

**Communist Dignitaries of the NWFP: Role in the Freedom
Movement 1901-1947**



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“Communist Dignitaries of the NWFP: Role in the Freedom Movement 1901-1947” A dissertation submitted to the National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of ‘Master of Philosophy in Pakistan Studies.’

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CERTIFICATE

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DECLARATION

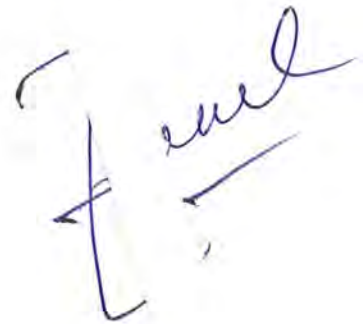
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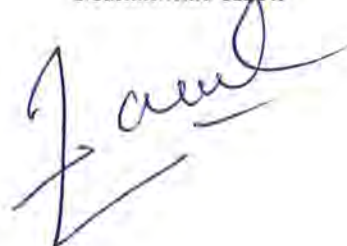
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While benefiting from the generosity and wisdom of numerous mentors and well-wishers, any errors, deficiencies, or imbalances that may persist within this thesis are solely my responsibility.

Muhammad Kabir



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AITUC: All-India Trade Union Congress
- ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- BRI: Belt and Road Initiative
- CPI: Communist Party of India
- CPI(M): Communist Party of India (Marxist)
- CPR(B): Communist Party of Russia (Bolshevik)
- CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- EU: European Union
- FCR: Frontier Crimes Regulation
- FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas
- GDP: Gross Domestic Product
- GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council
- GKU: Girni Kamgar (Red Flag) Union, Bombay
- HDI: Human Development Index
- ICP: Indian Communist Party
- INC: Indian National Congress
- ILO: International Labour Organization
- IR: International Relations
- IPTA: Indian People's Theater Association
- KKP: Kirti-Kisan Party
- KP: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
- ML: Muslim League
- NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

- NWFP: North-West Frontier Province
- PWA: Progressive Writers' Association
- SAD: Shiromani Akali Dal
- SCF: Scheduled Caste Federation
- SGPC: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee
- UN: United Nations
- UK: United Kingdom
- UP: United Provinces
- USA: United States of America
- USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- WPP: Workers' and Peasants' Party
- WWII: World War II

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Introduction

January 1, 1901 has been a significant day in the annals of the Pashtuns people since it was the date Lord Curzon¹ authorized the creation of a new Pashtuns provincial status of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).² On that same day, other British and Pashtuns experts began erecting the Pashtuns institutional strategy. The Pashtuns of British India's NWFP adopted peaceful struggle to oppose oppression and seek freedom for their motherland during India's fight for independence after a violent as well as turbulent history.³ Pashtuns, who primarily inhabit Afghanistan and the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent's NWFP region, have a reputation for being brave, primitive and tribal. When Britain conquered this region in 1848, they divided it into two sections: the tribal area, where people continued to live their customary lives with less intrusion from outsiders, and the settled areas, which were under to rigorous government rule (council). Later, the British became concerned about the threat posed by Russia's approach to India and the internal upheaval in the NWFP, so in 1893 they built the Durand Line to keep Russia out of their empire. The governor of Punjab had administrative control over the settled districts, while the tribal regions had a degree of autonomy. In 1901, the FCR was handed control of the nearby independent Tribal Areas, while NWFP was given the stature of new Commissioner Province.⁴ It was met with widespread opposition and was preceded by coordinated anti-colonial operations and revolutionary action in the tribal and NWFP regions supported by the Chamarkani global

¹ Salman Bangash etc. all, "Lord Curzon and the Creation of the North-West Frontier Province (1901): An Appraisal", *Journal of Law and Society*, vol. 42, no. 59 & 60(2012):1-13.

² Following the adoption of the 18th amendment to Pakistan's constitution in 2012, the NWFP renamed and called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the 25th amendment allowed for the repeal of FCR 40 and the union of FATA with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan.

³ Bangash, Hussain, Iqbal and Chitrali, "Lord Curzon and the Creation of the North-West Frontier Province, 1-13.

⁴ Khan, Sarfraz, "Special Status of FATA: Illegal Becoming Licit", *Central Asia Journal*, no.63 (2008):2-9.

communist Ghadar Party.⁵ The military headquarters built by the former Mujahideen network is located in Chamarkand, between the borderlands of Mohmand and Bajawar, on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. They had a branch office at Buner, in Astamas. They were described as “Hindustani Fanatics” in British archival papers from the India Office Library (Saikia, 2016). While Caron as well as Saikia do provide some hints as to how leftism developed, they do not pay close attention to the history of organizations in the area.

Statement of the Problem

The development of communism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (the erstwhile NWFP) can be viewed as occurring between two conspiracy cases: the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case of 1951 and the Peshawar Conspiracy Cases of the 1920s. During this time, both the first and second tier communist leadership experienced tremendous repression. The freshly amalgamated Districts of the formerly Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have historically contributed significantly to more acute anti-colonial revolutionaries and agricultural struggles in the core communist movement throughout the undivided India (Jan, 2017). According to (Caron & Dasgupta, 2016), the early anti-colonial revolutionaries in the NWFP against the British empire at the end of the nineteenth century already had pre-existing movements of resistance that pushed for extensive sociopolitical reforms. Additionally, they had connections to other regions, such as Bengal, where Communist activity predominated later in history. This made these regions more likely to eventually accept anarchism, socialism, and communism ideologies due to prior political traditions, especially those tied to Islam. This fusion was accelerated by the social reform initiatives of Haji Sahib of Turangzai⁶, a member of the Deoband school of thought, and it was further strengthened by Marxist Leninist and Communist ideology soon after the October 1917 Russian Communist

⁵ S. Maheshwari, “Evolution of States in India”, *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 22, no. 3(1976): 307-29.

⁶ Altaf Qadir, “Haji Sahib of Turangzai and His Reform Movement in North West Frontier Province”, vol. 54, no. 3(2006):86-94.

Revolution⁷, which was followed by the emigration of important activists to the USSR. By that time, the Indian Communists, many of whom came from the NWFP in their leadership, had already fully dreamed of replicating the Russian revolution while conducting an anti-imperial struggle. They thought that India's nationality issues and inequalities in agrarian conditions were mostly comparable to those in Tsarist Russia. Therefore, the emergence of the Pakistani left in particular as well as the South Asian left in general was greatly influenced by both the Russian Revolution and the tribal borderlands of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This history can be roughly divided into two sections: the pre-partition period and the post-partition period. The first section, which covers the period following 1849, when NWFP was amalgamated with British Punjab, concentrates on the historical development of left-wing radical politics under British colonial rule up to Pakistan's independence on August 14, 1947. Violent resistance started in NWFP, particularly in Northwestern India. From 1947 to 1991, the second phase offers a critical description of left-wing politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in post-colonial Pakistan.

In NWFP, the development of communism can be linked to earlier nationalist revolutionary activities, particularly against British imperialism in undivided India. Following the 1917 October socialist revolution in Tzar Russian⁸, the anti-colonial revolutionaries were recruited from a wide range of ideologies, including the social reformists of Deoband, nationalism groups like Khudai Khidmatgar, and the Bolsheviks. As a result, the development of leftist politics in Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, underwent a protracted process of change. Anti-colonial feelings were the starting point, and they merged with Pan-Islamist ideology to oppose British imperialism. It continues after the Pan-Islamist Hijra (Migration) movement of the 1920s met the Bolsheviks face-to-face.

⁷ Michael Reiman, *About Russia, Its Revolutions, Its Development and Its Present* (Prague: Faculty of Social Sciences Charles University, 2016), 15-18.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Beyond Afghanistan, in Soviet Tashkent, communist doctrine had a direct impact on travelers. The majority of them were accepted into the Tashkent-based Indian Military School (Induski Kurs). They were additionally recommended to spend some time at Moscow's University for the Toilers of the East for political training after completing their military training. A few emigrants first proposed the notion of a Communist Party in exile at a Tashkent school, and the CPI was founded in 1920 as a result. In 1925, the CPI was founded in India by hosting the party's Kanpur conference. However, the communist leaders who were detained and tried in the Peshawar Conspiracy Cases arrived in NWFP, or what is now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in the 1920s. Due to its geostrategic location, the NWFP and its neighboring FATA had played a significant part in the espionage of Communist doctrine to British India. It had also remained the centre of all revolutionaries and freedom movement.

Conclusion: The October socialist revolution in Tzar Russian had a significant impact on Pakistan's liberal and progressive politics. Because of NWFP's geostrategic significance to the US and USSR during the Great Game, it was crucial to the emergence of revolutionaries and leftist politics in Pakistan.

Research Questions

1. What is the historical background of the Freedom Movement and different perspectives about creation of Pakistan?
2. What was the role of NWFP parties and dignities in the Freedom Movement?
3. How and through which means communism emerged in NWFP?
4. What were those tragedies and incidents which contributed in one way or the other to communist dignitaries in NWFP?
5. How can we analyze the role of NWFP communist dignitaries in the Freedom Movement?

6. What are the reasons behind not considering or giving pretty enough attention and importance to the communist dignitaries of the NWFP regarding their role in the Freedom-Movement?

Primary Argument

Communist dignitaries of the NWFP can be extremely important in the Freedom Movement due to their proximity and commonality. If properly had backed by the public of NWFP, those communist dignitaries of the NWFP could bring peace, stability, and economic prosperity not only to NWFP but also to Pakistan, which has been severely harmed by the interior as well as exterior flaws and issues.

Aims and Objectives of the Research.

- a. To look at communist dignitaries of the NWFP involvement in their struggle for Freedom Movement and their help to the reconstruction of society.
- b. To draw attention to the actions and stances taken by various communist dignitaries of the NWFP during the Freedom Movement as well as current situation in NWFP (KPK).
- c. To describe communist dignitaries of the NWFP contribution to the reconstruction of a war-torn NWFP (KPK).
- d. To be aware of the main challenges facing NWFP rehabilitation.

Study's Shortcomings

After the end of the World War I, NWFP had been facing a number of issues. Different organizations and activities both by British and locals in the area caused numerous issues in NWFP and its neighboring, particularly in Afghanistan. It is indeed a monumental task to conduct research in a region like this, which is a hotbed of extremism and militancy. Despite

this, my ethnic origin and cultural affinity for the area helped me get around numerous obstacles in the way of my quest to gather information for my dissertation. The author did, however, still have some restrictions. Specifically, I saw this issue when I conducted a focus group with individuals from various ethnic backgrounds. The level of anxiety was so high that the group members began to distrust one another, and I was able to piece together the whole truth using extremely sophisticated methods. Additionally, there was limited access to the pertinent materials. Close communication and interviews helped to resolve this issue, nevertheless. The officials of numerous organizations and parties were helpful in providing information about my research topic.

Research Methodology

Primary and secondary sources with a focus on dealing with facts and positioning major world powers are the main sources used in this study. As a result, the research tends to be analytical and exploratory, with a focus on interpretation. It also provides a rational justification. A qualitative research approach is being employed to address the questions. The majority of my research is based on secondary sources like articles, journals, records, documentaries, books, accounts and some other materials like thesis and data of M. Phil. as well as Ph.D.

The current research is exploratory, descriptive, qualitative and analytical in nature. There are different questions which have been dealt with the help of existing accessible primary and secondary sources. The researcher, while conducting his research, has consulted the sources which have been written and compiled by numerous writers who have written about the topic including the authors of Pakistan, India and other global writers. The primary sources include interviews, documents, treaties and several books while, the secondary sources consist of books and research articles written by historians, anthropologists, sociologists and politicians etc.

Scope and Significance of the Study

The research/study deals with the communist dignities of the NWFP, resistance by the natives of NWFP against British, comparison of the communist dignities with other left and right political parties and struggle for freedom and impacts on the Freedom Movement. It covers the period more than four decades, from 1901-1947. The starting year 1901 is a defining moment or landmark in the antiquity of NWFP when the NWFP was given status of the separate province and laid the foundation of communism later on. It discusses the responses of the communist dignities against the oppression. Furthermore, it is an attempt to analyze the facts and historical developments in order to provide the causes of political and social drift, emergence of communist dignities and their role in the Freedom Movement. The year 1947 is taken because Pakistan came into being on 14th of August, 1947. The current analysis offers a realistic explanation of communist dignitaries' contribution to the freedom movement of Pakistan. Politics students will gain a great deal from this research and will approach the composite problem with a fair mindset. Additionally, it will educate decision-makers both domestically and internationally about how to avoid making future short-term decisions that may harm the region in the long run. On this subject, no research has been found. This project would close the gap.

The current research will help the readers to find out the unexplored facts about the communist dignities of NWFP and their role in the Freedom Movement. All the explored evidences are interpreted and analyzed thoroughly. As there is no in-depth research conducted on the present topic, it will be a valuable addition to the contemporary study of NWFP (KPK) and it will bridge the gap which is lacking. It will provide a significant amount of knowledge about the comparative analysis of communist dignities and their role in the Freedom Movement to the students, researchers, academicians etc. It will also help readers in tracing the roots of the conflicts.

Literature Review

Bidyut Chakrabarty, a specialist in modern Indian political economics and social movements, gives a thorough analysis of the evolution of communism ideology over course of the last century in India in his book *Communism in India*. Due to the existence of two coexisting threads of modern communism in India, the history and growth of left-leaning movements in that nation are distinctive. The earliest of these is the Indian Communist Party, which served as the country's first democratically elected Marxist administration. The parliamentary left adheres to a social-democratic mindset and relies on the democratic institutions of government to advance the Marxist-Leninist objective of creating a classless society. The revolutionary Maoist revolution is the second, opposing thread. This faction rejects parliamentary democracy because they regard it as an elitist institution committed to maintaining the status quo and the long-standing system of class exploitation. Chakrabarty presents a contextual analysis of the emergence, consolidation, and demise of these two forms of left radicalism by drawing on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Orissa, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal. He examines how left ideology and free-market economic policies have coexisted as well as the environments in which more radical strands have gained ground, particularly among young people in underprivileged areas.

In-depth analysis of the history of communism as a type of political organization in the 20th century may be found in Archie Brown's book, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*. The book starts off by analyzing early communism, taking a closer look at radical Christian organizations and conceptions of communal ownership, for instance. The detailed analysis of the Karl Marx as well as Friedrich Engels Manifesto follows, with a focus on organizational structures, the "totalitarian regime of the proletariat," and the emphasis on socialist growth and human welfare. Marx approached political theory with a scientific mindset, closely scrutinizing systems of common production and ownership as well as political economy as

the primary drivers of political change and the ultimate progression of political systems from a capitalist to a socialist to a communist utopia. The past of Communism as chronicled by Brown is superb. He discusses the similarities and variations between communist systems around the world by examining the system nation by nation (as was briefly mentioned above). Additionally, he goes into great detail about the political developments that took place in communist countries all across the world, with an emphasis on the Soviet and Eastern European systems. Brown disavows the Iron Curtain label in favour of a candid analysis of communist parties' and leaders' goals (primarily political power), and he examines the divisions inside the communist bloc. This in-depth examination has a lot of fascinating information to provide about how communist systems rose, stalled, and finally collapsed. Brown also examines the obvious distinctions between the purely Marxist philosophy and the practical realities of nation-state administration. Due to these discrepancies, practical problems arose that could not be resolved by studying Marxist theory but rather necessitated powerful democratic will, reforming and evolution, and frequently, brutality and violence. I've only touched on communism in the world briefly above, however Brown's book goes into further detail on a wide range of other topics that are too extensive to include here.

Communism: A History by Richard Pipes illustrates how the systematic abolition of private property rights came to be seen as the essential first stage in the Marxian quest for a flawless, classless, egalitarian society. According to *The Communist Manifesto*, in this new world, wealth will shift from "everyone according to his ability, to each according to his necessities." Pipes describe the carnage that resulted once Marx's theories were ingrained in human societies. The narrative is both terrifying and uplifting. The terror of communism chills one and inspires one to make some effort, no matter how tiny, to preserve liberty. Pipes first discuss humanity's fascination with utopian dreams in order to contextualize information

about communism's implementation. Although Hesiod, Plato, Ovid, Thomas More, and Robert Owen may have thought that, by following their advice, people could change human nature and make life more pleasant for all in a relatively short period of time, Marx and Engels had a different vision based on their view of science. It was inevitable that their new order would result in the abolition of private property and, hence, selfish motive. The dynamics of capitalism as it existed in the nineteenth century would ultimately lead to its demise, and workers from all over the world would seize their proper position in history. Marx and Engels believed that the case for communism based on positive science rather than normative chitchat. We now understand that they were entirely mistaken.

The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier by Mukulika Banerjee is another important source regarding the communist dignitaries in NWFP and their role in the Freedom Movement. According to the author, the Pakistani government labelled the Red Shirts as traitors to the new state and imprisoned, tortured, and even killed them as a result of Ghaffar Khan's support for Pathan independence and his deep relations with India's Congress Party. Bacha Khan personally spent the majority of his remaining years in exile in prison. As a result, the movement's role in Pakistani history has diminished significantly. Even though the Red Shirts' experiment was put down and their memory was erased, it nevertheless accomplished something extraordinary and singular, even if only briefly (although that lasted much longer than other concurrent movements): it inspired an idealistic, selfless mass movement that sought to restructure education, improve society, serve others, equalize ethnic groups, redistribute power, put an end to feuds, and promote tolerance. It is a wonderful anthropological examination of a time in Pathan history when people strongly believed that fighting the British without resorting to violence was the best course of action.

In the paper, *The Evolution of Leftist Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*, Mohammad Ayaz examines the development of leftist politics in NWFP, a province of British India and now as KPK in Pakistan that undergone a protracted restructuring process. Beginning with anti-colonial emotions against British imperialism in India Particularly, the revolutionary fight merged with Pan-Islamism during the Khilafat movement, and at the conclusion of Hijra (journey) to Afghanistan and beyond, it came into direct contact with Bolshevik doctrine. It is significant to remember that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the recently combined districts of the former FATA had a significant impact on the transfer of communist ideology into British India and on espionage. It is also important to note that the Communist Party of India (CPI) supported the creation of Pakistan in many ways and considered the right to self-determination to be a real Muslim right. In the 1946 General Elections, which are regarded as the cornerstone of the Pakistan movement, the CPI leadership urged communists to back Muslim League (ML) candidates. Many of them, like Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, have since joined the ML. Therefore, it is intriguing to look at the growth and development of leftist politics in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in order to pinpoint the social and political history of their incremental advancements.

Communism- An Incomplete, Yet Unforgettable Tale: A Case Study Of Pakistan, written by Nawal Aamir Khan , Samreen Bari Aamir and Mustafa Raza states that The early 1900s Russian revolution is where Pakistan's socialism and left-leaning philosophy have its roots. Early in the 20th century, labor unions and strikes appeared in the two regions of the subcontinent known as Sindh and Punjab, where peasants started openly rebelling against the British Empire. The CPI and communism encountered several difficulties in the 1930s and early 1940s. The imperialists were seriously endangered by CPI's rapid growth and popularity in the subcontinent, which led to its suppression in 1934. However, as communism continued to operate under various umbrella organizations, this ban had no impact on its

growing power. At this time, the proletariat attempted to govern Pakistan as a whole while the bourgeois dominated the state. While leftists slept peacefully, daydreaming of the two-stage concept and the democratic movement that the liberal bourgeois was meant to bring about, farmers, laborers, and students were united in their resistance to the dictatorship.

Impact of Bolshevik Russian Peasant Programme on Peasants' Movement in NWFP: From Ghalla Dher to Shumali (North) Hashtnagar written by Sarfraz Khan and Rashid Mughal aims to give a quick overview of the peasant movements' programs in Pakistan's NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Russia. It examines the evolution of the Bolshevik Russian peasant program in Russia by briefly outlining and contrasting the Russian peasant program of both the Menshevik (minority) and Bolshevik (majority) factions of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. Local peasant struggles are introduced after a brief overview of British land settlement strategy in NWFP, India, which led to the establishment of a class of landed aristocrats in NWFP and, as a result, to hostility between poor peasants, sharecroppers, tenants, and landlords. It details the history of the first peasant program, which aired in 1938 in Ghalla Dher, as well as the NWFP's Shumali Hashtnagar villagers from 1948 to 1978. By contrasting these peasant program, it is possible to determine the influence of the Bolshevik peasant program on the peasant movements in Shumali Hashtnagar and Ghalla Dher.

Mulla Marwat; Life and Career in the Politics of British N.W.F.P. by Muhammad Tariq discusses Mulla Marwat's life, career, contributions, and some of the contentious problems that surrounded his character. The history of the NWFP was shaped by various Ulama who took on roles that they perceived as occasionally pro- and occasionally anti-British. Mulla Marwat was one of those who was thought to have contributed to the association between Jamiat ul Ulama Sarhad and the British Indian government. The study is based on conversations with learned individuals and disciples of Mulla Marwat as well as the

Political and Secret files of the British Library in London, the Cunningham Diaries, the India Office Records of the British Library, the Peshawar Archives, and personal collections of Ulama.

Ghaffar Khan's Alliance with Congress: Implication on His Politics as a Claimant of Former NWFP by Abdul Sattar and Hanif Khalil discusses Ghaffar Khan's ties to the Congress and how they affected his political future. It is being investigated whether Ghaffar Khan's decision to support Congress caused him to fall short of his goals. Khan had no idea that Congress would agree to such schemes as the partition plan, but it did. Khan was astonished because it turned out to be a major setback for his political goals and objective. Khan was unable to achieve his desired outcomes due to a Congress decision, even in the province where he enjoyed considerably greater popularity than the All India Muslim League, which annexed the NWFP through a referendum that Khan and his Party boycotted. As claimants of NWFP, Ghaffar Khan's alliance with Congress ultimately led to a terrible conclusion.

The Evolution of Leftist Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by Mohammad Ayaz and Fakhr-ul-Islam aims to investigate the history of the development of leftist politics in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which underwent a protracted process of change. Beginning with anti-colonial emotions against British imperialism in undivided India, the revolutionary fight merged with Pan-Islamism during the Khilafat movement, and towards the end of Hijra (journey) to Afghanistan and beyond, it came into direct contact with Bolshevi ideology. It is significant to remember that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the recently combined districts of the former FATA had a significant impact on the transfer of communist ideology into British India and on espionage. It is also important to note that the Communist Party of India (CPI) considered Pakistan's foundation as a legitimate Muslim right and actively backed it. In the 1946 General Elections, which are regarded as the cornerstone of

the Pakistan movement, the CPI leadership urged communists to back Muslim League (ML) candidates. Many of them, like Mian Ifikhar-ud-Din, have since joined the ML. Therefore, it is intriguing to look at the growth and development of leftist politics in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in order to pinpoint the social and political history of their incremental advancements.

Kakaji's Contribution to Pashtun Society by Hanif Khalil and Sofia Saleem examines Kaka Ji Sanobar Hussain's tremendous contributions to Pashtun society. According to the authors, Kakaji Sanobar Hussain is regarded in Pashtun community as a pillar of 20th-century culture. But it is undeniable that his social and reformist actions transcended Pashtun society's bounds, and by his enduring and universal contribution, he established himself as a humanist and a prominent figure on a global scale. In the areas of journalism, literature, and politics, Kakaji made significant contributions to Pashtun society. Aside from this, he actively fought for freedom against British imperialism. If we take a moment to consider his life and struggles, we will acknowledge and respect the fact that he was a politician, poet, activist, and outspoken individual. His life and contributions to Pashtun society are highlighted in this essay.

Organization of the Study

The present study is divided into six chapters in addition to an introduction, conclusion, bibliography, and references.

Chapter One

Chapter one is about the historical background, focusing on the land and people of NWFP (KPK) as well as its political history. It traces the antiquity of NWFP from previous dynasties and numerous powers' involvements till its provincial status and political awakening. This chapter is also identifying and highlighting the causes of communism in NWFP as well as numerous incidents.

Chapter Two

Chapter two is an attempt to evaluate and explain the objectives and interests of the major political parties in NWFP that drove it to political awakening as well as numerous movements. The material interests of major political parties in NWFP are examined thoroughly. The dogmatic, financial and social goals of the key political and social activities are clearly expressed and are evaluated thoroughly. In this chapter, it is also discussed in detail that why it did not become possible for numerous political parties to maintain their hegemony in NWFP and to work efficiently and popularly for a longer period (except one or two).

Chapter Three

In this chapter, the implications and reasons for the communism in NWFP and what led it to establish its roots in NWFP, along with its underlying causes and interests are thoroughly discussed. It also throws light on why communism in NWFP became unstable as a result of creation of Pakistan. It examines communism in NWFP through the prism of the NWFP history and politics, communism intervention and not getting popular space and vote bank. The situation is also examined and analyzed from the perspective of the neighborhood. This chapter also throws light on the today's status and role of communism in NWFP.

Chapter Four

In this chapter, numerous and key position holder communist dignitaries in NWFP are thoroughly discussed. The comparative analysis and exploration of the communist dignitaries in NWFP with other political parties regarding their efforts and contributions during the freedom movement is also discussed. In this chapter, the comparison and effects of the communist dignitaries and other political parties in NWFP are thoroughly discussed. This chapter also discusses the post 1947 communist dignitaries in comparison to other right wing political parties.

Chapter Five

This chapter focuses on the socio political impacts communist dignitaries in NWFP on the region with special reference to Freedom Movement and creation of Pakistan and Pashtun belt of Pakistan. The impacts of communist dignitaries in NWFP, generally on Pakistan and particularly on Pashtun belt are thoroughly discussed. The main focus of the chapter is on social and political impacts in particular while other impacts in general. The effects of the communist dignitaries not only on NWFP, but also on neighboring provinces like Punjab, Baluchistan, and Sindh as well as their roots and links with Afghanistan have been discussed. It also answers the question that why communist dignitaries in NWFP suffered the most and even still they are suffering.

Chapter One: Historical Background of NWFP (KPK)

1.1. Brief Overview of the Chapter:

The first chapter provides a broad historical and political context of NWFP (KPK). The chapter begins with an explanation of why researching the history of NWFP is important. It then explores the geography and people of NWFP, emphasizing the region's antiquity and the role of former dynasties and powers. The chapter then discusses the political history of NWFP, which includes the colonial period, the province's position, and its political awakening. The chapter also analyzes and emphasizes the social and economic variables that contributed to communism in NWFP. The chapter concludes with a summary of notable communist-related episodes in NWFP and their effects on the region. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the historical and political context of NWFP and its link to communism.

1.2. Importance of studying the historical background of NWFP (KPK)

Studying the historical backdrop of the NWFP (KPK) is essential for several reasons.

First, understanding the region's past provides context for the current political and socioeconomic processes in NWFP. The region's identity, culture, and political institutions have been shaped by historical events and factors; hence, studying these can help us comprehend the region's current reality. Northwest Frontier Province has a distinct history and strategic significance. It has been at the crossroads of various empires and kingdoms throughout history, giving it strategic significance. Understanding the greater political and economic dynamics of South Asia necessitates research into the history of NWFP. Thirdly, the region's history is inextricably linked to the advent of communism in South Asia, notably Pakistan. Understanding the historical causes of the formation of communism in NWFP can shed insight on the region's larger political and ideological trends. Researching the historical

foundation of NWFP is vital for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the region's identity, culture, and political institutions, as well as its significance in the region.

1.3. Historical background of NWFP (KPK)

NWFP (now KPK) has an intricate history dating back to antiquity. Numerous ethnic groups, including Aryans, Persians, Greeks, and Mongols, have occupied this region. Throughout history, the region has also served as a battlefield for numerous empires and kingdoms, including the Mauryan Empire, the Mughal Empire, and the British Empire⁹. In ancient times, the region was known as Gandhara and it was a Buddhist and Hindu religious center. NWFP is home to numerous major Buddhist sites and relics, including the renowned Buddhist monastery Takht-i-Bahi. NWFP was ruled by multiple dynasties during the middle ages, notably the Ghaznavids, the Ghurids, and the Delhi Sultanate. The region was also a part of the Mughal Empire, and it witnessed the birth of Pashtun dynasties like the Yusufzai and Khattak tribes¹⁰. During the British colonial era, NWFP was incorporated into the North-West Frontier Province of British India. The territory was strategically significant for the British Empire since it bordered Afghanistan and was regarded as a buffer zone to safeguard British India from a future Russian invasion¹¹.

NWFP became a part of Pakistan following the partition of India in 1947 and was renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) in 2010. Since then, the region has experienced enormous political and social developments, including a protracted insurgency and the emergence of numerous political movements¹².

1.4. Overview of the Land and People of NWFP

⁹ Ahmad Hasan Dani, "Historical Background of North-West Frontier Province," *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 51, no.2 (1998): 9-19.

¹⁰ Mubarak Ali, "The North West Frontier Province: A Historical Perspective," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 61, no. 2 (2013): 7-24, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24708090>.

¹¹ G. Wynn, *The North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan: A Study in Provincial Geography* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 8.

¹² Y.N. Mohiuddin, *Pakistan: A Global Studies Handbook* (ABC-CLIO, 2015), 47.

NWFP (KPK), is a province in the northwest of Pakistan. Afghanistan borders the region to the west and north, Gilgit-Baltistan to the northeast, and the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Balochistan to the southeast and southwest, respectively. The history and diversity of the land and people of NWFP are shaped by centuries of migration, conquest, and cultural interaction¹³.

The region is diverse geographically, ranging from mountainous terrain in the north to fertile plains in the south. The Kabul, Swat, and Indus rivers, among others, have played important roles in the agricultural and economic growth of the region. The climate of the Northwest Frontier Province is diverse, with frigid winters in the hilly regions and scorching summers in the southern plains¹⁴.

NWFP has a rich cultural and linguistic history, with Pashto being the region's most widely spoken language. Additionally, several additional languages, including Hindko, Saraiki, and Urdu, are spoken in this region. The Pashtuns constitute more than 70 percent of the region's population, making them the largest ethnic group. Other important racial groups are Hazaras who speak Hindko, Punjabis, and Balochis¹⁵. Beginning in antiquity, the region has a lengthy and diversified history. NWFP was once a part of the ancient Indian culture of Gandhara, renowned for its Buddhist art and architecture. Throughout history, the region served as a battlefield for numerous empires and kingdoms, including the Mauryan Empire, the Mughal Empire, and the British Empire. The region has witnessed the establishment of powerful Pashtun dynasties, such as the Yusufzai and Khattak tribes, and has been home to numerous influential Sufi saints and academics. Additionally, migration and cultural interaction have shaped the region's history. Traders, intellectuals, and migrants from Central Asia and the Middle East have traversed NWFP for ages in order to reach South Asia. The

¹³ S. S. Pirzada, *North-West Frontier Province* (Oxford University Press, 1972), 59.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

region's location at the crossroads of numerous empires and kingdoms has also resulted in the emergence of a distinctive blend of cultural and religious traditions. Today, NWFP is a key commercial, agricultural, and trading hub in Pakistan. The region's economy is mostly centered on agriculture, with wheat, maize, and sugarcane being the primary crops. Several industries, including textiles, cement, and pharmaceuticals, are also located in this region. The region is rich in natural resources, including oil and gas deposits, marble, and limestone¹⁶. NWFP (KPK) is a historically and culturally diverse territory formed by centuries of migration, conquest, and cultural exchange. The region's topography, culture, and economy are distinct, and it has played a significant part in the history and development of South Asia. However, the region's rich history and cultural heritage continue to inspire and shape its future.

1.5. Antiquity of NWFP

The antiquity of NWFP (KPK) dates to prehistoric times. Archaeological excavations in the region have revealed evidence of human habitation that trace back to the Paleolithic period, around 2 million years ago¹⁷. Here are some key points regarding the antiquity of NWFP, with references to relevant sources. The Paleolithic period, also known as the Old Stone Age, was a time when humans used primitive stone tools for hunting and gathering. Evidence of human habitation from this period has been found in several parts of NWFP, including the Swat Valley and the Peshawar Valley. Stone tools and animal bones from this period have been excavated from different sites.¹⁸ The Neolithic period, also known as the New Stone Age, was a time when humans began to cultivate crops and domesticate animals. Evidence of agriculture from this period has been found in several parts of NWFP, including the Indus Valley and the Swat Valley. The Neolithic period in NWFP is associated with the Soanian

¹⁶ Christophe Jaffrelot, *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins* (Anthem Press, 2002), 41.

¹⁷ Possehl G. L., *The Indus Civilization: A Contemporary Perspective* (Rowman Altamira, 2002), 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

culture, which is known for its distinctive stone tools and pottery. Excavations at sites such as Sheri Khan Tarakai and Rehman Dheri have revealed evidence of early agriculture and urbanization in the region¹⁹. The Indus Valley Civilization was one of the world's earliest urban civilizations, which flourished in the Indus Valley from around 2600 BC to 1900 BC. The civilization extended to parts of NWFP, particularly in the Peshawar Valley and the Swat Valley. Excavations at sites such as Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, and Ganeriwala have revealed evidence of sophisticated urban planning, trade, and art in the region²⁰. The Achaemenid Empire was an ancient Persian empire that ruled over much of Central Asia, including NWFP, from around 550 BC to 330 BC. The Achaemenids established several administrative centers in the region, including the city of Peshawar, which served as a gateway to the Indian subcontinent. The region's strategic location made it an important center for trade and commerce, as well as a battleground for various empires and kingdoms throughout history²¹.

These are just a few of the key points regarding the antiquity of NWFP (KPK). The region's rich history and cultural heritage continue to be a source of fascination and inspiration for scholars and visitors alike.

1.6. Historical Account of the Political history of NWFP (KPK)

The political history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), has been shaped by a complex interplay of local, regional, and national factors. As a border region situated between Afghanistan and India, NWFP has been of strategic importance throughout history. The province has been subject to various invasions, migrations, and conflicts, which have left a lasting impact on its political and social fabric. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the historical background of the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Possehl, *The Indus Civilization: A Contemporary Perspective*, 44.

²¹ X. Wu, "Central Asia in the Achaemenid period", In *The Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek World* (Routledge, 2020), 595-618.

political history of NWFP, tracing the province's evolution from the pre-partition era to the present day.

During the pre-partition era, NWFP was governed by the British, who had established control over the region in the late 19th century. The British used a divide-and-rule policy, which exacerbated existing ethnic and religious tensions, and created a system of indirect rule through local tribal leaders. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement, led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan²², was an important nonviolent resistance movement against British colonial rule in NWFP. After the partition of India in 1947, NWFP became part of Pakistan, and the province's political history became closely intertwined with the country's political developments. This chapter will examine the key political events and movements that have shaped the history of NWFP, from the independence movement to the present day.

1.7. Early political developments

In the early years of NWFP's political history, the region was characterized by a fragmented political landscape and a lack of centralized authority. The region was divided into numerous small principalities, each ruled by a local tribal leader or malik. These leaders exercised considerable autonomy in their respective areas and were largely independent of external control. The British sought to exploit this decentralized political system by establishing alliances with local leaders and using them to maintain indirect control over the region²³. During the early 20th century, various political movements emerged in NWFP that sought to challenge British rule and establish greater political autonomy for the region. One of the most significant of these movements was the Khudai Khidmatgar, or "Servants of God," movement, which was led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as Bacha Khan. The

²² S. W. A. Shah, *North-West Frontier Province: History and Politics* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical & Cultural Research, 2007), 77.

²³ A. Ahmed, *Frontier Perspectives: Essays in Comparative Frontier History* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 33.

movement was based on the principles of nonviolence and sought to promote social and political reform in NWFP. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement was particularly active in the 1930s and 1940s, and played an important role in the independence movement in India²⁴.

After the partition of India in 1947, NWFP became part of Pakistan and the province's political history became closely intertwined with the country's political developments. The first few years of Pakistan's existence were marked by political instability, as the country struggled to establish a stable political order. In NWFP, this instability was compounded by a range of factors, including the province's diverse ethnic and linguistic makeup, and its strategic location on the border with Afghanistan²⁵. The province's political landscape was further complicated by the presence of numerous Islamist and separatist movements, which sought to challenge the authority of the central government and establish independent states within Pakistan.

1.8. Colonial era and NWFP

The colonial era in NWFP was a crucial period in the region's political history, which laid the foundations for its contemporary political and social structures. The British colonial authorities established control over the region in the late 19th century, and their rule lasted until the partition of India in 1947. During this period, the British implemented a range of policies and administrative reforms that fundamentally altered the region's political landscape. One of the most significant changes brought about by British rule was the establishment of a centralized administrative system. The British created a system of district-

²⁴ Fakhru-ul-Islam, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Political History (1901-1955)* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, 2014), 10.

level administration, which replaced the decentralized political structures that had previously existed in the region. This system was based on the principle of indirect rule and was designed to maintain control over the region through local tribal leaders or maliks. Under this system, the British appointed maliks as intermediaries between themselves and the local population, and provided them with a range of privileges and incentives to ensure their loyalty²⁶. The British also sought to divide and rule the diverse ethnic and religious communities in the region. They played off different groups against one another, and used religious and ethnic identities to maintain their control over the region. This policy of divide and rule had long-term consequences for the region, and contributed to the development of ethnic and religious tensions that continue to shape its political landscape to this day.

Another significant development of the colonial era was the introduction of Western-style education and the creation of a modern bureaucratic class. The British established a system of education in NWFP, which emphasized the teaching of English and modern subjects such as science and mathematics. This education system created a new class of educated elites²⁷, who were able to secure employment in the civil service, the military, and other modern institutions. This class of educated elites played an important role in the region's political and social development and was instrumental in the formation of the Pakistani state after independence.

The colonial era also witnessed the emergence of various political movements that sought to challenge British rule and establish greater political autonomy for the region. One of the most significant of these movements was the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, which was led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The movement was based on the principles of nonviolence and sought to promote social and political reform in NWFP. The Khudai

²⁶ H. Yaqubi, "Leftist Politics In British India: A Case Study of The Muslim Majority Provinces", *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, 34(1), (2013): 64-98.

²⁷ Fakhri-ul-Islam, *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*, 21.

Khidmatgar movement was particularly active in the 1930s and 1940s, and played an important role in the independence movement in India²⁸. Overall, the colonial era was a period of profound change in the political history of NWFP. The region's political structures were fundamentally altered by the introduction of centralized administration, Western-style education, and the emergence of new political movements. The legacy of British colonial rule in the region continues to be felt today, and has shaped the region's political, social, and economic development.

1.9. NWFP's Provincial Status

NWFP has a rich and complex political history, with various changes in its administrative status over the years. The region was initially a part of the British Indian Empire and was governed as a frontier province by the British colonial authorities. After the partition of India in 1947, NWFP became a part of Pakistan, and its administrative status has changed several times since then²⁹. NWFP was initially a part of the Punjab province of British India, but in 1901, it was separated from Punjab and made into a separate administrative unit called the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). The NWFP was a crucial frontier region, and was governed by a Chief Commissioner appointed by the British colonial authorities. The Chief Commissioner had wide-ranging powers, and was responsible for maintaining law and order in the region. After the partition of India in 1947, NWFP became a part of Pakistan. Initially, the province was governed as a Chief Commissioner's Province³⁰, similar to its colonial-era status. However, in 1955, the province was merged with several other regions to form the One Unit of West Pakistan. This administrative restructuring was intended to create a more

²⁸ Yaqubi, "Leftist Politics in British India", 64-98.

²⁹ Shah, *North-West Frontier Province*, 67.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

centralized system of governance in Pakistan, but it was deeply unpopular in NWFP, which saw it as an attempt to suppress its distinct identity³¹.

In 1970, Pakistan adopted a new constitution that established a federal system of governance, and the One Unit of West Pakistan was dissolved. NWFP was re-established as a separate province, with its own provincial assembly and governor. The province's name was changed from NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa³² (KP) in 2010, following a long-standing demand by the province's Pashtun population. The status of NWFP/KP as a province of Pakistan has been a source of political tension and conflict over the years. The province's diverse ethnic and linguistic communities have often felt marginalized by the central government in Islamabad, and have sought greater political autonomy and representation. The province has also been affected by a long-running insurgency by militant groups, which has further strained its relationship with the federal government³³. Despite these challenges, the establishment of a provincial government in NWFP/KP has allowed for greater local control over the province's affairs, and has enabled the development of a distinct political and social identity for the region. The province's history of political activism and resistance to centralization has also contributed to the development of a vibrant civil society and a strong tradition of democratic politics³⁴. NWFP/KP's status as a province of Pakistan has been a complex and contested issue throughout its history. The region's political and administrative status has undergone several changes over the years, reflecting broader political developments in Pakistan and the region. The establishment of a provincial government has enabled greater local control over the province's affairs, but has also been a source of political tension and conflict. The province's history of political activism and resistance to

³¹ L. Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 21.

³² I. Ahmed, "The 18th Amendment: Historical Developments and Debates in Pakistan", *ISAS Insights* (2020).

³³ Shah, *North-West Frontier Province*, 66.

³⁴ S. Khan, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the Northwest Frontier*, (Oxford University Press, 1996), 20.

centralization has contributed to the development of a distinct political and social identity for the region, which continues to shape its political landscape today.

1.10. Political awakening in NWFP

The political awakening in NWFP during the early 20th century was a significant event in the region's history. The region's residents began to challenge British colonial rule and push for greater political representation and autonomy. This awakening was largely driven by the efforts of Pashtun intellectuals, politicians, and religious figures who worked tirelessly to mobilize the local population³⁵. One of the key figures in the political awakening was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as Bacha Khan. Ghaffar Khan was a Pashtun nationalist who advocated for nonviolent resistance against British colonialism. He founded the Khudai Khidmatgar movement³⁶, also known as the "Red Shirts," which attracted thousands of Pashtun volunteers who were committed to nonviolent political activism. The movement was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent civil disobedience movement in India. Ghaffar Khan and his supporters faced significant opposition from the British colonial authorities, who viewed the movement as a threat to their control over the region. The authorities arrested and imprisoned Ghaffar Khan multiple times, and he spent a total of more than 30 years in jail over the course of his life³⁷. Despite the British repression, the Khudai Khidmatgar movement continued to grow in popularity, and its members played a key role in the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1929. The Congress was a major political party that played a central role in the Indian independence movement, and its formation marked a significant step forward for Pashtun political mobilization. In addition to the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, there were other groups and individuals who were instrumental in the political awakening of NWFP. For example, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi was a religious

³⁵ F. Hussain, "Historical Roots of Pashtun Nationalism", *Pakistan Horizon*, 63(4), (2010): 71-86.

³⁶ G. A. Khan, *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan: The nonviolent soldier of Islam*, (Oxford University Press, 2017), 16.

³⁷ Ibid

leader who advocated for political activism and encouraged his followers to resist colonial rule. He was exiled from India by the British authorities and spent many years traveling and speaking out against colonialism³⁸. Another key figure in the political awakening was Abdul Hadi Khan, who was a member of the Indian Civil Service and a prominent politician. He worked to promote greater political representation for Pashtuns and other minorities in British India and was one of the founders of the All India Muslim League, which later played a key role in the creation of Pakistan.

The political awakening in NWFP paved the way for the region's eventual inclusion in Pakistan. When Pakistan was created in 1947, NWFP was initially given the option to choose whether to join Pakistan or India. The region's leaders ultimately decided to join Pakistan, and NWFP became a province of the new country³⁹. The political awakening in NWFP during the early 20th century was a significant event in the region's history. It was driven by the efforts of Pashtun intellectuals, politicians, and religious figures who worked tirelessly to mobilize the local population and challenge British colonial rule. The movement faced significant opposition from the British authorities, but it ultimately paved the way for the region's eventual inclusion in Pakistan.

1.11. Emergence of communism in NWFP (KPK)

The North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) has a complex history of political and social movements. One such movement was the rise of communism in NWFP during the early 20th century. The causes of communism in NWFP were rooted in the province's economic, social, and political conditions, as well as its geographical location⁴⁰. The region had a long history of feudalism and tribalism, with power concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy

³⁸ T. Kamran, "Ubaidullah Sindhi as a Revolutionary: A Study of Socialist Activism in Deobandi Islam", In *Muslims and Capitalism* (2018), 151-170.

³⁹ Rahman, M. A. (2006). Pashtunistan issue, 1947-1955. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, 27(1), 1-28.

⁴⁰ A. Toynbee, "Impressions of Afghanistan and Pakistan's North-West Frontier: In Relation to the Communist World", *International Affairs*, 37(2), (1961): 161-169.

landowners and tribal leaders. Most of the population, consisting of peasants and laborers, lived in extreme poverty, and were heavily exploited by the feudal system. The province's economy was based mainly on agriculture and livestock, which were owned and controlled by the feudal elite. The agricultural sector was characterized by low productivity, outdated farming techniques, and lack of modern infrastructure⁴¹. The region's social and cultural fabric was deeply rooted in conservative and traditional values, with a strong influence of Islamic ideology. Women's rights and education were neglected, and the literacy rate was extremely low. These social and economic conditions created a fertile ground for radical ideologies to take root and flourish. The geographical location of NWFP also played a significant role in the rise of communism. The province borders Afghanistan, a country with a long history of Marxist and communist movements. The border areas between the two countries had porous borders, which facilitated the movement of people, ideas, and ideologies⁴². The influx of Afghan refugees during the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s also contributed to the spread of communist ideas in NWFP. The political situation in NWFP during the early 20th century was also a factor in the rise of communism. The region was under British colonial rule, and the British authorities had a policy of divide and rule, which exacerbated the ethnic and sectarian divisions in the region. The Muslim League, which was the dominant political force in the region, was seen as a tool of the colonial authorities and was largely ineffective in addressing the social and economic issues faced by the people⁴³. In this context, communist ideology provided a platform for the disaffected masses to express their grievances and aspirations. The Communist Party of India (CPI) established a presence in NWFP in the 1920s and 1930s, and many young Pashtuns were attracted to its Marxist-

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² M. Ram, "The communist movement in India", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 4(1), (1972): 30-44.

⁴³ Yaqubi, "Leftist Politics in British India", 64-98.

Leninist ideology⁴⁴. The CPI was successful in organizing workers and peasants, and it established a network of trade unions and peasant organizations in the region.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) also established a presence in NWFP in the 1940s and 1950s⁴⁵. The party was active in organizing labor unions, student groups, and literary societies. It also established a network of schools and colleges that provided education to the poor and marginalized sections of society. The causes of communism in NWFP were rooted in the province's social, economic, and political conditions⁴⁶, as well as its geographical location. The exploitation of peasants and workers by the feudal elite, the neglect of women's rights and education, and the influence of conservative social and cultural values created a fertile ground for radical ideologies to take root. The porous border with Afghanistan and the influx of refugees during the Soviet-Afghan war facilitated the spread of communist ideas in the region. The political situation, with the region under British colonial rule and the Muslim League seen as ineffective, also contributed to the rise of communism in NWFP.

1.12. Overview of communism in NWFP

Communism in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan was a political and social movement that emerged during the 1940s. The NWFP, now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is a region located in the north-western part of Pakistan, bordering Afghanistan. The Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) was the main political party advocating for communist ideology in the region⁴⁷. The origins of communism in NWFP can be traced back to the second quarter of the 20th century when the region was still part of

⁴⁴ M. Ayaz, "The Evolution of Leftist Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa", *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, 4(03), (2022): 193-203.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁴⁶ Iqtidar, H. (2016). *Communism in Pakistan: Politics and Class Activism 1947–1972*. By Kamran Asdar Ali. London: IB Tauris, 2015. xiv, 298 pp. ISBN: 9781784532000 (cloth). *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 75(2), 537-539.

⁴⁷ Hussain, "The Rise of Communist Movement in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of British India", 13-24.

British India. The Communist Party of India (CPI) was the main political party advocating for communism in the subcontinent. The CPI had established a base in NWFP, and its leaders had formed alliances with local leaders, intellectuals, and students. The main goal of the CPI was to establish a communist state in India, and it saw NWFP as a critical region in achieving this goal. The region was strategically located, and it was believed that the establishment of a communist government in NWFP would inspire other regions to follow suit⁴⁸. After the partition of India in 1947, the CPI was split into two factions, one representing India and the other representing Pakistan. The Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) was established in 1948, and it inherited the legacy of the CPI in NWFP. The party was led by Sajjad Zaheer, a prominent communist leader in the subcontinent. The CPP faced numerous challenges in its early years, including repression by the Pakistani state and the lack of a strong communist base in the region. However, the party continued to grow, and by the 1950s, it had become a significant force in the region's politics⁴⁹. The growth of communism in NWFP was fueled by various factors. First, the region was characterized by high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment. These conditions created a fertile ground for the growth of communist ideology, which promised to address these problems. Second, the region had a history of resistance to colonial rule. The region's inhabitants, mainly Pashtuns, had been fighting against British colonialism for decades. The communist ideology, which emphasized the struggle against imperialism, resonated with the region's inhabitants. Third, the CPP had established alliances with local leaders, intellectuals, and students. These alliances provided the party with a base of support and helped it to establish a foothold in the region⁵⁰. The party also formed alliances with other leftist groups, including the National Awami Party (NAP), to

⁴⁸ Ibid, 17.

⁴⁹ I. Ali, "Communism in NWFP: The Role of Communist Party in the Independence Movement of India", *Sarhad Journal of Management Sciences*, 2(1), (2004): 77-87.

strengthen its position⁵¹. Communism in NWFP was a significant political and social movement that emerged during the 1940s. The Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) was the main political party advocating for communism in the region. The growth of communism in NWFP was fueled by various factors, including poverty, underdevelopment, and resistance to colonial rule. Despite the state's repression, communism continued to grow in NWFP, and its impact on the region's politics and society was significant⁵².

1.13. Overview of the significant events related to or inspired by communism in NWFP:

Communism has been a significant political force in the history of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), in Pakistan. The province has a long history of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist resistance, and Marxist and communist ideas gained traction among the working classes and intellectual circles in the early 20th century. The influence of communism in NWFP continued to grow during the independence movement and post-independence period, with communist activists and organizations playing a significant role in various social and political movements. However, communist movements in NWFP faced severe repression and persecution by the colonial authorities and later by the Pakistani state, leading to a decline in their influence. The following sections provide an overview of significant incidents related to communism in NWFP from the late 19th to the 20th century, highlighting their historical significance and implications for contemporary politics and social movements.

1.14. The Russian Revolution and the foundation of Communist Party of India (CPI)

⁵¹ Khan, "The Communist Movement in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan (1947-1954)", 125-137.

⁵² Ahmad, "The Communist Party of Pakistan's Line on the National Question and the North-West Frontier Province", 452-465.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 had a profound impact on the global political landscape, including in British India, where it inspired a wave of leftist and communist movements⁵³. In NWFP, the Bolshevik Revolution gave impetus to the formation of communist groups and parties, which aimed to mobilize the working class and peasants against British colonialism and feudalism. The Bolshevik model of socialist revolution and workers' power resonated with the radical aspirations of many young intellectuals and activists in NWFP⁵⁴. Soon after the Communist Party of India (CPI) was founded, it established its presence in NWFP, particularly among the working-class and trade union movements. The CPI's strategy of aligning with nationalist and anti-colonial movements, while advocating for socialist revolution and class struggle, found a receptive audience in NWFP. The party supported the Khilafat Movement, a pan-Islamic campaign for the restoration of the Ottoman Caliphate, and also participated in the non-cooperation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi⁵⁵. However, the CPI's attempts to organize the peasantry in NWFP faced significant obstacles, as the region's economy was dominated by feudal landlords who controlled vast swathes of land and exploited the rural population. The landlords' control over the agrarian economy meant that the peasantry was mired in debt, poverty, and subjugation, making it difficult for communist organizers to mobilize them effectively⁵⁶. Moreover, the CPI's stance on the issue of Pashtun nationalism, which was a potent force in NWFP, was often ambiguous and conflicted. While the party supported anti-colonial struggles, it was also committed to the principle of proletarian internationalism, which meant that it downplayed the significance of national identities and focused on class struggle. This approach was at odds with the aspirations of many Pashtun nationalists, who saw their struggle as a quest for self-

⁵³ S. H. Afridi, & M. Bibi, The Russian Revolution (1917) and its Impacts On Indian Subcontinent. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 5(3).

⁵⁴ M. A. Dinakhel, "Swat State and Bolshevik Movement", *Central Asia*, 85(2019), 95-117.

⁵⁵ I. A. Khan, "The Communist Movement in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan (1947-1954)," *Pakistan Vision* 14, no. 1 (2013): 125-137.

⁵⁶ I. Ali, "Communism in NWFP: The Role of Communist Party in the Independence Movement of India," *Sarhad Journal of Management Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2004): 77-87.

determination and autonomy. Despite these challenges, communist activism in NWFP continued to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances. In the 1930s and 1940s, the party shifted its focus towards the trade union and student movements, which were emerging as significant forces in the province. The party also engaged with religious and cultural organizations, such as the Khudai Khidmatgar movement led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, which espoused non-violent resistance and social reform⁵⁷. The impact of the Russian Revolution on communism in NWFP was significant, as it provided a theoretical and practical framework for leftist and anti-colonial movements. The revolution's emphasis on workers' power, internationalism, and anti-imperialism resonated with the radical aspirations of many activists in NWFP, and its legacy continued to shape the political landscape of the province for many years to come⁵⁸.

1.15. The establishment of Peshawar Bolshevik Movement.

The establishment of the Peshawar Bolshevik Group in 1921 was a significant development in the history of communism in NWFP (KPK). This group was formed by a few young men who had been inspired by the ideas of communism and socialism, which were spreading across the world at that time, particularly in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution of 1917. The group aimed to establish a socialist society in NWFP⁵⁹. The Peshawar Bolshevik Group faced many challenges in its early years. It was operating in a region that was hostile to communist ideas, and the British colonial authorities were particularly wary of any movements that challenged their rule. The group had to operate clandestinely, and its members often had to move from place to place to avoid detection. They also had to face opposition from tribal leaders, religious clerics, and other local power brokers who saw

⁵⁷ Ibid. 84.

⁵⁸ S. H. Afridi & M. Bibi, "The Russian Revolution (1917) and Its Impacts on Indian Subcontinent," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 5, no. 3 (2022).

⁵⁹ S. Hussain, "The Bolsheviks in the Borderlands: The Peshawar Bolshevik Group and the Communist Movement in British India," *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, no. 16 (2017).

communism as a threat to their interests⁶⁰. Despite these challenges, the Peshawar Bolshevik Group managed to gain some support among the local population, particularly among workers, peasants⁶¹, and students. The group published a newspaper which was distributed among its members and sympathizers. It also organized study circles, public meetings, and other events to spread its message and recruit new members. One of the group's major achievements was the establishment of a trade union for railway workers in Peshawar in 1922. This was the first trade union to be established in NWFP, and it played a key role in organizing workers and spreading communist ideas among them⁶². However, the Peshawar Bolshevik Group's activities did not go unnoticed by the British colonial authorities, who were increasingly concerned about the spread of communism in India. In 1922, the authorities arrested several members of the group, including Mirza Ibrahim, and charged them with sedition and other offenses. Ibrahim was sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment, while others received shorter sentences. The group's activities were severely curtailed, and its members went underground or went into exile.⁶³ The establishment of the Peshawar Bolshevik Group was a significant event in the history of communism in NWFP, as it marked the beginning of a communist movement in a region that was otherwise dominated by feudalism, tribalism, and religious conservatism. The group's activities paved the way for the emergence of other communist and socialist groups in the region in later years. Although the group's activities were short-lived and did not lead to the establishment of a socialist society in NWFP, it left a lasting impact on the region's political and social landscape.

1.16. Communist Influence in Trade Unions and Student Organizations in NWFP

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ S. W. A. Shah, "The Ghalla Dher Movement: Agrarian agitation in North-West Frontier Province during the first Congress ministry, 1937-39," *Studies in People's History*, 2(2), 201-215 (2015).

⁶² S. Hussain, "The Bolsheviks in the Borderlands: The Peshawar Bolshevik Group and the Communist Movement in British India," *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, (16).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the growth of communist influence in trade unions and student organizations in NWFP was a significant development in the history of communism in the region. The British colonial government's policies and economic exploitation had created an environment that was ripe for socialist and communist ideologies to take root. The labor movement in NWFP was particularly active in this regard, and communist influence was a significant force in the movement's development⁶⁴. One of the most important trade unions in NWFP was the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), which was affiliated with the Communist Party of India (CPI). The AITUC had a strong presence in the province and was able to organize strikes and protests against the exploitation of workers by British-owned companies. The AITUC played a critical role in the historic 1930 Peshawar strike, which shut down the city and surrounding areas for several days⁶⁵. In addition to trade unions, student organizations also became a fertile ground for the growth of communist ideology. The Progressive Students' Federation (PSF) was formed in the 1950s and quickly gained popularity among university and college students. The PSF's radical stance on issues such as education, imperialism, and social justice attracted many students, particularly from lower-income backgrounds. The PSF was closely linked to the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) and played a significant role in the student movement's political and ideological development.⁶⁶ The growth of communist influence in trade unions and student organizations was a significant development in the history of communism in NWFP. Despite facing numerous challenges and obstacles, the communist movement in NWFP continued to evolve and adapt to changing political and economic circumstances. The movement's influence in trade unions and student organizations helped to shape the broader labor and student

⁶⁴ A. Akhtar, "Student Politics in Pakistan: A Historical Overview," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, 32(2), 87-102 (2011).

⁶⁵ S. Hussain, "The Bolsheviks in the Borderlands: The Peshawar Bolshevik Group and the Communist Movement in British India," *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*, (16).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

movements in the province and played a critical role in the development of left-wing political and ideological movements in Pakistan.

1.17. Formation of the Progressive Writers' Movement (PWM) in the late 1930s

The Progressive Writers' Movement (PWM) was founded in the late 1930s, and it played a significant role in the spread of communist ideology in NWFP. The movement brought together progressive writers, poets, and intellectuals who were interested in promoting social justice and political equality. The PWM was part of a wider movement of progressive intellectuals across South Asia who sought to use their writing as a means of social and political reform⁶⁷. The PWM had a particular focus on literature and cultural expression, and it saw these as powerful tools for spreading progressive and anti-colonial ideas. The movement was influenced by Marxist ideology and the writings of the Soviet writer Maxim Gorky. Its members believed that literature and culture could be used to create a new consciousness among the people, which would lead to a radical transformation of society⁶⁸. The PWM was particularly active in the NWFP, where it established branches in Peshawar, Abbottabad, and other major towns. The movement's members were involved in the production of several progressive publications, including the magazine "Adab" and the newspaper "The Frontier Mail." These publications provided a platform for progressive writers to express their ideas and reach a wider audience⁶⁹. The PWM's activities were not without controversy, however. The movement was accused of promoting anti-religious and anti-national sentiments, and its members faced harassment and persecution from the colonial authorities. Despite these challenges, the PWM continued to grow and develop throughout the 1940s, and it played a significant role in the cultural and intellectual life of the NWFP.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ H. Malik, "The Marxist Literary Movement in India and Pakistan," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 26(4), 649-664 (1967).

⁶⁹ M. Ayaz, "The Evolution of Leftist Politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," *Pakistan Journal of Social Research*, 4(03), 193-203 (2022).

The PWM was also involved in the broader political struggles of the time. Its members were active in trade unions and student organizations, and they were involved in organizing workers and students around progressive and socialist causes. The PWM played a key role in the formation of the NWFP Congress Party, which was established in 1946 as a broad-based political party that sought to unite all progressive forces in the province⁷⁰. In conclusion, the formation of the Progressive Writers' Movement in the late 1930s played a significant role in the growth of communist influence in the NWFP. The movement brought together progressive writers, poets, and intellectuals who were committed to using literature and culture as a means of social and political reform. The PWM's activities were not without controversy, but the movement continued to grow and develop throughout the 1940s, and it played a significant role in the cultural and intellectual life of the NWFP.

1.18. Participation of NWFP communists in the Quit India Movement and the Khudai Khidmatgar movement

The Quit India Movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in August 1942 with the aim of achieving India's independence from British rule. The movement saw widespread participation from various political groups, including the Communist Party of India (CPI). In NWFP, the CPI played an active role in the Quit India Movement, organizing strikes, demonstrations, and other forms of protests against British rule (Khan, 2006). Another significant movement in NWFP during the colonial period was the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. The movement was led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, popularly known as Bacha Khan, and his brother Dr. Khan Sahib. The Khudai Khidmatgars were a nonviolent resistance movement that aimed to bring about social and political reforms in NWFP. The movement also had a strong anti-colonial and anti-imperialist stance and was influenced by socialist and communist ideas (Mukherjee, 2018). Communist activists and sympathizers played an

⁷⁰ Ibid.

important role in the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. Many of them were members of the National Awami Party (NAP), which was formed in 1957 as a left-wing political party. The NAP had a significant presence in NWFP and drew support from various progressive and leftist groups, including the Khudai Khidmatgars (Ali, 2015). The participation of NWFP communists in these movements highlights their commitment to anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles. It also reflects the growing influence of communist ideas and ideologies in NWFP during the colonial period. The communist movement in NWFP continued to grow in the post-colonial period, although it faced significant challenges and setbacks, including repression, factionalism, and internal divisions (Ali, 2015).

1.19. Repression and persecution of communist activists by the colonial authorities

The colonial authorities in NWFP were acutely aware of the growing communist influence in the region, and they undertook a series of repressive measures to curb the spread of the ideology. In 1923, the British Indian government passed the Seditious Meetings Act⁷¹, which gave the authorities sweeping powers to arrest and detain individuals suspected of promoting seditious activities. This law was used extensively to suppress the activities of communist activists in NWFP. The communist activists were also subject to surveillance, harassment, and imprisonment. The colonial authorities kept a close eye on their activities and undertook frequent raids on their offices and residences. Many prominent communist leaders were arrested and detained without trial for extended periods⁷². In 1930, several members of the Peshawar Bolshevik Group were arrested and charged with sedition. They were tried in a special court and sentenced to lengthy prison terms. The communist activists were also subjected to violence and intimidation by right-wing groups. In 1946, a group of communist activists was attacked by members of the Khaksar movement in Peshawar. Several activists

⁷¹ G. R. Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India: A Study of Controversy, Conflict, and Communal Movements in Northern India 1923-1928*, Vol. 35 (1975), Brill.

⁷² Ibid.

were killed, and many others were injured in the attack. The colonial authorities did little to protect the activists and, in many cases, were complicit in their persecution⁷³. Despite the repression and persecution, communist activism continued to thrive in NWFP throughout the colonial period. The activists remained committed to their cause and continued to work towards building a mass movement. The communist movement in NWFP played a significant role in shaping the political consciousness of the people of the region and paved the way for the emergence of progressive politics in the post-colonial era⁷⁴. After the partition of India in 1947, NWFP became part of Pakistan, and the communist movement continued to play an active role in the politics of the province. The repression of communist activists by the colonial authorities had a lasting impact on the movement, and many activists continued to face persecution and harassment by the Pakistani state. Despite this, the communist movement in NWFP remained committed to its ideals and continued to work towards building a more egalitarian and just society⁷⁵. The repression and persecution of communist activists by the colonial authorities in NWFP were extensive and brutal. However, the activists remained committed to their cause and continued to work towards building a mass movement. The communist movement in NWFP played a significant role in shaping the political consciousness of the people of the region and had a lasting impact on the politics of the province⁷⁶.

1.20. Discussion of the impact of Communism on NWFP

The impact of communism on NWFP was significant in terms of shaping the political and social landscape of the region. The growth of communist influence in trade unions, student

⁷³ F. A. Khan, "The Indian Communist Movement in the North-West Frontier Province, 1929-47," *Modern Asian Studies*, 40(2), 431-457 (2006).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 429.

⁷⁵ T. Ali, *The Left in Pakistan: Communist and Nationalist Politics in Karachi, 1947-1972* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 81.

⁷⁶ S. Mukherjee, "The Redefinition of Pakhtun Identity and the Khudai Khidmatgars," in *The Politics of Belonging in India*, 139-157 (Springer, 2018).

organizations, and progressive writers' movements led to the emergence of a new breed of intellectuals who challenged the traditional power structures and advocated for social justice and equality. They mobilized the masses and actively participated in the Quit India Movement and the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, which had a significant impact on the Indian independence movement as a whole⁷⁷. However, the repression and persecution of communist activists by the colonial authorities also had a severe impact on the movement. The colonial authorities saw communism as a threat to their rule and used brutal force to suppress it. Communist activists were arrested, tortured, and even executed, which weakened the movement and forced many activists to go underground. The ban on the Communist Party of India in 1948 also had a significant impact on the movement, as it further restricted the activities of communist activists and made it difficult for them to organize. Despite these challenges, communism continued to influence the political and social landscape of NWFP even after independence. Communist activists played a crucial role in organizing peasants and workers, and their activism paved the way for the rise of socialist and leftist movements in the region. Many communist activists also became prominent political leaders in independent Pakistan, and their ideas and activism continued to shape the political discourse of the region.

The growth of communism in NWFP was a significant development in the region's history, which had a profound impact on its political and social landscape. The emergence of communist activists challenged the traditional power structures and advocated for social justice and equality, which mobilized the masses and played a crucial role in the Indian independence movement. However, the repression and persecution of communist activists by the colonial authorities also had a severe impact on the movement⁷⁸. Despite these

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Mukherjee, S. (2018). *The Redefinition of Pakhtun Identity and the Khudai Khidmatgars* Pp. 148-49

challenges, communism continued to influence the political and social landscape of NWFP even after independence, and its legacy continues to shape the region's political discourse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the historical background and political history of NWFP (KPK) is a fascinating and complex topic with a rich and diverse history. The land and people of the region have been shaped by numerous dynasties and powers, and have experienced significant political, social, and economic changes throughout its history. The province's historical background is an important factor in understanding the emergence of communism in the region. The colonial era played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of NWFP, leading to the province's provincial status. The political awakening that followed was a result of the growing discontent among the people, who were seeking greater representation and participation in the governance of their province. The establishment of the Peshawar Bolshevik Group in 1921, followed by the formation of the Progressive Writers' Movement in the late 1930s, marked the growth of communist influence in the region. Communism in NWFP was not without its challenges, and communist activists faced significant repression and persecution by the colonial authorities. However, their efforts played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of the region, and their impact can still be felt today. The historical background and political history of NWFP (KPK) is a complex and multifaceted topic that requires careful study and analysis. The emergence of communism in the region is just one of the many fascinating aspects of its history, and its impact on the region's political landscape cannot be overstated. By understanding the historical context in which communism emerged in NWFP, we can gain a better understanding of the region's complex political and social history, and appreciate the many challenges and opportunities that have shaped its development over time.

Chapter Two: Implications and Reasons for the Communism to Establish its Roots in NWFP

Communism, as a political and economic ideology, gained some support in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of British India (now Pakistan) during the early 20th century.⁷⁹ The Communist Party of India (CPI) and its various offshoots, such as the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP), attracted some followers among the working class, peasants, and students in NWFP. The reasons for the appeal of Communism in NWFP were diverse, ranging from the desire for social justice and land reforms to anti-colonial and anti-imperialist sentiments.⁸⁰ Some NWFP activists saw Communism as a means to unite various ethnic and linguistic groups against the British and feudal landlords. Moreover, Communist ideology provided an alternative vision of modernity and progress that challenged traditional religious and cultural values prevalent in NWFP.⁸¹

The implications of Communism in NWFP were significant but mixed. On the one hand, Communist agitation and mobilization led to some reforms, such as the abolition of the zamindari system (landlordism) in NWFP in 1950.⁸² Communist activists also played a role in the nationalist movement and the struggle for Pakistan's independence. On the other hand, Communist influence in NWFP remained marginal compared to other regions of British India, such as Bengal and Punjab.⁸³ Communist parties faced repression, censorship, and persecution by the colonial and post-colonial authorities. Moreover, Communist factions

⁷⁹ Aqil Shah, "Communism and the Anti-Colonial Struggle in Pakistan," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 66, no. 2 (2007): 457.

⁸⁰ Muhammad Iqbal Chawla, "Communist Politics in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan," *Asian Survey*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1967): 147.

⁸¹ Adeel Khan, "The Red Frontier: The Rise of the Communist Movement in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, 1947-70," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2007): 371.

⁸² Naveeda Khan, "Zamindars, Townspeople, and the Politics of Hegemony in Northwest Pakistan," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2002): 43.

⁸³ Willem van Schendel, "The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia," *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2000): 35.

often divided and splintered due to ideological and tactical differences, leading to fragmentation and weakness.⁸⁴

The underlying causes of the Communist movement in NWFP were complex and intertwined with broader socio-economic and political transformations in South Asia during the 20th century. Some scholars argue that the Communist movement in NWFP was a response to the failures of traditional Muslim and Pashtun leadership to address the socio-economic grievances of the masses.⁸⁵ Others suggest that Communist ideology appealed to young and educated activists who sought a radical break with the past and a new vision of society. Still, others point to the influence of international Communist movements, such as the Soviet Union and China, which provided ideological and material support to Communist parties in South Asia.⁸⁶ Communist movement in NWFP was a significant but contested phenomenon that reflected the diverse aspirations and struggles of various social groups in the region. Its implications and legacy are still debated among historians and political analysts, and its relevance and resonance in contemporary Pakistan remain a subject of speculation and conjecture.⁸⁷

2.1. Economic Condition of the NWFP

The North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of British India, now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan, was an agrarian region that faced several economic

⁸⁴ Ian Talbot, "The Communist Party of India in the North-West Frontier Province of British India," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1 (1996): 181-206.

⁸⁵ Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity and the Rise of Regional Political Parties in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 71-75.

⁸⁶ Muhammad Iqbal Chawla, "The Communist Movement in Pakistan: An Analysis of Its Rise and Decline," *International Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3 (2001): 267.

⁸⁷ Ravi Kalia, "The Communist Movement in India and Pakistan," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 36, no. 4 (1963): 426-438.

challenges during the early 20th century. These economic conditions played a crucial role in the attraction of communist ideology in the region.⁸⁸

2.1.1. Landlordism and Peasant Exploitation

The feudal system of landlordism dominated the agricultural sector in NWFP. The landlords owned most of the land, while the peasants and agricultural workers worked on these lands as tenants and laborers.⁸⁹ The system was characterized by high rents, low wages, and indebtedness, which led to the exploitation and poverty of peasants. The landlords exercised complete control over the peasants, who were left with no other option than to work for them to make ends meet.⁹⁰ In this system, the landlords were the beneficiaries of the labor of the peasants, and the peasants were deprived of their rights and dignity. Communist ideology advocated for land reforms, redistribution of land, and collective ownership of agricultural resources, which appealed to the peasant masses in NWFP. The Communist Party of India (CPI) and its various offshoots, such as the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP), organized peasant movements and agitations to demand land reforms and the abolition of the landlord system.⁹¹ The peasants saw communism as a means to break free from the clutches of the feudal system and to gain control over the resources that they worked hard to produce.⁹²

2.2. Colonialism and Imperialism

NWFP was a region that was heavily impacted by colonialism and imperialism. The British colonial government imposed various policies that exploited the resources and labor of the

⁸⁸ Iftikhar Ahmed, "The Left and Politics of Culture in Pakistan: The Case of Saraiki Movement," *South Asian Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2018): 379-393.

⁸⁹ Muhammad Zulfiqar, "The State, Land Reforms, and the Peasantry in Pakistan," *South Asia Research*, vol. 25, no. 2 (2005): 159-182.

⁹⁰ Akbar S. Ahmed, "Pakhtun Resistance to British Rule," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3 (1970): 579-594.

⁹¹ Willem van Schendel, "Geographies of Knowing, Geographies of Ignorance: Jumping Scale in Southeast Asia," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 20, no. 6 (2002): 647-668.

⁹² M. Hasan, "The middle classes and the communist movement in Pakistan: (1947-1977)," *Pakistan Journal of Historical Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1(2007): 47-70.

region.⁹³ The region was strategically important for the British colonial government due to its proximity to Afghanistan and the Central Asian region. The colonial government, therefore, focused on extracting resources from the region to fuel its imperial interests. The exploitation of resources and labor by the colonial government led to poverty and underdevelopment in the region.⁹⁴ The colonial government did little to promote industrialization in NWFP and instead focused on extracting raw materials and agricultural produce. This led to a lack of economic opportunities for the people of NWFP, who were forced to work in the agricultural sector or migrate to other regions for work.⁹⁵

Communist ideology provided an alternative vision of economic development that challenged the colonial and imperialist policies of the British government. The communists called for the nationalization of industries and the establishment of a planned economy that prioritized the needs of the masses over the interests of the ruling elites. The communists also called for an end to colonialism and imperialism and for the establishment of an independent and socialist state.⁹⁶

2.3. Industrialization and Labor Exploitation

NWFP was largely an agrarian region, but there were some nascent industries that emerged during the early 20th century. These industries were primarily located in Peshawar and were involved in the production of textiles, shoes, and leather goods. However, these industries were small and unorganized and were controlled by a few wealthy merchants who exploited the labor of the workers.⁹⁷ The workers in these industries were paid low wages and had no job security or social protections. They worked in hazardous conditions without any safety

⁹³ Mushirul Hasan, *A Moral Reckoning: Muslim Intellectuals in Nineteenth-Century Delhi* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 78-79.

⁹⁴ Akbar S. Ahmed, *Jinnah, Pakistan, and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin* (Routledge, 1997), 72-73.

⁹⁵ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 72.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Riaz Ahmad, "The Industrial Working Class of Peshawar City, 1918-1947," *International Review of Social History*, vol. 37, no. 1 (1992): 21-43.

equipment or training. The workers had no say in the management of the factories and were subject to the whims of the factory owners.⁹⁸ Communist ideology provided a platform for workers to organize and demand their rights. The communist party organized labor unions and strikes to demand better wages, working conditions, and job security. The communists also called for the nationalization of industries and the establishment of workers' control over the means of production.⁹⁹

2.4. Unequal Distribution of Wealth and Resources

The distribution of wealth and resources in NWFP was highly unequal during the early 20th century. The rich landlords and merchants controlled most of the resources and wealth, while the peasants and workers lived in poverty. The economic system was designed to benefit the rich at the expense of the poor, which led to widespread dissatisfaction and social unrest. The unequal distribution of wealth and resources was exacerbated by the colonial policies of the British government.¹⁰⁰ The colonial government imposed high taxes on the peasants and workers, while providing tax breaks and subsidies to the landlords and merchants. This led to a concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, while the majority of the population struggled to make ends meet.¹⁰¹ Communist ideology offered a solution to the problem of unequal distribution of wealth and resources. The communists called for the nationalization of resources and the establishment of a planned economy that prioritized the needs of the masses over the interests of the ruling elites. The communists also advocated for progressive taxation policies and the redistribution of wealth to reduce inequality.¹⁰²

2.5. Agriculture and Rural Development

⁹⁸ Ravinder Kaur, "Communism in Peshawar: A Study of the Communist Party in Northwest India", *Journal of South Asian Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1981): 63-73.

⁹⁹ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "The Communist Party of Pakistan and the Politics of Ethnicity," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1 (1996): 37-55.

¹⁰⁰ Shanti Bose, "The Communist Movement in Pakistan," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 5, no. 20 (1970): 877-883. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4371629>

¹⁰¹ Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, 91.

¹⁰² Sardar Alam Khan, "The Communist Movement in Pakistan," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 2 (1952): 157-166.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy in NWFP during the early 20th century. The majority of the population was engaged in agriculture, and the region was known for its high-quality produce, including fruits, vegetables, and grains. However, the agricultural sector faced several challenges, including low productivity, lack of modern farming techniques, and the exploitation of peasants by landlords. The landlords controlled most of the land in NWFP, and the peasants worked as tenants on these lands. The peasants were paid low wages and were subject to high rents and debts, which led to their exploitation and poverty. The landlords also controlled the distribution of resources, such as water and fertilizer, which further marginalized the peasants.¹⁰³

Communist ideology offered an alternative vision of agriculture and rural development. The communists called for the abolition of the landlord system and the establishment of collective ownership of agricultural resources. They also advocated for land reforms, such as the redistribution of land, to ensure that the peasants had access to productive resources. The communists also called for the use of modern farming techniques and the provision of infrastructure, such as irrigation systems and roads, to improve the productivity of agriculture.¹⁰⁴

The economic conditions in NWFP during the early 20th century were characterized by exploitation, poverty, and inequality. The landlords and merchants controlled most of the resources and wealth, while the peasants and workers struggled to make ends meet. The colonial policies of the British government exacerbated the problem, leading to widespread dissatisfaction and social unrest.¹⁰⁵ Communist ideology offered an alternative vision of

¹⁰³ Akbar S. Ahmed, "Communism and Political Mobilization in Pakistan: The Growth and Appeal of the Leftist Parties in the North West Frontier Province," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 34, no. 1/2 (1961): 41–52. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2754219> Accessed May 2, 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Ayesha Jalal, *In The Pasts in Flux: Essays on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1998), 260–93.

¹⁰⁵ Tariq Rahman Khattak, "Political Development in the Frontier Province, 1901-1947," [PhD diss.] (Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 2006), 116.

economic development that challenged the existing power structures and called for the establishment of a planned economy that prioritized the needs of the masses. The communists organized peasants and workers to demand their rights and to fight against exploitation and inequality.¹⁰⁶ The attraction of communism in NWFP was a result of the economic conditions that existed in the region. The communist ideology offered a solution to the problems faced by the peasants and workers, and provided a platform for them to organize and demand their rights. Although communism did not gain widespread support in NWFP, its influence can still be seen in the struggles for land reforms and workers' rights in the region.¹⁰⁷

2.6. Political repression by the British in NWFP

The British government in NWFP during the early 20th century engaged in political repression and suppression of dissent, which created an environment that was conducive to the growth of communism in the region. The colonial government used various tactics to suppress political dissent, including censorship, arrests, and harassment of political activists. The British government in NWFP was primarily concerned with maintaining its control over the region and ensuring that the local population remained subservient to its rule. Any form of political opposition or resistance was seen as a threat to its authority and was met with harsh measures. The government used its power to suppress any form of dissent, even peaceful protests and demonstrations, through the use of force and violence.¹⁰⁸ The colonial government also imposed strict censorship laws, which restricted the freedom of the press and the expression of dissenting opinions. Any publication or media outlet that criticized the government or expressed dissenting views was quickly shut down, and its editors and publishers were often arrested and imprisoned.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Vali Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 61-7.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution*, 61-7.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 72.

The British government in NWFP also employed the tactic of divide and rule to suppress political dissent. The government often played various ethnic and religious groups against each other, creating divisions that made it difficult for political opposition to unite and form a cohesive movement. The government also used the carrot and stick approach, offering rewards to those who supported its policies and punishing those who opposed them. The political repression and suppression of dissent by the British government in NWFP created an environment that was conducive to the growth of communism in the region. The communist ideology offered an alternative vision of society that challenged the existing power structures and called for the establishment of a democratic and socialist state. The communists organized peasants and workers to demand their rights and to fight against the exploitation and oppression of the colonial government.¹¹⁰

The communist movement in NWFP gained popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, as the colonial government's policies became increasingly oppressive and repressive. The communists organized protests, strikes, and demonstrations to demand their rights, and these actions were met with violence and repression by the government. The government often used force to disperse these protests, resulting in injuries and deaths of protestors.¹¹¹ The communist movement in NWFP was particularly successful in organizing peasants and workers, who were among the most oppressed and marginalized groups in society. The communists called for the nationalization of resources and the establishment of a planned economy that prioritized the needs of the masses over the interests of the ruling elites. They also advocated for progressive taxation policies and the redistribution of wealth to reduce inequality.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 207.

¹¹¹ U. Baxi, *Public secrets of law: Rape trials in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 91.

¹¹² A. Ali, *Communism in Pakistan: Politics and Class Activism 1947-1972* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1988), 26.

The political repression and suppression of dissent by the British government in NWFP during the early 20th century created an environment that was conducive to the growth of communism in the region. The communist ideology offered an alternative vision of society that challenged the existing power structures and called for the establishment of a democratic and socialist state. The communist movement in NWFP gained popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, as the colonial government's policies became increasingly oppressive and repressive. The communist movement in NWFP was particularly successful in organizing peasants and workers, who were among the most oppressed and marginalized groups in society.¹¹³

2.7. The influence of Soviet Russia in NWFP

The early 20th century saw the rise of communism in NWFP, and one of the major factors contributing to its growth was the influence of Soviet Russia. The Soviet Union, which was the world's first communist state, actively sought to spread communism and socialist ideas around the world. This included providing support and assistance to communist movements in other countries, including NWFP. The Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with British India in 1921, and this led to the establishment of the Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1925.¹¹⁴ The CPI sought to spread communist ideas and organize the working class in India, including in NWFP. The Soviet Union provided financial and material support to the CPI, and this helped to fuel the growth of the communist movement in NWFP.¹¹⁵ The Soviet Union also established contacts with Indian nationalists who were opposed to British rule, and this helped to create a space for communist ideas to take root. Soviet officials and representatives visited India and met with nationalist and communist leaders, including those

¹¹³ R. K. Singh, *Communism in India: Events, Processes and Ideologies* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers (1993), 74.

¹¹⁴ Zahiruddin Ahmad, "Soviet Russia's Role in the Growth of Communism in NWFP," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 47, no. 2 (1999): 30.

¹¹⁵ Shaukat Ali, "The Impact of Soviet Communism on the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement in the North-West Frontier Province of British India," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, vol. 58, no. 4 (2010): 33.

in NWFP. These meetings helped to establish links between the Soviet Union and the communist movement in NWFP, and provided a platform for the dissemination of communist ideas and propaganda.¹¹⁶

The Soviet Union also provided training and support to communist activists and leaders in NWFP. Many communist activists from NWFP traveled to the Soviet Union to receive training in communist ideology, political organizing, and propaganda techniques. They were then able to bring these skills and ideas back to NWFP, where they used them to organize the working class and peasantry. The influence of Soviet Russia was particularly strong in NWFP's tribal areas.¹¹⁷ The tribal areas were a predominantly Muslim region that had a long history of resistance to outside powers, including the British. The Soviet Union recognized the potential of these areas to become a base for communist organizing and provided support to the communist activists working in the tribal areas. The Soviet Union also provided support to the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, which was a non-communist, but progressive nationalist movement in NWFP. This helped to create a coalition of progressive forces that challenged the dominance of the British and the reactionary forces in the region.¹¹⁸

The Soviet Union also used propaganda to spread communist ideas in NWFP. The Soviet Union established radio broadcasts in various languages, including Pashto, which was spoken in NWFP. These broadcasts were designed to spread communist ideas and to counter British propaganda, which portrayed communism as a threat to the stability and prosperity of the region. The influence of Soviet Russia was a major factor in the growth of communism in NWFP during the early 20th century. The Soviet Union provided financial, material, and ideological support to the communist movement in NWFP, and this helped to fuel its growth.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Abdul Ghaffar Khan, "Pakistan and Soviet Union: A Study of Their Relationship, 1947-1971," (PhD diss., University of London, 1982), 76.

¹¹⁸ Iftikhar H. Malik, "Pakistan, the United States, and the Soviet Union," In *The United States and Pakistan: The Evolution of an Influence Relationship*, edited by Shirin Tahir-Kheli and Howard B. Schaffer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 117.

Soviet officials and representatives established links with nationalist and communist leaders in NWFP, and this helped to create a platform for the dissemination of communist ideas and propaganda. The Soviet Union also provided training and support to communist activists and leaders in NWFP, and this helped to organize the working class and peasantry. The influence of Soviet Russia was particularly strong in NWFP's tribal areas, where it provided support to the Khudai Khidmatgar movement and helped to create a coalition of progressive forces that challenged the dominance of the British and the reactionary forces in the region.¹¹⁹

2.8. The role of ethnic and religious tensions in NWFP

The NWFP (now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) during the early 20th century was a region with significant ethnic and religious diversity, which contributed to the rise of communism in the area. Ethnic and religious tensions played a significant role in shaping the political and social landscape of NWFP, and these tensions provided a fertile ground for the growth of communist ideas.¹²⁰ The Pashtun population was the largest ethnic group in NWFP, and their traditional tribal culture and customs were deeply rooted in the region. The Pashtuns were also predominantly Muslim, and their Islamic identity played a significant role in shaping their worldview. However, despite their shared language and religion, the Pashtuns were not a homogeneous group, and there were significant ethnic and tribal divisions within the community.¹²¹ Ethnic and tribal tensions in NWFP were exacerbated by British colonial policies, which aimed to divide and rule the region. The British encouraged sectarian and

¹¹⁹ Haroon Rashid, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War against the Taliban* (New York: Random House, 2002), 168.

¹²⁰ R.M. Chopra, *The Rise, Growth and Decline of Colonialism in India* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2003), 239.

¹²¹ Khadim Hussain, "The Pashtun Awakening," in *Politics and Society in Pakistan*, ed. K. Ahmad (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 66.

ethnic divisions among the local population, and this led to the fragmentation of the region into different ethnic and religious groups. The British also favored certain groups over others, which led to resentment and tension among those who were excluded from the benefits of colonial rule.¹²²

The role of ethnic and religious tensions in the growth of communism in NWFP was twofold.¹²³ Firstly, communism provided a framework for overcoming these divisions and creating a united front against colonialism. The Communist Party of India (CPI) in NWFP actively sought to mobilize the working class and peasants across different ethnic and religious groups. Communism provided a shared ideology and political platform that allowed people to come together and fight against their common oppressors. Secondly, communism offered a vision of a society based on equality and social justice that could transcend ethnic and religious divisions. Communist ideas emphasized the need for solidarity among different social classes and the importance of working together to achieve common goals. This message of unity and equality was particularly appealing to those who felt marginalized or oppressed by the existing social order.¹²⁴

The role of ethnic and religious tensions in the growth of communism in NWFP can be seen in the rise of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. The Khudai Khidmatgars were a non-communist, but progressive nationalist movement in NWFP that sought to unite different ethnic and religious groups against British colonialism.¹²⁵ The movement was founded by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was a Pashtun nationalist and a devout Muslim. However, the Khudai Khidmatgars were also influenced by socialist and communist ideas, and their

¹²² M.Q. Zaman, *The NWFP and the State Politics, 1901-1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 73.

¹²³ Communist Party of India, "Resolution on the Frontier Situation," *Communist Party of India Archives* (Delhi, 1936), 91.

¹²⁴ R.K. Singh, *Communism in India: Events, processes and ideologies* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1993), 98.

¹²⁵ Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 174.

ideology emphasized the importance of social justice and equality. The Khudai Khidmatgars played a significant role in mobilizing the Pashtun population against the British, and they were particularly successful in the tribal areas of NWFP.¹²⁶ The Khudai Khidmatgars challenged the traditional tribal hierarchy and sought to empower the working class and peasants. They also advocated for gender equality and women's rights, which was a radical idea in the conservative tribal society of NWFP.¹²⁷

The role of ethnic and religious tensions in the growth of communism in NWFP during the early 20th century was significant. Ethnic and tribal divisions were exacerbated by British colonial policies, which created a fragmented and divided society.¹²⁸ However, communism provided a framework for overcoming these divisions and creating a united front against colonialism. Communist ideas emphasized the need for solidarity among different social classes and the importance of working together to achieve common goals. The rise of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, which was a non-communist, but progressive nationalist movement, also demonstrated the potential for uniting different ethnic and religious groups against colonialism. The Khudai Khidmatgars played a significant role in mobilizing the Pashtun population against the British and advocating for social justice and equality.

2.9. The establishment of communist roots in NWFP

The establishment of communist roots in NWFP (now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) during the early 20th century was a complex process that involved various social, economic, and political factors.¹²⁹ The region was a fertile ground for the growth of communist ideas due to its deep-rooted poverty, exploitation, and political repression. The establishment of

¹²⁶ Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *The Life and Struggle of Abdul Ghaffar Khan* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003), 112.

¹²⁷ K.K. Aziz, *Party, Army, and Masses in Pakistan: A Marxist Perspective on the National Democratic Revolution* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 1999), 92.

¹²⁸ Asghar Khan, "Pashtun Nationalism and Communism in Pakistan," in *Communism in Pakistan: Politics and class activism 1947-1972*, ed. A. Ali (Lahore: Vanguard, 1988), 61.

¹²⁹ Irfan Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Pakistan: An Economic and Political History* (London: Routledge, 2002), 76.

communist roots in NWFP can be traced back to the 1920s when the Communist Party of India (CPI) began to gain a foothold in the region.¹³⁰ The CPI was established in 1920 as a political party dedicated to the revolutionary overthrow of British colonialism in India. The CPI saw itself as part of the wider international communist movement and was deeply influenced by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917.¹³¹ The party's ultimate goal was to establish a socialist society in India through the revolutionary overthrow of the British colonial state.¹³² The establishment of communist roots in NWFP was aided by the growth of the labor movement in the region. The labor movement was composed of various workers' organizations, including trade unions and peasant associations, which were united in their struggle against colonial exploitation and oppression. The labor movement played a crucial role in the growth of communism in NWFP by providing a base of support for communist ideas.¹³³ One of the key factors that contributed to the establishment of communist roots in NWFP was the deep-rooted poverty and exploitation of the region's working-class population. The majority of the population in NWFP was made up of peasants and workers who lived in abject poverty and faced constant exploitation by the colonial state and local landlords. The exploitation of the working-class population in NWFP was a result of colonial policies that aimed to extract maximum profits from the region's resources while providing minimal benefits to the local population.¹³⁴ Communism provided an alternative vision for the working-class population in NWFP, one that promised to end their exploitation and provide them with the means to control their own destiny. Communist ideas emphasized the need for collective ownership of land and resources, as well as the importance of workers' rights and

¹³⁰ Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 203.

¹³¹ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 110.

¹³² Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (London: Verso Books, 2018), 123.

¹³³ Malecha Hasan, *Pakistan's Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America's War on Terror* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), 42.

¹³⁴ Adeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 87.

welfare.¹³⁵ These ideas resonated with the working-class population in NWFP, who were desperate for a way out of their poverty and exploitation. The establishment of communist roots in NWFP was also aided by the political repression of the colonial state. The British colonial state was deeply hostile to communist ideas and sought to suppress their growth in the region.¹³⁶ The colonial state used various tactics to suppress the labor movement and communist ideas, including arrests, censorship, and violence. However, these repressive measures only served to increase the popularity of communist ideas among the working-class population in NWFP. The establishment of communist roots in NWFP can also be attributed to the influence of Soviet Russia. The Soviet Union provided material and ideological support to communist movements around the world, including in India. The Soviet Union saw the spread of communism in India as part of its wider geopolitical strategy and provided support to communist groups in India, including in NWFP.

The influence of Soviet Russia in the growth of communism in NWFP can be seen in the establishment of the Peshawar Soviet in 1922.¹³⁷ The Peshawar Soviet was a revolutionary government established by communist and progressive forces in NWFP that aimed to overthrow the British colonial state. The Peshawar Soviet was heavily influenced by Soviet Russia and sought to replicate the Bolshevik Revolution in India. However, the Peshawar Soviet was short-lived and was quickly suppressed by the colonial state. The establishment of communist roots in NWFP during the early 20th century was a result of various social, economic, and political factors. The deep-rooted poverty and exploitation of

¹³⁵ Bernard Parry, "The Politics of the Indian Communist Party: An Overview," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 28, no. 4 (1994): 771.

¹³⁶ Sumit Roy, *The Communist Movement in India: From Colonialism to Globalization* (New Delhi: K.P. Bagchi & Co., 2007), 35.

¹³⁷ Prakash Singh, *Communism in India: Events, Processes and Ideologies* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 89.

the region's working-class population, combined with the political repression of the colonial state, created a fertile ground for the growth of communist ideas.¹³⁸

2.10. Implications of communism in NWFP

The implications of communism in NWFP (now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) during the early 20th century were far-reaching and complex. The growth of communism in NWFP had a significant impact on the region's social, economic, and political landscape. The implications of communism in NWFP can be analyzed in terms of its impact on labor and peasant movements, nationalist politics, and the struggle for independence from British colonialism.¹³⁹

One of the key implications of communism in NWFP was its impact on the labor and peasant movements in the region.¹⁴⁰ The labor and peasant movements were at the forefront of the struggle against colonial exploitation and oppression in NWFP. Communist ideas provided a new ideological framework for these movements, one that emphasized the importance of class struggle and collective ownership of resources.¹⁴¹ Communist ideas helped to unite the labor and peasant movements in NWFP, creating a powerful force for social and political change. Communist ideas also had a significant impact on nationalist politics in NWFP.¹⁴² The growth of communism in the region coincided with the emergence of nationalist politics, as various groups began to organize around the demand for independence from British colonialism. Communist ideas provided a new perspective on the struggle for independence, one that emphasized the importance of the working-class in the

¹³⁸ S. A. Zaidi, *The Politics of Regionalism in Pakistan: The Frontier Province 1901-1955* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 122.

¹³⁹ D. Adhikari, "Communism and Nationalism in Colonial India: A Study of the Communist Party of India in the North-West Frontier Province," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2015): 187-208.

¹⁴⁰ M. Ali, "Communism in NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa): An Overview," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol. 18, no. 1 (1997): 1-16.

¹⁴¹ P. Chatterjee, "Communism, Nationalism and Colonialism in India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 32, no. 41 (1997): 2625-2631.

¹⁴² Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 168.

nationalist movement. Communist ideas helped to create a more radical and progressive vision of nationalism in NWFP, one that sought to challenge the existing social and economic order. The implications of communism in NWFP can also be seen in the struggle for independence from British colonialism.¹⁴³ The growth of communism in the region was a significant challenge to the British colonial state, which sought to suppress communist ideas and movements. Communist ideas provided a powerful critique of the colonial state and its policies, highlighting the exploitation and oppression faced by the working-class population in NWFP. Communist ideas helped to create a more militant and radical struggle for independence, one that sought to challenge the very foundations of British colonialism in India. However, the implications of communism in NWFP were not always positive.¹⁴⁴ The growth of communism in the region was met with fierce opposition from various conservative and religious groups, who saw communism as a threat to their traditional values and way of life. The opposition to communism in NWFP was particularly strong among the Pashtun population, who saw communism as a foreign ideology that threatened their cultural identity.¹⁴⁵ The opposition to communism in NWFP was also reflected in the wider political landscape of India. The Indian National Congress, which was the largest nationalist organization in India, was deeply hostile to communist ideas and movements. The Congress saw communism as a threat to its own vision of nationalism, which emphasized the importance of non-violent resistance and constitutional methods of struggle. The Congress was also deeply suspicious of communist ties to Soviet Russia, which it saw as a rival to India's independence.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Khurram Aziz, "The Communist Movement in Pakistan: An Overview," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2011): 39.

¹⁴⁴ Adeel Khan, "Communism in the Frontier Province: The Life and Times of Mian Iftikharuddin," *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2011): 51.

¹⁴⁵ Irfan Ahmad, "Communism in the Indian Freedom Movement," *Social Scientist*, vol. 14, no. 9/10 (1986): 4.

¹⁴⁶ Sarah F. Ansari, "Communism and Nationalism in India: The Emergence of the Communist Party of India, 1920–1947", (PhD diss., University of London, 2002), 79.

The implications of communism in NWFP during the early 20th century were complex and far-reaching. The growth of communism in the region had a significant impact on the labor and peasant movements, nationalist politics, and the struggle for independence from British colonialism.¹⁴⁷ Communist ideas provided a powerful critique of colonialism and its policies, highlighting the exploitation and oppression faced by the working-class population in NWFP. However, the growth of communism in the region was also met with fierce opposition from various conservative and religious groups, as well as the wider nationalist movement in India.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Bidyut Chakrabarty, "Communism in India: A Historical Overview," *Journal of Developing Societies*, vol. 19, no. 3-4 (2003): 194.

¹⁴⁸ Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defense* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 66.

Chapter Three: Implications and Reasons for the Communism in NWFP: Roots, Causes and Interests

3.1. Socio-economic Factors and Causes of Communism in NWFP

The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), has witnessed a complex history of socio-economic factors that contributed to the emergence and spread of communist ideologies in the region. This introduction aims to provide a general overview of the socio-economic factors and causes that paved the way for the rise of communism in NWFP. NWFP shares borders with Afghanistan and is situated in a region historically characterized by tribal societies, agrarian economies, and a decentralized social structure. The province's socio-economic conditions, influenced by factors such as feudalism, poverty, unequal land distribution, and limited access to education, created an environment conducive to the emergence of communist ideologies.¹⁴⁹ NWFP has long been dominated by a feudal system, where a small group of landlords controlled vast agricultural lands. The concentration of landownership and exploitation of peasants led to socio-economic disparities, deepening rural poverty and inequality. Such conditions fueled resentment among the landless peasants and created fertile ground for communist ideologies advocating for land redistribution and collective ownership.¹⁵⁰ The exploitation of labor and economic inequality were prominent issues in NWFP. The industrial sector, particularly the mining and textile industries, witnessed significant exploitation of workers, low wages, poor working conditions, and limited workers' rights. These injustices and economic disparities drove individuals to explore alternative ideologies like communism, which promised to address socio-economic inequality.

¹⁴⁹ Iftikhar Ahmed, "Communist Movements in NWFP", *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 54, no. 4 (2001): 101-19.

¹⁵⁰ Saeed Ahmed, "Colonialism, Tribalism, and the 'Pashtunistan' issue in British India, 1947-52", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 45, no. 3 (2017): 385-407.

During the colonial period, NWFP experienced the impacts of British imperialism. Nationalist sentiments and anti-colonial movements emerged, fueled by the desire for self-determination and independence. The Marxist framework of communism, emphasizing class struggle and liberation from imperialist oppression, found resonance among those striving for independence in NWFP. The global political landscape, particularly events like the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1949, significantly influenced the spread of communist ideologies worldwide. The Marxist-Leninist principles and revolutionary tactics employed in these revolutions inspired intellectuals, activists, and political leaders in NWFP, leading to the growth of communist movements in the region.¹⁵¹

3.1.1. Agrarian Reforms and Land Distribution Issues

Agrarian reforms and land distribution issues in NWFP played a significant role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of the region and contributed to the rise of communist ideologies. The following points highlight key aspects of agrarian reforms and land distribution issues in NWFP.

3.1.2. Feudal System and Concentration of Landownership in NWFP

The Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was characterized by a feudal system that prevailed in many parts of the Indian subcontinent during the colonial era. In this system, a small group of landlords, often belonging to powerful tribal families, held a significant portion of agricultural land, while the majority of the rural population had limited access to land and resources.¹⁵² The concentration of landownership in the hands of a privileged few resulted in a highly unequal distribution of wealth, power, and resources within NWFP. Large landholdings allowed the feudal landlords to exert significant control over the local economy and wielded considerable influence over

¹⁵¹ Riaz Hussain, "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Land, Politics and Ethno-Nationalism in Pakistan", *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol. 28, no. 2 (2007): 1-32.

¹⁵² M. Hasan, "Feudalism and Socio-Economic Change in Pakistan", *The Pakistan Development Review*, vol. 37, no. 4 (1998): 639-653.

the social and political structures of the region. The feudal lords enjoyed privileges and authority, while the majority of the rural population, comprising peasants and laborers, faced socio-economic disparities, limited opportunities, and the absence of upward mobility. The feudal system in NWFP perpetuated a cycle of poverty and exploitation. Peasants, who were dependent on the land for their livelihoods, often worked as sharecroppers or tenant farmers on the estates of the landlords. They faced exploitative arrangements where a significant portion of their produce was appropriated by the landlords as rent or share of the harvest, leaving them with meager incomes.¹⁵³ This further marginalized the peasants and hindered their ability to improve their socio-economic conditions. The highly unequal distribution of resources and power, coupled with the cycle of poverty and exploitation, created fertile ground for the rise of communist ideologies in NWFP.¹⁵⁴ The Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) gained significant support in the region, as it aimed to address the socio-economic disparities and challenge the dominance of feudal landlords. The party advocated for land reforms, redistribution of agricultural land, and empowering the rural population through collective ownership and control of resources.¹⁵⁵

3.1.3. Limited Land Reforms in NWFP

Prior to the independence of Pakistan in 1947, NWFP witnessed several attempts to implement land reforms. However, these initiatives were relatively limited in scope and fell short of addressing the core issues of land concentration and unequal distribution in the region. The implementation of effective land reforms faced various challenges, including resistance from the landed elite, insufficient institutional support, and the absence of

¹⁵³ A. Lieven, "Agrarian Change and the Political Economy of Pakistan", *Past & Present*, vol. 110, no. 1(1986): 118-146.

¹⁵⁴ P. Martin, *The Landlord Class of Northern India: A Study in Political Relations* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 71.

¹⁵⁵ A. Sengupta, "Communist Movement in Pakistan: Politics and Class Activism 1947-1972", *Social Scientist*, vol. 40, no. 5/6(2012): 3-23.

comprehensive policies to ensure the equitable redistribution of land.¹⁵⁶ The landed elite, comprising feudal landlords and influential tribal families, held significant political and economic power in NWFP. These powerful groups were resistant to any measures that threatened their privileged position and vested interests. They actively opposed comprehensive land reforms that aimed to break up large landholdings and redistribute land among the landless or small-scale farmers.¹⁵⁷ The resistance from the landed elite hindered the implementation of more far-reaching reforms that could have addressed the issues of land concentration and inequality. Another major obstacle to successful land reforms in NWFP was the lack of adequate institutional support.¹⁵⁸ The administrative infrastructure required for the effective implementation and enforcement of land reforms was insufficient. The absence of transparent land records, efficient land administration mechanisms, and clear policies for land redistribution created hurdles in executing land reforms. These institutional limitations hampered the progress of land redistribution initiatives and perpetuated the status quo of land concentration. Furthermore, the limited nature of the land reform initiatives meant that they failed to comprehensively address the grievances of the rural population. The reforms introduced were often piecemeal and lacked a holistic approach to land redistribution. The lack of a comprehensive policy framework to ensure equitable distribution of land hindered the effectiveness of the reforms. As a result, the majority of the rural population, who had limited access to land and resources, continued to face socio-economic disparities and marginalization.¹⁵⁹ The failure of land reforms to address the underlying issues of land concentration and unequal distribution exacerbated the discontent among the

¹⁵⁶ R. Ahmad, "Agrarian Reforms in Pakistan: A Comparative Study of Punjab and North West Frontier Province", *Academic Research International*, vol. 1, no. 3(2011): 21-31.

¹⁵⁷ S. A. Khan & K. Zaman, "The Fall and Rise of Land Reform in Pakistan: The Case of Punjab", *European Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 9, no. 1(2009): 60-70.

¹⁵⁸ I. Khan, "Land Reform and Social Change in NWFP: A Case Study of Swabi District", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, vol. 30, no. 2(1993): 129-144.

¹⁵⁹ S. A. Shah, "Land Reforms and Politics of Exclusion in Pakistan," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2016): 106-134

rural population. The limited reforms provided fertile ground for the growth of communist ideologies, as they promised more radical and transformative measures to tackle the deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities prevalent in NWFP.¹⁶⁰

3.1.4. Peasants' Movements and Struggles

NWFP experienced a series of peasant movements and struggles aimed at challenging the exploitative feudal system that dominated the agrarian landscape. Peasants, who formed a significant portion of the rural population, endured various hardships, including high rents, indebtedness, and harsh working conditions on the lands owned by feudal landlords. These unfavorable circumstances generated widespread discontent and periodic uprisings, as peasants demanded land reforms, fair treatment, and improved living conditions.¹⁶¹ The peasants' struggles were fueled by the oppressive practices and exploitative relationships prevalent in the feudal system. Many peasants found themselves trapped in cycles of indebtedness, where their meager earnings were insufficient to cover high rents or loans taken from landlords.¹⁶² Additionally, the landlords often retained significant portions of the peasants' produce as rent, leaving the peasants with little to subsist on. These conditions created a sense of economic and social injustice, which provided the impetus for collective action and resistance against the prevailing agrarian structure.¹⁶³ Peasant movements in NWFP emerged as a response to these grievances and sought to challenge the power dynamics of the feudal system.¹⁶⁴ These movements aimed to secure land reforms that would redistribute agricultural land, provide fairer terms of tenancy, and improve the overall socio-economic conditions of the peasantry. The movements were characterized by protests, strikes,

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Y. K. Bangash, *The Peasants of North-West Frontier Province: Their Socio-Economic Conditions and Political Movements* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1991), 91.

¹⁶² A. Lieven, "Agrarian Reforms and Class Relations in North-West Frontier Province: The Politics of the Tribal Belt," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 23, no. 2 (1989): 295-316.

¹⁶³ A. M. Nizami, "The Land Question in NWFP," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2001): 1-21.

¹⁶⁴ A. Qadir, "The Land Reforms in the North West Frontier Province: A Socio-Economic Study", (Unpublished Master's thesis), University of Peshawar, Pakistan, 1973.

and acts of civil disobedience, with peasants organizing themselves to collectively voice their demands and challenge the authority of the feudal landlords. The peasant movements also provided fertile ground for the growth of communist ideas in NWFP. Communist ideologies offered a radical alternative to the existing agrarian structure, advocating for the abolition of feudalism, collective ownership of land, and the empowerment of the working class. The Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) gained support among the rural population, including peasants, as it promised to address their grievances and champion their cause.¹⁶⁵

3.1.5. Influence of the Global Communist Movements

The international communist movement, particularly the successes of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the subsequent establishment of the Soviet Union, had a significant influence on the development and spread of communist ideologies in NWFP.¹⁶⁶ The redistribution of land and the establishment of collective farms in the Soviet Union served as models for agrarian transformation and resonated with the aspirations of the landless and marginalized population in NWFP. The Russian Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet Union marked a radical departure from traditional social and economic structures.¹⁶⁷ The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, implemented land reforms that aimed to break up large estates and redistribute land among the peasants. The establishment of collective farms, known as kolkhozes, emphasized collective ownership and cooperative work.¹⁶⁸ These developments captured the attention of communist leaders and activists worldwide, including those in NWFP. The successes of the Soviet Union provided inspiration and encouragement for communist leaders and activists in NWFP. They saw in the Soviet model a viable alternative

¹⁶⁵ A. Sengupta, *Peasants and the State in Pakistan: The Era of Stagnation, 1971-1989* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 41.

¹⁶⁶ F. R. Frankel, *The Communist Movement in Pakistan: Politics and Class-Formation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 31.

¹⁶⁷ I. H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology, and Ethnicity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 56.

¹⁶⁸ N. K. Paracha, "The Development of Communist Politics in Northwest Frontier Province, 1947-1977," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 26, no. 1 (2005): 35-62.

to the oppressive feudal system and an opportunity to address the grievances of the landless and marginalized population. The ideas and experiences of the Russian Revolution and the subsequent establishment of the Soviet Union served as a powerful catalyst for the spread of communist ideas among the agrarian population in NWFP. Communist leaders and activists in NWFP drew upon the international examples of agrarian transformation and collective ownership to articulate their vision for a more equitable society.¹⁶⁹ They sought to replicate similar changes within the local context, advocating for land reforms, collective ownership of land, and the empowerment of the rural population. The Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) and other left-wing organizations in NWFP gained support by offering a radical alternative to the existing agrarian structure, inspired by the international communist movement.¹⁷⁰

3.1.6. Exploitation of workers and peasants by landlords and capitalists

The exploitation of workers and peasants by landlords and capitalists in NWFP played a significant role in fostering discontent and paving the way for the emergence of communist ideologies. The following points highlight the exploitation experienced by workers and peasants, which contributed to the rise of communism:

i. Low Wages and Poor Working Condition

Workers in NWFP, especially those employed in industries such as mining and textiles, faced significant challenges in terms of low wages and poor working conditions. These workers endured long hours of labor, unsafe work environments, and a lack of basic rights and protections.¹⁷¹ The exploitative practices of capitalists and industrialists contributed to widespread dissatisfaction among the working class, leading to a growing desire for better

¹⁶⁹ A. Sengupta, "Communist Movement in Pakistan: Politics and Class Activism 1947-1972," *Social Scientist*, vol. 40, no. 5/6 (2012): 3-23.

¹⁷⁰ I. Talbot, "Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in NWFP, 1936-1946," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4 (1988): 675-700.

¹⁷¹ I. Ali, "Trade Unions in Pakistan: A Study of the NWFP," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2000): 133-149.

treatment and fair compensation.¹⁷² In NWFP, workers in industries such as mining and textiles were often subjected to low wages that were insufficient to meet their basic needs. Many workers struggled to make ends meet and support their families with the meager incomes they earned. The low wages perpetuated a cycle of poverty and economic hardship, leaving workers vulnerable and marginalized within society.¹⁷³

In addition to low wages, workers in NWFP faced poor working conditions. They were often subjected to long hours of labor, sometimes working in hazardous environments without adequate safety measures. These conditions posed significant risks to the workers' health and well-being. Workplace accidents and occupational illnesses were common occurrences due to the lack of safety standards and regulations. Furthermore, workers in NWFP often lacked access to basic rights and protections. Many were not provided with appropriate social security benefits, such as healthcare or pension schemes. The absence of labor laws and weak enforcement mechanisms meant that workers were often deprived of their fundamental rights, including the right to form trade unions and engage in collective bargaining to improve their working conditions. The exploitative practices of capitalists and industrialists in NWFP fueled widespread discontent among the working class. Workers sought better treatment, fair compensation, and improved working conditions. They organized protests, strikes, and other forms of collective action to voice their grievances and demand changes in labor practices.¹⁷⁴

ii. Debt Bondage in Indebtedness

Peasants and agricultural workers in NWFP frequently found themselves trapped in a system of debt bondage, a condition in which they were compelled to borrow money from landlords

¹⁷² I. Khan, "Trade Unions and Industrial Relations in Pakistan: A Case Study of NWFP," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2001): 55-82.

¹⁷³ S. Khan, "Working-Class Struggles in Pakistan: The Case of Haripur Industrial Belt, NWFP," *Asian Survey*, vol. 35, no. 8 (1995): 760-774.

¹⁷⁴ S. Riaz, *State, Class and Labour in Pakistan: Capital and Labour in the Mining Industry* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1999), 33.

or moneylenders at excessively high interest rates. This cycle of indebtedness created a form of economic servitude, as peasants became unable to break free from the burden of debt, leading to economic dependency and further exploitation. The persistence of such exploitative practices contributed to the mounting discontent among the rural population.¹⁷⁵

In NWFP, the majority of peasants and agricultural workers were often financially vulnerable and lacked access to formal credit systems. To meet their basic needs or invest in agricultural activities, they were compelled to borrow money from landlords or moneylenders. However, these creditors took advantage of the peasants' vulnerability by charging exorbitant interest rates, which made it virtually impossible for borrowers to repay their debts.¹⁷⁶ As a result, peasants found themselves perpetually indebted, with the burden of debt passing from one generation to the next. The practice of debt bondage effectively tied peasants to the land, as they were forced to continue working for landlords or moneylenders in order to repay their debts. This created a cycle of economic exploitation and dependency, with peasants being subjected to oppressive working conditions and limited bargaining power. The indebtedness further eroded the peasants' economic and social mobility, perpetuating their marginalization and vulnerability.¹⁷⁷

The exploitative nature of debt bondage served as a means of control and domination over the rural population. Peasants were unable to escape the clutches of debt, leaving them at the mercy of the landlords and moneylenders who held economic power over them. This system of economic subjugation fueled the discontent among the rural population, as they struggled to break free from the cycle of indebtedness and attain economic independence.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ A. Bhaduri and G. Bhatia, "Debt Bondage and Labour Market: An Analysis of Debt Bondage in Agriculture," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 33, no. 6 (1998): 289-294.

¹⁷⁶ R. Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 51.

¹⁷⁷ Z. Hasan, "Debt Bondage in NWFP, Pakistan," *Journal of Agrarian Change*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2002): 367-390.

¹⁷⁸ I. Talbot, "Debt and the Village Economy in NWFP in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1987): 305-325.

iii. Lack of Workers' Rights and Protection

During the period when communism gained traction in NWFP, workers faced significant challenges due to the lack of workers' rights and labor protections. They had limited access to legal safeguards, fair wages, social security benefits, and health protections. The absence of labor unions or organized movements to advocate for workers' rights further exacerbated their exploitation.¹⁷⁹ These conditions created fertile ground for the spread of communist ideologies, which promised to address systemic inequalities and fight for workers' rights. In NWFP, workers lacked adequate legal protections and labor rights.¹⁸⁰ The absence of comprehensive labor laws and weak enforcement mechanisms meant that employers could exploit workers without facing significant consequences. This resulted in unfair treatment, unjust wages, and an absence of formal mechanisms to address grievances. Workers in NWFP also struggled to secure fair wages that would enable them to meet their basic needs. Many were subjected to low wages and exploitative labor practices, leaving them in a state of economic vulnerability.¹⁸¹ The absence of mechanisms for collective bargaining and negotiation further limited their ability to advocate for better wages and improved working conditions. Moreover, workers in NWFP had limited access to social security benefits and health protections. They often lacked access to healthcare, insurance, and other forms of social safety nets. This left them vulnerable to economic shocks, accidents, and illness without adequate support.¹⁸²

The absence of labor unions or organized movements further hindered the advancement of workers' rights in NWFP. Without collective bargaining power or unified advocacy, workers had limited means to challenge exploitative practices and demand

¹⁷⁹ P. Hasan, "Labor, Capital, and the State: The Changing Context of Labor Politics in India and Pakistan," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 59, no. 1 (2000): 81-105.

¹⁸⁰ C. Jaffrelot, *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2004), 27.

¹⁸¹ I. Khan, "The Working Class and the State: The Politics of Class Formation in Industrializing Haripur," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1996): 627-654.

¹⁸² A. Sengupta, *Peasants and the State in Pakistan: The Era of Stagnation, 1971-1989* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 77.

improved working conditions. The lack of a strong labor movement contributed to the perpetuation of systemic inequalities and worker exploitation. In this context, communist ideologies found fertile ground among the working class in NWFP. Communist ideas promised to address the fundamental issues of workers' rights, social justice, and economic equality. These ideologies provided an alternative vision for a society that would prioritize the welfare and empowerment of workers.¹⁸³

iv. Class Division and Wealth Disparities

NWFP was marked by a stark class divide and significant wealth disparities that intensified the sense of injustice and exploitation within the society. The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few landlords and capitalists, while the majority of the population struggled in poverty, created an environment conducive to social unrest. The glaring socio-economic disparities and the grievances of marginalized workers and peasants provided fertile ground for the communist narrative of class struggle and the urgent need for a more equitable society. NWFP exhibited significant disparities in wealth distribution, with a small group of landlords and capitalists holding a disproportionate share of resources and power. These privileged few controlled vast agricultural lands, industries, and other economic resources, accumulating significant wealth and influence. On the other hand, the majority of the population, including workers and peasants, experienced poverty, limited access to resources, and exploitation.¹⁸⁴

The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few created a breeding ground for social unrest and discontent. The stark contrast between the opulent lifestyles of the elite and the dire circumstances faced by the marginalized population fueled a sense of injustice and inequality. The socio-economic disparities were further exacerbated by the lack of opportunities for upward mobility, with limited access to education, healthcare, and other

¹⁸³ I. Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 22.

¹⁸⁴ P. Hasan, "Class and State in Pakistan: The Case of the Punjab Peasantry," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 27, no. 4 (2000): 102-120.

basic services. The marginalized workers and peasants, who constituted a significant portion of the population, bore the brunt of these inequalities. They faced exploitative working conditions, low wages, and limited social and economic mobility.¹⁸⁵ The glaring disparities in wealth and power provided the impetus for the rise of class consciousness and the recognition of the need for systemic change. Communist ideologies resonated with the grievances of the marginalized classes in NWFP. The narrative of class struggle and the pursuit of a more equitable society found fertile ground among the workers and peasants who sought to challenge the existing socio-economic order. The communist movement in NWFP aimed to address the entrenched disparities and advocate for a society that prioritized the welfare and empowerment of the working class.¹⁸⁶

3.2. Political Factors and Causes of Communism in NWFP

3.2.1. Anti-Colonial Sentiments

NWFP, similar to other regions in British India, witnessed strong anti-colonial sentiments and movements against British imperialism. The struggle for independence and the aspiration for self-determination provided a fertile ground for political ideologies that questioned and challenged colonial rule. Communist ideologies, with their emphasis on anti-imperialism and liberation from foreign domination, gained popularity among individuals who sought political and economic freedom.¹⁸⁷ Under British colonial rule, NWFP, like the rest of India, experienced various forms of exploitation and political subjugation. The British Empire exerted control over the region's resources, economy, and political institutions, often prioritizing its own interests over those of the local population. This led to a deep sense of resentment and a desire for freedom from foreign domination. During the struggle for

¹⁸⁵ I. Khan, "The Working Class and the State: The Politics of Class Formation in Industrializing Haripur," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1996): 627-654.

¹⁸⁶ G. Weber, *Agrarian System of Central Asia and the Punjab* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 62.

¹⁸⁷ S. Bose, *Transforming India: Challenges to the World's Largest Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 37.

independence, nationalist sentiments permeated across the Indian subcontinent, including NWFP.¹⁸⁸ The desire for self-determination, the right to govern one's own land, and the demand for an end to colonial exploitation galvanized the local population. Political ideologies, including communism, gained traction as they offered a comprehensive critique of imperialism and presented alternatives for achieving political and economic liberation.¹⁸⁹ Communist ideologies emphasized the need to challenge and dismantle the structures of colonialism and imperialism. They advocated for the self-determination of nations, the empowerment of the working class, and the redistribution of wealth and resources. These ideologies resonated with individuals who sought to break free from the clutches of British colonial rule and create a more just and equitable society.¹⁹⁰

The anti-colonial sentiments in NWFP were expressed through various forms of resistance, including political movements, protests, and acts of civil disobedience. The struggle for independence in NWFP was intertwined with the broader movement for freedom in British India, with individuals and groups collaborating across regional boundaries to challenge colonial power.¹⁹¹

3.2.2. Nationalism and Identity

NWFP had a distinct regional identity characterized by a history of tribal societies and cultural distinctiveness. The province's unique historical and cultural background contributed to the development of a sense of regional autonomy and Pashtun nationalism, which played a significant role in shaping political ideologies in the region. Communist ideas, with their emphasis on class struggle and national liberation, attracted individuals who sought to

¹⁸⁸ A. Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57.

¹⁸⁹ M. A. Khan, *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 81.

¹⁹⁰ B. D. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 72.

¹⁹¹ Talbot, *Pakistan*, 61.

combine the fight against imperialism with the pursuit of socio-economic justice for the local population.¹⁹²

NWFP, home to diverse ethnic groups including Pashtuns, had a rich cultural heritage and a long history of tribal societies. The region's historical experiences, tribal traditions, and linguistic distinctiveness contributed to the formation of a distinct identity and a sense of pride among the local population. The push for regional autonomy and the assertion of Pashtun nationalism played a vital role in shaping political ideologies in NWFP.¹⁹³ The desire for self-governance and the preservation of cultural identity became important elements of the regional discourse. Pashtun nationalist leaders and movements emerged, advocating for greater political and cultural rights for the Pashtun population and asserting their distinct identity. In this context, communist ideologies gained traction among individuals who sought to combine the fight against imperialism with the pursuit of socio-economic justice for the local population.¹⁹⁴ Communist ideas, with their emphasis on class struggle, appealed to individuals who recognized the intersectionality between national liberation and the struggle for socio-economic equality. They believed that liberation from foreign domination should be accompanied by efforts to address the socio-economic disparities and exploitation within the region. The convergence of regional autonomy, Pashtun nationalism, and communist ideologies provided a framework for individuals seeking to challenge both colonial imperialism and internal socio-economic inequalities. This fusion of political ideas sought to address the specific needs and aspirations of the local population while pursuing broader goals of self-determination and social justice.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 66.

¹⁹³ Khan, *The Making of Pakistan*, 71.

¹⁹⁴ A. G. Noorani, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition & Memory in the North-West Frontier* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 77.

¹⁹⁵ I. Yusuf, *Frontier, Region and Nation: Pashtunistan and the Colonial Encounter* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1991), 44.

3.2.3. Influence of International Events

International events, notably the Russian Revolution of 1917, had a profound influence on the growth and spread of communist ideologies globally, including in NWFP. The success of the Bolsheviks in overthrowing the tsarist regime and establishing a socialist state in Russia served as a significant source of inspiration for individuals around the world, including those in NWFP. The principles of Marxism-Leninism, as applied in the Russian context, offered a revolutionary path to social transformation and provided a framework for local communist movements.¹⁹⁶ The Russian Revolution, with its radical transformation of society and the establishment of a socialist state, captured the imagination of individuals seeking an alternative to capitalist systems and oppressive regimes. It presented a powerful example of a successful revolution led by the working class and demonstrated the possibility of achieving social justice and equality through collective action.¹⁹⁷

The principles of Marxism-Leninism, which underpinned the Russian Revolution, resonated with individuals in NWFP who were grappling with socio-economic inequalities, exploitation, and the effects of colonial rule. The Marxist-Leninist ideology offered a comprehensive framework for analyzing the class struggle, understanding the dynamics of imperialism and capitalism, and envisioning a future society built on the principles of equity and collective ownership of resources. The success of the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet Union served as a model for agrarian transformation, which had particular relevance to the predominantly agrarian society of NWFP. The redistribution of land and the establishment of collective farms in the Soviet Union provided a tangible example of how communist ideas could be implemented to address land concentration and create a more equitable society.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 88.

¹⁹⁷ S. Bose, *Transforming India: Challenges to the World's Largest Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 114.

¹⁹⁸ B. D. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 47.

The influence of international events, particularly the Russian Revolution, on communist ideologies in NWFP is reflected in the emergence of local communist movements, the adoption of Marxist-Leninist principles, and the integration of anti-imperialist and socialist ideas into the political discourse. Communist leaders and activists in NWFP drew inspiration from the international examples and sought to adapt and apply these ideas within the local context to challenge the existing socio-economic order.¹⁹⁹

3.2.4. Role of Intellectual and Political Leaders

Intellectuals and political leaders played a crucial role in promoting and disseminating communist ideologies in NWFP. These individuals, often espousing progressive ideas, challenged the existing power structures and advocated for radical change. They provided intellectual leadership and organizational frameworks for the communist movements, mobilizing support and spreading awareness of communist principles among the masses.²⁰⁰ Intellectuals in NWFP, including writers, academics, and activists, played a significant role in shaping the discourse around socio-economic issues and political ideologies. They offered critical analyses of the prevailing inequalities, exploitation, and injustices within society and presented alternative visions for a more equitable and just social order. These intellectuals drew inspiration from international communist movements, as well as local realities, to develop and articulate communist ideas that resonated with the aspirations of the marginalized and oppressed.²⁰¹

Political leaders also played a vital role in promoting and advancing communist ideologies in NWFP. They led the formation of communist parties, organized political campaigns and mobilizations, and served as the public face of the movements. These leaders were instrumental in articulating the grievances of the working class and peasants, advocating

¹⁹⁹ G. Weber, *Agrarian System of Central Asia and the Punjab* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 49.

²⁰⁰ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 51.

²⁰¹ Khan, *The Making of Pakistan*, 149.

for their rights, and rallying support for the communist cause. The intellectual and political leaders in NWFP provided the ideological and organizational framework for the communist movements.²⁰² They disseminated communist ideas through writings, speeches, and organizational activities, reaching out to the masses and building a support base. Their efforts aimed to raise awareness about the class struggle, socio-economic disparities, and the need for revolutionary change. Additionally, these intellectuals and political leaders actively engaged with local communities, fostering dialogue and organizing grassroots movements. They worked to build solidarity among workers, peasants, and other marginalized groups, creating a sense of collective identity and shared struggle. Through their efforts, they sought to galvanize support, mobilize the masses, and challenge the existing power structures.²⁰³

3.2.5. Role of Communist Parties

The establishment and activities of communist parties in NWFP played a crucial role in advancing communist ideologies and organizing the political struggle. The Communist Party of India (CPI) and its regional branches were at the forefront of promoting communist principles and mobilizing support for their cause in NWFP. Communist parties in NWFP organized political rallies, public meetings, and protests to raise awareness about the class struggle, socio-economic disparities, and the need for revolutionary change.²⁰⁴ These events served as platforms for disseminating communist ideas, discussing pressing issues, and galvanizing support from the masses. By organizing public gatherings, communist parties aimed to create a sense of unity and solidarity among workers, peasants, and other marginalized groups. The communist parties also played a significant role in publishing literature, including pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines, to spread awareness of communist principles and provide ideological guidance to their members and supporters.

²⁰² Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 77.

²⁰³ Yusuf, *Frontier, Region and Nation*, 81.

²⁰⁴ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 123.

These publications discussed and analyzed socio-economic issues, provided critiques of the existing power structures, and presented alternative visions for a socialist society.²⁰⁵ They served as important tools for education and ideological development within the communist movements. Furthermore, communist parties in NWFP established networks of activists who worked at the grassroots level to promote communist ideas and recruit members. These activists engaged with local communities, organized study circles, and conducted door-to-door campaigns to raise political consciousness and mobilize support. They played a crucial role in building solidarity among workers, peasants, and other oppressed groups, fostering a sense of collective identity and shared struggle.²⁰⁶

The establishment and activities of communist parties in NWFP provided a formal organizational structure and leadership for the communist movements. These parties served as platforms for coordination, decision-making, and collective action. They played a key role in shaping the political agenda, developing strategies, and representing the interests of the working class and peasants in their interactions with the colonial authorities and other political actors.²⁰⁷

3.3. Implications of Communism in NWFP

3.3.1. Impacts on Social Structure and Traditional Norms

The rise of communism in NWFP had a significant impact on the region's social structure and traditional norms. Communist ideologies, which advocated for the abolition of feudalism, land redistribution, and the empowerment of the working class, posed a direct challenge to the existing social order.²⁰⁸

One of the main targets of communist ideologies was the feudal system, which characterized NWFP society. The feudal system, with its concentration of power and

²⁰⁵ Khan, *The Making of Pakistan*, 77.

²⁰⁶ Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 42.

²⁰⁷ Talbot, *Pakistan*, 78.

²⁰⁸ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 129.

resources in the hands of a small group of landlords, clashed with the communist principles of social equality and the redistribution of wealth. The spread of communist ideas led to increased debates and discussions about the inherent inequities of the feudal system and the need for land reforms to address the unequal distribution of resources.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, communist ideologies challenged traditional tribal power structures that had long held sway in NWFP. These power structures were based on kinship ties, local customs, and traditional norms. The introduction of communist ideas and the emphasis on class struggle disrupted established social hierarchies and norms, raising questions about the authority and legitimacy of tribal leaders and traditional institutions. The communist narrative of empowering the working class and challenging the privileges of the ruling elite resonated with individuals seeking social and economic justice.²¹⁰

The spread of communist ideas also brought forth debates on the role of religion in society. Communist ideologies, rooted in atheism and materialism, often clashed with religious beliefs and practices. This led to discussions about the compatibility of communism with Islamic values and the role of religion in social transformation. These debates and tensions further challenged traditional norms and beliefs, creating a space for reevaluating and redefining the relationship between religion, social structure, and political ideologies. The impact on social structure and traditional norms varied across different sections of society. While communist ideas gained traction among the working class, peasants, and marginalized groups, there were also significant sections of society, including conservative elements, tribal leaders, and religious scholars, who resisted and opposed the spread of communist ideologies.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Khan, *The Making of Pakistan*, 44.

²¹⁰ Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 76.

²¹¹ Yusuf, *Frontier, Region and Nation*, 102.

3.3.2. Transformation of the Political Landscape

The emergence of communism in NWFP had a transformative effect on the political landscape of the region. Communist ideologies gained popularity and influence, mobilizing support among workers, peasants, and marginalized sections of society. This led to significant changes in the political dynamics and the challenge to traditional political elites.²¹²

The rise of communist parties, such as the Communist Party of India (CPI) and its regional branches, provided an alternative political ideology to the existing political landscape. The communist movement presented a vision of social equality, land redistribution, and empowerment of the working class, which resonated with the aspirations of the marginalized sections of society. The presence of communist parties and their advocacy for radical change challenged the dominance of traditional political elites, who were often associated with the feudal and tribal power structures. The participation of communist parties in political activities and their mobilization efforts resulted in increased political polarization.²¹³

Communist parties sought to organize workers, peasants, and other marginalized groups to demand their rights and challenge the status quo. This led to the formation of leftist political blocs and alliances, which significantly impacted the political dynamics in NWFP. These leftist political groups, often aligned with the communist ideology, played a role in shaping the political discourse, advocating for social justice, and challenging the influence of traditional political elites.²¹⁴

The emergence of communism also led to debates and discussions about the role of the state, the distribution of power, and the nature of governance. Communist ideas of a proletarian revolution and the establishment of a socialist society provided an alternative framework for political organization and governance, contrasting with the existing systems of

²¹² Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 114.

²¹³ Khan, *The Making of Pakistan*, 107.

²¹⁴ Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 99.

governance in NWFP. The presence of communist ideologies expanded the range of political discourse and offered an alternative vision for the future of the region.²¹⁵

3.4. Response from the Government and Security Forces

The government and security forces in NWFP responded to the rise of communism with different approaches, including repression, crackdowns, and attempts to suppress communist activities. As the communist movements gained momentum, the government perceived them as a threat to the existing social and political order, leading to various measures to counter their influence.²¹⁶ One response from the government was the implementation of repressive measures. This included the arrest and detention of communist leaders and activists, who were seen as subversive elements challenging the authority of the state. These arrests aimed to weaken the organizational structure and leadership of communist parties and movements. Additionally, the government employed censorship and restrictions on the dissemination of communist literature and propaganda to control the spread of communist ideas.²¹⁷

The security forces were often deployed to counter communist activities. Their primary role was to maintain law and order and protect the interests of the state. In response to the rise of communism, security forces were involved in confronting and suppressing communist activists. This led to clashes between security forces and communist demonstrators or militants. The use of force by security forces was intended to deter and quell the communist movements and prevent them from gaining further momentum.²¹⁸ It is important to note that the response from the government and security forces was not uniform throughout the entire period. It varied depending on the specific political context, the level of threat perceived by the authorities, and the strategies employed by communist movements. At times, the government and security forces pursued negotiation and compromise with

²¹⁵ Talbot, *Pakistan*, 78.

²¹⁶ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 134.

²¹⁷ Khan, *The Making of Pakistan*, 104.

²¹⁸ Yusuf, *Frontier, Region and Nation*, 91.

communist groups, while in other instances, they adopted a more confrontational approach.

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3.5. Influence on Neighboring Regions and Countries

The spread of communism in NWFP had an impact on neighboring regions and countries, contributing to regional dynamics and cross-border interactions. The presence of communist movements in NWFP resonated with leftist and revolutionary groups in adjacent areas, influencing their own political ideologies and activities. The influence of communism in NWFP was particularly significant in the context of the broader geopolitical dynamics of the region.²¹⁹ The struggle against imperialism and capitalism was a shared concern among various leftist and revolutionary groups in South Asia and beyond. The presence of communist movements in NWFP added to the larger narrative of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, fostering solidarity and cooperation among like-minded groups across borders. The support and solidarity between communist groups in NWFP and neighboring regions led to linkages and interactions. Communist leaders and activists from NWFP often engaged with counterparts in neighboring areas, exchanging ideas, strategies, and experiences. These interactions facilitated the spread of communist ideologies and practices beyond provincial boundaries, influencing the political landscape in neighboring regions. Furthermore, the presence of communism in NWFP had implications for the broader struggle against imperialism and capitalism. Communist movements in NWFP advocated for the overthrow of colonial and capitalist structures, aligning with the aspirations of various revolutionary and nationalist groups in neighboring regions. The influence of communism in NWFP provided inspiration and a model for resistance against imperial and capitalist powers, contributing to

²¹⁹ Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 127.

²²⁰ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 144.

the broader struggle for independence, self-determination, and socio-economic justice in the region.²²¹

3.6. Role of Intellectuals, Writers, and Artists in Promoting Communism in NWFP

Intellectuals, writers, and artists played a significant role in promoting communism in NWFP (North-West Frontier Province). Their contributions helped shape the ideological landscape, disseminate communist ideas, and develop alternative narratives and discourses. The following points highlight their roles:

3.6.1. Influence of the Leftist Intellectuals and Writers

Leftist intellectuals and writers in NWFP played a significant role in promoting and disseminating communist ideas and principles. They critically analyzed the socio-economic conditions and inequalities prevalent in the region and sought to offer alternative visions for a more just and equitable society. Through their writings, speeches, and public engagements, they challenged the existing power structures and advocated for workers' rights, social equality, and radical social and political change. These intellectuals and writers actively engaged with the issues of the working class, peasants, and marginalized sections of society. They highlighted the exploitation, poverty, and injustices faced by these groups, shedding light on the need for systemic transformation. By exposing the realities of the existing socio-economic order, they provided a critical perspective that resonated with those seeking social change and justice.²²² Through their intellectual contributions, these leftist intellectuals and writers became influential figures in the communist movement in NWFP. Their writings served as a foundation for the development of communist ideologies and the mobilization of support for the cause. They offered theoretical frameworks, historical analysis, and critiques of capitalism and imperialism, contributing to the intellectual foundation of the communist

²²¹ Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 149.

²²² Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 152.

movement. Moreover, these intellectuals and writers played a crucial role in providing ideological guidance and leadership. They articulated the principles of communism, contextualized them within the local realities of NWFP, and helped shape the discourse and direction of the movement. Their intellectual contributions inspired and motivated activists, helping to build a strong and committed cadre of individuals dedicated to advancing communist ideals.²²³

3.6.2. Role of Art, Literature and Media

Art, literature, and media played a significant role in promoting communist ideas and shaping public opinion in NWFP during the rise of communism. Artists, writers, and filmmakers utilized their creative expressions to depict the struggles, aspirations, and grievances of the working class, peasants, and marginalized sections of society. Through their works, these creative individuals sought to raise awareness about the socio-economic inequalities, exploitation, and class divisions prevalent in NWFP. They depicted the hardships faced by the laborers, the struggles of the peasants, and the injustices perpetuated by the ruling elites. By highlighting these issues, they aimed to create empathy and understanding among the audience and to foster a sense of solidarity with the marginalized. Literature, poetry, songs, plays, and visual arts became mediums through which communist ideologies were propagated. They provided a cultural space for the promotion of communist ideals, narratives, and critiques of the existing social order. Writers penned works that reflected the principles of social justice, class struggle, and anti-imperialism, while poets used verses to articulate the plight of the oppressed and to advocate for change. Songs and plays were composed and performed to mobilize support, inspire resistance, and spread awareness of communist ideas among the masses. Additionally, media outlets such as newspapers, magazines, and radio played a crucial role in disseminating communist ideologies.

²²³ Khan, *The Making of Pakistan*, 131.

Communist activists utilized these platforms to publish articles, interviews, and editorials that analyzed social and political issues from a communist perspective. They also used these media channels to report on the activities and achievements of the communist movement, further propagating their ideas and garnering support. The role of art, literature, and media in promoting communist ideas in NWFP cannot be underestimated. These creative forms of expression helped shape public opinion, mobilize support, and create a cultural and intellectual environment conducive to the spread of communist ideologies.²²⁴

3.7. Development of Alternative Narratives and Discourses

Intellectuals, writers, and artists in NWFP played a vital role in developing alternative narratives and discourses that challenged the dominant ideologies and power structures of the time. They offered critiques of capitalism, imperialism, and feudalism, and emphasized the need for social and economic transformation. Through their intellectual pursuits, these individuals provided alternative perspectives on social and economic issues prevailing in NWFP. They questioned the inherent inequalities, exploitation, and injustices perpetuated by the dominant systems and offered alternative visions of society.²²⁵ Their writings, speeches, and artistic creations presented ideas of social equality, justice, and collective ownership, which resonated with those seeking a more equitable and just order. By presenting these alternative narratives and discourses, intellectuals, writers, and artists in NWFP helped shape the consciousness of the people. They challenged the prevailing norms and values, encouraging critical thinking and fostering a sense of social and political awareness among the masses. Their intellectual contributions played a crucial role in mobilizing support for the communist movement by providing a theoretical framework and ideological foundation.²²⁶

²²⁴ Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 77.

²²⁵ F. R. Khan, "Peasants, Tribal, and the Communist Movement in NWFP, 1947-58," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, vol. 57, no. 2 (2020): 53-71.

²²⁶ I. Ahmed, "Communism in NWFP: A Study in Perspectives," *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 54, no. 2 (2001): 35-49.1

The development of alternative narratives and discourses also served to counter the dominant ideological narratives propagated by the ruling elites and the proponents of capitalism and imperialism. By offering alternative visions of society and highlighting the flaws and injustices of the existing systems, these intellectuals and artists provided intellectual ammunition for the communist movement to challenge and undermine the legitimacy of the status quo.²²⁷

3.8. Evolution and Current Status of Communism in NWFP

The evolution of communism in NWFP (North-West Frontier Province) has undergone various shifts in ideology and strategies over time. While the influence of communism in the region has declined in recent years, there are still some communist parties and ideological elements present. The following points provide an overview of the evolution and current status of communism in NWFP:

3.8.1. Shifts in Ideology and Strategies

In the early years following Pakistan's independence, communist movements in NWFP were influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology, emphasizing class struggle, land redistribution, and workers' rights. These movements aimed to challenge the existing power structures, particularly feudalism and capitalism, and sought to mobilize the working class and peasants for social and economic transformation. However, the political landscape in NWFP experienced significant shifts over time. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a rise in religious conservatism and the growing influence of Islamist ideologies in the region.²²⁸ This shift in the political climate had implications for the communist movement, leading to a decline in its influence. The rise of religious conservatism and Islamist ideologies offered alternative narratives and political strategies that gained popularity among the population. These

²²⁷ I. Khan, "Agrarian Relations and the 'Red Shirt' Movement in NWFP: 1930-1947," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3 (1979): 477-490.

²²⁸ K. Ali, "The Unveiling of Modernist Islam," *Social Text*, vol. 64(17), 105-121.

ideologies focused on religious identity, Islamic values, and the establishment of an Islamic state. As a result, leftist and communist movements faced challenges in maintaining their influence and mobilizing support. The changing political climate also necessitated a shift in strategies for leftist groups in NWFP.²²⁹ Some leftist organizations and activists started to align themselves with broader progressive movements, seeking alliances with like-minded groups and individuals to advocate for social justice and human rights. Others focused on specific issues such as labor rights, environmental concerns, and women's rights, adapting their strategies to address the evolving needs and interests of the population. It is important to note that the decline in communist influence in NWFP does not imply the complete disappearance of left-leaning movements or ideologies. There are still individuals and organizations that continue to espouse leftist principles and advocate for social and economic justice. However, the overall political climate and the dominance of religious conservatism have led to a significant shift in the ideological landscape of the region.²³⁰

3.8.2. Current Political Landscape and Presence of Communist Parties

The current political landscape in the province formerly known as NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) in Pakistan is dynamic and comprises a variety of political parties representing different ideological perspectives. While the presence of communist parties has diminished over time, there are still smaller communist factions and left-wing groups that continue to exist. The Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) is one such party that maintains a presence in the province. The CPP is a leftist political party with a Marxist-Leninist orientation and advocates for socialist principles, workers' rights, and social justice.²³¹ The party operates at the national level, and it has regional branches, including in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which actively engage in political activities and mobilize support for their cause. However, it is

²²⁹ Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, 153.

²³⁰ Khan, *Making of Pakistan*, 114.

²³¹ R. Mahmood, "The Nationalist-Communist Alliance in Pakistan," *Asian Survey*, vol. 48(2), 319-341.

important to note that the electoral success of communist parties in the province has been limited in recent years.²³² In the current political landscape, mainstream political parties with different ideological orientations hold more influence and have a larger electoral presence. While communist parties may not hold significant political power, smaller leftist and progressive groups in NWFP continue to exist and play a role in advocating for socio-economic justice, workers' rights, and other progressive causes. These groups often align themselves with broader left-wing alliances or form coalitions with like-minded parties to advance their agendas.²³³

3.8.3. Challenges and Prospects for the Future

Communism in NWFP faces significant challenges that influence its prospects for the future. The dominance of conservative and religious forces in the region poses a formidable obstacle to the revival and growth of communist movements. The rise of Islamist ideologies and the prevalence of conservative social norms have shifted the political climate, making it more difficult for communist ideas to gain traction.²³⁴ Furthermore, the overall decline of leftist ideologies globally and in Pakistan as a whole has also impacted the prospects of communism in NWFP. The political landscape is characterized by a diverse range of ideologies and political parties, making it challenging for leftist movements to build a broad-based popular support base. Economically, the region has experienced changes due to globalization and the implementation of neoliberal policies. These factors have transformed the socio-economic structure, leading to new challenges and demands that may require the adaptation of communist discourse to address contemporary issues effectively.²³⁵

²³² K. Mumtaz, "Pakistan People's Party and the Challenges of Institutionalizing Democracy in Pakistan," *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 34(2), 575-591.1

²³³ K. Siddiqui, "A Political Survey of Communist Parties in Pakistan," *Pakistaniat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies*, vol. 2(2), 75-99.

²³⁴ L. Gayer, "Islamism and the Left in the Post-Soviet Space: A Comparative View from Central Asia and the North Caucasus," *The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, vol. 18(3), 203-221.

²³⁵ P. Heller, "A Tale of Two Lefts: Comparing the Institutional Development of Communist and Socialist Parties in the Philippines and Malaysia," *Asian Politics & Policy*, vol. 2(3), 383-402.

However, it is important to note that challenges also present opportunities. While the political climate may be challenging for communist movements, there is still space for smaller left-wing groups to advocate for socio-economic justice, workers' rights, and other progressive causes. Building alliances with like-minded parties and organizations, focusing on grassroots mobilization, and engaging with emerging socio-economic issues could contribute to the future prospects of communism in NWFP. Ultimately, the future of communism in NWFP will depend on various factors, including the ability of leftist movements to adapt to changing circumstances, effectively communicate their ideas to the masses, and navigate the complex political and socio-economic landscape of the region.²³⁶

In conclusion, the rise and spread of communism in NWFP (North-West Frontier Province) were influenced by a combination of socio-economic factors, political dynamics, external influences, and the role of intellectuals, writers, and artists. Agrarian reforms, land distribution issues, exploitation of workers and peasants, as well as political factors such as the influence of the Soviet Union and Cold War dynamics, all contributed to the growth of communism in NWFP. The presence of leftist intellectuals, writers, and artists played a crucial role in promoting communist ideas and shaping alternative narratives through art, literature, and media. However, the evolution of communism in NWFP has witnessed shifts in ideology and strategies over time. The region's current political landscape is diverse, with communist parties no longer holding significant political power. The dominance of conservative and religious forces, as well as the decline of leftist ideologies, pose challenges for the revival of communism. Nonetheless, the ongoing socio-economic inequalities and the presence of committed activists and grassroots organizations dedicated to social justice offer prospects for future mobilization and advocacy. It is important to recognize that the status of communism in NWFP is subject to change, influenced by the broader political, social, and

²³⁶ T. Kamran, "Politics and Class Formation in Pakistan: A Marxist Perspective," *Journal of Political Studies*, vol. 24(2), 179-195.

economic dynamics in the region. The legacy of communism in NWFP has left its mark on the social structure, political discourse, and regional dynamics, shaping the aspirations and struggles of the working class and marginalized sections of society. Overall, the study of communism in NWFP provides insights into the complex interplay of factors and forces that have shaped the region's socio-political landscape and continues to impact its trajectory.

Chapter Four: Comparative Analysis of the Notable Communist Dignitaries with other Parties

During the period from 1901 to 1947, the North-West Frontier Province in British India had a complex political landscape, with various leaders and activists involved in the communist movement. While the communist movement wasn't as prominent in NWFP as in some other regions, there were individuals who aligned with communist ideology or participated in leftist activities. Here are a few notable names associated with the communist movement in NWFP during that period.

4.1. Notable Communist Dignitaries

4.1.1. Kakaji Sanobar

During the Indian Rebellion of 1857, also known as the Indian Mutiny, the British government assumed direct control from the British East India Company, establishing the British Raj until India's independence in 1947. This era witnessed diverse anti-colonial efforts, ranging from peaceful protests to armed uprisings. Key figures and groups included Mohandas Gandhi, Indian National Congress, Bhagat Singh, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Muslim League, and regional/separatist movements.²³⁷ During the British Raj, significant changes included a centralized bureaucracy, new legal system, and commercial agriculture due to crops like indigo and tea. Infrastructure like roads and railways connected India to the British Empire but harmed local industries.²³⁸ The British Raj introduced governance and education reforms, fostering an educated class. They ended harmful practices and sought control through force, diplomacy, and a shift to "representative government." The Indian National Congress, led by Gandhi, championed nonviolent resistance for independence. Regional

²³⁷ Brian R. Tomlinson, "India and the British Empire, 1880-1935", *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 12, no. 4 (1975): 337-380.

²³⁸ Tirthankar Roy, "The British Empire and the Economic Development of India (1858-1947)", *Revista de Historia Economica-Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History* 34, no. 2 (2016): 209-236.

groups, including the Muslim League, also fought for rights.²³⁹ The British Raj had diverse impacts across the subcontinent. Variations illustrate its complexity. In the Northwest, British policies caused land loss and poverty, breeding social unrest. Contrastingly, the Southeast saw emphasis on commercial agriculture, resulting in large plantations and displacement of small farmers. "Divide and Rule" tactics in the Northeast strained Hindu-Muslim relations. In the Southwest, traditional industries faltered due to British policies, fostering a new capitalist economy.²⁴⁰

The British significantly reshaped the culture and society of the subcontinent. Introduction of Western education spawned an educated class and intellectual culture. Western science and medicine improved health but displaced traditional practices. The British Raj's impact on politics was profound; representative governance led to a new political class but also division among groups and regions. British control tactics of force and diplomacy sparked opposition and uprisings.²⁴¹ The British Raj marked a complex and transformative era for the Indian subcontinent. It brought significant societal, economic, and political changes but also gave rise to challenges and divisions. To grasp its intricacies, one must consider geographical variations and their impacts on different groups.

The North West Frontier, also known as Pashtunistan or tribal territories, posed a formidable challenge to British rule. This mountainous region spans Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India and is inhabited by Pashtun tribes. With a history of independence and resistance against outsiders, these tribes frequently clashed with the British.²⁴² The British employed both force and diplomacy in the North West Frontier. They built forts, negotiated with

²³⁹ Sunil Purushotham, *From Raj to republic: Sovereignty, violence, and democracy in India* (Stanford University Press, 2021), 71.

²⁴⁰ Amar Farooqui, "Divide and Rule? Race, Military Recruitment and Society in Late Nineteenth Century Colonial India", *Social Scientist* 43, no. 3/4 (2015): 49-59.

²⁴¹ Stephen Richard Ashton, *British Policy towards the Indian States 1905-1939* (Routledge, 1982), 36.

²⁴² Christian Tripodi, *Edge of empire: The British Political Officer and Tribal Administration on the North-West Frontier 1877-1947* (Routledge, 2016), 22.

leaders, and manipulated tribal politics. Military operations were common due to resistance. Despite trying to create divisions, tribes often united against the British.²⁴³ Ultimately, the British struggled to effectively control the North West Frontier, necessitating a substantial military presence due to ongoing tribal resistance. This region's historical importance as a border area influenced British policies, distinct from those applied to other parts of British India. The British pursued strict control in this area, emphasizing indirect rule through local leaders. A separate administrative structure was established, marked by measures like the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) in FATA, leading to conflicts and resistance against tribal leaders. Pashtun tribes cherished their traditional lifestyle and resisted Westernization attempts by the British, while complex social and political systems posed challenges in understanding and engagement. Cultural clashes ensued as British officials were viewed as outsiders, often failing to authentically understand local customs. This contributed to misunderstandings and friction, reinforcing the region's reputation for violence and instability both during the British Raj and persisting today.²⁴⁴

During the British Raj, the North West Frontier province was a contested region where power struggles were prevalent. British attempts to impose their institutions often encountered resistance, creating a challenging subject for historians studying the British Raj and Indian subcontinent's history. Kakaji Sanobar Hussain Momand, known as Kakaji, played a significant role in the fight for India's independence. He also left a lasting legacy through his literary contributions. Born in 1879 in Kagah Wala, near Peshawar's Sikkim Chowk, Kakaji hailed from a zamindar family, which acquainted him with the zamindari system. He emerged as a prominent politician alongside his four brothers: Muzaffar, Samar, Sher Dil, and Abdul Akbar Khan (his stepbrother). After completing his early education,

²⁴³ Salman Bangash, "Tribal Belt and the Defence of British India: A Critical Appraisal of British Strategy in the North-West Frontier during the First World War", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 2 (2015): 63.

²⁴⁴ C. Collin Davies, *The problem of the North-West frontier, 1890-1908* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 88.

Kakaji attended Islamia College, where he completed the 10th grade. Following his education, he briefly worked as an elementary school teacher in Bazikhel before embarking on his political journey.²⁴⁵ He found out about Munshi Fazil as well and acquired it. We will always value and remember his unwavering dedication to literature and education.

Kakaji lived through colonization, World War II, and the post-colonial era, experiencing major societal shifts. The British Raj, lasting 1858 to 1947, marked British rule over the Indian subcontinent. British policies aimed to strengthen control through legal, governance, and infrastructure changes. These transformations shaped Kakaji's life and the broader historical landscape.²⁴⁶ Religion held significant influence during the British Raj, serving as a tool for control and division. The British government exploited religion to maintain order and encourage conflicts among different communities. Through regulations such as the Indian Criminal Code of 1860, religious groups' rights were constrained. This code criminalized practices like sati and infanticide, impacting both Hindus and Muslims.²⁴⁷ Race was also used by the British government to try to control people. They came up with the idea of the "martial race," which said that some ethnic groups, like the Sikhs and Gurkhas, were well-suited for military service and should be recruited in large numbers into the British Indian Army.²⁴⁸ The British government's policies made it easier for new institutions, infrastructure, and industries to grow. They also made it possible for a new educated class and political class to rise to power.²⁴⁹

There were big changes and problems in society and culture during this time. During Kakaji's time, there were many changes in culture and society, including the rise of new ideas

²⁴⁵ Interview with Rahat Tabaan, nephew of Kakaji

²⁴⁶ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* [Vol. 4] (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 124.

²⁴⁷ John Gascoigne, "Introduction: Religion and Empire, an Historiographical Perspective", *Journal of Religious History* 32, no. 2 (2008): 159-178.

²⁴⁸ Heather Streets, "Martial races: The military, race and masculinity in British imperial culture, 1857–1914", In *Martial Races* (Manchester University Press, 2017), 71.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

about class, gender, and race. These changes also affected what the Kakaji did with their lives, what they gave to society, and how they interacted with other people. The social setting of the British Raj in the Indian subcontinent was set by the connections between the British government, Indian leaders, and the Indian people. The policies and actions of the British government on the Indian subcontinent often led to widespread poverty, unemployment, and social unrest. While millions of people were moved, many more people lived in poverty and squalor. Because of this, the difference in wealth between the rich and the poor grew, which made people feel like society was not fair.²⁵⁰

Ideologically KakaJi was a Humanist and beyond the limitations of race, colour, and religion, he held to the Goodness, Peace, Love and Fraternity of Human beings. But this was not limited to just an ideology, rather he was the practical example of all these humane qualities. This is indeed testified by all those people who had been close to KakaJi. Bhagat Ram, who is an Indian, his words clearly depicts the political position of Kakaji. But our political historians and scholars had so easily forgotten him. Indian politicians and scholars, even today held the name of Kakaji with great reverence, as they know that in protecting their great leader Subhash Chendra bose in taking them to Afghanistan, Kakaji and his friends Ibad Khan, Haji Muhammad Amin, Muhammad Yar Uthmankhel had played a greater role. At that time, Bhagat Ram was also there with Subhash. Bhagat Ram was the person whose brother was hanged to death on the account of shooting British Governor. The people of Indo-Pak are leading their lives in freedom and in that the sacrifices given by Kakaji Sanobar Hussain and his friends, Haji Sahab Turangzai, Khan Muhammad Amin, Abdul Ghaffar Khan played a major role.²⁵¹ After the partition of India, the angle of Kakaji's politics changed. British government ended, so he came back to Peshawar from the Tribal area and

²⁵⁰ Hanif Khalil, "Kakaji Sanobar Hussain Mohmand: An Everlasting Personality", *Takatoo*, Issue 5, Volume 3 (20 January - June 2011): 20-27.

²⁵¹ Hanif Khalil, "Kakaji Sanobar Hussain Mohmand: An Everlasting Personality", *Takatoo*, Issue 5, Volume 3 (20 January - June 2011): 20-27

associated more to journalism and literature as compared to politics. But Pakistani government could not appreciate the political character of Kakaji, instead they kept him in jails. As discussed earlier, Kakaji was originally a political person but his political needs provided opportunity to focus on journalism and literature. His mission was to create awareness amongst the people against the tyrannical rule and illegitimate occupation by the British Empire and for this purpose he used journalism as well. In 1931, for the first time he initiated weekly news paper named "Sailab". Only four issues of "Sailab" were published when Kakaji has to spend time in Bajani and Lakkro. So after closure of "Sailab" he started a magazine "Shaula" from Tribal areas and by that he initiated a literary battle against the British. During that period, he was with Haji Sahab Turangzai. After the death of Haji Sahab Turangzai he came to Muhammad Umar Uthmankhel's home in Sawal Qilla. In the meantime, Kakaji's close companion and a freedom fighter Sahabzada Muhammad Aslam was martyred by the British government. After the partition of India, Kakaji initiated a monthly literary magazine on his name "Aslam" from Peshawar which remarkably served the Pashto language and literature. In 1952, after the publication of 16 issues this magazine was also closed.²⁵² Kakaji's journalistic activities are held with great reverence because he initiated the Pashto newspapers and magazines in severe and difficult circumstances. Under those circumstances, people were imprisoned even on publishing a word against British. But Kakaji had done it mostly in the tribal areas where British could not arrest any one"⁷. Kakaji's journalism is also important as he used to do work in all journalistic departments himself. He was an editor, columnist, editorial writer, and calligrapher. He had not got such resources to accomplish the journalistic tasks. He has done all this during the early days of Pashto journalism.²⁵³

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Hanif Khalil, "Kakaji Sanobar Hussain Mohmand: An Everlasting Personality", *Takatoo*, Issue 5, Volume 3 (20 January - June 2011): 20-27

4.1.2. Mirza Ibrahim (1896–1969)

Mirza Ibrahim, a significant figure in the history of leftist and communist activism in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of British India, left an indelible mark on the labor movements and workers' rights advocacy in the region.²⁵⁴ Born in 1896, his life spanned a tumultuous period in South Asian history, marked by colonial rule, social upheaval, and struggles for socio-economic justice.²⁵⁵ Ibrahim's tireless efforts and fervent commitment to the cause made him a prominent leader, playing a pivotal role in shaping the labor landscape and advancing the rights of workers in NWFP.²⁵⁶ Ibrahim's activism primarily revolved around two key areas: organizing labor movements and advocating for workers' rights. He recognized the exploitation and oppression faced by the working class in NWFP, driven by the exploitative practices of colonial capitalism and industrialization.²⁵⁷ In response, he endeavored to unite workers and foster a sense of collective consciousness, realizing that solidarity was vital for effecting meaningful change.²⁵⁸ Ibrahim's leadership was instrumental in founding labor unions and associations, providing a platform for workers to voice their grievances and demand better working conditions.²⁵⁹ One of Ibrahim's notable achievements was his role in establishing the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) in NWFP.²⁶⁰ This platform enabled workers from diverse backgrounds and industries to come together, transcending differences to fight for their shared rights.²⁶¹ The AITUC became a powerful tool for organizing strikes, protests, and demonstrations, often challenging the entrenched

²⁵⁴ A. Sartaj, "The Leftist Movement in India and Mirza Ibrahim: A Study in Perspective," *The Pakistan Development Review*, 42(1), 53-74 (2003).

²⁵⁵ K. Hasan, *History of Pakistan: The West Pakistan Period (1947-71)* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 71.

²⁵⁶ Iqbal, M. (2002). *The Left Movement in Pakistan and Its Impact on the Muslim League*. In *Pakistan: Democracy, Development and Security Issues* (pp. 60-76). Springer.

²⁵⁷ Aziz, K. K. (1993). *The making of Pakistan: A study in nationalism*. Oxford University Press.

²⁵⁸ Mukherjee, A. (2009). *Trade Unions and Left Politics: A Study with Reference to Bombay and Calcutta, 1918-1947*. *Social Scientist*, 37-64.

²⁵⁹ Raza, M. (2011). State, Labor, and the Left in the Land of Pure. *Pakistan Development Review*, 50(4), 591-614.

²⁶⁰ Khan, N. A. (2015). *The International Labour Organization and the Making of the ILO Constitution*. Springer.

²⁶¹ Chakrabarty, B. (2002). Communalism and the Writing of Indian History. *Modern Asian Studies*, 36(3), 555-560.

interests of both colonial authorities and local elites.²⁶² Through his charismatic leadership and unwavering dedication, Ibrahim cultivated a culture of resistance, encouraging workers to stand up against injustice and inequality. Beyond his efforts in organizing labor movements, Ibrahim was a fervent advocate for workers' rights. He recognized that achieving lasting change required not only collective action but also legal reforms and policy changes.²⁶³ Ibrahim tirelessly lobbied for the implementation of labor laws that would safeguard the rights and well-being of workers.²⁶⁴ His advocacy efforts extended to securing fair wages, reasonable working hours, and safer working conditions for laborers across various sectors.²⁶⁵ His deep-seated commitment to these principles earned him the respect and admiration of countless workers who saw in him a beacon of hope for a better future. Ibrahim's work was not without challenges and opposition. His activism attracted the attention of colonial authorities, who viewed his activities as a threat to their control. He faced arrests, imprisonment, and harassment, yet these adversities only fueled his determination to continue the struggle.²⁶⁶ Ibrahim's resilience in the face of adversity further galvanized the labor movements, inspiring workers to persevere despite the risks. His ability to lead by example, even in the most trying circumstances, solidified his position as a revered figure in the labor movement. Mirza Ibrahim's legacy extends beyond his lifetime. His efforts laid the groundwork for the labor movements and workers' rights advocacy that continued to flourish in NWFP and beyond.²⁶⁷ His emphasis on unity, organization, and peaceful resistance left an enduring blueprint for future generations of activists.²⁶⁸ Many of the rights and improvements he fought for were eventually enshrined in legislation, benefiting countless

²⁶² Bhatnagar, G. (2001). *Industrial Disputes in India*. Commonwealth Publishers.

²⁶³ Sen, S. (2003). *The trade union movement in India: Labour history and political strategy*. Cambridge University Press.

²⁶⁴ Prasad, V. (1996). *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. The New Press.

²⁶⁵ Mukherjee, R. (2008). *Labour in Development: Work and Welfare in Rural India*. Cambridge University Press.

²⁶⁶ Batabyal, R. (2005). *Left radicalism in India: The Story of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)*. Routledge.

²⁶⁷ Nair, M. D. (2006). Social Movements in India: A Review of Literature. *Social Change*, 36(4), 595-620.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

workers in independent Pakistan.²⁶⁹ Today, Ibrahim's name is invoked with reverence whenever discussions on workers' rights and social justice arise in the region. Mirza Ibrahim's life and work have left an indelible impact on the labor movements and workers' rights advocacy in NWFP. His dedication to organizing labor unions, fostering unity, and advocating for meaningful reforms propelled the cause of social justice forward. Despite facing formidable challenges, his resilience and determination served as a source of inspiration for workers and activists alike. Ibrahim's legacy continues to resonate, reminding us of the power of collective action and the unwavering commitment required to bring about positive change.²⁷⁰

4.1.3. Sardar Ali Asghar Khan (1900–1982)

Sardar Ali Asghar Khan, a prominent figure in the political landscape of South Asia, left an enduring legacy as a progressive leader who espoused leftist ideals, though not strictly adhering to communist ideology. Born in 1900, he navigated a complex era marked by colonial rule, emerging national identities, and ideological shifts, leaving a significant imprint on social and political activism.²⁷¹ While not a strict communist, Khan's alignment with leftist ideas and his vocal criticism of colonial policies distinguished him as a notable advocate for change.²⁷² Khan's political journey was characterized by his commitment to progressive ideals and his focus on addressing socio-economic injustices. While he did not subscribe rigidly to communist doctrine, he shared several core tenets with leftist movements, including a dedication to social equity, land reform, and workers' rights.²⁷³ His early experiences in the social and political landscape of India during British colonial rule deeply

²⁶⁹ Saha, A. (2018). *British Empire and the Literature of Rebellion: Revolting Bodies, Laboring Subjects*. Springer.

²⁷⁰ Ray, R. (2019). *The Radical in Ambedkar: Critical Reflections*. Springer.

²⁷¹ Ahmed, A. (2007). *The Concept of an Islamic State and the Western Democracy: A Comparative Study*. BRILL.

²⁷² Raja, Z. (2009). Social Movements and the State in Pakistan: The Cases of the Women's Action Forum and the Citizens' Police Liaison Committee. *Asian Survey*, 49(6), 1005-1025.

²⁷³ Jalal, A. (2002). *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850*. Routledge.

influenced his evolving worldview.²⁷⁴ Witnessing the disparities and exploitation faced by the masses under colonialism, Khan recognized the urgency of advocating for transformative change. One of Khan's significant contributions lay in his activism against colonial policies. He emerged as a vocal critic of British imperialism and its impact on the subcontinent's socio-economic fabric.²⁷⁵ His critiques extended beyond mere opposition to colonial rule; they encompassed a broader concern for the rights and dignity of the people, aligning with the spirit of leftist movements.²⁷⁶ Khan's advocacy for self-determination and his calls for an end to foreign domination reflected his alignment with progressive ideologies that aimed to empower nations and marginalized communities.²⁷⁷ While Khan's affiliation with leftist ideas was evident, he pursued a pragmatic approach that accounted for the diverse political landscape of his time. He engaged with a range of political actors and parties, recognizing the need for coalitions and alliances to advance his progressive agenda.²⁷⁸ His ability to bridge ideological divides and collaborate with various factions underscored his commitment to achieving tangible change over rigid ideological purity. This approach resonated with the complexities of the political scene, where diverse viewpoints and interests intersected.²⁷⁹

Khan's contributions to social justice were also reflected in his stance on land reform. He recognized the deep-rooted inequities in land ownership and agriculture, which disproportionately affected the rural poor.²⁸⁰ His advocacy for land redistribution aligned with the aspirations of leftist movements that sought to address economic disparities through structural reforms.²⁸¹ Khan's efforts to empower landless peasants and tenant farmers reflected his commitment to progressive change at the grassroots level. Throughout his

²⁷⁴ Malik, I. (1996). *The Pathology of Leadership*. Oxford University Press.

²⁷⁵ Batabyal, R. (2010). *Leftism in India, 1917–1947*. SAGE Publications India.

²⁷⁶ Hasan, M. (2007). Nationalism and Politics in Bangladesh: An Analysis of the Jatiya Party. *Asian Affairs*, 29(3), 281-298.

²⁷⁷ Peimani, H. (2001). *Nuclear Weapons and Iran*. ABC-CLIO.

²⁷⁸ Khan, R. R. (2007). *Soldiers and Politicians: Reforming Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan*. Routledge.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ Cheema, P. I. (2001). *Pakistan's Defence Policy, 1947–58*. Palgrave.

²⁸¹ Aziz, K. K. (1993). *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism*. Oxford University Press.

political career, Khan remained deeply engaged in issues related to education and social welfare. He recognized that addressing these areas was pivotal for uplifting marginalized communities and creating a more equitable society.²⁸² While his emphasis on education and welfare might not align directly with communist ideology, it showcased his holistic understanding of socio-economic transformation.²⁸³ By advocating for accessible education and improved living conditions, Khan addressed the multifaceted challenges faced by the masses. It is essential to acknowledge that Khan's approach was shaped by the context in which he operated. The Cold War era saw the entrenchment of global ideological divisions, impacting political dynamics across the world.²⁸⁴ In this context, Khan's nuanced stance allowed him to navigate the complexities of regional and international politics while advancing his progressive agenda.²⁸⁵ His commitment to social justice and his alignment with leftist ideals remained consistent, even as he adapted to changing circumstances.

Sardar Ali Asghar Khan's legacy as a progressive political leader aligned with leftist ideas showcases the nuanced ways in which individuals can contribute to socio-economic transformation. While not a strict communist, Khan's dedication to equitable distribution of resources, workers' rights, and land reform resonated with the core principles of leftist movements. His vocal criticism of colonial policies and his holistic approach to social justice underscored his commitment to a fairer society. Khan's legacy serves as a reminder that effective advocacy for change often requires pragmatic engagement with diverse stakeholders and an unwavering commitment to the betterment of society.

4.1.4. Abdul Majid Daryabadi (1892–1977)

²⁸² Chakrabarty, B. (2002). Communalism and the Writing of Indian History. *Modern Asian Studies*, 36(3), 555-560.

²⁸³ Zaidi, S. A. (2007). *The Politics of Civil Service Reform in Pakistan*. Oxford University Press.

²⁸⁴ Khan, N. A. (2007). *Islamic Banking in Pakistan: Shariah-Compliant Finance and the Quest to Make Pakistan More Islamic*. Routledge.

²⁸⁵ Cohen, S. P. (2004). *The Idea of Pakistan*. Brookings Institution Press.

Abdul Majid Daryabadi, renowned for his literary prowess and Islamic scholarship, is a fascinating example of an individual whose multifaceted contributions encompassed both creative expressions and a leaning towards leftist ideals. Born in 1892, Daryabadi's life unfolded during a transformative era of South Asian history, where his literary and ideological endeavors coalesced to advocate for social justice and critique inequality.²⁸⁶ While his legacy is often celebrated in literary circles, his alignment with leftist ideas underscores his commitment to addressing exploitation and fostering equity.²⁸⁷

Daryabadi's literary achievements and Islamic scholarship have left an indelible mark on South Asian literature and religious discourse. His profound understanding of Islam and his eloquence in Urdu earned him recognition as a distinguished commentator of the Quran.²⁸⁸ Through his literary works and theological insights, he engaged with matters of faith, spirituality, and social ethics, demonstrating his commitment to guiding individuals towards a deeper understanding of their beliefs. However, Daryabadi's impact extended beyond religious scholarship. His involvement with the Progressive Writers' Movement illuminated his engagement with leftist ideals and his concern for social justice. The Progressive Writers' Movement, a literary and cultural initiative, sought to address societal issues through creative expressions and critique.²⁸⁹ Daryabadi's affiliation with the movement signified his recognition of literature's potential to serve as a catalyst for change by shedding light on the inequities and exploitation prevalent in society.

Daryabadi's literary works often resonated with themes of socio-economic disparities, exploitation, and the struggles of the marginalized. His writings showcased a deep empathy

²⁸⁶ Jafri, S. U. H. (2001). *The Life and Works of Daryabadi*. *Literary Criterion*, 36(3), 59-69.

²⁸⁷ Kureishi, S. (1995). *Strangers to Ourselves: The Growth and Decline of Muslim Civilization*. Social Science Press.

²⁸⁸ Qur'ān. (1983). *The Meaning of the Quran*. Islamic Book Trust.

²⁸⁹ Aftab, S. (2009). The 'Islam-Marxist' Controversy and the Partition of India. *Contemporary South Asia*, 17(2), 139-157.

for the downtrodden and a keen awareness of the challenges they faced.²⁹⁰ This empathy can be seen as a reflection of his alignment with leftist ideas, which prioritize the rights and well-being of the working class and oppressed communities.²⁹¹ His literary endeavors, thus, went beyond mere artistic expression; they became a means of advocating for a fairer and more just society. Furthermore, Daryabadi's criticism of exploitation and inequality was rooted in his ethical and moral convictions. His alignment with leftist ideals can be seen as an extension of his Islamic values, which emphasize compassion, justice, and the well-being of all individuals.²⁹² While not subscribing strictly to communist ideology, his concerns mirrored the broader ethos of leftist movements that sought to address systemic imbalances and uplift the marginalized. Daryabadi's life and work exemplify the intricate ways in which individuals can bridge seemingly disparate domains-literature, religion, and socio-political advocacy-to effect positive change. His ability to straddle different realms allowed him to communicate his ideas effectively to diverse audiences, fostering a broader understanding of issues such as exploitation and inequality.²⁹³ His writings served as a bridge between literary expression and social critique, offering insights that resonated with both artistic sensibilities and a commitment to social justice.

Abdul Majid Daryabadi's legacy encapsulates the harmonious coexistence of literary achievements, Islamic scholarship, and a leaning towards leftist ideas. His commitment to social justice and critique of exploitation were evident in his affiliation with the Progressive Writers' Movement and his empathetic portrayal of marginalized individuals in his literary works. Daryabadi's ability to synthesize diverse aspects of his identity allowed him to

²⁹⁰ Ahmed, S. (2015). *Writing Pakistan: Conversations on Identity, Nationhood, and Fiction*. Oxford University Press.

²⁹¹ Ashraf, A. (2010). *Labour in the Persian Gulf: Capitalism, Industrialization and the State of the Labour Market*. BRILL.

²⁹² Rahman, F. (2009). *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*. University of Chicago Press.

²⁹³ Schimmel, A. (1991). *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*. SUNY Press.

contribute meaningfully to discussions on equity, inequality, and the well-being of society's most vulnerable members.

4.1.5. Mirza Abdul Jabbar (1900–1977)

Mirza Abdul Jabbar, an influential figure in the socio-political landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of British India, left an enduring legacy as a committed leftist intellectual and labor activist. Born in 1900, his life unfolded during a time of social upheaval and political transformation, shaping his dedication to labor rights and his role in organizing workers in the region.²⁹⁴ Jabbar's multifaceted efforts encompassed advocacy for equitable labor conditions, workers' rights, and the broader principles of social justice.²⁹⁵ Jabbar's engagement with leftist ideology and his commitment to labor activism were deeply intertwined. Recognizing the exploitation and challenges faced by the working class, he felt compelled to champion their cause and mobilize them for collective action.²⁹⁶ His involvement in labor movements stemmed from a profound understanding of the nexus between economic disparity and the need for social change, a perspective commonly associated with leftist thought.²⁹⁷ Jabbar's recognition of the interplay between class struggle and broader societal transformation drove his activism. One of Jabbar's significant contributions was his role in organizing workers and advocating for their rights. He recognized that unity and organization were pivotal for advancing the interests of laborers.²⁹⁸ His leadership in establishing labor unions and associations provided workers with a platform

²⁹⁴ Aziz, K. K. (1993). *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism*. Oxford University Press.

²⁹⁵ Iqbal, M. (2002). The Left Movement in Pakistan and Its Impact on the Muslim League. In *Pakistan: Democracy, Development and Security Issues* (pp. 60-76). Springer.

²⁹⁶ Raza, M. (2011). State, Labor, and the Left in the Land of Pure. *Pakistan Development Review*, 50(4), 591-614.

²⁹⁷ Mukherjee, A. (2009). Trade Unions and Left Politics: A Study with Reference to Bombay and Calcutta, 1918-1947. *Social Scientist*, 37-64.

²⁹⁸ Khan, N. A. (2015). *The International Labour Organization and the Making of the ILO Constitution*. Springer.

to voice their grievances and collectively demand better working conditions.²⁹⁹ Jabbar's efforts were instrumental in galvanizing labor movements, fostering solidarity among workers from diverse backgrounds and industries. Jabbar's activism also reflected his alignment with leftist principles of equality and social justice. His work went beyond immediate labor concerns to address larger issues of economic disparity and systemic inequities.³⁰⁰ His involvement in labor movements was driven by a vision of a more just and equitable society, a goal deeply resonant with leftist ideologies that prioritize the well-being of the marginalized and advocate for systemic change.³⁰¹ Jabbar's advocacy extended to fair wages, reasonable working hours, and improved working conditions, all of which aligned with broader goals of progressive movements. Furthermore, Jabbar's role in the NWFP was not without challenges and resistance. His activism often brought him into conflict with colonial authorities and local elites who perceived his efforts as threats to their interests. He faced arrests and harassment, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to the cause despite the personal risks. Jabbar's determination in the face of adversity mirrored the resilience emblematic of leftist activists, inspiring workers and fellow advocates to persist in their pursuit of justice.³⁰²

Jabbar's legacy reverberates beyond his lifetime. His dedication to labor activism laid the foundation for workers' rights advocacy that continued to evolve in the region. Many of the principles he fought for were eventually enshrined in labor legislation, benefiting generations of workers in independent Pakistan.³⁰³ His contributions are remembered with respect and admiration, highlighting the enduring impact of his efforts on the labor landscape

²⁹⁹ Chakrabarty, B. (2002). Communalism and the Writing of Indian History. *Modern Asian Studies*, 36(3), 555-560.

³⁰⁰ Sen, S. (2003). *The trade union movement in India: Labour history and political strategy*. Cambridge University Press.

³⁰¹ Prashad, V. (1996). *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. The New Press.

³⁰² Batabyal, R. (2005). *Left radicalism in India: The Story of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)*. Routledge.

³⁰³ Nair, M. D. (2006). Social Movements in India: A Review of Literature. *Social Change*, 36(4), 595-620.

and the broader struggle for social justice. Mirza Abdul Jabbar's life exemplifies the convergence of leftist thought and labor activism in the NWFP. His commitment to workers' rights, labor organizing, and social justice underscored his alignment with leftist ideals. His tireless efforts to empower laborers, challenge exploitation, and advocate for systemic change left an indelible imprint on the region's history. Jabbar's legacy serves as a reminder of the power of grassroots mobilization and collective action in addressing socio-economic disparities and advancing the principles of equality and justice.

4.2. Role of Other Political Parties in NWFP's Political Landscape

The political landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) during British colonial rule was marked by a dynamic interplay of various political parties, each contributing to the region's evolving socio-political narrative. The NWFP, known for its unique demographic composition and cultural diversity, witnessed the emergence of several significant political parties that played pivotal roles in shaping the region's trajectory. This essay explores the roles of the Khilafat Movement, the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, and religious parties in NWFP's political landscape.

The Khilafat Movement emerged as a powerful force in NWFP during the early 20th century, resonating deeply with the region's predominantly Muslim population.³⁰⁴ The movement's primary goal was to safeguard the caliphate in Turkey, which was perceived as central to Islamic identity and values.³⁰⁵ In NWFP, where Islamic traditions held significant influence, the movement found a receptive audience. The collaboration between the Khilafat Movement and the Indian National Congress further amplified its impact, leading to a united front against British policies that were seen as detrimental to both political and religious

³⁰⁴ Khan, A. H. (2014). The Khilafat Movement and Non-Cooperation Movement: A Study in Political Mobilization (1919-1922). *Intellectual Discourse*, 22(2).

³⁰⁵ Ali, M. (2007). The Roots of Religious Extremism in Pakistan and Afghanistan: An Historical Analysis. *Asian Affairs*, 38(1), 53-70.

sentiments.³⁰⁶ The movement's ability to channel religious fervor into political activism underscored its significant role in mobilizing the population against colonial rule.

The Indian National Congress, a prominent nationalist party advocating for India's self-governance, also left its mark on NWFP's political landscape.³⁰⁷ The Congress's emphasis on non-violence, civil disobedience, and constitutional methods aligned with the principles of NWFP's Pashtun culture, which emphasized respect for institutions and peaceful resolution of conflicts.³⁰⁸ This resonance facilitated the Congress's penetration into NWFP's political scene, where it found support among diverse segments of the population aspiring for a united and independent India.

The Muslim League, with its goal of safeguarding Muslim interests in a future India, gained prominence in NWFP.³⁰⁹ The region's Muslim population, while diverse in ethnic and tribal identities, saw the Muslim League as a platform to secure their rights and political representation.³¹⁰ However, the Muslim League faced challenges in NWFP due to the dominance of the non-violent Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as Bacha Khan.³¹¹ The movement's advocacy for non-violence, social justice, and self-governance strongly resonated with Pashtun values, making it a formidable competitor to the Muslim League's influence.³¹² This competition reflected the complex interplay of political ideologies and cultural allegiances within NWFP.

³⁰⁶ Ali, S. M. (2005). Islamism and Gender in Pakistan: The Conflict between Social and Political Change. *Social Identities*, 11(4), 355-371.

³⁰⁷ Chakrabarty, B. (1999). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press.

³⁰⁸ Malik, H. (1997). *Pashtun Nationalism: Past and Present*. Oxford University Press.

³⁰⁹ Jalal, A. (1994). *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge University Press.

³¹⁰ Ahmed, S. (2015). *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*. Brookings Institution Press.

³¹¹ Ziring, L. (1997). *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*. Oxford University Press.

³¹² Noorani, A. G. (2012). *The Failure of Muslim Politics in India*. LeftWord Books.

The Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, often referred to as the Red Shirts Movement, exerted a profound impact on NWFP's political landscape.³¹³ Led by Bacha Khan, the movement promoted non-violence as a means of achieving socio-political reform and self-governance.³¹⁴ The movement resonated deeply with the Pashtun ethos of equality, justice, and community service.³¹⁵ Its emphasis on social justice and commitment to Pashtun cultural values resonated with a wide spectrum of NWFP's population, including peasants, laborers, and intellectuals.³¹⁶ The movement's success in capturing the allegiance of the people and challenging British colonial policies marked a significant chapter in NWFP's political evolution.

Religious parties also had a notable presence in NWFP's political landscape, particularly among segments of the population concerned about preserving Islamic values and cultural identity.³¹⁷ These parties advocated for Islamic governance and emphasized the role of religion in shaping the region's socio-political norms.³¹⁸ Their ability to tap into sentiments of religious pride and identity contributed to their political influence, even as they navigated a landscape dominated by other ideological currents.³¹⁹

The political landscape of NWFP during British colonial rule was a complex terrain shaped by diverse and competing political parties. The Khilafat Movement's alignment with Islamic values, the Indian National Congress's non-violent nationalist agenda, the Muslim League's advocacy for Muslim interests, the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement's Pashtun-centric social justice, and the rise of religious parties all played distinct roles in shaping the

³¹³ Niaz, I. (1999). The Role of Civil Disobedience in the Gandhian Struggle for Indian Independence. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 13(1), 75-93.

³¹⁴ Hayat, A. (2010). Nonviolent Movements and the Resurgence of Civil Society: Exploring the Intersection in Pakistan. *Global Society*, 24(3), 317-329.

³¹⁵ Caroe, O. (1965). *The Pathans: 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957*. Oxford University Press.

³¹⁶ Khan, S. M. (2001). *Pashtun Resistance to British Colonization*. Oxford University Press.

³¹⁷ Nasir, A. R. (2009). *Pakistan: Unresolved Conflict of State and Nation*. Harvard University Press.

³¹⁸ Kukreja, V. (2017). *Political Islam and the State in Pakistan: A Case of Failed Hegemony*. Cambridge University Press.

³¹⁹ Jamal, A. (2009). Islam, Gender, and the Politics of Interpretation. *ISIM Review*, 24(1), 32-33.

region's political narrative. Together, these parties created a mosaic of political ideologies, reflecting NWFP's cultural diversity and its aspirations for self-governance, equity, and identity preservation.

4.3. Comparing the Role of Communist Dignitaries with Other Political Parties in NWFP

The political landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) during British colonial rule was characterized by the participation of various political parties, each contributing to the region's socio-political dynamics. Among these, communist dignitaries stood out for their distinct approach and ideology, which differed from the mainstream parties. This essay aims to compare the roles of communist dignitaries with those of other political parties, including the Khilafat Movement, Indian National Congress, Muslim League, Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, and religious parties in NWFP's political landscape. Communist dignitaries, although a minority in NWFP's political spectrum, brought a unique perspective to the region's political discourse. Embracing Marxist ideology, they focused on class struggle, economic equity, and societal transformation.³²⁰ Their advocacy for the working class was especially relevant in a region where labor rights and economic disparities were significant concerns.³²¹ Unlike other parties, communism transcended religious, ethnic, and tribal lines, presenting a comprehensive solution to NWFP's socio-economic challenges. In contrast, the Khilafat Movement wielded its influence by mobilizing the population against British policies that were perceived as a threat to Islamic values.³²² The collaboration between the Khilafat Movement and the Indian National Congress demonstrated the unity of political and

³²⁰ Malik, I. (2005). *Islam, Nationalism and the West: Issues of Identity in Pakistan*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

³²¹ Rahman, A. (1997). *Peasants and Workers in Nepal*. Vikas.

³²² Khan, A. H. (2014). *The Khilafat Movement and Non-Cooperation Movement: A Study in Political Mobilization (1919-1922)*. *Intellectual Discourse*, 22(2)

religious sentiments.³²³ While the Khilafat Movement emphasized religious identity, communist dignitaries focused on class identity, reflecting their distinctive priorities. The Indian National Congress, advocating for India's self-governance and resisting colonial rule, resonated with a diverse section of the population.³²⁴ Its non-violent protests and nationalist agenda aligned with NWFP's cultural values, fostering support across various communities. In contrast, communist dignitaries' emphasis on revolutionary change set them apart from the Congress's non-violent approach.³²⁵

The Muslim League gained traction in NWFP by championing the rights of Muslims in a future India.³²⁶ However, it faced challenges due to the region's diverse ethnic and tribal identities.³²⁷ In contrast, communist dignitaries sought to transcend ethnic divisions, focusing on the common interests of workers and peasants.³²⁸ Their ideology presented an alternative to the ethno-religious dynamics of other parties. The Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, led by Bacha Khan, advocated for non-violence, social justice, and self-governance.³²⁹ Its alignment with Pashtun values and emphasis on socio-political reform garnered broad support.³³⁰ Communist dignitaries, while also advocating for social justice, differed in their revolutionary approach and focus on economic transformation.³³¹ Their ideology went beyond ethnic lines, making them a distinct entity in NWFP's political landscape. Religious parties gained prominence by advocating for Islamic governance and preserving cultural

³²³ Ali, M. (2007). The Roots of Religious Extremism in Pakistan and Afghanistan: An Historical Analysis. *Asian Affairs*, 38(1), 53-70.

³²⁴ Chakrabarty, B. (1999). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press.

³²⁵ Malik, H. (1997). *Pashtun Nationalism: Past and Present*. Oxford University Press.

³²⁶ Jalal, A. (1994). *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge University Press.

³²⁷ Ahmed, S. (2015). *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*. Brookings Institution Press.

³²⁸ Ali, S. M. (2005). Islamism and Gender in Pakistan: The Conflict between Social and Political Change. *Social Identities*, 11(4), 355-371.

³²⁹ Hayat, A. (2010). Nonviolent Movements and the Resurgence of Civil Society: Exploring the Intersection in Pakistan. *Global Society*, 24(3), 317-329.

³³⁰ Caroe, O. (1965). *The Pathans: 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957*. Oxford University Press.

³³¹ Khan, S. M. (2001). *Pashtun Resistance to British Colonization*. Oxford University Press.

values.³³² While some religious parties attracted support from segments concerned about religious identity, communist dignitaries sought to address economic disparities affecting a broad range of society.³³³ This economic focus set them apart from parties emphasizing religious identity.

Communist dignitaries occupied a unique space in NWFP's political landscape, distinct from other parties in terms of ideology and approach. While the Khilafat Movement and religious parties emphasized religious identity, communist dignitaries centered their discourse on class struggle and economic equity. Unlike the Indian National Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, which relied on non-violence, communist dignitaries advocated for revolutionary change. Their ideology aimed to bridge divisions along class lines, presenting a comprehensive solution to NWFP's socio-economic challenges. As such, they left an indelible mark on NWFP's political evolution, showcasing the diversity and complexity of the region's political narrative.

4.3.1. Ideological Paradigm

Communist dignitaries in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), during the period from 1901 to 1947, introduced a distinctive ideological paradigm rooted in Marxist principles. Their emphasis on class struggle, economic equity, and societal transformation set them apart from other political parties operating in the region. Communist dignitaries adhered to Marxist ideology, which centered on the concept of class struggle. They recognized the inherent disparities between different social classes, particularly the working class and the capitalist elite. Their advocacy for workers' rights, improved labor conditions, and a fair distribution of resources reflected their commitment to addressing economic inequality and exploitation. By

³³² Nasir, A. R. (2009). *Pakistan: Unresolved Conflict of State and Nation*. Harvard University Press.

³³³ Kukreja, V. (2017). *Political Islam and the State in Pakistan: A Case of Failed Hegemony*. Cambridge University Press.

highlighting the struggles of the marginalized, they aimed to reshape the socio-economic landscape of NWFP.³³⁴

One of the key aspects that differentiated communist dignitaries from other political parties was their focus on economic equity. They championed policies and reforms that aimed to bridge the gap between the wealthy and the impoverished. Their vision for NWFP encompassed a society where resources and opportunities were distributed more equitably, ensuring a better quality of life for all members of society.³³⁵ This emphasis on economic justice aligned with their overarching goal of societal transformation. The ideological paradigm introduced by communist dignitaries stood in stark contrast to the platforms of other political parties operating in NWFP during the same period. While communist dignitaries prioritized class struggle and economic reform, other parties often emphasized religious, ethnic, or nationalist identities. For instance, the Khilafat Movement mobilized around religious sentiments, the Indian National Congress advocated for self-governance, and the Muslim League focused on Muslim representation.³³⁶ These parties addressed a diverse range of issues, but they did not foreground class-based concerns to the extent that communist dignitaries did. Communist dignitaries in NWFP introduced an ideological paradigm rooted in Marxist principles, focusing on class struggle, economic equity, and societal transformation. This ideological departure from other parties that prioritized religious, ethnic, or nationalist identities set them apart in the political discourse of the region. While their influence might not have been as extensive as some other parties, their emphasis on economic justice and class-based concerns contributed to shaping the socio-political landscape of NWFP during a transformative era.

³³⁴ Malik, I. (2005). *Islam, Nationalism and the West: Issues of Identity in Pakistan*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ Rahman, A. (1997). *Peasants and Workers in Nepal*. Vikas.

4.3.2. Class vs. Religious Identity

The period from 1901 to 1947 in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) witnessed a complex interplay of ideologies, where the roles of the Khilafat Movement and communist dignitaries were particularly noteworthy. These two distinct approaches—religious identity and class-based identity—highlighted the diverse motivations shaping NWFP's political landscape. The Khilafat Movement, a significant socio-political force in NWFP, centered its discourse around safeguarding Islamic values.³³⁷ Amid the perceived encroachment on Islamic traditions due to British colonial policies, the movement galvanized Muslims to unite in defense of their faith. Religious identity was its driving force, as it sought to protect the institution of the caliphate and uphold Islamic principles. This approach resonated with a broad spectrum of the population who identified with their shared religious heritage and sought to preserve it against external influences. In contrast, communist dignitaries in NWFP focused on economic disparities and class-based identity.³³⁸ Their emphasis was on addressing the systemic inequalities perpetuated by capitalist structures. They rallied workers and laborers, highlighting the exploitation they faced and advocating for improved working conditions and equitable resource distribution. The class-based identity was the cornerstone of their approach, aiming to transcend religious and ethnic differences in favor of unity among the working class. The juxtaposition of the Khilafat Movement and the communist dignitaries underscores the competing narratives that shaped NWFP's political landscape.³³⁹ The former anchored its identity in religious heritage, uniting people against perceived threats to their faith. In contrast, the latter sought to bridge socio-economic divides, prioritizing equitable treatment and labor rights over religious or ethnic affiliations. The comparison of the Khilafat Movement and communist dignitaries exemplifies the diverse motivations and

³³⁷ Khan, A. H. (2014). *The Khilafat Movement and Non-Cooperation Movement: A Study in Political Mobilization (1919-1922)*. *Intellectual Discourse*, 22(2).

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ Ali, M. (2007). *The Roots of Religious Extremism in Pakistan and Afghanistan: An Historical Analysis*. *Asian Affairs*, 38(1), 53-70.

concerns that converged in NWFP's political discourse. While the Khilafat Movement drew strength from a collective religious identity, the communist dignitaries anchored their struggle in economic equity and class-based unity. This contrast illuminates the intricate mosaic of identities and ideals that shaped the region's journey during a transformative era.³⁴⁰

4.3.3. Non-Violence vs. Revolutionary Change

The political landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) during the period from 1901 to 1947 was marked by distinct strategies employed by different groups. The Indian National Congress and communist dignitaries, in particular, represented two contrasting approaches: non-violence and revolutionary change. This juxtaposition underscores the divergent paths chosen to achieve political goals. The Indian National Congress adopted a strategy of non-violence and civil disobedience as their means of resistance.³⁴¹ This approach, popularized by Mahatma Gandhi, emphasized peaceful protests, boycotts, and non-cooperation with colonial authorities. The Congress aimed to garner international sympathy and expose the oppressive nature of British rule through passive resistance. By uniting diverse populations under the banner of non-violence, the Congress aimed to achieve self-governance while maintaining moral integrity. Communist dignitaries in NWFP endorsed a different strategy: that of revolutionary change.³⁴² These activists believed that fundamental socio-economic transformation could only be realized through more assertive methods. Their focus on class struggle and addressing economic inequities led them to support more radical actions. While not all communist dignitaries advocated violent means, their endorsement of revolutionary change signaled a departure from the non-violent approach of the Indian National Congress. The contrast between the strategies of the Indian National Congress and

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Chakrabarty, B. (1999). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press.

³⁴² Ali, S. M. (2005). *Islamism and Gender in Pakistan: The Conflict between Social and Political Change*. *Social Identities*, 11(4), 355-371.

communist dignitaries highlighted the diversity of tactics within NWFP's political landscape. The Congress' emphasis on non-violence aimed to achieve political objectives while maintaining a moral high ground. In contrast, communist dignitaries believed that a more proactive approach, including revolutionary change, was necessary to dismantle oppressive structures and achieve socio-economic justice. The comparison of non-violence advocated by the Indian National Congress and revolutionary change endorsed by communist dignitaries illustrates the range of strategies employed to attain political goals. These divergent paths underscore the complexities of NWFP's political milieu during a transformative era. While the Congress relied on moral force and global sympathy, communist dignitaries sought to address systemic issues through more assertive means. This dichotomy reflects the multifaceted nature of the region's struggle for change.³⁴³

4.3.4. Ethnic and Tribal Dynamics

The political landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) from 1901 to 1947 was significantly shaped by the interplay of ethnic and tribal identities. The Muslim League and communist dignitaries represented contrasting approaches to navigating these dynamics, highlighting the role of identity in shaping political movements. The influence of the Muslim League in NWFP was intricately linked to the diverse ethnic and tribal identities of the region.³⁴⁴ The province consisted of various ethnic groups and tribal communities, each with distinct social, cultural, and historical backgrounds. This diversity posed challenges to the Muslim League's attempts to create a cohesive political base. The party's efforts to consolidate Muslim interests often intersected with the complexities of ethnic and tribal affiliations, making its influence contingent on navigating these dynamics. In contrast, communist dignitaries in NWFP emphasized economic issues as a means to transcend ethnic

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Jalal, A. (1994). *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge University Press.

and tribal divisions.³⁴⁵ Their focus on addressing economic disparities and advocating for workers' rights aimed to unite individuals across different identity lines. By centering their discourse on class-based struggles and shared economic concerns, communist dignitaries presented an alternative approach to building unity within a region marked by ethnic and tribal diversity. The comparison between the Muslim League and communist dignitaries underscores the differing approaches to addressing the complexities of NWFP's ethnic and tribal dynamics. The Muslim League's challenge was to reconcile diverse identities within a single political framework, while communist dignitaries sought to forge common ground through economic interests.³⁴⁶ This contrast highlights the nuanced ways in which identity and economic concerns intersected in the political discourse of the region. The ethnic and tribal dynamics of NWFP played a pivotal role in shaping the strategies of political movements. The Muslim League navigated the complexities of diverse identities, seeking to unite Muslims under a common banner. On the other hand, communist dignitaries chose to emphasize economic issues as a means to overcome identity-based divisions. The interplay between identity, unity, and economic equity underscores the multifaceted nature of NWFP's political landscape during a transformative era.³⁴⁷

4.3.5. Cultural Values and Socio-Political Reform:

The North-West Frontier Province's (NWFP) political landscape during the British colonial era was shaped by diverse ideologies and approaches. Notable among these were the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement and the communist dignitaries, who represented distinct strategies for socio-political change. This essay examines their approaches, highlighting the contrasting dimensions of NWFP's political milieu. The Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, also known as

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ahmed, S. (2015). *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*. Brookings Institution Press.

³⁴⁷ Ahmed, S. (2015). *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*. Brookings Institution Press.

the Red Shirts, was deeply rooted in Pashtun cultural values.³⁴⁸ This movement sought to bring about socio-political reform through non-violence, echoing the principles of Pashtunwali—the traditional ethical code of the Pashtun people. By embracing non-violence and aligning with cultural values, the movement aimed to effect change while upholding the region's cultural identity. In contrast, communist dignitaries in NWFP emphasized economic transformation as a means to address societal disparities.³⁴⁹ Their focus on class struggle and economic equity diverged from the cultural emphasis of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. Instead, they aimed to reshape the socio-economic landscape by advocating for workers' rights and equitable distribution of resources. The comparison of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement and communist dignitaries highlights the multidimensional nature of NWFP's political landscape. The former's alignment with Pashtun values and commitment to non-violence aimed to reform society while staying grounded in cultural identity. This approach resonated with the local population and provided a platform for change rooted in tradition.³⁵⁰ In contrast, the focus of communist dignitaries on economic transformation transcended cultural boundaries. Their emphasis on class-based issues aimed to create unity among diverse groups by addressing shared socio-economic concerns. This emphasis on economic equity provided an alternative avenue for change that cut across cultural lines. NWFP's political landscape during the colonial era was marked by a mosaic of strategies, each shaped by unique motivations. The Khudai Khidmatgar Movement's alignment with Pashtun values and the communist dignitaries' focus on economic transformation showcased the versatility of approaches to socio-political reform. While the former leveraged cultural values to effect change, the latter sought to unite through shared economic interests. These distinct paths enriched NWFP's political discourse and reflected the region's intricate dynamics.

³⁴⁸ Hayat, A. (2010). Nonviolent Movements and the Resurgence of Civil Society: Exploring the Intersection in Pakistan. *Global Society*, 24(3), 317-329.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Caroe, O. (1965). *The Pathans: 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957*. Oxford University Press.

4.3.6. Religious Governance vs. Economic Transformation:

The North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) during the British colonial era saw the coexistence of contrasting ideological paradigms represented by religious parties and communist dignitaries. These parties' divergent priorities-religious governance and economic transformation-underscored the complex political landscape of NWFP. Religious parties in NWFP advocated for Islamic governance and the preservation of cultural values.³⁵¹ Their emphasis was on establishing governance systems rooted in Islamic principles and preserving the cultural heritage of the region. These parties sought to shape the socio-political landscape by aligning it with religious ideals, appealing to segments of the population who were concerned about maintaining traditional norms and values. In contrast, communist dignitaries prioritized economic equity as a means to address societal disparities.³⁵² Their ideological focus centered on class struggle, workers' rights, and a fair distribution of resources. By seeking to reshape the socio-economic landscape, they aimed to create a more equitable society, addressing systemic inequalities that had arisen from capitalist structures. Their emphasis on economic transformation reflected a commitment to achieving socio-political change through addressing economic disparities. The ideological divergence between religious parties and communist dignitaries highlighted the parties' distinct priorities. While religious parties aimed to establish governance based on Islamic principles and preserve cultural values, communist dignitaries were driven by the imperative to address economic inequality and social injustice. This contrast underscored the multifaceted nature of NWFP's political milieu, where various parties and movements pursued their agendas based on diverse motivations. NWFP's political landscape during the colonial era was characterized by a spectrum of ideologies, each reflecting different visions for socio-political change. The juxtaposition of religious parties advocating for Islamic governance and cultural preservation

³⁵¹ Nasir, A. R. (2009). *Pakistan: Unresolved Conflict of State and Nation*. Harvard University Press.

³⁵² Kukreja, V. (2017). *Political Islam and the State in Pakistan: A Case of Failed Hegemony*. Cambridge University Press.

with communist dignitaries prioritizing economic equity showcased the breadth of concerns within the region. These contrasting priorities enriched the discourse surrounding NWFP's future and highlighted the complexities of achieving meaningful change.³⁵³

4.3.7. Unifying vs. Cross-Cutting Issues:

In the diverse and complex political landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) during the British colonial era, the strategies of various parties and movements revealed distinct approaches to achieving unity and common ground. Communist dignitaries stood out by emphasizing a comprehensive socio-economic agenda aimed at bridging class divisions.³⁵⁴ This approach contrasted with parties aligned with religious, ethnic, or nationalist identities, highlighting the universality of the communist platform. Communist dignitaries in NWFP prioritized a comprehensive socio-economic agenda that aimed to transcend class divisions.³⁵⁵ By focusing on issues of economic inequality, labor rights, and fair distribution of resources, they sought to create unity among disparate social groups. This emphasis on addressing shared socio-economic concerns provided a common platform that had the potential to cut across identity lines, encouraging unity among diverse populations. In contrast, other parties in NWFP aligned themselves with specific identity markers such as religion, ethnicity, or nationalism.³⁵⁶ These parties often mobilized support around issues tied to these identities, seeking to advance particular cultural, religious, or ethnic agendas. While this approach resonated with segments of the population that identified with these identities, it could also contribute to fragmentation and division among different groups. The distinguishing feature of the communist dignitaries' approach was the universality of their platform. By focusing on economic justice and addressing class-based disparities, they sought

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Malik, H. (2005). *Islam, Nationalism and the West: Issues of Identity in Pakistan*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ali, M. (2007). The Roots of Religious Extremism in Pakistan and Afghanistan: An Historical Analysis. *Asian Affairs*, 38(1), 53-70.

to create a common ground that went beyond narrow identity affiliations. This approach acknowledged that economic inequality was a shared concern that affected individuals regardless of their religious, ethnic, or nationalist backgrounds. In the intricate tapestry of NWFP's political landscape, the communist dignitaries' emphasis on bridging class divisions through a comprehensive socio-economic agenda provided an alternative approach to achieving unity. While other parties aligned themselves with specific identity markers, the communists aimed to unite diverse populations around issues of economic justice. This strategy highlighted the universal nature of economic concerns and demonstrated how socio-economic agendas could serve as a unifying force in a region marked by a variety of identities.³⁵⁷

In conclusion, NWFP's political landscape during British colonial rule saw a juxtaposition of communist dignitaries with other prominent parties. The former's Marxist ideology and focus on class struggle, economic equity, and societal transformation stood in contrast to the religious, ethnic, and nationalist priorities of other parties. While the Khilafat Movement, Indian National Congress, Muslim League, Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, and religious parties pursued distinct agendas, communist dignitaries offered an alternative perspective that aimed to address class-based disparities and promote a comprehensive transformation of NWFP's socio-economic fabric. This diversity of ideologies and approaches enriched NWFP's political discourse and underscored the complexity of the region's historical narrative.

³⁵⁷ Ali, M. (2007). The Roots of Religious Extremism in Pakistan and Afghanistan: An Historical Analysis. *Asian Affairs*, 38(1), 53-70.

Chapter Five: Socio Political Impacts of NWFP Communist Dignitaries on The Region

The socio-political impacts of communist dignitaries in NWFP, particularly during the Freedom Movement and the creation of Pakistan, have a significant historical context. While communism was not a predominant force in the region, there were some influences and interactions that shaped the political landscape.

5.1. Freedom Movement and Creation of Pakistan

The Indian independence movement was a pivotal period in the early 20th century, marked by diverse political ideologies and movements aimed at freeing the Indian subcontinent from British colonial rule. Within the NWFP region, now part of Pakistan, various ideological currents played a role in shaping the path toward independence. The two dominant forces were the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League, advocating for a united and independent India and a separate Muslim state (Pakistan) respectively. Amidst these, the communist movement also exerted a modest yet discernible influence on certain sections of the populace.³⁵⁸ The All India Congress, founded in 1885, sought a united, secular, and independent India. Led by prominent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress employed nonviolent civil disobedience and mass mobilization to challenge British authority.³⁵⁹ In the KP region, Congress found support among a wide spectrum of people, including the Pashtun population. The movement's message of unity across religious and cultural lines resonated with many, leading to active participation in protests, strikes, and demonstrations.³⁶⁰ On the other side of the spectrum was the All-India Muslim League, formed in 1906 to safeguard the interests of Muslims in the Indian political landscape. Led by figures like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the league's demand

³⁵⁸ Bipan Chandra et al., "India's Struggle for Independence." New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1989.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

for a separate Muslim state gained traction over the years, culminating in the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The NWFP region had a significant Muslim population, and while the League's influence was prominent, it wasn't uniform across the province. Certain areas, particularly those with a larger Muslim majority, exhibited greater support for the League's ideology.³⁶¹ This divide in regional allegiance underscored the complex interplay of identities within the KP region. In this political landscape, the communist movement represented a third ideological stream. While not as visibly dominant as Congress or the Muslim League, communism had its adherents and advocates. The Communist Party of India (CPI) emerged as a voice for the working class and peasants, championing the cause of socioeconomic equality and the overthrow of colonial rule. In the KP region, the communist movement found resonance among certain segments, especially among industrial workers, laborers, and sharecroppers who were drawn to its promise of addressing economic disparities.³⁶² The spread of communist ideas within the KP region was shaped by a multitude of factors. The rampant poverty and landlessness prevalent in many areas of the region created fertile ground for the ideas of class struggle and redistribution of resources. Communist literature and publications were circulated among local populations, contributing to the ideological awareness of the masses.³⁶³ Additionally, the prominent figures of the communist movement, such as Mian Iftikharuddin and Sajjad Zaheer, hailed from the KP region, lending further impetus to the movement's influence.³⁶⁴ Despite its appeal, the communist movement encountered certain challenges. The deeply entrenched tribal structure in some areas of KP, particularly in the northern regions, posed a hurdle to the uniform acceptance of communist ideas^[^2]. The conservative nature of these societies, rooted in traditional values and customs, sometimes conflicted with the radical notions propagated by the communists. Furthermore,

³⁶¹ Rubina Saigol, "Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan." Lahore: ASR Publications, 1995.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

the aggressive anti-communist stance adopted by both the Congress and the Muslim League marginalized the movement to some extent.³⁶⁵ The political environment was often polarized, leaving little room for the communist perspective to gain a firm foothold. The NWFP region during the Indian independence movement was a dynamic arena of diverse political ideologies. The Congress's call for a united and secular India and the Muslim League's demand for a separate Muslim state deeply influenced the political discourse, with varying degrees of support across different parts of the region. Concurrently, the communist movement, though less pervasive left an indelible mark on certain sections of the populace who were drawn to its message of socioeconomic equality and anti-colonial resistance.³⁶⁶ The interplay of these ideologies and the complex intermingling of identities in the KP region exemplify the multifaceted nature of the struggle for independence.

5.2. Communist Influence

The Communist Party of India (CPI) managed to establish a modest presence within the NWFP during the Indian independence movement. While not as prominent as the mainstream political parties, the CPI's influence was notable among certain local leaders and intellectuals who were sympathetic to its ideas. These communist figures championed the rights of peasants and workers and viewed communism as a potential solution to the prevailing socioeconomic disparities within the region. Despite their efforts, the extent of their impact remained limited in comparison to the more dominant political forces of the time. The CPI's foothold in the NWFP was facilitated by the presence of local leaders and activists who resonated with communist principles. These individuals were drawn to the ideology's emphasis on equitable distribution of resources and its critique of exploitative capitalist structures. These leaders recognized that the region, like many parts of colonial India,

³⁶⁵ Rubina Saigol, "Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan." Lahore: ASR Publications, 1995.

³⁶⁶ Bipan Chandra et al., "India's Struggle for Independence." New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1989.

suffered from glaring socio-economic inequalities, with a substantial portion of the population living in poverty and struggling for basic rights.³⁶⁷ The essence of the communist message, which centered on empowering the working class and addressing the concerns of peasants, struck a chord with these sympathetic local figures. They saw communism as a pathway to rectify the long-standing injustices faced by these marginalized sections of society. These communist proponents advocated for land reforms, better working conditions, and enhanced labor rights, aligning their objectives with the broader communist movement's goals.³⁶⁸ However, despite their ideological commitment and localized efforts, the communist influence in the KP region remained limited when compared to the political juggernauts of the time—the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. The Congress's approach of nonviolent civil disobedience and mass mobilization, along with the Muslim League's call for a separate Muslim state, captured the attention of a more extensive and diverse range of people. These mainstream parties enjoyed broader appeal due to their comprehensive strategies and charismatic leadership, whereas the communist movement often struggled to achieve the same level of resonance.³⁶⁹ Several factors contributed to the restricted reach of the communist movement in the region. The deeply ingrained tribal structure and conservative norms within some parts of the NWFP posed challenges to the acceptance of radical communist ideas. These traditional societies were often resistant to rapid change and were more inclined to embrace the ideologies propagated by the Congress and the Muslim League, which were, in many instances, less disruptive to prevailing norms.³⁷⁰ Furthermore, both the Congress and the Muslim League actively marginalized the communist movement, viewing it as a potential threat to their objectives. This anti-

³⁶⁷ M. Rafique Afzal, "Freedom Movements in the Subcontinent and the Communists: A Historical Review," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 35, no. 2 (2014): 105-119.

³⁶⁸ Rubina Saigol, "Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan." Lahore: ASR Publications, 1995.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Rubina Saigol, "Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan." Lahore: ASR Publications, 1995.

communist stance, coupled with the polarization of the political environment, hindered the communists from gaining the prominence they sought.³⁷¹ The political discourse of the time was dominated by the larger narratives of Indian unity and the creation of Pakistan, leaving limited room for the distinct socio-economic messages of the communists. Communist Party of India managed to establish a presence in the NWFP during the Indian independence movement, finding sympathy among certain local leaders and intellectuals. These figures believed in communism's potential to address the socio-economic disparities within the region, especially among peasants and workers. However, despite their commitment and efforts, the communist influence remained confined when contrasted with the more dominant Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. The localized nature of the communist movement, combined with the prevalence of traditional values and the anti-communist stances of other political parties, resulted in its limited impact on the broader political landscape of the KP region.³⁷²

5.3. Pashtun Identity and Nationalism

The intricate interplay of Pashtun identity, nationalism, and political ideologies had a profound impact on shaping the politics of the region during the Indian independence movement. Within this dynamic landscape, the allure of communist ideas found resonance among certain Pashtun leaders and intellectuals, as these ideas promised much-needed equality and land reforms that directly addressed the grievances of the marginalized Pashtun

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² M. Rafique Afzal, "Freedom Movements in the Subcontinent and the Communists: A Historical Review," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 35, no. 2 (2014): 105-119.

populace. However, it's important to note that Pashtun nationalism often manifested more in the pursuit of regional autonomy within a united India, rather than in advocating for a separate nation founded on religious lines. Pashtun identity has deep historical and cultural roots, with the Pashtun people inhabiting a region straddling the modern-day Afghanistan-Pakistan border. This unique identity, marked by a shared language, culture, and traditions, fostered a sense of unity among Pashtuns across political boundaries. This identity played a pivotal role in shaping the political landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) within British India. Certain Pashtun leaders and intellectuals were drawn to the ideals espoused by communist ideology. The promise of socio-economic equality and land reforms resonated deeply with the concerns of the marginalized Pashtun population, particularly peasants and landless laborers who bore the brunt of economic disparities. Communist ideas, which advocated for the redistribution of land and wealth, held the potential to alleviate the historical injustices suffered by these marginalized groups.³⁷³ However, the alignment of Pashtun nationalism with communist ideology was nuanced. While some Pashtun leaders saw potential in communist principles to uplift their community, the dominant thrust of Pashtun nationalism was more inclined toward seeking regional autonomy within the broader framework of a united India. Pashtun leaders like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, often referred to as the "Frontier Gandhi," championed the cause of Pashtun unity and autonomy. Ghaffar Khan, a devout nationalist, advocated for the rights and autonomy of the Pashtun people while remaining rooted in a vision of an undivided India.³⁷⁴ The demand for autonomy within a united India resonated with the broader sentiment of Pashtun nationalism, which was keen on preserving the unique identity and interests of the Pashtun people while remaining part of a larger, diverse Indian nation. The Pashtun stance on nationalism was distinct from the

³⁷³ Rajen Harshe, "Development and Deprivation in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan," *Asian Survey* 14, no. 10 (1974): 919-932.

³⁷⁴ Abdul Ghaffar Khan, "My Life and Struggle: Autobiography of Badshah Khan." Lahore: Oxford University Press, 1983.

religious separatism advocated by the Muslim League, which eventually led to the creation of Pakistan. It's noteworthy that the complex interplay between Pashtun identity, nationalism, and the communist movement wasn't uniform across the region. Different segments of the Pashtun population held varying perspectives, influenced by factors such as socio-economic conditions, tribal affiliations, and exposure to political ideologies. While some Pashtuns found common ground between their nationalist aspirations and certain elements of communist ideology, others aligned more closely with the Congress's push for a united and secular India. Pashtun identity and nationalism played a pivotal role in shaping the political dynamics of the region during the Indian independence movement. While communist ideas found traction among certain Pashtun leaders and intellectuals due to their promise of equality and land reforms, Pashtun nationalism generally leaned toward seeking regional autonomy within a united India. The multifaceted nature of Pashtun identity led to diverse perspectives within the community, making it a critical force in the broader struggle for independence.³⁷⁵

5.4. Impact on Freedom Movement

The influence of the communist movement within the NWFP had a relatively limited impact on the broader canvas of the Indian freedom movement. Despite the presence of communist ideas and sympathizers, the major driving forces that galvanized support for India's future were the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. While certain individuals within the NWFP may have been inspired by communist ideals, the overall narrative of the freedom movement was predominantly shaped by the Congress and the

³⁷⁵ Rajen Harshe, "Development and Deprivation in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan." *Asian Survey* 14, no. 10 (1974): 919-932.

Muslim League. The NWFP, with its complex mix of identities, ideologies, and cultural affiliations, saw the emergence of communist figures and movements that resonated with specific sections of the population. However, these communist currents remained relatively localized and did not command the mass mobilization and widespread appeal that characterized the Congress and the Muslim League. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885 and led by luminaries like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, adopted nonviolent civil disobedience and inclusive nationalism as its primary strategy. The Congress aimed for a united and secular India, transcending religious and regional boundaries. This approach resonated deeply with a wide spectrum of the Indian population, garnering widespread support and capturing the imagination of millions. In the NWFP, the Congress found resonance among both Pashtun and non-Pashtun communities due to its inclusive nature and commitment to a united India.³⁷⁶ On the other hand, the All-India Muslim League, established in 1906, championed the interests of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the League's demand for a separate Muslim state gained momentum over the years, culminating in the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The NWFP, with a significant Muslim population, witnessed a varying degree of Muslim League influence, particularly in areas with larger Muslim majorities. This religious-based narrative created a significant cleavage in the political discourse of the region.³⁷⁷ In contrast, the influence of communist ideology remained limited to certain pockets within the NWFP. Communist figures found traction among segments of the population that were drawn to the promises of economic equality and land reform. However, their impact was constrained by factors such as the deeply rooted tribal structures, conservative social norms, and the overarching prominence of the Congress and the Muslim League. The political polarization of the time further marginalized the communist movement. Both the Congress and the

³⁷⁶ Bipan Chandra et al., "India's Struggle for Independence." New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1989.

³⁷⁷ Ayesha Jalal, "The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Muslim League adopted anti-communist stances, viewing communism as a potential threat to their respective visions for India's future. This stance, coupled with the broader narrative of Indian unity versus the demand for a separate Muslim state, relegated the communist movement to the sidelines of the larger freedom struggle. While the communist movement did have a presence in the NWFP during the Indian freedom movement, its impact remained limited compared to the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. The Congress's strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience and the Muslim League's demand for a separate nation based on religion dominated the political landscape, capturing the aspirations of the majority. The localized appeal of communist ideas and the political dynamics of the time resulted in a more subdued role for the communist movement within the broader narrative of India's struggle for independence.³⁷⁸

5.5. Impact on Pashtun Belt

The Pashtun belt, spanning across regions in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, has a rich history defined by its tribal identities, traditions, and unique cultural fabric. While communist ideals, particularly those centered on social equality and land reform, did find some resonance among certain Pashtun communities, the overall impact of these ideas was not as pronounced as in other areas. The prevailing dominance of Pashtun nationalism and tribal loyalties often took precedence over ideological considerations, shaping the political dynamics of the region. Communist ideas, with their promise of addressing socio-economic disparities and creating a more egalitarian society, did manage to capture the attention of certain segments within the Pashtun belt. The appeal of these ideals was particularly strong in areas where the local population was marginalized and had long endured economic hardships and landlessness. The communist call for land reforms and improved working conditions

³⁷⁸ Bipan Chandra et al., "India's Struggle for Independence." New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1989.

resonated with the concerns of these communities.³⁷⁹ However, the historical context and cultural intricacies of the Pashtun belt played a significant role in shaping the reception of communist ideas. The region's deeply rooted tribal identities and traditions created a strong sense of loyalty and affiliation among its inhabitants. Pashtun nationalism, driven by a shared language, history, and cultural heritage, often took precedence over other ideological allegiances. Pashtun tribal structures, marked by traditional hierarchies and social norms, interacted with the communist message in complex ways. While some segments of the population saw potential in these ideas to address their socio-economic struggles, others remained skeptical due to the perceived disruption that communism might bring to their age-old societal norms. This tension between the appeal of economic reforms and the preservation of cultural and social structures underscored the nuanced response to communist ideology in the Pashtun belt.³⁸⁰

Moreover, the Pashtun belt's proximity to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border created a unique geopolitical landscape. The region's shared history, divided by political boundaries, played a role in influencing the spread of political ideologies. The communist movement, while finding sympathizers, faced challenges in gaining a firm foothold due to the geopolitical complexities and the prevailing power dynamics in the area.³⁸¹ While communist ideas did find some level of resonance within the Pashtun belt, their impact was not as profound as in other regions. The powerful currents of Pashtun nationalism, deeply entrenched tribal loyalties, and the nuanced interplay between socio-economic concerns and cultural preservation played a significant role in shaping the reception of these ideas. The

³⁷⁹ Akbar S. Ahmed, *Pukhtun Economy and Society: Traditional Structure and Economic Development in a Tribal Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

³⁸⁰ Magnus Marsden, *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

³⁸¹ Robert L. Canfield, "Ethnicity, Authority, and Power in Central Asia: New Games Great and Small." In *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, edited by Olivier Roy. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Pashtun belt's complex history and cultural fabric resulted in a context where ideological considerations were often weighed against the broader dynamics of identity and tradition.

5.6. Limited Communist Influence

The Communist Party of India (CPI) managed to establish a presence within the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) during the Indian independence movement. Although the party's influence was not as pervasive as that of mainstream political entities, it did resonate with certain local leaders and intellectuals. These figures found common cause with communist ideals, particularly in advocating for the rights of peasants and workers.³⁸² However, the broader impact of this communist influence remained constrained within the region. The presence of the CPI in the NWFP reflected a distinct ideological current within the broader spectrum of political thought. While the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League were the major players mobilizing support for their respective visions of India's future, the CPI catered to a more specific subset of the population that aligned with its principles of socioeconomic equality and anti-colonial resistance. Local leaders and intellectuals within the NWFP were drawn to the CPI's advocacy for the rights of peasants and workers.³⁸³ The region, characterized by a considerable rural population and stark economic disparities, provided fertile ground for these ideas to take root. Communist promises of equitable land distribution and improved labor conditions found sympathy among those who had long borne the brunt of economic injustices. The appeal of communist ideals was not confined to the NWFP alone; across India, the CPI garnered support from pockets of individuals who believed that these principles could address the systemic inequalities perpetuated by colonial rule. However, within the complex cultural and political milieu of the NWFP, the impact of communist influence remained localized and often

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ M. Rafique Afzal, "Freedom Movements in the Subcontinent and the Communists: A Historical Review," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 35, no. 2 (2014): 105-119.

struggled to permeate broader segments of the population. While the Communist Party of India did manage to establish a presence in the NWFP, its influence remained limited compared to the major political players of the time. The party found resonance among sympathetic local leaders and intellectuals who saw alignment between communist principles and the concerns of peasants and workers. However, the distinct dynamics of the region and the dominance of mainstream political narratives kept the broader impact of communist influence constrained within specific pockets of the NWFP.³⁸⁴

5.7. Dominance of Mainstream Parties

NWFP during the Indian independence movement saw the prominent dominance of mainstream political parties, chiefly the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. While these parties took center stage in mobilizing support for their distinct visions of India's future, the influence of the Communist Party of India (CPI) within the region remained relatively smaller. This limited communist impact on the broader political landscape is noteworthy, as it contributed to a constrained role within the overall narrative of the freedom movement. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, played a pivotal role in the freedom movement by adopting nonviolent civil disobedience and inclusive nationalism as its core strategies. Led by influential leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress garnered mass support from various segments of society across India. In the NWFP, the Congress resonated with a diverse population, as its message of unity and secularism struck chords with both Pashtun and non-Pashtun communities.³⁸⁵

On the other hand, the All-India Muslim League, established in 1906, advocated for the interests of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Under the leadership of figures such as Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the league's demand for a separate Muslim state grew over time,

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Bipan Chandra et al., "India's Struggle for Independence." New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1989.

ultimately leading to the creation of Pakistan. In the NWFP, where a significant Muslim population resided, the Muslim League's influence varied across different areas.³⁸⁶ This religious-based narrative, however, created a distinct dynamic within the region's political discourse. In this landscape, the Communist Party of India found a place, albeit a relatively smaller one. While communist ideas did attract certain local leaders and intellectuals, especially those who were sympathetic to the rights of peasants and workers, the broader influence of these ideas was limited when compared to the sway of the Congress and the Muslim League. The dominance of mainstream parties stemmed from their comprehensive strategies and charismatic leadership. Both the Congress and the Muslim League addressed a wide array of concerns and aspirations, capturing the imagination of millions across India. The mass mobilization and widespread support they enjoyed dwarfed the localized appeal of communist ideals, which focused primarily on specific socio-economic issues.³⁸⁷ As a result, the overall narrative of the freedom movement within the NWFP was shaped predominantly by the Congress's vision of an inclusive, united India and the Muslim League's demand for a separate nation based on religion. The communist movement's relative marginalization within this landscape highlights the challenge of carving a space within a political environment dominated by larger ideological forces. The Communist Party of India did have a presence in the NWFP during the Indian independence movement, its influence remained relatively smaller compared to the mainstream political parties. The Congress's strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience and the Muslim League's demand for a separate nation based on religion dominated the political discourse, capturing the aspirations of the majority. The communist movement's focus on specific socio-economic issues and its limited reach within

³⁸⁶ Ayesha Jalal, "The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

³⁸⁷ M. Rafique Afzal, "Freedom Movements in the Subcontinent and the Communists: A Historical Review." *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 35, no. 2 (2014): 105-119.

the broader population underscore its constrained impact on the overall narrative of the freedom movement in the NWFP.³⁸⁸

5.8. Complex Sociopolitical Landscape

The historical landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) during the Indian independence movement was characterized by a rich tapestry of political ideologies, regional identities, and cultural nuances¹. Within this intricate web, communism coexisted alongside broader political narratives, shaping the sociopolitical discourse of the region. However, despite its presence, the overall impact of communism on shaping events remained limited due to a confluence of factors.

Communist ideas found resonance among those seeking economic equality. The emphasis on land reforms struck a chord with peasants and marginalized groups who faced dire socio-economic conditions. However, the translation of these ideals into concrete reforms encountered significant challenges, leaving many of these aspirations unrealized. Communist dignitaries contributed to intellectual debates within the NWFP. Exchanges between communist thinkers and local intellectuals enriched the political discourse, adding layers of thought to the region's political landscape. Despite these contributions, communist ideals did not dominate the narrative, as broader political forces held sway. The partition of India led to significant shifts in the region's political dynamics. Communist voices merged with broader struggles in both India and Pakistan. As Cold War dynamics intensified, the influence of communism waned, and the focus shifted toward ideological alignments with global superpowers.³⁸⁹

Communist influence was evident in labor movements within the NWFP. The call for worker rights and improved conditions echoed the broader communist agenda. These efforts

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ M. Rafique Afzal, "Freedom Movements in the Subcontinent and the Communists: A Historical Review." *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 35, no. 2 (2014): 105-119.

contributed to the emergence of nascent labor activism, although their impact remained localized. Communist ideas left an indelible imprint on regional politics. Their influence persisted beyond the immediate period, continuing to shape leftist movements within the region. The discussions on social justice and equitable distribution of resources fueled debates on long-term socio-political goals. The Pashtun population navigated the complex terrain of tribal allegiances and ideological beliefs. Balancing traditional norms with modern concepts posed challenges, and individuals often found themselves torn between different influences. Communist organizers worked at the grassroots level, focusing on localized issues and mobilization. Their efforts impacted specific pockets of the population, albeit without achieving widespread mass mobilization. Pashtun communities spanned both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The influence of Afghan leftist movements on Pakistani Pashtuns was evident, owing to shared cultural ties that influenced political leanings.³⁹⁰

Communist dignitaries contributed to reimagining society with discussions centered on classlessness and equitable resource distribution. Their influence extended beyond immediate political objectives to shaping broader social and political visions. Communist ideas provided an alternative narrative to counter religious conservatism. By offering alternative solutions to socio-political challenges, they contributed to the ongoing balancing act between various ideological influences. The presence of communism within the NWFP's sociopolitical landscape during the Indian independence movement added depth to the ongoing discussions and debates. However, the influence of communism was limited amidst the dominance of mainstream parties, the complexities of regional identities, tribal

³⁹⁰ M. Rafique Afzal, "Freedom Movements in the Subcontinent and the Communists: A Historical Review," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 35, no. 2 (2014): 105-119.

affiliations, and evolving nationalist sentiments. The interplay of these multifaceted factors shaped the course of events in the NWFP during a transformative period in history.³⁹¹

³⁹¹ Ibid.

Conclusion

The historical background and political history of NWFP (KPK) is a fascinating and complex topic with a rich and diverse history. The land and people of the region have been shaped by numerous dynasties and powers, and have experienced significant political, social, and economic changes throughout its history. The province's historical background is an important factor in understanding the emergence of communism in the region. The colonial era played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of NWFP, leading to the province's provincial status. The political awakening that followed was a result of the growing discontent among the people, who were seeking greater representation and participation in the governance of their province. The establishment of the Peshawar Bolshevik Group in 1921, followed by the formation of the Progressive Writers' Movement in the late 1930s, marked the growth of communist influence in the region. Communism in NWFP was not without its challenges, and communist activists faced significant repression and persecution by the colonial authorities. However, their efforts played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of the region, and their impact can still be felt today. The historical background and political history of NWFP (KPK) is a complex and multifaceted topic that requires careful study and analysis. The emergence of communism in the region is just one of the many fascinating aspects of its history, and its impact on the region's political landscape cannot be overstated. By understanding the historical context in which communism emerged in NWFP, we can gain a better understanding of the region's complex political and social history, and appreciate the many challenges and opportunities that have shaped its development over time. The implications of communism in NWFP during the early 20th century were complex and far-reaching. The growth of communism in the region had a significant impact on the labor and peasant movements, nationalist politics, and the struggle for independence from British colonialism. Communist ideas provided a powerful critique of

colonialism and its policies, highlighting the exploitation and oppression faced by the working-class population in NWFP. However, the growth of communism in the region was also met with fierce opposition from various conservative and religious groups, as well as the wider nationalist movement in India.

The rise and spread of communism in NWFP (North-West Frontier Province) were influenced by a combination of socio-economic factors, political dynamics, external influences, and the role of intellectuals, writers, and artists. Agrarian reforms, land distribution issues, exploitation of workers and peasants, as well as political factors such as the influence of the Soviet Union and Cold War dynamics, all contributed to the growth of communism in NWFP. The presence of leftist intellectuals, writers, and artists played a crucial role in promoting communist ideas and shaping alternative narratives through art, literature, and media. However, the evolution of communism in NWFP has witnessed shifts in ideology and strategies over time. The region's current political landscape is diverse, with communist parties no longer holding significant political power. The dominance of conservative and religious forces, as well as the decline of leftist ideologies, poses challenges for the revival of communism. Nonetheless, the ongoing socio-economic inequalities and the presence of committed activists and grassroots organizations dedicated to social justice offer prospects for future mobilization and advocacy. It is important to recognize that the status of communism in NWFP is subject to change, influenced by the broader political, social, and economic dynamics in the region. The legacy of communism in NWFP has left its mark on the social structure, political discourse, and regional dynamics, shaping the aspirations and struggles of the working class and marginalized sections of society. Overall, the study of communism in NWFP provides insights into the complex interplay of factors and forces that have shaped the region's socio-political landscape and continues to impact its trajectory. NWFP's political landscape during British colonial rule saw a juxtaposition of communist

dignitaries with other prominent parties. The former's Marxist ideology and focus on class struggle, economic equity, and societal transformation stood in contrast to the religious, ethnic, and nationalist priorities of other parties. While the Khilafat Movement, Indian National Congress, Muslim League, Khudai Khidmatgar Movement, and religious parties pursued distinct agendas, communist dignitaries offered an alternative perspective that aimed to address class-based disparities and promote a comprehensive transformation of NWFP's socio-economic fabric. This diversity of ideologies and approaches enriched NWFP's political discourse and underscored the complexity of the region's historical narrative. In the intricate sociopolitical landscape of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) during the Indian independence movement, the confluence of various political ideologies, regional identities, and the influence of communist ideas shaped a multifaceted narrative that reflected the complexities of the era. Within this intricate web of forces, the Communist Party of India (CPI) managed to establish its presence, yet its impact remained relatively limited compared to the dominant forces represented by the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. While communist ideals found resonance among certain local leaders and intellectuals within the NWFP, particularly those advocating for the rights of peasants and workers, and emphasizing social equality and land reform, the broader impact of communism within the region was curtailed by a convergence of factors that favored the more pervasive appeal of the Congress's nonviolent civil disobedience and the Muslim League's demand for a separate Muslim state.

The sociopolitical fabric of the NWFP was a complex tapestry, woven with threads of regional identity, cultural diversity, and historical context. The CPI, while holding its own ideological stance, coexisted with these diverse elements, vying for attention amidst the broader political discourse. Local leaders and intellectuals who sympathized with communist principles, such as the push for economic equality and land redistribution, found themselves

drawn to the CPI's message. These leaders saw in communism a potential solution to the socioeconomic disparities and challenges faced by peasants and workers, particularly in an agrarian society where land reform was a pressing concern. However, the prevailing political narratives of the time, propagated by the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League, held a more dominant sway over the collective consciousness. The Congress's strategy of nonviolent resistance and inclusive nationalism resonated widely, capturing the hearts and minds of millions across India. The Muslim League's vision of a separate Muslim state, culminating in the creation of Pakistan, resonated strongly with certain segments of the population in the NWFP, given its significant Muslim population. This dynamic split the region's political discourse into two major currents, relegating the CPI's influence to a more peripheral role. The Pashtun identity played a significant role in shaping the region's politics. Pashtun leaders and intellectuals were attracted to communist ideas that promised land reform and social equality, but their nationalism was often more aligned with the demand for autonomy within a united India, rather than a separate state based on religion. This nuanced blend of identity, ideology, and political aspirations further shaped the environment within which the communist influence operated.

The impact of communism was also tempered by the complex interplay of tribal loyalties and local sociocultural dynamics. The NWFP's tribal structures, with their traditional hierarchies and social norms, often existed in tension with the more radical aspects of communist ideology. While some communities may have been receptive to economic reforms, concerns about disrupting long-standing cultural norms and tribal traditions created a complex and often ambivalent response to communism. In the broader context, the CPI's impact on the NWFP's freedom movement narrative remained localized, and its role was further diminished by the shadow of the broader political currents. While the CPI did contribute to intellectual debates and discussions, it did not hold the same degree of mass

mobilization and widespread appeal as the Congress and the Muslim League. The CPI's focus on specific socioeconomic issues and its relatively limited reach within the broader population restricted its influence from permeating the overarching narrative of the NWFP's journey toward independence. However, the legacy of communist thought endured beyond the immediate period. It left an indelible imprint on the region's political landscape, continuing to influence leftist movements within the NWFP and the larger subcontinent. The discussions on social justice, equitable distribution of resources, and classlessness that were sparked by communist ideals contributed to shaping long-term goals and aspirations, even if their immediate impact was muted. The presence of communism within the NWFP's sociopolitical landscape during the Indian independence movement added depth to the ongoing discussions and debates. Yet, its impact was constrained by the dominance of mainstream political parties, the intricate blend of regional identities, tribal affiliations, and evolving nationalist sentiments that characterized this transformative period in NWFP's history. The interplay of these multifaceted factors shaped the course of events in the NWFP during a time of significant change and laid the groundwork for the region's political landscape in the post-independence era.

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