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World Social Forum

WSF Karachi - A short report

- News from around the world -

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Karachi World Social Forum ended with a closing rally addressed by mainly young activists from different countries. Over 35000 attended this unprecedented event in the history of Pakistan during the course of five days. Over 300 events attracted hundreds of activists from different walk of life. Activists from 59 countries participated in the event.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/saakar.jpg>]

Held at Karachi Sports Complex from 24th March to 29th March, WSF Karachi brought together most of the movements in Pakistan on one platform, from peasants to fisher folk, from women rights groups to national liberation struggle groups, they were all there.

Never before in the history of Pakistan were so many different walks of life united in opposing the new liberal agenda, militarization and imperialist globalization. There were countless rallies and cultural programmes during the five days. It was people at liberty. It was activists' freedom to say anything at a time when they are unable to say it in public due to the fear of prosecution at the hands of present military dictatorship.

Never before had delegates from 59 countries got together in one platform in Pakistan. They were here to show their solidarity with the Pakistan masses in their struggle against imperialism and religious fundamentalism. They were here fearing that something would happen during the WSF as there has been many unfortunate incidents of bombing and firing by the state forces and religious fundamentalists. But to everyone's relief, there was no incident of that sort.

The media could not find any issue to use against the WSF Karachi as was the case in Mumbai during the WSF in 2004. At Mumbai, the media fabricated a story of rape during the WSF. Here the media gave full coverage to the cultural and serious political and social issues during the all five days. There were newspapers full of WSF stories on the front pages. The journalist was also amazed to see the response of the people and the way they were expressing their feeling against the rotten capitalist feudal system. They had many good stories to report from one venue.

The Left parties now united in one Peoples Democratic Movement (AJT) found themselves surrounded by many hundreds who wanted hear them on every issue. I was invited to speak in countless events and during the five days, I spoke time after time on issues related to the class struggle, trade unions rights, women issues, the national liberation struggle in Kashmir and Baluchistan, question of unjust distribution of resources and so on.

Labour Party Pakistan supported organizations like Women Workers Help Line, National Trade Union Federation, Progressive Youth front, Pakistan Peasants Coordination Committee, Labour Education Foundation organized seven different workshops and seminars during the five days. Here are some details of these functions

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/lppdemo.jpg>]

Progressive Youth Organization: Falsification of Soviet History, Dr. Mark Glavinon from Russia spoke to over 200 on 25th March. Tariq Ali and Farooq Sulehria and Jamal Jumma of Palestine spoke on "Political Islam, Challenges and responses" to over 1000.

Women Workers Help Line seminar on "Women Workers in Pakistan, struggle for change" was addressed by Bushra Khaliq, I and Pip Hinman of Australian Socialist Alliance and attended by over 500.

Labour Education Foundation seminar on "Globalisation and Anti Globalisation" was addressed by Pierre Rousset of

Europe in Solidarity Without Borders, Olivier Bonfond of Committee for the Cancellation of third World Debts, Assim Sajad Akhtar of People Rights Movement and Pip Hinman attend by over 400.

National Trade Union Federation seminar on "Privatisation, New Liberal Agenda and fight back" was addressed by Pierre Rousset, I, Salim Raza and Rasul Bukhash Paleejo of Awami Tehrik (Peoples Movement). It was attended by over 700.

Another seminar by NTUF on "Socialism as an alternative" brought together over 700 and speakers included Abid Hassan Minto of National Workers Party, myself, Pierre Rousset and Masoor Karim of Pakistan Communist Party.

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee (peasant coordination committee) seminar on Peasants struggle in Pakistan was addressed by Dr. Abbdul hai Baluch of National Party, Mehr Abdul Sattar of Anjamman Mozarren Punjab (AMP), Gul Hassan of Sind Hari Tehrik and Fateh Mohammed of Pakistan Kissan Committee. Over 500 listned to this seminar as well.

Struggle Publications stall was a hit and they sold over 1600 copies of Weekly Mazdoor Jeddojuhd (www.jeddojuhd.com) as well as a range of books. Tariq Ali's book Clash of Fundamentalism in Urdu translations second edition was another hot cake here. This was also the case of Eric Toussaint's new book Who Owes Who. This book is also printed by Jeddojuhd Publications.

On 28th March, all these organization organized a rally within the premises against the demolition of shanty towns in Karachi with hundreds of Labour Party Pakistan red flags.