

## PRACTICAL POLITCS FOR PAKISTAN

Safdar Hasan Siddiqi  
(16 Aug 2004)

The first positive visage was given to democratic politics in this subcontinent when practical steps were taken by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the greatest leader of this part of the world, to establish Pakistan, a country of great expectations, through a thoroughly democratic process.

Before taking the final step the Quaid articulated fully, and in clear terms, the *raison de tre* of Pakistan. It was to build in this separate land a society that would be commensurate with their articles of faith as Muslims, that we were progressive and could be instrumental in setting up a modern welfare state which would give equal rights, economic justice and full participation in State affairs to all its inhabitants irrespective of caste, creed, religion and gender.

This could not have been achieved in the pre-partition India that was charged with communal hatred and religious bigotry, based on the worst kind of a caste-system that gave a vast majority of their own fellow-religionists, the Hindus, the worst form of subjugation. The Muslims, in this setting, could not give full play to their inherent capabilities as upholders of a universal ideology based on peace and love for the whole of mankind. Jinnah led the Muslims of India for enabling them to venture upon this much-needed human experiment.

It should be kept in mind that the religious elite, which had built itself on sectarianism and bigotry, had opposed this relevant move of the Quaid, tooth and nail, but after Pakistan came into being they, all of a sudden, became the standard-bearers of Islam. Since then, they have been exploiting religion for their political and class interests. They have all along worked for the establishment and the vested interests of the upper classes, and gone against the interests of the people of the middle and lower classes. There is nothing astonishing

about this act of theirs because that is the historical role they have been playing ever since the days of Moses, wherein *Fir'on, Qaroon and Ham'an* represented the absolute dictator, the filthy rich (capitalists) and the crafty religious manipulator (religious elite) respectively.

The bases for politics in Pakistan were clearly laid down by Jinnah in his various speeches, especially in his landmark presidential address after being elected as the first President of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August 1947 in which he clearly outlined the ideal and concept of Pakistan. He advised Pakistanis to work together " in a spirit that any one of you, no matter what community he belongs to, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of the State with equal rights, privileges and obligations. You may belong to any religion, cast or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State.... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State."

In his Eid Day Message on 13 November 1939 he had already pointed out that " no injunction is considered by our Holy Prophet (PBUH) more important and more divinely binding than the devout but supreme realization of our duty of love and toleration towards all other human beings."

During an address to the Bar Association of Karachi on 25 January 1948 he stressed, "Islamic principles today are as applicable to life as they were 1,300 years ago... Islam and its idealism have taught democracy. Islam has taught equality, justice and fairplay.

About Prophet Muhammad Jinnah said on 25 January 1948 "The Prophet was a great teacher. He was a great lawgiver. He was a great statesman and he was a great sovereign who ruled." He said that he was the greatest man that the world had ever seen. 'Thirteen hundred years ago he laid the foundation of democracy.'

On the same day he said, "Islam is not only a set of rituals, traditions and spiritual doctrines. Islam is also a code for every Muslim, which

regulates his life and his conduct in even politics and economics and the like. It is based on the highest principles of honour, integrity, fairplay and justice for all."

About good governance, he said on 24 October 1947 "Let us mobilize all our reserves in a systematic and organized way and tackle the grave issues that confront us with grim determination and discipline worthy of a great nation."

About education policy, he said on 27 November 1947 "The importance of education and the right type of education cannot be overemphasized. Under foreign rule for over a century,... sufficient attention has not been paid to the education of our people, and if we are to make any real, speedy and substantial progress we must earnestly tackle this question and bring our educational policy and programme on the lines suited to the genius of our people, consonant with our history and culture, and having regard to the modern conditions and vast developments that have taken place all over the world.

We have to build up the character of our future generations which means highest sense of honour, integrity, selfless service to the nation, and sense of responsibility, and we have to see that they are fully qualified or equipped to play their part in the various branches of economic life in a manner which will do honour to Pakistan.

He said in 22 December 1947 "Self-advancement, greed and lust for power sway the conduct of individuals as that of nations. If we are to build a safer, cleaner and happier world let us start with the individual. If you young people learn to befriend all, to help other people at all times, subordinate personal interest to the welfare of others, eschew violence of thought, word and action, I am sanguine that the attainment of universal brotherhood is possible and within our reach.

About economic development, he said on 1 July 1948 "The economic system of the West has created almost insoluble problems for humanity and to many of us it appears that only a miracle can save it

from disaster which is now facing the world. It has failed to justice between man and man and to eradicate friction from the international field. On the contrary, it was largely responsible for the two world wars in the last half-century. The Western World, inspite of its advantage of mechanization and industrial efficiency is today in a worse mess than ever before I history. The adoption of western economic theory and practice will not help us in achieving our goal of creating a happy and contented people. We must work our destiny in our own way and present to the world an economic system based on true Islamic concept of equality of manhood and social justice. We will thereby fulfil be fulfilling our mission as Muslims and giving to humanity the message of peace which alone can save it and secure the welfare, happiness and prosperity of mankind.

Keeping in view these parameters of the true concept of democracy, very ably determined by Jinnah, and abstaining from misinterpreting it, we now move forward to laying down the practical steps to achieve these ideals. Even before we venture to determine these steps it would be proper to have a deep look at the ground realities that surround us today.

### **Ground Realities**

The ground realities being faced by us presently are:

- Pakistan is passing through the gravest situation politically, socially and economically, and that its very security is imperiled.
- Pakistan's polity has become hostage to Machiavellian politics with its armoury of deceit, intrigue, opportunism, corruption and marked absence of moral content.
- Democracy and good governance have retreated, and the sovereignty of the people in state affairs had been thoroughly undermined., and law and order has been completely flawed.

In view of the above facts, it has now become imperative that the people of Pakistan organize themselves at the grassroots level, and assert themselves to get rid of all sorts if injustice and inequality at

the national level We have been talking a lot about politics and democracy on the ideological and conceptual plane and concentrating on the visionary aspects of politics, but have sadly neglected its practical aspect which relates to commitment of the individual and the nation to a cause. We have all along avoided committing ourselves practically to politics, the all-important aspect of life that goes to change the system itself. We have failed to do our duty in this respect. It is time we look sincerely and honestly into this aspect of politics and commit ourselves, one way or the other.

### **Plan of Action**

Political parties and their workers, conscientious intellectuals and social activists must pledge to work together, sincerely and honestly, to secure their authority and establish a functional democracy in the country. For this purpose the following actions will have to be taken:

- \* Make yourself, and your political party, trustworthy amongst the people by serving them, and create your own Constituency for elections.
- \* Create a mechanism for bringing about a positive change in the present system of governance and working of the political parties.
- \* Approach the peasants and workers organizations and social organizations for close co-ordination.
- \* Approach leaders of public opinion and intellectuals close cooperation.
- \* Approach teachers, students and women organizations.
- \* Approach Local Bodies Nazims and Counselors.
- \* Raise leaders from the lower and middle classes.
- \* Make out a list of people's problems directly affecting them at the local level, and do the best to help them out. Be people-friendly and helpful in solving their problems.
- \* Make contacts with the relevant police officials and the local administration for obtaining their assistance in solving people's problems.

- \* Disallow the religious elite from monopolizing interpretation of Islam and the Qur'an, and using these for political and sectional purposes.
- \* Make yourself, and your political party, trustworthy amongst the people by serving them, and create your own Constituency for elections.
- \* Prepare proposals for electoral reforms for ensuring free and fair future elections.
- \* Frame proposals for improvement of the present Local Bodies system, and prepare for participation in the coming local bodies elections.
- \* Arrange classes for political education and training of the masses in democracy.
- \* Devise work-plan for strengthening and insulating the political process against all kinds of intrusion by the vested interests.
- \* Give a new direction to politics of the future by developing the concept of collective leadership, and by giving equal status to the members and leaders of a political party.
- \* Agitate for utilization of the means of production by all instead of the few. Press for giving agricultural land to landless tenant families
- \* Raise voice for bringing down electricity, water and gas rates
- Agitate for reducing Property Tax rates, and receiving Income Tax through direct taxation instead of indirect taxation.
- Agitate for lowering the excessive fees charged, and sub-standard education imparted, by private educational institutions

16 August 2004