CHAPTER II

INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES AND AFGHANISTAN

The humiliating defeat of the Ottoman Empire during the Italo-Ottoman War in Tripoli in 1911 and in the Balkan War in 1912 provoked Muslims of the world against British Imperialism. It further strengthened Pan-Islamic agitation among the Muslims of India. The outbreak of the World War and the entry of Turkey into the conflict had a great impact on the Afghans and Indian Muslims. They particularly criticised Great Britain which was ranged against Turkey. Siraj-ul-Akhbar increasingly reflected the widespread pro-Turkish feeling in Afghanistan and became the voice of those who wanted Afghanistan to enter the war. Religious leaders, nationalists and modernists denounced the Italians and the British for their political and religious assault against Muslim countries including Afghanistan. They were afraid that Europe’s aim was to deprive Muslims of modern civilization and to subvert the power and independence of the Muslim states. The concept of Pan-Islamic solidarity made it


2 Ibid., p. 217.
possible for the traditionalists and modernists to fight from a common platform against British Imperialism in the preservation of their independence. In India, Maulana Mohammad Ali preached Pan-Islamism from the Khilafat Committee as well as the Congress platforms. According to Moin Shaker, "Pan-Islamism was not an institution and not concrete. But Pan-Islamism had been more an abstract and emotional factor than a pragmatic concept. It was not motivated against non-Muslims. Mohammad Ali, therefore, held that Pan-Islamism and Islam were synonymous and neither was aggressive".

Jihan-i-Islam, a Pan-Islamic newspaper, published from Constantinople, carried anti-British articles and encouraged the Afghans to fight for Islamic solidarity. Another paper, Islamic Fraternity, was published from Tokyo by Maulavi Barakatullah. It propagated anti-British, Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asiatic ideas. Though this paper was suppressed by the Government of Japan, Maulavi Barakatullah continued to propagate his anti-British views through the columns of Siraj-ul-Akhbar. Meanwhile, an Indian revolutionary organization succeeded in establishing a network which extended from the Punjab to Kabul, Rangoon and Singapore. The founder of the organization was Har Dayal of Delhi. In 1913 he founded an anti-British periodical in San Francisco. He

3 Moin Shaker, Khilafat to Partition (New Delhi, 1979), p. 65.
4 Sedition Committee Report, 1918 (Calcutta, 1918), p. 120.
attempted to politicize Indians staying in Canada and the United States and propagated anti-British ideas. Several other Indian revolutionaries, Hindus and Muslims, launched their anti-British campaign after the start of the First World War. Raja Mahendra Pratap left India for Germany in 1914 to fight British Imperialism.\(^5\)

Such was the political situation when the Afghan nationalists led by Mahmud Tarzi and some Indian revolutionaries started a joint struggle against British imperialism to liberate Afghanistan and India. They came together to fight a common enemy.\(^6\) Pan-Islamism brought Indian Muslims and Afghans together in fighting against British Imperialism.

Most of the religious revivalism in Islam during the nineteenth century had been definitely anti-Ottoman. The Wahabis of Nejd and the Mahdis of Egypt and the Sudan regarded the Ottoman Turks as little better than Europeans. The Senussis retired to the Libyan desert to escape the contamination of Istanbul.\(^7\) The Ottoman Empire, the

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strongest and most enduring Muslim state since the fall of the Abbasids, exploited its status in the Muslim world for its own purposes. Sultan Abdul Hamid propagated and exploited the situation cleverly. The Ottoman strategic railway from Damascus to Medina, largely built out of the contributions of the Muslims in foreign countries, is a good example of his diplomacy; and this diplomacy was continued after his overthrow by the Committee of Union and Progress. In Tripoli, for instance, before the Italian conquest the Ottoman Government was regarded by the people as an irksome foreign oppression, but Enver Pasha succeeded in winning over their sympathies. The Libyans considered the Turks as their natural allies against the European invaders. In Asia the Committee of Union and Progress had posed as the liberators of Muslims states under British or Russian domination. The Committee sent a Mission to the Amir of Afghanistan which seriously embarrassed him in his neutrality. In the districts of Western Persia they persuaded the Persian Nationalists to give them armed support. They suggested a triple alliance of Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan, based on the idea of political independence for Islamic states. The 'Holy War' proclaimed in the name of the Caliph by the Shaikh-ul-Islam in October 1914 had turned out to be a complete fiasco, but this was because Turkey had suffered military defeats. Had the Turkish army marched victoriously into Tripoli, Cairo and Tehran, the Pan-Islamic
movement might have produced far-reaching military and political effects.8

The policy of the Committee of Union and Progress was to exploit Pan-Turanian9 and Pan-Islamic movements. While the Pan-Islamic movement 'could be used to promote Turkish foreign policy objectives', the Pan-Turanian movement could unite people at home. The Committee's object was to convert the Ottoman Empire into a highly organised militaristic state on the pattern of Germany. It naturally needed a more appropriate basis in common language than in common religion and the following passage occurs in a resolution passed at the Congress of the Committee of Union and Progress in October 1911:

The character of the Empire must be Muhammadan, and respect must be secured for Muhammadan institutions and traditions. Other nationalities must be denied the right of organisation, for decentralization and autonomy are treason to the Turkish Empire. The nationalities are a negligible quantity. They can keep their religion but not their language. The propagation of the Turkish language is a sovereign means of forming

8 Ibid.

9 Pan-Turanianism was a movement to unite in a political and cultural union all the Turku-Tatar peoples living in Turkey Southeastern Russia, Transcaucasia, Siberia and Turkestan. During the years 1913-1918 when Turkey was involved in a struggle against Russia, Pan-Turanian propaganda was officially promoted by the Ottoman government. Kemal Attaturk's realism de-emphasized the movement and confined Turkish nationalism to Turkey itself. For details see, Encyclopaedia Britannica (London, 1965), vol. 17, p. 193.
the Muhammadan supremacy and assimilating the other elements. 10

This shows how the Committee of Union and Progress tried to combine and the two ideas in its internal policy, and on which it laid more stress. The suggestion that the subject nationalities may keep their religion but not their native language was a complete reversal of the traditional policy of the early Ottomans. They had allowed Albanian and Bosnian nobility to keep their language and estate, once they had accepted Islam. 11

Though the Ottomans used Pan-Islamism for their own interests, the Afghans and the Indian Muslims were agitated about the fate of the Caliphate and held the British responsible for the plight of Turkey. As the British imperialism was their own main adversary, the fate of the Caliphate appeared to be tied with their own. The Indian nationalist movement had acquired a mass base and the mass appeal of the issue of the future of the Caliphate was very great. Thus there was an unusual conjunction of events. Afghanistan's struggle for independence, the plight of Turkey, the Indian mass upsurge -- and all this in the context of a major upheaval called the First World War -- combined to create an explosive situation for Britain's position in

11 Ibid.
Asia in general and in India and the surrounding regions in particular.

The Indian nationalists also started mobilizing German and Ottoman help in overthrowing British rule in India. Raja Mahendra Pratap, a resident of Bindraban of Hatras district of Uttar Pradesh, went to Europe to join the revolutionary movement in Europe. On the outbreak of the World War, he was in Switzerland and was invited by the Indian Revolutionary Committee at Berlin. In a statement presented through this Committee, Mahendra Pratap briefed the members, that he was in touch with the Princes of Northern India and the Court of Nepal. As a member of the Jat Community, he said that he could get the support of the Sikhs. He suggested that the following ideas should be communicated to the Princes and nationalist leaders of India:

1. **Community of Interests between Germany and India, and among the Allies in general.**

2. **The military and economic resources of Germany and her allies and their determination to crush England in this war.**

3. **The cooperation of Turkey as a sign of her faith in the final success of our cause.**

4. **Promise to send German Officers to the Indian frontier.**

5. **Assurance that the confedracy of Great Princes of India will be treated as equal allies at the conclusion of the war.**

6. **Promise of non-interference in the internal organisation of the country after the overthrow of the British Empire in India.**
7. Promise of continued support and sympathy after the war.

8. Intimation that the German Government is already cooperating with the important princes and nationalist leaders. 12

He further suggested to the Committee that it should arrange a meeting between him and the German Chancellor. Such a meeting would create an impression that the German Government was desirous to establish cordial relations with Indian princes. He also suggested that official letters from the Governments of Germany, Turkey and Austria should be sent to the leading nationalist leaders of India; arrangements should also be made for his journey to Kabul. 13

He had an audience of the Kaiser and raised the question of liberating India and fighting against British forces in the East. The German Emperor was well-prepared for the interview; he had found time to remember something about Mahendra Pratap's relations with the Phulkian States of the Punjab. He spoke of the strategic importance of Jind, Patiala and Nabha, in case of a military move from the side of Afghanistan. Raja Mahendra Pratap was given letters addressed to the Princes of India and to the Amir.

12 Statement presented by Mahendra Pratap through the Indian Revolutionary Committee at Berlin, 16 February 1916, German Foreign Ministry Archives, Roll No. 397, NAI.

13 Ibid.
Towards the end of the interview the Kaiser said: "Don't forget to give my greetings to the Amir of Afghanistan". 14

Mahendra Pratap submitted a memorandum to the German Foreign Office. He referred to the situation in India as favourable for a revolution; if the Afghan army could be persuaded to invade India, British rule in India could be overthrown. He maintained that in the case of an Afghan invasion of India, it was "necessary to secure the hearty co-operation of the Hindus" who might oppose if they viewed it as a raid of a foreign Muslim adventurer. In order to remove this apprehension of the Hindus, he wanted to proceed to Kabul, and "join the Afghan Army" and assure the Hindus that Indian nationalists were working in collaboration with the Court of Kabul for the emancipation of India. 15

After the project was approved by the German Foreign Office and the General Staff, it was decided to send a Mission to Kabul under the leadership of Lieutenant Werner Otto Von Hentig who had been on the staff of the German Legation at Tehran. When the war broke out, he had been recalled in March 1915 to lead a diplomatic mission to conclude an alliance with Afghanistan. The Hentig Mission, consisting of Mahendra Pratap, Maulavi Barkatullah, Dr

14 Mahendra Pratap, Afghanistan, the Heart of Aryans (Peking, 1932), pp. 15-16.

15 "Memorandum by Mahendra Pratap, 17 February 1915", German Foreign Office Records, Roll No. 397, NAI.
Karl Becken, Lieutenant Walter Rohr and a number of Afridi soldiers, left for Afghanistan on 10 April 1915. 16

Mahendra Pratap had brought letters from the German Emperor addressed to the Princes of India and to the trans-border tribes, requesting them to revolt, which were sent through Harnam Singh. 17 He had also an autograph letter from the Sultan of Turkey addressed to the Amir of Afghanistan. It was very helpful to Mahendra Pratap in introducing him to the Amir as he says: "I am extremely thankful for that letter as it introduced me to the King of Afghanistan in terms which are not often used...." 18

Mahendra Pratap and Maulavi Barakatullah reached Kabul on 2 October 1915 along with the German Mission. They discussed the situation in India with the Amir and sought his assistance in support of the liberation of India. They both laid the foundations of an anjuman, named Hakumat-i-Moakata-i-Hind (Provisional Government of India). The work of this anjuman was to conclude alliances regarding future affairs of India with Great Powers. 19

16 Tilak Raj Sareen, Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad, 1905-1921 (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 172-73.

17 From Indian revolutionaries to German Ambassador in Constantinople, 22 July 1915, German Foreign Office Records, Roll No. 398, NAI.

18 An account of the trip from Berlin to Berlin, n.d. by Mahendra Pratap, German Foreign Office Records, Roll No. 400, NAI.

The Provisional Government of India was formally established on 1 December 1915 -- the date was chosen because it happened to be Mahendra Pratap's 29th birthday -- and started functioning with its headquarters in Kabul and branches in the tribal territory. Raja Mahendra Pratap was appointed its "life President", so long as a regular government was not established in India. Maulavi Barkatullah was appointed Prime Minister and Maulavi Obeidullah Sindhi Home Minister. Captain Neidermayer, Captain Kazim Beg and Dr Munier Beg warmly congratulated the office bearers and spoke a few words of encouragement.  

A declaration was issued by the Provisional Government and its copies were sent to India. The declaration referred to the promises of help given by the Turkish and the German governments to liberate the country. In another proclamation the unity of the Hindus and Muslims was emphasized. It further stated that the Provisional Government of India was established with the approval of the Sultan of Turkey and the Emperor of Germany. It appealed to the "warriors and heroic sons of India" to rise and help the Indian revolutionaries to annihilate the British and liberate India.  

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21 Summary of Silk letter Case, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4260/1916, part III, p. 137, IOIR.
The Provisional Government suggested that, if Afghanistan joined the war, they were prepared to acknowledge the Amir as the permanent King of India. The Amir declined the offer. Emissaries on behalf of the Provisional Government were sent to Russia, Turkey and Germany via Persia. Other emissaries were sent to India. 22

Barakatullah had already advocated the necessity of unity between the Hindus and Muslims, and defended the two chief duties of Muslims as patriotism and friendship with all Muslims outside India. He strongly opposed the British and asserted that "about 20000000 Indians had died of hunger ... and Rupees three crore of India goes to England from the pockets of poor Indians". 23

He published a newspaper, *Islamic Fraternity* from Tokyo, in which he opposed British Imperialism in Asia. The British Government prohibited its entry into India on 6 July 1912 under the Sea Customs Act. They also brought pressure on Japan to ban the paper and expell Barakatullah from Japan. Compelled to leave Japan, he shifted to San Francisco on 3 May 1914, and joined the Ghadar Party. He addressed many meetings of Indians in California and appealed to them to return to India because the time was appropriate for a revolution. 24 Barakatullah received an

23 Josh, n. 5, pp. 32-33.
24 Ibid.
invitation from Mahendra Pratap to proceed to Germany. He reached Berlin on 10 February 1915 and joined Mahendra Pratap and the Indian National Party headed by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya.

The activity of the revolutionaries in India till October 1914 was confined to *jehad* propaganda. The entry of Turkey into the war in November 1914 as an enemy of the British Government further exasperated the nationalists and induced them to take active steps to give practical effect to the object of overthrowing the British yoke. It was in November 1914 that Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan, head Maulavi of the Deoband Madrasa, was first noticed having conferences with men from the North-West frontier and from Afghanistan. Later, the mujahidin also took part in these meetings and consulted the Maulana and other revolutionaries about their activities on the frontier. In this connection, the Maulana went to Delhi to consult Maulavi Obeidullah and Maulavi Saif-ul-Rahman of the Fatehpuri Mosque of Delhi.25

While the anti-British movement was gaining momentum, the nationalists resorted to boycotting British goods. Maulavi Fazl-ul-Hasan, who had already been advocating the boycott movement in Aligarh as an anti-British measure, came to Deoband. He was introduced to Mahmud-ul-Hasan by Maulavi Anis Ahmad, who himself took a

prominent part in advocating a similar movement at Deoband. He wore clothes of common country-made, and tried to induce senior maulavis of the school to do the same. 26

Obeidullah, a student of the Deoband Madrasa, who later joined its teaching staff, influenced many teachers and students in the Madrasa with his revolutionary and anti-British views. He also won over Mahmud-ul-Hasan. Obeidullah wanted to use the Madrasa as the headquarters for his work and to spread his movement throughout India by making use of the hundreds of Maulavis who had been educated at the Deoband Madrasa and were spread all over India and Afghanistan. 27 During the Italian-Turkish war (1911-12) and the Balkan wars (1912-13) they preached that the English were anti-Muslim and helping those who were at war with the Ottoman Empire. It was suggested that the Madrasa should be closed for the higher cause of jehad. Later on, this was done and many Maulavis went out collecting funds for the Turks. 28 The Muslims were of the opinion that, unless the British policy was changed, the status of Muslims in Asia and Europe would be permanently degraded. The most anti-British interpretation possible was placed by certain Muslim newspapers, particularly Siraj-ul-Akhbar of Kabul.

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Summary of Abdul Haq's statement, ibid., p. 10.
on all occurrences in or out of India which could be adduced in support of this theory.29

The object of the movement was to liberate India. Leaders of the movement exploited the religious feelings of the people and stirred the pathans of the frontier and Afghanistan against the British Indian Government. They established societies for the purposes, like Jamat-i-Angar, Jamat-i-Hizbullah, and schools, like Nazarat-ul-Qurania and Dar-ul-Irshad. After arousing anti-British feelings India was declared dar-ul-harb30 (territory of war) or a place in which devoted Muslims should not live. Literature advocating jehad was collected and circulated and a number of revolutionary Indian performed hijrat, leaving India for the frontier with a view to conduct jehad from there. They agreed to co-operate with the mujahidin, who were

29 Secret Publication, India Office, V/26/262/2, p. 173, IOIR.

30 This term is derived from the logical development of the idea of the jehad (Holy War). The Quran makes this holy war a major duty, a test of the sincerity of believers, to be waged against unbelievers wherever they are to be found. This war must be just, not oppressive, its aim being peace under the rule of Islam. Classically, the Dar-ul-Harb includes those countries where the Muslim law is not in force, in the matter of worship and the protection of the faithful and dhimmis (non-Muslims under Muslim's protection). A territory of the Dar-ul-Islam, reconquered by non-Muslims of any description, thereby becomes a territory of the Dar-ul-Harb once again, provided that: 1. The law of the unbelievers replaces that of Islam; 2. The country in question directly adjoins the Dar-ul-Harb; 3. Muslims and their non-Muslims dhimmis no longer enjoy any protection there. The first of these conditions is the most important. Some even believe that a country remains Dar-ul-Islam so long as a single provision (Hukm) of the Muslim law is kept in force there. For further details see Encyclopaedia of Islam (London, 1965), vol. II, p. 126.
declared enemies of the British Government and steps were taken to provide them with funds and ammunition. Some of the revolutionaries who left India in June 1915 were Maulavis; they stayed in the tribal belt on the North-West Frontier and incited the tribes to fight against the British. They were successful in their efforts and the British authorities had a difficult time.

The Jamat-i-Hizbullah consisting of muhajirin and ansars residing in Yaghistan, was established under the patronage of Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan. Haji Sahib of Turangzai was its President and the Mullah Sahib of Babara its Vice-President. In a petition to the Sultan of Turkey they wished that at the peace conference after the war, the Sultan would secure the independence of the tribal region and obtain sanction to bring it under the influence of the Caliphate. They also requested the Sultan to send a few trained officers to lead millions of Pathans against the British. They had established centres of co-operation in the tribal belt in 1913. These centres were to incite the tribes against the British authorities in India.

The revolutionaries in the North-West Frontier Province were closely associated with the Deoband Group

31 Sayed Mohammad, "Tahrik-i-Shaikh-ul-Hind" (Delhi, 1975), p. 189.
32 Summary of Abdul Haq's statement, L/P&S/10/633, Part I, p. 5, IOLR.
33 Ibid.
led by Mahmud-ul-Hasan and Obeidullah. In order to oust the anti-British Maulavis from Deoband, the British coerced the managing authorities of the Madrasa to dismiss Obeidullah, Anis Ahmad and his other lieutenants. Obeidullah, however, did not stop his visits to the place; he frequently used to visit Mahmud-ul-Hasan right up to his departure for Hedjaz. 34 In 1913 he started a school in Delhi, called the Nazrat-ul-Maurif-ul-Quuran. He also put two books into circulation preaching anti-British views to Indian Muslims and impressing on them the supreme duty of jehad. The common object of Obeidullah and his friends was to promote a great Muslim attack on India which should synchronize with a Muslim rebellion. 35

In 1915 Obeidullah was commanded by his teacher, Mahmud-ul-Hasan to proceed to Afghanistan where he could help the Afghan nationalists in the struggle against British imperialism. 36 On 15 August 1915, he crossed the border and reached Shurabak, a district of Kandahar. There he was arrested and subsequently released by Qazi Mohammad Jan, who was a student of Deoband and a friend of Obeidullah, and sent to Kandahar. 37 There was another group of Deoband

34 Secret Publication, n. 29, p. 177.
35 Ibid.
36 Maulana Obeidullah Sindi, "Kabul May Sat Sal" (Lahore, 1950), p. 23.
37 Summary of Abdul Haq's statement, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4260/1916, Part IO, p. 5, IOILR.
students in Kandahar through whom he was introduced to the Governor. They also recommended him to Inayatullah Khan and Nadir Khan. On 15 October 1915 he reached Kabul. He already had some acquaintances in Kabul. A few months before his departure, Obeidullah had sent Mohammad Ali of Qasur and Shaikh Ibrahim of Karachi to Kabul in order to take up educational appointments in Kabul. They had been appointed as Principal and Professor respectively in the Habibia College of Kabul.

Of infinitely more importance was the decision that Mahmud-ul-Hasan should perform hijrat. Knowing its importance in Islamic history, Dr Ansari and others induced Mahmud-ul-Hasan to announce his intention. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, however, wished him to stay in India and to provoke the Government to arrest him. The Maulana's decision to migrate was given much publicity as he was one of the most learned and respected scholars in northern India, and the news spread from Surat to Rangoon. His destination was at first uncertain; it was decided finally that he should go to Hejaz. A collection was made for him and suitable companions were chosen. He was to direct a campaign of jehad against the British Government, obtaining assistance from the Turkish officials there, and if necessary, going on

39 Sayed Mohammad, n. 31, p. 205.
to Constantinople or to Kabul. The idea was to induce the Turks either to send an army against India or to persuade the Amir to lead the attack. 40

On reaching Hejaz the Maulana had an interview with Ghalib Pasha, the Governor of Hejaz. He procured a document from him known as Ghalib Nama. The Governor advised him either to return to India or to send his men to recruit and organize people in India for a revolution. An invasion by the Amir was to be the signal for the outbreak of the Indian revolution. The Indians should also claim their right to be represented at the peace negotiations at the end of the war. 41

Important passages of Ghalib Nama run as follows:

The Muhammadans in Asia, Europe and Africa adorned themselves with all sorts of arms and rushed to join the jehad in the Path of God. Thanks to Almighty God that the Turkish Army and the Mujahiddin have overcome the enemies of Islam.... Oh Moslems, therefore attack the tyrannical Christians Government under whose bondage you are.... Hasten to put all your efforts, with strong resolution, to strangle the enemy to death and show your hatred and enmity for them. It may also be known to you that Maulavi Mahmud Hasan Effendi came to us and sought our counsel. We agreed with him in this respect and gave him necessary instructions. You should trust him if he comes to you and help him with men, money and whatever he requires. 42


41 Ibid.

42 Secret Publication, n. 29, p. 179.
The Chalib Nama was brought to India by Mohammad Mian Ansari. After distributing it, he went to the North-West Frontier in April 1916 and showed it to the people there. 43

Meanwhile, there had been another development in the Punjab. As has already been noted, the revolutionaries in India had also been thinking of declaring India a dar-ul-harb. According to this way of thinking, true Muslims should perform hijrat and to go to a Muslim country. In February 1915, a party of some fifteen Muslim students of various colleges in the Punjab secretly left their homes and crossed the North-West Frontier to Independent Territory, being followed by others singly or in small parties. These students were advised by Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad to perform jehad against the British and to go to Turkey via the North-West Frontier Province and Afghanistan. 44 They hoped to reach Turkey through the good offices of the Afghan Government. They thought that the Amir was already on the brink of declaring war against Great Britain or would be driven to it. The student's journey to the frontier had been arranged by an organisation of the Wahabis in the Punjab and in the North-West Frontier Province. They had been handed over by the trans-frontier

43 Summary of Abdul Haq's statement, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4260/1916, Part I, p. 21, IOLR.

44 Ibid.
Wahabis to the Wahabi Colony in Ismas of Buner in the independent territory. Maulavi Niamatullah was Rais-ul-Mujahiddin of the Ismas Colony of the mujahiddin. This Colony was founded by Sayed Ahmad Shah Barailawi who in 1824 had preached jehad in the North West Frontier Province against the Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab. The students were kept separately from other muhajarin under the suspicion that the British authorities might have planted spies among them. They were given rifles and military training. After a month's stay at Ismas, they left for Kabul along with a guide. On reaching Jalalabad they were arrested. They were sent to Kabul under surveillance and subsequently released by Nasrullah Khan through the intervention of Obeidullah. On 3 May, they were joined by other mujahidin from Kohat. By the end of the year 1915, two Sikhs from the Punjab, Harnam Singh and Dr Matra Singh, joined the Indian revolutionaries in Kabul.

45 Summary of the Silk letters case, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4260/1916, IOLR.
46 Ibid.
48 Abdul Haq's statement, September 1916, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4260/1916, IOLR.
49 Maulavi Mohammad Ali Qasuri, "Mushahidat-i-Kabul Wa Yaghistan" (Karachi, n.d.), p. 32.
50 Abdul Haq's statement, September 1916, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4260/1916, IOLR.
The flight of the fifteen students from Lahore was a visible sign of growing anti-British feelings. In January 1917 it was discovered that a party of eight Muslims from the district of Rangpur and Dacca in Eastern Bengal had joined the mujahidin. In March 1917, two Bengali Muslims were arrested in the North-West Frontier Province with Rs.8,000 in their possession which they were taking to deliver to the mujahidin Colony.\(^5\)\(^1\)

The mujahidin colony was assisted by results and funds from India. Its members regarded India as a land not governed by Muslims and therefore unfit for Muslims habitation, dar-ul-harb.\(^5\)\(^2\) They were always in touch with, and drew support from, a secret organization of friends in India.\(^5\)\(^3\) Funds for the support of mujahidin were obtained by subscription in India and by a grant from Kabul. They also procured ammunition from Afghanistan. In October 1915 Maulavi Abdul Rahim took large boxes of cartridges with 10,000 cartridges and 30,000 rupees as a gift to the mujahidin from Nasrullah Khan.\(^5\)\(^4\)

The mujahidin carried their activities in the following ways:

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\(^{51}\) Secret Publication, n. 29, p. 175.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Foreign and Political Department, Secret War, May 1916, 1-288, Notes, p. 13, NAI.
(1) They attacked British outposts on the border and looted arms, etc.

(2) They joined the border tribes whenever there was any fight against the British Government.

(3) They intended to send out armed men to murder Europeans in India and terrorise the country.

The mujahidin were divided into two parties. One party of about 280 persons lived at Ismas and the other party of about 40 to 50 persons lived at Chamarkand (on the Afghan Frontier 200 miles from Ismas). The latter colony was established in August 1915. Normally, the mujahidin were doing physical exercises and drills. They were organised in groups of fifteen persons under one Jamadar. They had five hundred rifles, guns, canons and swords. Their uniform was black from head to foot.\(^55\)

Abdul Karim of Lahore was the commander of the mujahidin of Ismas Colony. Mohammad Bashir was Rais-ul-Mujahiddin and Commander of the Chamarkand Colony. He also worked as a messenger between Afghanistan and the mujahidin.

The Chamarkand branch was mainly opened to influence the Mohmands who were on the border and it was also easy to go to Kabul from there. Moreover, at the time of danger, the mujahidin could take refuge at that place.\(^56\)

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\(^{55}\) Abdul Haq's statement, September 1916, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4260/1916, IOLR.

\(^{56}\) Ibid.
In 1914, the mujahidin along with frontier tribes made a general attack on the British posts. It is said that the fighting force of the mujahidin was over 50,000. In this fighting a few hundreds of them were killed or died of pestilence while the British lost 2,000. A booty of rifles, ammunition and swords, etc. fell into the hands of the revolutionaries. The Chaknawar Mullah led the Mohmands and conducted a big raid, killed many British soldiers and captured a large booty. The revolutionaries' network was even extended upto Kashmir and the Afghans were part of this network. According to Mohammad Mian: "The independent territory lying between the Indian frontier and Afghanistan from Waziristan down to Alai near the Kashmir border is full of high spirited Afghans who are well equipped with cartridges, rifles of every description." 57

After the entry of Turkey into the war the following actions were taken against the British by the revolutionaries and by the war party of Afghanistan on the North-West Frontier: (1) *jehad* in 1914 at Buner through preachings of Haji of Turangzai; (2) *jehad* in 1914 in the Mohmand and Bajaur country through the preachings of the Mullah of Babara and Maulana Fazal Rabi, the first *muhammedan* or *muhibb*. The Mullah of Babara carried on a series of attacks for a few months. He wanted to continue his campaign for another six

57 Mohammad Mian to Mahmud-ul-Hasan, 9 July 1917, L/F&3/10/633, IOLR.
months, but the British had poisoned the drinking water. The fighting stopped quickly.58

Yaghistan, especially the whole of Mohmand country, was dependent on Peshawar for its supplies. On account of hostilities the roads to Peshawar were closed and the people were in distress for a long time. Consequently, the ignorant people of Yaghistan made terms with the British Government, but they insisted that if the armies of the Sultan of Turkey arrived in India, those terms would no longer be applicable to them. The Mullah of Babara annulled this settlement with the British and punished those who had been responsible for it. He also burned the houses of certain Mullahs and others who had made peace with the British and resumed the fighting.59

Mohammad Mian Ansari, carrying instructions from Mahmud-ul-Hasan on reaching Yaghistan from Hejaz, formed a deputation consisting of Maulana Fazal Rabi, Maulavi Fazal Mahmud, Abdul Aziz and two brothers of the wife of the Mullah of Babara, proceeded to Kabul. There they met Obeidullah and Saif Rahman. He interviewed Haji Abdul Razaq, the Chief Judge of Kabul, who presented them to Nasrullah Khan.60

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
Mohammad Mian suggested to Mahmud-ul-Hasan that it would be profitable to work in the tribal territory through the agency of the Mullah of Babra and Maulana Fazal Rabi. The Mullah commanded trust and respect far greater than any other Shaikh in the Mohmand country, Bajaur, and Swat. Four centres were chosen for propaganda, i.e. (a) Waziristan, (2) Tirah, (3) Mohmand, Buner Meleza1, and (4) Swat and Alai. He suggested that there should be one head and four assistants for each centre and a director of education, a military expert, a mine expert, an engineer, an armour, bomb and dynamite maker for each and every centre.61

He assured Mahmud-ul-Hasan that it would be more helpful at the time of an attack on India if a few military officers and a small quantity of war material were sent to Yaghistan. He added: "Practically speaking every individual here is a soldier. Even their women folk are warriors. I saw a ten year old boy fighting in front line. A fifty year old man is considered a young man here."62

In July 1916 Maulavi Abdul Rahim left Kabul with Mohammad Husain, Abdul Rashid, Shah Nawaz, Mohammad Ali Sindhi and other muhajirin in order to start a press in the independent territory for publishing seditious

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
literature. He was supported in this enterprise by Shaikh Ibrahim and Mohammad Ali who had been dismissed from the Habibia College by Prince Inayatullah Khan. They took letters to the Haji of Turangzai to start a campaign against the British.

The Indian revolutionaries in Afghanistan had popular support and the Government also offered them assistance. Maulana Saif-ul-Rahman was given an annual allowance of Rs.2000/- Maulana Fazal Rabi, Abdul Aziz and Maulavi Fazal Mahmud were granted an annual allowance of Rs.400/- per head by Nasrullah Khan and were appointed for work in Yaghanistan. Allowances were also given to members of the Indian Revolutionaries Party.63

The Turkish emissaries Kazim Bey and Barakatullah sent Khair-ud-din Turk and an Arab named Ahmad Effendi to Tirah. Nasrullah Khan had enhanced their importance by secretly spreading the news that these men had arrived there at the instance of the Afghan Government. Anti-British activities were further encouraged by the Mullah of Babara.64

The Afghans whole-heartedly supported the cause of the Indian revolutionaries and secretly financed revolutionary centres in the North-West Frontier Province.

63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
Nasrullah Khan extended every possible co-operation. Prince Amanullah, his mother the Ulya Hazrat and Mahmud Tarzi also supported the cause of the Indian Revolutionaries. On one occasion the Ulya Hazrat sent three boxes of cartridges and money to the Haji of Turangzai to be used for revolutionary purposes. Nasrullah spent 24 lakhs of rupees in tribal territory against the British. Maulana Fazal Rabi wrote to Mahmud-ul-Hasan that Nasrullah Khan and Prince Amanullah were ready for Jihad. He assured that war would be immediately declared if war material could be obtained from Turkey.

Apart from the Amir's household, Afghan officials were also helping the Indian revolutionaries. Maulavi Mohammad Ali Qasuri, in his autobiography, comments: "Haji Abdul Razaq (Chief Justice of Kabul) is a strange man. Enmity of the British is mixed in his blood." Raja Mahendra Pratap also praised him saying: "I may here specially recommend Haji Abdul Razaq the right hand man of His Royal Highness the Naibus Sultanate who was doing his best to push on our cause with all his means official or unofficial."

65 Abdul Haq's statement, September 1916, L/P&S/10/633, IOLR.
66 Maulavi Fazal Rabi to Mahmud-ul-Hasan, n.d. (Persian), L/P&S/10/633, IOLR.
67 Qasuri, n. 49, p. 31.
68 An Account of the Trip from Berlin to Berlin, by Mahendra Pratap, n.d., German Foreign Office Records, Roll No. 400, NAI.
Mohammad Mian discussed in a revealing letter the interplay of forces in the Amir's household:

The Naib-ul-Sultanat (Sardar Nasrullah Khan) however, is a true Muslim imbued with zealous ideas, and is fond of jihad. When the mission arrived, Sardar Nasrullah Khan succeeded in winning over Inayatullah Khan to his side. Ain-ud-Daula the second son of the Amir already favoured the ideas of Sardar Nasrullah Khan. Consequently the Amir being left unsupported in his opinion became powerless. The Naib-ul-Sultanat getting the upper hand stirred up the feelings of the populace. But the Amir kept this work in abeyance, and formed a jirga consisting of ullemas, meshaliks and the dignitaries of the State, and in the interval effected an estrangement between Inayatullah Khan and Nasrullah Khan through Maasum Zia, the Hazrat of Charbagh and thus weakened Nasrullah's party. 

The Amir gradually assuaged public feelings by publishing a pamphlet entitled "Obedience to those who are placed to rule over you" (written by a Mullah and signed by Mulla Saad-ud-din-Khan, the Chief Qazi) which impressed upon the people that he who disobeyed the Amir flouted the tenets of Islam. He tried to isolate Nasrullah Khan by denying him any major responsibility in the administration. He also sent his confidential servant Mastaufi-ul-Mamalik to Yaghistan to pacify the tribes.

Meanwhile, the members of the revolutionary group chalked out a plan for establishing a military organisation

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69 Mohammad Mian to Mahmud-ul-Hasan, 9 July 1917, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4062/1916, IOIR.

70 Ibid.
known as "Al Janud-ul-Rabbani" or the "army of God" in which all members were to receive military titles. The principal centre was to be Medina, where Mohammad-ul-Hasan of Deoband was to be appointed "Al Quaid" or "General". Secondary centres were to be Constantinople, Tehran and Kabul. Maulavi Obeidullah was to be "officiating General" in Kabul.

The object of the "Army" was to unite Muslim Kings with a view to the liberation of Islamic countries under infidel rule, especially India. Mahmud-ul-Hasan was to get in touch through the Hejaz with the Ottoman Government to persuade it to accept certain conditions, the fulfilment of which would cause the Afghan Government to go to war with the British. The officers of the "Army" in Kabul were in their turn to intrigue to the same end with the anti-British party in Afghanistan and to keep the independent tribes in a state of constant hostility to the British. Meanwhile the revolutionaries in India were to collect money to finance the movement in Kabul, India and the Hejaz, while at the same time they were to arouse Indian Muslims against British rule. A rebellion in India was to be started on the outbreak of war between Afghanistan and India.

71 See Appendix VII.

72 Mohammad Mian to Mahmud-ul-Hasan, 9 July 1917, L/P&S/10/633, IOLR.

73 Ibid.
The officers of the "Army" were divided into four groups: (i) Obeidullah's friends, followers and relatives in Sindh and their relations in other parts of India; (ii) the Deoband, United Provinces and Delhi groups of Maulavis whom Maulavi Obeidullah had brought under his influence while a professor at Deoband, and through his associations, the Jama yat-ul-Ansar and the Nazrat-ul-Muarrif-ul-Qurania; (iii) the Wahabi fund collectors of Bihar, United Provinces, Punjab and North-West Frontier Province, and (iv) the well known Pan-Islamic leaders.

The "Army of God" was to be combined with the "Provisional Government", not essentially Muslim in Personnel, of which the "President" was to be Raja Mahendra Pratap, with Barkatullah as "Prime Minister" and Obeidullah as "Minister for India". Obeidullah's plan was to make use of Indian Muslims and thus combine the practical machinery of the Wahabi Movement, the Islamic fervor of the Maulavis and the political energy and bitterness of the Pan-Islamists. His plan was further to work side by side and in unity with a separate movement which should keep on his side the revolutionary elements among the Hindus.

Mahendra Pratap and Obeidullah sent messages and letters to Shaikh Abdul Rahim Sindhi and Ahmad Ali of Delhi requesting them to come to Kabul. Barakatullah wrote a letter for Abdul Kalam Azad, Fazal Hasan and Dr Ansari,
narrating his experiences and objectives. There was also a
fatwa of jehad by Shaikh-ul-Islam. Ahmad Ali sent a
photographic copy of the fatwa to Azad and asked him to go
to Kabul. Azad agreed to go to Kabul and it was decided
that Sheikh Abdul Rahim Sindh should arrange for his
journey. 74

The Provisional Government of India despatched
letters to both the Governor of Russian Turkëstan and the
then Tsar of Russia requesting the abrogation of Russia's
alliance with Great Britain and assistance in the overthrow
of British rule in India. These letters were signed by
Mahendra Pratap and subsequently fell into British hands.
The letter to the Tsar was on a gold plate, a photograph of
which was shown to British representatives by the Russians. 75
The Provisional Government of India also proposed to form
an alliance with the Turkish Government, and in order to
accomplish this objective Obeidullah addressed a letter to
his old friend Mahmud-ul-Hasan. This, together with another
letter dated 9 July 1916, written by Mohammad Mian Ansari,
he forwarded under a covering note addressed to Shaikh
Abdul Rahim of Hyderabad Sindh. The latter was requested
to send on the enclosure by the hand of some reliable
haji (pilgrim) to Mahmud-ul-Hasan at Mecca, or even to

74 Summary of Silk Letter Case, L/P&S/10/633, File No.

75 Secret Publication, n. 29, p. 177.
convey it himself if no trustworthy messenger were obtainable. These letters eventually fell into the hands of the British authorities.

Mohammad Mian Ansari's letter mentioned the arrival of the German and Turkish missions, the return of the Germans, the continued stay of the Turks "but without work", the circulation of the Chalibnama, the "Provisional Government", and the formation of an "Army of God". This army was to draw recruits from India and to bring about an alliance among Islamic rulers. Mahmud-ul-Hasan was to convey all these particulars to the Ottoman Government.76

Obeidullah's letter contained a tabular statement of the "army of God". Its headquarters were to be at Medina, with Mahmud-ul-Hasan as general-in-chief. Secondary headquarters under local generals were to be established at Constantinople, Teheran and Kabul. The general at Kabul was to be Obeidullah himself. The table contained the names of three patrons, twelve field marshals and many other high military officers.77 Of the Lahore students one was to be a major-general, and a colonel, and six lieutenant-colonels. Most of the persons designated for these high commands could not have been consulted as to their appointments.

76 Ibid., p. 178.  
77 Ibid.
Strict secrecy was maintained in the transmission of messages, on 9 July 1916 Obeidullah gave three yellow silken handkerchiefs to Abdul Haq. These were the so-called silk letters with message written on them. This method of unitary letters was devised in order to maintain secrecy. Obeidullah directed Abdul Haq to stitch the handkerchiefs inside his coat. He was directed to give them to Abdul Rahim Sindhi. Abdul Haq was sent to India with messages. He had an important job to do because he had the silk letters with him which were supposed to be sent to Mahmud-ul-Hasan through Shaikh Abdul Rahim Sindhi. He showed these letters to Rab Nawaz Khan, father of two students from the Punjab who were his companions and had accompanied him to Kabul from Lahore. Rab Nawaz Khan played the role of informer and handed them over to the Government of the Punjab. Abdul Haq, then narrated the whole story and thus the whole plan was disclosed. With the discovery of the silk letters the Government of India arrested all members of the "Army of God" who were in India or within the British domain. But the revolutionary movement did not stagnate and it continued in one way or the other.

Mahmud-ul-Hasan and his party in Hejaz had not foreseen the possibility of the Sharif of Mecca throwing off

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78 Abdul Haq's Statement, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4260/1916, IOL.
the Turkish yoke; and that event somewhat upset their plans. Their final discomfiture was affected by the Sharif arresting and deporting Mahmud-ul-Hasan, Maulavi Husain Ahmad Madani, Maulavi Anzer Gul, Abdul Wahid and others on the ground that they were plotting against his Government.79

A mission of the Provisional Government of India was supposed to go to China and America via Russia. The members of the mission were arrested in Russia and handed over to the British authorities. Among them were Maulavi Abdul Qadir and a Sikh Revolutionary Dr Mathra Singh, who was publicly hanged.80

Another mission of the Provisional Government of India consisted of Abdul Bari and Shujaullah. They were sent through Persia to Germany and Turkey. They were caught in Persia and jailed.81

In September 1916 Mohammad Mian Ansari and Obeidullah left Kabul for Jalalabad. Obeidullah stayed in Jalalabad and Mohammad Mian Ansari went to Chamarkand. He, along with Mullah of Babara and Haji of Turangzai, preached jehad as a result of which the Mohmands, Mamunds, 

79 Ibid.
80 Mohammad Mian to Mahmud-ul-Hasan, 5 August 1917, L/P&S/10/633, File No. 4250/1916, IOLR.
81 Ibid.
Charmang and other Bajaur tribes assembled at Dheri, Chivari and Matta and fought a religious war in November 1916. This fighting was confined to a single day. The gathering at first was about 25,000 strong but a large number of the men returned to their homes; about 10,000 participated in the fight. According to revolutionary sources, the casualties on the British side were around 150 men and the revolutionaries' casualties were only 18 men - eight killed and ten wounded. Eight aeroplanes and four batteries were employed. The operations extended over a line of twenty-five kilometers between Kabul river and Samal river. In addition to this battle, raiding parties were sent to the British territory almost daily as a result of which the British erected electric barbed wire fencing to protect their camps from attacks. The revolutionaries and Pathans crossed the electric wires. The fencing was totally destroyed during the jehad.

By the beginning of 1917, however the Indian Revolutionary Movement in Afghanistan lost its momentum. Maulavi Barakatullah, blames the German party in Kabul for the failure of the Indian Revolutionaries in Kabul. In a private letter he states:

82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
It is a matter of delight to leave on record that Raja Sahib (Mahendra Pratap), of Hatras, Captain Kazim Beg and myself had the pleasure of working together in harmony and concord for the noble ideal -- for the realization of which the great government of Germany and Turkey had sent us to Kabul.... Had it not been for the ill-nature and want of tact and experience on the part of Von Hentig both in Persia and Afghanistan, our efforts would surely have been crowned with complete success. 84

Maulavi Obeidullah accuses the Amir for his soft corner for the British and for ignoring the Indian Revolutionaries. The Amir with his limited resources could not go against the British. The Germans were simply promising financial and military help, but in reality did nothing. Dr R.N. Datta, a revolutionary leader, accused the Germans for their inadequate help to the Amir. 85

The complete exposure of the silk letter conspiracy altered the situation considerably and was a great setback to the Indian Revolutionaries in Afghanistan and in India. The Amir jailed Haji Abdul Razak, Chief Judge of Kabul, on the ground that he had connections with the Indian Revolutionary leader, Obeidullah Sindhi. 86

84 Memoranda by Maulavi Barakatullah, 21 September 1916, Mahendra Pratap Papers, File No. 1, NAI.


Government of India imprisoned all those who were involved in the silk letter conspiracy. The revolt of the Sharif of Mecca was an other blow to them. Mahmud-ul-Hasan was arrested, and handed over to the British, and subsequently sent to Malta as a political prisoner. Maulavi Barakatullah and Kazim Beg left for Turkey, but due to the Russian presence in Iran, they could not cross the border and stayed in Afghanistan. Maulavi Obeidullah stayed in Jalalabad.

Mahendra Pratap left Kabul by the end of 1916. Since he was short of funds, the Afghan Government granted him £1000. With the consent of the Afghan Government, he contacted the Russian Government to seek its support for the liberation of India. On reaching Mazar Sharif, capital of the northern province of Afghanistan, he sent two messengers, Dr Mathra Singh and Abdul Qadir, to Russia.

In the meantime British diplomacy succeeded in persuading the Russian Government to an unfavourable reply and Mahendra Pratap could not enter Russia. His two messengers Dr Mathra Singh and Abdul Qadir were handed over to the British Indian authorities. Dr Mathra Singh was hanged in Lahore and Abdul Qadir was jailed and subsequently released on certain conditions. Mahendra Pratap passed the winter in northern Afghanistan and at the beginning of Spring 1917 started for China. While he was crossing the Afghan border, he received a message from Nasrullah Khan informing him about the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and
the declaration of war by China against Germany. He returned back to Khana Abad, a provincial capital of Kataghan and Badakhshan province in northern Afghanistan. With the help of Mohammad Safar Khan, the Governor of the province he sent messengers to the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Begum of Bhopal and others. He also sent some money and ammunition to the mujahidin centres in the North-West Frontier Province.

On his return to Mazar Sharif, he again started contacts with Soviet Russia. Once again he received an unfavourable reply. On 1 February 1918 he received an invitation from the Soviet Russian Government, to go to Tirmiz. Crossing the Afghan frontier, he was received by two Soviet Russian officers. He proceeded from Tirmiz to Petrograd. He was now a state guest. During his stay he met Trotsky and Joffe who displayed much sympathy. At a public meeting in Soviet Russia Mahendra Pratap "advocated the idea that liberated Russia should cooperate with Germany in order to liberate India".

Mahendra Pratap then moved to Berlin where he impressed upon the German Foreign Office the necessity of

87 Mahendra Pratap, An Account of a Trip from Berlin to Berlin, through Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and Russia, Germany, Foreign Ministry Archives, Microfilm, Role No. 400, NAI.

88 Ibid.
forging close cooperation between Germany and Russia and taking up the eastern question in harmony with the latter and all the Central Powers. It appears, however, that nobody took any serious notice of his suggestion. 89

The Indian Revolutionaries, after the Bolshevik Revolution, got more sympathy in Soviet Russia than in any other country. They were assured that revolutionary Russia would not be unmindful of the fate of three hundred and fifty million people of India. The Soviet Government, in its proclamation of 24 November 1917, had already appealed "to all working classes of Muslims of Russia and the East to rally to Bolshevism, to secure honest peace and to help all oppressed people to secure freedom". 90 In this proclamation special reference was made to India. It also nullified all the treaties entered into by the Tsarist regime with the eastern countries. 91

After the assassination of Amir Habibullah, the new Amir, Amanullah Khan, deputed Barakatullah and Mahendra Pratap to the Soviet Union. Barakatullah narrates:

In March 1919 after Habibullah was assassinated and Amanullah, who hated the English, ascended the throne, I, as one of the most

89 Sareen, n. 16, pp. 219-20.
91 Ibid.
trusted persons of the new Amir, was sent to Moscow as ambassador extraordinary for establishing permanent relations with Soviet Russia. With this the new Amir cancelled the alliance treaty with the English, according to which Afghanistan was obliged not to enter into diplomatic relations with any other country than England. 92

Barakatullah was received by Lenin on 7 May 1919 along with Mahendra Pratap and discussed with him the possibilities of rendering assistance to Afghanistan in its struggle against British Imperialism. Lenin was impressed by Barakatullah; he took more interest in him than in Mahendra Pratap. This was the reason why Lenin was anxiously enquiring from his foreign minister Chicherin in June 1919 whether Barakatullah's appeal, on Bolshevism and Muslims, had been published or not.93

Barakatullah was impressed by the gains of the Russian Revolution and its principles of equality, fraternity and justice. He saw the fulfilment of his dreams in it. He told a correspondent: "I am not a Communist or a socialist. My political programme has been so far that of driving the Britons out of Asia. I am an irreconcilable foe of European capitalism in Asia which is represented by the British. In this attitude I stand close to the

92 Josh, n. 5, p. 37.
93 Ibid., p. 38.
Communists and in that respect you and I are natural allies".

Lenin's appeal for self-determination for all countries made a great impression upon him and when he spoke to a Russian correspondent, he gave expression to the feelings and aspirations of all subjugated people:

I only know one thing, that the well known appeal of the Soviet Government of Russia to all peoples, calling on them to struggle against capitalists (and for us, capitalist is a synonym for the foreigner, more accurately the English), has created on us colossal impression. 95

Barakatullah wrote a pamphlet in Persian in which he appealed to the Muslims to support Soviet Union. He maintained that the freedom of Muslims depended on their support to the Soviet Union in order to defeat counter-revolutionaries who were supported by the British. 96

Barakatullah remained in Soviet Russia till 1922. Then he shifted to Berlin. He maintained his contact with the Soviet leaders. He re-organised the India's Revolutionary Committee, whose members met Chicherin on his way home from the Genoa conference in April 1922. He brought out a weekly

95 Josh, n. 5, p. 41.
96 Ibid.
Al-Islah from Berlin. In 1927 he participated in the Conference of the League of Anti-Imperialists held in Brussels as an official representative of the Hindustan Ghadar Party. Barkatullah died in September 1927 in the United States.97

An association was founded in Kabul in June 1919 by the youth of the North-West Frontier Province. It was named "Anjuman-i-Muslim Nau Jawanan-i-Shamal Maghrabi Sarhad" or the North-West Frontier Muslim Young Men’s Association. Its object was to emancipate India from the oppressive rule of the British. The anjuman in a leaflet explained that during the reign of Amir Habibullah, no movement could be organised to liberate India; with the accession of Amir Amanullah they could easily emancipate India with the help of the Afghans.98

The Indian revolutionaries at Samasta received /jihad/ Amir Amanullah’s firmans proclaiming on 14 April 1919 and three days later distributed them to the neighbouring tribes. The Amir of Mujahidin of Chamarkand Colony, however, on 16 April preached a sermon strongly opposing /jihad/ but told his followers that he would consult Swat

97 Ibid., pp. 42-43.

98 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 201-422, Pro. 281, NAI.
and Buner people and after harvesting, he would consider the question. 99

The Provisional Government of India issued a leaflet signed by Obeidullah, Home Minister, and Zafarul Hasan, its Secretary. It said that this Government was instituted in order to replace the treacherous, usurping and tyrannical British rulers. The leaflet added:

Your Provisional Government has been continuously struggling for the last four years. As soon as you determined to refuse to accept the oppressive law, the Provisional government too, succeeded in obtaining help then and there.

The Provisional Government has entered into a compact with the invading forces. Hence you should not destroy your real interest by fighting against but kill the English in every possible way, don't help them with men and money, and continue to destroy rails and telegraph wires. 100

The Government of India confiscated the property of Mahendra Pratap in 1919. The Government paid only two hundred rupees to his two step mothers, and similar amounts to his wife and to his two sons. The income from the whole property was estimated to be around Rs.32,500 annually. Thus his family got a pittance only. 101

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99 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 201-422, Notes, p. 55, NAI.

100 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, August 1919, 1-200 B, Notes, p. 55.

101 Home Political Department, April 1919, 221-222, Prov. 221.
The Indian Revolutionaries could not achieve their goal during the third Anglo-Afghan war. Disappointed they turned towards Soviet Russia for encouragement and support. Bravine, a Russian representative in Kabul, had already been assisted in his anti-British propaganda, by two Indian Revolutionaries -- Abdul Subhan and Abdul Rahman. In his negotiations with Amir Amanullah Bravine agreed to transfer Panjdeh to Afghanistan, which had been annexed by Russia in 1884, and to offer money, arms and ammunition and technical instructions; in return for these concessions, Afghanistan was to facilitate the despatch of Bolshevik propaganda to India. The Soviet Government rejected the proposed arrangement and Bravine was replaced by Z. Suritz as Soviet representative in Kabul. 102

Suritz, accompanied by a few prominent Indian Revolutionaries like Raja Mahendra Pratap, Acharya and Abdul Rab, reached Kabul on 26 December 1919. They brought a mass of propaganda material for transmission to India. Discussions were held between the Indian revolutionaries, Suritz and Afghan nationalists on their future course of action. Abdul Rab and Acharya were willing to propagate communist ideology, while Mahendra Pratap wanted to follow the earlier policy of the Provisional Government of India. 103

101 Home Political Department, April 1919, 221-222, Prov. 221.
102 Sareen, n. 16, p. 230.
The Amir, who was now under a probationary period after signing the Rawalpindi Peace Treaty and was planning to send another mission to India, could not afford to allow a Bolshevik propaganda centre against the British to be established in his country and sided with Raja Mahendra Pratap. Acharya and Abdul Rab, with the backing of Suritz, formed a separate party known as Inqilabin-i-Hind (The Indian Revolutionaries). The Amir, fed up with their intrigues, asked Acharya and Abdul Rab to leave Kabul. Suritz continued his efforts for a free passage of Bolshevik propaganda and agents through Afghanistan to India. The Amir, anxious about the success of the Mussoorie Conference, rejected the proposals made by Suritz. 104

In the summer of 1920, when Afghanistan's foreign minister was negotiating with the British in India, and a Russian envoy was having discussions with the Amir in Kabul, the Treaty of Sevres dismembering the Turkish Empire made Indian Muslim indignant. They reacted to the terms of the Treaty by deciding to perform hijrat. 105

In 1920 when the Khilafat movement was strong, many Indian Muslims, under severe emotional stress, started emigration to Afghanistan. They believed that British India had become dar-ul-harb (Place of War), and was not

104 Ibid., p. 231.

safe for Islam. Turkey and the Arab countries including Persia were under the influence of Europeans. As Afghanistan was the only neighbouring independent Muslim country, the Muslims of India considered Afghanistan as dar-ul-Islam. Therefore, they preferred hijrat (emigration) to Afghanistan.

According to some scholars, Afghanistan was responsible for the failure of the hijrat of 1920. The well-known British historian, Arnold Toynbee, has quoted the exaggerated statement from a British Indian Government official report saying, "the road from Peshawar to Kabul was strewn with graves of old men, women and children who had succumbed to the difficulties of the journey".106 However, this statement is not corroborated by contemporary sources.

About the beginning of 1920 the Amir began to show increased sympathy for the Indian agitation on the Khilafat question. The first official intimation of this was a letter dated 14 January 1920, from the Amir to the King-Emperor in which Amir Amanullah stated that he shared the opinions of all Muslims with regard to the upholding of the Islamic Khilafat.107


107 Military Report on Afghanistan (Simla, 1940), p. 113, L/Mil/17/14/6, IOLR.
On 9 February 1920, the Amir, at a commemoration ceremony of the death of his father, made a speech in which he declared himself to be ready to sacrifice his life for Khilafat and to welcome muhajirin from India in Afghanistan. Copies of this speech were widely circulated in Afghanistan and created some excitement.

The Muslims of India, in their telegram to the British Prime Minister Lloyd George, stated that if the problem of Khilafat was not resolved according to their wishes, they would either declare jihad against the British or would migrate to Afghanistan. 108

The Ali Brothers, Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali, had already expressed their views in their memorandum to Lord Chelmsford in April 1919:

When a land is not safe for Islam a Muslim has only two alternatives, jihad or hijrat. That is to say, he must either make use of every force God has given him for the liberation of the land and the ensuring of perfect freedom for the practice and propagation of Islam, or he must migrate to some other and freer land with a view to returning to it when it is once more safe for Islam. In view of our weak condition, migration is the only alternative for us... This step, which we shall now have to consider with all the seriousness that its very nature demands, will be perhaps the most decisive in the history of our community since the hijrat of our Holy Prophet. 109

108 Aman-i-Afghan (Kabul), 20 May 1920.

Other leaders of the Khilafat movement shared this view.
Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad believed that hijrat was an important constituent of the five pillars which firmly held the structure of the Islamic society. 110

In reality the hijrat movement was an off-shoot of the Khilafat agitation. Many Indian Muslims decided to leave their country as a protest against the British policy towards the Caliph. 111 Mohammad Ali in his speech at the twentieth Annual Conference of the Labour Party at Scarborough, England, declared on 2 July 1920:

Six weeks ago more than 2,300 had already migrated to Afghanistan whose Amir was openly giving them an asylum. Already as many as 25,000 from only one part of a single province of India had wired to the Governor of Bombay asking what formalities they were required to comply with as they desired to walk out of the British Empire. 112

The Indian Ulemas declared that India was dar-ul-harb, land of war, and that it was their religious duty to give up every thing and go to a dar-ul-islam, land of peace. A hijrat committee 113 was formed in Peshawar and

110 Ibid.
112 Qureshi, n. 109, p. 44.
113 The Hijrat Committee consisted of the following members: Abdul Ghan, Saikh Abdul Rahim Qasuri, Mohammad Ikbal, Shaidai Rahmatullah Zakaria, Pir Usman Shah Guhati, Mohammad Akbar, Obeidullah, Shaikh Abdul Haq, Dr Noor Muhammad, Mohammad Saleh Abbas, Mohammad Afzal, Khalaf Shaikh Abdul Rahim, Qasuri, Rahim Qaa, Abdul Rauf, Ahmad Ali (earlier President of the Khilafat Committee of the Punjab), Maulavi Shams-ul-Qamar, Abdul Karim, Khair Mohammad Ghuri, Mohammad Khan, Sayed Qamash and Illahi Bakshsh.
all those who intended to migrate to Afghanistan were to be screened by this committee, which provided assistance to the muhajarin. 114

The Afghan Government extended all facilities to the muhajarin. Amir Amanullah sent a trusted Afghan official to welcome them at Jalalabad. 115

The Amir issued an Ordinance for the comfort of the muhajarin and the External Affairs Ministry of Afghanistan was asked to implement it. It runs as follows:

(1) Everyone who wants to migrate to Afghanistan should obtain an Afghan identity card.

(2) Each emigrant holding an Afghan identity card will be provided with six jaribs of cultivated land and a married man with eight jaribs.

(3) An allowance of 35 kgs of wheat for an adult and 21 kgs. for a child will be provided.

(4) That each muhajarin who was granted land, would be given 42 kgs. of wheat for each Jarib of land. In addition, a sum of rupees five would be advanced which would be recovered in the next three years.

(5) The land revenue would be exempted for three years and would be realised during the fourth year according to land revenue regulations.

114 Tendulkar, n. 111, p. 32.
115 The Englishman (Calcutta), 10 August 1920.
(6) The muhajarin could not participate in political activities without the permission of the Afghan Government.

(7) Educated and skilled muhajarin could join government service.

(8) The muhajarin would be sent to Jabal Siraj at the initial stage and from there to other places. The Government would provide them with accommodation facilities. 116

The Afghan Government further stated that it would be responsible for finding employment for educated people and skilled workers and the rest would get free land grants. 117

On the advice of the Government, the headmen of the villages welcomed and entertained the muhajarin on reaching every village from the Indian border up to Jabal-siraj, where the Government had allotted them land and accommodation. They were also escorted from one village to another by the inhabitants of those villages. 118

Amir Amanullah Khan addressed a firman to the Secretary of the Indian muhajarin which declared:

117 Military Report, n. 107, p. 113.
118 Ittihad-i-Mashriqi (Jalalabad), 15 July 1920.
Whereas our brethren the Muhammadans and Hindus have in these days suffered pains and sorrows of general and special character, and having relied on the holy word "make hijrat in the way of God", as a means of their salvation, have regarded our Islamic country of the Afghans as a place of refuge... I have also therefore, out of Islamic sympathy and in a public manner in compliance with the holy text, "He who makes hijrat in the way of God finds consideration and ease" - received under my care and consideration these true sons of India, who for the sake of Islam and humanity are making Hijrat. Accordingly I make a gift to these people, for their comfort, 15,000 jaribs of land which is my own property (crown land). 119

The State Revenue Department of Afghanistan estimated the value of land donated to the muhajarin at 470 to 500 rupees per jarib. The total value of the land allotted to the muhajarin thus came to about 75,000 rupees. 120

Afghan officials provided the muhajarin with food and other facilities when they entered Afghanistan. In Kabul also the Government provided them with accommodation and food. Rich muhajarin, however, spent their own money and certain muhajarin even fed their companions. For instance, Arabab Ghulam Raza Khan of Tekhal Bala resided in a Serai (guest house) near the Kotwali of Kabul city and supplied food to 2,000 emigrants who accompanied him. Most of the Sindhi emigrants were sent to Jabalsiraj and they

119 Ibid., 29 July 1920.
120 Ibid.
were supplied food and accommodation. Land was also distributed to them. 121

The Anglo-Indian newspapers misrepresented the hijrat movement and reported several charges against the Afghans who did not help the muhajarin. The New Times made remarks on the motive. Three out of 1,500 muhajarin who formed the Kafila died of heat on the way. It was pointed out that "the attitude of the Amir, indeed, is indicated by the fact that the Amir has made to the muhajarin a free grant of crownland worth 75 lakhs of rupees". 122 The number of muhajarin who died on their journey to Afghanistan is estimated to be about thirty-six of which half of them died in British territory. 123 The Military Department of the Government of India reported that by October 1920, only 2,000 muhajarin were left in Afghanistan. A majority of them were settled in Kotaghan. Some 200 of these muhajarin crossed the Oxus and went to the Soviet Union. 124

The Government of India, in their communique on the subject, acknowledged that the hijrat movement was

121 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Notes, p. 25, NAI.

122 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Notes, p. 30, NAI.

123 Military Report, n. 107, p. 115.

124 For details see Table VIII.
widespread, especially in the Peshawar district. The people were selling their property, crops, and cattle in order to perform hijrat. The communique proceeded to refer to lies, set afloat by agitators, which persuaded people to emigrate to Afghanistan. But the hijrat could not be explained away in this fashion. No lies can induce a man to leave his homeland, relatives and friends.\textsuperscript{125} The muhajarin made these sacrifices for the independence of their country.

The hijrat movement seriously affected the rural areas in the district of Peshawar. Hundreds of peasants were going to Peshawar to join the emigration.\textsuperscript{126} There was a general unrest which affected all classes of people. One of its dangerous signs for the British was that the people were not cultivating their lands as they were going to Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{127} Apart from the Peshawar city, theCharsadda subdivision was similarly affected. In Doabba and Hashtnagar tracts, two-thirds of the Patwaris had resigned. Deputy Commissioner Lieutenant Colonel W.J. Keen toured the area with the object of reassuring the people.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{125} Military Report, n. 107, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{126} Rushbrooke Williams, \textit{India in 1920: A Report Prepared for Presentation to Parliament in Accordance with the Requirements of the 26th Section of the Government of India Act (Calcutta, 1921)}, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{127} Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Pro. 15, NAI.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
The Chief Commissioner wrote to the Viceroy that the main demands of the Muslims were: (i) the maintenance of Khilafat, and (ii) the maintenance of suzerainty of the Sultan over the Holy Places. He added:

Whether any further representations to His Majesty's Government on the subject of the Turkish peace terms are now possible or not I do not know, but it is my firm conviction that there will be no real peace or contentment among the Muslims of Northern India unless and until some further modification is made in the Turkish peace terms. 129

Hamilton Grant further suggested to the Viceroy that unless the spiritual suzerainty of the Sultan over the Holy places in the Hejaz, in Mesopotamia and in Palestine was nominally admitted, there could be no real contentment. He was convinced that even if the _hijrat_ movement and the non-cooperation movement died a natural death, those movements would be replaced by others more dangerous for the British Raj in India. 130

The Government of India, after reviewing the situation in connection with the _hijrat_ movement, advised the Chief Commissioner to send a representative deputation from the frontier districts to Mecca immediately at the expenses of the Government. It was also suggested that the _muhajerin_ might be detained on health grounds so as to

129 Hamilton Grant to A.N.L. Cater, 27 July 1921, Foreign and Political Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, NAI.

130 Ibid. 
give time for excitement to abate and to permit British influences to prevail over them. 131

The majority of emigrants came from poorer classes, with a sprinkling of intelligentsia, chiefly from towns. Important agricultural classes left their lands and migrated. Religious excitement caused by streams of emigrants affected Government servants too. Government employees, mostly from the police and the armed forces, also joined the emigrants. Ninety per cent of the emigrants from Sindh, whose number was estimated at about 1,000 men, were labourers, and unemployed men. Most of the Punjabi emigrants were from the cities. 132

Amir Amanullah in his proclamation to the Afghan nation appealed for hospitality to the mihajarin. He said that the Afghan Government received them with great pleasure and provided all facilities. He exhorted the people: "Do become the ansars 133 of these Dear muhajarin and have sympathy with these oppressed people so that on the day of justice you may be counted Ansar". 134 Addressing a gathering

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131 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Pro. 19, NAI.

132 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Pro. 37a, NAI.

133 Ansars were the residents of Medina who helped Prophet Muhammad and his companions (muhajarin) when they migrated from Mecca to Medina.

134 Ittihad-i-Mashriqi, 15 July 1920.
to mourn the passing away of Mahmud-ul-Hasan, he assured the Indians that he would cooperate with them in their struggle against the British. He added: "Mahmud-ul-Hasan started the work. I would finish it." Mahmud-ul-Hasan died in 1920 in Malta and he was, therefore, called aseer-i-malta (prisoner of Malta).

At the beginning of July 1920, there was unrest among the emigrants. Some emigrants refused to go to northern Afghanistan and Jabalsiraj. They wanted to stay in Kabul. They did not accept land as they had come for jihad. The Ittihad-i-Mashriqi, in its issue of 10 July 1920, commented that those muhajarin who migrated to Afghanistan and were repenting and intended to return to India were British spies. They had come only with the object of bringing India and Islam to disgrace, and to discourage other muhajarin.

On 12 August 1920, Amir Amanullah with the advice of the muhajarin Committee announced the postponement of the hijrat. A party of 7,000 muhajarin at Jamrud which was on their way to Kabul refused to accept the Amir's orders. Accordingly, the Khilafat Committee at once despatched

135 Obeidullah, n. 36, p. 84.
136 Ittihad-i-Mashriqi, 10 July 1920.
137 The Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore), 19 August 1920.
emissaries and volunteers to Jamrud to bring the mahajarin back to India. They refused to return and accused the Khilafat Committee of having been bribed by the Amir. The Afghan Agent from Peshawar personally went but failed in his efforts to dissuade them. They proceeded to Landi Kotal and reached the Afghan border where they were detained by the Sarhadar. They were eventually permitted to go to Afghanistan.

During August 1920 the roads to Kabul were congested, and the muhajarin could not be looked after properly. They entered Afghanistan without the prior knowledge of the Afghan Government. Their settlement was, therefore essential as severe winter was approaching. Afghanistan could accommodate about 40,000 muhajarin up to the approaching winter. Having in view these difficulties, the Hijrat Committee requested the Amir to order the postponement of the emigration movement so that arrangements could be made for the settlement of the old muhajarin. The Amir accepted their request and ordered the postponement of the emigration till further orders.

It was decided that the muhajarin should receive passports from Faqir Mohammad Khan, the Afghan employee at

138 (i) Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Pro. 40, NAI.


139 From Sahadar of Dakka to Political Agent Khyber, 12 August 1920, Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, NAI.
Peshawar. The Hijrat Committee at Peshawar should inform the head office at Jalalabad through Faqir Muhammad Khan about the number of men desiring to proceed to Afghanistan. The head office at Jalalabad after making proper arrangements for them, would suggest the number of many muhajarin to be sent by specific routes. 140

The Committee also stated that there was no place in Jibalsiraj and the new muhajarin would be sent to Afghanistan Turkistan. Those who preferred to serve in the army of their own accord were sent to any place required by the Afghan Government. They would be subjected to the rules and regulations applicable to Afghan nationals. The Indian muhajarin, on entering Afghanistan, become Afghan subjects. They were not allowed without Afghan passport to go out of Afghanistan in case they intended to go to any country. 141

The following rules were proposed by the hijrat Committee and accepted by the Amir:

(1) Three regiments of the muhajarin were proposed to be enlisted at Kabul in the regular army and were to be paid according to the pay scale of the Afghan army.

(2) The young emigrants from noble families were allowed to enter the military college and after the completion

140 Ibid.
141 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Pro. 49, NAI.
of their training they were to be appointed in the 
*muhajarin* army according to requirements. The 
muhajarin from India, both Hindus and Muslims, would 
have equal rights with the Afghans according to their 
service.

(3) Teachers, doctors, and skilled labourers would be 
appointed in their respective departments according 
to requirements in the various departments. Their 
pay would be equal to that of the Afghans.

(4) Without the permission of the Afghan Government the 
muhajarin could not go to Anatolia.

(5) The *hijrat* Committee would make arrangements for the 
journey of the emigrants upto Kataghan. The Committee 
also recommended assistance upto ₹30,000 to the 
poor.

(6) Facilities would be provided for the coming winter.

(7) Foodgrain was to be given to the *muhajarin* in order 
to enable them to cultivate and live till the next 
harvest.

(8) The military training to the *muhajarin* would be given 
in their respective colonies and they were not supposed 
to get pay during training.

(9) The *muhajarin* were allowed to form two committees 
through which they could consult the Amir.

(10) Ghulam Sadiq Khan late Ishak Aqasi Mulki\(^{142}\) was 
appointed President, Abdul Jabar Khan vice-President

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\(^{142}\) Ghulam Sadiq Khan was brother of Mohammad Wali Khan who 
went as an Afghan Envoy to Soviet Russia and other 
European countries.
and Amanullah Khan supervisor of the muhajarin welfare Committee. All these office bearers were Afghans.\footnote{143 Aman-i-Afghan, 4 August 1920.}

Amir Amanullah wanted to give cultivable land, employment and a share in trade in the emigrants; but they, being misled by British spies, insisted that they came for waging a holy war and not for work. The Amir told them: "I have no strength to wage a war against the British. But I shall allot a colony to you. You generate strength in you to wage a war with the British. I shall extend all help to you, because the British are like a black cobra that does not allow me to rest in peace."\footnote{144 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Notes, p. 18, NAI.} He tried his best to help the emigrants but the British agents were active and did not allow the emigrants to settle in Afghanistan.

The British authorities encouraged the Indian Muslims to migrate in large numbers. Thus they thought Afghanistan would be greatly burdened with the emigrants, and they themselves would get rid of the Indian sedition elements. This can be understood from Chelmsford's letter to Montagu: "The muhajarin movement which I wrote last week has had a definite set-back by reason of the Afghan inability to cope with the numbers wishing to immigrate
into Afghanistan. I think the line that we have taken has proved to be the right one. 145

The British policy was to send a large number of immigrants in one group so that there would be disorder on the way and in Afghanistan. Rescue trains were put at the disposal of the muhajirin; within a few weeks large number of muhajirin gathered in Peshawar and at Landi Kotal. Spies were sent along with the muhajirin in order to subvert the movement. 146

Some emigrants realized that they could not fight British Imperialism from outside India. They thought that fleeing from India to Afghanistan was a form of escapism. 147 Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan, who was at that time President of the Khilafat Committee of the North-West Frontier Province also performed hijrat to Afghanistan. Later he realised that going to Afghanistan could not help the cause of freedom struggle; he returned to India and formed the Anjuman-i-Islahe-Afghania for the reform of the Afghans. 148 The Ali brothers particularly were the principal advocates of the exodus. But neither of them performed the hijrat.

145 Chelmsford to Montague, 19 August 1920, Montague Papers, Roll No. 1933, NAI.

146 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Notes, p. 26, NAI.

147 Military Report, n. 107, p. 115.


(ii) Tendulkar, n. 111, p. 32.
The hijrat movement was purely an emotional and spontaneous migration of devoted Muslims who were urged by fanatic mullahs and some members of the Khilafat Committee like Maulana Azad and the Ali Brothers. Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew, one of the front rank leaders of the Khilafat movement, was not in favour of the hijrat. He bluntly said that "the hijrat movement has started without a formal connection with the Central Khilafat Committee, and excited people will undoubtedly proclaim jihad, having no leaders to advise them to behave in a peaceful manner".

Apart from religious enthusiasm, there were other factors which may have contributed to the hijrat movement. Economically depressed peasants, small landowners and artisans constituted the majority of the emigrants population. The Third Afghan War caused a very high deficit in British India's military budget. According to authoritative British source, the "only event which had seriously disturbed the anticipation of the budget presented by Lord Meston was the Third Afghan War, which

149 Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew was a member of the Central Khilafat Committee in 1920. In 1921 he was one of the General Secretaries and in 1924 President of the Central Khilafat Committee. For details see a political biography of Dr. Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, by Mr Tawfiq Kitchlew (unpublished).


151 Foreign and Political Department, Secret Frontier, July 1921, 1-91, Pro. 19, NAI.
had converted surplus into a deficit of some 23 crores.\footnote{152}{Rushbrook Williams, n. 126, p. 77.}

At the end of 1920, the Indian national debt caused by the Afghan War amounted to about £ 378 millions, or about £ 1.11 per head of India’s population, as compared with a total public revenue of £ 132 millions.\footnote{153}{Ibid., p. 84.} Trade had also been seriously affected by the World War I and the Third Afghan War.

The crop failure of 1918-19 and soaring prices severely affected the masses of India and caused revision of pay at the cost of tax-payers. Thus the deteriorating economic conditions in India could have been a contributory factor in the emigration of Indian Muslims to Afghanistan. It is significant that peasants, landless labourers and artisans formed more than 80% of the emigrants. British records acknowledge the fact that "hundreds of families sold their lands".\footnote{154}{Ibid., p. 52.} Moreover, rich landlords, who were mostly Hindus, encouraged ignorant Muslim peasants to emigrate so that they could buy land cheaply.\footnote{155}{Church Missionary Review (London), 71, 1920, quoted by Naeem Qureshee, p. 55.}

The emigrants, numbering about 18,000 were an insignificant proportion of the Muslim population of India.
As Dr S.D. Kitchlew commented: "Hijrat or migration is impracticable for seventy millions of Mussalmans." 156

The hijrat movement was a complete failure. A large number of Indian Muslims misled by their so-called religious leaders, left their homes, sold their property for a pittance, and braved the journey to Afghanistan. They endured these hardships for the sake of freedom. Vested interests exploited their religious and patriotic sentiments. The hospitality of the Afghans could not compensate for the failure of the Indian Muslim leadership. 157

One major consequences of the hijrat movement was the arrival in Soviet Central Asia of the Indian muhajarin. Some of them accepted Bolshevik ideology under the influence of M.N. Roy. Shaukat Usmani led the left group of the Indian muhajarin in Soviet Russia. He returned to India and became one of the founder members of the Communist Party of India. 158

The Bolshevik regime on its own was keen to establish direct contacts with the people of India as part of its broader offensive against Western imperialism in Asia.


158 Samra, n. 105, p. 52.
The new regime in Russia nullified all the treaties imposed on the Muslim world by the Tsar. It declared that the Bolsheviks were against the seizure of foreign territories, that Constantinople must remain in the hands of Muslims, and that the Persians would be guaranteed the right to shape their own destiny. 159

The Bolshevik appeal clearly indicated the identification of Soviet interests with those of the peoples of Asia. The appeal to the Muslims was designed to remove anxieties about Russian encroachment of Turkey and the rest of the Muslim world. Not only did the Soviet Government publicly renounce the secret treaties by which the Tsarist regime paved the way for further annexations; it redefined the Eastern Question as one which involved Soviet aid for the liberation of enslaved peoples from the Western imperialist domination. As an official Russian spokesman put it: "A war against any of these countries of the Orient is a war against the USSR, just as a war against the USSR is a war against the Orient." 160

In the summer of 1920 the Bolshevik regime was confident of victory over the counter-revolutionary forces and foreign interventionists. The Bolshevik regime

159 Spector, n. 90, p. 15.
160 Ibid., p. 20.
convened a Congress of the Peoples of the East at Baku.
The aim of the Congress was to promote unrest and revolution
in the colonial periphery so that the Western imperialist
could be deprived of its sources of raw material. Another
objection was to organize a counter-attack against foreign
invaders of Russia by expelling them from the lands adjacent
to the Soviet republics. 161

The call for the Baku Congress of the Peoples of
the East came from the Second Congress of the Third
International (19 July-7 August 1920). The Baku Congress of
the people of the East was held on 1 September 1920. The
Congress was representing twenty-six Asian nationalities
including those of Turkey, China, India, Persia and
Afghanistan. 162 The Indian delegates also spoke at different
meetings which were arranged at the "Rabachi (workers)
Club". While delivering his emotional speech, Abdul
Kadir suddenly turned to the map of India, which was just
behind, and burst into tears and spoke no longer. This
caused a great commotion in the Congress. Slogans were
shouted "Long live the Indian People", "Down with the
British". 163 Seven Indian Revolutionaries attended the
Congress. As regards India and Afghanistan, it was

161 Ibid., p. 241
162 Zafar Imam, n. 94, p. 21.
163 Sareen, n. 16, pp. 232-33.
decided that the future Bolshevik activities in these countries would come under the direct control of the Eastern Section of the Third International. While considering the political situation in India it was stated that "it would be suicidal not to profit by the present God-sent opportunity". Zinov'eff, Karl Radek and other Soviet leaders delivered speeches.

According to one writer, the Baku Congress was a demonstration of Bolshevik capacity to create trouble for the British in Asia in case Britain was not willing to resume diplomatic relations with the new regime. This is not a correct assumption because even after the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian trade agreement, the Russians continued their support to Indian revolutionaries and to the Afghan nationalists. A British Foreign Office note of 7 September 1921 to the Soviet Commissary for Foreign Affairs, for instance states:

The Soviet Government has been trying to persuade a well known Indian anarchist, Dr. Hafiz, who has been studying the manufacture of bombs, in Vienna, to proceed to Afghanistan to supervise a bomb depot on the borders of India in order to facilitate their importation to India. Dr Hafiz has now, with the assistance...

164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
of the Soviet Government, undertaken the task of manufacturing smokeless powder in Kabul, and has received from the Soviet Government the sum of 10,000 Kronen for expenses connected with his wife and children. 166

M.N. Roy was deputed to Kabul to chalk out a programme for invading India. Barakatullah and Jamal Pasha were sent to Kabul in order to implement the scheme. Since the Amir was negotiating with the British, Roy was stopped at the Afghan border. A treaty of friendship was at last concluded between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan on 28 February 1921. 167

166 British Foreign Office to Soviet Commissary for Foreign Affairs, 7 September 1921, L/F&3/10/956, Pt. 2, IOLR.

167 Sareen, n. 16, p. 236.