

## An Interview with Tufail Abbas of the Pakistan Mazdoor Mahaaz

*(This interview was given in 2006 and is being reproduced from the Revolutionary Democracy)*

### Revolutionary Homage to Comrade Tufail Abbas

Comrade Tufail Abbas, one of the first leaders of Communist Party of Pakistan passed away in Karachi on 8 August 2019 due to prolonged ill health. He was 92 years old. He is survived by his wife, three daughters and one son,

Com. Abbas was born in a small town called Debar near Lucknow in India in 1927. He migrated to Karachi after the Partition and was among the first members of Communist party of Pakistan. He was the founding member of erstwhile Oriental Airways Employees Union which was founded in 1950. Com. Abbas was arrested and jailed several times whenever the regimes unleashed repression on the peoples' movements. He was jailed in 1960 after the arrest and killing of com. Hassan Nazir by the regime of Ayub Khan.

Com. Abbas was the city secretary of communist Party in Karachi. He left the party after the differences emerged in the party and inclined towards Communist Party of China. After the death of Mao Tse tung, he condemned both the regimes in Moscow and Beijing as revisionists. He was the president of Pakistan Mazdoor Mahaaz (Pakistan Workers Front)

The CPI(ML) expresses Its deepest condolences to the comrades of Pakistan Mazdoor Mahaaz and family members and pays revolutionary tributes to comrade Tufail Abbas.

#### **Q. No. 1. What is your appraisal of the current situation in Pakistan? How do you view the role of General Musharraf and his policies, and what are his objectives?**

Ans: Pakistan was created in 1947, but its current political situation is a continuity of the past 58 year's policies in the sub-continent. No basic change in policy took place in all these years, and there is no likelihood of any basic change in near future. This country is not yet alive to the characteristic of genuine democracy or even parliamentary democracy. Because of the existing deep-rooted feudalism, the tribal system, and the exploiting classes which are totally in the grip of the imperialist forces, in these circumstances the question of the emergence of even a capitalist society (what to talk of genuine democracy) does nowhere exist.

In fact the country came into being on account of the wishes of the imperialistic forces, resultant to the weakening of British Imperialism after World War II.

After 1953, American imperialism has taken hold of the country through various pacts and military agreements. This had become possible with collaboration of the ruling classes.

Here the exploiting classes have not been as strong as in India so that the army which earlier protected British imperialism now continued to look after both the exploiting classes and the imperialist policies in the region.

The exploiting classes have tried to stage a drama of democracy which has never lasted long so the exploiting classes call in the army to their rescue which each time has come to stay in power for long, to save the exploiting system.

Every group has stayed in power only so long as they have acted on the U.S. imperialist policies. In case anyone attempted to work against the U.S. imperialist interests, they were made either to

quit or removed from the scene with disgrace, or even killed or managed to be killed in accidents. President General Musharraf who earlier said that he was forced in by the former Prime Minister Nawaz Shahrif, to take up the rule of the country, has changed the provision of the constitution to remain as the Head of the State in uniform up to year 2007. It seems, he plans to stay on further till 2020. He has the blessings of U.S. imperialism.

As for the policies of General Musharraf, he is working to keep feudal-capitalist society intact, in the interest of U.S. imperialism, and to continue to remain in power.

**Q. No. 2. What is the nationality question in Pakistan involving Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan and NWFP (North West Frontier Province)?**

Ans: The question of nationalities exists in almost every country, but in Pakistan it is quite different because of its location in the region. In fact, Pakistan had been created on the two different concepts of religion and nationalities; intermingled together. The country was divided on the basis of 'Two Nation Theory' and religion was equated with the concept of nation.

After the creation of Pakistan the different nationalities here were the Pathans, Punjabis, Sindhis and Balochis in West Pakistan and the Bengalis in the province of East Pakistan. Although the politics in both the regions (East-West Pakistan) were different the exploiting classes were ruling their masses. If you look into the history of pre-divided Hindustan, its different regions were ruled separately by Rajas and Maharajas, but the country remained intact to an extent under Mughal rule, although Burma and Sri Lanka became separate countries. Towards the end of the Mughal rule, the power had weakened and due to inter-state fights and disputes the Britishers gained control as their rulers.

After World War II and the weakening of British imperialism both Hindus and Muslims worked together to free themselves from British rule. After World War II there was a wave of uprisings, to seek freedom, in many countries and this weakened the imperialist forces further, throughout the world.

Eastern Europe followed the path of democracy and in Vietnam, China and Germany, armed struggle started.

After World War II, the British imperialism understood the situation and to avoid armed struggle in India (like in China) it diverted the wave of freedom and independence towards reform, and itself worked to form the bourgeois parties: first the Congress Party and then the Muslim League. Though the communist party was there, but it did not adopt the revolutionary line (like in Vietnam and China) and played a part in the division of the country on the basis of religion.

The movements and uprisings against the British rule were in the hands of the exploiting class. In the NWFP, Khan Ghaffar Khan was under the strong influence of Congress, in Punjab the Unionists, in Sindh the feudal lords, in Balochistan the tribal and feudal forces, and in Bengal also the feudal lords were in the fore front. Soon after the division of the country these exploiting classes set to work.

Punjab being the larger province, the big landlords joined the Muslim League only to remain in power. The politics of Punjab affected other provinces as well. India had accepted the division, but it was set to the idea that Pakistan would not go a long way. Unfortunately, the ruling Muslim League party was the stronghold of the Muslim Leaguers who had come from India and the exploiting classes here in the region did not accept their domination.

Strong undercurrents against Mr. Jinnah had started even in his life time. Mr. Jinnah on his visit to East Pakistan (Bengal) announced Urdu as the official language. This issue led to demonstrations and riots and later it led to separation. Even afterwards in Sindh, on the issue of language there was even bloodshed. After the death of Jinnah, the exploiting classes revolted against the members of the Muslim League that had come from India. Punjab being the bigger province it adopted unconstitutional means to stay in power. Elections were not held at a national level. In 1954, elections were held in East Pakistan, where the Muslim League was rejected and the Awami League gained the majority of the votes.

In the NWFP (Frontier Province) Khan Abdul Ghaffar was a staunch Congressite and being against Pakistan he had never accepted its creation. He lost the referendum on the basis of religion

in 1946. He had not even wanted to be buried in Pakistan and his body was taken to Kabul, Afghanistan for the last rituals.

Likewise, in Sindh, people were quitting Muslim League, and slogans of 'Sindhu Desh' were raised. The situation worsened as the people who migrated from Hindustan settled in Sindh and with their differences being on the rise, slogans for 'Jinnah Pur' were also heard. Balochistan being in the grip of tribals and feudals had joined Pakistan, but not accepted its solidarity.

This remained the situation of the country where feudalism and tribal system should have been abolished to give place to industrial development, having free and fair elections in the country and allowing provincial autonomy. But instead the rule of the exploiting classes continued to rescue their vested interests, the country faced Martial Laws and in the 1971 election, when the power was not handed over to the majority party, the country was broken and India played its part in the debacle. When the army had been called by the exploiting rulers to take over the power, it played the same exploiting role for the masses and acquired estates and land for itself.

In the new Pakistan all the provinces are claiming their autonomy and raising slogans against the bigger province – Punjab. Unfortunately the ruling classes of Pakistan are not even ready to consider the bourgeois demands for provincial autonomy.

The position will remain unchanged as long as the masses, the workers and the peasants do not stand up jointly against the exploiting classes and struggle together to change the system.

**Q. No. 3. Tell us about the Mazdoor Mahaaz trade union movement. Can it help to build a communist trade union movement?**

Ans: Pakistan Mazdoor Mahaaz is not a trade union movement; it is, in fact, a party of the workers and peasants which is working under the revolutionary ideology. It is a party centrally organised and working in all four provinces under provincial committees. It would be quite true if I said that it is a party very similar to the Turkish Party of Labour. Under the leadership of the working class and uniting the peasants and all patriotic elements to bring out revolutionary and basic change by overthrowing the feudal and imperialist forces which is only possible by working under a revolutionary ideology and tactics, thus creating a revolutionary movement for bringing the revolution in Pakistan.

**Q. No. 4. What kinds of policies are being projected in the monthly Awami Manshoor magazine? What is its influence on Pakistan left politics?**

Ans: With a view to highlight the labour movement in Pakistan at the national and international level, the magazine *Manshoor* was published in 1964, as the organ of Airways Employees Union - the progressive trade union of the Pakistan Airline – the PIA which worked under the revolutionary ideology. In 1974, under the rule of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government, the publication of the magazine was banned. Publication of the magazine under the name of *Awami Manshoor* started again in June 1989 and it has continued as a publication of our Pakistan Mazdoor Mahaaz. The magazine with its policy is making a contribution to bring about a socio-political change in the country. Its readership is comprised of Urdu readers across the country and in outside countries especially in India. It is a progressive magazine which contains not only an objective analysis of the political situation of the country but international analysis as well, in the light of revolutionary ideology. It also presents extracts of classical literature, and the contribution of poets and writers reflecting progressive thought. It would not be inappropriate to say that it is the only progressive magazine of the left-movement reflecting true revolutionary ideology.

**Q. No. 5. How do you see the politics of USSR, China and Albania after the death of Stalin?**

Ans: During my imprisonment in 1954, I happened to read in the magazine titled 'For A Lasting Peace And People's Democracy' published from Bucharest, which I somehow managed to get along with my things and reading material from home. In it was the central news that Stalin's tomb has been dug out. I told my colleagues in jail that if this could happen, then some day Lenin's tomb would also be dug out – and this is what happened after Stalin's death. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted revisionist policies, and these policies resulted in the break up of the USSR. Now the former USSR has been completely taken over by capitalist market economic policies.

China, under Mao Tse-tung, after Stalin's death had however continued with the revolutionary ideology to some extent, and thus it opposed both Russian revisionism and American imperialism. Later, China, after the border dispute with Russia, shifted towards a pro-American line, and by and by it too went over to the market economy and now, to great extent it is an ally of the U.S.

I would like to add here that in 1966 I was invited by the Communist Party of China to the Cultural Revolution celebrations on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1966. After all that I witnessed, I had the following three points of reservation, which I discussed there:

First: the question of the third world: our point of view is that this slogan is un-scientific, because we believe that there are only two worlds. The Third World slogan was a substitute slogan of Tito's non-aligned movement. Their reply to my viewpoint did not satisfy me.

Second: was their policy of appreciating any government which came to power in Pakistan whether it was a military dictatorship or a democratic government, and they maintained good relations with every government.

Third: was the personality cult of Mao Tse-tung though we also have been appreciative of the role of comrade Mao Tse-tung.

In 1978, I was again invited to visit China, but by that time comrade Mao Tse-tung had died and was succeeded by Hua Kuo-feng as the head of state. He had gone to see the Shah of Iran and he also went to meet Tito, thus China had also adopted revisionist policies, so I decided not to visit China.

In the meantime I had come into contact with comrade William Ash and I discussed with him the whole international scenario. He agreed with me on some points, and on the points where he disagreed he referred me to read the books by comrade Enver Hoxha, especially his book 'Reflections on China'. I then read the complete set of books written by comrade Enver Hoxha and I totally agreed with his point of view and we adopted that line in our working.

**Q. No. 6. What is the impact of imperialist globalisation on the economy and the working class movement?**

Ans: The United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan says that 'arguing against globalisation is like arguing against the law of gravity'. Some accept its inevitability, and to some, it is the increasing of the inter-connectedness of the world's problems, solutions and resources. Global trends are shifting the ground beneath our feet. The shifts in society, technology and environment are going to be great challenges for the business leaders in the next 30 years. As one critic of globalisation said, 'in the swiftly changing global economy, only nations, corporations and workers that remain flexible will survive, and the most willing to adapt will thrive. International disputes and conflicts, and resource degradation trends, are some of the biggest challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.' We take a quick look at the impacts of globalisation. Out of the hundred largest economies in the world, 51 are global corporations and 49 are the countries. A comparison of corporate incomes with the gross domestic products (GDP) shows the following:

- ? General Motors is richer than Denmark
- ? Wal-Mart is wealthier than Saudi Arabia
- ? IBM ranks higher than Singapore and Ireland.
- ? Sony outclasses Pakistan.

Globalisation (western-style) along with liberalised trade policies and foreign investment has created worrisome challenges to the physical and cultural environment in traditionally poor nations such as India, China and Pakistan. Humanity is today face to face with the greatest reactionary attack in its history. This attack is simultaneously taking place under the name of New World Order, sometimes globalisation, market economy or neo liberalism. The international capital forces targets the countries which try to limit the circulation of international capital or those who do not agree to adapt to the market-system. So a series of measures are taken against them.

Other targets of international capital forces are the anti-imperialistic, progressive and democratic forces in different countries. Those people who are struggling for the independence and democracy, and the values created by this struggle are also under attack. These reactionary forces are also carrying out an assault on the genuine defenders of socialism, and the independent class organisations

of the working class. Anti-globalisation and anti-imperialist actions are expanding all around the world and protests with the participation of millions of people have appeared. These are getting intense, more massive and widespread against the policies developed to collapse the countries' economies in the interests of international capital and monopolies. The wide spread massive protests taking place are of great significance as they are against globalisation and the New World Order.

**Q. No. 7. How do you assess the role of the existing communist and left politics of Pakistan?**

Ans: At the time of creation of the present Pakistan there were no industries in the region, so in the absence of the working class there was no question of either the communist party or the left politics being a force.

The division of the country was basically un-scientific. Equating religion to the concept of nation, 'the two nation theory' was presented. When the country was divided on the basis of religion, the Hindu majority were unwilling to give up their lands. The Hindus and Muslims who had lived together, fought the war of independence, now stood against each other. There was a great bloodshed and loss of human lives.

There was no progressive movement in this part of the region, as subsequent to the division of the country, the progressive Hindus and Sikhs migrated to India. Muslims who were communist came from India to form the central committee of the Communist Party so much so that the general secretary of the party came from India. The communist party adopted a 'right'-opportunist position by accepting the division of the country and adopting a tailist attitude to the Muslim League. After the adventurism of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case, the communist party lost its worth and existence. The general secretary left Pakistan for India after surviving four years imprisonment and other central committee members left the country. Those remaining took up services, jobs and started their business.

With the imposition of the ban on the communist party in 1954, *en bloc* arrests were made. After the release of the communists who came from India the bulk of them returned to India and a few other members settled in England and places abroad. You can well understand the fate of the party and the state of left politics at that stage!

However the making of history does not stop, and efforts for the making of a true revolutionary party have continued. It cannot be denied that revisionism in USSR, reformism in China and the so-called revolution of Afghanistan have put down all efforts for raising up and strengthening the working class movement.

Later on, when industries were set up, the workers who had come from India were employed and they adopted the same tactics of hartals and strikes as in India. Thus industrial development suffered a lot. Different governments from time to time attacked the trade union workers and the leftists, and while arresting them, forced them to leave the movement. Subsequently some leftists adopted NGO policies which resulted in the demolition of the trade union movement and left politics.

Despite the adverse and most discouraging environment and circumstances, the trade union movement and left politics are adopting the correct line and the right tactics for the advancement and progress of the revolutionary movement.

**Q. No. 8. How do you see the recent visit of the leaders of the CPI and CPI (M) to Pakistan and its impact on the communist movement in Pakistan and the Pakistan state?**

Ans: The present government of Pakistan, as a political requirement, claims to have good relations with India. Besides this, the government is also showing coordination with the communist parties of India, which are supporting the present Indian government, so as to also gain the support of the so-called communists, and the NGO oriented leftist organisations in Pakistan. For this reason the communist parties from India are invited here for meetings with government officials. At the same time the bourgeois opposition parties also invite them for talks. It gives the impression that there is no problem now. Pakistan and India are both correct and everything is OK. The so-called communists of both the countries are also friendly, while both the Pakistan and Indian governments are getting enslaved under the US economy, military and nuclear pacts – as though there is nothing to bother about.

If you look into the details of the joint meetings held here with the communists from India, Bangladesh and the so-called communists and NGO oriented leftist organisations in Pakistan, nothing was said about the policies of their respective governments, the exploiting classes or about the exploited masses of these countries, and how the working classes were exploited by the policies and designs of their governments. The outcome was that they only stressed Pak-India friendship and unity among working classes of the region.

As for the Pakistan government, they are satisfied with the situation because whatever is happening is according to their wishes and policies. They can now pose themselves as being liberals and get the support of the so-called liberal progressives.

**Q. No. 9. What message would you like to convey to the Indian communist movement?**

Ans: We can only say, in this regard, that the Indian communist movement should play its pivotal role in the region. Hindustan is a big country and Pakistan and Bangladesh are also two countries in the same region. As long as the communist movement in India does not adopt a scientific line, there can be no revolutionary movement in the region.

At present the communist movement in India has been split up into different fractions. The CPI and CPI (M) adopted the parliamentary line to support the present Congress government which is a class enemy of the working people of India. This support has been granted without any principled stand or condition.

The present Indian government has adopted a pro-American policy by entering into military and nuclear pacts. The communists who are supporting the governments have taken the plea that if they do not support the Congress, then India will be in the grip of fascism but we do not understand that there is any difference between the Congress and the BJP from the class point of view.

We think that the class enemy should be exposed to the masses so that the progressive forces can adopt a scientific line to overthrow the reactionary forces and to establish true democracy through struggle and by revolutionary methods.

This unscientific and un-Marxist thinking has remained prevalent and this is why Hindustan has been divided into three reactionary states Bharat, Pakistan and Bangladesh. At present when the different countries in the region are adopting a conciliatory position, it is the duty of the progressive parties to adopt a correct scientific line, by discussing with each other, so that a broad based unity is created among the working class and the toiling masses for a joint struggle to overthrow the reactionary governments of these countries.

It is the prime duty of the Indian communist groups and progressives to contact the progressive forces of other countries, so that the revolutionary movement is taken ahead.

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