

Rejoinder

An Analysis of Jeay Sindh Tahreek; What is the Reality

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Pakistan Perspectives is respected and reputed journal which enriches us with intellectual analysis of historical, cultural and political matters and movements. But its Volume 14, Number 1 (January – June 2009) carries an article which hardly matches the standard and status of this periodical. ‘An Analysis of Jeay Sindh Tahreek as an Ethno Nationalist Movement of Pakistan’ by Mr. Amir Ali Chandio is less an analysis and more a propaganda pamphlet devoid of basic and essential information about Jeay Sindh Tahreek and replete with factual errors and distorted version. For example he writes on page 95 that ‘Jeay Sindh Tahreek is a nationalist and secessionist party led by G.M. Sayed. It was formed in 1972.’ The fact is that Jeay Sindh Tahreek is neither a party nor it has any specific date of formation. Rathar it is a name Sindh’s nationalist movement acquired through its evolutionary process and it includes different political, students, women, labour and other organizations and individuals. Initially it was a poem by peasant nationalist leader, comrade Hyder Bux Jatoti, written during the One-Unit era carrying the words ‘Jeay Sindh’ and portraying the sentiments of love and affection for motherland. Immediately it became a popular slogan and with the passage of time acquired the position of a symbol of Sindh’s nationalist movement which still continues. The party G.M. Sayed funded in 1972 was Jeay Sindh Mahaz.

The whole article has been made hostage to the comparison of two persons, J.M. Sayed and Z.A. Bhutto. And that also on a pre-conceived notion of Z.A. Bhutto being a democratic, progressive and anti-establishment leader and G.M. Sayed an anti democratic, reactionary and pro-establishment person. The write-up is an unsuccessful attempt to prove this notion. Actually Mr. Amir Ali Chandio himself had remained associated with Sindhi nationalist movement but had worked against the

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ideology and politics of G.M. Sayed. So he has used this opportunity to give vent to his personal opinion, anger and grudge about G.M.Sayed.

Instead of giving an objective analysis (as required by the subject) the writer has issued *fatwas* (edicts). For example 'He mentioned secularism and democracy in his party program to seek help from India'¹ (p.99), or 'Bhutto countered him wisely' (p.99), or that 'the people of Sindh as such rejected the ideas of G.M. Sayed'. This is a subjective thinking of the writer, 180 degrees opposed to the objective conditions. The well known ideas of G.M.Sayed are: (i) state should have no religion; (ii) Pakistan is not a nation but a multinational country; (iii) Sindh should be sovereign with absolute right and² total control over its resources; and (iv) friendship with neighbours and opposition to imperial hegemony. On the other hand Z.A. Bhutto tried to: (i) make Pakistan a Islamic state; (ii) create a (new) Pakistani nation; (iii) make war with neighbours and friendship with the friends of imperialism. What is the result? (i) Pakistan is paying heavy price for making Islam the state religion; (ii) despite all the state efforts, Sindhi society remains secular, (iii) voices of historical and cultural notions are much louder and stronger than Pakistani nation; (iv) in Sindh People's Party is forced to follow the politics of nationalism, and (v) everyone is recognizing the efficacy of the friendship with neighbours. It shows that people of Sindh have totally accepted the ideas of G.M.Sayed and it demonstrates that the policies of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto have failed and proved disastrous, not only for Sindh but Pakistani society and state as well and also for the entire region.

Writer's prejudiced, premeditated and hollow approach is clear from the fact that in an article of 18 pages, he has even failed to mention the manifesto of Jeay Sindh Mahaz / Jeay Sindh Tahreek. Neither he has given historical/social background of Sindh's nationalist movement nor discussed the political situation of the period from late 1960 and early 1970 when Jeay Sindh Mahaz was formed particularly the emergence of Bangladesh which was the single most influential factor that led G.M. Sayed to believe that the state of Pakistan had crossed all the limits of its hegemonic character and undemocratic and inhuman behavior, hence the struggle for 'political, economic and cultural freedom of Sindh' which in fact was the basic point of JSM'S political program and struggle.

¹ How can he say this, what proof he has. One reserves the right to sue him for character assassination

² The writer himself concedes (p.105) that 'the politics of Peoples Party Sindh Chapter was also nationalistic, PPP demanded provincial autonomy and struggled for the rights of Sindh'.

The article is also devoid of any description of organizational formation, political orientation and class character of Jeay Sindh movement. Here once again the professor has issued only *fatwas* saying that ‘actually he was not a socialist and was an opponent of class struggle’ (p.99) and ‘The opposition of MRD by G.M. Sayed went in the interest of feudal and waderas’ (p.106) or ‘He was against class struggle because Sayed himself also belonged to feudal class’. Nothing more could be far from truth and contradictory to the reality. Immediately after the creation of Pakistan, G.M. Sayed was the moving force behind the creation of Pakistan Peoples Organization in 1948. One of the points of its manifesto suggests that ‘Pakistan should be envisaged as a ‘Federation of Fully Autonomous Socialist – Republics’ In his welcome address Sayed said ‘socialism is the only type of economy which can ensure full justice for the underdogs and galvanize the productive force of our state for a swift and planned industrialization on our backward people. Our entire national wealth is today concentrated in the hands of a few Nawabs, Jagirdars and new Capitalists whose only incentive for help to the state is the lure of lucre and office’. Over all G.M.Sayed’s politics has been anti-feudal, anti-Pir and Mir of which history books are replete with and to make mention of all that would require another article. Even before Pakistan, historians describe, the confrontation between M.A. Jinnah and G.M. Sayed was a conflict between the politics of feudals and that of middle class. Most important period that Amir Ali Chandio discuss in this contact is since the formation of JSM/JST. The party (Jeay Sindh Mahaz) and whole of the movement (Jeay Sindh Tahreek) comprised of not even the middle class but lower middle and working class people. Not a single person from the feudal class was associated with Sayed’s struggle, not even from his own family. One person Dr. Hamida Khuhro, at one stage, tried to enter the movement but soon found the environment inconducive for her type of politics and left.

On the other hand Z.A. Bhutto himself was many times bigger landlord numberwise and much more feudal characterwise and People’s Party was (and still is) the biggest conglomeration of feudals in Pakistan and one of the biggest in the world. The few middle class people who were with Peoples Party at its inception like J.A Rahim, Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Mir Rasool Bux Talpur, Hanif Ramay, Mukhtar Rana were thrown out unceremoniously once Mr. Bhutto came to power and were replaced with more feudals like Tiwanas, Daultanas and Wattoos. And the much trumpeted ‘Movement for Restoration of Democracy’ was initiated, planned managed and led by the feudals of Sindh (though people of Sindh participated in large numbers but they were just sufferers). Sindh’s biggest (perhaps world’s) feudal, Ghulam Mustafa

Jatoi, was the leader of MRD who, it is a known fact, after returning from America called the feudal fraternity and revealed before them the 'fruits' of the intended movement. It is false that G.M.Sayed opposed MRD. It is, however, true that he did not support it either and his argument was that 'MRD leaders don't want to change the system, they only vie for the chair'. Subsequent events vindicated him as after coming to power at the crest of the MRD, PPP leaders continued with General Zia's framework 'scrupulously'. They did not change, they did not even try to change, any of the 'draconian laws' enacted by martial law regime. They colluded with General Zia's team (Ghulam Ishaque Khan, Sahibzada Yaqub & Co) and confronted the colleagues of MRD (like Nawabzada Nasrullah) to defeat the aims and objectives of the so eulogized MRD. So much so that PPP leader, Benazir Bhutto, conferred the democracy award not on the people of Sindh whose blood was shed and who suffered unprecedented cruelties, but on the army, the perpetrators of these cruelties.

And now something about the reality and trueness or otherwise of the premise that Bhutto was a democracy loving person and Sayed an antidemocrat on which professor Chandio has built his whole story. Again we quote from the manifesto of Pakistan People's organization where-in it was said that 'Pakistan should be a democratic people's state'. Not only were these words but since then Sayed's life was a continuous confrontation with all dictators (military as well as civilians) of Pakistan and suffered incarceration at the hands of all of them. Ironically the longest period, of more than nine years, was under General Zia's rule. More ironic is the fact that General Zia changed every policy and undid every act of Bhutto government but continued the imprisonment of G.M.Sayed saying that he 'had inherited this from the previous government'. It shows how-so-much opposed Bhutto and Zia might have been to each other, they had unanimity in thought and action viz-a-viz G.M.Sayed. And it was so because both men were supporters of the same system to which G.M. Sayed was deadily opposed under which Sindh's separate national identity was declined and Sindh was being treated like a colony. And the professor writer perhaps does not know that in a multinational country, like Pakistan, national question is the biggest question of democracy.

On the other side Zulfikar Ali Bhutto started his political career with the help of the first martial law by joining the government of Iskandar Mirza. When after 20 days General Ayub Khan dethroned Iskandar Mirza, Mr. Bhutto abandoned the sinking ship of Mirza and jumped into the bandwagon of Ayub Khan. It is an interesting coincidence of history (or something else) that the period (from 1958 to

1960) that Mr. Bhutto was Ayub Khan's minister, G.M. Sayed remained in jail. General Ayub was replaced by another General, Yahya Khan, through second martial law and Z.A. Bhutto served in his government also. And that also at a very critical and crucial time. After the 1970 elections in which Awami League received majority, the martial law regime instead of handing over power to that party unleashed a brutal military operation to crush the will of Bengali people. Mr. Bhutto not only supported the operation by saying that 'thanks God Pakistan has been saved' but went to the United Nations as foreign minister and with all his 'abilities and efficiencies' fought the case of the military government.

When, as a result of this 'Save Pakistan operation', East Pakistan became Bangladesh, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had the unique feat (in the annals of democracy) of becoming a civilian chief Martial Law Administrator. As the 'democratic' ruler of 'new Pakistan' he, in collusion with security establishment, toppled the democratically elected government of Balochistan, banned National Awami Party, put its leaders in prison and launched a military operation (on the pattern of Bengal) which lasted until his government lasted. Not being content at this, he achieved another unprecedented and unparalleled milestone in the democratic history of the world. i.e. forming the government in Balochistan of his own Peoples Party despite the fact that not a single member of his party was elected to that assembly.

Another criterion of a quality analytical article would be the selection of the books cited from the persons referred to. Mr. Ameer Ali Chandio has mostly quoted the people who are either non-entities as far as Sindh's nationalist movement is concerned or the sworn political opponents of G.M. Sayed. The first category includes people like Ayesha Jalal, Tahir Amin, Korjo, Teesta Ghosh, Shahzad Manzar, and Babar Ali who have no record of any research on Jeay Sindh Movement and have based their analysis, or rather pronouncements, on stories or the propaganda made by the Peoples Party or the state of Pakistan, both proven enemies of G.M. Sayed and the nationalist movement. For example Tahir Amin says (pp.97-8) that 'The program of Jeay Sindh Mahaz was to get maximum provincial autonomy for the federating units...'. It is wrong and without substance as 'maximum provincial autonomy has never been the program of Jeay Sindh Mahaz. Mahaz's program from its founding day was 'political, cultural and economic freedom of Sindh'.

Similarly Teesta Ghosh has just repeated the propaganda propelled in the 'pamphlets' of Peoples Party when she says 'Zia encouraged the rise of ethno-nationalists...' and 'Zia also courted G.M.

Sayed, the leader of Sindhi nationalist party Jeay Sindh Mahaz an inapplicable enemy of the PPP (p.104-5)'. These assertions are hanging in the air without any historical support. Sindh's nationalist aspirations made very forceful appearance during the initial days of Pakistan's existence and if any one 'encouraged' it, it was Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah when he snatched Karachi from Sindh and Amir Ali Chandio and Teesta Ghosh must know that people from Mr. Jinnah's own party, the Muslim League and its students wing were very much active in the struggle to save Karachi. Then there is a very important and strong phase of Sindhi nationalism in the shape of anti-One Unit movement which engulfed the entire Sindhi spectrum. This in fact was the first complete and comprehensive manifestation of the modern Sindhi nationalism which brought into into fold Sindhis from all walks of life including women and children except, of course Z.A. Bhutto. Also there is very concerted and continuous language movement and agitation against 1973 constitution and influx of outsiders particularly Biharies during Mr. Bhutto's rule.

Teesta Ghosh can not produce any evidence how G.M. Sayed was courted by Zia. As has been explained earlier that Sayed served the longest period of his incarcerated life under Zia-ul-Haq which was also the longest for anyone under Zia's martial law. When PPP leader Benazir Bhutto was enjoying the freedoms and cool weather of Europe, G.M. Sayed was experiencing the rigorous of house arrest in the heat of his native village Sann without electricity. B.B. was allowed by General Zia to lead big rallies against his government but Sayed and his party were denied such facilities. Workers of Jeay Sindh Mahaz used to travel long distances on feet, mostly in the darkness of night, to hide from the hounding agencies who would, some times, pick the persons hosting the night 'kachehry'. Many workers of Jeay Sindh Movement had undergone sentences of jail and lashes and some had to even face the bullets at the hands of the military men. The then Chairman Abdul Wahid Areesar was the first political leader to be flogged. Mr. Chandio himself is witness to all these happenings.

The second category (of political opponents) referred in the article consists of people like Jam Saqi, Qadir Magsi, Ghafoor Ahmed and Idrees Chandio. Their political (and even personal) hostility towards G.M. Sayed is well known and does not need much explanation. So much so that for describing the role of 'nationalists/secessionists' the professor chose none other but Benazir Bhutto, a staunch centralist and pro-Punjab politician and a proven political foe of G.M. Sayed. Another example of biased and history-ignorant attitude is the assertion that in 1970 elections G.M. Sayed 'made an election alliance with Mumtaz

Daultana and Mohammad Ayub Khuhro both had strongly supported One Unit (p.97)'. It is totally wrong and incorrect. It is the record of school level history that in the 1970 elections G.M. Sayed's party Sindh Muttahida Mahaz had made alliance with Sheikh Mujib-led Awami League having the manifesto of maximum autonomy based on the well known six points while Mumtaz Daultana and Mohammad Ayub Khuhro contested these elections from the platform of Muslim League Council with the program of strong centre. As far as One Unit is concerned, it is correct that Mumtaz Daultana and Muhammad Ayub Khuhro had strongly supported the scheme but it is also a fact that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto himself was strong supporter of One Unit. Out of Ayub Khan's government, and at the peak of anti-One Unit movement, Mr. Bhutto went to Sindh University and at the insistence of students replied that 'by demanding the break-up of One Unit, he can not afford to antagonise Punjab'. Also he was the last political leader, even after Daultana and Khuhro, to demand the break-up of One Unit just 48 hours before it was actually announced.

The learned professor has not bothered to interview/quote single reputed/recognized historian, intellectual or scholar with any research or analytical work on political, cultural, social economic history of Sindh. He has quoted my interview also out of context.

Neither Amir Ali Chandio nor any of his 'resource persons' can give a single example where G.M. Sayed had supported any of Zia regime's policies. In fact he (Sayed) remained on opponent of his policy of Islamization while PP and its leader, Benazir Bhutto, supported and continued with the Islamist and jingoistic agenda of General Zia.

At many a place Sayed is categorized as an anti-democracy and anti-Sindh person just because he 'opposed' PPP or Benazir Bhutto (as on pp.109-10). It is also on Benazir Bhutto's credit that when army Chief Pervez Musharraf, after overthrowing the elected Government of Nawaz Sharif, announced his seven point 'manifesto' the PPP leader wasted no time in claiming it as her own and offering her services to promote the same internationally.

Whereas G.M. Syed's name has become a benchmark for Sindhi nationalism, PPP has never recognized Sindhis as a separate nation, what to talk about national rights. On the contrary this party has worked in tandem with the establishment to usurp the rights of nations: Bengalis and Balochs through the force of gun, Sindhis through 'constitutional' means. Sindh's natural resources and means of income were put in the control of central government and gates for unlimited, unhindered and unregulated influx of outsiders into Sindh, were opened. Another 'crime' attributed to Sayed is that he 'supported MQM' (p.110). It is a dishonest

description. The fact is that MQM chief, Altaf Hussain, for some time, supported G.M. Sayed and came to meet him, not the otherwise.

To sum up the things, one can easily say that the article 'An analysis of Jeay Sindh Tahreek as an Ethno Nationalist Movement of Pakistan' is anything but an analysis of Sindh's nationalist movement. It is a character assassination campaign against a person of highest-character who did so much and suffered so long for the ideals of freedom, democracy, secularism, peace and brotherhood.

In the end I feel obliged to give very brief but correct version of Jeay Sindh Movement. Motto of G.M. Sayed's life was freedom, peaceful co-existence and progress of humankind. To play proper role in the universal struggle for the achievement of these goals, he wanted a sovereign Sindh. First expression of such intent was his subscription to the 1940 Lahore resolution. He continued his struggle in Pakistan for a quarter of century.

In 1972, after the brutal and savage response of Pakistani state to the expression of freewill by the majority Bengali people Sayed lost all hope of getting a sovereign Sindh and realized the futility of his efforts to change the 'oppressive, discriminatory, dictatorial and colonial character of the state'. In this background, on 18 June 1972, he called a gathering of his supporters and sympathizers where-in Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (from whose platform G.M. Sayed had contested 1970 elections) was changed to Jeay Sindh Mahaz. 'Political, cultural and economic freedom of Sindh' was declared as the goal of new party and 'national secularism, socialism and democracy' were made the guiding principles of its struggle. Later on 'abolition of feudalism' was made the part of JSM's manifesto.

Since then different groups have defected and dissociated from JSM and formed their separate parties, less on ideological basis and more on the question of strategies, colour and character of these groups. Classwise Jeay Sindh Movement consists mainly of people from lower middle class with not a single feudal/*wadera* and very few middle class people in its folds.