THE COST OF FATWA POLITICS

In the death of the Polish minister and three pakistanis the nation has received its first bill for the cost of Fatwa politics. For nearly a year, hysterical attempts have been made to hammer the evils of Socialism and Communism into our consciousness. Such a fact is a legitimate part of politics in any country. But when socialism is equated with sin and the struggle against it identified with a jehad, fanaticism and hate must find an outlet. In all societies there will be those of unstable emotions who will take such fulminations to heart and identify Socialists as the devil incarnate. It should therefore not occasion too much surprise if such emotions finally run riot at the honouring of a full-blooded, Communist and head of a Communist state, where Communism is actually practised as opposed to merely being talked about as in Pakistan. To execute such a person would not be seen as an crime but as a holy act and its perpetrator would see himself as a mujahid rather than a criminal.

It is not for us to usurp the functions of the court of inquiry. But in the absence of fuller terms of reference it is mandatory on us to draw the attention of this enquiry to some of the more basic issues which demand attention.

The public assassination must rest heavy on the nation's conscience. In the contemporary world assassinations have been domestic affairs. We are almost unique in directing the assassin's blade to a foreign dignitary who was our guest. The fact that only sheer chance prevented the incident from becoming a crime on a head of state does not mitigate our concern. We can therefore not afford to bury the truth in the grave with the assassin as we did with the Liaquat assassination. We have to give satisfaction of the world community of our sense of justice if we are to regain their respect and confidence. We can therefore bardly treat the incident as a mere case of administrative incompetence or deficient security which appears to have been bad enough. When the assassin wears the insignia of a political party, shouts anti-communist slogans, claims the status of a mujahid and is known for his political affiliations and activities we must bare the political milieu within which such a deed could occur. Some of the issues which merit scrutiny are indicated by us.

1. Was Feroze Abdullah a member of the Jamaat-e-Islam?
2. Was he wearing an insignia of the party at the time of the assassination?
3. Did he shout slogans when he was bearing down on the victims and what were these?
4. Did he continue to shout slogans after his detention?
5. Was it true that he carried party literature on his person?
6. Was he an active worker for the Jamaat-e-Islam? If so, what are did he work in and who were his superiors within the Party?
7. What were his precise movements and contacts in the days before the deed?
8. Had he been involved in other incidents of a violent nature.
9. Was he involved in the assault by Pro-Jamaat PIA workers on Kaneez Fatima, a labour leader, at Karachi airport? Was any disciplinary action taken by PIAC, against those involved in the incident?
10. What were the views and affiliations of the actual driver of the van, who so conveniently vacated his charge?
11. Were there other PIAC operatives of similar views involved in the incident or did Abdullah act alone?
12. Why was it necessary to employ Polish emigres in the Catering Section of PIA?
13. Did the emigres have strong anti-communist views?
14. Did they have any know dealings with Feroze Abdullah and those of his persuasion? Did the Poles have any special antipathy to the Polish President or any member of his mission?

From the specific to the general the following areas bear investigation.

15. What was the precise nature of relations between the PIA management and the Pro-Jamaat Unions?
16. Were PIA workers actively involved in Jamaat politics?
17. Was there a political motive behind the crime?
18. 18. Was any political party Involved in the planning of this crime?
19. Were any foreign governments or agencies involved?
20. Was the Polish President the intended victim?
21. Was there an intended victim?
22. If there was a victim why was this time, place and person chosen?
23. Was this a symbolic act or was there a specific antipathy to the intended victim?
24. Was there any intention of damaging Pakistan's relations with Poland and the Socialist World?
25. Is this likely to be the first of further such assassinations against Socialist visitors?
26. Is there any threat to Pakistanis of Socialist persuasion?
27. Is this part of an attempt to create chaos within the country with a view to frustrating elections?
28. Were any people in the administration directly or indirectly involved in the incident?


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Many more questions will occur to the enquiry commission as they will to the public. It is therefore as well that the enquiry public. It is hoped that it will summon a wide cross section of the public in a position to fill in the political background to the incident and that its findings be published. It may never be possible to erase this dark stain on our consciousness as a nation. But we can expiate ourselves before the international community by so exposing the cancer which gave birth to this deed that the people of Pakistan can once and for all excise it from the nation's body politic.

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