CHAPTER - III

Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi in Afghanistan, Soviet Union and Turkey

The sympathies of Indian Muslims with Turkey were noticeable as long ago as the Crimean War. The British inaction during the Balkan War was contrasted with Britain's championship of Turkey in former days. The feelings of Indian Muslims towards Britain had been determined by pan-Islamic influences. There was a great resentment among the Indian Muslims against the anti-Turkish policy of the British. The British Government also did not hesitate to take repressive measures against the Muslim leadership in India. By 1916 most of them including Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had already been interned. They and their activities were considered very dangerous. It was during this troubled period that Maulana Sindhi received a message from the Sheikh-ul-Hind commanding him to proceed to Kabul at once.

Maulana Sindhi, therefore, left Delhi in August 1915 and spent three or four months in the villages at Bhawalpur district. The C.I.D. kept a strict watch over his activities and movements, but finding him quite inactive, gave up the strict vigilance. During these months the Maulana kept himself

busy in making preparations for his onward journey. So after having befooled the British C.I.D. the Maulana, accompanied by Sheikh Abdur Raheem Sahib Sindhi of Hyderabad (elder brother of Acharya Kirpalani) left one day on bullocks through the deserts and hilly tracts of Baluchistan.¹

The journey was completed within the shortest period as they took to by-paths for fear of being detected by the C.I.D. Sheikh Abdur Rahim, escorted the Maulana upto Quetta and then returned. Maulana Sindhi entered Afghanistan on August 15, 1915 along with other members of his party.² They had some difficulty in convincing the Afghan authorities of their intentions as they carried no passports. They were, however, taken to Qandhar to satisfy the authorities.

At Qandhar they were given a hearty welcome by the 'Nayab-ul-Hukumat' Sardar Mohammad Yunus Khan who happened to know them.³ He not only treated them nicely but also made arrangements for their journey to Kabul. They reached Kabul on October 15, 1915.⁴ Incidentally it was again October 15, 1922 when they got their passports for their onward journey from Kabul to Moscow. Maulana Sindhi and other members of his party played a significant role in the Afghan politics during these seven years and also made vigorous efforts to get the active support of Afghanistan for liberating India.

¹. Ibid. loc. cit.
². Ibid. p. 149.
³. Ibid. loc. cit.
⁴. Ibid. loc. cit.
Purpose of Maulana Sindhi's Visit to Afghanistan:

In his autobiography the Maulana says that he had no idea as to why he had been ordered to proceed to Afghanistan. It was only when he reached there that he came to know about the real purpose of his visit.¹

Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani has given a brief but vivid description of the events which had necessitated Maulana Sindhi's departure to Afghanistan.² According to him after the outbreak of the First World War, the Sheikh-ul-Hind wrote to Maulana Saifur Rehman Sahib and Haji Turangzai who were busy in organisational work at Yoghistan to speed up their activities and come out in the open against the British as the time had come for that. They requested the Sheikh-ul-Hind to come himself and guide them in their stupendous task.

Meanwhile the British, who had got clue of the anti-British activities in the Yaghistan region, attacked the camps of the 'Mujahedins'.³ The 'Mujahedins' who had not yet completed their preparations fought back valiantly and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy's side. But very soon they got short of supplies and resorted to other means for their defence. Some times they looted the enemy's camp and at other times

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1. Mohammad Sarwar, Khutbat Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, p.68.
3. Ibid. p. 145.
retreated from their positions.

At last it was decided that it was no use fighting a well equipped army like that of the British government without thorough preparations. So it was strongly felt that help should be sought from such foreign powers who were ready to help the Indian cause. It was for this reason that Maulana Sindhi had been sent to Afghanistan by the Sheikh-ul-Hind.\(^1\) Maulana Sindhi, therefore, worked hard to persuade the government of Afghanistan to help them in their war against the British and to a great extent he was successful in his attempts to create trouble for the British Indian Government from its very close neighbour Afghanistan.

**Maulana Sindhi at Kabul:**

At Kabul Maulana Sindhi and other members of his party occupied a rented house near the house of Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim.\(^2\) He also helped the Maulana in making acquaintance

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1. Ibid. loc.cit.

2. Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim has been described as a great revolutionary and close associate of Maulana Sindhi, Raja Mahendra Pratap and Maulvi Barkatullah of Bhopal in the C.I.D. records. He did his M.A. in History and Economics from Bombay University. He had been appointed professor at Habibia College, Kabul in 1915, but was dismissed later in June 1916. He, however, crossed over to the independent territory of Yaghistan and remained an active member of the anti-British forces. See: Mohammad Mian, ed. Tehrik Sheikh-ul-Hind - Who's Who in Silk-letter case - p. 6.
with high government officials and all such persons for whom Maulana Sindhi had introductory letters from India.¹

The Sheikh-ul-Hind had got many of his trusted followers and students holding responsible posts in the Government of Afghanistan. So it became easier for Maulana Sindhi to solve all such problems that had arisen due to their entry into the country without proper documents. In due course of time he had developed cordial relations with Sardar Inayat Ullah Khan, the heir and son of Amir Habibullah Khan of Afghanistan. This enabled him to come very close to the other officials of the government.² The Maulana was surprised to learn that Qazi Abdul Razzak Khan, head of the department of Justice already knew of his journey to Afghanistan.³ This was revealed when he went to meet him. This shows that the Sheikh-ul-Hind was held in great esteem even in Afghanistan. Later he also came to know that the 'Qazi' had also been educated at the Deoband seminary.

Qazi Abdul Razzaq wanted Maulana Sindhi to be introduced to Amir Nasarullah Khan Nayab-us-Saltanat (Premier) who used to deal with all political matters. But Maulana Sindhi suggested that it would be much better if he and

² Ibid. pp. 150-51.
³ Ibid. loc. cit.
other members of his party were introduced to the Premier by the Prince himself i.e., Sardar Inayatullah Khan. Qazi Abdul Razzaq liked this idea and got a note written by Maulana Sindhi which briefly mentioned their aims and objectives and solicited audience with Amir Nasarullah Khan. The following day Maulana Sindhi, accompanied by Sardar Inayatullah Khan, was presented to Amir Nasarullah Khan. The conversation lasted for two hours. It was a closed door meeting and besides Sardar Inayatullah Khan and Amir Nasarullah Khan no one else was present. Maulana Sindhi represented the Indian side.

It was his first performance in diplomacy outside India and he emerged successful in it. Amir Nasarullah Khan, however, expressed the desire to have a brief summary of the discourse translated into Persian. The Maulana performed this tedious job within fifteen days and presented a draft of about seven or eight pages to him. He was assisted by Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim in this. Amir Nasarullah Khan, however, fully understood the importance of the matter and he also rightly realized that Maulana Sindhi would not be satisfied unless he had talks with the Amir himself. So he arranged for his audience with the Amir after about a month.

1. Ibid. loc. cit.
2. Ibid. loc. cit.
3. Ibid. p. 52.
Amir Nasarullah Khan presented the draft submitted by the Maulana earlier to the Amir. The Amir went through it very minutely and said nothing which might have dissuaded the Maulana from his activities. He advised the Maulana to co-operate with the Indian National Congress. The Amir was very much pleased to learn that Maulana Sindhi represented the Indians and not the Muslims alone.  

It was a very critical period in the Afghan politics. The Amir did not wish to offend the British and so he refrained from giving encouragement to Maulana Sindhi or to the German mission which visited Kabul at that time. As a matter of fact the Amir of Afghanistan was dissuaded from extending support to the Indian revolutionaries by the British Government. Afghanistan was, thus, forced into the British sphere of influence.

Meeting with the Indo-German Mission:

The Indo-German mission had arrived in Kabul nearly a week before Maulana Sindhi's arrival. It consisted of Raja Mahendra Pratap, Maulvi Barkatullah of Bhopal and Dr. Von Hentig of the German diplomatic service holding the rank of legation secretary. The mission on its way to Kabul visited Istanbul where the Sultan of Turkey gave them

1. Mohammad Sarwar, &lt;Khutbat Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi&gt;, p.68.
2. Tara Chand, op. cit., p. 278.
audience and also a letter for the Amir of Afghanistan. The Turkish high officials promised to give full support to the cause of the mission which was to overthrow the British rule in India. Maulvi Barkatullah also procured a 'fatawa' from the Sheikhul Islam of Turkey asking the Indian Muslims to act in unison with their Hindu brethren for the liberation of their motherland. ¹

At Isphahan they were joined by another mission headed by Neidermayer. The Indo-German, mission, however, reached Kabul on October 2, 1915 and was given a right royal reception by the Afghan government. ² They were treated as guests of the state. A few days later they were received by the Amir. After the mission had disclosed its purpose, the Amir replied. "You show your wares and then we shall see whether they suit us". ³

So after Maulana Sindhi had met the Amir, the Afghanistan Government imposed no restrictions on his movements and also allowed him to meet the Indo-German mission. Maulana Sindhi realized that there was not much difference between their aims and objectives and so both the missions came closer with each other. ⁴ Very soon the Maulana observed that there were differences between the German and Indian members of the mission. The Germans complained that the things were

¹. Ibid. p. 243.
³. Ibid. p. 50.
quite different from what they were made to believe in Berlin and Istanbul whereas the Indian members put all the blame and responsibility on the shoulders of Germans. As a matter of fact the German members of the mission wanted that Afghanistan should become an ally of Germany and that it should declare war on British India. Afghanistan, at that time, was in no mood to antagonise the British government. With the result that the mission, failing to achieve their objective, left Afghanistan disappointed in May 1910, but the Indians remained.

The failure of the mission was mainly due to the fact that the Amir realized that it was in the fact interest of his country to remain neutral and he promised this to the British. As compared with the Germans, the Maulana had consolidated his position and in the beginning the Amir nearly joined hands with the pan-Islamic party by giving approval to the publication of anti-British literature including a pamphlet entitled, "Rally Under the Flag of Salvation and Eternal Happiness", which might have involved Afghanistan in the war.

The Flight of Lahore Students:

The flight of Lahore students and the subsequent arrest of two of these; namely Mian Abdul Bari and Shujaullah need
special mention as these throw enough light on the activities of Muslim revolutionaries who had long been engaged in activities against the British in the North-West Frontier region. As a matter of fact they had founded a colony of rebels. They were furthering the cause of a movement that had been started by Sayyed Ahmad Shahid of Rai Bareli.¹ Maulana Mahmood Hasan had been in constant touch with these 'Mujahedins' and when he ordered Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi to proceed to Kabul in 1915, he wanted that he should join them and make them strong.

After the declaration of war by Turkey, the Government of India had received a number of reports regarding the spread of pan-Islamic movement in India. It also discovered that there was a good deal of sympathy and contact between the Indian Muslims and the outside Muslim world. The flight of fifteen Muslim students from Lahore in 1915 had convinced the British authorities that there were Muslims in the country who had strong pro-Turkish leanings and they firmly believed that their salvation lay in waging war against the 'infidel' Government of India. They had gone to Kabul with the intention of joining the Turks in any capacity for which they were fitted i.e. either as spies, messengers, preachers of jihad or soldiers. The Amir, who had pro-British leanings, tried to convince them that the time was not ripe for 'jehad' and that he would support them when the proper time came.²

² T.R. Sareen, op. cit., p. 177.
This is supported by the following remarks of the Sedition Committee report:

"In independent territory across the border of the North-West Frontier Province there is a small colony of Hindustani fanatics who go by the name of 'Mujahedin. The colony was founded by Sayyed Ahmad Shahid a native of Rai Bareli in Oudh and an apostle in India of the Wahabi sect. ... Together with his adherents, he founded a colony, which although small has survived many vicissitudes and remains until now. It has frequently been assisted by recruits and funds from co-religionists in this country many of whom have lent their support to this colony as a purely religious institution without enquiring into its political tendencies. Its members regard Indian as a land not governed by Muslims and therefore unfit for Muslims habitation, a land of the enemy (darul Harb). They have always preached jehad. They have always kept themselves in touch with and drawn support from a secret organisation of friends in India. During the troubles of 1857 they were joined by a number of mutineers and endeavoured unsuccess­fully to bring about a general frontier attack. Later on they took part in various border wars and in 1915 were concerned in the rising which led upto the engagements at Rustum and Shalkadar. Twelve of their number, dressed in customary black robes, were found dead in the field after the latter". ¹

The Sedition Committee Report further adds:

"The flight of the fifteen students from Lahore was a visible sign that there are in this country, as there were fifty years ago, a few Mohammadans who teach that the way of salvation lies in waging war against the infidel Government of India either personally or by recruiting for or sending money to the Mujahedin. This, fact had been established by other evidence. In 1917 two Bengali Mohammadans were arrested in the North-West Frontier Province with Rs.8,000/= in their possession which they were conveying to the fanatical colony. Those two men had been for some time themselves Mujahedin and had been sent down to their native districts to collect subscriptions. The ground is prepared for such persons and their work is facilitated by false allegations of British oppression. They have helpers of a type that is not new but has for many years been generally lost to official sight". ¹

The statements made by Mian Abdul Bari and Shujaullah before the Indian Government narrate the circumstances that led them to leave the country and join the rebels in the endependent territory, and also the role of these 'run away students' in the movement. ²

Statement of Mian Abdul Bari:

While recording his statement Mian Abdul Bari states that he was a student of M.A. Class when the First World War broke out in 1914. Within months Turkey got involved in it on Germany's side. Naturally the Muslims of India and of course, students were no exception, got emotionally involved into it. In the meantime Maulana Mahmood Hasan declared jehad on the British through a 'Fatawa'. This was ridiculed in an English daily 'The Graphic' depicting a cartoon of Maulana Mahmood Hasan declaring Fatawa with the caption:

"Allah Akbar ! Qaiser Rasool Allah".¹

This enraged the whole of the Muslim students community and they resented it very strongly. Some of them even suggested that Muslim should migrate from such land where they were subjected to such humiliation. It was, therefore, decided that they would leave for Afghanistan and if circumstances allowed they would further proceed to Turkey.

After making necessary preparation the group of students accompanied by one Sheikh Abdul Haq left Lahore on February 5, 1915 in small groups through different trains.² They reached Haripur railway station the next morning. There they gave themselves fake names to conceal their identity. The following

1. Ibid. p. 229.
2. Ibid. p. 232.
is the list of the students with their fake names against each:

   Name assumed - Mohammad Husain

   Name assumed - Ismail

   Name assumed - Not given.

   Name assumed - Yusuf.

   Name assumed - Sadiq.

   Name assumed - Ibrahim.

   Name assumed - Mohammad Omar.

8. Mohammad Hasan : Fourth Year student of Islamia College, Lahore.
   Name assumed - Yaqub.

9. Sheikh khushi Mohammad : Second Year Student of Medical College, Lahore.
   Name assumed - Mohammad Ali.

10. Shujaullah : Second Year student of Medical College, Lahore.
    Name assumed - Mohammad Yunus.

11. Abdul Hameed : Second Year student of Medical College, Lahore.
    Name assumed - Yahya.

12. Rahmat Ali : Second Year student of Medical College, Lahore.
    Name assumed - Zakaria.

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1. Ibid. p. 229.
The party left Haripur in the evening leaving all their baggage in a railway bungalow. Alimuddin, the man who was leading them assured that all their belongings would safely reach 'Asmas' the headquarters of Mujahedin in the independent territory. 'Asmas' was inhabited by five hundred Mujahedins poorly equipped with guns. Shujaullah stated that the number of Mujahedins was about two thousands. Although military exercises were not included in their daily routine, it was carried on from time to time. Their army flag was black in colour with a Quranic verse inscribed on it meaning 'God favours those who shed blood for the cause of Islam and put up defence against the enemy like an iron wall'. They had to stay there for nearly one and a half month as the way to Kabul had been blocked by heavy snowfall. They spent all that time in practice shooting.

Before their departure to Afghanistan one of the students had reportedly been sent to seek Maulana Abul Kalam

1. Abdur Rehman did not accompany the other fourteen students. He joined them later at Asmas. Ibid. p. 234.
2. 'Asmas' is a derivation from 'Samas' in Persian meaning 'a den'.
3. Ibid. p. 11. (Part II)
4. Ibid. p. 260.
5. Ibid. loc.cit.
Azad's advice on leaving the country. He disapproved of their plan and categorically told them that the struggle for the freedom movement could best be carried on from within the country and so he did not promise any help to them.¹

During their stay at 'Asmas' they were joined by many Indians Hindus and Muslims who had been blacklisted by the British Government for anti-British activities. Abdur Rehman a first year student of Government College, Lahore and Kala Singh of Ludhiana were among them.²

The students stayed there for about a month and then left for Kabul in the beginning of April 1915.³ When they reached Jalalabad a town of Afghanistan they were stopped entry for they had no passports. They were then sent to Kabul and kept under police surveillance in Kotwali. They were allowed to go out only with the police escort. While still in police Kotwali at Kabul four more students from 'Peshawar' and 'Kohat' arrived. They too were without passports and were put up with the rest. It was after a very long wait that Mian Abdul Bari along with Khushi Mohammad and Sheikh Abdul Qadir were given audience by Prince Inayatullah Khan.⁴ They were welcomed at his residence in the most hospitable way and the Prince asked them

1. Ibdi. p. 234.
2. Ibid. loc. cit.
3. Ibid. p. 235.
4. Ibid. p. 238.
to explain why they left India for Afghanistan. He heard
their tale of woe and assured them of all sympathy.¹

While still under police surveillance they came to
know about the arrival of a German mission to Kabul. Al­
though the general public did not know anything about the
purpose of the mission, they conjectured that it had come to
put pressure on the Afghan Government that it should declare
war against the British in pursuance of the 'Fatawa' of the
Sheikh-ul-Islam.² After that they were shifted from Kotwali
to an appropriate place. They had now developed contact
with members of the Turko-German mission including Raja
Mahendra Pratap who had also accompanied them.

Maulana Sindhi and The Lahore Students:

The most important part of the diplomatic manouvouring
began with the arrival of Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi in Kabul.
Within a very short period of his arrival at Kabul he started
exerting considerable influence on Prince Inayat ullah Khan
and Prince Nasarullah Khan who had begun to trust him very
much.³ He was even offered a handsome salary but he refused
to accept it saying that he had not come to take anything
from them instead he was determined to give something good.⁴

¹. Ibid. pp. 238-239.
². Ibid. p. 39.
³. Ibid. p. 241.
⁴. Ibid. loc. cit.
The students could not remain unimpressed by the charismatic personality of Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and he exercised great influence over them. In fact they had become his devoted followers. He was generally accompanied by Mian Abdul Bari in his meetings with the members of the Turko-German mission.

Raja Mahendra Pratap had come with a specific purpose. But when he learnt that Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi was too working against the British Indian Government, he joined hands with him and the two agreed to form a Provisional Government of India in exile.

The result of all these diplomatic manoeuvring was that Afghanistan agreed to help the Provisional Government in their military adventure against British India provided there was a general uprising in India and enough military assistance came from Germany and Turkey. But the irony was that the Provisional Government could neither guarantee military assistance on a large scale nor could they assure the Afghan Government that the rulers of Indian states would take up arms against the British at their instance.¹

The German mission soon got very much disgusted with the assurances given to them by the Amir from time to time. They wanted that the Amir should fix a certain date for the declaration of war against the British India. They even inspected arms factories in Afghanistan and made a number of suggestions to the Amir to increase their output.² At the moment Kabul appeared to be preparing for a real war. Trenches

¹ Ibid. p. 244.
² Ibid. p. 245.
were dug round Kabul and many people including the Afghan chiefs were seen taking military training under German military officials. Nevertheless, the German mission felt that the Amir was playing a double game. He was still faithful to the British but was afraid to come out openly with it because of the popular hatred for the British in Afghanistan. He was also fully aware of the fact that people were in favour of 'jehad'.

At one stage it was even proposed that one of the ministers of Afghanistan should be made the head of the Provisional Government of India so that Afghanistan could be persuaded to attack the British India.\(^1\) The Germans had their own interest involved in the whole affair. They were thinking that if they could, somehow, succeed in getting Afghanistan involved in the war against England, the pressure of British army would certainly ease in Iraq and Egypt.

In the meantime a scheme was drawn up to send an Indian mission to Russia. The purpose of the mission was to get this undertaking in the form of an agreement from the Russian Government that they would not interfere in case of Afghanistan joining the war on the German side.\(^2\) The mission, however, failed to achieve its objectives.

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Mian Abdul Bari made a specific reference of the role played by Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi in these developments and stated that Maulana Sindhi was busy in drawing up a scheme of the confederation of Turkey Iran and Afghanistan.\(^1\) He was also hopeful that most of the ruling princes of India would be ready to pledge their support to the Afghan ruler and that they would actively help him. He assured the Amir that almost all the tribal chiefs had agreed to extend their full support in the hour of need. He said that Maulana Mahmood Hasan had gone to Turkey for the fulfillment of this plan. In the meantime the Amir called a conference of all the governors of provinces and 'Khans' and 'Mullahs' of Afghanistan. He appealed to them to stand by him in the hour of crisis although he did not mention the name of the enemy.\(^2\)

The people of Afghanistan as well as of India held in very high esteem the Turkish Caliphate and so the call for jehad had the force of a sort of religious injunction for them. It was, therefore, not surprising that when they heard of the declaration of Sharif Husain of Mecca flinging the authority of the Ottoman Caliphate they condemned him and considered this as an act of treachery.\(^3\) This also upset Maulana Obaidullah. Soon it was learnt that Sharif Husain got Maulana Mahmood Hasan arrested.

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1. Ibid. pp. 247-248.
2. Ibid. pp. 249-250.
3. Ibid. p. 251.
The Mujahedin and the Diplomatic Manoeuvring of Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi:

A close study of the flight of Lahore students and later the arrest of a few of them reveals that the Government of India had intimate knowledge about the happenings in this region and that they fully realised its strategic importance.

Yaghistan, the Afghan tribal area, had long been a source of trouble to the Government of India. Their supremacy in arms and military power proved of no avail in the mountaineous region where the tanks and artillery could do very little good. On the contrary the tribals who were also expert marksmen could and actually did cause considerable damage to the British, taking full advantage of their knowledge of the mountaineous region where they lived.¹

Haji Turang Zai who had been sent to Yaghistan by Maulana Mahmood Hasan at the outbreak of the First World War had been very successful in mobilising anti-British forces in the region. He had united the warring tribes against the British by preaching jehad and exposing their anti-Islamic activities. They were very much infuriated when they learnt that the British were actively engaged in dismembering the Ottoman Caliphate.

¹ Husain Ahmad madani, Naqsh-e-Heyat, Vol. II., p. 182.
The result of all this was that the Haji achieved remarkable success in his early assaults on the various British military camps.\textsuperscript{1} The British army had one more handicap. Besides, being untrained in fighting in the mountaneous and hilly region, all their trained and experienced army personnel had been sent to the other parts in Europe.\textsuperscript{2} The loss, therefore, of the British army personnel and military equipment was colossal.

The appreciable unity among the tribals proved very dangerous to the British Government. It fully realised that the Mujahedins were not only a group of religious fanatics, but they posed a real threat to their government in this region. There were those who considered it their privilege to sacrifice their lives in the cause of religion and the less orthodox believed that the British aimed at conquering their land and enslaving them.\textsuperscript{3} Besides, the moves of the British Government to destroy the Ottoman Caliphate and bring about its defeat terribly enraged the tribes.\textsuperscript{4}

The British Government had already spread a network of their intelligence in the tribal areas because they were very much afraid of the grave danger which they had from

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid. loc. cit.
\item Ibid. loc. cit.
\item Ibid. p. 183.
\item Ibid. loc. cit.
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this region. When they came to know of the war-like preparations of the tribal people, they atonce rushed their army into Yaghistan. Haji Turang Zai had himself been waiting for such an appropriate opportunity and he launched many fold attacks on the British and the British had to suffer heavy casualties on every front.¹

The British now resorted to their old tactics of 'divide and rule'. In addition to this they poured money into the region to be distributed through various agencies among the tribal people. They propagated that according to the injunctions of Islam 'jehad' was unlawful without the king as its leader and that the king in their region was no one else than the king of Afghanistan and hence they should first pledge loyalty to the Amir and should be suided by his judgement.² The propaganda and the money distributed among the tribes had its desired effect. Most of them returned to their native places and they lost all fervour and zeal for 'jehad'.

According to Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi the British gave enough money to the Amir of Kabul to be distributed among the tribal-heads in the region of Yaghistan. People were told to attend the call for jehad only when their Amir

¹. Ibid. p. 184.
². Ibid. p. 185.
declared jehad. This created considerable misgivings and confusion among the tribal people and the movement of Haji Turang Zai which was being carried on with the help of popular support suffered a set-back. His victory turned into defeat.¹

The British who had already entered into an agreement with the Amir were very much satisfied with these developments. The Amir had been promised crown-princeship for his son Sardar Inayatullah Khan and many other concessions.² Had Maulana Mahmood Hasan reached Yaghistan at this stage, he might have been able to save this situation. But he left for Hejaz to secure help from Turkey with regard to the supply of arms and other war material. With the result that Haji Turang Zai who was now left with not many followers and without any resources suffered one defeat another. He later shifted to 'Mehmand' where he remained to the last.³

The armed struggle against the British Government gradually started subsiding. Meanwhile the British speeded up their repressive policy. Maulana Mahmood Hasan was arrested and deported to Malta. The Government of India had now full knowledge of the anti-British activities being

². Husain Ahmad Madani, op. cit., p. 186.
³. Ibid. p. 188.
carried on in Afghanistan and it made a very strong protest to the Amir and pressed him to take action against the leaders of anti-British activities.¹

Meanwhile the silk letter conspiracy had also been unearthed and so the Afghan Government was forced to lay its hands on Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and others. They were put under house arrest in 1919.² When the Maulana drew the attention of the administration to their miserable condition during the detention they were shifted to the tents in the Government gardens. The Maulana was later transferred to Jalalabad. He was still there when Amir Habibullah Khan was murdered and his younger son Sardar Amanullah Khan succeeded him as the new Amir.

A brief account of the circumstances that led to the murder of Amir Habibullah Khan are as follows:

At the time of coronation to the Afghan throne Amir Habibullah Khan had declared his brother Amir Nasarullah Khan as the crown prince and the administration of the government was carried on in this way for many years.³ But when the Amir's elder son grew up, he began to think of appointing him as the heir apparent to the throne. He devised the whole scheme very cunningly and allowed Nasarullah Khan to carry on anti-British activities and himself

¹. Ibid. p. 169.
². Ibid. p. 171.
always adopted and followed pro-British policies. When he was pressed to come out openly against the British by the Turko-German mission, he consoled them by saying that he was anxiously waiting for the arrival of the Turkish and German forces and that he would declare the war as soon as the reinforcement arrived from those countries. At the same time he ensured that the British Government had blocked the way for any possible despatch of German or Turkish forces to Afghanistan by attacking Iraq.¹

The Amir summoned a meeting of high military officials and elderly statesmen to seek their advice. To his great embarrassment, all except Sardar Inayatullah Khan, his son, gave their opinion in favour of the declaration of war against the British.² But the Amir used his regal powers and dismissed them without accepting their verdict. It was later known that the British had agreed to accept Sardar Inayatullah Khan as the heir to the Afghan throne only on the condition that he would oppose all moves against the British Government.³

However, Amir Habibullah Khan had become unpopular with the masses, not only because of his pro-British leanings but

1. Ibid. loc. cit.
2. Ibid. p. 173.
3. Ibid. loc. cit.
also because of his immoral and luxuriant life. Sardar Nasarullah Khan fully understood that his brother meant to reject his claim to the throne. So he also did not exercise any effective control over the administrative machinery. With the result the capital became the centre of conspiracies against the Amir. It was also natural that Sardar Nasarullah Khan should join hands with the opponents of Amir Habibullah Khan. His main rival was Sardar Amanullah Khan, the younger son of the Amir. One night the Amir's palace was heavily fired but, somehow, the Amir escaped unhurt. Later another conspiracy was hatched. At last the conspirators succeeded and Amanullah Khan ascended to the throne.

Maulana Obaidullah who had not been very successful with Amir Habibullah Khan had already developed good relations with the new Amir. So on the very first day of his accession Kaulana Sindhi, who had been detained for sometime, was set free and summoned to the court in Kabul. The Maulana now enjoyed the same privileges at his court as enjoyed by his ministers of the highest rank. The new Amir himself showed great respect to him and treated him as a member of his own family.

When Amir Amanullah Khan ascended the throne, the hopes of Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and his associates rose very high. Soon after, a short war between Afghanistan and the British took place. In this war the role of the Provincial Government

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1. Ibid. loc. cit.
2. Ibid. p. 174.
3. Ibid. p. 175.
4. Ibid. pp. 175-76.
of India of which Maulana Sindhi was the Home Minister, was openly acknowledged and very much applauded by the Afghan Government.¹

At a later stage Amir Amanullah Khan even declared that he would complete the work left by Maulana Mahmood Hasan.² But the situation in Kabul after the Afghan war forced Maulana Sindhi to leave Afghanistan. According to the Maulana if the Provisional Government had not failed in some of its missions and if he had not in his mind the future of his country, he might not have left Afghanistan at all.³

Formation of All India Congress Committee at Kabul:

As stated earlier in 1919 Amir Habibullah Khan advised Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi to work for the independence of his country in collaboration with other Indian organisations in Afghanistan which had the same objectives. Maulana Sindhi, therefore, formed the first branch of All India Congress outside India in Kabul in 1922 during the regime of Amir Amanullah Khan.⁴ The Maulana writes in his autobiography that Dr. M.A. Ansari got it recognised by the 'Gaya Session'⁵ of All India Congress and adds that he was proud to be its first president.⁶

¹ Ibid. p. 80.
² Ibid. p. 176.
³ Ibid. loc. cit.
⁴ Ziya-ul-Hasan Farooqi, op. cit., p. 60.
⁵ It was confirmed in the Gaya Session of the Congress in 1922 that Congress Bodies in South Africa and Kabul were affiliated with rights to send 10 and 2 delegates respectively to the Congress. (See:B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, The History of the Congress 1885-1935) p.425.
⁶ Mohammad Sarwar, Khutbat, pp. 68-69.
However, during his seven years stay in Afghanistan he had many achievements to his credit. The task assigned to him by Maulana Mahmood Hasan was not an easy one. It was a giant leap towards a noble cause. He faced hardships at each step but remained undeterred in his work. The following are some of his notable achievements:

1) Although the haukala did not succeed in his efforts to persuade Amir Habibullah to rise in arms against the British and help the cause of Indian freedom openly, the Amir was greatly influenced by him. The British now found much difficulty in getting their policies implemented by the Afghan Government. The new Amir had followed the policy of confrontation with the British Government even when Afghanistan had not achieved her independence.

2) Maulana Sindhi was successful in mobilising public opinion in Afghanistan and the support of the nobility in favour of 'jehad' against the British. With the result that when Amir Habibullah Khan summoned a meeting of high government official and tribal-heads, all of them excepting his eldest son Inayatullah, were unanimous in favour of declaring jehad. The Amir himself was stunned to see this. Of course, he turned down the advice by virtue of his being the Amir, but not without fatal consequences.

3) The Maulana had developed such cordial relationship with the new Amir that he fully agreed with him on nearly all matters. He declared complete independence for Afghanistan.
This infuriated the British Government and a war ensued between the two and this finally resulted in the independence of Afghanistan.

4) He took active part in chalk ing out the war strategy and his followers fought on every front with the Afghan army except on the eastern sector where the Afghan army suffered a minor set-back. But ultimately it came out victorious and Afghanistan got complete independence. Such was Maulana Sindhi's role that the British Ambassador to Afghanistan described the victory of Afghanistan as the personal victory of Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi. The Afghan Government also acknowledged with gratitude the excellent work done by the members of 'Junood-Allah' and other Indian young men.

5) He greatly furthered the cause of the movement started by Maulana Mahmood Hasan. The Amir also espoused the cause and expressed his feelings on the death of Maulana Mahmood Hasan in the following words:

"I shall complete the work Maulana Mahmood Hasan had begun".

6) Another great achievement of Maulana Sindhi was that he put the programme for India's freedom before the members

2. Ibid. loc. cit.
3. Ibid. loc. cit.
of the Turko-German mission and also suggested the line of action. Through this he was also successful in removing certain misgivings in the mind of Raja Mahendra Pratap, an Indian member of the Turko-German mission, regarding the role of Indian Muslims in the freedom struggle.

7) He was instrumental in sending a number of missions to Russia, Turkey and Germany on behalf of the 'Provisional Government', which though failed to achieve any notable success, at least made the Indian point of view understandable to others.

Maulana Sindhi's stay in Kabul, therefore, cannot be called a waste of time in fruitless exercises. Instead he achieved something for the Indian people as a whole and the Indian history will certainly take pride in recording his remarkable achievements. Though the 'Provisional Government' failed to achieve its objectives and Raja Mahendra Pratap who headed the government left for Berlin via Russia in 1918, the 'Provisional Government' remained intact in Kabul and continued to work under the guidance of Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi.

Provisional Government of India in Afghanistan:

Immediately after his arrival in Kabul, Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi was invited by the Indian revolutionaries who were staying there to join them.† Though it was not possible

† T.R. Sareen, op. cit., p. 177.
for them to induce the Amir to declare war against Britain, yet with the help of Sardar Nasarullah Khan and other members of the war party, the Indian revolutionaries, along with the Maulana were able to set up a provisional government known as Hukumat-e-looghita-i-Hind.¹

The provisional government of India started functioning from December 1, 1915 with its headquarters in the tribal territory.² Mahendra Pratap was its head or President; while Barkatullah was the Prime minister and Maulana Sindhi was entrusted with Home portfolio in this government.³

Giving an account of the formation of the Provisional Government in Afghanistan, The Sedition Committee Report, 1918 says:

"Obaidullah and his fellow conspirators had devised a scheme for the provisional government of India after the overthrow of British power. A certain Mahendra Pratap was to be President. This man is a Hindu of good family and eccentric character, who, at the end of 1914, was granted a passport to travel in Italy, Switzerland and France. He had gone straight to Geneva, had there met the notorious Hardayal and had been by Hardayal introduced to the German Consul. He had then proceeded to Berlin and had thence been despatched on a special mission, having apparently impressed the Germans with an exaggerated idea of his importance.

1. Ibid. loc. cit.
3. Ibid. loc. cit.
Obaidullah himself was to be Minister of India, and Barkatullah, a friend of Krishnavarma's and a members of the American Ghadr party, who had also travelled to Kabul via Berlin, was to be Prime Minister. Son of a servant of the Bhopal State, he had visited England, America and Japan. He had been appointed Professor of Hindustani at Tokio. He had there edited a bitter anti-British paper called "The Islamic Fraternity", which was suppressed by the Japanese authorities. He had later been dismissed from his appointment and had then joined his Ghadr friends in America.

The Germans of the Mission, failing to achieve their object, left Afghanistan early in 1916; but the Indians remained and the "Provisional Government" despatched letters to both the Governor of Russian Turkestan and the then Czar of Russia inviting Russia to throw over her alliance with Great Britain and assist in the overthrow of British rule in India. These were signed by Mahendra Pratap and subsequently fell into British hands. The letter to the Czar was on a gold plate, a photograph of which has been shown to us.

The "Provisional Government" also proposed to form an alliance with the Turkish Government, and in order to accomplish this object Obaidullah addressed a letter to his old friend, Maulana Mahmood Hasan. This together with another letter dated the 8th Ramzan (9th July 1916), written by Mohammad Mian Ansari, he forwarded under a covering note addressed to Sheikh Abdur Rahim of Hyderabad, Sind, a person who has since absconded.

Soon after assuming office the Provisional Government issued a declaration and its copies were sent to India. 2 The declaration referred to the promises of help given by the Turkish and the German Governments for the liberation of India. The subsequent proclamation mentioned the alliance between the Hindus and the Muslims and the formation of the Provisional Government with the approval of the Sultan of Turkey and the Kaiser of Germany. The Provisional Government

made an appeal to the "warriors and heroic sons of India" to rise and help the Indian revolutionaries to annihilate the British and liberate India.

Declaration on Behalf of the Provisional Government of India to the Indian Rulers and Ryots:

At the time of the outbreak of this world-war on the 1st of August 1914 we were convinced that this struggle was to release the oppressed, helpless and trampled nations from the clutches of heartless, plundering and cruel England, Russia and France. Accordingly we at once started for Berlin and then went to Constantiople. At these places we obtained a written agreement from the German and Turkish Governments to the effect that if the Indians would rise up and expel the English from India those two powers in conjunction with their allies, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, would recognise them at once as belligerents and not as rebels. Further that if possible they would assist them with men and material and that if they succeeded in turning the English out of India and in establishing a stable Government in their country they would not only themselves recognise their Government but would get it approved by other powers at the time of general peace. At the same time the Turkish and German governments have given out in clear terms that they have no desire to establish their own rule in India but simply want to liberate her.

The Provisional Government of India has in its possession such complete documents as would furnish clear proof of the aforesaid conditions and would be published at their proper time. Our Indian brethren must understand that the attainment of these privileges costs nations ages of warfare and, loss of life and property, but it is due to nothing but her good luck that India has already secured them. Secondly, if the present opportunity which is afforded to India today is once lost it cannot be expected again for a thousand years. Thirdly, the English have become extremely exhausted by two years' fighting and even the slightest effort would suffice to overthrow them. Fourthly, the Irish revolt has already shown that the downfall of the British is near at hand and none can stop it. Fifthly, now the tyranny of the English has reached its zenith and the hour of the tyrant's fall has struck.
Ponder a little and you will find how many promising youths were hanged by the English this year, how many were transported to the penal settlement and how many were sent to prison for life? Sixthly, how did the English maltreat your Sikh brethren in Canada and with that cruelty the heroes of the Komagata Maru were murdered and how the Ghadr sepoys who came from America to fight for you have been put to trouble. This proves that the English are our enemies and can never be our friends.

The Provisional Government has arranged to make a properly organised attack on the English and that attack will soon take place. All the people of Hindustan should be on the look out for this attack and when it takes place they must arrange to kill the English and drive them out of India. Oh! Nawabs and Rajas of India, the time has come for you to wipe the stain of servitude from your foreheads and become free and fit to be called human beings. Don't wait for the impending attack, be free now and arrange to set up a free Government. Combine to devise your plans for war so that when the time comes you will not be found wanting. Oh! Indian sepoys, in spite of the fact that your prowess and perseverance and your steadfastness and gallantry in battle are known to the whole world, yet you are looked upon as wild beasts because you are at the bidding of the impure English who are desolating your dear country and ruining your fellow-countrymen. This crime and sin will blacken your faces both in this world and in the next. The time has now come for you to wipe away with your own hands the dark stain on your forehead. When the attack on the English comes kill your English officers, join the army of liberation and help them to kill the English. To free Mother India and your Indian brothers follow the example of the soldiers of Bosnia Herzegovina, Dalmatia of Russian and Serbian stock. When Austria sent them to fight the Russians and the Serbians they deserted to their Russian and Serbian brethren with their arms.

Oh! Indian Police constables, you are the eyes, ears, hands and feet of the English, who are robbers and aliens. It is through you that they learn the innermost secrets of your Indian brethren and get the most complete information though they neither know your language nor care to meet you. It is through you that they hang hundreds of respectable young Indians, transport thousands of them and entomb lakhs of them in fetters in jails. There are no worse sinners than you in the world. For the sake of foreigners you dishonour your own kith and kin, plunder their wealth
and ruin their lives. Come to your senses and realise that the time has come to punish the English for their oppression, cruelty, falsehood and treachery. If you will render assistance in releasing Mother India from the clutches of these transgressors you will obtain the absolution of your sins. All that is required of you is to allow the liberators of their country to work unhindered and when the fighting begins keep them informed of the movements of the British troops. Nowadays you fight like dogs over the bone thrown amongst you by the English, but tomorrow you will become masters of your own land. The wealth and riches of India are so vast that they will suffice for the necessities and luxuries of life of all persons. By the imposition of heavy taxes on the land, by the suppression of arts and industries, by means of laws, by monopolisation of commerce and trade by themselves and by reserving all high civil and military posts for their fellow-countrymen, the English have created in India ever present famine, cholera and plague. In some years starvation and plague carry away more lives from India than have been lost during the last two year's world-war. The English have purposely spread these calamities in India and the hour has arrived for you to free yourselves from this misfortune and take matters into your own hands.

Oh! dear children of India, Hindus, Muslimmandans, Jains, Parsees and native Christians—the Provisional Government of India looks upon you with love and wishes to turn the marauding English out of India. All the races and religions of India should live together like brethren, they should encourage arts and sciences, turn the whole human race into one family by promoting civilisation to the highest degree and turn the face of the earth into heaven and make it a fit abode for the pious.

Like the Turko-German mission, the Provisional Government was also working desperately to bring about a collision between Afghanistan and Great Britain and to prepare India for the acceptance of the Afghan invasion.

1. Foreign Department, Frontier, Confidential A, 1918, Nos. 241-430. (This and all other references in this chapter to the confidential record of the Government of India have been quoted from T.R. Sareen, Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad (1905-1920).
The Indian revolutionaries also received encouragement from Mahmood Tarzi and other members of the anti-British party, but the sudden departure of the members of the German mission retarded the progress of their activities. The mission had taken away all the money it had brought from Berlin. The entire control of the money by Von Hentig was very much resented by the Indian members. They felt that it was a serious lapse on the part of the German Government. Von Hentig had, however, left Afghanistan after forming an alliance with Afghanistan. He might have considered it useless to stay in Kabul just for the sake of Indian revolutionaries. Being a diplomat by profession he had no interest in any activity not conducive to the interest of his country.

The Provisional Government of India was not able to do anything effective because of lack of funds even though they had taken into confidence the war council of the Government of Afghanistan. Immediately after the departure of German mission, the German Foreign Office was requested to send a considerable sum of money in the hands of a sympathetic German statesman and at least ten thousand troops "to Afghanistan for Indian work".

1. Ibid. loc. cit.
2. Ibid. p. 178.
3. Barkatullah's letter to German Foreign Office 21 May 1916 German Foreign Records Roll No. 400.
The German Foreign Office did not take any notice of these requests. Saifullah, the British agent in Kabul, reported that after the departure of the German mission the Provisional Government tried to enter into an agreement with Amir of Afghanistan. After discussion for several days the members of the Provisional Government decided that if Afghanistan was willing to declare war against Britain then they were prepared to acknowledge him as the permanent ruler of India.  

Perhaps a treaty was also signed between the Provisional Government and the Amir. The details of this treaty are not known. Mahendra Pratap signed this treaty as head of the Provisional Government. He has referred to it in his life story, but did not mention any of the clauses in it. The Amir, however, did not agree to the proposal of the Provisional Government to declare war against Britain. But he allowed the Provisional Government to enter into agreement with other foreign powers if they desired so. This encouraged them to send two of its emissaries.

1. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 15 September 1916, Foreign Department Frontier Confidential A, 1918, Nos. 241-430 N.A.I.

Khushi Mohammad\(^1\) and Mathura Singh\(^2\) with letters to the Governor of Russian Turkestan referring to the help received by the Provisional Government from Germany and Turkey for the cause of India. They expressed the hope that "Russian would extend the same help".\(^3\)

The task undertaken by the Provisional Government included sending missions to Russia, Turkey and Japan soliciting their aid in liberating India. Efforts were also made to raise troops and the 'mahajirs' who had fled to Kabul, were enrolled as officers in the revolutionary army.

1) **Mission to Russia** : Among the various missions, the one sent to Russia in April 1916 had great importance and expectations. It included Khushi Mohammad and Dr. Mathura Singh. The latter was sentenced to death in Lahore.

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1. Khushi Mohammad was a third year student of Medical College, Lahore, before his departure to Afghanistan.

2. Dr. Mathura Singh, a revolutionary for a long time, had also worked with Hardayal of Ghadar party whom he had met in San Francisco. He had been involved in so many anti-British activities. He had been arrested by the Afghan Government in 1914 but later released by order of Sardar Nasarullah khan on the recommendation of Raja Mahendra Pratap. After that he joined anti-British activities with Raja Mahendra Pratap, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and others. (See : Mohammad Mian, ed., *Tehrik Sheikh-ul-Hind - Who's Who in Silk Letter Case* - pp. 52, 56.)

3. Provisional Government's letter to the Governor of Russian Turkestan, 21 February 1916, Foreign Department, Frontier Confidential A, 1918 Nos. 241-430 N.A.I.
Conspiracy Case in 1917.¹ These two were sent to Tashkent and Samarkent with instructions and documents to hold talks with high officials and mobilise opinion in their favour. A separate letter addressed to the Czar engraved on gold plate was given to them.

The purpose of the mission was to persuade Russia not to interfere if Afghanistan joined the war from the German Camp.² Dr. Kathura Singh and Khushi Mohammad started for Russia along with two Afghan orderlies, one Sikh named Aya Singh Kabli and another Muslim named Abdul Haq Kabli.³ They assumed the names of Sardar Shamsher Singh and Mirza Mohammad Ali respectively. They carried the following documents with them.⁴

1. A letter addressed to the Czar engraved on a gold sheet,
2. Letters addressed to the Governor General of Tashkent and to the Prime Minister of Russian Government,
3. Letters to the border guards directing them to take the messengers to Tashkent and present them to the Governor General.

In one of the letters Raja Mahendra Pratap had also expressed the desire to visit Russia provided he was received at the border by a Russian General of the armed forces.

³ Ibid. loc. cit.
⁴ Ibid. loc. cit.
forces. The letter to the Czar suggested that if Russia agreed to join hands with Afghanistan in this war, she could easily establish her influence in Asia on a permanent basis.¹

The mission to Russia returned to Afghanistan in about four months. They did not bring any letters with them but conveyed that the Russian official welcomed them and that the golden plate with the letter to the Czar engraved on it had been sent to Petrograd. The Diplomatic Secretary of Tashkent further promised that as soon as a reply was received, it would be sent to Kabul.² The mission returned without much success because of political instability in Russia. Not only did it fail to get a proper response, the Russian Government on the other hand informed the British government of their arrival and also despatched the documents it had left behind to the Government of India.³

The British Government was greatly disturbed when it learnt that the diplomatic representatives of the Provisional Government had been cordially welcomed by the Russian Government. They sent a strong protest to the Russian Government requesting them to arrest the two members and if possible hand them over to the Indian Government.⁴

² Mohammad Mian, op. cit., p. 252.
³ Ibid. p. 216.
Although the Russian Government refused to comply with their request, the members of the mission were asked to leave the country. The Provisional Government also drew up an elaborate plan to form an all world Islamic front including the Turks and Arabs to join Afghanistan in its war against the British to liberate India.¹

2) Mission to Turkey and Germany: In May 1916, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi selected Mian Abdul Bari² and Shujatullah³ as members of the Turko-German Mission.

The Provisional Government felt that members of the Turkish mission who visited Afghanistan were of low order and hence the talks with them could not be very fruitful. It was proposed that the Turkish Government should be requested to send experts in the field of education, economics, technology and other fields and help in the development of Afghanistan. Further the Turkish Government should emphasise upon the Afghan Government to send their young men to Turkey for further education.

¹. Ibid. loc. cit.
². Mian Abdul Bari was one of the Lahore students who had crossed over to the independent territory across the border of the North West Frontier Province in Feb. 1915.
³. Shujatullah was a Medical student of Lahore. He, too, crossed over to the Independent territory along with the fifteen other students. They were despatched with relevant papers and documents to Constantinople and Berlin in June 1916 via Iran. They also carried letters to the Sultan of Turkey and Kaiser William of Germany from Sardar Nasarullah Khan of Afghanistan (See: Mohammad Mian ed., Tehrik Sheikh-ul-mind Who's Who in Silk Letter Case., pp. 16, 88).

Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi took active interest in sending this mission. He took the two members of the mission to Sardar Masarullah Khan who blessed and encouraged them. They were also told to impress upon the two governments of Turkey and Germany that they should at least arrange to send a well equipped army of 60 thousand men, and that the Afghan King had given full assurance that he would attack India immediately after the arrival of the said army. The mission, however, could not reach its destination and was nabbed at Mehmoodabad in early August 1916 by the Russian guards who later handed them over to the British authorities.

3) **Mission to the Independent Territory of the North-West Frontier Province**: In July 1916 Maulvi Abdur Rahim along with Mohammad Husain, Abdur Rashid, Shah Hashaw, Mohammad Ali Sindhi left Kabul for the independent territory of North West Frontier Province to start a press for printing seditious literature. Maulvi Abdur Rahim had also carried with him a large quantity of ammunition. The party had with them many letters addressed to the various

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2. Ibid. loc. cit.
3. Ibid. p. 255.
4. Ibid. p. 217.
tribal chiefs instigating them to rise up in arms against the British Government. One of the letters had been addressed to Haji Turang Zai, a trusted follower of Maulana Mahmood Hasan and a relentless fighter against British imperialism.

4) Mission to the Leader of Chinese Revolution, Sun Yat Sen and the Emperor of Japan: The Provisional Government had also planned to send missions to the leader of the Chinese revolution Sun Yat Sen and the Emperor of Japan. In the letters addressed to the dignitaries, a request had been made to realize their duty towards their Asian brethren by getting them liberated from the English imperialism.

5) The German-Afghan Treaty: The German mission which included the two Indians Raja Mahendra Pratap and Maulvi Barkatullah Bhopali reached Kabul on October 2, 1915. They, with the help of the Provisional Government, succeeded in concluding a treaty of friendship with the Amir of Afghanistan on 24th January 1916. As a result of this treaty the German Government pledged to provide the Afghan Government without subject to return one million rifles, 300 guns with ammunition, and other war material and ten

1. Ibid. loc. cit.
2. Ibid. pp. 255-256.
million pounds sterling and recognised the independence of Afghanistan. The German Government further agreed to defend Afghanistan with all possible measures against foreign aggression and in case Afghanistan agreed to join the war, Germany promised to help her to recover "lost and conquered territories". However, the draft of the Treaty which is available amongst the records of the Government of India contains no reference to the territories promised to the Amir.

6) An Appeal to the Countrymen: Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi also undertook the task of addressing the Indians through one of his letters which was given wide publicity. It had been addressed by him as Minister of the Home Department.

Brave Indians and Courageous Countrymen!

You have read the account of the formation of the Provisional Government of India. It has Raja Mahendra Pratap as its President, K. Barkatullah (of Ghadar Party) as its Prime Minister and M. Obaidullah as its Home Minister. Its object is to liberate India from the iron clutches of the treacherous English and to establish indigenous Government there.

1. This possibly meant the tribal belt, the Punjab and Baluchistan territories which Afghanistan had lost over the years to Sikhs and the British (See: V.S. Budhraj, The Provisional Government of India 1915-1920, Kurukshetra University Research Journal, Kurukshetra, Vol. I, January 1967.

This Government of yours read with utmost pleasure, the news of your gallant deeds done for the noble cause of liberty. You have no arms to extirpate the enemies of India and mankind. This Government of yours has tried and succeeded in obtaining help from outside. Our Government assures you full freedom and it has made agreement with the allied invading powers to that effect. Therefore, murder the English wherever you find them, cut the railway lines, destroy the railway bridges and render all possible help to the invading armies. None shall be molested but who shall resist. Your property and your homes are safe. May the Almighty show our brethren the right path.¹

The Provisional Government also tried to win over the favour of the Indian princes. There were about 47 letters from the German Chancellor and seven letters from the Sultan of Turkey addressed to the Indian rulers. These letters stated that if the princes and their people constituted an Indian National Government, it would be duly recognised as free Government by Germany and Turkey and other powers.²

The Government of India, however, came to know about the despatch of these letters and they immediately took the Indian princes into confidence. A conference of the various princes was convened who assured the British Government that it would help in the arrest of the emissary if and when he arrived. In this way Kala Singh, the emissary of the Provisional Government, was arrested while returning from Nepal.³ The letters which had reached their destination,

¹ M. Irfan, Barkatullah Bhopali (Bhopal, 1969) p. 213.
³ Ibid. p. 184.
were handed over to the British Government by the loyal Indian princes.¹

7) Third Afghan War and the Provisional Government of India: From the day of its inception the Provisional Government had been desperately trying to instigate the Amir of Afghanistan to declare war on the British Indian Government but all their efforts proved of no avail as long as Amir Habibullah Khan occupied the throne of Afghanistan. In February 1919, however, an event gave new hope to the revolutionaries. Amir Habibullah who had been known for his pro-British leanings was assassinated and Amir Amanullah Khan succeeded him. He had been noted for his anti-British views and had been deeply influenced by Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and his associates. The spirit of the revolutionaries, therefore, brightened up with his accession to the throne.²

In his first communication to the Government of India on March 3, 1919, while narrating the events preceding his accession to the throne the new Amir wrote to Chelmsford, the new Viceroy, that the independent and free Government of Afghanistan was ready to enter into any friendly relations with the British.³ The British Government of India was taken by surprise by the above letter.

1. Ibid. loc. cit.
2. Husain Ahmad Madani, op. cit., pp. 175-76.
In his enthusiasm, Amir Amanullah Khan declared War against the British Government of India. The reports of a political crisis in India in early 1919 instigated him to do so.¹ Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab believed that the Amir:

"Whether incited by the messages from Indian extremists or (there can be little doubt that a section of the Indian extremists kept in close touch with the Indian revolutionary organisation headed by Mahendra Pratap, Obaidullah, Sarkatullah and other organisers of the Silk Letters Conspiracy of 1917) he was encouraged in his hostile action by the news of the disturbances in the Punjab".²

There is no doubt that the Amir was inspired to take advantage by the Indian revolutionaries in Kabul. To support the Amir's action the Provisional Government issued a proclamation declaring that it had entered into an agreement with the invading forces and that the Indian people should welcome them instead of fighting against them.³

On April 13, 1919, at a special durbar, the Amir proclaimed that Afghanistan "should be externally and internally independent and free".⁴

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¹ Ibid. p. 227.
² The Disorders Inquiry Committee, Vol. VI. Home Political F.No. 164/1/1923, R.A.I.
The war lasted for about a month and in August 1919, the Government of Afghanistan and the Government of India signed a treaty at Rawalpindi whereby the British recognised the independence of Afghanistan.¹

As a result of this short war, Afghanistan achieved complete independence but it did not prove very useful from the point of view of the Indian revolutionaries. In spite of the proclamation issued by the Provisional Government in favour of Afghanistan, the declaration of War and also the Amir's statement promising full support to the Indian revolutionaries for the freedom of India, there was hardly any response from within the country.²

Mahatama Gandhi who was leading the nationalist movement in India said at the time of Afghan invasion that I would rather see India perish at the hands of the Afghans than purchase freedom from Afghan invasion at the cost of her honour.³

The British Government's Reaction to the Diplomatic Manoeuvrings of Foreign Missions and the Provisional Government of India in Afghanistan:

The Government of India had already been informed that a German mission which included some Indian revolutionaries had been trying to reach Afghanistan. They had,

¹. T.R. Sareen, op. cit., p. 228.
². Ibid. loc. cit.
therefore, given clear instruction to the Consul-General at Meshad "to capture or annihilate any party of Germans" which might be discovered attempting to enter Afghanistan.¹

Lord Harding, the Viceroy, wrote to the Amir of Afghanistan that some German might enter Afghanistan for anti-British activities and that they should be "arrested, disarmed or interned" pending conclusion of war. But in spite of all the precautions taken by the British Government Von Hentig, the head of German mission, was successful in crossing over to Afghanistan with his party where he was received in the Durbar of the Governor of Herat on August 24, 1915.²

The Governor was shown the proclamation of 'jehad' issued by the Sultan of Turkey. From 'Herat' the party reached Kabul via 'Qandhar'. Although the German mission had reached Kabul, the Amir of Afghanistan wrote to the British Government of India that he would not allow any armed party of foreigners to enter Afghanistan. This satisfied the British Government. The British Government of India and the Amir of Afghanistan had already entered into a contract that the latter would not have any external relation with any power other than the British.³

1. Telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State for India 3 July, 1915, Foreign Department, Secret War, January 1916, Nos. 1-202 N.A.I.
3. Ibid. p. 175.
Soon after the arrival of the German mission and the formation of the Provisional Government of India, rumour ran afloat that Afghanistan was planning to attack India. The British agent in Kabul, however, contradicted these rumours and assured the British Government of the Amir's loyalty. But at the same time he also confirmed that the Afghan population in general, was anti-British and pro-Turkish.\(^1\)

Although the Amir was thoroughly pro-British, he welcomed the German mission to appease the masses. The German mission along with Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and other had an audience with the Amir of Afghanistan. They tried to impress upon the Amir that the Germans had all possibility of winning the war and that Afghanistan would secure various benefits if it sided with Turko-German cause.

The Amir was also shown the letters of William Kaiser of Germany and the Sultan of Turkey in his name, but it seemed to have no effect on him.\(^2\) The members made no mistake in realising that the Amir was through and through under British influence. But they still considered it worthwhile to try their luck with him. It

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1. Ibid. loc. cit.
2. Ibid. loc. cit.
was because of the strong support which they already had of the anti-British party which included besides Sardar Nasarullah Khan, the prime minister, two sons of the Amir, Inayatullah and Amanullah, who also had the support of General Nadir Khan, the Commander-in-Chief, and Rahmood Tarzi, the Foreign minister. The whole party was in favour of war with the British.\textsuperscript{1}

The Amir had great difficulty in keeping the members of the war party under control specially at a time when Afghanistan was in the grip of pan-Islamic feelings amongst its people. Assuring the British Government he sent a secret message to Hardinge, the Viceroy, that he would do his utmost to maintain strict neutrality so long as the independence of Afghanistan was not threatened.\textsuperscript{2}

While negotiations were going on between the members of the German mission and Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and the Amir, the Government of India announced an increase of 2 lakhs of rupees in the subsidy to the Amir.\textsuperscript{3} This was done as a token of appreciation of his stand at that critical moment by not joining the war. The Amir would not keep everyone in suspense about his attitude for a long time and therefore in subsequent meetings he frankly

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told them that it was not possible for him "to break his alliance with the Government of Great Britain."\(^1\)

**Junood Allah (The Army of God)**

After their meeting with premier Sardar Wasarullah Ahn, Maulana Sindhi got the students, who had come to Yaghistan from Lahore released. The Maulana also persuaded them to remain in Yaghistan and work with him. Fortunately they were also lodged in the same house and so Maulana Sindhi got enough opportunity to win their support for his programme and strategy.\(^2\) Meanwhile some more people arrived from Deoband. They were Maulvi Mansoor Ansari, a member of Jamiat-ul-Ansar and Maulana Saifur Rehman\(^3\). Maulana Sindhi formed an organisation with their help. Later the followers of Haji Turang Zai, who had a great regard for the Sheikh-ul-Hind, also joined him.

Junood Allah was, in fact, a military organisation and included the frontier tribesmen. Its purpose was to form a paramilitia organisation of the Muslims all over the world and fight British imperialism. The scheme was conceived by Maulana Mahmood Hasan who had planned to liberate India with the help of Turkish forces.\(^4\)

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1. Ibid. loc. cit.
On August 15, 1917 a letter addressed to the Caliph Sultan Mohammad Rashid of Turkey, was sent on behalf of this organisation. It declared its formation under the patronage and guidance of Maulana Mahmood Hasan and pledged to fight injustice and extinguish the fire of hell let loose by the treacherous and tyrannical British rule in India.¹

Describing the activities of the organisation the letter stated that the vast area between the Indo-Afghan border, a free zone till then and inhabited by the brave Afghan tribes was under its total influence having centres at many places. It was also stated that the organisation fully supported the cause of Khilafat and many of its members who had arrived recently from India were active in rousing the tribes against the British imperialism. But unfortunately they had not achieved any notable success so far.²

Under the circumstances it was felt that the organisation did not find itself strong enough to fight the powerful British Government effectively. It, therefore, requested the Caliph to send its Officers and trained soldiers along with suitable supply to continue the war. It also assured the Caliph that a good number of volunteers were ready to offer their services and even sacrifice

¹. Ibid. pp. 280-281.
². Ibid. p. 281.
their lives in the name of Allah. The letter was signed by Haji Sahib Turang Zai, Mullah Sahib Babra, Maulvi Fazle Kabui and Maulvi Abdul Aziz, all members of the organisation.¹

It was in response to this letter and the efforts of Maulana Mahmood Hasan that the famous 'Ghalibnama' had been issued by Ghalib Pasha, Governor of Fezzan at that time.

The Sedition Committee Report 1918 refers to the organisation in the following words:

"This army was to draw recruits from India and to bring about an alliance among Islamic rulers... Its headquarters was to be at Medina and Mahmood Hasan was himself to be general-in-chief. Secondary headquarters under local generals were to be established at Constantinople, Tehran and Kabul. The general at Kabul would be Obaidullah himself. The table contains the names of three patrons, 12 field marshals and many other high military officers. Of the Lahore students one was to be major-general, one a colonel, and six lieutenant colonels".²

The following important names with their designations have been mentioned in the list available with the confidential C.I.D. records.³

A - Patrons:

1. The Caliph
2. Sultan Ahmad Shah Qachar of Iran
3. Amir Habibullah Khan of Afghanistan

¹ Ibid. pp. 281-282.
B - Field Marshals:

1. Anwar Pasha
2. Heir apparent to the Turkish Sultan
3. Prime Minister of Turkey
4. Abbas Halmi Pasha
5. Sharif Husain of Mecca
6. Sardar Nasarullah Khan, Premier Afghanistan
7. Prince Inayatullah Khan of Afghanistan
8. The Nizam of Hyderabad
9. The Nawab of Bhopal
10. The Nawab of Rampur
11. The Nawab of Bhawalpur
12. Maulana Naimatullah - Rais-ul-Mujahedin

C - Generals:

1. Maulana Mahmood Hasan
2. Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi - General at Kabul. He would also officiate in place of Maulana Mahmood Hasan.

D - Lieutenant Generals:

1. Maulana Mohiuddin Khan
2. Maulana Abdur Rahim
3. Maulana Ghulam Mohammad
4. Maulana Taj Mohammad
5. Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani
6. Haji Turang Zai
7. Dr. M.A. Ansari
8. Hakim Abdul Kazzaq
9. Hulla Sahib Zebra

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1. The letter by Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi was written in July, 1916 while the revolt of Sharif Husain of Mecca occurred in June, 1916. Most probably the Maulana did not know about it or else his name would not have been included in the list of field-marshals.
12. Maulvi Ibrahim Sahib Kalvi
13. Maulvi Mohammad Mian
14. M. Said Ahmad Banethwi
15. Sheikh Abdul Aziz Shadesh
17. Maulvi Abdul Aziz Rahimabadi
18. Maulvi Abdul Rahim Azimabadi
19. Maulvi Abdullah Ghazipuri
20. Nawab Zamiruddin Ahmad
21. Mian Abdul Bari
22. Maulana Abul Aalam Azad
23. Maulana Mohammad Ali
24. Maulana Shaukat Ali
25. Zafar Ali Sahib
26. Hasrat Nohani Sahib
27. Maulvi Abdul Qadir Qasmi
28. Maulvi Barakatullah Bhopali
29. Pir Asadullah Shah Sindhi

E - Major-Generals:

1. Maulvi Saifur Rehman Sahib
2. Maulvi Mohammad HasanMoradabadi
3. Maulvi Abdullah Ansari
4. M. Sirajuddin Bhawalpuri
5. Maulvi Bashir
6. Sheikh Ibrahim Sindhi
7. Maulvi Mohammad Ali Qasur
8. Seyyed Sulaiman Nadvi
9. Imadi Ghulam Husain Sahib
10. Abdul Qadir Azad Subhani
11. Kazim Bey
12. Khushi Mohammad
13. Maulvi Sanaullah
14. Maulvi Abdul Bari
F - Colonels:

1. Sheikh Abdul Qadir
2. Shujaullah
3. Maulvi Abdul Aziz (Yaghistan)
4. Maulvi Fazle Rabbi
5. Maulvi Abdul Huq Lahori
6. Mian Fazal Ullah
7. Sadruddin
8. Maulvi Abdullah Sindhi
9. Maulvi Abu Mohammad Ahmad Lahori
10. Maulvi Ahmad Ali
11. Sheikh Abdur Rahim Sindhi
12. Maulvi Mohammad Sadiq Sindhi
13. Maulvi Wali Mohammad
14. Maulvi Aziz Gul
15. Khwaja Abdul Hai
16. Kazi Ziauddin, M.A.
17. Maulvi Ibrahim Sialkoti
18. Abdul Rashid, B.A.
19. Maulvi Zahoor Mohammad
20. Maulvi Mohammad Moeen
21. Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf Gangohi
22. Maulvi Rashid Ahmad Ansari
23. Maulvi Sayyed Abdus Salam Farooqi
24. Haji Ahmad Jan Saharanpuri

G - Lieutenant-Colonels:

1. Fazal Mohammad
2. Mohammad Hasan, B.A.
3. Sheikh Abdullah, B.A.
4. Zafar Hasan, B.A.
5. Allah Nawaz Khan, B.A.
6. Rahmat Ali, B.A.
7. Abdul Hamid, B.A.
8. Haji Shah Bux Sindhi
9. Maulvi Abdur Qadir, Dinpuri
10. Maulvi Ghulam Nabi
11. Mohammad Ali Sindhi
12. Habibullah

H.- Majors:

1. Shahnawaz
2. Abdur Rahman
3. Abdul Huq

I- Captains:

1. Mohammad Salim
2. Karim Bux

J.- Lieutenant:

1. Nadir Shah

A study of the above names reveal that it included all prominent Muslims in India and abroad who were fighting against British imperialism.

Ghalibname

Maulana Mahmood Hasan and Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi had been working together for a pan-Islamic Union before the war and when the war broke out, the former left for Mecca and the latter for Kabul. They drew up an elaborate programme for combining all the forces of Islam - the Turks and the Arabs under the Caliph - and to join the
Afghans, the frontier tribes and the Muslim masses as well as Hindus in India in a combined effort to oust the British from India. They had built up their hopes upon the pan-Islamic tendencies visible amongst the Indian Muslims after the declaration of war by Turkey.

Soon after his arrival at Mecca, the Sheikh-ul-Hind left for Madina where he was received warmly by Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani and his other disciples. He stayed there for about six months. It was here that he got an opportunity to meet the Turkish minister of war Ghazi Anwar Pasha, the Turkish naval chief, Jamal Pasha, and many other Turkish generals. He then returned to Mecca and met Ghalib Pasha, the Turkish governor of Hejaz and discussed with him at length the Indian problem and his future programme.1

Ghalib Pasha appreciated the programme of Sheikh-ul-Hind and promised to help him in his endeavours to attack India through the 'Khyber Pass'. The Sheikh-ul-Hind was also successful in obtaining three letters from him.

The first letter was addressed to the Indian Muslims asking them to be ready for 'jehad' against the British. This very letter came to be known as 'Ghalibnama' because of the signature and seal of Ghalib Pasha, the Turkish Governor of Hejaz on it.2

1. Ibid. pp. 78-79.
The second letter was addressed to Basri Pasha, the Governor of Medina which described Maulan Mahmood Hasan as a reliable person and requested him to arrange for his journey to Constantinople.¹

The third letter was addressed to Ghazi Anwar Pasha recommending that the requirements of Maulana Mahmood Hasan be immediately arranged and supplied with.² After having been assured of Turkish support Sheikh-ul-Hind wanted to reach the Indian border to revive the 'Sunnah' of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid; but the war was in full swing and all land routes were unsafe because of the presence of the British and Russian armies in Iran and sea voyage was also fraught with danger. In the meantime in December 1916 the Arabs under Sharif Husain revolted against the Turks and, through him the British succeeded in arresting Sheikh-ul-Hind and a few of his co-workers at Mecca from where they were sent to Malta for internment.³

A translation of the prominent passages of Ghalib-nama runs as follows:

"The Muslims of Asia, Africa and Europe, equipped with all sorts of weapons, have started a 'jehad' in the path of God. Thanks to Him Who is Omnipotent and Eternal, the Turkish armies and 'mujahidin' have succeeded in subduing the enemies of Islam. Therefore, O Muslims, attack the tyrannical Christian regime which has kept you enslaved for years.

1. Mohammad Mian, op. cit., p. 75.
2. Ibid, loc. cit.
"Devote all your efforts with determination to kill the enemy, expressing your hatred and enmity towards him.

"You should know that Maulvi Mahmood Effendi, formerly a teacher at Deoband (India), came here and consulted with us. We have supported his programme and issued necessary instructions. Have full confidence in him when he comes to you and help him with men and money and whatever he asks for".¹

The letter was in Arabic, Persian and Turkish language. The Sheikh-ul-Hind handed over the letter to Maulana Hadi Hasan to be carried to India. He successfully brought the letter to India where it was given a wide publicity.²

The Silk Letter Conspiracy

The Nwatt Committee Report, 1918 has referred to the Silk-letter Conspiracy in the following words:

In 1916, the plot known to the government as 'Silk-letter Case' was discovered. This was a project hatched in India with the object of destroying the British rule by means of an attack on the North-West Frontier, supplemented by the Mohammadan rising in this country. For the purpose of instigating and executing this plan a certain Maulvi Obaidullah crossed the North-West Frontier early in August 1915 with three companions, Abdullah, Fateh Mohammad and Mohammad Ali...

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2. The Sedition Committee Report (1918) states that Maulana Mahmood Hasan had sent the letters through Maulana Mahmood Mian, but the record now available with the India Office, London, proves that it was Maulana Hadi Hasan and not Maulana Mohammad Mian who brought the letter to India. Maulana Mohammad Mian carried the letters from India to Kabul. (Mohammad Mian, ed., Tehrik Sheikh-ul-Hind, p. 174).
The Provisional Government also proposed to form an alliance with the Turkish Government and in order to accomplish this object, Obaidullah addressed a letter to his old friend Maulana Mahmood Hasan. This together with another letter dated the 8th. Ramadhán (9th July, 1916) written by Mohammad Mian Ansari, he forwarded under a covering note, addressed to Sheikh Abdur Rahim of Hyderabad Sindh, a person who has since been absconded. Sheikh Abdur Rahim was requested in the note to send all the enclosures by the hand of some reliable hadji (Pilgrim) to Mahmood Hasan at Mecca, or even to convey them himself if no trustworthy messengers were obtainable. We have ourselves seen the letters to Mahmood Hasan which come into British hands. They are neatly and clearly written on yellow silk. Mohammad Mian's letter mentioned the previous arrival of Turkish and German missions, the return of the Germans, the staying on of the Turks but without work, the run-away students, the circulation of Ghalibnama, the Provisional Government and the projected formation of an 'Army of God'.

The Sedition Committee Report is erroneous and unauthentic. A correct version of the case has been given in the book Tehrik Sheikh-ul-Hind' edited by Maulana Mohammad Mian, a veteran leader of Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind. A brief account of the same is given below:

While still in Afghanistan Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi had sent these letters known as Silk letters to Sheikh Abdur Rahim Sindhi in India through one Sheikh Abdul Haq, instructing him to take them to Maulana Mahmood Hasan at Madina or send them through some very reliable 'Haji'. He arrived in India and it is not known as to under what circumstances Abdul Haq showed the letters to Rab Nawaz Khan,

a police officer in Multan whom he had served as private servant previously, instead of handing it over to Sheikh Abdur Rahim who was to take them to Maulana Mahmood Hasan.

According to the C.I.D. report Rab Nawaz Khan had got possession of the letters on August 4, 1916 but the same could not be put up before the Commissioner of Multan before August 14, 1916 because of the latter's absence.¹ Rab Nawaz Khan told the Commissioner that Abdul naq had been specially sent from Kabul with the instructions to deliver the letters to Abdur Rahim of Hyderabad Sindh and return to Kabul after obtaining the receipt of these letters. At first the Commissioner did not give any importance to them and considered it a joke but later on he handed it over to the C.I.D. branch of Punjab which got it translated by 30th August, 1916 and a thorough inquiry began.²

The Letters:

As stated earlier the letters were three in numbers and were neatly written over three pieces of silk cloth. The first letter was addressed to Sheikh Abdur Rahim of Hyderabad Sindh and was 6" x 5". The second letter was addressed to Maulana Mahmood Hasan and was 10" x 8". The

1. Ibid. p. 126.
2. Ibid. loc. cit.
third letter was 15" x 10" and appeared to be in continuation with the first letter. The language of the letters was not very clear but it was very refined and polished. The ambiguity of the language appeared to be intentional. The first and the third letter were signed by Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi himself. The second letter bore no signatures. The inquiry, however, revealed that it was written by Maulana Mohammad Kian alias Maulvi Mansoor.

**Purpose:**

The letters were written by Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi with the purpose of acquainting Maulana Mahmood Hasan, who happened to be in Saudi Arabia at that time, of the activities and achievements of himself and his associates in Afghanistan. They referred to the formation of the Provisional Government and the proposed Muslim Salvation Army (Junood Allah). The proposed army had all prominent and influential Muslims of the world in its rank and file.

A close study of the events show that the plan was not on paper alone but many of the personalities included in the list had already been contacted and efforts were being made to mobilise all Muslims and anti-British forces to start a joint venture to do away with British imperialistic designs all over the world.¹

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1. Ibid. p. 127.
2. Ibid. pp. 172-173.
Contents of the Silk Letters:

**First Letter:** The letter is dated July 10, 1916 and is addressed to Sheikh Abdur Rahim of Hyderabad Sindh.\(^1\)

It is a sort of covering letter. It suggests that Maulana Khamood Hasan should not take the trouble to come over to Kabul.\(^2\) Perhaps Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi had got some clue of Maulana's efforts to reach Afghanistan with the help of the Turkish Government. Further Sheikh Abdur Rahim was instructed to join him at Kabul. It added that in case Sheikh Abdur Rahim failed to find any reliable messenger or arrange for his own journey to Medina, he should seek the help of Maulvi Hamdullah of Panipat in this regard. In the end Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi wrote that all informations received from the haulana should be communicated to him, if not in person then through one Maulvi Ahmad of Lahore.\(^3\)

**Second Letter:** The second letter is dated 9th. July 1916.\(^4\) It has been addressed to Maulana Khamood Hasan but did not bear any signature at the end. In the first part of the letter, the author has described the position of the Madarsa at Leoband after his arrival from Jeddah.

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1. Ibid. p. 265.
2. Ibid. loc. cit.
3. Ibid. loc. cit.
4. Ibid. p. 269.
He then proceeds on to describe the activities of the 'Mujahedins' in Yaghistan region, the favourable effect of the Ghalibnama and the negotiations going on with the Government of Kabul to seek its help against the British. It also disclosed the arrival of the Indo-German and the Turkish missions in Kabul. The author is disgusted that foreign missions did not bring definite proposals with them.

Moreover, it informed that the Afghan Government was critical of the role of Turkey. It expected that Turkey should also look after the requirements of Iran and Afghanistan.¹ The author felt that Afghanistan would be ready to wage war against the British India if it was supplied with sufficient military and monetary aid.² It also mentioned the arrival of Raja Mahendra Pratap and Maulvi Barkatullah with the German mission. The author repeatedly assured Maulana Mahmood Hasan that they had been absolutely successful in preparing grounds against the British in the frontier region and that the Afghan Government was also ready to declare war against the British provided they received enough aid.³

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1. Ibid. p. 270.
2. Ibid. loc. cit.
3. Ibid. p. 271.
Third Letter: In the third letter Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi has very elaborately described the formation of Junood Allah (the army of God), an army whose main task would be to liberate India from the British rule. The letter has no date on it. The genius of the scheme did not lie in making such a comprehensive plan, rather it was the involvement of all anti-British forces in the Indian freedom struggle which was indeed praise-worthy and achievement in itself.

In the latter part of the letter Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi described the formation of the Provisional Government of India in exile at Kabul and its activities in brief.

The Maulana specifically mentioned his fine relations with the Indo-German mission stationed at Kabul and hoped that it would prove fruitful for the Indian cause.

The scheme, in brief, was that Maulana Mahmood Hasan was to get in touch with the Turkish Government through the Turkish Governor in Hejaz for an alliance with the Islamic countries. On the other hand members of the Provisional Government were to intrigue to the same end with the anti-British party in Afghanistan and to keep the frontier tribes in a state of constant hostility against the British. Meanwhile revolutionaries in India were to

1. Ibid. pp. 276-77.
collect money to finance the activities in Kabul, India and the Hejaz.\(^1\)

The scheme was an ambitious one and by no means impossible of execution in the circumstances then existing. The revolutionaries in Afghanistan especially the pan-Islamic party were sure of its success, but unfortunately Abdul Haq who carried these letters, instead of taking them to person concerned, revealed their contents to Khan Bahadur Rab Nawaz Khan. Thereupon the authorities in India were apprised of the whole conspiracy.

The discovery resulted in the arrest of many persons in the Punjab, Sind, Delhi and Peshawar. In all 59 persons were convicted in what came to be known as the Silk-letters Conspiracy Case.\(^2\) The conspiracy did not succeed because of the attitude of neutrality adopted by the Amir. Another factor which proved a stumbling block in the fulfilment of the project was the revolt of Sharif Husain of Mecca who was prevailed upon the British to revolt against the Ottoman empire and join the British forces to drive the Turks out of Mesopotamia.\(^3\) Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab wrote:

"The revolt divided Islam and knocked the bottom out of the project for combined Muslim action against British India".\(^4\)

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Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi In Moscow

In 1922 Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi proceeded to Moscow and stayed there for about seven months. He had been accepted there as the spokesman of the Congress and so he was welcomed by the Soviet Government. During his stay there he had the opportunity to study the socialist system of Soviet Russia with the help of some of his friends. They also offered him all facilities to study the Soviet Revolution. He thoroughly studied the impact of such a revolution which had no place for religion, in the Islamic Society particularly in the context of the Shah Waliullah Movement.

His efforts did not go in vain and he succeeded in assimilating the substance of the Socialist Movement. Curiously enough, the communist revolution in USSR was seen by the Maulana as close to Islam. The Maulana expressed his gratitude to the Indian National Congress, his young Indian friends in Moscow both Hindu and Muslims, Socialists and nationalists who provided him the opportunity and the privilege to watch that great experiment at close quarters. The Maulana published a political programme of his party when he reached Ankara from Russia which had been greatly influenced by the Soviet Socialist Philosophy.

2. Ibid. loc. cit.
3. Ibid. loc. cit.
4. His political programme has been dealt with in Chapter V.
The Maulana in Turkey

From Moscow he went to Constantinople and Ankara where he spent the next three years i.e. 1923 to 1926.\(^1\) This was a transitional period in the history of Turkey under the strong leadership of Ataturk Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Maulana Sindhi was a witness to three revolutions - one in Kabul, another in Russia and the third in Turkey. The revolution that he witnessed in Turkey was the most exciting and distinguished for a man like Maulana Sindhi who had deep rooted religious feelings.

His journey to 'Ankara' had been arranged by the Turkish Ambassador to Moscow and the Ministry of External Affairs of Soviet Union. In this way the English agent did not know anything about it. It is incorrect as has been pointed out by the Maulana himself that when he reached Ankara, Turkey had been in control of the British and the French.\(^2\)

In 1926 Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi left Constantinople for Hejaz via Italy and Switzerland. Hejaz had by now passed under the rule of Ibn-e-Saud. He spent the next twelve years in Arabia and devoted his time to teaching and studying.\(^3\) There also he got himself introduced as a

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2. Ibid. p. 71.
member of the Indian National Congress but spent all his time away from any political controversy. There he became acquainted with the new currents of thought which were agitating the then Arab World. It is said that it was during these years that he developed his own philosophy of life and religion.

This brings to an end his active political life outside India. Though he gathered deep knowledge of international happenings both in Russia and Turkey and later in Saudi Arabia but his practical involvement in the international politics was restricted to his activities in Afghanistan.