

AWP launches struggle for ‘socialists Pakistan’

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LAHORE, Nov 11: The Awami Workers’ Party (AWP) — the merger of left-wing parties, Labour Party Pakistan, Awami Party Pakistan and Workers’ Party Pakistan — organised on Sunday its founding conference at Aiwan-i-Iqbal.

At the meeting of the AWP, speakers said that the merger of the left-wing parties would provide a platform to anti-imperialist, anti-establishment and secular political workers to challenge feudal, capitalist and conservative forces. They called the AWP a way to establish people’s supremacy over civil and military bureaucracies. The conference featured a handsome participation of youth, reflecting the new party’s emphasis on reinvigorating the left’s organisational presence as well as the evolving novel tactics in the wake of the 20th century experiences with socialism.

“The present situation has forced us to mobilise the progressive youth on a platform that can bring about a positive change in the political system destroyed by the corrupt rulers with their anti-workers and pro-imperialism policies,” AWP Vice-President Baba Jan said.

“Now we should strengthen our struggle to topple the system to ensure rights for every one as enshrined in the Constitution,” Mr Jan, who heads a group of rights activists in Gilgit-Baltistan, said.

He said leftists and radical nationalists had a great concern over the deteriorating law and order in Pakistan, mainly in Balochistan and Sindh, where workers were either being killed or tortured.

“We want to make the country a ‘socialists Pakistan’ through peaceful efforts and protests. I request you to actively participate in the AWP activities as the situation in Pakistan is at the verge of change,” he said.

AWP President Abid Hassan Manto also endorsed Mr Jan’s views about the wave of change taking place in the world and said his party would learn about the new experiences and interventions of socialism spreading in the world on a fast track.

“Through new interventions, method and techniques, we will lay foundation stone of a new Pakistan through socialism,” he said.

He said the AWP would prove to be the real representation of the masses to help them get their rights without discrimination.

“It is an anti-imperialism and anti-feudal party,” he said, adding that it would begin extensive efforts to break these two systems through introducing a pro-worker and welfare state. He asked the AWP workers to start mobilising the youth for the next general elections. He said the AWP would bring about a revolution under the slogan of socialism.

AWP Secretary-General Farooq Tariq criticised the subordinate judiciary for handing down 650 years in jail to six Faisalabad workers in a factory fire case.

"It is very strange that the judiciary has handed down such a horrible punishment to protesting workers, but it has done nothing into fire incidents that claimed 300 workers in Karachi and 25 in Lahore," he said.

"We will not tolerate such attitude of the judiciary and we will accelerate our struggle against such rubbish system," he said.

He said the AWP would get arrested land grabbers and distribute the retrieved land among landless people. "We will launch effective land reforms," he said.

AWP Senior Vice-President Dr Hassan Nasir said his party believed in the rule of people, as it was the only way to get rid of extremism and corrupt rulers.

Farzana Bari, Aasim Sajjad Akhtar and Maqsood Mujahid also spoke.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION: Dozens of women activists from Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir also attended the conference. A few women from Lahore-based civil society organizations were also present.

OFFICE BEARERS: The central office bearers of AWP were also announced in the conference. According to announcement, Fanoos Gujjar, Abid Hassan Manto, Dr Hassan Nasir, Baba Jan, Farooq Tariq, Javaid Akhtar, Talib Husain and Nisar Shah were elected as chairman, president, senior vice-president, vice president, general secretary, deputy general secretary, finance secretary and information secretary.

CONCLUSION: The conference concluded with outlining the party's immediate objectives in the form of five points. The points include: the redress of state's hostile policy towards neighbouring countries; recognition of Pakistan's multinational essence and the establishment of a genuine federal system based on the right of self-determination for all nations; break from the dictates of multinational capital and imperialism in all its forms; and replacing the existing and oppressive state institutions with those that provide for basic needs and are fundamentally democratic in their functioning.

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* From Dawn.com:

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