# RASOOL BUX PALIJO

## An Icon of Relentless Struggle

( Voice of Century 1930 - 2018 )



Compiled By

Kalavanti Raja

PEACOCK PUBLISHERS



Introduction of Compiler

Kalavanti Raja is a social and political activist. She is Masters in Chemistry and belongs to Gambat District Khairpur Mirs.

She remained the member of central committee of Sindhiyani Tahreek and playing active role in activities and protests for minorities, women, extremism terrorism and other public issue since last 30 years.

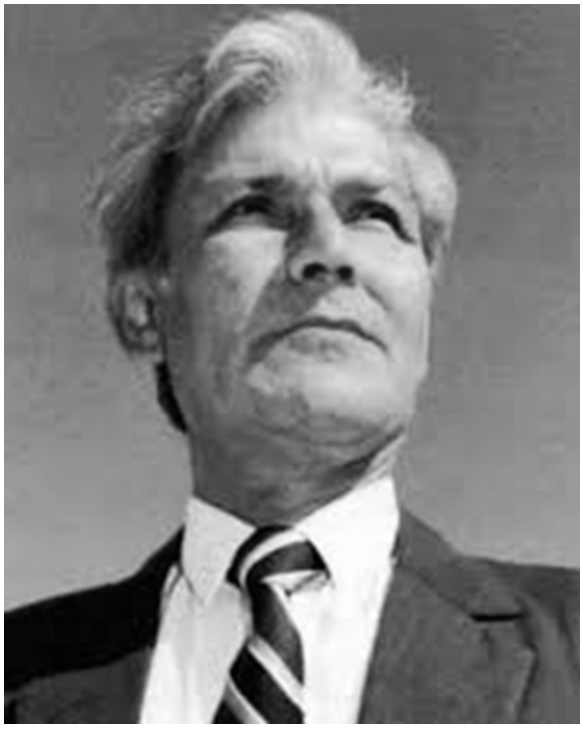
Besides all province of Pakistan, she attended several conferences, seminars and walks in Bangladesh, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Europe and America.

Reading, writing, Keeping records and taking part in public protests and gatherings are her prime interests and this book is result of her activeness. She can be reached at.

kalavanti.raja@gmail.com

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## An Icon of Relentless Struggle



Compiled By

*Kalavanti Raja*

**Peacock Publishers, Sindh**

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**RASOOL BUX PALIJO**
**An Icon of Relentless Struggle**

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Print run: 1000 copies

Price: Rs. 750/=

First Edition: 2019

Title: Munawar Abro

Layout : Syed Aafaq Shah

Printer
H & R Printers Karachi

Publisher
Peacock Publishers Karachi-Sindh
peacockpublishers@gmail.com

Peacock Book House
Flat # 404 Rafique Center, Abdullah Haroon Road, Saddar
Karachi-Sindh.
Phone: 021-35680607 ،021-35682020
peacockbookhouse@gmail.com

**Dedicated to:**

## Rasool Bux Palijo

The revolutionary leader and spirited crusader
of human equality and welfare.

**And also dedicated to:**

The unwavering and unchallengeable workers
of his beloved Awami Tahreek
who, as always, will steadfastly pursue
RB Palijo's life long odyssey for a secular,
national and democratic polity.

***- Kalavanti Raja***

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# INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Given his unerringly scientific approach to political theories, thorough and incisive grasp of world affairs and absolute clarity of mind about both local and international issues, he attained a unique stature as an opinion maker. On special occasions, Sindhi leaders and parties always selected him unopposed as the single speaker to present Sindh's stance on problems of greater concern such as settlement of Biharis, Afghan refugees, Kashmir question, Indus Water, Foreign policy, anti-terrorism war and religious extremism. He always came well-prepared and well-endowed with facts and figures and scientific analysis and carried the people with himself making us proud. He was also honoured with special invitations by world reputed universities, and treated as state guest by the liberal governments particularly those of Nepal, Afghanistan, China and Korea to talk on world affairs in context of Marxism.

I have had unbounded support and encouragement, counsels and advices and cooperation in abundance from eminent persons across Pakistan to realize my dream of producing this book. I feel a deep sense of gratitude to the worthy contributors to this book who spared some days from their busy schedule of intellectual activity to help complete it.

There is long list of friends who remained associated at various stages of the arduous process of compiling and printing of the book. They checked proofs, language, and helped in the selection of articles from the heap of material

received from across the country and abroad but preferred to remain anonymous. I want to record a big 'thank you' for all these selfless and sincere contributors who, by their untiring efforts and continued interest, made this gigantic task possible in the shortest possible time.

Two eminent intellectuals - Mr. Ali Mardan Rahoojo, a former diplomat and Ambassador M. Alam Brohi deserve my special commendation and gratitude for their steadfast, perseverant and resolute efforts and valuable suggestions for the compilation of the book. Their skillful editing of the manuscript with an incisive editorial eye has not only enhanced the beauty of the book, it has rendered it a master piece.

My special thanks goes to talented and avid reader Rukhsana Ali, a PhD student in Finland, for her absolute support and pursuance in collection and selection of articles with due commitment and competence. She remained involved intuitively with deep personal insight and passion till publishing of this book.

None of what I wanted to do would have been possible without the enthusiastic and talented team of Peacock Printers, who indebted me with professional advises in the completion of this anthology. For a considerably long time, I did not dare to undertake the compiling of the book but credit goes to my family for sparing me time to sit across the table to complete this assignment.

Nevertheless, the book is now in your hands to read, judge, and comment, to which I shall be enthusiastically looking forward. In short, I pay tributes to Palijo sahib, his followers and contributors of this book with the words of Nelson Mandela, which he wrote in a letter to Winnie Mandela on 23 June 1969.

*"Honour belongs to those who never forsake the truth even; when things seems dark and grim, who try over and over again, who never discouraged by insults, humiliations and even defeats".*

*Gambat, 15-May-2019* **Kalavanti Raja**

# FOREWORD

I am truly honoured and humbled to be writing the foreword for this book with a wonderful collection of articles on Rasool Bux Palijo. I am neither a politician nor an academic - I am merely an artist who loved, respected and admired Rasool Bux Palijo!

How do I even begin to write about a man who was and will continue to be a towering figure in the history of politics of Pakistan? Perhaps I should start from the moment that I first met him. This was in 1977 in Karachi, and needless to say I was totally overwhelmed and mesmerized by his brilliance, his intelligence, his knowledge of not only Marxism, but of literature, of music, of history and of course of Sindhi art and culture! It is rare, in Pakistan, to find such a well and widely read man involved in political activism; most of the men who are involved in politics have no interest beyond the mundane logistics of political thinking. For them politics is not the dynamic pulse of life but a way to get into power and control. Palijo was a man of acute and sharp observation and perception with a diverse interest in many subjects, who could discuss in great depth the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai and Shakespeare, the history of the world, the literature of the world, the *bhajans* of Meerabai, the musical contribution of Ameer Khusraw and the ideas of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg and even feminists like Simone de Beauvoir and Angela Davis. The amazing diversity of his interests and the depth of his knowledge and scholarship was indeed incredible. All this was reflected in him, in his being, in his speech and in the twinkle in his eyes. Undoubtedly he was a very intelligent

man, a handsome man, both intense and humorous, a man with a great presence and a charming charisma.

What impressed me most about Palijo and his politics right from the very beginning was his sensitivity and understanding about involving women and youth into politics, and his belief that culture and cultural activity were those revolutionary elements that must be employed to their full potential for a new revolutionary identity for human kind. Since 1977 I have attended and participated in numerous *Jalsas*', meetings and conferences of his Awami Tehreek and the Sindhiyani Tehreek. Palijo sahib would himself call me up and invite me, almost ordering me to perform at these events. For me it was not just a pleasure but always an honour to perform at these amazing gatherings of hundreds of thousands of peasant women and men and the most amazing thing was to see so many young girls and boys performing with conviction and energy. At every *jalsa* the fiery speeches would be interspersed with folk songs, revolutionary songs, songs of liberation, poetry recitations, dances, skits, tableaus performed by young boys and girls.

In a society that is so highly patriarchal and misogynist, where feudal anti-women practices and values are prevalent, the work of mobilising and organising women, especially peasant women into an organisation such as Sindhiyani Tehreek was an amazingly revolutionary step taken by Palijo. He believed in women's liberation and always helped women to achieve their independence and freedom. I have walked miles with Zarina Baloch and with his sisters the late Ghulam Fatima and with Marium APA and later on with Zaheda Shaikh in the small towns and villages of Sindh visiting women, talking and mobilising them. I have seen how the women of Sindh have been trained and inspired by Palijo and his ideas at a time when no other political leader was even aware or concerned about involving women in politics. His influence and his capacity to motivate women to fight for their rights was manifested when thousands of

women of Sindh carried his coffin on their shoulders, singing while taking his body during his funeral procession to his last resting place. This was a historic moment which can never be forgotten.

Palijo's other great contribution was his movement to involve young people to fight for their rights. He created the *Sujag Baar'* Tehreek and then the '*Shagird*' Tehreek - both these organisations were unique in the manner in which the youth, both girls and boys were motivated to study politics, make political speeches and become politically active. Palijo would himself take a personal interest in every child who he found had the potential to go forward. He would train these young people in the art of oratory and speech. He himself was a fascinating speaker and used his study of law to convince and persuade his audiences. He could move people to cry or to laugh at his behest.

Comrade Palijo was always outspoken, brave, strongly anti-establishment and totally secular. He always stood with the oppressed, with the marginalized and with the down trodden. It is not easy to find anyone of his caliber, his deep understanding of Marxism-Leninism, his study of world revolutionary thought and of all the revolutionary movements of the world. He was a pillar of the Left movement in Pakistan. For me, perhaps the most unique and the greatest contribution of Palijo sahib towards political history of the Leftist movement in Pakistan is the beautiful way he integrated 'Art' with his politics. For him politics was not only slogans and pamphlets; his politics involved the integration of folk lore, of dance, of music, of theatre into a social phenomenon for the welfare, refinement and growth of hearts and minds of the people, so that culture and cultural life plays a productive role leading us into a better state of human existence.

Love was a driving force for Palijo, love for justice, for equality and for the creation of a better world for human beings. Only someone who believes in love wants to create

beauty and this is what he aspired for - a just and beautiful world, free from inequality, oppression and hatred. He was a 'nationalist' because he could see and feel the national oppression that his people faced; he was an internationalist because he understood that revolution cannot be accomplished in a fragmented manner. I don't think that anyone who ever met him was not touched, inspired and moved by his integrity and his eloquence. He was both an emotional and intellectual man who lived a life to its full potential striving every minute to raise the qualitative level of human life and existence. The impact and legacy of Rasul Bux Palijo will never be forgotten!

*Karachi, April 2019* **Sheema Kermani**

# PREFACE

Some lives touch the world in an exceptional way. They do this not just by being an exceptional individual, but by having the special ability to motivate others to believe that a more just world is possible; that the collective struggle is worthwhile; that we are agents in this story and we have the power to create change. Some people force us to think and to question and to grow from this knowledge. This knowledge empowers us, informs our struggles and allows us to move forward. Comrade Rasool Bux Palijo was such a life and he continues to live past his death in all the ideas and people who he touched in an exceptional way. I have never had the privilege to know anyone in my life who was as multidimensional a personality as Palijo. He was an intellectual, a politician, a philosopher, a lawyer, a writer, a strategist, a motivator and so much more. What made him an exceptional human is the excellence that he commanded in all of these dimensions.

I met him in exile in London in 1980s after he was released from a six years long imprisonment for opposing General Zia ul Haq's martial Law. Amnesty International had already declared him as a -prisoner of conscience. We had established the -Palijo Release Committee and launched a campaign for his release in London.

A man I had never met, with whom I had no blood relationship, was coming to stay with us. But we were connected through our ideas and commitment to social justice, through socialism and our shared secular, democratic worldview. At the time ideological connections seemed stronger than blood relations.

From the airport, Palijo landed in our small two-room flat in William Good Enough House at Russell Square in London. I was struck by the two extreme contradictory aspects to his personality. His time in prison had affected him badly. I saw a fearful child in him when he was out with me on the streets of London. He would refuse to cross the road and I would virtually have to drag him with me. He was not able to handle loud noises and road traffic would scare him. He would wear layers and layers of clothes and still feel extremely cold, even in hot weather. He could hardly manage to eat properly and would spill tea and food on his clothes. Yet despite this, he was an intellectual giant and his mind in contrast was just as sharp as his hands were shaky.

Our flat in London was an open place for all Pakistanis. As Pervaiz Tahir mentioned it was like the Paris Commune. The standard food served in our house was Dal Chawal or Chicken Curry and Rice. Bari or I would cook plenty, as we never knew who would drop by at our place. But I made a rule in my house that everyone who would eat in our house would wash their own plate. I tried to apply the same rule to Palijo sahib, but the mess he used to make in the kitchen by spilling water all over the place forced me to make an exception for him. I was happy to make these exceptions for Palijo. His extremely insightful analysis and his intellectual power of understanding complex political situations with clarity was eye opening for us all. Palijo sahib was in the habit of first asking everyone around to reflect on the issue or problem he raised. He would seek their views first and listen intently and then at the end he would give his own analysis. His analysis would always be so insightful that it would leave people speechless.

He was an extremely well read person. I remember Palijo sitting on the bed, with his reading glasses slipping down his nose, surrounded by heaps of books on many different subjects, ranging from politics, history, philosophy,

war, literature, poetry, films etc. Whenever he would come to Islamabad, he never missed the opportunity to scour the old bookshops.

As a Marxist, no one in Pakistan understood women's potential to play a role in the socialist revolution, as did he. Palijo understood the power of women. Women who were slaves of the slaves and thus their desire for liberation was even stronger than the male proletariat in the capitalist system. Women are the ones who virtually had nothing to lose but their chains, as working class men still enjoy the dividends of patriarchy. Women's dual suffering of capital exploitation and patriarchal oppression in capitalism provides the material condition for women to develop a class and gender consciousness that makes them the vanguard of the socialist revolution. Palijo understood this.

Palijo was the only leftist politician in Pakistan who brought women and family as an integrated whole in the party fold of Awami Tehreek. Sindhiani Tehreek was the most powerful and resilient face of AT. I would often be bowled over when simple looking rural women in Sindhinai Tehreek would open their mouth to reflect on the political situation. They are so unassuming, but fully trained and well versed in Marxism and understood how these ideologies connected to their lived realities. The way Sindhiani Tehreek fought for democratic rights and resisted Zia ul Haq's repression was also unprecedented. Ms. Akhtar Baloch and many others were tortured in jails for years to make political history for the women in Pakistan. Sindhiani Tehreek became a distinction of Palijo's politics. Sindhi rural women were at the forefront of his long marches for Sindh's rights. No wonder Sindhiani women carried him on their shoulders in his last journey to the grave.

There are so many aspects of Palijo's life that one cannot do justice to reflect on. On a personal level, I found his presence so inspirational. His belief and commitment to socialist revolution was unwavering. He was youthful in his

ideas. He would make you feel like you are the most important person for the revolution. That Inquilab is not coming just because you are not actively playing your role.

When I would leave his company, I would be filled with resolve to work for socialist revolution in the country. His presence will always be missed at the political as well as at the personal level.

I really appreciate Kalavanti Raja, who took this initiative to collate all pieces that are written at Palijo's departure to pay him a tribute. I am extremely grateful that this publication has given us an opportunity to celebrate Palijo's life and remember him.

Rest in Power Rasool Bux Palijo. You will be missed, but not forgotten.

*Islamabad, April 2019* **Dr. Farzana Bari**

# RASOOL BUX PALIJO - A VALIANT SON OF SINDH

*Ali Mardan Rahoojo*

Late Rasool Bux Palijo was a man of exceptional qualities of head and heart. He was a gifted intellect, a prolific writer, a fiery orator, a creative thinker, an ardent social-political activist, a true son of soil, a Sindh lover and an inspiring leader with clear vision, matchless courage, indefatigable energy, unwavering resolve and unfaltering commitment to the cause.

Palijo Sahib was shining star among the galaxy of contemporary Sindh intellectuals, activists and political leaders who left a lasting mark on language, literature, culture, history and political awakening of Sindh. Unlike many theoreticians he practiced what he preached. He not only created ideas and penned several books but also put all his ideas and theories into practice by organizing mass movements and leading them from the front.

Mr. Palijo has many facets of personality; each one needs volumes of research and documentation. However, some aspects of his personality and political struggle are briefly touched in this write-up.

Mr. Palijo was a born rebel and challenged gender bias of society from his very adolescent days. In one of his interviews he said he would always side with his mother whenever there used to be an argument between his parents. Similarly, he used to rush to protect the women if any incident of domestic violence took place at his native village. He also said to have encouraged his elder sister to reject a

suitor being imposed upon her by parents and instead chose a life partner of her own choice.

He always believed that women are the backbone of any society and would play a leading role in socioeconomic development if they were to be properly educated and empowered. He considered it no less than a sin to confine 50% of population into fortified walls of households. He believed that women of Sindh were neither weak nor meek but they have been subdued to servitude due to male chauvinism and feudal value system. In his view, if Sindh had to progress and get away with the shackles of feudal vestiges, the women should be organized, educated and streamlined.

Perhaps one of the outstanding contributions of Mr. Palijo was that he organized hitherto the weakest segment of society - Sindhi women into a formidable political force- who not only raised their voice against social injustice, male dominated social values and feudal mindset but also stood shoulder to shoulder with their male comrades in protracted struggle for restoration of social, political and economic rights of people of Sindh. The *Sindhyani-Tehrik* - Movement of Sindhi Women - one of the offshoot of Palijo's *Awami Tehrik* - Peoples Movement - was a distinct in many ways which had no parallel in the country as well in the entire south Asia region.

Mr. Palijo came to realize in very early age that all problems in society originate from politics and also end in politics. In his views, it was political struggle which could ensure equitable rights to all citizen of the state and shall end social injustice and exploitation of weak by the powerful. He started political activities from very early age.

While studying at Sindh Madarastul Islam, he joined Muslim Student Federation and took active part in student politics. However his active political career started in 1953 when he joined Sindh Hari (Peasant) Committee, which was actually founded by GM Syed in 1930 but later taken over by

Hyder Bux Jatoi in 1947. The Hari Committee spoke of the peasant's rights which included, among others, the abolition of bonded labor, stoppage of forcible eviction of landless peasants, end of zamindari/ feudal system and discriminatory policies of Government against the peasants.

As an active member of Hari Committee, Mr. Palijo was instruments in drafting and adopting a landmark resolution during Annual Conference of the Sindh Hari Committee held in Hyderabad in December 1955. This resolution later influenced the policy decisions on successive land reforms in the country initiated during Ayub and ZA Bhutto eras. The highlights of the resolution are produced as under:

The Hari Committee resolved and demands that: Security of tenancy rights should be guaranteed to all peasants of Pakistan (by an entry in the Record of Rights) and their arbitrary eviction by Zamindars legally prohibited.

Batai system should be replaced by a fair cash rental system, the peasants to pay the rental through Government agency along with the land assessment.

Till the 'Batai' system is abolished, the Haris' share should be 60 percent of the gross produce, and no deduction should be made from this share All forms of free or forced labor exacted from the peasants by the Zamindars must be stopped, and all available Government machinery must be applied to the problem.

An effective and all-embracing Tenancy Law must be passed immediately, even by an ordinance, incorporating the above measures. Though Mr. Palijo remained politically active throughout life but he emerged as a mass leader after he founded his political party- *Sindhi Awami Tehreek* in 1978-79. Prior to that he remained part of National Awami Party and Bazam Sofiya-e Sindh but he could not see eye to eye with their leadership and parted his ways. Those days, founding a political party was easy but finding a political space in Sindh could have been a daunting task. In 1970s the rural landscape of Sindh was dominated by two powerful

undercurrents of political thought. The ultra-nationalist elements were rallied under the banner of Late G M Syed who gave a powerful narrative that creation of Pakistan did not resolve the issues of nationalities but rather aggravated them. To him, a nation can't be formed only on the basis of religion but it needs to have common language, collective heritage, shared history, accepted value system and defined goals and objectives. In that context, the real issue in Pakistan was to recognize the rights of nations and grant them freedom to exercise their will freely.

Mr. GM Syed's philosophy and appeal attracted millions of follower, especially the young students, leaving hardly any room for any new comer in political arena to flex his muscle. At one time it was even unthinkable to challenge the wisdom and political philosophy of GM Syed in literary circles of Sindh.

On the other hand, a charismatic and evangelist Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto emerged on the political scene with populist and socialist agenda, with catchy slogans to provide basic needs like *Roti, Kapara and Makan* (food, clothing and shelter) to all by taking over industries and business houses by the state and distributing the dividends to poor and needy. Though overtly against the feudalism but Bhutto craftily lured the feudal lords to his party and who later formed the backbone of the party. Mr. Bhutto also organized the hot-headed young men by creating a formidable cadre of political worker -*Jiyalas*- who were later geared up to mobilize masses for Bhutto's power politics.

Bhutto's party believed in strong federation leaving no room for narrow nationalism or parochial sentiments, which was juxtapose to GM Syed's nationalist philosophy. Though mutually conflicting, but both political philosophies had a powerful appeal for the masses and pulled million into their folds. So it was challenging for any new comer like Mr. Palijo to challenge these established political thoughts and find space for himself and his party. Mr. Palijo had to deeply

study the existing political currents in the country and analyze them from the prism of the thoughts of modern and classical political thinkers. In the process he came up with his own political synthesis which was in sync with ground realties. His book "*Subuh Thendo*"- there will be Dawn - was tell teller of his understanding of political issues of Pakistan. To him all the nations forming the present day Pakistan shall prosper and progress in united Pakistan but the Federation must recognize the status of the federating units as nations as defined in Lahore Resolution of 1940. He also believed that democracy was the only way to govern the country but elected government should not follow the status quo but should pursue a social agenda to empower all segments of society including agriculture and industrial workers by abolition of feudal system and cartelization of industry. As such his political philosophy was not completely a nationalist movement or class struggle but it was a delicate blend of two.

Mr. Palijo not only unraveled the political ideology of his party but also organized a political movement on scientific line. He established comprehensive tiers of party consisting of a central executive body at the top, followed by provincial, district, tehsil and village bodies at the grassroots level. He started a comprehensive program of study circles in which party workers were given books and topics to study and later share the central idea of books with the audiences followed by Q&A sessions. This created healthy traditions of book reading and knowledge sharing. Mr. Palijo always exhorted his workers and followers to devote much of their time in acquiring and disseminating knowledge and information through reading, writing, debates and discussions. Simultaneously, he charted out plans and strategies to build the character, ethical and moral values of his party workers. He insisted that his worker more specifically the students should seek formal education in any discipline but never resort to cheating or any other

unfair means to get degrees. When it was rather norm than exception that student leaders hardly took their studies seriously and spent more time in non-academic activities, the student leaders of Palijo's party were called upon to excel in academics first then involve in student politics.

Mr. Palijo had a unique style of training and mentoring his party workers. Being himself a world class orator and master of table talks, Mr. Palijo would tell his workers that if they wished to influence the people at any occasion and win their loyalties, they should do the following:

They must read the world literature. They should select at least half a dozen themes and pick about a dozen of books on each subject and read them from cover to cover. After going through the books, they should form small groups and discuss as what they have read and understood. The more they read, the more they would grasp the theme and more effectively they could present their point view. This exercise shall shape their personalities and they could outshine others during the course of discussion and debate.

Besides reading literature and political science, every worker should read the world history with more focus on history of subcontinent and find out how the power struggle had lately changed the history, geography and the way of living and thinking of common folks.

He would insist to extensively read the books on history, art, literature and society of Sindh. He used to say if you want to play as advocates of Sindh rights then you must master all aspects of Sindh society. Without solid understating of Sindh issues you can't effectively present the case of Sindh at any forum.

He also insisted to study philosophy and religion to widen their understanding of the religions. He would say study at least 100 books in two years on these subjects. Without the understanding of the religions, you can't draw a line between reality and dogma. In his view, we are human first and religious later. All religions of world convey the

message to unconditionally love humanity and make no discrimination among them on the basis of cast and creed.

He also advised workers, if they wanted to be good public speakers they must read and commit to memory some inspiring couplets of known poets of all language but preferably the poets of Sindhi, Urdu, Persian and English language. The poetry and poetic interpretation of intricate issues of life, if presented in any gathering in proper context and meaning, would create a mesmerizing effect on audience and lift their mood and charge their spirits.

The last but not the least, he advised his worker to read and memorize proverbs, maxims, sayings and words of wisdom of different languages and use them in their interactions with people. These maxims symbolize the collective wisdom of any nation and have evolved in thousands of years. The one who uses them frequently will invariable get the attention and shall be viewed as wise and learned man.

With these teachings, training, and mentoring, Palijo Sahib created a very organized, disciplined and progressive political cadre unprecedented in the history of Sindh who later played a very critical role in political awakening in Sindh.

Mr. Palijo believed in inclusive political participation and thus organized every strata of society by establishing their representative organizations under his party umbrella. *Sindyani Tehrik* - Sindhi Women Movement - *Sindhi Shagard* Tehrik (SST) - Sindhi Student Movement - *Sindhi Mazdoor Tehrik*- Sindhi Labour Movement *Sindhi Hari Tahreek*- Sindhi Farmers Movement - *Sujag Bar Tehrik* -Youth Awakening Movement - Sindhi Girls Student Movement and *Hindu Sujag Tehrik* - Hindu Awakening Movement - were some of the organizations he formed to rally support of all segments of society for greater cause.

Though Mr. Palijo remained active and vibrant in politics throughout his life but he shot up to the stature of

national leader when he joined Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) in 1983. The MRD was a coalition of eleven Pakistani political parties formed to pressurize the dictatorial regime of Zia-ul-Haq to hold elections and suspend the martial law. Though MRD was launched nationwide but its intensity in Sindh was too staggering which forced Zia to send 45,000 troops into the province to suppress the uprising. 200 people were killed and up to 15,000 were arrested. The jails overflowed and the regime was forced to set up camps to keep prisoners in tents.

Though PPP was in the forefront but the real bite to movement was given by the political workers of Palijo's Awami Tehrik. The trained and disciplined *Awami Tehrik* workers toured villages and towns of Sindh and inspired the people to rise to the occasion. As a result millions of people took part in boycotts and strikes and demonstrations and thousands of them offered volunteer arrests.

No doubt MRD was the defining movement for people of Sindh who saw it as an opportunity to avenge the blood of Shaheed Zulfiqar Bhutto and also to get redressed of the pent-up grievances at the hands of the majority Punjabi-dominated administration in Islamabad. Though the movement was suppressed with heavy hand but it conveyed the message of Sindhis loud and clear that the stability of the country lies in democracy and parliamentary process. One of the highlight of MRD movement, which goes to the credit of Mr. Palijo, was adoption of a resolution on provincial autonomy during MRD's meeting held in Rawalpindi in 1983.

Long before the MRD movement, Mr. Palijo remained very vocal and vibrant on Sindh issues. He played a leading role in orchestrating a mass movement against One Unit. He used his pen as sword and words as bullets to target the powerful dictators to undo One-Unit which had grossly undermined the historic significance of smaller federating nations. This movement gained incredible public sympathy

and support and it seemed unlikely that dictators could sustain the scheme of One Unit for long, and eventually they gave in and undid it in July, 1970.

Mr. Palijo also waged a pitched struggle to end the auction of state lands to non Sindhis after commissioning of Ghulam Muhammad (Kotri) Barrage. His struggle bore the fruits and government eventually stopped the public auctioning of state land in 1970.

Mr. Palijo's intellectual depth and political sagacity could be judged from the fact that when most of the political leaders had not fully comprehend the repercussions of the construction of Kala Bagh Dam (KBD), he identified KBD scheme as a dangerous ploy to rob the Indus water- a life blood of Sindh and turn it into veritable desert. He remained an avowed opponent of KBD throughout his life and never hesitated to discredit and oppose this scheme at any level and at any forum.

In his view, Punjab has historically been stealing the waters of Sindh from pre-partition days down to the commissioning of Terbella Dam in and Chashma Jehlum Link Canal in 1972. Mr. Palijo argued in his book -The Sindh - Punjab water dispute 1859-2002 – that 'if wars are too serious matters to be left to the discretion of Generals, fair and equitable distribution of national water among the provinces being a thousand times more complicated and sensitive matter than any war, cannot be settled by the orders of even a Commando general.

Judging by the past history, the locking up of Indus at Kalabagh will turn Sindh into a desert and destroy the lives of Crores of people in Sindh and many more in NWFP. Sindhis and Pashtoons will have nowhere to go, except to fight for their existence. This is going to have consequences for the whole of Pakistan which could go far beyond the longest possible rule of the present rulers and may prove to be worse than those of the East Pakistan debacle. Pakistan has already suffered enough from the adventures of Ayub

Khan, Yahya Khan and Zia-ul-Haq. It cannot afford any more adventures'.

'The bulk of Sindh's share of waters had already been illegally plundered, especially after the establishment of Pakistan and long before the 1991 accord, Mangla dam, built at the expense of all Pakistanis, as the replacement dam for the illegally sold rivers, has been totally misappropriated and transformed from a replacement to a basically development dam for irrigating new lands of Punjab. Tarbela, the development dam declared to be meant for development and feeding of Sindh canals - has been forcibly captured by Punjab authorities who are using it as their exclusive property'.

'This is internal colonial high handedness, exploitation and terrorism in its most naked, blatant and cruel form. Every further drop or cusec of water - that is being taken now or will be taken hereafter, from the Indus System, for any canal or dam - will to that extent, reduce the flow of Indus System Water towards the province at the tail - Sindh and intensify its ruin and desertification'.

'Justice demands that the above enormous injustices to Sindh from the first days of the establishment of Pakistan be rectified before any further loose talk about further dams and canals. The alleged wrong doers in this respect include Prime Ministers, Presidents and federal and provincial governments of the country. So what is needed is an impartial and powerful, international judicial forum of the UN, OIC and SAARC level to decide the matter. Justice delayed is Justice denied'.

Mr. Palijo not only raised his voice but organized a well -coordinated movement against the construction of KBD. He held conference, took part in TV talks, organized demonstrations and rallies where he delivered fiery speeches and proved with material facts, wit and logic that KBD was nothing short of malice to benefit the powerful federating unit at the expense of smaller units. Not only that

he also organized long marches against KBD. The first such march was organized from Sukkur to Karachi in 1991 followed similar march in 1995 and another marches from Bhit Shah to Karachi in 2017 and yet another from Islamkot to Karachi in 2018. All these marches were joined by thousands of his party worker including men and women of all ages and social group.

His struggle against KBD bore the fruits. Three provincial Assemblies passed resolutions against KBD. The ANG Abbasi Committee appointed in 2004 rejected the KBD on technical grounds. Even the former Chief Justice -Mian Saqib Nisar, a champion of Dams, could not pass a clear judgment on it. The KBD has since become a controversial project and no Government could revive it by risking a severe public backlash. The credit to this squarely goes to Mr. Palijo. Had he not been vocal on this very existential issue, the KBD scheme would have materialized long ago and Sindh would have been deprived of its rightful share of Indus water.

Another feather in the cap of Mr. Palijo was that long before Pakistan Government and its sensitive agencies smelt the foul play of MQM and declared it a terrorist organization having links with foreign agencies to disturb peace and stability in the country, he publically called MQM a fascist, terrorist and criminal organization having no political ideology or agenda to further its cause. In his views MQM was product of Mohajir mindset who had never owned any land or culture to fully integrate and assimilate in the local milieu. Besides, they always considered themselves victors and treated locals as vanquished and as such they demanded greater pie from the resources of Sindh from the day Pakistan became independent country. In his assessment, if MQM or as a matter of fact, Mohjirs do not change their mindset and accept Sindh as their motherland, they would be destined to be pushed out of it one day by the forces of nature.

Mr. Palijo did not have smooth ride on bumpy road of politics. He paid heavy price for that. He was arrested several times on various grounds and incarcerated in jails. He spent about 11 years in jail with different intervals and was declared as the 'prisoner of conscience' by Amnesty International in 1981. But these troubles and tribulations did not break the resolve of Mr. Palijo. He remained steadfast and relentless in his struggle and continuously waged a crusade to root out exploitation and social injustice from the society.

Mr. Palijo left the mortal world for heavily abode on June 7, 2018 leaving behind a sea of mourners. He was an icon of relentless struggle. The people of Sindh owe too much to him. He gave them courage, confidence, a clear vision and direction. Though he left us but his legacy shall live forever. Sindh may not have another Rasool Bux Palijo for centuries again.

*(Writer is a former diplomat & President Sindh Vision; can be reached at alimrahoojo@gmail.com)*

# A SOLDIER OF SINDH AND SINDHU

*M Alam Brohi*

I have not encountered this much difficulty in writing about any person whom I had met twice in my life, about whom I had read to some extent, and about whom I had heard something from his contemporaries. I saw and heard him in Television Talk shows on various subjects. I heard his speeches. I read some of his books and columns. As a critic or debater, he always appeared to be well armed with spears of facts and sharp sword of figures, a stunning eloquence in expressing his views, and a daunting aggressiveness, a sharp edged intellect - all out to shred the credibility of his contestants and expose their superficial and scanty knowledge of the theme under discussion.

He exuded confidence, moral and intellectual authority, and scholarly superiority in his arguments aimed at a wider spectrum of audience from scholars to subject experts, educated middle class to the common man. He swung from one argument to the other with clarity of mind. He was not confined in his knowledge to a single subject. He moved like a living library, well-endowed with an array of books on every faculty, every discipline of study. Though lean and simple by his appearance, modest in his habits, he looked like giant of a man in his will, determination, dominance, and political and ideological convictions.

His lectures were like streams ebbing and flowing with curls and curves, and through ups and downs of history, making and breaking empires, covering rise and eclipse of nations and civilizations, laying bare pearls of facts from odd mélange of fiction, plucking truth from the cobweb of

falsehood, exposing the wicked nature of humans, torture of underprivileged by ruthless human evolutionary march, cutting across the upheavals of revolutions, aiming at the oppressive religious beliefs.

He was not a historian but knew history like the palm of his hand; he was not a traditional religious scholar but had labored hard to grasp the spirit of gospels and Holy Scriptures including the Quran. He was a revolutionary and his understanding of Karl Marx, Lenin and Angelis sharply contrasted with the pseudo revolutionaries and communists and dwarfed subject experts. He did not have a doctorate in Philosophy but his grasp of the Greek philosophies and Western political thought outweighed the labour of silver haired professors.

His writings reflected the depth of the Sea, the vastness of the horizon, the majestic flow of a river; the roar of a waterfall devastating intellectually everything and everyone coming in his way. In his time, and among his contemporaries, there was no match to his mighty pen, no match to his hard labour in research and collection of facts and analytical appreciation of circumstances in a given point of time, no answer to his powerful arguments, no resistance to his surgical autopsy of theories, themes and issues that stimulated his intellectual curiosity, irked his scholarly patience, challenged his depth of knowledge and comprehension of historical, political and strategic under currents and cross currents. Though precise and cogent, his books, essays and columns reveal treasure trove of knowledge, erudition and scholarship permeating the cobweb of hearsay and falsehood and allowing readers to have a glimpse of truth obscured under layers of misrepresentation and misleading statements. Teachers and students of history and social sciences will benefit from his books, essays and columns for years to come.

For years, his friends, followers and contemporaries have been struggling to determine his place as to what he

was: an astute politician, a consummate political scientist and theorist, a diehard Marxist, a crusading nationalist, a shrewd strategist and indefatigable agitator, a great social reformer, a versatile scholar and writer, a committed leader and teacher. They find it hard to restrict him to any single status. Then, what was he? Was he giant of a person epitomizing all these multiple qualifications equipping his armoury to fight successful battles at various fronts in defense of his land and people, and his convictions?

He proved an unbeatable warrior on every front, undaunted by temporary setback, hardships of jail wards, pecuniary loss or social and family pressures. His crusading spirit never succumbed to fatigue, pessimism and hopelessness or a selfish temptation for wealth, power and fame. He forged ahead with an infectious aura of optimism reflecting the inherent strength of his land and the resilience of his underprivileged people being the epicenter of his undying love and labour.

His achievements as a true Sindhi nationalist, Marxist and leftist, a political strategist and leader, a scholar and writer and a liberal social agitator and reformer not only received public recognition within his home province and country but transcended regional and international borders, too. He stood taller than his contemporaries and rubbed shoulder as a scholar and political writer with his eminent predecessors in his land. He picked up the thread of political writings where Ghulam Mohammad Grami, Hyder Bukhsh Jatoi, Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi and G.M. Syed had left it.

His style, diction and beauty of language prominently distinguished him from these big names of political literature in Sindhi language. His choice or invention of comprehensible phrases of Sindhi language in deciphering the curls and curves of political and ideological themes was unique and formidable and went directly to the heart and mind of his readers. I have not come across the writings of any Sindhi scholar or writer in political literature which

could claim such appealing and convincing force as that of his masterpieces.

This was Rasool Bukhsh Palijo, as his friends, colleagues and admirers knew him and presented him with pride and privilege and whose reflection we could see in his writings, in his long struggle spawning over many decades - a unique son of the soil, a moving and motivating spirit, a versatile scholar, a committed political and ideological mentor, a social reformer, a Marxist and Moist, a nationalist crusader, a dauntless battler, a believer in the virtues of labour and struggle, a consummate lawyer, a man of uncompromising convictions and irreproachable character, a man of words and deeds, a spear in the ribs of anti-Sindh forces, a formidable challenge to the tribalism, a phalanx against dogmatism and fragmentation of humanity, and compartmentalization of political consciousness into self-serving national politics and nationalist politics, or federal politics and provincial politics. I feel myself helpless to encapsulate his qualifications and achievements in one article.

I had the privilege of hearing him in the early-1970s in Larkana during the heyday of Z.A. Bhutto. Some senior leaders of his political party, Awami Tehrik, invited him for a brief talk. Most of the questions related to the rule of Bhutto and the role of Pakistan People's in the political evolution of Sindh. He was ruthlessly objective in his criticism of Bhutto and his promotion of cronyism through dispensation of political and administrative positions to landlords and their sons and nephews. He warned that this political culture that Bhutto was developing, was an aberration of serious nature portending gross and far reaching consequences for Sindh, and would be an albatross around the neck of Sindhis in the coming years.

This mindless dispensation of administrative positions to the sons and brothers of his cronies at the cost of merit would strengthen the hands of landlords and rejuvenate the

very self-serving and feudal-constituency based politics which he himself challenged and defeated with the support of general masses. He was of the firm view that Late Bhutto was unwittingly making traditional political demigods more powerful and helping them perpetuate their hold on the masses of Sindh. He called his land reforms and nationalization of industry as cosmetic steps far from bringing any socio-economic change in Sindh and the country. He claimed Bhutto exploited socialism to mobilize the masses to achieve his political ends.

What he prophetically predicted was that the education in Sindh would have a nosedive in Bhutto's rule. The trend of waywardness in students set in motion by G.M. Syed for the advancement of his harmful nationalist politics would be taken to a devastating height by Bhutto. He rejected Bhutto's credentials as a true democrat, a true socialist, though he reckoned with his popularity, and his inspiration of the masses. He predicted that Bhutto himself was going to be the architect of his downfall. He depended on the electoral strength of landlords, the Punjabi—Muhajir political manipulators, and the wily establishment. All these foundational bases of his power would drift away under his feet like shifting sands no sooner than he outlived his utility.

Though, given the popularity of Late Bhutto at the time, it was not possible for some of his audience to buy his arguments, the subsequent years, however, proved him prophetically true.

In an earlier article captioned as 'Syed and Bhutto', he had profusely admired Bhutto for his political acumen, his skillful use of the general masses' disillusionment and anger against the autocratic rather oligarchic rule of Ayub Khan, to his favour, his labour to mobilize the peoples' power to overthrow the ossified political system which had almost suffocated and reduced the masses to resignation and sufferance, and the leftist and secularist forces to apathy and inertia. For the revival of politics, as Mao Zedong had put it,

we need a battle. Bhutto fought this battle and broke the stagnation in the politics of that era. Some forces of status quo, landlords and tribal chiefs had jumped the fence and joined the PPP ranks with the sole objective of undermining its strength from within. They were getting powerful within the party. Nobody could open a PPP office in their area without an express signal from them. The rightist and so called nationalist forces represented by the Jamaat Islami, Pakistan Democratic Party, factions of Muslim League, National Awami Party and Jeay Sindh Mahaz in West Pakistan and Awami League in East Pakistan were out with all their armoury to defend the feudal electorate-based political system. Bhutto was the one- man army to battle with the dark forces of the status quo with the help of some young leftists. The rest of the leaders in the party were hungry vultures waiting in wings to take their pound of flesh of political and administrative spoils for the Pakistan People Party, though in its infancy, with the general masses rallying round Bhutto as a gallant and brave leader was well set to win the elections in the West Pakistan.

In his 'Syed and Bhutto' piece, this political clairvoyant, clearly predicted that if Bhutto shunned the farce feudal election-based politics, and mobilized the underprivileged masses in the length and breadth of the country, he would bring about a revolutionary change burying the prevalent corrupt and anti-peoples political culture forever in the country, and emerge as peoples' leader of the standing of the known revolutionary leaders of Asia and Latin America. He warned Bhutto of the conspiracy hatched by the USA and major countries inimical to China to enlist the support of the status quo forces in the country to destroy him. Bhutto did not show the patience and stomach for a long and decisive peoples' struggle to bury the status quo and gradually succumbed to the magnetic pull of power and the fast results of his political strategy of defeating the status quo forces in the feudal election-based battle. The subsequent years

proved how grossly mistaken Bhutto was. No political party in the country attracted Rasool Bukhsh. He liked a bit National Awami Party as a nationalist and leftist political party. But, he could not feel comfortable among all those Khans, Sardars, and insincere nationalists and Urdu-speaking leftist of the like of Mahmood ul Haq Usmani and Jamal Naqvi being the products of the anti- people's political system and suffering from anti-Sindhi bias.

Consistent with his political beliefs, he co-founded the Awami Tehrik, with another political thinker and sage Fazil Rahu at the far end of the 1960s. Both were of the firm view that the labour class being small in strength, though motivated for political struggle, could only create waves in the muddy waters of status quo but would be unable to bring it down unless supported by the huge peasantry.

The condition of peasants all over the country was more miserable than the industrial labour and factory workers. They lived in perpetual poverty and misery. The Hari Committee of Hyder Bukhsh Jatoi had mobilized the peasantry in Sindh but failed to achieve the desired results. The co-founders of Awami Tehrik had an ideological convergence to concentrate their political struggle on forging an alliance among the underprivileged classes from labour to peasantry to low-income employees and traders in urban and semi urban areas. They had all the clarity of mind and vision about the constituency and the multiple dimensions of their movement.

They also believed in an identical political philosophy to keep away from the charade of feudal election-based politics and, instead, go for political education and indoctrination of their followers from all social and economic segments for a long and arduous struggle for social and political change. They wanted to prepare the population at the lowest rung of the societal pyramid which was bearing the oppression of the exploitative system to break the shackles of the social and economic slavery; the

obscurant religious and superstitious customs; the outmoded feudal traditions; the primitive and decadent tribal supremacy.

This has been the most daunting task of social reformers and political revolutionaries to prepare the people to rebel against well-entrenched social and economic systems. The people living under a social and political system, no matter howsoever may it be oppressively exploitative, develop awe and fear of it and gradually succumb to the illusory comfort of resignation and sufferance. Being ardent students of history and ideology-driven and mass-based revolutions, Rasool Bukhsh Palijo and his colleagues were fully conscious of the daunting nature of their struggle.

In their faith in the peoples' power, they were probably taking a leaf from the Victor Hugo's eloquent description of the progressive journey of the French underprivileged in the late eighteenth century from - evil to good, from injustice to justice, from falsehood to truth, from night to day, from corruption to life, from bestiality to duty, from hell to heaven, from nothingness to God. They knew the circumstances were ripe for building the base for a mass labour-based movement particularly when, under the reign of an autocrat, the democracy was reduced to a farce, the powerful had become more powerful, the wealthy wealthier, the poor poorer.

The ugly consequences of such anti-peoples rule were painfully harsh. The police stations and law courts auctioned justice to the elite, the poor and the vulnerable lived in abject poverty and misery, the favoritism and cronyism, in their naked form, reigned supreme and meritocracy wailed from its death cell. The ever-present and ever growing grudge and disdain that separates the masses from the elite in an unjust society, was rapidly turning into an ugly phenomenon in the country as reflected in the powerful words of human right activist, writer and contemporary of King Martin Luther, Mrs. Maya Angelou, highlighting it as

the 'hostility of the powerless against the powerful, poor against the rich, worker against the worked for, the rugged against the well-dressed'.

The Awami Tehrik made gradual and formidably ingress in the rural and semi urban populations creating local and ideologically motivated hardcore of leaders and activists in both male and female genders. Within a decade and half, Awami Tehrik had already strong roots in the rural population. Its senior leader, Fazil Rahu, known for his popularity in the peasants, had incurred the ire of the powerful feudal demigods and spy paymasters, and was assassinated to the chagrin of his colleagues and admirers in January 1987. His assassins probably thought that depriving the Awami Tehrik of the tall leadership of Fazil Rahu, this movement would disintegrate into factions and die a slow death like that of Syed's Jeay Sindh Mahaz.

They had no idea that the vacuum created by the assassination of Fazil Rahu would be filled in by his comrade in arms, Rasool Bukhsh Palijo, taking the Tehrik to new heights of success. Undaunted by the loss of his friend and the spearhead of this ideological caravan, he forged ahead to strengthen the flanks of Awami Tehrik and its organizational structure. The Awami Tehrik could be rivaled in organizational ranks, ideological indoctrination, motivation and skill in political agitation only by the more old and orthodox Jamaat Islami.

Rasool Bukhsh Palijo knew the strength of the female in any mass movement. How a student of the history of revolutions could overlook the role of the female communist activists in disseminating the message of Bolsheviks in the length and breadth of communes and industrial units particularly in delivering the revolutionary literature among farmers and industrial labours. The labour and influence of Maxim Gorky's 'Mother' was not lost on him. He went ahead to organize the female wing of the movement - Sindhiani Tehrik. This was not akin to the traditional women

wing of other political parties. He had a different role for the female cadre of the Tehrik.

Armed with the clarity of mind, devotional attachment to the Tehrik's battle against the decadent tribal custom of stereotyping the women for roles of child bearing, housekeeping, kowtowing the male supremacy, living within four walls of their homes in perpetual economic dependency, the female cadres of the Tehrik shunned this tribal way of living and came out in droves seeking and playing a political role in educating and reawakening the innate but dormant desire of their fellow sisters and daughters for social and economic emancipation by acquiring education and taking up independent employments. Awami Tehrik was the unique party in Pakistan whose processions and public meetings had sizeable participation of its female cadres, mostly belonging to rural regions and lower and middle class from the semi urban centres.

Rasool Bukhsh Palijo was completely different from other traditional political leaders and social reformers whose sole purpose was to acquire power, or earn wealth. He wanted to revolutionize the society and strike at the roots of the tribal and feudal social and political systems. This could be possible only through a politically and socially conscious and motivated cadre within all the segments of the society from labour to peasants, small landholders, artisans, small traders, lower middle class in semi urban centres, male and female and youth. As charity begins from home, he encouraged and indoctrinated his own female relatives - wives, sisters, daughters and cousins to carry forward the message of the Tehrik. This reflected his sincerity with - and commitment to the emancipation of women and was not lost on the onlookers, magnetically pulling them to the ranks of the Tehrik.

We all witnessed a glimpse of the emancipation of the rural woman from the prevalent decadent social system in

the last funeral rites of their mentor when members of the Sindhiani Tehrik came out in droves to shoulder his coffin. They just added a new chapter in the annals of the patriarchal society of Sindh.

This was followed by the Sindhi Student Tehrik or SST. Organizing the students from both genders in disciplined rural and semi-urban units to engage them in productive social activities and raising their consciousness of the social, economic and political conditions in which they were born, being brought up, and which they were aiming to change. His lectures and columns always aimed at stimulating and refining the thought process of his young disciples, audience and followers opening before them secrets of social and political evolutions. What he emphasized to them was the value of labour and hard work for acquisition of excellence in education, enhancing their competitive capacity and aiming at high intellectual pursuits. He advised them to frequent libraries, buy books and develop the habit of living with books.

He took extraordinary interest in the educational pursuits of the SST members enquiring about their subjects, their study, their examinations and their results. Students with modest achievements in their examinations used to incur his ire and displeasure. Like a harsh and disciplinary military trainer, he used to award them symbolic punishments like staying in a Yoga position for some time. This was to shame them for neglecting their education and the future role they had committed to play in transforming their land from a tribal, retrogressive and regressive system into a modern, liberal and progressive society. His most familiar refrain on such occasions was 'you should not be like all those Sindhu Deshis and SPAFs', referring with disdain to Jeay Sindh Student Federation and Sindh Peoples Student Federation.

He also formed the 'Balik Tehrik' (Teenagers' Tehrik) to promote their physical health and evolutionary under-

standing of the social conditions surrounding them. In human evolution, the journey from childhood to the conscious age is very delicate and needs to be carefully superintended. As a social reformer, Mr. Palijo knew that fathers and mothers in the rural regions generally fail to provide guidance and counsel to their children in this delicate phase of life. Balik Tehrik organized games, academic debates, writing competitions and study tours of historic places, scenic spots, and scout camps in Sindh. The parents of the children had full trust in the Balik Tehrik leaders. The purpose of the Balik Tehrik was to stimulate the academic curiosity of teenage boys and girls, giving an impetus to their comprehension and helping them grow into a meaningful conscious age with ease and comfort.

His battles for the defense of Sindh's national existence, territorial integrity, resources, rights and privileges as the second biggest federal unit of Pakistan constitute an emblazoned chapter of the recent history of the province. He fought these battles with courage and gallantry following the footprints of the legendary Raja Dahir, Dodo, Dollah Darya Khan, Mian Muhammad Shahil aka Shah Baharo, Mir Sher Muhammad Talpur, Hosh Muhammad Sheedi, Pir of Pagara Sibaghatullah Rashi and Ruplo Kolhi/ He challenged the decadent tribalism and landlordism like Syed Inayat Shah and Mai Bakhtawar. He never took off his gloves in his struggle to fight the case of Sindh.

We are proud that the past and recent history of Sindh is embellished by the bravery and sacrifices of the true sons and daughters of Sindh from old warriors to the recent world fame heroes who fought for the preservation of its geographical frontiers, independence, economic and social development in the face of mighty powers and challengers - may they be the Saracens from the Arabian deserts, the Pathan from rugged Afghanistan, the Sultans and Emperors from New Delhi, the British colonizers or may it be its merger in the Bombay Presidency in the colonial era, or in

the infamous One-Unit in Pakistan.

At every critical juncture of history, there has never been dearth of warriors in Sindh to leave their home and hearth to answer the call of duty to defend their land. The place of Rasool Bukhsh Palijo among these warriors will be conspicuously prominent. He knew that Sindh of his time needed a united voice, collective efforts and well-organized and well-strategized battles to defeat its enemies who were out to attack the very vitals of its national existence with all those ethnic, social and economic divisions, the loot and plunder perpetrated by political and bureaucratic moguls, like the carnivorous animals, trying to devour the last morsel of flesh from the bones of their nation and shutting their eyes to the thickening dark clouds of misery, poverty, disease and ignorance hovering over the picturesque landscape of this dear land. This kept him restless and in perpetual pain stimulating his spirit of fight.

He agonized and mustered all his intellectual power and political talent to whisper a word of caution and wisdom in the blocked ears of his fellow leaders that predators of modern times, with more swift and strategic minds and smarter than the primitive General Charles Napier, would be quick in exploiting the consequences of their misdemeanors to rob their land of its autonomy and free will if they kept stumbling over small pebbles of their ego and factional interests. He kept highlighting the afflictions undermining Sindh from within that included the suffocating tribalism; the debilitating ethnic and linguistic division; the growing institutional decay; the crumbling educational structure and the endemic corruption that were sealing the fate of the people of this dear land and stunting their advance to progress and modernity.

With hindsight, we find him in the vanguard of all the movements of Sindhi intellectuals and writers, political leaders and activists - may they be inspired and triggered by the suppressive One-Unit scheme, and the merger of Sindh

in it, the defense of the rights of Bengalis, the publication of voters' list in Sindhi, the restoration of Sindhi language to its pre-partition position, the Save Bhutto Committee, the political agitation for restoration of democracy, the PPP-MQM coalition agreement of 1988, the slaughter of Sindhis in Hyderabad by Urban fascists, the violation of the sanctity of Indus River, the night raids on the water rights of Sindh, the building of Kala Bagh Dam. His struggle in all these movements outweighed many big names. He stood upright among stalwarts of the caliber of G.M. Syed, Shaikh Ayaz, Ibrahim Joyo, Fazil Rahoo, Hafeez Qureshi and Masood Noorani. He never took off his gloves or sheathed his sword and moved from one front to the other like a gallant battler. He suffered the strong arm tactics of the autocratic Ayub and Bhutto regimes and wrath of Zia ul Haq's Martial Law but never wavered in his struggle.

True to his Marxist and Leninist beliefs, he took up cudgels against the aristocratic rule of Bhutto. He opposed him tooth and nail in his move against the elected and nationalist National Awami Party government in Balochistan and the subsequent military operation against Baloch nationalists. Later, when the National Awami Party was banned and the Baloch and Pakhtun leaders were booked for treason and locked up in Hyderabad Jail, Rasool Bukhsh Palijo volunteered to defend them in the Special Tribunal against the charges of treason. He suffered imprisonment during the Bhutto rule. But raised his voice against the injustice meted out to him by the Martial Law authorities by trying him in a false murder case and executing him in the wee hours of 4 April 1979. He was the moving spirit behind the 'Save Bhutto Committee'.

His party joined the MRD movement against the Zia regime. The Awami Tehrik leaders and activists trained and ideologically motivated by Rasool Bukhsh Palijo fought heroic battles against the security forces in the length and breadth of Sindh particularly in the small towns like Mehar

and Khairpur Nathan Shah to the chagrin of the military junta. Punjabis did not come out in support of the MRD movement in their known tradition of standing on the right side of power. Karachi, given the traditional fifth column role of Urdu speaking intellectuals and leftists, remained indifferent to the sacrifices being given by the rural Sindh for the restoration of democracy.

The MRD movement which began in a modest way from the early 1980s, and picked up momentum in 1983-84, forced the Martial Law authorities to allow Benazir Bhutto to fly abroad for the treatment of her ear infection. Later, the Martial regime felt compelled to hold local body elections and later general elections on non-party basis. Rasool Bukhsh Palijo had a long stint in the Kot Lakhpat Jail for his role in the MRD movement.

As a result of its modest electoral victory in the general elections of 1988, the PPP formed the federal government with the support of the MQM. The two parties signed an agreement which was heavily loaded in favour of the urban fascist party to the explicit detriment of the rights and privileges of Sindh and Sindhis. Later, the agreement was published by the print media.

He did the pioneering work for the United Front against the PPP-MQM coalition and had G.M. Syed as its President. The Front did not take off because of differences with Syed on organizational matters. Syed wanted some Urdu speaking friends in the Steering Committee of the Front. Palijo refused to share the Front's stage with these anti -Sindh elements. The subsequent circumstances leading to the Pucca Qila incident Hyderabad and the well-planned massacre of Sindhis in various neighborhoods of the city confirmed the apprehensions of Rasool Bukhsh Palijo.

The issue of Kala Bagh Dam has been on the agenda of the Punjabi establishment since the last days of Bhutto regime. After the execution of Bhutto, the Zia regime raised the bogey of Kala Bagh Dam in 1979-80. Rasool Bukhsh,

being a clairvoyant, thoroughly appreciated the depth and intensity of the harmful repercussions of Kala Bagh Dam on the social and economic life, and the ecological environment of Sindh. He mobilized the masses of Sindh and tried to shame the nationalists. He was clearly the man and the only spirit behind the battle against the ghost of Kalabagh Dam.

He also superintended the intellectual front in this battle and set himself to research and collections of facts and figures on the long 150-year night raids on the water rights of Sindh by Punjab. He wrote a comprehensive treatise exposing the Punjab's audacious treachery of depriving Sindh from the waters of Indus River System from the early 1900s to this day. He gave in detail the nature of water disputes, findings of various water commissions and committees, apportioning of waters among states, provinces and regions in accordance with the universally recognized upper and lower riparian laws and practices followed all over the world.

He spearheaded scores of public meetings, public processions, sits-in and long marches. He prepared the atmosphere in Sindh against the Kala Bagh Dam. He was also instrumental in enlisting the support of the Awami National Party leaders against the Dam. Realizing the intensity of the resistance of Sindhis and Pashtuns to the dam, and having failed to enlist even the support of his hand -picked Governor of KPK, General Fazal-e-Haq, and General Zia shelved the scheme for time being.

The bogey was again raised in 1991 by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, being the blue eyed boy of the establishment at the time. Rasool Bukhsh Palijo sought his spears and swords to fight the night raiders conspiring to violate the sanctity of Sindhu by reviving the stinking cadaver of Kala Bagh Dam. Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto, freshly stung by the establishment in the undemocratic removal of her government, jumped the bandwagon of the anti-Kalabagh agitation and spearheaded a big sit-in on the

Sindh-Punjab border. Nevertheless, the anti-Kalabagh momentum built by Rasool Bukhsh Palijo would never die. Sindhis will always seize the occasion to resist this devastating anti-Sindh scheme recalling the heroic fight which Rasool Bukhsh Palijo had fought to defeat its supporters on political, intellectual and technical fronts.

I have thus far appreciated Rasool Bukhsh Palijo as a revolutionary, a Marxist and Moist, a politician, a political scientist, an intellectual, a scholar, a political mentor, a social reformer, a nationalist and a patriotic. He represented more than all these qualifications. Let us look at his person to find what he was not. He was not an intolerant or arrogant scholar, an egoist, an opportunist politician, an insincere political leader, a power seeker, a palace conspirator, a mean and vindictive man, a self-seeker, a saleable commodity, a pseudo revolutionary, a pseudo social reformer, a pessimist, a man of empty words, empty promises and lures, a hypocrite, a liar, a cheater. In short, he did not have the duplicity of person and character. He talked what he had in his mind and breast. Though prone to many human weaknesses, he kept himself under constant self-scrutiny. His writings free from self-laceration testify to the comfort, tranquility and strength, he had from within.

Could any soul crack in the face of any threat, any hardship, and any temptation if he has the Holy Scripture of Quran, the mystical poetic compendiums of Shah Latif, Roomi and Shirazi well ensconced in his breast and he had the history and philosophy of the world on his fingertips?

How this heroic man, this legendary son of the soil of Sindh could have wavered in his convictions. His mental horizon had transcended beyond the frontiers of his land and made him an internationalist in his thinking and approach considering the humanity as an indivisible whole, human rights and human freedoms as inviolable norms, and the human right to democracy, rule of law, equality before law, economic equity, social justice as the foremost end of all

gospels, political struggle and revolutions. This heroic sage who appeared on the horizon of Sindh from the small village of Moongur close to Jangshahi of district Thatta in January *1930 regained the embrace of his mother soil in June 2018 leaving behind a blazing trail of brilliant scholarly pursuits, rich political literature, ever inspiring books, a treasure* trove of knowledge and research, a multi-faceted tale of political struggle, and above all, a strong corps of trained, disciplined, intellectually curious, ideologically motivated, politically conscious, well read and well-endowed leaders and activists who could be found in both genders and every field of life who could fight as soldiers for the defense of their land and people on political and intellectual fronts in the footprints of their leader and mentor. They need to be collected on one platform, bound in a dynamic chain of an ideological struggle unleashing their energy and spirit to carry forward the message of Late Rasool Bukhsh Palijo.

Guns have fallen silent; the noise of soldiers has drowned in the depth of the night; but the war is far from over; many serious battles are yet to be fought. The lull is illusory. Do not let the numbing winds of despair and gloom overwhelms you. Look at the young moon as it merrily peeps out from a rebellious piece of cloud hovering over a fresh mound of earth in Jungshahi; watch the restless soul rustling with the waves of Sindhu and beckoning to us to see the beauty of this motherland; feel her miseries, learn from her patience, aim at mountains, keep above pebbles; control our ego and subdue our pride for her sake. This is what this great son of soil did from his conscious age to the final embrace of the mother earth of his small village.

These paragraphs, coming out of my heart and soul, are just a humble effort to pay my tributes to this legendary son of Sindh.

*(Courtesy: The Weekender)*

# PALIJO — A LEADER OF UNIQUE POLITICAL LEGACY

*Shaikh Aziz*

Eminent leftist leader and celebrated progressive writer Rasool Bakhsh Palijo, who passed away on Thursday morning, was a leader of unique political legacy. Besides being an important political figure, he was an influential writer, a persuasive orator and a sensitive social worker.

A lawyer by profession, he strove hard for the deprived class besides working for the fundamental rights of people. An inspiring writer, an imposing leader and a stirring orator, he lived a full life. Owing to his multifaceted virtues he was loved by his friends and respected by his foes. He was 88.

He is survived by seven sons and four daughters and is scheduled to be laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard in Jungshahi. Born in a moderate grower family of Jungshahi town in Thatta district on Feb 21, 1930, he got his education at his village and later at the Sindh Madressatul Islam, Karachi — the historic institution that saw many of its students rise to positions of eminence in various walks of life.

From the Sindh Law College, Karachi, he obtained his law degree and began practicing law in the expanding metropolis. However, he soon moved to Hyderabad for which he had his reasons, the main one being that he wanted to remain close to the deprived peasants.

As a young lawyer he felt the pain of Sindh's peasants and members of other working classes suffering at the hands

of the feudal class that exploited them in collusion with the corrupt bureaucracy. Out of sheer sympathy, he helped them in legal matters.

In the 1960s when nationalist leaders Hyder Bukhsh Jatoi and G.M. Syed led a campaign against One Unit, Palijo joined them and worked for the uplift of peasants in his own style of progressive nationalism. His deep study of history and contemporary politics allowed him to forge a socialist viewpoint. As a diehard Maoist, he believed strongly that only a socialist approach could resolve the multiple issues of economic disparity and social degradation.

In February of 1970, he founded the Sindh Awami Tahreek, whose leaders included Hafeez Qureshi, Fazil Rahu, Comrade Ghulam Mohammad Leghari and writer-cum-lawyer Nooruddin Sarki. This party was later renamed as the Awami Tahreek and became a symbol for the struggle for rights of the deprived people. He was also founder of the Sindhiani Tahreek and Sindhi Shagrid Tahreek — the wings for women and students that sought to create awareness about important issue among the two segments of society.

He led many campaigns but his role in making the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy of 1983 a success was highly commendable. His party left a deep mark on the country's political history by agitating against military rule. For his political and social struggles he was imprisoned many times and in all he spent 11 years in jail.

He developed a taste for reading at a young age, which later allowed him to delve deeper into literature as he became a writer with an inimitable style. Through the short story he depicted the miseries and agonies of the common man.

He had a unique vocabulary that allowed him to depict scenarios in true perspectives. His association with law enhanced his creativity.

He wrote a number of moving stories that form a brilliant chapter in modern Sindhi literature. When his first

story Passi garha gul (As red flowers appear) was published in 1966, eminent writers took notice. His other stories - Jite baah bare (Where flames leap), Vadiyo heeniyen na veh (Don't sit idle) and Aj agrria aaya (Mystics visited today) - are considered to be representative of his fiction. They depict rural life under feudal system and the miseries of men as well as women.

He translated verses of a number of revolutionary poets and published them in his party's periodical called Tahreek, which was later banned by the government. He also penned many pieces of literary criticism to counter the revisionist propaganda.

His first book Andha Oonda Vej (Blind and Mindless Doctors) appeared in 1961. His other works are Mao Zedong (biography, 1972), Ho Chi Monh ji atam kahani (biography of Ho Chi Minh, 1972), Jeki Bengal saan thio (Whatever happened to Bengal, 1973), Subh theendo (Dawn will apear, 1974), and Inqlab Jidhojhad mein adab jo kirdar (Literature's role in revolutionary struggle, 1974).

During the 1988 elections, the Pakistan People's Party invited him to merge his party with it, but he declined the offer by saying that he did not believe in politics of sharing power. He was even offered a place in the forthcoming government, which he flatly refused and took part in the contest on his own and lost it without regrets.

His efforts for the uplift of the oppressed classes brought many nationalist leaders together but owing to conflicting ideals, and moves by the bureaucracy, they could not form a formidable force. However, this hardly mattered to him as he continued to wage a campaign for all oppressed classes. Rasool Bakhsh Palijo's lifelong struggles brought about a commendable change in the thought process of the people, particularly those belonging to the deprived classes.

*(Courtesy: Daily Dawn)*

# PALIJO SAEEN

*Dr. Pervez Tahir*

Rasool Bakhsh Palijo breathed his last on June 7th 2018. In the month before, Ashfaq Saleem Mirza asked Facebook friends to guess who might have read the entire works of Karl Marx. I did not have to guess. I knew. Palijo had read and absorbed all of Marx's works. He was a thinker, writer, poet and a deep drinker from the fountainheads of the world of mysticism, political leader, lawyer, polemicist, orator, human rights activist, champion of gender equality, Sindhi nationalist, connoisseur of Urdu poetry, an avid reader of almost everything. Apart from Sindhi, Urdu and English, he could speak seven other languages. He was an intellectual for all seasons, and a campaigner for all times and spaces, including jails where he spent 11 of the 88 years he lived. At the PTI *dharnas*, we witnessed families, including children as active participants. Palijo had started this tradition of entire families participating in political activity. Sindhiani Tahreek of rural women founded by him was part of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy. It was led by his wife, Zarina Baloch, singer and activist. The whole families were imprisoned, highlighting the difference between the movements of working and other classes.

In the exclusionary period of General Zia-ul-Haq, many had to exit. Palijo Saeen, as we fondly called him, also spent some time in England. I chose the time to complete my education. Farzana and Sarwar Bari's flat in the William Good enough House in London served as our own version of the Paris Commune. I was at Cambridge working towards a PhD. Nearly every weekend; I would take the train to

London for political catharsis. Palijo Saeen's appearance on the scene raised the quality of discussion several-fold. He had an eye for detail and the extraordinary ability to bring the participants towards his own line of thought. Often times I, a habitual doubter, found myself drifting towards ideas whose time, I used to think, had not come. What surprised me was his interest in the latest developments in economic thought. He would interrogate me for hours; ending up satisfied that Marx's understanding of capitalism still had no parallel.

Jam Sadiq Ali's place in London was a hub of politicians, traditional and radical. He had the knack of pulling any leg he could lay his hand on. Jam Sahib would chide Palijo Saeen for being a talk-talk revolutionary, declaring Fazil Rahu, the Secretary General of the Awami Tehreek, the party founded by Palijo Saeen, the real action man. In one of these jovial sessions, I asked Jam Sahib about his public reputation of an indiscriminate encroacher when he was Sindh's Local Body Minister during the time of Mr. Bhutto. Mr. Bhutto was reported to have told Jam Sahib to spare the Mazar of the Quaid-e-Azam. To my question, Jam Sahib replied in the affirmative. -What did you say in reply, I asked. 'No one has applied, Saab', he had told Mr. Bhutto. His life was full of ironies. He was imprisoned by Mr. Bhutto for being a Defence lawyer for the leadership of the banned National Awami Party. Later, he was sent behind bars by General Zia for protesting Mr. Bhutto's hanging.

Lately, there are chauvinistic attempts in Punjab to revive the case for Kalabagh dam. In 2005, when Musharraf thought he had the power to build it, Palijo Saeen led a million marches to stop him. He had done it before in 1991 and 1995. One of his 30-odd books, one was on water issues. We may have seen the last of the scholar-politicians.

*(Courtesy: The News)*

# RED SALUTE TO PALIJO

*Aamir Riaz*

Rasool Bux Palijo an astute politician, an avid reader, a prolific writer and a fine intellectual from Sindh, is no more the history of people's struggle is not known to many in Pakistan. The young generation often ignores it partly due to the absence of archival record. Socio-political movements and individuals have played an important role since long in the undivided India; yet it is largely ignored not only by court historians, colonial apologists but also by the revolutionaries.

It is, however, difficult to not take notice of people who left a legacy in the form of writings and followers. That is why it is hard to ignore Rasool Bux Palijo (1930-2018) who passed away last week (June 7) in Karachi at the age of 88 but will live on through his struggle, following and dozens of books in his mother-tongue, Sindhi. He wrote a book on Indus Water - Sindh - Punjab Water Dispute - and also many articles in English and Urdu)

Though his death did not get much attention in the mainstream media, even his opponents were forced to praise him. It is time to translate his books into English and other Pakistani languages since many of us are unaware of his struggle.

Two stars of anti-Zia struggle, Jam Saqi and Rasool Bux Palijo, died this year. They were both from Sindhi lower middle classes and tried their best to bridge the gap between nationalism and communism. Both failed to attract the masses of Sindh to their brand of politics.

As a student, young Palijo worked with Muslim

Students Federation (MSF), took part in the Pakistan Movement and remained an advocate of Lahore Resolution passed at Minto Park (now Iqbal Park) in March 1940. He often criticised the Pakistani establishment for betraying the spirit of Lahore Resolution. Like Mian Iftikharuddin, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Sheikh Rasheed (*Baba-e-Socialism*) and Abdullah Malik, he was among those progressives who rejected the Congress narrative against the creation of Pakistan.

His love for landless peasants started in early 1950s when he joined the legendary *Hari* leader Hyder Bux Jatoi of Larkana. Sindh Hari Committee was founded by G.M. Syed in the 1930s, yet its anti-feudal colour emerged in mid-1940s when Jatoi took charge of it, after resigning from the post of Deputy Collector in 1945. He was not only a leader but also a writer and poet. He translated the Quran into English. The Young Palijo learnt a lot from Hyder Bux Jatoi, the Hari politics, G.M. Syed and Sindhi Adabi Sangat.

When Syed formed Bazm-e-Sufia-e-Sindh, Palijo worked with him as secretary. As Syed was among the major power players of Sindh, young Palijo could not survive his comradeship for long and departed. "Syed had relations with waderas (feudals) and always took vital decisions without even informing his comrades so I departed," said Palijo in an interview with me for Awami Jamhoori Forum in 2004.

Sindhi Hari Committee merged in the National Awami Party (NAP) in 1957. The party was an alliance of landlord nationalists and communists, and had less interest in Hari politics. It largely affected those progressives who believed in class struggle and worked for the rights of downtrodden. Finally, people like Afzal Bangash, Major Ishaq and Palijo had to form their own parties and work for the rights of landless peasants in then NWFP, Punjab and Sindh. Of all the three, Palijo's party proved a non-starter in many ways. Palijo formed his own party in late 1960s and called it

Awami Tahreek (AT), People's movement or Lok Lahar. "We did not call it Sindhi Awami Tahreek because we wanted to work in the whole country including Punjab. But Sindh was our starting point. I am not a nationalist at all," said Palijo in the same interview.

At the time when Palijo and many leftists were forming their own parties or groups, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was being founded in Lahore and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) had emerged as the sole spokesman of West Pakistan.

Bhutto was a Sindhi and many leftists had joined him in Sindh and Punjab too. "Bhutto invited me to join PPP but I had refused". Palijo said in the interview.

Palijo wrote a book in Sindhi *What Happened in Bengal* against Bhutto's role in the East Pakistan crisis and sided with his old party NAP (Wali). Unfortunate events like language riots and Landhi labour killings in 1972 further widened the gulf between ZAB and progressives, especially in Sindh and the Punjab. NAP's or Wali Khan's role in this phase is questionable. It shows that in the early 1970s, progressives and nationalists failed to reconcile with the first people's government in Pakistan and it strengthened rightist, extremist and religious fundamentalists largely. This gulf enabled the establishment to reduce civil space in general.

Palijo did not side with PNA movement but he remained very active in MRD movement with many democratic parties including PPP in fighting Gen. Zia's dictatorship. His role was highly recognized in masses.

In Awami Tahreek, Palijo was lucky enough to have the support of a vibrant Sindhi leader, Fazal Rahu, from Badin who helped Palijo develop a mass organisation, especially in Thatta and Badin districts, with its base in Hyderabad during the 1970s. Rahu was elected a Basic Democracy (BD) member in 1962 and later in 1965 worked as chairman union council Taraai. Rahu and Saeen Alam Shah were the backbone of AT. During the Zia period, when Palijo was in

jail, both Rahu and Shah worked hard in MRD along with many unknown workers in Sindh. Palijo was in Kot Lakhpat jail while his family remained at Professor Azizuddin Ahmad's home at Lahore who was head of a leftist faction known as Professors' Group.

It is to be remembered that MRD movement was very strong in interior Sindh and Punjab. Thanks to a controlled print media, it was often portrayed as concentrated in Sindh alone. Later, it was proven the establishment wanted to limit PPP in Sindh. It failed terribly when Benazir Bhutto landed in Lahore on April 10, 1986 and Lahoris gave her a historic reception. Alas, that agenda was fulfilled after the killing of BB. After his release from jail, in mid-1980s, Palijo visited the US where he stayed with Shafqat Khan in New York who was associated with Pakistan Committee for Democracy and Justice. That committee was formed after the execution of ZAB and included many intellectuals living in the US and Europe including Eqbal Ahmad, Feroz Ahmad, Zulfiqar Gilani (brother of Iftikhar Gilani) and many more. "Palijo inspired us a lot because he was the only politician who did tangible work for women," said Shafqat Khan after Palijo's death.

During the Zia era, many anti-women laws under the banner of 'Islamisation' were made by the state. In those dark times, Awami Tahreek's women wing, Sindhiani Tahreek, was a ray of hope in the land of pure. No wonder women were in the forefront at Palijo's funeral. Many people shared the video clips of mixed gathering at the funeral after Asma Jahangir's funeral in Lahore. If Lahore and Thatta-led women can come together, things can change dramatically.

In 1986, Palijo along with Professors' Group joined the newly formed Awami National Party (ANP) headed by Khan Abdul Wali Khan with Sardar Shaukat Ali as Secretary General. Palijo became its second secretary general the next year. Unfortunately, Fazal Rahu was killed on January 17, 1987 and it broke the spirit of Palijo, personally as well as

politically. Palijo participated in the 1988 elections and got 9,813 votes from NA-182. He lost to PPP's candidate Ghulam Husain Babu who got over 53,000 votes. If he were not in

ANP, he might have got PPP's support - but it wasn't meant to be. By 1990, when Wali Khan joined IJI, Palijo and his comrades left ANP. He fought in the 1990 elections as well but the fate was the same. Basically he failed to attract the Sindhi voters. This made him bitter. I interviewed him in 2004 and he told us that he had met Pervez Musharraf thrice. There was nothing common between him and the dictator. Later, he acknowledged that Musharraf was a liar.

No doubt, Palijo was an avid reader, a prolific writer and a fine intellectual who inspired Sindhi middle classes. Luckily, we have his writings with us. But these are mostly in Sindhi and without translation one cannot expand the debate of Sindh. Palijo had great respect for Punjabi sufi poets like Bulleh Shah and Madhu Lal Husain as well as others like Maulana Rumi and Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. In many ways, he was much different from traditional Sindhi nationalists. You may disagree with his politics and life choices but if you want to initiate a dialogue with Sindhis it is important to read Palijo's writings.

*(Courtesy: The News)*

# A VERSATILE LEADER PAKISTAN COULD HAVE EVER GOT

*Karamat Ali*

I had very close relationship with late Rasool Bux Palijo, which continued till his death. Although I had never joined his Awami Tahreek because I was already politically associated with late Ghaus Bux Bizinjo's National Party, our political views, however, were alike. We had many common views on many issues, which was the main reason of our friendship. Late Palijo was a dedicated practical politician, who played an effective role in Pakistani political history.

My first acquaintance with Palijo was in early 1970s, when we were working in trade union movement along with trade union leader late Nabi Ahmed, who often used to praise Rasool Bux Palijo in good words. Nabi Ahmed recalled that when he along with his family was coming to Karachi via a train as a Mohajir (Immigrant) after the partition, the train came at a halt for over two hours at Jungshahi station due to some technical fault. A group of youth, led by young Palijo was busy in serving the train passengers with water and food. Most of the passengers were coming from India as immigrants, so the locals were happy and welcoming. Nabi Ahmed met with Palijo and they become friends since then.

I can recall, Nabi Ahmed was very close to Palijo Sahib and whenever he used to come to Karachi he stayed at his home. Both were active in communist movement and trade unions in Sindh and Palijo was frequently meeting with him for party's work as well. Late Nabi Ahmed used to tell us

that some people thought that Palijo was against Urdu-speaking Mohajirs, which was totally wrong. Palijo was very sentimental and full of energy so some politicians considered him quarrelsome. But it was his style to present his point of view.

The main credit for organizing effective movements of women, peasants and workers in Sindh goes to late Rasool Bux Palijo as he had successfully established separate organizations for women (Sindhiyani Tahreek), for industrial workers (Sindhi Mazdoor Tahreek) and for peasants (Sindhi Hari Tahreek) under the umbrella of Awami Tahreek.

The Sindhiyani Tahreek was on the top of all the organizations, as it does not have any match even in South Asian region. This women's movement has brought a revolution in rural Sindh. Sindhiyani Tahreek has played a leading role in creating political awareness among women folk in rural Sindh, where women are mostly treated adversely and in some places kept indoors. Sindhiyani Tahreek can be the role model for women's movement in Pakistan. The Tahreek has given a strong confidence to women and is still playing a key role in women empowerment in Sindh. Once the Sindhi woman becomes independent and empowered, Sindhiyani Tahreek's role would be the leading one. We have to acknowledge the efforts of Rasool Bux Palijo in organizing the Sindhi women in such a way.

Similarly, Sindhi Hari Tahreek and Sindhi Mazdoor Tahreek have also played a leading role in organizing workers' movements in the country. Although the trade unions have weakened in Pakistan over the period and now only one percent workers are organized in trade unions, the Sindhi Mazdoor Tahreek is still active organization in rural Sindh's industries and playing an effective role in organizing workers for their rights.

The cadre of the active political workers both male and

female created by Palijo Sahib have practically led the Awami Tahreek in the key struggles like Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) in 1983 and after wards.

Rasool Bux Palijo led many political movements in the country. He played a key role in formation of political alliances like Sindh Mutahida Muhaz, Sindh Qomi Itehad, Bazm-e-Sofia-e Sindh, Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement (PONM), Sindhi Adabi Sangat, Anti One-Unit Movement and 4th March Movement.

Sindhi Shagird Tahreek, a students' organization has played a key role in creating a young cadre of educated youth, who brought a change in traditional Sindhi nationalistic politics in the campus. Holding regular study circles in the universities and regular programmes of discussions on literature and poetry, it provided a platform to youth to polish their skills and be prepared to become future leaders. These cultural and literacy activities by Sindhi Shagird Tahreek have provided a number of good writers, journalists and poets to the nation.

Rasool Bux Palijo was a great thinker and intellectual of the world class, who gave a new paradigm to the politics in Pakistan. He wrote around 40 books in Sindhi and English and he was a practicing lawyer, who fought many human rights cases on behalf of workers and peasants. He was visiting many world class universities like University of Chicago, University of Cambridge, University of Sussex, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow and many other world class educational institutions and was delivering lectures on philosophy, politics and workers issues.

Being an author is a good quality and achievement, but the greatness of late Palijo was that he was a prolific reader and he had read a lot of books on international literature. I had an opportunity to travel with him. When during Martial Law regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, he was put behind the bars and suffered a disease, which was not curable in

Pakistan. A medical board of doctors from Jinnah Hospital Karachi had recommended sending him abroad for his medical treatment. But the military regime was not ready to release him on medical grounds. The Amnesty International declared him -Prisoner of Conscience and offered to provide him medical treatment in England.

I got an opportunity to meet the Military Dictator General Zia ul Haq at a seminar on land reforms in Islamabad, where he was the chief guest. In his speech Zia ul Haq narrated his father's services to the poor community and he said he was very much inclined to serve the poor peasants. At the end of the function, I found an opportunity to personally meet him and asked him to release a peasant's leader Palijo who was behind the bars and whom a board of doctors had recommended for medical treatment abroad. Zia ul Haq said he did not know about imprisonment of Palijo and promised to do something. However, after passage of many months and mounting international pressure, ultimately, the Military government released him.

Palijo asked me to accompany him and asked the Amnesty International to bear my travel cost as well. Thus his treatment in England was arranged, so I accompanied him to London. We stayed there for six to seven weeks.

During that stay we also visited the Netherlands, where he held meetings with trade unions of Europe. From England he also visited New York, but I did not accompany him to USA.

During our stay in London he held longer sessions of discussion on politics and workers movements. He used to quote from books of renowned authors and I learned that he had never made his opinion on a subject without thoroughly reading books on that topic. He always encouraged his colleagues, students and friends to read books.

I think his death has deprived Pakistan and even South Asia of a visionary political leader.

# PALIJO: A LARGER THAN LIFE ICON OF SINDH

*Naseer Memon*

Political history of Sindh in particular and Pakistan in general will remain incomplete without mentioning renowned intellectual, writer and a left-oriented pro-people political leader Rasool Bakhsh Palijo. He was among the iconic leaders of progressive and nationalist movements that dominated political discourse in Pakistan for several decades. After 1947, Pakistan started its tumultuous political journey dotted with a series of conflicts between federating units and central government. One Unit scheme turned out to be the last straw on camel's back. Except Punjab all other provinces including East Pakistan (that later became Bangladesh) greeted this infamous scheme with strong abhorrence and rejection. Sindh was particularly exasperated by a series of acts of unfair treatment by central government. Forced separation of Karachi, excluding Sindhi language from mainstream official business and installing puppet governments in the province had already triggered a deep sense of alienation. It was further aggravated by imposition of One Unit scheme through a handpicked regime of Ayub Khuhro. It was during anti One Unit movement when Palijo emerged as a dynamic nationalist leader and found his place in the galaxy of towering political and literary figures like G.M Syed, Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi and Shaikh Ayaz. Palijo was a riveting orator, whose stirring speeches were ornamented with references from world history of revolutions, inspiring Sindhi poetry and quotes of

Chairman Mao and other revolutionary leaders. He artistically weaved poetry of Shah Latif in his heart warming speeches with simple narrations that appealed ordinary masses and magnetized them to a mass movement across Sindh.

After partition of the Sub-continent, three stellar political leaders viz. G M Syed, Rasool Bakhsh Palijo and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto dominated political arena of Sindh. The former two are recognized as nationalist leaders whose political struggle mostly revolved around Sindh and the latter one was known for his national level political outreach who emerged to be the most popular public leader in all provinces of Pakistan. While G.M Syed and Palijo are both considered as nationalist leaders, the former wanted Sindh to be an independent state out of any framework of Pakistan, Mr. Palijo wanted Sindh to be politically and administratively autonomous having all rights over its natural resources and socially free of clutches of feudal class within the constitutional framework of Pakistan. He wanted oppressed classes in every province to get politically empowered through a people-lead democratic process. His political ideology was for a democratic system in Pakistan where peasants and laborers had key role in decision making at all levels. He was abundantly clear that unless led by peasants and laborers, democracy will be a mere ruse and a musical chair game of feudal.

This political philosophy was reflected by his leadership within his party "Awami Tahreek" where working class and educated middle class Sindhis were in leadership role. Awami Tahreek emerged as a forum of nationalist movement for rights of Sindhi masses where educated middle class youth found space to struggle through non-violent means. Both Jeay Sindh and Awami Tahreek were most popular nationalist movements especially in the decades of 70s and 80s. While Jeay Sindh was for an independent Sindhu Desh, Awami Tahreek

wanted a social transformation of Sindh and alliance with similar progressive movements in other provinces of Pakistan. By that time Palijo had already emerged as a towering political figure known for his frequent imprisonments, charming oratory and mind-gripping writings. His speeches, lectures, articles and books attracted flocks of educated Sindhi youth to join Awami Tahreek founded by Mr. Palijo.

Another unique aspect of Palijo's political struggle was mainstreaming rural Sindhi women in movement for political rights of Sindh. It was unprecedented in Pakistan that thousands of women carrying their feeding babies, walking dozens of miles under scorching sun, chanting slogans for political rights were seen marching on roads. This rare show of women's active participation was witnessed in mainstream political movements such as Movement for Restoration of Democracy, Anti Kalabagh Dam movement and Anti Greater Thal Canal. Sindhyani Tahreek is an inspiring chapter of women's struggle for political rights in this region. No other political movement was able to mobilise and organize thousands of educated and uneducated women from rural areas. They not only struggled for political rights of Sindh but also became a lynchpin of class-based anti-feudal movement at a time when society was captive in the clutches of feudal. From parliament to police station, every institute was made subservient to powerful feudal. It was not easy to challenge such parasitic forces of society. It was political valor and spirit sparked by Palijo that transformed these women from banal housewives to leaders of popular political movements. Several of them also later emerged as enviable leaders in their creative and professional domain. Sindhyani movement inspired a generation of Sindhi women who took strides in reshaping rural Sindhi society. As a result of this awakening, thousands of young girls of these families reached colleges and universities and later joined a wide range of professions as working women. It completely changed social outlook of

Sindhi society during recent decades.

Palijo's legacy of mobilising masses for political rights through peaceful and democratic means will continue to warm hearts and minds of coming generations in Sindh. His written work will continue to inspire posterity. Palijo will always be adored for his tireless political struggle and matchless intellectual contribution.

## SANA MOURNS

### *Mohammad Ali Mahar*

SANA mourns the death of great Sindhi leader and intellectual, Rasool Bakhsh Palijo. Sindhi Association of North America (SANA) in a press statement issued in Austin, Texas today, has expressed deep grief and sorrow at the demise of a great leader, a lawyer and an intellectual par excellence, Mr. Rasool Bakhsh Palijo.

A fighter by nature, the statement noted, 'Mr. Palijo never gave in to the forces of tyranny and injustice. Throughout his 89 years of life, he struggled to bring about a positive change in the lives of fellow human beings. A sage, who taught generations of Sindhis the value of freedom and meaning of patriotism, is no more with us'

All through his life, Mr. Palijo fought politically, legally and through his pen for the marginalized people of Sindh. Sindhi nation especially cannot forget the heroic role he played in the restoration of democracy movement during the dark days of dictator Zia ul Haq, as a result of which he was incarcerated for a prolonged time by the martial law regime. Amnesty International declared him a -Prisoner of Conscience. A voracious reader and a keen student of politics, he introduced the same kind of romanticism and idealism to Pakistani politics as espoused by Nelson Mandela, Mao Zedong, and other great revolutionaries.

With Mr. Palijo's death, the nation, especially Sindh, has become poorer. *(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# THE VETERAN POLITICIAN: RASOOL BUX PALIJO

*Naveed Sandeelo*

Rasool Bux Palijo took his last breath on 7 June 2018, at the age of 88 years. He was a prolific writer, political thinker, socialist, literary critic, distinguished lawyer and an avid scholar of great repute. He was one of the last men left in Pakistan who championed leftist politics in the country, and was heavily influenced by the writings of Karl Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Ho Chi Minh.

Palijo was a notable writer, and a multi-dimensional politician, who worked on different platforms. He was an influential member of the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) and remained a member of the central executive committee on the Asia Pacific Peace Forum. He was also a member of the World Social Forum, President of the Sindh Water Committee, the member of Anti-Greater Thal Canal and Anti-Kala Bag Dam Action Committee. As a member of the Pakistan Oppressed Nations' Movement (Ponam), he became a pioneer for the national unity of the Sindhi people and led long marches for the greater cause of resisting the Indus River water theft by the Punjab establishment. He also led long marches from Sukkur to Karachi twice; first in 1991 and then again in 1995 to protest against the proposed construction of Kala Bag Dam. In 2001, he led another long march from Bhitt Shah to Karachi for the same cause. Palijo was born on 20 January 1930, at Jungshahi of the Thatta district of Sindh. He got his early education at his village, and later travelled to Karachi to complete his

schooling at the Sindh Madarsatul Islam. He then decided to pursue a law degree at the Muslim Law College and started practicing as a lawyer. This was the time he started getting involved in political movements, and became a member of the Sindh Hari Committee (peasantry movement) in 1953. He went on to join the National Awami Party (NAP) in 1964, which he quit some time later, citing the party's lack of motivation in solving national issues as his main reason for leaving. He was also general Secretary of Bazm-e-Sufia-e-Sindh, whose goal is to promote the message of the Sufi saints of the province.

Moreover, he actively participated in the activities of the Sindhi Adabi Sangat. At a time when religious parties and fundamentalists openly criticized the progressive poets and writers of Sindh, he wrote a book in defence titled as The '*Andha Undha Wejj*' (The blind doctors). He also played a very active role in mobilizing the people of Sindh to unite against the one-unit policy of 1954 and also successfully resisted the release of voter lists in the Urdu language forcing the government to release new ones in Sindhi. In 1970, he founded the Awami Tahreek Party, which promoted a socialist platform and fought for equality amongst all the different communities of Pakistan.

During his multiple struggles for people's rights, Palijo was arrested a number of times and spent an accumulated eleven years in jail. For his great sacrifice, Amnesty International declared him a 'Prisoner of Conscience'. He spent his entire life in the service of the public, especially the Sindhis, and even though he suffered greatly because of his beliefs, he never lost sight of his mission.

Palijo was an avant-garde who introduced new trends in Sindhi literature. Being a voracious reader himself, as well as a student of history, he had a deep insight in into the literature of other nations and their history. He could talk for hours on German, French, Russian, Chinese, Greek, Vietnamese, English, Persian, Punjabi and Urdu poetry,

history, politics, literature and philosophy. While, he always quoted Shah Latif, Sheikh Ayaz, Ustad Bukhari in his speeches and writings, he also had a good command over Faiz, Saher, Mira Baee, Bulleh Shah, Galib, Rumi, Walt Whitman and Mayakovsky among countless others. He wrote 35 books during his lifetime, which included short stories, criticisms, political writings, translations, speeches, articles and Latifiat (analysis of Shah Latif's poetry). Palijo was an orator of tremendous qualities as well. He attracted thousands of people to his public speeches, and was known in certain circles as the Socrates of Sindh. He was one of the very few people, who could instill in their followers and friends the same excitement for gaining knowledge and reading books that they themselves were engaged in.

Palijo's struggle was emblematic of his personality and resolve: to never give up, even in the face of adversity. He was unique and a great thinker who was an authority on a wide range of subjects, which attracted admirers the world over. He was never afraid to critique and admonish people in power for their shortcomings, and his ultimate desire was to rid the country of the corrupt and greedy forces that threaten to ruin it.

Being a socialist, he believed in the power of the community, and that all people were created equal. In this regard he empowered women, and other disenfranchised groups in the country to fight for their rights and speak their minds. He did not simply sit and wait for change to come about; he understood the significance of the struggle. His comrades always followed their great leader's exceptional discipline and this was observed during his funeral as well. The day of his departure left an unprecedented expression of love and affinity. By virtue of his political astuteness, Palijo will surely be remembered for centuries.

*(Courtesy: Daily Times)*

# THE MAN OF SOUND CONVICTION AND STRUGGLE

*Syed Momin Ali Shah*

Sindh is the blessed piece of land in the world, it is graced with the grandeur of God and this has been the reason that Sindhies are born leaders and born revolutionaries. Compare them with others in the subcontinent and one would find clear difference in their thinking, approach and human friendly discourses. They are found to be men of character, courage and conviction and these are the fundamental ingredients for making of personalities. Unfortunately they have seen brief periods of their own rules, which could not create, desired change in their socioeconomic trends.

The settings and situations in Sindh compel people to be on left side of the center, the vast expanses of nothingness, the poverty, and fragmentation in society, uncertainty, corruption and leaderless-ness have brought the Sindh at the edge of precipice. These things are enough for any person with even average knowledge to think for bringing change by the sheer force of his will and conviction. We have seen such people in last seventy years in Sindh who came out to bring transformation and serve the people only to alleviate their pains and sufferings and improve their living conditions. They remained always in the forefront of struggle with sincerity, commitment and dedication. The names which come to mind are Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, G.M Sayed, Hyder Bux Jatoi, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Miskeen Jahan Khan Khoso, Pir Sibghatullh shah Rashdi, Maulana

Ubedullah Sindhi, Sobho Gianchandani and Rasool Bux Palijo. Except Jinnah all were leftists, socialists and believed in progressivism, democracy and norms of change leading to better and disciplined lives of people of Sindh. They believed to remove injustices to the people of Sindh and they faced the exploiters stoically resulting in their troubles, imprisonments and sufferings. The other name is Allah Bux Soomro who got the chance to govern the province and who was also man of principles and believed in transformation and knew full well the dynamics of politics but winds blew against him in his times.

As we are talking about Mr. Palijo he was born in village Mungar Khan Palijo of Jungshahi town of Thatta district in early 1930.People of this area of Sindh are completely different in nature from those in northern Sindh, they are mostly peaceful and always toe the line of government. However the timings when Palijo became young around 1947 were of great tumult and disturbance on larger scale. Subsequently the timings in Sindh from 1947 till 1969 also remained in the state of fluidity and very much against the people of Sindh in which they remained always in struggle mode and there was always upheaval and uncertainty in which people themselves looked aghast and fully pulverized.

This was the background, which created the man like Rasool Bux Palijo who despite being different than the politicians found attracted towards to sufferings and tribulations of the common people. In the younger years he found his ways to be linked with local student unions in Hyderabad. These sentiments in him subsequently flourished when he became lawyer and entered in full form in practical field of legal profession. This field introduced him to the practical politics in the province and later in the country but he shunned to be lucky and soon started to be recognized with those who believed in struggles, revolutions and changes on mass scales that too only for the sake of

people. He was selfless, witty and with sense of humour, these things imparted him soon with the quality of resilience, which is the sign of complete maturity. This maturity further regimented when he read the books of Marx, Hegel, Lenin, Spinoza, Fidel Castro, Gandhi, Nehru, Nelson Mandela, Jamal Nasir of Egypt and such other leaders.

He was the person who truly believed in the theories of modern revolutions and transformations but he did not look deeply into the Iranian revolution, which in fact resembled with the conditions prevailing generally in Pakistan and particularly in Sindh. I do not know what made him to not to be interested in Iranian revolution despite its suitability for our situations in Sindh and despite it being truly relevant to our cause.

**Mr. Palijo as torchbearer**

After understanding the theories of revolutions and change leading towards progressivism and wellbeing of the people he launched his political party based really on the principles enshrined in the socialistic and democratic thoughts. The party launched by him was Sindhi Awami Tahreek now working under the name of Awami Tehrik with coverage in all over Pakistan.

Mr. Palijo was indeed multifaceted personality, he was proficient in literature, economics, law, politics, transformations and he was poet of high class. His straightforwardness and sincerity with his cause made him suffer eleven years of imprisonment in the Kot Lakhpat jail of Lahore from where he was released under the pressure by international organizations. This happened after when he participated in the Movement for Restoration of Democracy by various parties under the leading role of Peoples Party in Sindh. This movement gave the sense of confidence to Sindhi people who started thinking that they can do something on bigger scale and they can really rule the

country provided that people's party mends its ways.

**Mr. Palijo in his local area**.

Palijo can be termed as the person who started his political work at grass root levels, he created awareness in the poor people of his area and through conscious indoctrination he changed the thinking of common man. He was the first person in Sindh to work on scientific basis on the theory of socialism and he practically introduced the concept of proletariat and working class. He was the person he started his struggle from self, then from his family and then enlarged his scope of activities and eventually it covered whole of Sindh and it took him fifty years to make poor people accept his concept and consider themselves engulfed in four layers of exploitation.

**Palijo as practical strategist**

The scientist know the hard facts of nature and its laws governing various things in the nature, engineers know the formulae to asses various unknown facts but it is difficult for social scientist, revolutionaries and politicians to prepare the formulae for linking socio-eco-politico –economic stream of behaviour and finally calculate what will happen. This can only be done when one has full knowledge of all the programms, policies, outcomes and their impacts on nations and their survival, on the people and on their lives. Mr. Palijo had because comprehensive knowledge in these fields as such he was able to predict what would be ultimate of shape of things if such and such things happened. In one stroke of pen he said that he wanted to see the secular Pakistan, now this phrase encompasses various things and those with knowledge can assess what was the intention of Palijo. There were various such things for which he predicted accurately for example he said that MQM was the terrorist organization which fact proved to be true subsequently.

Palijo was very good negotiator because like Bhutto he could predict the results of various permutations and combinations and their long term impacts and he could easily formulate the strategy to cope with all types of situations That is why he was good negotiator because he had knowledge of historical contexts, present scenarios and intentions of other parties while at the same time he was fully aware of who was doing what in Pakistan and what he wanted.

**Literary and Philosophical foundations of Palijo's Thought**

Speaking in a broader sense Mr. Palijo had vast spectrum of knowledge and wisdom before him, he believed in and followed the political thought of western philosophers starting from Thomas Hobbes to Karl Marx, Hagel and from Voltaire to Kant. He studied all the modern revolutions particularly French revolution which catapulted the Europe on the world scene and triggered the process in other countries .In literature also he had studied the thought of most of famous literary figures like Plato, Aristotle, Democritus Dostoevsky, Carlyle while at the same time his canvas of thinking covered the oriental figures like Buddha, Confucius, Gandhi, Mani, Zoroaster and Kemal Ataturk. While at the same time he had full knowledge of all the religions and remained interested in the life and works of Muhammad (PBUH). Therefore it can be said with good degree of certainty that he combined the western philosophy with oriental thought and culled out his own stream of approach basing his realization on the local conditions.

All the religions, all the philosophy and all the revolutions talk of improving the living conditions of poor and they lay down fundamental principles for achieving cerate objectives in this regard because focus of all the theories and practical approaches is humanity oriented and stress on struggle to remove the barriers for to have access to every rich and poor alike. The classical theories of Greek

philosophers and those coming from medieval ages are clear for understanding and Mr. Palijo took full benefit by studying those and by pursuing the goals enshrined in them.

**Political Achievements of Mr. Palijo**

The barometer used for knowing and understanding the political achievements of any leader is the level of change he has instilled in the minds of people and by the awareness he has created in the minds of common man. While at the same time the achievements are measured by understanding the degree of knowledge encompassing the details of currents and cross currents in the field of politics, social systems and economic scope of things. If these are the factors considered for knowing what Mr. Palijo achieved then it could easily be said that given his humble background and given his circumstances he achieved a lot in his lifetime. He knew the art of agitating not only the minds of people but was aware of the art of controlling their thoughts and imaginations. In case if people start loving any leader by their sincerity and through the prism of their hearts than it should be construed without and grain of doubt that the man was really a leader. The leadership indeed was ingrained in his personality just it was matter of time to emerge in its true form which it did and that worked wonders.

**Art of combining democratic, socialistic and nationalistic elements**

Because the focus of democracy, socialism, communism, nationalism and other such isms is man himself therefore all these systems and isms define the mechanisms and procedures for uplift and development of downtrodden. It was Mr. Palijo who first introduced this practical form of Marxism in Sindh and linked it with its network working in the subcontinent. His aim was to give shape to such permanent framework in Sindh, which must remove not

only inequalities but to erase the very foundations of feudalism and create equal opportunities for all and sundry. He combined all these forms, which culminate in reforms and good governance and ensures its sustainability. For nationalism he kept the things within the limits of Sindh while for socialism he was following the laid down principles of Lenin, Mao and Marx. While at the same time he did not deviate from the dictums of democracy, which means he wanted change through proper and permanent system for everybody and on sustainable basis. It was the reason all the poor listened thoughtfully his calls and gave full attention to whatever he said. It was his miracle to do so because normally people of Sindh do not form any type of unity unless they think it was realistic and based on their aspirations and there was no chance in it of any exploitation.

**Scientific Analysis of Socio-politico economic conditions**

When someone embarks on the way to transform the society and give it such a shape that it develops and ultimately be responsive in all its forms then he automatically tries to learn the nature of forces acting and shaping the society. He tries to find shortcomings and focus on them for real change. He understands the logic behind all of these forces and the joint effect of social, economic and political conditions on the individual and on society. He tries to also understand the patterns and their impact also in the light religious and historical contexts while at the same time brings in focus the present those factors which adversely impact the living conditions of people. Mr. Palijo when set out on the course of ameliorating the conditions of poor people he then became part of international scenario and dug out the stories of change and transformations all over the world which proved to be successful. He pursued vehemently the Marxist policies in Sindh, which was difficult in presence of feudal and other centers of exploitation and coercion. Despite his opposition his efforts

borne the fruit and there found to be continuity in his party after half a century and it is pursuing same goals on well-defined policies.

The analysis of society by him was based exactly on the patterns suggested by the masters of communism and thus he was following their programms except using their verbosity and which were inherently part of communism like proletariat, class struggle etc. This he did to reorient the things in the light of culture and norms in Sindh. He also understood and made that known to poor people that who their exploiters were and who was behind these imbalances and inequalities and drafted the comprehensive program in the light of those forces which were responsible for such exploitative tendencies in Sindh and then in Pakistan.

**Eschewing the Ideological adventurism and linking politics with Knowledge and literature base.**

I have seen Mr. Palijo as a person who while understanding the theoretical Marxism and obtaining situation in Sindh tries to dovetail both and create its acceptable shape, which proves to be workable and responsive. Logically bringing the practical Marxism immediately in its truest form would not have been acceptable and result oriented and thus would have been rejected forthwith by the people as had been done in different times elsewhere. He thus realized this fundamental urge and prepared his manifesto keeping different elements of culture, social settings and economic necessities, this became acceptable to the people and they welcomed it with both arms.

Despite his being Marxist he altogether did not eschew the religion and he learned it wholeheartedly and also studied the life of Muhammad (PBUH) while at the same time he was proficient in comparative religions. But he thought that the message of Allah was clear it was simply wellbeing of people and fighting for their cause .As such he,

like Maulana Ubedullah Sindhi believed that communism plus God equal to Islam.

There are various such politicians, statesmen and freedom fighter who were scholars at the same time. Various examples can be quoted who have written the books while remaining in the field of politics they are Nelson Mandela, Yasir Arafat, Nehru, Gromyko of Russia, Fidel Castro of Cuba, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan, Sardar Sherbaz Mazari, Yousuf Raza Gilani etc. Most of them have written their biographies while there are others who have given full accounts of their struggle and discussed method to be used in overt and covert and covert operations among them are Mao Zedong, Hochi Minh of Vietnam and Ben Blla of Algeria and Abul Kalam Azad of India and Allma Inayatullah Msahraqi etc.

**Indus water dispute between Punjab and Sindh.**

I heard the speech of Mr. Palijo, which he delivered in Lahore in late nineties, it can be called masterpiece of his articulation, philosophy and thought. I have not been able to forget the tone and tenor of that speech. It contained all the details involving, engineering, economics and agricultural aspects so meticulously explained that there was no room for listener to deny him. I was surprised about his oration, substance, purpose and background. He was the person who really made the listeners to accept the case of Sindh with regard to various details Sindh has been talking about particularly about the recent history of construction of barrages and dams. It covered the period from 1859 to present with references to the international laws and relevant documents. I heard him snubbing the ex WAPDA chairman Mr. Shamsul Mulk who was repeatedly trying to intervene and make his point heard. What made difference during his talk about water dispute was his forcefulness and his insightful approach which others in Sindh province do not posses.

**Conclusion**

Much is expected from those who have been given much from the God and Mr. Palijo was given much from God. He was multidimensional man with clear-cut ideas and streamlined approaches. If I had to summaries my viewpoint about the personage of Mr. Palijo I would say that he was surely brave person believing in real change through struggle, dedication and commitment. In brief span of his life he had created enough space for those who can sincerely follow in his footsteps and he has left behind the legacy so rich in thought and action oriented approach that it will not despair the ones who sincerely adopt and use that.

# PALIJO – REVOLUTIONARY MIND

***Sahar Gul***

A Rare Funeral with Women and Men Chanting Revolutionary Songs till Burial! I would rather say: RB Palijo Rest in Revolutionary mind! Echo in Resistant/Resilient Mind!

An epitome of leftist politics in Pakistan/region: A highly well-read Marxist Leninist and Maoist politician of Sindh, who gave new dimensions to the politics of Sindh and Pakistan, in which he lifted up downtrodden, marginalized sections, esp. women of society and trained them in his amazing political nursery, meanwhile kept writing unique history by creating a precedence of placing cut-throat resistance against dictatorships of the time.

The sights of his funeral confirm once again: he is no more physically, the legacy of his revolutionary politics and political intellectualism will live long till society is fully transformed into a pro-people world! *(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# REMEMBERING A FRIEND AND A COMRADE

*Nighat Said Khan*

I first heard of Bhai Palijo in the 1970s. As a Marxist that keenly followed Mao Zedong and an academic working on peasant politics and peasants in revolutionary struggles, I was interested in his struggle in organizing the Haris in Sindh. His work was revolutionary and exciting and I hoped that I could get to know and to learn from how the peasantry could be organized. However, at that time I didn't get the opportunity. Later in 1981 when Amnesty International announced that it was honoring him as a 'Prisoner of Conscience' my interest was fueled once again but getting to meet him while in jail was out of the question.

Rasul Bux Palijo, the son of Ali Ahmed Palijo and Ladee Bai, was a Marxist leader who tried to implement his theoretical understanding. He was a scholar, a human rights activist, a Supreme Court lawyer, an outstanding speaker and a writer who wrote extensively. He has about 40 books to his credit covering a wide sweep: from literature and politics; to prison diaries, culture, poetry, translations and biographies of Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Min. As a leader of the Awami Tahreek, a leftist party that worked with the peasantry, he was well versed in political mobilization and activism. Apart from the Awami Tahreek Palijo Sahib was also active in the Sindh Hari Committee and a member of several organizations and forums. His activism included several campaigns including the campaign against the Kalabagh Dam; peaceful long marches on different issues

and protests for rights of the people of East Pakistan in 1971, and the people of Baluchistan. His role in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy stands out as significant especially his influence in mobilizing men and women who courted arrest in 1983.

The first opportunity that I got to meet him was when he was seriously unwell in jail and was getting treatment in hospital in Karachi. It was 1986 when I went to see him with Munir Chandio. Palijo Sahib was wearing a sweater in the middle of summer which signified one of the medical symptoms that he had was constantly feeling cold. I remember our conversation very well, although it went on for hours and covered a range of issues, not least the political situation in the country. We also talked a lot about the women's struggle and of Sindhiani Tahreek which had been active since 1982 and which had played an active role in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy in 1983. He was proud that women and young girls had played such a committed role and had not only courted arrest but spent years in jail.

I was impressed by Palijo Sahib's knowledge and his extensive reading which ranged from politics, economics, culture, history, women's rights, and peasant politics to literature. His readings were not only the classics but more recent literature, poetry, essays, and philosophy in Sindhi Urdu and English although he was well versed in several other languages. I was fascinated and wanted to pursue many of the angles we discussed including the women's movement. We agreed that we would keep in touch and continue our conversation when he felt better and when he was out of jail.

I lost touch with Palijo Sahib when he went abroad for his treatment but I met with him in the early 1990s. This time it was in Hyderabad where he was staying. His family was there when I went to see him and they were in a reading session on literature. Palijo Sahib was a rare individual and

even rarer man in that he was keen that his family members, including women members be familiar with political writings and literature. He was also keen that they be involved in political action and took a great interest in Sindhiani Tahreek. I once asked him about this and he said that he supported women and it was necessary that he should start by supporting the women in his family in being part of movements for a justice, equality and a humane world.

Palijo Sahib promoted a well- rounded education for all activists on the grounds that all aspects of society needed to be understood and internalized since revolutionary change necessarily meant changing the whole of society. Knowledge was a must for all forms of activism and books were not only for information and knowledge but for sensitivity and pleasure. I myself like to read and have been exposed to books throughout my life but my reading did not match Palijo's. I also do not have the committed wide ranging and meaningful political activism that he had. However, we did share our approach to knowledge and knowledge-based activism and we shared our belief in the benefits of reading and study circles.

Since the 1990s Palijo Sahib and I met several times. His sister Maryam and I had become very close friends in 1987. I was also friends with Zahida Sheikh and I knew and respected many others members of his family. I was also involved at several levels in Sindh which I consider my home. Even though I am from an Urdu Speaking family and live in Lahore, I have never been associated with Muhajir politics and have always taken the position that Pakistan is ruled from and by the Punjab. There were many times when we disagreed especially when he overstated how the Muhajir politics could be resolved.

On one occasion we actually had a falling out. I agreed that the Muhajir population and other ethnicities were turning Sindhis into Red Indians in Sindh but could not

agree that one could just get rid of the situation by forcing them out of Sindh. Palijo Sahib was forceful and every conversation with him was long and animated but since I too can hold my ground, I was openly critical. I don't think others challenged him as much as I did! Our friendship survived. In fact, it grew over the years.

Our politics, our values, our sense of purpose saw to it that any falling out was only temporary. Palijo Sahib was a human being I respected and admired. I last saw him last year in Karachi when I went to spend time with him and to have lunch with Maryam. Palijo had lost his wife Zahida who died very suddenly in January 2018. I too was upset at losing my friend and expected that we would talk about her and how bereft he was with the loss of his wife, his companion and his friend. I also knew he was unwell but I had not expected to find Palijo Sahib so devastated and so physically weak.

He was clearly happy to see me and as usual was very affectionate. And as usual, and despite his illness, he wanted to know about everything that was going on in the world and in Pakistan. His dynamism was still there even as he found it tiring to talk. I sat on his bed, held his hand and then his niece took photographs of us. His arm around my shoulders and me resting against him. His gesture gave me strength. I felt as if he was passing something on to me. And he was.

He passed on to all of us a political legacy.

# AN ENLIGHTENED MIND

*Dr. Naazir Mahmood*

Calling a great personality 'controversial' is a mundane statement. Such statements have been used to describe almost all great figures. Rasul Bakhsh Palijo was an outstanding person of not only Sindh but of Pakistan. His greatness lay in his personality, which was full of contradictions. And with his controversies and contradictions, he challenged the dominant classes of this country and fought till his last breath.

Palijo was a committed leftist and Marxist intellectual who left a large repertoire of his writings, most of which have been in the form of high-quality books. In addition to being an intellectual and writer, Palijo was a defender of human rights and the leader of the Awami Tahreek. His political party was launched around half a century ago in 1970 by the name of Sindhi Awami Tahreek with a clear dedication to communism and Marxism.

In the 1960s, leftist movements across the world were divided into pro-Soviet and pro-China groups; Palijo was considered pro-China. His socialism had a nationalistic hue and he always followed the path of progressive and secular politics. Another orbit of Palijo's political focus was feudalism and large land holdings which he tried to abolish. Perhaps that was the reason he could never join the PPP or PML-N. His commitment to democracy was legendary.

Born in 1930 at Mangar Khan Palijo village in the Thatta district, Palijo received his early education there. For his secondary education he joined the Sindh Madrassatul Islam in Karachi where he also completed his LLB degree. Like all

distinguished scholars of social sciences, Palijo had a love for languages and he never resented the use of any language in his presence. In addition to Sindhi, he had at an early age mastered Balochi, English, Punjabi, Saraiki and Urdu. He also had working knowledge of Arabic and Persian. He could not only converse in these languages but was also familiar with their history and literature.

His fondness for poetry enabled him to recite long passages from poems of many poets. For example, he had memorised the writings of almost all big names of Urdu poetry, from Mir and Ghalib, to Josh, Iqbal and Faiz. Those who spent time with him in jails recall that when Palijo was in a good mood he would transform a dreary prison evening into a lively soiree. Though 'prisoners of conscience' he lived a miserable life in jail. Palijo took full advantage of it by reading, writing and teaching other inmates.

As an advocate, Palijo knew the law well, with all the intricacies of the legalese. He became a Supreme Court lawyer, thanks to his legal finesse. He spent over 11 years of his life in various jails, especially during the 1980s when dictator Gen Zia-ul-Haq was targeting politicians, particularly those who were leftists. The Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) is a shining chapter in the history of politics in Pakistan. From 1981 to 1988, the MRD was the leading light of resistance against Gen Zia's dictatorship.

Though the PPP was the largest party in the MRD, leftist activists and leaders such as R B Palijo, Faazil Rahu, Jaam Saqi and Wali Khan played an important role in it. We must remember that the 1980s was the decade of intense oppression and suppression in Pakistan. Gen Zia was bent upon destroying all democratic forces in the country. Before Gen Zia, similar attempts were made by our self-proclaimed Field Marshal, Gen Ayub Khan. But the limits crossed by the former were unprecedented, and set the tone of repression in Pakistan for many decades to come.

While Gen Zia was introducing the era of dark ages in Pakistan, it was leftist leaders such as Palijo, Rahu and Saqi who, along with the PPP, carried forward the standard of democracy and endured hardships -including extreme mental and physical torture. Sadly, the MRD could not extend itself beyond the sand dunes of Sindh. And what to talk of other provinces, even Mohajirs of Karachi and Hyderabad remained aloof from this movement. That was precisely the time when Gen Zia used divisive tactics in Sindh by promoting a rabble-rouser such as Altaf Hussain, who formed his political party, the Mohajir Qaumi Movement.

This precipitated an ethnic and violent turn in the politics of Sindh. Palijo was cognizant of this treachery and tried his best to warn the Urdu-speaking Mohajirs of the likely consequences of this ethnic politics. But the state institutions at that time were whole heartedly supporting the MQM. The primary purpose of this assistance was thwarting a united front in which speakers of various languages in Sindh could raise their voice in unison against the dictatorship.

Palijo took a clear and unambiguous stance against Altaf Hussain and his MQM. Some people tried to interpret this as a conspiracy against Mohajirs and the Urdu language.

But the fact is that a secular intellectual such as Palijo who had command over many languages could be against an ideology or a political party, but could hardly be against a nation or nationality as a whole. He did, though, have his own definition of nation and nationality and was not willing to recognize Mohajirs as a separate nationality.

Palijo preached harmony and wanted all people living in Sindh to call and consider themselves Sindhis. He wanted all the new and old Sindhis to learn the Sindhi language. Alas, denizens of Karachi such as myself could not become proficient in Sindhi. In addition to the Awami Tahreek and the MRD, Palijo played an active role in the formation of the

Awami National Party (ANP), Sindh United Front, Sindh National Alliance, Bazm-e-Sufia-e-Sindh and the Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement –that included in its fold parties such as the Sindh Progressive Party, Awami Tahreek, Balochistan National Movement (BNM), Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP), and Saraiki Movement. In the PONM, Palijo worked with Attaullah Mengal, Mehmood Khan Achakzai, Dr. Qadir Magsi, Syed Jalal Mehmood Shah and others.

Palijo also took keen interest in the Sindhi Adabi Sangat, led by Nuruddin Sarki and others; Sangat has played a prominent role in the literary history of Sindh. Palijo was also instrumental in the fight against the One-Unit during the Ayub regime. The One-Unit was formed in 1955 by dissolving all provinces in West Pakistan and forming a single province, with Lahore as the capital. In the history of Pakistan, the One-Unit episode conjures up a lot of unpleasant memories, since it was an attempt to crush the aspirations of smaller nationalities in the country by neglecting local cultures and languages.

During Gen Ayub Khan's reign, state repression intensified. This resulted in East Pakistan becoming an independent country, Bangladesh. The repression also aggravated the sense of deprivation in other nationalities.

Any discussion about Rasul Bakhsh Palijo cannot be complete without a mention of the Sindhi Hari Committee and Sindhiani Tahreek that was formed in 1980 - 10 years after the formation of the Awami Tahreek. With Sindhiani Tahreek, Palijo encouraged political consciousness in the women of Sindh and taught them how to wage a political struggle. Gen Zia wanted to prolong his dictatorship under the guise of Islamisation because it helped him formulate anti- women laws which could marginalise his opponents such as Nusrat and Benazir Bhutto. Sadly, again, the Sindhiani Tahreek remained confined to interior Sindh and could not make inroads into big urban areas.

Rasul Bukhsh Palijo was a handsome and smart man who loved beauty. His friends and followers admired his aesthetic sense - and at times resented it. His eye for beauty remained intact till his old age. Rest in peace Palijo Sahib; we will remember your struggle for peoples' rights and your efforts to make Pakistan a peoples' democracy.

The writer holds a PhD from the University of Birmingham, UK and works in Islamabad.

*(Courtesy: The News)*

# MARXIST -LENINIST -MAOST... PALIJO

***Laal Group***

An incredibly moving tribute at the funeral of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist and Sindhi leader Rasool Bux Palijo. He fought against the establishment all his life and has left a huge political legacy. His struggle against the military dictatorship of Zia ul Haq is the stuff of legends. He is one of the only leaders in Pakistan with such a massive following amongst Sindhi women. Thousands of women lined along the street to see off his body to the funeral. Rest in Peace Comrade Palijo.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# RASOOL BUX PALIJO: BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL

*Saquib Niaz Khaskheli*

Born 17 years prior to the independence of Pakistan, Rasool Bux Palijo was a gem who saw the world as it was.

He was a progressive and his knowledge kept him ahead of his time. Thus, a lot of people found his ideas and messages irrelevant and hard to comprehend. His vast knowledge was a product of extensive reading and exposure to the Pakistan Movement. His lifelong work revolved around working for the rights of the downtrodden and opposing feudalism and bureaucracy. From the 88 years of his life, he spent 11 years in jail because of his lead role in the Movement of Restoration of Democracy (MRD) and fighting against Gen. Zia's martial law. He founded his own far-leftist party Awami Tahreek and was also a founding member of Awami National Party, Sindhi Adabi Sangat and Sindh Qaumi Itehad.

**Palijo's Life:**

As a student, the young Palijo was a part of Muslim Student Federation (MSF) and actively participated in Lahore Resolution. As he grew up and saw the independence of Pakistan, he often criticized the establishment of Pakistan for failing to fulfil the real essence of the Lahore Resolution. Palijo was an avid reader. He was well-versed in literature by reading Mao Zedong, Vladimir Lenin, Mohandas Gandhi, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and Karl Marx. By the time Palijo reached his adulthood, he had read and

absorbed all of Marx's words and was a staunch believer in his concept of class struggle. This led him to becoming an outspoken critic of bureaucracy, feudalism, and martial law.

Palijo entered into politics in early 1950s to secure the rights of peasants who were being crushed by feudal. He joined Hyder Bux Jatoi in his Sindhi Hari Committee and also started working as a Secretary to G. M. Syed in Bazm-e-Sufia-e-Sindh. In 1957, Sindh Hari Committee merged in the National Awami Party (NAP) which was an alliance of landlord nationalists. With this move, Palijo saw a change in the motive of the party and a decrease of interest in Hari politics so he left the Hari Committee. On the other side, he also parted ways with Syed's Bazm-e-Sufia-e-Sindh because of difference in ideology. Palijo started his own party in 1970 and called it Awami Tahreek (AT). In an interview, he said he did not want to call his party Sindhi Awami Tahreek because his manifesto was to work in the whole country. Because of his origin, Sindh was his first step but he never termed himself a nationalist, and intended to work in other provinces as well. This was the time when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) founded Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Lahore and many Sindhi leftists started joining his party. Bhutto offered Palijo to join PPP but he turned down the offer. After the East Pakistan crisis (1971), Palijo wrote a book named What Happened in Bengal where his narrative was largely against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Furthermore, Landhi labour killings (1972) also widened the gap between him and ZAB. It was evident that the progressives and nationalists were in constant disagreement with PPP which provided an opportunity to the rightist and religious parties to rise against ZAB. At long last, a movement against ZAB under the banner of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) kick started with the participation of many nationalists and communists, including Palijo. What they didn't foresee at the time was that Gen. Zia's dictatorship would follow right after the fall of Bhutto. As Zia decided to hang ZAB, Palijo

protested against his actions and joined the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). The sole purpose of MRD was to fight Gen. Zia's dictatorship. A lot of parties including late ZAB's PPP and Palijo's AT, joined hands to form MRD.

During the MRD, Zia regime could not expect the kind of massive support the campaign evoked from the masses in Sindh. Zia realized the consequences of the unhindered movement for his rule and started rounding up the main leaders and incarcerating them. Mr. Palijo was imprisoned in the Kot Lakhpat Jail on politically motivated charges. During that time, Awami Tahreek (AT) was held together by Fazal Rahu and Sain Alam Shah and developed a huge following in Thatta and Badin districts.

Palijo had already served two prior stints of imprisonment during rule of General Yahya Khan and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. All three of his periods of imprisonment accounted to 11 years (Between 1969 to 1986). In 1981 Palijo was declared as "Prisoner of Conscience" by Amnesty International.

After his release from jail in mid-1980s, Palijo visited the UK where he met with many intellectuals who were associated with Pakistan Committee for Democracy and Justice, a committee that was formed after the execution of ZAB. In 1986, Palijo merged his AT in the newly formed Awami National Party (ANP) and became its Secretary General. When leaders from KPK joined the Government of Nawaz Sharif, Palijo found their action anti Sindh and restored his Awami Tahreek from ANP.

In the later years of his life, his health started getting affected due to age and years of struggle. He was hospitalized for the first half of 2018 after suffering cardiac and respiratory complications. The star of anti-Zia struggle died on 7th June 2018 at the age of 88. On 8 June 2018, he was laid to rest in his native village, Mungar Khan Palijo, in Thatta district.

**Palijo's Death:**

Palijo's death was as revolutionary and legendary as his life. The usual burial procedures in Middle Eastern Muslim cultures do not include participation of women in the procession. But due to Palijo's extensive work in empowering women and relieving them from the shackles of the society, hundreds of women (mostly workers and beneficiaries of Palijo's Sindhiani Tahreek) gathered in the procession and paid tribute to him by singing anthems and chanting praises. They chanted these Sindhi lines Rahbar Sindhi quom jo (leader of the nation of Sindh), Rasool Bux Palijo Zinda aahe zinda rahando, fikar-e-Palijo zinda rahando (Palijo's philosophy is alive and will remain alive)

Deviating from the norm, the women also acted as the pall-bearers, carrying the coffin from the residence of his elder son Jamil Palijo to the graveyard. The women also offered Janaza Namaz and participated in burial rites. His death did not get much attention in the mainstream media, but it was covered by masses and videos were put on the social media. Many people shared the video clips of mixed gathering at the funeral after his death.

Palijo was widely respected throughout Pakistan. After his death, even his opponents were forced to praise him. A large number of politicians, nationalist leaders, writers, poets, lawyers, journalists and educationists attended the funeral.

**Palijo's Work for Women:**

Palijo was a staunch supporter of women equality. He inspired the progressives around him because he had done a lot of tangible work for women. When Zia came into power, he introduced a lot of Islamic policies which tended to be anti-women in practice. The women, who got a lot of freedom in Bhutto's era, were marginalized again under the Zia's Islamization'. Those were dark times for women.

In that time, Awami Tahreek started a movement to

fight discriminatory laws against women and called it Sindhiani Tahreek. This movement came as a ray of hope in those dark times. The Sindhiani Tahreek worked to emancipate the Sindhi rural women from their shackled way of life.

They were instrumental in bringing women into the political circle in Sindh. The movement worked like a women wing of the Awami Tahreek and was led by Palijo's wife, Zarina Baloch.

**Palijo's Legacy:**

In his life, Palijo tried to transform the thinking pattern and thought process of people of Pakistan introducing them to the concept of total freedom and a class-less society (Marx's concept). His teachings did not die with him. He left a legacy in the form of writings. Palijo was not only an avid reader but also a prolific writer. He transformed his words, understanding and knowledge into books. He authored more than 40 books on numerous subjects. The subjects range from identity to culture, literature to politics to prison diaries, poetry.. In his book —Subuh Theendo (Thee will a dawn), he depicted how people of Sindh were exploited along national and class lines. This book was a form of original political literature and offered critique on how military coups in Pakistan served vested interests of only a few and deprived the major population of their rights. Furthermore, he also wrote during his time in jail. His jail diary was published as 'Kot Lakhpat Jo Qaidi (Prisoner of Kot Lakhpat).

Palijo was a fine intellectual who inspired the Sindhi middle class and encouraged the emancipation of women, a concept that wasn't well-accepted at that time. He wasn't a nationalist. He neither called himself a nationalist nor do his actions and writings show his inclination towards the concept. He read literature and scriptures of people around the world and extremely respected Punjabi poets Bulleh

Shah and Madhu Lal Hussain as much as he respected Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. In many ways, his approach was very unorthodox and distinguished him from Sindhi nationalists.

A lawyer, writer, politician and social worker, Palijo was a man of unrivalled wisdom. His lifelong political struggle is a legacy of awakening and resistance. His books will always be there to enlighten the future generations about his ideology and struggle. Out his 40+ books, 26 are in his mother tongue, Sindhi. Now the next step to continue his legacy should be to translate Palijo's writings in other languages so that people can learn about the history of Sindh in his words.

## GOODBYE SAIN PALIJO

### *Gul Metlo*

I am grieved to learn about the sad demise of Sain Palijo sb. My heartfelt condolences to his all family members, party, friends and fans. May he rest in eternal peace and harmony.

Like thousands of other activists, I was also one who benefited from his personal training. Which have life long imprints on our lives. We were Comrades in arms in true sense of the term, during a very chequered history of Pakistan the- entire decade of 1980s.

He was a legend and great icon of contemporary Sindh. He will be missed and remembered for long. In grief.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# RASOOL BUX PALIJO- ICONIC CHARACTER OF INDUS VALLEY

*Nasir Jamali*

When I wrote the obituary of Sobhao Gianchandani some years ago, I quoted Tagore as entitling him the man of Mohenjo-Daro. That was by virtue of Moen Jo Daro as being sobho's birth place. The case is far different in case of Rasool Bux Palijo - the man who scintillated Indus culture and civilisation by being an iconic figure of Indus culture and civilization spawning over a period of seven decades as he peeped in its panorama of literature, academia, social, political, economic and cultural life. Palijo, a valiant figure, who could rightly be ranked with Marx, Hagel, GB Shaw, Soorah Badshah and Subash Candar Bosh, given his selfless struggle for poor, labour, peasant and powerless. I am really ashamed to write his obituary nearly a month after his departure due to demise of my mother (may her soul rest in peace).

It was a gigantic task to write on Palijo. For some moments I was clueless - on, what and how to write about a person, whose character has remained magnanimous in all its aspects – being an epitome of a selfless, lust-less life, a custodian of social, cultural, political and human values; a protagonist of the doctrine of poor and downtrodden; a focal figure and voice of have-nots in our feudal society. Striving for national rights, Sindh has produced three main battles in last ten decades-Sooah Badshah, GM Syed and Rasool Bux Palijo.

*Walk to beloved is truly arcane*
*Head is used for feet so as to reach ketch with resolve*

As sassui had resolved to use her head in place of feet to acclaim destination, so did Palijo, till his last breathe. His life remained dedicated to Sindh and its people. We, being highly marginal in appreciating the worth of Palijo, GM Syed and Soorah Badshah, could not better judge and evaluate their vision in their lives. A silly nation comes to know the real value of their heroes when it is out of deep slumber.

*Longing for beloved knows no bounds*
*Oyster knows, no rest without a raindrop*

The work and efforts of Palijo could better be compared with that of Oyster, who awaits raindrop even in deep Sea. Sindh was Palijo's true love and destination. He loved this land and its people, climate, crops, language and dialects, poetry, music, social norms, traditions and what not. He was the man who in fact was born to live and die for Sindh.

*The naked ones do not sleep*
*They go, weeping, towards Ram*

The term naked here denotes complete purity; totally free from lust, greed, conceit, worldly gains, pleasure and fame. He was simply a mystic character, who really suited all acclaims which Shah Sain has attributed to a Jogi in Ramkalli. Palijo could truly be acclaimed as a Jogi, a Sami, a Lahotti, a Kapri, a Jabrotti, a Sanyassi, an Adessi, a Viragi, an Avassi, a Talib. Shah Sain has portrayed the struggle of such selfless Jogis as an incessantly smoldering ember in the world Getting rid of respite: they sought no sleep Firm in their faith: I cannot survive them A reflection of why do the truth seekers come in world, and shun its pleasure and luxuries. Why they befriend hardships, pains of life and choose hilly tracks for themselves. Respite has no place in their lives; they keep on wandering and are destination less. They have just one destination that is to attain the pleasure of their lord in discharging the duty towards human love and understanding their woes. The Jogi's are a peripatetic

tribe; they have never settled their permanent living place. This is their centuries old practice. They go on wandering and erect their thatched dwellings for short time and then go ahead again.

*They do not take horse or camel with them*
*And walk towards the far-off destiny*
*Dhottis are searching in desert of wild growth*

The sign of Khahoris are that, they don't wear intact cloths on their body.

Rasool Bux Palijo, fully attained the merit, which Shah Sain has fixed for a jogi and a Sanyassi. Throughout his life, he never seemed to have inclination for a luxury and worldly pleasure. It is another thing that we put cotton in our ears and remain oblivious to the philosophy of these gigantic figures.

*Beloved poet Urfi has wonderfully reflected it*
*Don't say the singers love are silent*

The song is subtle, but our companions have cotton in their ears.

Palijo was a symbol of love with his land and people and that love was never bound for any worldly reward. Amrta Pretam takes love in its broad concept. Love can be with anyone. A male can love a woman; a woman can love a man, natural bondage of parental love, love with nature such as natural beauty of landscapes such as hills, mountains, oceans, rivers, stones, beautiful birds, animals, reptiles and variety of different other things which enchant in one or other way. The creation of world, living objects into pairs, and the bond of relationship has given birth to the state of intimacy among living beings, which has shaped itself into love and hate. The character of Rasool Bux Palijo has all aspects of love in his life. He loved Sindh, its people, its land, its birds.

Unwavering struggle was another great component of Palijo's life. He was never a traditional politician to have roamed for an Assembly seat, Ministry or personal fame. He

was a kohyari, Hussani, Dessi and Khahori of Bhittai, who devoted himself to the great cause of human love striving for their rights. He was a propound-er of the theory of equality, amity and love without any difference of caste, creed and social standards.

*Sufi has no sect: no one knows his creed*
*Waging war within: he leaves no trace*
*Ready ever to rescue: his bitter enemies*

Human love and the respect have governed the life of people like Palijo. All their efforts and activities of their life are dedicated to the cause they believe in. Before writing this piece, I preferred to write about Palijo to prove that he was not a traditional politician throughout his life but then I chose to write on him as a great humanist and believer in human values.

*Peeved being bestowed: pleased when denied*
*Sufi they became: after having self- abnegated*

Such noble characters are rare in our society. Moulana Jami symbolizes Tulip for human understanding of the real cause of life. He says

*You are heedless tulip, oh slave*
*With black heart, a short life and yet laughing.*

The respect and acclamation, which Palijo has received, is far more than those who amass billions in their accounts. Being a national reformer, he came with his agenda, lived with it and died with it. It is never his end but the birth of his philosophy and agenda

*Keeping Kaak aside: they went far beyond*
*Warriors, says latif: discovered the secret*
*Moomal Left aside: it was all about Mandhero*

Kaak was never destination of Palijo, he loved the thatched hut and its dwellers, he loved the bare feet, and empty bellies, poor and hungry masses. Through his steel will, he defeated the dwellers of Kaak and its lovers.

Earlier, I described him as a symbol of the enormous characters of Sassui and her struggle. Palijo had an

insurmountable courage in facing the political class of Sindh, who aimed at fleecing common people. No matter, he could not amass wealth and political ascent that they have, but the love, respect he earned was unquantifiable. The political roadmap that he earmarked for his people will guide them as a beacon light for centuries to come.

*Rapt with no Kaak: Kapris Charmed by no palace*
*Damsels and matrons: also failed to delude*
*Lahoutis left behind: laces of likes on their way*
*Palijo and history are intertwined and would remain so.*
*The yogis in the world were as if in a hamam*
*They were far from rest and did not approach rest*
*It is tragic, I cannot live without them*

(Rest in Peace)

*PART-II*

# RASOOL BUX PALIJO AND SINDH AN ACQUIESCENCE OF LOVE FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

***Nasir Jamali***

Kabir another great mystic poet of sub-continent too follows the same path on inborn love with his unique approach of adhering to unconditional love before the love

*Love does not grow on trees or brought in markets*
*If one wants to be loved, one must first know*
*How to give unconditional love*

This is all where we can depict the covenant of love between Sindh and Rasool Bux Palijo, a man who dedicated his life to this great agreement of love, which he did with his people and land. The roots of this love are never from the day of his birth but are even much before from the day when all the souls submitted before God Almighty with the commitment of Kunf Yakoon (be and it became).

*Neither Be! And it became: nor limbs to foetus*
*Adam had still not been: bestowed with body*
*My bond with kinsfolk: oh Soomra: Is so old*

While I was a college student my maternal Uncle late Ali Hussain Jamali former Editor Daily Mehran Hyderabad always endorsed me to listen and carefully read Rasool Bux Palijo. From that time I started to read and listen this philosopher cum politician. I also wrote his obituary and shared it on my Facebook page too. In that article (probably due to my inadequate approach) I only read his personality in the light of Sur Ramkalli by decorating him with different similes of Jogis with their numerous characters as portrayed

by Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. Now when I have started to ponder on his viable personality, I may say that Ramkalli could be one of the aspects of his personality.

*Melodies of variegies: are my biggest treasures*
*Above every squabble: they never reprimand*
*Are ever ecstatic: I cannot survive sans them*

Rasool Bux Palijo with his sheer struggle ascended to the position of an international level philosopher, intellectual and a sole representative of poorer class of our society. As a politician and as an intellectual, peasant, labor and down trodden class of our society was gyrating around his work.

Rasool Bux Palijo didn't change the discourse of his life throughout eight decades for his personal gains and political retributions as is common in our society. He can rightly be called as a man born for poor, lived for poor and died as a poor. This was the remarkable picture and approach of Rasool Bux Palijo and his life

The question is how he can be peddled, when he thoroughly understood Bhittai, Rumi, and Hafiz and had the sentiments of Sarmad, Tabrez and Mansoor. He politically followed Marx but never treated Marxism as dogma. This was the doable character which differed Palijo from other followers of communist school of thought. His masterpiece Subah Thindo (Dawn will appear) can be supposed as his political manifesto.

He was a self-styled politician. With his sagacious understanding of circumstances and more importantly the needs of have not (lower and deprived) class in Sindh, made him to devise his mild political and nationalistic approach. Neither was he a hard core communist nor xenophobic nationalist. Common Sindhi man, farmer and labor class were his ideal and a core reason of his political strategy.

A village near Jungshahi is the birthplace of Palijo. This area coincides with Keenjahar Lake. It is also the birthplace of Noori a veritable character of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai in Sur Kamood.

*Floating on water under floret: and blooming lilies*
*Keenjahar smelt sweet: on the arrival of spring breeze*

The birth of Rasool Bux Palijo at Village Mungar Khan Palijo was indeed the arrival of spring breeze for the underprivileged class of Sindh as their advocate. Six decades of his life (in practical politics) as a student leader and thereafter a mature politician found his complete devotion to poor man's politics. This can have only semblance with Ghandhi, Subash Chandar Bosh, Castro and Hochiman.

To discuss his life, there are multi- aspects which has glared his life but what enchanted me most, is his lust-less life and un-ceasing struggle. When one would embark on to evaluate the life this gigantic person in the context of the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, each Sur has strong resemblance with the everlasting struggle of Palijo but more particularly, the five Surs scintillating the character of Sassui and three Surs encompassing the lust less- life of yogis including Khahori, Poorab and Ramkalli, Sur Marvi and Sur Sohani would greatly reflect the life and person and the constant struggle of Rasool Bux Palijo.

*Never slept fast: taking their slippers off*
*Khahoris worried ever: about their voyage*

Primeval love as I have always been discussing is a bounty, only born in people having true essence of life. They see every aspect of life from its natural context. To Rasool Bux Palijo, a shoes-less and a cloth less was his ideal. Neither he was from the elite class of the Society nor did he represent them. His intellectual wisdom and Politics were only directed towards common man devoid of the basic amenities of life.

Keeping the fact, Rasool Bux Palijo endeavored to bring a unique change in the lives of common individual by bringing evolutionary cum revolutionary changes in their lives, a change which he perceived would be sustainable and powerful tool to safeguard their rights.

Right from Ayoub era and onwards till his death the

poorest of Sindh were his devotion and dedication and can rightly be called his love as Bulla Shah has said: The moment love came towards me, rituals went by the board

*Love and only love, was then to be seen,*
*Over and under, around and between*
*The loveless noticed nothing at all*
*Fasting, pilgrimage and the call, to prayer*
*Love has drowned all*

To attain that great love in the shape socio-political amelioration for the people of Sindh, Palijo utilized his capabilities as intellectual, philosopher and a resilient politician but sometimes destiny works too. His intellectual and philosophical approach and most importantly his pristine love with Sindhi people was its major factor. His politics was not for rewards, position, luxuries or acclamations but was destined with love of land, its people, culture, civilization and more importantly their prosperity. A man with such a diligence is rare to be found.

*Seek forge of smithies: making head an anvil*
*So they make you steel: by striking of hammer*

Palijo desired an educated and economically a stable Sindh with its indigenous and land born communities having due share from its resources. Though his strong and well-studied vision of Sindh has strong potentials for common man but PPP hurled slogan of Rotti, Kapra and makan controlled his rise and occupy top most position in the politics but it always occupied the status of an alternate political power in Sindh.

Palijo had the courage and the patriotism of Marvi, capacity of striving of Sassui, valor of Maroro, openhanded-ness of Rai Dyach and patience of abstinent Yogis to continue his struggle and alive himself as a challenging Politician. Be it political or Social life, Rasool Bux Palijo had unique approach of life. He was a mystic who only witnessed the broader aspect of life, he became such a self-sacrificing to have even disclaimed his existence for the sake

of others.

*As long as you are conscious of yourself*
*Prostration is of no use*
*Frist give up your existence*
*Then only can you voice the takbir.*

These qualities are rarely found in common man. Only the blessed one fill this vacuum. The political life of Rasool Bux Palijo is self –explanatory of his perpetual struggle. Be it the construction of kalabagh Dam, share of Sindh's water, provincial autonomy and social issues such as women rights, honor killing, girls education, women access to politics, language issue, settlement of aliens such as Bengalese, Burmese, Afghanis, Rasool Bux Palijo was a towering character to safeguard the rights of Sindh. Sindh and Sindhi's were his first and last love. The dignity of this unique figure in Sindh can be seen from the fact that at the age 70 years with a poor health, he marched 1000 kilometers from Kamo Shaheed to Karachi to highlight the above mentioned issues of Sindh.

*Rugged hills: grueling journey: intractable mountains*
*Scaled arduous hills: for the sake of noble Ari*
*Join me in trip. Oh kohyara! So I get that closer*

As poetry of Shah was his ideal and its message was core strategy of his political mission therefore he sagaciously utilized each of such character, he absorbed the true spirit of every character / Sur in his life and Politics. He preserved the geniuses of each character and explored their message and successfully transformed it in the practical life of common man. He taught us to adopt the loyalty of Marvi, Struggle of Sassui to face internal and external issues, Sacrifice as in Kadero for ultimate cause of land and nation, the love of Sohani as an unadulterated love with people, resources, land and greater interest of the Nation. He was a change maker in a real sense with greater national approach. He was an advocate of national approach instead of local thinking or linguistic and class politics.

He discouraged localism of communities on the basis of caste and language. To him Sindh and Sindhi have their own self-worth in the context of its rich history and civilization.

If we cast a glance in the politics of Sindh we could only find GM Seyed and Rasool Bux Palijo as nationalist politicians to have only served their nation with a greater and durable objectivity instead of temporary needs. They enrooted the philosophy of nation in Sindhi masses with full acquaintance to the importance of our language, traditions, resources and more importantly our economic rights.

Rasool Bux Palijo and GM Syed both represented spiritual Politics and striving. There was impact of Mansoor in their striving. Be it the scorching June or quivering December, Rasool Bux Palijo was rock in all seasons. There was no concept of slumber in his life. He was a Sassui, who ever loved to hike in sizzling sun for his land and people. He never desired comfort. What comforted him most was the comfort of his nation.

*Spark of Sizzling sun: scorched Sassui in canyons*
*Even then she scaled peaks: for Sake of Kohyaras*

The Political Career of Rasool Bux Palijo was mixed one but Palijo at any moment was never dejected. His efforts for woman emancipation in traditionalist Sindhi society accounted most in his life. The foundation of Sindhani Tahreek (Sindhi women movement) and Sindh Shagard Tahreek (Sindhi student's movement) which streamlined Sindhi girls, brought them to the political panorama. The credit of woman awakening in Sindh exclusively goes to Rasool Bux Palijo.

Palijo was a statesman sans power politics. Power, ministries, accumulation of wealth were not in his agenda. Though having a great stature of a Philosopher cum politician, he could have been an easy beneficiary of the prevailing politics but Rasool Bux Palijo remained a true follower of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai by shunning power in politics. He can better be described as a reformer cum

politician who centered the distresses of common man in his agenda. The impact of the socialist school of thought was its major reason. A close look in his life better vindicates the amalgamation of Socialist doctrine with the philosophy of the struggle of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai.

*No Character of hunters: the way you waddle*
*Fond of exploring Kolachi: never sought to relax*

As mentioned above, the character Sassui and Sohani witness their uncompromising love and endurance. As the love of both were unblemished so was the love of Palijo for his people. When he embarked his efforts against one unit, it was Rasool Bux Palijo who assembled the Sindhi Youth around himself and fought gallantly. He re-awakened the Sindhi Youth to a great devastation that he supposed to ruin their coming generations. The credit of streamlining Sindhi Youth in politics vehemently goes to Rasool Bux. Ayoubi atrocities never striped Palijo from his cause. As once he has said that the struggle of one unit was the base of the start of Sindhi youth in the politics of struggle against demagogues rule. With Rasool Bux Palijo, it were Shaikh Ayaz, Jam Saqui and Yousf Lighari, the young nationalists cum socialists accompanied in his efforts and managed to bring a revolutionary change in student's politics of that time. This indeed was the basis of the practical politics of Palijo too, which became concrete with foundation of Awami Tahreek in 1970.

The foundation of Awami Tahreek was first initiative of middle class Politics in Pakistan and Sindh. Before it, Bhutto, Doultana, kalabagh, Arbabs, Khattaks of NWFP, Sardars of Baluchistan including Marri, Bugati, Jamali and Khoso's were the representatives of feudal class, so was the situation in Sindh, Bhutto, Pir, Mir and Khuhro and numerous other Sardars were representing elite class of society.

To suppress such a well rooted class and their interests and replace it with Poor's politics was a gigantic task but it was the towering will of Rasool Bux Palijo and his

unwavering politics, has brought this change in the politics of Sindh.

We cannot call it an overwhelming successful but it has brought an evolutionary change and enkindled a hope to smash well rooted barriers of feudalism including class society, Use of excessive money in feudal Politics to hypnotize common man with their abominable grip, their lust for power and most importantly their less accommodative approach were hilly task for Palijo to place himself in the politics of Sindh. His determination with his cause and undefeatable hope with his mission enabled him to ensure his stay in politics and defiantly echo his say for down trodden communities.

*Seared in pinning: Sassui still pines more*
*Sipping Punhoon: her hiccups did not end*
*Swing from that quay: Incensed thirst further*

Throughout his life, Rasool Bux never become the part power Politics such as member of any Assembly or occupied any official post or designation but as an irrepressible Politician, he was center of attraction in all political movements but never become part of any political maneuvering.

He was a firm believer of ethics in Politics. He can rightly be decorated as Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan of Sindh's Politics. As Nawabzada was a true democrat and absolved from any ill approach of Politics, Rasool Bux Palijo in Sindh had the same class of Politics. As he was a devout in practical politics so was he an accommodative politician. The way he brought up the politics of Fazil Rahoo from peasant's politics to a national level politician is its wonderful example.

Fazil was a nice character of peasant's politics. A genuine man, Fazil had ache for the lower class of Society. Palijo Sahib did good work on Fazil to groom his farmer and labors politics. This company was a good match for more than a decade till the martyrdom of Fazil Rahoo.

Palijo and Fazil travelled nook and cranny of Sindh to

organize lower and lower middle class of Society. Sindhi Hari Tahreek and Sindhani Tahreek brought common farmer and peasant women with a new fervor for their social and political rights. For many years both these groups of society were real symbols of Palijo Politics. From eighties on wards till the mid of nineties, Palijo Politics streamlined the lower middle class politics.

*Hills piers on earth: buddy hooks on hills*
*You would never find: such a screne kinship*

Palijo had instincts of benevolence of Rai Dyach. Sindh, Sindhi people and land of Sindh occupied his life till his death. It was only death that compelled to silence his voice but not his vision.

*Dagger, string and head: all three in harmony*
*No match, oh minstrel: to distance you covered*
*Thank God, oh troubadour: you asked for head*

When Gen: Zia imposed Martial law, majority of Intellectuals and feudal class including some his old buddies were decorating dictator of time with Sindhi Ajraks, It was the patience and Principle politics of Palijo which kicked away number of clandestine offers to support military regime. Gen: Zia was much interested to have the favors of Palijo in Sindh Politics. Rasool Bux Palijo shattered all such designs and he went ahead with his mystic politics. His conscience has the power of steel to overcome any such evil design which might harm his values and vision.

*Hard to confer alms: but easy to proffer head*
*Test for Diyach to keep: complement of melody*

The philosophy of Bhittai in the sacrifice of Rai Diyach had much to do with the political life of Rasool Bux Palijo. This man of high intellectual stature could have utilized his intellect and efficiency for his personal attainments and positions. We have innumerable such examples where man of understandings have better utilized their potentials for the worldly gains. As Palijo had strong resemblance with Rai Dyach and his munificence, he therefore better understood

its art of en-cashing his personality which he did for the people and land of Sindh. He immortalized his home at Prince town Hyderabad over great mansions as many of the politicians of his stature have built through ill means. Every ricochet of Beejal and pressing of string brought a unique mystic message of the love of Sindh for Palijo.

*If my neck had: a hundred thousand head*
*Would chop them: on every pitch of your tune*

Marvi was another great character which Palijo had utilized as his patriotism and women empowerment in our society, if one sees the life of Rasool Bux he seems to be a role archetypal of Marvi. He was mostly symbolizing Marvi in his discussions in the context of the love of land. The land of Sindh, its resources, fauna and flora, its language, its culture and civilization were prime to Palijo. Throughout his life he never bargained on any issue harming Sindh and Sindhi culture and civilization. He can rightly be entitled as custodian Sindh culture and civilization.

*Had a single heart: that I devoted to sweetheart*
*Did not keep another: that I could offer to others*

Contamination in true love fades the real charm of love. This was a common point of loyalty between Marvi and Palijo. As the land of Thar (Desert) though obviously short of what can be described as a charming place adoring all the necessities of life compared to the mansions, kingly life style, Queens festooned with jewels and Silks could have mesmerized Marvi but a collateral of love and kinship which Marvi had with his poor family, land of Thar and its dwellings became more important for her comparative to jewel, silk and kingly cuisine.

It was a great test of patriotism that Marvi has qualified. She brought her love as symbol of patriotism for the coming generations to peep their land with the eye of their heart.

*Was betrothed to kinsman: in this rough scarf*
*Threads donned on wrists: can compare to gold*
*How can me, oh Soomra: wear your silk.*

Being a lawyer by Profession and accessing to the Supreme Court of Pakistan is highly elevated Position for a man of legal profession, besides this Palijo had international exposure. He was well acquainted with innovative world and modern norms which he had almost preached in his political life but what mostly accounted to his genuineness was the preserving the traditional norms of Sindhi Society.

When I wrote the obituary Sobho Gianchandani I referred Tagore as calling Gianchandani as man of Moen Jo Daro but again I clarified it when I wrote the obituary of Rasool Bux Palijo, I termed Palijo sahib as a real custodian of five thousand Years civilization of Indus valley. He was a man who transformed the eight decades of his life in developing the culture and traditions of five thousand years. Sindhi language, Sindhi living style, villages, customs and traditions are indebted to Rasool Bux and his struggle for their enrichment. He was advocate of modernism but he never did it on the stake of mutilating our indigenous culture and traditions for the sake of modernism. He set up limits to adopt modernism without harming our own culture and values.

*Mind melded with kinsfolk: as nodes in sugarcane*
*My heart says Latif: oh Hameer! Beset by lumps*
*Shall undo them all: oh Soomra! Back in Malir*

The agreement of love between Palijo and Sindh was such a natural bond which has brought him as custodian of Sindh in all its glaring aspects which we can define as its customs, traditions and more importantly as its values I was highly pleased to witness him in a documentary asking family females to sing local marriage songs during marriage programs instead playing recorded songs. Ghulam Fatima (aka Hoor Palijo) the younger sister of Rasool Bux Palijo recalls that her mother and aunts have melodious voices but due to local prohibitions they use to sung in low voice, it was Palijo who asked to sing loudly to mesmerize him of their melodious tunes. This was the first step of his working

for women empowerment.

He was a true curator of Sindhi society and whatever prevailed in it. The magnitude is love with Sindhi society can only be seen from the velocity of his reactions on anti-Sindh issues throughout his life.

*Better rag-clad: shall contract no other spouse*
*We kinsfolk always: well come bland beloved*

As Marvi established her dignity with a no bargaining approach on her land and people with mansions and cuisines so Rasool Bux Palijo did in his political life. To change himself with prevailing circumstances wasn't worth of his salt. Palijo and Marvi never changed their love. There love had no artificial approach. It only satiated their inner Soul

*Picking Duth, oh Soomra! They stew everyday*
*Gladly they dry, says Seyed: stacks of sorghum*
*Stewing grains says Latif: husked from millet*
*Your Pullao oh Umar: No match to Arhari*

Rasool Bux Palijo, fully accomplish the merit, Which Shah Sain has fixed for a Jogi and a Sanyassi for their continuous efforts, and he never seemed idle of having any deliberate hibernation. Comparative to his love, efforts and unending striving, the response from Sindhi people was quite icy. Poet Urfi has wonderfully reflected it

*Don't say the singers of love are silent*
*The song is subtle, but*
*Our companions have cotton in their ears*

Palijo didn't mind or nor remained dissatisfied for his political gains. His politics was outcome of his instinctive love with his land. It was far different form our instant politics, which only has objective of personal gains. A man filled with national integrity and its traditions could have no dismay. Every failure was a lofty achievement for him. If one should be realistic for a moment on the failures of Palijo as a Politician could only calculate that he couldn't became a member of national Assembly or senate, or didn't gather billions of rupees as every traditional politician does in his

career but nobody has ever recounted his gains which immortalized his personality. A man of wisdom would always recall him as national reformer, a nation builder and a man lived with principles of life which he has desired for himself with the start and till the end of his politics. If someone could see the non- violence of Ghandhi as his failure, the sacrifice of Soorah Badshah as fruitless can have every right to comment on the politics of Palijo.

*Leaving pots in field: throwing their staffs*
*Rose above opulence: never looking back*
*Forfeiting desire: they got unison yesterday*

Palijo made Politics of Sindh universal by snatching it from the hands merciless feudal and made it level playing field for common individual. He disowned the tradition of hierarchy. Though his son Ayaz has his special nourishment in Politics but in last few months of life, he fully disowned him by parting his ways. As he was a man of moral values, had probably found it better to part his ways with Ayaz to save doctrine being adulterated in any phase. The fact fully justifies his principle politics and Palijo Doctrine

*Nobility is neither born: nor does it give birth*
*Young and old Gandari: could claim the kinship*
*Neither begets nor is He begotten, noble justice*
*Tamachi crown inspired: true grandeur and glory*

A year is approaching to the physical departure of Rasool Bux Palijo. Death is a fact with its binding taste but Rasool Bux Palijo and his vision are more exuberantly alive even much better to what was at his lifetime. A man of many virtues lived for Sindh and humanity and died for them. Probably Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai has given him a befitting response and ovation in Sur Sohani

*Juvenile sought truth: ever since infinity*
*Sought no boat nor boatman: or any rope*
*Surge to Sohani: was just an ankle deep*

# RASOOL BAKHSH PALIJO POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FEMINIST VOICES

*Rukhsana Ali*

While reading philosophers like Plato's ideas on women integration into the group of warriors strengthen the belief of excelling of souls in courage, power and resilience, the visible thought and practice seems beaming the ray of hope among women of the suppressed class shackled into the chains of hidden identities. The warrior of scorching land Sindh, Rasool Baksh Palijo an icon of constant struggle using his oratory skills develops the idea of self-recognition, recognition of power and identity among the people of Sindh. One who preaches and practice to struggle against the oppressors enlighten the oppressed society who being always a target by the feudal class and conventional ill practices. A theorist and ideologist of his time did not speak on the plight of the miserable gender but empower and, encourage them with vital political force through creating an understanding with his wise words. The founder and the pioneer of Women Movement who envisioned women of his time without the distinction and merit of class, culture, religion and social and economic division.

An ardent reader and a revolutionary leader, one of the most radical leaders of Sindhi movement protesting against the military regime, who boldly represent and spoke utter truth, though not fought a battle but a political war, remained a knight of an artillery through his measured, legalised language. Believing in the armour of the law and

truth empowered the young minds with 'developmental construct' using his increased political understanding in the era of political injustice.

A theorist of empowerment during the time when there was a chorus of mass discontentment, oppressed women culture in society, suppressed souls from political and social elites. A social scientist and politician and an icon of revolutionary mind set emerges with preaching thought of equal rights for the people of Sindh, revolutionises the minds of miserable with oratory speeches. His constant struggle and resistance did not yield so much from the power corridors but poor peasantry that learnt to resist through marches and chanting slogans against the feudal practices. The long marches motivated thousands of people covering 20Kms per day, but their spirits were never low, their energy remained high under the Palijo's leadership.

I would look Palijo from the perspective of a leader who raised socio-political identity recognition

Rasool Baksh Palijo an icon of resistance, whose armour is bitter truth, predicted well ahead the regional politics based on deep observation and studies. To describe and characterise some of his fair contribution in the mass empowerment among Sindhi people is like what to write and from where to start. During the literature review about his life long struggle on social and political empowerment, I went through many of his recorded videos of speeches. Although his quality and rigour of speech had a tone of blunt truth, the only truth and the significant truth about atrocities and injustices with a particular society by the rigid mind set of the dictators. I will highlight his revolutionary political vision beginning from his Political Party Awami Tahreek and later Sindhyani Tahreek (Sindhi Women Movement) as a feminist voice.

***The segment of his speech which I interpret here is ; (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKmZfYsyY2o )***

Press Conference,

"We think we the people of Awaami Tehreek are poor people, the way we have been fighting for years all our life, and now to interrupt such people like Ayaz (his own Son) these people are royal people to interrupt such is useless,

Look at us!

We fought for one Unit, we fought for Kala Bagh Dam, we fought against dictatorship, we fought against sky and earth, this work will also be done and this time will also pass away".

The power and rigour of his words spoken spontaneously shows his commitment to the cause for the neglected masses. He himself attributes to his attachment to the simple, plain truth. It was the charisma of his diction, form and style that he is frail but still a symbol of greater knowledge, indomitable courage, inexhaustible zeal, unshakable determination. To examine the speech extract of Palijo, a thought provoking message conveys to the power domain that the party values vision and the voice for the voiceless. The dynamism and versatility to respond to his most favourite subject on politics seems still alive with the declining age. In a true sense, he loved politics, sleeping with political dream and bringing it to real political arena. The background party flag is in a shabby condition determines the least approach for the objects and material symbolising the party motto which is more for struggle and resistance rather a love for majestic show of objects.

A poor politician, social activist whose advocacy and activism affect million marchers supporting the idea of self-rights and recognition. In his letter to General Musharraf, he showed his concerns over the marginalization of Sindhi people, who being red-indianized and virtually eliminated from their five thousand-year old homeland and its resources. To him it seems a planned marginalization of the Sindhi speaking majority in judiciary when other gentlemen are elevated to the position of judges whereas Sindhis are

kept in vogue. The biased media and particular ethnic group remained demoralizing him with the targeted words as anti-State. The pushback and supressing culture from urban elites has remained undermining the identity and status of rural class. Palijo smelt and kept resisting empowering the youth with political vision and later transformed the political vision into women wing. A step to the idea of feminism to lead politically which we witnessed on many of the huge gatherings and marches conducted by women wing. As according to him in an interview, ' The Awami Tehrik and the Sindhyani Tahreek are waging a war of struggle against the brutalities but we lack resources if we would find someone interested in this cause, we would get better results'. The constant struggle was against the autocracy.

Defining feminism in Pakistani context has certain inconsequential phases of struggle from the struggle movement for a separate state to restore democracy. The ideology orientation seems within the periphery of urban class whereas rural exposure surfaced less. The broader active work seems taking place by the political struggle of Sindhyani Tehrik ( an activist group under Awami Tehrik- a people's movement, 1970m known as Qoam Parast) guided by Rasul Bax Palijo and other leaders, a mammoth task to empower rural women against their plight and victimization. (Rashid, J, 1987).

Palijo did this through his brainchild "Sindhiyani Tahreek", which was aimed at consciousness and unity of women to play an effective role in national and political mainstream. The role this movement played hailed by many prominent political and literary figures including Shaikh Ayaz, Senator Iqbal Haider, Rashid Bhatti and many others.

The first meeting of Sindhiyani Tareek held at Rahooki on November 26, 1982. This gathering attracted a big number of women from villages- many came with their infants. It was a great achievement on Sindhi women's part.

It must be borne in mind that only those nations have successfully fought against evils of society where women have enjoyed equal rights and struggled together with men. Realising this fact Sindhi women, who remained imprisoned and mum for centuries, rose to the occasion and took active part in this movement initiated by Rasool Bux Palijo.

Before the advent of this movement, many organisations of women struggled for their self-rights but were not successful as Sindhyani Tahreek. This was a novel idea and a sincere step to work towards the betterment of women underprivileged, and uneducated rural class. The main reason behind the failure of the past women movement was that these organisations mainly depended on educated women who bent upon male enmity whereas Sindhyani Tahreek wanted women to struggle hands in hand with men to get rid of devilish social traditions literally making women animals.

This emotion was behind the great success of this movement. Even the first meeting at Rahooki was a great success. In that meeting a great number of illiterate women from the rural areas of Sindh took part. This was a great success on the part of the Tahreek because none expected that there would be so much illiterate women from rural areas taking their infants in their laps would gather in such kind of meeting. When we look at the office bearers elected for enhancing the activities of women we see that most of them were not adequately educated but possessed the leadership qualities to lead women through the dark surroundings they lived in. In this respect, the services rendered by Rasool Bux Palijo's stepdaughter Akhtar Baloch will find golden words in the annals of the Tahreek.

Awami Tahreek itself was a socialist Democratic party that was already fighting for the rights of the downtrodden. Sindhi people subjected to great tyranny for participating in the processions and gatherings of the Awami Tahreek. At that moment, Sindhiyani Tahreek was in the initial stages

yet they decided to actively enter into the movement and fight alongside their brothers. Not only Sindh and Pakistan but also the whole world is evident on the fact that these women marched proudly throughout the roads and roundabouts of Hyderabad. In spite of harsh behaviour and hurdles, they came out triumphantly. At least 30 women from girls to older ones arrested but they remained unshaken. This achievement opened the eyes of all a sundry. The Sindhiyani Tehreek women succeeded in getting Rasool Bux Palijo and Fazil Rohoo free from prison.

Before that on 08 March 1986, Women Action Forum arranged a gathering. It was simply a show of the women Sindhiyani Tahreek who out performed foreign educated women in all departments

On March 28, 1986, a great gathering presided over by Hussain Bux Narejo held and during that session, Sindhi women entered the place. A huge organized group of warrior women surprised participants who stood up and welcomed the Sindhiyani Tahreek women. Here we must remember the struggle and sacrifices of the women in MRD movement.

The other huge and well-organised gatherings were Jashan e Latif, wherein a scholastic discourse on the message of the great poet, was the main subject of the women speakers. On the martyrdom of Fazil Rahoo Sindhyani Tahreek in collaboration with other organizations of Sindh played a leading part. Sindhyani Tahreek opposition to Kala Bagh Dam, Military Cantonments the situation of Sindh is turning into minority has been great achievements. In addition, their agitated role in the genocide and dishonour of Sindhi women is bailable.

All the organised gatherings and other political activities of which most took place in the towns and small villages are evident on the political awareness of the Sindhiyani Tahreek. All this was only possible because of the idea developed by Rasool Bux Palijo that the March of any

society to success was not possible without active political participation of the women of that society. Rasool Bux could do what once looked impossible.

Palijo's role is undeniable in terms of political activism and brining women at forefront. The limited political empowerment of women comes from an urban section whereas Palijo leaves a legacy with designating and shifting role of political activism to the rural women wing. Such women of this party comes from weaker socio-economic division. Among those women who were with Palijo, enlightened and guided by his political and feminist voice was Zahida Shaikh. She being a wife of Palijo became translating and propagating his thought and voice for the women of poor social class where male chauvinism dominated and seized gender identity. A revolutionary woman fighting for racial equality and political activist remained committed to mobilise females about their rights in a no-go area in Larkana division. These women of the political wing stayed in such no go areas, communicated, and counseled women about their political rights and on honour killings. Those women in the party including Late Zahida Shaikh, Kalavanti Raja, travelled far and wide in rural areas of Sindh and demonstrated in huge gatherings, participated in two long marches walking on foot crossing miles and miles only to advocate the women's rights and other issues of Sindh.

Looking back through the curtains of history, we find Shah Abdul Latif whose poetic vision symbolises the strongest and brave women of his era and the women of modern times in twenty first century seems feebler, losing its own prestige under the heinous domination of social class. Feminist voice seems echoing again in the era of Palijo's political vision, canvassing the ground for them to create a picture of self-right. It was the Sindhyani Tahreek emerged in the 1980s for this cause to envision and enlighten the other women of rural class. Women of this feminist movement

gave a voice to those voiceless women and peasants. *(Sindhyani Tahreek activist Zahida Shaikh passes away, by Hafeez Tunio, Express Tribune, January 8, 2018).*

Palijo's thought as an intellectual was not only for the poor society of Sindh but he took a firm stand on to elevate women for that he focused first from his own family. He observed grave injustices and marginalization among women of his society not as a silent spectator but stood against this tyranny by bringing forth his own sister Hoor Palijo who was inspired by his ideology and famous for his communist inclination and nationalistic ideas. As reported by Hoor Palijo, women of her times were not allowed to be part of decision making and deal other issues of the family without their male counterpart.

Sheema Kirmani contended the idea of feminism and its voice by these words, "He made the women of Sindh confident, passionate and politically conscious". He created political consciousness among peasants who remained less regarded in elite group of Pakistani politics. Labour leader Karamat Ali further added on Palijo's Sindhyani Tehreek while paying tribute to the legendry that "Sindhyani Tahreek was a unique women's organization in South Asia, where emancipation was the key mantra". The only ideology Palijo resisted was Imperialism.

**The Trajectory of Feminist Ideology**

Feminism regarded as a 20th century ample movement with huge impact on the social, political and cultural life. Conventionally believed that women are the weaker gender, unfairly treated in rural areas of Pakistan. Traditionally, the customs and practices are to hide and confine them within the home with huge boundary walls not because of objective criteria of the moral and professional ground but division on the name of gender. The rural population is composed of the agro society with labour force, aged women mainly helping their spouses in carrying out some tasks. The ethnic group

with lower caste women had less valued status in society. Palijo's observation and profound study was to help empower the targeted gender, which he grounded through his political vision. This stake of power and rebalancing the status of women arises when he politically empowered the low caste and weaker gender. He designated them multiple roles, encouraged them to boldly step forward to become a greater voice for the weaker. That is why feminism raises against everything traditional and conservative in point of gender relations, militating for substantial role in society with political embankment.

One such example comes from the case study of Sunita Parmar from scheduled caste from Thar. Sunita an educated strong social activist and active political worker of Palijo's party Awami Tahreek dedicates all her success due to her political vision that comes from her mentor Rasool Baksh Palijo. She was a part of long marches on critical decisions of autocracy seizing the local's rights.

Palijo's legacy on political empowerment has strong impact through the position of political standing into identity based 'local' voices in the spheres strengthen the belief of women on themselves, where society is full of discrimination, inequalities and violence against them. Well versed in Marxist theory, Palijo allows and treats them to re-think and refigure role to create your self-image for the stronger rights and identity. In one of his interview over international politics his line of strong argument mesmerized me which I am sharing here, (Reference, https://archive.org/stream/BookFromIndus/SindhSpeaks_djvu.txt )

"In face, as I tried to point out earlier, the majority of Third World countries like Pakistan, which were the directly rule colonies of the western powers, became upon getting independence, indirectly ruled neo-colonies of these powers. Whereas previously western parliaments appointed the rulers of colonies masters who rule by remote control now do not accept any such responsibility. So the hand-picked

rulers foisted upon such countries are shown to come to the top through reckless by the knowledge that so long as they keep dancing to the tunes of the masters, they need fear nobody else-feel themselves absolutely free to play havoc with the lives, the rights, resources, liberties and destinies of their semi-enslaved, illiterate and impoverished populations".

A silent revolution seems engulfing the other areas of Pakistan, when the dictators and democrats of Palijo's time sniff the leadership's women movement wing. Those were the brave and bold women of Sindhyani Tahreek who stood steadfast facing all the hardships with continued resistance against the tyranny of the state. During the Zia era, these women of Sindhyani Tahreek motivated the labour and working class women to be a strong force with them for the restoration of democracy and self-right. Those peasant women trained well by Palijo's advisory team and campaign of mass empowerment in the local areas of Sindh stood against the criminal customary practices like, 'Honour killing', 'surrendering inheritance property and land rights'. The movement and empowerment to such section of society was against 'feudal system' and industrialists. These women faced brutal behaviour and faced adversaries, remained in jails with their feeding babies with them.

To examine the role of leadership as Palijo played in this power shift we find a continuous mobility and shifting roles within this women movement. One can figure out that leadership remains collaborating effectively, raising the identity and image of every member as its strong unique agent, which we never found in any of the elites social or political party of this century. It was this greater trust and confidence, respecting the status and voice of the women worker that The Sindhyani Tahreek seems working ahead, conducting Marches, protest rallies over the ill practices. To me his words and wisdom is touching to the core of this Chinese saying, "women hold up half the sky'', this intended to suggest how much power women carry. This is

another part of knowledge that half the sky is also half the equation. This is the same half power of sky that women never sensed, never questioned but their leader gave them a mantra of their own voice.

**Sindhyani Tahreek and Foot Soldiers in Long Marches**

Long Marches by the foot soldiers, not only by men but women side by side equally with their counterparts seem raising and chanting slogans against the terrorism, autocracy, Jirga system, karo kari an inhumane practice . Such foot soldiers did not fear the tyranny and hardships caused by weather, hunger or any other obstacle but remained steadfast walking miles and miles on foot covering 20 kms each day and the length of the march would cover the length and breadth of Sindh. The long Marches later joined by small marchers from every city and district covering 960 Kms in 46 days. These were the unique and historic event with extended support from every Sindh lover to join solidarity. The strong emotional support from other sections of society who did not walk in the marches but served the foot soldiers with water bottles and food and garlanded until they reach to Press club in Karachi. The party workers from Awami Tahreek and Sindhyani Tahreek were the core members carrying out protest marches for their survival, as the leader mobilised them towards the issues like provincial autonomy, major share in NFC award and an implementation on 1940 resolution, against tribalism, Jirga system, lawlessness, and water shortage. None of the political party has ever shown this greater force of workers, and the trend of foot march except Palijo's die-hard worker. Such foot marching is a novice idea of Palijo that symbolises to face hardships, resistance, patience and resilience. There were emotional scenes when peasant women joined foot soldiers and tribal women chanting the slogans of 'Namanzoor, Namanzoor' staging sit in protest outside press club in Karachi. It was a glorious day for Sindh when the

women taking active part were all uneducated but skilled workers.

It was general Zia's era of dictatorship when all activism was banned, the only women of Sindhyani Tahreek struggled together fighting at forefront for the basic fundamental rights. They raised voice against discrimination, it was the same era when peasant women from Sindh boldly joined the similar voice echoed all over with the name of Sindhyani movement. The same Sindhyani movement introduced by Palijo worked for a radical agenda of eradication of feudalism on land reforms and the struggle against militant dictatorship. The Sindhiani movement also took great part in the restoration of democracy. The same feminist movement not only emerged as a greater fighting force but also against the cruel practices of 'Karo Kari'. Those 'traditional practices of 'Karo Kari' and other ill practices confiscated the major rights of women inheritance, a right to marry of her own choice and at times to wave off the older debts, women's hand handed for the wedding to any old and frail male without any match.

What is Women's regional political empowerment?

Palijo was the very first guru of political empowerment to authorise the gender and identity of women of our oppressed class. He with keen interest and understanding theoretically drove the momentum to develop a regional identity among women and then giving them a flavour for the recognition of global political empowerment. Once can witness from the long marches and sit in protest that women of Sindhyani successfully conducted. Those women never imagined walking out for their self-rights and extending solidarity with other fellow women suffering from total suppression. However, today we find many women from the same long marches and Sindhyani Tahreek who proved to be holding their image and identity value in orthodox society. As how those women of oppressed culture show themselves in the global world to gain power, empowerment

and influence society with their challenging identity image. Women marches and demonstration by the Sindhyani Tahreek in the public sphere is a way beyond to explain the practical wisdom of Palijo that strikingly got attention from every sphere. Mobilised women representing diverse groups created a bold voice for greater gender identity and equality in socio-economic and political life. Those increased efforts provided a sense of identity recognition and a status women hold in society who can resist violent elements.

Moreover, I would discuss how gender recognition got an equal treatment from society-enhancing women's role in political campaign in Sindh particular and Pakistan in general during a dark era of military government. Across this discussion, we emphasise three major axioms. First the political empowerment gains decreases gender inequality. Women's power opens up political domain and secondly gender recognition organizes greater force in social relations across the globe such gender biasness used to create inequalities that disadvantage women. This gender recognition and political empowerment requires special attention that women are strong categorical group today. Third, inequalities in political empowerment creates multiple barriers and representation in the house of parliament where the number of women is too low to be counted today. Palijo's legacy seems dominating this fact today that women movement created a history, a history for empowerment and creating a sense of being there despite all the barriers in society. Palijo's vision disseminate among women who intersects the idea of barriers but one could view it as a fundamental process of transformation for benchmarking social and political uplifting. The goal of this continuous struggle do not seem to be profitable rapidly but it created a whirl of change for the women who did not participate in political empowerment but gender recognition paved their way to support themselves economically. There are such greater examples of low cast women who became

an icon of change in society through their entrepreneurship role.

The goal of this campaign by Palijo thus bring together to develop a broader vision of women's political empowerment, to understand how social constructions of gender influence such change outcomes. The first appropriate definition of women's global political empowerment enlightens us;

> The enhancement of assets, capabilities and achievements of women to gain equality to men in influencing and exercising political authority worldwide. (Alexander et al. 2016: 433)

The component of this definition features social enhancement as gender and politics, power and empowerment. The UN has declared women's empowerment as the third of its Millennium development goals but practically Palijo started it decades ago, beginning from his own home. One cannot undermine Palijo's role in political activism and empowerment, which he based foundation in early years. He was an illuminating figure, close to the heart of weaker gender, making them realise their role and responsibilities outside home. Sindhyani Tahreek was the key and the platform for gender recognition and political empowerment as a process of change from less to more effective agency. One of the most comprehensive approaches was a report for the World Bank (Malhotra et al.2002) that argued for a broader view of political empowerment. The report advised on inclusion of women's political knowledge, participation, interest group activity and representation in local, regional and national offices.

The empowerment process gained currency rapidly, and the process of transformation was visible when a large number of women in rural section were joining the Sindhyani Tahreek. Young girls transformed into this change segment and joining the team of paramilitary force, parading before the commencement of political processions.

This captures the transformative essence of empowerment processes under the perspective of women in politics by incorporating the systematic marginalization of women as a group to an achievement of equal levels, influence and representation observed universally across our world today. Second, women's political empowerment achieved as part of political process, not at one particular moment; it was ongoing, rigorous efforts of Palijo that brought them to cross a milestone and made history for women self-recognition in political field. Third, women's political empowerment distributes power better between men and women and undermines patriarchal social structures of our conventional Sindhi society.

Thus, women's political empowerment gains popularity and recognition and many could raise voice against injustice, a seed sowed long ago by Palijo is a grown tree with an understanding of rights and fighting against violations.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# PALIJO'S LEGACY

*Mushtaq Rajper*

The demise of Rasool Bux Palijo - a stalwart politician and intellectual from Sindh, and one of the greatest writers of Sindhi prose in the 20th century - has not only left thousands of his workers orphaned but has also dealt a blow to the politics of ideology and commitment, and the path to salvation.

Rasool Bux Palijo's narrative for Sindh was entirely different from what his contemporaries in the business of politics had proposed. He remained a strong proponent of Sindh's rights. In his own creative and scientific way, he proved to be a brilliant advocate of the province's rights. Palijo's approach to politics and society was influenced by Marxist literature and leftist movements in third world countries during the Post-World War-II era.

But the traditional Marxist activists and nationalists of his era refused to see him as one of their own because he didn't consider ideological influences to be dogmatic. Palijo was neither a Marxist in the way that the Communist Party of Pakistan would adhere to the rigid ideological lines of the Marxist theory, nor a nationalist like G M Syed, who sought clear-cut national unity and ignored class divisions and exploitation in society.

Palijo hailed from Sindh's peasantry and read widely about the history of revolutionary movements in post-colonial societies such as Vietnam, China, Angola and Mozambique. It took him years to develop his own ideological framework and thesis on which to base his politics. In his book, Subuh Thendo (Dawn will come), he

presented the exploitation of Sindh's people along national and class lines and coined a suitable way forward: the Qaumi Awami Jamhoori Inqilab' (the National People's Democratic Revolution). 'Subuh Thendo' is categorised as a form of original political literature. It offers a critique on how Pakistan's undemocratic regimes developed a nexus of vested interests to further their agenda to deprive people of their rights on three 'democratic, class and national' fronts.

It took decades for him to get his workers and activists in Sindh to truly grasp the ideological foundations he had built. This is why he was unique and inspiring. It was the power of his ideas that helped him build a strong political base across Sindh. Palijo was the first political leader who hailed from a lower middle class family in rural Sindh to lay the foundation for a Marxist party with distinctly Sindh-based characteristics.

The revolutionary poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai was a recurring theme in his politics. The titles of most of Palijo's books were derived from Bhitai's poetic lines and expressions. Even his political activism and mobilization was built around Shah Latif's poetry. No one celebrated Bhitai's urs in Sindh like he did. Through Bhitai's poetry, Palijo would explain his political ideas and future direction. As a result, his words would come across as songs of liberation to the ears of his followers.

Palijo's rise to politics occurred at a time when Sindh and Pakistan were thrilled with the launch of two key political parties. ZAB had launched the PPP at the federal level and G M Syed had started the Jeay Sindh Tahreek (JST) in Sindh in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Along with a group of intellectuals and writers, such as poet Shaikh Ayaz and Hafeez Qureshi, Palijo launched the Sindhi Awami Tehreek.

His famous treatises on literature and politics already existed in politico-literary circles. A lawyer by profession, writer by compulsion and a politician by passion, Palijo was

like a rising sun on the political spectrum back in the 1970s.

The rise of Bhutto's political power could not weaken his resolve. Palijo preached and practised the art of swimming against the tide. He gathered the necessary elements to align women, students, children, writers and intellectuals to attack the exploitative structures within the federal polity and various social structures.

Although Palijo had started his political activism with the Sindh Hari Committee of comrade Hyder Bux Jatoi and, later, the National Awami Party (NAP), he chose to embark on his own direction. In the 1960s, he was imprisoned along with his family members, including women. His wife - the iconic Sindhi musician and singer Jiji Zarina Baloch, who sang songs about liberation, unity, history, and the masses, stood by him in the long struggle that eventually kept him away from her.

Successive military regimes kept him imprisoned for 11 years. Palijo's imprisonment could not silence his workers. He issued directives from jail and wrote analyses on the changes that the world was witnessing - including those that predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union. During this time at the infamous Kot Lakhpat jail, he wrote a book that became a masterpiece in Sindhi literature. His jail diary was published as 'Kot Lakhpat jo Qaidi' (Prisoner of Kot Lakhpat).

Rasool Bux Palijo empowered Sindhi peasant women by giving them a power political platform: the Sindhiyani Tahreek. This platform has, to date, remained active and popular. Palijo did not see the collapse of the Soviet Union as the end of Marxism. He also rejected Professor Samuel Huntington's flawed thesis on the Clash of Civilisations.

Palijo's lifelong political struggle is a legacy of resistance and awakening that combined literature and scientific consciousness. He not only dreamt of a better world, but also believed in working towards it without succumbing to the lure of power politics.

Did he achieve his goals? Was he a successful politician? Did he usher in the revolution that he sought for decades? He firmly believed that the journey to achieve liberation was worth undertaking. Palijo has left an indelible imprint on the lives of many people who came across to him. His 26 books and the well-compiled audio and video archives of his speeches will remain with us as a reminder of the meaningful life that he lived. With his death, we have lost one of the most powerful, intelligent and sincere advocates of Sindh's rights.

*(Courtesy: The News)*

## LAST OF THE MOHICANS!

*Aziz Narejo*

A giant among his generation, Rasool Bux Palijo departed this world today. He was synonyms with the word 'struggle'! That's what his whole life was! Fighting for the rights of the oppressed, poor, peasants, labour, downtrodden, women & weaker sections of the society. An orator par excellence, scholar, writer, critic, left wing politician, debator and an activist to the core! And much more!

It's indeed very sad for all of us that he is no more with us but his memories will always live with us. May his soul Rest In Peace. Heartfelt condolences with his family, friends, followers, fans and with the poor and the downtrodden that he always stood with.

Good bye, dear Rasool Bux Palijo! We will miss you!

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# PALIJO - A MARXIST LEGEND OF SINDH

*Dastghir Bhatti*

Mr. Rasool Bux Palijo, a Marxist theoretician who turned the theory of revolutionary socio Economic change into practice in Sindh, the second largest province of Pakistan. The Legendary socialist scholar Late Mr. Palijo was a Marxist-Leninist cum Maoist political leader who introduced & organized a party of the downtrodden masses of Sindh.

It was late 1968 when I first met him in his office in Hyderabad. He was a practicing lawyer by profession and used to take up the legal matters of the litigants, mostly poor peasants who faced victimization at the hands of powerful feudal lords. This was the time when he had already quit the leftist political party – namely National Awami Party led by Khan Abdul Wali Khan of Peshawar. Mr. Palijo decided to dissociate himself from the NAP due to the political differences with the Urdu speaking stalwarts along with hundreds of Comrades. He believed that the leftists who had migrated from India after the Partition of the subcontinent were not sincere to the cause of oppressed Sindhis and averse to the national question of Sindhis and Balochis.

A highly committed Leninist and completely devoted to the cause of proletariat and peasantry, Palijo later on joined hands with the left-oriented intellectuals, writers, poets, lawyer for the consultation to form a new Marxist organization which was named as SAT just to raise the burning issues of the Sindhis. The first convention of the newly formed party was organized at Hyderabad in 1970, which grew much faster in the remote districts and villages of the Sindh. Mostly the leftist

elements and the peasant fighting against the injustices and atrocities of landed aristocracy were attracted to the SAT as the fundamental rights of this downtrodden segment of Rural Sindhi society was ensured support by the selfless and intellectually brilliant Mr. R.B. Palijo who had earned reputation through his hard-work and selfless struggle to awaken and an the illiterate mass of the people. He fought against the four military dictatorships. During the one unit era under general Ayub Khan the agricultural lands of Sindh were distributed amongst the outsiders specially Punjabi bureaucrats and retired army officers. Mr. Palijo launched a vigorous yet peaceful political campaign with the slogans like, no lands to the outsiders, stop the fake auction of lands in Sindh and the peasantry of Sindh enjoyed the natural rights to be allotted/given those public lands instead of the outsiders and influential urban aristocrats who will obviously pollute the local culture, peace and harmony that exists through the centuries.

Mr. Palijo was a literary giant also who has written over forty Books, many of them being the translation of the October Revolution of 1917, Chinese socialist party's historic long March under the leadership of Comrade Mao Tse Tung and the Vietnamese revolution. He was a remarkable short story writer and a popular poet in his right. On top all these multiple qualities he was the best ever critic recognized in Sindhi literature.

During the formation stage of SAT, Mr. Palijo travelled through the nook and cranny of Sindh and created the cells of his party in Punjab and KPK also. He was very fond of personally witnessing the fruits of October revolution. Mr. Palijo was the first diehard communist leader who introduced the fundamental theories of dialectical materialism in Sindhi language to spread awareness and expose the exploitative capitalism and feudalism which had turned the labourers and peasants into the serfs and slaves of the exploiters. Palijo fought against the unlawful rule of military dictators and called the martial laws as No Laws. He always supported the freedom

of the press and speech and physically participated in all the movements of the independent writers and journalist against the army rule. Even after supporting Mr. Z.A Bhutto when he felt that the Prime Minister of Pakistan is behaving like a merciless dictator, he opposed the farmer's anti-people policies in Balochistan and KPK.

He was a genuine feminist and a staunch crusader for the women's rights and liberties. Palijo believed that the slavery of women eventually makes the males also slaves of the system. Perhaps, he was the first leader of Sindhis who encouraged and empowered his wife Zarina Baloch and daughter Akhtar Baloch to come out in the open and lead the Sindhi females as well as the illiterate males. Mr. Palijo and his entire family were incarcerated by not only the military dictators but even the democratically elected government of Late Prime Minister Mr. Z.A Bhutto who did not spare him and threw Mr. Palijo behind the bars only because of his descent against the PPP Government.

During the longest and darkest Martial Law under General Zia ul Haq, Mr. Palijo was again arrested because he opposed the military rule and led the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) from early eighties. The MRD struggle turned violent in Sindh and hundreds of political workers were butchered by the forces just to save General Zia's darkest dictatorship. Mr. Palijo was shifted from his hometown Hyderabad jail to hundreds of miles away in the Kot Lakhpat Jail of Lahore, the capital of Punjab which is the largest province population wise. He remained chained for seven long years yet stuck to his principles and never capitulated before any ruler.

Mr. Palijo remained sick and under treatment for two decades continuously and suffered the most just for the cause of creating awareness and political consciousness amongst the wretched millions of Sindhis. He died last year at the age of 88. Even after his deaths, he lives in the hearts of his supporters as a real freedom fighter, a great legendry Marxist leader.

# THE MAN WHO NEVER SURRENDERED

*Sagar Mushtaq*

The man who lived like a great human, brave soldier and committed leader of the nation. Rasool Bux Palijo gave his whole life to his people to take them out of the slavery of the state conservatism, brutal kingdom, feudalism, capitalism and some other human violating acts happening in the region. He was the only person in the history of Pakistan, who never changed his vision, his aims and objectives in all circumstances. He knew that Pakistan of Jinnah and the Pakistan of dictators was much different than the ideological state conceived by the scholars - Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Al- Beruni, Quaid e Azam.

He was a great visionary person of his time and will remain as an eternal ideology of the freedom of state. The mission that he took along with his followers was not only for Sindh but for Pakistan and even for the less advanced and the slave nations living on the surface of the earth. History witnesses that a man like Rasool Bux Palijo challenged the dictators Musharraf, Zia ul Haq, Yahya Khan and Ayub in their times. He proved MQM as the terrorist organization made by the real power wielders of the world. He rejected their policies to make Muhajir Soba in Sindh, which was not only supported by the state oriented politicians but also by the PPP (Pakistan People's Party) during its government since reign of Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto and till the government of Zardari.

He criticized Mr. Hameed Gul face to face and proved

him guilty for the terrorism, stagnant economy, brutal acts and everything happening against the country internally or externally While Bhutto jailed him for many years because he used to speak truth with strong questions and arguments. When the time came that Bhutto was arrested and the Supreme Court announced his execution, he was the only man, who said that Bhutto should not be left alone on the ground. He must be protected and he announced the Tahreek named (Bhutto Bachayo Tahreek). He remained active all the time and sighted the things beyond expectations.

He argued against the Kala Baag Dam issue and proved it wrong in his book (Water Dispute). He explained that the water of river Indus should not be distributed unjustly. It is the violation of water laws of the seas and oceans, rivers and canals. Mark Twin said, whisky is for drinking, and water is for fighting over." It is indeed a fact that if there comes a war between the nations of the world again, water, as it has been predicted, will be the main reason behind it. Rasool Bux Palijo wrote many books on different topics, and defended the legendary politicians and poets like G.M Syed and Sheikh Ayaz the well know revolutionary personalities of the Sindh

The genius mind, the extraordinary man of all the time can never be forgotten because he has left his vision, ideology, scientific approach of understanding international powers and the current nation state system. He loved his people more than his life. He wanted to see them happy as they lived during the times of Moen Jo Daro. Oh! The man of history, we stand with your mission and promising to never surrender until the last breath of life.

Long live Sindh, Long live Palijo.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# PHILOSOPHY OF PALIJO SHOULD BE RESEARCHED AND FOLLOWED

*Zulfikar Rajper*

Though the world is now bereft of physical presence of great scientists, philosophers, political thinkers and leaders of Darwin, Newton, Karl Marx, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Rumi, Bu Ali Sina, Ashoka the Great, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai of Sindh and many countless classical writers, poets, artists, revolutionary and vociferous people, but their works, voice, philosophy, and an ideology, live in the present day world with full glory and they continue influencing modern day political arena and proving as beacon light and inspiration for present-day active characters in all fields of life - science, philosophy, literature and politics.

Had the afore-mentioned benefactors of humanity not resisted the status quo during their era and set examples, the present day people would not have been fortunate enough and motivated to stand up against all unfavorable odds and become able to surmount the nature as is evidenced from society. Their thoughts and theories are being taught to the students in second and third standard course of science in schools that prove the truth of the claim of solar system in the cosmos. Bruno had to undergo the punishment of being burn in the fire. Galileo in his senior age experienced terror for his claim of world being round. Karl Marx gave a very useful ideology undergoing very trying times and that ideology was taken by common people as guiding line for them to achieve emancipation from the usurpers, who later

for its implementation struggled hard, served punishment in prisons, laid sacrifices of their lives, and thus become successful in laying the foundation of anti- establishment, anti-dictatorship peoples rule and gave rise to liberal forces and people friendly states.

We should inculcate this fact in our minds that the theories which were propounded by Darwin, Karl Marx, Lenin, and Moa Zedong were not altogether new but they were in some way already present in the world. Likewise in the field of science and research the theories and inventions which we see now were either the input of erstwhile scientist and researchers or the extension of their works, only some newness had been added to them by the present day scientists.

The past many political parties and their leaders following different political thoughts have been in arena on national issues, democratic values, ante dictatorship, ante establishment approach and class struggle in Pakistan including Sindh as well. The one school of thought of politics in the country opposes national question in struggle for classless society and others feel it necessary to link national issues with class struggle. Some parties deal issues of democratic values and ante dictatorship struggle separately.

Comrade Rasool Bux Palijo, the founder leader of *Awami Tahreek* before laying foundation of his party had worked on one platform with Communist Party, *Hari Tahreek* and *Bazim-e-Soofiae Sindh* (not on the ideology of *Sindhu desh*); had also observed meticulously the politics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; had worked with the politicians of Punjab, Baluchistan and KPK as well. Besides his all that political experience and knowledge of world politics, Rasool Bux Palijo established his separate party -*Sindhi Awami Tahreek* (which later became *Awami Tahreek*) after deep study of teachings and philosophy of great political philosophers and revolutionary teachers Karl Marx, Lenin, Mao zedong. The

people who were with Mr. Palijo in the initial days of establishment of the Party could not remain associated with him for long time and gave up.

Mr. Palijo in his book -*Subuh theendo* has dealt with national, democratic problems, class struggle and ante-establishment politics a detail manner. Thus by showing the true face of all usurpers and exploiters he laid the foundation of a people's friendly revolutionary ideology and Independent political party. He besides examining three burning issues of national reality, class struggle and democratic values in the light of Marx and Lenin's teachings and philosophy, wrote extensively on upper and middle class politics, party and leadership also. Coupled with it he practically laid the foundation of traditions of alliances with other political parties including leftist organizations believing in revolutionary approach to the issue of national importance and common popular politics. Given the strong opposition of forces of establishment, it could not get the due projection. However the foundation of it was laid on concrete grounds. He in fact introduced middle and lower middle class population consisting of peasants, labrour, students and other young minds to the people's friendly politics. For them he created the party that addressed the issues of national, democratic questions and gave birth to the resistance to establishment and class based society. He widened the struggle of peasants from agriculture based issues and connected them with the mainstreams politics and journalistic liberalism which worked for national and democratic rights of the people. To mobilize students he established Sindhi *Shagrid Tahreek*. Comrade Rasool Bux Palijo helped bring women in field of revolutionary politics despite the society being feudal and tribal in its nature where women are not allowed to come out of the home and partake in public gatherings.

He founded for women the *Sindhiani Tahreek* which provided very strong political platform which connected

women of Sindh with national, and anti-class and international revolutionary politics.

Palijo Sahib and his comrades had to pay dearly for their revolutionary and liberal ideology, political activism and struggle for the emancipation of the people. Antagonists leveled filthy and unfounded blames upon him and initiated his character assassination by writing books against him but he did not falter or retraced an inch even from his just stand which he had taken for the downtrodden people of the homeland. The militants and agents of so-called feudal backed national politics closed the doors of educational institutions on the students who were following the teachings of Palijo Sahib. They attacked the student members of *Sindhi Shagrd Tareekh* everywhere in educational institutions and even in the cities as well. They also killed the leaders of Sindhi *Shagrd Tahreek* in Sindh University. The powers that be opened other fronts also against Mr. Palijo who did not like his revolutionary and people friendly politics. They leveled many allegations against him because they did not want a party which gave political strength to Sindhi women.

Mr. Palijo introduced the politics of alliances and joint struggle to the parties for securing democratic, national rights and abolishing class based society. He wrote extensively on many contemporary issues which included the crises into International Communist *Tahreek,* introduction of unrealistic politics in the country which deviated from the political values introduced by the Quaid e Azam and the strategy of feudal who discouraged the common people to partake in politics in the country. He also exposed the dangerous face of army backed feudal politics and also challenged the perpetrators of social injustice, slavery and exploitation in the country.

When we say that the ideology of Palijo exists in Sindh and in Pakistan, then his adversaries raise the question of what the new had Palijo done. The same question had been

raised for Marx, Lenient and Moa Zedong. If anybody who is serious to find out the contribution of Palijo he would have to honestly observe and research the works of Palijo which are documented in his writings, books, speeches, interviews, audio video tapes, newspapers and his lectures on national and international forums and his tireless struggle as well. This whole record must be available with Party, and that which is missing is to be collected from wherever it is available. For it the Party and the followers of the philosophy of Mr. Palijo have to play their role. For collection and preservation of this important record, a serious campaign needs to be launched.

I believe that during the five thousand years long history of Sindh and about seventy two years brief history of the country not a single leader of the caliber of the revolutionary Comrade Rasool Bux Palijo has born in the country. The emancipation of the people of Pakistan and Sindh lies in the recognition, understanding, adoption and following his philosophy and line of action.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# RASOOL BUX PALIJO: GENIUS AND GENUINE

*Vijesh Kumar*

The man who is deemed as the greater man the history of Sindh has ever witnessed is Rasool Bux Palijo. This man has left immortal marks on the patches of history, politics, journalism, literature, literary criticism, water issues, Marxism and almost on everything which affects the socio political arena of Sindh in particular and world at large.

Rasool Bux Palijo, the veteran Sindhi scholar, the orator par excellence, the political figure and great writer was born in village Mungar Khan Palijo, Jungshahi, Thatta district of Sindh, on September 21, 1930. He received his early education from his home town and then shifted to Karachi to pursue his higher studies at Sindh Madarsatul Islam. His father's name was Ali Ahmed Palijo and mother's name was Ladee Bai. He actively participated in the politics of the region and kept a vigilant eye on what went there round the globe. He was famous for promoting nonviolent struggle against feudalism, martial laws, colonialism and imperialism. He was one of the leading founders of Awami National Party, Sindh Mtaheda Mahaz, Sindh Qomi Ittehad, PONM, Sindhi Adbi Sangat, Bazam-e- Soofiyae Sindh, Anti One Unit Movement, MRD and the 4th March Movement.

He founded Awami Tehreek, Sindhi Hari Committee, Sindhiyani Tehreek, Sindhi Shagrid Tehreek, Sindhi Hari Tehreek, Pakistan Awami Jamhoori Ittehad,Pakistan Awami Tehreek, Sindhi Mazdoor Tehreek, Sindh Intellectual Forum, Sindhi Awam jo Qomi Ittehad, Sindhi Girls Students

Organization, Sujjag Bar Tehreek, Sindh Water Committee, 1940 Pakistan Resolution Implementation, Awami Jamhoori Tahreek, Anti Greater Thal Canal and Kala Bagh Dam Action Committee.

He was the real embodiment of the consistent struggle. R B Palijo was the great writer of not only Sindhi but of English as well. He was one of the great proponents of progressive writers and the great champion of art for life's sake. He was the writer par excellence and knew very well how to write effectively and convey the message so as to get perfect eye and ear. He was the widely read. He wrote many books – some 40 books of quality on a variety of subjects remain to his credit these works are considered as the masterpieces in themselves in terms of matter and diction. These exemplary writings come under the genre of Politics, literature, water disputes, law, poetry, article, literary criticism, history and the political thought. Besides he rendered myriads of lectures in the country and the abroad.

He spoke in thundering voice against the atrocities committed by the autocratic and despotic regimes, and put his stance as clear as the crystal.

He traveled throughout his life and delivered lectures on myriads of topics on cosmopolitanism, literature, art and politics. He visited many parts of the world and delivered lectures on the issues g faced by the third world countries and the depressed people of the Pakistan. He rendered staunch support to the provinces of the state and was the greatest proponent of the provincial autonomy. He kept on demanding the implementation of the 23rd March 1940 Resolution later on termed as Pakistan Resolution in letters and spirits.

His literary work ranged from a myriad of articles in Sindhi and English on social, literary, economic and the political subjects, to books and lectures. His works in Sindhi include Subah Theendo, Jeki Bengal san Thiyo, Adbi Fun, Sandi zat hanjan, Choond Shairi; Mao Tse Tung, Karl Marx,

Communict Manifesto, Ho chi Minh, Choond Mazmoon; and Andha Oondha Wej.

He was very much optimistic about the better times in the future and he not only highlighted and analyzed the issues faced by the people but also recommended their remedies. He admired Jinnah for his liberal and the secular ideas. He deemed him as one of the great men in history. He spoke without fear, and spoke in unequivocal terms and acrimonious manner. He stressed the history to be read and facts to be revealed. He remembered history like his fingertips. He was staunch opponent of the distortion of history and of the view that the historical facts be corrected.

His thought, research and the knowledge on the water issue was updated in the international perspective. He thoroughly analyzed the water issue and always spoken on every front regarding the injustice done to Sindh. He had striven hard throughout his life against the building of the dams.

He was one of the progressive writers of the age of the First rank and a great champion of political literature. According to him the real ideology of changing the world was with the Lateef. Lateef according to him was the great ideologist of the world. It was he and the group of his minded people who brought Lateef among the public and the image of Lateef was revealed unto the world. His explanation of Lateef was laudatory..

He girdled up his lions for Shaikh Ayaz when Ayaz was severely criticized by the rightest and the fundamentalist and Ayaz lost heart and it was Rasool Bux Palijo who wrote his remarkable book Andha Onndha Wej, and silenced all the critics and the Ayaz rose to the arena again backed by this stage of the age. In this book he comparatively analyzed the poetic thoughts of the poets of different languages and the evolution of the poetic thought and the poetry. This book proved as the touch stone of the Sindhi criticism and became the permanent source of not only inspiration for the men of

letters specially the critics and the poets but also the guidelines to be followed.

His major contribution in the realm of the literature is his political writings and political literature. This man and the leader par excellence provided Sindh and Sindhi literature, intellectuals who are contributing to Sindh and Sindhi literature in one or the other way.

*(Courtesy: Blog: Sketches)*

# A MAN OF STRUGGLE

## *Kashif Qadeer Shar*

Few people are born to fight for the rights of people. They devote their lives for the service of humanity in different ways. Rasool Bux Palijo is one of these people. His death on June 7 has saddened many. He was the man of pride, determination and enthusiasm.

He started his political career with the Awami Tehreek Party in 1970. His courage and determination was unshakeable. With his death, Sindh has lost a man of struggle.

*(Courtesy: Daily Dawn)*

# A MAN OF IMMENSE TALENTS AND TACT

***SK Nagpal***

*I do die o' mother*
*But I die on the way to my goal,*
*Shah Latif*
(Those who die on the way to achieve goal,
are the people of high stature)

The lines above truly describe our stalwart as man of struggle assiduous, untiring efforts without thought of Success and Failure. His entire life was work to change the fate of hopeless people of Sindh, grossly exploited and victimized. He knew no rest right from birth to grave and worked without pause being embodiment of Carlyle's thought. Work is worship. Shah very well portraits him in verse.

So far, he was living, he rested not at all, and was ultimately buried craving continuously for the beloved.

A man of highest calibre, stature and sublimity... Rasool Bux Palijo, a scholar, intellectual, wise Politician and a Revolutionary in all walks of his 88 years of life. A great orator round the world lectured on burning issues of life in shackles, slavery and exploitation of man-by-man. A literary genius has mastery in many language quoting profusely Asian and western literature with especially art of rendering poetry, Shah Latif, being most favourite and versatile for all occasions.

A man having no assets other than knowledge, he not

only trained thousands of youth in Sindh but also touched Punjab, KPK and Balochistan. 'How he convinced people in Punjab to protest against Kalabagh Dam in Lahore??' I am here sharing one of an archive published in August 1986 in Herald written by IA Rehman, in which you can assess the way he spoke in Punjab about Mohammad Bin Qasim and reaction of people of Punjab. People shocked in 1986 but now thousands who enlightened with facts. This was the power of his talk.

## *Palijo Conquers Punjab*

*There are people who would not grant Lahore the status of Punjab's representative city: it is far too opportunistic and hypocritical to claim the distinction. But the city certainly reveals the devious ways of the Punjab's ruling elite and division between the purblind privileged class and the saner elements among the middle and deprived classes.*

*Last month, Lahore showed both of its faces – the ugly face of the intolerant soldiers of the status quo, and the serene face of the mass that has accepted the rationale for change. The catalytic agent was Rasul Bakhsh Palijo. No, Sindhi leader (or any leader from any other province for that matter) has ever received the kind of reception in Lahore that Mr. Palijo received, and none has provoked the self-appointed custodians of ideology – which, unfortunately, Lahore has not stopped breeding–like he did.*

*Almost every political party in the MRD courted Mr. Palijo. Big luncheon and dinner parties were thrown in his honour and the crowd of Lahore's thinkers – some active in politics and some only honorary advisers to the community – had difficulty accepting all the invitations.*

*But these were receptions with a difference; unlike most chief guests at such functions. Mr. Palijo fully utilized the opportunity to meet people and to have his say. He is a speaker of considerable merit and obviously enjoys speaking,*

*always with confidence and a great display of authority. There were obviously two ideas foremost in his mind: first, to inform the Punjabi people of the minimum demands of Sindh for sustaining the federation of Pakistan, and, second, to shake them out of their myths and illusions. The first task – that no federal arrangement would be acceptable to Sindh unless it was based on total autonomy, i.e., each province to have complete control over its resources – was accomplished in a few words, but he had to devote more time to the ideological conversion of the Punjab's population. This unavoidably led to a plea for a rational understanding of history, especially for the need to avoid confusing all feudal practices and the policies of the Muslim kings of the subcontinent as Islamic models, and for treating leaders like Allama Iqbal and the Quid-i-Azam as normal human beings.*

*On both counts Mr. Palijo found his audience receptive. A few among his MRD colleagues found his tone unnecessarily irreverent, and Nawabzada Nasrullah and Maulana Fazulr Rehman – both known for their patience – expressed their disapproval in public. But the intelligentsia, at least the better-informed part of it, was neither shocked nor surprised. For Mr. Palijo came to Lahore at a time when a sizeable section of the intelligentsia had realized the grave wrongs done to the smaller provinces over the past several decades, and had also been convinced of the need for a rational interpretation of history. Indeed, his hosts were more keen than anything else to use him as a carrier of their messages of goodwill to the alienated population of Sindh. The desire of each and every political faction in the Punjab to find a niche in the heart of the glaring factors of the present political situation.*

*At the same time the time-serves were not slows to present their hideous face. Mr. Palijo was misquoted, or at least quoted out or context. It is not certain that this was an act of deliberate mischief on the part of Lahore's overworked*

*reporters. Those who hold this view are of a charitable disposition or have no idea of the decline of the press in recent years: much what is attributed to the wickedness of this party or that might well be due to sheer inexperience, even inability to make use of commonsense. Anyhow, the result was that the honorary denigrators of rationalism and reason came out in the streets.*

*There was a march by the city fathers, led by me holy mayor, demanding Mr. Palijo's head, come body even identifying the venue where the 'heretic' was to be lynched. The happening was appropriately described by a local wit as 'Lahore's march of shame.' And while no more than a few overzealous people were involved in this act of inquisition, the really concerned citizens of Lahore were worried about the impact the reports of such demonstrations would have on the Sindhi population.*

*In a way the preachers of hate achieved their purpose. Mr. Palijo took the bait and kept clarifying his remarks and making pleas for honest historical analysis. As a result he did not have much time to discuss the current political situation.*

*What the whole affair proved once again is that the battle for the salvation of the national identity continues to rage in the minds of the Punjabi people. They have already been assailed by doubts about their past politics and their history, and this is the first step on the Punjab's road to self-discovery. An increasing number of people in he Punjab known what their reason tells them but vested interest – and short-term interest at that – inhibits them from assuming the role that alone can guarantee Pakistan's survival*

*–IAR, (Monthly Herald of August 1986)*

We salute his long-life and untiring efforts against terrorism, extremism, militarism and fuedalism. We miss you a lot, Palijo Sahib.

# SURKH SALAM TO PALIJO

*Tehrik-e-Niswan*

Sad to hear about the death of the great Sindhi leader and intellectual Rasul Bux Palijo, a very fine and cultured Person and so well read. I first met him in 1978 when he was at the peak of his political life. At the time of my last farewell meeting with him, he was very unwell but he recited a beautiful revolutionary poem by heart and with sincere animation. He would invite me to perform at his jalsas and conferences where many women would participate and there would always be cultural performances. I have long admired him. We have hardly any political leaders of this calibre, such a loss! Condolences to all his family specially Hoorunisa Palijo, Ayaz Latif Palijo, Bakhtawar Mazhar, Pirah Nabeel Ahmed Palijo, Sarmad Palijo, Akhter Baloch and all others. One must not forget that he was the motivational force behind Sindhiyani Tahreek through which rural and urban women were for the first time brought into political movement. I have always admired him!

How wonderful to see so many women at Palijo sahib's funeral procession and actually giving shoulder to his coffin. He did wonder to bring the rural women into politics, I personally know all his sisters whom he motivated and inspired to play a major role in the feminist movement. Rasool Bukhsh Palijo will always be remembered! Condolences to Hoorunisa Palijo, Sassui Palijo, and all family and Surkh Salam to Palijo sahib! Whether one agreed with all that Rasool Bux Palijo stood for or not, I think that he introduced an amazing feminist and revolutionary thinking in the people of Sindh- this is obvious if one sees

that at his funeral it was women who carried his body to the graveyard, and at his Chelum there was much singing and dancing, breaking all taboos and traditions - see this video where young girls present a wonderful revolutionary salute to him! Just as he broke old traditions in his lifetime, so at his death, long lives revolutionary ideology!

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# VISIONARY PALIJO

***Shahnaz Shoro***

He was a big man, an eloquent orator, a very well read thinker, a giant ideologist, a great politician with vision and wisdom. Rasool Bux Palijo sb, your friends, and foes will agree upon that you lived on your own terms and conditions. Non-other has fought the case of Sindh as you did! Sindh has lost her honorable beloved. Rest in peace, Sir! A very gloomy day for Sindh-lovers. He and Sindh are inseparable. Alas, the world is losing men of courage!

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# CRITICAL MASTERPIECE "ANDHA ONDHA WEJJ"

*GM Umrani*

Rasul Bux Palijo is a unique phenomenon in Sindhi Literary Theory due to his now celebrated book "Andha Ondha Wejj" (the blind topsy-turvy physicians). This is basically a typical book in the domain of Sindhi Literary criticism, especially by way of its quaint and queer agonistic fanciful symbolism and searing postmodern caricaturist piece of linguistic marvels. An epitome of the typical Palijoistic expression, it is assailing the archaic hidebound reactionary, outdated propagandists of the old school of thought of the late sixties in Sindh. That was the age of a high velocity battles; waged by the two antagonistic camps of Sindhi writers -the conventionalists and the Neo liberal leftist progressives. They were engaged in a ferocious, no holds barred exchanges of vitriolic emotive verbiage in the local Sindhi newspapers like the rightist Daily "Mehran" led by Syed Sardar Shah Zakir and the contrarian progressive monthly literary magazines like "Rooh Rehan" led by Hameed Sindhi and the Quarterly "Mehran" edited by Maulana Ghulam Muhammad Girami. Those were highly charged days when the military sponsored civil governments had to face the nationalistic resistance in the form of anti-One-Unit and democratic movements and Sindhi literature was a powerful medium of expression via its vibrant prose and poetry more often than not allegorically. The Sindhi language had been facing the threat from Urdu. The time was out of the joint and hence this type

of scathing criticism of the conservatives was a sensational harbinger of modern intellectual inquiry.

The political parties of the pro -establishment right wing supported and often used Sindhi writers mostly the reactionary traditionalists who viciously accused the left of sponsoring the Marxist and socialist through the nationalist pro- G. M. Syed intellectuals led by Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo and Shaikh Ayaz. Rasul Bux Palijo being a diehard highly regarded leftist thinker came out instinctively and courageously in defense of the progressive comrades under attack with this substantive crucial critical work devastatingly excoriating his rightist ideological opponents. This is a land mark work in the sense that it takes on the sheer illogicality and irrationality of the traditionalists who used the pseudo religious symbolism and termed it as the hall mark of so -called Pious feudalist hypocritical pretentious literature and at the same time under official patronage castigated the secular and progressive writers as hopeless wayward, heretics, paganistic zealots and god forsaken agnostic rebels, liable to be crucified and ultimately to be tried and condemned in this world and in the hereafter .This book is sarcastic and calculatedly a tongue in cheek expose of the reactionaries, a quasi-humorous narrative, yet not surprisingly, sometimes bitterly harsh diatribe in its tone and temper.

Indubitably Palijo had an overwhelmingly enviable command over this cynical genre of literary dialectics masquerading as a strong case for Sindhi literary renaissance .The impact of the book was profound as it was a well- argued polemic of sustained rhetorical flights of innuendos, insinuations and learned references from author's keen insightful studies of lifetime, richly alluding to the vast array of the Sindhi classical poets like Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Sachal Sarmast, Sami, Bedal, Bekas et al, and the Punjabi mystics Bulleh Shah, Sultan Bahu, Farid who had persistently challenged the obscurantist Mullaism,

conservative status quo and the decadent mores. Urdu and Persian poets of the free thinking and mindset like Mir, Ghalib, Faiz et al were also liberally cited in order to drive home the debating points. The battle of Ideas in Sindhi literature as reflected in this characteristically Palioistic thesis of enlightenment had an unmistaken and remarkable impact on the contemporary academic scenario as it blazed an inspirational innovative path to permanently lay down the groundswell of liberalism in Sindhi literature. This book has a rational argumentative framework and its exotic arcane plethora of wise cracking colloquialisms, ironies, smiles, metaphors, which work wonders as effective tools of rational apology for New Wave Literature. This penetrative critical tome is indeed a robust ground breaking historic milestone, only next to Maulana Girami's "Mashriqi Shairy ja Qadar," which is more extensive and sober in language. The literary theory is enriched by this work. Palijo has proven to be a hardcore master of rational dialectics using the weapon of cold irony and logical positivism, hitherto never seen in the field of letters.

# MY TRIBUTE TO EVER LIVING ARBY PALIJO!

*Iqbal Tareen*

I was hardly 19-year-old when I went to prison first time during General Ayub's rule in 1968. A bunch of us was rounded by police and interned in Central Prison Hyderabad. All of us were placed in -B Class‖. I guess they considered political prisoners to be of some threat, thus prevented their encounter or cohabitation with ordinary prisoners.

The new arrivals included Rasool Bux Palijo, Hafiz Qureshi, Jam Saqi, Bakar Ali Shah, Yusuf Talpur, Masood Noorani, Lala Qadir, Shaukat Sindhi, Mir Thebo, Nadeem, Inayat Kashmiri, Ghulam M Saryo and me. We were received by the veteran Hari leader, Mama Ghulam Muhammed Laghari who had his cell fully stocked and beautifully setup as if he had moved into this facility for good. I knew little about politics except the personal rage against dictatorship and a deep solidarity for Sindhis. It was Palijo sahib - my first mentor and teacher, who introduced me to socialism, communism, and world history, history of Sindh, literature, poetry, and politics. Above all, he inspired me to shift my life's focus to Sindh and Sindhis. Later we respectfully parted companies on ideological and strategic grounds.

It is fair to say that without my encounter with Palijo sahib, I would have never embarked on my life's journey that I did. I was fortunate to meet with him a few months ago at his Hyderabad home. Although a very brief but we

had a quality conversation and I had an opportunity to express my personal gratitude to him.

Different people will remember RB Palijo for different reasons, but I will always remember him as a great teacher who produced an army of well-educated and highly trained cadre of political workers and thinkers. No one else comes closer to him in our region.

Rasool Bux Palijo will always have his memorial in the national conscious of Sindhi nation.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# QUALIFIED LEADER

***K.K Sujawal***

Rasool Bux Palijo had leadership qualities and has left an impact in the political history of Pakistan.

Born in Jungshahi, he received his early education there and moved to Karachi for higher education where he did LLB. He was a leading human rights activist who gave awareness to the suppressed people about their rights.

He also served as a lawyer of the Supreme Court and hd command over several languages - Sindhi, Urdu, English, Bengali, Arabic, Persian and Hindi.

He started a movement for doing away with the One Unit and also played a pivotal role in the Movement for Restoration of Democracy. He is also credited with creating political awareness among women.

He was sent behind the bars countless times because of his revolutionary struggle. He was declared a 'Prisoner of Conscience' by Amnesty International in 1981. He also did exemplary work in the field of literature by writing more than 25 books, mainly in Sindhi. *(Courtesy: Dawn)*

# PROGRESSIVE ... PALIJO

*Dr. Feroze Ursani*

Mr. Palijo was known for his organizational skills, his Awami Tahreek is a testament of that. His lifelong struggle was a story in itself was an enduring struggle to free the people of Sindh from alien economic and political subjugation which saw him incarcerated by the Pakistani Establishment multiple times; one of those was a eleven year almost solitary confinement in the infamous Kot Lakhpat Jail of Lahore. His academic proficiency was stellar amongst his peers, and Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo and other persons of letters recognized him as an authority on Shah Abdul Latif's poetry.

He has graced SANA conventions quite a few times, and was the main speaker at a Shah Latif Academy in St Louis, organized by Dr. Vakassi, where his address was very well received by a wide diverse body of attendees.

Personally, I'm, and will always be, indebted to him for my grooming in progressive and national politics of Sindh! I was once lent a book on the Irish Potato Famine by my mentor Sain Joyo, and saw multiple entries on the withered pages of the paperback mirroring the calamitous hand dealt to the Irish by the English to those being dealt by the Establishment to the people of Sindh, and on enquiry Sain Joyo told me that was the Rasool Bux Sindh is indebted to! Mr. Palijo had read the book while in Hyderabad Jail.

Sindh and Sindhis have lost a great leader. Progressives have lost a great friend. RIP Mr. Palijo.

-He used to live at Dr. Vakassi's House whenever he used to visit STL. Dr. Vakassi used to make his breakfast and

leave for work. At lunch he used to pick me up and we will see that his breakfast would be nearly untouched. Remember he was always very frail, and Dr. Vakassi used to make him eat; one day he said, and I quote: — I never developed a good eating habit, I used to be so poor in Karachi I could afford only two tie biscuits and a cup of tea at Cafe George in Sadar and the rest six annas I had left I used to buy a book from the used books vendor in Bohri Bazar I hope Mazhar and Aijaz and Dr. Hayat could also share some personal reminiscences of Mr. Palijo. They also hosted him!

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# PALIJO TAUGHT TO QUESTION

***Dr. Aijaz Turk***

Palijo Sahib was the only Sindhi political leader who encouraged critical thinking & encouraged his followers to question everything & critically analyze it before you accept it.

Palijo was against any type of violence & injustice against any human or even animal. Best thing about Palijo Sahib was his love for Latif & his way of recitation of shah's poetry.

Let us rise against opportunistic politicians, waderas, and peers and unite as a nation behind courageous, young, middle class, modern, secular & humanist political leadership and party. Let us forget politics of hate and start politics of love and inclusiveness to get freedom from waderashahi, mullahshahi, peershahi & sardarshahi. These were the teachings of great Rasool Bux Palijo.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# PALIJO IS OUR MATCHLESS PROTAGONIST

*Ramesh Raja*

Very sad to hear that Rasool Bux Palijo completed his journey of purposeful life. Really, we all, progressive and pro-activists in Pakistan are shocked. However, would miss him with grieved hearts. Rest in Peace; Surkh salaam to him.

No doubt, we lost a high-spirited leader and a man of supreme intellectual of Pakistan. The octogenarian polyglot was very inspiring, charismatic, versatile, trendsetter and well-watched and well heard speaker and a towering leader of Pakistan.

To me, he was most successful leader and a visionary giant of our era. ***-He visualized, actualized, succeeded and was recognized and honoured.*** I feel privileged and proud that I met and listened to him since 1987. I found him a genuine, genius, practical, competent, multifaceted, insightful, scientific, innovative, witty, upright, non-violent, updated, miraculous, mercurial, bold and committed man.

With modern intellect, updated wisdom, multi- fielded work and constant struggle, he was honoured with titles as leading politician, progressive thinker, visionary scholar, veteran Marxist, renowned social scientist, prolific writer, eminent literary critic and notable constitutional lawyer. Sindhis ranked him as God Father of Politics.

We proudly witnessed his dynamic, constant and resilient life-long activism armed with logic and argument against feudalism, imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, classism, militarism, martial laws, extremism, terrorism,

intolerance, sectarianism, discrimination on basis of caste, creed and colour – in brief - all inequalities.

He had spent 11 years of his life incarcerated in different jails of Pakistan due to his commanding role against draconian laws of Ayub Khan, Zia, Musharraf, One Unit and dams on Indus. He was declared as -Prisoner of Conscience by the Amnesty International in 1981.

His vast, deep and advance studies of religions, philosophy, science, history, he attained a status of visiting faculty and university. He delivered thousands of lectures in universities around the world including Oxford, Chicago, Kabul, Germany, Russia and New Delhi universities. He is respectfully called as -***Ustad*** (Sir or Master or Guru) due to providing of highly trained political workers in political spheres. He authored more than 40 books on poetry, short stories, jail diary, translations, Shah Latif, Indus waters, biographies, political subjects and edited many reputable magazines and Newspapers. He was multilingual with command over Sindhi, English and Urdu and also conversant with Persian, Arabic, Hindi, Siraiki and Punjabi. He read a lot of fiction, non-fiction and poetry from English, Urdu, Russian, Chinese, Persian, German, French and Arabic. He was well read person, as well. Being not from any political family or a landlord or no competitor for power, he acquired a space between ZA Bhutto (The Champion of democracy), GM Syed (Nationalism) and several notable communists (Communism) with his long struggle, public attachment, and untiring hard work through lectures, study circles, public procession, and awareness activities. He was an avowed example of - *Mehnat Rang Lati Hai* (hard-work pays off). He attracted and gathered millions of people and remained well lauded and supported.

He is largely credited with creation of political awareness among women and brought them in mainstream politics through the largest and pure political party —Sindhiyani Tahreek. Sindhiyani Tahreek played a vital role

in MRD movement, exposing metropolitan terrorists, anti Kalabagh dam, and Judiciary movement. He believed in women leadership and brought his own family women to politics and set an example of volunteer arrest of his daughters, sisters and wives in jails for political cause in Marshal Laws. Thousands of women participated in his funeral and shouldered his coffin with unprecedented expression of love and affinity and sang anthems eulogizing around graveyard.

Usually women are not allowed in funeral under Muslim customs but they participated and set an amazing example.

He was highly honoured in political and literarily corners for his exceptionality in political analysis, calculations, predictions and strategies. Being equipped with comprehensive knowledge of history, geo-politics, international situation, good stamina of rising and fast situation handling, he was considered as great tactician. Sense of hummer, poetic sagacity, analytical narration, and love of music were among his remarkable characteristics.

He was Marxist to the core and remained so till his last breath. Many people viewed him as man of literature and many liked him as politician. However, he did justice with both fields and people of both corners found him perfect; so unanimously ranked him as well read and well-heard person. His imprints on political thoughts would be everlasting and would continue to inspire us for times to come.

Let us preserve his teachings and non-violent and disciplined political legacies on for prosper Pakistan.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# RASOOL BUX PALIJO: AN ACCOMPLISHED REVOLUTIONARY

*Idrees Laghari Advocate*

For the first time, I heard the name of Rasool Bux Palijo in my early childhood some 20 years ago. My father was a diehard worker of Awami Tehreek till his last breath. We used to talk and heard his name as a family member. His introduction was not new and strange for me at all. Though my whole relatives were and are Jiyalas of people's party. I used to play with my relatives, their slogan was Jeay Bhutto but I was alone in their company and used to cry Jeay Palijo and Jeay Fazil. Both names were very new for my all companions, whenever they heard the name of Palijo, they used to ask, who Palijo is'? I had to tell them he was Wada Manhu (an intellectual). Mostly, I delivered speeches in Palijo Sahib's style without knowing the meanings of words and phrases.

No doubt Palijo was an intellectual, a great scholar, a literary icon, a stalwart politician but allow me to write that by birth he was an accomplished revolutionary. Practically he played his role in Sindh,. He was a dreamer; Sindh was land of his dreams. But ideologically he was an internationalist especially in the context of Marxism and communism. He led, founded and guided many movements at Sindh as well Pakistan level. Both dictators and civilian rulers are it general Ayub Khan, general Zia ul Haq or Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, put him behind the bars for 11 years in different jails of Pakistan. He was declared 'Prisoner of Conscience' by amnesty international in 1983. He introduced

new trends of movements and struggles. He revolutionized the public meetings through tableaus, songs, poetries and brief dramas. Before him mainly the public processions used to be a good plate forms for dry and long speeches. He had an allergy to hopelessness and withdrawnness.

He was a rebel for exploiters, dictators, culprits. He remained an enemy of terrorists, butchers, killers. He was a strong voice of voiceless people, poor people, powerless people, and laborers; he did struggle for the restoration of Democracy, constitution, human rights, fundamental rights, rule of law, peasant's right, and laborers' right. He was a symbol of revolution, courage, hope, true struggle. He stood for innocent girls, women, oppressed, who were deprived from their legal and just rights. He was a committed to the cause of poor, minorities, peasants, laborers, women, and girls. He was anti nationalist for so called nationalists; He was agent of common people Sindhis, farmers and underprivileged and deprived powerless, collective wellbeing of the society he lived and toiled in.

He was a writer. He wrote about new aspirations, new dreams, new hopes, new movements, new trends, new world, new Sindh, new Pakistan, new men, new women, new girls, new babies, new lines, new directions, new courage, new bravery, new talent, new morning, new periods, new generations. He wrote and composed poetry for new and imaginary world of his dreams. He presented his world of dream in his poems, in his lyrics, in his rhythms, in his instruments. All his poetry bears stark witness to his revolutionary world.

He was enemy of irrationality, darkness, and, of course, he was a great dreamer of prosperity, justice, bright morning, free world, peace and happiness. He dreamt of classless society, equity, equal opportunities for everyone irrespective of colour, creed, sect, ethnicity, culture, religion caste, language. He dreamt liberty and fraternity. He was a matchless admirer of real art. He was a hope for hopeless

people, for a mother, a hope for bright future.

No doubt he was a clear threat to so called leaders, landlords, land grabbers, traditional mullahs, status quo, pseudo communists, pseudo nationalist, pseudo internationalists, pseudo revolutionary, pseudo well-wisher of common people, pseudo Pakistani, pseudo Sindhi. He was also a serious challenge for so called technocrats, experts, orators, scholars.

He was and is hero of oppressed. He was and is hero of powerless people, of voiceless, and of excluded people. Palijo was an Internationalist for humanists, liberals, communists, secularists, socialists, progressive, revolutionaries. He was a Pakistani for democrats; yes he was also a Sindhi for deprived and downtrodden people of Sindh; he was Sindhi because Sindh was his mother land; he was Sindhi because Sindhi people have rendered enormous sacrifices for the restorations of democracy and constitution since the inception of Pakistan. He was the strongest voice of revolution, Justice, democracy, rule of law and constitution,

He had sound grip on many languages - Persian, Arabic, English, Urdu, Punjabi, Saraiki and Sindhi. He translated numerous poems and stories of Arabic, Persian, Pashto, Punjabi and English into Sindhi which was his mother tongue. He travailed throughout Pakistan as well abroad. He delivered lectures over there. His demise dealt a blow to the politics of laborers, peasants and women generally in Pakistan and particularly in Sindh. Definitely, the gap caused by his death will take much time to fill in.

*(Courtesy: Facebook)*

# IRON MAN OF SINDH – EMPIRES OF THE INDUS

*Waseem Palijo*

The man who defended Sindh over decades, whenever generals, feudal, capitalists wasted the powers of Sindh for their personal interests, he stood for the rights of Sindhi people and raised the slogan of 'power to the people', veteran politician of Sindh and Pakistan Mr. Rasool Bux Palijo led many movements against the feudalism in Sindh and honor killings, worked for the betterment of Sindh and Sindhi people, he also struggled for the education, freedom for women and girls education, Sovereignty of Sindh.

After the downfall of Soviet Union, he was ambitious to bring cultural revolution in Sindh, which was at first practiced in China, in Sindh on some extent he went successful in revolutionizing people, he went door-to-door to make aware people of their Culture, Traditions, Norms, Land, Resources, Literature, History.

During Zia's reign he formed the left-alliance, MRD (Movement for Restoration of Democracy), his Awami Tehreek with PPP, CPP, ANP struggled to restore democracy in the country, Sindh was the center of MRD agitation this way, every kind of movement first started from Sindh against the martial law and then to other provinces. Mr. Palijo remained the president of MRD and he also played the major role in leading Mohatrama Benazir Bhutto, the movement engulfed the entire Sindh, every person was enthusiastic and it seems to everyone that revolution has come to door.

Rasool Bux Palijo was imprisoned many times over launching campaigns against the martial law, establishment offered him premiership, presidentship of the country but he refused to accept, at last Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was sentenced to death and Mr. Palijo was imprisoned for long term, Bhutto was hanged due to manipulation of general Zia and religious parties, but Awami Tehreek's strong and active campaigns liberated him from the hands of cruel rulers.

He got his early education from Sindh Madressutal Islam, Karachi and author of many books, and a prominent lawyer in Sindh. Today in 88's age he leads rallies on forefront and has an encyclopedic mind still remembers the poetry of Bhittai, Rumi, and Hafiz. He still has vast knowledge on Science, History, Philosophy, Politics, world literature etc, and his home is nursery to learners also nurtured many luminaries of Sindh.

*(Courtesy: Indus Gazette)*

# INTERVIEWS

# PALEEJO RECOUNTS HIS 7 YEARS IN JAIL

***Mariana Baabar***
***Weekly MAG July 10-16, 1986***

*"The name Rasul Bux Paleejo was brought on the national scene from the obscurity of the Sindh province when demands spearheaded by the MRD for his release, arose.*

*This gained momentum after the lifting of Martial law and soon the media was familiar with the son of the soil who had been behind bars for seven years and was in a terrible state of health.*

*When one first meets him, one is taken by surprise how this gentle person, with his lean frame and slowly greying hair, could have emerged alive out of such a lengthy imprisonment; one is surprised again when one talks to this intellectual who had not lost the flair for speech even in solitary confinement he says; "it is the essence of the human desire to live with certain humanity according to your own conceptions, not to live like an animal".*

*Son of a Patwari in the interior of Sind, his father wanted him to be a 'Maulvi', a prestigious position in those days. The young revolutionary thought that he would bring reforms by religion until he read the legend of Muhammad Bin Qasim and changed his mind.*

*He recalls, "I was meant to be a man who was born to do extraordinary things" and rightly so it appeared that when he had made up his mind in the midst of*

*injustice and poverty there was no force alive that could restrain him.*

*Today the secretary general of the Awami Tehrik and a leader in his own right though comes from one of the smaller provinces, shuns the through of confederation. Recently in town to attend the MRD meeting he talked to 'MAG'.*

**Q: What were your sins that the military government felt you needed seven years of rigorous imprisonment?**

**A**: My biggest sin is that I come from a class that is supposed to follow, not to lead. I come from the peasantry. Now in our society you can be a great leader if you belong to the ruling class or the ruling nation. I happen to belong to the Sindh peasantry. This combination is not liked by many. And if I do things that other are doing, then this is supposed to be a great sin. I do not belong to the group who are actually supposed to be dong such things.

If a Zamindar, Jagirdar or even a gentleman belonging to the great cities indulges in such activities, then it is quite understandable. But a man belonging to a small hamlet that challenges the powers of the ruling classes and tried to behave like the ruling classes must be put down with a firm hand, according to the elite classes. Among themselves they can allow each other everything but not to an outsider, or intruder on the political scene. If I am allowed to do these things, they think, and then every Tom, Dick and Harry will do it. My cousins are still barefooted. I met my first cousin the other day and she told me, that due to lack of funds her husband suffering from TB and paralysis could not be treated. She took him to the graveyard of some Pir to be treated. So this is my social background come on the national scene as leader and do not bow before the ruling classes, then people will start getting ideas.

**BRAVE, UNDAUTED**

**Q: Do you feel the regime has achieved its aim by this**

**long imprisonment which eventually resulted in your present deteriorating health, where even the doctors are baffled by your ailments?**

**A**: What do you think? Do you see me bowed down? Broken? Defeated? Is the element of fear and apprehension there? This is the fear of our oppressors. But the fear has never affected me even in the worst conditions. And I hope it never will. There are common fears like missing a train. But the other fear, that because of this fear you will refrain from doing certain things or do the kind of things you might not have otherwise done, this has never and I hope will never affect me.

**Q: No man comes out of prison unseen. Do you feel this long confinement has made any positive changes in your personality?**

**A**: The first thing is that I always wondered whether I could withstand a long punishment. I am glad that I came out of it undaunted. If you are tortured for one day, one month, it is alright. But for me this illness has been a continuous torture - every day, every hour, every moment. You have to live not from month to month but from day to day from hour to hour, telling yourself that yesterday is gone. And I never knew that I would survive it. The fact that I have come out alive with firm mind and unbroken spirit, is a great thing, and I am very happy about it. Secondly, I have met various kinds of people with whom I may never have come in contact - with political people, businessmen, etc. it is a wonderful experience to see people coming out of ordeals so bravely. I only imagined but I never hoped I would be able to see people who were real heroes. There were people sentenced to jail for 25 years, singing, laughing, talking. I thought that such people existed only in China, or Russia or France or England or in some other times in different places in other historical setups. But ordinary men and women so brave, so selfless, so determined, I had not expected to meet. So to come in contact with them was quite an experience. I

was on the same wave length with them, heard them, and shared their woes. It gave men not a theoretical or emotional approach to people but there we were ordinary people in the same camp. Misery effectively leveled us. All our intellectual heights and slogans were completely shattered and we really achieved brotherhood, friendship and a sense of common destiny. Then I had the opportunity to come to the Punjab. For us humanity is the first thing. But practice is different. So when I came over here, I talked with friends; we were able to see eye-to-eye on many problems. We struck up friendship which still exists. So in the Punjab it was quite an experience and it will be a part of my experiences in life when new vistas opened up for me. I wrote a book in Sindhi. And the fact that you can bear it and stand it is really encouraging and heartwarming.

**HUMAN DIGNITY**

**Q: What is that basic element that makes a man behind bars want to survive to witness yet another dawn? Again what is that which makes him reach the breaking point?**

**A**: It is the essence of the human desire to live like a human being and not like an animal. So there was a common stand that we had all to live with dignity or not to live at all. You have to be dignified, you have to be brave. Otherwise, there is no survival in this world. If we are cowardly and weep for ourselves, then you can't live in jail. You cannot get out of any misery or ordeal if you are a coward or a time server. There were examples before us of people who defied everything and survived, others who broke down. The common desires were to hold our heads high, to show that we were human beings, and as such were capable of surviving any ordeal.

**NEVER LOST HOPE**

**Q: Was there any time in this long and trying period**

**when you wondered if it was really worth it and you were on the verge of breaking down?**

**A**: No, never. Not even one moment. But there was a time when I felt that illness would break my spirits. There were such moments when you could stay alive; I never knew what could happen to me physically. Nothing good could be expected of the people you were dealing with. But there was no moment where I lost hope. Losing hope that it was not worth it otherwise there were moment when there was uncertainty.

**Q: Most political prisoners who come out from behind bars unlike other prisoners emerge and are elevated to the status of heroes in our society. What were your reactions?**

**A**: There are different reasons. We are the people who have been brought up on the cult of humility, and shunning all publicity. It is considered very mean to feel heroic. This hero business is completely banned in our organisation. We teach everyone not to aspire after personal glory. There is no heroism. How can you be a hero today if you take up unwanted and undesirable causes? You take up issues which people don't like. The moment you've come out of jail you say something people do not like. A hero should be a person who does not say unpleasant things to the majority of the people. But all the time we are not only talking against the government but also against many things which are not liked by the people. So to remain a hero is to remain an inoperative and inactive man. We are active people. We are constantly pleasing and displeasing people. And a hero I wish to be, but in a different sense, in my own sense. That I will do my duty, I will remain humble; I will not crave after anything. I am not interested in publicity. This is real heroism that we share with people of all centuries, at all times. Party discipline has taught us that individualism has to be shunned. If anyone of us strikes a pose and becomes a hero, we will laugh at him.

**A BORN REBEL**

**Q: Was there any indication in the process of growing up especially in your social set-up that one day you would be addressing the masses from a national platform, as you are doing today?**

**A**: The First years of my life proved that I was always an outstanding man. I was meant to be a man who was born to do extraordinary things. For instance at the age of ten my teacher paraded me on his shoulders in front of the whole school and said, "He'll be a leader of tomorrow". The Pakistan movement was going on and a leader was the greatest thing. We had doctors, engineers at that time but a leader was considered to be the greatest of all. Everywhere at every stage I have been considered to do the most unusual things. People may call me an evil genius. I was always rebellious even in childhood. Then I was always rebelling against tyranny to children, against women related to me, in fact the whole set up. I was given to study from childhood and I started trading things, the conventional kind of things. So I always had the reputation of being somewhat out of the ordinary.

**Q: As a person from one of the smaller provinces which is today in the forefront of the campaign for provincial autonomy, where do you think the answer really lies?**

**A**: The bigger province has some inborn and inherent advantages which if you take things in the normal course they are entitled to have. Now if they do things which they are allowed to by society then the smaller provinces will be destroyed. If the smaller provinces do things that they are normally expected to do, then Pakistan will not remain. We have never had a common state. I have no links with Pathans I have not seen Baluchistan. This is not Europe where you are always travelling. Here nobody knows anybody else. In Sindh we don't even know the urban people. So here we are suddenly told that we are a nation.

We were never a nation. Is a nation made by an act of Parliament; that from certain regions is made up the nation of Pakistan? Therefore, if everyone does the things he is normally entitled to do, nothing can remain otherwise. We have to adjust. If I insist on my rights and you insist on yours, we cannot exist. Somebody says I have the soldiers, I have the army. We are the majority, so we must rule. Then the small provinces will say okay if you are the majority, we don't want anything. We want to have a different kind of a set-up and we do not want to co-operate with you. When war comes we are not with you. We will have our own say. You can keep on saying what you like. If you want to fight us, okay. If you want to fight us, okay. If you want to kill, let some of our people be killed. So you have to strike a balance leaving your impregnated positions, leaving your own ideology.

**LACK OF CONSENSUS**

**Q: But don't you feel it is actually the smaller provinces which have unconsciously given the bigger provinces the role which it plays today?**

**A**: History has given them that chance of doing certain things which will be not in their interest in the long run. You can only have one time to make mischief. It is a onetime shot. We had all our revolutions, like Allama Iqbal, Nazaria e Pakistan etc. but you can only say it once. Even in nation building, it is a very fragile structure. You have to accommodate. Here is a lack of accommodation, lack of leadership, lack of orientation towards understanding. If they are Jagirdars, they are Jagirdars, why should they listen to you. If they are the majority, they are the majority why should they listen to you. Are you going to be guided by your immediate blind interest? So it is a lack of maturity in the leadership - a lack of real revolutionary parties. The ruling classes do not know how to behave like responsible people, how to attract the people and rule democratically.

# THIS GENERATION HAS TO FIGHT: PALIJO

***Zahid Hussain***
***Monthly Herald, August 1986***

***"Hang Palijo!"*** *screamed the headline in a national daily. Editorials and columns in the right-wing press demanded his trial and expulsion from the Punjab. Liberal intellectuals and writers, on the other hand, dubbed him the messiah the nation has been waiting for.*

*The media last month was full of Rasul Bakhsh Palijo. His bold and candid comments on history and politics during his visit to the Punjab made Palijo, 56, general secretary of the Pakistan Awami Tehrik (now merged into the newly formed Awami National Party) the centre of a shrill controversy. Although the intellectual-politician made a lot of enemies during his Punjab sojourn he managed to enchant Punjab's liberal intellectuals, writers and politicians. Often dubbed a "narrow Sindhi nationalist," the Awami Tehrik leader appears to have now become more pragmatic, and has considerably softened his stance on the national question.*

*A lawyer by profession, Rasul Bakhsh Palijo achieved nation-wide prominence in 1983 when his Awami Tehrik played an active role in the MRD movement. A national revolutionary democrat, as he calls himself, the Awami Tehrik leader entered politics at a very early age. Much criticized recently for his views on Mohammad Bin Qasim, Palijo claims, interestingly enough, that he was in fact greatly influenced by Qasim*

*in his boyhood: "I liked Mohammed Bin Qasim who conquered Sindh and changed society. I wanted to conquer the world like him."*

*At the age of fifteen, Mr. Palijo joined a Wahabi organization and actively participated in the movement to change society on the basis of Wahabi teachings, but he soon became disenchanted with the movement. He was then attracted to socialism through his introduction to progressive literature. His first serious political involvement in practical politics came when he joined the Hari Committee in the early '50s. He entered journalism in the 1950s, when he joined a progressive Sindhi weekly* **Sadaqat;** *later he worked for* **Nawai Sindh** *and* ***Nai Sind.*** *A prominent Sindhi literary critic, Mr. Palijo wrote his first book* ***Andha Undha Vaid*** *(Blind Physician) in the early '60s against the onslaught of the Jamaat-i-Islami, and has since written several others.*

*He was also the general secretary of G.M. Syed's Bazme Soofia (a literary cum political organization), but left when, according to him, the elder Sindhi politician joined the feudals. Palijo was also briefly associated with NAP, but resigned in 1965 because of differences on certain basis issues. In 1968 he formed his own Sindh Awami Tehrik – a peasant-based organization. Later in 1977, it was converted into the Pakistan Awami Tehrik.*

*Though often criticized for his changing political views, Rasul Bakhsh Palijo is nevertheless admired for his political courage, which has often subjected him to the wrath of rights groups and the ruling classes. In this interview Rasul Bakhsh Palijo, currently the convener of the 11party MRD alliance discusses his political views and the current political situation in the country.*

**Q. You have been released after seven years of detention. How do you view the present situation?**

**A.** When I was sent to jail our Amirul Momineen had just announced that martial law would be inflicted on the

people, with all its preventive detentions and other restrictions. Now there's a lot of talk about democracy, elected representatives and so on. But basically, the sword of Damocles that hung over us during martial law is still there. We continue to live under the reign of terror. One man can still say, "I'll do this to you or I'll do that to you, I'll re-impose martial law, I'll withdraw these relaxations and concessions that I've given."

So though outwardly there is a relaxation, inwardly there is none. It is very transitory; it could end at any moment. Any moment the whip could fall on you, any moment the road to the dungeon could be reopened. Martial law could be re-imposed; ordinances could start showering upon you from Islamabad.

So inwardly, I don't feel any real pleasure and joy in coming out of jail after so many years. I had hoped that when I came out, I would be in a different place, in a free land where we'd be able to talk and think without any fear of reprisals, and where we'd all have our democratic rights. But unfortunately it's not so.

Of course, there is the difference that people are more understanding and less afraid. The terror of martial law has not been able to make them forsake their cause. They have not bent, they have not been brow-beaten. They hold their heads high. They're more ready to challenge the status quo. They're become wiser, more dignified, more full of confidence in their future. I think in that sense there's been a change.

**Q. Do you think a qualitative change has taken place?**

**A.** At that time, people thought nothing would happen. There were many people in jail at that time, many people who felt that there was no future, that marital law is re-imposed, it will not really accomplish any purpose. I consider that to be a qualitative change. You know, before an operation takes place, you feel you won't be able to stand it. But you've stood it and you can stand worse. What happens

to individuals is different. They can be killed or put in jail and tortured: things that are happening in Latin America and elsewhere, or have happened in Iran. But deep down everybody knows that the forces of terror and fascism can't win, and the people will defeat them. All the combined forces of reaction have lost their credibility, their cover, their terror; they have lost their viability, and stand naked before the eyes of the whole world. That's a qualitative change. A lot of water has flowed down the Indus, and the forces of reaction have failed.

**Q. You mean to say there has been a transition from a military to a civilian government?**

**A.** No, it's not a question of the civilian government. It's a question of people having fought bravely and valiantly in the '83 movement, it's a question of the not succumbing to the terror and the jails. I'm not referring to the so-called civilian government, which is a military government in civilian disguise. I'm referring to the men who were in jail and women and families who were behind them. That's what I mean, not the "civilian government."

That can push a button and the whole thing can revert back in minutes. You can wake up in the morning and the radio will be braying like a donkey, giving you orders. They can put you into jail, they can kill you… but the basic fight has been lost by the forces of reaction, in the face of the adamant spirit of the people. They can prolong the agony of people, they can prolong this tin show, the whole fraud, for a little while longer, but the longer they stay, the longer they fight, the weaker will be their power base. Individual can remain in power a little longer, but by prolonging the agony of the people they're making them more conscious, more united, and stronger from inside. New forces are being born and will continue to be born. That's why I say there's been a qualitative change and the forces of reaction have been defeated.

**Q. The democratic forces have been struggling for the**

**last nine years against the martial law regime and for restoration of genuine democracy. Why haven't they succeeded in their objectives?**

**A.** There are many causes. One of them is that we haven't had the same body politics for any length of timer: our association among ourselves is only 30 years old, unlike Iran or India which have been nations for a long time. The Indians have struggled jointly for over 100 years. We are a new state, and we have few united struggles, so we don't have the same wavelength at the popular level. For example, I don't know the thoughts and aspirations of the people of the Frontier below a certain level. So people have to come together on the basis of certain imaginary notions and perceptions about one another. We don't have a very long democratic tradition, because of the lack of a bourgeois or social democratic background. Most of our leaders come from the feudal class, and then there's government penetration, there's selfishness, there's ineptitude. The people want to fight; they want to unite and to struggle. But the correct leadership has to be evolved.

The government is trying its level best to sow the seeds of disruption and to break the democratic movement. So we cannot go beyond a certain level of progress in the democratic movement, and then it breaks down, at some level or other, and we have to start again. There's no revolutionary, democratic, progressive party in the country. The lack of such a party is one of the main weaknesses in the democratic camp.

And then there are national contradictions. We don't have one agreed basic position. There are many people who feel that the 1973 constitution, even in its pure and virgin form, was not a constitution designed to serve the interests of the smaller provinces. I myself wrote an article at the times saying that this constitution would not serve the interests of the smaller nationalities to the extent that we want. So, because of the national contradiction, inbuilt

intervention, and the dubious role of some people in the democratic ranks, we're not as powerful as we ought to have been. That's our great weakness.

**Q. Do you see any hope of the MRD achieving its objective of forcing the government to hold fresh elections in the near future?**

**A.** I'll put it another way. The very fact that so many people have not deserted the democratic camp, in spite of the bribes of the government, the disruption, the infiltration in the democratic camp, is because of the MRD. I consider the very facts that we haven't broken during all these years, despite all the attempts of authority, to be a very great achievement. The fact that you have a platform from which you can say things and at least have a pretense of unity is very important: you have got a democratic plank where you are forced to at least pretend to be a democrat. Even a situation which forces you to behave, thoughts you may not want to behave, is in itself a great achievement. I stress the negative aspect as well as the positive aspect. The fact that the government has not been able to completely wipe out the opposition is due mainly to the MRD. And then the people can always hope that by putting pressure on the MRD, they can achieve something more: more effort from the MRD, more unity.

Even party in the MRD has a veto, so therefore you have to go according to the wishes of the man who's the least cooperative. He has a veto over those who want to go the furthest. All the time we're being pulled back by the man who's sitting back and telling you, "Don't go further, don't go further, slow down, slow down,"; the man who's the slowest, the one who's the least willing to move, the one who's the least anxious to have a change in the status quo, can dominate the whole show, by the very nature of the MRD.

But in spite of everything I think the MRD, by sticking to its position, by having initiated something like the 1983

movement, by having made the decision to give only four subjects to the centre and give other subjects to the provinces, has done a great job. By achieving consensus and by telling the people what should be done in the future, it has made the basis for further negotiation and cooperation. That alone, I think, justifies the MRD's position as the focal point for rallying the democratic forces.

**Q. It might exist as a sort of discussion forum but as far as real politics is concerned hasn't the MRD become very ineffective in the present situation?**

**A.** There are differences of perception and different approaches to every problem. People do debate in MRD, they don't have weapons, they don't have machine guns, they're not active in that way. They talk and talk and talk and try to reach a consensus. And they're not in a very great hurry to jump into the active struggle in the streets. They're very conservative. But it's more than debating forum. It's a link with the people, at least in the field of the political thought. It tells people what the government is doing: when it carries on psychological warfare through its lies and propaganda, the MRD says, "No, this is not true." We've stood against the government, we have not bowed down. The MRD told the people not to take part in the bogus election; if the MRD had not been there, people would have participated in the bogus elections. The opposition would have been wiped out. Because of the MRD, people have to take stand; otherwise, may be, they wouldn't feel compelled to do so. When eleven people are sitting together, who is going to say, "I'm covered, I'm going to bow down?"

When there is this institution and you're talking in front of it… everybody pretends to be brave even though he isn't brave, everybody pretends to take the cause of people further, even though he may not really be all that interested in it. So it gives a lead also, it tells people what to think at least and what to believe. The government and the authorities wish people to believe that democracy is not

feasible in this country; But the MRD says "No, it is feasible." The government says the people of Pakistan don't want democracy, and the MRD says "No, they do want democracy." The government says that the referendum is a very good referendum. The MRD, as an embodiment of the thought and will and ideas of the people, says "No, it was not a good referendum."

Merely passing such a judgment is a political act. Sometime great action, tumultuous events, upheavals and the revolution are based upon a mere statement of fact, mere judgment. So, passing the judgment that the present government is illegitimate that is a fraud, that the so-called president has no right to be president, that martial law is not solution to problems, that Islam . . . we have got Ulema-*e-kram here* (in the MRD). If they hadn't been there the government would have said, "There's a Shoora, Islam doesn't believe in parties, you have the right kind of government here," and the mullahs in their millions would have pronounced that the assemblies are all right, that everything is fine.

But because of the MRD, nobody dared to take a solo flight in the domain of the ideological sides against the revolution. Who would have dared to hold meetings alone if the MRD had not been there? The MRD violated the government's ban, it held meeting, people went to jail, it went on for four years. It would have been impossible to struggle at this level if the MRD had not been there. In fact, the government has been trying to paint the picture that everything you do is futile. It is the practice of the government to say that whatever you do will be futile, so give up hope, give up the struggle, bow down, and join the ranks of the obedient.

**Q. Don't you think the MRD is virtually on the brink of splitting up, particularly in the view of PPP's decision to go it alone?**

**A.** The MRD has seen worse days. Every MRD meeting

is preceded by the predictions in the newspapers that it will not survive, that it will split up in the next week, but somehow it survives. We have differences, of course, very important differences of perception, of understanding about the role of the MRD, about the relationship between the parties forming the MRD. Some people even say that the present government is better than the government that will come into power if elections are held. So there are many positions people have many different perception about the past and about the future.

We know all these shortcomings of the MRD. But we have a Sindhi proverb: "Till the beautiful new red cradle is ready for you to swing in, use the broken one." We know that something new must come; a revolutionary, democratic, progressive party has to be there to lead the struggle, so that people can unite around it. We know all that. But until that happens… even a 10,000 – mile long journey has to start with a single step. We're so backward in the international sense of social development that we have to go through the agony of this lower level of struggle, through initial stages, the very slow, very tortuously slow, pace of development.

Sometimes change comes very slowly and imperceptibly, so that you don't even know a change is coming. There's such a big backlog, so much has to be done, so many impediments, so much to be overcome in the domain of ideology. For instance, you don't have any analysis of the life and work of anybody belonging to the liberation movement, because of the hold of fascist ideology over the minds of a number of people. They have turned human beings into icons to be worshiped; these attitudes are weighting us down; they don't allow us to go forward especially in Karachi and Punjab; you have to do a lot to clear the minds of the people and make them receptive to the ideas without which no great movement can take place. It is, in short, an ideology that's out of tune with the requirements of modern times you can't proceed very far on it.

In the 15th century in Europe, of the dark ages, people began to think that perhaps everything that was written might not be true. In fact, it happened long before, in Greek times, with Socrates and even before, with Pythagoras, and in Indian culture at the time of Gautama Buddha with people like Mahavira who questioned everything, the whole myth of the Aryan philosophy, about the Vedas and so on. So there have been times in human's history which have been dark ages, when people have been forbidden to think, to question, to examine, to contradict. There have been centuries when people have been told to obey, not to see, to shut their eyes, to shut their ears, to block their minds and merely obey.

We in Pakistan are going through such a phase in the twentieth century. Something is said on radio or on television, or written in a few books and they say, "Obey." Now, if you obey them, if you take things for granted, then how are we going to question or overcome the obstacles – ideological, intellectual – that are blocking our path? Our generation, therefore, has to work very hard, to cover many countries during which many things should have been done. But freedom of thought has not been possible for thinkers in this country, because of imperialism at various times. We've never had the kind of freedom of thought, the boldness of thought that you had in Spain or in the Middle East. We didn't produce any body like Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd, Abu Sina, Al-Razi, Alberoni. We didn't produce great minds, great philosopher, or thinkers, or people of great stature in the domain of ideology. We produce only a few historians here and there and a few poets. So all that work must be done now. This generation has to fight, it has to go to jail, it has to bleed. It has to have the boldness of Socrates, of Al-Razi, of Ibn Rush, of Khayyam. And you have to create a new generation of people. That alone will produce the kind of struggle that you and I think should be waged.

But every perfect thing is created from something imperfect. Every great development has behind it millions of insignificant, boring events and actions carried out by insignificant people. There's a relationship between the perfect and the imperfect. The perfect doesn't come down from the heavens. The dazzling, great revolutionary event of the world comes from the slow process and slow evolution. So that is something that we can't go beyond. That process has to be gone through. We can only accelerate it or decelerate it.

**Q. What is the MRD's position on Benazir's call to hold elections in the autumn? And what are your own views on this?**

**A.** I believe that elections should be held immediately, before the year is out. The MRD has also said that elections should be held now. It has been demanding elections from the very beginning. Every year we say, "Elections, elections, elections, immediately." The word was "immediately." That word has now been improved upon. And taking into consideration the increased freedom and the possibility of holding elections now, and the fact that there's been a tradition of holding election either in spring or in autumn, the PPP's call and the MRD's is identical.

**Q. Do you think the PPP on its own can force the government to hold elections?**

**A.** I don't know. But if we all put our shoulders to the wheel it'll be a lot easier to do whatever we want to. I think whatever we do, it should be done jointly. Supposing we're all doing something together and someone keeps bickering and quarreling and pretending to do something but not really doing anything. What do you do then? If somebody's conspiring and pretending and doing various things here and there, then what do you do? So it is not a question of MRD members not departing from the joint path. It is the duty of every one of us that we don't give any impression to our friends that we are doing things alone.

**Q. Wasn't the PPP's call for a black day on July 5 a failure because the MRD parties stayed away?**

**A.** It is very good to act jointly. In fact, it is the only way to succeed. But if you feel, rightly or wrongly that your partners don't want you to do anything then you are bound to think of alternatives, like acting on your own. In this case, one of the members of the MRD has held meetings without inviting the others parties to participate. Now, holding separate meetings is not such an important issue. We have been holding joint meetings on July 5 every year. But this year the PPP held its own meetings.

I wouldn't call those meetings a failure. It was good to see how many people would gather for a meeting without Benazir. It proved two things. First, it showed Benazir the strength of her party in each district, and how much work they have done. She must have judged what the party leaders have done in each district during this period. I think it was necessary for the People's Party leadership to know what has actually been done at the grassroots level. In every organization there are black sheep who say many things before their leaders, but don't actually do anything. I know many people in the PPP who have done absolutely nothing except to talk about the sacrifices of Mr. Bhutto all the time. It's not only in the PPP that you find people who pretend to be fighting for democracy while licking the boots of the rulers. Such people are in every party. They may be in my own party. But since the PPP is the biggest party it may have the greatest number of such people in its ranks: people who come at the last moment and are big gods, while the real workers who have sacrifices are left out. So the leaders of not only the PPP but of every party should know what people are actually doing and how popular they are in their own areas.

The black day has also shown the MRD leaders that they will soon be left behind. I would even say that an unsuccessful movement is better than doing nothing. There

is a tendency among some people to just talk and to pass judgments and intrigue. Even if the PPP's call was a failure, people know that they at least tried it and we did not even try. By going forward it has at least made a distinction between those who want to go forward and those who don't. people like us who are left behind will have to catch up. We say "Down with the PPP, because it is not allowing us to participate," whereas the real point is that we were not prepared to do so. There are some good people in the MRD who want to do something, but there are definitely others who, under the cover of the MRD, just want to sit it out, enjoy themselves and make the best of the situation. They issue statement as representatives of the MRD without doing anything. Some have used the MRD for their own purposes.

The MRD must now decide whether we want to go forward or just sit and watch. We will now consider whether to jointly observe August 14. I think the MRD parties are coming closer and a consensus is emerging that we should act together. This realization was not so clear earlier. The PPP's meetings on July 5, even without Benazir's presence, were not, in my opinion, as insignificant as the government wanted them to be, but they were not as successful as they would have been with the participation of the MRD.

**Q. What are your views on an electoral alliance among the parties of the MRD?**

**A.** There was a time when the government wanted to isolate the PPP, to crush it and to tell the other parties, "Look, you shouldn't associate yourself with the PPP because it passed black laws against you." The government's policy was to beat up the PPP and then take care of the rest. That was a very hard time, a very cruel time for the PPP cadres. The treacherous elements ran away. The people were confused, but they stood up and fought. Many even burnt themselves to death. Other political parties also did not fall into the government's trap.

Then the MRD was formed. Those were dark times. The

PPP might have survived alone, but again, it might not have survived without the combined efforts of the MRD. There is distinct difference between the commitments of some of the workers of the party. The workers are more committed to democracy, more loyal and more sincere, though there are exceptions everywhere that get corrupted. But generally the workers of every party are more devoted and committed than some of the people in the leading echelons. So we all joined together to do the job. That was the first ray of light, whereas before there was no hope. It was the spirit of defiance which held us together against the regime, which was saying, "We don't want any political parties, we want Islam, there will be no democracy, and his henchmen and nothing else." At that time, the worst period, the PPP was not left alone. The MRD workers, everybody, the whole nation, fought together. Without that we would not have achieved the present state of affairs, where the ruling class has been compelled to pretend to give us that bit of democracy. As the result of our combined efforts, there will be real elections someday.

Democracy does not mean being an MNA or a minister. Democracy means getting freedom of movement, freedom of expression, freedom of writing. It means having dignity and the rule of law. The other day, I was talking to one of the leaders of the MRD. He said "Why should we fight for the PPP to come into power? We have done our bit – let the PPP do its bit. If it wants to come into power, let it fight it out and take power. Why should we fight to bring a party to power which has not been known for being kind to opposition parties?" Our stand is that there should be a just, proper and equitable settlement, that the component parties of the MRD should share the good things emerging from this bitter struggle. But this should not be made an excuse for destroying the MRD, if the other party does not agree to it.

**Q. Would you call yourself a Marxist or a nationalist?**

**A.** I consider myself a patriotic revolutionary democrat.

I wouldn't go into Marxism right now, as it is not the proper stage to go into this question. We are socially-oriented revolutionary patriotic democrats. We combined class struggle with the national struggle and both with the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist struggle.

**Q. How were you attracted to socialism?**

**A.** After I matriculated in 1947, I became a librarian. There were two types of books in the library, Islamic literature and English novels. I read both of them. I read Thackeray, George Eliot, Walter Scott, and Dickens. And I read all the books on Islam. Fiqh was actually compulsory in our school. After matriculation, I thought that I needed to add some Islamic history, so I read Maudoodi. I read Qadiani and Shia texts. Then suddenly someone introduced me to socialist literature. And Nabi Ahmed, the trade union leader, introduced me to revolutionary poetry. I read Makhdoom Mohiyudin, Sardar Jaferi, Josh and others. We used to have nothing in our pockets, so we couldn't afford trams and used to walk on Bunder Road here, singing songs at night. My first introduction to Urdu poetry was when I read Allama Iqbal at 15 years of age.

Then I started reading socialist literature, but I couldn't understand it. So I turned to novels. Those that I could understand. My favourite writer was Elia Ehrenberg. I also read Lenin, Marks and others. I could not understand socialist theoretical writings, but I did understand the practical side of socialism. It was through literature that I was first attracted to socialism.

Then I joined the Sindh Hari Committee. That was a wonderful life. We sometimes used to have nothing to eat. And when some wadera used to give *khairat* we used to go there, speak against him, abuse him and then eat his food. Then I also came in contract with women. Even at that time there were revolutionary and brave women. Those were great times for the progressive movement. Revolution was in the air.

**Q. What is your perception of revolution?**

**A.** I could not understand all the talk about workers. They would not talk about peasants and others, but all the time workers, workers; only workers were revolutionary, and all others were backward. I could not relate to the emphasis on workers only. This was what put me at odds with these elements. I say that revolution will probably never come with this attitude. All the emphasis is on the workers – nothing about peasant, nothing about students, nothing about us, nothing about love, nothing about our problems.

**Q. Do you believe in establishing a classless society?**

**A.** Of course.

**Q. How can it be achieved?**

**A.** After achieving a people's national democracy, or whatever you may call it, then gradually and slowly establishing a socialist state. Then the whole world will become socialist, and in this way you can establish a classless society.

**Q. How would the transition to socialism take place in Pakistan?**

**A.** I would give first priority to the elimination of fascism in the country, by uniting all the forces against fascism, which masquerades as Islamisation: all the dark forces of reaction who hate people, who hate workers, who hate the poor people. They pretend to be the great flag bearers of Islam, but in fact it is sheer fascism. It has nothing to do with Islam, or the revolutionary spirit of the Islam of the Prophet. Then we will have to eliminate feudalism. In a national people's democracy we will try to eliminate national contradictions and national oppression. By stages we will achieve a socialist order.

At this stage, even if democracy is achieved it will be a feudal democracy. We have never had people's democracy in the country. There has been democracy only for the feudal. Never at any stage has there been freedom for the

people, for the working millions. Even at the best of times, there has been liberty for the ruling class. But now even the ruling classes have not been allowed to have their share in democracy. In fact, what we are fighting for is, in objective times, not a people's democracy, not even bourgeois democracy, but feudal democracy, although on paper it will we be democracy for all people. What has our struggle, objective speaking, resulted in? Elections and more henchmen for the regime. Even if the MRD succeeds, it will result in freedom for the feudal to stand in elections. For example, the feudal of the PPP are not allowed to stand in elections because of their affiliation with that party. Now these feudal will stand a good chance of returning as or representatives if the MRD's movements succeed. The will enjoy the fruits of the struggle and we will get a small share. But it does not mean that our struggle is futile. We know that step by step we will grow stronger and stronger and will have a bigger and bigger share, till the time will come when all injustices will be eliminated.

**Q. You formed at Sindhi Awami Tehrik in 1968, but in 1977 you converted it into the Pakistan Awami Tehrik. Does this indicate a shift from purely Sind-based politics to a countrywide position?**

**A.** It was done merely to take part in the elections. Organizations with a provincial bias were not allowed to participate in the elections to be held in 1977.

**Q. Was that the only reason?**

**A.** It was an immediate reason. We had no other way but to drop Sindh from the name of the organization. But it was not the real cause. The real cause was that we were internationalists from the very beginning. We have never been parochial in any sense, at any stage. Our background, our society, our culture, our psychology, has all been dominated by an international outlook.

**Q. You are often criticized for being a narrow nationalist. Would you agree with this?**

**A.** Suppose you belong to Nigeria and are also internationalist. You will obviously talk about problems peculiar to Nigeria. You have to start from the particular and come to the general. You cannot talk about the whole world without talking about your own country, so we talk about the Sindhi people. Secondly, the Sindhis are the only people who are being reduced to minority in their own province. They are only people who have lost their homes to a flood of immigrants. It is the only province whose capital does not consist of its own people. Karachi used to be a purely Sindhi town with a few Parsis from Bombay. No capital of any province has been severed from the rest of province and given to settlers. Sindh is at the end of the Indus and it gets its water last. It is a flat area: Baluchistan and the Frontier have mountains in which the people can take refuge. Sindh is flat. Anyone come into Sindh and run it over with tanks. So this is a strategic weakness of the area. We don't even have any generals. We don't have the tradition of guerrilla warfare which the Baluch have. We have left their tribal traditions for behind: lower Sindh does not have any tribal system. This province is the most oppressed and it is also the greatest centre of contradiction. You have a cosmopolitan city like Karachi, on the one hand, and places like Thar which have no water at all on the other. So we have greater problems. Unless we become strong in Sindh we cannot have any impact on Pakistan's politics. We would not have participated in the 1983 movement as we did as it had no strong organization in Sind. You have to have some basis of influence.

But otherwise, we have always combined both local and national politics. There has been no point in time when we have not strived for a countrywide organization. We have tried, but we have not succeeded. It has been a big long ten-thousand mile march. We don't have anybody in Karachi, because up to this stage we have not found anybody who agrees with us ideologically. We have a unique political

position in Pakistan, though we have some affinity with the Mazdoor Kisaan Party. This is our misfortune. How can you build an organization when people don't agree with you?

**Q. Why don't people agree with you?**

**A.** Because some of them emphasis class struggle. If they ever talk about the national issue it is as a forum the charity. There are other people who only talk about nations. They refuse to do anything with Punjabis and Muhajirs. Then there are some people who talk about the class struggle and the national struggle but do not believe in struggling in democracy. They believe that the democratic struggle is basically a part of feudal politics, and that only the feudal will come into the power as a result of this struggle, so it is futile to participate in it. We believe that we can become stronger only by participating in this struggle for democracy. If we sit at home and allowed them to get all the fruits then what we get? We can be tempered into steel only by participating in the struggle. When, 1978, the journalists started their movement, we sent our people from the peasantry to participate in it and court arrest along with the journalists. Now, what do they have to do with the journalists? But we told them to work in a spirit of internationalism. You are fighting for democracy, and so you fight for anybody who is just. If you are in a position to help him, you must join him.

**Q. Despite your ideological differences you have agreed to merge into a single party with the NDP and MKP. Do you think this merger of politically diverse elements can succeed?**

**A.** I think it can function if we do not fall prey to 'tailism' or closed-doorism. That we regard as the failure of ANP was actually due to the fact that the "progressive, leftist, democratic" leadership from the lower classes confined itself to intrigues behind closed doors, not speaking out and not participating in real leadership of the party. They had become ideologues, sitting back stage and pulling

the strings but what we do is that participate in the leadership on an equal basis. This was not so in ANP. We insist on maintaining our position on the equal basis. All matters should be thrashed out openly and with equal participation. Otherwise, the leadership will go into the hands of ruling classes.

We even proposed that all the powers should be given to the central committee and the office-bearers should be elected by central committee. But it was not accepted. Bizenjo Sahib says that his proposals were not accepted, but actually most of our proposals were not accepted. We wanted a different kind of organization but for the sake of unity we accepted the final outcome. Actually this is not our idea of organization. There are many aspects on which we differ.

**Q. What will be the impact of this merger on the country's politics?**

**A.** The people who have been disillusioned can be aroused. Similarly, there will be more power, more following and more credibility. We will have a little more influence in national politics.

**Q. You have recently toured the Punjab. Have you found any change there, particularly on the national issue?**

**A.** Actually, I found a change when I last went to Punjab, ten years ago. I found them more realistic this time. There were quite a few people who were prepared to think more realistically about the situation in Sind. I found them more anxious to learn, speak, and express themselves. There was more sense of the need for democracy; more concern about the wellbeing of smaller provinces; more concern about the future; less righteousness; less sense of supremacy and of their being right in everything. On the whole, there has been a great deal of change.

Everyone defended me when the media attacked me on my views. They simply enveloped me in love, and took up the cause as their own cause. So the battle was on without

my knowing about it in that bar room and in other places. People who would have been the last ones to give me a reception invited me. Everyone – lawyers, intellectuals, women, workers and people whom I had never seen – came to listen to me. I went to Gujranwala, Wazirabad and other small towns. Everywhere we had heated and frank discussions. I told them that because of their backwardness, we are suffering so much. I told them, "You accept everything which comes to you, without question. This is the kind of mentality which is keeping you in chains." I told them that I admire my own people, because while our bodies may be chained, our minds are not. We are freer and mightier. In Karachi and Sindh our minds are not chained. People here talk about history and other issues, but nobody minds such things.

So I feel that we are freer, our minds are freer. Of course, I am only talking about a small section of the Punjab. Otherwise they are very brave and daring people. We have a lot to learn from them. I found them eager to learn. It was a marvelous experience, totally the opposite of what the reactionaries and the henchmen of the government and the self-appointed guardians of our conscience had expected. It was a complete backlash. People came to me and said "You have brought us together. We were fighting with each other, we have been at each other's' throats, but because of this incident we are all united. Now we are going to fix the reactionary elements." I am grateful to all the fine men and women who extended so much love and sympathy and showed tolerance for what I said. There is an earnest desire among the people of Punjab to build a new Punjab.

**Q. What are your views on confederation?**

**A.** Suppose you have confederation, you have your army and your own generals. The Sindhi general will be less powerful than the Punjabi general. But the Punjabi generals will conspire with the Sindhi and Pathan generals to rule us, because even the local generals will be from the Pakistani

army. What is to prevent the generals in Lahore from taking over from the generals in Quetta and Sind? A constitution is not an army; it is a piece of paper. When people talk about the inability of a constitution to save their rights, I simply laugh. How can a book or a piece of paper, however sacred it may be, protect it?

No arm can protect anything, which cannot protect itself. It is absurd to say that the constitution will protect itself. It is the people behind a constitution who matter. Therefore, the confederation proposal is more likely to protect the rights of the smaller provinces and to create a greater balance between the centre and provinces. But the point is, how do we get it? All the three smaller provinces combined are weaker than Punjab. We are faced with the strongest army in Asia. So you don't have the requisite force to achieve confederation. I don't have anything against the confederation proposal. If all the oppressed people in Punjab and other provinces agree to this proposal, I am also in favour of it. If they don't, then I will take the best possible alternative, one which has the support of the people. So it is on practical grounds that I support federation over confederation.

# BIGGEST PROBLEM IS STRUCTURAL

***Panel Interview***
***Daily Dawn August 19, 2003***

*Awami Tehrik leader Rasool Bakhsh Palijo believes that the biggest problem facing Pakistan is "structural", since the country does not have even the "pretence of a federation" any longer.*

*In a Dawn Dialogue interview in Karachi, Mr. Palijo blamed the ruling class of Punjab for trying to dominate the smaller provinces, but at the same time he said his party's first struggle was against the feudal lords of Sindh.*

*If "Sindhu Desh is created, the feudal lords will kill us. Our first struggle is against autocracy," he said.*

*Asked to specify steps that he would like to be taken for the country's progress, he said talk about the Thal Canal project and the Kalabagh Dam should stop, and added: "Stop devaluing politics. Stop being cynical about the judiciary." Mr. Palijo also warned against involving criminals in politics, and involving the army in corruption.*

*He said the liberal and progressive path of genuine national independence and civilian democratic rule charted out by the Quaid-i- Azam was "the only path of salvation for this country". Mr. Palijo said the issues currently being negotiated between the opposition and the government were important ones, but stressed that the "petty compromises" sought would not change the basic autocratic and ant people structure of the "neo-colonial, virtually non-federal, unitary, oppressive and military*

*state that Jinnah's Pakistan now stands tragically transformed into".*

*The following is the text of the Dawn Dialogue interview with Awami Tehrik chief Rasool Bakhsh Palijo:*

**Q: To begin with, perhaps you could identify what you consider to be the biggest problem facing Pakistan today.**

A: The biggest problem is structural. This is a neo-colonial country in which its rulers have been nominated by outsiders. This is the case with every Third World country, though their rulers claim to be representatives of their people. But that is not true. In 1971, the federation envisioned in the 1940 Resolution ended. That resolution seeking independent states was adopted because the supremacy of one province was not considered acceptable. Domination of Sindh by Punjab since Ranjit Singhs time was a known fact, but no one was prepared to be part of greater Punjab. That is why the phrase 'independent states was used in the 1940 Resolution at the insistence of Bengal and Sindh. We got rid of Bengal in 1971 by blaming them for all sorts of things. Now this is a one unit, a foreign-inspired one unit. In fact, it is a foreign colony, not just in name. Now we don't even have the pretense of a federation.

**Q: What exactly do you mean when you blame Punjab because most of the people of Punjab have nothing to do with this problem of domination?**

**A**: I am glad you raised the point, and you are right that the people have nothing to do with this. I am not a traditional nationalist. I am a proletarian internationalist. I now support the cause of the people of Sindh. Earlier, I had supported the people of Bengal. And when during the days of the great Sindhi leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, military action was taken in Balochistan, I was an advocate of the rebels for which I was sent to jail. By Punjab, I mean its ruling class. Punjabi people, American people and European people are also our brothers. The way Europe is fighting for the Muslim

cause, none of us is doing so. In the same way, we have differences with the Indian rulers, but we have nothing against the people of India.

**Q: How do you look at the Jeay Sindh Movement?**

**A**: First of all, this country has to be sovereign. There should be a federation of equals. There should be a proper constitution. The Senate should be the dominant house. There should be democracy. There should be no extremism. Pakistan should be sovereign, independent and progressive. Pakistan has never been independent for a day. We want an independent Pakistan.

**Q: These problems have been repeatedly identified. One factor may be the domination of Punjab because of its size. But what do you propose to do to solve these problems?**

**A**: The modus operandi of imperialistic forces has been this for the past many years have democracy and fair play in your own country on the condition that the rest of the world is your playground. There should be light in your country provided that there is darkness in the rest of the world. They want undemocratic regimes all over the world so that they can be manipulated. This is criminalized state politics. They will keep people in power in Third World countries as long as they continue to commit the crimes they want them to commit.

It is not that Punjab's size is the problem. Their ruling classes have been given the license on behalf of imperial powers. They have committed crimes with the aid of the military. I know that the international climate is such that they have to allow freedom to the press. There must be amendments to the Constitution. There should be a real federation. The criminalization of (politics and government) has to be understood and resisted by all the people.

When Mr. Bhutto was in power, we did our duty to stand up and be counted and be hunted. People used to say that they did not regard me as a Sindhi. I used to say that I

was thankful to them. They used to say that I was working as a lawyer to traitors.

Many crimes have been committed over the issue of water. I also want to write the criminal history of the political processes of Pakistan. I have always said that Mohammad Ali Jinnah was killed. They left Mr. Jinnah unattended on the road. He was very fragile. I had seen him. I am a criminal lawyer. You do not need great methodology to kill a man. If you leave a child in the cold, he will die. Now it is being said that Fatima Jinnah was also murdered.

This administration is committing more injustices than its predecessors; especially its focus is on Sindh. When growers in Sindh grow sugarcane, they import sugar to keep prices down. The systematic manner in which this administration is seeking to destroy Sindh as an entity, the way it is pauperizing the population (is regrettable). Servicemen are posted everywhere in Sindh. The way these people are using the army the army decides who would be a union council nazim. They are running the whole administration.

Even the British officers would not speak with the arrogance with which the army generals speak. They do so because they have the backing of the US. They urge the people of Punjab to use the kind of language against Sindh they have not used in the past 50 years. Nobody talked like that.

**Q: How do you look at nationalist politics when you say that you are not a nationalist but a proletarian internationalist?**

**A**: I am not a nationalist in the strict sense of the word. I am not like that. I do not accept that nationalism. If the definition of nationalism is my-nation-right-or-wrong, I do not believe in that. I do not say that the Sindhis are better than any other nation. I do not want to conquer other areas.

Actually, I would not like to use the word nationalist at all. We support Namibia. We supported Vietnam. We

support the Palestinians.

**Q: When voices were raised for the Vietnamese people, we saw more crowds and more rage large crowds talking about the rights of the Vietnamese people. Why is the proletarian movement in Pakistan no longer so potent?**

**A**: There are so many Muslim countries, yet the Muslims are being destroyed. The imperial forces have set up a bogus democratic movement. People have been compartmentalized; Democrats, Nationalists, Islamists, They are all bogus. They are appointed by them. It is important to see whether the so-called Islamists are really Islamists or not. Similarly, whether the so- called democrats are really democrats or not. Are we real nationalists?

**Q: What is your stand on the Legal Framework Order and the controversy on the uniform of the president?**

**A**: The LFO is against the letter and spirit of the 1973 Constitution. With the utmost respect, I do not consider the decision of the worthy Supreme Court of Pakistan giving General Musharraf the power to amend the Constitution as laying down the correct law. What the Muslims of the subcontinent struggled for was not a state ruled by generals through mafia-like agencies and their machine-made and mass-produced, power-hungry, corrupt to the core and petty -minded puppet politicians. The Quaid-i-Azam did not want the military to have anything to do with the governance of Pakistan. Unfortunately, he was gravely ill at the time of partition and was surrounded by the civil and military bureaucracy and their puppet politicians, dancing to foreign tunes, who took over the country lock, stock and barrel even during the life of the Quaid. Successive coteries of foreign oriented generals have been riding roughshod, directly or indirectly, over this unfortunate land for decades. They drove out East Bengal, thus dealing the death blow to the federal foundation of Jinnah's Pakistan, making it virtually a one-unit, dominated by one province and the generals. So we find Punjab's military general acting as a governor-

general over Sindh and giving orders to the nominal provincial authorities. Pakistan has been transformed into a Prussian type military state in all but name. In fact, as I tried to point out earlier, the majority of Third World countries like Pakistan, which were the directly ruled colonies of the western powers, became upon getting independence, indirectly ruled neo-colonies of these powers. Whereas previously western parliaments appointed the rulers of colonies and accepted responsibility for their good and bad deeds, the new colonial masters who rule by remote control now do not accept any such responsibility. So the hand-picked rulers foisted upon such countries-who are shown to have come to the top through bogus electoral processes, coups or other intrigues, rendered reckless by the knowledge that so long as they keep dancing to the tunes of the masters, they need fear nobody else- feel themselves absolutely free to play havoc with the lives, the rights, resources, liberties and destinies of their semi-enslaved, illiterate and impoverished populations. Many of the politicians we find around ourselves are commonly believed to be the creatures of the generals and their agencies. And as long as the worthy generals and their political creatures are riding on the backs of the oppressed people of Pakistan, with the blessing and backing of foreign powers, Pakistan's status as a semi-slave military state, its backwardness, abysmal poverty and helplessness cannot be changed. The liberal and progressive path of genuine national independence and civilian democratic rule charted out for this country by Mohammad Ali Jinnah is the only path of salvation for this country.

The petty compromises sought in the current negotiations cannot change the basic autocratic and anti-people structure of the neocolonial, virtually non-federal, unitary military state that Jinnah's Pakistan now stands tragically transformed into.

As for the controversy about the uniform, that is a

superficial matter and avoids the fundamental question about the future of the people and the state of Pakistan.

That question is this. Have the crores of the people of Pakistan been given birth to by their mothers to pass their whole lives under the sword of Damocles of a now familiar phenomenon?

A general suddenly stages a coup, grabs power, invokes the historic justification of all usurpers, viz, the law of necessity, gets his usurpation condoned by the judiciary, throws away the Constitution of the country, imposes his own self- serving interim constitution, stages the now familiar drama of a totally bogus referendum and thus makes himself an elected president followed by elections tailored to his needs, gets desired results and then begins the haggling about petty concessions.

How long is this vicious circle going to continue? Will it ever end?

**Q: Do you think, then, that the issues over which the government, the ARD and the MMA have been fighting are non-issues?**

**A**: No, they are very important issues. But our problem is that we are a colony and the colony is being ruled through the army. And the army is creating the politics (we see).

**Q: How do you build up public pressure for your position when the political parties remain so disorganized? Even your political party is not organized. Political parties have no roots among the masses.**

**A**: There must be and there are a number of individuals and groups who do not like to keep trudging along the beaten path of traditional petty power politics. If they think over the matter properly they will come to the conclusion that sham democracy and pro-status-quo politics can never improve the situation fundamentally. Only a persistent, courageous, peaceful democratic struggle will create the conditions for basic and lasting changes. The Awami Tehrik has been working in this direction for the last three decades.

It has been in the forefront of every pro- people democratic struggle in this country in general and the province of Sindh in particular.

At present we are waging a struggle along with seven other parties against the Greater Thal Canal Project. We invited all political parties including those in the government, the Muslim League-Q and the MQM, to join the struggle. Some friends including Aftab Shaikh of the MQM appeared to be surprised at my invitation.

We are in contact with a number of friends throughout the country. I had recently had discussions with Mr. Abid Hasan Minto and several other friends. We hope that the common struggle for real democratic change will win many new adherents in the coming months and years.

A great and mighty global wave of mass movements for peoples' rights, liberties and rule is on the order of the day. The conscious and justice loving, democratic-minded people of Pakistan cannot afford to lag far behind the rest of the re-awakening and rising world.

**Q: Do you think the 1973 Constitution is still relevant and valid?**

**A**: After 1971 Pakistan has actually lost its federal character as a single province now dominates the parliament and the senate has no real power. In practice, the so- called federal government of Pakistan is but another name of the establishment of the biggest province. The three small provinces are virtually being treated as the undeclared divisions of the dominating province and their resources are being mercilessly plundered. Section 6 of the Constitution which punishes those who overthrow the Constitution has become a dead letter. The Constitution therefore needs to be appropriately amended.

**Q: Politicians do not talk about ending Karo-kari, marriage with the Quran, etc. They do not talk about spreading education. All they want to do is grab power.**

**A**: I agree with you. The Awami Tehrik and the

Sindhiani Tehrik are waging a struggle against this licensed brutal slaughter of helpless women. But we lack resources. If some NGOs who are sincerely interested in this cause come forward to work with us, I think we will get better results.

**Q: Now you are mobilizing people on the water issue. Will you be talking to Punjab?**

**A**: Absolutely. We will talk to them very soon. We will even go to the Frontier and Balochistan. I prefer to go to the villages. In the villages of Punjab, more people recognize us.

**Q: In order to mobilize the people, we need a party and a leadership. Will you ally yourself with the existing parties or will you form a new party?**

**A**: When we invited the MQM to cooperate with us, they were surprised. But there is no permanent hostility in politics. Do you know that I have been in touch with Gen Musharraf? I like the man because at least he is a polite man. He talks to people and listens to them. The things that I have said here, I told him the same things. Can you believe it?

We will take this struggle forward. You will soon find a new awakening in Pakistan. Our first struggle is basically against the feudal lords of Sindh. Why am I against 'Sindhu Desh'? Because I fear that if Sindhu Desh is created, these feudal lords will kill us. Our first struggle is against autocracy.

**Q: What three or four steps do you specifically want the people of Pakistan to take to tide over the present problems?**

**A**: Stop the Thal canal. Stop talking about the Kalabagh Dam. Stop squeezing Sindhis and stop obliterating them from the face of the earth. Stop devaluing politics. Stop being cynical. Stop being cynical with regard to the judiciary. Do not over-use the military. Stop the militarization of Pakistan. Stop plundering the economic resources of the people. Do not involve the army in corruption. Do not involve criminals in politics.

**Q: How do you see the normalization process between**

**Pakistan and India? Will it lead to any fundamental changes in domestic politics?**

**A**: I should hope so. But all things do not happen the way we want them to. Most things depend upon factors which are not completely under your control. I do not agree with the traditional interpretation of Indian history. There was only one Indian nationalist, and that was Mohammad Ali Jinnah. They had him killed. India has never played the role of an elder brother. They have always acted like a 'baniya'. Their hatred against the Muslims has not disappeared. Having said that, I agree with you that normalization of relations between India and Pakistan would have a great impact.

**Q: How will it have an impact on domestic politics?**

**A**: They will not be able to incite people when they have talks with Indian politicians in Delhi and Lucknow. We have the same language and culture. How can you hate them in a mad and brutal manner? This will bring about tolerance in politics.

*(The Dawn Dialogue panel included Sabihuddin Ghausi, Lateef Baloch, Bahzad Alam Khan and Shamim-ur-Rahman.)*

# POLY TO STEAL WATER SHARE: PALIJO

***Aamir Latif***
***Weekly Pulse Dec 30-Jan 5, 2006***

*Rasool Bukhsh Palijo was born on January 20, 1930 in a small village called Mongar Khan Palijo in Thatta district. He is a staunch opponent of any dam on Indus River, including Kalabagh. An advocate of Supreme Court by profession, Mr. Palijo becomes emotional while talking about water issue, especially the mistrust created by the federal government on it. However, he never becomes sarcastic.*

*The veteran politician commenced his political career in 1954 from the platform of Sindh Hari (farmers) Committee, and later joined the de-funct National Awami Party (NAP). He founded Awami Tehrik in 1968, and is currently serving as its chairman. He also remained the secretary-general of ANP, led by Wali Khan, for some time.*

*Mr. Palijo remained behind bars for 11 years for "crimes" unknown to him too. He was arrested in 1976 during Bhutto regime, and was released in 1986 during Zia era. Mao cap is an essential part of his dressing, whether with Shalwar Kameez or suit.*

*Mr. Palijo, also known as a literary figure of Sindh, has 20 books on literature/ politics, ideology, and other subjects to his credit. Weekly Pulse recently interviewed him on the simmering water issue.*

*Sharing his views on construction of Kalabagh Dam, Rasool Bukhsh Palijo, in an interview with weekly Pulse,*

*out rightly rejects any dam on Indus River, and terms such a move tantamount to stealing water share of Sindh. He believes that water shortage is artificial and proposes setting up an international water commission under the United Nations or SAARC to settle the lingering issue forever*

**Q: Do you agree that there is acute water shortage in the country, and construction of new water Reservoirs is necessary to cope with it?**

**A**: First of all, there is no water paucity in the country. The existing water shortage is artificial. Ok, for a moment I agree that there is shortage, so what? This is all over the world. There is shortage of oil, shortage of food, shortage of several other items. The issue is not the shortage, but just distribution of available water among the four provinces.

**Q: Who should monitor the "just distribution" because you are not ready to trust the federal government?**

**A**: Yes, you are right. We do not trust the federal government, which stands alongside the "thief". My proposal is setting up an international water commission under the United Nations or SAARC so that this lingering issue could be settled forever. I repeat here that there is no dearth of water.

**Q: Then why the farmers of Sindh and other provinces have been crying for water since long?**

**A**: This is because of the series of criminal acts committed by the federal government and Punjab from day one. Our farmers are crying for water because their share is being stolen. And, the thieves are not ready to concentrate on that, but they want to steal the remaining water available to us in the name of water shortage and reservoirs.

**Q: What do you mean by criminal acts?**

**A**: The water dispute between Sindh and Punjab has been continuing since 1859. The first prime minister of Pakistan had started negotiations with the Indian government in 1947 on water issue, but Sindh was not taken

into confidence. The water of three Pakistani rivers was actually sold to India in 1947 by Liaqat Ali Khan, but it was officially recognized in 1960's water agreement between the two countries. In 1960, not a single representative of Sindh was included in the Pakistani commission as West Pakistan was one unit. The entire process was beyond our back. I want to ask that who had authorized Ayub Khan to sell our water to India.

**Q: But Tarbela and Indus dams were built during Ayub's regime?**

**A**: It was another criminal act. The World Bank was not ready to provide any money for Indus and Tarbela dams. The international consultants and the World Bank had suggested the construction of Barotha and Mangla dam, but Ayub Khan had threatened the World Bank that if funds were not provided for Tarbela and Indus, there would be a war between Pakistan and India on water issue.

**Q: But the dams were built!**

**A**: Yes, because there was martial law in the country. The army rulers were not ready to give any weight to the opinion of Sindhi people. They just wanted and still want to steal our water. These are criminal acts and fit to be taken to the international criminal court.

**Q: But General Musharraf is ready to provide all guarantees, including the Supreme Court!**

**A**: What guarantee are you talking about? The Supreme Court! Can you quote a single example whereby the courts have given ruling against the usurpers? No, not a single one. In fact, the Supreme Court has always strengthened the military rulers in the name of "law of necessity". Sindhis do not trust any guarantee.

**Q: General Musharraf is also ready for constitutional guarantee?**

**A**: Very funny. The Constitution cannot guarantee its own existence. The history of Pakistan very clearly suggests that there has been no guarantee regarding the Constitution.

Every military ruler came and trampled the Constitution and the courts supported him in the name of law of necessity and so-called national interest. Ok, if we trust a constitutional guarantee, but in future, another military ruler will come, and annul the guarantee in the name of national interest, then where will we stand? And I want to ask what happened to the guarantee about the "robbers canals" of Chashma, Jhelum and Taunsa Panjnad? The rulers have fulfilled none of the guarantees.

**Q: General Musharraf personally promises that he will not betray Sindh. Why are you not ready to trust him?**

**A**: He (Musharraf) is a violator of the Constitution. We are not ready to even think of his promises. He should be tried under article 106 of the Constitution, and the General knows what article 106 says.

**Q: But Musharraf says he is a Sindhi too. Why would he go against Sindh's interest?**

**A**: He has broken his promise time and again. He had promised to shed his uniform by December 31, 2004. What happened to that? He is the most cynical and unreliable man I have ever seen. In fact, he is more dangerous for Sindh than Zia-ul-Haq. He has imposed terrorists on Sindh in the form of Mutahida Qaumi Movement. He actually has given us message that Sindhis had done a mistake by opting for Pakistan.

**Q: General Musharraf is striving for consensus on Kalabagh dam. How do you see this?**

**A**: What consensus. The consensus is already there. The three provinces have rejected Kalabagh dam. What other consensus do you need? The rulers must keep it in their minds that Pakistan is not the name of Punjab. Other three provinces are also in Pakistan. Therefore, they must not risk the solidarity of the country just to appease one province.

**Q: General Musharraf says Kalabagh dam is technically more feasible and beneficial, and he is ready for debate on that with the nationalists. Do you accept his**

**challenge?**

**A**: Of course, I accept his challenge. But Musharraf will nev-er come to debate on the issue with me, because he has no legal or mor-al ground. He is just fighting the case of water thieves. A few days ago when a journalist asked him (Musharraf) about holding a debate with me, he replied that Palijo is an emotional man, and is not fit for discussion.

**Q: But Sheikh Rashid Ahmed says he is ready for debate with you!**

**A**: Sheikh is an ignorant fellow. He is not fit for this serious matter.

**Q: Various opponents of Kalabagh dam, like PPP, ANP and other nationalist parties, propose the construction of Bhasha dam. Do you support Bhasha dam?**

A: No, not at all. I say no cut on Indus River. Sindh is the tail-ender and it has the prime right on Indus River in line with international laws.

**Q: But, technical experts and nationalists have no objection on Bhasha dam!**

A: They are fools. Dam is dam, whether Kalabagh or Bhasha. The basic purpose of Punjab is to steal our water. It could be done through both Kalabagh and Bhasha.

**Q: Don't you think the government seems to be committed to constructing Kalabagh dam?**

A: I will only say that if the federal government and Punjab do not desist from their ongoing policies, another debacle like East Pakistan may occur. Sindhis will become a flock of sheep if Kalabagh dam is built. Before we turn out to be a flock of sheep, it is better to die.

**Q: If the government sticks to its guns?**

**A**: Then we will see. We have seen the bravery and courage of these Generals in the battlefield in 1971 and Kargil.

**Q: What do you expect from Punjab?**

**A**: I appeal to the people of Punjab to rise and save Pakistan.

# THERE WAS NO INDIGENOUS ELEMENT IN CPP: PALIJO

*Panel Interview*
*RDPI 5 April 2011*

RDPI has arranged a sitting "Baithak with Rasool Bux Palijo." Rasool Bux Palijo, Chairman Awami Tehreek, has a large followings in Sindh and certain other pockets. Mr. Palijo has been influential politician and activist. He was born in District Thatta on September 21, 1930. He has also been Secretary General Awami National Party (Walli) under the leadership of Walli Khan.

His active political career spreads on the last four decades of Pakistan's history. He has been linked in different capacities with major socio political developments in national life. He is well read and eloquent politician who has been practicing socialist ideas in different forms at different levels.

**Highlights**

Mr. Palijo in a very candid and informal way shared his early life, schooling, college and university days. He told that he had a penchant for social reforms since childhood. He had a strong religious frame of mind, as his family temperament was quite religious. He read various novels based on the campaigns of Muslim Generals and their exploits in far off lands.

He told that organized theft was a heroic occupation in his area, during his adolescence. People would praise and fear those involved in that field. Just to prove that he and his friends could do anything that is regarded difficult or

impossible. He formed an association of young thieves. He led that association. He failed in the annual exam, because he devoted more time to the newly formed association than his own studies.

I read "Khoon Kay Aansoo" before I completed my fifth grade. I would deliver speeches at Milaad and other religious occasions. I was impressed by Muslim warriors. As a result "I made my own private army getting inspiration from Muhammad Bin Qasim. I thought if he in the age of 17 could go and conquer a country why cannot we? I then started motivating young lads of my village but they were all busy in their study the army got scattered."

He also talked about his interaction with Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and how he sought advice from various politicians like Ameen Faheem, Shaikh Ayyaz( a poet), and himself at the time of Shimla Accord and the difficult times of 1971. G.M Syed, he told, was a strong Sindhi leader and termed Bhutto as agent of the Punjab and traitor of Sindh. G.M Syed at one time even banned Bhutto entering Sindh, his home province. Mr. Palijo told that he tried to convince G.M Syed to allow Bhutto the political freedom to interact with the people. Palijo commented that "Bhutto was a brilliant tactician not a political strategist. He had no bigger historical picture in his mind".

Mr. Palijo further commented on Bhutto saying that he was glib and flattered Skindar Mirza saying "any impartial account of Pakistan's history would record you above Jinnah." He was feudal; he betrayed the aspirations of the masses. He was be fooled by the establishment and lost his life as a result of his shortsightedness." Bhutto also at one point said that 'in third world countries military governments are unavoidable. Kalson was hero of Bhutto

About MQM he said they are playing the same role as Kurds (in Iraq?). He also told that he is the first matriculate of his village. His father was Patwaari in revenue department. I did matriculation in 1947, met Mr. Jinnah

many times. I did law but started practical life as reporter and became assistant editor.

Mr. Palijo remained associated with Sindhi Adabi Sangat. "My political and intellectual training was done in that Sangat. It was extremely disciplined body." The political education and awareness among Sindhis owes a lot to the teachers of that province.

Nawab Bahadar Yar Jung was an excellent orator. I had good English by the time I did matriculation, but Mr. Jinnah's speeches were difficult to understand at that time.

Coming to the current political situations in the country, he told that in last week SM Zafar asked me what is the future of Pakistan. I told Pakistan has no future.

I have convinced Sindhi people that 1973 Constitution is not accepted to Sindhis. My intellectual grooming has been by one of my teachers, who was Muslim but he would neither say prayer nor observe fast but he was a man of strong integrity. The other source of inspiration was M.N Roy.

Commenting on the current form of new imperialism, he said a long historical span is needed before the real spirit of socialism can be restored and brought to the force. For this you have to have an ideology that no political party other than Awami Tehreek, has today.

Talking about his meetings with Dr. Najeeb, he told that Ajmal Khattak would be translator during my chat with Najeeb. Commenting on early communist party in Pakistan, he said all the communists were members of congress before 1947. There was no indigenous element. The support and inspiration all came from outside. He revealed that even Jinnah was expelled from Muslim league in 1948 and was replaced by Ch. Khaleeq Zaman.

He also told that Muhammad Ali Jinnah was alone fighter for the cause of freedom. He was nationalist. But all other contemporary politicians were not that gracious. Jinnah was aware of shortsightedness of his political cronies in Muslim League.

# ONLINE BOOKS

1). SINDH-PUJAB WATER DISPUTE (1859-2002)
http://www.archive.org/stream/RashidAliDaudpota/TheSindh-PunjabWaterDispute1859-2002#mode/2up

2). INTRODUCTION OF RASOOL BUX PALIJO
https://archive.org/details/BookFromIndus?q=about+rasool+bux+palijo

3). HISTORY OF AWAMI TAHREEK
https://archive.org/details/TheHistoryOfPeoplesMovementInSindh

4). ARTICLE ON PERSONALITY OF RASOOL BUX PALIJO
https://www.scribd.com/document/406632911/Tribute-to-Rasool-Bux-Palijo-by-Tahreek-Magazine-2018

https://www.scribd.com/document/403700335/Tahreek-Rasool-Bux-Palijo-Number-No

# ONLINE VIDEOS OF RASOOL BUX PALIJO

1). Rasool Bux Palijo on Resettlement of Biharis in Lahore
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doztYLfMk1w

2). Meri Jidojud with Ajj TV
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p83RbVtVUmY

3). Rasool Bakhsh Paleejo in Tanazur with Farrukh Sohail Goindi
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PZngGJOhDo

4). Rasool Bux Palijo with Hamid Mir on MQM (Part-1)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AC1lj0AB7KY

5). Rasool Bux Palijo with Hamid Mir on MQM (Part-1I)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmPjsOYePMI

6). Tribute to Rasool Bux Palijo (Yasir Qazi)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JPuLSGmACs

7). Rasool Bux Palijo with Mujahid Brelivi on Indus Water
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wj66CXbA5GA

8). Zara Hat Ke (Wasatullah Kahan, Zarar Khuhro and Zaidi)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV8JkUxlqLU&t=1144s

9). Rasool Bux Palijo with Shaista Lodhi in Morning Show
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_vSHZrIyNQ
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9_R6hx3UfQ

# GLIMPSE FROM PAST

30-5-86 "DAWN DAILY"

# Paleejo's detention extended

**By Our Staff Reporter**

30-5-1986 "Dawn Daily"

KARACHI, May 29: A Review Board of the Sind High Court on Thursday extended, by two days, the detention of Mr Rasul Bakhsh Paleejo, Secretary-General of the Pakistan Awami Tehrik. It was due to expire on June 5.

The Board ordered his appearance on June 7. It is the same date when Mr Fazil Rahu, President of the Tehrik, is to appear before the same Board.

Mr Paleejo was arrested on Oct 16, 1979.

The Review Board comprised Mr Justice Salim Akhtar, Mr Justice Abdul Razzaq Taheem and Mr Justice Ali Haider Pirzada.

The Additional Home-Secretary (Sind) submitted details of charges against Mr Paleejo who pleaded his own case.

Mr Paleejo, who was brought to the court from JPMC, under police guard, appeared to be in bad health. He was wearing a sweater in the hot weather.

His ailment, besides his chronic ulcer, has not been diagnosed so far. Last year, two medical boards, one on the Provincial level and the other on Federal level, recommended his treatment abroad.

Because of the ailment, his resistance, digestion, and stamina have been badly affected. His eyesight is also affected.

However, Mr Paleejo, was full of praise for the hospital services at JPMC where he is under treatment for the past one year as well as at Mayo Hospital where he stayed for a similar period during his detention in Lahore.

On his arrival, Mr Paleejo was taken to the bar room by fellow lawyers. Prominent among others who met him in the court were: Mr Hussain Bakhsh Narejo (PAT), Mr Aftab Shahban Meerani, (PPP), Mr Fatehyab Ali Khan (MKP), Mr Iqbal Haider (QMA), Barrister Abdul Wadood, Mr Abdul Hafiz Lakho, Mr B.M. Katty (PNP).

Mr Paleejo was later taken back to JPMC.



A WAVE AND A SMILE: Mr. Rasul Bakhsh Paleejo, an Awami Tehrik leader under detention since 1979, waving at supporters after appearing before a review board at Sind High Court in Karachi on Thursday. — Dawn photo.

## 'Leftists warned of hidden hands'

# PALEJO'S PRISON PHASE

By Mazhar Abbas

Mr Rasul Bakhsh Palejo, Secretary General of Awami Tehreek, who was released on Saturday after a six and half years detention, talked more about the time he passed in jail instead of discussing the current national politics in a short interview with this correspondent, last evening.

He said that for quite sometime he was kept in the same cell, at Kot Lakpath Jail, Lahore, where Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, former Prime Minister had been kept earlier. "It was a mental torture for me [illegible] not only for this reason, but also because of the fact that the window of the cell opens right into the death cell", he added.

The former journalist and a prominent politician said that in that cell, where he was kept for quite some time, he met a number of prisoners who gave



details about Bhutto's last days.

Palejo said that Mr. Bhutto used to water a tree in the prison courtyard, during his detention there and that tree was still there, when he was in Kot Lakhpat Jail.

He said that he was feeling relieved after his release, but at this moment he remembered and will always remember all those prisoners with whom he lived in various jails, irrespective of the fact whether they were involved in any crime or not. He said he had learnt a lot from many of these prisoners during his very long period in prison. "I had even taken notes from some of the prisoners, who were supposedly involved in serious offences and found them very gentle and humane", he stated. He said it was a great experience for him to remain in jail for several years. He added that in fact he had been in jail since 1976, except for a period of one or two months. Thus he did not see much of the world from outside, for a very long period.

The AT leader who also wrote a book on "literary criticism" during his [illegible] since October, 197[illegible] of books on vari[illegible] during this jail [illegible] about the present p[illegible] ation, Mr. Palejo s[illegible] could not talk much

Continued on [illegible]

20.6.86 FRONTIER POST.

## Talks open in atmosphere of mutual understanding

# Palejo nominated MRD convener

From MUHAMMAD RAFIQUE

RAWALPINDI, June 19: Rasul Bakhsh Palejo, a Sindhi revolutionary and poet, released from jail after a seven-year detention on June 7, was today nominated convener of the 11-party alliance, the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD), at its opening session here today.

The secretary-general of the Awami Tehrik, with the most following among the dispossessed of Sind, will continue to be the convener in place of the representative of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, which refused to take the office after differences with the Pakistan People's Party over the latter's stand on the 1973 Constitution.

Maulana Fazalur Rehman, chief of the JUI, who is attending the MRD meeting, the first-ever held in Rawalpindi, is understood to have backed Palejo along with all the other leaders in giving him the honour in view of his sacrifices for political freedom in the country.

A spokesman of the JUI told the *The Frontier Post* that the party was satisfied with the explanations given today by the PPP representatives over the 1973 Constitution and will reconsider its decision about convenership at its central committee meeting on June 26. "We are satisfied with the way the MRD meeting has started off today," he said.

This was one single achievement of the opening morning session of the MRD. The first half of the morning session was presided over by Khawaja Khairuddin of the Pakistan Muslim League and second by Palejo. The Awami Tehrik leader will continue to chair the MRD until his successor is chosen, MRD sources said. JUI is likely to reverse its decision, informed sources said, giving a much-needed shot in the arm to the MRD.

The first session start at about 11 a.m. and broke up for lunch around 2 p.m. at the Satellite Town residence of Haji Iqbal Ahmed. A large number of staff of the intelligence agencies posted themselves outside the meeting venue.

The first item on the agenda was the quantum of provincial autonomy and the issue is expected to dominate the proceedings.

Almost all delegates to the meeting expressed satisfaction over the pleasant way the deliberations had opened. They all expressed the confidence that the MRD will remain intact to force a real change in the country. Some of them expressed the view that the issue of autonomy should not become an election issue. They said the PPP's call for observing July 5 as a day of protest was an issue with which no one could disagree.

Notable absentees were Benazir Bhutto of PPP, Mr. Abdul Wali Khan of NDP and Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan of Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP). Air Marshal Asghar Khan's Tehrik-i-Istiqlal was represented solo by Asaf Vardag.

The delegations were: NDP—Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilour, Abdul Khaliq Khan, Hakim Ali Zardari, Abid Zuberi, and Rao Mehroze Akhtar: PNP—Mr. Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo, Syed Kaswar Gardezi, B.M. Kutty, Jawaid Minto: PML—Khawaja Khairuddin, Malik Mohammad Qasim, Major Ijaz Ahmed Khan, Syed Kabir Ali Wasti and Syed Maqsood Shah: Qaumi Mahaz-e-Azadi—Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Pervez Saleh, Azhar Jamil and Khawaja Salim: PPP—Pyar Ali Allana, Rao Abdur Rashid and Aftab Sherpao: Awami Tehrik—Rasul Bakhsh Palejo, Faazil Rahu, Hussain Bakhsh Naurejo: JUI—Maulana Fazalur Rehman, Maulana Aftab Mughal and Nawaz Khan: Pakhtoonkhwa NAP—Abdur-ur-Rahim Mandokhel, Abduul Razaq Dotani and Nawabzada Hashim Khan Jogezai: PDP—Arshad Chaudhry, Rashid Qureshi, Chaudhry Mohammad Ashraf and Mushtaq Mirza: Tehrik-i-Istiqlal—Asaf Vardag: and Mazdoor Kissan Party—Fatehyab Ali Khan, Rao Suleman and Said Umar Khan.

25.6.86.

THE STAR

# Pakistan can't remain intact if injustice continues—Palejo

**STAR REPORT**

BADIN, June 25: Rasool Bux Palejo, Convener, MRD and Secretary General of the Awami Tehreek, has said that Pakistan cannot remain integrated if injustice, inequality coercion suppression, continued in the country.

The Awami Tehreek General Secretary was addressing a largely attended and impressively organised public meeting, his first after his release after a seven-year detention. He said amid cheers that to keep Pakistan intact and integrated, a policy of justice, equality, friendship and brotherhood has to be adopted.

During his seventeen-minute speech at the station ground, in front of Badin Railway Station building on which the red-coloured Awami Tehreek flag was hoisted, the master-mind behind the well-knit organisation of the Tehreek, Rasool Bux Palejo, an advocate by profession, said "No one disagrees on democracy in this country except the rulers. But we say that we want to live like free citizens in this country and not as slaves. Even slaves cannot be kept in chains."

Fazil Rahu, and Palejo, President and Secretary respectively, were taken in a procession from Hyderabad to Badin this morning. Throughout one hundred and three kilometers journey, they were welcomed at various towns and were profusely garlanded at vantage points. Badin and other districts in lower Sind are considered to be the stronghold of Awami Tehreek. Flags of PPP were also hoisted over huts in villages on the road side but Talhar was the only town where two flags of Sind Baloch Pakhtoon Front were also hoisted. In Badin a large number of flags of the Awami Tehreek, PPP and SBPF were fluttering on buildings around the public meeting ground.

It is interesting to note here that during the proceedings of the public meeting, not a single slogan of Jeay Bhutto was raised though it is inevitable in public meetings of the MRD parties in the interior Sind.

The MRD convener was very critical for what he said was the process of turning Sindhis into a minority, in their own province. "Sindhis will resist the move tooth and nail." He said that besides the issue of provincial autonomy, this issue will also be included in the agenda for the MRD meeting at Karachi.

Rasool Bux Palejo was perhaps the only political leader who, while concluding his speech, cursed the people saying that all those will die as lepers if they failed to respond to the call of Sind. He advised the people to shun their petty differences and forge unity in their ranks and to "work in complete unison to resist pressures against Sind and its people. History is replete with instances where a handful of persons have ruled because they were united and well-organised". He also exhorted his audience "Every one amongst you should think and discuss politics and issues confronting Sind. It is essential for the democratic process which the rulers do not want to flourish."

During full throated slogans "kair aihe rehber qoom jo — palejo" (who is leader of nation — Palejo), the theoretician behind the Awami Tehreek said that "Sindis do not want one grain (dana) of wheat nor one inch of land of others but what they want is that they should be the owners of what they produce. He also demanded the cancellation of allotments of agriculture lands to non-locals and distribution of land among the Sindhis.

Fazil Rahu, president of Awami Tehreek and a native of Badin, addressed the meeting before his secretary general, which was an unusual practice. During his thirtyone-minute address, tall Fazil pleaded that the haris and tillers are being exploited in this country. Giving statistics to prove his contention, he said that 'haris' and 'zamindars' earn hardly Rs five hundred per maund from sugarcane but the government earns rupees four thousand two hundred on the same quantity. He attempted to convince his audience that the governm was exploiting tillers and e ing millions of rupees in name of taxes and duties on riculture produce and products.

Refering the failure of G ernment to frame labour po during last nine years, he s that it was deliberate de aimed at exploiting labour Regarding oil production fr Badin Oil Fields he said t government was earning r lions of rupees but failed compensate the growers wh lands have been acquired exploration of oil. He lamen the policy for denying jobs locals in oil fields.

Fazil strongly opposed habilitation of stranded E Pakistanis in Sind. He also ked the people not to run af waderas. "They are deaf a dumb leaders. They are shar power with exploiters. Uni we can overcome all odds."

He said that there was a h and cry about the crime wa and dacoits these days but real dacoits are rulers and ose who are well dressed a living in airconditioned hous

The other speaker who tracted the audience was ba Zahida Perveen Jamali, eighth class student of a lo school and daughter of labourer in agriculture depa ment. She delivered a most promptu speech in eloqu style. She won cheers peatedly and Palejo adorn an Ajrak on her.



Burial Ceremony



Women shouldered his coffin



Kalavanti Raja (Compiler of Book)



Roshni Raja and Kalavanti Raja



Dr. Najeebullah (Afghanistan)



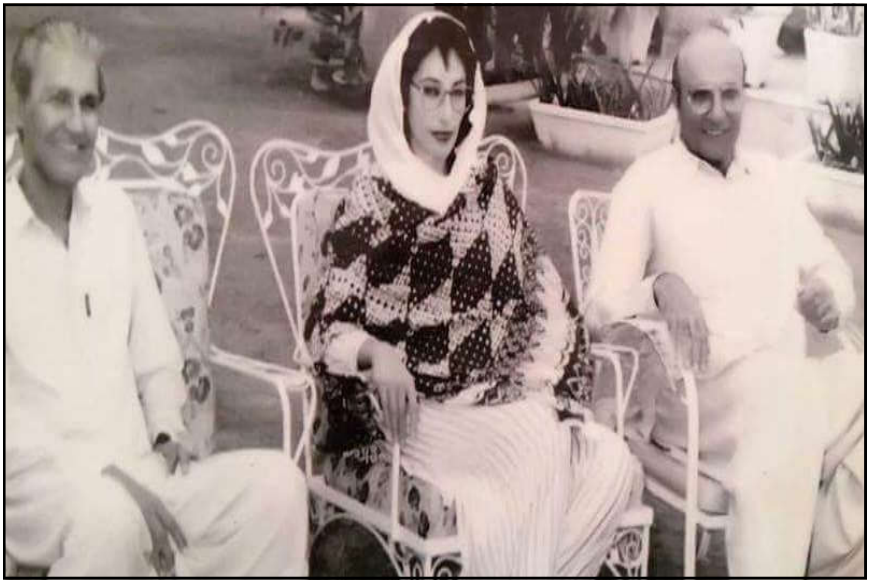
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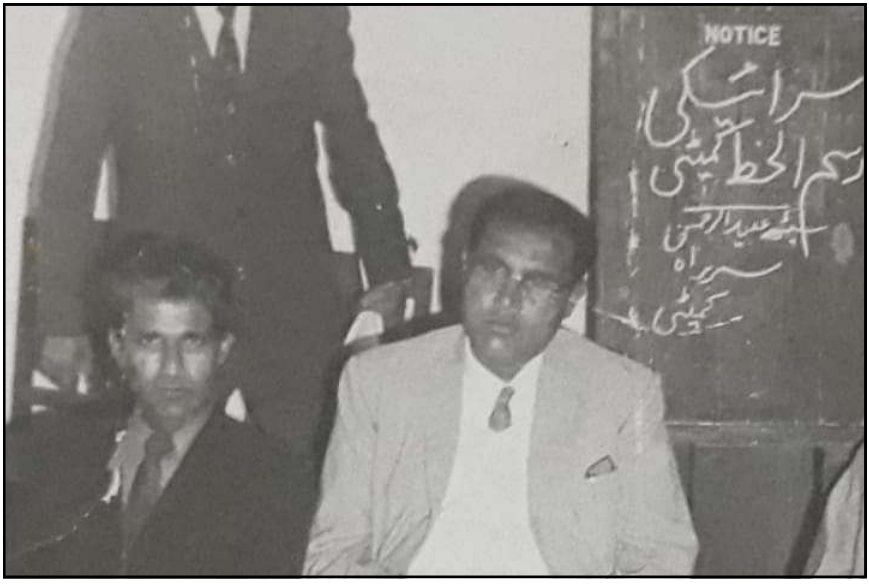
With G. M. Syed



With Z. A. Bhutto



Benazir Bhutto and Fazil Rahu




With Seth Abdul Rahman



Wali Khan, Nawab zada Nasurullah Khan and Fazul Rahman



Dr. Mubashir, Sagdar Mir, Sardar Shauqat,
I. A Rahman, & Ahmad Bashir.




Shaikh Ayaz and Husamuddin Rashidi



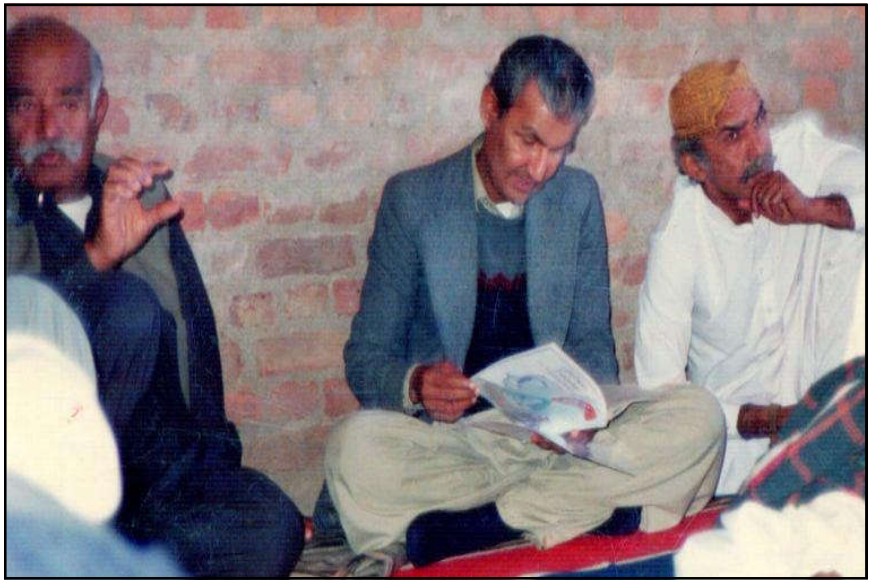
Ibrahim Joyo and Shaikh Ayaz



Amar Jaleel, Sahar Imdad & Imdad Hussaini



Keerat Babani, Virchoo Vidyarathi and Zafar Ujjan



Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah and Shah Nawaz Jonejo




Mustafa Qureshi and Jiji Zarina Baloch



Utam, Hari Motvani, Kirshan Rahi & Kirat Babani




With Chief Justice Rana Bhagwan Das



Comrade Sobho Giyanchandani



Dr. Najam Abbasi



Ustad Bukhari




Ahmad Faraz