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Assessing impact of Russian Bolshevik thought on  
Mohammad Afzal Khan Bangash as leader of peasant  
movement at North Hashtnagar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,  
Pakistan: from 1963 to 1979

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## Assessing impact of Russian Bolshevik thought on Mohammad Afzal Khan Bangash as leader of peasant movement at North Hashtnagar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan: from 1963 to 1979<sup>1</sup>

Rashid Hussain Mughal

### Abstract

*This paper attempts to briefly describe topography and class structure of the North Hashtnagar of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP, henceforth): Pakistan; various acts of oppressions of the big landowners on poor peasants of North Hashtnagar (NH, henceforth); early life of Mohammad Afzal Bangash and development of his political thought. It also assesses impact of Russian Bolshevik thought on Mohammad Afzal Bangash through his role in mapping out the strategies and tactics for development of the peasant movement at NH during 1963-1979. Descriptive, qualitative and analytical tools are used for this paper that attempt to narrate in the light of primary data generated through primary as well as secondary sources, interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs, henceforth). The participants, in collection of primary data, were comprised of mostly family members of peasants, peasant leadership, agrarian workers and socio-political activists. The available existing literature, on peasant movement of NH, was compared, contrasted, interpreted through the lens of Russian Bolshevik thought. Due to non-availability of existing data on the subject, snow-ball technique was used to conduct field work and interviews were conducted from all useful informants in NH and around until the information coming through interviewees got saturated.*

*NH, literally meaning eight villages, encompasses a huge portion in Charsadda Tehsil, which is situated at district Peshawar of KP. At that time, two major prominent classes were existed at the NH including: big landowners and non-owners. On one hand, 5% of big landowners' occupied land nearly thousands of acres, whereas, 95% of the population was comprised on non-owners including 10% lease-holding peasants, 40% middle peasants and 50% poor peasants. Moreover, half of the 95% of the non-owners consisted of agriculture workers (rural proletariat). Side by side, the entire area had no factory at all in the beginning of the peasant movement in NH. Poor peasants of NH lived miserable life under the oppressive rule of landowners. Plight of poor peasants attracted the attention of the most progressive elements of the society and, hence, a peasant movement was emerged, under the leadership of Mohammad Afzal Khan Bangash in 1970s, which succeeded in providing democratic life to peasants of NH.*

*Afzal Bangash, Mohammad Afzal Khan Bangash was born at Niazi Street, located near Bannu bazaar of Kohat of KP on April 16, 1924. Since from his early age, it was aroused, under the influence of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement (KKM, henceforth), in him a smoldering sense of protest and, thus, the political environment around contributed to construct his politico-nationalistic and anti-imperialistic sentiments that led to cultivate tremendously to increase his love for freedom movement. Following his graduation in Law from Law College Lahore, Punjab University, he took active part in various political platforms: from Muslim League to Mazdoor Kisan Party (MKP, henceforth). During his graduation in Law, he was greatly influenced by national-democratic, progressive and revolutionary literature such as People's War. Later on, he began attending several Marxist study circles, studied literature of Russian Bolshevik peasant and workers' leadership and thus these things contributed a lot in transforming his nationalist-progressive thought into a more revolutionary Bolshevik thought that led him to successfully develop a peasant movement against ruthless oppressions of big landowners under the flag of MKP at NH during 1963-1979.*

**Keywords:** North Hashtnagar, Topography and Class structure, Oppressions, Poor Peasants, Russian Bolshevism, Strategies and Tactics

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<sup>1</sup> Material of this conference paper is extracted from the author's Ph D dissertation.

## 1 Introduction

Hashtnagar, meaning eight villages, encompasses a huge portion in Tehsil Charsadda, situated at district Peshawar of KP. It is extended 10 miles eastward from the River Swat, and expanded from the north hills to the River Kabul on the south. It comprises of eight villages including: Tangi including *Maira* (high plain), Sherpao, Turangzai, Umerzai, Uthmanzai, Razar, Charsadda and Prang (S. Fazal Dayan, personal communication, December 02, 2006).<sup>2</sup> These villages have further stretched into various sub localities over the passage of time. Tangi including *Maira* is known as NH, whereas, the rest of seven villages together constitute the area of the South Hashtnagar. The entire land area of NH is estimated 86266 acres, 7 kanal and 4 Marlas, representing fifty three villages (mauzas) and twenty five circles (Record of office of Tehsildar, 1926-27). In NH, land for arable cultivation is about 67621 acre, 7 kanal and 10 Marlas including 50768 acre, 3 kanal and 7 Marlas irrigated, whereas, the total un-irrigated land in NH is 16853 acre, 4 kanal and 3 Marlas (Record office of Tehsildar, 1926-27).

The total area of NH is about from twelve to fourteen miles long and from eight to ten mile wide. Almost whole of the area is fertile and well irrigated producing major crops including Sugar Beet, Corn, Virginia Tobacco and Sugarcane. However, un-irrigated portion of the NH is famous mostly for growing Wheat. The area of NH is thickly populated including important villages apart from Tangi: Shakoor, Behram Dheri, Mandani, Dhaki, and Harichand (Weekly Sanobar, October 23, 1970). NH is further subdivided into two sections: Tangi *Maira* and Proper Tangi, which are separated from one another by the lower Swat irrigation canal (Imperial Gazetteer of India, NWFP, 2002; Amin, personal communication, November 13, 2006). The entire area of Tangi *Maira* includes: 65423 acre, 5 Kanal and 6 Marlas, which is irrigated by upper Swat canal, whereas, Tangi Proper, including 9420 acre, 5 Kanal and 12 Marlas in area, is irrigated by lower Swat canal. The remaining area of NH is called *Sholgira*, measuring around 11423 acre, 4 Kanal and 6 Marlas (S. Fazal Dayan, 2012).

In North of the NH lies the tribal territory, Malakand Agency lies on its North east and some of the tribal territories, such as UthmanKhel, Safi and Mohmand, lie at its North West, District Dir lies short of tribal areas and to the West lies Afghanistan, however, the Proper Tangi is situated 29 miles north of Peshawar (Weekly Sanobar, 1970). It has a police station of the first class and the inhabitants are comprised of mostly Mohammadzai Pathan (Noor-ul-Zafar, personal communication, March 02, 2007). Around six to eight big landowners and twenty to thirty small landowners lived in NH (Haider Khan, personal communication, March 19, 2007). This landownership, including *Panjotra* (5% of the land tax), had been acquired by the big landowners from the British as a compensation for services to them. These services included: collecting *Abiana* (water tax) and *Malia* (land tax) both in proper Tangi as well as in *Maira* Tangi. Big landowners included: Faqir Khan (jarib 4000=2000 acres) of Barazai, Khan Behadur Mir Alam Khan (owning jarib 18000 equivalent to 9000 acres) and Mohammad Ali Khan (jarib 30000=15000 acres), Abdul Akbar Khan (jarib 16000=8000 acres), Ghulam Ahmad Jan Khan (jarib 4000=2000 acres) of Nasratzai and some others (Register Dakhil-wa-Kharij of Numerdaran, 1926-27). Each big landowner possessed around sixty to a hundred *kacha* (mud) houses for his servants, known as *Faqirano* or *Hamsaya Koruna* or *Faqir Nama*. The servants, comprising mostly of poor peasants 50% along with their families, lived in those mud-houses without paying any rent. Whereas, other rural professionals classes including *chamyar* (cobbler), *lohar* (blacksmith), *nai* (barber) shopkeepers, merchants and others also used to live and provide unpaid services to their landowners (Amin, personal communication, November 13, 2006).

The agrarian class structure in NH comprised of 05% of big landowners, possessing almost thousands of acres of land from the whole of the area. Whereas, 95% of the peasants were non-owners including 10%, lease-holding peasants, 40% middle peasants and 50% poor peasants in peasantry class structure of NH. Moreover, half of the 95% of the no-owners included farm or agriculture workers (rural proletariat), however, no factory was existed in the area at the beginning of the peasant movement in NH (Nashr-wa-Ishaat Committee, 1974).

Big landowners used to inflict various kinds of oppressions on poor peasants including: *baigar* (unpaid work), *Tip* (mandatory extraction of 5% from wheat and 10% from maize crop in kind), *Tora* (a matrimonial tax taken on the occasion of marriage in peasant family), presenting two chickens to Khan before sowing and after reaping harvest, a lamb presented to Khan at occasion of marriage in Khan's family, trees standing on land were property of Khan, women of peasants performed *baigar* at residence of Khan, *Ser Mani* (taken as share of 1/40<sup>th</sup> from every 40 kg of wheat), *Qula* (a kind of share from heap of wheat), *Babat-e-Barnaqi* {a share taken from wheat crop, maize crop and *gur* (raw sugar) without any reason}, *Pashgi* {an advance payment to Khan as a security at time of agreement between peasant and Khan for land given on lease or *Nisf-e-Batai* (half and half in share of crop)} (Mohammad, personal communication, 2012) wearing of clean and neat cloths were not allowed to peasants, beating, harassments, and eviction of peasants from the land and so on (Nashr-wa-Ishaat Committee, 1974).

This paper is confined to area of NH alone where peasant movement was emerged, under the leadership of Mohammad Afzal Khan Bangash, during 1963-1979. Moreover, I assessed impact of Russian Bolshevism on political thought of Afzal Bangash in developing strategies and tactics to organize and build up Peasant Movement at NH during 1963-1979. Moreover, this study used two research tools, such as Personal Interviews and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) along with secondary sources. For personal interviews, I conducted structured, semi-structured, unstructured, open-ended and hand-written interviews carrying mostly similar and dissimilar questions. I also used the second tool of FGD to remove any personal bias, prejudice and exaggeration from the collected research through personal interviews for achieving optimum results, thorough and insight understanding with regard to various views on the study under investigation.

Qualitative research method was adopted for collection of data by using snowball or chain referral technique. Following this technique in field research, I came to quickly know other people possessing similar information. This technique helped me to locate, contact and substantiate the eligibility of the potentials of the new and specific respondents relating the peasant movement through independent sources, who knew the respondents. It also helped to activate and develop the pace of the data collection and maintain quality of the data relevant to the study by limiting number of the respondents up till the satisfaction of the objectives of the study.

These personal interviews and FGDs were recorded in written form and, hence, this recorded data was transcribed. During transcription of the material, special emphasis was laid upon the body language of the respondents, such as facial gestures and hand movements, which gave clear indication of the authenticity of spoken response to the research problem. These things gave a better insight into the respondent's state of mind and a kind of litmus test about whether he was exaggerating or telling the truth. The material, which was most repeated in these interviews and FGDs, took up the shape of themes relevant to the objectives of the study. These themes were codified and, hence, a synthesis was extracted.

Mohammad Afzal Khan Bangash was born at *Niazi* Street, located near *Bannu* bazaar of Kohat on April 16, 1924 (Widow of Afzal Bangash, personal communication, 2006; Sabir, S, M, ND). The ancestral village of Afzal Bangash was *Shadikhel*, situated at fifteen kilometers south of Kohat. His father, Mohammad Akbar Khan, a prosperous peasant, was a *patwari* (land record clerk) (Riffat Khalid, personal communication, 2006; Lodhi, 1986) owing to his limited education upto 12<sup>th</sup> class, however, he improved his education by earning degree of law in 1934 and became a professional lawyer later on (Directorate of Archives, 1954-74). Akbar Khan was, in his entire life, a man of religious views following spiritual leader Syed Ahmad alias *Pir Kabuli Baba* (Riffat, 2006). Father of Afzal Bangash owned land, ranging from twenty five to forty jirib (20 acres). Whereas, the great grandfather of Afzal Bangash, Mehbood Khan, was a sepoy in the British Army, who had two sons

and a daughter including: Chontar Khan (elder son) and Abdul Jabbar Khan (younger son) (M. Akbar, personal communication, 2007).

Following his death, his great grandfather's widow decided to migrate from *Shadikhel* to Kohat town together with her children. Shortly afterwards, she struggled hard to buy land for constructing a house at *Niazi Street*, with whatever money she had, and settled gardeners beside her place for her own protection (Bangash, K, K, 1988). Subsequently, her children also started getting early education at Kohat. Chontar Khan received education upto sixth class, whereas, her younger son Abdul Jabbar Khan (grandfather of Afzal Bangash) improved his education upto eighth class. As a result, Chontar Khan became a clerk at Municipality of Kohat, whereas, Abdul Jabbar Khan posted initially as clerk at the Courts of Kohat, however, he was promoted to become a file-reader with Deputy Commissioner of Kohat later on (Khan, Z, M., 1990-92).

Family of Abdul Jabbar was comprised of three sons together with six daughters. His sons included: Sarwar Khan, Abdul Qudoos Khan and Mohammad Akbar Khan. Abdul Qudoos was, amongst his sons, unmarried and a lawyer by profession, whereas, both Sarwar Khan and Mohammad Akbar Khan were married. Akbar Khan had three wives: Khanzadi Jan (real mother of Afzal Bangash), Khawar Sultan and Mehr Sultan. In 1980, Akbar died and left a huge family of ten children including: three sons and seven daughters. Mohammad Afzal Khan Bangash was his eldest son, who had two real sisters and with no real brother (Widow of Afzal Bangash, April 2006).

Parents of Afzal Bangash did their best to provide him all-around education. Afzal Bangash entered Islamia Primary School of Kohat, from where, he passed primary school certificate and qualified to get admission at Islamia High School of Kohat later on (M. Akbar, 2007). In 1936, he entered Government High School of Kohat and continued studying up till he passed his school leaving examination from that institute in 1940 (Lodhi, 1986). Subsequently, he was admitted in Islamia College, Peshawar in late 1940s and passed Higher School Secondary Certificate (HSSC) (Islamia College Peshawar, 1939-40). Later, he also did Bachelor of Arts (graduation) from the same institute, under class number 29, in April, 1944 after studying four successive years.

Following his graduation, he moved to Lahore (Punjab) and entered Law College of Punjab University, Lahore in 1944. After earning degree in law (Notification Register No. 47, 1946-47), he moved back to Peshawar and began practicing law in 1948 at lower courts, Peshawar (Sabir, ND). Following three years of successive professional performance, he was enrolled amongst the advocates' nomenclature working at High Court of Peshawar Division in February, 1951 (List of Advocates of Peshawar Division, ND). From 1945 to 1986, he also took an active part in politics at various political fronts including: Muslim League (from 1945 to 1947), *Sarhad Awami League* (from 1951 to 1957), National *Awami Party* (NAP, henceforth) (from 1957 to 1968), *Mazdoor Kisan Party* (from 1968 to 1986), *Sind-Pakhtun-Baluch-Front* (from 1985 to 1986) and *Awami National Party* (1986). On October 29, 1986, he died of cardiac arrest at the age of sixty nine in Peshawar (The Daily Mashriq, 1986).

## **2 Development of political thought of Afzal Bangash**

Afzal Bangash's childhood and youth coincided with anti-British and freedom loving tendencies that led him to develop anti-imperialistic sentiments later on. Thus, he had both spiritual and intellectual yearnings for freedom from the very beginning. Afzal Bangash's outlook was crystallized during early period of his age under immense influence of cultivating at his grand great uncle, Chontar Khan and Gul Mohammad (his father's friend and class-fellow at faculty of law), who strongly supported anti-British freedom fighters such as Mohammad Ali Johar, King Amanullah and Anwar Pasha (K. Aurangzeb, personal communication, 2007 ). Afzal Bangash paid immense attention to his great grand uncle's stories against the ruthless rule of the British Indian government (Riffat, 2006).

This was a period, when national and anti-imperialist movements, spreading libertarian and democratic ideas, such as Indian National Congress led by Mohan Das Gandhi and Jawahir Lal Nehru, All India Muslim League (AIML, henceforth) led by Mohammad Ali Johar, KKM led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Khaksar Movements led by Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi were at their height of fame (Sabir, ND). By then, the British Imperialism had taken a foothold, and burden of nationalist-colonial oppression weighed overwhelmingly. The survivals of feudalism were still strong, where ruthless landlords savagely exploited poor peasants of the country, which contributed to aggravate imperialist oppression (Akbar Ji, personal communication, 2006).

Hence, he began working out meaning of things at his early age that aroused in Afzal Bangash a smoldering sense of protest and thus the political environment around contributed to construct his politico-nationalistic and anti-imperialistic sentiments that led to cultivate tremendously to increase his love for freedom movement. For instance, Afzal Bangash had the opportunity to closely study the KKM movement, whose drum demonstrations were especially moving (Khan, Z, 1990-92). Similarly, during the visit of Gandhi and Nehru to KP in 1938, Peshawar resounded with cries of '*long live Gandhi*' and '*long live Nehru*' as local leaders vocally demonstrated their love for their national leaders (Khan, Z, 1990-92). These national and anti-imperialist sentiments led him to join student wing of Muslim League (Riffat, 2006) i.e. Muslim Student Federation (MSF) (Mirza, H, S, 1991) later on during his stay at Law College of Punjab University in 1945 in Lahore. Hence, he worked hard and took an active part in freedom movement as member of the advance guard of MSF during 1945-1947 (The Daily Mashriq, 1986).

Afzal Bangash got affiliated at Law College with progressive-minded class-fellows, who all had come from Islamia College of Peshawar, along with senior students of Law College (I. Yasir, personal communication, March 28, 2006). These included: Abdul Aziz of Mardan (Chairman of World Colonial and All India Student Congress Committee), Mohammad Safdar of Mardan, Mohib-ur-Rehman of Kohat and Mohammad Aslam Virk of Sialkot (Khan, Z, 1990-92) and, whereas, senior students such as Sardar Shaukat Ali (1923-2003) (member of Communist Party of India from 1943 and president of the Branch of All India Student Federation at Qasur) (Ali, S, S, 2012) and Sultan Ahmad Qasir, who were also resided at the same hostel (Ali, S, S, 2012). Afzal Bangash and his seniors, such as Abdullah Malik, Shoukat Ali and Eric Sipren used to associate with one another by taking meals and tea together at premises of the college. His senior friends also supplied some of the national-democratic, progressive and revolutionary literature, such as Peoples' War (an organ of Communist Party of India), to Afzal Bangash (M.Abdur Rauf, personal communication, 2006). Shortly afterwards, Afzal Bangash attended Marxist study-groups with his senior hostel-fellows and also held heated debates on the consistent struggle of revolutionaries such as Marx, Lenin and Stalin against feudalism and capitalism. These study-groups exerted a great influence on Afzal Bangash instilling him a taste for national revolutionary literature, thus, he became a regular subscriber of two of the progressive news papers such as Peoples War and *Qoumi Jang* (National War) together with a weekly magazine *Jung-i-Azadi* (Freedom War) (Rauf, 2006). Thus, his regular attendance, at Marxist study-groups and reading progressive literature, contributed a lot in shaping his embryonic socialist revolutionary views (Lodhi, 1986).

Following getting degree in law, he moved back to Peshawar in 1948 and began practicing at law courts of Peshawar. It was a time during his legal career in KP, when Pashtun local intellectuals had established a progressive, nationalist-democratic and literary society, such as *Ulas Adabi Jirga* (UAJ, henceforth) (Naveed, B, N, 1994), in 1951 (Monthly "Aslam", 1951) with the cause of promoting Pashto language and literature, cultivating Pashtun traditions and paving way for objective criticism (Adeeb, K, A, 1991). Members of UAJ included: Raza Hamdani, Sanobar Hussain Kakaji (1897-1963), Sardar Khan Fana (b.1932), Farigh Bukhari (1917-1981), Dost Mohammad Kamil (1915-1981), Ajmal Khattak (1926-2008), Amir Hamza Shinwari (1907-1994) (Ghaznavi, K, 1976) Qalandar Mohammad (b. 1930), Mehdi Shah (1926-1996), Zia Jaffery, Abdul Wali Khan, Master Abdul Karim (1908-1961), Hamesh Gul Hamesh (1945), Hussein Bakhsh Kausar (1922-1991), Habibullah Mian

Gujar, and Abdul Khaliq Kahleeq (1895-1978) and so on (Sardar Khan, personal communication, 2007).

Afzal Bangash got in-touch with these progressive-minded local intellectuals (Abdul Shakoor, personal communication, 2007), enrolled also as member of the Society and, thus, took an active part in conducting literary debates and discussions as well as spreading progressive thoughts amongst youth of KP. The most unique thing about the Society was that it had united progressive elements from all over KP having different political ideologies (Deewana, K, A, 1993). Afzal Bangash attended numerous meetings of UAJ regularly from February 1952 to April 1957 (Adeeb, 1991; Hasrat, Z, M, 1998) at different places including: the office of monthly magazine “*Aslam*” and the Balakhana (office) of Dost Mohammad Khan Kamil at Peshawar (Directorate of Archives, Bundle No. 08).

During the course of developing his progressive-nationalist political thought, he also joined *Sarhad Awami League* (Khan, Z, 1990-92) (formed in 1949, SAL, henceforth) (Aziz, K, K, 2007) under the leadership of *Pir* of Manki Sharif on account of its anti-feudal and democratic programme. He considered SAL as useful platform to propagate land reforms through its limit of landownership to 250 acres irrigated and 500 acres arid land (Aziz, 2007). Shortly afterwards, he became an elected member of its Provincial Working Committee (Khan, Z, 1990-92). Later, he also penned a draft constitution of SAL and its important clauses that included: people democratic system based on Islamic principles, struggle for complete political and economic freedom, and struggle for oppressed classes to perform economic justice. All of these clauses clearly demonstrated his anti-feudal, democratic and early reformist tendencies (Directorate of Archives, Bundle No. 08). However, Afzal Bangash left this organization later on, because he considered that it was not a politically homogeneous organization and most of its members continued to prolong survivals of feudalism (Widow of Afzal Bangash, 2006).

Later, he stepped ahead to join National *Awami Party* (NAP, henceforth) in 1957 under leadership of petite landlord Abdul Wali Khan and became strong promoter of its comparatively progressive-agrarian programme. Its agrarian programme advocated in 1965: agrarian reforms on large scale allowing maximum limit for landownership up to 150 acres of irrigated and 300 acres of arid land, exemption from land tax (*malia*) on small land holdings up to twelve and a half acres, provision of appropriate price to peasants for their agriculture produce, protection of peasants’ right to farming, provision of improved agriculture implements, seeds and farming animals, granting loan on flexible conditions, and introduction of cooperative farming (Sarhad National Awami Party, 1965). He had been an elected member of NAP’s Central Executive Committee with effect from 1957 to 1964, and later remained its General Secretary from 1964 to 1968 (Kaka, K, M, 1970). Moreover, he himself reports in “*Mung Ao Manzi (We and Destination)*” as General Secretary of NAP in 1965 that some of the clauses of NAP’s programme included: establishing peoples’ democracy, socialism and economic justice through parliamentary, constitutional and peaceful way (Bangash, A, ND).

In a FGD with Aimal and Ajmal Bangash (sons of Afzal Bangash), Salar Ahmad Ali (leader of youth and militant wing at NH during peasant movement), Akbar Khan (leader of militant wing of peasant movement at Mardan) and widow of Afzal Bangash, Afzal Bangash also succeeded in forming a minority group of professional revolutionaries with the object of abolishing feudalism altogether during the course of developing anti-feudal and democratic agrarian programme inside NAP (FGD, 2007). It was the time, when Afzal Bangash used to read Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist literature for expanding his knowledge during 1960s. This literature included: the Communist Manifesto and Das Capital of Karl Marx; Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State of Fredrik Engels; What the Friends of the People Are and How They Fight Social Democrats, To the Rural Poor, Where to Begin and What Is to Be Done of Lenin; A Short History of Communist Party of the Soviet Union by Soviet writers; Foundations of Leninism of Joseph Stalin; Peking Review of Peoples Republic of China and many others (I. Yasir, personal communication, 2006).

Similarly, he was also acquainted himself especially with Lenin-Stalin’s literature against trends of trade unionism, opportunism and economism amongst peasants. This literature together with hard



work of local political revolutionaries, such as Khushal Khan Kaka (a KKM activist and member of Central Committee of Communist Party of India) and Sanobar Hussain Kakaji, made a tremendous impression on him (Ali, 2012). Afzal Bangash also broadened his theoretical interests by widely reading political philosophy, history, political economy and the classical social revolutions. It contributed in training him to transform his nationalist thought into a more revolutionary Bolshevik thought and, hence, he became an educated Marxist revolutionary (Abdul Shakoor, personal communication, 2007).

Afzal Bangash, along with his adherents, continued to intensively propagate to organize poor peasants into peasant committees at NH from 1963 to 1968 (I. Yasir, 2006). His aim was to drag peasants into practical-political struggle for the achievements of their economic rights through revolutionary peasant movement. However, NAP's leadership kept strictly watching his secret, revolutionary and pro-peasant activities. Since, NAP's leadership believed in establishing their programme of economic agrarian reforms by means of election and thus opposed the idea of forming peasant committees, revolutionary socialism and dragging peasants into practical struggle. Hence, they expelled Afzal Bangash on March 17, 1968 along with his adherents from NAP for organizing peasant committees and revolutionary socialism (Kaka, K, M, 1970).

Afzal Bangash had become one of the prominent leading supporters in organizing peasant movement. However, his proposal for creating a class-based party of workers and peasants, on urgent basis, occupied a central place in all debates and discussions of peasants' leadership. Subsequently, he began taking active part to discuss organizational structure of the party in meetings with local and national revolutionary leadership of the peasants (I. Yasir, 2006). Peasant leadership, organizational structure of the party was to comprise of two sections including: first section of small but ideological circle of leading, prominent and professional revolutionaries such as Afzal Bangash, Sher Ali Bacha, Ghulam Nabbi Kallu, Ishaq Mohammad, Abdus Sattar and Ziarat Gul, whereas, second section was an extensive network of local peasants' organization of the party for securing support and sympathy of poor peasants (Shamas, K, personal communication, January 05, 2007). Afzal Bangash's consistent and integrated struggle, for building the party, brought to an end and, hence, he eventually succeeded in establishing an independent class-based party of workers and peasants or *Mazdoor-Kisaan* Party (MKP, henceforth) on May 01, 1968 (Kaka, K, M, 1970).

It was in the greatest interest of peasants to have a separate political organization of their own, therefore, Afzal Bangash enjoyed immense affection and admiration of the peasants including rich peasants, sharecroppers, agriculture workers and landless peasants. Subsequently, he began to train the most advanced and revolutionary segment (lease-holding rich peasants) amongst layers of the entire peasantry as well as allocated them responsibility to locally lead the peasant movement at NH. Side by side, he also maintained that peasant movement must be supervised and led by urban workers (Qazi, M, Anwar, personal communication, 2006).

Notwithstanding identifying different layers amongst peasants, he also advocated MKP's two-staged theoretical revolutionary programme of peasant movement for bringing radical agrarian reforms and also formulated immediate aim of peasant movement. Afzal Bangash pointed out that "*first stage of peasant movement aimed at establishing peoples' democracy i.e. establishing democratic and political rights, whereas, the ultimate stage of peasant movement was to establish socialism*". He also maintained that the first stage would be bourgeois-democratic and anti-feudal. It would aim at rooting out feudalism together with its remnants and promoting agrarian capitalist relations (Professor Zafar, personal communication, 2006).

For instance, it would allow rich peasant economy by limiting landownership to 50 acres of irrigated and 100 acres of arid land; and distribute land amongst landless peasants (Maseeh, W, 1970). To proceed to the ultimate stage i.e. establishment of socialism, could only be possible after abolishment of feudalism and creation of democratic environment. He considered both the stages inevitable and

inseparable to each other. However, he consistently emphasized that peasant movement would fail to establish bourgeois-democratic stage without leadership of urban workers (Maseeh, W, 1970). Though, he maintained that MKP was depending upon strength of peasants because they were in greater number, however, urban workers would supervise and lead to complete bourgeois-democratic stage before switching over to the stage of Socialism. Afzal Bangash, in his pamphlet “*Awami Jamhoori Inqilab, Socialist Inqilab Ao Da Mazdoor Tabke Da Qayadat Masala*” (Peoples Democratic Revolution, Socialist Revolution and Question of Urban Workers’ Leadership), urged for utilization of revolutionary capability and strength of advanced and revolutionary peasants to accomplish first stage of peasant movement in alliance with urban workers, because he considered peasants were the most reliable ally of urban workers. He also urged peasants to remain united under MKP and conducted meetings, processions and congresses to weaken trade unionist and opportunist trends amongst them (Bangash, A, ND).

It was his immediate aim to found a class-based newspaper and party organ to achieve the objectives of MKP because he always considered that no broad organization of peasant movement could be possible without a party organ (I. Yasir, 2006). Hence, MKP’s press organ i.e. *Sanobar*, after name of Sanobar Hussain Kakaji, appeared on weekly basis and closely connected with rest of the peasant leadership of Pakistan. Moreover, it applied principles of political struggle for winning over considerations of progressive and democratic elements by reflecting plight of poor peasants of NH, inconsiderate attitude of their landlords towards them, alliance of peasants with urban workers and ultimate solution of the peasants’ problems. *Sanobar* used to be published regularly during early seventies of the twentieth century and succeeded in articulating aims of peasant movement, intensifying class struggle between poor peasants and landlords, and binding together progressive forces of Pakistan with the just cause of peasants’ struggle (Kaka, K, M, 1970). It seems Afzal Bangash’s urge for raising the level of peasants’ consciousness from amateurism to revolutionary political consciousness.

Afzal Bangash also urged to throw away primitive methods, old-styled parliamentary form of struggle, disprove constitutional delusion and legal conditions and, thus, he discarded it as a bourgeois-democratic way of achieving ends, a way of compromise with bourgeois and a tendency to opportunism. Consequently, he began organizing peasants’ youth into militant groups and crafted them with skillful professionalism. These militant groups included: *Naujawan Tanzeem* (youth organization) for implementing decisions of the party, *Janbaz* (dear devil) Force for using small arms and explosives and *Zahrila Tanzeem* (sinister organization). These organizations used proper code during struggle against landlords, escaped of arrest during police surveillance and arranged proper contacts through reliable means (FGD, 2007). However, these professional youth pledged to observe principle of extreme confidentiality till accomplishment of the task (Khan, Z, 1990-92). Hence, he envisaged MKP as a militant organization of steadfast fighters, who were ready either to work on a daily basis or combat by carrying arms in hands (Khan, Z, 1990-92).

Similarly, he also formulated organizational rules for those who wanted to join party, for instance, clause I of the party’s rules had established criterion for membership: any Pakistani worker, poor or mediocre peasant, handicraftsman and revolutionary intellectual attained the age 18 years, could become party member if “*he is ready to accept party programme, participate actively in one of party’s organization, act upon party decisions, submit to party discipline and contribute financially as party member*” (Maseeh, W, 1970). This formulation aimed at making the party well-ordered, disciplined and strong by hindering entry of unstable and anti-peasant elements. Clause III of party’s rules made it compulsory for party members to study and fully comprehend ideology of working class. Similarly, Rule No. V stated that “*democratic centralism is vital principle of the party’s organization directing each member to strictly observe party discipline*”. According to one of its principles, an individual must submit to organization, minority to majority and whole party to the Central Council. The rationale behind observance of strict party’s discipline was to avoid taking biased-decisions.

Following five years of peasant movement's struggle, Afzal Bangash also managed to organize MKP's congress at national level (Reporter, S, 1973). Afzal Bangash held, for instance, MKP's First National Congress on May 12-13, 1973 at *Sher Garh*, Mardan under presidency of Major Ishaq Mohammad. It became a milestone in political struggle of the peasants. Eminent peasant Comrade, such as Ghulam Nabi Kalu, was assigned to perform the duty of Stage Secretary for conducting the proceedings of the Congress (FGD, 2007). First sitting of the MKP's First National Congress was attended by a large number of delegates from Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan. Prominent leadership included: Major Ishaq Mohammad of Faisalabad (Lyallpur), Hafizullah Chaudari of Gujranwala, Fatu—president of MKP from Lahore, Babu Sharif of Lyallpur, Abdul Khaliq Khan MNA (PPP-Revolutionary Group of Mardan) and other members of PPP. However, it was held under impending threat of a ruthless action to crush it, as the meeting place had been surrounded on all four sides by heavily armed contingents of police and Militia (Nashr-wa-Ishaat, ND).

Following imposition of Martial Law by Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan in 1977, Afzal Bangash carefully reviewed his tactics applicable to new situation and, hence, he prepared MKP to actively take part in forthcoming election after consultation with party adherents. Meanwhile, he continued to propagate MKP's programme including: right of urban workers to constitute trade unions, restore democracy, redistribute lands amongst peasants and establish a welfare state (Iqbal, 1995-96).

Afzal Bangash urged peasants to cast their vote to those political parties, whose manifestos were identical to that of MKP, side by side, he also urged party workers to abide by Martial Law Regulations during the election (Salar, A, personal communication, 2007). He claimed MKP to be the representative of the poor and down-trodden classes, fighting for their rights in ongoing struggle of peasants against landlords and capitalists in a private meeting held at the Saw Mill of Mutalib Khan, *Mingora* of Swat on August 10, 1977. Prominent participants of the meeting included: Major (R) Ishaq Mohammad (Directorate of Archives, 1975), Shah Jehan and Behramand, who also expressed similar views in the meeting.

It was disclosed that after the Afghan (*Saur* Revolution in 1978), Afzal Bangash also continued to vehemently support Afghan *Saur* Revolution from April 1978 to December 1979. Afzal Bangash praised *Saur* Revolution at all meetings, either small or large in number of participants, and he also used to term it as his own revolution. Initially, he could not manage to develop direct contacts with Tarakai's government, however, Afghan government gradually developed contacts with him later on. Consequently, Afzal Bangash succeeded in concluding an agreement with the Administration of Tarakai to accelerate democratic and political struggle on one hand and, on the other, to provide training of armed struggle to peasants of KP (I. Yasir, 2006).

Meanwhile, Afzal Bangash conducted several meetings with his adherents, such as Faridullah and Inayatullah Yasir, to assess and develop tactics and strategy in the pursuit of their ultimate aim. Following their consensus, Afzal Bangash urged Faridullah to enlist volunteers from all over KP and prepared them for military training in Afghanistan. Consequently, Qadir Khan (Provincial President of MKP) received around one hundred and twenty young men at Kabul, belonging to different areas of KP such as Dir and Malakand and, hence, they successfully managed to provide military training to these young men (I. Yasir, 2006).

Afzal Bangash also started and edited a clandestine *Pushto* weekly magazine "*Sahar*" (Dawn) under pen name of Ahmad Ali and praised Afghan revolution in its editorial pages during the course of developing armed struggle with support of Afghanistan. This magazine also used to publish analytical essays of Dr. Feroz Ahmad (a progressive writer of Pakistan) about economic and political situation of Pakistan (Ahmad, F, June 1978). Similarly, Inayatullah Yasir also penned some of the editorials of the magazine. Manuscripts of the magazine were sent to Mohmand Agency to be printed on cyclostyle machine before distribution in both Pakistan and Afghanistan (Ali, A, S, ND).

*Sahar* managed to publish around 10 to 12 editions of the magazine and also the work of Noor Mohammad Tarakai such as “*Da Bang Musafiri*” and “*Sangsar*”. It also translated work of Tarakai’s “*Da Moashre Irteka*” (Evolution of Society) into Urdu. Though, this exercise continued for some time, however, things began cooling down owing to lack of interest from Tarakai’s Administration later on and, consequently, all these volunteers of armed struggle returned to Peshawar (I. Yasir, 2006).

Upon eventual return from Afghanistan, Afzal Bangash held a private meeting of peasants and party workers on July 11, 1979 at MKP office, Tehsil Bazar of Charssada. It was attended by about twenty four prominent participants including Afzal Bangash and Shamas Khan. They discussed the issue of arranging forthcoming Three-Day Second National Congress of MKP to be held from July 18 to 20, 1979 at Tangi of Charssada (Shamas, K, personal communication, 2007). Afzal Bangash advised the organizers to select a proper building for holding the Congress owing to strict restrictions on open meetings and persuaded them to give wide publicity to it (I. Yasir, 2006). Big sized Urdu posters had been distributed, containing main points of MKP agenda: to get rid of political, economic and cultural domination of imperialists, to set up heavy industries in public sector under the control of urban workers, to bring an end to feudal system by distributing land amongst peasants, to restore civil liberties, democracy and freedom of trade unionism, to provide equal opportunities of employment irrespective of region, language and culture, to release all political and trade union leaders and to pave way for establishing Workers-Peasants Rule through unity of sincere, progressive and leftist elements (Shamas, K, 2007).

On July 18, 1979, party leaders held Three-Day Second National Congress of MKP at the residence of Saif-ur-Rehman Bacha of *Mandani* Tangi. The Chairman of the Congress Afzal Bangash asserted importance of holding the Second National Congress of MKP despite facing numerous difficulties. He expressed his commitment to bring a radical change and rendered numerous sacrifices for rooting out feudalism in entirety (Directorate of Archives, 1975). As a result, MKP had become a popular party amongst other leftist parties in the entire country. He also criticized the landlords saying that they were not owners of land but the land belonged to peasants alone. However, he stressed to forbid owning more than 50 jarib (25 acres) of land. Side by side, he stressed the need for creating unity amongst ranks of peasants in order to accomplish their revolution. In his speech, he remained critical of the leadership of National Democratic Party, who opposed programme of MKP (Directorate of Archives, 1975).

Shamas Khan reports in his personal diary that on the second day of the Second National Congress, Afzal Bangash was elected Central President of MKP (Khan, S, 1979). Afzal Bangash pledged to struggle for bringing up the revolution to improve the lot of masses during the concluding session of the Congress. Afzal Bangash also promised to bring unity and continue to cooperate with progressive parties of Pakistan in their struggle (I. Yasir, 2006). Meanwhile, police registered case vide FIR No. 831 dated July 28, 1979 under Military Law Regulation 13 at *Tangi* Police Station against Afzal Bangash and Fateh Yab Ali for delivering objectionable speeches in MKP’s Three-Day Congress (Khan, Z, 1990-92). Before police succeeded to arrest, Afzal Bangash escaped to avoid arrest. Later, he managed to go abroad in 1980 and remained there for longer period of six years (Khan, Z, 1990-92).

During his prolong stay of six years in London; he adopted new tactics to suit to the conditions and decided to continue political struggle by enlisting democratic elements in the movement and, hence, conducted a meeting, with Sardar Attaullah Mengal, Mumtaz Bhatto and Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, in April 1985 to constitute an alliance of *Sind-Baluch-Pakhtun-Front* (SBPF, henceforth) at Birmingham (Bangash's son in law house) (Lodhi, M, 1985). The main objectives of the SBFP included: to continue struggle to create a confederal structure for Pakistan and raise slogans for rights of small and oppressed nationalities (Iqbal, 1995-96). Later, he joined SBPF, in his individual capacity, with no prior approval of the senior adherents of his party at Peshawar. On his return to Peshawar, he invited members of MKP to discuss for bringing unity at the idea of SBFP, however, his party adherents were, by no means, ready to agree and even reject idea of the draft altogether proclaiming that it would

ultimately lead to sink MKP (Lodhi, M, 1986). Afzal Bangash gave his interview to the Daily Muslim held on March 13, 1986 and expressed his wish to make an alliance of political parties with similar ideologies before mergence of the leftist elements in one and single party of Pakistan (I. Yasir, 2006). Afzal Bangash also expressed that “*this alliance should function for at least six month before it unite together on permanent basis*” (Iqbal, A, 1986).

### **3 Impact of Russian Bolshevism on political thought of Afzal Bangash: an assessment**

Afzal Bangash seemingly borrowed not only ideology but also tactics from Russian Bolshevism and adapted to develop peasant movement at NH according to the cultural and historical objective realities of the area (Aimal, personal communication, 2006). Specific impact of the Russian Bolshevism can be identified on Afzal Bangash in the subsequent paragraphs. Afzal Bangash followed Bolshevik tactics during the course of the peasant movement. For instance, firstly, he devoted himself to develop strong connections amongst peasants, to understand their socio-economic and political problems, to present a revolutionary theory suiting to their specific conditions, to acquire their sympathies and determine ways and means how to achieve the ultimate aim of the struggle. Eventually, his struggle opened their eyes, strengthened, encouraged and succeeded them in leading the movement. It also enabled them to root out feudalism through armed struggle and exercise freely their democratic and political rights (FGD, 2006; Lenin, V, I, January 1902-August 1903).

Secondly, Afzal Bangash united scattered peasants, sharecroppers and agriculture workers into peasant committees or trade unions, and transformed their economic trends (Lenin, CW, Vol. 05) into practical-political struggle by working together with urban workers under leadership of class-based party of MKP (Shamas, 2007; Lenin, CW, Vol. 06) Thirdly, Afzal Bangash also borrowed some principal rules from the Russian Bolshevism to perfectly establish discipline and apply effective techniques for development of party organization (Pospelov, N, P, et all, 1966). Fourthly, Afzal Bangash urged peasants to pass on the appropriate stage of developing agrarian capitalism before establishment of socialist stage (Siraj, personal communication, 2005; Pospelov, N, P, et all, 1966). Fifthly, Afzal Bangash managed to provide training to militant groups and supply them weapons for flaring up armed struggle and offensive sporadic operations against landlords (Lenin, CW, Vol. 10). Sixthly, Afzal Bangash launched a weekly newspaper i.e. *Sanober* to propagate socio-economic and political plight of peasants, kindle and consolidate the movement as well as mould opinion of the progressive and democratic elements of the society for raising their voice and working together for democratic rights of peasants (Lenin, CW, Vol. 04; Pospelov, N, P, et all, 1966). Seventhly, Afzal Bangash reviewed his tactics with regard to election during Martial law regime and decided to actively use parliamentary way for revolutionary propaganda. By then, he began advocating: to establish an alliance with those political parties of the left, which represented either democratic programme or whose programmes were similar to MKP (Professor Anwaar, personal communication, 2007; Lenin, CW, Vol. 09).

Eighthly, his urge for initiating a common struggle for democracy, therefore, he brought together various democratic political parties of Pakistan (I. Yasir, 2006; Lenin, CW, Vol. 10). Ninthly, Afzal Bangash became an active member of the SBFP, which urged to strengthen right of each national minority by providing them representation through SBFP (FGD, 2007; Lenin, CW, Vol. 10). Finally, Afzal Bangash also envisaged a plan to establish an independent people’s republic of KP with a view to confiscate and nationalize all lands, distribute these lands amongst peasants and form agricultural committees for landless peasants (Lenin, CW, 1965), however, the idea had never been operationalized due to lack of support from *Khalqi* (Tarakai) government in Afghanistan (I. Yasir, 2006).

#### **4 Assessment of Afzal Bangash's strategy and tactics during peasant moment**

Afzal Bangash, as an active member of NAP, pursued tactics of progressive nationalism and legitimate way of struggle due to absence of direct and open clash of peasants with big landowners. Side by side, he continued his struggle to create socio-political awareness amongst peasants of NH from 1963 to 1968 (Siraj, 2005). Afzal Bangash transformed amateurishness of peasants and their ideological bewilderment into a united front against big landowners and built a separate party of Workers and Peasants (Jamal, R, personal communication, 2005). Afzal Bangash also established a press organ of peasant movement to expose liberal bourgeois attitude of NAP on one side and, on the other, plight of poor peasants. He disseminated ideological and tactical unity amongst peasants (I. Yasir, 2006).

Following political inspiration from Russian Bolshevism, he borrowed some of its basic strategies and tactics and, hence, he mapped out his plan of action to push and direct the peasants according to the understanding of the socio-economic conditions of NH. Though, he adopted numerous changing but genuine tactics, however, his strategic plan for achievement of objectives, remained unchanged, during first stage of the entire peasant movement. Afzal Bangash's revolutionary and changing tactics included: to build up class consciousness amongst the peasants and deepen it through various means such as formation of peasant committees; to intensify class struggle between peasants and big landowners through raising aggressive slogans and holding political demonstration, strikes and national congresses; to properly train and prepare the advanced section of the peasants for initiating an organized armed struggle against big landowners; and to wait for attack the targeted big landowners, when their forces were scattered and he also utilized all possible means to begin with full courage, surprise and destroy the enemy up till accomplishment of the first stage of the movement (FGD, 2007).

Side by side, Afzal Bangash also neutralized small landowners during the entire movement, by means of making an alliance of peasants with agriculture workers, under leadership of MKP. Thereby, he consummated first stage of the peasant movement and accomplished the primary objectives by weakening the influence of big landowners, establishing political-democratic rights for peasants and transforming to create agrarian capitalist relations. However, he could have done more to transform peasant movement from democratic-bourgeois stage to accomplish the ultimate stage of peasant movement i.e. Socialism (Jamal, R, 2005).

#### **5 Summary**

Impact of Russian Bolshevism was significantly identified on Afzal Bangash as he borrowed some of the principles of Russian Bolshevism and applied precisely according to the local socio-economic conditions of NH under supervision of MKP. For instance, he organized scattered peasants, conducted study-circles, held public meetings, set up a class-based weekly newspaper for reflecting the socio-economic conditions of poor peasants and spurred the movement according to genuine principles of peasant revolution. Eventually, he succeeded to weaken influence of feudal lords, establish individual landownership, achieve political and democratic rights for peasants and promote agrarian capitalist relations at NH.

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