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The Genesis and Evolution of Khudai Khidmatgars (1929-1947)

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Abstract

The North West Frontier Province (renamed as Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa)¹ was directly affected by political development taking place in India during the second decade of 20th Century. The anti-Rowlatt Act² campaign and ³Khilafat Movement ignited the feelings of liberation in this part of the World. The Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek (KKT); an outcome of those anti- British campaigns, was founded to the end of 3rd decade of the 20th Century. With the passage of time, it acquired strength and became formidable political force in the province. The KKT was in alliance with All India National Congress and its leader Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan⁴ was influenced by the Non-violence creed of Gandhi. The electoral strength of KKT can be judged from the fact that they formed ministries thrice in NWFP i.e. in 1937, 1945 and 1946. The founder of this movement Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan had a multidimensional personality. Besides his hard work and popularity, he was the most controversial figure in the pre and post partition eras. In this paper, an attempt has been made to take into account the foundation, objectives, organizational structure and evolution of Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek

Keywords: Khudai Khidmatgar, Red Shirts, Non-violence, Congress, Muslim League

The Foundation of KKT

The Khudai Khidmatgar Tehreek was a culmination of Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan's social and political activism. It was founded by him in 1929. In the British circles

the term 'Red Shirt' has been used for the movement. The reason for giving this name to the movement was because of the red uniform its members used to wear. In the beginning, they wore white uniform but it was changed by its leadership to red colour. J. Spain has another version:

Khudai Khidmatgars, the servants of God, whose uniform was dyed with local brick dust, to a distinctive shade of red. In British official records, the organization quickly dubbed as "The Red Shirts" and nervous administrators professed to see sinister connection between it and the "Red menace" which had been discovered beyond the Hindu Kush almost before the Tsarist threat was in its grave. (Spain, 1985:97)

Before the foundation of Khudai Khidmatgars, Abdul Ghafar Khan kept himself associated with educational and social activities. Being impressed by the plan of Azad Schools initiated by the Haji Sahib of Turangzai, he, in collaboration with Mulvi Abdul Aziz, opened Azad Islamia High School in Uthmanzai, in 1921; some other schools were opened in various parts of the province. Besides, he founded a reformatory and social welfare organization *Anjuman Islahul Afaghina* in 1924. (Spain J.W, 1985:98) To universalize his ideas, Abdul Ghafar Khan started a monthly Pashto journal *Pukhtoon* in 1928 with Uthmanzai as its head office. He was the founder editor of the journal while Muhammad Akbar Khadim acted as its sub-editor. (Spain, 1985:97) The *Pukhtoon* Journal continued to appear until 1947 although it was banned time and again. On September 1, 1929 Abdul Ghafar Khan laid the foundation of a Jirga called, *Da Suba Sarhad Da Zalmo Jirga* or the Afghan Youth League. Although having separate identity and organizational setup, the Jirga was in close contact with the Khudai Khidmatgars Abdul Akbar Khan was chosen the first president of the Jirga (Spain, 1985:98).

The above details bear testimony to the fact that Abdul Ghafar Khan founded and took part in many socio-political movements but the Khudai Khidmatgar movement became synonymous with his personality. About the foundation of Khudai Khidmatgars, he himself writes:

As a matter of fact, we already had the *Islahul Afaghina* the organization we had started for the spreading of education in our province. In our opinion, this was very important work and we thought that the organization should continue to concentrate on education. But we realized that there were many weaknesses in our social system and we felt that we ought to start a movement that would

help to make people more socially conscious. And that is how the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement was founded. (Khan, A. G., 1969:126)

Objectives

It was with this background that the Khudai Khidmatgar movement was launched in 1929. The objectives of the movement were:

- (i) To serve humanity in the name of God.
- (ii) To refrain from violence and taking revenge.
- (iii) To refrain from feuds, quarrels and creating enmity.
- (iv) Not to practice anti-social customs.
- (v) To live a simple life.
- (vi) To devote at least some time daily to social work (Asma, 1990:12).

Those who wanted to join the movement had to take the following oath:

I am a Khudai Khidmatgar and as God needs no service but serving His creation is serving Him. I promise to serve humanity in the name of God. I promise to refrain from violence and from taking revenge. I promise to forgive those who oppress me or treat me with cruelty. I promise to refrain from taking part in feuds and quarrels and from creating enmity. I promise to treat every Pathan as my brother and friend. I promise to refrain from anti-social customs and practices. I promise to live a simple life, to practice virtue and to refrain from evils. I promise to practice good manners and good behaviour, and not to lead a life of idleness. I promise to devote at least two hours a day to social life. (Asma, 1990:13)

The Khudai Khidmatgars were given rigorous training which usually lasted one week. The training component included drills, physical fitness training, village cleaning, political education, spinning, grinding wheat, political-cultural performances, and speeches from senior members including Abdul Ghafar Khan. These training camps were often large and varied in term of participants; some had 800 participants (Bannerji, 2001:75).

The Khudai Khidmatgar movement was organized from grass-root level. Its organizational set up originating from Muhallah went up to the provincial level. Its head quarter was established at Sardaryab in the suburbs of Charsadda. Describing the details of organizing the movement, Abdul Ghafar Khan said:

We went from village to village, talked to people, founded Jirgas, and enlisted Khudai Khidmatgars. The movement spread in all parts of the province even among the tribes and soon it became so popular that Jirgas and Khudai Khidmatgars were established in every village. (Khan, A.G., 1967:64)

Tilt Towards All India National Congress

The Khudai Khidmatgars participated in all the anti-British campaigns launched by the All India National Congress. Williams while referring to the relations between the Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgars wrote:

It was in the midst of this local anti-British campaign that Mr. Abdul Ghafar Khan first became prominent. He identified himself completely with the Congress aims, and the movement which he had started that of the Khudai Khidmatgars (Servant of God) or Red Shirts, became a powerful instrument of political pressure. The Congress point of view thus became firmly entrenched with political leaders of the North West Frontier Province; and for some time the Muslim League whose main appeal was against future Hindu domination (which no Pathan thought possible in his own area) made small headway. (Williams, 1975:143)

The Congress benefited a lot from Khudai Khidmatgars, organizational strength. Abdul Ghafar Khan and his associates justified their relations with the Congress by arguing that they had urged the Muslim League leaders to raise themselves to the opportunity of organizing an anti-British movement but in vain. Moreover the British spread disinformation about the Red Shirts and dubbed them as Bolsheviks. The landed gentry of NWFP, who considered Red Shirts a threat to their interests, came into an open conflict with them. At this stage the All India National Congress came to the rescue of the movement.

It was at this time that the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi extended the hand of fellowship and help to the Pathans. This was a great event and turning point in the history of the province. The Pathans will for ever gratefully remember that it was the Indian National Congress which came to their help in their hour of trial. (Khan, A.G., 1969:157)

The same argument has been given by Abdul Ghafar Khan himself. After the signing of Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931, the British Indian Government released most of the political prisoners but Ghafar Khan was still in Jail. Gandhi Ji went to Irwin and demanded his immediate release. According to Ghafar Khan, Gandhi

was more sympathetic to him than the Muslim leaders. He disliked the Muslim leaders as he himself says:

[A] delegation of Muslim leaders was coming to see me. Among them were Sir Fazle Hussain and Sahibzada Abdul Qayum. I told the Superintendent that I did not want to see them. When we were in trouble, I said, they did not lift a finger to help us. They had forgotten all about us. Now they have suddenly reminded [sic.] me. (Khan, A. G.,160)

Non-Violence

As for the objectives of the Khudai Khidmatgars and the oath, it is clear that the movement did not like violence. The doctrine of non-violence preached by Abdul Ghafar Khan was the imitation of the *Ahinsa* of Mahatma Gandhi.⁵ Christopher Chapple suggests that Gandhi's nonviolence creed was derived from Jainism and Buddhism. Both these religions advocate *ahinsa* (non-violence), which negates the human desire for killing and harming of fellow human beings. The detailed philosophy may be found in Jainist, Buddhist and Hindu religious texts.

However, it was interesting that Abdul Ghafar Khan preached non-violence to the Pathans who believed in tit-for-tat which was a prominent feature of their Code of life or *Pukhtoonwali*. His supporters argue that, although violent by nature, Pakhtoons were fed up with blood feuds and violence. They, therefore, rallied round Ghafar Khan to get rid of those feuds. Moreover, they deny any influence of Gandhi on Abdul Ghafar Khan with regard to nonviolence. (Shah, 2007:68). Nevertheless, barring a limited number of Khudai Khidmatgars, the rest of Pukhtoons stuck to their tribal vendetta. As for influence of Gandhi on Ghafar Khan's philosophy of non-violence, the latter never deny it. Rather he invited Gandhi in 1938 to teach his *ahinsa* to the Khudai Khidmatgars. Gandhi stayed for more than one month in the NWFP and delivered lectures to important office bearers of Khudai Khidmatgars. Details of that visit have been recorded by Pyaray Lal (Lal, 2010:61). On the other hand, his opponents allege that the waging of the non-violence campaign among the militant Pathans was a conspiracy hatched by the Hindus and the British in a bid to dampen the spirit of Jihad. One of the proponents of this theory is Dr Murad Ali Shah, who told me in an interview:

In the beginning, Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan supported the armed struggle of Haji Sahib of Turangzai but later on he withdrew his support from Haji Sahib and promoted the idea of non-violence. The reason was that the British were very embarrassed by the Jihad of Haji Sahib and his connection with Turko-

German alliance. The British managed to detach Ghafar Khan from the Haji Sahib with the help of Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan. It is reported that Sir Sahibzada met Ghafar Khan and advised him either to join the Muslim League or the Congress, so that India could be liberated through democracy and not through armed struggle. Ghafar Khan succumbed to this conspiracy and he joined hands with Gandhi. That was how non-violence creed was introduced. (Murad Ali Shah, 1994)⁶

A question arises whether both Gandhi and Ghafar Khan were able to inculcate nonviolence in the mind of their respective communities. Analysts' respond is negative to this question. One view goes like this:

Mohandas K. Gandhi, the 'Great Soul,' was anything but a failure. In a world seemingly dominated by violence and hatred, Mahatma Gandhi reincarnated the ancient idea of *Ahimsa*, non-violence, as the only way of living in peace. (Web, Social change now, 2012)⁷

Sadiq Hussain Tariq has levelled serious charges against Gandhi. He alleges that during the World wars, Gandhi advised the British not to fight against Hitler with arms but with *Shinas* (non-violence). Moreover, Gandhi asked Abdul Ghafar Khan to disarm the Pathans, but, on the other hand, he advised even the Hindu women to keep pistols and gun with them and learn how to fire (Daily Jang, 1993)⁸.

In the case of Abdul Ghafar Khan, he defended the idea of non-violence. In his opinion, the armed struggle in the Frontier had brought disastrous results and created fear and cowardice in the minds of the people. To him, non-violence preached love and injected a new life in the Pathans (Abdul Ghafar Khan, 1969). One can give him credit for indoctrinating non-violence in his followers, but he could not popularize it. He might have resolved internal disputes among a limited portion of Pakhtoons but eradication of violence from the souls of Pakhtoons remained an unaccomplished task.

Rise to power

The Khudai Khidmatgars, who were completely merged with the All India National Congress for political reasons, took an active part in all anti-British movements, such as the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, the Non Cooperation Movement of 1931-34 and the agitation of 1940-42. No doubt, in all those movements, Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan and his followers offered sacrifices.

In the NWFP, the electoral process started in 1932 with the extension of the Government of India Act 1919 to this province. But the electoral strength of the Red Shirts could not be judged in 1932 as they stayed away from the Legislative Council elections due to the agitation of Non-Cooperation. The 1937 elections proved for sure that the Red Shirts were the most popular party in the NWFP. In the 50 member assembly, they got 19 seats, but could not form ministry due to two reasons: one, most of its MLA's were in jail; two, they could not win the support of parliamentary groups. Resultantly, Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan filled the gap. He entered into alliance with the Hindu-Sikh Nationalist party and formed the ministry. Commenting on the situation, Abdul Ghafar Khan (1969:151) wrote:

In 1936 the elections for the provincial assembly of the Frontier Province were held and the Khudai Khidmatgar party had won majority of the seats. In spite of that the Governor had asked Sir Nawab Sahibzada Abdul Qayum to form a government. This gentleman would certainly have lost in the elections, had he stood as a candidate from his own district. But he was elected from the district of Hazara. With the help of the government, he formed a government of Hindus, Sikh and some independent members. (Khan, A.G., 151).

The Sahibzada ministry could not continue to exist due to desertion of Hazara group of MLA's and some members of the Hindu-Sikh Nationalist party. It was on September 3, 1937 that the Congress leader, Dr Khan Sahib, moved a no-trust motion in the assembly against the Sahibzada ministry. The motion was passed accordingly and the Governor invited Dr Khan Sahib to form the ministry (Assembly debates, 1937)⁹.

The other ministers included Qazi Ataulah (Education), Lala Bhanju Ram Gandhi (Finance) and Khan Abbas Khan (Forest) (ibid).

The Congress ministry (1937-39) could not do a commendable job; rather it earned a bad name in handling the Syndicate or Monopolies and Control System. Under this system, the essential items of daily life (food items, cloths, etc.) were sold out by the government. Malik Amir Muhammad of Tehkal gave me details and functioning of the system in an interview:

Through the Control System, people were supplied cloth, commodities of daily use and medicines. For this purpose the houses or Hujras of Congress leaders were declared as depots. In Tehkal the house of Arbab Ghafoor Khan was a distribution depot. The system was so disorganized that many people could not get the things. In front of the depot, we used to wait for hours in a

long queue but at the end 5 or 6 people would ask to get the commodities. People faced difficulties even in getting Kafan (shroud) for their near and dear ones. (Malik Amir Muhammad, 1994)¹⁰

Abdul Ghafar Khan himself confessed the incompetence of Dr Khan Sahib's ministry regarding the Control System. He said:

The Syndicate proved to be a new calamity for the movement as our workers were not able to distribute the controlled goods honestly and fairly. (Khan, A.G., 158)

Despite confession by Abdul Ghafar Khan, the ministry and the Red Shirts insisted that they did well. They held the governor and his subordinate officers responsible for creating hurdles for the ministry, as a consequence of which they failed in performing well for the masses (Assembly debates, 1939).

Like that of the Sahibzada government, the Red Shirt Ministry too could not live long and on November, 6, 1939 it resigned consequent upon decision of the All India National Congress on the issue of war (Khan, A. W., 1994:131). With the resignation of Dr Khan Sahib ministry, the British imposed Governor Rule in the NWFP under the Government of India Act 1935 (Rittenberg, 1988:210). The Congress passed most of the 1939-45 period in agitation and confrontation with the British Government. This period is also called the war-time politics period. Earlier on, the Muslim League took benefit and formed the ministry in the province under the leadership of Sardar Aurangzeb (1943-1945).

The 1946 elections once again brought the Red Shirts to the glare of publicity. This time they faced a comparatively stronger Muslim League in the NWFP. According to the election results, Khudai Khidmatgars (Congress) won 30 while the Muslim League secured 17 seats. Dr Khan Sahib, in addition to his 30 comrades, succeeded in getting the loyalty of 2 MLA's of Jamiatul Ulema Sarhad and one Akali Dal member, and formed his own ministry. He occupies a unique position in the political history of the NWFP. He took oath as Chief Minister three times in a short span of nine years. In 1946, Dr Khan Sahib became Chief Minister at a time when the province was in grip of communal riots which were the consequences of the 1946 elections. These elections divided India on communal lines despite the fact in the NWFP a different scenario developed. The scenario of 1946 has been summarized by Janson as:

As India's communal conflict grew more embittered in 1946, the Muslim League rapidly acquired popularity in the Frontier. Integral to its new found strength was the wide spread support it received from the province's religious leaders, and especially its *Sajada Nashins*. Additionally, once India exploded into violence in August 1946, the League warning of 'Islam in danger' assumed a credibility and urgency in Pukhtuns' eyes it had previously lacked. (Janson, 1981:213)

The Muslim League fully exploited the communal issue and created problems for Dr Khan Sahib. They sent teams of its leaders in order to investigate in the communal riots-stricken areas of India. They made arrangements for bringing eyewitnesses and victims to the NWFP and propagated that Hindus had embarked upon the policy of destroying the Islamic culture and exterminating the Muslims in India (Janson, 1981:213).

This propaganda worked well and communal riots engulfed the entire Frontier Province. The year 1947 brought a triumph for the Muslim League and the Red Shirts' popularity started declining. Rittenberg reports the situation of 1947 as:

By 1947, the election results of the previous year were no longer an accurate gauge of public opinion. Political sympathies had shifted but there was no institutional way for the change to be reflected in the provincial assembly. The Muslim League could call for Dr Khan Sahib's resignation but with its solid majority in the assembly, the Frontier Congress could not be expected to surrender willingly its control of the provincial government. Since the Muslim League had no legal recourse, it resorted to extra-constitutional means to displace the Frontier Congress. (Rittenberg, 1988:210)

Parting ways with Congress

In early 1947, the civil disobedience movement or Direct Action of the Muslim League against the Red Shirt ministry was in full swing. The British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, announced that India would be given independence by June 1948; however, the widespread communal riots in every nook and corner of India compelled the British to bring the transfer of power date forward. When the All India National Congress accepted the 3rd June 1947 plan, the Khudai Khidmatgars refused to become part of the agreement. They parted ways with the Congress. "It was not we who had left the Congress. The Congress had deserted us," said Abdul Ghafar Khan. He was against the partition and proposed referendum in the plan while the Congress had accepted both these things. In the

post-June Plan scenario, Abdul Ghafar Khan lodged strong protest with the Central Working Committee of All India National Congress. When referendum was decided in the NWFP, the Khudai Khidmatgars reacted to it with bitterness. According to them, there was no need at all for referendum because less than one year before, i.e. in 1946, the people of Frontier had voted for Congress and rejected the Muslim League. These elections, they argued, "had been fought on the issue of India and Pakistan (The Daily Times, 1940)¹¹.

Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan attended the Congress Working Committee in Delhi where Sardar Patel and Rajgopal Achari put a lot of pressure on the working Committee to accept referendum plan in the NWFP. When the Committee voted in favour of the partition plan and referendum, Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan protested against it. He said that he told the working committee and Gandhi that Pathans were standing side by side with them in the struggle for freedom. Moreover, they had made sacrifices for the cause of independence, but at the end Congress deserted them and threw them to the "wolves": In the same meeting Abdul Ghafar Khan opposed the idea of referendum (Khan, A.G., 158).

Frustrated after the acceptance of the Partition plan by the Congress, the Khan Brothers, and their Red Shirt workers stepped up Pukhtoonistan propaganda. To them it was unfair to hold referendum on two choices; i.e. Pakistan or Hindustan. They wanted to include a third choice; i.e. Pukhtoonistan, but the British authorities refused to accept their demand.

Pukhtoonistan and Referendum

However, failing in convincing the working committee, Abdul Ghafar Khan returned to his home province and discussed the matters with his party men. The party empowered him to take whichever line of action he deemed appropriate. He visited Delhi, met Jinnah and the Congress leaders urging them to accommodate Red Shirts' demands but these meetings bore no fruits. Finally, he decided to take a step and on June 21, 1947 a meeting was convened at Bannu. It was in this meeting that the Pukhtoonistan Resolution was passed.

A Joint meeting of the provincial Jirga (FPCC) (Congress), members of the Assembly, commanders of the Khudai Khidmatgars and Zalme Pukhtoon was held on 21st June 1947 at Bannu with Khan Amir Mohammad Khan in the chair. This joint session unanimously decided that here in this country an independent government of all the Pukhtoons should be established, the constitution of which should be based on Islamic principles, democracy,

equality and social justice. This session appeals to all the Pukhtoons to come together on one platform to achieve this noble aim and not to bow before the power of anybody except that of the Pukhtoon. (Marwat, 1993:268)

Although the Bannu Resolution was unambiguous which demanded for independent Pukhtoon state, nevertheless, the Red Shirts, at one stage, denied it and they explained that by Pukhtoonistan they meant a separate identity for the Pukhtoons within the state of Pakistan. However, the latter explanation cannot be synchronized with historical facts.

In July 1947, when the people of the NWFP were given the choice of joining India or Pakistan in a referendum, the Red Shirts boycotted the polling and launched a movement against it. In their campaign, the Red shirts demanded that instead of having a referendum on two options of India or Pakistan, it should be on Pukhtoonistan or Pakistan. However, the overwhelming majority of the Pathans voted for Pakistan and the Red Shirts could not succeed in their mission. They did not accept the results and challenged the credibility of referendum (Korejo, 1993:216).

Now the only option open for the Red Shirts was to press their demand for an independent state of Pukhtoons, i.e., Pukhtoonistan. This, they demanded through the Bannu Resolution. The demand for Pukhtoonistan was put forward by a prominent leader of the Red Shirts, Qazi Attaullah, on 13th May 1947. He said,

First of all we want to have an independent sovereign state of Pathans and then we will visualize a joint Jirga — which will ultimately negotiate on equal footings either with Hindustan or Pakistan whichever offers us better terms. (ibid: 216)

Henceforth, the demand for Pukhtoonistan became party line of the Red Shirts and their leaders in individual capacity and in public meetings raised this issue. As mentioned earlier, when the All India National Congress ignored the protest of Abdul Ghafar Khan and accepted the 3rd June plan of 1947, Ghafar Khan and his companions finally resolved to get a separate Pukhtoon homeland. The Red Shirts tried hard to hold the Referendum of July 1947 on the question of Pakistan and Pukhtoonistan but to no avail. The referendum was a clear verdict in favour of Pakistan, but Ghafar Khan did not accept the results and even challenged the validity of the polling. About the referendum he said: “It may be a triumph for the Muslim League. It is none for Islam” (ibid: 217).

The Pukhtoonistan issue received a boost, when the Government of Afghanistan demanded the return of areas comprising the NWFP to Afghanistan. The Afghan government made this claim on the behest of the Indian Government. An emissary of the All India National Congress visited Kabul before the referendum. The Government of India continued its pro-Pukhtoonistan policy to counter Kashmir freedom movement and also to console the Pukhtoon leaders (ibid: 218).

On 21 June 1947, the Afghan Prime Minister, Muhammad Hashim Khan in an interview to a newspaper in Bombay said that if the independent Pukhtoon state cannot be established, then the Frontier province should join Afghanistan. (Marwat, 1993:273) In September 1947, when the question of Pakistan's membership to the United Nations came up for discussion, Afghan representative opposed the move on the pretext that his country did not recognize the NWFP as part of Pakistan. "So long as the people of that province were given an opportunity, free from any kind of influence, to determine whether they wished to be independent or to be a part of Pakistan (or India)" (Ramu, 1991:71).

The tension between Pakistan and Afghanistan was eased to some extent due to exchange of visits between the two countries, but in 1949 and 1950, the relations once again deteriorated. During this period, the Afghan government sponsored the establishment of Pukhtoonistan government in Tirah on 12 August 1949 with Faqir of Ippi as its president. The Afghan parliament rejected the legitimacy of the Durand Line in 1949 and in August 1950, Pukhtoonistan day was observed in Afghanistan which was followed by Afghan air violation of Pakistani territory in September 1950 (Ali, 1985:251).

The Congress government in India started actively supporting the Pukhtoonistan issue after entering into a treaty of friendship with Afghanistan, and the Indian Press launched campaign in favour of Pukhtoonistan. Some analysts are of the view that there was a sharp contrast between the Pukhtoonistan versions of Abdul Ghafar Khan, the Afghanistan and that of India. For instance, the official stance of Kabul was to include Chitral, the NWFP, and the Pathan areas of Baluchistan, (excluding the Pashto speaking areas of Afghanistan) in Pukhtoonistan. But on the other hand, Abdul Ghafar Khan wanted to absorb all the Pukhtoon areas of Pakistan (Tendulkar, 1967:60). The Indian version of Pukhtoonistan was the inclusion of the NWFP, the whole tribal belt, Qalat and the whole of Baluchistan with the Makran Coast on the Arabian Sea and part of the Sindh province including the port of Karachi. The version of Abdul Ghafar Khan, however, later changed and he demanded only renaming the NWFP. He says:

In 1948 when I attended the Pakistan parliament session for the first time, I declared that all that was to happen had happened. Pakistan belongs to all equally. During the course of my speech Prince (Nawabzada) Liaquat Ali Khan asked me to what I meant by 'Patanistan.' I replied that it was not Patanistan but Pukhtoonistan, and it is only one name. He again questioned as to what sort of name it was. At this I replied that just as Punjab, Bengal and Baluchistan are the names of the provinces of Pakistan, similarly Pukhtoonistan is also a name included in the structure of Pakistan. (Khan, A.G., 1969)

According to his new version, Ghafar Khan opined that it was the cruel policy of the British who deprived the Pukhtoos of their name and identity.

The post-independence policy of the Red shirts has changed time and again due to many reasons. The Bannu resolution of June 1947, Abdul Ghafar Khan's contacts with the government of Kabul and India and then changing the version viz-a-viz Pukhtoonistan were not one-sided. Actually, the ruling Muslim League in general and some Leaguers in particular provoked Abdul Ghafar Khan on many occasions.

Dismissal of Dr Khan's Ministry

The first step of the government of Pakistan which annoyed the Red Shirts was the dismissal of Dr Khan Sahib-led ministry in the NWFP. There are divergent opinions about the cause of the dismissal of the Red Shirt ministry. One view which has been popularly known among the historians in Pakistan is that Dr Khan Sahib and his ministers refused to salute the Pakistani flag and on August 22, 1947 the ministry was dismissed. But the pro-Red Shirt writers contradict this view. D.G. Tendulkar presents another picture as he wrote:

On that day (15th August 1947) Sir George Cunningham, the then Governor of the Frontier Province, took the oath of allegiance. Dr Khan Sahib and his colleagues were invited to attend the ceremony but not asked to take the oath. After the oath taking, there was also to be flag-hoisting ceremony. The Governor asked Dr Khan Sahib whether he and his colleagues would attend this ceremony also. Dr Khan Sahib replied that they would, of course, do so. Thereupon the Governor warned him saying that as the arrangements of the ceremony were in the hands of the Muslim League National Guards, they — Dr Khan Sahib and his colleagues — could do so on their own responsibility and that he, the Governor, could not take the responsibility of their safety. Dr Khan Sahib apprehended some foul play and therefore, did not attend the function (Tendulkar, 1967:62).

Khan Abdul Wali Khan has touched upon the legal aspect of the dismissal order. During an interview with the present writer, he said that under the Government of India Act 1935, the Governor General had the power to dismiss a provincial government but when the same act was adopted as Indian independence Act 1947, the Governor General ceased to enjoy this power. Before the partition, Jinnah had demanded the viceroy Mountbatten to dismiss the Red Shirt ministry in the NWFP, but the latter refused on the plea that the decision should be taken by the Frontier Assembly (Khan, A.W., 1995)¹². He further said,

When Jinnah took over the charge as Governor General of Pakistan, he promulgated an ordinance thereby empowering himself to dismiss a Provincial government. It was under this power that the Dr Khan led ministry was dismissed. The reason given by the Muslim League government for the dismissal was funny. In principle the flag-hoisting ceremony should have been arranged by the elected Chief Minister but on the contrary all the arrangements were given in the hands of the Muslim League workers. George Cunningham told me that Dr Khan Sahib was keen to attend the meeting but he (Cunningham) stopped him from doing so due to security reasons. (ibid)

Khan Abdul Wali Khan further said that even if the dismissal was according to law, Governor Rule should have been enforced in the province; but “Jinnah appointed Khan Abdul Qayum Khan as Chief Minister with the support of 17 MLAs in the house of 50. It was the beginning of horse trading in the politics of Pakistan”(ibid). The Red Shirts condemned the action of the Central government but after two weeks, i.e., on 3rd and 4th September 1947 in a meeting held at Sardaryab (Charsadda), they reluctantly accepted the decision. In a resolution adopted in the meeting on the same issue, they said:

The dismissal of Dr Khan Sahib’s ministry and the setting up of Abdul Qayum 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. (Daily Pakistan Times, 1948)¹³

In the same meeting, the Red Shirt announced their disassociation with the All India National Congress and vowed to make every sacrifice for strengthening Pakistan (Khan, A.W., 1995).

Rapprochement with the Quaid-i-Azam

Abdul Ghafar Khan, who was elected member of the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, attended the session of the assembly on 23rd February 1948 at Karachi and took the oath of allegiance to Pakistan. During that session, he held negotiations with the Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and invited the latter to visit the Frontier Province so that he (Ghafar Khan) could entertain him and introduce the Khudai Khidmatgar to him. Quaid-i-Azam accepted that invitation (Tendulkar, 1967:22).

In April 1948, the Quaid-i-Azam visited the North West Frontier Province and arrived at Peshawar on April 11. Apart from other engagements, the Quaid-i-Azam wanted to meet Abdul Ghafar Khan in the Sardaryab Head Quarters of the Khudai Khidmatgars but the Muslim League leaders created misunderstanding in the mind of the Quaid-i-Azam and the meeting could not be held (Khan, A.W., 1995).

Khan Abdul Wail Khan has discussed in his Pashto book *Bacha Khan Ao Khudai Khitmatgar*, about Jinnah-Ghafar Khan meeting in the Governor House Peshawar. He writes that after the meeting, Abdul Ghafar Khan told him that Jinnah refused to visit Khudai Khidmatgar headquarter and asked him (Ghafar Khan) to merge his movement into the Muslim League. Abdul Ghafar Khan convened a meeting of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement leaders who rejected Jinnah's proposal (Khan, A.W., 1994:117). Ghafar Khan informed Jinnah about the decision of the Khudai Khidmatgars through a letter which reads:

I presented your proposal to my colleagues who unanimously decided not to join Muslim League. However, they were ready to cooperate in any move for the development of the country. They also pledged to continue constructive criticism against illegal and unconstitutional policies adopted by the government (ibid).

Conclusion

The Khudai Khidmatgar Movement was a significant phenomenon of the Indian political scenario in the second decade of the 20th Century. Inspired by the struggle of Haji Sahib of Turangzai and benefiting from Anti-Rowlatt and Khilafat Moment (both launched in 1919), Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan rose at the horizon of India. Though switching over from Haji Sahib Turangzai's Jihad movement to the secular politics of the Congress and then adopting the non-violence philosophy of Gandhi raised many an eye brow, but Ghafar Khan's relentless struggle can hardly

be denied. Hailing from a family of Behram Khan, who himself was a friend of the British, Ghafar Khan fought against them.

The available record of the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement testifies that it was deeply influenced by religion; nonetheless its attachment to All India Congress and Movement, Awami National Party is now a proclaimed secular political force.

Had the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement been able to establish some working relations with the All India Muslim League, it would not have been subjected to severe propaganda and being dubbed as Hindus agent. The acceptance of the 3rd June Plan in 1947 frustrated the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. When their demand for the inclusion of an independent Puktoon state in the choices of Referendum was not heeded, they, in retaliation passed the Pukhtoonistan Resolution in Bannu during the same month. Not only the Muslim League but Afghanistan, Russia and India exploited Puktoostan for their own benefits and in turn Khudai Khidmatgars earned hatred and bad name.

In the post-partition era, the Muslim League and the Khudai Khidmatgars could have buried the hatchet and come closer to each other. Unfortunately, it did not occur as Khan Abdul Wali Khan blamed that Muslim Leaguers, especially Khan Abdul Qayum Khan, for creating hurdles in the way of possible rapprochement.

End Notes

¹ The NWFP was renamed as Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa as a result of the 18th Constitutional Amendment by the Parliament in 2010.

² Rowlatte Act: Named after British judge Sir Sidney Rowlatt, who was chairman of a committee that drafted the law, Rowlatt Act or the Defense of India Regulations Act was passed by the British Parliament for India during the First World War in March 1919. Through the law "emergency measures" were indefinitely imposed in India. The basic aim was to control public unrest and root out conspiracy. The act effectively authorized the government to imprison for a maximum period of two years, without trial, any person suspected of terrorism living in the Raj. The Rowlatt Act gave British imperial authorities power to deal with revolutionary activities.

³ After World War I, the Ottoman Empire in Turkey faced dismemberment. Under the leadership of the Ali Brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, the Muslims of South Asia launched the historic Khilafat Movement (1919-24) to try and save it. Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi linked the issue of Swaraj with the Khilafat issue to

associate Hindus with the movement. The ensuing movement was the first countrywide popular movement.

⁴ Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan was born in 1890 at Utmanzai Charsadda. His father name was Behram Khan. He received his early education in Utmanzai and Peshawar, Due to opposition of his mother; he could not proceed to England for further education. He took part in social service activities. Founded *Anjumn Eslahe afaghina*, published journal *Pukhtoon* and finally founded Khudai Khidmatgars. He entered into alliance with All India National Congress. He spread non-violence among the Pukhtoos. He tried to establish Pukhtoon state Pukhtoonistan. He remained member of Pakistan Constituent Assembly He died on 20th January 1986 and was buried in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. (See *My life and struggle*, Autobiography Abdul Gaffar Khan, Seemanth Gandhi *Badshah Khan* by Madalsa Narayaen.)

⁵ Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2nd October 1869 at Porbandar, Kathiawar Agency in Gujrat stat of India. In 1891, got law degree from England and settled in South Africa. There he practiced law and struggled for Indians' rights. In 1915, came back to India, assumed Congress leadership in 1921. He taught non-violence and led many anti-British campaigns in India. He was the most popular leader of India. He was assassinated on 30th January 1948 at the age of 78 years. (For further details see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohandas_Karamchand_Gandhi; Brown, Judith M.; Parel, Anthony (2011). *The Cambridge Companion to Gandhi*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-13345-6. <http://books.google.com/books?id=KLM8kMZZu-IC>. Retrieved 7 February 2012.; Chadha, Yogesh (1997). *Gandhi: a life* (Illustrated, reprint ed.)

⁶ Interview with Dr. Murad Ali Shah Advisor to Ameer Jamat-e-Islami Pakistan , at Peshawar on 12.11.93

⁷ <http://www.socialchangenow.ca/mypages/gandhi.htm>, accessed on 4th February, 2012

⁸ The Daily Jang, Rawalpindi, 25.5.1993.

⁹ NWFP Legislative Assembly Debates Henceforth to be written as LAD, 6.11.1939

¹⁰ Interview with Malik Amir Muhammad, Tehkal, 25-8- 1994

¹¹ The daily *Times*, London

¹² Interview with Khan Abdul Wali Khan at Wali Bagh district Charsadda, 9, July 1995

¹³ The Daily *Pakistan Times*, Lahore, 14-8-1948.

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