

Pashtu Literature

A Quest for Identity in Pakistan

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In this paper, an attempt is made to examine Pashtu literature from three perspectives: first, to highlight briefly the background of Pashtu literature and its major contours in the geopolitical context of Pashtunkhwa; second, to explore how Pashtu literature was born and bred in the womb of nationalist movements in pre-partition India; and third, to determine why Pashtu literature used nationalism and why the nationalists used Pashtu literature for their common cause- the quest for identity in Pakistan.

In view of this three-dimensional perspective, an integral theme is the interaction between internal and external variables in defining the contours (traits) of Pashtu literature in its half century of life in Pakistan. Specially, how geo-political crosscurrents in the surrounding region of Pakistan and the intricacies of Pak-

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Afghan relations determine the parameters of fusion and fission in the Pashtu literature vis-à-vis the state.

The dilemma of Pashtu literature in Pakistan is that of the Pashtun nation and its merger in Pakistan under the British colonial framework.

The Pashtuns, originally a Central Asian stock, are spread across in Pashtunkhwa (the land of the Pashtuns) lying between rivers Oxus and Indus. Practically forming a gateway to the Indian subcontinent, Pashtunkhwa was continuously trampled through history by waves of invaders and conquerors. This unique geographical situation and history of invasions created deep ruptures in the process of evolution of Pashtun history, and sustained tribal formation during this period, shaping the culture and psyche of the Pashtuns.

The culture of Pashtunkhwa, a synthesis, at least in its essence, represents the great humanistic ideals of Zoroastrian, Greco - Bactrian, Gandhara and Islam traditions, all integrated in the tribal secular code of the Pashtuns- the Pashtunwali. The co-existence and interaction of this ancient tribal code with religious traits is an extraordinary and interesting phenomenon which is indispensable to an understanding of the Pashtun secular national culture.

The “Great Game” and Pashtu Literature

Pashtun historians, scholars and writers attribute their country's backwardness, poverty and underdevelopment to colonialism, imperialism and the “Great Game.”¹ In the history

¹ From revolutionary scholars like Syed Jamal-ud-Din Afghan to Sardar Daud Khan, from Abdul Ghaffar Khan to Afrasyab Khattak (Chairman, Pakistan Human Rights Commission) all blame the “Great Game” as the principal cause of Pashtun disunity, backwardness and poverty. For more details, see Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, *The Evolution and Growth of Communism in Afghanistan (1917-1979)*, Karachi: Royal Book Agency, 1997; Also see the monthly *Diplomat*, Peshawar, March-April 1994, pp. 36-37.

of colonialism, Pashtunkhwa is one of those unfortunate regions that suffered most of the disadvantages of the European colonialism without any of its advantages. The Pashtuns paid a high price for their survival in the context of “Great power” rivalries.

For instance, as a result of forced treaties, Afghanistan was deprived of (a) its sovereignty, (b) half of its Pashtun population and (c) fertile Pashtun lands of the present day Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan. Among the three, sovereignty was regained by the Afghans. In order to regain the other two, “the lost Paradise”: the Pashtun land and people, the Pashtuns started a movement within and outside Afghanistan.

The arbitrary division of lower Pashtunkhwa into a variety of administrative units “Tribal areas, settled districts, British Balochistan, and native states” led to socio-economic stagnation. The imperialist agenda hampered the nation-building process among the Pashtun and profoundly affected political structures and social order among the community, contributing to the consolidation of tribalism, Mullahism, feudalism and conservatism.² The shift of power from centralized authority to fanatics and reactionaries caused great harm to modernization process and development.

² The Afghan Wars seriously damaged the urban economy of Afghanistan. The loss of Kashmir, Peshawar Valley, tribal areas and Balochistan dealt a severe blow to the Afghan urban economy and the royal treasury. Charles Masson comments on the deteriorated economic situation of Afghanistan thus: “...the monarchy, which also gradually lost its tenuous hold over Baluchistan and the tribal trade fair centres of Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan and Darband was left with few hopes of freeing itself of its dependence on the Afghan tribes or of achieving the political and economic integration of the country.” The weakness of Afghan authority in the east provided an opportunity and excuse for expansion by the British into the tribal areas and Frontier hills. V. Gregorian asserts, “the military importance of the independent tribes of the frontier also strengthened the position of the tribes within Afghanistan: through blood ties or political alliance they could obtain needed support. Tribalism was thus preserved at the expense of the Afghan monarchy and the growth of national institutions.” Marwat, *Evolution and Growth of Communism in Afghanistan*, pp. 22-3.

Throughout the British rule, the aim of government in the Frontier (northern Pashtunkhwa) was security, not revenue or development. This fact was recognized by Sir William Barton, who noted, “The policy of forcing the Pathan tribal system into the administrative mould of British India accounts in great measure for the British failure to assimilate the Pathans into the Indian political system.”³

Last but not the least, the “Great Game” that marked the Cold War and “Iron Curtain” of the Soviet regime in Russia, on the one hand, isolated Central Asia from the outside world, and, on the other, detached the Pashtuns from their socio-cultural roots and pushed them towards Indian subcontinent, where they naturally faced a crisis of identity. This crisis of identity further developed as a result of the British intrigues, suppression and exploitation of Pashtunkhwa.

Pashtu Literature and Pakistan

The political history of South Asia in the twentieth century has been shaped by the interplay of nationalism, imperialism and communal identity. Out of the contradictions in the Indian society, Pakistan emerged in the name of Islam or Muslim communalism. While the Pashtun nationalist movement was secular and pluralistic in its very nature, was identified, rightly or wrongly with the Soviet expansion in pre-partition politics. All the actions of the Pashtun nationalists, whether political or social and cultural, were considered to be a conspiracy of the Bolsheviks in their struggle to secure access to a “warm waters”. That is why the Pashtun nationalist movement attracted suspicion of the new state and on the basis of past record Islamabad gained the support of the west against the Pashtuns.

³ Sir William Barton, *India's North-West Frontier*, London: John Murray, 1939, p. 83.

The year 1947 posed a serious threat, altering the problems and prospects of Pashtu literature and of the Pashtuns, as a result of geo-political developments in and around Pashtunkhwa. These included the following factors:

1) The Pashtun community that joined Pakistan was itself a segregated unit of the Pashtun nation.

2) The Pashtuns of Pakistan had two Pashtun states [Afghanistan & Swat] in their neighborhood, with Pashtu as their national and official language.

3) The Pashtuns were the victims of the Anglo-Russian rivalry, of the Anglo-Afghan wars and of Anglo-Bolshevik intrigues.

4) Khushal Khan Khattak, Afghanistan's national poet, is buried in Pakistani controlled area, while Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a non-violent Pashtun leader is buried in Afghanistan demonstrating the overlapping politico-cultural vibrant.

5) On June 21, 1947, the Khuda Khidmatgars passed the Pashtunistan resolution at Bannu.⁴

⁴ The name Pakhtunistan or in soft Pashtu dialect Pashtunistan evolved originally from the Indian word Pathanistan. The very concept of Pakhtunistan was taken from the old word Pakhtunkhwa. Obaidullah Sindhi used Pashtania for Pashtu speaking area of his Proposed People's Republic of India or Saro-Rajia-i-Hind (Obaidullah's letter to Iqbal Shaidai on 22 June 1924), Muhammad Aslam, *Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi Kay Siyasi Maktubat*, Lahore: Niduatal Musanifeen, 1966, p. 34; The report entitled Conditions in India, of the delegation sent out to India in 1932 by the India League under the Chairmanship of Bertrand Russell, devoted a chapter to the NWFP, noting: "...It was also stated to us by a very high official that Abdul Ghaffar Khan's real plan was to create a "Pathanistan" and not to work for Indian self-Government". D.G Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith is Battle*, Bombay: Times of India Press, 1967. pp. 152-3. The British, Indian leaders and even the Khudai- Khidmatgars were using Pathanistan for Pakhtunistan in the beginning, but later on they started using the word Pakhtunistan.

6) In July 1947, a forced referendum was held under British Army, with the result favoring accession to Pakistan. Both the Khuda Khidmatgars and the Kabul Government rejected the results.

7) The inability to reorient the Pashtun nationalist line for a separate state has been the hallmark of the Pashtun community, which was plunged into the folds of the new state of Pakistan. The leadership was shocked by this momentous event, and remained in a state of indecision. It could neither map out a new phase of the Pashtun nationalist movement, nor could it embrace the Pakistani state with a ready mind. There were clashes and conflicts between the Pashtun leaders and the new ruling elite of Pakistan from day one.

8) In the upper Pashtunkhwa, (Afghanistan), a liberal, political, nationalistic and literary organization known as the Wish Zalmiyan (Awakened Youth) emerged with its major objective defined as “the liberation of Pashtun land from foreign control.”⁵ It brought political, social and intellectual changes and produced a new generation, which can be better-called a ‘Pashtunistan generation’. It reminded Pashtun writers and poets of their task to fearlessly record reality, and underscored their duty as the vanguard of needed change.

9) The sense of distinctiveness, which is an essential ingredient of nationalism, had been induced into Pashtuns

According to Pohand Sidiqullah Rishteen, "in 1947, A. Rauf Benawa, Chief of the Pashtu Tolana Kabul, translated Pakhtunistan from Pathanistan". When newspapers and particularly the "Pakhtun" journal of A.G. Khan started to use Pakhtunistan for Pathanistan, it was acknowledged with enthusiasm in the "Kabul" magazine of Afghanistan, Kabul 1326 (1947) vol: 8, first page (Abdur Rauf Benawa was the editor in chief of the Kabul Magazine).

⁵ Marwat, *Evolution and Growth of Communism in Afghanistan*, p. 235.

centuries ago, and is visible in the poetry of Khushal Khan Khattak (16th century), in which language and territory, the two nation-making elements are described as the distinguishing features of the Pashtuns. Khattak notes, further, that “All Pashtuns, from Kandahar to Attock are one and the same overtly and covertly in respect of Nang (sense of honor).”⁶

Currently, the intensity of Kabul’s claim on the Pashtun people and land of the lower Pashtunkhwa is comparatively in a low profile due to its own internal crisis, yet the participation of tribal chiefs from FATA in the recent meeting of the emergency Loya Jirga for the future political dispensation of Afghanistan demonstrates the character and direction of future political designs.⁷

Three Phases of Pashtu Literature in Pakistan

We can broadly divide Pashtu Literature into three Phases in Pakistan’s history:

- First Phase: A Pashtunistan Literature (1947-1978)
- Second Phase: *Inqilabi* and *Jihadi* [Revolution and Resistance] Literature (1978-1992)
- Third Phase: *Aman* and *Jirga* [Peace and Reconciliation] Literature (1992-2002)

⁶ Dost Mohammad Khan Kamil, ed., *Kulyat-e-Khushal*, Peshawar: Idara-e-Ishaat-e-Sarhad, 1952; Muhamd Nawaz Tahir, *Pashtu Zaban wa Adab: Akk Mutalya*, Peshawar: Pashtu Academy, 1988, pp. 38-39. K B Sayeed admits that the Pashtun’s sense of distinctiveness was a thing apart from the Islamic Identity. He wrote: “The Pashtun consciousness was not of recent origin. The famous Pashtun poet Khushal Khan Khattak had lyricised about the historic role of the Pashtuns and how they had hurled defiance at the mighty Mughals. One could see that this separate Pashtun consciousness could not be submerged in the larger Islamic identity, for the Pashtuns, though Muslims, had taken up arms against the Muslim Mughals.”

⁷ *The Herald*, Karachi, July, 2002, p. 64. The emergency *Loya Jirga* held in Kabul from June 11 to 19, 2002, was attended by Malik Darya Khan Afridi from the Khyber Agency, Haji Ahmad Jan Mohmand from the Mohmand Agency and Malik Mian Shah Jahan from the Bajaur Agency. Haji Khan Gul Chamkani from the Kurram Agency and some delegates from North and South Waziristan were also invited as observers.

First Phase: A Pashtunistan Literature (1947-1978)

During the first thirty years, Pakistan conducted constitutional and institutional experiments of various kinds to overcome the crises of identity, legitimacy, integration, penetration, participation and distribution in the new state, but all these efforts failed to turn Pakistan into a genuine federal, democratic nation- state. Within this troubled political history, the Pashtuns, their language and literature shared the trauma with other nationalities within Pakistan, even as they played their role in Afghanistan's Pashtunistan politics. Another strange paradox within the multinational state of Pakistan is the prevention of Anti-national activities Act of 1974, which makes it a crime for a Pashtun, Sindhi or Baloch to call himself Pashtun, Sindhi or Baloch.⁸

During these years, Pakistan used the card of so-called democracy, the Pashtunistan issue, and the Afghan minorities against Pashtun dominated Kabul regime. Contrary to this, the Kabul regime used the Pashtunistan card in an effort to regain its lost territories, for the integrity and solidarity of Afghanistan, for the rights of Pashtuns and Balochs and to divert the attention of the people from its internal problems. During this phase, Kabul published more than fifty-nine books in Pashtu on different aspects of Pashtunistan, besides numerous pamphlets, articles and posters.

The major landmarks in Pashtu literature on the eve of the emergence of Pakistan were:

1) The works of the literary triumvirate or Ahmad trio: Mir Ahmad Shah Rizwani, Maulvi Ahmad and Munshi Ahmad Jan, on the learning of the Pashtu language and literature as well as the translations into Pashtu of Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali's

⁸ Act vii of 1974, Prevention of Anti-national Activities, Act, 1974.

Musadas, Deputy Nazir Ahmad's Miratul Urus and Ibni Batuta's travelogue.

2) Syed Rahat Zakheli (1884-1963), the harbinger of modern Pashtu prose, novel and short story translated some of Dr. Iqbal's poems into Pashtu.⁹

3) Abdul Ghaffar Khan (known in India as Frontier Gandhi) and his nonviolent colleagues such as Fazal Mahmud Makhfi, Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar,¹⁰ and their attempts for cultural, political, educational renaissance in Pashtunkhwa. It should be noted that most of the pioneers of Pashtu literature on modern ideological lines were those who had experience of the Great Hijrat Movement of 1920s and of Russian society, political system and revolutionary theories and practices, either in Moscow or Tashkent with M. N. Roy, Maulana Barakatullah, Abur Rab Berq Peshawari, etc. The requirements of the modern nationhood were clear in the poetry of Makhfi, as is for instance, graphically illustrated in these lines:

Oh God! Will there be a time when
we shall have an aeroplane of our own?
Soaring high into the skies like an eagle,
it will fly over oceans.
We shall have a railway of our own

⁹ Tahir, *Pashtu Zaban wa Adab: Akk Mutalya*, pp 43-44. Researcher Zalmai Hewadmal, *Da Pakhtu Nasar Atth Sawa Kala (The Eight Hundred Years of Pashtu Prose)*, Lahore: Milat Printer, 1996.

¹⁰ Some other eminent writers and poets of the period were Muhammad Akbar Khadim, Abdul Khaliq Khaleeq, Amir Hamza Shinwari, Abdul Ghani Khan, Ajmal Khatak, Amir Nawaz Jalia, Wali Muhammad Tofan, Fazal Rahim Saqi, Master Abdul Karim, Mian Akbar Shah, Syed Rasul Rasa, Abdul Malik Fida, Khan Mir Hilali, and Mir Mehdi Shah Mehdi. The eminent litterateurs of this period in upper Pashtunkhwa (Afghanistan) were Gul Pach Ulfat, Abdul Hay Habibi, Sadiqullah Rishteen, Abdur Rauf Benawa, Mirajan Sial and Noor Muhammad Taraki. Some of the important Pashtu works and dramas of this period were Abdul Ghaffar Khan Journal Pukhtun, Qazi Rahimullah's drama *Nawi Roshni* (New Light), Amir Nawaz Khan Jalai's *Dard* (Pain), Muhammad Aslam Khan Khattak's *Da Wino Jam* (the Goblet of Blood) 1935, Abdul Khaliq Khan Khaliq's *Shaheeda Sakina* (Martyr Sakina) 1936, and Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar's *Jungara* (The Hut), 1945.

as well as a telegraph.

I shall be following my own general
to overtake the enemy”¹¹

4) Haji Mirza Ali Khan alias Faqir of Ippi and his militant followers were also publishing anti-British anti-Pakistani literature in the tribal areas.¹²

5) The Marxist group led by Maulana Abdur Rahim Popalzai and Kaka Sanobar Hussain.

6) Nasrullah Khan Nasr’s efforts for promotion of Pashtu language and literature and four other literary associations (a) Pashtu Adabi Jarga, Nowshera (b) Bazm-i-Adab Peshawar, (c) Adabi Tolay, Peshawar, and (d) Ulusi Adabi Jarga Peshawar played a vital role in the shaping of Pashtu literature.

7) Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai ‘Anjuman-i-Watan’ and his journal *Istiqlal* followed by his political organization Ror Pashtun (Pashtun Brotherhood) took major strides for the promotion of Pashtu and Pashtun nationalism in southern Pashtunkhwa.¹³

Pashtun nationalism, with its dual goal of freedom and development, was the hallmark of Pashtun political thinking at the turn of the century. A nationalist literary movement emerged advocating reassessment of the role of poets and intellectuals in the society, and the adaptation of old literary forms to new circumstances and audiences. Along with other literary forms, poetry was consciously employed to promote social and political goals. Poets felt an obligation to use their literary talent to present social and political ideas, to enlighten and inspire their readers with visions of human potential in a new age and a New World.

¹¹ See for poem of Makhfi the dedication of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *Zama Zawand Aw JudoJuhad* (My Life and Struggle), Kabul, nd.

¹² Fazal-ur-rahim Marwat and Syed Wiqar Ali Shah Kaka Khel, *Afghanistan and the Frontier*, Peshawar: EMJAY Publishers, 1993, Chapter 13.

¹³ Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai was the father of Mahmud Khan Achakzai, the chief of Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party.

In the *Pukhtun* journal, Abdul Ghaffar Khan attempted to set a political, economic, educational and cultural agenda for the future of the Pashtuns. Naturally, most Pashtun writers were anti-mullah, anti-nawabs (feudal lords), anti-oppression, anti-British and anti -Muslim League. Their writings depicted the high goals of democracy, modernism, social and economic justice, pluralism and above all, independence. *Azad* or independence was the watchword of Pashtu prose and poetry and the most favored title of at least six books, including Mian Akbar Shah's Pashtu travelogue *Da Azadi Talash* (In search of Independence), Abdul Kaliq Khan Kaleeq's *Da Azadi Jang* (War for Independence) and Waris Khan's *Da Azadi Tehreek* (Movement For Independence).

Literature thus became a principal means to promote modernization, communicate liberal and political ideas, and expose the atrocities of authoritarian regimes. The notion that poetry should only be taken as an aesthetic exercise, an art devoid of political advocacy, was rejected by a number of Pashtun poets.

The period produced a Pashtun version of sentimental socialism in literature, where the mysticism of Rabindra Nath Tagore merged with the matter of fact style of Maxim Gorky, both cloaked with a reverential but dubious robe of religion, as expressed by Maurice Maeterlinck. Some Pashtun writers explained economic issues and attempted to present the views of Adam Smith as well as those of Karl Marx. To attract the public and to project their demands and problems, Pashtu periodicals reprinted and translated the works of contemporary Middle Eastern and Indian writers and poets, such as Tagore, Namik Kemal, Muhammad Iqbal, Taha Hussain and even Victor Hugo's *Less Miserable*.¹⁴

While the "two nation- theory" captured the headlines in a new state, it was obvious from its inception that Pakistan was not

¹⁴ Pohand Abdul Hay Habibi translated "Le Miserable" into Pashtu "Bay Nawayan" in 1930s.

one, but a land of many nations. Politically immature and economically crippled, the new state itself was in search of identity in the name of Islam as a justification for its own physical and political existence in its own geographical surroundings. The Muslim League's old paranoid phobia of a "Hindu majority" quickly turned into phobia of a "Bengali majority" (then East Pakistan's population was principally Muslim Bengali), which was drummed up to sustain itself in the echelons of power.

Within such a socio-political scenario, the first setback for the Pashtun leaders and Pashtu literature in the new country was the dismissal of the majority Khudai Khidmatgars Ministry in the NWFP by the Governor General, and the installation of Muslim League Ministry under Abdul Qayum Khan on August 22 and 23, 1947. This was the first undemocratic act of the fledgling Pakistani Government against the Pashtun people.

The process of integration with Pakistan was further complicated for the Pashtun when the new state, like its British predecessors, targeted the nationalist leaders, political workers and writers, who were labeled anti-Pakistan and traitors.

As a first step for collaboration and co-operation with the government, the Khuda Khidmatgars declared that they "regard Pakistan as their own country and pledge that they shall do their utmost to strengthen and safeguard its interest and make every sacrifice for the cause."¹⁵ Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan took an oath

¹⁵ In September 1947, the meeting of the Khudai Khidmatgars at Sardaryab, near Peshawar, passed the following resolutions: The Khudai Khidmagars regard Pakistan as their own country and pledge that they shall do their utmost to strengthen and safeguard its interest and make every sacrifice for the cause; The dismissal of Dr. Khan Sahib's ministry and the setting up of Abdul Qaiyum's ministry is undemocratic, but as our country is passing through a critical stage, the Khudai Khidmatgars shall take no step which might create difficulties in the way of either the Provincial or Central Government; After the division of the country the Khudai Khidmatgars sever their connection with the All-India Congress organization and, therefore, instead of the Tricolor, adopt the Red Flag as the symbol of their party.

of allegiance to Pakistan in the assembly and defined his concept of “Pashtunistan” as a name for the NWFP.

On the part of Pashtun nationalist leaders, this was a major step in retreat from the idea of independence to that of provincial autonomy, and from antagonism to co-operation and integration in the new state. But for Muslim Leaguers like Abdul Qayum Khan and bureaucrats like Iskandar Mirza this “change of heart”, and the ideas of pluralism and democratic behavior were not acceptable, and they continued to conspire against nationalist Pashtun leaders, and muddying the water to catch their own fish. Indeed, even the “father of the nation”, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, asked Abdul Ghaffar Khan to join the Muslim League in March, 1948, a request that the later rejected.

To counter the Government’s policies, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, along with other nationalist leaders of Pakistan founded the People’s Party in Karachi with the following objectives: Stabilization and security of Pakistan as a “Union of the Socialist Republics, drawing its sanctions and authority from the people through their willing consent; provision of full and unimpaired autonomy for all, and cultural relations with neighboring states, particularly with the Indian Union.”¹⁶

Though the party never played any significant role in Pakistani politics, its formation was indicative of a political pattern and aspirations. However, on September 15, 1948, the Government declared the Khuda Khidmatgars organization as illegal and banned its journal, *Pukhtun*.

There was a general belief at that time among the Muslim Leaguers that “Pakistan is state of the Muslim League for the Muslim League and by the Muslim League.” All other parties

¹⁶ The political ally of Khudai Khidmatgars, the All Indian National Congress and its political rival the All Indian Muslim League accepted the 3rd June (1947) Plan of Lord Mountbattan, including a proposal for a referendum in the North West Frontier Province on two options only: India or Pakistan. This left the Pashtuns in a lurch.

were thought by them to be anti-Pakistan and were consequently to be forced to join with or merge into the Muslim League.

These various developments demonstrated the “mind set” of the Pashtun leaders and exposed the myopic approach of the new state towards them. The democratic behavior and pluralist approach of the Pashtun leaders in the affairs of the new state was misunderstood, misconstrued, and cast into a mould of suspicion as an anti-state and anti-ideology. Quite naturally, the future of the Pashtuns in Pakistan was fraught with difficulties.

In June, 1948, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested, followed by the tragedy of Babra, when the Qayum Khan government killed about 700 workers of the Khuda Khidmatgars (Official figures were only 15) and razed to ground its Sirdaryab headquarters.¹⁷

In such harsh circumstances and with complete censorship, nothing could be published in the Province except some secret pamphlets. A few public meetings, folklore and *charbatas* still survived to create the illusion of a cultural life but the Government policy of suppression was making its way in the press in other areas of Pakistan as well. The daily *Inqilab* and the Lahore-based *Pakistan Times* criticized the new ordinance (new form of Frontier Crimes Regulations-FCR)) as an ‘un-healthy measure,’ and asserted that its most objectionable feature was that the Government became both prosecutor and final judge. Continuing this criticism *Inqilab*, quoting from the daily *London Times*, lamented that the province was still ruled by draconian British laws of the colonial era. Under the British, the NWFP used to be called “Sarzameen-e-be-Ain” or land without any constitution; unfortunately the same saga still prevailed even after the establishment of Pakistan.¹⁸

Thus nothing changed inside the province. Pashtu literature, like Pashtun leaders, was branded as “Pashtunistani” and

¹⁷ Syed Minhajul Hassan, *Babra Firing Incident: 12 August 1948*, Peshawar: University of Peshawar, 1998.

¹⁸ Ibid.

“disloyal”. This situation is depicted in a poem by Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar:

“If liberty means starvation and stark nakedness I hate it.
What type of a windstorm it was?
Which blew off my gathered harvest.
Who planted wild grass in my garden of roses?
Probably we are not destined to
enjoy the blessing of freedom
Not a flash of it- not a grain of it.
What sort of freedom this is?”¹⁹

Islam, the only common bond between the Khudai Khidmatgars and the Muslim League was taken up and “owned” by the later as a “state ideology”, either for integration or suppression of all anti-government elements. The Pashtun nationalists were left with no option but their own language, Pashtu, and literature. In the absence of national leadership, which was in Pakistan’s jails in 1949, the only ray of hope was a Pashtu monthly *Aslam* of Kaka Sanober Hussain. Kaka Sanober, a Marxist nationalist, raised the banner of Pashtun rights by focusing on deteriorating political and economic conditions and the hypocrisy of the rulers, appealing to the people that the real force and authority was vested in them. He wrote boldly, peoples are the real force in the country. It is because of the public pressure that most of the rulers are praying publicly, not because of the fear of God but of the people.

Like its predecessors, *Aslam* also tried to champion the cause of the Pashtu and the Pashtuns in Marxist phraseology, and tried to create political consciousness, and to project objective analysis

¹⁹ Rukhsana Hidayatullah, unpublished MA thesis, “Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar,” Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar, 1987.

of the past and future strategies in the changing circumstances. A Pashtu couplet by Sahibzada Aslam declared:

“Oh! Proud over cries of ‘long live’
and ‘long live’ Let us come and
see the real happenings [hardships] of life.”²⁰

The Government also missed no chance by publishing two Pashtu monthlies *Jamuhar-Islam* (Islamic State/Democracy) from Peshawar and *Abaseen* (Indus) from both Karachi and Peshawar with the objectives:

1. to counter and defuse the Pashtunistan propaganda in Pashtu,
2. to create unity among different regions of Pakistan,
3. to create hatred against the Kabul regime among Pakistani Pashtuns,
4. to embrace and assimilate Pashtuns in the name of Islam with Pakistan.
5. to propagate its development plans and developmental works in East Pakistan and Pashtun tribal areas.²¹

These official periodicals were anti- Kabul regime, anti-India and pro-“One Unit” scheme, rejecting the diversity of Pakistani peoples. Instead of literary pursuits, most of writings in these publications were reproduction of official statements. They sought to promote the Government’s policies in favor of the “One Unit Scheme” in the name of “Islam”, “Islamic democracy” and “national integration”. The attempt was to marshal Pashtun sentiments in favour of Pakistan and against Kabul regime. These periodicals also propagated the theme that Pakistani Pashtuns

²⁰ *Aslam*, a monthly journal of Kaka Sanobar Hussain.

²¹ The file of Pashtu journals 1952, 1955, 1956. *Jamuhar-Islam and Abaseen*. Published from Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Karachi respectively. All these files are in the library of Pashtu Academy, University of Peshawar.

were Muslim first, then Pashtuns. In one of these official periodicals, an interesting poem was published:

Oh! Pashtuns of Kabul be awakened and be ready
for the creation of independent democracy,
How far will you be under the yoke of despotism?
Try and be independent (liberate) yourself
from personal despotic government.”²²

The emergence of cleavages between Centre and component units in Pakistan was further facilitated by the implementation of the One Unit Scheme in 1955 in West Pakistan. It brought about another crisis of identity in the new country. The Central government also hoped to silence those who demanded more autonomy for the provinces. In East Pakistan, this policy was interpreted as an attempt to reduce or marginalize the majority status of the population of the Eastern Wing, while within the Unit (West Pakistan) the merged parts felt their individual identities endangered. Internally, the Pashtuns, Sindhis and Baloch challenged the One Unit Scheme, and externally, it created new waves of tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

On March 25, 1955, Abdul Ghaffar Khan bluntly criticized the proposed One Unit Scheme arguing:

I believe that the existence and the promotion of cultural and linguistic areas do not militate against national unity. The people must be given an opportunity to express themselves on this national issue. He declared in unequivocal terms: “A nation is known and recognized by its language and without a language of its own, a nation cannot really be called a nation. A nation that forgets its own language will eventually disappear from the map altogether.”²³

²² See Jamuhar-Islam, October 1956.

²³ Tendulkar, *op. cit.*, p. 485.

It was in 1957 that nationalist forces in Pakistan were united on the platform of the National Awami Party (NAP).²⁴ Side by side with these nationalist-autonomists, Pashtun intellectuals and writers were also active with the purpose of reviving Pashtun society. The *Olasi Adabi Jirga* (Peoples Literary forum), and *Da Sahoo Likunkio Maraka* (The Association of seasoned/ progressive Writers) were the literary organizations run by nationalists who, like their comrades in ideology in politics, were believed to be backed by the regimes in Kabul. The suspicions regarding their loyalty owed their existence to the fact that, despite advocating an autonomous Pashtunistan within Pakistan, the nationalist leaders were always reluctant in rejecting, once and for all, the Kabul brand of Pashtunistan. Almost all Pashtun nationalists gave primacy to their Pashtun identity over the Muslim or the Pakistani, on occasion even begging for the rights of the Pashtu language. Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar thus wrote:

As a beggar I wait at your doorstep
For God's sake pour the sublime Pashtu language
As alms in my outstretched bowl.²⁵

During the era of the One Unit Scheme (1955-1969), Pashtu literature was clearly divided into two sections: official and non-official or pro-government and anti-government. The official publications under Pashtu Academy (1954), University of Peshawar and Tribal Publicity Organization (1961), published two dozens books about Pakistan and Muhammad Ali Jinnah and

²⁴ Formed in 1956, originally it included six parties namely: (1) Khudai Khitmatgar led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, (2) Sindh Awami Mahaz led by G. M. Sayyad, (3) Sind Hari committee led by Hayadar Bakhs Jatoi, (4) Ustman gall of Balochistan led by Prince Karim Khan and Mir Ghous Bakhs Bizenjo, (5) Wrore Pashtoon Party led by Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai and (6) Azad Pakistan Party led by Mian Iftikharuddin. In 1957 the party was named National Awami Party when Maulana Bhashani's Awami League from East Pakistan joined it.

²⁵ Hidayatullah, unpublished MA thesis, "Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar."

even Ayub Khan. The same organizations translated into Pashtu almost all works of Dr. Iqbal. Most of the works of Khushal Khan Khattak were translated into Urdu, while all important English and Urdu books on Islam, such as Syed Amir Alia's *The Spirit of Islam*, were translated into Pashtu. All these translations contributed positively to the state's efforts for integration and cultural and linguistic diffusion among nationalities. However, the role of official periodical like *Jamuhar-Islam* (Islamic State), *Abaseen* (Indus) and *Oolas* (People) was more to generate open propaganda, with little less originality or objectivity. The tone was more aggressively pro-Pakistan and One Unit and anti-Pashtunistan. Most of the writers were either non-entities in literary circles, with the exception of a few celebrities, such as Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari, Syed Rasul Rasa, Dost Muhammad Khan Kamil and Sahbzada Idirees.

The non-official segment of Pashtu literature was under the direct and indirect influence of the Pashtun nationalist movement and mostly consisted of nationalist, Marxist and liberal democratic litterateurs. All these were barred from radio Peshawar and Quetta, were excluded from Government patronage and faced persecution by the state. They were dubbed "traitors", "anti-Pakistan" and "Pashtunistani". Most of their writings were published in weeklies like *Lar* (Path), *Rahbar* (Guide), *Jamhuriat* (Democracy), *Nangialai* (Brave), *Zawand* (Life), *Rana* (Light), *Ghuncha* (Flower Bouquet) and *Gulistan*. Mostly these periodicals were anti-government, anti-One Unit, anti-despotism and anti-CENTO and SEATO, and championed the cause of Pashtun nationalism, Pashtu language, Pashtun rights, democracy, pluralism and progressivism.²⁶

²⁶ On the title page of monthly, *Lar*, Peshawar, was inscribed: "Speak Pashtu, Write Pashtu, read Pashtu" And, Ka Ghar Ochat Day Pa Sar ya Lar Shta " There is a Path to the top of even the highest mountain (Meaning: Where there is a will there is a way). See the October 1956 issue quoting a speech by Mian Mumtaz Daulatana at Peshawar, in which he demanded the detention of Abdul Ghaffar Khan because he was the "enemy of the

Among the most talented writers and poets of this period were Kak Sanobar Hussain, Abdul Ghani Khan, Ajmal Khattak, Mehdi Shah Mehdi, Wali Muhammad Toofan, Hamish Khalil and Qalander Mohmand. These icons of Pashtu literature had profound impact on the young generation on both sides of the Durand Line. Literary perfection, clarity of thought, objectivity, progressivism and, above all, revolutionary struggle for the emancipation of the downtrodden classes and attainment of Pashtun rights, marked their works. The common theme they projected was of love, peace, and rule of law, humanism, Human Rights and equal rights for all nationalities of Pakistan, irrespective of colour, creed and religion.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan in his booklet *Pashtun Aw Yoo Unit* (Pashtuns and the One Unit) in 1958 strongly criticized the One Unit Scheme and pleaded for its disbandment.²⁷ Indeed, at the height of the Pashtunistan issue in the fifties and the sixties, the Government became almost paranoid about Pashtu, which it looked upon as the major visible symbol of Pashtun nationalism. For Pakistan's intelligence agencies, all Pashtu publications of the 1960s and 1970s were assessed to have 'contained highly objectionable matter advocating the cause of Pashtunistan and the disintegration of West Pakistan'. Such reports made Government officials so mistrustful of Pashtu that the police monitored all Pashtu publications and all efforts to develop the language.²⁸

Revolution." He referred to the Russian revolution of 1917, in which all counter-revolutionaries were killed. There is a poem by Qalander Mohmand "There is a Might" [Might is Right?]; See also Hamesh Khalil, *Jamhuriat* in 1957. (1960 Ghuncha, Peshawar, April 1960, Criticism on Pashtu Seminar conducted in Urdu, with articles in Urdu. In its May 1960 editorial, the issue was raised, why Pashtun writers and poets were dubbed traitors and anti Pakistan? Why did the Government ban the books of some writers like Ajmal Khattak, Abdul Akbar Khan Mir Rahman Ghazi? Because there was nothing against Pakistan in their writings. Only mentioning Khushal Khan and Pashtunwali was not a crime.

²⁷ Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *Pashtun Aw Yoo Unit* (Pashtuns and the One Unit), Peshawar, 1958.

²⁸ Tariq Rahman, *Language and Politics in Pakistan*, Oxford Pakistan Paperbacks, 1996, p. 145; See also Mohammad Said Khan, *The Voice of the*

The era of Ayub Khan (1958-1969) further complicated relationships between the state and nationalities. Being a military strongman, he sought the consolidation of his power base in the country and Pak-Afghan tensions provided him a good opportunity to divert the attention of the public from internal political and constitutional crises. For him any retreat or compromise on the Pashtunistan issue with Daud Khan was a matter of prestige, and entirely unacceptable. For Daud, on the other hand, retreat from the issue meant political death. Both were marching in opposite directions “the former towards Washington and the latter towards Moscow. Their personal interests intertwined with their assessments of the national interest, and this was reflected in their respective external policies.”²⁹

Throughout the sixties and seventies, the Pashtun nationalists and Pashtu literature in northern and southern Pashtunkhwa remained autonomist, demanding a “Pashtun Suba”, an autonomous province within Pakistan defined on a linguistic basis, and as far as possible in keeping with the Pakistan Resolution of 1940.³⁰ They also remained active participants in all such alliances, such as the NAP, whose struggle was mainly based on the demand for autonomy and democracy within Pakistan.

Some Pashtun writers and poets were expecting a change under Ayub Khan’s regime, and this was reflected in the demand, from time to time, in some of the periodicals, for making the

Pakhtoons, Lahore: Feroz Press Limited, 1972. On page 66, he states that once a very senior military officer in Quetta was once made to tremble in his shoes, when the local police officer reported him as a “Pashtunistani”, for presiding over a meeting (*mushaira*) of a Pashtu symposia.

²⁹ Marwat, *Evolution and Growth of Communism in Afghanistan*, p. 295.

³⁰ In The Lahore Resolution, the grouping together of the Muslim majority areas in the Northwest and Eastern zones of India “constitute[ing] independent states” having an ‘autonomous’ and ‘sovereign’ statues was demanded. See Abdul Sattar Khan, ‘Pakistan Resolution and Politics in NWFP’ in *Pakistan Resolution Revised*, eds., Kaniz Yosuf, M. Saleem Akhtar and S. Razi Wasti, Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1990, p. 204.

Pashtu language the medium of instruction in educational institutions in the Frontier Province, and advice to the new ruler that the past practice of calling Pashtun writers “traitors” and “anti-Pakistani” should be ended once and for all. Though Ayub Khan first welcomed the Writers Guild, their dreams were soon shattered when the Government banned the books of Ajmal Khattak, Abdul Akbar Khan and Mir Rahman Ghazi. There was nothing in these books against Pakistan or its ideology, but their crime was to have mentioned the names of Khushal Khan Khattak and to use words such as democracy and Pashtunwali.

Among the literary works of this period, *Da Ghairat Chagha* (The Call of Valour) by Ajmal Khattak, a poet politician, surpassed all poetic works, particularly poetry on both sides of the Durand Line, and had a lasting impact on the young generation. His active role in politics and humble background lent force to his poetry, giving an outlet for his strong determinations, powerful expression, the call to open revolt, his courage and, above all, revolutionary fervour. The Government banned *The Call of Valour* for its allegedly seditious content in 1958. Hafizullah Amin, the second PDPA (People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan) President of Afghanistan confessed in 1979 that he was inspired by this book. The theme of most of Khattak’s poetry is love for the land, people, justice and fraternity, nationalism, revolution, Marxism, and humanism. Even in A recent interview he proudly confessed that he was a Marxist-Leninist.³¹ In his poem “Our Destiny,” Khattak wrote:

In my beautiful land
For the Pashtuns I want a love of life.
Of beauty and fraternity.
That alone is my destination
That alone is my Heaven
That alone I will pursue

³¹ Interview of Ajmal Khattak, Akora Khattak dated October 12, 2002.

For I do not like

The *Mullah* or the Khan.

When dictatorial regimes appeared with new trappings and new methods of suppression of the nationalities, Khattak declares a war and revolt against the rulers:

Comrades, it is not enough to smoke

We must turn ourselves into a flame.

To create new flowers is not joke

Clean up the garden to build again.³²

The second literary icon of this period was Abdul Ghani Khan (the elder son of Abdul Ghaffar Khan), who wrote his first book *Da Panjray Chaghar* (Lamentation of the Caged) in Haripur jail in 1953. This book was later banned by the Ayub Khan regime. Ghani Khan's poetry was "the proclamation of a new thinking and an open rebellion against conservatism."³³ About self-realization, Ghani said: I want to see my people educated and enlightened. A people with a vision and a strong sense of justice, who can carve out a future for themselves, in harmony with nature. In art and sculpture, the impressionists, Monet, Manet and Van Gogh inspired him. He thought Gauguin's colours were brilliant; Michelangelo's David, and Rodin's Cupid and Psyche, superb.³⁴

The third literary giant of this period was Qalender Mohmand, an even more profound and articulate poet and writer, who turned the tables by publishing a series of short stories *Gajray* (Bracelets). His poetry depicted all contemporary progressive traits and trends, with the flavour of nationalism and Marxism. Being a political worker, he struggled for the political rights of the people and for the removal of economic injustices. In

³² Ajmal Khattak, *Da Ghairat Chagha (The Call of Valor)*, Akori 1958. See also Louis Dupree, *Ajmal Khattak: A Revolutionary Poet*, AUFS vol. xx, No: 9.

³³ All works of Abdul Ghani Khan; See also Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, *Ghani Khan- A Renaissance Man*, The WUFA, March 7, 1996.

³⁴ Ibid. See all works of Abdul Ghani Khan.

his writings, he sought to follow Victor Hugo's example: "I have written *Les Miserables* for all nations. I don't know whether all will read it or not but I have written it for all."³⁵

In the 1960s, when Abdul Ghaffar Khan launched a civil disobedience movement, many writers and poets were arrested and persecuted, including Hamesh Khalil. To divert the attention of the public from internal problems, Ayub Khan's regime deliberately stirred up political controversies vis-à-vis Pakistan's rivalry with neighbours Afghanistan and India. The demands of local Pashtun leaders for the restoration of the pre-One Unit position, local autonomy, development of their culture and language, and the removal of disparities in regional units, were interpreted as a "conspiracy against Pakistan" by Islamabad. The official Press created a Pashtunistan phobia in order to suppress opponents, to divert public attention from real issues, or to secure certain personal interests.

During this period Pashtu literary associations were formed with different names in almost all areas of Pashtunkhwa. Some of the secular, young and educated writers, who were not actively involved in politics, but who intellectually, supported mass movements, socialism and democracy, worked to project the case of Pashtu and the Pashtuns. Among these, Abdur Rahim Majzooob adopted Greek mythology, exploiting its symbolism to condemn Ayub Khan despotic regime. Some of his poems in this period include "Arcadia", "Salute to Vietnam" and "The Gods of Metropole". In the "The Gods of Metropole," he criticizes rulers and politicians for their abuse and exploitation of the innocent populace:

Listen; O gods of Metropole;
We cannot bear anymore
Your rule of tyranny and oppression.

³⁵ Qalander Mohmand, *Sabawan*, Peshawar: Qami Maktaba, 1988.

O, power hungry and blind in luxuries of disposition!
We are unable to allow you to suck our blood anymore.³⁶

Prolonged Martial Law, controlled democracy, political instability, over-centralization, and eventually Shiekh Mujib-ur-Rahman's Six Point Programme of Constitutional Reform³⁷ and the cleansing of the leadership by Ayub Khan, encouraged Pashtun nationalists and other democratic forces to demand more rights and provincial autonomy. The victory of the Awami League in the elections of 1970 in the East wing gave a message and a new lesson to the people of other nationalities: that secular nationalism was more powerful than "Islam" of Islamabad and the "socialism" of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

During this period, two features appeared to be common in all Pashtu literary works: their dismissal of the One Unit scheme and the description of their authors as "anti-state" elements and "traitors" by the establishment. No substantial effort was made by either of the military regimes in power during this period to secure the compliance of the intellectuals and leaders who were working for the cause of their respective nations.

The fall of Dacca (now Dhaka) and the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 encouraged centrifugal forces in Pakistan, defying the country's Islamic ideological base. "New Pakistan,"

³⁶ Abdu Rahim Majzoob, *Da Majzoob Kulyiat*, Peshawar, 1999.

³⁷ The Six Points included: 1. A Federal Constitution in the true sense, and Parliamentary Government based on the supremacy of a directly elected legislature on the basis of universal adult franchise. 2. The Federal Government shall deal with only two subjects; Defense and Foreign Affairs. All residuary subjects will be vested in the federating states. 3. There should be either two separate, freely convertible currencies for the two Wings (East & West Pakistan), or one currency with two separate reserve banks to prevent inter-Wing flight of capital. 4. The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units. The Federal Government will receive a share to meet its financial obligations. 5. Economic disparities between the two Wings shall disappear through a series of economic, fiscal, and legal reforms. 6. A militia or paramilitary force must be created in East Pakistan, which at present has no defense of its own.

in the words of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was itself in search of an identity. In this search for identity, the Pashtun's quest for their own identity intensified, as did the demands for democracy and greater autonomy reflected in Pashtu literature from three distinctive perspectives: the Nationalist, the Socialist and the Secular Democratic.

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) slogans and programmes encouraged the Mazdoor Kisan (worker-farmer) Movement in the NWFP. But, PPP's unwise steps, and Bhutto's despotic desire to dominate the NWFP and Balochistan by dismissing their elected provincial Governments in 1973, the massacre at Liaquat Bagh, Lahore, in which two bodyguards of Ajmal Khattak were among the dead, and the Army action in Balochistan, were all witness to his authoritarian style. These measures were seen in Pashtunkhwa and Balochistan as an assault on the autonomy of the provinces. Among the nationalist leaders at this stage, Ghaus Bakhsh Bijenjo articulated the theory of four nationalities, in which Pakistan was seen as comprised of four distinct "nations", the Pashtun, Baloch, Sindhi and Punjabi.³⁸

Pashtu Literature in 1970s was more inclined towards socialism, Maoism and nationalism. A wide range of secular and progressive themes were presented in Pashtu literature and very serious discussions were initiated regarding Pashtun identity, Pashtu as medium of instruction and even the role of computers, in periodicals like Qand. As one writer commented: nationalism and regionalism, being inherent in a multi-national country, are as such, not the problem. The ruling political elites in Pakistan have always sought to use the ideology of the Pakistani nation against the demands of different nationalities for greater provincial autonomy. The elite's propensity to interpret any demand for autonomy as a mischievous conspiracy to divide and disintegrate

³⁸ Ghaus Bakhsh Bijenjo was NAP leader and Governor of Balochistan during NAP-JUI government in 1972-73.

Pakistan has had an adverse impact on the country, and has led to the assertion of many regional identities.³⁹

It should be noted that the NAP-Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JuI) coalition Government (1972 -1973) was in power, when it chose to declare Urdu as the official language of the NWFP, and assured the PPP leadership that it would support Pakistan's integrity. This volte face was taken very seriously in nationalist circles and harshly criticized in their literature.

The Daud Khan coup of 1973 in Afghanistan, his tough stand on Pashtunistan and the rights of the Pashtuns and Balochs, created more problems for the Pashtun leaders and further inflamed radical nationalist elements. The death of Hayat Muhammad Khan Sherpao of the PPP in a bomb blast in 1975 provided another chance to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to outlaw the NAP and its student's wing, the Pashtun Students Federation (PSF).

In the first thirty years of its existence, the Pakistani state tried to assimilate the nationalities on various pretexts, but failed totally, and the result was the separation of the East Wing, and the creation of Bangladesh. Throughout this period, Pashtu literature was wavering (perhaps, balancing) between cooperation and confrontation and was always on the forefront of the demand for equal rights of Pashtu and the Pashtuns in Pakistan under a true democratic parliamentary political system. Nationalists, Marxists, Maoists and democrats collectively promoted the cause of the common masses and its literature raised the banner of revolt against the notions of a strong Centre, authoritarianism, economic disparities and the hegemony of one province over the others,

³⁹ In October-November 1972: Qand, Mardan, Sahar Yousfzai, quoting Mao-Tse Tung's concept of "Literature and for whom it should be". In this conception, literature is for the revolutionary workers, then for the peasants, then for the revolutionary forces, then for the middle classes in the cities. But Pashtu literature was more for the common people, and it is the democratic right of the Pashtuns to have their own language.

even as they supported the secular, democratic, constitutional and economic rights of the masses of all provinces.

Second Phase: *Inqilabi* and *Jehadi* (Revolutionary and Resistance) Literature, 1978 - 1992

General Zia's Martial Law regime did make certain positive gestures to control, or at least neutralize, Pashtun nationalist's such as the release of all Pashtun and Baloch leaders, the dissolution of the Hyderabad Tribunal,⁴⁰ calling off military action in Balochistan and granting general amnesty to the Baloch rebels. He tried to win over Abdul Ghaffar Khan by declaring him a "patriot", and asked him to propose some name for NWFP except Pashtunistan. Ghaffar Khan proposed "Pashtunkhwa", but Zia subsequently simply shelved the entire issue. Nevertheless, at one stage, Zia not only chaired a seminar on Khushal Khattak, but also granted sanction for the establishment of the Khushal Cell at the Pashtu Academy, University of Peshawar. It was also during the Zia regime that the provincial Government started a project for Pashtu as the medium of instruction in the primary schools of the province.⁴¹

Some of these gestures helped in easing the tensions between the state and the Pashtuns, but this marriage of convenience was short lived due to geopolitical changes in neighbouring Afghanistan and Iran.

The Afghan Revolution (1978), followed by Soviet intervention and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, jolted the entire region politically, accelerating processes of political confrontation and ideological polarization. The Kabul regime supported Leftist

⁴⁰ Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had established the Hyderabad Tribunal, with especially hand-picked judges, to try all cases of "high treason."

⁴¹ Hafizullah Amin, the Afghan President, organized a seminar on Khushal Khan Khattak during his three-month rule in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, this seminar was organized by eminent Pashtu writer Prof. Parashan Khattak at Khushal Khattak's mausoleum.

elements in the NWFP, while the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan created the opportunity for the Islamic forces to exploit them for their own interest. Again, Pashtun nationalism was the target.

As was the case with his predecessors, Zia had no sympathies for Pashtun nationalism, but he did exploit the sentiments, weaknesses and poverty of the Afghans. The Afghans, who had long struggled to regain their lost Pashtun lands through the Pashtunistan movement, even lost Afghanistan to the Soviets in 1979. At this stage, the Zia regime sought to produce a “Pakistani generation” of Afghans to counter the “Pashtunistani generation”, by accommodating some three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

The Afghan crisis constituted a direct threat to traditional Pashtun nationalism and its leadership in the province, because the PDPA regime presented a new concept of Afghan nationalism, with a veneer of Afghan socialism. The counter-revolutionaries and the *Mujahideen* interpreted their resistance in terms of Islamic nationalism and *Jihad* against the Soviet occupation. Radicalism, extremism and the “Kalashnikov culture” spread like a jungle fire across the country. The Kalashnikov became a symbol of power and prestige and this phenomenon was reflected in films, calendar art and literature. The shadow of the Kalashnikov often fell across the poetry of this period:

After waiting and waiting for long, I can wait no more,
I think tomorrow I will take a Kalashnikov.
I have no respect even in my own house,
Now, with the Kalashnikov, I become chief in the area.
Another such couplet says:
There is no need of family planning in the country,

When there already are the Kalashnikov and the flying couch (minibus).⁴²

The Islamic nature of the Afghan resistance highlighted the close relationship of religion and politics and encouraged both locals and refugees in the province to establish some one thousand Islamic *Madrassas* and *Dar-ul-Ulum* (seminaries for senior students) with aid from Middle Eastern countries, in order to create the ideological base for the Afghan *Jihad*. Further, in all educational institutions in Pakistan, “Pakistan studies” and *Islamiyat* were introduced as compulsory subjects, to cast the younger generation into a more Islamic and patriotic mould, and “to defend the ideological frontiers” of Pakistan.

Though Islamabad’s official Afghan policy was based on the concept of “Islamic brotherhood, neighbourliness and humanitarianism”, its covert and real objectives were:

1. to suppress and discourage Pashtun nationalism;
2. to reduce Afghanistan to the status a Pakistani protégé, or at best, to let it be governed by her puppets;
3. to legitimize and prolong General Zia’s rule on the pretext of jihad; and last, but not least,
4. to divert public attention from domestic politics towards external threats.⁴³

The Kabul regime also produced ideological propaganda literature in Pashtu, projecting notions of “class struggle”, nationalism and internationalism. The novels and stories of Noor Muhammad Taraki (the head of the new regime and an eminent Pashtu writer) were republished and distributed freely on both sides of the Durand Line. Kabul also tried to establish the Khalq

⁴² Major (Retd.) Muhammad Nawaz Khan, *Da Naway Zamani Tappay*, Mardan: Gandhara Markaz Shabaz Ghari, 2001.

⁴³ Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, “The Role of Pakistan in conflict resolution in Afghanistan.” Seminar paper, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, UK, 2000.

Party in the tribal area and established close contacts with the Mazdoor Kisan Party of the NWFP.

The settlement of 2.2 million Afghan refugees in the Frontier contributed significantly to Pashtu literature and journalism. A major achievement was secured in the consolidation of a common Pashtu script. It was due to Afghan crisis that Pashtu services were started by the British Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of America and some twenty other radio stations. During these years, more than 2,500 books and periodicals, as well as a large volume of anti-Soviet propaganda material was published by different organizations and institutions in lower Pashtunkhwa.

From calligraphy to art and from handicrafts to Pashtu music, all improved and changed in style as a result of the arrival of large numbers of Afghan artists, singers and musicians. With the flood of refugees, the Pashtu film industry and video-audio businesses also increased manifold. In short if the Afghan war politically damaged the cause of Pashtun nationalism in Pashtunkhwa at that time, it accelerated and regenerated cultural nationalism, which will have far greater impact in future than the political losses.

The nationalist forces, which were either pro-Kabul or neutral, were sidelined by the Zia regime in Pakistan, and Islamic fundamentalist forces were encouraged to ally themselves with the Afghan *Mujahideen*. The writings of Pashtun refugees were anti-Soviet, anti-Communism and pro-*Mujahideen*, while the local Pashtu publications were also ideologically loaded.

Ironically, the Pashtu literature produced during this period was enormously diversified in form and content. Instead of Pashtunistan, the word Pashtunkhwa became more popular and politicized. Some of the nationalist Pashtun refugee writers, such as Azizur-Rahman Ulfat and Bahauddin Majrooh, were

assassinated in Peshawar by unknown assailants and others were forced to leave Pakistan.

With colossal losses in other fields, the Afghan Revolution contributed a great deal to the development of Pashtu through Government institutions such as the Pashtu Academy, Area Study Centre (Central Asia) and Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar, as well as through institution such as the Writers Union of Free Afghanistan (WUFA) and other cultural associations, centres and non-governmental organisations in northern and southern Pashtunkhwa.⁴⁴

Though the Pakistani Government tried to use its entire force to suppress Pashtun nationalism on both sides of the Durand line on the pretext of Islam and *Jihad* during this phase, the nationalist, leftist and democratic forces tried to resist the Government policies against peaceful resolution of the Afghan crisis, both politically and in literary circles. However, neither Islamabad nor the Afghan *Mujahideen* were ready for a political and peaceful resolution in Afghanistan.

During this period, most writers diverted their attention from Islamabad to Kabul, and little or no space was left for others to talk about peace or democracy. Among the positive fallouts of the Afghan crisis were the cultural, economic and ideological osmosis of Afghan/Pashtun elements with other nationalities of Pakistan. Among the negative consequences were the growing tendencies towards mullahism, extremism, militancy, sectarianism, the drug Mafia and the spread of the Kalashnikov culture in the entire country.

In 1985, anti-Kalabagh Dam⁴⁵ project and anti-Center sentiments were running high in the Frontier both in political and

⁴⁴ Out of 300 theses in the Pakistan Study Centre (University of Peshawar), some 125 titles were related to the Pashtuns and Pashtu.

⁴⁵ The Federal Government of Pakistan is planning to construct the Kala Bagh Dam in Punjab. The remaining three provinces of Pakistan - Sindh, Balochistan and NWFP are deadly against the construction of the proposed dam.

literary circles. This was followed by another important event in April 1987, when the First World Pashtu Conference was convened at Peshawar by Salim Raz in collaboration with nationalist, leftist and democratic forces, and with Abdul Ghaffar Khan as chief guest. The writers at the Conference condemned inhuman punishments under the Martial Law regime, as they condemned war in all its forms, reiterating their support to all peaceful efforts for the resolution of the Afghan conflict. They also demanded that Urdu be declared the “language of communication”, while Pashtu, Punjabi, Saraiki, Sindhi and Balochi should be declared “national languages.” They demanded, further, that Pashtu should be the medium of instruction in educational institutions in Pashtunkhwa. The Conference supported the just struggle of all people in Pakistan for democracy, peace and rights, irrespective of religion, race, sect, nation and creed.⁴⁶

Another two important literary occasions in this period included a three-day seminar on the Pashtu Script at Baraghali (July 1990) and the seminar on the “Importance of the mother tongue in imparting education” organized by the Peshawar University Teachers Association (PUTA) on November 13, 1990. These events articulated the demands that the name of the Frontier Province be changed to Pashtunkhwa; that Pashtu be made the medium of instruction at all levels in educational institutions in Pashtunkhwa; and more time be allocated for Pashtu programs on Pakistan Television’s Peshawar Centre.⁴⁷

An important development in provincial politics was the rejection of the ANP-sponsored resolution for the change of the name of the province from NWFP to Pashtunkhwa on November 29, 1990, in the Provincial Assembly by its coalition partner, the Islami Jumhuri Ittihad (IJI) party. Writers and nationalist forces in

⁴⁶ Personal collection of Salim Raz and the published record of the conference.

⁴⁷ *Frontier Post*, Peshawar, November 14, 1990.

the entire Pashtunkhwa criticized this event. The name, Pashtunkhwa, was not new for the Pashtun land, and found mention in Pashtu and Persian poetry and prose as far back as in the fourteenth century. After the name “Pashtunistan” lost its political value for Pashtun nationalists in Pakistan, the name “Pashtunkhwa” reflected a modern sense of the Pashtun people’s reintegration. In the wake of the IJI decision, literary circles reverberated with the question: Are we still scared of Pashtunistan? And why had the attitude of the Centre not changed despite the transformation of ground realities, including the facts that:

1. The centre of Pashtun aspiration was Peshawar not Kabul.
2. Pashtuns are as much Pakistani as the people of Sindh and Balochistan.
3. Provincial autonomy was a reality, as reflected in the national consensus over the rights of the provinces.⁴⁸

In Pashtunkhwa, all literary and academic occasions, seminars and conferences were used to express opposition to the authoritarian federal rule, martial law, Islamization and Pakistan’s flawed Afghan policy.

Zia sought to tame “disloyal” writers, whom he declared “equivalent to water logging and salinity.”⁴⁹ Blandishments were offered through the Academy of Letters (1979-88), but failed to buy the conscience of Pashtu writers, who refused to be turned into tools of the Government. Even after Zia’s death, the ensuing “democratic” regimes also failed to deliver any benefits to the Pashtun people. Emma Duncan was, perhaps, accurate in her assessment that, in the state of affairs in Pakistan, “the Army

⁴⁸ Ibid, November 30, 1990; Also see *Wahdat*, *Mashriq* and other dailies.

⁴⁹ Almost all nationalist parties launched the anti-Kala Bagh movement in the NWFP. This agitation was followed by demonstrations in the Sindh province.

blamed the politicians; the politicians the Army; the businessmen blamed the civil servants, the civil servants the politicians; everybody blamed the landlords and the foreigners, and the left and the religious fundamentalists blamed everybody except the masses.”⁵⁰ At the end of it all, no one accepted any responsibility, and there were no solutions to the endemic problems of the nation’s including the problems of Pashtunkhwa.

With the fall of the Soviet Empire and rise of the Central Asian Republics, a new debate commenced in literary circles; whether Islamic *Jihad* or nationalism was to be the main instrument of change? These ideas, and the struggle for the transformation of Pashtunkhwa, found a place in the dreams, songs and sorrows of poets and writers, including those who were illiterate. Among such illiterate poets, Nazar Shinwari wrote:

Stop moaning about your fate and heavenly woes.

Instead talk of man’s flight into space.⁵¹

The second phase (1978-1992) of Pashtu literature was testimony to revolutions, resistance, civil wars, ideological polarization, extremism, mullahism, the drug Mafia, the Kalashnikov culture, sectarianism, the rebirth of the two-nation theory, Islamization, military dictatorship, and political anachronism. Pashtu literature gained from this ferment, but Pashtun society turned to violence and disorders. Practically and culturally, if not politically, the Durand Line was blurred and provided opportunities for greater exposure of Pashtu artists, musicians, singers and writers to other areas of Pakistan, creating the basis for common avenues and interests, as well as cultural inter-penetration. The Tablighi Jamaat, Gadinashins (Sufis), mystics, the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, various non-governmental organisations, and the dynamic trends towards globalization were

⁵⁰ Emma Duncan, *Breaking the Curfew*, “A political journey through Pakistan,” London: Arrow Book Ltd, 1990, p. 6.

⁵¹ *Frontier Post*, May 26, 1990.

other factors that influenced these exchanges, creating both harmony and conflict between the different nationalities of Pakistan.

The Third Phase: *Aman and Jirga* (Peace and Reconciliation) Literature 1992-2002

The fall of Dr. Najibullah and the rise of the *Mujahideen* Government in Kabul, followed by fratricidal war, bloodshed and the burning of Kabul, all changed the attitude and thinking of those who had expectations from the Islamic radical forces. Unfortunately, the *Mujahideen* Government burned all the books in the libraries of Kabul in order “to obliterate the stains of Communism.” In Pakistan, two books, *The Silent Soldier* and *The Bear Trap*, exposed the real Pakistani designs to Pashtuns. The factional infighting between *Mujahideen* groups in Afghanistan shattered the myth and might of Islamic forces, and of an ideal Islamic Afghanistan, even as their supporters in Pakistan were exposed.⁵² The hopelessness of the people at this time was reflected in both prose and poetry. Thus,

Some embraced martyrdom on the very name of a country,
While others erected palaces on the blood of the martyrs.

November 12, 1993, also marked the completion of one hundred years on of the Durand Agreement on the basis of which the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan had been drawn by the British, bringing the frontier once again into dispute. This issue was widely analysed within the context of the new and changing political scenario.

⁵² Brig (Retd) Muhammad Yousaf revealed in his two books *Silent Soldier: The Man behind the Afghan Jihad*, Lahore: Jang Publisher, 1991, pp. 39-47, and *The Bear Trap: Afghanistan's Untold Story*, Lahore: Jang Publisher, 1995, pp. 79-86, that it was General Akhtar who “urged Zia to take the military option” instead of the diplomatic option for countering the Soviet presence in Afghanistan.

Pashtun society had already been divided into ideological extremes, crystallizing into two distinct political streams: One was for *Jirga*, reconciliation and peace; the other for *Jihad* and war. These conflicts found clear expression in contemporary Pashtu literature, with *Spede* (Dawn) emerging as one of the best journals of this period. *Spede* projected cultural and political aspects of Pashtu literature and translated many Urdu articles into Pashtu. Its tone changed with the changing political scenario in Afghanistan, yet it maintained a balance in its approach towards national question of the Pashtuns.

Among Pashtun writers of this period, five groups produced literature from their own perspective on the national question of the Pashtuns and the future of Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The first group of writers was mostly those who were in European countries, particularly Germany-based members of the Pashtun Social Democratic Party (PSDP), interpreting Pashtun/Afghan problems in their own western cultural environment and with utopian hypotheses. The best example of this trend was Ali Khan Masud's *Germanian bia Yoo Shwal* (The Germans Reunited) and the journal, *Pashtunkhwa*.

The second group of writers, mostly from the "Pashtunistan generation", with new experience of Revolution, *Jihad* and civil war, living either in refugees camps or in rented houses, and having closely observed the problems of local Pashtuns and their own kith and kin, were more careful and more objective in their writings and analyses. The best examples were the late Bahaudin Majrooh and Rasul Amin and the latter's book, *Afghanistan Da Tarikh Khtarnak Pachumi na Tiragi* (Afghanistan through a critical phase of history). In this book, Amin analyses the history of the region with special reference to Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the role of political leaders, negating the concept of Iqbal's *Her Mulikai Mulikai Maa Asat, Khee Milki Khudai Maa Asat*

(Every country is my country because I am the heir of the property of God).

The third groups of writers were principally nationalists, interpreting Pashtun history and literature with their own political agendas. These included the writings of Mahmud Khan Achakzai, Abdur Rahim Mandu Khel, Sher Ali Bacha and the series of Abdul Wali Khan books, *Bacha Khan Aw Khudai Khidmatgari* (Bacha Khan and Khudai Khidmagari).

The fourth group was that of “Reconstructionist” writers, led by Muhammad Afzal Khan, a former federal minister. Afzal Khan in his booklet *Pakhtun Qami Wahdat* (Pashtun National Unity) presents a different hypothesis for the unification of Pashtuns by justifying his arguments in the light of the sayings of Dr. Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He proposes the abolition of feudalism for the unity of Pashtuns and even envisages such unity at the cost of the disintegration of Afghanistan.

The fifth group of writers was that of leftist progressives, led by Salim Raz and Noorul Bashir Navid. Their approach was more progressive, democratic, independent and dynamic, penetrated with notions of socialism, nationalism, peace and progress.

The sixth group of writers was drawn from the “war generation,” born and bred in the shadows of the India-Pakistan wars or the Afghan war. Most of these writers are either deadly against war or totally committed to war and *Jihad*. The psyche of the latter group was further developed in Islamic seminaries and training camps, where they internalized Islamic rhetoric and slogans, which was then articulated in their songs and writings. The Taliban themselves, and the rise of the Taliban Islamic Movement in Afghanistan, are the best examples of this group.

The urge of Pashtuns for peace and tranquility on both sides of the Durand line was exploited by Islamabad by pushing forward, once again, the obscurantist Taliban purportedly to

establish peace and order, and to defeat warlordism and lawlessness in Afghanistan.

The quest for peace and reconciliation, nevertheless, found its place and expression on four significant occasions, which are important from politico-literary perspective in the Pashtunkhwa:

1. The Bacha Khan Peace Conference at Peshawar on January 20, 1995;
2. The passing of the resolution in the NWFP Assembly to rename the province as Pashtunkhwa in November, 1997.
3. The 2nd World Pashtu Conference in Peshawar: November 3-5, 2000:
4. The Jirga convened by Afzal Khan for Pashtun National Unity at Peshawar in December 2000.

Besides exploring the ways and means for development and propagation of the Pashtu language, literature, journalism and culture, enabling them to compete with other nations, the 2nd World Pashtu Conference also emphasised the need to prepare concrete revolutionary proposals regarding the economic, social, psychological and cultural problems of the Pashtu nation, and to put an end to the social injustice. Some of the important resolutions of the Conference were:

1. The demand that the war in Afghanistan and foreign interference in its internal affairs be ended.
2. The demand for a change in the name of the province from NWFP to Pashtunkhwa.
3. The demand that Pashtu be made the medium of instruction in the province.
4. A demand for official patronage to Pashtu.
5. In all areas of the former Swat State, Pashtu should be introduced because it was official language of the State.
6. All journals and magazines published by the Central Government in Pashtu in the past, such as *Abaseen*, *Oulas* and *Jamhur-i-Islam*, should re-start publication.

7. *PTV World* should include Pashtu programmes for all Pashtuns living in the Middle Eastern countries.

Some new periodicals, *Jirga*, *Shamshad*, *Gorbat*, *Gandhara*, *Waraze*, from Peshawar and *Mewand* and *Palana* from Quetta, started publication for peace and reconciliation and the promotion of Pashtu language and literature in this period. Among these periodicals, *Likwal* (Writer, 1992-1997) was more vocal in championing the cause of Pashtu language and literature. Most of the Urdu articles of Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Habib Jalib were translated into Pashtu. *Likwal* also countered the vilification of those who were writing from Islamabad and Lahore against the Pashtuns, and their culture and language. Most writers discussed political and cultural issues, the Afghan problem, as well as local, regional and international concerns, seeking to subject these to scientific and objective analysis. Some of the issues and questions they raised constantly included:

1. It is the right of every nation to demand the protection and development of its own language. Why then is the demand for Pashtu considered treasonous in Pakistan? Why does the state look upon the Pashtuns with suspicion?
2. The Afghan war is not a war between Islam and non-Islam but rather a war between the USA and the USSR, whose only victims are the poor Afghans.
3. The name "Pashtunkhwa" should be given to the NWFP. Why the Pashtun's national question always is exploited in the name of political priorities, party interests and constitutionality?
4. In an article "Literature and Democratic culture", Salim Raz criticized the militant policies of the Government, demanding to know how democratic norms of peace came to be replaced by the violent cultural trends of terror and the Kalashnikov? Why was the Kalashnikov culture nourished under the shadows of modernization and an anti-Soviet posture? He

claimed that Pakistan's rulers were trying to artificially "oxygenate" an old system, to produce a fake leadership for Afghanistan, and the result of this was unending war.

The late Sher Ali Bacha focused on the history of the nationalities, arguing that the *Muhajir* were considered an invading force, who used Urdu as tool to impose their own will and culture on the other nationalities of Pakistan. The *Muhajirs* (here referred to those migrated from India) first talked of the ideology of Pakistan, a strong Centre and Urdu as the national & state language. With the passage of time, the *Muhajirs* abandoned the ideology of Pakistan and Islam and were now projecting provincial autonomy, not a strong center, Jinnah not Iqbal.

Another article by Ali Bacha focused on "Modern Democracy", which was identified with pluralism and the idea of "unity in diversity". He argued that those in the echelons of power had forgotten that, in a uni-polar world, Cold War policies had to be abandoned. In the emerging New World Order, modern Pashtun nationalism had also adopted a new progressivism, democratic and liberal qualities. It was no more a comparison with particularism and was making strides to reconcile with and embrace other progressive forces in Pakistan. In the new economic order it was evident that, on the one hand, Pashtun nationalism was declining politically and, on the other, rising both culturally and economically. Pashtunkhwa had been a bridge for Central Asia and South Asia and needed to be restored to this status. In the words of Allama Iqbal (1877-1938):

Asia is comparable to a living body.

The heart that beats inside the body is the nation of Afghans.

The destruction of the Afghans is the destruction of Asia.

In their progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia.

Among the Pashtu dailies, *Hewad*, *Wahdat*, *Maidan*, *Sahar* and the *Frontier Post* (though originally an English daily) started a weekly page from 1992 to 1995 for the promotion of Pashtu

literature and Pashtun nationalism. Resource-less poets and writers were at the forefront of the campaign for Pashtu literature. As a result, literary societies, associations and the media were important vehicles for the projection of their desires and expectations through their own language and literature.

As one writer expressed it: “A civilization can only prosper or develop when its cultural and social ethos blend harmoniously into its political and administrative structures.”⁵³ There exists utter confusion in Pakistan, generally, as a nation’s state built for the Muslims of South Asia, which has denied a majority of its citizens their fundamental rights free individuals. Political sovereignty and economic prosperity have long been elusive goals and the discussion about nationalities within Pakistan, their cultural identity and development was deliberately suppressed during long spells of dictatorship and “undemocratic democracies.” This has resulted in the fragmentation of social structures within the different nationalities living in Pakistan, and a loss of a cohesive value system, other than religion. The media has falsely projected the “ideological identity” that was conducive to the perpetuation of the ruling elite of Pakistan. It reinforced the idea of “homogeneity” on the basis Islamic traditions alone, consequently ignoring wide cultures and political differences.

The late Ghani Khan once observed that a culture grows and develops in centuries. Conversely, it takes centuries to wipe out a culture. One of the basic factors that have paradoxically contributed to the survival of Pashtu is the economic backwardness and lower rates of literacy among the Pashtuns, as compared to some of Pakistan’s more privileged groups.⁵⁴

The last five years of the 20th century and the early years of the new century saw more than 700 new titles in Pashtu, on

⁵³ Muhammad Nawaz Khan, *Da Naway Zamani Tappay*.

⁵⁴ S. Inamur Rahman, Contribution of daily the Frontier Post to Pashtu Literature (1992-1995), unpublished MA thesis, Pakistan Study Center, University of Peshawar, p. 155.

history, legal systems, technical subjects, fiction and poetry. A cursory look at these titles indicates that young writers have come up to expectations, following closely in the footsteps of the retiring generation. A majority of these authors is drawn from the middle classes and their writings are replete with anti-war slogans and a desire for peace and reconciliation. Thus, *Akbar Sial*, *Paa Jang Day Aoor Wa Lagi* (To Hell with the War), *Abdullah Jan Maghmoom*, *Armanoona auo Hasratoona* (Ambitions and Aspirations), *Dr. Sher Zaman Taizai*, *Nara Zaba* (Virile language) and *Dr. Suhail Insha Pukhtane neway jorakhat* (Pashtun social & tribal structure) reflect anti-war themes and a powerful assertion of the Pashtun identity.⁵⁵

All contemporary events, both regional and global, have found expression in this phase of Pashtu literature, including Habibullah Rafie's *Da Bootano Hangama* (The Crisis of Idols); Ghaos Khaberi's *Pa Afghanistan Kay Topan* (Storm in Afghanistan); Muhammad Kamal's book on 9/11, *Naray da Topan pa Oogo* (World on the Shoulders of a Storm), and the periodical *Hillah* of April-May 2002, which raised the crucial question: Are All Pashtuns Taliban?

Afrasiyab Khattak and Dr. Taizai are optimistic about the role and place of Pashtu in globalization and a fast-changing world. But the situation calls for an urgent and fundamental change- a change from the old parasitic ethos to the technological heights through "intellectual insurgency" if possible, otherwise the rusted system and anachronistic order will collapse under its own contradictions.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Among some important books of the period are: Rahmat Shah Sahil's *Da Wino rang Paa Lambu Singa Khkari* (How looks the colour of blood on the flames), Ajmal Khattak's *Da Afghan Nang*, Mirza Halim Hamidi, *Da Kanro Zaroona* (The Stone Hearts), Najibullah Amir, *Da Bachai Akhri Warz* (The last day of the Kingship), Syed Wiqar Ali Shah, *Khushal Khan Khattak aw Tarikh Nawisi* (Khushal Khan Khattak and Historiography).

⁵⁶ Interview with Dr. Sherzaman Taizai, Peshawar, October 10, 2002; Interview with Afrasiyab Khattak, Peshawar, October 25, 2002.

For many years, the Pashtun nationalist movement remained underdeveloped and enmeshed in “particularism”, yet its literature contains all the qualities of modern global literary trends. Pashtu literature has effectively articulated the new Pashtun nationalism, including the demand for a new federal relationship with Pakistan, and has not failed to accommodate the imperatives of the decentralization of administration within Pashtunkhwa. There is a clear recognition that a quantum of autonomy is essential in order to assert a political identity, and this can be achieved only through a restructured relationship between the federating units of Pakistan. Democracy and a genuine federation of Pakistan tops the list of Pashtun demands, and includes the ideas of political autonomy and rights over natural resources to the constituent States of the federation, as also the right to independently develop their cultural and national identity.

These demands may appear sentimental to some, but it must be made abundantly clear that the Pashtun movement is not isolationist in its essence. The Pashtuns are bound to benefit from a dynamic socio-economic intercourse with the rest of the region. However, the uniqueness of the Pashtuns has to be emphasized precisely because it has been denied and suppressed. But the ideal is a unity in diversity, and the positive and modern objectives of democracy and economic development

Pashtu was chosen as an identity-marker by Pashtun nationalists for educational, economic, cultural and political reasons, to create a place for themselves within Pakistan. Their aspirations for independence changed into a demand for maximum provincial autonomy, and this shift was expressed in literature, at times in the form of Pashtunistan, at others, in the form of Pashtunkhwa. These efforts, however, are all part of the Pashtun nationalist demand for greater autonomy, the right to preserve the indigenous way of life, and pride in the Pashtun

identity. The Pashtun ideal and aspiration is articulated in Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar's famous couplet:

I am not such a fool as to want to rule over other people [in Pakistan]

All that I want is: The reflection of the Pashtun entity in the constitution of the country,

The region where I live to be named after my people,
the Pashtuns who live there and Good education for my children in their own language, Pashtu.

As long as these aspirations are fulfilled, I do not mind even if I remain poor, hungry and naked.