

Abdul Ghaffar Khan: A Case Study of His Services in Colonial India to Pushtun and Beyond (1900-1950)

Yahya Ahmad¹

¹Independent Researcher
Department of History,
Quaid-i-Azam University
Islamabad,Pakistan

Yahya.mehsud1@gmail.com

Abstract: *This research paper probe into the remarkable services of Abdul Ghaffar Khan to Pashtuns and non-Pashtuns in colonial India from 1900 to 1950. The paper highlights his efforts in promoting education, social reform, and women's empowerment, as well as his guidance of violent Pashtuns towards non-violence. Khan's initiatives, including Azad schools, Afghan Youth League, Khudai Khidmitgars, Anjuman Islah-e-Afghina, and Pukhtun magazine are investigated thoroughly. His commitment to education and women's rights is emphasized, as reflected in his quote on judging a society's decency by its treatment of women. This research paper studies the life and legacy of Bacha Khan, a leader of oppressed known across Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India for pioneering a new path for the Pashtuns and Indian citizens. Bacha Khan guided the people towards modern warfare through education and technology, vehemently opposing the traditional violent methods. Under British rule, NWFP was harshly discriminated by the Raj, but Bacha Khan advocated for their rights through non-violent means despite the severe consequences of events like the Qissa Khawani and Babarra massacres.*

Keywords: *Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Azad School, British, Colonial India, Pashtuns, Non-Violent etc.*

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Introduction

Abdul Ghaffar Khan (aka Bacha Khan) was born in 1890¹. Badshah Khan ('King of Chiefs') was an Indian Pushtun independence activist, and founder of the Khudai Khidmatgar resistance movement against British Raj in Indian Sub-Continent. He was the first who guided the violent Pashtuns to be the followers of the Non-Violence Policy². Bacha Khan's struggle was for the rights of the oppressed. A call was issued from Congress for All India hartal on April 6, 1919, to resist Rowlatt Act of 1919. He emerged as a political figure delivering speech at Charsadda after Jaliana Wala Bagh Massacre.³ Abdul Ghaffar Khan started his political career by coming out against Rowlett Act.⁴ Khudai Khidmatgar movement, emphasizing its departure from Pathans' violent stereotypes to embrace non-violent resistance against British colonialism. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement, led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, advocated for justice and non-violence in the anti-colonial struggle of the North-West Frontier of British India. Despite the Pathans' reputation for violence, the movement successfully promoted non-violent resistance, challenging British stereotypes, and aiming for political maturity and self-rule. Through a bricolage of Pukhtunwali ethics, Islamic principles, and non-violence ideology⁵, the movement creatively challenged British stereotypes and aimed for political autonomy. The Formation of Afghan Youth League for the Educated and the Khudai Khidmatgar for the un-educated Pushtuns depicts his wisdom and intellect. He challenged British rule through activism in Khilafat Movement and Hijrat Movement, pushing beyond colonial limits. Abdul Ghaffar took initiative for educations such as establishing Azad Schools and kept himself in contact with Haji Tarangzai Sahib who was an educationist reformer in Pashtuns. Abdul Ghaffar's Ideology was based on Non-Violence. His philosophy stands on Dipod with Pre-Partition encircling the struggle for social reforms like KK movements, Afghan Youth or Youth League, Anjuman-i-Islahu'l-Afaghana, Azad Madrassas, Preaching and Teaching the Philosophy of Non-Violence, his struggle against the British Imperialism and with Post-Partition including: Pukhtunistan- a separate province for Pashtuns like Punjab and Sindh, Inclusive Governance based on reconciliation and trust⁶, Provincial Autonomy, and Political Consciousness of the Pukhtuns.

Early Life and his Education

Abdul Ghaffar was born in Hashtanagar, now known as Ashtanagar or "eight towns", in the village of Utmanzai, in the house of Khan Behram Khan in 1890.⁷ Ghaffar writes in his book, 'If I say I was born in 1890 it is because my mother used to tell me that I was eleven years old when my brother. Dr. Khan Sahib got married in 1901.'⁸ Ali Khan Mehsud mentions his birthdate in his book writes about him as, 'Pushtun Women have excellent memories for dates, and with only four siblings, keeping track of family record was easy for his mother.'⁹ Tendulkar writes about his childhood that, Abdul Ghaffar was fond of listening to stories—tales from books and tales

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told to him. He used to play mostly with the sweepers' children. His companions used to say: "They are bhangis, why play with them!" But he did not listen to them, nor did their bidding have any effect on his mind. Even when he grew up his contacts were mostly with the artisans: blacksmiths, weavers, carpenters, and sweepers.¹⁰

In 1896, he was sent to a Mosque to learn Quran, as education was deemed detrimental to one's faith. "According to the popular tradition, he was sent to the local mosque to take early lessons in the Holy Quran and the Pashtoons have great respect for religious education and majority of them send their children to mosques and that's why, there was hardly any government school in the rural areas and, therefore, the NWFP was one of the most backward areas in education in British India."¹¹ In those times, it was widely believed that anyone who received school education would be condemned to hell and barred from entering paradise. This belief was a common perspective in certain communities, where religious education was prioritized over school education. In NWFP they would say, Ghaffar writes about it.

*Sabaq da madrasse wai
dapara de paisey wai
Janat ke ye baye zai na wi
dozakh ke be ghasey wai¹²*

[Translation: Those who learn at school do so for money and will face damnation(hell), not Salvation (Paradise).]

He enrolled in Municipal Board high School in 1898 and, "took his preliminary education up to the primary classes in the Municipal Board High School and then joined the Edwardes Memorial Mission High School at Peshawar, where the Rev. E. F. E. Wigram was his headmaster."¹³ In 1901, he got admission to Edward Mission High School and there the 'E. F. E. Wigram, the school headmaster had a profound impact on young Abdul Ghaffar Khan.'¹⁴ In 1906, while still in matriculation, he was offered a chance to join military, as son of a Khan, it was prestigious opportunity. However, an incident¹⁵ where an Indian soldier was insulted by British soldier changed his mind, and he decided to refuse the offer and decline joining the Army. Ghaffar Khan decided to pursue his studies further and travelled to Campbellpur, but his stay was brief. He then headed to Qadian, where he was deeply inspired by the personality of Hakim Noor-ud-Din. However, during his journey to Qadian, he had a vivid dream at one of the stops along the way. In the dream¹⁶, a wise old man with grey beard appeared to him, warning him away from a deep ditch, just as he was about to fall into it. In 1908, he went to Islami School Aligarh, "he proceeded to Aligarh and got himself admitted there as a day-scholar. During the summer vacation Abdul Ghaffar, after a year's stay at Aligarh, went back to his village."¹⁷

The NWFP was the most neglected province of British India in terms of Education. Tendulkar thinks that Punjab and British were responsible for it "From 1849 to 1901, the North-West

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Frontier territory formed part of the Punjab Province. In the Punjab the British had established many schools for the education of the Punjabis, but there was no such facility for the Frontier region. The Britishers and the Punjabis neglected the education of Pakhtuns. All the officers in the Education Department were Punjabis. There was hardly any primary school in the Frontier villages.' Ghaffar Khan concern were the British and Mullah as described by Tendulkar, 'It is most regrettable,' he says, "that the British had established no schools for us, and if there was any, the mullahs were set behind us to propagate that it was a sin to learn. They wanted the Pakhtuns to remain illiterate and ignorant."¹⁸ The neglected society of Pashtun by British and then Clergy still had impacts on the social, cultural, and political life of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa people.

Social Reforms and Services

In 1909, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's father wanted him to study in England, but his mother refused, fearing he'd never return, convert to Christianity, and abandon his heritage, citing his brother's absence and recent family deaths as ominous signs.¹⁹ This was the time when Ghaffar Khan begin his practical life, dedicating himself to serving his people through Social Work and Welfare. Shah Writes, "He was convinced that Pashtoons must be educated, reformed and organised. Abdul Ghaffar Khan commenced his social activities as an educationist and came into close contact with another social reformer of the area, Haji Fazli Wahid, popularly known as the Haji of Turangzai. In 1910, their combined efforts resulted in opening of educational institution – the Dar-ul-Ulooms – at Utmanzai and Gaddar (Mardan)."²⁰ In 1912, he joined the Social Welfare movement of Haji Sahib of Turangzai.²¹ The creation of Azad School and many other social welfare activities were because he was inspired by the Haji Turangzai efforts but when he knew that it turned to armed resistance and 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan had developed his perception on non-violence since early 1910s. This was one of the main reasons that he disapproved the armed struggle of the Haji Sahib of Turangzai, launched against the Raj. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was convinced that the armed resistance would bring disaster and ruin upon the Pashtoons, who were, as the inhabitants of a politically and strategically sensitive area, already facing lot of miseries."²² He had great respect for Deoband and because of "His colleagues, Fazle Rabi Saheb and Fazle Makhfi .Saheb, were educated at Deoband, the well-known Islamic institution, of which Maulana Mahmudul Hasan, a savant and a pious man, was the principal. Abdul Ghaffar took a great liking for the maulana because he was a patriot. Through him he met Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, who used to teach the Koran to the English-educated youth in the Fatehpuri Mosque in Delhi."²³

Bacha Khan as discussed earlier was now in contact with Deoband and that's why, 'Bacha khan-maintained connections with prominent figures like 'Mahmoodul Hassan, the chief divine figure at Deoband, and Ubaidullah Sindhi, a revolutionary scholar and discipe of Mahmood. Together they decided for establishing a anti-British hub within the tribal regions, but

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unfortunately, this plan never came to fruition.²⁴ In 1913, Abdul Ghaffar attended the Muslim League session at Agra, and the same year, his first son, Abdul Ghani Khan was born. Ghani Khan later became a renowned poet of the time, making great contributions to Pashto Literature. In 1914 he visited Deoband at the request of Maulana Mohamedul Hasan, accompanied by his colleagues, Maulvi Fazle Mohamed, and Maulvi Fazle Rabi.²⁵ In 1915, the British imposed ban on Azad Schools in Utmanzai. The same year, his second son, Abdul Wali Khan, was born. Three years later, in 1918, his wife passed away. The coming year is marked as the beginning for his political life.

Political Career and Social Reforms

The frontier province was excluded from the 1908 Morely-Minto reforms and 1919 Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Instead, the FCR (Frontier Crime Regulation) was used to silence reforms advocates, forcing them to provide heavy securities under section 40 of the regulation or face imprisonment for three years. Similarly, Rowlatt act was a controversial law passed by the British in 1919, which even allowed detention of individuals without court trail or evidence. Ghaffar Khan started his political career by speaking out against this act. Tendulkar writes in his book, The name of Abdul Ghaffar Khan first came to notice in 1919 when he led an agitation, in common with the rest of India, against the Rowlatt Act which severely restricted political activity in India.²⁶ In the same year, he was taken by the government but managed to secure bail. Additionally, he married for the second time that year. Indian Nationalist, led by Congress leader Gandhi, protested Rowlatt Act with a nationwide strike, All India *Hartal* on April 6, 1919. In Peshawar similar hartal was observed, with Muslims and Non-Muslims participating. Similar protests occurred in other districts of NWFP. Meanwhile, news of firing on innocent citizens at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, reached the province. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the emerging socio-political worker from Charsadda, convened a protest meeting at Utmanzai. The CID reported 50,000-70,000 attendees in rural areas, marking a great show of solidarity with All India Cause.²⁷ This was the political debut, as he addressed the protest for first time, entering to political forefront.

Khilafat and Hijrat Movement

During the War years, the Indian Muslim was given surety that there will be no harm to Caliph as religious head of the Indian Muslims and Holy Places after War. The Paris Peace Conference was against the expectations of the Indian Muslims. This hurt the feelings of Muslims across globe and Khilafat Movement was started. Ghaffar Khan, in 1920, went to Delhi to attend Khilafat Conference and 'British sought to solidify their control over NWFP, following World War I, The Third Anglo-Afghan Was, and the Khilafat Movement. They launched operations in Waziristan, Wanna, and Razmak (1921-1924), spending Rs. 3,33,33,678. The total Expenditure for

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administering NWFP's agencies and tribal areas in 1920-21 was Rs. 62.28 lakhs.'²⁸ Ghaffar Khan went to Delhi to attend khilafat Conference in 1920 and become the provincial president of Provincial khilafat Committee. He was the Non-violent resisting force against the Raj in the frontier. Hijrat Movement (May, 1919) was another movement soon after Khilafat movement. This was the off shot of Khilafat Agitation.

'India had become a Dar-ul-harb, land of war; it was their religious duty to give up everything and go on pilgrimage, Hijrat, to a Dar-ul-salam, a land of peace, to a land of true believers.' Hijrat Committee were formed across the regions and 'The mullahs issued fatwas saying that those who did not go on Hijrat would lose their right on their wives.' King Amanullah wants to help the immigrants with Employment, trade, allot colonies and cultivable land but spies of British tell them that they were here for fighting war with British who dodge them in Khilafat case. He was weak to fight wars but vowed support to the immigrants if they gained strength to fight British, whom he likened to a troublesome "black cobra". Hijrat Movement failed.²⁹ Ghaffar Khan with his companions came back. Abdul Ghaffar was arrested under 40 FCR on Dec 17, 1921, and was given rigorous imprisonment for 3 years. He was alleged for taking part in Hijrat Movement and recontinuing Azad School at Utmanzai.

Educational initiatives in the Province

After the failure of hijrat movement, he came back and reinitiated educational activities. In April 1921, Tehrik Islah-i-Al-Afghina was founded, and Abdul Akbar Khan was appointed the first president, and first drama writer Mian Muhammad Shah was its first General Secretary. Muhammad Akbar Khan Khadim was the poet considered.³⁰ Shah in his book writes about the diverse curriculum of Azad schools under banner of Anjuman, 'First branch of Azad Islamia Madrassa was opened at Utmanzai, followed by many more branches in different 79 areas of the Peshawar Valley. The curriculum included teaching of the Holy Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, Islamic History, Pashto, Mathematics, English and Arabic. Moreover, vocational skills like carpentry, weaving and tailoring were also introduced.'³¹ The aims of Anjuman were diverse and 'during colonial times, Hindus controlled trade and business. This association started to spread the spirit of doing trade and commerce in Pakhtoon community. In this connection, Bacha Khan took initiative and established a Sugar factory in Utmanzai in 1927.' He welcomed his people to take part in commercial and trade activities and initiatives.³² Mullah were the main obstacle and hindrance in way of Pushtun to get educated as he thinks that both British and Mullah were responsible for this and therefore, 'Abdul Ghaffar told the mullahs. "When you ask the people not to go to the schools started by the British, you should open your own schools." He tried to enlighten the mullahs without any success. "When God could not make these mullahs understand, how could I?"³³ His third son Abdul Ali Khan was born in 1922 who later become the vice Chancellor of Gomal and Peshawar universities. Khan's mother passed away in 1923

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while he was in Dera Ghazi Khan jail. In 1926, he attended the Congress meeting on Khilafat movement, went on hajj with his sister and visited Saudi Arabia and Palestine.

Pukhtuns Magazine

In 1928, after coming back, he started magazine to educate Pushtun about ongoing affairs. This magazine was known as *Pukhtuns*. This magazine was banned time and again. Pukhtuns was published from May 1928 till April 1930 and there was ban on it, from June 1931 to dec 1931, from May 1938 to dec 1940, from May 1945 to 10 Aug 1947 and again a ban on it. The Pukhtun was inclusive for both man and woman. Shah writes about 'Khudai Khidmatgars who were devoted to the socio-economic uplift were the foremost advocates of female education. An educated woman, according to them, could take care of herself better than an inexperienced, uneducated, mentally confused woman. The columns of the Pukhtun were open for women to write about their problems.'³⁴ The Pukhtun greatly contributed to spread awareness among the Pukhtuns. Copies of the May issue of Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Pakhtu magazine, Pakhtun, which is purely devoted to the cause of social reform, have been held up by the postal authorities and no reason for it has been given to Khan Saheb.³⁵ The time to time ban on Pukhtun didn't stop Ghaffar Khan to spread his message among the Pushtuns.

Envisioned Muslim Leadership and Khudai Khidmatgar

In 1928, Bacha Khan started an organization 'Anjamun-i- Nujwanan Subah-e-Sarhad'. Abdul Ghaffar Khan attended the Khilafat Conference in Calcutta, meeting Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Allama Iqbal, and Ali Brethren to discuss NWFP and Afghanistan. Mahomed Ali's presidential speech targeted Hindus, and despite interruptions, Gandhi remained calm despite interruption during his speech. Abdul Ghaffar Khan advised Mahomed Ali to cultivate tolerance, but he flared up, saying, "Wild Pathans have come to teach Mahomed Ali!" Hurt by his behavior, Abdul Ghaffar Khan skipped the rest of the Khilafat session and returned to his village.³⁶

On Nov 11, 1928, he was appointed as provincial president of congress, and he went to Lahore for attending Congress Annual Session where demand for an independent Hindustan was put forward. In 1929, Ghaffar went to Lucknow for congress session where he met with Jawahar Lal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi for first time and Nujwanan-i-Subah Sarhad was now renamed as apolitical 'Khudai-i-Khidmitgar Organization' which was turned political due to atrocities carried out by British in Indian sub-Continent. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was the leader of this Organization. Due to the difference of opinion between the Khilafat Movement and the Congress, he resigned from the provincial presidency of the Khilafat Committee. On April 18 and 19, 1929 he gathered around 200 Surkhposh in Khudai Khidmitgar Movement Gatherings.

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Afghan Youth League or Zalmo Jirga

Abdul Ghaffar formed Zilmo Jirga in 1929, a political wing of Khudai-i-Khidmitgar. In 1930, he led a rally in Utmanzai, urging civil disobedience, and was imprisoned on April 23, 1930 for three years under FCR. The government also banned the Monthly Pukhtun Magazine.

Mian Akbar Shah (1899-1990), an active member of the Anjuman, and a former student of Islamia College, proposed the formation of a youth league, drawing inspiration from similar organizations outside India, such as the Young Turks, Young Afghans, Young Bukharans, and Young Khivans. Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also known as Bacha Khan, appreciated the idea and agreed to host a meeting to discuss the proposal. The meeting was convened on September 1, 1929, at Utmanzai, which was Bacha Khan's hometown. During the meeting, the formation of the Zalmo Jirga (also known as the Afghan Jirga) was announced, with its temporary headquarters established in Utmanzai. The Zalmo Jirga was a youth organization aimed at promoting social and political awareness, reform, and empowerment among the youth of the region.³⁷

Non-Violence

The Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God) movement, founded by Khan Abdul Ghaffar in 1930, was a regional movement of Pathans in the NWFP. Despite their reputation for violence, the movement adhered to non-violence and civil disobedience, inspired by Badshah Khan's leadership and ideology. This approach was a strategic move to challenge British stereotypes and show political maturity, telling the Pathans' ability to adapt and evolve. The movement's non-violent stance was remarkable, given the region's history of violent uprisings and militant struggles against British rule. However, Badshah Khan's commitment to non-violence, honed through his experiences and interactions with Mahatma Gandhi, remained great. The Government of India Act of 1919, which introduced a basic democratic structure of elections throughout the rest of India, was not applied to the Frontier and in 1929 the Simon Commission on constitutional reform reiterated the unsuitability of the NWFP for democratic reforms that were otherwise acceptable elsewhere in India. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement's success in converting notoriously violent Pukhtuns to non-violence was remarkable for social creativity, combining elements of Pukhtunwali, Islam, and non-violence. Through their non-violent resistance, the movement seized the moral high ground, allowing Badshah Khan to critique British claims of civilization and governance.³⁸ Mahatma Gandhi revered Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan as a "Man of God", admiring his selflessness and dedication to the cause. Gandhi saw Ghaffar Khan's non-violent approach as the only way to achieve freedom for the Pathans,

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transforming their bravery into informed courage. Ghaffar Khan believed that his people had been exploited and kept in ignorance, and that his non-violent approach was the key to empowering them and bringing about true change.³⁹

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's commitment to non-violence predates his association with Gandhi, dating back to the 1910s. He disagreed with the armed resistance led by Haji Sahib of Turangzai against British rule. Contrary to popular belief, Gandhi's influence did not shape Khan's non-violent stance, as the Pashtoon mindset was not significantly impacted by Gandhian philosophy. The Khudai Khidmatgars, led by Khan, maintained their independence, and did not blindly follow Gandhi or the Congress. The Congress Poona Offer (1939) offered conditional support to the British war effort in 1939, Khan disagreed and chose to resign from the Congress Working Committee, expressing his decision to Gandhi and affirming his commitment to non-violent resistance.⁴⁰ Following the great Punjab killings of Aug and Sep 1947, the independence was mix of dance and joy with streams of blood, dead bodies, and miseries everywhere, Mercifully the Frontier was spared large scale communal riots in Aug and Sep, thanks in Part to the role the KKs played. Badshah Khan and his brother had no hesitation in seeing themselves and KKs as Contributors to Pakistan's Independence and League as its beneficiary.⁴¹

Imprisonment and Qissa Khwani Incident

In 1930, a protest was held in Qissa Khwani against the imprisonment of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, which ended in tragedy. On April 23, 1930, the Qissa Khwani massacre occurred, resulting in the deaths of approximately 400 people, according to local sources, who were shot by the authorities. This event marked a turning point in the freedom movement in NWFP.⁴² In May 1930, the people of NWFP, protested the atrocities committed by government, leading to a crackdown on the Khudai-i-Khidmitgar movement. On May 2, the government seized Utmanzai and forced the people to abandon their affiliation with Khudai-i-Khidmitgari. In response, on May 28, Abdul Ghaffar Khan reached out to Congress, seeking their support, and offering to merge his movement with theirs in times of need.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan was actively involved in the freedom movement, attending Congress meetings in Karachi and Delhi in 1931. He also met with national leaders in Bombay and Shimla but was subsequently imprisoned for three years and the movement was banned in December of that year. In 1932, the Pukhtun Magazine was banned by the government. Released from prison in 1934, he was restricted from visiting the Frontier Province, but continued to advocate for Hindu-Muslim unity, addressing the public in Calcutta. However, he was arrested again in December of that year after addressing a public session in Bombay. Released from prison again in 1936, he was still barred from entering his home province and Punjab. It wasn't until 1937 that the restrictions were lifted, and he was able to attend a Congress meeting in Delhi with Mahatma Gandhi. In 1938, he resumed publication of Pukhtun Magazine and accompanied

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Gandhi to attend the meeting of the Congress working committee to Kolkata. Finally, in 1940, he joined the Congress working committee and led the Civil Disobedience movement in NWFP, although the Pukhtun Magazine was banned again by the government.

In 1941, Abdul Ghaffar Khan established training camps for the Khudai-i-Khidmitgars. The following year, both Gandhi and Bacha Khan resigned from Congress due to disagreements over supporting the British in World War II. In July 1942, Bacha Khan established a central office for the Khudai-i-Khidmitgars, Markaz-i-Ala' Khudai Khidmitgaran, 14 miles outside Peshawar. However, on October 27, 1942, he was beaten by police and imprisoned in Haripur Jail for two years due to his involvement in the Quit India Movement. He has been known for prisoner of Pakistan to prisoner of the year.

Khan Ministry

In 1945, Dr. Khan formed a ministry on the invitation of Lord Cunningham, and Bacha Khan was released from prison on March 11. He and Gandhi rejoined Congress, and Bacha Khan resumed publishing the weekly Pukhtun Magazine. On June 25, Bacha Khan and Dr. Khan attended the Wavell Conference in Shimla as representatives of Congress. In 1946, Abdul Ghaffar was chosen as a member of the Central Parliamentary Assembly. The following year, on April 22, he addressed the first Asian Relations Conference, and on May 22, he formed the organization Pukhtun Zalmay, with Abdul Ghani Khan as its head. On June 21, Bacha Khan demanded a separate state of Pukhtunistan in Bannu, which later became known as the Bannu Resolution. However, in August 1947, the Khan government was dismissed, and Abdul Qayyum Khan was appointed as the new Chief Minister. Bacha Khan continued to demand a separate state of Pukhtunistan within Pakistan. In 1948, he formed a political party, the Peoples Party, with other leaders, and on February 3, he took the oath of the parliamentary assembly. On March 5, he delivered a speech in Urdu to the national assembly.

Later that year, Bacha Khan welcomed Jinnah to NWFP, but his attempt to merge his organization with the Muslim League was unsuccessful. On May 13, he announced that the Khudai-i-Khidmitgars were the social welfare wing of the Peoples Party, and he began a movement against the government. He was imprisoned again for three years, during which time the Babara Massacre occurred. In September 1948, a law was passed against the Khudai-i-Khidmitgars, and their center in Sardaryab was destroyed. In 1950, Bacha Khan's imprisonment was extended for several months under the Bengal Regulation of 1818.

Bacha Khan and India's Unity

Bacha Khan had huge respect for all religions and that's why he always stressed on the importance of Indian's unity. Talking to Muslims, "You are afraid for nothing ... have some sense of honour ... Have some gherat [honour] in the cause of Islam ... Feel a little gherat for your

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mothers, sisters and children who are dressed in rags. How could a man be truly of honour when he had allowed the British to reduce his women and children to wearing rags and to insult Islam?"⁴³ Gandhi once asked Abdul Ghaffar about the faith of Dr. Khan Sahib's English wife, assuming she had converted to Islam. Abdul Ghaffar replied, "Surprisingly, I don't know if she's a Muslim or Christian. She was never converted and is free to practice her own faith. I've never asked her about it. Why should I? Why should marriage change one's faith? A husband and wife can maintain their respective beliefs."⁴⁴

He stressed the inability of the bastardized Jirga to provide real justice. "The message of Bad shah Khan was 'Don't go to courts. Resort to hujras and mosques.'⁴⁵ Talking about the Muslim conditions in Indian Subcontinent, he said, our country is plagued by poverty and inequality. Half of our children are ill, while hospitals cater to the English. We own the land, resources, and money, yet we suffer from hunger and homelessness. The British built roads with our money, but we're denied access. They fuel religious tensions, pitting Hindus against Muslims, and Sikhs against Muslims, causing suffering for all three. The true oppressor, sucking our blood, is the English.⁴⁶ One horn of the Firangi is already broken. Now you rise and get ready to break the other horn. This is your land, God has ordained it to you, but owing to your disunity, the Firangis are occupying your land. Your children die of hunger and thirst, while their children are enjoying everything they want.⁴⁷ He pioneered the stress on women education allowing them to publish their thoughts in Pukhtun magazine. Ghaffar said, the true measure of a society's civilization and decency is how it treats its women.

Ghaffar Khan and his People

The British intervention in tribal customs and codes had far-reaching consequences for the people of the Frontier. In 1889-1890, the Maliki System was introduced, where leading landlords were selected and graded according to their power and influence, and paid allowances by the Government. This created a symbiotic relationship between the British and the larger landlords, who were expected to provide military service, control over tribes and clans, and surrender individual criminals to the Government in return for their privileges. This system continued to grow in the 20th century, with grants and honorific titles such as Nawab or knighthood being awarded to loyal landlords.

Furthermore, the Frontier Crimes Regulation of 1904 allowed for collective punishments when no individual culprit could be found, leading to entire families or lineages being targeted. In the Settled Districts of NWFP, the relationship between khans and tenants became increasingly feudal, with tenants being treated as loyal serfs. This led to a decline in the traditional Pathan values of honor and Pukhtunwali, causing frustration and tension among the people. By the early 20th century, feud and conflict had reached unprecedented levels in the Frontier. In response, Bacha Khan recognized the need to re-examine the basic foundations of

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Pathan custom to wage an effective anti-colonial fight for justice. He encouraged inter-marriage among KK members, replacing traditional bride-prices with political camaraderie. This led to a new network of alliances and solidarity, de-emphasizing village and kinship identities and uniting Pathans against British rule. By promoting unity and solidarity, Bacha Khan was able to challenge the British tactics of divide and rule and pave the way for a more united and independent future for the people of the Frontier.⁴⁸ The British are just like us, with two hands and two feet. But they have a unity and spirit that we lack, which is why they rule over us. Let's unite and strengthen our spirit to gain freedom.⁴⁹

Question about Pakistan

'On 14 Aug 1947, the Pakistani flag flew atop government building in Peshawar, and the Khan brothers didn't protest. They didn't protest when, a week later, the Khan Sahib ministry was dismissed and Qayyum Khan was installed Frontier's Chief minister.'⁵⁰ On March 5, 1948, Ghaffar Khan addressed the Pakistani Parliament for the first time, speaking in Urdu. He acknowledged his initial opposition to Partition but emphasized the need to move forward. He advocated for Pukhtunistan, prompting Liaqat Ali Khan and other leaders like Feroz Khan Noon and Ghazanfar Ali Khan to question his loyalty, accusing him of promoting provincialism and suggesting he wanted to join Afghanistan. Ghaffar Khan countered that Punjabis and Sindhis were also guilty of provincialism if separate province was any sin and asserted that seeking a separate identity for NWFP as Pukhtunistan was not a sin in Islam. It will strengthen Pakistan not otherwise.⁵¹ No one questions the geography and ethnic distribution of Punjab as Both Saraiki and Punjabi are living and Sindh with many Baloch, so was relatable for NWFP when it comes to Hazara and Non-Pushtuns in KP. His demand was for the Pushtuns to be United under Pushtunistan on this side of Durand Line. And Ghaffar Khan said, Govt is run by good trust, and I believe, this will strengthen Pakistan.

Conclusion and Findings

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's political career shows his advocacy for the rights of not only Pashtuns but also Indian citizens at large. He began by protesting the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar, Punjab, where innocent Punjabi Sikhs were killed by the British. He continued to protest similar atrocities committed against Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, emphasizing the importance of unity to counter the British divide-and-rule tactic. Despite his efforts to collaborate with the Muslim League, both before and after partition, there was a lack of trust between the government and the Khan brethren. Ghaffar Khan's emphasis on diversity and trust as essential for strengthening government demonstrates his political maturity. His demand for Pashtunistan within Pakistan was a notable example of decentralization of power, a legal and

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legitimate demand, especially considering that Sindhis had their own province of Sindh and Punjabis had Punjab. He believed that this diversity was a strength for the state. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was an active participant in the Khilafat Movement, Hijrat Movement and Civil Disobedience against British rule in the Indian subcontinent. This depicts his stance against oppression and colonization, fighting for the rights of the oppressed and colonized. His understanding goes beyond ethnic lines, prioritizing Indian national causes above all else.

In Pakistan, despite his contributions, he was not given the opportunity to lead and contribute to the country's future despite put behind the bars for years. If his government had been allowed to run and he had been given a chance to contribute, Pakistan's fate might have been different. Jinnah and Pakistan could have had a better successor, and the country's trajectory might have been altered. Abdul Ghaffar Khan possessed a deep understanding of Indian nationalism and politics. He believed that diversity and trust between the government and opposition are essential for strengthening a nation. His vision emphasized unity and cooperation, which could have led to a more harmonious and prosperous Pakistan and NWFP.

Dream

*I have one great dream, one great longing,
Like flowers in the desert, my people are born, bloom for a
while with no body to look after them, wither, and return to
the dust they came from.
I want to see them sharing each other's sorrow and happiness.
I want them to see them work together as equal partners. I want
to see them play their national role and take their rightful
place among the nations of the world, for the service of God
and humanity.⁵²*

Notes & References

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