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Pakistan

Thousands of peasants and workers gather in a show of political strength by the Awami Workers Party

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Thousands of peasants and workers from across Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa gathered at the Railway Ground in Mardan in a major show of political strength by the left-wing Awami Workers Party, and demanded that the KP government revoke amendments planned in the provincial tenancy act, and slammed the increasingly common practice of grabbing of agricultural lands by military-run housing schemes.

Held at the conclusion of its second regular Federal Committee meeting, the ‘Kissan-Kashtkar’ Conference was an opportunity for the entire party leadership to address the majority of the party membership in KP, as well as representatives of all provincial committees. President Abid Hasan Minto, chairman Fanoos Gujjar, general secretary Farooq Tariq, Akhtar Hussain, Farzana Bari, Younis Raho, Aasim Sajjad, Bakhshal Thalho, Yusuf Masti Khan and Shahab Khattak were prominent amongst the speakers.

Peasants and workers traveled from Buner, Swat, Dir, Charsadda, Swabi and Mardan to participate in the conference, the prominent features of which included the presence of hundreds of women. Party activists from Toba Tek Singh, Lahore, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi also participated. Allied organizations such as Anjuman Mazarain Punjab (AMP) and the Pakhtunkhwa Ulusi Tehrik were also in attendance.

Aside from motivational speeches there were numerous cultural performances, by artists affiliated with the party in both KP and Punjab.

The party leadership also used the occasion to announce plans to participate in the upcoming local body elections in all provinces, and to bring to the fore a new brand of revolutionary politics in which money and influence did not determine electoral outcomes.

They said that Pakistan’s present political system is little more than a procedural democracy, and in actuality there is virtually no possibility for the poor and downtrodden to exercise political voice in such a system. They slammed the so-called ‘revolutionaries’ and champions of ‘change’ such as the PTI which itself is running the KP government and is no different in qualitative terms to the other bourgeois parties that it claims to be opposing.

In this regard, the planned amendments to the KP tenancy act was heavily criticized for completely taking away the limited rights that landless farmers actually possess. More generally, the party leadership also outlined its overall program for comprehensive transformation of the agrarian sector, emphasizing widespread land reforms and abolition of corporate farming and other pro-capitalist policies designed to benefit multinational corporation and foreigners like Arab Sheikhs.