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Pakistan

“Socialism of 21st century will be basis for working class salvation”

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The Awami Worker’s Party first two-day congress concluded here with a rally on the roads of Islamabad chanting slogans against capitalism, feudalism and in favour of socialism. Addressing the rally at Aabpara Chouck Islamabad, Fanoos Gujjar, the newly elected chairman vowed to build a party that would help working class to overthrow a rotten corrupt system for a Socialist Pakistan.

The main slogan of the congress banner was, “Struggle, Solidarity and Socialism”.

The congress opened with singing of the “International” by a group of young comrades. Chaired jointly by Abid Hasan Minto, Farooq Tariq and Fanoos Gujjar with a four member standing order committee consisting of Nisar Shah, Ismat Shahjehan, Javed Akhtar and Haider Zaman, the congress first speaker Abid Hasan Minto briefly explained why we need a unity of the three parties to continue and need for a mass party of the Left.

The congress unanimously elected a 41-member federal committee presented by Abid Hasan Minto for the outgoing leadership on the first day, they took oath next day in front of over 350 delegates and observers. Veteran peasant leader, Choudry Fateh Mohammed administered the oath.

Among the 41 members, Baba Jan got the maximum applause when his name was called. He was got a life sentence just two days before the congress. He had arrived in Islamabad to attend the congress, but went back to face the sentence after the court announced the punishment in a case of helping climate change victims during 2011.

The following office bearers were elected for the next two years by the elected federal committee: President: Abid Hasan Minto; Chairman: Fanoos Gujjar; General secretary Farooq Tariq; senior vice president: Akhtar Hussain; vice president Farzana Bari; Deputy general secretary: Javed Akhtar; Finance secretary Shazia Khan; Information secretary: Nisar Shah; Peasant secretary: Younas Rahu, Women's secretary: Abida Choudry; education secretary: Haider Zaman and youth secretary: Farooq Ahmad.

Farooq Tariq presented a general secretary’s report which covered the AWP’s activities and organization from November 2012 to September 2014.

The AWP manifesto and constitution was presented by Akhtar Hussain in two sessions and after presentations of written suggestions by delegates for amendments and recommendation was to be discussed by the newly elected federal committee.

The manifesto and constitution was accepted unanimously. The new flag was also unanimously recommended.

Warm welcome to international solidarity

The only international delegate at the congress was Mahmood Hamrazan, (chief editor Voice of Solidarity) of Solidarity Party of Afghanistan, who travelled from Kabul to Islamabad to attend and deliver a message of solidarity. He was very warmly welcome by the delegates of the congress.

There was a great response when the solidarity messages of international organization were read at the congress by Farooq Tariq.

The following organizations sent the messages; 1- NPA (France), 2- Socialist Alliance (Australia), 3- Communist Party of Bangladesh ML, 4- Left Voice (Sri Lanka), 5- Malaysian Socialist Party (PSM), 6- Dutch Socialist Party (SP), 7- Workers International Network (UK), 8- Scottish Socialist Party, 9- The Smmilita Samajjik Andolon (United civil Society Movement) Bangladesh, 10- Jangibaad Birodhi Mancha (Forum Against Religious Intolerance and fanaticism) Bangladesh, 11- Communist Party of India ML, 12- Japan Revolutionary Communist League (JRCL), 13- Left Party of Sweden, 14- Left Unity (UK), 15- South Asian Peoples Forum (UK), 16- Indian Workers Association (UK), 17- Afghanistan Solidarity Party, 18- Labour Education Foundation (Pakistan), 19- Fourth International (FI), 20- International Socialist Left (Germany), 21- Communist Party of Pakistan, 22- Gefont (Nepal), 23- Socialist Alternative (Australia), 24- Professor Chaman Lal (JNU New Delhi), 25- Afghan Workers Revolutionary Front, 26- Committee of Progressive Pakistani Canadians, 27- Friends of South Asia (USA),

Farooq Tariq also made the finance appeal at the congress that raised over 600,000 Rupees, a pre congress appeal raised nearly another one million Rupees.

“Best tradition of the Left will be promoted and defended”

Speaking at last session of the congress, the newly elected president of the AWP Abid Hasan Minto said that we must learn from lessons of the collapse of socialism after 73 years in power. We need democratic socialism. Establishing a united party of the Left is a new unique idea that is being observed keenly by the Left parties of the region and internationally. Commenting on the target of the membership of 10,000 from the present 5623 members, he said that we would have many more than the target during the next two years. “All we need is party unity and many would join.” He appealed to those on the sidelines to join AWP to help build a society free from capitalist, imperialist, feudal exploitation. He said that best traditions of the Left would be promoted by the party.

Those who spoke in this open session include Nighat Khan of ASR Women’s Resource Centre, Amjad Salar Ali of Mazdoor Kissan Party, Professor Khaliq Kiyani of UKPNP, Dr Khalid Javed Jan (radical poet), Dr Rajab Ali Memon, Said Alam Mehsud of Pakhtunkhwa Ulasi Tehrek, president AWP KPK, Asim Sajad Akhtar president AWP Punjab, Zafar Iqbal president AWP Saraiki Waseeb, Sufi Abdul Khaliq from AWP Balochistan, Fanoos Gujjar, chairman AWP and Abid HASAN Minto president AWP.

There were slogans raised by the youth at the congress such as “Down with imperialism, feudalism, capitalism, Up up red flag, long live Socialism, ism ism Socialism, path of revolution is our path, join us for a Socialist revolution, Down with military generals and colonels, land to the tillers, trade union rights for every worker” and so on.

The success of the campaign on the social media by AWP young activists can be measured by the fact that Bilawal Bhutto (son of Benazhir Bhutto and chairman of PPP) recommended to his disillusioned party workers to attend our congress and join. He said in a tweet message:

" In fact, if any former sympathizers are looking to attend a political event today I would suggest attending the #AWPCongress in Islamabad."

http://www.twitlonger.com/show/n_1sc538b

Vows to launch campaign for the release of arrested activists

The congress passed several resolutions. It vowed to launch an international campaign for the release of Baba Jan and 11 other activists sentenced to life imprisonment just two days before the congress (see update below).

The rally was a great occasion and [here](#) and [here](#) are some links to the report of the rally and news about the congress.

Islamabad

28 September 2014

Baba Jan arrested in Gilgit

Baba Jan presented himself for arrest today in front of Anti Terrorist Court Gilgit. This will enable us to launch an appeal in the higher court.

Here is a report from Pamir Times Blog:

Gilgit, September 29: Baba Jan, a renowned progressive leader from the Gilgit-Baltistan region, presented himself for arrest in front of an ATC judge in Gilgit this morning. He was arrested and taken to the jail by the police.

Baba Jan, Vice President of Awami Workers Party and leader of the Progressive Youth Front, was sentenced to life in prison along with 11 other people by an Anti-Terrorism Court a couple of days ago on the charges of putting government properties on fire and looting ammunition.

Baba Jan and the other eleven people deny the charges.

Talking to the *Pamir Times* correspondent in Gilgit today, Baba Jan said that his struggle for justice and rights has always been peaceful. He said that the real culprits are roaming free and the killers of two IDPs from the Hunza valley are yet to be punished. He said that although the provincial government has declared them terrorists and sent them behind the bars, the peaceful struggle will continue.

It is pertinent to note that cases had been registered against Baba Jan and his 11 companions after riots broke out in Aliabad (Hunza), after two IDPs were shot dead on point-blank by police officials on the 11th of August 2011.

Baba Jan said that the decision of the Anti-Terrorism Court will be challenged in the higher courts of the region