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**Adeem Suhail**

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**The Pakistan National Alliance of 1977**

**APPROVED BY**

**SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Syed Akbar Hyder)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**(Kamran Asdar Ali)**

**The Pakistan National Alliance of 1977**

**by**

**Adeem Suhail, BA; BSEE**

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# **The Pakistan National Alliance of 1977**

**by**

**Adeem Suhail, MA**

**The University of Texas at Austin, 2011**

**SUPERVISOR: Syed Akbar Hyder**

## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) and the movement associated with that party, in the aftermath of the 1977 elections in Pakistan. Through this study, the author addresses the issue of regionalism and its effects on politics at a National level. A study of the course of the movement also allows one to look at the problems in representation and how ideological stances merge with material conditions and needs of the country's citizenry to articulate the desire for, what is basically, an equitable form of democracy that is peculiar to Pakistan. The form of such a democratic system of governance can be gauged through the frustrations and desires of the variety of Pakistan's oppressed classes. Moreover, the fissures within the discourses that appear through the PNA, as well as their reassessment and analysis helps one formulate a fresh conception of resistance along different matrices of society within the country.

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## **Introduction**

This study focuses on the discourses surrounding the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), formed in January 1977. The PNA was a coalition of nine different political parties that encompassed a broad political spectrum from the political Left to the ultra-Right wing. The constitutive parties included: the National Democratic Party (NDP), the Jamiat-e Ulema-e Islam (JUI), the Muslim League (PML), the Jamaat-e Islami (JI), the Jamiat-e Ulema-e Pakistan (JUP), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Pakistan Tehrik-e Istaqlal (PTI), the Khaaksaar Tehrik and the finally Sardar Qayyum Khan's Muslim Conference.

The purpose of the PNA was to run as a joint opposition to break the hegemonic hold over the state that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party had held through the course of the 1970s. However, as this study will show, to the masses that learned to believe in the PNA and came out to its rallies and agitations throughout the first half of 1977, it became something more than just a sum of its constituents. Herein, I will present a history of the PNA through the words and letters of some of these people, who now remember it less as a political party and more as a 'movement' towards the attainment of certain political ends that were dear to them.

In this introduction, I will sketch out brief histories of some of the major political parties in the post 1971 era of Pakistani politics. This is necessary for three reasons. The first being that many of these parties have both ceased to exist or have politically and ideologically diverged from the political aims they expressed at the time of the PNA movement. Second, in the aftermath of the Zia administration that also commenced in the July of 1977, many of these parties changed leaderships and allegiances to accommodate the shift to the army rule which lasted more than a decade. In that regard, most of the scholarship that engages the issues that the

PNA was addressing as well as the agendas of its constituent parties reflects on the PNA in the light of the politics of the Zia years. Lastly, it sets up the context for the discussions that this study underlines and undertakes.

Pakistan, from its inception, has been caught within the tension of wishing to be the Nation-State that its creators had envisioned it to be, and the wait for the fulfillment of that wish. For a variety of reasons, not much has changed and waiting continues. In August 1947, it became clear where the true seat of power lay when Jinnah decided to be the first Governor-General of Pakistan rather than the Prime Minister of a country aspiring to be a parliamentary democracy. No doubt, contingencies of the time — the issues of war with India, rehabilitation of the refugees, disputes over resources and coercion of stubborn regional governments to join the nation-state — necessitated the existence of a strong central government. Nonetheless, the genealogy of this trend can actually be traced back to the colonial era in the very way the Muslim League was knit together around the personality of Jinnah, where he became recognized by the colonial authorities as the ‘sole spokesman’<sup>1</sup> for the Muslims of India.

With the party monopolizing power in the central government in the first decade of Pakistan’s existence, the people who followed him were not only relatively powerless vis-à-vis the Military, but the tug-o-war for power within the party following Jinnah’s demise saw the chair of the Governor-General become the focal node of the State structure. Through the period of multiple unstable governments between the eras of Liaqat Ali Khan and Ayub Khan, a political culture became ossified, in which all power was perceived to be encapsulated in the

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<sup>1</sup> Jinnah was characterized as such by Ayesha Jalal in her book by the same name. While the narrative deals with Jinnah’s role as the leader of the All India Muslim League in the pre-partition era, Jinnah in popular memory has a very different role in various parts of Pakistan. Especially given the violent manner in which Baluchistan was incorporated into the nascent nation-state and the continued violence and coercion of the Pakistani State, as well as the tradition of anti-Muslim League politics in the NWFP; Jinnah’s role bears a less than redoubtable legacy than state discourses as well as partition narratives would seem to imply.

person of the Head-of-the-State. The ties forged then between the weak bourgeois bureaucratic order of the Muslim League and the Military have become the noose that has bound Pakistan since.

It was only inevitable that a system wound up so tightly around Jinnah's personality would seek similar strategies of the application of power when a workable constitutional framework or political structures on the National level proved to be elusive. And when the leaders of the Muslim League proved to be inadequate heirs to Jinnah, the military in the form of Ayub Khan stepped up to the role it had always played *de facto*. The dominant actors in the National political spaces in Pakistan did nothing to shed this fixation with charismatic personalities that can hold on to the seat of power, as the head of the State, which became its *raison d'être*. This political culture persisted even during Pakistan's short spells of 'civilian' governments, precisely because this configuration of the structures of governance so heavily favored the centre over the periphery.

In a sense, in the days following independence there was the underlying anxiety about what it meant to be a Pakistani now that there was a Pakistan. How does one adopt this identity and how does it work with the more rooted sense of belonging in which individuals and communities conceived of themselves?<sup>2</sup> And while this anxiety developed as time went on, it was also coupled with the immediacy of the nascent state's governance issues. It had to deal with the rampant partition violence, rehabilitation of millions of refugees, integration of the State's peripheries under the central authority and the formation of a functional central government. It had to do all this and more with the knowledge of its limited resources and in the fear of the collapse that the whole world had expected would eventually occur and which contributed to the

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<sup>2</sup> See *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* by Vazira Zamindar, *Columbia University Press*

uncertainties at the centre. These various issues and conditions, early on, turned the State apparatus into a coercive 'tutelary democracy' headed by the military-bureaucratic oligarchic order. The effects of these exigencies not only stunted the birth of a representative form of governance but also suppressed the evolution of a kind of government that catered to the more specific needs of a citizenry that was still adapting to the mode of being Pakistani, but that had concerns that were still 'local' and not in alignment with a National 'whole'. Thus the State apparatus failed to capture the imagination of the masses, doomed to miscomprehend and miscalculate the nature of its constituency, their difference and their aspirations. While this is a relatively generalized hypothesis, it does give us an idea of the kind of predicament Pakistani political heritage inheres.

An idea of this heritage is also important to an evaluation of the significance of the PNA. The state of affairs as they unfolded over the course of the PPP government's first term in power after the loss of East Pakistan in 1971, must be brought to bear upon the reasons behind the way the movement shaped up. More importantly, the crisis of the Pakistani State in the 1970s was built upon some of the fissures and political tendencies discussed above. This is also tied to the fact that after the loss of East Pakistan the internal dynamics of mundane politics in what remained of Pakistan changed drastically. Quite suddenly the country was thrust into a position where it had to deal with issues of identity, ideology, inter-provincial relations, the role of the State and its institutions and apparatuses, and the question of the very survival of the Nation-State. The conditions under which politics had hitherto played out was different now, and spaces opened up for a new kind of politics to emerge which took into account the myriad realpolitik issues that had either been aggravated or brushed under the rug during the previous autocratic governments. Given the situation, though the PPP held a hegemonic majority at the center,

parties on both the Right and the Left were now able to readjust and re-strategize their lines to take the best advantage of the transformations.

After the end of the 1971 war, Bhutto took over from Yahya Khan as the Chief Martial Law Administrator and instantly began consolidating his powerful position vis-à-vis the Opposition as well as the Army. In fact, even within the PPP, drastic personnel changes were made through which the radical socialist cells within the party, which were mostly the remnants of the student leaders that had ousted Ayub Khan and driven Bhutto to power, were liquidated. With a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, the PPP government pushed through labor, industrial and economic reforms, including plans for wide-spread industrial nationalizations that were unpopular amongst the constituents of the Opposition parties. Moreover, Khan Abdul Wali Khan of the National Awami Party (NAP), a party that had been successful in forming a government in the provinces of Baluchistan and NWFP, was rallying support around the issues concerning the new constitution for Pakistan. While the debates over the constitution heated up, these fissures grew ever more, and political positions became more rigidly defined for the opposition as well as the government. By 1974, even after the matter of the constitution had been settled and the new constitution ratified and adopted, the central government was at definite odds with the provincial governments in Baluchistan and the NWFP. That year, Bhutto dissolved the provincial assemblies in those two provinces and declared martial law in the Baluchistan. This action gave the opposition the first instance to galvanize and form their first, albeit a loose, alliance called the United Democratic Front (UDF) under the leadership of the Pir of Pagaro.

According to his peer and fellow UDF member Sherbaz Khan Mazari, the Pir of Pagaro had a “fondness for activities such as horse racing [that] far outweighed his penchant for politics.

Soon he made it clear that he would be otherwise occupied on Saturdays and Sundays.”<sup>3</sup> This attitude is corroborated by Prof. Ghafoor of the Jamaat-e Islami (JI) and was the primary reason that Retd. Air Marshall Asghar Khan gave for his PTI not joining the coalition. The UDF was a first-of-its-kind effort that was wont to failure simply because the opposition leaders were learning how to function together and coalesce against the PPP government by putting aside their own egos as well as relaxing on the rigidity of their own party ideology.

The Jamaat-e Islami (JI) in the seventies was at the foremost in this effort to bridge the gaps between the various opposition parties. The party had a long (pre-partition) history of electoral failures and had failed to play a decisive and unequivocal role in the ouster of the military governments of Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan. However, in 1972 the party went into a transitional phase, with its founder and long-time president Maulana Maududi finally releasing his hold over the party to let ‘new blood’<sup>4</sup> take over. People like Mian Tufail and Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad emerged as the new leaders of the party, who were more open to new strategies aimed at broadening their mass appeal. Humeira Iqtidar in *Secularizing Islamists* provides detailed insights into the formation of these strategies, formed very much in conversation with the Left, and thus changing the categories ‘religious right’ and ‘secular left’ which are used frequently in contemporary political discourse and scholarly analysis relating to Pakistan. Moreover, ‘Maududi had resolutely refused to engage with socio-economic issues, seeing Western dominance and threat primarily in cultural terms. Even when the vigor of leftist mobilizations during the 1960s forced Maududi to engage with leftist analysis, he remained unwilling to place the economic and political critique over the cultural’.<sup>5</sup> This kind of an innovative politics helped

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<sup>3</sup> Sherbaz Khan Mazari, *A Journey to Disillusionment*, pp.294

<sup>4</sup> Prof Ghafoor Ahmad, *Aur Elections Na Ho Sake*

<sup>5</sup> Humeira Iqtidar, *Secularizing Islamists* (2010)

the JI lead the drive towards the kind of compromises that were necessary for a political platform like the PNA.

However, Retd Air Marshal Asghar Khan and his party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e Istaqlal (PTI), did not join the UDF. The party's politics was constructed around Asghar Khan's personality as he had been able to build some credibility for it during the movement to ouster Ayub Khan's government by being the only military figure to oppose the Field Marshal. His party, however, did not gain even a sliver of the electoral success that the PPP did in the 1970 elections. PTI was aptly described by Aijaz Ahmad as a 'centrist bourgeois liberal party' capturing the imagination of a subset of the educated middle class, but losing out most of its mass support to the PPP and its radical student supporters in the National Students Federation (NSF). Nonetheless, Asghar Khan seems to have held the reputation of being a very direct and honest man within the Opposition parties, and in spite of the relatively weak mass support for the PTI as compared to, say Wali Khan's NAP, he emerged in 1977 as a strong contender for being the PNA's candidate for the Prime Ministership.

Khan Abdul Wali Khan was a part of the triumvirate of popular anti-Ayub Khan leaders along with Bhutto and Asghar Khan, and unlike Asghar Khan his National Awami Party was able to form a government in the Baluchistan and NWFP provinces. The NAP was a political party formed in 1957 through the merger of several leftist and progressive groups by the 'Father of Pakistani Marxism'<sup>6</sup> Maulana Bhashani, in conjunction with other nationalist leaders such as G.M. Syed of Sind, Khan Abdul Ghaffar 'Bacha' Khan, and his son Khan Abdul Wali Khan. Consequently, the leftist cadres in the NAP were extremely strong and active, and on the ground,

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<sup>6</sup> Mullah Bhashani is one of the few figures in the history of the Left in Pakistan who have been unanimously hailed and respected by all of the myriads groups and factions. Though I have yet to see this title for Bhashani being used in written work, many of my sources within the Pakistan Worker's Party and the Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party have related to him in this fashion.

also had many allies amongst the leftists within the PPP. All this changed when Bhutto, was able to slowly but surely able to rid himself of the leftist elements in his party, including founding members and mentors such as J.A. Rahim and Mairaj Mohammad Khan. He thus not only consolidated power in the more traditional channels of governance such as the 'intermediate rural bourgeoisie', but in the process, also burnt all the bridges that existed between the opposition and the ruling party.

After the imposition of martial law in Baluchistan, the UDF and specifically the NAP launched an extensive protest movement that drove the government to ban the NAP. Khan Abdul Wali Khan who, given the amount of press coverage he received despite governmental restrictions, had grown immensely popular through the course of this protest movement, was arrested along with the main leaders from the Baluchistan province, Attaullah Mengal and Khair Baksh Marri. They were arrested in what has since been called the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case, charged with the crime of 'conspiracy to disintegrate Pakistan'.<sup>7</sup>

Even though the apex of the leadership was imprisoned indefinitely, the NAP just like the PPP, had cadres that were deeply entrenched in the local political and social life of its constituent localities and it was able to resurface under the initiative of Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari and Begum Wali Khan (Khan Abdul Wali Khan's wife) as the National Democratic Party (NDP) in November 1975. In this reincarnated form, bereft of Wali Khan's influence, the NDP emerged as a more 'moderate' (read centrist) party, which was more inclined to work with the rest of the Opposition to thwart the government's violent advances in the NWFP and especially in Baluchistan. The nascent NDP was able to attract many of the intellectuals and Leftist activists who had been expunged from the PPP, had been in secret Marxist cells within the National

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<sup>7</sup> Sherbaz Khan Mazari, *A Journey to Disillusionment*, pp. 402

Student's Federation (NSF)<sup>8</sup> or had been previously sympathetic to the beleaguered NAP. One of these was the great 'poet of the masses' Habib Jalib, who would proceed to contest the 1977 elections on the PNA ticket against Bhutto from Larkana, Bhutto's home district! We will look at Habib Jalib's detailed engagement with the PNA at a later point in this study.

For this study, I have examined a variety of sources: both in English and Urdu language, regionally as well as nationally circulated, overwhelmingly partisan as well as relatively neutral publications including newspapers, journals, autobiographies and magazines. Moreover, while these sources provide an overview of the movement on a National level, as discussed in detail throughout the works of Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari, Professor Abdul Ghafoor Khan and Retd Air Marshall Asghar Khan; I have tried to offset and complicate these narratives by juxtaposing them with personal conversations I conducted with some of the journalists, political workers and supporters of the movement. Specifically, I spoke with those who populated the massive PNA rallies in the summer of 1977 and proved to be the real engines for its progress at the Local level.

To be precise, through this study of the PNA I address the issue of regionalism and its effects on politics at a national level. The movement also allows me to look at the problems in representation and how ideological stances merge with material conditions and needs of the constituents to articulate the desire for, what is basically, an equitable form of democracy that is peculiar to Pakistan. The form of such a democratic system of governance can be gauged through the frustrations and desires of the variety of Pakistan's oppressed classes. Moreover, the fissures within the PNA, and their reassessment and analysis will help us formulate a fresh conception of resistance along different matrices of society within the country.

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<sup>8</sup> While a splinter group within the NSF, had initially been supportive of the Bhutto administration, by 1974 none of these factions were aligned with the government even as Mairaj Mohammad Khan and J.A.Rahim were ejected from the PPP.

In Chapter 1, I will sketch the history of the movement as seen through the eyes of these very participants. I present this account of the sequence of events leading up to and immediately following the 1977 elections as a kind of an under-history of the movement through the words, memories and ideas of the men and women who worked for it during that fateful year, supplemented and structured in time through various newspaper accounts of the same. In doing so, this chapter touches upon the difference posed by the interplay between memory and history and also set up a contrast with the sparse scholarship on the movement.

In Chapter 2, I will provide a deep engagement with Aijaz Ahmad's<sup>9</sup> scholarly account of this movement and his analysis of it. I will question some of the ways in which he seeks to construct the distinctions as well as the dismissals of the movement, that inevitably seep into an account that focuses on a monolithic Pakistan, ignoring the significance of the myriad 'incidentals' that constitute it. I also problematize the difference between perceived and memorialized truths, that were set up in the previous chapter, to look at how this dialectic can inform a de-centering of what Pakistan's leading contemporary political analyst and social activist Asim Sajjad Akhtar calls a 'Change Industry'.<sup>10</sup> Change Industry, is the name he attributes to the mass of media, academic and polemical discourses that converge at the head of the Pakistani State as the source of all issues facing the country. I contend that these engagements would influence the concretization of the PNA's politics as something that is conscious of its own lineage and is equipped with the tools that look towards its own transformation as well as that of the political plane at which it has been functioning hitherto.

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<sup>9</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Pakistan*

<sup>10</sup> The News on Sunday, Section: Political Economy, issue date: 26-09-10

In Chapter 3, I will present a very different approach to the movement by looking at the poetry and writings of the popular Urdu poet and political activist Habib Jalib. Habib Jalib was a famous Marxist and revolutionary and was very active as a member of the PNA movement. His views and words set up the possibility to discern on a more abstract level, the main issues that the people who became a part of the PNA, thought were plaguing Pakistani politics and systems of governance from its inception. It offers an alternate way of viewing Pakistan's history through the more affect-laden and incisive thoughts of Habib Jalib and his compatriots.

## Chapter 1

*“[T]he failure of the state becomes a moment to ruminare on the artificiality of this most modern construct, the failure of nationalism, an opportunity to dream of alternative modes of association, and the failure of sovereignty to consider the threats and possibilities of the realm of foreignness within the nation-state itself. Only then do we come to see that to belong to a nation-state is not always premised on a sense of sharing a common origin, language, ethnicity, territory or goal but may entail a shared sense of being alienated from it”<sup>11</sup>*

Naveeda Khan captures the anxieties of Pakistani nationalism in the aftermath of 1971 war when Bengal (East-Pakistan) broke away from Pakistan to declare independence as Bangladesh. The loss of East-Pakistan brought ethnic, linguistic and economic paradoxes within Pakistan's national identity to surface. Where Pakistan was formed as the homeland for the Muslims of South Asia, it is home to diverse communities with differing claims to language, ethnicity, territory and political cultures. The breakup of Pakistan led political scientist like Philip Oldenburg (as well as literary figure like Salman Rushdie) to highlight the deficiencies of Pakistani nationalism by calling it an ‘insufficiently imagined’ nation-state. This study challenges these over-determined renderings of Pakistan's national identity by looking at the rise of a social movement, the Pakistan National Alliance, an unlikely coalition of Left and Right

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11 Naveeda Khan, *Beyond Crisis: Re-evaluating Pakistan*, pp. 1-2

parties who came together to address these very anxieties about national identity by articulating a popular vision of Pakistan.

The Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) was a consortium of nine political parties formed in January 1977, mere days after the announcement of the first general elections to be held by an incumbent civilian government, that of the populist Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party. The Alliance was constitutive of a broad spectrum of parties ranging from the Religious Right to the Communist Left. I argue that the formation of PNA is indicative of a different kind of mass politics that not only incorporates certain contradictions about the meaning of Pakistan but is actually driven by these differences.

I provide, here, a close reading of the contradictory and ambivalent discourses of the PNA, deployed during its massive urban movement built upon the resistance to accept the ostensibly manufactured results of the May 1977 general elections in Pakistan. Moreover, I also engage the sparse literature that analyzes the movement under the prejudices of certain ideological lenses and political interests. The movement itself was short lived, cut short by the imposition of Martial Law by General Zia in July 1977. The dearth of its mention in scholarly work on Pakistan is only interrupted by its characterization and consequent dismissal as simply a precursor to the said coup. I submit that what such an analysis misses are as yet un-recorded and ignored ideas and endeavors of the various people that constituted the mass of movement. That decisively crucial factor, which actually fuelled a mass movement, is lost amidst the plethora of partisan narratives that obviate discourses that sit jarringly across it. Paradoxically, though events in Pakistan's history such as the PNA movement have persevered in the memories of many individuals, collectively they remain stowed away in an oblivion that saps from them every measure of 'potential'. Potential, that is, to be an integral part of Pakistani history that not only

belongs in its recording but has actively shaped it at one of the most delicate junctures in its unfolding. For as far as scholarship on the PNA goes, it seems that the entire movement happened in a time vacuum outside of Pakistani history and thus it does not merit any kind of close attention and investigation.

On the contrary, given the failures of political Islam to garner any semblance of mass support up to and since the movement and also given the shortcomings of the Left in doing much the same, these very memories have become extremely pertinent as voices from the margins. The parties that constituted the PNA possessed no charismatic leader amongst them with the magnetism and pomp that was capable of matching the inimitable Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This ‘problem’ of not being able to unify behind one charismatic personality, was also accentuated by the divergent trajectories that the history and ideology of the individual parties had hitherto taken. With neither a clear ideological and structural framework nor a larger-than-life political personality to anthropomorphize it, the PNA eluded neat categorization unless one decided to completely ignore certain uncomfortable aspects of its constitution that didn’t fit the narrative of Pakistani history one wished to relay.

Thus, the relevant literature seems to suggest that the Alliance was completely absurd, flawed in ways typical to what are generally regarded as norms of politics in Pakistan. It was deemed to be grievously ill prepared in its planning, and fundamentally confused about what it really sought to accomplish. It began as a quick-fire urban movement following the controversy over the results of the 1977 general elections, working in doubt with certain ideas such as that of *Nizam-e Mustafa*<sup>12</sup>, but without unraveling a plan of action for its implementation. My research

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<sup>12</sup> The concept of Nizam-e Mustafa or Tehreek-e Nizam-e Mustafa was the sporadically recurring demand of the Religious parties in Pakistan for the establishment of the Sharia law in

shows that there were instances of great discomfort within the workers of both NDP and PTI regarding the kinds of implications this might have for their own mass base, and yet chose to labor through these differences.

Yusuf Masti Khan, who at the time of this writing is the vice-president of the Worker's Party Pakistan, and was at the time a member of the NDP, in spite of this discomfort with the inclusion of the religious parties' agenda, defends the decision to work within the alliance with the following anecdote:

*“There was this rally once in Karachi, in the Lyari area, which of course was a bastion of the Gabols who were with PPP. And then we would go there to campaign, already kind of fearful... and we had this one person from the Jamaat (JI) who was overly enthusiastic. Prior to this the slogans we had employed were never overtly religious... but this guy, goes up there, it was a kind of a porch of a house, but anyway, he started ranting about the Nizam-e Mustafa and how everything else is kufr and all this talk of socialism by the PPP is actually a farce and the true system is the Islamic Nizam. He went on and on about how these tribal and primitive bonds need to be broken and Islam was the only thing binding us together as Pakistanis. And suddenly,*

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Pakistan. Though the conception and demands changed every time it came to the fore as a political issue, the general outline is presently considered to be the measures imposed by General Zia ul-Haq's 'Islamization' and the imposition of the Hudood Ordinance in the 1980s. However, the idea was differently conceived of in different times and meant a different code for different political parties such as the JUP and JI, who differed in that they claimed their lineage from different schools of South Asian Islamic thought (the Deobandi and Bareilvi divide). During the PNA movement, it became a popular slogan during the days leading up to the elections, especially in the urban centers of Karachi and Rawalpindi, though it was never really explained at any time what was meant by 'the imposition of Nizam-e Mustafa'. It appears to be more or less a rhetorical tool used by the PNA to attract a certain section of the urban bourgeoisie.

*I standing up there on the stage with him, felt really stupid. I mean, this was not what I stood for. For me, a secular democratic Pakistan was of the utmost importance. So when it was my turn to speak, I had to begin by saying that ‘our friend’ here got a bit carried away in his condemnations. But the alliance was important to keep together, even though it was later betrayed by these people, it was important to show solidarity at the time. And we were ready to do that.”<sup>13</sup>*

Before proceeding further, I must also point out that one needs to be very careful when working with broad nebulous categories such as ‘Religious Right’, ‘Political Islam’ or ‘The Left’. In each of the instances they are hitherto evoked in this paper, there exists a distance between what is generally accepted as being constitutive of these categories, and the much more structurally, ideologically and temporally contextualized and restricted sense that I seek to use them with. What I mean by this is that there are these political classification of Right and Left but rise of mass politics that took place in Pakistan in the seventies and its culture which persists even today, was a much more muddled affair, the contradictory nature of which would be evident to anyone paying close attention to the ways in which the anti-Musharraf mobilization took place.

Moreover, apart from the rhetoric, it appears to be the case that what are characterized as the political Right and the Left had much more in common by the fact of their marginalized statuses within mainstream politics.<sup>14</sup> So, as this study proceeds, these categories unravel and get

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<sup>13</sup> Yusuf Masti Khan, in a conversation with the author.

<sup>14</sup> For a more elaborate discussion on this see Humerina Iqtidar’s essay *Learning from the Left, in Pakistan: Beyond Crisis (2010)*

complicated. We must also remain conscious of the obvious fact that what constitutes Leftism or Right-wing politics in the seventies is not the same as what it became in the post-Zia era.

Without delving into the intricacies of those transformations, it suffices to say that one must try and bring all the discursive nuances into the picture when analyzing the dynamics of the PNA movement with retrospective lenses. Thus as this thesis unfolds, so would these broad categories and terms be pulled asunder. I am making a case here for contingency, which is starkly evident in the testimony of people from both ends of the spectrum, such as Yusuf Masti Khan and Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad.

On the other hand, this is also not an explication of how the religious Right ‘rose to power’ in Pakistan because one of the tasks here is to look at the movement after decoupling it from its link to General Zia’s ascendancy. For that has been the treatment meted out to the movement in scholarship, when it is not being ignored as an insignificant byproduct of the 1977 elections or simply shenanigans of the JI. The connections between the PNA and Zia’s ascendancy to power was firstly, not a coherent and calculated project working towards the ouster of Bhutto’s government, and secondly, the Islamization process which forms the only direct link between the two events was, I would argue, neither integral to the PNA campaign nor immediately central to Zia’s coup. The subversion of the movement, inasmuch as it was important to the creation of the objective conditions for the coup took place in the realm of what Aijaz Ahmad would call the ‘ideological domain’. Processes and strategies for combating the PPP within this domain, however, were simply beyond the PNA precisely because of its amalgam nature.

At the juncture in history we are concerned with here we find the political actors on both sides, utilizing the ambiguity within the Pakistani identity as an instrument for creating spaces

were the contested nature of it contributed to form alliances across ideological and class barriers. This idea in Humeira Iqtedar's essay *Learning from the Left*, where she argues that the only way for the JI to make inroads in the working classes and the peasantry was to borrow strategies and language from the Marxists. In the case of the PNA, they accomplished this on a larger national level, for the express purposes of running for the 1977 elections, by allying themselves with the leftist parties.

Strategically though, the identity contradictions that the PNA constructed was two-fold: the first emanating from the religious parties was that of the supremacy of the *Nizam-e Mustafa*, that Pakistan in spite of Jinnah's vision of a secular state, could not escape from the fact that it was created for the Muslims, and that the constitution demanded a 'Muslim' head of the state. Bhutto, they argued in their rhetoric, without explicitly saying so, did not meet this criterion. Secondly from the opposite point of view, the leftists within the PNA argued that Bhutto's so-called 'Islamic Socialism' was convoluted and impracticable to the extent that it ended up being neither. They repeatedly maintained in their speeches, that true social equality and justice, and neither Islamic nor secular democratic values were never the principles Bhutto's government ever employed. This dual lines of argument were integral to the PNA appeal simply because in Pakistan, the 'Religious' Right has never attracted mass support at the ballot boxes but has, by circumstance and opportunism, always ended up being an appendage to the Pakistan military's proto-fascism, evident from their leading roles in Zia's and Musharraf's governments.<sup>15</sup> Thus in Pakistan, organized Right-wing political parties such as the JI, JUI and JUP failed to actually 'rise' to power by the ballot box. Even less can be said about the electoral trysts of the Left.

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<sup>15</sup> Insert stats here for MMA, JI win %

On the other hand, it is a fact that failure has also befallen the model of the secular liberal democratic state that has been imagined for Pakistan, usually in the name of its founders. Aijaz Ahmad argues in his essay *Democracy and Dictatorship in Pakistan*, that the main reason for Bhutto's downfall was precisely the fact that he did not restructure and reorient the role of the State and its institutions after 1971 when the time was ripe for such a radical transformation to take place. Failure to do this, it would appear, resulted in the persistence of the oscillations between that civilian state which has yet to culminate in any real sense, and its antithesis: military dictatorship. This emerges, then, as the curse of a country that has failed to, not imagine but market and sell, an ideological and structural apparatus outside of this binary. Getting caught up in this binary has led to very peculiar spells of democratic governance as well military rule that are constrained by this tension and have led to lack of clearly defined structural and ideological apparatus of the state. Democracy in such a state of affairs is practiced within these limitations. In that sense, as it is evident in their persistent engagement with the Baluchistan issue, that the PNA was working on a different schematic for attaining power, because it not only operated outside this prevalent logic of the State, but was also able to accommodate political perspectives as well as real mass movements that were local and isolated from each other across Pakistan.

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As mentioned above, Bhutto announced the dissolution of the assemblies by the end of the week of January the 7<sup>th</sup> and the alliance formally came into existence on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January

1977. The ‘plough’ was to be their election symbol. In reality, the plan for a formalization of the effective alliance between the JUP and the centrist PTI, along with other major parties in the Opposition had been in the works for quite a while hence. Sherbaz Khan Mazari was then the president of the NDP which was effectively just a re-structured NAP formed after the latter got banned and its leadership, including Wali Khan, Mengal and Marri, all implicated in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case, were put behind bars.

Some three days later there was a meeting of the representatives from each party, where structural and logistical issues were discussed. A key decision made on the insistence of the NDP leadership was that the elections in Baluchistan would be boycotted because the Baluch leadership within the opposition had not yet been released, and so it came to be that even before general elections were underway and the PPP won a majority of seats in Baluchistan virtually uncontested. However, even though talks amongst the party heads preceded the formal formation of the alliance, a decision on the allocation of parliamentary and provincial seats could still not be reached. However, a seven member committee was elected under the chairmanship of Rafiq Bajwa JUP to forge an organizational structure and draw up a party manifesto. The election campaign was to begin, sans party head, manifesto, or structure, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January at Nishtar Park, Karachi. Rafiq Bajwa recounts the meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> in great and colorful detail in conversations, which we shall engage in the next chapter.

One of the sources associated then with the JI, in a conversation with the author, recalled the Nishtar Park rally as a kind of a watershed moment for a certain subset of Karachi’s population at the time:

*“We headed out from Malir, barely a group of ten or eleven boys. All had sympathies the Jamaat (JI). At first we didn’t quite know what to do or expect, because the terror of Bhutto’s backlash was such, that it was difficult for anyone to begin something. Then one of us, getting more excited as we walked on with flags in our hands shouted ‘Bhutto the dog, woe! Woe!’ and we were all taken aback. Someone said this is not our way. But then another one of us said that this is the only way the terror in the people’s hearts could be gotten rid of. To be in the street, and voice it out. And so we did go on shouting that over and over again. And I think that is how people got intrigued and interested in us. They must have said, who are these people who, after such a long time, have mustered the courage to speak out against Bhutto”<sup>16</sup>*

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On March 7<sup>th</sup> 1977, according to the official records, about 80% of Pakistan’s population came out to vote in their candidates of choice into power. It became apparent, as the results poured, by the following day, that the ‘multitudes’ that had show up at the PNA rally over the course of the past two months, had instead, quite amazing decided to return PPP candidates to power in 155 of the total 196 seats, across the country. Only 36 of those seats had come PNA’s way, with many of their ‘sure winners’ had lost seats from their ‘home turf’. On 8<sup>th</sup> March the PNA leadership gathered at an emergency meeting in Lahore and unanimously decided that all successful PNA candidates would resign from their seats, and a call would be made to the public for the boycott of the provincial elections two days later. Kausar Niazi, then a cabinet minister in Bhutto’s government writes:

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<sup>16</sup> Editor of *Jassarat* Newspaper and JI supporter, Mr. Yahiya Zakaria. This is a translation from a conversation in Urdu with the author.

*“The PNA’s mass popularity was proved on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March when the Provincial Assembly elections were scheduled and the polling booths lay deserted. That day it was only the People’s Party candidates who were in the field. Complete boycott of the Provincial Assembly polls gave me clear indication that the anti-government campaign launched by the PNA...would prove very effective”*<sup>17</sup>

A nationwide strike was called by the PNA, and the response in urban centers across Pakistan was met with force by the police imposing the dreaded Section 144 and employing *lathi* (cane) charge and tear gas coupled with mass arrests and curfews. A current member of the Karachi *shura* (council) of the JI, who was then just a young boy, provides a ‘from the bleachers’ account of the protest march from the Empress Market area in Karachi, scheduled to reach Jinnah’s mausoleum:

*“We had Professor Ghafoor sahib with us there; we had been waiting for them since early morning. Thousands of us. And then near the Bohri Bazaar area, the police and rangers who had been with us since we had started out decided that this procession could not be let to reach the Quaid’s mausoleum so they began the lathi charge. They didn’t even spare the leaders. Ghafoor sahib, Sherbaz Khan, both were leading the march and they also got beat up, and then shelled with tear gas. That made us mad and we started fighting the authorities, matching them*

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17 Kausar Niazi as quoted in *A Journey to Disillusionment* by Sherbaz Mazari, pp.445

*blow for blow. Ghafoor sahib and Shah Faridul Haq were suffocating so they were taken to one of our brothers' house to recover. In those days, all of Karachi was ours. Remember, I lived in Malir, but it didn't matter because every house was like our own house. When the police became too brutal, people, complete strangers, would invite us into their own houses to hide in.*"<sup>18</sup>

On March the 18<sup>th</sup> most of the PNA leadership was arrested, apart from Mufti Mahmood, who would then become the 'negotiator' for the PNA. In response to this, riots broke out in all of the major urban centers, which hastened the need for dialog. 'The worst occurrence' according to Sherbaz Khan Mazari's memoirs, 'took place on 9 April at Lahore' where demonstrators decided to converge at the provincial assembly building where 'elected' PPP members were to take oath. Reportedly, along with the conventional police the authorities employed 'the *Nath* force' (which he describes as 'prostitutes from *Heera Mandi* conscripted to deal with the female demonstrators'), and in the ensuing rampage over thirty protestors were killed, and hundreds injured. Mazari notes that 'it is generally believed that it was this incident that proved to be the turning point of the whole campaign against Bhutto.

It is interesting though that Mazari made no mention of it, but for one JI supporter that I spoke to, the poignancy of the event was also due to the fact that Maulana Maududi's own wife was one of the people leading the protest:

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18 Osama Razii, current member of the Sindh shura of the JI in conversation with author

*“It had a huge impact. Maududi sahab’s own wife led a procession from Anarkali and the police fired on them. There was a huge uproar, and this was the beginning of a serious upheaval within Lahore. Karachi had been the home ground for the movement all along, with sizable pockets of resistance in Peshawar, Abbotabad, Sukkur, and Jacobabad. But never before this in Lahore. We were all enraged, for they had disrespected Maududi sahab’s wife. That is where, for me, the turning point was. And then it was only a matter of time before Bhutto had to recognize his gravest mistake, and sit down at a table and talk to the leaders now as a force to be reckoned with.”<sup>19</sup>*

Three of the Brigadiers involved in the incident were asked to tender resignations. The movement which began as a protest against the rigged elections was gaining momentum as the new slogan calling for the establishment of the *Nizam-e Mustafa* grew ever stronger in Karachi, which is not the way most of the folks in the NDP choose to remember it. By the 17<sup>th</sup> of December, Bhutto was forced to respond to the opposition rhetoric by combating the very points associated with the *Nizam-e Mustafa*, with a blanket ban on alcohol consumption and sale, gambling, horse-racing, night clubs and bars, and the official holiday was changed from Sunday to Friday. Sherbaz Mazari says:

*“He hoped that by this action he would regain lost ground among the masses. It was not to be. The real issue behind the protests was the call for fresh and fair elections. Not surprisingly the public agitation continued without abating. Sensing failure, three days later, Bhutto is reported to have complained to a general that he had taken these religious measures solely on*

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19 Yahiya Zakaria, in conversation with author

*General Zia's advice. According to Bhutto, Zia had assured him that once these measures were introduced the agitation would fade away.”*<sup>20</sup>

In the meanwhile, as the agitation raged on, which in Karachi became exceedingly violent, Martial Law was declared in the city on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, to which the PNA responded with a *payya jam* (vehicular) strike. The culture of ‘corner meetings’ became prevalent in neighborhoods sympathetic to the opposition. At these corner meetings, despite the Martial Law edicts and the imposition of Section 144, people of a certain *mohalla* would gather to discuss the plan of action in the days to come. Local leaders would make roaring speeches while everyone would listen to the BBC radio news broadcasts collectively and discuss them. One participant recalls:

*“For us, because we were young and excitable then, it was almost adventurous, those corner meetings. And young as we were, we could discern from those BBC broadcasts, you know, the way the undertones of their broadcasts changed, first highly, almost theatrically critical of the opposition, then becoming more and more balanced, and finally bowing to the popularity of the unrest, critical of the government and Bhutto. It was clear that we were having an effect.”*<sup>21</sup>

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20 *A Journey to Disillusionment* by Sherbaz Mazari, pp.445

21 Yahiya Zakaria, in conversation with author

It becomes clear that around this time, either due to the fact that many of them were imprisoned or maybe even from the surprise of an overwhelmingly good response to their calls for agitation, the PNA leadership was not *directly* involved in the day to day planning and execution of protests and rallies, even in their home districts. The agitation was mostly organized by sympathetic community members local to certain areas under the direction of some low level JI and NDP party workers. The leadership instead, was intent on utilizing this momentum, while it lasted, to pressurize Bhutto into holding fresh elections. On May 5<sup>th</sup> PNA issued a 33-point memo of demands through its acting president, the Pir Pagaro who had managed to remain outside the jail. Even at this point, the list seemed somewhat confused. Many of the demands pertained to the imposition of some unclear conception of the Nizam-e Mustafa even though Bhutto had enforced most of these demands even before the 33 points were published. However, the call for fresh and fair elections remained the foremost demand. The document was also peppered up with demands such as the immediate withdrawals of troops from Baluchistan and the 'immediate restoration of the rights of the workers'.<sup>22</sup> This demand sat absurdly juxtaposed to the points regarding the establishment of a more Islamic system of governance, simply because not since Mullah Bhashani<sup>23</sup> had there been any rapprochement between Islam and the Leftist ideals on a political level. This, much like the manifesto was not, by far, a coherent document.

In fact, when Mazari writes about this period, when the PNA leadership was detained at Sihala, and negotiations with Bhutto were underway, now with the mediation of the Saudi ambassador, he also notes:

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<sup>22</sup> Dawn Newspaper, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1977

<sup>23</sup> Mulla Bhashani ke bare main batao

*“Living in proximity to some of our religious party leaders, it was hard not to become aware of the schisms that divide them. On the very first evening Mufti Mahmood got up to lead the maghrib prayers. In customary Islamic fashion the rest of us lined up behind him, but not Maulana Noorani. Announcing that he refused to pray behind a Deobandi, he walked away to pray elsewhere. Only his close political ally, Asghar Khan, opted to follow the Barelvi Maulana. It was disheartening that even in crisis we clung to such narrow-minded practices. The fact that the PNA unity held up for such a long period was indeed remarkable.”<sup>24</sup>*

However, on the more local level there was a more co-operative frame of mind, the reservations regarding the talking points notwithstanding Yusuf Masti Khan elaborates on the anecdote quoted earlier in this chapter, saying:

*“You have to understand that it was an experiment. A few of our friends in the NSF were not happy, and it led to a fracture within the organization between groups sympathetic to the NDP’s cause, and those that weren’t. However, this was the new strategy for the Left, it was directly from the publications of the International in ’69 or was it ’70... we had to make a strategic alliance to bring down a repressive order, which was all the more dangerous because of it claims to socialism and leftism. It was important to expose it for what it really was. You know what role Bhutto had in ’71, but he had the power of the street, the students, with him. That was not the case in ’77. Allied with the feudal elements, and eradicating all the honest, democratic representatives, he initiated the military operation in Baluchistan that is on even today. So those who parted ways with the NDP didn’t realize the importance of remaining within*

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24 *A Journey to Disillusionment* by Sherbaz Mazari, pp.445

*the party, and to challenge the nationalists in the party from within, which would have been more effective. The arrested leaders (of the former NAP) in the end were for a democratic, secular Pakistan. That is what I worked for then, that is what I stand for now.*"<sup>25</sup>

It is rather interesting how much Yusuf Masti Khan's analysis of the political situation follows that of Aijaz Ahmad's (discussed at length in the following chapter) and yet both of them advocated diametrically opposite plans of action.

By June 15<sup>th</sup>, after much hankering, an accord had been agreed upon between the two parties with the following terms:

- Fresh elections in the near (indeterminate) future.
- Withdrawal of the army from Baluchistan.
- Closure of all special tribunals (esp. the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case)
- Release of all political prisoners.
- All constitutional amendments in contradictory to basic human rights rendered null and void.
- All Press censorship to be stopped
- Equal airtime to be allotted to both sides on the National Television and Radio.
- The state of emergency to be lifted.

However, there was procrastination on the part of the government to provide some kind of a constitutional protection to the agreement, and once more there was a stalemate. Recalling that final week of June, the General Arif writes:

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25 In conversation with the author

*“...Zia expressed his apprehensions [to Bhutto] that, if the agitation did not end, it could erode the army’s discipline and cause divisions in the ranks. This would be disastrous for the army and for the country. Mr. Bhutto sensed the mood. Employing his charm, he said, ‘you are my brother and I trust you.’ He went on to confide that he had taken ‘other measures’ to deal with the PNA agitation. That statement rang alarm bells in General Zia’s mind.”<sup>26</sup>*

Over the next few days, talks once more broke down, this time, quite ambiguously and equally suspiciously from both sides of the détente, with Asghar Khan on the PNA side and Hafeez Peerzada on the government’s, becoming increasingly bellicose over the negotiations. This setback has been generally regarded as a sign of the opposition’s complicity with the factions in the Army that wanted to take over the government. However, accounts of the talks suggest that the breakdown of negotiations was caused from both sides of the negotiating table. In the aftermath, Asghar Khan called for a re-intensification of the agitations, with Mazari and Noorani in complete agreement. Both sides however, were out of time. On July 5<sup>th</sup> at 2 A.M Operation Fair Play was executed, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was arrested, General Zia assumed Presidency and Pakistan was once again under army rule.

After the imposition of Martial Law, the movement naturally petered out, because the object of its critique, which was wholly and completely Bhutto and his government, was no more

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<sup>26</sup> A Journey to Disillusionment by Sherbaz Mazari, pp.445

in power. With the course of the movement thus set up through these alternative but involved voices, the next two chapters will expand upon some of the lines of thought suggested herein.

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*“ Look, there was never any conspiracy from us. We were then as pure of heart as we’ve always been. These are just the things people who are opposed to the setting up of a just order in our country have always said about us, because we had a plan of action. The conspiracy in turn was against us as it always has been.*

*What was the plan? Well it could be summed up as the Nizam-e Mustafa, but it is more than that. But it was bigger than that. At the time, we were looking for a revolution. You know the Socialists amongst us kept talking about a revolution, but it was us that had the formula for it. We wanted, and I believe that if the correct choices were made at the right times and instead of confusion, our leaders had shown a little bit of foresight, the people would have changed the system completely. I still remember the movement of the PNA like that, a missed chance for a long overdue revolution. But I believe that the time will come again. We are again surrounded by the same problems. We still have the same solutions because they are in accordance with the times. And they have been so for ever. ”<sup>27</sup>*

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<sup>27</sup> Private conversation with JI activist

## Chapter 2

The then vice-president of the Jamiat-e Ulema-e Pakistan (JUP) Barrister Rafiq Bajwa in an interview<sup>28</sup> recalls that meeting on the eleventh of January 1977 which saw the birth of PNA. As he remembers it, the meeting was initially not going well, with severe reservations amongst the attendant party representatives about the nature of the alliance impeding the progress. He recalls that it was Asghar Khan's idea that the parties which were already a part of the failed UDF alliance should proffer forty percent of the PNA seats to the Jamiat Ulema Pakistan (JUP) and his own Pakistan Tehreek-e Istaqlal (PTI). These two parties, according to Asghar Khan, would be the spearhead of the opposition's challenge to the PPP in the upcoming elections. No one was ready to grant him this concession.

Bajwa says that this led to heated discussions amongst the politicians and some of them were about to leave, whereupon Abdus Sattar Niazi went into a frenzy. He procured a hefty stick and said that if the common people can give up their lives in the struggle against Bhutto's oppression then here too can blood be spilled. Niazi said "I shall not let anyone step out of this house until all the leaders of the opposition decide upon the creation of a united electoral alliance." Soon enough, concessions were made, interim compromises reached, and the alliance, PNA, was formed. Thus goes the apocryphal story of the birth of the PNA.

Bajwa, one of the people most instrumental in the forging of the alliance was later expelled from it because he had later met Bhutto without sanction from the party leadership. In the same interview Bajwa defends himself, by saying that he did not voluntarily meet the Prime

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<sup>28</sup> Munir Ahmad, *Pakistan Ke Siyasi Ittehad*, pp.76 (This source is in Urdu, and all the translations are my own)

Minister, but was forcibly taken there ‘probably by the FSF’. What else could he have done when his ‘own comrades had acquiesced to [his] murder?’ Once there, he recalls that Bhutto was ‘extremely angry at me’. He says:

*“Remember it was I who, having surveyed the situation, had written the party manifesto which was presented to the people in a rally at Nasir Bagh and which especially mentioned the imposition of the Nizam-e Mustafa. My slogan for the imposition of the Nizam-e Mustafa, within a few days became extremely popular and it was thus that I inflicted an intellectual defeat on Bhutto.”*<sup>29</sup>

This defeat was, according to Bajwa, taken characteristically personally by the premier and he questioned Bajwa at this meeting as to why the latter had taken it upon his self to destroy him. In the ensuing discussion between the two, which Bajwa claims to have remembered ‘word to word, to this day’ Bajwa seems to have impressed upon Bhutto the veracity of his conception of the Nizam-e Mustafa as being the only correct way forward for Pakistan. I reproduce here a part of the conversation between the two as reported by Bajwa. While the content of the narrative is unverifiable, it does indicate the position from which Bajwa hailed. This position was very different from that of the Marxist activist and popular revolutionary Urdu poet Habib Jalib would offer up as the reasons and tenor of the movement. However, it represents one of the many discourses that the PNA, as a platform, was able to project. The narrative also indicates some of the pitfalls of the PNA’s discourses which Jalib critiques while still being a member of the party

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 77-80

and which we shall visit in the next chapter. One of these pitfalls is the idea of the personality cult, and obsession with Bhutto the man rather than the institution he represents. This is evident from the beginning of the exchange between Bajwa and Bhutto:

*“ Bhutto: Bajwa, what have I ever done to you? Why have you become my biggest enemy? Why are you bent on destroying me? Tell me!*

*Bajwa: Bhutto sahib, I assure you I am not your enemy...*

*Bhutto: Have you no idea of what you've done to me?*

*Bajwa: Sir, please listen...*

*Bhutto: (in extreme anger) Bajwa you have done excesses against me. You've become my biggest enemy.*

*(According to Rafiq Bajwa, Bhutto was really angry with him and for the next half hour he kept ranting, then...)*

*Bhutto: Tell me now, on whose orders are you doing all this?*

*Bajwa: If you only give me a chance to speak, I can explain everything. Sir, I am not your enemy. Its true, I have never been your enemy. My only crime is that I speak of the rights of the people, which I'll continue doing even if you don't approve of it.*

*Bhutto: I have gone through your articles and have heard recordings of your speeches. You have personally opposed me beyond the limits but you know why I haven't done anything to you yet? You have been allowed to live up until now because a man of intellect never destroys another*

*man of intellect. Use your virtues in a different way. Believe me, had I wanted to I'd have indicted you in cases or in the manner after your own people, gotten you killed. But I do not want to create such political legacies. You are dear to me. Oppose me, but only under limits.*

*Bajwa: It is my right to politically oppose you and I shall continue doing that. I know that you want to subvert the leadership of the National Alliance [PNA] but the people want change. You relinquish power and I'll stop opposing you.*

*Bhutto: (angrily puffing a cigar) Do you want the people to think me an imposter? I have, all my life, spoken of democracy and socialism. Should I now forget it all and speak of the Nizam-e Mustafa and become an imposter?*

*Bajwa: You are already an imposter.*

*Bhutto: What do you mean?*

*Bajwa: Tell me something. Do you think that the Prophet was an extremely astute politician?*

*Bhutto: Definitely.*

*Bajwa: If you really believe in the Prophet and his political abilities then why don't you express it? Why have you taken up this false cause of socialism?*

*(According to Bajwa, Bhutto became quiet and introspective at this point. Bajwa continued...)*

*Bhutto sahib, consider what I'm saying. Speak of the Nizam-e Mustafa and I'll never oppose you.*<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. pp. 77-80

Bajwa continues in the interview to say that it was this conversation that changed Bhutto's heart and made him more favorably disposed towards the PPP leader. Bajwa reports that he had convinced Bhutto of the error of his ways and a few days after this conversation, Bhutto wrote to the PNA's head Mufti Mahmood and requested the JI members to create a draft proposal for what Nizam-e Mustafa would entail and how would its implementation come about. *'But Mufti Mahmood rejected this olive branch, and said that the Nizam-e Mustafa was a secondary issue, he should first speak about fresh and fair elections.'*<sup>31</sup>

To Bajwa, this was sabotage. For him personally the implementation of the Nizam was tantamount to what the PNA was all about. This vision was *not* shared by the rest of the PNA. It was rejected and Bajwa expelled from the party for speaking to Bhutto. So, when we discuss the analyses proffered by scholars of how the PNA was simply a Right-wing co-conspirator with the pro-Islamist army generals in the usurpation of power from the civilian government, such anecdotes punch holes in those neat theories. Mufti Mahmood of the JUI, for instance, was the Chief Minister of the NWFP under the NAP-JUI coalition government of that province. He is, to date the only Chief Minister in Pakistani history to have resigned his office in protest against the insult to the democratic process which the dismissal of the NAP led Baluchistan government in February 1973 entailed.

For these programmatic and neat theorizations do not incorporate a nuanced analysis of this political movement which encapsulated the ambiguity and myriad possibilities of a host of 'localized' motivations and political trajectories moving towards a certain direction, which for Bajwa came to be the 'Nizam-e Mustafa'. Historians and commentators, however have cited the movement retrospectively in the light of a foregone conclusion, the culmination of Pakistan's

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. pp. 79

‘dark ages’ – the Zia era. Naveeda Khan, as quoted in the introduction, highlights the major themes of discourses that govern evaluations and ‘diagnoses’ of Pakistan and Pakistani-ness as being the ideas of the failed state, failed nationalism and failed sovereignty.<sup>32</sup> Within these discourses are deployed the usual symptoms that signify the malady of choice; corruption, elitism, effects of capital, laboratories of modernity and insufficiently imagined nation-states, amongst others. Aijaz Ahmad’s engagement with the Opposition politics in the Pakistan of the late seventies employs these very themes.

He begins the essay by recalling his own predictions, in the March of 1977, of a ‘Right-wing’ coup d’état in Pakistan. This analysis was prompted at the time by the amount of fervor amongst the urban masses the movement of the PNA was gaining and Bhutto’s pre-election concessions to the proponents of the Nizam-e Mustafa movement. His prediction was:

*“...Despite Mr. Bhutto’s juggling with the command structure and his many rewards to the Army and Police, there will still be a coup... this regime... [In] the name of an Islamic way of life, will impose a medieval labor code in the factories; will weed out all the remnants of intellectual life in the universities; and will seek to reverse all the marginal gains the peasantry has made during the struggles of the past five years... and terror under such a regime, if it comes about, is likely to reach a scale heretofore unknown and unimagined in our body politic.”<sup>33</sup>*

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<sup>32</sup> Naveeda, 3

<sup>33</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Pakistan*, (1978) pp.1

In fact, he views the post-election outcry generated by the PNA as being a ‘de-stabilizing campaign’ from which ‘one got the impression that ground was being prepared for a takeover by the ultra-Right, with the much-publicized ‘democratic movement’ that the PNA’s leadership was calling its movement fitting into the scheme of things rather like the famous ‘strikes’ of truck owners, housewives and some other elements of the middle strata in Allende’s Chile.’<sup>34</sup>

In the classical Marxian tradition that Aijaz Ahmad followed, he puts the onus of his analysis of the movement as being characteristically ‘ultra-Right’ in nature, and always viewed in continuation to its culmination, the coup that brought about Zia’s rule. Such an analysis, as will be made obvious is in contradiction with itself as much as it is belied by the sentiments expressed by the very people who formed the mass of the movement, mentioned in the preceding chapters. By Aijaz Ahmad’s reckoning though, it was a ‘classic of pre-Fascist upheavals’, whereby the ‘social base of the movement was comprised of the most retrograde sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the city *lumpen* proletariat, while it was backed by a cluster of trade unions nurtured over the years by the American Institute of Labor and its affiliates.’<sup>35</sup> These various forces were activated by a confluence of foreign and domestic interests under threat by the nature of Bhutto’s base and certain policies the government had imposed regarding foreign policy as well as the agrarian and industrial reforms.

Aijaz Ahmad’s analysis, however, must also be put in the context of the debates that were prevalent in the progressive circles at the time. On the one hand, he was arguing against those that were opposed to a development of a critique of Bhutto’s policies because his ‘name and cause’ provided the best course of opposition to the repressive apparatuses deployed by the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

ultra-Right wing military dictatorship of Zia-ul-Haq. For according to Aijaz Ahmad the fact that ‘the repressive apparatuses of the state had so blatantly assumed the tasks of its political apparatus’ indicates a gross failure on the part of Bhutto’s reformist model of governance.

On the other hand, Ahmad also sought middle ground between this uncritically pro-Bhutto position and that of those who saw Bhutto as a proto-fascist and worthy of condemnation as an enemy of the working classes. ‘These comrades’ he asserts ‘imply a degree of support for the [military] junta which is supposed to have destroyed [Bhutto’s] fascism’.<sup>36</sup> This contingent of ‘comrades’ was, of course, comprised overwhelmingly of the progressive elements that were a part of the NDP and affiliated with the PNA. While Aijaz Ahmad concedes that the apparatuses which carried out the coup were allowed to proliferate and organize during Bhutto’s stint in power, he argues that hailing the perpetrators of the military coup as saviors of the country’ is also a flawed position to take. To recognize the coup as an act of benevolence disregards a close examination of the material conditions which arose through ‘the crises of the economic base, the dominant ideology, the institutions and even the legitimacy of the existing state.’<sup>37</sup>

So Aijaz Ahmad’s main argument in the paper is set up as a critique of Bhutto’s policies, characterized as ‘reformist’ in nature, and his failure to curb the onslaught of ‘Islamic-fascist’ interests that were always inscribed into the agenda of the PNA movement. The movement was thus seen only as a deliberate pre-cursor to and catalyst for the coup of the right-wing military dictatorship to follow, which was also aligned with Imperialist foreign interests.

In fact, Bhutto’s idea of Pakistan as an ‘Islamic social democracy’ comes under direct criticism for the way events consequently unfolded. According to Aijaz Ahmad, the PPP came

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid pp. 3

<sup>37</sup> Ibid pp. 4

into power riding on the efforts of a burgeoning progressive leftist movement that was able to oust Ayub Khan and Yahyah Khan from power. However, once in power, Bhutto had to get rid of the radical elements that formed the backbone of the PPP in order to establish ties with the more traditional channels of maintaining power – the feudal lords. He writes:

*“PPP had to be an apparatus predominantly of the radical petty bourgeoisie in the pre-election [1971] phase when the main objective was to secure a mass base and an electoral majority, particularly in the countryside. Once, however, the PPP had formed a government on the social democratic premise of seeking reforms within the predicates of the state as already constituted... its Left Wing was faced with the objective choice of either accepting the exigencies of the State or getting liquidated. In the event, the Left was of course liquidated.”*<sup>38</sup>

The question then arises, what were the exigencies of the state? Apart from the fact of the economic limitations of a country so recently torn into two parts, Aijaz Ahmad also identifies the ‘crisis of the dominant ideology’ as being one of the foremost reasons for this, because after 1971 Pakistan had lost its *raison d’être* – it could no longer claim to be a homeland for the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent. At this juncture ‘the PPP was a new and raw political formation’ which was ‘a conglomerate of disparate political tendencies’ held together ‘from the outset [by] the charismatic personality and articulations of Bhutto himself’.<sup>39</sup>

In the event, Bhutto took a series of steps that were detrimental and counter-intuitive to his conceptualization of a social-democratic Pakistan. Apart from the fact that he made ‘an extensive compromise with imperialism’ by agreeing to implement IMF policies which involved devaluation of the currency, and suppression of the working classes; he also began consolidating

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. pp. 5

<sup>39</sup> Ibid pp.7

power by making structural changes in the bureaucracy and the economy. More importantly though, in order to sustain these changes he built up a juggernaut of a repressive apparatus which comprised extensively of the ultra-Right thus thinking that he could pacify the right wing while building his own repressive potential. This was exemplified in the appointment of General Zia to the army chief's position ahead of many other senior generals.

Moreover, after dismissing the NAP/JUI governments in the provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan, Bhutto had not only banned the NAP but also imprisoned its leadership, including the popular Khan Abdul Wali Khan. In Baluchistan, Bhutto had deployed the disgraced Pakistani army to quell the agitations this move ensued. 'Approximately a hundred thousand troops were deployed there at any time' between 1973 and 1976 'so that the majority of the Pakistan Army had gained the Baluchistan experience, so as to apply it elsewhere in the country if and when the opportunity arose. Exigencies of this type led to a quasi-Bonapartism whereby the growing autonomy of the state from all spheres of "civil society" was systematically reinforced by restricted parameters of action for all social groups and classes.'<sup>40</sup>

Through these actions, 'the PPP bequeathed to the working class a list of martyrs which is indeed painfully long.'<sup>41</sup> However this according to Aijaz Ahmad did not paint Bhutto fascist as was the assertion of the PNA, especially its leftist elements. In fact, Bhutto's reformism 'constituted a definite advance in a country which was born in religious bigotry, was dominated by semi-feudal social structures, was fed for two decades a very Dulles-style anti-communism,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid pp.9

<sup>41</sup> Ibid pp. 10

was ruled by the Armed Forces for thirteen years, and which therefore lacked any widespread culture of secular, democratic, progressive ideas.’<sup>42</sup>

The ultra-right wing contingent of the landed class was already alienated from the PPP, despite later concessions, because the imposition of measures such as the agricultural income tax, reduction of the land ceiling, and reform of subsidies on agricultural produce were detrimental to their interests even as the de facto imposition of these measures were still wanting. These were the elements that became a huge part of the ‘destabilizing campaign’ of 1977, championed by the PNA opposition.<sup>43</sup> In fact, this was the only power bloc, considerable as its power was, that could challenge PPP’s hegemony in the elections of March 1977. Even in that case, Bhutto could have easily maintained his supremacy in the parliaments had he not been in pursuit of ’71-like electoral hegemony and gotten down to the outlandish manipulations at the polls.

The fact that Bhutto, almost blindly tumbling to his fate, actually went ahead with the said rigging of the elections was according to Aijaz Ahmad a variable already accounted for in the ultra-Right’s plans. He writes:

*“The destabilizing campaign which was launched two days after the elections displayed from the outset such resourcefulness, such a sense of timing, such perfection in the execution of each step, that no one could possibly believe it was not carefully planned in advance, with startling expertise. Moreover, the campaign clearly had the blessings of the armed forces,*

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid pp. 11

<sup>43</sup> Ibid pp. 14

*funding from the urban and rural bourgeoisies and a substantial ideological base amongst the petty bourgeoisie and the lumpen population...[The] ultra-Right was able to make significant inroads amongst these strata thus preparing the social base for the destabilizing campaign by isolating Bhutto as the (socialist) man chiefly responsible for the crisis.”*<sup>44</sup>

In sum, Aijaz Ahmad's main contentions rest on two political facts. First, that Bhutto's reformist agenda gave way to a demagogical, self-centered political and repressive apparatus that collapsed on its own head while also aggravating the nature of the economic crisis for the urban bourgeoisie. Second, that a highly organized conglomeration of Right-wing political parties (namely, the PNA) was working towards the collapse of the PPP government. This band of conspirators, so to speak, was led by ideologues compromised by Western Imperialism and Arab money. They were working with the full support of the armed forces of Pakistan that had been ideologically penetrated by the JI and its various 'clandestine cells' that were allowed to proliferate their version of Islam and Islamic systems of governance. I contend that the paradox in the argument thus proffered by Ahmad, is transparently obvious even without having to reference the overwhelmingly contradictory accounts of the PNA movement as delineated in the preceding chapters.

Leaving aside the implications of a grand conspiracy in which American imperialism and fascist Arab countries were in cahoots with a rather powerless JI; or the fact that these forces were in turn influencing the army which Bhutto had himself resuscitated from its utter humiliation and demoralization in East Pakistan. Aijaz Ahmad, in his analysis, almost completely circumvents the role of the Left in the so-called 'destabilization movement' that the PNA launched. It is in fact apparent from the positions taken by the communist cells within the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid pp. 14,21-31

NDP on the ground, as well as the ‘on the fence’ position taken by Leftist publications such as the publication *Fatah* in print that the Left was more than just ambivalent about supporting an end to the Bhutto regime. Elements within it were actively engaged in the agitation, and were instrumental in mobilizing protests not just in the provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan but also amongst the working class populations of major urban centers such as Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad.

The facts appear to be contrary to Aijaz Ahmad’s assertions of the ideological hegemony of the JI over the rhetoric of the PNA. He seems to be alluding to the dominance of the *Nizam-e Mustafa* slogan which was extremely popular in the months leading up to the elections March 1977, but not really that prominent in the agitations that followed it. In fact, in Rafiq Bajwa’s interview traced out at the beginning of this chapter his account of showing Bhutto the light by impressing upon him the veracity of the Nizam-e Mustafa cause is peppered with the reservations he had about its applicability through the PNA given the PTI’s bourgeois liberalism and the leftist cells within the NDP.

We have already encountered an instance of this in chapter 1, where Yousuf Masti Khan related his own reservations regarding the message of Nizam-e Mustafa and his efforts to limit its proliferation in the campaign in Karachi. By and large, the talking points taken up by the protesting opposition had squarely to do with the rights of the working classes taking up Bhutto’s repression of industrial workers in Karachi as a prime motivator. On the National level, the leadership decided to wholly rely on the promise that it would mend the economy and return to the prices of 1970 (which was also an idea sprung out of one of Rafiq Bajwa’s speeches). On the level of national policy making the analysis from the opposition was wholly economic and only superficially ideological. This was inevitable too, because the composition of the Alliance did

not permit the evolution of a coherent grammar that could articulate either the Socialist or the pro-Islamic agenda to the fullest. Ideologically, the Alliance could only function on compromises.

The banal and unequivocal nature of the Nizam-e Mustafa slogan, for it was never a coherent plan of action to begin with, is readily apparent if the Leftists in the PNA are given due attention. The fact that the ideological baggage for the PNA that the Left incurred has been cast aside has a three-fold reasoning. Firstly, in the kind of a Marxist analysis of the turn of affairs in 1977, the idea for Aijaz Ahmad was to convey a retelling of the events that was to serve not just as an outlook for future action on the part of the Left but also one that would explain the coup of the ultra-Right. In that regard it was impossible to provide a smooth cause-effect rationale from the Marxist perspective without completely ignoring the role of the Left in the unfolding of the matter.

Secondly, and following on from this, Aijaz Ahmad's analysis was published in 1978 just when the struggle against military rule was germinating. The struggle, as Ahmad identifies it, required a battle on the ideological level and in direct opposition to the dominant and emergent ideology of the Zia regime which would later be identified as the Islamization project. The struggle was also ideological because the coercive apparatuses of the regime were too strong and well entrenched for there to be any viable form of resistance otherwise. Nonetheless, a monolithic conception such as Zia administration's vision of 'Pakistani Islam' could of course only be a rather impracticable and mostly rhetorical weapon. It could never reflect the kind of politics that played itself out on the ground, especially in the case of the PNA agitations in the days that led up to the coup. However, viewed from the perspective of an analysis that sought to

set up action and resistance, as Aijaz Ahmad's analysis does, such a characterization of the status quo was necessary to garner consensus and form alliances to combat it.

Lastly, there is also the fact of the general bias of scholarship. While Aijaz Ahmad's focus remained on explaining and opposing the Zia regime, the only other perspective that penetrates the muck of history is that of the PPP. The narrative, as Aijaz Ahmed too cautions against in his work, is to write the events from the perspective of this political party and its larger than life leader, hailed as the first and only truly democratically elected government in Pakistan. The tragic and chaotic nature of this government's ouster has led to the formation of a larger narrative focusing on democracy in Pakistan and whether it is even a viable option for the beleaguered nation-state.

This question becomes a favorite of a strata of the petty bourgeoisie that remains decidedly pro-military, but also a constant issue for those sections of the same group that dream of a 'Western-style' secular liberalism as the only 'democratic' way forward for Pakistan. For the latter, diametrically opposed to the former and yet springing from the same well, the events of 1977 become an issue of identifying the enemy, which then becomes the idea of Islamization. The cues for such conceptions of the State actually erupt from Bhutto himself, when towards the end of his first term he begins to seriously attend to the criticism of the Right about how little Pakistan laws and constitution accommodate their idea of the Islamic way of life. This is evident from the tenor of the mostly apocryphal story Rafiq Bajwa relates in the interview this chapter begins with.

This 'defensiveness' of the government on Islamic issues<sup>45</sup>, as Ian Talbot calls it, was a result of the immense popularity in the urban centers of the anti-Ahmadiya movement earlier which Bhutto himself had to support even though the PPP agenda championed the secularism of the party. Come election campaigns of 1977, it was a fact that immense crowds flocked to PNA rallies for a variety of reasons; however, the one reason singled out by Bhutto as a weakness and mistaken by the opposition as some kind of a strength was the issue of Islamic law. On Bhutto's part, the purging of the Leftist cell within the PPP limited the number of perspectives available to the government. Had the political diversity the PPP had at the beginning of his first term been available to him, he might have realized that the reasons for the popularity of the opposition might have something to do with something else.

The brutality with which labor strikes in urban centers had been handled in his tenure, the unpopular military operation in Baluchistan, the dissolution of the democratically elected governments in that province and the NWFP, the phony charges through which the opposition leaders were incarcerated in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case, the slew of political assassinations and disappearances, the acquiescence to the World Bank and the IMF that incurred massive inflation and price hikes, the detrimental reaction of the rural landowners to his land reforms, all had in some part contributed to the PNA's popularity and were the actual issues that its leadership sought to exploit. However, Bhutto's attention to the way opposition rhetoric painted him as a debauched and womanizing tyrant and the Right-wing Islamist agenda of the Zia regime, however, skews the analytical lens for most of the scholarship on the PNA movement. It is perceived that between the fascism of Zia and 'progressivism' of Bhutto, is the chasm of

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<sup>45</sup> Ian Talbot, *A Modern History of Pakistan*, pp. 233

‘Islamic law and governance’, so naturally, the story is smoothed out by casting the PNA as the bridge that enabled the transition.

Ian Talbot’s treatment of the episode relates a similar story, attaching the same importance to the ideological facets of the opposition rhetoric and its apparent connections to the Islamization process of the Zia regime. However, we do inevitably get some idea of the other factors in the more *realpolitik* and economic sense. More importantly, Talbot points out another poignant reason for the participation of the urban bourgeoisie in the PNA campaign:

*“[The commercial classes] had been badly hit by the labour reforms and the nationalization of ghee, cotton and rice husking trades. Their mohajir background also made them susceptible to the religious appeals of the Islamic parties which remained inveterately opposed to the regime despite its increasingly wrongheaded attempts to placate them as in the anti-Ahmadi issue.”*<sup>46</sup>

While the comment on the monolithically defined ‘*mohajir*’ community’s increased susceptibility to the exhortations of the religious parties remains conjectural, by all accounts and the conversations that I had, it does become obvious that at least a sizable portion of Karachi’s mohajir population was on board with the PNA agenda. It was fact that Bhutto’s economic reforms and nationalization projects were negatively received within the merchant classes of the *mohajir* community. Moreover, a large portion of the working class in the cities of Karachi and

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid pp. 244

Hyderabad were in fact *mohajir* and the PPP government's violent reaction to worker's protests and strikes in these industrial centers had diminished their credibility amongst them.

In effect the creation of the kind of alliance that the PNA proved to be i.e. a conglomeration of the disenfranchised masses and marginalized communities and nationalities, foreshadowed the kind of compromises that would be central to the success of the MRD. These are the compromises that would bridge the schisms that would eventually be made painfully obvious during Zia's time. It is important that the PNA proved to be that platform from which people who were seemingly integrated into the hegemonic and privileged national spaces of Pakistan (as exemplified by the example of Karachi's *mohajir* community) could articulate their perceived distance from power as political spaces and issues changed. It is soon after the PNA that the All Pakistan Muttahida Student's Organization or APMSO was founded to articulate the anxieties of the *mohajir* youth. One of the members of the JI that I met, maintained though that the PNA was the first instance in which, post-1972 language riots in Sindh, the *mohajir* community of Karachi exerted itself as a separate minority community with political ends and goals wholly its own.

Aijaz Ahmad does an excellent economic analysis of the effects and reception within the bourgeois communities, and I shall not repeat it here.<sup>47</sup> Suffice to say that by bringing the focus back onto the religious parties (and especially the JI) Aijaz Ahmad undermines the centrality of the economical considerations and infra-political and localized effects of the economic policies to the reasons for the massive agitations in the urban centers amongst the various classes and subsets of the civil society. And while little attention is given to the Baluch and Sindhi nationalists aligned with the 'Right' within the PNA, only a few years later, these very forces

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<sup>47</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Pakistan*, See pp. 491 to 497

would prove to be central to the revival of the dying Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), and be praised thus in print.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, *The Rebellion of 1983*, (1984)

### Chapter 3

At a poetic gathering (*mushaairaa*) sometime in the 1980s Habib Jalib, the poet of the people (*shaair-e awwaam*), was called onto the stage to recite his poetry. This was a time when Jalib, along with a multitude of different forces in Pakistan, was fighting in the struggle to bring an end to the dictatorship of Gen. Zia ul-Haq. His unassuming and modestly dressed figure glided imperiously onto the stage, amidst a grand applause. He began reciting in his deep and melodious voice and the crowd repeated his verses with him. Jalib's verses were famous for addressing the tyranny and oppression visited upon the masses by the people in power. When the enthusiastic audience began to call for a performance of the famous poem *Dastuur*, which he had composed in an earlier era, as an answer to the supporters of the military dictatorship of Ayub Khan, he complied in turn. He set up the context of the poem with these words:

*“After the creation of Pakistan, when all our dreams were scattered and broken one by one, we began searching for people who were like-minded to us, in order to figure out how to rejuvenate liberty, democracy and economic freedom in the country. So I wrote this poem, Dastuur, which I recited at a mushaairaa in Murree. And all of the bigwigs in Pakistan were present [at that gathering], in fear of whom even the leaves on the trees would dare not move with the wind, but I began reciting this poem...*

*The moment I finished reciting this poem the whole assembly ended right there and the public came onto the streets with me [in show of solidarity with my words]. A senior poet*

said to me that this was not the [right] opportunity [to recite this poem]. I replied that I am not an opportunist.”<sup>49</sup>

He then goes ahead and recites the poem *Dastuur*:

*Diip jis kaa mahalaat hii main jale*

*Chand logon kii khushyon ko le kar chale*

*Who jo saaye main har maslehat ke pale*

*Aise dastuur ko subh-e benuur ko*

*Main nahiin maantaa, main nahiin jaantaa*

*Main bhii khaaif nahiin takhta-e daar se*

*Main bhii mansuur huun kah do aghyaar se*

*Kyun daraate ho zindaan kii diiwaar se*

*Zulm kii baat ko, jahl kii raat ko*

*Main nahiin maantaa, main nahiin jaantaa*

*Phuul shaakhon pe khilne lage, tum kaho*

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<sup>49</sup> Habib Jalib, see youtube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2muWwwmq9c&feature=related>

*Jaam rindon ko milne lage, tum kaho*

*Chaak siinon ke silne lage, tum kaho*

*Is khule jhuut ko, zahn ki luut ko,*

*Main nahiin maantaa main nahiin jaantaa*

*Tum ne luutaa hai sadiyon hamaaraa sukuun*

*Ab naa ham par chale ga tumhara fusuun*

*Charaagar dardmandon ke bante ho kyuun*

*Tum nahiin charaagar koi maane magar*

*Main nahiin maantaa, main nahiin jaantaa*

**The lamp of which lights up only the palaces**

**And caters to the happiness of the few**

**That which is bred in the shadow from all good counsel**

**Such a code, such a lightless morning**

**I cannot accept, I cannot comprehend**

**I am also not fearful of the gallows**

**Inform the enemies that I too am Mansuur**

**Why do you even try to threaten me with imprisonment?**

**The matter of tyranny, the night of ignorance**

**I cannot accept, I cannot comprehend**

**Flowers are now blossoming on branches, you say**

**The outcasts are now being served, you say**

**The torn collars on our chests are now being mended, you say**

**This open lie, this robbery of the intellect**

**I cannot accept, I cannot comprehend**

**You have, for centuries, robbed us of peace**

**Now your enchantments shall not work us**

**Why do you pretend to be a remedy provider to the pain stricken?**

**You do not offer the remedy, no matter who accepts that**

### **I cannot accept, I cannot comprehend<sup>50</sup>**

I want to engage the third *band* (stanza) more closely. This verse in the poem begins with a series of statements that are negated at the end of each *misraah* (line). While the poem, from the beginning is explicitly political, it borrows from the stock imagery of the Urdu *ghazal* to make a comment on the State's oppression at the time. He begins with the assertion that it is *tum* (you), the oppressive and tyrannical ruler, who say that flowers are blossoming on dry branches, and implicit in the line is an invisible 'not I or us', the people who live under the tyranny of the oppressor. The next two lines repeat this strategy, by asserting that it is this same *tum* (the oppressor) who says, and I am shedding the metaphor here, that those that have been traditionally and perpetually excluded shall now be served aright, not those oppressed. It is again the oppressor who asserts that the wounds of oppression that the people have been bearing on their chests shall be redressed. Then, in the final two lines, he calls these statements made by the tyrant 'an obvious lie', a 'robbery of intellect': they cannot be 'accepted' (*maantaa*), they cannot be known (*jaantaa*). The questions emerge: Who is this '*tum*', this 'tyrant' that is set up here to make the claims that Jalib is negating? And on whose behalf is Jalib negating the validity of these statements? In short, who does he claim to be representing?

Perhaps nobody captures the underlying crisis of the Pakistani state better than Habib Jalib when he writes the refrain for the poem, regarding the *Dastoor* (which can be translated as a 'code', 'model' or even 'regime' and is the title of this poem) which dominated the State's political scene, especially so in the seventies. Commentaries appearing in Urdu poetry relay exactly this: an idea of a State besieged by conflicting ideologies. So, when Habib Jalib writes the above-quoted lines, the fact that the *dastoor* does not merit recognition (*maannaa*) is tied

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<sup>50</sup> The translations are my own.

precisely to the fact that it is rendered incomprehensible, that is it eludes (*jaannaa*) comprehension when viewed ‘from below’ as a citizen of the State.

This discourse identifies the two major problematics of politics in Pakistan, questions that the PNA movement was in some ways formed to answer, questions that become a rearrangement of the two questions that are posed by Jalib’s poem above. The first question relates to the theme of personality politics that has arguably plagued the political scene in Pakistan since its inception, and the second relates to the misrepresentation of the ‘Political Society’,<sup>51</sup> in National politics through the structures of power and ‘cultures of politics’ that have ossified in Pakistan. I will elaborate on this point shortly.

The consequences these problematics have for a productive analysis of political possibilities for Pakistan are that they demand a nuanced analytical approach that shuns the utility of the conventional narratives dictated by the power of the State. Such discourses are bereft of the very ambiguity and subtlety that highlight the effectiveness of, for instance, Urdu poetry as practiced by figures such as Habib Jalib, as an articulation of the (political) sentiments emanating from non-hegemonic sources. For these discourses are forever set up in a manner so as to interpret the historical-political developments in Pakistan from the viewpoint of State machinery. They, so to speak, communicate the very institutional and bureaucratic language which people like Jalib seek to challenge from the margins. For the purpose of this study, this discourse of the State and its coercive and pedagogical apparatuses thus, in all its forms, plays out at a plane I identify as the ‘National’.

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<sup>51</sup> I am using a conception of the term ‘political society’ as detailed by Partha Chatterjee in *Politics of the Governed (2004)*. The concept, despite all the context-induced limitations attached to it proves to be an apt characterization of the kind of localized, movement-based politics it is used herein to describe.

Lying counter to this, therefore, is exactly the discourse outlined throughout Jalib's poetry, which then becomes the multitudinous voices of the 'Local'. So when Jalib's poetry beckons the question of representation, as stated above, this offers a generalized answer to that very question. These are the different voices that Jalib's poem, by virtue of its inherent privileging of compromise and multivocality, is able to portray. This also enables it to work, in a very political manner, against the fault-lines that constitute the Pakistani nation-state by situating itself both against a reified notion of the Nation and the State. This discourse also stands in stark contrast to Jalib's strict stand on the supremacy of a secular, democratic Pakistan and his prior hesitancy at aligning himself in any way with the religious political parties.

In fact, the unequivocally defined nature of Jalib's politics outside of this involvement with the PNA, underlines to an even greater extent the compromises that the PNA expected from its constituent members. Therefore these accounts of Jalib's involvements with the movement, as a member of the National Democratic Party (NDP) and one of the central figures in its Marxist cell highlights the extent of that compromise. As far as Jalib is concerned I do this by tracing through the discourses and developments that he birthed throughout the course of this movement, and paying a close attention to the way he and the rest of the PNA dealt with the dominant problematics of the Pakistani political space as identified above. While the appraisal might seem to become polemical at some points, I intend to capture a more affective account of the events leading up to 1977 and thus signify, on a more personalized level, why the PNA movement still holds importance for those that took part in it.

It is thus, important to keep the context in which Jalib was writing, as one traces the development of this politics of charismatic personalities and its relationship with the Local/National divide that he alludes to. Deploying the world of ideas and metaphor that are

imbued within the traditions of Urdu poetry, Habib Jalib's pen of molten anger is a means to providing firm resistance to those that traverse the avenues of power no matter what kind of politics they represent. Thus, my main arguments in this chapter pertain to the wealth of insights that this four-month long and aptly forgotten movement holds in store, and can be dealt with in two parts. The first part deals with the socio-political context in which this movement was born as seen through Jalib's eyes, and the second pertains to the strengths and weaknesses of the movement as seen through his eyes and in contrast with some of the arguments made by scholars of post-colonial Pakistan, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Jalib's autobiography features an episode from the summer of 1977 when he was leading one of the PNA protest rallies in Lahore. I want to begin this Jalib-inspired appraisal of the political situation in Pakistan with a view to where this trajectory leads, which is what this episode captures. This becomes an instant which captures the essence of what the people involved with the PNA were willing to sacrifice for their cause, no matter how different it was from their fellow protestors standing right by them. I quote extensively:

*“ This one time, the army had drawn a line across the Mall Road and they told us that if anyone tried to cross this line they'd shoot them. Hamid Sarfraz and I crossed that line and we drew our chests right up to their bayonets and we said 'shoot us!'. Our leaders showed up. They began talking to the army men. Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, I.G and Home Secretary all had to show up. If shots had gone off that day, there would have been carnage. Such was the PNA movement. At many other times the shots did go off, and we continued our march despite them. Many times have I seen death up close. But when fate has some use or another for one, one*

*gets saved somehow. We too got saved, otherwise what we went through that day did not leave too much doubt for our deaths.*

*Our party workers decided to offer ourselves in arrest from Maulana Nasrullah Khan's office.<sup>52</sup> My wife was pregnant at the time. Our condition was as bad as it has always been because we had entered the political realm and could not turn back. At the time I was writing the lyrics for a Zia Sarhadi's movie. I completed the work quickly, asked him to send the money to my wife, went to Nasrullah Khan's office at Nicholson Road and sat in the police car with him. There were two Maulvis with us. Maulvi Sher Muhammad and Maulvi Saleemullah. One was taken into the C.I.A and terrible things were done to him. A 'working girl' was made to lie next to him and obscene photographs of them were taken, The poor guy was reciting the Quran Sharif all this time. The other one was taken to Chhanga Manga. Nasrullah was transferred to Muzaffargarh and Malik Qasim was kept somewhere in North Chhauni. He was so brutally tortured there that his spinal cord got messed up. He still prays sitting on a chair. An ASI who was sympathetic to us told me, 'This night will bear heavily upon you.'*

...

*We were in jail. The cell was filthy and stinky. We were kept in the psychiatric wing of the jail. Malik Qasim and me were eventually in the same cell. I asked him what they had done with him. He replied that they had treated him really badly. 'They beat me up severely, they lay me down and jumped on my back.' I asked him if anything else happened. He quietly said that if there was anything to be said he'd say it. There was extreme pain in my own body. Malik Qasim, forgetting his own pain kept massaging me all night. Some relief came late in the night when the*

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<sup>52</sup> Maulana Nasrullah Khan was the leader of the Jamiat Ulema Pakistan (JUP).

*doctor came and gave me an injection... When I had earlier warned Chaudhry Makhdum about how the policeman had said this night would be heavy upon me, I had not hoped that he'd rally the people to come and free us. I'd only meant it as a caution to the police officers, so that they don't have their way with us. Such was the Bhutto era.*

*That which is called complete democracy has never prevailed. It is still a dream the fulfillment of which has not been granted to us as yet. The PNA movement was an antidote to the Bhutto era. The matter of fresh elections was near resolution but our time had passed and it was too late. So late that the army finally came in. Now if the politicians had wanted the matter to be resolved politically and had wanted the prevention of army rule, it could have been done. They think on another level though, and I don't know what elements they were, that did not want the sway of true democracy. Zia-ul Haq, who had been promoted over many other officers for the position of Commander in Chief by Bhutto, came to power and promised elections in ninety days. Those ninety days eventually stretched out to eleven years. And our troubles began anew. The same paths, the same destination and the struggle for democracy began anew. General Zia used to begin his speeches by reading chapters from the Quran Sharif. A religious atmosphere was created. Elections in ninety days he said. But there were no elections.”<sup>53</sup>*

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In the introduction to this study, we had briefly traced the trends of Pakistani political culture that Jalib and his contemporaries had inherited. The fact remained that the State apparatus, even

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<sup>53</sup> Habib Jalib, *Jalib Biti*, pp.153 (the translation from Urdu is my own)

under the PPP administration, had tried and failed to address as well as represent the difference that characterized the fragments of the Pakistan nation. This created anxieties regarding the issues of regionalism, nationalism, ideology and identity. For the establishment of an equitable democratic order in Pakistan, it was important that the political discourse represent and accept this difference and address these anxieties, and not dismiss them, as many have, as the residue of an inadequately imagined Nation. Habib Jalib captures this latent anxiety in his poem *Pakistan ka matlab kya?* (What is the meaning of 'Pakistan'?). He wrote this poem as an answer to the perceived emptiness and lack of imagination, as he terms it, of the slogan '*Pakistan ka matlab kya, La ilaha illallah*' (What is the meaning of 'Pakistan'? There is no god but God). The slogan was a popular tool wielded by the establishment, of reinforcing the concept of a Nation-State bound together under the banner of Islam. According to Jalib, the slogan was 'empty', in the sense that a claim made for a hegemonic 'Pakistan' must necessarily reflect what it meant for the bodies that peopled it. His poem goes:

*Pakistan kaa matlab kyaa?*

*Rotii kapraa aur dawaa*

*Ghar rehne ko chhotaa saa*

*Muft mujhe taa'lim dilaa*

*Pakistan ka matlab kyaa?*

*Laa ilaahaa illalaah...*

*Amrika se maang naa bhiik*

*Mat kar logon kii tazhiik*

*Rok naa jamhuuri tahriik*

*Chhor naa aazaadii kii raah*

*Pakistan ka matlab kyaa?*

*Laa ilaahaa illalaah...*

*Khet waderon se le lo*

*Mill-ein luteron se le lo*

*Mulk andheron se le lo*

*Rahe na koi a'ali jah*

*Pakistan ka matlab kya?*

*Laa ilaahaa illalaah...*

*Sarhad, Sindh, Baluchistan*

*Teenon hain Punjab ki jan*

*Aur bangal hai sab ki an*

*Aye na is ke lab pe ah*

*Pakistan ka matlab kya?*

*Laa ilaahaa illalaah...*

*Baat yahii hai bunyaadii*

*Ghaasib kii ho barbaadii*

*Haq kahte hain haq-aagaah*

*Pakistan ka matlab kya?*

*Laa ilaahaa illalaah...*

What is the meaning of Pakistan?

Food, Clothing, and Medicine

A small house to live in

Get me some free education

What is the meaning of Pakistan?

There is no god but God...

Do not beg America for scraps

Do not insult the people

Do not impede the movement for democracy

Do not abandon the path to freedom

What is the meaning of Pakistan?

There is no god but God...

Take back the farms from the Feudals

Take back the mills from these looters

Take back the Country from the darkneses

Let there be no high of pomp

What is the meaning of Pakistan?

There is no god but God...

Sarhad, Sindh and Baluchistan

All three are Punjab's life

And Bengal is the pride of all

Let there be no lament on its lips

What is the meaning of Pakistan?

There is no god but God...

The basic point of the matter is

That the oppressor is destroyed

Those privy to truth speak the truth

What is the meaning of Pakistan?

There is no god but God...

Jalib, here, is looking for the meaning of Pakistan at multiple sites that are at once varied and yet cohabit the same space. Pakistan is not just a 'homeland for the Muslims' but a host of other considerations, very material and immediate ones, which emanate from the difference that defines the multitudes that are still, however, captured within it. It is also poignant that he does not completely replace the '*la ilaha illallah*' part of the slogan, but reworks it, builds upon it and casts it in conjunction with the myriad issues that define existence as a Pakistani. As a member of the Marxist cell within the NAP, this was not an easy compromise to entertain.

However, Jalib wrote this poem at the point in Pakistani history when these questions were ripe for the asking, and at the same time it seemed as if they could be voiced out. As Pakistan

lost its Eastern half, the Bengal of this poem, in 1971 the military was in shambles. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, a democratically elected government came into power, that of the PPP led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It was expected, in spite of the role Bhutto had played during the 1970-71 elections and his refusal to recognize Shaikh Mujib as the elected President of Pakistan, that the PPP would make structural changes to the political system.<sup>54</sup> Thus it was expected that the party would begin undermining the traditionally intrusive role played by the Military, cutting the power chord on the feudal and industrial monopolizers, and forging a new more inclusivistic constitution.

These desires were for the first time accompanied by hope, given that the PPP had come to power riding on the wave of popular political protest emanating from the Leftist student organization, the National Student Federation (NSF), and becoming the spearhead of the November Revolution of 1968. Many of the student leaders and trade unionists of the anti-Ayub campaign became members of the PPP, and were appointed to positions of relative import when the party came into power. These included the likes of Mairaj Mohammad Khan, J.A. Rahim and Shaikh Rashid, people who had consistently stood for the rights of the proletariat and had been the main architects of the labor and land reforms the PPP was able to introduce, but according to Jalib were unable to enforce. However, the PPP government in its first term fell far short of these optimistic expectations.

It is quite consistent with the problems identified in Jalib's poetry at the beginning of this chapter, how accounts of the post 1971 era are focused mostly on the actions of Bhutto the man rather than his government, and the responses of the opposition reacting to it accordingly. On April 21<sup>st</sup> 1972 when a provisional constitution based upon the Government of India Act 1935

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<sup>54</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, *Democracy and Dictatorship in Pakistan*, (see introduction section)

was adopted with Bhutto as President, the mass expectation seemed to be that the PPP was a political party committed to major systemic and structural reforms. However, with the departure of Yahya Khan from power, and Bhutto's ascendancy to the post of the first civilian Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan, the hitherto scattered Opposition forces began resituating themselves in the transformed political space by coalescing against him. Decisions such as the suppression of the Hamood-ur Rahman Report on the military operation in the former East Pakistan which gave a reprieve to the disgraced Generals, the violent reaction against labor unrest in the industrial sector, and the lack of sufficient retraction from the attitudes and techniques of a police state with regards to media and political processes, did much to galvanize an opposition that seemed to have no footing only a short while earlier. Jalib too was severely critical of Bhutto's role in the East Pakistan debacle, one of the main reasons why he decided not to join the PPP even when it seemed to be a potent platform for the kind of Leftist politics he practiced.

On the one hand, the labor struggle in Pakistan, emboldened by the fervor of the anti-Ayub movement and working through a much more organized network of unions, found itself in a compromised position when the PPP began appearing to become a different face of the same old hydra that the Pakistani State had been. The government, even though it came out with a more equitable labor policy, was extremely intolerant of any worker unrest, working now on the excuse of rebuilding the post-1971 Pakistan. On June 7<sup>th</sup> 1972, this was proven when the police open fired on protesting mill workers in the city of Karachi killing seven, giving rise to more

unrest all over the country as well as reviving the same relations of domination that characterize the point where labor meets the State.<sup>55</sup>

Tensions between PPP's left wing, and the growing tendency in the party to reach out to the more traditional hubs of power and capital, came to a head with the wholesale ousting of the Leftist elements in party and ascendancy of 'dirty players'<sup>56</sup> such as Mustafa Khar, Hafeez Pirzada and Mumtaz Bhutto. This made it even more difficult for the party to make inroads in the Baluchistan and Sarhad provinces where the National Awami Party (NAP) was, by then, in an extremely strong position under the leadership of Khan Abdul Wali Khan.

Habib Jalib himself was very much an active participant of the NAP and was on the central committee of the party's Punjab branch. In his autobiography, Jalib writes and I translate:

*"There are valid reasons for me not to join the People's Party...but in truth the biggest reason is that our progressive and communist friends had a clique [in the National Awami Party, NAP], which we used to call the Central Committee...we didn't want to go with the People's Party because we had fashioned a very strong party of our own."*<sup>57</sup>

The province of Baluchistan, already a hotbed of political intrigue due to the fact of its colonization by the Pakistani state soon after partition, came to produce the leading resistive discourses against the power at the center. Attaullah Mengal, Khair Baksh Marri and Wali Khan, reproduced these debates in the assembly and national media time and again. In February 1973

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<sup>55</sup> Kamran Asdar Ali, *Strength of Street Meets the Strength of the State* (2006)

<sup>56</sup> Yousuf Masti Khan, vice president of the Pakistan Worker Party (PWP) in conversation with author

<sup>57</sup> Habib Jalib, *Jalib Biti*, pp 123

the NAP/JUI government was dissolved and consequently, their leaders and workers arrested and the NAP was banned. This led to an armed struggle wherein, certain incidents took place, during this time, the effects of which still reverberate in the Baluchi resistance to this day, and were more importantly, left fresh and relevant in memory at the time of the 1977 elections and the PNA movement. Incidents, such as the one at Mali on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1973 where the Pakistan army massacred thirty five villagers in cold blood, came to be a 'part of Baluchi folklore'.<sup>58</sup> Consequent skirmishes saw the government retaliating with a full scale military operation in Baluchistan in 1973, and the 1974 Baluch insurgency was built up against it.

The opposition was thus able to rally around these issues, not of ideology or economics, but that of resistance to what they perceived was an authoritarian government and its repressive actions from Islamabad. This gave birth to the United Democratic Front (UDF) headed by Wali Khan and the Pir of Pagaro, after Wali Khan was indicted with treason in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case, along with Attaullah Mengal and Khair Baksh Marri, for abetting Afghan and Russian forces in destabilizing the peace and transforming what was an internal strife into a secessionist movement. One of my colleagues in the Pakistan Worker's Party, Yusuf Masti Khan, who was a part of the NAP, recalls that this was the shift for the nature of politics in the NWFP and Baluchistan provinces, from the socialist agenda of Wali Khan to the more Baluchi/Pathan nationalist leanings that were to take ascendancy in the years leading up to the 1977 elections.

Habib Jalib, at this point, became a respected but part of the minority voice amongst the party cadres. Part of the difficulty for his kind of localized politics was that his constituency was in Punjab (he contested the Provincial Assembly seat from Lahore) and through the Hyderabad

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<sup>58</sup> Sherbaz Khan Mazari, *A Journey To Disillusionment*, pp. 371

Conspiracy Case, the government was able to paint Wali Khan and his supporters as separatists. People like Jalib, ever faithful to Wali Khan and his esteemed father Bacha Khan's vision for Pakistan, would initially have to fight not only the growing tendencies within the party to reach compromise with 'the bearded mullahs'<sup>59</sup> but also propaganda induced misinformation within the constituency. He writes:

*"It was obvious that our line was an immensely difficult line. Wali Khan was our party leader. The Media and the Governments had poisoned the hearts of the people with regards to him and his father Bacha Khan. Such was the extent of the propaganda that they became our liabilities. We used to have to defend Bacha Khan. We spoke about his sacrifices, that he fought the British and he fought against Hitler. He was a part of the freedom struggle and that he'd patched things up with Jinnah over a cup of tea. He was a member of the first constitution-drafting assembly... his story is a very tall one, and misunderstood... But such was the web of illusions spun by Bhutto that when I asked a barber who [was a friend and] used to shave me for free, if he would vote for us he'd reply that he would only vote for Bhutto... This made it very difficult for our politics of the poor and downtrodden to work."*<sup>60</sup>

Jalib, however, puts the Baluchistan issue at the fore of the reasons why he remained an eager participant in the reincarnation of the NAP, now called the National Democratic Party (NDP) headed by Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari and Begum Wali Khan. He, it must be noted here, was one of the twenty-four workers and leaders of the former NAP, to be implicated in the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Habib Jalib, Jalib Biti, pp.149

Hyderabad Conspiracy Case. As far as his recollections go, ‘it was extremely difficult to speak of [four nationalities] in that atmosphere’, especially in the paranoia created in the post-1971 era when serious questions were being asked about the very survival of the Pakistani nation-state.<sup>61</sup> In fact, Jalib would run against Bhutto, as a show of resistance, from the PNA ticket in the 1977 elections, as he says:

*“ The People’s Party government had begun working against democracy in Baluchistan and our struggle was exactly the [opposite], in support for flourishing of democracy. And so, once more we were thrust into calamities... This is the reason why we had to join the united front... The alliance of unity was formed and we had to be involved in it. And there they were, the Jamaat-e Islami slogans continuing to ring out...”*<sup>62</sup>

Along with the operation in Baluchistan and the dismantling of the NAP, some of the people that I spoke to, were also quick to mention the five major political assassinations during that period leading up to the 1977 elections; including those of Dr. Nazir Ahmed of D.G. Khan, Hayat Muhammad Sherpao a minister from NWFP and the failed attempt at Kasuri’s death, all attributed to Bhutto’s egotism and paranoia. By the time the PNA was formed, in some respect or the other, Mahmood Kasuri, J.A. Rahim and other former members of the PPP would join the Opposition. Jalib, in his autobiography takes special notice of the role Mahmood Kasuri played in strengthening the Opposition, as he became the principle voice that challenged PPP hegemony at the debates in the National Assembly. Incidentally, Kasuri had initially been a part of the

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid pp. 123

<sup>62</sup> Ibid pp. 121

NAP, later joining the PPP in the anti-Ayub struggle, only to have ‘angered Bhutto’ and eventually having to leave the party to return to the Opposition folds. His departure in fact was part of the trend where the incumbent party, all this while, was aligning itself more and more with the logic of ‘personality cults’ and consolidated itself more and more into Bhutto’s sole, authoritarian control and that of those who ‘fed his ego’.<sup>63</sup>

So, a discourse of rebuilding and renegotiating the political terrain that constituted Pakistan after 1971, with social reform and redefining the role of the Pakistani army and the proletarian and peasant rights as its guiding principles, found itself as being slowly transformed. It turned instead into a discourse that focused not simply on the federal government, but the person who led it, which was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The perceived failures of PPP to create spaces of equity and justice became the personal failures, nay personality flaws, of Bhutto. His ego became the hubris of the central government, the police brutality and structural inadequacies which continued the involvement of the army in governance remained intact, and the promises of ‘democracy’ were deferred to an era where Bhutto was sidelined as a dictator.

By 1977, as the PPP lost some ground in the provinces, and shifted away from its original base of power, there was already a latent search for something new on the political horizons, evident from the myriad movements, struggles and political alliances that were forged in this era. What did not materialize was a force that took the local nature of these struggles and transformed them into a unified self-sustained vision for a kind of inclusivistic politics. It was in this environment that the call for elections in 1977 took place and nine political parties, from the religious right to the Socialist left came together to contest the elections as one. This gave a measure of room for imagining and strategically and naturally formed alliances and discourses to

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<sup>63</sup> Yousuf Masti Khan, in conversation with the author

flourish in a politics that was headlined by contradictions. I read 'imagining' as the political act of working through 'Local' institutions and strategies and resisting the unambiguous, and totalizing discourse of the National. I read these aforementioned ambiguities and contradictions as a space of hope and transformation, where the discourses of the minor, the local, found articulation and representation at level where it could shape the discourses on the level of the National.

## Conclusion

*Sukuun muhaal hai qudrat ke kaarkhaane main*

*Sabaat ik taghayyur ko hai zamaane mein*

*Tranquility is impossible in the Workshop of Nature*

*Only Change ever has Permanence in the World*

- Iqbal

In this study, I have tried to provide an analysis of the PNA movement from various angles by looking at the discourses that fueled it and giving voice to some of the actors that played a part in it. During my research, as I went and talked to the workers of the JI and the Leftists who are scattered over a myriad of political parties and equally diverse professions since that time, one fact stood out as a theme of our conversations, no matter who it was. All of my sources conceded to the fact that while they were a part of the movement they viewed it as being 'revolutionary'. Many of them acceded to the fact that while Bhutto had 'hijacked'<sup>64</sup> the anti Ayub movement ten years earlier. The very nature of the opposition to power in 1977 gave these people the hope that it would not be so this second time round. No one party, ideology or person

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid

was bigger than the cause, because the cause itself meant different things to different people. The ethnographic approach of the first chapter tries to capture these voices.

In of itself the collective pendulum swings of thought and memory between hope-filled nostalgia and disappointment surrounding the movement in these discourses is enough to merit an even more detailed study. These are the narratives that have remained on the margins of power despite their being consistently characterized as tools and catalysts for the persistence of military interventions in the politics of the country. For this reason alone it becomes necessary to include their voice in retelling Pakistan's history. This study, however, goes further and highlights the ambivalence within their discourses to act as a kind of a repudiation of their generally accepted role in the unfolding of this history.

Asim Sajjad Akhtar, a professor of anthropology at the Quaid-e Azam University in Islamabad and a leftist political-social activist in Pakistan, in a recent article titled 'Change Industry' bewails the persistence of issues such as personality politics in Pakistan. Akhtar grapples with a more immediate and dangerous attitude that seems to have pervaded national media in Pakistan, following the ouster of Pervez Musharraf dictatorial government and the establishment of a new PPP government in 2008. In an analysis commenting on the uncertainties pertaining to some of these very same issues this work is engaging with, Akhtar coins the ambivalent tendency towards 'something new' as 'change industry'; something that the Pakistani media as well as other sources that influence public opinion seemed to be calling for at the time.<sup>65</sup> The criticisms that featured in the work of Aijaz Ahmad, Munir Ahmad and Ian Talbot provided a similar characterization of the PNA. This study proves that the PNA managed to be more than this. It was more than just the instrument of the 'powers that be': namely the army and

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<sup>65</sup> Asim Sajjad Akhtar, *The News*, issue date 26.9.10

the core of the ruling party. It was an articulation of the desire for change for a large subset of the Pakistani people that were dissatisfied with the systems and rules under which politics occurred at the national level in Pakistan.

However, whether it is labeled ‘change industry’ or ‘the lumpen and the petit bourgeoisie’, the PNA escapes all such tags and complicates all the categories attached to it. The politics of redoubtable figures in Pakistani history, who stood up for the peoples' right to an equitable democracy, such as Habib Jalib offer us a certain amount of hope and food for thought. What the PNA was able to accomplish was to place Jalib on the podium with figures such as Nasrullah Khan and Asghar Khan, men whose role in Pakistani politics has been ambiguous and suspect. The fact though, that the PNA did become a platform that could be used to voice Jalib’s words as well as accommodating Rafique Bajwa and Prof. Ghafoor, says something about the extent to which it inhaled with the very difference that constitutes Pakistan today.

In that regard, in the course of writing this thesis, it was extremely difficult to weave together a coherent narrative for the PNA simply because it thrived in the very break down of that possibility of neat narrativization. When the thoughts and words of the source come from a place of profound multi-valence and hazy outlines for motives and reasons, all that remains within them as the lowest common denominator, is hope and possibility for a fresh and more democratic government that incorporates and subsists on the inclusion of the multiplicity of voices. Hence in Chapter 3, we explored the National/Local divide, not as a complete ‘one-fits-all’ diagnosis of some ailment that beleaguers the Pakistani State but as an example of the kinds of thought, analysis and motivations that drove figures such as Jalib to challenge the first elected civilian government of Pakistan and its premier.

However, it simply doesn't suffice to come up with the idea that the only reason the PNA movement did not achieve its goals is because the army took over the government and it had no coercive apparatus which would be able to offer resistance to that. Nor is the idea that such a broad formation was wholly complicit in a vast conspiracy to overthrow Bhutto satisfying. Many of the people involved with the movement were later central figures in the resistance to Zia ul Haq's dictatorship, and many others still became accomplices to the dictator. This study tries to offer a more nuanced answer to this, by indicating how the PNA's greatest strength was also its greatest weakness. That the perceived lack of direction and a coherent message was its downfall in the elections of 1977, but also the fact that while it was seen as a 'revolution to change the system, completely'<sup>66</sup> by its workers and supporters on the national stage, it persisted with the discourses of personality politics and ideological debates that it simultaneously eschewed.

The movement was spontaneously fueled localized political issues and was flexible enough to accommodate them all. However, once it was asked to provide a unifying theme on the national level their discourse broke down into its ideological components. While ideologically, the JI was strongly placed with its demand of Nizam-e Mustafa, it appeared on a national level that the religious parties dominated the PNA discourse, which as we have seen is far from the more complicated dynamics within the movement. Thus it was important to capture the voices of these political actors who argued at the time for a change in the political which was something that had not been tried in Pakistan's history and had a semblance of possibility and hope.

The recent turn of events in Pakistan make a re-evaluation of the PNA even more pertinent. We have right now a different kind of a PPP government, however, as is obvious from

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<sup>66</sup> Yahiya Zakaria, editor of *Jasarat* newspaper, in conversation with the author

Qasim Sajjad's article about the 'change industry', the focus has remained on the figure of Asif Ali Zardari, and the call for his removal from power, rather than looking at the structural and economic and policy inadequacies that were identified but in no way overcome by the members of the PNA. The religious parties have resurrected their strategy of allying themselves with each other and again an easily misinterpreted notion of 'religious extremism' masks the very political issue of anger against the military operation within Pakistan and foreign policy, not to mention the growing economic instabilities that it ensues.

When the widespread support from different quarters came for the person who assassinated the Punjab governor Salman Taseer, the focus naturally went to the idea that we engaged in the first chapter. Namely, it is Philip Oldenburg's thesis that Pakistan is an 'insufficiently imagined' Nation-State which makes it easier for 'retrograde elements and ideologies' to creep up and fill the void, thus causing further instability. This study hopefully re-embeds such occurrences into the realpolitik and tangible issues rather than the obscure and abstract realms of ideological tug-o-war.

The next step then, is to bring the discourses of the PNA back to the present because the Pakistani milieu hasn't solved most of the questions that they set out to address. The terrain of National/Local has made itself even more apparent now, with the kind of the break up that the provinces have. Problems in Baluchistan persist as an issue that has been further aggravated since the bloodshed and oppression of the Musharraf era. The military problem in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has not moved towards resolution, and the history of the oppressed classes and religious minorities too has intensified. The situation thus mimics an aggravation of some of the problems elucidated upon herein.

While this conclusion gives a brief idea of the possibilities for future work on the PNA as an extension of this study, there are still many avenues that could not possibly be included here and offer a better understanding of the political milieu in Pakistan in the 1970s. During the course of my research I came across literature from Karachi in the Gujrati, Baluchi and Memoni languages which included pamphlets, newspapers and books that promoted the cause of the PNA amongst the merchant classes in the city. Due to limitations of language and dearth of space, there is a wealth of ethnographic information in that literature that needs to be explored. Similarly, due the same language issues as well as the fact that my research was restricted to the cities of Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, the literature that was proliferating in Baluchistan and the North West, does not inform this study.

While the conversations regarding the subject that I had, were extensive and across the board of the broad spectrum of parties that constituted the PNA; that is, across party affiliations, class and professions, many of the voices simply could not be built into the generic and rigid structures of a master's thesis. This is also because multivocality and diversity of arguments which that creates is not conducive to coherence in discourse without some kind of an intervention and selectiveness on the part of the author. In a future study based on this thesis, it would be interesting to try and incorporate those sources and see what that adds to the definition of the PNA's agenda. Does it clarify the position taken at the time or as I predict, complicate it to an extent that could possibly become a practicable and productive and fresh kind of a politics for Pakistan.

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