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# Peasant and Class Struggles: The Case of Sindh Hari Committee and the Communist Party of Pakistan

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## Abstract

*The 20th century witnessed a series of socialist and communist revolutions that sparked hope among the masses worldwide. The Russian Revolution, famously known as the October Revolution under the leadership of Lenin in 1917, was the first socialist revolution in the world. This event ignited leftist movements across the globe. India was under British control during the revolutionary movements in Russia that led to the October Revolution. However, the post-October revolution inspired some political parties in India to launch movements aimed at bringing about a socialist revolution. Prior to the partition of India, the Sindh Hari Committee (Sindh Peasants Committee) was established in 1930 to rally peasants and fight for their rights from the feudal system. They advocated for the fair distribution of land among landless peasants in Sindh, while following communist principles. Following the partition, the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) was formed in 1948. This research primarily delves into the historical events surrounding the efforts of the SHC and CPP in organizing peasants and labourers, respectively. Additionally, the paper addresses the response of the state apparatus to counter communism and, in turn, the reaction of leftist forces to state suppression.*

**Keywords:** Sindh Hari Committee; Communist Party of Pakistan; Class & Peasant Struggles; Socialism; Communism.

## 1. Introduction

When discussing Left movements in Sindh, it is important to explore the history of the Sindh Hari Committee and the Communist Party of Pakistan. The Sindh Hari Committee was highly active before the creation of Pakistan and successfully got the Tenancy Act passed by the Sindh Assembly in 1950. After that, the SHC operated as a sister organization of the Communist Party of Pakistan. The Communist Party of Pakistan, established in 1948, was operational until it was banned in July 1954. Following the ban, the CPP went underground and later merged with various other parties such as the Awami (People's) League, National Awami (People's) Party, and Pakistan National Party.

This paper examines the establishment and activities of the Sindh Hari Committee (SHC) and the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) from 1930 to 1954. Although other Left parties were also present in Sindh during this time or emerged after 1954, none were as active or influential as the SHC and CPP. These parties operated as sister organizations of the CPP, demonstrated by the example of the Sindh Hari Committee. Additionally, the Democratic Students Federation and certain Trade Unions operated under the umbrella of the CPP. As a result, this paper specifically focuses on the significant roles played by the Sindh Hari Committee and the Communist Party of Pakistan during this period.

The paper aims to understand why the Left failed to become a mainstream political force in Sindh, despite its prominent role in political uprisings. It focuses on Left politics before 1954 and examines its evolution and shortcomings during that time. Additionally, it explores the state's response to these movements. The paper offers an account of the early stages of the Left and analyzes the key factors contributing to its lack of success in Sindh.

An important reason for focusing solely on these two parties is that SHC mobilized and organized the peasant class in Sindh to reclaim their rights from feudal lords before the creation of Pakistan. Furthermore, following the partition of India, it was the CPP that initiated a class struggle and advocated for a classless society in Pakistan, including in Sindh.

The paper provides a brief introduction to the Sindh Hari Committee and the Communist Party of Pakistan, discussing their roles in the emergence of left politics in Sindh and their impact on mobilizing the local population. Additionally, the paper analyzes state oppression against leftists and communists.

## **2. Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing both secondary and primary sources. A key focus of the research is to analyze leftist politics in Sindh, particularly the role of the Sindh Hari Tehreek (SHT) in mobilizing the peasant population and the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) in organizing the labor class in urban areas. To achieve this, interviews were conducted with experts and individuals who were directly involved in the movement.

## **3. Review of Literature**

This study primarily consults literature in the Sindhi language, as available English-language sources on the Sindh Hari Committee are quite limited. Notably, Ashique Hussain Solangi's book, "Sindh Hari Committee: Tareekh aien Jidojihad (1930-1970)" (translated as "Sindh Hari Committee: History and Struggle (1930-1970)"), serves as a crucial resource outlining the history of the Sindh Hari Committee (SHC) since its inception. Similarly, Qazi Faiz Muhammad's work, "Hari Committee aien Allottee Tehrik" (translated as "Sindh Hari Committee and the Struggle for Land Allotment"), provides a comprehensive account of the SHT's active involvement in the land allotment struggle.

Additionally, Dr. Azad Qazi has compiled writings about Hyder Bux Jatoi, the leader of the SHC, in a book titled "Comrade Hyder Bux Jatoi (Sindhi Sarwech)" (translated as "Comrade Hyder Bux Jatoi (Sindhi Hero)"). This book is essential for understanding Jatoi's contributions, dedication, and sacrifices for the cause of landless peasants. Alongside Jatoi, Sobho Gianchandani emerged as a prominent leftist intellectual who examined both leftist ideology in general and the SHC in particular. His collection of writings, "Sobhy Joon Tahreroon-1" (translated as "Sobho's Writings"), compiled by Naz Sanai, encompasses significant insights into leftist politics, including discussions on the SHC. In addition to Sindhi sources, several English texts have been consulted on the subject. Notably, Kamran Asdar Ali's book, "Surkh Salam: Communist Politics and Class Activism in Pakistan 1947-

1972,” offers valuable insights into the labour and peasant movements both before and after the partition of India. The book also explores the role of SHC and CPP in mobilizing peasants and labourers in Sindh. Another significant source for understanding leftist politics in the region is Ishtiaq Ahmed’s research article, “The Rise and Fall of the Maoist Movement in Pakistan,” which sheds light on leftist movements influenced by Maoist ideology. In Sindh, this includes Bhutto’s National Students Federation (NSF) and Rasool Bux Palijo’s Awami Tehrik (AT). This article is particularly relevant to this study as the Awami Tehrik can be seen as an extension of SHC, with one of its founding fathers having been an active participant in SHC prior to the establishment of AT. Furthermore, since this study also examines the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP), Ahmed’s article engages in discussions regarding the ideological orientations within the party. Additionally, Professor Jamal Naqvi’s two pivotal works are referenced. One booklet, “Communist Party of Pakistan me Nazryati Kashmkash ki Mukhtasir Tareek” (A Brief History of Ideological Conflicts in the Communist Party of Pakistan), is essential for understanding the internal ideological debates within the CPP. These debates included whether the CPP should align with the military against the government prior to the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case, as well as discussions on prioritizing class issues versus national concerns.

Naqvi's book, "Leaving Left Behind," sparked considerable debate within leftist circles as he chose to distance himself from leftist politics based on insights he gained during his visit to the Soviet Union. Additionally, Zamir Sheikh's work, "What Went Wrong," which features interviews with various left organizers, serves as an important source on the topic, presenting a range of opinions regarding SHC and CPP. Lastly, the compilation titled "Baba-e-Sindh Hyder Bux Jatoi: Introduction and Excerpts from His Writings," curated by Dr. Hatim Jatoi, offers significant excerpts from Jatoi's writings, showcasing his approach to various issues.

#### **4. Formation of the Sindh Hari Committee**

The Sindh Hari Committee was initially an independent political party until it merged with the Communist Party. It was formed in 1930 during a peasant conference in Mirpurkhas, one of the major cities of Sindh. The founding members decided to form a party called the 'Sindh Hari Association' (Solangi, 2007, p. 32). The founding members included Jamshed Mehta, Principal Gokle, G.M. Syed, Sheikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi, Jethmal Pursuram, and Comrade Abdul Qadir (Muhammad, 2008, p. 25). Principal Gokle became the first President of SHC. The formation of the Sindh Hari Committee was driven by various motives, especially the need for a party to fight for the rights of the peasants.

At a time of great global change and revolutions, the founders of SHC drew inspiration from the Russian Revolution, where workers united for their rights and brought about significant change. This inspired political leaders and workers in Sindh to establish a party that would advocate for peasant rights. The construction of the Sukkur Barrage in 1932, originally conceived by Mr. C.A. Fife in 1868, led to the cultivation of many acres of land in Sindh and was a major catalyst for the formation of SHC.

The construction of the Sukkur Barrage led to a situation where the formation of a peasant political party became inevitable. The Sindhi leadership was concerned about the potential loss of land to Punjabi military personnel, as the fertile land made available by the Barrage's construction created this fear. This concern was not unfounded, as the government at the time was seeking to settle Punjabi military personnel in Sindh by granting them fertile lands. Despite serving in the British government as military soldiers, Punjabi military personnel were being rewarded with land in Sindh as a token of appreciation for their loyalty.

As Sindh was part of the Bombay presidency at that time, the Sindh Hari Committee passed a resolution at the Hari conference held in Mirpurkhas on 12th July 1930. In this resolution, the SHC demanded rights for the local Sindhi population from the Bombay government. Two points in the resolution were vital:

1. The Bombay government was requested to allocate lands that came under cultivation due to the construction of the Sukkur Barrage to local peasants at cheap rates and easy installments.
2. The resolution demanded the passing of the 'Tenancy Act' to protect peasant rights over lands.

The ideological debate surrounding the Sindh Hari Committee is an intriguing topic to explore. Since the party's inception, there has been ongoing discussion about its ideological stance in Sindh. Two main arguments prevail in this debate. Some believe that the Sindh Hari Committee was not a leftist party, but rather a Sindhi ethno-nationalist party. They argue that it advocated for the rights of Sindhi Haris exclusively and led movements in defense of the Sindhi language while resisting the One Unit scheme. On the other hand, another school of thought contends that the Sindh Hari Committee was indeed a leftist party that engaged in class struggles and confronted the influential feudal lords of Sindh. They acknowledge the presence of Sindhi nationalist elements within the party but assert that the SHC had a clear stance on the national question, advocating for the rights of Sindhi Haris and the defense of the Sindhi language. Before delving into the further history of the SHC, it is crucial to examine this ideological debate about the Sindh Hari Committee.

### **5. The Ideological Debate about the Sindh Hari Committee**

The debate about whether the Sindh Hari Committee was a Leftist party is ongoing. There are two prevailing opinions. Some believe that the SHC was a Leftist party that focused on class issues by challenging feudal lords. Others argue that the SHC only advocated for the rights of agricultural laborers and did not aim to establish a classless society, so it should not be considered a Left party. Jami Chandio, a prominent writer from Sindh, supports the latter opinion, stating that the “SHC was solely focused on highlighting the issues of agricultural laborers and did not seek to establish a stateless society like a typical communist party” (Chandio, personal communication, February 5, 2016). He further said, “The slogan Jo Khare so Khaye (Those who plow should reap)” was originally coined by Shaheed Shah Inayat. However, the Sindh Hari Committee did not adopt this slogan, as it was focused on advocating for the rights of Haris under the British Empire. Hyder Bux Jatoti played a significant role in strengthening the Hari Committee in 1945, leading to the passage of the Tenancy Act from the Assembly in 1950. It's important to note that the Hari movement was distinct from the communist movement, even though it did raise class-related questions. Not all peasant movements are necessarily communist. Communist parties are primarily focused on working towards a classless society” (Chandio, personal communication, February 5, 2016). On the other hand, according to the renowned Communist Sobho Gianchandani, the Sindh Hari Committee had affiliations with the All-India Kisan Sabha since its early days (Gianchandani, 2010, p. 118).

Kamran Asdar Ali also discusses the Sindh Hari Committee's affiliation with the Communist Party of India (CPI) before Pakistan's creation. He mentions “In Sind, as in Bengal and Punjab, some peasant-based organizations had close links to the CPI during the 1940s. One of them, the Sind Hari Committee under Haidar Bux Jatoti's leadership, was active in certain rural districts, and G. M. Syed, a progressive Muslim League leader, supported its demands for tenancy rights among the Haris (peasants)” (Ali, 2015, p. 49). In 1930, the Sindh Hari Committee was established under the leadership of prominent Sindhi politicians. However, the party gained significant popularity under the leadership of Hyder Bux Jatoti, who resigned from his bureaucratic position as Deputy Collector to



join the party in 1945. There is an interesting debate about whether Jatoi was a Communist or a Sindhi nationalist. Dr. Azad Qazi writes, “Comrade Jatoi was dedicated to the national question of Sindh, and due to his sincere affiliation with this issue, the Communist Party did not grant him membership” (Qazi, 2015, pp. 13-14). Qazi also cites a declaration of the SHC published in the 'Haqdar' newspaper on June 20th, 1947. This declaration stated that the Sindh Hari Committee was not a branch of the Communist Party. Therefore, anyone, whether a communist, non-communist, member of Congress, or Muslim League, who was dedicated to the cause of peasants, could join the party (Ibid., p. 15). Contrary to this opinion, Imdad Qazi, Secretary General of CPP, claimed that the Sindh Hari Committee was working as a sister organization of CPP. According to him, “Jatoi was a member of the Communist Party until the general elections held during the General Ayub Khan regime. Jatoi was expelled from the Communist Party because he wanted to participate in the elections held during the Ayub era and replace the name of the Sindh Hari Committee with the Sindh Hari Party. However, despite being expelled, he remained loyal to the Communist Party until his death” (Qazi, personal communication on the phone, March 23, 2016). Similarly, a well-known Communist intellectual, Sobho Gianchandani, reported that Hyder Bux Jatoi proudly used to declare that he was a communist (Gianchandani, 2010, p. 107).

According to senior journalist Zamir Sheikh, quoting Imdad Qazi, General Secretary of CPP, “Secretary General of Communist Party Imdad Kazi said that Sindh Hari Committee had played important role in the class struggle movement of the 50s when the slogans of abolish of the feudal system, an equal share of Hari in the agricultural produce, etc were raised. The Committee had rejuvenated the slogan of Shah Inayat, ‘Those who plow the land should reap the land’. This slogan had strained relations between G.M. Syed and Comrade Jatoi” (Sheikh, 2014, p. 33).

When we examine the debate above, we can see that the Sindh Hari Committee (SHC) initiated class struggles, such as fighting against the feudal lords of Sindh and demanding rights for the lower class, specifically the peasants. Although their aim was not to create a stateless society, it cannot be denied that SHC played a crucial role in raising awareness among peasants about their rights, strengths, weaknesses, and how to collectively fight against their common enemy – feudalism and landlordism. The Sindh Hari Committee also raised the issue of evacuee property of Hindus, which was supposed to be granted to new settlers (emigrants) from India by the government of Pakistan. The Sindhi Hindus left almost two and a half million acres of land, and SHC demanded the distribution of this evacuee land among both immigrants from India and local landless Sindhis. The demand was for a 50%-50% distribution of land among indigenous Sindhis and immigrants from India. Additionally, SHC played a vital role in the anti-One Unit movement and the defense of the Sindhi language. Due to these actions, the SHC appeared more as a Sindhi nationalist party rather than a leftist party. Also, they did not address the labor question parallel to the Hari (peasant) question, which was one of the reasons why SHC was not considered a leftist party. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the Sindh Hari Committee played a significant role in mobilizing peasants against the feudal system in Sindh.

## **6. SHC’s Struggle for the Rights of *Haris* (Peasants)**

The Sindh Hari Committee continued its struggle by organizing peasant conferences in various cities and towns of Sindh to raise awareness about the rights and strengths of the people. According to former Communist party leader Sohail Sangi, “In the 1950s and 1960s, there was no presence of any political party in the villages, towns, and cities of Sindh except for the active involvement of the Sindh Hari Committee. I believe that the Left was popular during that time because it was the only

group fully committed to the cause of the people” (Sangi, personal communication, January 31, 2016). This active involvement of the Sindh Hari Committee brought peasant issues into mainstream political discourse. As a result, during a visit to Pakistan, the then-Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai expressed his desire to meet with Comrade Hyder Bux Jatoi (Sheikh, 2014, p. 31).

Hyder Bux Jatoi was a person who resigned from his bureaucratic post as Deputy Collector and joined the Sindh Hari Committee in 1945. Later, in 1946, he was elected President of the Sindh Hari Committee (Jatoi, 1995, p. 7). Before Jatoi's leadership, the SHC was working among Haris, but its strength increased significantly under his leadership. During his tenure, the SHC successfully advocated for the passage of the Sindh Tenancy Act in the Sindh Assembly and achieved the acceptance of the half Batai (share-crop) demand from the Assembly.

### **7. The Struggle for Sindh Tenancy Act and Half Batai (Share-Crop)**

The Sindh Tenancy Act was a significant achievement for the Sindh Hari Committee, as it had been working tirelessly to get this Act passed in the Assembly. The SHC had been mobilizing the Haris of Sindh on this issue since the party was established in 1930. However, neither the British government before partition nor the government of Pakistan after partition had considered their demand. In 1949, Pir Illahi Bux was replaced by a new Chief Minister of Sindh, Yousif Haroon, who showed interest in this Act. On March 9, 1949, a Select Committee, comprised of 21 members, was formed and given two weeks to present a report (Solangi, 2007, p. 127). The Sindh Hari Committee delegate passionately presented their views on the Sindh Tenancy Act on March 17, 1949. This marked a significant moment in the ongoing struggle of the SHC, as they tirelessly worked to educate and rally the people on this critical issue. The SHC organized impactful conferences across various cities of Sindh, notably in Thatta on April 8, 1949, Sukkur on April 13, Hyderabad on April 15, Larkana on April 17, Mirpurkhas on August 13, and Nawabshah on September 5, 1949 (Ibid, p. 129). These efforts were vital in garnering support and spreading awareness.

On April 1, 1950, the Sindh Assembly engaged in a compelling debate regarding the Tenancy Act. The very next day, workers from the Sindh Hari Committee congregated in Karachi, subsequently deciding to stage a protest in front of the Assembly Hall. They intended to present a memorandum about the Tenancy Act to all Assembly members and to also secure a meeting with the then Chief Minister of Sindh (Ibid, pp. 130-131). On April 3, the Haris assembled in front of the Assembly Hall and fervently voiced their support for the peasants. Finally, on April 4, 1950, the Assembly passed the historic 'Sindh Tenancy Act' (Ibid, p. 131). The Tenancy Act was a significant achievement as it recognized the demand for half Batai (share crop). This demand for half Batai originated in 1947 and became a rallying cry for the Sindh Hari Committee on 4th and 5th March 1947. With the Sindh Tenancy Act, peasants now have the right to receive half the share of the crop they produce themselves.

Due to the passage of the Tenancy Act, Haris not only gained the right to half of the crop produce, but they were also exempted from providing extra labor. Additionally, landowners were prohibited from evicting the Haris without a valid reason, which they used to do before the Act was passed. While the Tenancy Act was a significant achievement in granting equal crop-sharing rights to landowners and peasants, it also led to numerous threats and even deaths of peasants during its implementation in Sindh.

After the formation of Pakistan, the Communist Party of Pakistan played a leading role in the Left movements in Sindh and the rest of the country. However, since Karachi was taken away from Sindh and forcefully made the capital of Pakistan despite resistance from the people of the province,

industries were predominantly located in Karachi, with a few in other cities of Sindh. As a result, Trade Union movements were mainly active in Karachi, while the Sindh Hari Committee, working as a sister organization of the Communist Party, was focused on mobilizing the Haris in rural areas. Similarly, the student wings of the Communist Party, such as the National Student Federation (NSF) and the Democratic Student Federation (DSF), were also active in Sindh, particularly in Karachi. It can be said that the Communist Party provided a central platform for Left parties to unite under the banner of the CPP.

### **8. Formation of the Communist Party of Pakistan and State Response to Communists**

The influence of Communist ideology in Sindh's politics predates the formation of Pakistan, but it notably grew after the establishment of the CPP. While some sources suggest that the Sindh Hari Committee was associated with the CPI, it is also believed that the Trade Union movement began after the Urdu-speaking leadership of the CPP migrated to Pakistan following partition. However, records indicate that a small Trade Union was operating in Sindh before the creation of Pakistan. Kamran Asdar Ali notes that "there were some peasant-based organizations that at the time of partition had links to the CPI. For example, the Sind Hari Committee under Haidar Bux Jatoti's leadership was active in certain rural districts. There was also a nascent trade union movement and a small, but effective branch of the Communist Party. The trade union activities were organized mostly around dock workers, workers in the Karachi Port Trust, railways, electricity supply, and municipal workers" (Ali, 2015, p. 87). Ali also writes about the formation of the Communist Party in the 1940s in Sindh. He writes, "In the early 1940s, in addition to the trade union activity in Karachi, there was a parallel formation of the Communist Party, led by Qadir Baksh Nizamani, Abdul Qadir, and Mohammad Amin Khoso" (Ali, 2015, p. 87). He further states that "by the mid-1940s, the Communist Party had a strong following, especially among bidi workers, carriage drivers, ginning factory workers, and some shop assistants (Ibid).

The Secretary General of the CPP, Imdad Qazi, expressed similar views about the Trade Union movements in Sindh. He stated, "The Trade Union was already active from Karachi to Lahore before the creation of Pakistan. It was known as the 'All India Trade Union Congress'" (Qazi, personal communication, January 28, 2016). In Sindh, there was a provincial committee of this Trade Union Congress called the 'Sindh Provincial Trade Union Congress'. Narain Das Bechar, a Sindhi Hindu, was the founder of the Trade Union movement in Sindh and became the leader of the Sindh Provincial Trade Union Congress in 1930.

The Communist Party of Pakistan has faced criticism right from its early days. The party's policies have been questioned, with concerns raised about the leadership's understanding of the unique political and social conditions in Pakistan. For instance, Professor Jamal Naqvi highlighted that the religious sentiments in Pakistan were distinct from those in India, suggesting that the name "Communist" might not be suitable for the party in Pakistan. Additionally, critics have pointed out that the leadership of the party had migrated from India and may not fully comprehend the local issues. This has led to calls for more indigenous leadership. Sohail Sangi, a CPP-Sindh leader, emphasized the importance of local understanding, stating that leaders from outside the region may not fully grasp the conditions in Sindh (Sangi, personal communication, January 31, 2016).

Jami Chandio, an intellectual from Sindh, provides an analysis of the Communist Party as follows: "The Left of Pakistan faced 3-4 issues. When Pakistan was formed, the Communist Party of India sent Sajjad Zaheer, Aziz Sallam Bukhari, and other Communist leaders to Pakistan. Although Sajjad Zaheer was actively involved in the Progressive Writers' Association, they were not familiar

with the actual political and social conditions of the country. As a result, they were unable to grasp the internal challenges of the country” (Chandio, personal communication, February 5, 2016). Regarding the Communist Party, Jami Chandio mentions, "After Sajjad Zaheer was released from jail, he returned to India. The remaining party members from India were unclear about the national and Hari question. For instance, they did not support the inclusion of Hyder Bux Jatoti as a member of CPP. This narrow-mindedness was obvious. Moreover, the CPP's stance on language was ambiguous. In 1948, when Jinnah Sahib declared that only Urdu would be the national language of Pakistan, what was the CPP's position at that time? Their stance was similar to that of Jamait-i-Islami, a major religious party in Pakistan” (Ibid).

Despite its shortcomings, the Communist Party of Pakistan grew to become one of the main political parties in Pakistan until it was banned. The Muslim League was losing popularity, and the new religious party, Jamait-i-Islami, was poised to replace it. Amid this shift, the Communist Party also gained popularity throughout Pakistan, especially in the Punjab province. According to the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Imdad Qazi, "The Inspector General of the Special Branch in Punjab, Chaudhary Anwer, was tasked by the Federal Government to report on the CPP's activities in Punjab. At that time, Lahore served as the CPP's headquarters. Anwer's report has recently been published. According to his findings, CPP had district committees in over 80 percent of Punjab's districts, and CPP organizers were active in the remaining districts. He also mentioned that CPP had substantial funds, even more than the Muslim League. This indicated that CPP had emerged as a counterforce to the Muslim League, which was one of the reasons for the ban on the party” (Qazi, personal communication, January 28, 2016).

There was a shift in the political landscape as the Communist Party expanded, while the Muslim League saw a decline in popularity in Pakistan. This led to the emergence of a new religious party, the Jamait-i-Islami. At the same time, the state undertook a crackdown on Communists, using its machinery to suppress their activities.

## **9. The Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case**

The Communist Party of Pakistan quickly rose to prominence as a significant political force in the country. There was a friendly relationship between the party leadership and the Pakistan military, particularly with Brigadier Akbar Khan. However, this cooperation led to allegations of a plot to overthrow the existing government and replace it with a CPP government, resulting in the infamous Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case against army personnel and CPP leadership. In March 1951, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan accused some military personnel of conspiring with the Communist Party to assassinate him and overthrow his government. Tensions rose between then Brigadier Akbar Khan and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan over the Kashmir issue. While Akbar Khan aimed to enter Kashmir against India (Naqvi & Ishtiaq, 2014, p. 27), the Prime Minister opposed this plan, leading Akbar Khan to seek assistance from Communist leaders such as Sajjad Zaheer, Sibte Hassan, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Muhammad Hussain Ata in his attempt to overthrow Liaquat's government (Ibid).

In his autobiography, Syed Jamaluddin writes about a plan that “According to the plan, Khan was to form a new government which was to organize general elections in the country. The new government was to allow the Communist Party to take part in the political process and, in return, the CPP was to welcome and provide support to the new government. The plan leaked out and all the accused were tried in a special tribunal in the compound of Hyderabad Jail” (Ibid). It is not yet clear whether the Communist Party was involved in the conspiracy, but there were confirmed meetings between Akbar Khan and the Communist Party leadership. Kamran Asdar Ali quotes Tufail Abbas's



interview with him, who states, “The CPP leadership in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case showed haste. He argued that people were in a hurry to bring about the revolution and could not wait for the Party to develop its roots among the masses. Whether this is a serious analysis or not, it does seem that the CPP leadership in the early 1950s had decided to keep open all options for capturing state power” (Ali, 2015, p. 201). On the contrary, another senior member of the Communist Party, namely Professor Jamal Naqvi, argues that the CPP was not involved in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case. The government also did not allege the party leadership's involvement in the conspiracy, but the government was upset with the party for not informing them about the conspiracy (Naqvi, 1989, p. 19). However, in his autobiography, Syed Jamaluddin contradicts his own statement and writes, “The case was not false as the meeting had indeed taken place. However, the meeting had ended without any accord after a prolonged session spanning eight hours of intense debate. The CPP was not too interested in any aggressive posture as it felt it did not have the means to sustain any so-called revolution” (Naqvi & Ishtiaq, 2014, p. 27).

The Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP) was inclined toward Brigadier Akbar Khan and his team, despite knowing that Akbar Khan wanted to compel the government to allow military forces to go to Kashmir. This decision raised questions because military action could strain India-Pakistan relations. Unlike in other countries where Leftists came to power through revolutionary military means under the direction of communist parties, the situation in Pakistan was different, as the military personnel, including Brigadier Akbar Khan, were not revolutionaries. It's possible that the military sought to exploit the CPP for their personal or institutional gains because they had no other option at that time. On March 9, 1951, Akbar Khan and eleven other military personnel were arrested on charges of conspiracy. Later, the Communist Party was also implicated in the case. Communist Party leaders such as Sajjad Zaheer, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Muhammad Hussain Ata were arrested and sentenced to four years in prison and fined Rs. 500 (Ahmed, 2010, p. 3). Although the charges against the Communist Party leadership were not proven, the government was successful in eliminating anti-imperialist elements in the military and progressive elements in trade unions by detaining military personnel and leading Communist leaders. Because of the Conspiracy Case registered against the CPP and the success of the United Front in the 1954 elections held in East Pakistan, a ban was imposed on the CPP.

## **10. CPP Banned and went Underground**

The Communist Party faced significant challenges during the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case, which resulted in a crackdown against Communists in Pakistan. State oppression led to the central leadership of the party either leaving the country or the party after being released from jail. For example, Sajjad Zaheer, the Secretary General of the Party, left Pakistan and returned to India, while Muhammad Hussain Ata resigned from the Party (Ali, 2015, pp. 201-202). Following the ban on the Communist Party of Pakistan, it became almost non-existent in West Pakistan. Despite attempts by some party members in Punjab to revive the CPP immediately after the ban, it was challenging due to the ongoing state tactics against Communists and internal divisions within the party ranks. In this regard, Kaman writes, “During this disarray, the Sind provincial committee was not willing to submit to the Punjab party as it had severe reservations about the ‘adventurist’ line followed by the Central Committee and the Punjab colleagues. The Sind party hence became more independent and called itself the new CPP” (Ibid, pp. 202-203). The Communist Party continued to have widespread support in East Pakistan, as evidenced by the results of the provincial elections. It's important to note that the ban on the Communist Party was influenced by these election results, particularly following the

Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case. Ishtiaq Ahmed discusses the provincial elections in East Bengal and the subsequent ban imposed on the Communist Party. He writes, "In the provincial elections held in East Bengal in March 1954, a united front constituted by a number of parties opposed to West Pakistani domination won 223 seats out of a total of 237 seats reserved for Muslims. These developments created panic among the ruling Muslim League government. It retaliated by alleging that the United Front and the CPP were involved in a conspiracy to undo the unity of Pakistan by supporting secessionist movements. Consequently, a ban was imposed on the CPP in July 1954" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 3).

Despite the ban imposed on the Communist Party, the committees in Sindh and East Pakistan continued their activities. In contrast, the Punjab committee was dominated by opportunistic elements and did not exist in the same way as the Sindh and East Pakistan committees. This suggests that the state apparatus was actively working against the Communist Party because it was emerging as a major political force in Pakistan, potentially replacing the Muslim League. The Liaquat government also showed a stronger inclination towards America than the Soviet Union. The ban on the Communist Party may have been influenced by America's interests, as the party had emerged as a significant force in the provincial elections of East Bengal, which was not acceptable to the Pakistani government or America. This led to government action against the Communists. Additionally, the Communist Party leadership had made a grave mistake by devising a secret plan to overthrow the Liaquat government, providing the government with a reason to restrict the party's activities.

While the Communist Party's involvement in the conspiracy case was not proven, the CPP leadership was in contact with Brigadier Akbar Khan and his team, which was not the right decision at that time. The CPP leadership failed to analyze Pakistani conditions before taking any action. As a result, the state succeeded in its counter-policy, and the Communist Party went underground. After that time, the CPP never emerged as a major political force in Pakistan again. The Pakistani government managed to eliminate the Communist presence, and the government signed mutual defense agreements with the United States. This development further marginalized leftist elements in Pakistan. Therefore, it can be argued that some of the causes discussed in this paper, such as the CPP leadership's lack of awareness about the prevailing political conditions of Pakistan, the participation in discussions with the Pakistani military to overthrow the Liaquat regime, and the state's oppression against the Left, were major factors contributing to the weakness and lack of success of the Left. These causes undoubtedly affected the Left movement in Sindh and Pakistan.

## **11. Conclusion**

The study delves into two influential political entities: the Sindh Hari Committee (SHC) and the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP). The SHC ardently championed the rights of Sindh's peasants and successfully advocated for the passage of the Tenancy Act by the Provincial Assembly of Sindh. This pivotal legislation granted Haris the right to a half share in the produced crops, marking a significant victory. Additionally, the SHC assumed a crucial role in national affairs by vehemently opposing the One-Unit scheme and safeguarding the endangered Sindhi language during that period. Notably, the leader of the SHC, Hyder Bux Jatoi, coined the widely recognized slogan 'Jiye Sindh [Long Live Sindh]', which continues to resonate within Sindhi nationalist spheres. Therefore, it is evident that the SHC played a pivotal role in advocating for the rights of the peasant class against the feudal hierarchy in Sindh, while also contributing to the nationalist cause of Sindh. Conversely, the Communist Party of Pakistan, established in 1948, garnered significant popularity, particularly in Punjab and among the industrial laborers of Karachi. Criticisms have been leveled against the CPP

for allegedly neglecting the national question and predominantly focusing on the class question, given its active engagement with factory laborers. As the national question held utmost importance during the country's nascent stages, it should have been accorded due attention. Nevertheless, the Sindh leadership of the CPP actively participated in the nationalist cause, notably opposing the one-unit scheme and partaking in student movements that advocated for equal treatment among all nations coexisting within Pakistan. Regrettably, both the SHC and the CPP saw a decline in their activities after the passage of the Tenancy Act in 1950 and the subsequent ban on the CPP in 1954. Despite the SHC's integration with the CPP and the latter's continued operations underground, both parties experienced a loss of influence. Consequently, this paved the way for the resurgence of feudal and right-wing religious parties, which continue to wield power in the country.

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