

THE EVOLUTION OF LEFTIST POLITICS IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to explore the history of the evolution of leftist politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, which underwent a long process of transformation. Beginning with anti-colonial sentiments of opposing the British imperialism in undivided India, the revolutionary struggle fused with Pan-Islamism during the Khilafat movement and finally came into direct contact with Bolshevik ideology at the end of Hijra (travel) to Afghanistan and beyond. It is important to note that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and recently merged districts of former FATA had played an important role in the espionage and export of communist ideology into British India. It is also worth mentioning that Communist Party of India (CPI) viewed the right of self-determination as genuine right of the Muslim and supported the establishment of Pakistan by many ways. The leadership of CPI urged communists to support Muslim League (ML) candidates in 1946 General Elections which is considered the basis of Pakistan movement and many of them like Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din have joined ML. It is therefore interesting to investigate the evolution and development of leftist politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, so that to locate the social and political history of its gradual developments.

Keywords: Pan-Islamism, revolutionary, anti-colonial, communist, nationalist, NWFP, progressive

INTRODUCTION

The history of the evolution of leftist politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (the former N.W.F.P) may be seen as a history in between the two conspiracy cases: the Peshawar Conspiracy Cases of the 1920s, and the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case of 1951. The communist leadership of first and second layer, faced severe repression during this phase. The recently merged Districts of the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), have historically played a significant role in more immediate anti-colonial revolutionary and agrarian movements in the mainstream leftist movement across the undivided India (Jan, 2017). (Caron & Dasgupta, 2016), have described, pre-existing trends of resistance of the early anti-colonial revolutionaries in NWFP against the British empire at the closing of the nineteenth century already contained a strong radical egalitarian sentiment which drives for wholesale sociopolitical reforms. And they were linked to other areas like Bengal that also had a prevalence of Communist activities in later part of the history. In this way, preexisting political cultures, especially those related to Islam, predisposed these areas to adopting Anarchist, Socialist, and Communist ideals later.

The social reform drives of Haji Sahib of Turangzai, who was associated with Deoband school of thought, increased this fusion, and it was further reinforced by Marxist-Leninist and Communist politics, soon after the Communist revolution of October 1917 in Russia, which was followed by migration of key activists to the USSR. By that point, the Indian Communists, with many in their leadership from the NWFP, fully conceived to follow the pattern of Russian revolution, while waging anti-imperial war. They believed that the inequalities within agrarian conditions and the question of nationalities in India were more or less the same as in Tsarist Russia. Therefore, both the Russian Revolution and the Tribal borderland of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had profound impacts on the development of Pakistani left in specific and on South Asian left in general.

Broadly, this history is divided in two phases; 1) Pre-Partition phase and 2) post-partition phase. The first phase focuses on the earlier historical development of left-wing radical politics under British colonial rule till Pakistan's independence in August 14, 1947, which covers the events after 1849 when NWFP was annexed with British Punjab. The militant resistance begun in Northwestern India especially in NWFP. The second phase describes critically the politics of left-wing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under post-colonial Pakistan from 1947 to 1991, with special focus on the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP), National Awami Party (NAP), and on the Mazdoor-Kisan Party (MKP).

Historical Background of the Leftist Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Soon after the decline of Moghul empire, these Northwestern area and borderland was controlled by the Sikh army around 1832. The anti-Sikh *Mujahideen* (of the reformist Syed Ahmad Shaheed and his followers) struggled to attain power. It was until 1849 that British imperial army defeated the Sikh Empire's forces in the Second Anglo-Sikh war, and annexed these areas with the province of Punjab (Islam, 2015). These areas were separated from Punjab in 1901 and constituted a separate Chief Commissioner Province, named as North-West Frontier Province (NWFP)¹ with adjoining Tribal areas, which were governed by Frontier Crimes Regulation, FCR (Williams, 2005). In this context, the Tribal areas had generally served as a buffer zone between Afghanistan and British India throughout the period of the Great Game rivalry between Russia and the British. It was geo-strategically so important for the British empire that the government adopted a 'close border' policy to control the Tribal Areas and its people (Ayaz, 2022).

This development resulted into a wide scale resistance and uprising in the Tribal region. The Great war of 1897 in Malakand-Chakdarra, that was waged by reformist *Sufi* networks of the Hadda Mulla, had imposed heavy loss to the British military (Rauf, 2005). It was followed by uprisings in Tirah, Mohmand, and Waziristan simultaneously under other members of these networks. As Caron describes, these local anti-imperial networks eventually folded themselves first into global revolutionary secret society activism in the interwar period, and then borderland leftist politics in the 1920s and 1930s, through the activism of individuals like Fazal Mahmood Makhfi (Caron, 2016).

The balance of social strata disturbed further by the promulgation of Tenancy Act of 1882, and other such laws regulating the lands. Lands were confiscated by the British Army and thus the formation of new classes of landed elites and a landless peasantry class, came into existence. The peasant activists in his memoirs, Dr Waris Khan of Ghalla Dher describes this history from other sources (W. Khan, 1988). It therefore set in motion a series of conditions of class conflict that were later picked up by leftist activists.

In 1901, NWFP was given the status of new Commissioner Province while the FCR governed the adjacent independent Tribal Areas. It was widely resisted and was followed by an organized anti-colonial activities and revolutionary work in the NWFP and Tribal areas, with the support of the global leftist Ghadar Party, in Chamarkand (Maheshwari, 1976). Chamarkand is the military headquarter established by earlier Mujahideen network, which is locate between Mohmand and Bajawar borderland on Pak-Afghan border. They had a sub-headquarter in Astamas which is in Buner. The British archival records from the India Office Library, reported them 'Hindustani Fanatics' (Saikia, 2016). But while Caron and Saikia give some clues to the development of leftism, they are not comprehensive in their attention to organizational history in the province.

In the following pages, various developments of the left politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, will be discussed starting with the history of nationalists who were working under Ghadar Party (Nagina, 1939). The Naujawan Bharat Sabha, NBS and Ghala Dher peasant movement, had tried to gradually addressed local social dynamics (Ayaz, 2022).

¹ The N.W.F.P, was renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2012 after the passage of 18th amendments in the constitution of Pakistan, while the 25th amendments granted accession to the abolition of FCR 40 and the merging of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan.

The Ghadar Party and Muslim Nationalism

The resistance against British imperialism by *Sufi* networks, nationalist and regional ethno-nationalist forces were growing stronger in NWFP and the Tribal Areas. Many activists associated with Congress, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, Majlis-i-Ahrar, and the Khaksar movement fought alongside the *Mujahideen* networks (Haroon, 2008). It was a scene presenting a mixed anti-imperial struggle by several different stands of ideologies with varying dynamics on the political spectrum. Although there were a variety of fusions but by and large it was the two streams—the Nationalists, and increasingly Pan-Islamist collectives—which emerged potentially challenging for the central British Raj through the first decade of the twentieth century.

The Ghadar Party, which was a socialist Party working globally for the liberation of India, established its connections in NWFP in 1913 and used Tribal Areas bordering Afghanistan for its global connections (Ramnath, 2011). Abdur Rab Peshawari (1890-1957), Fazal Mahmood Makhfi (1898-1960), Maulvi Barkat Ullah (1882-1937), and several other eminent revolutionaries, have worked in this party. Many of them had also connections to reformists such as Deoband and the Islamic border networks of Haji Sahib of Tarangzai.

The Ghadar Party were equally supported by revolutionary nationalist, Marxists and Pan-Islamists as far as its anti-imperial struggle is concerned (Ramnath, 2011). They founded in 1915 'Provisional Government of India' in exile, with Maulvi Barkat Ullah as secretary while Mahindra Singh Pratap as president. Other émigré revolutionaries were the officer bearers, including Maulvi Fazlullah as representative of Chamarkand Head Quarters. This was a kind of a fusion represented a scion of revolutionary Islamic activism that had some socialistic-like egalitarian tendencies, and formal socialism (Ansari, 2015a).

The Ghadar Party and its activists had continued their work later in Babbar Akali Party, which was formed in 1922, but comparatively it was strong in the areas of Punjab and those parts of the NWFP, where Sikh nationalists were pre-dominantly active in anti-colonial contestation (Kazmi, 2018).

The Socialist Revolution in Russian and Formation Of CPI

The Socialist revolution of October 1917 in Tzar Russia had a direct impact on the development of revolutionary politics in British India. The émigré revolutionary as mentioned above had already met V. Lenin and were trying to export communist ideology of British India. Thus, the Pakhtun-majority *Hijrat* movement in the politically charged scenario of Khilafat agitation, was watched carefully by Lenin and M. N. Roy. On the directives of Lenin, Indian Military Training School (*Induski Kurs*) was established by Roy in Tashkent in 1920 in order to train *Muhajirin* (Adhikari, 1925). Although, Lenin and Roy expected a large number of migrants (*Muhajirin*) however few hundreds of them left Afghanistan for Tashkent. Some of them, after successful training at Tashkent opted to study further in the University of the Toilers of the East at Moscow. Therefore, most of these *Muhajirin* turned communists before they returned India (Ansari, 1986).

During their training Rab floated the idea of establishing their own communist party or be allowed to join Communist Party of Tashkent. Roy, therefore, took the initiative of founding CPI in October 1920 at Tashkent and was optimistic to establish it in India upon their return. These plans were disclosed to the British Government very soon, because several spies were accompanying the *Muhajirin* on their travel. Quite vigilant and proactive, the government had set up anti-Bolshevik cells in the Home Department for searching and arresting of *Muhajirin*. Many of these *Muhajirin* were periodically arrested and trialed under the famous Peshawar Conspiracy Cases (Khan et al., 2021). The records of the arrested *Muhajirin* are preserved by the Archives and Library Department in Peshawar (Records, 1922).

Mohammad Shafiq from Peshawar, the founding Secretary of the émigré CPI, was arrested in Tribal borderland on his return and was charged under the Peshawar Conspiracy Case along with Allah Bakhsh Yousafi, and Akbar Shah of Badrashi (Salim, 2016). He questioned the Judge, Justice Fraser, that what was wrong if someone travels to Soviet Russia? He quoted examples of several ministers who had visited USSR and also mentioned about such travelling of the members of the Communist Party of Great Britain. It

was in accordance with British policy to dismantle communist movement and its expansion in South Asia. (Chattopadhyay, 2006). The geopolitics during the Great Game competition, made it even more urgent to contain the spread of communist ideology in the northwestern bordering Afghanistan. Therefore, NWFP and its bordering Tribal Areas, were focused by the Special Branch and Intelligence quarters (Fisher, 2000).

The Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Left Politics

Naujawan Bharat Sabha (NBS) was founded in 1926 by Bhagat Singh. It was more like a public face of the already banned socialist organization, Hindustan Republican Association and had established connections with nationalist revolutionaries of NWFP. NBS played a major role in setting the ground for infusing communism into existing anti-imperialist work in the province, particularly in the Tribal areas. Maulana Abdul Rahim Popalzai (1890-1960), was made president of the NBS in 1929, who carried out socialist activity under its auspices (Khan & Islam, 2021). Under his patronage, the NBS, published the two revolutionary newspapers; *Chingari* and *Naujawan-i-Sarhad* (Ayaz, 2022).

Popalzai along with Sanubar Hussain Kakaji worked actively by organizing various Associations, Unions, and societies of lower working classes. His agrarian protests in particular fused Islam and class conflict, promoting *shari'a* as a more equitable social contract than colonial rule through *nawabs*. His activities were considered a potential threat for the British Government and was therefore put under surveillance. However, Popalzai managed to lead nationalist rally in Peshawar that a violent incident took place at Qissa Khwani in 1930, in which activists of NBS and Khidmatgar were massacred by British forces. Popalzai was arrested and sentenced for seven years in jail. This incident further infuriated anti-colonial sentiments among the lower classes of society and led to increasingly militant resistance (Marwat, 2005).

The Left Politics and Frontier Socialist Party (FSP)

Soon after Qissa Khwani incidence, CPI and NBS were banned in 1930, and its leadership were put behind the bar or put under house custody. The Frontier Socialist Party (FSP) was therefore founded in 1932 in order to carry out socialist struggle and anti-imperialist resistance. Sanubar Hussain Kakaji (1898-1960), who was a close associate of Popalzai in NBS led the activities of the FSP in collaboration with progressive elements of All India National Congress's Forward Bloc. Khushal Khan of Bahadarkhel village, Kohat division, Bhagat Ram Talwar of Ghala Dher Mardan, and Ram Saran Nagina were among its prominent leaders.

FSP was operating inside All India National Congress, as Ajmal Khattak, narrates in his autobiography that in his childhood he has seen Khushal Khan, who brought cyclostyle printing machine to their *Hujra*. Later, his father disclosed to him Khushal was using this machine for printing of communist literature for CPI and NBS (Khattak, 2005). The biographical account of Bhagat Ram Talwar, also re-affirm the revolutionary work of Khushal Khan.

Unlike Khudai Khidmatgar, the strategy and policy of FSP did not uphold non-violence in its political actions, rather it adopted a very militant policy against the British government. It carried militant attacks on the British officials including throwing of bomb into parliament (Rao, 1997). In Ajmal Khattak's biography, *Qisa Zama da Adabi Zwand (The Story of my Literary Life)*, he remembered that there used to be two cupboards in his *hujra*; one for the forward block and militant activities while the other was used by non-violent Khudai Khidmatgar.

In order to take revenge of the Qissa Khwani massacre, Hari Kishin Talwar, the younger brother of Bhagat Ram, planned to shoot Montgomery, the Governor of Punjab. On the convocation day function in Punjab University, Hari Kishin fired on the Governor Punjab (W. Khan, 1988). Hari Kishan Talwar, was the son of a small landowners of the village Ghala Dher Mardan, who was chosen by the party for this task. The elder brother of Hari Kishan Talwar narrates this story in his book, *The Talwar Family and the Great Escape of Subhas Chandra Bose*. This book also give details about the Satyagrahi movement of the Congress, and according to the author it was receiving success because of high number of militant attacks by the FSP (Talwar, 1976).

The All India Kisan Sabha, and Foundation of Kisan Jirga

The All-India Kisan Sabha was founded in 1935 as a mass front of peasants throughout India. The CPI leadership was using the platform for preparatory work among peasants and the working classes (Dey, 2014). However, members of the CPI from NWFP decided, to establish their own entity names as *Kisan Jirga* in 1936. The senior communist leaders like Sanubar Hussain from Peshawar, Mohammad Hussain Ata of Hazara, Khushal Khan of Kohat, and Maulana Popalzai worked for the organization. Other members of this Jirga were Mian Akbar Shah of Badrashi, Ram Saran Nagina, Mian Mukaram Shah, Bhagat Ram Talwar, and comrade Ziarat Gul (Ali, 2020).

The *Kisan Jirga* was quite productive to produce the desired results. The class conflict and peasants uprising against the landlordism increased substantially in the province, which was followed by Ghala Dher agitation in 1938, then the Mufti Abad resistance in 1939, and the Hazara Kisan uprising. These uprisings of the peasants were all the results of Kisan Jirga (Personal Communication with Ahmad Salim: 2021). More importantly Kisan Jirga worked as a bridge between the working-classes, the peasantry, and CPI leadership, which made NWFP disproportionately a prominent province on all-India level of activism (Salim, 2008).

The *Kisan Jirga* also played an influential role in peasant uprising in Hashtnagar valley of Peshawar Division in 1948. Comrade Ziarat Gul led on the directives of CPI leadership waged a militant resistance against the eviction, which resulted into severe reaction from the state authorities. The then government supported landed elites to start evictions of landless peasants.

The Ghala Dher Peasant Movement and the Left Politics

Historically Ghala Dher is a prominent village of Mardan Division, because of its fertile land which produce an abundance of wheat, maize, and other crops. The Nawab of Ghala Dher was supported by the government to suppress the peasants and working class. Due to the cruelties of landed elite the Kisan Jirga was remained very active in Ghala Dher. By the time of peasant uprising in 1938, the leadership of Kisan Jirga has founded war cabinet in order to combat the forced eviction. Popalzai, Waris Khan, Bhagat Ram Talwar, Mia Akbar Shah, and numerous other peasant leaders gathered in Ghala Dher. This village is also prominent in the social and political history Indo-Pakistan subcontinent because of its heroes and their contribution during the liberation of India (Khan, 1988). Hari Kishan Talwar was one of those heroes who attempted to shoot Montgomery, the then-Governor of Punjab and was sentenced to be hang to death.

The government and the landed elites in a joint oppression evicted poor peasants from their homes and fields. The intensity of injustices to the peasants, and workers rose to such a peak that most residents were desperate wage a militant struggle. The Nawab of Toru imposed a heavy tax like Tora, forced *begar* (forced labor) and other penalties upon them, which were becoming unbearable.

The Ghala Dher uprising pinpointed the hidden support of Congress-Khudai Khidmatgar government toward Nawab of Toru. According to the peasants viewpoint, they voted Congress-Khudai Khidmatgar in elections on the hope that they would helped in their miseries. However, instead of support they were shocked to notice harsh treatment from the government (Popalzai, 1990). The Police and paramilitary forces alongside Nawab's own private army arrived at the occasion and sent more than six hundred people to jail. At this time, only women and children were left at homes while the security forces tried to damage their crops and their houses. Members of the Frontier Congress Committee were also sent to jails even under their own government.

The Khudai Khidmatgar's leader Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, visited Ghala Dher to see the ground reality. He hardly met any peasants because all were sent to either in jail or in hospital due to the atrocities of the security forces. Responding to a question he claimed that this uprising was a conspiracy hatched by foreign interests but no one believing on his words as he was trying to give protection to elites over poor peasants (Marwat, 2015).

Leftist Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkwa in Post-Colonial Pakistan: (1947-1991)

The CPI leadership decided to support the British government of India, when Hitler of Nazi Germany attacked USSR in 1942. The communist leaders termed it people's war and urged its workers, peasants to cooperate with British in her war against fascist Germany. In Return ban was lifted from CPI and it was allowed to carry its activities. During this time, CPI had a strain relationship with All India National Congress while came close to ML. The CPI leadership and ML developed working relationship in 1945-47, toward the end, CPI accepted the demand for Pakistan fully justified and directed its members to support ML (Ansari, 2015b).

The CPI was split to form CPP after the inception of Pakistan. Thus, CPP was the first leftist political party of post-colonial Pakistan. Mohammad Hussain Ata was made secretary of CPP-NWFP in 1948, who continued till his arrest in Rawalpindi conspiracy case. Comrade Ziarat Gul had replaced him as acting Secretary of CPP-NWFP for a brief period of time. Gul was also looking after the peasant mobilization in the province by organizing Kisan Jirga again. Gul was supported Comrade Abdul Sattar Lala, Farid Ullah of Khweshgi, Kaptan Sarfaraz Khan of Amirabad Charsadda, and other peasant leaders in organizing communist work in the province (Bacha, 1988). Mohammad Afzal Bangash was made Secretary of the CPP-NWFP in 1955 when Ziarat Gul went underground.

Right after partition, two developments changed the political scenario of the province; first the dismissal of Khudai Khidmatgar government by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder and then Governor General of Pakistan and second the split of Communist movement and consequent emergence of CPP. The left-wing politics of NWFP, received a further setback when Pakistan joined the Western alliance during the cold war period. Being an ally of US and the western world, it was extremely difficult for the communists to carry forward their politics (Iqtidar, 2016).

Gul, Farid, Sattar, Olas Mehar, and several other peasants' leaders, organized a big gathering in Mandani in 1950 which was attended by a large number of peasants, and workers of Hashtnagar (Ishaq, 1972b). It was followed by a Kisan conference in Hazara and a big political gathering of Kisan in Banu-Kohat, throughout 1950s (Popalzai, 1991).

The CPP in NWFP formed its provincial committee in 1950 which included Mohammad Afzal Bangash, Comrade Sattar Lala, Comrade Ghulam Nabi, Shaheen Shah Bacha, and Khushal Khan, who carried out the party work in the province (Bangash, 1972). However when the party was banned in 1954, its leadership of first and second layer were arrested, while those who evaded arrests, were went underground. The underground party leadership decided to continue their communist work in other upfront political parties. The National Awami Party, (NAP), Azad Pakistan Party, and ML were among such political parties that were used by CPP as mass fronts (K. A. Ali, 2013).

The Formation of NAP and Left Politics, 1957-67

In Punjab Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din founded Azad Pakistan Party in 1954 in order to accommodate those communists whose party (the CPP) was banned in fall out of Rawalpindi conspiracy (Kamran, 2009). However, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, this arrangement did not work out. A meeting of Six progressive political parties of West Pakistan was called to form Pakistan National Party, PNP in 1955. PNP was later on merged with Awami League of East Pakistan to form, National Awami Party, NAP in 1957. NAP was the second leftist political party of both wings of Pakistan after CPP (Bhuiyan, 2000).

NAP was the biggest leftist political party of both wings of Pakistan and except Punjab it has followers in Baluchistan, Sindh and NEFP, however it grew very strong in East Pakistan. The party was very strong in NWFP, with the support of progressive poets like Sanuba Hussain, Qalandar Mohmand, Saif-ur-Rehman, and Salim Raz during 1950s and 60s. Under the leadership of Sanubar Hussain, these poets formed Olasi Adabi Jirga, (OAJ) which played a role in development of NAP leftism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Khalil, 2010).

Despite the growing popularity of NAP, it faced serious internal differences in party cadre because of the presence of landed elites inside the NAP and their problems with

the peasants. It was in 1968, that in the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of NAP was called in the house of Amirzada of Mardan, where in the presence of Khan Abdul Wali Khan, Ajmal Khattak moved a resolution to the affect the expulsion of communists, and peasant leaders from the party. Peasant leader like Ahmad Khan Kaka and Syed Sher Ali Bacha argued strenuously against the resolution. However, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, the President of the NAP, approved the resolution despite the fact that the quorum was incomplete (Kaka, 1968).

On the expulsion of Peasants and communist from NAP, Syed Sher Ali Bacha called a meeting to form Pakistan Mazdoor-Kisan Party, PMKP, in July 1968. PMKP was organized by Mohammad Afzal Bangash, Abdul Sattar lala, and senior leadership of peasant committee.

The Formation of Mazdoor Kisan Party (MKP) and the Left Politics

Kisan Committee in NWFP under the NAB umbrella was re-organized in 1963. Mohammad Afzal Bangash was elected convener of NWFP while Syed Sher Ali Bacha was convener of District Mardan. They used to hold study circles to train the peasants on Marxist-Leninist ideology which was aimed at establishing a socialist state and society in Pakistan. Most of the members of the this committee were inspired by Maoist ideology and envisioned Mao's insurgent methods of revolutionary work, which was considered to be most appropriate and effective (Ishaq, 1972a). Maulana Bhashani, the president of NAP himself was pro-China however, Abdul Wali Khan and the senior leadership of the party in West Pakistan were not in favor of Mao's model of revolutionary work. They followed the USSR model of cultural revolution through a constitutional struggle and democracy.

Thus, the mainstream leadership of NAP was divided between pro-Peking and pro-Moscow camps. This split was more open in West Pakistan than in East wing which caused serious rift in the party. The China-USSR split and divergence in 1960s therefore heavily impacted the stability and unity of left politics in Pakistan in general, and of the NWFP in particular (Toor, 2011).

On the other hand, due to the efforts of communist activists the membership of Kisan Committee increased phenomenally at all levels i.e., Provincial, District, Tehsil and Union Council levels. The expansion of Kisan committee further continued as the land reforms of Ayub Khan severely impacted on peasants and landless workers, especially the case in Districts Mardan and Charsadda alone, more than sixty different local Kisan Committee branches were organized with their own executive committees, and membership reached into the thousands. In next five years, the Kisan Committee became an organizational force with workers and offices in almost every district and Tehsil of the Pakhtunkhwa. It would not be inappropriate to conclude that by 1968, the Kisan Committee overall had acquired a status parallel to NAP (Khan, 1978).

Amidst these historic achievements of the Kisan Committee, undercurrents of conflict continued among its top leadership in Punjab, Sindh and NWFP. In Punjab, disagreements between Ishaq Mohammad and C. R. Aslam came to the surface when the later called a Kisan Conference in Multan on July 02-03, 1967. The friends and supporters of Aslam demanded the resignation of Ishaq Mohammad from his Central Convenorship role in the Committee. In response, workers and leaders who were supporters of Ishaq Mohammad called their own Kisan Conference in Lyallpur on July 14, 1967. Sher Ali Bacha, Abdus Sattar Lala, and Mohammad Khan Kaka participated in this conference from the NWFP, and Abdus Sattar Lala presided over the meeting. During the sessions, a majority of them put forth a vote of confidence in favor of Ishaq Mohammad to continue his convenorship. Consequently, the Kisan Committee in Punjab split into two groups. Similarly, in NWFP the Convenor of Kisan Committee, Shaheen Shah, who attended the Multan Conference as an observer, was asked to explain his position regarding his noncompliance with orders of the party. Finally, he was expelled from convenorship on July 13, 1967 (Ishaq, 1972b).

The Kisan Committee soon fell victim to internal strife and rifts. Abdul Wali Khan, was disturbed by these Kisan conferences and expressed serious concerns over pro-Maoist Bhashani faction of NAP. Wali Khan disagreed with this program for both personal-

political and philosophical reasons, as he was tilted toward USSR. Therefore he began deliberations to remove Kisan Committee from his own faction of the NAP. In other provinces, Kisan Committees were expelled from the NAP, but however the expelled members were re-organized under new names, like Punjab-NAP (Mazdoor-Kisan) and Karachi-NAP (Mazdoor-Kisan Party).

Without any further wait, meeting of NWFP-NAP was called in on March 03, 1967, at the house of Amir Zada Khan, district Mardan. Mr. Ajmal Khattak moved a resolution to the effect that an individual members of NAP would have to choose either to remain a member of the NAP, or to become a member of Kisan committee. Divided loyalties would be unacceptable. In effect this meant pulling off the curtain from the Kisan Committee as a parallel structure and faction inside the NAP (Kaka, 1968).

The reasons were both an expression of factional politics and were philosophical. Wali Khan and his supporters blamed the Kisan Committee for attempting revolution prematurely, and for damaging the regional-nationalist aspect of the movement by focusing too much on class struggle on the road toward socialist revolution. Syed Sher Ali Bacha, Mohammad Khan Kaka, Afzal Bangash, Ziarat Gul Lala, and other prominent peasant leaders spoke on the occasion to counter the allegations made by Wali Khan. In the course of this meeting Mohammad Khan Kaka, a District Convenor of Kisan Committee, answered all questions raised by Wali Khan with arguments based on facts and figures. In a long speech, he dismissed the contention that the Kisan Committee is a political party of its own by referring to the constitutions of both organization. Further, if members of trade unions, labor unions, the bar association, literary societies, and other cooperative unions can become members of the NAP, he asked, then what was wrong with members of a Kisan Committee also becoming members of the NAP (Kaka, 1968). At the end, he lamented the earlier historic U-turn by the Khudai Khidmatgar movement on the question of Ghala Dher Kisan Movement of 1930s, in which landed power and the state sided together against the interests of the movement's chief constituency and membership; and he paralleled that with this current reversal of the NAP leadership on its principles. M. Khan Kaka denounced this as a violation of the party constitution, one which would bring disaster for the future of both nationalist and class politics in Pakistan.

A long debate ensued, with many arguments for and against, but it came to an end with one conclusion: the forceful eviction of the Kisan Committee from the NAP. In a more general sense this heralded a parting of ways for regional-nationalist politics and class politics in the NWFP. None of the explanations and arguments presented by the leaders of the Committee influenced the movers of the resolution, and consequently the resolution was assumed to have passed. Deeply disappointed by the NAP, and realizing the need of the hour, the Committee leaders convened a meeting on May 01, 1968, to discuss their post-expulsion scenario and the future of the Kisan Committee. And it was thus that the Pakhtunkhwa Mazdoor-Kisan Party, or PkMKP, came into being, as an independent party of agrarian workers and downtrodden classes.

Very soon, a joint meeting of the PkMKP, Karachi-NAP (Mazdoor-Kisan) and Punjab-NAP (Mazdoor-Kisan) was held in Faisalabad, on May 16-17, 1968, and they were all merged into one party: the NAP (Mazdoor-Kisan). However, in the NWFP, it preferred to work under the name 'Mazdoor-Kisan Party' without mentioning the "NAP" at all. Further developments in this connection happened in March 1970, when these three factions merged as one, NAP-Mazdoor-Kisan, dropped the NAP from their name altogether and thus named themselves the Pakistan Mazdoor-Kisan Party (Bacha, 1995).

Soon after its establishment the PMKP, under Sher Ali Bacha, sponsored the Hashtnagar Kisan movement of the 1970s which had reached to its peak due to the extensive work of the Kisan committee over the previous five or six years (Ahmad, 2009). The young party successfully pleaded the case of peasants, by organizing protest processions and meetings to oppose the oppressive evictions of peasants from the lands they worked. The sphere of influence of this movement was increasing extensively and within a year or so it spread in the North from Mandani and Hari Chand to Dargai, Malakand protected areas, Swat, Buner, Dir, Kohistan, and Chitral. In the south, it spread from South

Hashtnagar to Mardan, Swabi, Peshawar, Hazara, and southern districts of NWFP (Ahmad, 2011).

The formation of Pakhtunkhwa Mili Awami Party PMAP

In 1978, however, after enjoying some success, the party again split in two groups: the Bangash and Sher Ali groups. In the wake of the Hashtnagar Kisan uprisings of Mandani in 1970, the MKP once again faced internal strife and differences. This time the differences arose between Sher Ali Bacha and Lala Sattar over the Mandani Kisan uprising; and the party leadership blamed Lala Sattar for what they saw as an immature Kisan uprising. After an explanation in response to a show cause notice, he was expelled from the MKP.

Afzal Bangash, along with Qadir Khan, and Faridullah Khan, had already formed his own faction of MKP while Syed Sher Ali Bacha was running his own group with the help of peasant leaders in Hashtnagar. In 1988, a communist Mazdoor Kisan Party (CMKP) was reconstituted but rather than participating in it, Syed Sher Ali Bacha, did not joined (Ahmed & Khan, 2022).

Sher Ali Bacha, finally decided to establish another nationalist and progressive party for all Pashtun across the country. Thus, along with Mehmood Khan Achakzai, and other splinters peasant leaders, Bacha formed the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party in 1989 and served as its first General Secretary, while Achakzai was elected as its founding chairman (Taj, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The evolution of leftist politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan can be traced to the earlier history of Nationalist revolutionary activism, especially against the British imperialism in undivided India. The anti-colonial revolutionaries were drawn from a diverse school of thoughts like the social reformist of Deoband, the nationalist organizations like Khudai Khidmatgar, and the Bolsheviks after the October socialist revolution in Tzar Russian in 1917. Thus, the evolution of leftist politics in Pakistan and especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa underwent a long process of transformation. Beginning with anti-colonial sentiments, it fused with Pan-Islamist ideology opposing British imperialism. It goes on and on when the Pan-Islamist *Hijra* (Migration) movement of 1920s came into direct contact with the Bolsheviks.

Those who travelled beyond Afghanistan to Soviet Tashkent, came under the direct influence of communist ideology. Most of them were admitted in Indian Military School (Induski Kurs) at Tashkent. After completing their military training, they were further advised to spend some time in Moscow's University for the toilers of the East, for gaining political training. It was in Tashkent school, that few emigree floated the idea of having a Communist Party in exile and thus, CPI came into existence in 1920.

The CPI was established in India in 1925 by holding Kanpur conference of the party. However, in NWFP the present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the communist leaders arrived in 1920s who were arrested and trialed in Peshawar Conspiracy Cases. NWFP and its adjoining FATA had played an effective role in the espionage of Communist ideology to British India, because due to its geostrategic location, it was remained a hub of all revolutionary and liberation struggle.

It is concluded that the Socialist revolution of October in Tzar Russian, had profound impacts on the progressive and leftist politics in Pakistan. Due to the geostrategic importance of NWFP, for US and USSR during the Great Game period, it played a significant role in development of revolutionary and leftist politics in Pakistan.

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