

MQM failed to rally support in Punjab

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MQM has failed to rally support in Punjab as it expected from its public meeting at Lahore on 13th August 2006. According to "Daily News International" there were not more than 4000 who attended the rally. There were 3700 police men deployed for security of the public meeting. That is almost one police men for one participant. MQM claimed that 20,000 have attended the rally.

Only a day before the rally, MQM leadership told the media that they have arranged seating for 30,000. Even if we accept MQM tall claim that 20,000 has attended, it means that they could not fill the seating capacity that they had organised. But according to our resources, not over 5000 attended the meeting, a number that even Labour Party Pakistan has crossed in mobilisation on 16th March this year at Lahore.

The meeting was addressed by the "great leader" Altaf Hussain from London by telephone. The message of the speech was to attract the urban poor in Punjab by attacking the Choudries and feudals of Punjab. Altaf Hussain has tried to play on the recent discontent among the urban poor created by the growing pricehike and unemployment. He failed to attack the real reasons of this situation. Instead, Altaf used more general demogogy to attack the feudals. How come that Altaf who is sitting side by side with the feudals and the military regime, can be trusted just by his sloganeering.

Termendous efforts were made to make this event successfull. Almost all the areas of Lahore had colourfull posters and banners advertising the public rally. All the newspapers in Lahore got front and back page advertisement by MQM making an appeal to attend the public meeting. A national advertisement campaign by poster, leaflets and banners was also carried out to bring more people in the meeting. All the ministers and member of parliaments were stationed in Punjab for several weeks to contact any one who is willing to join MQM. MQM must have spent millions of rupees for this public meeting.

MQM made a specail efforts to contact the people associated with progressive movement. They did not go very for in winning the left elements. Only Giasudin Janbaz and Amanullah, both remaind in PPP for long time and were associated at one time with the left politics.

I met Giasudin Janbaz on 9th August at his residence in Toba Tek Singh. He told us that Altaf Hussain has called me and invited me to join MQM. He did not tell us that he is going to join. I guessed and pleaded with him not to join this sectarian organisation with fascist trends. Giusdin Janbaz is in his seventies and is not feeling very well for some time. His decision to join MQM will not have any significant effect in popularising MQM message in Punjab.

The media campaign by MQM gave an impression that MQM might be able to attract a considerable numbers at the public meeting. MQM did a termendous organisational work to make the event a "historic" one. But the objective realities went against them. Organisational measure are not sufficiant to break the realites of the objective ciscumstances.

What are the objective realities? MQM is part of a governemtn which is highly unpopular. MQM is part of a government which is dominated by feudals at Sind and in the Center. MQM has not made

any significant change in the lives of Karachiets while they have a total control over the local and provincial government in Sind. Under MQM, Karachi was drowned by the recent rains and all the justification by MQM mayer that he does not control all Karachi was not met with satisfaction. With their unsatisfied performances in Sind, MQM could not become a pole of attraction in Punjab.

I spoke to a trade union seminar on 12th August 2006 at Multan. It was jointly organised by National Trade Union Federation and Labour Education Foundation. Over 150 trade union leaders were present. I got maximum applause when I warned the trade unions leaders of MQM infiltration among the working class in Punjab. "They are not anti feudal. Why do not they speak against capitalism? Capitalism and feudalism goes hands in hand in Pakistan. How could you go against feudalism while promoting and strengthening capitalism? This is all lies and propaganda that MQM is for the poor" I told the packed hall by most influential trade union leaders from the Saraiki area. Several joined the

National Trade Union Federation after the seminar. NTUF is the only trade union federation that is actively making a stand against MQM politics not only in Punjab but in the main heartland of MQM, the Karachi.

Despite this recent failure, the Left forces, particularly Awami Jamhoori Tehreek, the left alliance, has to make conscious effort to block the way of MQM in Punjab and Pakistan by consistently advocating the progressive politics not only in words but in practice.

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