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ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: NORTH WEST FRONTIER

Anti-colonial movements in Islamic world were actually movements against un-Islamic values and un-Islamic system of the Governments. They were not based on nationalism as anti-colonial movements usually are, but on the simple fact that a Muslim by the nature of his faith cannot live under any un-Islamic system, social, cultural or political.

Pashtoons or Pathans, as they are called by non-Pashtoons, are Muslims collectively and individually. Islam is a part of their Pashto which is their code of life and Islam is a part of their nationality so much so that a non-Muslim cannot be a Pashtoon, neither by right of birth nor by right of domicile in the area. And a Pashtoon foregoes his rights as a Pashtoon the moment he becomes, God forbid, a non-Muslim. Obviously, *such a nationality* could not think of remaining under the banner of a non-Muslim state. So their struggle for independence was a part of their faith, a part of their nationality and a part of their life. It was a struggle for existence in the true meaning of the word.

The history of the sub-continent, if deeply studied, shows that Pashtoons have always taken upon themselves to uphold the banner of Islam every where in the sub-continent from Mahmood Ghaznavi to Ghoris, Khiljis to Lodhis to Suries and to Ahmad Shah Abdali without aspiring for the throne of Delhi. They went, they fought for Islam, they secured Islamic Governments, and came back to their hills. That is why when Shah Waliullah and his followers felt that Islamic Government in the sub-continent is once more in the need of strong arms and sincere faith, they appealed to the Pashtoons of the area. The movement of Syed Ahmad Shaheed was one such movement.

Much has been written on this movement, and it is not necessary to go into the details, but now it is clear that this movement was not only against a small fraction of Sikhs in the area but it was the beginning of a larger movement against English intentions as well. Syed Ahmad

Shaheed wanted to establish a stronghold in a strong country with the help of strong people to uproot the unestablished roots of English Colonialism.

The movement after getting some momentum suddenly stopped and lost its hold over the area. The causes are well known, and no body is to be particularly blamed for what unfortunately happened. Suffice is to say that the Mujahideen could not adjust themselves to the psychological environment of the area and fell into pits that could be avoided. Though the movement started by them failed in securing an independent Islamic State, it succeeded in its essence and revived a spirit of struggle for the cause of Islam. The struggle continued till the establishment of Pakistan, an independent Islamic State.

The rule of Sikhs in the Pashtoon area was not a government in the real sense of the word. It was a way of extracting money from the various wealthy cities scattered over the plains of North West Frontier. Sometimes they would stay in some of the cities for an extended period and sometimes they will come and go getting what they were after. With the exception of Edwards, we seldom find a general who intended to establish a prolonged control with organised system of State. And what Mr. Edward performed can be considered a prelude to the British Raj rather than a part of Sikh rule.

The most famous of Sikh Governors of the area is Hari Singh Nalva whose cruelty towards human race in general and towards Muslims in particular is proverbial. He created for himself an image of ruthless terror and unthinkable horrors and sought a personal security beyond this image. It took time to get him, but ultimately he received the fate he deserved. To Pashtoon, "Revenge is a dish which tastes best when it is cold." Any how his rule was not based on an organized system and it was limited to the cities leaving the rural area to be ruled by their own petty chiefs in traditional ways.

Even after the Barelvi movement, Sikhs faced tremendous opposition and military defeats in almost every part of the North West Frontier, and this state of affairs continued till the arrival of British military forces.

The demarcation line between the Sikh rule administered by English officers and English rule by almost the same men is very thin. It appears that in the North West Frontier they were working for themselves under a treaty with the Sikh Raj. The moral of such acts is not our topic of discussion but it is a part of the history of the land. The "Jihad" of Marwat and Banochis under the astute generalship of

Dalasa Khan, continued for years against Sikhs and Britishers. The Sikhs and Mr. Edward himself could not establish government till the disbursement of forces united by his personal character and courage.

The British Raj was not extended to the North West Frontier region as easily and as smoothly as in the many areas of the sub-continent. They had to fight more than seventy-four, major battles in the short period between 1849 and 1926. And even these battles could not secure an established Raj in about one-third of the Pashtoon area. Only in the Waziristan area two thousand eight hundred and sixty operations were conducted in thirteen years and the result was an independent tribal area where the control was in the hands of Tribal Chiefs and the cases were decided according to their code of life in traditional ways. Such was the case with all the surrounding hills of the area which is now called the tribal belt. Their independent character retained by the British Raj is a tribute to their struggle and their fights for the cause of Islam. They were, by the confession of the British writers, "a nation of skilled marksmen, masters of guerilla warfare, amply provided with arms and ammunition, fleet of foot as goats, and inhabiting country as difficult as any of the world."

It is very difficult even to enumerate all the battles fought in the name of Islam in this short article. Every corner of the area, every village in the plains or hills, every family of Pashtoons have a Shaheed amongst them to remind:

و جاهدو في سبيل الله حق جهاده

And every child of the family can recite with pride how his ancestors laid down their lives in the name of Allah for the glory of Islam.

The history of this continuous "Jihad" can be divided into two parts, though the division line will not be well marked and the events will look overlapping in time and in space. The first phase is of wide spread "Jihad" in individual areas where the British Raj was expanding itself under their advance policy. This period spreads over the years between 1846 and 1900 A.D.

The second phase is of the "Jihad" planned and organised by religious leaders for the revival of Islamic State and expulsion of the colonialists. In both the phases the religious furore and the spirit of Jihad dominate the emotions and nationalistic tendencies are not traceable at all. The difference between the two is that in the first phase the fight was of a defensive nature and they optimistically believed that this

foreign rule will also be unsystematic or disorganized like the Sikh rule and could easily be uprooted. In the second phase it was an uphill struggle against an established and organized force and it was a conscious effort against an acknowledged power.

In the first phase amongst the famous battles are:

1. The battle of Moghdara in 1846.
2. The battle of Gumbati with Wazir, Banochis and Marwat in the same year.
3. The battle of Babuzai with Utman Khel and Yusufzai clans in 1847.
4. The battle of Sangao with Utman Khel in 1849.
5. The battle of Dara Adam Khel in 1850.
6. The battle of Gojar Garhi with Kamalzai in 1851.
7. The battle of Niran in the same year.
8. The battle of Mohmand in the same year.
9. The battle of Mohmand in the year 1852.
10. The battle of Ranizai in the year 1852.
11. The battle of Utman Khel in the year 1852.
12. The battle of Darwish Khel Wazir in the year 1852.
13. The battle of Umarzai Wazir in the year 1852.
14. The battle of Khattak and Wazir in the year 1852.
15. The battle of Hassanzai in the year 1853.
16. The battle of Indian Mujahdeen in the year 1853.
17. The battle of Adam Khel Afridi in the year 1853.
18. The battle of Mohmands in the year 1854.
19. The battle of Aka Khel Afridi in the year 1855.
20. The battle of Miranzai in the year 1855.
21. The battle of Rabia Khel Orakzai in the year 1855.
22. The battle of Tori in the year 1856.
23. The battle of Yusufzai in the year 1857.
24. The battle of Darwish Khel Wazir in the year 1859-60.
25. The battle of Ahmadzai Wazir and Mahsuds in the year 1859-60.
26. The battle of Mahaban Khado Khel in the year 1863.
27. The battle of Ambela in the year 1863.
28. The battle of Mohmand in the year 1863.
29. The battle of Orakzai in the year 1868.
30. The battle of Torghar in the year 1868.
31. The battle of Orakzai in the year 1869.
32. The battle of Kurram Kabul Khel in the year 1869.
33. The battle of Daur in the year 1872.

34. The battle of Afridi in the year 1877.
35. The battle of Afridi in the year 1877-78.
36. The battle of Utman Khel in the year 1878.
37. The battle of Ranizai in the year 1878.
38. The battle of Utman Khel in the year 1878.
39. The battle of Zakha Khel Afridi in the year 1878.
40. The battle of Zakha Khel Afridi in the year 1879.
41. The battle of Mishto Orakzai in the year 1879.
42. The battle of Tank Ishahur Tangi in the year 1879.
43. The battle of Mohmand in the year 1879.
44. The battle of Mohmand in the year 1879-80.
45. The battle of Bhattani in the year 1880.
46. The battle of Darwish Khel Wazir in the year of 1880.
47. The battle of Wazir and Mahsud in the year 1880.
48. The battle of Buner in the year of 1887.
49. The battle of Torghar in the year 1888.
50. The battle of Torghar in the year 1891.
51. The battle of Orakzai in the year 1891.
52. The battle of Orakzai in the year 1891.
53. The battle of Tochi in the year 1892.
54. The battle of Darwish Khel Wazir in the year 1894.
55. Chitral expedition in the year 1894.
56. The battle of Chitral in the year 1895.
57. The battle of Malakand in the year 1897.
58. The battle of Darwish Khel Wazir in the year 1897.
59. The battle of Mada Khel Wazir in the year 1897.
60. The battle of Akuzai Swat in the year 1897.
61. The battle of Mohmand in the year 1897.
62. The battle of Akuzai Tarkain of By in the year 1897.
63. The battle of Utman Khel in the year 1897.
64. The battle of Orakzai in the year 1897.
65. The battle of Afridi (Tirah Expedition) in the year 1897.
66. The battle of Buner in the year 1897.
67. The battle of Kurram in the year 1900.
68. The battle of Wazir Mahsud in the year 1900.

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE BATTLES

1. The battle of Darwish Khel Wazir in the year 1901-2.
2. The battle of Chakdara in the year 1915.
3. The battle of Moghal Kot in the year 1918.

4. The battle of Tank in the year 1918-19.
5. The battle of Apuzai (Fort Sandeman) in the year 1919.
6. The battle of Tochi in the year 1919.
7. The battle of Kasi Ghar in the year 1919.
8. The battle of Shabqadar in the year 1919.
9. The battle of Kaur Binj in the year 1920.
10. The battle of Manji Garai in the year 1920.
11. The battle of Zazi Qalla in the year 1920.
12. The battle of Daraban in the year 1921.
13. The battle of Qalla Wuwa in the year 1922.
14. The battle of Ajab Khan Afridi in the year 1923.
15. The battle of Tarakai in the year 1924.
16. The battle of Anri Tangi in the year 1925.
17. The battle of Mohmand in the year 1926.
18. The battle of Sararogha in the year 1926.
19. The battle of Datta Khel in the year 1928.
20. Attack of Afridis on Peshawar in the year 1930.
21. The battle of Boya in the year 1930.
22. The firing of Spin Tangi in the year 1930.
23. The battle of Shahwali Ziarat in the year 1932.
24. The battle of Bat Khela in the year 1908.
25. The battle of Babra in the year 1914.
26. The battle of Salampur in the year 1914.
27. The battle of Haji Turangzai in the year 1916.
28. The battle of Gumbati in the year 1937.
29. The battle of Shahur Tangi in the year 1937.
30. The battle of Kande Sar in the year 1937.
31. The battle of Dana Sar in the year 1937.
32. Attack on Bannu city in the year 1938.
33. Battle of Lawaghar in the year 1938.
34. The battle of Shahur Tangi in the year 1947 before partition.

These and such like hundreds of battles, though temporarily defeated Mujahid forces, did not result in the establishment of the British rule in the whole of North West Frontier. Some areas of the plains like Mardan, Peshawar, the city of Kohat and adjacent plain area, the city of Bannu and adjacent plain area and other plains were securely dominated but the neighbouring hills continued to be the strongholds of the Mujahids and remained a permanent headache for the British Raj. In these areas the Jihad of the first phase was constantly carried over to the second phase. And these two phases are unseparably amalgamated.

The distinct example of this constant Jihad is the battle of Ambela, Buner area which was fought in 1863 and according to official British record about 900 British soldiers and officers were killed without securing any victory. The prominent leader of the Mujahideen was Sheikh Abdul Ghaffur known as Saidu Baba. The followers of Saidu Baba, spreading over the whole North West Frontier, kept the spirit of Jihad alive. And the area of Swat and Buner could not be amalgamated with the Government of sub-continent till the establishment of Pakistan.

The forces of Saidu Baba saved Buner and Swat, but such was not the fate of Chitral. In spite of the recognized military genius of Umra Khan the British expedition in Chitral was successful and the area was taken over. The courage and the spirit of Pashtoon Mujahids is still remembered in the area as well as by the enemies themselves. Captain Husband relates:

“One of enemy’s drummers, not content with taking his fair share of risks, persisted in mounting on to the roof of a hut, where he showed up clear and conspicuous against the sky line, and thence cheered on his comrades. Every now and again a bullet would find him out, and he would drop to dress his wounds, and then again mounting recommenced beating his drum. At last a bullet got him through the heart and he fell headlong a hundred yards down the cliff, and there lay stark dead, but with his drum round his neck, his arms ready raised to strike it.”

The primitive expedition of Tirah could not subjugate the area till the end of British empire. The losses of British forces in Tirah expedition are so tremendous that even the British writers are apologetic about them.

Col. H. D. Hutchinson states:

“The difficulties and dangers and risks involved in waging warfare against such a foe in such a country are obvious.” Another British writer Captain L. J. Shadwell describes:

“Our losses, it is true, have been heavy but this was inevitable with an enemy who would not risk a standup fight, and who inhabit a most difficult country, who are certainly the finest skirmishers in the world, and who fight a guerilla warfare to perfection.”

It looks that round about 1908 when the prominent Religious leaders of the sub-continent were organizing a world wide movement to uproot British Raj through collective Muslim efforts, the Pashtoon area was to be made the centre of armed uprising against the British Government. Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hassan who was

the Chief Organizer of the movement had with him as his trusty lieutenant, Maulana Uzer Gul of this area. And through him connections were established with the religious leaders of the plain and tribal areas. The recently released record of the British office speaks of Maulana Uzer Gul as a fierce staunch supporter of Jihad.

Unfortunately the movement of "Reshmi Khatut" was intercepted and consequently failed but the religious leaders of the area declared Jihad against the rule of unbelievers and whole area flamed up. Mr. Warburton rightly suspected, "it is not possible to say with any amount of certainty whether the preaching of the Ghaza was to be carried out at one and same time in Waziristan, in Tirah, amongst the Mohmands, and by the "Mad Fakir" in the Swat valley, so that the rising should be simultaneous from Maizar in the Tochi valley to Chakdara and Malakand."

If it could not be so organized it was due to the lack of facilities at the disposal of the religious leaders, but it is a fact that the Ghaza covered the whole area mentioned by Mr. Warburton. Mullah Powinda in the Waziristan area started Jihad inheriting it from his teachers Maulana Gulab Din (1861 A.D.) and Maulana Humza Khan near about the same period. The original name of Mullah Powinda was Mohayyuddin and he was Shabi Khel Wazir and spiritually attached to the Mullah of Karbogha who was bestowed the title of "MAZUN" by Saidu Baba, leader of the Ambela Jihad. Mullah Powinda attacked Jandola camp in 1884 for the first time and continued his Jihad till he died like a Mujahid.

Like Mullah Powinda the famous Haji Sahib of Turangzai also inherited the spirit of Jihad from his illustrious spiritual leader Ada Mullah Sahib. Ada Mullah was Akhund Zada Najmuddin of Ghazni of the Sulaiman Khel tribe. His birth place Ada is situated near Jalalabad. He got his religious education as well spiritual education at Saidu Sharif from Saidu Baba and participated in the battle of Ambela under the banner of this great leader. He also participated in the battle of Malakand, Chakdara, Bajaur, Shab Qadar and other great battles from 1863 to 1909 A.D. He died in 1902 and left a legacy of *Jihad fi Sabilillah* to his family and his followers. Famous among his followers is the great Haji Sahib of Turangzai whose name is still revered in every village of Pashtoon area. The great Hiji Sahib established his headquarter at Kanda Ghar at the Mohmand area and led his first army against British Government in 1919 attacking Shabqadar fort and the fight continued for twenty years till 1937 when he sighed his last.

Such religious leaders and such Jihads were spread over the surrounding tribal areas of the British province of North West Frontier. Obviously all the participants of these Jihads were not the inhabitants of tribal hills. The clans of Pashtoon area are intermingled and the exchange of residences is frequent and unrestricted. The residents of the plains were as much members of the Jihad force as the residents of the hills. Naturally the so-called settled area was also affected and in the hearts the residents of the settled area were as much against the unfaithful as their brothers in hills. When the political movements started under legal covers, the Khilafat and then Khudai Khidmatgar movements projected their religious characteristics rather than political aims and Pashtoons of the area accepted these movements as reformational activities against social evils in the true spirit of Islam. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement later on attained itself with a political movement of the sub-continent and lost its greater support in the Pashtoon area.

Even when the hold of the law was not relaxed, the Pashtoons of the area never subdued themselves to the law of the Britishers, whenever the law confronted the Islamic values. The case of Ajab Khan Afridi can be cited as an example. He faced the full strength of the British Raj single-handedly in a so-called settled area when the question of the honour of Islam was arisen.

The last uprising against the British Raj starting again from the settled area was the cry of Jihad by Faqir of EPI in 1937. A Hindu girl near Bannu embraced Islam and married a Muslim. The influential Hindus of the area persuaded British Justice to handover the Muslim lady to their Hindu relatives. It was, no doubt, an insult of Islam, and Pashtoons of the settled and tribal areas never subdue to any law against Islam. The result was a long Jihad with British Raj till the establishment of Pakistan.

The history of this area is very clear on one point that Pashtoons have always struggled for the establishment of Islamic Government in the sub-continent, and never ceased to struggle for this aim even after the establishment of the British Government in the very large area of the sub-continent.

When the Muslims of the sub-continent started their struggle for an independent Islamic state by means other than Jihad, the Pashtoons of the settled area whole-heartedly supported this struggle because it was their ages long aim by whatever means it could be achieved.

It is a unique fact in the history of wars that when the Islamic State

of Pakistan was established the wars on the borders spreading all over the tribal area suddenly ceased to be as if they never were.

The large number of many divisions deployed on the border were withdrawn by a single order of the Head of the State of Pakistan Late Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Such is the Islamic character of Pashtoons.

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