

Marxists And Progressive Trends In South Asian Literatures: A Case Study Of Selected Pashto Poetry

Dr. Mohammad Ayaz¹, Dr. Fakhr ul Islam², Dr Nousheen Jamshed³, Fayyaz Ali⁴,
Muhammad Taimur Khan⁵

¹Lecturer/In-Charge Chairman, Department of Pakistan Studies, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: m.a.mohammadzai@gmail.com

²Director Research and Academic Outreach, Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: ifakhar@hotmail.com

³Lecturer Pakistan Studies, Pakistan Studies Department, Islamia College Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Email: drnausheen@icp.edu.pk

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies and Political Science University of Science and Technology Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Email: fayyazust@gmail.com

⁵M.Phil Scholar, Pakistan Studies, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Email: rumaitkhan007@gmail.com

Abstract:

The Marxist trends in South Asian literature, especially *Urdu*, and *Pashto*, are directly connected with the developments of progressive and Marxist literature, which was impacted by the literary movement in former USSR. The *Urdu* as well *Pashto* literatures, were influenced by the progressive trends during its formative phase in post-colonial Pakistan. The establishment of Communist Party of Pakistan, (CPP) and the demand for Pakistan were interconnected as the Communist leaders accepted the right of self-determination for the Muslim of India. Although CPP was banned in 1954 along with its associated cadres like Progressive Writers Association and Student organizations, however, it was the literary front which expressed the demands, aspiration, and philosophy of leftist political parties, which resulted into a progressive literary movement in *Urdu* as well as in *Pashto* literature. This paper attempts to highlight the Marxist, and progressive trends in *Pashto* literature by analyzing selected poetry of progressive poets of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan.

Keywords: Marxists, Progressive Writers, Socialist realism, Soviet Union, Literature, *Pashto*, Olasi Jirga.

INTRODUCTION:

Research work on the Marxists trends in South Asian literatures, is spotty and according to (COPPOLA, 1975) it is much needed to explore progressive trends in various contemporary literatures. Examining the progressive literary works in Urdu and especially Pashto poetry, it can be established that Marxists ideology has influenced the art, culture, and literature of South Asian countries. Some earlier works (Caron, 2016), (Caron, 2019) and Shipiro, which treats Pashto poetry as alternative knowledge, suggest to study and analyze further the progressive literature in a

way to fill gaps in the social history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Keeping in view the need of assessing South Asian literatures, this research engages selected poems of progressive literary figures of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the context of Marxist political outlook. Most of these literary figures and poets were either associated with Progressive Writer Association, (PWA) or were influenced by Olasi Adabi Jirga, (OAJ). The founder of OAJ, Kakaji Sanubar Hussain himself was member of PWA from NWFP (present-day Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) The biographical sketch and

selected poetry of these progressive literary figures unfold literary history of progressive ideology (K. Khalil, 2011).

Right after independence of Pakistan in 1947, these progressive writers under OAJ opposed imperialism in their literary works. By and large, they were tilted toward former USSR and were impacted by the literature developed under its patronage (Kazmi, 2018). However, after 1970s, the progressive literature also faced a split- and a big chunk of literary figures espoused Maoist ideology as against others who were still upheld Moscow line of communist politics. This paper is thus divided into two sections in order to fully understand the themes and contents of progressive literature of both periods.

Before analyzing the contents of selected poems with translations from Pashto into English, it is important to review relevant literature for establishing evidence of Marxist's influence on Urdu and Pashto literatures. A full segment is therefore devoted to study the early expansion of Marxist ideology to British India and its impacts on the development of progressive literary movement. The British government used every strategy and policy to combat and contain by any means and had established a special cell (anti-Bolshevik) section in the home department for the purpose (Ayaz, 2022).

It is pertinent to mention that these 'anti-Bolshevik' sections continued to operate in India and Pakistan for a long time since partition in 1947. Because of sever state's repression throughout the cold war period, most of the records of Marxists political activities, likes party's circulars and documents, files and diaries, minutes of the meetings and correspondence letters, have either been buried, or burned to evade possible search operation¹. In many instances, such

documents were confiscated by the state authorities, in police raids or been damaged due to flood and rainwater. Thus, researching into socialist and Marxists literature, had been remained a less studied subject as Pakistan was a close ally of western block in their strategies to contain the spread of Marxist ideology. In the following pages an effort is made to explore Marxist's influence on Urdu and Pashto literatures.

Marxists influence on Urdu and Pashto literatures: Historical Analysis

The literature developed under the patronage of Soviet Union's Writers in post-October 1917-Union of Soviet Socialist Russian (USSR), has profoundly influenced South Asian literatures. Nearly all of the South Asian Literatures, were effected in varying degrees, and for varying lengths of time by Marxism (Coppola, 1974). The literary work of undivided India, especially Urdu and Pashto literatures (1940s-1970s) were impacted by the Marxists ideology through a long process of transformation. In first place the anti-colonial thinkers, and émigré revolutionaries had made close contact with Bolsheviks leaders in Afghanistan, and Tashkent, but these links were initially limited to N.W.F.P and Punjab unto 1920s (Ansari, 2015). Most of the Marxist publications, along with translations work from Russian to Urdu, and Pashto, were made during this period in order to reach out to the public at large in British India. For example major works of Maxim Gorky, (a Marxist poet of USSR), have been translated to Urdu and Pashto languages (Ibn-i-Hassan, n.d.).

Simultaneously after the 2nd Comintern International in 1922, the situation in Europe had changed drastically and in turn it was derived that the socialist revolution did not attain the desired results. Consequently, the Bolshevik leadership shifted their efforts and

¹ In an interview, Abid Hassan Manto of Awami Workers Party, who was secretary of CPP (Rawalpindi), had confirmed this fact. Progressive writer, Ahmad Salim, and other prominent leftist

activists have also attested that how various departments of government had operated to confiscate progressive literature.

attention toward the countries of East, by making an appeal to Indians to stand against the British Imperialism. The flow of Soviet literature to British India increased substantially in this period, which caused development of progressive and Marxist trends in the Urdu and Pashto Literatures (Marwat, 2015).

The Soviet Government under Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) kept continue its support both for training as well as of financial assistance to the revolutionary struggle against British Imperialism. On the advice of Lenin, Manabendra Nath Roy (1887-1954) had managed to established contacts with anti-colonial revolutionaries in India and thus, Ghulam Hussain (a progressive editor) received funding for establishing a publishing Center in 1922 at Lahore. The Urdu language newspaper, daily Inqilab (Revolution) has started its publication from this center. Similarly, Shaukat Usmani, Muzzafar Ahmad and M. N. Roy had received a substantial amount of funds for carrying out publishing of literary work (Ansari, 2015).

On the other hand, the anti-colonial and progressive writers welcomed this situation by aligning their literary works with the literary developments in USSR. For example, Aziz Bhopali, published from Lahore a book in 1922 on the theme, 'Lenin Awr Inqilab-i-Roos (Lenin and the Soviet Revolution). Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar, a revolutionary nationalist from Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has published his travelogue, Safar Nama-i Roosi Turkistan Au Afghanistan (Travel Account of Russian Turkistan & Afghanistan) in 1926, in which he narrates the historical account of the Muhajirin' s travel to Soviet Tashkent through Afghanistan. This was considered the most important piece of literature, as it has led toward opening-up of new avenues and progressive trends in Pashto literature. He wrote his short play, which was staged in 1928, Dree Yatimanan (Three orphans) which is yet

another example of progressive art and literature.

Dr. Allama Mohammad Iqbal's 'Hizr-i-Rao' (Iqbāl, 1971) which reflects a Marxist influence and explanation to the social problems of India. Iqbal wrote Trana-i-Hind (Song of India) and considered himself very close to Socialism. In a discussion with Sajjad Zaheer, he had expressed his sympathy with progressive literature and socialist movement. Similarly, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, has also given a tribute to Lenin and jubilated the triumph of Communism over the capitalist system, which is evident from a special report in his weekly newspaper Al-Hilal (The crescent). Similarly, Hasrat Mohani have also penned numerous writings in support of Marxist's triumph while opposing western imperialism (Ansari, 1986).

Thus, Marxists influence together with its literary handmaiden Socialist Realism has had enormous impacts on the form and content of literary work under All-India Progressive Writer Movement, (AIPWM). Maxim Gorky, a Russian poet and the founder of Socialist Realism, had profound impression on the Urdu and Pashto literatures (Coppola, 1974). Ibn-i-Hassan and. Sanubar Hussain Kakaji has translated his selected works in Urdu and Pashto, which has set the ground for creating purposive and Marxists literature.

In 1932 the essays (Angary) of Syed Sajjad Zaheer, Rashid Jehan, Mehmud-u-Zafar, and Ahmad Ali, which was taken as the first response of All India Progressive Writers Movement (Ali, 2015) against the British colonial rule. Sayyid Sajjad Zaheer along with his associates including British writers R. Fox and Caudwell, had established AIPWA in 1936, first in London and later on in undivided India. The AIPWA had a long-lasting impact on the literary developments in undivided India in general and in Pakistan at particular.

The manifesto of AIPWA in section 14 referred to the establishment of organizations of writer in various linguistic provinces of

India, which will create contacts and produce cooperation among these organizations by means of meetings, pamphlets, etc. In this connection Syed Sajjad Zaheer visited various provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to meet Sanubar Hussain Kakaji, Amir Hamza, and other progressive literary figures of the province. The foundation of Bazm-i-Adab (Literary Union) by Amir Hamza, and Rahat Zakheli, as well as the formation of Anjuman-i-Taraqi Pasand Musanifeen (Association of Progressive Writers) by Sanubar Kakaji in 1940s, had served the purpose of AIPWA. It was considered a step forward for collaborative work with AIPWA.

The CPI leadership in a bid to win its support among North-Indian Muslims, justified the demand for Pakistan. It is manifested in the song written by Israr ul Haq Majaz 'Pakistan Hamara' (Our Pakistan) shortly before independence of the country, which was the leading voice of AIPWA. Similarly, the progressive Pashto poets, had written songs and poems in the love of Pakistan as a dear homeland. Although, a segment of Pashto poetry, which were under the influence of Pashton nationalist organizations, had written excessively on the sentiments of Pashtonistan. Pashton nationalists living both sides across Anglo-Afghan borderland, had imbued feelings of patriotism for motherland-Afghanistan but those living in post-colonial Pakistan had equally strong feelings of belonging and sense of loyalty to Pakistan as country their citizenship (Homeland). Thus, Pashton as one ethnic community (qaam) with two homelands (Pakistan and Afghanistan) and both has reflected in the progressive poetry across the borderland throughout 1950s up to 1970s due to the PWA and OAJ associated progressive writers (Nangarhari, 2015).

After partition of India in 1947, the progressive writers and essayists, like Sanubar Hussain Kakaji, Amir Hamza, Dost Mohammad Kamil, Qalandar Mohmand, and other progressive intellectuals, continued their close association and links with PWA in post-

colonial Pakistan. Kakaji has devoted his energies, to literary work and therefore, laid the foundation Olasi Adabi Jirga, (OAJ) in 1950. Hamza Shinwari also merged his Literary Union (Bazm-i-Adab) in OAJ in the same year when it was established. The literary activities and progressive work of OAJ, has a long-lasting impact on the socio-political conditions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The PWA and the formation of Olasi Adabi Jirga (OAJ)

Certain measures were taken by Sajjad Zaheer, Sibte-e-Hassan, Mirza Ashfaq Beg to lunch quarterly Naya Adab, in later 1940s found its way to the hands of progressive and interested individuals in cities, towns, and small Mohalla. The weekly publication Qaumi Jang had an already a large readership across the Muslim majority provinces. The publication of Nizam from Bombay, which was yet another masterpiece of progressive writers to influence the interested readership. These publications along with party's newspaper, were to be transported and distributed among the members of OAJ and sympathizers of communist groups in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (N.W.F.P) in later 1940s. By 1947 the circulation of Nizam had risen to several thousands, and according to its editor (Qudus Sehbai), the progressive groups in Peshawar, received several hundred copies of its each issue. The demand of the literary work of PWA in the remote areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was rising continuously after the Independence (Ansari, 2015).

The progressive writers and their short plays, like, Akhtar Hussain Raipuri, Ali Sardar Jaffari, Kaifi Azmi, Majnun Ghorakhpuri, Sadat Hassan Manto, Sajjad Zaheer, and several other of PWA, had a tremendous readership among the members of Anjuman-i-Taraqi Pasand Musanifeen (Union of Progressive Writers) which was established by Sanubar Hussain Kakaji in 1948. The short stories which carried purposiveness and application of Marxist interpretation of the

social issues in this period, reflect the influence of the writers of PWA on Pashto Literature. For example, the work of Ismat Chughtai, most notably her novel 'Terhi Lakeer' (crooked line) which is a kind of fusion of Marxists ideology and Sigmund Freud's psycho-analytical theory, has deeply influenced the poetry of Kakaji. Like Chughtai, Kakaji portrayed in his poetry, poverty as a prime cause that compelled a woman to degrade herself and her family and that the women's honor was bargained for wealth. Following couplets of the poem from the collection (H. Khalil, 2010) written by Kakaji, upheld the same viewpoint about the poverty as one of the cause of prostitute;

"May God destroy this bazaar of infidels
The beauty of a poor is sold over a
handful of dry beans
They would scent like the frolic smell
of gunpowder
Now Pashton scent like apple's
fragrance
See them downed anytime in the fields
Every bird that uses the wings of other
to fly"

Kakaji has also lamented the creed of non-violence being adopted by a segment of Pashton nationalist as a major cause in the way of revolution. He was continuously opposing Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Gandhi and his non-violence movement and the above couplets he had rejected the peaceful struggle.

Being an active member of PWA himself, Kakaji, has then established Olasi Adabi Jirga (People's literary Association) in 1950 which worked as Pakhtunkhwa branch of PWA. Progressive poets and literary figures like, Fazal Rahim Mekhfi, Abdul Rahim Popalzai, Ajmal Khattak, Farigh Bukhari, Reza Hamdani, Qalandar Mohammad, Saif-ur-Rehman Salim, Afzal Bangash, Salim Raz, Amir Hamza Shinwari, Ayub Sabir and other progressive intellectuals, took part in the meetings and literary activities of OAJ. This association served as a pioneer of introducing socialist realism in the short stories, drama

genre, and poetry and has proved impactful in the development of progressive themes in the Pashto literature. Raised on the literature produced by OAJ, the poets, critics, and short story writers of 1950s up to the period of 1970s, reflect very often the glimpses of socialist realism, which is very much resemblance with the Russian poets, like Maxim Gorky, Chekhov, and Vladimir Mayakovsky (Jangfeldt, 2021).

Even Pashto literature, be it prose, poetry or drama, is very vast subject and thus, this research would exclude the analysis of fiction (Afsana), Drama, essays, and short-stories and kept limited to the analysis of progressive poetry during period from 1950s-1970s. For example, the selected poetry of Sanubar Hussain Kakaji, Ajmal Khattak, Qalandar Mohmand, who were also members of Olasi Adabi Jirga, are remarkable in this regard. The analysis of selected progressive poetry is divided into two sections; 1) The progressive literature and Socialist realism 2) the Progressive poetry, Maoist and socialist revolutionary trends.

Section I: The Socialist Realism and OAJ: Analysis of selected poetry

The progressive literature in post-colonial Pakistan up to 1970 reflects the influence of PWA in its contents, themes and form of literary work. The selected poetry, the translation of which is reproduced in this section, shows the practical example of socialist realism, which was overwhelmingly discussed by the writers and critiques in the publications of PWA and OAJ in their literary work.

With the foundation of OAJ a remarkable change occurred in the form and content of the literary work, both prose and poetry which introduced progressive trends in Pashto literature of 1950s onward. According to Kakaji, the literature and art that represent the feelings of expressing lower and oppressed class and offer a solution and remedy for the problems of proletariat class, is termed as

progressive literature (Zhong, Ma, Ali, 2021). The following couplets from a poem of Kakaji published in Leikwal (H. Khalil, 2010) is an example of progressive and class centric demands;

“You are searching Khushal Khan?
Khushal-the Afghan or the Khan
Which Mehmood to be wake up? The
Muslim one or the King
My brethren litterateur!!! Their class is
distinct from us
Their school is different from us! Your
struggle is different”

For the writers and poets associated with OAJ, poetry was an advance form of literature, and that art is inseparable from society and the prevailing socio-political and cultural conditions, shape the form and contents of literature. To them, poet is the mirror of society, and that the subject of his poetry should revolve around the prevailing conditions in which the poet lives his life. Not only identification of social issues and raising it to public importance, found place in literary expression of OAJ, but possible solutions and remedies were also recommended according to the needs and requirements of society (K. Khalil, 2011).

The progressive literature developed under OAJ is considered a reaction to the romanticist trends in Pashto as well as in Urdu literary works. For examples the notions of beauty, love and liberty were presented as object in the art and poetry. The poet would sacrifice his life for his love and liberty for his art. Revolt and resistance, in the romanticist literature, were considered a way out to attain the objectives. The litterateurs and essayists in their writing treated the subject of social development, and politics as a political life, which is the basis for socialist realism in both literatures. Poet, according to OAJ, is considered mirror of the society, and reflection of its material reality and the object of a poetry must conform with fundamental issue and existing realities. It brings purposefulness and correlation in the modern romanticist poetry.

Thus, love and romance in the modern poetry were given too much significance under OAJ, which resulted into revolutionary romanticism in the poetry of Kakaji, Ajmal Khattak, Fazal Rahim Majzoob, Salim Raz, and other progressive writers and poets.

Qalandar Mohammad (1935-1995), who was also an active member of Ulasi adabi Jirga, had chosen similar themes and contents in his book, Sabawoon, (Daylight). It includes, Hossan (Beauty), Da Vietnam Charbeytta (Poem of Vietnam), Da Mazdoor Rejz (Labor’s voic), Inqilabi (Revolutionary) , Za Tanqeed Kho ba Kawama (I will censure) , and many more like them which provides an understanding of progressive trends. One of his poems (Kakaji, which was written in 1952) explains best the painful conditions of the communist leaders and their party, which was under fire due to Rawalpindi Conspiracy cases and Sanubar Hussain was arrested and sent behind the bars;

“I hear that the old story is renewed
And I hear that Mansoor is being sent to
the gallows again
I hear that the allies of Nimrud
Are roasting our flesh in fire
I hear it again that the conman
If flying the old kite with new strings

Oh! there That shackles clunk again
Oh! there the youth is ready to sacrifice
again
Oh there The thorns have sprung again
Oh there the majnoon is diving into
craziness again
Oh there they are sharpening their
daggers again
Oh there the unaware are diving into
danger again

Oh there somebody’s old bones
Have talked again because of
imprisonment
Oh there Darkness has spread again
Wounds of Some one s heart have
smoldered
Oh there some one forehead is wrinkled

again
The owner of power and money
trembled in fear

But I swear upon the cleansed
foreheads
That their deal will remain only a deal
Kushal khan breaks the good news to
the masses
That neither Aurang nor Dara will stay
At last the Present will shake hands
with past
And the future will belong to kaka”
(Mohmand, 1986)

The poets associated with OAJ had profound regards for Kakaji and his liberation struggle against the British imperialism and around eighteen years, he was living in exile in order to evade arrest. He returned to Peshawar in 1948 in independent post-colonial Pakistan, and devoted his time to literary activities. However, it was perceived as a shocking fact when Kakaji was arrested again in 1958 and was treated harshly in the jail. Due to ill-treatment in the prison and bad health due to lungs related illness, Kakaji died in 1963. Qalandar wrote a poem Sanda (elegy) on the death of Kakaji (Mohmand, 1986);

Desertification has engulfed the gardens
of Pashtons
Nightingales are dying yearning for
spring in their hearts
We were still mourning Khushal’s demise
While Kaka (Sanubar) is dying of grief
May God protect the young generation of
Pashtons
When everyday they are losing such
elders
Who have shattered the hearts of Britain?
Are dying in the battlefield field soaked
with their blood

From whom the imperialist cannot
properly rule
The rulers of the heart of The Powerless
nation are dying

When they sacrificed youth and
generations on their nation
Dies with a young heart and an old body

There is a Mourning in the Ruined
house of Aimal
The descendants of Hameed and
Rehman are dying
Floods of tears flowing from the
eyelashes
the tears dry up the person dies from
grief

Khushal and Darya’s hearts are broken
When the brave (defender of honor) of
Aimal’s clan die
Afridi, Mohmand and Khattak are all
the pallbearers
As if all the three khans will die once
more
Aimal khan baba put down his turban
Amongst sighs he screamed that
Afghans are dying

Sahibzada Muhammad Aslam was a close comrade of Kakaji, who fought alongside with him in the Tribal Areas in 1930s, was severely wounded in the war. Kakaji took him to Jalal Abad (Afghanistan) for treatment and tried his best to save his life. However due to deep wound, he lost his life as martyr of liberating homeland from the British colonial rule. The OAJ launched publication of “Monthly Aslam” in the memories of his comrade, which was published in three languages-Urdu, Pashto, and Hindku, and was gaining popularity among readerships. Unfortunately, after 16 printed issues, it was closed in 1952. Several poets had paid tributes to Aslam Shaheed by dedicating a number of poems to his bravery, and heroic display of struggle in Swal Qila in 1934. Several poems were written by the leading poets of OAJ on the death of Aslam, which are not reproduced for paucity of space.

Section II: The Maoist and Socialist trends in Pashto literature post-1970s

As discussed in section I, the progressive poetry of 1950s emerged after a split of CPI and its literary cadre, AIPWA, with a new beginning in post-colonial Pakistan. The selected poetry of this period reflected some glimpses of revolutionary romanticism, socialist realism, and progressive themes and contents.

In a much similar fashion, the poetry and prose of post-1970s had also developed after a great split in the National Awami Party, (NAP) and its peasant cadre, Kisan Committee in 1968. Mazdoor Kisan Party (MKP) emerged after this split and like NAP, it was viewed as another upfront progressive political party, the underground leadership of CPP, could have used for carrying their communist activities. Therefore, the poetry of post-1970s is more radical and ultra-left as far as its themes, content and form are concerned.

Therefore, this section is devoted to the Marxists poetry in post-1970s. The selected poetry of Syed Sher Ali Bacha (1938-1998), Master Sultan Khalakyar (1942-2007) and Syed-ul-Abrar Ghar (1948-1977) are translated and reproduced here for understanding the Marxists trends in Pashto poetry.

Syed Sher Ali Bacha (1938-1998), the General Secretary of MKP, took a radical position by challenging the imperialist policies of (Pakistan) which he labeled as Punjabi dominated state. For example one of the poem, Peegham (the message), as is reproduced in the following lines, with English translation (Bacha, 1995)

Trans.

We will have a huge gathering (Jirga) in
Peshawar
Then will we ferociously strike the
oppressor
Here occupy Abaseen and Pasheen
there
Unite the army and attack the
occupiers

The bang of guns will be heard on
Attock (Punjab)
Let us create chaos and wrath together
Let's take this crowd toward Margalla
This decision we will make in
Hashtnagar
We will find the tracks at every
moment
We will take care of our fields
That which connects Wakhan with
Bolan
And a million times we trust our
leader
He is not a leader if he is not a
nationalist
We reveal this secret so brief
One wish remains for the communist
(revolution) of Afghans
That we will be able to destroy Lahore
When the midnight killings of the
spread-out Pashtons end
Then we will jubilate in Bakhtar

Another poet Master Sultan Khalakyar (1942-2007), who was influenced by Marxist-Leninist thinking and personally participated in Hashtnagar Peasant Movement. He would read his poetry in the public meetings of MKP and contributed many proletarian poems to publishing houses of his party. A collection of his proletariat poems was published by the office of MKP in 1974, with the following two couplets on the title of the book, Da Wenny Rang, (The Color of Blood);

The color of blood and a white shroud
seems like Hina
Emerging dawn from that east seems like
tomorrow
The blood of the martyrs of Chicago is
visible in this
It is red with the blood of workers, and it
is the flag of peasants too

In an interview with his son, Mr. Bashir Tajik, aged 48, it was disclosed that seven different manuscripts (unpublished) were buried in the yard of his house, because of an expected police raid, on account of the

ongoing peasant struggle in Hashtnagar valley (Ahmad, 2009).

The collections of poems, its themes, and contents, published in his book *The Color of Blood* revolve around Marxist-Leninist ideology, the war in Vietnam, the miserable conditions of peasants, liberty, and militant confrontation's role in defeating imperialist rule. Based on this class-centric poetic work, published by MKP in 1974, Khalakyar may be rightfully called as a leading proletariat poet of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in an orthodox communist vein. Like Mayakovski, a Russian proletarian poet who wrote poetry during 1905-17 in favor of Soviet socialist revolution, Khalakyar penned more than hundreds of poems for the Hashtnagar Peasant Movement. For example, he wrote the whole story of the uprisings of Hashtnagar Peasant movement, applying the realist dastan (story) style of poetry writing. He also deployed misra in order to pay tribute to the heroes and martyrs of the Nasafai village war that took place on July 03, 1971 (Khalakyar, 1974). Every martyr is remembered by name, with their bravery recalled in separate individual misras, in paying tribute to the heroes and martyrs of Hashtnagar. By way of illustrating how the historical context of this uprising is discussed in his folk-popular style, a short selection is reproduced here with translation;

Trans.

Listen carefully to this strange story; A
variety of cruelties are inflicted on
peasants
Get informed of the plight of peasants;
The beautiful Hashtnagar turned to hell
for them
Not only Hashtnagar but the whole
country; Is occupied by the cronies of
Nixon
Every poor person is struck by sorrows;
He whom the Mullah has judged ill-
fated
Occupied by a few tyrants; That's why
life of poor is difficult

Oh lord, we're grateful for
whatever you destined; Then why
are we coerced by humans
Capitalists have started tyranny and
coercion; every poor man is
suffering in each home
Many were killed and others'
homes were burnt; Every nook and
corner were torched
And lot of them were bitten by
vicious dogs; And some were
falsely imprisoned
Several deceased were dug out of
graveyards; The wealthy are
unafraid of their curses
Countless atrocities happened
everyday; I wonder which one
ordeal I should write?
When trying to locate a wound, the
other aches; Their tyrannies beget
more tyrannies
Every atrocity is crueler than the
previous; That's why the poor is
engulfed by sorrows
The government is an accomplice
in every atrocity; Countless officers
take bribes
For Khan, 'the money makes the
mayor go'; They wrecked the
homes of the poor

In following selection from Da Nasafai Jang, Drem Mai, 1970 (The War of Nasafai, May 3, 1970), Khalakyar exposes the landed elites and their cruelties, along with the plight of other ethnicities, especially Bengalis, who faced the wrath of military dictatorship under Gen. Yahya Khan. He lamented all this in the following words, pointing to bad governance under a perverted capitalist system.

Trans.

The poor are burning in red hot
flames; Pakistan is as a hell for them
The 3rd of July 1971 was the date; At
the time Yahya governed the state

Ruthless atrocities began in Bengal;
Muslims were thirsty for brothers'
blood

The infighting was for rule and
wealth; Everywhere the world shrank
for the poor

All enemies have conspired against
the poor; Whether Yahya, Indira or
Mujeeb

Leave Bengal, burning in red flames;
unforgettable too is the mourning of
Nasafai

Early that morning the tehsildar: Sent
a message to the village of Nasafai

This time you will face eviction; They
won't let you be; this is the order of
the khan

When the peasants received this; It
felt like a bomb had exploded on them

The elders gathered immediately; Thy
proceed towards Tehsildar to question
him

All officers were present with the
Khan; They were called by this
Nimrud to conspire

Machine guns were installed around
the premises; Nasafai was besieged
by policemen

I. G. Shafiullah was commanding
officer; Was brought to kill the poor
mercilessly

He came to shoot them with no
second thought; He himself was a
Khan of the region

All Khans of Sarhad were gathered
there; They had thousands of goons
with them

A. C. was present alongside the
revenue officer; Both lavishly bribed
by Dajjal's Khan

The riches were distributed amongst
them; The wine bottles were
uncorked

Peasants were on their knees,
pleading; For God's sake grant an
extension for few days

Where will we be, wandering without
homes; Our young children will
starve

No one will let us relocate in another
land; We have bowed our heads at
your feet

There is no other shelter for us in this
world; And you don't let us live in
Pakistan

This was also pleaded by Lala Saif-ur
Rehman. (Salim, 1980)

Khalakyar wrote another poem *Inqilab*
(Revolution) to provoke the peasants of
Hashtnagar as well as the working
classes across the country. Several
couplets from this poem are reproduced
with translation;

Trans.

Rise up and bring revolution to the country, Oh poor ones!
Change history by bringing a new chapter in it
Cleanse society of class discrimination and inequalities
Eliminate poverty, Khans, and nawabs from the country
Let the palaces of the decadents and lavish life be crushed
Take your revenge and don't leave it to the day of judgment
Impose the day of judgment on the oppressors today
For how long will you survive in the butcher's den
At night bring your own butchers to the face of
the imperialists
For how long will you wander with dried lips and
grief ridden bodies
Bring youth, spring, and exuberance in yourself
Nobody can compete with your power
Rise with the cry of revolution and bring revolution"

Sayyid-ul-Abrar Ghar (1948-1977)
was another proletarian poet of Khyber
Pakhtunkhwa and was a member of the MKP.
He was born at a small village near Ziarat Kaka
Sahib, Nowshera in a Sayyid family. About his
family and poetic background, he penned the
following qitta:

I, Ibrar, was born in the house of the poor Manan
Loathsome in the eyes of the Kakakhel (landed elite
of his village)

Marx's call is open to all destitute revolutionaries

Through Marxist ideology I am the conqueror of the world (Ghar, 1973a)

What is particularly interesting in this is not only the directness with which Ghar speaks but also his reuse of the Pashto classical poetic tradition. His final line mimics the sufi poet Abdurrahman Baba's line, from the 17th century, against the emperor Aurangzeb and temporal power generally:

خوشال او دولتنا مي غلامان دي
زه رحمان په پښتو ژبه عالمگير يم

Rahman says, "Khushhal and Dawlat are my servants; I Rahman through the Pashto language am the world-conqueror beyond Aurangzeb." While Khushhal was a tribal leader and Dawlat was a wealthy trader, and Aurangzeb Alamgir was an emperor, Rahman was a poor man from outside Peshawar who criticized all sorts of power. By using the same meter and qafiya, Ghar is identifying with Rahman's transcendental message while placing Marxism consciously in the position of transcendence, even beyond critical sufism or regional identity of Pashto. This shows both a continuity with very local cultural modes of critique, and an interface with organizations that place Marxist internationalism even in the position that religion once held. This is the culmination of the trajectory noted before, in which local Islam gives way to pan-Islamism, which in turn gets fused with Marxism, and ultimately which turns into full-fledged communism. Nonetheless the continuity with critical thinking of local tradition remains important for a poet like Ghar.

Being a proletarian Pashto poet, Ghar played an integral part in mobilization of Hashtnagar Peasant Movement of 1970s, by reading class poetry as well as comic poems full of satire. His favored genre of poetry, the four line qita genre, proved effective in encapsulating for working class listeners the ideological orientation of the socialist movement and the manifesto of the MKP in popular wisdom. It was so effective that due to

this popularity as well as his political activities, he was arrested multiple times by law enforcement agencies, and was forced to live as a fugitive for a long period of time. A collection of his qitas has been printed in his book Sparghai (Spark) which was published by the printing house of the MKP (Ghar, 1973b). The book begins with the following couplets:

I am fortunate to be a worker-peasant
Neither am I Gujar, nor Utmankhel;
nor am I Mohmand

This again draws upon the authority of Rahman Baba, still the most influential poet among the masses to that day. Rahman says 'I am a lover and I am concerned with love; I am not Khalil or Daudzai or Mohmand'. Ghar again builds on Rahman's ideas, in this case his anti-identity politics. He then again removes the mystical love component from Rahman Baba's verse and reorients it into the modern universalism of historical materialism: the basic condition is now to be a worker or peasant, this is itself figured as normatively desirable, and this is linked to the specific politics of the MKP.

Other book of 'Da Khwari Khah Chigha (The Cry of the Manual Laborer) is among his most celebrated publications. Edited by S. A. Bacha in 1973, it consists of class poetry, and themes related to the daily problems of peasants and workers (Ghar, 1973a). It consists of twenty-seven nazms and nine qitas, and a couple of narrative charbeyta. Beyond these, and beyond his role in live events, Ghar was a regular contributor to the party's circulars and magazines.

The nine qitas (a special genre) that Ghar published in his first book were a polemic display of socialist allegiance in exactly this mode. At the same time, they enact the history of socialism not only in the world, but in NWFP, and they link them together. The following are five selected qitas from his two anthologies listed above:

I, a proletarian labourer, yearn as
 Lenin yearned
 I have owned the philosophy of the
 wise patriarch Ho Chi Minh
 What Karl Marx yearned for, one
 hundred years ago
 I yearn the same in NWFP today

Many philosophers have portrayed the
 world in diverse ideologies
 But only Marx suggested that we
 change the world
 Lenin woke the Russians and Mao
 Zedong roused the Chinese
 While Sanubar Kaka called to awaken
 the Pashtons

In the Mazdoor Kisan Party Bangash
 has given us
 This lesson time and again
 Retaining feudalism while seeking
 democracy ?
 Oh friends don't give heed to such an
 idiotic demagogue

Landlords have stirred a narrative
 That Afzal Bangash is the enemy of
 the state
 We claim that Bangash will make this
 country prosperous
 He is an example of Lenin and Stalin

When I look at my poor brother my
 heart smolders
 What are the destitute Vietnamese
 doing, and what is he up to?
 Vietnamese have nipped Khanism in
 the bud
 While my friend is still mowing grass
 for khan's cow"

Ghar was optimistic about the success of his party for bringing a dictatorship of the proletariat and called upon the working class to join MKP. In the following couplets, selected from his poem *Da Mazdoor Kisan Partai Worker* (the worker of Mazdoor Kisan Party) Ghar invites the peasants to join, using imagery

that distills the material reality into a Platonic essence that is still nonetheless inserted into materiality at the outset:

The worker in this party is like its veins
 The worker is a light, like a torch
 His meaningful essence is a servant
 who serves the party
 The worker is the ideal of the peasant,
 their thought and rationality and mental
 image

Elsewhere Ghar is more focused on elegizing specific histories. There was a division among the Marxist political parties in Pakistan, because of the two camps: pro-Moscow and pro-Peking. Like others in the more radical tendency of the NAP in NWFP, that which attracted more peasant support eventually, Ghar supported the Pro-Chinese camp and visualized Mao and communist leadership as a role model for the proletariat of Pakistan. In a poem 'Proletaria' (Proletariate) Ghar gives explanation to workers and peasants, few stanzas of which are reproduced here;

The landlords and capitalists cannot
 bring the revolution
 Don't befriend the decadents and rich
 people (drawing room revolutionaries)
 Workers and peasants are real and
 trustworthy friends
 Submissive heads support imperialism
 covertly
 If landlords want to befriend you, don't
 be fooled again
 These people (peasants) recognize
 only the Chinese leadership

In yet another poem 'Cheen' (China), he praised the leadership of China as an exemplary role model for Pakistan;

It's an ancient country of peasant
 movements
 The homeland of Mao Zedong is a
 revolutionary country
 It is the abode of the brave, the gallant,
 and the warriors of liberation

It is the abode of honorable, just
 fighters
 You are a model of the thoughts of
 Engels and Karl Marx
 That is why you are discussed
 everywhere in the world
 Your redness is coloured with blood of
 your enemies
 In your heart lays a historical guerilla
 war
 The philosophy of dialectical
 materialism of capital and labor
 emerged
 The system of guns and clubs is gone,
 and a change emerged
 Oh! China, peace to all your children,
 young and old people
 Salute to Mao Baba, of all these proud
 events, even if he be burnt

This was part of Ghar's broader internationalist awareness. According to Salim Raz, S.A. Bacha was known as "the comrade Ernest Che Guevara of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa", because of a similarity in thought and action of both leaders. Therefore, Ghar penned a long poem, with the title, "Comrade Ernesto" which is reproduced here in translation:

Comrade Ernesto Che Guevara

The brave and gallant son of Latin
 America
 Comrade Ernesto Che Guevara is a brave
 son
 He was a brave guerrilla, and a daring
 leader he was
 A graceful leader of the oppressed hard
 workers
 An internationalist revolutionary and
 freedom fighter
 He was a leader fully equipped against
 the imperialist aggressor
 It will be difficult for the world to
 produce such a leader again
 To birth to another handsome, brave
 and gallant one to replace Che

How is the flag that Che had
 hoisted in his youth?
 It was the flag of the enemy of
 America and imperialism
 Che wanted liberation and
 autonomy for the people
 In the hands of this brave one was
 an honorable flag
 He devoted his life to the poor
 populace of the world
 That's why he was capable enough
 to receive international fame
 Che was a brave politician and a
 real scholar
 Che was a selfless king of hearts
 and a servant of public
 Che was fighting as a soldier under
 the leadership of Castro
 He was the initiator of the
 liberation of Latin America
 His enthusiasm for revolution did
 not wane after the liberation of
 Cuba
 Because he had readied himself to
 conquer the whole world
 What type of role did Che play in
 the victory of Cuba?
 Which son of a gun can claim to
 have done the same?
 The victory of this cub over
 imperialism is the victory of
 communism
 This was a strike by the communist
 philosophy on imperialism
 This is a dagger in the back of the
 oppressor by the oppressed
 Idealism has put their heads in the
 feet of materialism
 When Che left Cuba in 1965
 With his heart full of enthusiasm
 and high passion for the revolution
 He did not want a life of leisure and
 rest after the revolution
 He stood on the doorstep for
 service in liberating oppressed
 Bolivia

Started revolutionary work with
 pomp and show
 To realize the dream of Karl Marx
 and Lenin
 On the way to revolution there are
 countless difficulties
 It is full deadly turns, ditches and
 fields on this thorny path
 At every step and move, there is a
 risk of losing heads
 This path has hardships and failures
 The revolutionaries follow this path
 of sacrifice
 For liberation and to counter
 imperialism
 Ernesto sacrificed himself for
 revolution
 For the true dream of Karl Marx
 and Lenin
 Among the martyred heroes of
 revolution, he is a great martyr
 Sending peace (prayer) on Che for
 the sake of blessing is required
 When people who are
 accomplished revolutionaries like
 Che are born
 The world will be illuminated
 while the darkest oppression will
 fade away
 Qasim was murdered very brutally,
 I confess so
 Qasim was the nationally
 recognized leader of Iraq
 He was slaughtered into pieces and
 witnessed by the nooks and corners
 It is said that Qasim was dragged
 alive by tanks,
 Karim Qasim is the revolutionary
 martyr of Iraq
 Che stands tall and above all, he is
 an international martyr
 The Shah of Iran martyred Hussain
 Fatimi by cannon
 The tyrant killed this kind
 companion of poor workers
 His feet were left hanging while the
 rest of his body disintegrated

How a human was killed mercilessly by
 these wicked tyrants
 The martyred Marxist Hussain Fatimi, is
 the martyr of Iran
 Ibrara you and I have witnessed Che in
 raging flames of fire
 What was not done to his dead body by the
 humiliated foe

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is established that Marxist-Leninist ideology influenced South Asian literature to a great length especially Urdu and Pashto literatures. The selected poems translated from Pashto to Urdu in section II, elaborated the socialist realism and Marxist perspective in the development of progressive poetry. Though leftist political parties, including PWA, and progressive public debate were banned in Pakistan, however, it has recorded its existence in poetic expression. Through this literature we can see the processes by which leftism itself drew its moral weight from preexisting Pashto tradition in NWFP, as well as processes through which it was transformed by ongoing movements. It is also a fact that leftism is a foreign idea in South Asia, but there were preexisting local ideas and vocabularies with which it could have a conversation, such as in Khalakyar use of Rahman Baba's skepticism of authority. Therefore, the selected poetry as discussed above is an ethnographic intervention to understand the ideological and material background of progressivism and its social history in Pakistan and especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan.

References

- Ahmad, F. (2009). P. F. Investigative Report : Sarhad Peasants under Attack. Middle East Research and Information Project, 2(9), 19–22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2569039>
- Ali, K. A. (2015). SURKH SALAM Communist Politics and Xlass Ativism in

- Pakistan 1947-1972 (1st ed.). Oxford University Press (OUP).
 progressive-episode/docview/302788237/se-2?accountid=135034
- Ansari, K. . (1986). Pan-Islam and the making of the early Indian Muslim Socialists. *Modern Asian Studies*, 20(3), 509–537. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-asian-studies/article/panislam-and-the-making-of-the-early-indian-muslim-socialists>
- Ansari, K. . (2015). *The Emergence of Socialist Thoughts Among North Indian Muslims (1917-1947)* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Ayaz, M. (2022). *The Evolution of Leftist Politics in Pakistan: A Critical Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*. University of Peshawar.
- Bacha, S. S. A. (1995). *Mili Atal Sher Ali Bacha ta peerzawany* (Mardan, Mili Pason Publications. Mili Pason Publications.
- Caron, J. (2016). Borderland historiography in Pakistan. *South Asian History and Culture*, 7(4), 327–345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2016.1223716>
- Caron, J. (2019). Pashto border literature as geopolitical knowledge. *Geopolitics*, 24(2), 444–461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1549035>
- Coppola, C. (1974). *Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature*. South Asia Series Occasional Paper No. 23, Vol. I. (1st ed.). ERIC.
- COPPOLA, C. (1975). *URDU POETRY, 1935-1970: THE PROGRESSIVE EPISODE*. [The University of Chicago]. In ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/urdu-poetry-1935-1970->
- Ghar, S. ul A. (1973a). *Da Khwarikah Chigha*. Mazdoor Kisan Daftar, Peshawar.
- Ghar, S. ul A. (1973b). *Sparghai*. Mazdoor Kisan Daftar, Peshawar.
- Ibn-i-Hassan. (n.d.). *Maan (Mother)*. Urdu Kutubkhana.
- Iqbāl, J. (1971). *Ideology of Pakistan* (1st ed.). Ferozsons.
- Jangfeldt, B. (2021). *Mayakovsky*. In *Mayakovsky*. University of Chicago Press.
- Kazmi, S. (2018). Of subalterns and Sammi trees: echoes of Ghadar in the Punjabi literary movement. *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes*. <https://doi.org/10.18740/ss27242>
- Khalakyar, S. (1974). *Da weeny Rang* (p. 51). Mazdoor Kisan Daftar, Peshawar.
- Khalil, H. (2010). *Pukhtana Leikwal* (3rd ed.). University Book Agency, Peshawar.
- Khalil, K. (2011). *Kakaji Sanobar Hussain Mohmand An Everlasting Personality LIFE SKETCH*: Takatoo, 3(5), 20–27.
- Marwat, F.-R. (2015). Glimpses of Revolutionary Romanticism in Pashto Literature. *Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 23(1).
- Mohmand, Q. (1986). *Sabawoon* (1st ed.). Qalandar Mohmand Rresearch Cell Peshawar.
- Nangarhari, K. B. A. (2015). *Da Mili Atalano Yadona*. University Book Agency, Peshawar.

Salim, S.-R. (1980). *Da Waro Waro Khudayano Di Banda Kram*. University Book Agency, Peshawar.

Zhong, Ma, Ali, M. (2021). The influence of marxist thoughts on pakhtu language poetry. *Pakistan*, 1(59), 55–75.