**Comrade Zia and the new communist movement in Afghanistan**

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Comrade Zia has made important theoretical contributions to communist struggle in Afghanistan and internationally. Although he was constantly engaged in practical and organizational matters, he persistently strove to respond to the theoretical necessities of revolutionary communist struggle. One of his most important contributions is his historical analysis and summation of the positive and negative experiences of the communist and the new democratic movement in the country. He also made important contributions in synthesizing the experience of the international communist movement in formulating the program and strategy of the proletarian revolution in Afghanistan.

After the collapse of the Progressive Youth Organization (PYO) and the new democratic movement, the left in Afghanistan suffered from various deviations and ideological confusion, which along with unfavorable domestic and international circumstances, affected the existence of communist struggles in Afghanistan. However, under comrade Zia’s leadership the new communist movement in Afghanistan, under the influence of the international revolutionary struggle and the lessons of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) in China, as well as the influence of the struggles against three worlds theory and Hoxhaite revisionism, the communist movement in Afghanistan adopted a principled Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideological and political line. Hence the working class and the communist movement in Afghanistan came to have a proletarian vanguard party with a clear communist program and strategy.

Communist struggle in Afghanistan started later than in other countries. In India, Iran, China, and other countries of the region, communist parties started operating in the early twentieth century. But in Afghanistan, communist organizing began with the PYO in 1964. This organization was formed based on Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought, influenced by the anti-revisionist struggles of the Communist Party of China under Mao’s leadership, and raised the independent banner of communism so as to draw a demarcating line between communism and revisionism.

The PYO broadly engaged the masses in political struggle by launching the *Sholajawid* journal and the new democratic movement. It dragged politics from the court and centers of power to the street, factory, and colleges, igniting the biggest mass movement in the history of the country. Therefore, *Sholajawid* emerged as the biggest threat for the reactionary government who, fearing the influence of the movement among the masses, blocked its publication. However, the publication of only eleven issues played a significant role in awakening and mobilizing an unprecedented and strong mass movement. Since then, *Sholajawid* has become the identity of the new democratic and the communist (Maoist) movement in Afghanistan.

After the revisionist coup led by the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)––which led to the occupation of the country by social imperialism whose ominous effects are still impacting people’s lives––and after the collapse of the Progressive Youth Organization, several deviationist organizations emerged in the wake of this collapse.

Unfortunately, serious political and ideological deviations including the tailing of the reactionary Islamist forces formed a salient feature of the political activities of these organizations. Some of these organizations accepted the “Islamic character” of the resistance against soviet social imperialism and some even accepted “Islamic revolution” as a stage of revolution in Afghanistan. It became commonplace to see the publications and leaflets of organization claiming to be “left” use religious slogans and symbols. Thus, many revolutionaries who considered themselves affiliated with the left movement participated and sacrificed their lives in the resistance against social imperialism in the ranks of Islamist parties. During the seventies and early eighties, Hoxhaite and Three Worlds Theory revisionist lines were dominant in Afghanistan’s left-wing movement. Comrade Zia identified “underestimating and ignoring the importance of the historical and political evaluation of PYO and lack of understanding the importance of its leading principled line”[[1]](#endnote-1) as one of the most important theoretical reasons of these deviations. He believed that most of the leaders of these left organizations, due to hostility towards the founding leading line of the PYO, could not reach a scientific and principled analysis of this experience, therefore falling into the deviationist path of class and national capulationism.[[2]](#endnote-2) Comrade Zia, in these very difficult and unfavorable circumstances, not only absorbed and reestablished the principled line of the PYO but, influenced by the GPCR and the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), played a fundamental role in the formation of the new communist movement in Afghanistan.

For this reason, he first summed up and analyzed the positive and negative historical experience of the PYO. He believed that without identifying and learning from past ideological and political shortcomings of the movement, it would be impossible to formulate and apply the correct and principled line. Comrade Zia provided a theoretical summation of the ideological, political, and organizational shortcomings and deviations of the left movement in the country, which facilitated a historical rupture from deviationist lines. Therefore, the formation of the new communist movement in the country, based on the correct and principled Marxist-Leninist-Maoist line, is tied with comrade Zia’s name.

Comrade Zia emphasized the correct and principled aspect of PYO’s line while refusing to ignore its shortcomings and mistakes. He analyzed PYO’s “lack of attention for the immediate necessity for the formation of communist party in Afghanistan.”[[3]](#endnote-3) This organization did not have a correct understanding of the necessity of the formation of communist party in Afghanistan, since it did not understand the importance of theory for the proletarian vanguard party, as the most important weapon of proletarian revolution. Some leftist groups in Afghanistan still hold the opinion that the material condition for the formation of the communist party in Afghanistan does not exist. This lack of understanding of the importance of the proletarian vanguard in Afghanistan means the rejection of the necessity of communist struggle and proletarian revolution, which leads to class capitulationism and political/ideological liquidationism. By identifying this incorrect understanding, comrade Zia made important theoretical contribution in defense of Lenin’s theory of the party. When leading the Revolutionary Communist Cell of Afghanistan, he emphasized the formation of the party as the most important weapon of revolution besides revolutionary armed forces and the united front. The formation of the Communist (Maoist) Party Afghanistan in the unity congress of 2004 was, to a large extent, the fruit of comrade Zia’s theoretical struggles and his criticism of the understanding of the left movement on this issue.

Another shortcoming of the PYO was its failure to launch a communist journal, to propagate communist ideology in Afghanistan. In identifying this shortcoming, comrade Zia and the organization under his leadership took steps to rectify this problem. The Revolutionary Communist Cell of Afghanistan and the Communist Party of Afghanistan published *Voice of Revolution* and *Sholajawid* respectively as communist journals to propagate and promote communist theory and ideology. Therefore, the communist movement in Afghanistan came to have communist journals with communist names and logos, and with a principled communist (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) line. The famous maxim of the *Communist* *Manifesto* became practically manifested: “The communists disdain to conceal their views and aims.”[[4]](#endnote-4) Comrade Zia also criticized the lack of communist explicitness in literature, name and program of the PYO. The PYO in avoiding the name of communism, helped create a political culture in which organizations claiming to be left conducted their communist organizing under national and new democratic cover. In understanding this shortcoming, comrade Zia established and led the first communist (MLM) organization with an explicit communist name and identity.

The theoretical foundation of the new communist movement in Afghanistan was, on the one hand, built upon comrade Zia’s historical analysis of the positive and negative experience of the PYO and the participation of the left organizations in the war of resistance against soviet social imperialism. On the other hand, this foundation was based “on the influence and inspiration of the international communist movement,” particularly the experience of the GPCR in China and the RIM.

Comrade Zia was a serious and consistent proletarian internationalist. He also criticized the PYO, and the Communist Party of China led by Mao Zedong, for their lack of attention to proletarian internationalism. The Revolutionary Communist Cell of Afghanistan declared in its founding resolution: “The RCCA based on proletarian internationalism considers establishing relations with the International Communist Movement as one of its fundamental duties and upholds that the communist movement in Afghanistan cannot meet its international obligations without relations with the international communist movement, but it also cannot perform its national revolutionary responsibilities fully without that.”[[5]](#endnote-5)

Under comrade Zia’s leadership the Revolutionary Communist Organization of Afghanistan (RCOA) became a member of Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and thus an organic relation was established between the communist movement in Afghanistan and the international communist movement. Moreover, RCOA became the third organization in the world to accept Maoism as the third and highest stage of proletarian ideology and science, emphasizing its universal applicability. Organizations under comrade Zia’s leadership (RCOA, CPA, and C(M)PA) actively participated in debates and line struggles within the international Maoist movement. When the two revisionisms in this international movement––the Prachanda-Bhattarai revisionism in the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Avakianite revisionism in the Revolutionary Communist Party-USA––emerged and led to the collapse of the RIM, comrade Zia pioneered the struggle against them within the communist movement of Afghanistan and the international communist movement. In the struggle against the Avakianite and Prachanda revisionisms he defended the principles of MLM and made important theoretical contributions for the international communist movement.

Comrade Zia led the re-establishment of the communist movement in Afghanistan at a time when widespread disbelief and ideological liquidationism had become prevalent among left forces both there and internationally. After the collapse of soviet social imperialism, the reactionaries were blaring the “death of communism”, and the theoreticians of the imperialist ruling classes were theorizing and propagating the eternal victory of liberal democracy and “end of history.” During this time, reactionary Islamist forces rose to power in the wake of the fall of the puppet regime of the Soviet social imperialism and were also celebrating the collapse of soviet social imperialism and their puppet regime in Afghanistan as the “death of communism.” Comrade Zia and his comrades led the formation of the Communist Party of Afghanistan. The first issue of the second round of *Sholajawid* as the organ of the CPA announced: “at a time when social-imperialists, imperialists, revisionists, and varieties of reactionaries are making resentful attacks internationally, in the region, and in Afghanistan against communism, drafting the program and founding the CPA is a principled and courageous and appropriate communist counterattack.” [[6]](#endnote-6) Moreover, the fourth issue of the second round of *Sholajawid*, in an article titled “Communism is Alive”, announced:

The phony ‘communism’ of the PDPA was cover for their crimes, brutalities and reactionary and exploiting character, has not only disappeared, but it will also not have ground for their existence in the future. However, the communism of the *Sholaeis* not only will have many grounds for struggle, but this communism has also made extraordinary sacrifices in the struggle against the phony ‘communism’ of the PDPA. This communism exists and is also qualitatively stronger than before. This communism is now armed with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and has clear and principled program for new democratic revolution and has a clear strategy of people’s war and now has the most important weapon of revolution, the communist party.[[7]](#endnote-7)

In a period when imperialist wars and occupation, and the crimes of their satraps, have turned the lives of the people into hell, we should learn from comrade Zia’s example and continue the struggle against imperialist occupiers and their puppet regime. At this time when imperialist capitalism is causing aggressive wars, increasing social and class inequality, strengthening fascism, increasing reactionary violence, causing the unprecedented destruction of the environment, we should learn from comrade Zia’s commitment to communist struggle, his faith and optimism for a better world, and should fly high the flag of the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan as a detachment of the international communist movement.

Comrade Zia will remain immortal as a prominent revolutionary theorist of communism in the history of the country and internationally. Today, due to the services and efforts of comrade Zia, we have a clear program and a clear strategy for revolution; the most important weapon of revolution being the Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan. We pledge that in order to continue the path of comrade Zia, and to fight for the ideal of communism, we will burnish this important weapon of revolution and strive for its expansion and consolidation. To celebrate the memory of comrade Zia, we pledge that we will move forward and will not avoid any sacrifice for preparation and initiation of the revolutionary and people’s national war of resistance, and for revolution in Afghanistan as part of the global proletarian revolution.

1. “Twenty eight annivervarsary of founding the communist movement in Afghanistan,” Sholajawid # 7, second round, 1992. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “Communist Movement in Afghanistan,” Sholajawid # 4, second round, 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Sholajawid # 7, round 2, 1992, page 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Karl Marx and Fredric Engels, Communist Manifesto [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. “Founding Resolution of Revolutionary Communist Cell of Afghanistan,” 1986. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. “Program of Communist Party of Afghanistan” Sholajawid # 1, second round, 1991, page 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. “Communism is Alive,” Sholajawid # 4, round 2, 1992, page 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)