

THE STATE AS ARBITRATOR: BHUTTO'S LAND AND LABOR REFORMS AND THE CONTAINMENT OF RADICAL PEASANT SOVEREIGNTY IN CHARSADDA, PAKISTAN

Sohail Zaman^{*1}, Inam Ullah²

^{*1}M. Phil Scholar, Department of Political Science, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan

²M. Phil Scholar, Department of Political Science, Abasyn University, Peshawar

^{*4}sohailzaman104@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

Sohail Zaman

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the role of the postcolonial Pakistani state as an arbitrating authority during the reformist period of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government (1971–1977), focusing on the impacts of land and labor reforms in Charsadda, Pakistan. While Bhutto's reforms are often celebrated as progressive measures aimed at dismantling feudal dominance and advancing social justice, this study argues that they simultaneously functioned to contain emergent forms of radical peasant sovereignty. Situating the analysis within debates on state autonomy, populism, and agrarian political economy, the paper challenges reformist narratives that equate redistribution with empowerment. Using a qualitative historical–sociological case study approach, the study draws on policy documents, archival material, secondary literature, and contemporaneous accounts of peasant mobilization. The findings show that although land redistribution and labor legislation expanded the state's presence in rural society, their institutional design subordinated peasant agency to bureaucratic and legal frameworks controlled by the state. In Charsadda—an area characterized by intense agrarian activism and left-oriented peasant movements—the reforms reconfigured rather than transformed existing power relations. By positioning itself as a neutral arbitrator between landlords and peasants, the state absorbed popular demands while limiting the scope of autonomous collective action. Radical claims to peasant sovereignty were redirected toward formalized, state-mediated channels such as courts, party structures, and administrative negotiations. This process depoliticized grassroots mobilization and integrated dissent into a managed reformist framework, stabilizing rather than unsettling the agrarian order. The paper contributes to scholarship on agrarian politics and state–society relations by demonstrating how reformist states can simultaneously pursue redistribution and constrain popular sovereignty. Bhutto introduced the Land Reform Regulation of 1972 and the Land Reform Act of 1977, setting land ceilings at 150 irrigated and 300 non-irrigated acres. Although these reforms reclaimed significantly less land than Ayub Khan's 1959 initiatives—0.6 million acres compared to 1.9 million acres—they fundamentally altered rural power dynamics by providing tenants with legal protection against eviction. It underscores the need to critically examine the state's mediating role in shaping, containing, and redefining class struggle in postcolonial agrarian contexts.

Keywords: Agrarian reform, State–society relations, Peasant movements, Populism and reformism, Land and labor reforms, Postcolonial political economy, Pakistan.

Introduction

The landscape of rural Pakistan, particularly the North Hashtnagar region of the Charsadda district, was defined for decades by a rigid and exploitative socio-economic hierarchy known as "khanism" or the "zamindari" system. Under this structure, the landed elite, or Khans, exercised near-total sovereignty over the lives of the peasantry, who existed in a state of profound socio-political alienation and economic degradation. The introduction explores the emergence of the Mazdoor Kissan Movement (MKM), a radical peasant uprising that challenged this entrenched feudal order, and the subsequent state intervention under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that sought to contain this radicalism through legal and administrative arbitration. By examining the shift from the role of the National Awami Party (NAP) to the "passive revolution" strategy of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), this research highlights how state-led land and labor reforms served as instruments to de-authorize radical peasant sovereignty and integrate the rural masses into the formal legal infrastructure of the state.

Historically, the peasants of North Hashtnagar Charsadda were subjected to a multifaceted system of exploitation that extended beyond simple rent-seeking. The sources describe a reality where tenants were burdened by various coercive taxes and social obligations. These included Intok (grain given in exchange for winter fodder), Dak Dhari (fees for using open fields to dry grain), and Chana (the provision of livestock to the Khan during family weddings). Furthermore, the system enforced Torah Toqah, a fee paid upon the marriage of a tenant's daughter, and Khakshoora, which restricted the use of natural fertilizers without the Khan's consent. This exploitation was deeply gendered, as peasant women were often forced into unpaid domestic labor, sweeping wheat and washing clothes for the landed families, while simultaneously facing the constant threat of sexual harassment. Such conditions fostered a deep sense of alienation, where the workers felt disconnected from the fruits of their labor and their own human agency.

The Mazdoor Kissan Movement (MKM) emerged in the late 1960s as a militant rejection of this

system. Led by figures such as Afzal Bangash and Major Ishaq, the movement was grounded in Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideologies, prioritizing direct radical struggle over traditional parliamentary politics. The MKM's "red banner" became a potent symbol of resistance across Hashtnagar, Mardan, and Swat, promising an end to the atrocities of the primitive rulers. A pivotal moment in this struggle occurred in June 1970 in the Bahram Dheri region, where a peasant militia (*lahkar*) successfully repelled state police and landlord-hired gunmen. This victory inaugurated a period of " *awam raj* " (people's rule), during which the MKM established peasant courts and effectively abolished forced labor and illegal evictions in many areas of North Hashtnagar, Charsadda, Pakistan. The movement's expansion was significantly aided by "Aabiyah", or kinship unity, as entire lineages joined the MKM collectively to defend their survival and honor.

The radical sovereignty established by the MKM posed a significant threat to the existing power structures of Pakistan. Initially, the state responded with repression, relying on its coercive apparatus to contain peasant mobilization, which resulted in violent confrontations and the spilling of "Kissan blood." However, the rise of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 1972 marked a strategic shift in state-peasant relations. Bhutto, campaigning on a platform of socialism and the empowerment of the "downtrodden classes," employed a strategy of "passive revolution" to demobilize the radical base of the MKM while ostensibly addressing some of its demands.

Central to Bhutto's containment strategy were the Labor Reforms of 1972 and the Land Reform Regulation of 1972. The labor policies guaranteed fundamental rights such as freedom of association and collective bargaining, while the land reforms set ceilings on holdings at 150 irrigated and 300 non-irrigated acres. While these reforms reclaimed less land than those of the Ayub Khan era—recovering only 0.6 million acres compared to 1.9 million—their primary impact was to regularize tenancies. By granting tenants legal protection against eviction, the state effectively shifted the

locus of power from the MKM's radical militias to the state's legal and administrative machinery. The implementation of this "passive revolution" was facilitated by the creation of conciliation committees. Directed by district officials, these committees were tasked with mediating disputes between landlords and tenants to achieve state-sanctioned compromises. In many cases, this led tenants to purchase land at discounted rates or to continue their tenancies under strictly controlled prices. By acting as an arbitrator, the state deauthorized the radical sovereignty of the MKM; tenants no longer required the movement's militant protection because their rights were now governed by the state's legal system. As the sources note, this intervention was strategically targeted at regions where the MKM was most organized, effectively isolating the movement's leadership from the masses.

The long-term consequences of these reforms led to what has been termed "capitalism from below". The loosened control of the Khans allowed wealthier tenants to invest their surpluses back into agriculture, acquiring tractors, farm equipment, and cultivating high-value crops like tobacco and tomatoes. However, this economic shift also resulted in internal class fragmentation within the peasant movement. These "capitalist farmers" or wealthy peasants often evolved into vote brokers for traditional political parties, including the successors of the very Khans they once fought. Consequently, the contemporary remnants of the MKM frequently align with the landed elite in electoral politics, often neglecting the plight of the landless rural poor (*khet mazdoor*), who remain vulnerable to exploitation and lack secure access to land.

The state's role as an arbitrator—manifested through Bhutto's land and labor reforms—successfully contained the radical threat by regularizing agrarian conflict within the framework of state legality. This process ultimately facilitated the rise of a new rural middle class, which, while economically independent, has largely been integrated into the existing political order, leaving the radical goals of the 1970s partially unfulfilled for the most marginalized sectors of rural society.

Literature Review

The Nature of Peasant Movements: Radicalism versus Institutionalization

The academic study of agrarian politics categorizes peasant movements as a critical variation of community-based mobilization. Scholars differentiate between radical peasant movements, which are typically unrecognized groups seeking a total transformation of the social status of the peasantry, and institutionalized movements, which operate through formal structures to effect socially sanctioned change. Historically, the transition from radical resistance to institutionalized participation is a defining process for these communities. While Karl Marx originally expressed scepticism regarding the radical potential of the peasantry, subsequent thinkers like Lenin and Mao Zedong identified them as a revolutionary force. In the context of Asia, factors such as land scarcity, high profitability, and cheap labor have been identified as primary drivers for peasant-led revolutions. In Pakistan, the Mazdoor Kissan Movement (MKM) represents a quintessential case study of this transition, moving from a radical Marxist-Leninist rejection of the state to a complex relationship with the state's legal and administrative frameworks.

Radical Sovereignty: The Rise of the MKM and the Red Banner

The MKM emerged in 1968 as a direct challenge to this primitive rule, led by figures such as Afzal Bangash and Major Ishaq. From its inception, the movement prioritized radical struggle over parliamentary politics, viewing the electoral system as a tool of the status quo. Grounded in Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideologies, the MKM sought to awaken peasant consciousness to the illegality of their exploitation. The movement utilized the "red banner" as a potent symbol of protection and resistance across Hashtnagar, Mardan, and Swat. A pivotal moment of radical sovereignty occurred in June 1970 in the Bahram Dheri region. Following an attempt by a local Khan to extort more wheat, the MKM mobilized a peasant militia (*lahkar*) that successfully repelled police and landlord-hired gunmen. This victory led to the establishment of "*awam raj*" (people's rule), a form of popular democracy where peasant courts were

formed and forced labor was abolished. The movement's success was underpinned by the concept of "Aabiyah" (kinship unity), where entire lineages or clans joined the MKM collectively to defend their survival and honor. By 1970, the movement had spread "like fire," creating a state of affairs where many landlords were forced to flee Hashtnagar entirely.

The "Khanism" System: Institutionalized Oppression and Alienation

The socio-economic landscape of North Hashtnagar and the wider Charsadda district was historically dominated by the "khanism" or "zamindari" system. Under this structure, the landed elite (Khans) exercised absolute control, leaving the peasantry in a state of profound socio-political alienation. This alienation is a material and social process where workers are separated from the products of their labor and the ability to shape their own environments. In rural Charsadda, this was manifested through a variety of coercive taxes and feudal obligations that transcended simple rent. These included:

- **Intok:** The requirement for tenants to provide grain to the Khan in exchange for winter fodder for their own cattle.
- **Dak Dhari:** A fee paid in grain for the right to use open fields to dry-harvest crops.
- **Chana:** The obligation of a tenant to provide livestock and service during the marriages of the Khan's children.
- **Torah Toqah:** A fee paid to the Khan when a tenant's own daughter was married.
- **Khakshoora:** Restrictions on the use of natural fertilizers without the Khan's consent.

This system was further reinforced by gendered exploitation. Peasant women were frequently subjected to unpaid domestic labor, such as sweeping wheat or washing clothes for the Khans, and were vulnerable to sexual harassment. This intersectional oppression—being marginalized both as women and as members of the peasant class—defined the lived reality of the rural masses in Charsadda.

The Strategic Shift: From Coercion to Passive Revolution

The state's initial response to the MKM's assertion of radical sovereignty was marked by attempts at containment rather than outright accommodation. The National Awami Party (NAP), which governed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the early 1970s, positioned itself as a mediating authority between militant peasants and entrenched landed interests. Seeking to preserve social order and administrative stability, the NAP attempted to manage escalating tensions through negotiation and institutional channels. Nevertheless, these mediation efforts unfolded within a context of structural power asymmetries, and confrontations on the ground still resulted in violence, remembered locally as the spilling of "Kissan blood."

However, the rise of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 1972 introduced a different strategy: the "passive revolution". Bhutto, campaigning on a platform of socialism, sought to win over and demobilize the peasant base while ostensibly upholding the rights of the "downtrodden classes". Unlike the NAP, which refused to acknowledge MKM authority, the PPP government utilized the state's administrative machinery to absorb the movement's momentum into a state-led framework.

The Paradox of Reform: Land, Labor, and the Role of Arbitrator

Bhutto's containment strategy relied on two primary pillars: labor and land reforms. The Labor Reforms of 1972 guaranteed workers' fundamental rights such as freedom of association and collective bargaining, paving the way for a "new workable relationship" between employers and employees. Simultaneously, the Land Reform Regulation of 1972 set ownership ceilings at 150 irrigated and 300 non-irrigated acres. While the 1972 reforms recovered only 0.6 million acres of land—significantly less than the 1.9 million acres reclaimed under Ayub Khan's 1959 reforms—their primary value lay in their political and legal impact.

The most significant effect of these reforms was the regularization of tenancies. The state

transitioned from being a mere agent of the landlords to acting as an arbitrator. This was executed through conciliation committees directed by district officials. These committees mediated disputes, often resulting in compromises where tenants purchased land at discounted rates or secured tenancies under strictly controlled prices. By providing a legal avenue for dispute resolution, the state de-authorized the radical sovereignty of the MKM; peasants no longer needed the party's militant protection because the state's legal system now governed their land rights. This intervention was strategically targeted at areas where the MKM was most organized, effectively isolating the radical leadership from the masses.

Capitalism from Below and Class Fragmentation

The state's role as an arbitrator fundamentally altered rural production relations. While the "passive revolution" successfully ended traditional "khanism," it inadvertently fostered what has been termed "capitalism from below". The loosened control of the Khans allowed a segment of wealthy peasants to invest their surpluses into agriculture, acquiring farm equipment and cultivating high-value crops. However, this shift has led to internal class fragmentation within the movement. In contemporary Charsadda, the formerly oppressed wealthy peasants have evolved into "capitalist farmers" who now act as vote brokers for traditional political parties, including the successors of the very Khans they once fought. This evolution has created a divide between the "kissans" (tenants) and the "khet mazdoor" (landless laborers), with the latter still facing deep-seated prejudice and exploitation. Ultimately, the sources suggest that while Bhutto's reforms and the state's arbitration successfully mitigated the threat of radical insurrection, they did so by integrating the peasantry into a capitalist framework that prioritizes institutional brokerage over the radical, egalitarian goals of the 1970s.

Research Questions

1. To what extent did Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's "passive revolution" strategy and the deployment of conciliation committees successfully de-

authorize the radical sovereignty of the Mazdoor Kissan Movement (MKM)?

2. How did the discrepancy between the rhetorical aims of Bhutto's 1972 Land and Labor Reforms and their actual implementation facilitate the neutralization of agrarian militancy in Charsadda?

3. In what ways did the state's role as an arbitrator foster 'capitalism from below,' and how has this led to the internal class fragmentation of the contemporary peasant movement?

Methodology and Materials

Research Design and Study Area

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the peasants' radical resistance and subsequent state interventions in Tehsil Tangi, Charsadda. The research focuses on North Hashtnagar, a region historically identified as the center of radical peasant sovereignty. Data were gathered from eight hamlets—Sehwan, Shalam Jor, Serai, Qamar Khani, Behram Dheri, Shodag, Marghan, and Khanjary—where approximately 1,800 households have a documented history of agrarian resistance.

Sampling Strategy

A stratified random sampling (proportional random sampling) method was used to address the heterogeneous rural population, dividing it into three strata: landlords (owners), tenants (peasants), and laborers (mazdoors). This ensures the representation of conflicting socio-economic perspectives.

Data Collection and the Role of the State

The primary data collection tool was a detailed, culturally appropriate interview strategy designed for a population with limited formal education. These interviews measured independent variables such as poverty, political awareness, and displacement.

Crucially, the research incorporates the role of the state as a mediator by utilizing archival data and consultations with local non-governmental organizations like "Literate Masses". This allowed for a historical analysis of state-led conciliation committees and their function in mediating agrarian disputes.

Analytical Framework

The analysis is grounded in Marxian class conflict theory and the theory of alienation, examining how the separation of peasants from their land and labor fostered radicalism and the consequent state intervention. The methodology further integrates:

- **Intersectionality:** To analyze the dual oppression (class exploitation and gender-based domestic labor) of peasant women.

- **The State as Arbitrator (Passive Revolution Framework):** The study evaluates Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's land and labor reforms as a state-led mechanism of "passive revolution". This framework assesses how the state attempted to contain and de-authorize radical peasant sovereignty by integrating the rural masses into formal administrative and legal infrastructures.

Distribution of Households Across Socio-Economic Strata

The sampling distribution across the selected hamlets is detailed below:

S. No.	Hamlet Name	Landlords	Peasants	Laborers	Tenancy Court Cases
1	Sehwan	12	30	30	5
2	Shodag	18	35	35	7
3	Marghan	9	45	45	4
4	Shakoor	14	55	25	7
5	Behram Dheri	9	60	18	6
6	Shalam Jor	12	40	12	3
7	Qamar Khani	10	32	30	9
8	Khanjary	11	14	35	5
	Total	95	311	230	46

Results and Discussion

I. The Mechanics of Exploitation: Pre-Reform Socio-Economic Reality

The results of this study illustrate that the rural landscape of North Hashtnagar, Charsadda, was historically defined by a rigid system of "khanism" or feudalism that enforced a state of profound socio-political alienation among the peasantry. Before the rise of the Mazdoor Kissan Movement (MKM), the relationship between landlords (Khans) and tenants was not merely one of rent-seeking but was characterized by a multifaceted system of coercive taxes and forced labor.

Data reveals that the Khans imposed several illegal levies, including Intok (Pashto word): Farmers used millet stalks as winter fodder but were forced to give grain to feudal lords in exchange. Dak Dhadi: Rent collected by the Khan in grain for using open fields to dry-harvest crops. Channa: On a farmer's child's marriage, livestock was compulsorily offered to the Khan as food. Torah Tooqa: A compulsory payment made to the Khan

on a daughter's marriage for leaving the Khan-granted house. Bahishti: A water carrier for the Khan, paid in grain taken from the farmer's share. Khakshora: Farmers paid grain or cash for using natural fertilizer without the Khan's permission. Watchman: Farmers were obliged to guard the Khan's house or pay for a substitute.

This exploitation was deeply gendered. The findings indicate that peasant women in northern Hashtnagar were forced into unpaid domestic duties, such as sweeping wheat, washing clothes, and serving food for the landlords' households. These women faced constant threats of sexual harassment and were largely ignored in educational pursuits due to poverty and early marriage. This intersectional marginalization—based on both class and gender—created a volatile environment where the peasantry felt like "outsiders on earth," disconnected from the products of their labor and their own human agency.

II. The Rise of Radical Peasant Sovereignty (1968–1970)

The emergence of the MKM in 1968 marked a revolutionary shift from passive endurance to radical resistance. Unlike traditional political entities, the MKM initially rejected parliamentary elections, particularly in 1970, citing the military dictatorship's actions in Bangladesh and the unconstitutional nature of "One Unit". Under the leadership of Afzal Bangash, the movement prioritized direct struggle and utilized Marxist-Leninist and Maoist ideologies to awaken class consciousness among the rural masses.

A pivotal result of this mobilization was the 1970 Bahram Dheri uprising. Following an attempt by a landlord to extort more wheat, the MKM organized a peasant militia (*lahkar*) that successfully repelled a large police force and hired gunmen. This victory inaugurated a period of " *avam raj* " (people's rule), during which the "red banner" of the MKM became a symbol of protection across Charsadda, Mardan, and Swat. The movement effectively abolished forced labor, illegal evictions, and primitive practices, establishing peasant courts to settle disputes independently of the state.

The research indicates that the rapid expansion of the MKM was fueled by *Aabiyyah*, or kinship unity. Entire lineages and clans joined the movement collectively to defend their survival and honor. This kinship-based mobilization allowed the MKM to spread "like fire," establishing a form of radical sovereignty that forced many landlords to flee Hashtnagar, leaving their lands to be distributed among landless farmers.

III. State Intervention: The "Passive Revolution" and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

The study finds that the state's response to radical peasant sovereignty transitioned from initial attempts at mediation to a more sophisticated strategy of "passive revolution" under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The NAP government sought to position itself as an intermediary between mobilized peasants and entrenched landed interests, attempting to manage conflict through negotiation and administrative mechanisms. However, these

mediatory efforts operated within existing structural constraints and were unable to prevent episodes of violence. In contrast, Bhutto's administration pursued the demobilization of the MKM's radical base through legal and administrative concessions that selectively incorporated peasant demands into the state framework.

Bhutto's Labor and Land Reforms of 1972, the PPP government introduced comprehensive labor reforms that guaranteed workers the freedom of association, collective bargaining, and representation in management. Simultaneously, the Land Reform Regulation of 1972 set landownership ceilings at 150 irrigated and 300 non-irrigated acres. Although these reforms reclaimed significantly less land than the 1959 reforms of Ayub Khan—0.6 million acres compared to 1.9 million—their political utility was paramount.

The primary effect of these reforms was to regularize tenancies. By providing tenants with legal protection against evictions, the state effectively shifted the locus of power away from the MKM's militant protection and toward the state's own administrative machinery.

The Role of Conciliation Committees The findings highlight the critical role of conciliation committees established by district officials in Charsadda and Mardan. These committees were designed to mediate disputes between landlords and tenants, often resulting in compromises where tenants purchased land at discounted rates or regularized their rent at strictly controlled prices.

In Charsadda, these committees were particularly successful in de-authorizing the radical sovereignty of the MKM. The state acted as an arbitrator, bringing the rural masses under its legal and infrastructure power. Once tenants achieved legal security through state intervention, they no longer required the movement's radical authority. In Charsadda alone, the deputy commissioner successfully settled over 1,700 out of 1,800 cases by 1974, illustrating the state's effectiveness in neutralizing peasant militancy.

IV. Discussion: The Containment of Radicalism and the Transition to Capitalism

The transition of the MKM from a radical revolutionary force to a fragmented political entity can be discussed through the lens of state-led institutionalization and the evolution of "capitalism from below".

Neutralization of Radical Sovereignty The state's role as an arbitrator fundamentally undermined the MKM's radical ideology. By offering a state-sanctioned pathway to land security, the PPP government managed to "decapitate" the radical leadership from its mass base. Tenants, who previously rejected the state, transitioned from being subjects of the Khans to being subjects of the state's legal system. This process of "passive revolution" allowed the state to maintain the sanctity of private property while making just enough concessions to prevent total insurrection.

Class Fragmentation and 'Capitalism from Below' A significant discussion point is the emergence of a new class of "capitalist farmers" among the formerly oppressed peasantry. The loosened control of the Khans enabled wealthier tenants to invest their surplus into modern agriculture, such as tractors, threshers, and capital-intensive crops like tobacco and tomatoes. However, this economic upward mobility led to internal class fragmentation.

The study observes that these affluent peasants have largely abandoned the radical goals of the 1970s. In contemporary Charsadda, MKM factions now frequently act as vote brokers for traditional political parties, including the parties of the very Khans they once resisted. These brokers trade their local influence for public goods like electricity, gas, or government jobs, effectively becoming part of the existing patronage-based political system. While wealthier tenants secured land rights through Bhutto's reforms and MKM's early struggles, the landless laborers remain in a precarious position. There remains a palpable tension between the *kissans* (tenants) and *mazdoors* (laborers), with the latter still facing socio-economic degradation and being viewed as "juniors" or social inferiors by the land-owning peasants. The contemporary MKM leadership has shown little interest in organizing this segment of

the rural population, focusing instead on the interests of the new peasant-middle class.

The results of this research demonstrate that while the Mazdoor Kissan Movement successfully dismantled the traditional "khanism" of Hashtnagar, its radical trajectory was intercepted by the state's strategic intervention. Through Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's land and labor reforms and the mediating role of conciliation committees, the state transformed radical agrarian conflict into a regularized legal process. This "passive revolution" effectively contained the threat of radical peasant sovereignty but resulted in a fragmented movement that facilitated "capitalism from below". Ultimately, the shift from radical resistance to institutionalized brokerage has left the most marginalized sector of rural society—the landless laborers—largely behind.

Conclusion

The historical trajectory of the Mazdoor Kissan Movement (MKM) in North Hashtnagar demonstrates a profound shift from radical revolutionary sovereignty to a regularized framework of state arbitration and political brokerage. Initially, the movement emerged as a militant rejection of the oppressive "khanism" system, characterized by extreme socio-political alienation and a litany of coercive taxes such as *Intok* (fodder grain), *Dak Dhari* (harvest drying fees), and *Chana* (marriage tributes). By establishing "*awam raj*" (people's rule) following the 1970 Bahram Dheri uprising, the MKM successfully utilized Marxist-Leninist ideology and "Aabiyah" (kinship unity) to create an autonomous political order that effectively abolished forced labor and primitive feudal practices.

However, the findings of this research conclude that the radical threat posed by the MKM was ultimately contained through Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's "passive revolution" strategy. The Bhutto government utilized the state's infrastructure power to integrate the peasantry into the formal legal system. Through the Land Reform Regulation of 1972 and the establishment of conciliation committees, the state transitioned from being a mere agent of the landlords to a

neutral arbitrator. These committees mediated compromises that allowed tenants to purchase land at discounted rates or regularize their tenancies, thereby de-authorizing the radical sovereignty of the MKM. Once the state provided legal security, the peasants no longer required the movement's militant protection, effectively "decapitating" the radical leadership from its mass base.

The MKM succeeded in dismantling the traditional feudal order; it inadvertently facilitated the rise of "capitalism from below". The loosened control of the Khans allowed a segment of wealthy peasants to invest in capital-intensive agriculture, such as tractors and high-value crops like tobacco, eventually evolving into "capitalist farmers". This economic upward mobility has resulted in significant internal class fragmentation, where contemporary MKM factions frequently act as vote brokers for traditional political parties, often aligning with the very landed interests they once resisted in exchange for public goods and patronage.

Ultimately, the state arbitration and the transition of the MKM reflect the successful containment of radicalism through institutionalization. While the movement brought positive progress in political awareness and housing for some, it has largely failed to address the ongoing exploitation of the landless rural poor (*khet mazdoor*), who remain a marginalized "junior" class. The legacy of the movement in Charsadda is thus one of a partial revolution: it successfully ended the primitive atrocities of the Khans but replaced radical egalitarian goals with an institutionalized system of political brokerage that prioritizes the new peasant middle class over the truly landless. This research highlights that the state's role as an arbitrator was not merely a tool for order, but a sophisticated mechanism for maintaining the sanctity of private property while neutralizing revolutionary challenges to its authority.

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