS, as was his wont, met with his cronies, Mitha being the linchpin in that congregation. This august gathering was aware that a drastic change was in the offing. Bhutto, after the completion of his mission to the UN, had reached Rome, from where he had called Mustafa Khar (Later Governor of the Punjab) asking whether it was safe for him to return to Pakistan. Khar had contacted Air Marshal Rahim Khan, who in turn conveyed the message to the President. The latter instructed the Air Marshal to dispatch a PIA plane to fetch Bhutto. This development was known to the COS but I came to know of it from the Air Marshal some days later. I do not know what role was contemplated for the SSG in Rawalpindi but I can state categorically that the one purpose it was not intended for was to furnish a guard of honor to Bhutto at the airport. Had this drama been staged, it would have smacked of a reenactment of our military action in Dhaka, whether the President was a pray to his design, I am in no position to say.

General Mitha, with his potent credentials, was the obvious choice to set this plot in train he was a confident of the COS and, because of his past association with the SSG, it

was hopefully envisaged that the CGS could be circumvented. However, whatever was in store for us was averted because GM did not succumb to intimidation.

19 December 1971 was indeed a day that I will never forget it was the worst I had ever experienced in all my long service. The discipline in the Army was on the verge of snapping and the repugnant odor of anarchy was in the air. The climate was all the more awesome because there would have been no authority to arrest the rot, should it have set in. The induction of a company of the SSG, by no stretch of imagination for a Samaritan role, was a move so reckless that, had it materialized, it could have dispatched the country into oblivion. It would also have been a befitting final to Mrs. Gandhi's act to restore, all the joy to Pandit Nehru's heart. (*"Memoirs"* by Lt. General (R) Gul Hassan P 343 - 345), commented upon by General Khalid Mahmood Arif himself. What remains to be recalled and noted in this context of maintaining the dignity of high public officials and institutions is the mode of "retirement" of Presidents Ziaul-Haque and Mohammad Ishaque Khan and Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Mohammad Khan Junejo, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Mohammad Nawaz Sharif. How some of the Chief Justices and Justices of our Superior Courts, the other pillar of our state, have been "retired with dignity" is a long and painful story.

The institution that has been at the top of the power structure of Pakistan most of the time and in its wings all the time, is that of the armed forces which is supposed to be the most disciplined, the most patriotic, the most dedicated, selfless and high minded institution at the disposal of the country. What we have so far accomplished or not accomplished in all fields of national endeavor, including that of the maintaining the dignity of our highest public officials and national institutions, during the last half a century, has been done, mainly under the leadership and the guidance of this our topmost and all powerful national institution, with of course, ample and indispensable help from our worthy 'Patriotic' Politicians, our incorruptible political workers, our 'God-Loving' and 'God Fearing' Moulanas, our wise and valiant intellectuals, our 'dedicated public servants, our 'independent-minded' press, our 'enlightened' public and our noble foreign 'well-wishers' and patrons.

Let us see whether we can prevent the situation from getting worse or hopefully, even improve it bit by bit, through our collective efforts in all fields of national concern.

But before we can do anything in this regard. We shall have to muster up the courage to get ourselves rid of our unholy tradition of national self-delusion, self-righteousness and cynicism and make a fresh by calling a spade, a spade and facing the objective realities.

11th SEPTEMBER TRAGEDY:

PERSPECTIVES AND PORTENDS

The broad masses of the people of Pakistan joined the rest of the civilized world in their deepest sense of shock and grief at the horrible tragedy inflicted upon thousands of innocent people of United States and some other countries on 11th September 2001. It is widely believed that such crimes against humanity cannot be justified by any alleged previous crimes of a similar or even worse nature and dimension. The people of the third world countries including those of Pakistan, who have suffered centuries of countless terrorist crimes, in the course of the rule of local tyrants and successive series of foreign aggression and occupation, in all their brutal manifestations, *e.g.* (to mention only a few recent ones) in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in (Japan), massacres in Indonesia, in Mai Lai in Vietnam, in Palestinian refugee camps Sabra and Shatila (Lebanon) and the ongoing bombing and starving of Iraq and Zionist fundamentalist revivalist terror in Palestine, abhor all forms of terror against innocent and helpless groups, communities, peoples, states and countries under any allegedly lofty and noble covers *e.g.* exigencies of war, of restoring law and order, protecting liberty and the free world or promoting a civilizational or super-religious holy mission etc.

While thus rejecting any and all justifications for terror under any color or pretext whatever, people of the third world and for that matter, of the whole civilized world, cannot shut their eyes and pretend to be unaware of the facts, that those vociferously proclaiming today their horror of terror and calling for waging a holy war for saving human civilization, happen to be representatives of exactly those forces which have been practicing, instigating and masterminding terrorist crimes across the four corners of the globe, against innumerable poor and defenseless societies, involving looting, plundering, murdering, enslaving and de-humanizing of entire countries and continents of this, our un happy earth, either directly or through using and patronizing such fiends, again to mention only a few recent ones, as Hitlers, Mussolinis, Francos, Salazars, Pinoches, Marcoses, Sohartos and Ariel Sharons, etc. The vast majority of humanity today continues to bear the scars of such international terrorism.

Nor can it be forgotten that many of those alleged to be involved in terrorism now, are known to belong to those groups which were enlisted, trained, armed, financed and unleashed by imperialism for heinous acts similar in nature to those, which they have allegedly perpetrated now, under the very same cover *viz* religious extremism which has allegedly been used in the inhuman tragedy of 11th September.

Universal contradiction, motion and change, unity and struggle of opposites, growth and transformation, passing away, replacement and renewal are some of the laws of the

development of this our wonderful universe of systems in which, according to the science of universe, nothing is unconditional, permanent, unchangeable or absolute as everything and phenomenon is changeable and in permanent flux.

Allama Iqbal has referred to this phenomena in many of his immortal couplets:-

*Spirit of the west is commercial,
That of the East is hermetic,
There every second is different and new,
Here Time stands still.*

*Don't measure it with the measures
Of today and tomorrow,
Life is eternal, constantly moving,
Ever young.*

*The stars are old, the heavens outworn,
A growing world in its early youth,
Is what I want.*

*Never at all impossible that a way farer,
May at some point tell his guide,
" Please leave me alone!"*

Humanity has grievously suffered at the hands of dogmatic interpretations of the belief systems leading to intra-religious and inter-religious wars throughout world history, which caused the maimings and killings of billions of innocent human beings and ruined entire countries and civilizations.

Defying the dead dogma, enlightened and wise leaders of the Muslim world, throughout history, like Salahuddin the great, Akbar the great, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Mustafa Kamal Pasha, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, , Jamal Abdul Nasser, Abdul Rahim Sukarno and others, instead of treating life as at permanent stand-still, like dead-wood and always keeping their eyes fixed on the past only, while keeping in view all great and good things of the past which continue to be viable in subsequent times and historical environments, fully took into account the changes wrought by changing times and realities and adopted brilliant strategies, flexible tactics and wise policies which ensured success in facing the challenges confronting muslim societies in their times and situations.

What the Muslim world needs to day is a forward-looking strategy and tactics based upon the awakening of the Muslim masses throughout the world and their unity and

struggle based upon objective world, regional and local realities and the spirit and vision of the modern era and march forward, shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the deprived, oppressed and subjugated humanity in general and the Muslim world and the third world in particular, for a world built on the foundations of genuine democracy, social justice, equality, freedom of conscience, national sovereignty, and equality among nations based on mutual cooperation and benefit.

Dogmatic views of world history and of the available and feasible paths of national and social progress and development are bound to lead the Muslim world into historical blind alleys and may even prove to be suicidal. Dogmatism, fundamentalism, revivalism and social reaction are not and have never been the monopoly of the followers of any one particular faith only. At this very point of time, along with Muslim fundamentalism etc, we have Zionist and Hindu fundamentalism etc rampant in Israel and India.

Ruling classes, cliques, states and empires have always used one or the other form of religious extremism as a weapon against the masses to divide, weaken manipulate and subjugate them and to misguide them and send them on a wild goose chase.

In recent centuries, European colonizers did so in their colonies including India.

World imperialism and its stooges, who are foisted upon the majority of third world countries as their rulers, including the stooge-tyrants setup to control the Muslim world, are, a vast global-mafia who have enslaved the destinies of billions of starving and suffering human beings.

Religious fundamentalism and revivalism in various forms, are engendered and lavishly financed by imperialists today in Israel, India, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere for their global power-politics. Their new-found antipathy towards religious extremism and terrorism etc is selective, selfish and totally hypocritical.

Imperialists have historically been interfering with, invading, misusing and manipulating Afghanistan and committing un-pardonable crimes against the people of Afghanistan since centuries.

Through their highly rewarded clerical and other Afghan and Pakistani agents, imperialism has caused to be committed serious terrorist crimes against both countries and virtually ruined them. Floods of refugees, Heroin and Kalashnikov culture, sectarian bloodbaths are but a few evils imposed upon us in Pakistan.

People of Pakistan and Afghanistan are suffering and will continue to suffer for a long time because of what has been done to them yesterday and what is being done to them today.

The people of Pakistan and Afghanistan cannot be justly punished for the miscarriage of adventurous games that imperialism and its Afghan and Pakistani stooges have been playing with the destinies of the people of the two countries.

Historically, ultra religious and other-worldly thinking has gripped the minds of poor, helpless and backward masses when they have found themselves in a blind alley in a dark historical epoch without any hope of redemption in this world.

This happened in ancient times at the time of the decline and anarchy in the Roman Empire when poor people became prepared to be thrown before hungry lions in the hope of some future in the next world. Today, with the collapse of the Soviet Union which counterbalanced and kept in check, western imperialist domineering tendencies and adventures and the emergence of a Western, Christian, Sole Super World-Empire and with many of the leaders of the third world including those of the muslim world, at the beck and call of the new Super-Masters, there seems to be, apparently, no hope of redemption for the wretched billions of the earth in the majority of the continents of the earth.

The monarchs, etc and 'liberal democratic' rulers of Muslim countries are generally regarded by Muslim masses as corrupt and characterless imperialist stooge-autocrats, unwilling and unable to stand up and fight for the rights of their peoples and countries. Hence the frustration of the Muslim masses and hence the attraction of religious extremism, revivalism and fundamentalism.

Those of the Muslim world leaders who, rightly or wrongly, were perceived as enlightened, competent and able and willing to stand up before foreign pressure, *e.g.* Nasser, Soekarno, Bhutto etc were frustrated, overthrown or got murdered through henchmen and replaced by worthless nincompoop toadies. Consequently a number of people from the Muslim masses, who for centuries, have been deliberately kept socially back ward, confounded and heavily doped by imperialism with impractical "airy nothings" through its "liberal" stooges on the one hand and with fanatical revivalist day-dreams, on the other, through clerics many of them enlisted, intoxicated and bamboozled by it for its global political games and nefarious schemes and intrigues, regard some fundamentalist leaders as Super-Heroes who have stood-up for their faith and people, as the Heroes of the past.

We in Pakistan could not have been used as such helpless and obedient tools, if we had not been plundered, ravaged, bankrupted and turned into starving beggars by our own rapacious, corrupt and mercenary dominating classes and foreign-appointed ruling cliques, dancing to alien tunes.

Had those been men of the required intellectual and political grade, with some basic honesty, competence and character, they would never have allowed themselves to forget, in their exuberance at suddenly finding themselves in possession of a brand new country, that it was not only the existence of the cultural-historical yearnings and socio-political aspirations of Muslim India, for what they regarded as their proper share in the power structure of India and not only the existence of what they complained to be the super-ego, overconfidence and rigidity of the stand of the majority community, that led to the success of Pakistan movement but also the enlightened liberal democratic interpretation of the Muslim ethos, the up-to-date modern constitutional-political skills and flexible and rational strategy and tactics of a totally modern Muslim leader like Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah which had led their efforts to fruition. Had they not betrayed his liberal democratic patriotic ideals and enlightened socio-political line, when he was fighting for his life after partition, had they not, while paying lip-serves to him, deserted him and his ideology and general political line and joined the camp of imperialism and virtually adopted the fundamentalist ideology of its favorite revivalist clerics who, till but a few years back, had been towing, for decades, the Akhand Bharat line of the great Mahatma Gandhi , bitterly opposing Pakistan movement and had earned for these services to his line, the grand-eloquent title of "Nationalist Muslims" from him, things would have been quite different in Pakistan today.

Had they not, further, served their personal interests and those of their foreign masters at the cost of their own country and its deprived and oppressed people, had they not been busy, recklessly pushing their country backwards, year after year, decade after decade, through selfish criminal ventures like imposition of one-unit and one Martial law after another, East Pakistan, Baluchistan and Sindh (1983) massacres, the fiascos of 1965 and 1971 wars, enlisting, arming and unleashing ethnic and sectarian terrorist gangs against their own helpless citizens in Sindh, and elsewhere in the country, bankrupting the country through drowning it in a deep sea of indebtedness and insolvency, by incurring huge debts ostensibly taken for national development but known by the whole world, including the creditors themselves, to be destined mainly for the pockets of the members of the ruling cliques for the time being in power and through open loot and plunder of the banks etc, the condition of the country would not have been as desperate as it has become today. We as an atomic power, would not have become a laughing stock of the world because of the way that we have collapsed under threats and have virtually surrendered our sovereignty for petty installments of paltry sums of blood-money being announced from time to time in the papers, not only to our shame but to the shame of the people of the third and Muslim worlds.

After Afghanistan, Sindh is the worst sufferer of the machinations of imperialists and their Afghan and Pakistani stooges regarding Afghanistan. Sindh has been flooded with Heroin, Kalashnikov, lakhs of hungry, quarrelsome and aggressive Afghan refugees and groups of armed terrorists claiming to be armed with direct mandates from heaven.

We are in immediate and present danger of being over-flooded and swept away as the masters of our historical home-land Sindh.

The justice loving people of Pakistan are not alone in demanding that the bombing over Afghanistan be stopped forthwith, foreign forces be recalled and the matter be resolved through civilized processes. Even the fascists and Nazis who caused the horrible deaths of crores of innocent people and the devastation of the whole European continent, were given a proper and regular trial before an International Tribunal at Nuremburg , whose proceedings continued for years. Nobody should be allowed to be the complainant, the prosecutor and the Judge at the same time. This will tell the world at large, that doors to a fair hearing are closed where the sole Super-Power is concerned. The results of such a conduct can be well imagined.

It may not be out of place to add, that a number of fair minded leaders of public opinion in the west (and thank God there are quite a few of them, to the credit of the modern western civilization, in all walks of life.) are supporting these just demands and calling for the establishment of a new just world order which should ensure a fair and just deal for all the deprived and oppresses masses of the entire globe including those of Afghanistan, Palestine Kashmir And Iraq.

Among the steps that need to be taken immediately are the following:-

- (a) Bombing of Afghanistan should be stopped forth with.
- (b) An independent inquiry tribunal consisting of universally respected world jurists should be established to identify suspects involved in the above events.
- (c) The entire International Community should join hands in the interests of world stability and progress to apprehend the above suspects and produce them for trial by the International Criminal Trial Court consisting of international judges including Muslim judges of universally known and acknowledged judicial capacity, integrity and independence.
- (d) The judgment after the completion of the entire required judicial process should be implemented as a question of the honor and integrity of the World Community as a whole.
- (e) A Commission Of Inquiry under some world respected statesman like Nelson Mandela be appointed under UN auspices to define terrorism, find its causes, identify the forces responsible for breeding, promoting and indulging in terrorism in the past and the present and to suggest ways and means of uprooting terrorism and punishing the culprit individuals, groups and states thus found to have been involved directly or indirectly in terrorism.

- (f) The people of Afghanistan should be properly compensated for the havoc played with their society and economy by foreign inspired wars and they should be helped to create a viable economy with international assistance.
- (g) Afghan people be helped by International Community to construct for themselves a genuinely independent, enlightened, democratic, patriotic, forward-looking, broad-based Afghan government capable of leading them to a new bright future free of foreign intervention and domination.
- (h) An International force consisting of contingents from countries like South Africa, Finland, Switzerland, Bangla Desh, Malaysia and Tanzania etc be deployed to help maintain peace in Afghanistan during the interim period.

BIGGEST PROBLEM IS STRUCTURAL:

(Rasool Bux Paleejo's Interview)

Awami Tehrik leader Rasool Bakhsh Palijo believes that the biggest problem facing Pakistan is "structural", since the country does not have even the "pretence of a federation" any longer.

In a *Dawn* Dialogue interview in Karachi, Mr. Palijo blamed the ruling class of Punjab for trying to dominate the smaller provinces, but at the same time he said his party's first struggle was against the feudal lords of Sindh.

If "Sindhu Desh is created, the feudal lords will kill us. Our first struggle is against autocracy," he said:

Asked to specify steps that he would like to be taken for the country's progress, he said talk about the Thal Canal project and the Kalabagh Dam should stop, and added: "Stop devaluing politics. Stop being cynical about the judiciary." Mr. Palijo also warned against involving criminals in politics, and involving the army in corruption.

He said the liberal and progressive path of genuine national independence and civilian democratic rule charted out by the Quaid-i-Azam was "the only path of salvation for this country". Mr. Palijo said the issues currently being negotiated between the opposition and the government were important ones, but stressed that the "petty compromises" sought would not change the basic autocratic and anti-people structure of the "neo-colonial, virtually non-federal, unitary, oppressive and military state that Jinnah's Pakistan now stands tragically transformed into".

The following is the edited text of the *Dawn* Dialogue interview with Awami Tehrik chief Rasool Bakhsh Palijo:

QUESTION: To begin with, perhaps you could identify what you consider to be the biggest problem facing Pakistan today.

ANSWER: The biggest problem is structural. This is a neo-colonial country in which its rulers have been nominated by outsiders. This is the case with every Third World country, though their rulers claim to be representatives of their people. But that is not true. In 1971, the federation envisioned in the 1940 Resolution ended. That resolution seeking independent states was adopted because the supremacy of one province was

not considered acceptable. Domination of Sindh by Punjab since Ranjit Singhs time was a known fact, but no one was prepared to be part of greater Punjab. That is why the phrase `independent states was used in the 1940 Resolution at the insistence of Bengal and Sindh. We got rid of Bengal in 1971 by blaming them for all sorts of things. Now this is a one unit, a foreign-inspired one unit. In fact, it is a foreign colony, not just in name. Now we don't even have the pretence of a federation.

Q: What exactly do you mean when you blame Punjab because most of the people of Punjab have nothing to do with this problem of domination?

A: I am glad you raised the point, and you are right that the people have nothing to do with this. I am not a traditional nationalist. I am a proletarian internationalist. I now support the cause of the people of Sindh. Earlier, I had supported the people of Bengal. And when during the days of the great Sindhi leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, military action was taken in Balochistan, I was an advocate of the rebels for which I was sent to jail. By Punjab, I mean its ruling class. Punjabi people, American people and European people are also our brothers. The way Europe is fighting for the Muslim cause, none of us is doing so. In the same way, we have differences with the Indian rulers, but we have nothing against the people of India.

Q: How do you look at the Jeay Sindh Movement?

A: First of all, this country has to be sovereign. There should be a federation of equals. There should be a proper constitution. The Senate should be the dominant house. There should be democracy. There should be no extremism. Pakistan should be sovereign, independent and progressive. Pakistan has never been independent for a day. We want an independent Pakistan.

Q: These problems have been repeatedly identified. One factor may be the domination of Punjab because of its size. But what do you propose to do to solve these problems?

A: The modus operandi of imperialistic forces has been this for the past many years have democracy and fairplay in your own country on the condition that the rest of the world is your playground. There should be light in your country provided that there is darkness in the rest of the world. They want undemocratic regimes all over the world so that they can be manipulated. This is criminalized state politics. They will keep people in power in Third World countries as long as they continue to commit the crimes they want them to commit.

It is not that Punjab's size is the problem. Their ruling classes have been given the license on behalf of imperial powers. They have committed crimes with the aid of the military. I know that the international climate is such that they have to allow freedom to the press. There must be amendments to the Constitution. There should be a real

federation. The criminalization of (politics and government) has to be understood and resisted by all the people.

When Mr. Bhutto was in power, we did our duty to stand up and be counted and be hunted. People used to say that they did not regard me as a Sindhi. I used to say that I was thankful to them. They used to say that I was working as a lawyer to traitors.

Many crimes have been committed over the issue of water. I also want to write the criminal history of the political processes of Pakistan. I have always said that Mohammad Ali Jinnah was killed. They left Mr Jinnah unattended on the road. He was very fragile. I had seen him. I am a criminal lawyer. You do not need great methodology to kill a man. If you leave a child in the cold, he will die. Now it is being said that Fatima Jinnah was also murdered.

This administration is committing more injustices than its predecessors; especially its focus is on Sindh. When growers in Sindh grow sugarcane, they import sugar to keep prices down. The systematic manner in which this administration is seeking to destroy Sindh as an entity, the way it is pauperizing the population (is regrettable). Servicemen are posted everywhere in Sindh. The way these people are using the army the army decides who would be a union council nazim. They are running the whole administration.

Even the British officers would not speak with the arrogance with which the army generals speak. They do so because they have the backing of the US. They urge the people of Punjab to use the kind of language against Sindh they have not used in the past 50 years. Nobody talked like that.

Q: How do you look at nationalist politics when you say that you are not a nationalist but a proletarian internationalist?

A: I am not a nationalist in the strict sense of the word. I am not like that. I do not accept that nationalism. If the definition of nationalism is my-nation-right-or-wrong, I do not believe in that. I do not say that the Sindhis are better than any other nation. I do not want to conquer other areas.

Actually, I would not like to use the word nationalist at all. We support Namibia. We supported Vietnam. We support the Palestinians.

Q: When voices were raised for the Vietnamese people, we saw more crowds and more rage large crowds talking about the rights of the Vietnamese people. Why is the proletarian movement in Pakistan no longer so potent?

A: There are so many Muslim countries, yet the Muslims are being destroyed. The imperial forces have set up a bogus democratic movement. People have been compartmentalized. Democrats. Nationalists. Islamists. They are all bogus. They are appointed by them. It is important to see whether the so-called Islamists are really Islamists or not. Similarly, whether the so-called democrats are really democrats or not. Are we real nationalists?

Q: What is your stand on the Legal Framework Order and the controversy on the uniform of the president?

A: With the utmost respect, I do not consider the decision of the worthy Supreme Court of Pakistan giving General Musharraf the power to amend the Constitution as laying down the correct law. What the Muslims of the subcontinent struggled for was not a state ruled by generals through mafia-like agencies and their machine-made and mass-produced, power-hungry, corrupt to the core and petty-minded puppet politicians. The Quaid-i-Azam did not want the military to have anything to do with the governance of Pakistan. Unfortunately, he was gravely ill at the time of partition and was surrounded by the civil and military bureaucracy and their puppet politicians, dancing to foreign tunes, who took over the country lock, stock and barrel even during the life of the Quaid. Successive coteries of foreign oriented generals have been riding roughshod, directly or indirectly, over this unfortunate land for decades. They drove out East Bengal, thus dealing the death blow to the federal foundation of Jinnah's Pakistan, making it virtually a one-unit, dominated by one province and the generals. So we find Punjab's military general acting as a governor-general over Sindh and giving orders to the nominal provincial authorities. Pakistan has been transformed into a Prussian type military state in all but name.

In fact, as I tried to point out earlier, the majority of Third World countries like Pakistan, which were the directly ruled colonies of the western powers, became upon getting independence, indirectly ruled neo-colonies of these powers. Whereas previously western parliaments appointed the rulers of colonies and accepted responsibility for their good and bad deeds, the new colonial masters who rule by remote-control now do not accept any such responsibility. So the hand-picked rulers foisted upon such countries who are shown to have come to the top through bogus electoral processes, coups or other intrigues, rendered reckless by the knowledge that so long as they keep dancing to the tunes of the masters, they need fear nobody else feel themselves absolutely free to play havoc with the lives, the rights, resources, liberties and destinies of their semi-enslaved, illiterate and impoverished populations.

Many of the politicians we find around ourselves are commonly believed to be the creatures of the generals and their agencies. And as long as the worthy generals and their political creatures are riding on the backs of the oppressed people of Pakistan, with the blessing and backing of foreign powers, Pakistan's status as a semi-slave

military state, its backwardness, abysmal poverty and helplessness cannot be changed. The liberal and progressive path of genuine national independence and civilian democratic rule charted out for this country by Mohammad Ali Jinnah is the only path of salvation for this country.

The petty compromises sought in the current negotiations cannot change the basic autocratic and anti-people structure of the neocolonial, virtually non-federal, unitary military state that Jinnah's Pakistan now stands tragically transformed into.

As for the controversy about the uniform, that is a superficial matter and avoids the fundamental question about the future of the people and the state of Pakistan.

That question is this. Have the crores of the people of Pakistan been given birth to by their mothers to pass their whole lives under the sword of Damocles of a now familiar phenomenon?

A general suddenly stages a coup, grabs power, invokes the historic justification of all usurpers, *viz*, the law of necessity, gets his usurpation condoned by the judiciary, throws away the Constitution of the country, imposes his own self-serving interim constitution, stages the now familiar drama of a totally bogus referendum and thus makes himself an elected president followed by elections tailored to his needs, gets desired results and then begins the haggling about petty concessions.

How long is this vicious circle going to continue? Will it ever end?

Q: Do you think, then, that the issues over which the government, the ARD and the MMA have been fighting are non-issues?

A: No, they are very important issues. But our problem is that we are a colony and the colony is being ruled through the army. And the army is creating the politics (we see).

Q: How do you build up public pressure for your position when the political parties remain so disorganized? Even your political party is not organized. Political parties have no roots among the masses

A: Petty power politics. If they think over the matter properly they will come to the conclusion that sham democracy and pro-status-quo politics can never improve the situation fundamentally. Only a persistent, courageous, peaceful democratic struggle will create the conditions for basic and lasting changes.

The Awami Tehrik has been working in this direction for the last three decades. It has been in the forefront of every pro-people democratic struggle in this country in general and the province of Sindh in particular.

At present we are waging a struggle along with seven other parties against the Greater Thal Canal Project. We invited all political parties including those in the government, the Muslim League-Q and the MQM, to join the struggle. Some friends including Aftab Shaikh of the MQM appeared to be surprised at my invitation.

We are in contact with a number of friends throughout the country. I had recently had discussions with Mr. Abid Hasan Minto and several other friends. We hope that the common struggle for real democratic change will win many new adherents in the coming months and years. A great and mighty global wave of mass movements for peoples' rights, liberties and rule is on the order of the day. The conscious and justice loving, democratic-minded people of Pakistan cannot afford to lag far behind the rest of the re-awakening and rising world.

Q: Do you think the 1973 Constitution is still relevant and valid?

A: After 1971 Pakistan has actually lost its federal character as a single province now dominates the parliament and the senate has no real power. In practice, the so-called federal government of Pakistan is but another name of the establishment of the biggest province. The three small provinces are virtually being treated as the undeclared divisions of the dominating province and their resources are being mercilessly plundered. Section 6 of the Constitution which punishes those who overthrow the Constitution has become a dead letter. The Constitution therefore needs to be appropriately amended.

Q: Politicians do not talk about ending Karo-kari, marriage with the Quran, etc. They do not talk about spreading education. All they want to do is grab power.

A: I agree with you. The Awami Tehrik and the Sindhiani Tehrik are waging a struggle against this licensed brutal slaughter of helpless women. But we lack resources. If some NGOs who are sincerely interested in this cause come forward to work with us, I think we will get better results.

Q: Now you are mobilizing people on the water issue. Will you be talking to Punjab?

A: Absolutely. We will talk to them very soon. We will even go to the Frontier and Balochistan. I prefer to go to the villages. In the villages of Punjab, more people recognize us.

Q: In order to mobilize the people, we need a party and a leadership. Will you ally yourself with the existing parties or will you form a new party?

A: When we invited the MQM to cooperate with us, they were surprised. But there is no permanent hostility in politics. Do you know that I have been in touch with Gen Musharraf? I like the man because at least he is a polite man. He talks to people and listens to them. The things that I have said here, I told him the same things. Can you believe it?

We will take this struggle forward. You will soon find a new awakening in Pakistan. Our first struggle is basically against the feudal lords of Sindh. Why am I against 'Sindh Desh'? Because I fear that if Sindh Desh is created, these feudal lords will kill us. Our first struggle is against autocracy.

Q: What three or four steps do you specifically want the people of Pakistan to take to tide over the present problems?

A: Stop the Thal canal. Stop talking about the Kalabagh Dam. Stop squeezing Sindhis and stop obliterating them from the face of the earth. Stop devaluing politics. Stop being cynical. Stop being cynical with regard to the judiciary. Do not over-use the military. Stop the militarization of Pakistan. Stop plundering the economic resources of the people. Do not involve the army in corruption. Do not involve criminals in politics.

Q: How do you see the normalization process between Pakistan and India? Will it lead to any fundamental changes in domestic politics?

A: I should hope so. But all things do not happen the way we want them to. Most things depend upon factors which are not completely under your control. I do not agree with the traditional interpretation of Indian history. There was only one Indian nationalist, and that was Mohammad Ali Jinnah. They had him killed. India has never played the role of an elder brother. They have always acted like a 'baniya'. Their hatred against the Muslims has not disappeared. Having said that, I agree with you that normalization of relations between India and Pakistan would have a great impact.

Q: How will it have an impact on domestic politics?

A: They will not be able to incite people when they have talks with Indian politicians in Delhi and Lucknow. We have the same language and culture. How can you hate them in a mad and brutal manner? This will bring about tolerance in politics.

– *The Dawn Dialogue panel included Sabihuddin Ghausi, Lateef Baloch, Bahzad Alam Khan and Shamim-ur-Rahman*

Letter to, General Parwez Musharaf

Sir, I venture to invite your attention to the fact that among the many factors contributing to the creation of a serious perception among the minds of thinking Sindhi-speaking people of Sindh, that, they are being, step by step, marginalized, re-indianized and virtually eliminated as the historic matters of their five thousand-year old homeland and all its resources in accordance with a sinister and diabolic, comprehensive plan, set a-foot from day one of the establishment of Pakistan, is the factor of the stage-by-stage marginalization of Sindhi-speaking lawyers and judges in the judiciary at the provincial and national level.

That the Judicial system of the country is far from ideal, can be judged from the books and interviews published and seminars held on the subject. The latest public perceptions about it are embodied in the press reports of two recent events. A meeting of the Public Account Committee was held on 28-04-2005 and was addressed by Federal Law Secretary Justice R. Mansoor Ahmed, MNA Col. R. Ghulam Rasool Sahi, PML-N leader Choudhri Nisar Ahmed and Parliamentary Secretary Defence Tanveer Ahmed. The very next day a seminar was held on 29-04-2005 at Islamabad entitled "Role of Judiciary Streaming Democratic Institutions" which was addressed by Mr. Wasim Sajjad, HRCP Chairperson Asma Jahangir, HRCP Secretary-General Iqbal Haider, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Mian Raza Rabani, former president of Supreme Court Bar Association Hamid Khan, and president Lahore High Court Bar Association Justice (retired) Fakharun Nisa Khokhar and others.

On the above occasions, the high-ranking speakers gave a vent to their perceptions of our judicial system which, considering the fact that they represented a very wide spectrum of political and legal opinion, can be ignored only at our national peril.

The above views however do not cover the entire spectrum of public views on the subject. There is more to it that was not touched at the above two events. No one at any of the above events mentioned the ethnic bias of the system as applied to Sindh.

Sindhi-Speaking people constitute even after the over half a century long pressure of population from outside, more than sixty eight (68) percent majority of the population of the province. Thanks to what is perceived by many as a planned marginalization of the Sindhi speaking majority in judiciary, only 6 out of 19 sitting judges of the Sindh high court are Sindhi speaking . A similar state of affairs would be found to be prevalent with regard to the sub-ordinate judiciary also.

One very simple but most effective device for marginalization of the Sindhi-speaking majority in the judiciary is said to be in vogue, is to elevate aged Sindhi-speaking lawyers and judges with only a few year remaining eligibility for service.

On the other hand the other gentlemen are elevated at a very young age enabling them to become Chief Justice of Sindh and Supreme Court of Pakistan in due course of time, if possible. The result is that there has been no Sindhi-speaking Chief Justice of Sindh High Court for quite a number of years nor is there any such prospect for a long time to come.

To add insult to injury, some beneficiaries of the unjust system are hawking the absurd and ridiculous theory that Sindhi-speaking people the people who gave the world extraordinary people, like Shah Latif, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Shams-ul-Ulma Mirza Qaleech Baig, Allama I. I. Qazi, Dr. Hotchand Molchand Gurbuxani, Shams-ul-Ulma Dr. Umar Bin Daoodpoto, Molana Ubedullah Sindhi, Shaheed Peer Subghatullah Pagara, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Ghulam Muhammad Bhrigri, Hidar Bux Jattoi, A.K Brohi, Shaikh Ayaz, Air Marshal Waqar Azeem Daoodpoto, Justice Mohd Bux, Justices Velani, Justice Bachal Memon, Justice Durab Patel, Justice Fakhr-u-Din G. Ibrahim, Lalchand Amardino Mal Jagtiani, Najumudin Shaikh, Iqbal Akhund, Makhdoom Muhammad Zaman Talibul Mola, Justice Abdul Qadir Shaikh, Justice Tufail Ali Abdul Rehman, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, Justice Muktar Junejo, Dewan Deelal Mal, Peer Husam-Din Rashdi, Shaikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi, Muhammad Usman Deeplai Engineer Abdul Rasool Memon, Dr Nabi Bux Baloch, Ustad Bukhari, etc lack merit .

Some elevations at the Superior Courts level are over -due. But it is apprehended that the above mentioned imbalance may be perpetuated rather than redressed through new appointments over the vacant posts.

We the people here in Sindhi believe that such a problem requires to be addressed honestly, courageously, seriously and expeditiously so that the wrongs are redressed and Justice is done to all concerned, not the least to the federation and all its peoples.

Yours Sincerely

Rasool Bux Paleejo
President Awami Tahreek.