

# GOLD AND GUNS ON THE PATHAN FRONTIER

BY ABDUL QAIYUM

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REPRODUCED BY  
SANI H. PANHWAR

**GOLD AND GUNS ON  
THE PATHAN  
FRONTIER**

**BY ABDUL QAIYUM**

**B.SC. (ECON.) LONDON  
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**REPRODUCED BY**

**SANI H.PANHWAR (2018)**



# DEDICATION

TO  
DOCTOR KHAN SAHIB  
FOR HIS UNCEASING FIGHT AGAINST  
CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC LIFE AND IN  
PUBLIC SERVICES THIS BOOK IS  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

## PREFACE

For some time past some friends have repeatedly asked me to write a short book about the N.W.F.P. and the Tribal Belt. Owing to my manifold activities—political, legislative and legal, I have not been able to write as early as I wished to.

In this rather short book, I have tried to give the broad outlines of certain aspects of the Frontier problem. There is a short history of the Province; something about its people and some leading personalities; the rise of the Khudai Khidmatgars, who represent the freedom movement; the problem of the Tribal areas, the economic background; and the shape of things to come.

To my mind, the problem of the Pathan North-West is mainly economic. Force and bribery have failed to bring us any nearer to a solution. What is needed is an entirely different approach to the subject.

The Pathans are a people who wish only to be allowed to live in their own way. They have been misunderstood. Not only that, but for a very long time their case has been deliberately misrepresented by interested parties. They have no desire to dominate others. It is equally clear that they will never submit to dictation or discrimination of any kind from any quarter.

If this little book encourages people in India and abroad to understand the Pathan problem by helping them to view it in the right perspective, I shall feel that my labors have not been in vain.

ABDUL QAIYUM

New Delhi  
31st March 1945

## CHAPTER I

### PHYSICAL OUTLINES OF THE PATHAN HOMELANDS

The Frontier Province, and the Tribal Belt between it and the Durand Line have been something of a mystery to people in India till the thirties of the present century. Until then all this area was a sealed book. The Indian people could only know what the Political Department of the Government of India wanted them to know. Stories of murders here and there, or tales of Frontier expeditions now and again, attracted some attention. But beyond this, very little was known. It was round about 1930 that the stirrings of a new life became evident in the N.W.F.P., and the shroud of mystery was rent asunder. With the advent of Reforms in 1932, the peoples' point of view saw the light of day for the first time. It was then that the Indian people realized, that there was another side to this picture, and that all was not well with the doings of the political officers in the north-west.

It would not be proper to study the problems of this area against the narrow background of the province comprising six settled districts – Peshawar, Mardan, Hazara, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan. It would be equally undesirable to confine one's attention to parts of the great Tribal Belt now covered by the Agencies of Malakand (which includes the three States of Chitral, Dir and Swat), the Khyber, Kurram, North and South Waziristan, and others—administered by the Deputy Commissioners of the settled districts. If we look back at history we find that this area was but a part of the bigger area covered by what is called Hindustan and Afghanistan.

The Indian frontiers extended to the Hindu Kush and beyond in the hoary past when Ashoka ruled; and also when the great Moghul dynasty ruled over a vast empire from Delhi—the Imperial Capital.

The North-Western Frontier extends from the Sulaiman Mountains and the Gomal Pass in the south, to Chitral and the Pamirs in the north. The British Tribal Belt covers the area between the administrative boundary, that is, the foothills and the Durand Line as far as Kashmir, after which Kashmir State is the eastern boundary.

The Tribal Belt covers an area of 24,986 sq. miles, with an estimated population of 2,377,599. The area of the settled districts is 14,263 sq. miles, and the population 3,038,067. These figures are from the latest census report of 1941, According to it the total population of the Province and the Tribal Belt is 5,415,666. The figures for the Tribal

area are neither very accurate nor exhaustive. Some estimates place the population of the Tribal Belt alone at about three and a half million.

The N.W.F.P. and its Agencies form an irregular strip of country lying north-east by south-west between the parallels of 31° 4' and 36° 57' North latitude, and 69° 16' and 74° 7' East longitude; its extreme length is 408 miles and extreme breadth 279 miles. On the north it is shut off from the Pamirs by the Hindu Kush Mountains. On the south it is bounded by Baluchistan and the Dera Ghazi Khan district, on the east by Kashmir State and the Punjab, and on the west by Afghanistan. The cultivable area of the Province is 67.5 percent, but the net cultivated area is only 39.2 percent.

The bulk of this land is covered by mountains with narrow valleys in between. The plains extend between the Indus and the foothills on the west, and cover the Peshawar, Mardan, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan districts, and the cis-Indus plain of Haripur. Of these the Peshawar, Mardan, Haripur, and Bannu plains are extremely fertile. The valleys beyond the foothills are watered by springs, or else by hill streams. Some of these valleys, like the Kurram and the Swat, are extremely beautiful and fertile—with green paddy fields on either side of the Swat and Kurram rivers which run through them. The Peshawar and Mardan plains are also very fertile. A well-established irrigation system, comprising canals and water-courses, helps to irrigate this fertile plain. Wheat and sugarcane are the two principal crops and very good rice is also grown. But the fame of this plain rests on the excellent fruits that are grown in abundance—wonderful peaches and plums, luscious grapes of different kinds; pears and oranges.

In fact it would not be wrong to say that the whole area is one vast orchard which can very largely satisfy the demand of the Indian home market. The Government Experimental Farm at Tarnab, about nine miles from Peshawar, has done wonders in developing this fruit industry by giving expert advice, by supplying new varieties of fruit trees, and by spreading the knowledge of fruit culture in the valley. The Haripur plain is well-known for its excellent apricots, and in the mountain uplands of Hazata, Swat, Tirah and the Kurram, apples, walnuts and pears of different kinds abound.

The climate varies from season to season and between the hills and plains. In the plains it is very hot in the summer, pleasant in the spring and autumn, and very cold in the winter. In the upland regions the summers are delightfully cool and the winters are very very cold, with snowfalls in December and January. There are some delightful hill stations like Abbotabad, Nathia Gali and Para Chinar.

Such, in brief outline, is the land of the Pathans, who are the dominant race in the Province and the ruling race in the Tribal Belt. As stated at the outset, it would be an entirely wrong approach, to treat this area as if it stood detached from Hindustan and Afghanistan with which it has been intimately connected since the dawn of history. The

Indus on the east forms the ethnographical boundary of the Pathans or the Afghans. But this virile and manly race is not confined to the area with which this book deals. It occupies all that part of Afghanistan which stretches up to the great Hindu Kush range, and also the part of Baluchistan between Quetta and the Gomal known as the Zhob Agency.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FRONTIER CARAVAN THROUGH THE AGES

The land of the Pathans has played a very important part throughout the long course of history. Through it lead the Passes the Khyber, the Gomal, the Tochi, to mention the principal ones only – through which the Aryan hordes poured into India, driving the Dravidians and the aboriginal tribes before them.

Through the self-same passes have passed armies of Tartars, Mongols, Turks, Iranians and Afghans, either to colonize or to found empires at Delhi and beyond. It would be true to say that before the advent of the European races generally, and the British in particular, made India vulnerable from the sea, and more recently when our eastern frontier was threatened by Japan, all the invasions of India had been from the north-west. From the ninth century onwards, each of these invaders brought with them a new religion, an entirely new social code, a different type of art and architecture – in fact an entirely new conception of life. They brought about tremendous changes in our social and political system, our outlook on life, and our very conceptions of values. The newcomers fighting their way through the: passes and the valleys of the north-west, were always, in the first instance, bound for the Indus, and the 'Land of the Five Rivers' which we now call the Punjab. From there they advanced to the. Jamuna and the Ganges as far east as Bengal and Assam. Other waves swept past Delhi into Central India, and past the Vindhya into the uplands of the south, that is the Deccan, and founded kingdoms which very often lasted for centuries. They penetrated even to the far distant south. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam have in turn claimed spiritual allegiance from these fighting men of the north. The remains of numerous Buddhist stupas and monasteries scattered all over this area bear testimony to the spiritual hold which the religion of the great Gautama once enjoyed over the entire region.

In the fifth century B.C., Darius the Persian Monarch invaded and conquered the country round Kabul and that bordering on the Indus. Two centuries later the same hills and valleys witnessed the hosts of Alexander treading their way through to the Jhelum and beyond. Alexander came through Herat and overran the valleys and plains on the Afghan side of the Oxus. He marched on Kabul. The Khyber was then, as it is even now, held by that warlike clan of 'Aparoetae' as the Greeks called them, and whom we now call the Afridis. Avoiding the Khyber Pass, Alexander crossed the Kabul river near Jalalabad and by way of the Konar Valley entered the Yusufzai Plain, that is, Swat State and the Malakand Agency. He then headed for the river Indus, which he crossed near Amb. The little chieftains round about the Indus joined him and he advanced on the Jhelum, where he met and defeated the armies of the brave Raja Porus. He then continued his march to the Sutlej or the Hyphasis, but his men were becoming

weariness of this long, never-ending march. There he cried halt and turned back with his hosts to Babylon, where he arrived in 325 B.C.

The next landmark is the advent of the great Ashoka. He carried the confines of his kingdom to the river Krishna in the south, and the borders of Bactria in the north, about 267 B.C. This was the time when Buddhism was in the ascendant and held sway, spiritual as well as temporal over the Frontier and Afghanistan. Numerous ruins of Buddhist monasteries stupas and even settlements abound from the Indus right up to the Hindu Kush. The wanderings of Chinese pilgrims shed a good deal of light on the happenings in the Indus region and beyond. They came to pay their homage at Buddhist shrines, particularly at the shrine containing the ashes of the Buddha in the Kanishka Stupa outside Peshawar. The first to arrive was Fa-Hian, in the fifth century. The better-known Hivan Tsang followed him a couple of centuries later. We are told that a number of Graeco-Bactrian states flourished on both sides of the Indus at this time. They have left us numerous coins which have been found in large numbers in the recent archaeological discoveries. Even now if you go from Malakand up the Swat Valley, you will notice a number of Buddhist remains. Some of the stone carvings are of exquisite beauty. These Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms lingered on for a century or two.

The Frontier tract, it seems, was either Hindu or Buddhist down to the seventh century A.D. Tartars and Aryans, Hindus and Buddhists were during this long period struggling, with varying fortunes, for supremacy over Afghanistan and the Frontier, and each in turn held sway over this region.

The new faith of Islam had taken birth in Arabia, and in an incredibly short time the Holy Prophet had transformed an ignorant race of nomads steeped through and through in superstition, and constantly at war with one another, into a race of scientists, thinkers, writers and world-conquerors. Soon the Muslim hosts were on the march, fired with a wonderful zeal to carry the message of Islam to the four corners of the world—the message of the unity of God and the absolute equality of man. The Eastern Roman Empire and the Empire of Iran collapsed before it like a house of cards. The Muslim armies were in Kabul by A.D. 644 and by 711 Mohammad Bin-i-Qasim had invaded the province of Sindh. Soon after, Afghanistan and the Frontier were converted to Islam, and there followed a series of invasions of Hindustan which have completely altered and put an altogether new face on the history of India. By A.D. 977 Subaktagin, the Turkish slave king of Balkh and Ghazni, initiated a series of invasions of India. The Frontier tribes embraced Islam and eagerly joined the invading armies. Thereafter followed Mahmud of Ghazni and a succession of invading War Lords from the north who overran the whole of India, and founded dynasties that ruled India for centuries. It will be observed that throughout this period the Frontier and Afghanistan and almost the whole of Northern India formed one Empire. In 1526 Babar crossed the Indus and marching on Delhi, defeated the armies of Ibrahim Lodi and founded the Moghul

Dynasty which ruled India down to 1857 when the British brought the Moghul suzerainty to an end, and themselves became masters of India.

While the Moghul Empire was strong, right up to the death of Emperor Aurangzeb, the North-West Frontier, Afghanistan and India formed one single Empire. After the death of Aurangzeb, all the factors which make for disintegration became evident in Delhi. When the rot set in at Imperial Delhi, and the central authority ceased to be strong enough to enforce its orders in the outlying parts, revolts began all over the country. The Moghul hold over Afghanistan and the Frontier became weaker and weaker, till the Northern Provinces slipped out of their hands, or were wrested by powerful War Lords who carved out Empires for themselves in the north-west.

About this time a shepherd boy of Turkish origin named Nadir seized the Persian throne and became strong and powerful Nadir Shah soon overran Afghanistan and then marched on Delhi. His short stay at Delhi resulted in a frightful massacre, which is fresh in people's memories even today. Before returning to Persia, he forced the helpless Moghul Emperor Mohammad Shah to cede vast territories in the north-west to his kingdom. Afghanistan, which included Sindh, Multan, the Frontier Province and the Punjab districts near the Indus, was torn off from India and henceforth formed part of Nadir Shah's Persian Empire. After Nadir Shah's murder in 1747, the empire which his strong hand had welded together fell to pieces.

One of his nobles, Ahmed Khan Abdali, an Afghan, soon rose to prominence and found a wonderful opportunity of establishing an Afghan Empire. Such an Empire had never yet existed separately from India. He was a Sadozai and the ruling Afghan clan came to be known by the name and style of Durrani. The Frontier Province now formed part of the Afghan Empire, which included Afghanistan, Sindh, Multan and Kashmir. About this time the Maratha hordes were sweeping north from their uplands in the Deccan. It seemed as though India would fall into the hands of the Maratha who were making a bid for the Imperial throne of the Moghuls in Delhi. Ahmed Shah moved south to stop this Maratha bid for power. The great battle of Panipat was fought in 1761, and the Maratha armies, though they fought valiantly, were decimated by the more powerful armies of the Afghans. Once more north and south had met in mortal combat and victory had crowned the former. The Durrani ruled the Frontier Province till the rise of the Sikhs in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, by which time the Afghan Government in Kabul had become very weak and degenerate. Ranjit Singh invaded the Frontier Province—the effete and weak descendants of Ahmed Shah Abdali were no match for the Sikhs, and the country was being ruled rather by Afghan Sardars and local Khans than by them. Unlike their earlier history of the seventeenth century when the tribes of the Frontier plains had been able to unite against the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb, and after a long struggle had wrested terms from the Moghuls which left them almost as independent as their kinsmen in the hills further west, the tribes were now disunited and constantly at war with one another. This helped the Sikhs to gain a

footing in the Province—they were able to beat one by one the tribes in the plains who were not in a position to make anything like a united stand against their well-disciplined armies.

The Sikh invasion began in 1818. Dera Ismail Khan was overrun in that year, and five years later, the Marwat plains shared a similar fate. In 1834, two years after the defeat of the Pathan tribes near Nowshera by the Sikhs, General Hari Singh seized Peshawar Fort, and the rule of Afghan Sardars came to an end. In 1836 the Dera Nawabs were divested of their authority, and a Sikh 'Kardar' was appointed to govern the district. The Bannu Fort was built, and after terrific fighting the Bannochis were conquered by Herbert Edwards for the Lahore Durbar, and Maharajah Ranjit Singh became the Suzerain of the Frontier Province. It must be remembered, however, that even though Sikh garrisons were stationed in the plains between the Indus and the Tribal foothills on the west, the Sikh Government had to send out troops every time they felt the necessity of replenishing their treasury by collecting taxes.

Ranjit's successors had neither vision nor character, and after Ranjit's death the Sikh State was torn asunder by intrigues and internal strife. There followed the first and second Sikh wars with the British in 1846 and 1849, and the Sikh power was annihilated. By the Proclamation of 29th March, 1849, the Frontier districts, along with the Punjab, were incorporated within the British Empire.

The British lost no time in consolidating their hold on the Frontier. They concluded a treaty of amity and peace with the Emir of Kabul. During the rising of 1857, Indian troops, which were then styled the Native Army, were suspected of being in sympathy with the rebellion. All Indian troops on the Frontier were disarmed. The British proceeded to enlist Pathans in their place, and it speaks volumes for the success of the British administrators on the Frontier that the great storm of 1857 was successfully weathered on the Frontier. The Pathans marched on Delhi, and fought heroically on the side of the British against their own countrymen. The subsequent attitude of the British towards the Frontier Province, however, was such that many who belong to the Province including the descendants of those who helped the British in 1857 feel inclined to doubt the wisdom of the course their ancestors adopted. In all schemes of reforms which were introduced in India, the Pathans were left out entirely. They were singled out for very harsh treatment. The ruthless manner in which the British authorities put down the popular movement in 1919 and 1930 is in strange contrast to the loyal and devoted manner in which the Pathans had flocked to the British cause in 1857. In fact it was the help which the Pathans and the Punjabis then gave that saved the British from utter defeat and extinction in India.

From 1849 to 1901 the N.W.F.P., consisting of the four trans-Indus and one cis-Indus districts, formed part of the Province of the Punjab. Having seized the province, British administrators turned their eyes towards the Tribal Belt, Afghanistan, and even beyond

the Oxus. Russia, it was feared, was steadily advancing towards the Afghan frontier on the Oxus, and had successfully absorbed the Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara. The British professed to have a holy horror of Czarist Russia, and were anxious to have a strong and independent Afghanistan as a buffer in between. But while professing so much concern and regard for Afghan independence, their action clearly showed that they were quite willing to help themselves to as much of Afghanistan as they could. In vain did Abdul Rahman, the Emir-El-Kebir or the Great Emir, plead with them to leave the Tribal Belt severely alone. Afghanistan was not strong enough to fight the rising might of Britain in India, or to prevent the absorption of these tribes in the British political system. In vain did Abdul Rehman write: 'If you cut them off from my dominion's they will never be of any use to you or me. You can hold them down in peace, but if at any time a foreign enemy appears on the borders of India, these tribes will be your worst enemies' The British would not listen. There were three wars with Afghanistan in 1839, 1878, and 1919. Each one of these—so British historians would have us believe—was provoked by Afghanistan. Less biased people naturally doubt if a weak Afghanistan could ever provoke a war against the might of Britain, and know, rather, that these wars were caused either by the British desire to have a puppet of their own on the throne of Kabul, or to tear off more and more limbs from the body of the Afghan State. In the first war of 1839 to 1841, the British wanted to drive out Emir Dost Mohammad Khan and to put their own puppet, Shah Shuja, on the throne of Kabul. They did succeed in this, but the fury of the Afghans was naturally roused. In 1841 the entire British force, while returning to India was set upon and annihilated. Only Surgeon Brydon was left to tell the tales of the massacre. The avenging campaign put back the former enemy, Dost Mohammad Khan (who had fled to India!) on the Afghan throne.

The second Afghan war began in 1878. The Emir had the effrontery—so the British thought—to receive a Russian mission at Kabul, and to refuse admission to a British one. The Khyber and Kurram Valleys were annexed by sheer force of arms. The Emir had no option but to agree to this forcible seizure of his territory. The Durand Mission was sent in 1894-5 to demarcate the boundary between Afghanistan and, that part of the Tribal Belt which the British now preferred to call their own. Much trouble and heart-burning followed. In 1897 there was a general rising of the tribes. The British were at war now with one tribe and now with another.

Fortunately for them, even though the ferment was general in the Tribal Belt, the tribes rose one by one and were disposed of and subdued in turn. 'British' Baluchistan came into existence; and the Zhob Valley became the Zhob Agency —both of them Afghan territory and peopled mainly by the Afghans, the latter by the Afghan tribes called Karkars and Mandokhel, and both seized by force. The great Cantonment of Quetta was established, ostensibly for the defence of India, but in fact as a veritable pistol aimed at both Afghanistan and Iran.

The professed desire of the British to have a strong and independent Afghanistan as their neighbor was utterly exploded during the course of the third Afghan war. What was it after all that the go ahead and much-maligned Emir Amanullah wanted? He wanted Afghanistan to shake off the shackles into which British diplomacy had forced her. Afghanistan was no better than an Indian State. While in theory it was independent, all her foreign relations were controlled and managed by the British. This was a state of things which was galling to the Afghans as much as to their young and ambitious King, Amanullah. The British are past masters in the art of staging 'incidents' to show to the world that they are the injured party, and that aggression had come from the other fellow. The British gave out that the Emir was stirring up insurrection among the tribes. How these tribes came under British rule is a well-known fact. It was the insatiable desire for more land that urged British political officers to devise and execute schemes for expansion towards Central Asia. The Tribes are Afghans. They and the people of Afghanistan have a common religion, a common race, and a common language; the two, in fact, constitute but one nation. The British have so managed things that all tribes on this side of the Durand Line are British, however much their creed, race, language and religion may be common with Afghanistan. The British were more than a match for Amanullah in diplomacy. They did not like him, because of the contacts he had been able to establish with the Tribes, who were sympathetically disposed towards him. The British strongly suspected Amanullah of being in sympathy with the Indian Nationalists. They felt that the Afghan war and the political upheaval in the Punjab and the N.W.F.P. in 1919 had something in common. During the third Afghan war, however, the Afghans fared much better than in the two previous ones. The independence of Afghanistan was recognized; the Afghans were free to establish direct diplomatic relations with the outside world. They soon proceeded to make full use of it. The hated subsidy which the British used to pay the Amir and which appeared to the Afghans a symbol of Afghan bondage was discontinued. The Afghans refused to accept it any more.

To revert again to the N.W.F.P. proper, it formed part of the Punjab till 9th November 1901, when it was constituted as a separate Province under a Chief Commissioner. This was because the British felt that the Province and its people needed special treatment. They did not

like the new ideas of freedom, reform, and responsible Government, which were becoming popular in the Punjab and beyond, to penetrate this region. It was decreed that this Province was to be a sealed book henceforth—a happy hunting ground for the officers of the Political Department and the Military. We do not know what was in the mind of those who laid down and directed the policy for the administration of this Province. If one were to attempt a guess, one would run the risk of being told that false and unworthy motives were being imputed to the British. The manner in which this policy was carried out, however, leaves no doubt whatever as to its nature. Special laws and regulations were enforced for this unfortunate Province. The Frontier Crimes

Regulation, under which people could be sentenced to transportation for life, without being brought before a court of law, was a mockery of justice. The accused person could not claim to have the benefit of legal advice or to be defended by counsel. Certain pro-British landlords or businessmen would be invited to act as a Jirga or Council of Elders, to try people even for serious offences like murder. These gentlemen were ignorant of the ordinary principles of law and jurisprudence, and could easily be corrupted. While in theory the Jirga was to give a finding on facts, which a Deputy Commissioner had to accept if unanimous, in practice, a Jirga was told what opinion or finding was expected of it. Woe to the member of a Jirga who dared flout the wishes of the Deputy Commissioner. His name would be instantly removed from the list of members and he would cease to sit on the Jirga. Sometimes very important civil cases were tried by Jirgas, in utter disregard of the principles of law or natural justice. While in theory the Jirgas were supposed to administer Afghan customary law, in practice all such Jirgas became engines of oppression. On top of it all, the convicted person had no right of appeal. The Chief Commissioner was supposed to revise such orders. In the absence of any record or cross-examination of witnesses, or even a proper judgment, and without a convicted person having the right to be heard through counsel, such power of revision was a mere eye-wash. Then again such iniquitous laws as the Murderous Outrages Act were promulgated. This act was in itself an outrage on all notions of civilized jurisprudence. Under this Act, a man named Habib Noor was summarily tried and hanged for attempting the murder of a British officer. The British Government began to use the Khans or the landed aristocracy as intermediaries for controlling the masses. In return for the services rendered, liberal grants of lands and jagirs were made to such Khans, and Government service became an exclusive preserve for their sons and relations. Such was the type of regime the province had to endure right up to 1932. No person from outside the province with nationalist sympathies was allowed to cross the Indus, or to set foot on the soil of the North-West Frontier. Such men were either turned back, or arrested and then deported. Election was unknown in the municipalities and district boards—where nominations were confined exclusively to the selfish and the unpatriotic among the well-to-do. When the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 were introduced in the rest of India, the Frontier Province was entirely left out and deliberately ignored. The provisions of the Frontier Crimes Regulation were often used against politically-minded persons or against those who advocated reforms for the Province. People were asked to furnish heavy securities to keep the peace under section 40 of the Frontier Crimes Regulation, and those who failed, were locked up for anything extending to three years. The above in outline gives a picture of the state of affairs in the Province till 1930.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PEOPLE

Before proceeding to deal with the economic and political condition of the present-day Frontier Province, it is desirable that something should be written about the people who live in the Province and the Tribal Belt. What is their race? What is their religion? What are the minorities living in their midst? What is their everyday life like? These are some of the questions which will be answered in this chapter.

The people of the Province proper are overwhelmingly Pathans. There is a minority of roughly five to seven percent of Hindus, Sikhs and Christians. In dress, in looks, in their habits and in their outlook on life, the minorities are very much like the Pathans with whom they live. In the Tribal area almost, all the people are Pathans, with a sprinkling of Hindus and Sikhs. The Pathan' and Afghans' are interchangeable terms. They call themselves 'Pakhtun' or Pashtun' in their own language. The Pathans, numbering probably about 15 million are spread out and occupy the part of Afghanistan to the south of the Hindu Kush, the entire Tribal Belt, the Frontier Province, and the part of Baluchistan between Quetta on the south, and Gomal on the north, including the Zhob Valley. They had common Government from 1737 right up to 1834, till the Sikhs tore off the part of the N.W.F.P. between the Indus and the Tribal foothills on the west. They speak a language which is called Pushtu. They are all Muslims, and perhaps no other people in the world of Islam are more attached to the faith as are the Pathans. They are proud and fired with an intense zeal for the Pathan nation, are intensely patriotic, and very democratic in outlook. It would be no exaggeration to say that they are gifted with remarkable courage, and are a people who literally laugh at dangers, however serious. They constitute the finest fighting race in the world. They are born warriors; their courage is beyond question; they are fine natural shots, brought up never to waste valuable ammunition. Gifted with a remarkably fine physique, they look magnificent in their national dress.

The caste system, which has eaten into the vitals of Hindu Society in other parts of India, simply does not exist among the Pathans. Every Pathan thinks he is as good as any other. No other part of India is better suited to the growth of the plant of democracy than the N.W.F.P. There is nothing which a Pathan resents more than being treated as inferior to others. As soon as the train crosses the Indus, you find that you are in an entirely different atmosphere. The language, the dress and the very look of the people differ from those of the Punjab. The Indus is the ethno-graphical boundary between the Pathan homelands and the rest of India. Beyond the Indus are scattered over a great stretch of country the different tribes of the Pathans.



The Yusaf Zais and Mohmands occupy the stretch of country between Lal-Pura, in Afghanistan, right up to the Indus Kohistan. They occupy the areas known as Bajaur, Dir, Swat, Buner, a large part of the Mardan district, and the western slopes of the Black Mountain. The Afridis occupy the Tirah and the Khyber Pass. The upper Kurram Valley and the Miranzai Valley, in Kohat, are the homeland of the great Bangash tribe. The Turis – a Shiah tribe are found in the Kurram. Fartherer south in Teri and also in the Nowshera tehsil of Peshawar district are the Khattaks The Marwats occupy the Lakki tehsil of the Bannu district. Then we have in Dera Ismail Khan, the Bhattanis and Sheranis round the Takht-e-Suleman. Under the shadow of the same range are other Pathan tribes, such as Gandapurs, Babars, Mian khel, and Kundis. Lower Kurram and the mountain mass between the Gomal and the Tochi Valleys is occupied by the Waziris and Mahsuds Southwards still, the Afghan tribes belong mostly to the Powindah clans. These are a people who are always on the move, and are both warriors and merchants. They move down in large numbers? in the winter to the plains of the Indus, and penetrate farther east into the Punjab and Hindustan. From every point of view – ethnic, linguistic and geographical, as well as in traditions and history, the Pathan tribes differ widely from the people of the Punjab.

Violent controversy has raged round the question of the origin of the Pathans. One school of thought contends that the Pathans are descendants of the Beni-Israel. The other school holds that the Pathans are descendants of the Aryan tribes who moved out of Central Asia in some remote past, and spread out to Europe, Persia and India. The Pathans are considered by some to be Israelites, because of their nomenclature, their usages, and their physique. These advocates of the Israelite theory forget that Islam, which is the religion of the Pathans, has very much in common with Judaism and Christianity. The nomenclature and usages can be accounted for by the fact that Islam, Judaism and Christianity are kindred religions, having their origin in the Jazirat-ul-Arab or the Arab lands, which include Palestine as well as the Hedjaz. History does not throw any light on how and when the Jews moved eastwards from Palestine and colonized the region which we now call Afghanistan. On the other hand, it is crystal clear that the Aryans moved out of Central Asia, and in successive waves moved down the Afghan uplands into the Punjab and beyond on their march towards India. It is also an admitted fact that there are many Sanskrit words in the Pushtu language; many believe that it is derived from Sanskrit. The great white race which we call the Aryans set out from the heart of Asia in three directions. First, through the Caucasus to Europe; secondly to Iran; and lastly they moved, wave after wave, through the Afghan mountains and valleys, to the Indus. They moved down the land of the five rivers to Jamuna, and then spread out to the Gangetic plain and beyond. The movement of the Aryans, which is a historical fact, and the great affinity which the Pushtu language has with Sanskrit, lend considerable weight to the theory that the Pathans are an Aryan race, and are therefore Aryans. This fact receives additional weight from the observations of George Macmunn in his book, *The Romance of the Indian Frontiers*. The present author is of opinion that the claim to Beni-Israel genealogy is a bogus one, and

that most of the tribes from the Kohistan beyond Kabul down to the Indus are the descendants of the old Aryan colonists.

In the Province the vast majority of the population is rural and agriculturist. It is a land of small peasant proprietors. There is the land-owning class of Khans or the chiefs who own, in some cases, very big areas of land, which the tenants cultivate for them. Irrigation is done from water channels, springs, wells and also from canals constructed by the Government. The Government canals provide water in return for a water-cess called 'Abiana'. These canals irrigate extensive areas in the Mardan and Peshawar districts and a part of the Dera Ismail Khan plain. Very fertile lands between Peshawar and the Kohat Pass are lying fallow for want of water. Irrigation schemes are under consideration for bringing water to this area. But finance is a great handicap. The military authorities have diverted a lot of water from the Bara river for irrigating bungalows in Peshawar Cantonment, with the consequent depletion of supplies for the lands outside the perimeter wire. The Central Government is morally bound to finance such an irrigation project, because the Defence Department has diverted for officers' luxuries water that to the Pathan peasants is a dire necessity.

Large tracts of land are lying waste because of the scarcity of water. If the irrigation project materializes this tract will soon blossom forth as a fruit growing and wheat-producing area. It is a well-known fact that there is unemployment, and scarcity of cultivable land in the Afridi hills adjoining this area. Many families from the Khyber and the Tirah could easily be settled on this land. It would enable them to become peaceful citizens and good neighbors. The problem of lawlessness in the Tribal, areas cannot be solved by military expeditions, as the British officers on the spot believe even to this day. It is mainly an economic problem, Land must be found, and Tribal families settled on it. Employment should be found for the tribesmen, so that they give up the habit of periodical raids on the settled districts, with the consequent disturbance of the peace of the border. Large areas of land in the Dera Ismail Khan district are lying waste, while so much water flows down the Indus. Sindh has become a veritable garden, thanks to the wise and judicious use of Indus water, and the districts next door in the Punjab will become another Sindh should the Thall project materialize. Is it not criminal, then, to allow all these areas in Dera Ismail Khan to remain what they are? The Paharpur Canal in the district has only touched the fringe of the problem. No amount of tinkering will do. Dera Ismail Khan can become another Sindh—a great grain producing district, which will provide work for the Pathan and also banish the problem of hunger from our midst.

Life in a Pathan village is both exciting and interesting. It would be idle to deny that the N.W.F.P. is a vendetta-ridden country. Hundreds of murders take place every year—their rate is appallingly high. For generations, families which have blood-feuds have maintained a strict account. A murder is sure to lead to reprisals and counter-murder, if one may use the phrase. It is a sad commentary on British rule that it has not been able

to stop this mad course of bloodshed. The Frontier Province has been forced to spend enormous sums on maintaining a police force out of all proportion to its population.

The police and the jails between them swallow up a very large percentage of the revenues, which could have been easily earmarked for nation-building projects. This is a problem which has hitherto defied solution. It is holding up all progress. It is a blot on the fair name of the Province. It cannot be set down to something inherently wrong in the people. Among the same people in Swat State and Afghanistan the number of murders in relation to the population is surprisingly low. Again, it cannot be the effect of the law prevailing in the Province, because the same law is in force in the rest of India. It has probably something to do with the temperament of the people, and their views on the taking of human life. In this connection one may only hope that with the spread of literacy there will be an appreciable drop in the number of murders. It is the duty of those responsible for teaching the young to impress upon those entrusted to their charge that it is a horrible thing to commit murder; that it is the duty of those who see a crime being committed not to hesitate to give true information to the police and an absolutely true statement in court, no matter who the offender is. The offender should be made to pay for his crime, be he a relative or a man of great affluence. The average standard of veracity is probably higher in the Frontier than in many other parts of India, for the simple reason that an individual conscious of his strength does not hesitate to speak the truth. But faction feeling is a notorious evil amongst the Pathans. The 'Para-Jamba', as it is called, is the bane of Pathan society. A Pathan who will not hesitate to speak the truth in the face of danger will probably not consider it wrong to lie for the sake of his faction. While weakness or fear is considered unbecoming in a Pathan, it is considered absolutely correct to lie for the faction to which one belongs. It is the duty of young Pathans – who are our hopes of tomorrow – to get out of this habit. The sooner it is discarded the better. The fact that in the majority of cases it is considered difficult to secure a conviction, and crimes go unpunished, is to some extent due to the defective and perfunctory investigations which are conducted by the police in serious offences like murder. For some time, it has been the fashion for the law-courts to concentrate more on speed than on quality. Promotion in some cases goes to the officer who can dispose of a murder case – trial, judgment and all – within three hours. Murder cases must not be unceremoniously rushed through; sufficient time must be given for all the necessary facts to be brought out, and all aspects of the case to be discussed and considered.

The men who act as assessors in murder trials are generally henchmen of the district officers, and their claim to be so appointed does not depend on their integrity or their capacity to understand complicated facts and give an unbiased opinion. Merit hardly ever influences these selections. Adventurers who wish to make money, and Government informers well-versed in the art of flattering district officers, are not infrequently appointed as assessors. It is high time that the reprehensible practice of summoning such persons as assessors was stopped. Many of these assessors are liable

to succumb to temptation. Many are known to have come with preconceived ideas of guilt or innocence without having heard the facts of the case. British officers, or British appointed Indian officials cannot escape their share of blame in the matter. Such is the horror these officials entertain of anyone who takes, or is suspected of taking part, in the patriotic movements, that however well-fitted such a man may be to discharge the duties of an assessor, he is seldom selected. Government informers, flatterers, and those who can convince officials of this type that they are the enemies of freedom, are readily taken on as assessors or members of a Jirga, however corrupt or otherwise ill-fitted they may be to discharge such duties. The problem of murder is one that those who have a hold on the popular mind, or those who are charged with administering the Province, have to solve. And the sooner they solve it the better.

Education is fast becoming popular and the Pathan is very much alive to its necessity. Already Pathans have made great progress in education. They have been able to produce professors, teachers, doctors, lawyers, judges, and engineers. Some time ago such professional talent had to be imported from the Punjab and other provinces. But that is no longer so. These men have manned almost all the provincial services. Boys are entering schools in larger numbers. Of late, interest has been aroused also in the education of girls. A large number of schools have been opened in the Province and more are likely to be founded soon. In this connection, the Islamia College, a great residential college just outside Peshawar on the historic Khyber highway – almost at the mouth of the Pass – has done yeoman service to the cause of education. It will not be out of place to mention here the labors of that great educationist of the Province, the late lamented Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum, a clearheaded moderate statesman, a man gifted with vision and foresight, and withal a man of singularly charming manners. He belonged to a poor but very respectable family, and rose to eminence by sheer force of character. He was the first to realize that without education the Pathans would be nowhere in a world fast moving ahead. In this great venture, he was very ably assisted by the then Chief Commissioner, Sir George Roos-Keppel. Sir George had a great sympathy for the cause of Pathan education and gave active proof of it during his term of office. Sir Abdul Qaiyum founded the great Dar-ul-Ulum, of the Islamia College. It is affiliated to the Punjab University, and possesses a faculty of Arts, a faculty of Science, a faculty of Agriculture, and a faculty for the Training of Teachers. It is a residential college, with a residential high school attached to it. Most Frontier boys, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs, are welcomed within its portals, and are given not only education, but practical lessons in character building.

It has also a number of boys from the Tribal Belt. Owing to the unsympathetic attitude of the Foreign and Political Department which administers the Tribal Belt, sufficient encouragement is not given to such boys. The scholarships and stipends awarded are not enough. It is the ardent wish of the Pathans to transform this college into a great Pathan University, which, besides spreading the light of learning in the Province and the Tribal area, will also help the development and growth of the Pushtu language and

Pathan culture which they all have so much at heart. It is interesting to note that on this very place there once flourished a great Buddhist centre of learning, the remains of which are visible even today. Lack of finance stands in the way of this college becoming a unitary residential University. Some time back a resolution recommending the conversion of this college into a University was unanimously carried in the Central Legislative Assembly, but so far there has been no practical response from the powers that be.

The intelligentsia amongst the Pathans are conscious of the dynamic forces at work around them in a fast-changing world. They realize that they cannot progress by educating their men only: that it is a matter of the utmost importance that their girls too should have equal opportunities for education. To this end some progress has been made in the matter of girls' education, but it is mostly confined to urban areas. In rural areas women's education is still in its infancy. The Hindus and Sikhs have made great strides in educating their girls, and it is hoped that it will not be long before the Pathans catch up with them.

In the matter of succession, till about 1935 the Muslims were governed by customs mainly based on ideas of Hindu Law. Women could not own or inherit immovable property. This was patently anomalous in a predominantly Muslim country. In the matter of succession the Islamic Law is very clear. Every heir knows what his or her share is. Entirely at variance with this, in the Frontier Province customs of inheritance etc. varied from tribe to tribe and even from family to family. They involved people in ruinous litigations. It was always a problem both for litigants and courts to decide on the particular custom to be applied. No custom was codified; everything was vague and uncertain. Last but not the least, they all offended against our ideas of natural justice and good conscience. A great agitation was started with the object that in matters of succession, inheritance, etc., Muslims should henceforth be governed by their Personal Law, that is, *Shariat*. Meetings were held all over the Province and a *Shariat* conference was also held at Peshawar, to which religious divines were invited from various parts of India. The majority of the Khans were averse to this reform.

Such was the force of public opinion, however, that a law was passed which laid down that henceforth the Muslims shall be governed by the Muslim Law or *Shariat* in matters of succession, inheritance, etc. The result was dramatic. For the first time the Pathan woman began to inherit as daughter, as wife, as sister, and also as mother. The application of this highly enlightened provision of Muslim Law will improve the status of women and will do away with the evils which have resulted from the enforcement of a crude, archaic, and indefensible custom.

There is a very keen desire among the Pathans both of Afghanistan and the Frontier to encourage and enrich their own language, Pushtu. Persian was for centuries the official language in Afghanistan. Now it has been replaced by Pushtu. In the Frontier Province,

while people are alive to the importance of Urdu as the language for cultural intercourse with the rest of India, they desire, nonetheless, to see that Pushtu occupies a place of preeminence.

When the Congress was in power in the N.W.F.P. from 1937 to 1939 Pushtu was introduced in schools up to the fifth standard. Abdul Ghaffar Khan has done great service to the cause of Pushtu. His periodical '*Pushtun*' was published in this language and eagerly read. Now that the Khan is in prison his journal has ceased publication. Patriotic poems and articles in Pushtu, inculcating love of freedom, and aiming at social reform, were a notable feature of this journal. The Pathans, unlike people in certain other parts of India, always speak in their own mother-tongue whenever and wherever they may meet. Even highly educated and much-travelled Pathans will hesitate to converse in English or any other language but their own.

The growth of the Freedom Movement from 1919 onwards has produced a number of writers and poets in Pushtu. The prevailing tendency is to use simple words easily intelligible to the man in the street. We are on the eve of a great renaissance in Pushtu language and literature. Should a great University be established in Peshawar in the near future, one of the primary tasks to which it will have to address itself will be to carry out research into the origins and development of Pushtu literature and to foster its growth in the future. The great Pathan poet Khushal Khan Khattak proved its capacity about two centuries ago. The earliest available books were composed by Bayazid Ansari, surnamed Pir-e-Roshan, who died in 1585. It is said that another well-known writer of the same period, Akhunde-Darveza, wrote as many as 50 books. In his *Makhzan-e-Islam* he attacked the heresies of his opponents. In his other famous book entitled *Makhzan-e-Afghani*, he has traced the history of the Afghans from the earliest times. Among the descendants of Pir-e-Roshan is another famous poet, Mirza Ansari. Khushal Khan Khattak is the greatest and most famous of the Pathan poets. He lived from 1613 to 1691. He was both a poet and a warrior, and carried on a relentless campaign against the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb, who then ruled at Delhi. He led a national rising of the Pathans against the Moghuls. Afzal Khan, a descendant of the famous Khushal Khan, wrote the *Tarikh-e-Murassa*. Other famous poets rose to prominence and worthy of note among them are Abdul Rahman, Abdul Hamid and Emperor Ahmed Shah Abdali (1747-1773). Coming to modern times, Abdul Malik, of Charsadda, has composed a series of poems of a very high order. These poems are in great demand when the Pathans assemble in their thousands to hear their leaders speak of that freedom which is their birthright. These poems also aim at the social reforms of Pathan society. Abdul Malik's style is simple and he has very ably put into verse all that the Congress and Red Shirt movements stand for.

A peculiarly Pathan institution is the Hujra'—or the village club and guest house combined. No account of Pathan life would be complete without a description of this very useful institution. Every village has one or more Hujras', the number varying

according to the size of the village. It usually consists of a room or two, with an adjoining courtyard. A number of bedsteads or 'charpoys' are found in each Hujra'. Here it is that the villagers gather when the day's toiling is over, to meet one another, and discuss the topics of the day. Matters like the weather, the crops, the marketing of farm produce, the high-handedness, supposed or real, of the police or the magistracy, and party politics, are discussed, punctuated by great puffs at the '*chilam*'<sup>1</sup> or '*huqqa*' passed round the gathering.

The Pathan are perhaps the most hospitable race in the world. Anyone who has had occasion to enjoy their hospitality knows that it is not of the conventional type. There is so much of warmth and enthusiasm behind it, that it would be hard to find a parallel anywhere else in the world. Whenever a guest arrives clean sheets and pillows are at once fetched from inside the house and spread out on the bed for him. The arrival of the guest is immediately followed by tea which is served with eggs and buttered bread. In the evening dinner is served to the guest, who sleeps in the Hujra' for the night. The elders and married persons retire to their houses, but the bachelors generally sleep in the Hujra'. The Hujra' is the centre of Pathan social life and is in many respects a unique institution, so peculiarly Pathan in character.

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<sup>1</sup> A '*chilam*' is the Pathan edition of the tobacco-smoking apparatus, where the smoke has to pass through an earthen jar which forms its base.

## CHAPTER IV

### RISE OF THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

After the separation of the N.W.F.P. from the Punjab, the British proceeded to set up a military regime of the most rigid type in the Province. The Pathan, in their view, required a special course of treatment. He is proud, warlike, intensely patriotic, acutely conscious of the fact that he has enjoyed the freedom to live as he liked for centuries, and gifted with indomitable courage. He can never brook an insult, and will readily lay down his life to wipe it out. Alone among the races which inhabit the Indian Empire, he has a habit of staring the Englishman straight in the eyes. He hates to cast down his eyes when a foreigner is looking at him. This was the type of man that the British set out to tame and subdue. He must be made docile, and his love of freedom and equality must be knocked out of him. This has consistently been the purpose of British policy on the Frontier. It was repeatedly given out that the Pathan was a mad fanatic, almost a savage animal, and if for no other reason, at least for the sake of his neighbors in the Indus Valley, he must be subdued. The Frontier was likened to a gunpowder magazine, and to introduce reforms in such a land as this, it, was asserted, was like holding a match to the gunpowder—an explosion was, of course, inevitable.

Alone among the Indian. races, he was singled out for a treatment which was as callous as it was barbarous. The British Imperialist hastened to cut him off from his kinsmen in the trans-border belt. No manner of intercourse, cultural or political, between the Province and the Tribal Belt was allowed or tolerated. It must be remembered that the Pathans in the Province and the Tribal Belt constitute one race, one people, professing the same faith, Islam, speaking the same Pushtu language, leading the same kind of life. The late lamented Sahihzada Sir Abdul Qaiyum likened the Tribal area and the Province to the two wings of an eagle. But the British would not have it—so they preferred vivisection and hastened to cut these areas apart. Military officers were placed in charge of the Frontier districts, who ruled the Province under an autocratic military regime. Ruthless and repressive laws like the Murderous Outrages Act and the Frontier Crimes Regulation, were at once promulgated. The Frontier Crimes Regulation was readily used as an engine of political repression. Under section 40 of this Regulation, people suspected of having anything to do with the Freedom Movement were hauled up before the Magistracy and ordered to execute heavy bonds to keep the peace and to be of good behavior. No counsel could, under the Regulation, defend such a man, nor could he prefer any appeal to a higher court. Many failed to furnish the requisite security and were locked up in prison for anything up to three years. The N.W.F.P. was kept outside the ambit of Morley—Minto Reforms. Again, when the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were introduced in the rest of India, and Dyarchy was set up, the N.W.F.P. was altogether ignored. People began to wonder. They felt they



were being treated as an inferior race, and this they bitterly resented. About this time the Rowlatt Bill agitation was at its height. There were political demonstrations all over the country, and the great Tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh was enacted by General Dyer in Amritsar – firing on an unarmed crowd at a fair, resulting in heavy loss of life. There were other incidents of repression and humiliation imposed on the people of the Punjab and when the N.W.F.P. heard with horror what had happened in Amritsar and elsewhere, the Pathans hastened to line up with the rest of India. The Frontier also had its share of repression arrests, and shootings and had a taste of the ruthless methods which an enlightened Government considered indispensable for enforcing its rule in India. The attempt of the British Government to prevent forces and ideas at work across the Indus to gain a footing in the Frontier Province failed utterly. The movement was suppressed, but the fire of freedom shouldered under a very thin covering, ready to leap into flame at the slightest touch of a breeze. The dismemberment of the Turkish Empire stirred the Frontier people – both in the Province and the Tribal Belt – as never before. After solemn assurances made in the stress of the first World War not to cut up the Jazira-ul-Arab, or the land of the Arabs – containing the Holy Cities of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem – the British cast all their promises to the winds. Great Britain hastened to cut up the Arab lands as if they were a piece of cheese. She annexed Palestine, Iraq and trans-Jordan and allowed her ally, France, to help herself to Syria and the Lebanon. The promises of freedom and self-determination for the Arabs were forgotten as easily as they had been made. Palestine was handed over to the Jewish colonists, its gates were flung open to admit Jews from the Levant, from Eastern Europe, in fact, from all over the world. The same British Government, so we are told, had promised the Jews a National Home in Palestine. The promise to the Jews was quite inconsistent with that previously made to the Arabs. Resentment and bitterness spread from one end of the Frontier to the other. The great Khilafat movement from across the Indus embraced the whole province in its sweep. The Indus could not, therefore, be of much use as an impenetrable barrier to the movement of ideas from beyond. The policy of intellectual and political segregation of the Pathans had failed. The Khilafat movement and the Rowlatt Act agitation swept across the lowlands to the hills and valleys of the tribes.

It was at this time that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan began to take an active part in political events. He was imprisoned in 1920. This was the time when it was believed that the politically-minded could be cured if only they were subjected to the iron discipline of a British prison. Such was the barbarous treatment then meted out to political prisoners in Frontier prisons that one would have to go far back into the Middle Ages to find a parallel.

Then, in 1928, came the Simon Commission, and to it was entrusted the task of manufacturing a constitution for the Province. Needless to say, there were demonstrations all over the Province; the Commission was boycotted and greeted with shouts of 'Simon, go back'. It recommended a Council, more or less of the Morley-

Minto type, with elected and nominated members in about equal proportion. The elected members would be chosen by a special constituency of big land-holders, that is, the Khans, and by municipal and district boards. The legislative powers of this Council were to be limited, with law and order kept as reserved subjects. These proposals led to a furious agitation in the Province. Having lost all hope of justice and equal treatment for the Pathans, Abdul Ghaffar Khan began organizing a band of volunteers who call themselves 'Khudai Khidmatgars', or the Servants of God, but are called Red Shirts by the British, because of the color of their clothes. The movement spread like wild fire throughout the Province. Soon great numbers of young men joined up, pledged to the sacred cause of the freedom of their country, and eager to lay down their lives for it. In vain did Abdul Ghaffar Khan make overtures to Indian Muslim leaders of the time. He implored them to come and help in organizing and directing the movement. The authorities soon encouraged propaganda which tried to make out that the Red Shirts were Bolsheviki, whom the British then so fiercely hated. The Muslim leaders of India turned a deaf ear to the appeal for help from Abdul Ghaffar Khan. They would not touch the Red Shirts with a pair of tongs. The landed gentry and the upper classes saw red in this new mass movement, and eagerly lined up with the Government. It was at this time that the Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, extended the hand of fellowship and help to the Pathans. This was a great event and a turning point in the history of the Province. The Pathans will forever gratefully remember that it was the Indian National Congress which came to their help in their hour of trial. The movement was Officially affiliated to the Indian National Congress. The Pathans, for the first time in their troubled history, pledged themselves to fight this battle for freedom, in common with the rest of India, strictly on non-violent, lines. Nobody would have believed such a thing a year or two before. But a miracle had happened. Then the authorities let loose a wave of severe repression on the people. Wholesale arrests, and annoying midnight house searches followed. To cow down the people, some minions of the law did not hesitate even to insult our women and to loot private houses and carry away household effects. Firing took place in the principal street of Peshawar – the Kissa Khani Bazar and near Gor Khani, the residence of the Moghul Governors of old. Firing was resorted to all over the Province, wherever there were demonstrations. The people cheerfully submitted to these insults and indignities, and the Pathan proved his mettle by strict adherence to the policy of non-violence in thought and action. The bulk of the landed aristocracy actively helped the authorities in suppressing the popular movement, and thus came out in their true colors. After having done their worst to suppress the movement, the authorities, in 1932, suddenly agreed to extend the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms to the Province. The Red Shirts boycotted the elections. Dyarchy was set up from 1932 to 1937 and Sir Abdul Qaiyum became the first Minister in charge of the Transferred Departments. Abdul Ghaffar Khan had led his disciplined volunteers remarkably well and had become a power in the Province. How well he deserved the title of 'FAKHRE-AFGHAN' Pride of the Pathans' – which a grateful people had conferred on their beloved leader!

The Red Shirt movement was, in its inception, purely a social reform movement. Its promoters aimed at eradicating blood-feuds and vendetta, which like an incurable disease were eating into the vitals of Pathan society. They were anxious to do away with un-Islamic customs, involving waste of money on marriages and deaths. An impoverished peasantry, on the brink of starvation and heavily indebted to the money-lending class, could ill afford such wasteful expenditure. Then there was that curse of illiteracy, the removal of which was a crying need of the time. No scheme of political democracy could be worked successfully among a people where the majority was ignorant or illiterate. A meeting was convened in October, 1929. A programme of social reform was chalked out. It was decided to summon a bigger meeting, which was actually held on the 18th and 19th of April, 1930. Here it was decided to set up a volunteer corps of Khudai Khidmatgars to propagate and to carry out the ideas of social reform among the Pathans. Those who joined it were pledged to obey the order of God; to be fearless and non-violent in thought and action; never to be affected by flattery or abuse; to protect the oppressed as against the oppressor; and never to accept any remuneration for service. On April 23rd, 1930, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested while on the way to Peshawar. He was taken to Nowshera and there convicted under section 40 of the Frontier Crimes Regulation. He was awarded three years' imprisonment under a section primarily intended for robbers, murderers and notorious outlaws. In May, soldiers were sent to Utmanzai. They surrounded the village, and would not allow the inhabitants even to go out into the fields to relieve themselves. They would not even let the village cattle go grazing, so that the poor animals were left to starve. They did something more. Here I can do no better than quote the very words of that great Muslim fighter in the cause of Indian freedom, Tassaduq Ahmed Khan Sherwani, who was snatched away by the cruel hand of Fate while yet in the prime of life. These were uttered during the debate on a resolution in the Central Assembly in 1935 demanding the removal of the ban on the Khudai Khidmatgar organization. Mr. Sherwani said: 'They did not stop there; they surrounded the village and went and occupied the house in which was the office of the Khudai Khidmatgars; not only occupied the house, but, I say to the very face of the Honorable the Foreign Secretary, the people who were there were thrown out from the first storey (shame!). They were thrown out and several had broken legs and others broken arms; not only that, in the very presence of the Honorable the Foreign Secretary, that office was burnt to ashes (cries of shame from the Congress Party benches); and yet Government members say that these Khudai Khidmatgars were violent, who should be punished.' The Foreign Secretary, Mr. H. A. F. Metcalfe (who later became Sir Aubrey Metcalfe) rose and said: 'I admit that there was some regrettable violence by Government Forces on that occasion. I quite admit that. I am extremely sorry for all that happened. I immediately went to the spot and stopped all further violence.....' Again, to quote the late Mr. Sherwani's speech reported in Volume I of the 1935 Central Assembly Debates: 'In the month of June, troops surrounded the villages, brought out the people and made them stand in the sultry sun. Not only that, they placed heavy stones on their necks and asked them to carry them uphill, and pile them there, and your officers told them that that was the

tomb of their leader.' This happened to a people whom the late Maulana Shaukat Ali described thus: 'The finest of all people in this country are the people from the Frontier Province. They are powerful, physically strong, handsome, and brave.'

The attitude of the authorities in the N.W.F.P. can be inferred from the extracts quoted by Mr. B. Das, the mover of the resolution. Mr. B. Das, from Orissa, is a veteran fighter in the cause of national freedom. He is large-hearted, and free from any kind of bias, and his sympathy has an all-embracing sweep. He read some extracts from the communiqué, issued by the Chief Commissioner of the N.W.F.P. on May 5th, 1930 and addressed to the reactionary and conservative Khans of the Province: 'Is the Congress going to leave with you your landed property, Jagirs, and Muafis? Is it going to protect your frontiers? Will it maintain law and order amongst the people? Now it is high time for you to help the Government, which has ever been benevolent towards you and has done justice towards you. What help can you render to the Government? You must prevent Congress volunteers wearing red jackets from entering your villages. They call themselves Khudai Khidmatgars' (Servants of God). But in reality they are the servants of Gandhi. They wear the dress of the Bolsheviks. They will create the same atmosphere as you have heard of in the Bolsheviks Dominion. Little did this Chief Commissioner think that within the brief span of about seven years these same Khudai Khidmatgars were to take over the Government of the Province, and maintain law and order much more effectively than those from whom they took over. Attempts were made to wean the Muslims away from the movement on the plea that a Hindu—Gandhi—directed it. What better proof could be adduced of the British policy of *Divide et impera!* Again, the attempt to link the Red Shirts with the Bolsheviks was sinister in the extreme. This was used to rally the Khans against the masses—another instance of the 'divide-and-rule' policy. Some examples of the savagery practiced on the people are cited by Dr. Khan Sahib in his speech on the resolution. To quote his own words: The picketing of liquor shops began in Charsadda in 1930. There the Khudai Khidmatgars were beaten, their clothes were torn to pieces, they were made stark naked. Afterwards, they used to wear a double dress, a white band under and the red dress outside. Again, he proceeded, in our hospital, people who had collected there were all forcibly dispersed. Some of the patients in the hospital were taken to the Charsadda Hospital and next day they were thrown out. They were put in a mosque and I went there to treat them and later on we had a hospital in Peshawar City. With all that, nobody can cite a single scratch on the police or the Army people who were dealing with these Khudai Khidmatgars. (Central Assembly Debates, Vol. I, 1935, p. 390).

A meeting was held on February 28th, 1931, at Utmanzai—the village from which hail the two Khan brothers. The Gandhi-Irwin negotiations were then in progress. Troops were sent to the village. Again, it is better to quote the very words of Dr Khan Sahib: The troops were there. *Lathi* charges could not disperse the Khudai Khidmatgars. Really no order was given, but some of the soldiers went out of control and they started firing. Captain Baines, who was in charge of the party, shouted, "Don't fire, don't fire," but

nobody listened to him. The firing went on, but the Khudai Khidmatgars could not be dispersed, they were still there. Thirty people were wounded, two killed.

There came to this Province, at the time when the movement was at its height, an Englishman named Bernays. It was equally the time when repression of the worst type was in full swing. He was the guest of the Assistant Inspector-General of Police, himself an Englishman, who was in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department. In his book *The Naked Faqir*, Bernays makes some refreshing references to this Province which, in strange contrast to official publications, make quite interesting reading. He says: 'I am glad that I saw the Frontier. It is old India at its worst. The administration is unimaginative, callous and not particularly competent. I cannot understand how the Simon Commission came to report that there should be no reforms in the N.W.F.P. The much advertized Frontier danger is largely poppycock.' He adds: 'If they spent a quarter of the Army estimates on irrigating the desert, they would be able to halve the expenditure of the remainder. The Afridis loot because they are starving. I wish I could lift the veil and expose some of the excesses up there.' But the veil was soon lifted, and this could only come about as the result of the untold sufferings cheerfully borne by the Pathans in the cause of freedom.

About this time an attempt was made on the life of a British officer, Captain Barnes, who was Assistant Commissioner at Charsadda. An unfortunate Pathan—Habib Noor by name—was charged with the attempted murder. It seems the trigger did not work. The officer was not hurt. It was a case of attempted murder at the most, for which section 307 of the Indian Penal Code is intended. Habib Noor was not tried under the ordinary law, but under the Murderous Outrages Act. He was brought before the court of session, without even a commitment order. He was undefended. Within two days he was sentenced, to death. There is no right of appeal to the High Court—only, the case is sent up on revision to the Chief Commissioner. This was done, and the revision application was dismissed. To quote the exact words of Bernays: 'An attempt was made on the life of a British official; it was unsuccessful; but in less than two days, the perpetrator of it had been executed.' Such was the manner in which justice was administered by an enlightened Government in that unfortunate Province.

In March 1931, came the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. In 1932 Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested at Wardha, and tried for making a seditious speech before a gathering of Christians some months before in Bombay. Then followed the reforms and elections in 1932. The Red Shirts, who had in August 1931 become part and parcel of the great Congress organization, boycotted the elections. Nonetheless, as we have already said, Dyarchy was introduced and the conservative Sir Abdul Qaiyum became the first Minister of the Province and was placed in charge of the Transferred Departments.

With the coming into force of the Government of India Act, 1935, responsible Government was extended to the N.W.F.P. in common with the other Provinces of

India. Elections were held in the Province, and the Red Shirts, for the first time, contested them. But the old spirit of mistrust was still at work in the Provincial administration. The authorities did not relish the idea of Congress sweeping the polls, and of thus eventually seizing power in the Province. All manner of obstacles were put in the way of the Congress party in the matter of election. The Khans and the Indian personnel in the services—recruited by the British from among the most reactionary class in the Province—combined to oppose the Congress. Strangely enough, these conservative die-hards were forced to adopt Sir Abdul Qaiyum as their leader. It has been mentioned before that Sir Abdul Qaiyum was born in a poor but respectable family and had risen high in government service as the result of merit and efficiency. The idea of having to line up behind one whom they had hitherto criticized for being a commoner was utterly distasteful and galling to these diehard aristocrats. Sir Abdul Qaiyum, however, was also the nominee in fact, though not in name, of the British officials in charge of the Provincial administration. While outwardly remaining strictly neutral, British officials could not but sympathize with him in secret. Let it be said to the credit of the British officials that all the dirty underhand work was performed by their Indian underlings, some of whom are even now in a position to play the old game. Most of these Indian underlings are corrupt, self-seeking, get-rich-quick adventurers. It is a tragedy of the first magnitude that some of these men have been allowed to amass huge fortunes by questionable means and by helping themselves to public money earmarked for the Tribal area. An independent and impartial tribunal is the crying need of the hour. People in the Frontier Province know all about it. And yet, these men are beyond reach of the arm of the law. It is desirable that the C.I.D. should be specifically directed to look into the affairs of such men and haul up the guilty before an independent tribunal.

The elections were fought and the Congress emerged the strongest party, with 21 members in a house of 50. The rest of the 29 members were divided into three groups— (i) Those who were pro-Congress and who, with the Congress Party, formed a clear majority in the House; (ii) Those who belonged to the Hindu-Sikh Nationalist party. These were about six in number, the other six of the minority communities having been returned on the Congress ticket. (iii) Members who did not belong to any party, each forming a party by himself. The authorities were very much upset at what had happened. They just wondered. They rubbed their eyes to make sure that such a thing as a Congress victory was true. It was too much to install the hated Congress in office. Strangely enough, Sir Abdul Qaiyum, who had not much of a following in the House, was called upon to form a Ministry. He formed a Ministry of die-hards. The Assembly session was called, but so manipulated that the Opposition had no time to move a vote of no confidence. Meanwhile, all the progressive forces were rallying round the Congress, and the fate of the Ministry was sealed. Sir Abdul Qaiyum was defeated, and his Ministry resigned within a few months of assumption of power. A Congress Parliamentary Board, consisting of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, visited the Province. As a result of their deliberations, Dr

Khan Sahib was asked to form a new Ministry. For about 2 years and 3 months, till November 1939, the Congress held power. The Ministry was led by Dr Khan Sahib—a man who will never hesitate to tell the truth whatever the consequences, a man gifted with remarkable personal courage, and absolutely incorruptible. Nevertheless, the good doctor was very direct and blunt in his methods. He did not think much of that 'tact' which many consider an essential attribute in the leader of a great Parliamentary party.

The officials, who had hitherto considered themselves a heaven-born class, had to change their attitude. They were quick to redress popular grievances. It must be said to the credit of the British personnel in the services that they soon adjusted themselves to the changed times, and even began to cooperate with men whom they had despised and imprisoned not so long before. But it was not so with a large section of the Indian members of the services. The bulk of these Indians were drawn from the conservative, diehard class, which, with some honorable exceptions, did not like the new regime. Their sources of income from questionable methods soon dried up. For fear of a vigilant popular Ministry, they were forced to give up their old corrupt ways. Outwardly they flattered the new Ministers, and were even successful in throwing dust in their eyes. Inwardly they were scheming and plotting, sighing for the old times, and ever intriguing with the conservative elements to enable the latter to dethrone the Congress and seize power. The Ministry was powerless. It could not deal with such disloyal elements, and the pity of it was, such men were beyond reach of the law, because of the provisions of the Government of India Act. The principle of protection and safe-guards for public officials is unexceptionable. But it is not realized that, while in England the right type of men are recruited by a Government which is national in the true sense of the word, here most officials are recruited from a reactionary, anti-nationalist class. Most of them owe their posts to the patronage of some British officer or other. The competitive examinations held for the recruitment of men for these services are very often a farce. The poor boy, though deserving, goes to the wall, while the good-for-nothing son of a reactionary but well-to-do person gets in. What is good for the services in England is therefore not necessarily good for their opposite number here. This protection has, in fact, impeded a much-needed reform in our public services. The overhaul of the system of recruitment to the public services is a crying need of the hour. We have to devise a system which, while excluding the inter-play of party politics, will, at the same time, make it possible for the really efficient and deserving person, whatever his birth and however humble his origin, to gain admission to the public services, a system which, while giving the desired security of tenure, will II ice it possible lot the long siren of the law to get at the corrupt and the inefficient.

The ministry was in office only for about two years and a quarter—too short a period to accomplish much. It started by abolishing certain bad institutions. The first to go were the honorary magistrates. Their powers were henceforth to be exercised by the regular courts. These old-fashioned gentlemen were mostly corrupt, some were illiterate, almost all were ignorant of the first principles of criminal law. Powers had been

conferred on such people, because they acted as the intermediaries through whom the British hoped to control the masses. Their judgments were badly written, and not infrequently by the unscrupulous 'readers' posted to their courts. They were under the thumb of the police, and were incapable of exercising independent judgment. The people hated these courts, which were a veritable engine of oppression. Very often their judgments were influenced by faction-feeling. The 'Zaildars', who were placed over the headmen of a number of villages, exercised jurisdiction in parts of the tehsil called Zails. They were mostly corrupt. They were often employed by the police for cooking up false cases, and also sometimes as intermediaries for collecting bribes for dishonest officials. They too shared the fate of the honorary magistrates. Then there were the Muafidars (Muafi is the cash remission of land revenue granted to a person) who were no better than parasites. The Muafidars were mainly Government informers, unpatriotic men always anxious to create trouble for those who believed in freedom. Little did the Congress Ministers then realize that they had brought a hornets' nest about their ears. The Zaildars, honorary magistrates, and Muafidars soon became the 'Champions of Islam', and, with the cry of 'Islam in danger', were the Frontier's first recruits to the Muslim League, of which, in this Province, they still form the backbone. This class saw an admirable opportunity in the Muslim League, where, while posing as champions of Islam, they could protect their own vested interests and settle old scores against the progressive forces.

The 'Chaukidara system', under which poor agriculturists were forced to perform the duties of the night watch, without any remuneration, was done away with. After a hard day's honest work, these poor peasants were compelled to keep awake all night, while those who exploited them slept in peace and security. This was revolting to Congress ideas of justice and fairplay, and henceforth the poor man was able to enjoy his well-earned rest. In the matter of the services, too, the Ministry strained every nerve to see that boys from the poorer families got a square deal. In this they were stoutly opposed by the vested interests, who managed to put up a powerful opposition. The Ministry did succeed to some extent, and for the first time deserving boys from the poorer classes secured admission. This made the class which had a vested interest in the public services all the more bitter against the Ministry.

There is another side to the achievements of the Congress Ministry. High expectations had been aroused in the popular mind, and many expected the Ministry to perform miracles. But, in the very nature of things, it was little they could accomplish—the time at their disposal was so short. Certain supporters of the party expected the Ministers to do this or that for them. The assumption of power had attracted many a self-seeker to the Congress fold. The party could not exclude such elements—that is difficult in any mass organization. Some of the new recruits to the Congress—worshippers of power, and self-seekers from among the Old Guard—became corrupt and in turn tried to corrupt others. Moreover, there were quite a few ambitious men in the party who wanted to rise, and displace others certainly much better fitted to lead. This resulted in



a good deal of faction feeling, which weakened the party. Designing individuals began to form groups inside, as a stepping stone to power. The ranks of the party became divided and those anxious to create confusion were not slow to take advantage of the situation. Those at the helm of progressive forces owe a great duty to themselves as well as to the masses. In every party, there are bound to be groups, sometimes honestly differing from one another, sometimes actuated by the purely selfish motive of seizing the party machine. But there must be someone at the top who can rise above these intergroup disputes and rivalries – someone who commands the absolute confidence of the masses. He is quite above these inter-group disputes. He scrupulously avoids giving even the remotest impression that he is associated with a certain group, or that he favors any one group as against another. Only then can dissensions and disputes in the party itself be avoided and the integrity of the popular front maintained. For the N.W.F.P. we have such a man – Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Across the Indus, Mr. Jinnah was busy reorganizing the Muslim League. The League felt that the Congress had done a grievous wrong to the Muslims in not forming Coalition Ministries in the Provinces. There was considerable resentment among Muslims in Provinces where they are a minority, against the Congress Ministries. They charged the Congress with not being liberal enough to Muslims in the matter of the public services. They resented the attempt to revive and spread the Hindi language in Devanagri script; in this they saw real danger to the Urdu language. This and several other grievances, some real, mostly imaginary or grossly exaggerated, were used to work up the Muslim masses against the Congress. On behalf of the Muslim League the Pirpur Committee carried out an enquiry and charged the Congress Ministries with various acts of omission and commission. The fact that a predominantly Muslim Province, namely the N.W. F. P., owed allegiance to the Congress was treated almost as an insult by the League. Planned efforts were made to wean the Pathan from the Congress. Maulana Shaukat Ali, Qazi Mohamed Isa, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and other League leaders were sent, one after the other, to the N.W.F.P., to attack and if possible dislodge the Congress. The Second World War broke out in September, 1939. In common with the rest of the Congress Provinces, the Frontier Ministry, after passing the anti-war resolution on November 6th, 1939, tendered its resignation. This resolution was carried unanimously in the Frontier Legislature and even the members of the League dared not oppose it---such was the resentment among the masses of the Frontier over the fact that India had been dragged into the war without being consulted.

The League began to win increasing support amongst the vested class-interests in the N.W.F.P. The honorary magistrates, Zaildares Muafidars the landed aristocracy which had a monopoly of the public services, and all other reactionary elements joined the League. These people thought there was an admirable opportunity for them – by raising the cry of 'Islam in danger' they could seize power and secure their class-interests which had been rudely assailed by the Congress. Persistent attempts were made to form a Ministry, but all to no purpose.

Then came the Congress movement of 8th August, 1942. It had its, repercussions in the Frontier Province. Ten Congress M.L.A.'s were arrested along with thousands of others who courted arrest by, picketing the law courts: With the ten Congress M.L.A.'s safely tucked away in prison, the League thought their chance had come. It suited British policy too, to show to the outside world that all Muslims, as a class, were against the Congress. It was thought desirable that the U.S.A. in particular be impressed. Sardar Mohamed Aurangzeb Khan, the League leader, started running to and from between Delhi and Peshawar. Conferences were held with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. Sardar Aurangzeb proclaimed that he wanted to kill the Hindu Congress in the Frontier Province, and set up, instead, 'the rule of the Quran and the *Shariat*'. If only rule under Section 93 were suspended in the N.W.F.P., the British could show that all Muslim-majority provinces were anti-Congress and stood for cooperation, that the Congress was, therefore, a Hindu organization aiming at setting up Hindu domination in India. In May, 1943, the Governor gave way, perhaps under a hint from above, and a minority Ministry was installed. It was a Muslim League Ministry. Soon a session of the Assembly was called. Its first and last legislative performance was to pass a Bill almost trebling the pay of the Ministers. In a small province, which exists mainly on a subvention from the Centre, the number of Ministers was raised to five. Seven more M.L.A.'s got jobs as Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Parliamentary Secretaries. In a House of 40. (10 Congress M.L.A.'s being in jail), jobs were found for twelve M.L.A.'s out of the 21 the Ministry claimed as the total number of its supporters.

It was all very well to bring a minority Ministry into being. The difficulty was to keep it in power. Everyone who was approached for help demanded a quid pro quo. Those who supported the Ministry did not hesitate to demand this favor or that and threatened to go over to the other side if they were not placated. The food situation became acute, particularly in the towns. The system of controls and syndicate, with all the attendant evils of corruption among officials and also those non-officials who were exercising control, soon roused popular resentment. The life of the Ministry is hanging in the balance. In spite of persistent demands it refused to release five out of the 10 Congress M.L.A.'s. It has also refused to summon the usual autumn session of the Assembly on the plea of absence of official business. But it has only put off the evil day,<sup>2</sup> and thereby added to its manifold difficulties. The League made two great blunders. First, it did not examine the credentials of those whom it had put in positions of power. Some members who were hostile to the League joined it overnight when they saw prospects of power and patronage. Secondly, it has not been able to stop the rot which has set in as the result of putting a minority party in power. The result is complete disillusionment. Even those who belong to the League or are its sympathizers bitterly criticize the Ministry, and regret that it was put in office at all. The League, which started with such high hopes, has received a severe setback in the Province. People are

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<sup>2</sup> (Later) The Ministry fell on March 12, 1945, and Dr. Khan Sahib has formed a new Ministry.

looking back to the day when the Congress was in power, because, unlike the League, which is dominated by vested class-interests, it stood for the masses.

## CHAPTER V

### SOME PRESENT-DAY PERSONALITIES

Since 1932 the Indus has ceased to act as a barrier to political and social intercourse between this Province and the rest of India. The Indian Press has of late begun to take an active interest in the affairs of the Frontier Province—its people and their cultural and political aspirations. Leaders of Indian political thought, to whom the Frontier Province had been a sealed book, began to enter the Province and to establish contacts with the leading men amongst the Pathans. Pathan leaders also began to tour India, establishing similar contacts there. It is therefore necessary to give some details about the leading men of the Province. Attention will be concentrated on matters that should be known outside the Province.

Pride of place must necessarily go to the Khan Brothers — Dr. Khan Sahib, the elder, and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the younger. They can look back with pride on a series of unrivalled sufferings cheerfully endured, and a life of continuous public service. The two brothers hail from Utmanzai, a village about 22 miles from Peshawar, situated in the most fertile plain of Hashtnagar.

Their father, Bahram Khan, belonged to the Mohamandzai clan of the Pathans and was an affluent land-owner and Khan. Among families of this class the sons were then cut out either for a subordinate career in the Army or the Provincial service.

The younger brother, Abdul Ghaffar, was educated at the Mission High School, Peshawar, where his elder brother, Dr Khan Sahib, had also received his education. He came under the influence of the Reverend Mr Wigram, a highly respectable clergyman, who was the Head Master of the School. The Reverend Mr. Wigram was one of those who believed that a mere literary education that did not emphasize development of character was meaningless. He therefore concentrated on character-building, which left its lasting impress on his pupils. Abdul Ghaffar wanted to join the Army, but gave up the idea when he saw a British officer behaving very rudely to an Indian officer who was his senior in years. The blood-feuds, illiteracy and wasteful social customs at marriages and funerals among the Pathans oppressed him. He began a literacy campaign in rural areas, in conjunction with Haji Abdul Wahid Sahib, who later acquired fame and was known as the Haji Sahib of Turangzai. Turangzai was a village about a mile or so from Utmanzai. This campaign soon attracted the attention of the authorities, and the Haji had to quit the area and take up residence in Mohamand territory. There he offered the most determined and implacable opposition to the British. The British led several expeditions against him, but did not succeed in their object. During the martial law disturbances in the Punjab, and the Khilafat agitation,

Abdul Ghaffar was arrested. He was again arrested in 1921 and had to undergo three years rigorous imprisonment.

The treatment meted out to him in prison, judged from civilized standards, was barbarous in the extreme, and has permanently impaired his health. He joined the Hijrat movement, and left for Afghanistan, where he met that enlightened and luckless monarch Amanullah, on whose advice he returned to work in his home Province. The British arrested him again in 1930, after he had inaugurated his Khudai Khidmatgar movement. This remarkable organization, unique in many respects, bears testimony to Abdul Ghaffar's wonderful genius for organizing his people. He walked from village to village, addressing the Pathans in simple Pushtu.

His were words that went home. He would remind them of their great past and the remarkable part they had played in the history of Central Asia and India. He would tell them they were bold and courageous, not afraid of death, and yet they were slaves. He would exhort them to give up their blood-feuds, educate their children, be kind to their women, oppose all oppressors, and always stand up for the oppressed. He literally walked several times from one end of the Province to the other, talking to his people as no one had talked to them before. His simple words had a magic effect. Young men flocked to his standard, put on red uniforms, pledged themselves to non-violence and absolute obedience to all just orders of their leader. He set up a network of committees of the people—called Jirgas'—in every village. Then there were the Tappa Committees' (a 'Tappa' is a tract which covers several villages ). Next came the Tehsil and District Committees. Above all these was the Provincial Jirga, or the unofficial Parliament of the Pathans. The Village, Tappa, Tehsil, District and the Provincial Committees were all elected bodies. The volunteer organization, however, was built up on a different footing. Here the system of election was not introduced, because discipline mattered much more, and, to avoid faction-feeling, Abdul Ghaffar Khan himself nominates the Salar-e-Azam, or the Commander-in-Chief of the Khudai Khidmatgars. This officer, in turn, nominates and appoints officers who are placed in charge of the different units. Needless to say, all such officers and men render free service, and accept no remuneration whatsoever. The volunteers have always been the greatest source of strength to the organization. In fact, they form the spearhead of the movement and carry out its decrees, They are pledged to free and selfless service and cheerfully to make the greatest sacrifice that occasion may demand. The volunteers have their own flags, and bands which play various Pathan tunes. They maintain order at big public gatherings. Those who have had occasion to witness big Congress gatherings on the Frontier will bear testimony to the orderly manner in which such meetings are held. This is in strange contrast to the confusion which very often prevails in similar gatherings in other parts of India.

British propagandists gave out that the Red Shirts were a part of the Bolshevik organization, and time and again accusations were made, sometimes even by high

British officials, that Abdul Ghaffar had a hand in almost every trouble in the Tribal Belt. These accusations have never been substantiated. Those who are in intimate touch with the affairs of the Frontier Province know full well that all the allegations are pure fabrications. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was quick to realize that the question of the freedom of the Pathans was in fact a part of the bigger question of Indian freedom.

After making vain attempts to rouse the interest of Muslim political leaders in India, he very wisely decided in August 1931 to affiliate his organization to the Indian National Congress. Throughout the vicissitudes of time, he has never had occasion to regret that decision. The record of his sacrifices is incomparable. Towards the end of 1942, after the unhappy disturbances all over the country, he left for Mardan, accompanied by a band of his devoted followers. He was not allowed to enter the Mardan district, and near the Military Grass Farm he was stopped by the police under a British officer. He refused to turn back or to order his followers to disperse. He and his band of volunteers had been surrounded by the police. In the melee that ensued the Khan was very roughly handled and beaten, thrown down, injured and then arrested. All this sent a wave of strong resentment throughout the Province. What followed is quite recent history. Thousands of Khudai Khidmatgars joined the movement, and courted arrest by picketing the law-courts at Peshawar.

The charge that Abdul Ghaffar has had anything to do with the trans-border troubles is absolutely groundless. The Afridi descent into the plains of Peshawar in 1930 was not the result of any invitation extended to them from the Province. The Afridis are Pathans, and when they saw their kith and kin in the settled districts being so severely suppressed by the Government because they wanted the freedom to live their own lives, they made a demonstration in some force to express their sympathy. It was the excesses committed by the Government, which have been mentioned earlier, that resulted in the Afridi 'invasion' of the Peshawar district in 1930.

The elder brother, Dr Khan Sahib, is tremendously popular in the Frontier Province. Friend and foe alike bear testimony to his absolute honesty, impartiality and truthfulness. He is not a politician in the sense in which that term is understood nowadays. He will do what he thinks is right without the least hesitation. He never pauses to think what the consequences might be. It is true to say that he does not bear the slightest ill-will even to those who have wronged him. During the agrarian agitation while he was Premier, he did not hesitate to imprison his own son, Obaid Ullah, for whom he entertains the utmost love and affection. He was ever ready, while in office, to do a good turn to those who had once bitterly opposed him. To Congressmen who came seeking favors his usual reply was:

'Do you want a reward for the sacrifices made by you? If so, your sacrifices had an unworthy motive. Never ask a price, merely for having performed your duty on some earlier occasion.' When some of his supporters in the Assembly wanted a favor from

him, his answer was direct and very curt: 'Choose a leader who will reward you at the expense of the people,' he said and forthwith offered to resign his office.

Dr. Khan Sahib is a man who will never flinch from the greatest sacrifice. He gave up a lucrative job in the Indian Medical Service in order the better to serve his people. The sight of dead and wounded in the streets of Peshawar as a result of the Government firing brought him out of the confines of a comfortable home run in the latest Western style. He was imprisoned and sent off to the distant Hazari Bagh Jail. He considers it his duty to give free medical advice and even medicines to the poor and the indigent. While out on tour even after a long march of 25 miles on foot, he will neither eat nor rest before he has attended and ministered to the sick and the infirm in the villages. He is absolutely fearless. Those who have the good fortune to know him well will testify to his great personal courage. He is absolutely calm even when the worst type of personal danger stares him in the face.

In the rival camp, that is, the Muslim League, the star politician is, of course, Sardar Mohamed Aurangzeb Khan. He was practicing as a lawyer before he became Premier. He was the first to go over to Mr. Jinnah, who has made him a member of the Executive of the all-India Muslim League.

Sardar Aurangzeb goes out of his way to reward those who have done him a good turn or helped him to assume power. His difficulties are very great indeed. His is a minority Ministry, which means that you are always threatened by one or another of your supporters. It was constitutionally wrong on his part to accept office without an effective majority in the House. The Ministry is under the threat of a no confidence motion by Congress and other Opposition members. It refused to call the autumn session of the Assembly on the plea of lack of official business. This autumn session has been a normal feature of the Assembly ever since the introduction of reforms in the Province. The Ministry steadily refuses to release the five Congress M.L.A's in detention even though there is a persistent and wide-spread public demand for it. There has been a good deal of corruption in the services and also among those responsible for handling the food situation in the Province. This the present Ministry has been absolutely powerless to check. Its own supporters are dissatisfied and feel that the League has received a severe setback by accepting office in the Province. The present Finance minister, Abdul Rab Nishtar, is also a member of the all-India Muslim League Executive. He is believed to be a hot favorite of the Quaid-e-Azam. He is an astute lawyer, and was doing quite well as an advocate. By some he is considered the brain behind the League Ministry and future leader of the Muslim League organization in the Province. He was elected as an Independent candidate, and for some time leaned towards, and even actively cooperated with the Congress Party. Later on he drifted away from them, but for long steadily remained an unattached member. He is stated to have joined the League when it accepted office and is now its resolute champion.

Then there is that active and vigorous leader of the minorities, Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna. He was Finance Minister in Sir Abdul Qaiyum's Ministry which collapsed as the result of the Congress vote of no-confidence. Mehr Chand has always stubbornly fought, even in matters of detail, for the rights of the Hindu and Sikh minorities. He is shrewd and industrious and is a very fine speaker. At present he is the secretary of the Opposition party, which is mainly Congress. In his case, communalism has been more or less a pose. He has got a host of friends and admirers among Muslims. He is sure to prove a very capable and successful administrator, if induced to join any future ministry. He is very thoroughgoing and possesses a remarkable capacity for work.

Mian Jafar Shah, who belongs to a highly respectable Kakakhel family and is a member of the Provincial Assembly, is a politician with a promising future. He is a member of the Congress Party and commands considerable respect both in his party, and also in Opposition circles. He is straightforward and honest, and has clear-cut views. A man of simple habits, he is thoroughly dependable. He is a great believer in the bright future of the Pathan race, and has worked ceaselessly for the reform of Pathan society. There are others in the Congress rank who have done exceedingly well. There is young Mohamed Yunus, the brilliant author of that well-known book, *Frontier Speaks*, a man of great honesty of purpose, a man with a stout heart in a frail body. He is now languishing behind the high walls of the central prison at Haripur. This young man has a wide circle of admirers, is a trusted follower of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and has a great future before him. Arbab Abdul Rahman—an aristocratic Khan, member of the Assembly, and Deputy Leader of the Congress Party—has broken away from the tradition of his class, namely, servile reliance on the alien Government. The Arbab Sahib is immensely popular among the masses, and is an untiring worker in the cause of the Congress.

The Congress movement has thrown up a host of selfless workers. Amir Mohamed Khan, of Mardan, now a prisoner at Haripur is a fine speaker in Pushtu. His ready wit and humor are a delight to the masses. He is a shrewd, astute and well-informed politician.

Qazi Atta Ullah Khan—the former Education Minister, is another leader of note. He too is now locked up in the central prison at Haripur. The Qazi is a highly trusted follower and right-hand man of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and enjoys the absolute confidence of his chief. As Minister he did a lot to spread education in the rural areas. He is a great believer in the Pushtu language and was responsible for its introduction as the medium of instruction in all rural schools up to the Primary standard. The rise of the Red Shirt movement has witnessed the purification and spread of the Pushtu language. The records of that organization and all its correspondence are in Pushtu. A parallel movement is making headway in Afghanistan. Pushtu broadcasts have become a daily feature of the Kabul and Peshawar broadcasting stations. Afghan officials are enjoined to learn Pushtu, which is fast replacing Persian as the official language of the Afghans.



In Peshawar City, Hakim Abdul Jalil Nadvi, and Khan Ali Gul Khan are the two stalwarts of the Congress Party. Ali Gul is the President of the Provincial Congress Committee. He is a devoted follower of the movement, and has acted as elected President of the Peshawar Municipality. Hakim Abdul Jalil has got a proud record of sacrifices in the cause of national freedom. He is very outspoken, and never hesitates to put forth his point of view regardless of opposition. In Congress Committee meetings it is a treat to witness a passage at arms between the Hakim and Dr Khan Sahib. They are both blunt and direct, and yet, to the surprise of many, seem to get on remarkably well. Mehta Madan Lal, Advocate, is another politician with a promising future.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FORWARD POLICY AT WORK IN THE TRIBAL BELT

Now we will deal with a problem which has so vitally affected us in India for about a century. It has cost us crores and crores of rupees and so many valuable Indian lives. Yet we had no say, or very little say, in shaping British policy in the Tribal Belt. It is a problem about which many people in India knew very little until quite recent times. The British separated the Frontier Province from the Punjab, and established a semi-military regime there, and people in India were not allowed to know much about the Province until 1930. It was then that the great popular upsurge tore off the veil, and people in India began to hear something about conditions of life in the Province, not from official sources as hitherto, but from the political-minded and vocal leaders of the Province. If this was the case with the Province proper, our ignorance was much greater about the Tribal Belt, which stretches from the Pamirs in the north, to the Takht-e-Suleman and the border of Baluchistan in the south. This Tribal Belt is almost twice the size of the N.W. F. P., its area being 24,986 square miles. Its population, according to the latest census, is 2,377,599. But this is at best not a very accurate estimate of the Tribal population. There are very large areas in this Belt where the control of the Government is just nominal. It would be truer perhaps to put the population at about three million. This area is sandwiched between the N.W.F.P. proper on the east, and the international boundary with Afghanistan, called the Durand Line, on the west.

In this Tribal Belt there are the five Agencies, Malakand, Khyber, Kurram, North Waziristan and South Waziristan. This area includes the states of Chitral, Dir, Swat and Amb. It is inhabited by Pathan tribes, namely the Yousafzais, Afridis, Mohamands, Turis, Waziris, Mahsuds and Bhattanis, whose names are not quite unfamiliar to the people of India. The tribes inhabiting this land of mountains and valleys are all Pathans and Muslims. There is, however, a small minority of Hindus and Sikhs inhabiting this area, engaged mostly in trade. Some of the valleys, like the Swat, the Kurram, and the Tirah, are extremely beautiful and have been a source of inspiration and delight to those who have had occasion to visit them.

This is the land which the British in India have handed over to officers of the Political and Defence Departments. Here many an officer has made a name for himself. Here the British have always had wonderful opportunities for training their officers and men in active warfare, because of the chronic fighting which has been going on ever since the British set foot on this soil.

All sorts of motives have at different times urged the British to push farther and farther into these regions. Very often the fear of Russia (both Czarist and Communist) has furnished an excuse for incursions and raids into the Tribal Belt which have always ended in some annexation of further territory. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the 'Russian Bear' was steadily advancing towards the Oxus, and the Central Asian Khanates of Khiva and Bukhara were, after a weak resistance, swallowed up in the great land mass called Russia. This same Russian Bear, we were told, made it desirable for the British to have a strong and independent State in Afghanistan, to act as a buffer between the 'Bear' moving south and the 'Lion' steadily moving north, after having crushed the great Indian rising of 1857—which the British still prefer to call the Indian Mutiny. This professed desire to have a strong and independent buffer between Russia and India stands negated by the course of British policy ever since the annexation of the N.W.F.P. The Tribal area rightly belonged to, and formed part of, Afghanistan till 1849. It must be admitted that the measure of control exercised by the Afghan Government at Kabul depended very much on the character and capacity of the king who ruled in Kabul. If the king was strong, his control was real. Under weak kings the control was at best only nominal.

It is quite clear from the actual course of British policy—all public pronouncements of policy to the contrary notwithstanding—that it was intended to reduce Afghanistan to the position of a vassal State—a State receiving a subsidy from the British Indian Government, who in return had entire control of its foreign policy. Twice the British marched as far as Kabul, and on the second occasion in the eighties of the last century, they clearly had every intention of staying on. The flame of the Afghan spirit of independence flared up, the tribes rose as one man and wiped out the entire British force—only one doctor survived to bring the tale of annihilation and massacre. The theory that the British wanted to have a strong and independent buffer was falsified by these events. It was only the Afghans' spirit of independence that saved them from sharing the fate which had overtaken the various parts of India.

Let us now examine how this policy of vivisection and emasculation of Afghanistan has been consistently and scientifically pursued by the British.

The Afghan maritime province of Baluchistan was annexed in 1878. Afghanistan became completely landlocked. The Khan of Kalat, who was a feudatory of the Afghan King, was forced to transfer his allegiance to the British. This policy not only cut off Afghanistan from all access to the sea, which naturally is an obstacle to progress, but it went still further, and, in the Words of the Great Emir Abdul Rahman, pointed a pistol at the heart of his country. Before this the Emir had been deprived not only of Sindh, but of the country which now forms the N.W.F.P. In vain did Emir Abdul Rahman plead with the British. He said: If you cut them off from my dominions they will never be of any use to you or me. You can hold them down in peace, but if at any time a foreign enemy appears on the borders of India, these tribes will be your worst enemy.

During and after the second Afghan War of 1878, when the British invaded Afghanistan, they succeeded in helping themselves to a large slice of Afghan territory. Kurrum and the Khyber were annexed. The Zhob Valley, in Baluchistan, inhabited by Pathans, was occupied in 1889. This is not all. The Durand Mission was sent out in 1893 to demarcate the international boundary between India and Afghanistan. The Emir was powerless and was forced to surrender Afghan sovereignty over the whole of the Tribal Belt, covering an area of about 25,000 square miles. This territory was definitely Afghan, and in race, language and religion, one with that country. Having secured the Tribal Belt, the British, who had all along professed a keen desire to see Afghanistan strong and independent, began their policy of making their control effective over this 'no-man's-land', with Indian men and Indian money. This was the birth of the Frontier Problem, and a problem it remains even today, despite numerous expeditions, scandalous squandering of crores and crores of Indian money, and the continual loss of valuable Indian lives.

During the debate on a cut motion moved by Mr. Asaf Ali in the Central Legislative Assembly in 1937, some striking pronouncements were made by Sir Aubrey Metcalfe – the then Foreign Secretary. In these the British attitude towards the tribes was made clear, and British policy was enunciated in terms that were at once clear and unequivocal. Regarding the status of the Tribal Belt, Sir Aubrey said: 'There is no independent territory of any kind between the administered border and the Durand line.' On an interjection by Mr. Asaf Ali, Sir Aubrey added he meant 'internationally independent'. Then he proceeded to announce the past and present policy of his Government in these words: 'In some parts there is a partial administration, and in others, in deference to the treaties which we have with the tribes, we allow them to maintain complete internal autonomy, and they run their own affairs entirely.' He added that the tribesmen were British protected subjects and that a policy of peaceful penetration had been in force since 1923. Sir Aubrey proceeded to say: I am urged to revert to the close-border policy that was more or less in force until 1923. I am quite prepared to admit that up till 1923 there was a considerable amount of chopping and changing, though on the whole we were inclined to the policy of leaving the tribes to their own devices and not interfering with them. Since 1923 we have been, so far as we could, consistent in pursuing a policy of peaceful penetration. The Foreign Secretary frankly admitted that while the close-border policy held the field, it was found that they had got no nearer to any final solution of the problem. He added: The Government of India do not claim to be absolutely right. What we do claim is that this is the best policy which we have been able to devise, and which anybody has been able to suggest for dealing with this problem. We are now asked to leave the Tribal territory to stew in its own juice. Then talking of the 'Forward Policy', he said: 'The other policy would be to advance right up to the international boundary, to conquer, to disarm and to administer. That, I may say now, is not a policy which the Government of India favor at present, nor have they any intention of undertaking it at present.'

Call it by whatever name you like—'close-border' policy, 'hit-and-run' policy, 'policy of masterly inactivity', or 'policy of peaceful penetration' - it has been consistent in one thing, namely, its aim. It has aimed at the effective subjugation and emasculation of the tribes and the bringing of more and more of the tribal territory under British control. All manner of devices have been used to achieve this object. A group of special officers of the Political Department, working with Assistant Political Agents, Political Tehsildars and Political Naib-Tehsildars, has been placed in charge of tribal problems. Behind these officers stand the Khassadars, Scouts and other tribal levies, and also a considerable part of the regular Indian Army. Before the present war began, the bulk of the Indian Army was maintained in various Frontier garrison towns called Cantonments scattered from Rawalpindi right up to Landi Kotal and in fact, all along the Afghan border from Gilgit, in the north, to Quetta in Baluchistan, in the south. Large funds have always been placed at the disposal of these political officers to 'civilize' the tribes by corrupting them. Gold and guns have been used in great profusion to tame and subdue these warlike tribes.

The political officers work through informers from among the tribesmen, and also some recruited from the Province. These informers are expected to bring information as to the doings in the Tribal Belt. They receive payment for services rendered. Then there are the 'Maliks' or elders of the tribes. These men receive cash allowances, and sometimes titles—to give them a sense of self importance. The idea has always been to exercise control through these Maliks and other elders. Very large sums have been paid ever since the British came in contact with the tribes. These enormous sums have, of course, come from the Indian Treasury, which means the Indian taxpayer.

It is well known, though, naturally, it will be hotly denied by the British Government in India, that many of these subordinate Political Officers selected by the British to serve on the Frontier have been corrupt and unscrupulous. This charge cannot be made against the majority of British political officers, whose integrity in money matters has been on the whole of a high order. Some—perhaps a small percentage among the British—have at times succumbed to temptation. The actual spending of the money earmarked for the Tribal areas was left in the hands of these political officers and until quite recent times their accounts were not even audited. As a result of the pressure of public opinion some system of auditing has now been introduced. The promotion of these officers depends considerable on some spectacular act, which may result in an increase in British control over some tribe, or section of a tribe. Incidents are known to have been deliberately provoked to enable Government forces to measure their strength against some unfortunate tribe. Every expedition of this kind has meant bribes to tribal intermediaries and fifth columnists, and an opportunity to an unscrupulous and corrupt official to make his life's fortune. Some of the Indian Officers in the Political Department are known to have done exceedingly well for themselves and amassed considerable fortunes.

Inter-tribal jealousies have furnished excellent opportunities to the Government of India to intervene. For example, a section of the Mohamands called the Lower Mohamands have been declared a protected tribe. Whenever there has been an inter-tribal quarrel between the Upper and Lower Mohamands, the Government of India have ordered armed intervention.

Road-making is another method of 'civilizing' these tribes. A road was pushed through Mohamand country, which led to several expeditions. Similarly, a network of roads has been built in Waziristan and every attempt at road-making has been rightly resented by the tribe concerned. They hate outside intervention, and a road they very rightly consider as the prelude to repeated interference in their domestic affairs. Every attempt at road-making has led to an expedition and has entailed enormous expenditure to the Indian taxpayer. The Afridis, who are perhaps the most politically conscious tribe, have definitely refused to allow any road to be built in their territory, and have successfully resisted all attempts at road-building.

The Military have naturally played the greatest part in attempting to break the tribesmen's spirit of resistance. During the 70 years preceding 1937, it is stated, as many as 26 major expeditions were led against the Tribal Belt. Waziristan alone, between 1892 and 1932, accounted for 17 such military expeditions by the Government of India against the Mahsuds and the Waziris. In the thirties of the present century, in one such expedition, as many as forty thousand troops, equipped with artillery, aeroplanes, machine-guns, tanks, armored cars and all other paraphernalia of modern warfare, were engaged in Waziristan. After about two years of hostilities, the Government of India were back again at the starting point. Very wisely, the Government of India have always taken good care to deal with these tribes one by one, whenever force had to be employed. In 1897, for the first time, there was something like a general rising all along the Frontier. From Chitral, in the north, to the Takht-e-Suleman Mountain in the south, the entire Frontier was ablaze. These troubles came in the wake of the Durand Mission, and the attempts at demarcating the Frontier. There was extensive fighting in Malakand, and the Fort of Chakdara was besieged. The Mohamands were up in arms, and, descending from their grim hills overlooking the Peshawar plain, they sacked the town of Shabqadar. The Afridis too were on the war-path and seized the Khyber. It was at a tremendous cost in men and money that this wide-spread rising was suppressed.

The results achieved have been far from happy. George Mac-Munn, in his book *The Romance of the Indian Frontiers*, sums up the situation in the following words: 'It has been said and repeated by a certain school of thought that to have had this problem with us for 70 years and more, to have spent large sums on Frontier expeditions, and still to have the problem before us, is a great slur on our acumen and capacity.' Those responsible for directing the British policy against the tribes both at Whitehall and in New Delhi refuse to learn anything from the lessons of the past. They have decreed that the Tribal area is British territory, and that the tribesmen are British subjects, and,

therefore, they seem as determined as ever to make good their claim. The British are, however, fully alive to the difficulties of the situation, and the magnitude of the task ahead. It is realized that the complete disarmament and administration of the Tribal country up to the Durand Line is an extraordinarily difficult proposition. The cost would probably run into crores of rupees. The loss of life would be heavy. A series of campaigns would have to be undertaken, extending over a number of years, and most of the Indian Army would be involved in the operations. At one time a 'scientific frontier' for India was advocated along the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line. But the staggering defeat sustained by British arms in Afghanistan made this dream impossible of realization. The aim at present seems to be to gain effective control of the Tribal Belt, by means peaceful and otherwise, so that the Durand Line becomes the real frontier of an India which is British, instead of the dream-Frontier that it is now. British propagandists—official and non-official—never tire of telling the world that the tribesmen are a dangerous lot, eager as ever to swoop down on the rich and fertile plains of Hindustan, to kill and to plunder as their ancestors used to do in olden days. For did not a British Defence Secretary thus speak of the tribesmen in the Central Assembly in 1930?— 'Every grown man that is now on the North-Western Frontier is a potential warrior. Their combined fighting strength may be put at half a million, and they possess between them at least 250,000 rifles, most of which are modern weapons of military precision. The man behind the gun is perhaps as good a marksman as is to be found in any part of the world.' It has been given out that Britain's difficulty is the tribesmen's opportunity. Has it occurred to any one that though Great Britain has, since 1939, been engaged in a life-and-death struggle all the world over, there has been no eruption of violence at all in the entire Pathan borderland? Is this due to a sudden change of heart on the part of the tribesmen? Or is it the result of some hypnotic spell the officers of the Political Department have cast on these people? What truly does this amazing tranquility portend? The answer is very simple. British agents on the Frontier are past masters in the art of provoking incidents which could be held up before a credulous world, fed on one-sided propaganda, to show that the aggression has come from the tribesmen, and that it has got to be met by force. It would seem that owing to the many preoccupations of the British Government abroad and on the North-Eastern Frontier, Political officers on the North-West have been ordered to hold their hands and not to provoke any more 'incidents'. They have perhaps been instructed to drop the programme of road-building and other allied activities. To the tribesman that would be a heaven-sent opportunity to enjoy the peace so persistently denied him by a Government bent on the subjugation and annexation of his country. The truth is, the tribesman has always been on the defensive. If he has taken up arms, it has only been to resist 'peaceful penetration', which is but a polite name for wanton aggression. Now that thanks to the war, the Imperial Government have cried halt to their expansionist policy, these brave and hardy fighters of the Tribal Belt, who prize liberty more than their lives, are content to be peaceful and quiet.

In more recent times, the development of the air arm tempted the Government of India to use aeroplanes against the tribesmen.

This was done under directions from the Imperial Government, and with their approval and concurrence. Were it a case of employing aeroplanes against formations of tribes actively engaged in open hostilities with British forces, one could say that a more effective weapon was being used to drive some sense into these tribal hot-heads. But that was hardly the case. Planes were used to bomb tribal villages far from the scene of actual hostilities. It is asserted that the British Government have always arranged to drop notices over areas marked out for bombing. We are told that these notices were dropped in such a way, and at such a time, that the villagers had ample notice of what was coming. We are told that there was ample time for the villagers—men, women and children—to clear out with their movables and cattle before the bombing actually started. It is well-known that tribal villages in Mohamand territory and in Waziristan have been subjected to aerial bombing. The character of the country lends itself admirably to guerilla warfare in which these men excel. The problem was how to get at them, and the air arm came handy.

Much is made of the notices said to have been dropped in good time. When a tribe is at war all able-bodied men are at the front far away from their villages. Left behind are only old men, women and children. These villages also have their mosques. You can hardly imagine a Pathan village without one or two, for congregational worship is a normal feature of Pathan village life. To subject such old men, women, children, and their places of worship to bombing from the air can never be justified either on the score of International law or morality. The tribesmen do not possess anti-aircraft guns. They cannot, therefore, hit back. Moreover, illiteracy is the rule in such villages. There are very few who can claim to read such notices.

Air bombing of the Tribal areas has sent a wave of horror throughout the length and breadth of India. A matter like that could not be ignored. The question has been raised again and again on the floor of the Central Legislative Assembly, and the House has roundly condemned the action of the Government.

In August 1935, Dr Khan Sahib moved an adjournment motion to discuss the bombing of Tribal villages from the air in the Mohamand area. (Aeroplanes had begun bombing villages in Mohamand territory on August 19th 1935.) The question of adequacy of notice was very ably taken up by Dr Khan Sahib. He said: 'As for giving notice, the first notice which I saw personally in the Peshawar Press was published on August 22nd. You hear again Government dictating in their communiqués that they warn people to get out of their houses, but I can assure you that the first warning they get is the first



bomb which is dropped on them by the aeroplanes. They have no anti-aircraft guns, and you can drop bombs on them without any fear<sup>3</sup> and without taking much risk.'

The Defence Secretary, Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham, defended. Government action. The arguments advanced were as follows. Hitherto the tribesmen had been inaccessible. It was no longer so, because of the gallant air force which Government now had at their disposal. Government always gave 24 hours' notice. Air bombing was sought to be defended on humanitarian grounds: it meant fewer casualties. It was conveniently forgotten that all able-bodied men were away from their villages, fighting at the front. 'Accessibles', therefore, to the air-arm were only aged men, the sick, women and children and cattle, and 'the fewer casualties' were all among them. Loud were the protests when the Germans started bombing non-belligerent civilians in London and in other parts of Britain. The Germans were called all manner of names—'Huns', 'Barbarians and 'Baby-killers'. If the act of bombing those who are claimed to be British subjects is wrong, the mere giving of notice will not make it right. The great Imperial Government seem to have a double code of conduct and morals—one for the British, that is, the chosen and the ruling race, and another, quite different, for the unfortunate Pathan of the Tribal Belt.

It is significant to recall that after the first world war when the League of Nations was set up, the question of banning aerial bombing of civilians came up before the League., One would have thought that the British, who had had a taste of the German bombing of London, would be the first to agree to so sound and reasonable a proposition. Those representing His Majesty's Government on this particular occasion, to the utter horror and disgust of the civilized world, claimed an exception in the case of the Tribal areas. To revert to the debate on the adjournment motion to censure Government on the aerial bombing of villages in the Tribal area, the popular view was admirably expressed by Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, the Leader of the Opposition. He said: 'We stand here for this principle—and, indeed, we are more civilized, though we may be less scientific and less mechanized...therefore we stand for the principle that even during warfare, so far as the civil population is concerned, it shall be safe from the ravages of instruments like the bombs that were attempted to be used.' He went on: 'I further say that the economy of it is no excuse. I am not one of those who believe that economy justifies means fair or foul.' Needless to say, the censure motion was carried and the Government was defeated. This, however, did not mean the end of that hateful and indefensible, method of warfare. The Government of India, as at present constituted by law, is defeat-proof. Strange, indeed, are the ways of the British Government. While professing to fight for democracy it has set up a most undemocratic system of Government in this country. But there is not the least doubt as to the strength and intensity of public opinion in India against the bombing of Tribal villages from the air.

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<sup>3</sup> Read his speech, Central Assembly Debates, Vol. V., 1985, p. 878

The insatiable land hunger of the agents of British Imperialism, forced Amir Abdul Rahman Khan of Afghanistan to give up Afghan sovereignty over the Tribal Belt. But all attempts at the pacification of the Tribal area have failed, as they richly deserved to fail. For about a century, the British Government has been in a state of chronic war with the tribes. Expeditions, the payment of cash grants to tribesmen, and all the wiles of British diplomacy have failed to solve the Tribal problem. And a problem it has remained to this date. New ideas are at work, and enlightened public opinion in India has suggested different methods for dealing with this problem. It will be more appropriate to deal with this subject in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

to correct what they consider to be Tribal intransigence. For this the occasions have been many and frequent. Military expeditions have, however, failed to achieve the desired object. The Government of India have been trying to cure the disease of Tribal lawlessness by violence. No serious efforts seem to have been made to find out the real causes. Non-official public opinion, especially in Nationalist circles, has clearly perceived that Tribal lawlessness is very largely due to economic factors. The tribesman in his hills has no settled occupation to keep him busy. There is a scarcity of cultivable land. There are no industries worth the name. Most of the tribesmen are unemployed or employed for only a part of the year. It is the duty of the Central Government to find work for such people. Large areas of fertile land are lying useless in the Province, and to some extent in the Tribal Belt, for lack of water. The digging of canals to irrigate these waste areas, on which tribal people could be settled, is one way of solving this problem. Again, we get the best fighting material in the world amongst the tribesmen of the North-West. Large numbers of them can be safely absorbed in the Indian Army, where they will prove a great asset. Cottage industries should be encouraged; Government must not only help to train up people, but also provide them with the necessary capital, technical advice, and marketing facilities. Cottage industries in the Tribal area are similar to those now existing in the Province. Hence the methods for developing these cottage industries in the Tribal Belt and the Province are identical. Very little seems to have been done in the matter of imparting education to boys and girls in the Tribal area. The existing schools in the Agencies are mostly patronized by the children of outsiders doing garrison duty or carrying on trade in towns in the Agencies. Very serious efforts will have to be made to induce the tribesmen to send their children to school. The number of schools will have to be increased. Scholarships must be earmarked for tribal children. When tribal boys have completed their education, preference should be given to them in the Matter of recruitment to the Government services.

In the Province proper also, Government seem to have been content, so far, with maintaining law and order. They have had neither the time nor the inclination to pay proper attention, to the economic conditions of the people. Those responsible for running the provincial administration have thought that a matter like the development of cottage and large-scale industries was no business of theirs. That was left to private enterprise – and there was no private enterprise to do it. Outside capitalists have fought shy of investing money in a Province where blood-feuds and murders still take considerable toll of human lives, and highway robberies have not yet become a thing of the past.

There is plenty of fertile land available in the Province, which has not yet been brought under the plough. Water is the main problem. Thousands and thousands of acres can be turned into corn and fruit growing areas if water were made available. Great stretches of fertile land are lying waste in the Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu and Kohat districts and in the Peshawar tehsil of the Peshawar district. The Provincial Government have done much in the matter of canals. But finance is a great handicap. It is the duty of the Central Government to come out with a generous offer of help. Large quantities of water, which could have been used for growing crops, are taken away by the military authorities for the use of troops and for lawns and gardens in the Cantonments scattered all over the Province and the Tribal Belt. A considerable quantity of Bara water is taken away from that river for Peshawar Cantonment, while vast stretches of fertile land outside and up to the Afridi foothills have to do with what little is left over. Again, the development of irrigation, and an increase in acreage under the plough will result in the settlement of people from the Tribal area on this land. The Tribal problem is the responsibility of the Centre. Large numbers of Mohamands have, in recent times, come down and settled in the Charsadda plain, which is mostly canal-irrigated; and some Afridis in Peshawar tehsil and the Kohat district. If Sindh could make such admirable use of the waters of the Indus and if the Punjab is busy with the Thall Project which will irrigate large areas that are now desert, right opposite the N.W.F.P., there is no reason why a more effective use of Indus water should not be made for irrigating our southern districts. The British have believed in and used force to meet the Tribal problem. The forces of nationalism have been mobilized in India, and the 011ie is not far off when the GoveraillePt at the centre Will be a National Government. One of the first tasks to which such a Government will have to address itself is the construction of new canals and the development of means of irrigation both in the Province as well as in the Tribal Belt.

According to the Administration Report of the N.W.F.P. for 1937-8, the total area irrigated by the major canals of the Province was 460,420 acres. The total capital outlay, direct and indirect, up to the end of March 1938 was Rs. 3,20,78,476. The gross assessment, direct and indirect, from all sources amounted to Rs. 24,66,899. The working expenses amounted to Rs. 8,99,979, and the interest on the capital outlay to Rs. 11,21,659. The result was a profit of Rs. 4,45,261. The area irrigated by the Lower Swat Canal was 157,545 acres. The working of the canal, as judged by actual realization, resulted in a profit of 12.34 percent on the capital invested. The profit, as judged by the assessment, was 12.87 percent. The Kabul River Canal irrigated an area of 50,239 acres. The working of the canal, judged by actual realization, resulted in a profit of 8.6 percent on the capital invested. As judged by actual assessment, the profit was 8.95 percent. The area irrigated by the Upper Swat Canal was 212,632 acres. The working expenses came to Rs. 3,94,312. As judged by the assessment, the year's working resulted in a profit of 1.95 percent on the capital invested, while actual realization produced a profit of 3.17 percent. All these three canals irrigate areas in Peshawar and Mardan districts. Then comes the Paharpur Canal, in Dera Ismail Khan district, which did not pay in the year

1937-8. The area irrigated by this canal was 40,004 acres. The working of the canal, judged by actual realization, resulted in a loss of 142 percent. Judged by actual assessment the loss was 1.02 percent. It is clear that on the whole the canal system in the Province is a paying proposition.

There are other means of irrigation as well. Large areas are watered by means of Persian wells, called *arhats*. Then there are numerous springs all over the Province and the Tribal area, some of which have been turned to very good use. For instance, the Kohat Springs irrigate a considerable area of land. Much still remains to be done in the matter of wells. The Government should advance money to the people to dig more wells at suitable places. It is hoped that with the end of the war, it will be possible to carry electricity even to distant villages, where it can be used for pumping water from the wells.

Under the impetus of the 'Grow More Food' campaign, the irrigation system has in recent times been extended. Five irrigation schemes, chief of which is the New Michni Branch of the Doab Canal, have already been completed at a cost of Rs. 2,83,675; and it is anticipated that this will bring an area of about five thousand acres under cultivation. The Joesheikh Linking Scheme, now under consideration, is likely to improve the irrigation of twenty thousand acres of fertile land. Half the cost of this scheme is to be borne by the Central Government. The widening of the Bara Tunnels at the head of the Bara Canals is another scheme now under consideration. Provision has also been made in the next budget for remodeling the Takkarwah Distributary of the Paharpur Canal, and for the construction of the first stage of the Kabul River Canal right-bank lift-irrigation scheme. The latter, when completed, will bring about 15,000 acres of land under irrigation.

But this is merely tinkering with a vital problem. We have got to come to grips with it in right earnest. Our Province is not self-sufficient in the matter of food-grains. We, however, export large quantities of eggs and meat, to other Provinces. Yet, we do not get enough food-grains in return. This may become a serious problem if the transport system should break down on account of war or other demands on it which the Central Government may consider more important. To develop our irrigation system, we require more money. It cannot be said that money cannot be found. It would be of interest to know that the strength of the 'Additional Police' in the N.W.F.P. before the war was 201. The present strength of the force is 9,775. This force of Additional Police has been hurriedly recruited during war-time, to perform a number of duties, such as border defence, arrest of proclaimed offenders, apprehension of military deserters, and curbing of the outlaw menace in Charsadda. The cost of this additional war-time force is about Rs. 6141 lakhs, of which about 90 percent is met from Central revenues. Even in normal times the Frontier Province has a regular Police force of about 6,500. Its present strength is about the same. It cannot be said that the duties assigned to the 'Additional Police' cannot be performed by the regular Police. It would not be rash to hazard the

guess that the real object of having such a large additional force in the N.W.F.P. was to find employment for thousands of young men, and to have a tranquil, contented Frontier, in war-time. If the Central Government can find something like Rs. 61 lakhs for an unproductive venture of this kind, it cannot plead lack of funds for such productive and long-range investments as the digging of more canals in the Province and the Tribal area.

The Malakand Hydro-Electric scheme was a big step in the right direction. Had we waited for private enterprise, a scheme of such far-reaching importance might never have seen the light of day. The Provincial Government, therefore, stepped in and successfully launched this enterprise, which has proved a veritable boon to the Province. The first stage of the scheme, estimated to cost Rs. 42,27,205, received the sanction of the local Government during 1934-5. The power site is situated on the Upper Swat Canal, where it leaves the Benton Tunnel near Malakand Fort and flows down the bed of the steep Dargai Nullah before entering the canal proper. A minimum flow of 1,000 cubic feet per second is secured through the tunnel from the Swat River, and this flow on a head of 50 feet is capable of developing 16,000 K. W. continuously day and night throughout the year. The power is transmitted to grid sub-stations located in Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar Cantonment and Charsadda. From there power in bulk is supplied to the Military authorities at Nowshera, Risalpur and Peshawar Cantonments. These sub-stations supply direct to the towns of Mardan, Hoti, Nowshera, Charsadda, and several villages nearby. Power is delivered to the consumer at as low a rate as possible for industrial and agricultural purposes as well as for heating and lighting. The outbreak of World War II has checked the development of the scheme. The necessary material is very difficult to obtain, and it has not been possible to carry electricity to remote villages, or to extend it to the neighboring districts. There has of late been an increase in revenue. The surplus of revenue over expenditure during the current financial year is Rs. 1,62,000, compared with Rs. 89,000 last year. In the coming year the surplus, it is estimated, will be Rs. 1,98,000. The surplus in 1942-3 was credited to capitalized interest, thus reducing the annual interest charges on the scheme. The surplus for this year will be used up in paying off deferred depreciation charges, which could not be met during earlier years. It is, however, hoped that the scheme will, for the first time next year, pay a substantial and unencumbered revenue. With the termination of the war, there is every possibility of extending and developing the scheme. Electricity will prove an asset to the agricultural and industrial development of the Province. Large quantities of bleaching powder, chlorine, and caustic soda are being imported into India. With the extension of the grid system of electric supply, cheap electricity will be available as power in the salt mines of Jatta, Karak, and Bahadur Biel, in Kohat district. It will then be quite easy to manufacture such chemicals locally.

There seems to be a complete absence of any plan for the setting up of industries in the Province. Some new industries have of late sprung up under the stress of the present war. With a view to meeting the demand of the Defence Department for dried fruits,

processed from fresh fruits, a number of drying stations which work mainly in the summer, have sprung up recently. In 1943, about 3,500 tons of dried fruits were thus supplied, and orders were placed during 1944 for a similar quantity. There is a Government as well as a private fruit-processing factory at Peshawar. The Government of India have provided Rs. 61 lakhs for the erection of a canning factory at Nasirpur, near Peshawar. This is situated in the heart of the fruit growing area and has already started Work. There seems to be a great future for this industry in the Province. The N.W.F.P. is a fruit-growing orchard, and there are even greater possibilities for developing fruit culture. The Government of India will have to put up a tariff to protect the fruit-canning industry after the war. If cheap canned fruit from abroad is allowed to come into the Indian market, it will kill the Nasirpur enterprise and similar ventures in other parts of India Another war-time industry is the meat dehydration factory at Nowshera for the Defence Department. This is controlled and managed by the Provincial Government for the Defence Department. The activities of this factory encroach directly on the food requirements of the people. The Frontier Pathan consumes a lot of meat. Unlike other parts of India, meat enters into the everyday diet of the people. Meat prices in Frontier bazaars have already touched the peak, and are perhaps the highest in India. Our people badly need all the meat they produce, and a province deficient in food-grains even in normal times can ill afford to part with such large quantities of its meat supply.

There is a serious difference of opinion in India between the protagonists of machine industries and those who swear by cottage industries. It is clear enough to those who have eyes to see that we cannot do without machines. We must have heavy industries; we must make use of the most up-to-date machinery, if we wish to survive. We cannot, therefore, shut out machines from this Province. There are certain industries peculiarly suited to our Province where the latest type of machinery is absolutely necessary. Cottage industries are also indispensable for a balanced national economy – more so in a predominantly agriculturist country like India, where we must have cottage industries to keep our peasants busy when there is no work to do on the land.

Let us take the case of the sugar industry. When the Congress Ministry was in power, they set up a factory at Takhat-Bat in the Mardan district. In Peshawar and Mardan districts, about 63,000 acres of some of our most fertile land is under sugarcane crop. The sugar-cane grown is of excellent quality. Almost all this cane was formerly ( as most of it is even today) crushed by bullock-driven crushing mills called *ghanis*. It was with considerable misgivings that the sugar mill was set up. It was feared that it would not pay. People fought shy of the scheme and would not invest. The Congress Government at once invested about Rs. 2 lakhs in the enterprise. The mill started work and has done exceedingly well. During the years of this war, it has proved a great boon to the people of this Province. Sugar is now so difficult to obtain. It is a vital necessity in the N.W.F.P., where people drink large quantities of tea. The transport system has, during war-time, been unable to cope with the demand for transport of goods. The

Takhat-Bat sugar mill, the supervision of which is partly a Government responsibility, has come in very handy, and met a large part of our demand. Sri J. C. Kumarappa, who has written an excellent report called A Plan for the Economic Development of the N.W.F.P., (1940), felt considerable misgivings about the soundness of the Takhat-Bai venture. He wrote: 'The scheme is ill-advised and ill-timed, and will result in financial loss to the State if it fails; and if it succeeds, it will spell ruin to several of the successful gur producers of the day.' Fortunately, neither of these forebodings has turned out to be true. The gur manufacturers are doing exceedingly well, and the scheme is a very paying proposition at present. There is absolutely no reason why it should not pay in the future, if the Government of India take steps to protect our very important sugar industry against outside competition.

For my facts and figures I have drawn extensively on Sri Kumarappa's book. His book deals mostly with cottage industries. It is the only book of its kind about the Frontier I have come across. He has taken great pains to present a very complicated subject within the compass of about 36 pages. The volume gives very useful facts and figures about all our cottage industries. It is a pity that some very valuable suggestions of his have not been given effect to. The Provincial Government is, by tradition, like a policeman. Those who run it have no time to think of economic matters on which the welfare of our people so very largely depends. If more attention were given to the economic side of our problem, the Provincial Government would cease to be the policeman that it is today.

To revert to sugar and gut-making. Sri Kumarappa says 'In Mardan and Charsadda alone over 10 lakhs of maunds of gut are produced per annum.' The demand for sugar has increased.

'About 6,70,000 maunds of sugar and about 85,000 maunds of tea are being imported into the Province annually.' The gut made in the two districts of Mardan and Peshawar is of good quality, but it could be improved considerably, if more hygienic methods were adopted during the process of extraction, fermentation and preparation. There is ample room in this Province for one or two more sugar mills. The Provincial Government and the Central Government must see to it that these mills are State-owned. An exception can be made only in favor of agriculturists, particularly cane-growers, who must be induced to take up part of the share issue. It would be wrong to turn over this enterprise to private capitalists working purely for profit. All enlightened nations are working for State-ownership of industry. At a time like this, it would be wrong to hand over these industries to one or more capitalists. Let the people own these enterprises, and let them reap the benefits that accrue from them.

The Province and the Tribal Belt form a great wool-producing tract, and are preeminently fitted by nature to possess a first-class woolen industry. This can be of the cottage as well as of the machine variety. The very large number of sheep in this area yield enormous quantities of wool. According to Sri Kumarappa, out of about 40,000



maunds of wool available in the Province, only about 5,000 maunds are used in the Province. The balance is exported to mills in different parts of India and abroad. In addition, there are 8,000 maunds of goat's hair available. About a third of this goes to the U. S. A. for making belting. The rest is used in the Province, chiefly for making ropes. The quality of wool will have to be improved considerably if the industry is to come into its own. Sri Kumarappa suggests: 'To this end the grading of wool, the introduction of weaving of cloth and manufacture of woollen goods should be introduced through the agencies of the Government.' Excellent blankets, that is sharees are made in Kagan and Swat. Swati sharees make excellent curtains for the winter months. The paths made in Chitral provide excellent material for warm woollen coats. The choghas of Chitral have won a name for themselves and can be used either as dressing gowns or overcoats. If Afghanistan can have a woollen mill, there is no reason why the Frontier Province should not have a woollen mill of its own. It is the duty of Government to take an interest in developing the woollen cottage industry. This can be done by improving sheep-breeding, by furnishing technical and financial assistance, and by affording marketing facilities. Our next-door neighbour, Kashmir, has done exceedingly well in producing fine woollen goods. There is no valid reason why we should not be able to produce goods comparable in quality to those produced in Kashmir.

Again, there is great scope for a large tannery run on the most up-to-date lines. Large quantities of buffalo, ox, and cow hides, goat and sheep skins are available in the Province and the Tribal Belt. We import about 100,000 head of cattle annually, partly for dairy purposes, but mostly for slaughter. Today we use about one-seventh of the available hides here, and export the rest. We import into the Province annually about 40,000 maunds of half and full tanned leather, and over 3,000 maunds of half-tanned skins. I understand the requisite material for tanning is available in the Province. Owing to lack of finance, even our skilled workers turn out inferior leather. The hides and skins that we export could be very profitably tanned within the Province, and at the same time afford useful and lucrative employment to our people. Here is a venture the Provincial Government could easily take up. The danger here again, is that some capitalist may succeed in inducing a shaky Ministry with the policeman's mentality to hand over this very valuable enterprise to private ownership.

To those interested in cottage industries, Sri Kumarappa's book furnishes very valuable information. Cotton spinning and weaving, oil pressing, soap-making, making of paints and varnishes, dairy farming, paper-making, bee-keeping, ghee manufacture, poultry rearing, wood-work, tonga-building and a host of other useful cottage industries are admirably discussed in that treatise. It also contains very valuable suggestions on setting up the requisite administrative machinery such as the appointment of a Director of Industries, starting a Central training institute, revision of the archaic and foolish octroi schedules, etc.—suggestions to which the Provincial Government have paid no attention so far.

When we look carefully at the economic background of the Province and the Tribal Belt, what strikes us most is the complete absence of any planning. Industries have grown up under the stress of some dire necessity, and have been allowed to fall into decay when the necessity passed. We are living in an age when all enlightened nations plan before they begin to build. The Tribal areas are the responsibility of the Centre. The Provincial Government is responsible for the Province. It is the duty of the Centre and the Province to look ahead and plan. The setting up of a Planning Committee of experts is the crying need of the hour. On this Planning Committee we must have industrialists, representatives of the agriculturists, and agricultural experts, economists and popular representatives. To the Planning Committee should be entrusted the task of finding out what large-scale industry can best thrive in this Province, and how best to help and organize such cottage industries as already exist and also to introduce new ones. Once the Committee has reported, the Governments concerned should lose no time in implementing the suggestions as best they can.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

All around us, mutually antagonistic cries rend the air. Some insist that there should be a Pakistan or Pakistans. Others are equally determined to maintain the physical integrity of India, and are mustering strong under the Akhand Hindustan banner. While Indians are thus shouting themselves hoarse with these mutually destructive slogans, the British just keep smiling, secure in the conviction that no one dare seriously challenge their sovereignty.

The Muslim League has, through Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, laid claim to six Provinces. The four Provinces of the N.W. F. P., the Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan are to form the sovereign and independent State of North-Western Pakistan. The two eastern Provinces of Bengal and Assam are to form the other independent and sovereign State of North-Eastern Pakistan. Mr Jinnah wants self-determination for the Muslims. He alone is to determine the fate of the Muslims. There is to be no plebiscite. He would not be perturbed in the least, if large non-Muslim majority areas of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam are included in these Pakistans. He insists on the Congress agreeing unconditionally to his demands, while the British are still in power. That the Congress might accept them for the time being, and repudiate the undertaking when it actually seizes power, is a possibility that none seems to have envisaged. Who shall enforce the agreement, should a Congress blinded with the lust of power, ultimately repudiate it? Must the third party stay on to execute this decree? What sort of Muslim State would the Eastern Provinces be where almost half the population is non-Muslim? Would it be a healthy State, would it be strong, would it have peace? If Muslims, who form one fourth of the population of India, must have a separate State or States, how could the non-Muslims in the Eastern Pakistan—almost equal numerically to the Muslims—be denied a similar privilege? Again, the same series of questions confronts us with respect to the North-Western Pakistan! Would the Punjab, the main pillar of this State, be a healthy Muslim State with about 43 percent of hostile non-Muslims inhabiting an area contiguous to Hindustan?

What about the nationalities or units inside Pakistan, the Pathans, the Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis, and Kashmiris? Would the Pathan homelands of the N.W.F.P. and the Tribal Belt have the right to decide their own future? Would they have the right to join Hindustan, Pakistan or Afghanistan or even to form a State of their own if they so wished? Would this Province be asked to vote with the rest of Pakistan only to find itself submerged by an over-whelming non-Pathan electorate? Again, perhaps few realize (or they try to overlook) the fact that the Pathans in the Frontier Province, the

Tribal Belt, parts of Baluchistan and Afghanistan constitute one people, speaking the same language, Pushtu, zealously following the same faith, Islam, and having the same culture. Are the Tribal areas to be left to the tender mercies of the Political and Defence Departments of the irresponsible and irremovable Centre that we have at present? The crores and crores that have been spent on the Tribal area, come from the Centre, and have not paid any dividends so far. Would the debt be honored, or repudiated, or written off?

These are some of the questions agitating the minds of the educated Pathans of the N.W.F.P. We shall soon have to find answers to them. This is a fast-changing world: and events are changing and have changed the face of the earth, in some respects beyond recognition. We cannot afford to stand by with folded hands. If we do, we will be swept away by the swift current of dynamic world forces. Let us therefore think and plan before it is too late.

As far as the Tribal Belt is concerned the present system of control must be ended. If the British continued to have the upper hand, they would do exactly what they like. They would probably adhere to their good old policy. This policy has been consistent in its aim, namely the effective occupation of the Tribal area up to the Durand Line. The labels by which it has been known at different times have, however, differed – 'Forward Policy', 'Close-Border Policy', 'Hit-and-run Policy', 'Peaceful Penetration Policy', and, at times, the 'Policy of Masterly Inactivity'. The British know full well that it is the Indian taxpayer who has had to foot the bill in blood and money in the past. They still hope that it will be possible to draw upon the same source in future. We in India cannot think in terms of blood and steel. We have no designs on the Tribal territory. We do not wish them harm. In fact, we want them to be contented and prosperous neighbors. We want to wean them from their age-old habits of murder, robbery, and blood-feuds. Our approach to the problem is very different from that of the British.

Whatever may be the shape of things to come, the first thing to do is to end all control of the Tribal area at present exercised by the, British Political and Defence Departments. The Tribal people should be encouraged to have freely elected tribal Jirgas' or councils – each Jirga should be responsible for the internal affairs of its own tribe. These tribal Jirgas should send elected representatives to a big Jirga of the Tribal Belt, It will be the duty of this 'Loe Jirga', that is the all-Tribal Jirga, to settle inter-tribal disputes and also to negotiate matters of common interest between the Tribal Belt and the Province. Such matters can be settled by a free Government of the N.W.F.P. and the all-Tribal Jirga. Besides the control exercised by the Political and Defence Departments, there is something else that must end – the hated system of engaging Tribal spies, and the payment of subsidies to unpatriotic pro-British Maliks. The Central and Provincial Governments must also set up a commission of experts, consisting of industrialists, persons with experience of cottage industries, and agricultural experts, to survey the Tribal Belt and to suggest ways and means for its economic development – particularly,

the best methods for developing agriculture and cottage industries among the Tribes. The aim should be to banish hunger, unemployment and want, from the Tribal areas. Once the report is ready, it should, with the cooperation of Tribal Jirgas, be acted upon at once. It would be found that by spending only a fraction of what we have been spending so far, we could secure a quiet and contented border.

In the political sphere also, the present system of control is defective in the extreme. Subordinate officers of the Political Department, or of the Provincial Civil Service, serving under responsible Ministers, are switched over to the Tribal areas, and can snap their fingers at their former chiefs. This system of dual control—by an autonomous Government in the Province and by an irresponsible Centre in the Tribal Belt—means friction and bad blood in actual practice, and almost a doubling of the expense. The aim, therefore, should be the unification of the Pathan homelands—the N.W. F. P., the Tribal Belt and Baluchistan. This will reduce the expenses all round. We now have a largely bounty-fed Baluchistan and N.W.F.P., and an entirely bounty-fed Tribal area. We have, in fact, three administrations where only one would do. The people are all Pathans. Why have three administrations—an Agency administration in the Tribal area, an autonomous Government in the N.W.F.P. and a Chief Commissionership in Baluchistan? This is one of the tasks to which representatives of the people of India will have to address themselves when they sit down to frame a new constitution. Whatever is saved by a unification of the administration must be spent on banishing hunger and unemployment from this area.

The Pathans are an intensely nationalistic people. If anybody has the slightest doubt on this score, he would find an answer in the mass demonstrations witnessed in Peshawar on December 27th, 1944, —when the remains of that great Pathan philosopher and politician, Sayed Jamal-ud-Din Afghani, were brought to Peshawar from Istambul on the way to their last resting place in Afghanistan. The Pathans have the utmost love and affection for their kith and kin in the free Afghan kingdom of Afghanistan. While they would resent and actively oppose any encroachment on Afghan independence either by Britain or Russia, they have no desire to be absorbed in the Afghan kingdom. The Pathans of the Frontier Province are a practical people. They take a far more realistic view of things, than people in other parts of India who have had a far greater dose of British education. In spite of all the propaganda carried on by the Muslim League, the Pathan has realized that the problem of his freedom forms part of the larger problem of India's freedom. Unlike his co-religionists in other parts of India, he has not allowed himself to be gripped by the fear complex—the fear of Hindu domination. It is for the Pathan unthinkable—an insult to his self-respect, to need a promise of protection from any section of the Indian population, however numerically strong it might be. He would much rather rely on his own strong arm to get his freedom, and to retain it against all enemies after he has won it.

We will therefore fight for our freedom, without asking for guarantees from this quarter or that. Indeed, it would be foolish to put faith in any such guarantees. We must have the right and freedom to determine our own political future. We will be a free sovereign unit, in alliance, however, with other sovereign units of Indian sub-nationalities, voluntarily surrendering a part of our sovereignty for common ends and the greater welfare of the country, and reserving our right to walk out of the Indian Federation if we so desire. The advantage will be ours – by voluntarily joining an Indian Federation we obtain direct access to the sea; we get all the advantages that membership of a large progressive State can confer, namely, education, better communications, industrialization, a scientific development of agriculture, greater opportunity for the display of our inherent talents, a much better standard of life, and, let us hope, a free and go ahead Government of our own choice. The Pathans have no desire to dominate, but they are equally determined not to submit to any dictation or discrimination of any kind from any quarter.

In this connection it would be of interest to reproduce some remarks made by the Finance Minister of the Muslim League Ministry in the N.W.F.P., in his last budget speech. The estimate of revenue receipts for the Province for 1944-5 is Rs. 226.82 lakhs, while the anticipated expenditure is Rs. 229.47 lakhs. The Central subvention constitutes almost half of our annual receipts. Said the Finance Minister: 'I am convinced that, placed as we are, our sheet-anchor in the future is an increase in the amount of our subvention, which is by far the largest single item in our revenue budget.' The same exponent of 'No Centre' proceeded: The reason is that our inelastic revenue – inelastic because the bulk of it is a fixed subvention from the Central Government of India, and there is little possibility of expansion of the remainder – is barely enough to meet our standing charges and affords but meager scope for development, whether in agriculture, education, medical relief, or any other direction which may lead to the greater happiness of the people of this Province. It is admitted that the present League Ministry has made representations to the Viceroy and the Government of India for an increase in the subvention.

Let us examine the position. The Muslim League ministers are wedded to the principle of the division of India. In their public statements they are never tired of delivering long tirades against the present Centre. Yet they do not see anything wrong in making representations to this same hated Centre for an increase in the Provincial subvention. Our people have to guard against those who preach one thing and practice its exact opposite.

We must also be on our guard against unscrupulous politicians who are not ashamed of exploiting the fair name of religion for confusing the real issues, to facilitate their own rise to power. Our people have been deceived time and again by such self-styled champions of Islam who raise the cry of 'Religion in Danger'. We must remember that it

is the vested interests who issue appeals in the name of Islam and *Shariat*, every time they see their class interests assailed by a mass awakening.

We have so often been stung very badly in the past by this same exploiting class. It is frightfully selfish, and very very corrupt. The British have never hesitated to help this class whenever it has suited their imperial interests. It is the duty of all selfless, public-spirited workers among the masses ever to be on their guard against the dangerous activities of this class. The Khudai Khidmatgar movement has dealt a death-blow to the activities of the ignorant and the superstitious amongst the Mullah hierarchy. We thought that we had buried the ghost once and for all. But of late, the ghost has reappeared in another form. The upper class with vested interests who have noticed their undeserved privileges assailed by a mass movement have suddenly developed a new love for religion. With the cry of 'Islam in Danger', this class is making perhaps a last, desperate stand for privileges and rights acquired at the expense of the masses.

We in this Province are not convinced that it is impossible for the different communities, Provinces and States in India to form a workable Government at the Centre. We are not without hope. We should like to give such an experiment a trial – and a very fair trial. If such a Centre breaks down, and proves utterly unworkable, it would then be the proper time to effect a partition of the country. We resent the fact that we have been cut up into the N.W. F. P., the Tribal Belt and Baluchistan. Why cannot we be just one unit? We should hate to see Bengal or Assam or Punjab or any other natural unit maimed or mutilated. We do not relish the idea of voting for self-determination as part of an arbitrarily cut up bigger land mass in which we would be just submerged. We should like to have, and will not rest until we have, the right to decide our own future. We are not upset by the idea of a common Centre for the whole of India. We should also consider it wrong to deny the right of self-determination to the Hindu and Sikh minorities – we prefer to call them the Pathan minority in our midst.

Let each sub-nationality or unit in India like the Frontier Province, the Punjab, and Maharashtra have the right to determine its own future. We are prepared to surrender a part of our sovereignty to a common Centre, for the greater good of all units or sub-nationalities. We hope and believe that it is not beyond the genius of the Indian race to devise a Centre where all the component units will have an equal say, and where it will be impossible for a unit or group of units to dominate over other unit or units. It is in such a setting that we are prepared to work with other parts of India. For such a free Centre, and units that are sovereign and equal, we have made tremendous sacrifices in the past. We are equally determined to make even greater sacrifices for a free Pathan Homeland in an India that is free, independent, prosperous, and powerful.

## A POST-SCRIPT

Has a new era dawned for the North-West Frontier Province? Events fraught with immense possibilities—they may even herald changes affecting the political destiny of the entire country have happened in that Province since this book went to press. Dr. Khan Sahib—presumably with Mahatma Gandhi's blessings—has formed a Congress Ministry and to signalize its assumption of power, has set free the people's leaders held long in detention. How did the League Ministry crash, to make room for a popular administration? Let us go back some way and review the situation leading to this happy consummation.

The Muslim League stepped into office in May 1943. For months past, those who were directing the policy of the League had set their eyes on the N.W.F.P. This Province with a 95 percent Muslim majority, could not be left out. How could the dream of a North-Western Pakistan come true, if the N.W.F.P. did not owe allegiance to the League? In 1943, in a House of 50, ten Congress M.L.A.'s were in prison. The Congress had set its face against legislative activities. The League came into power, aided by the British Government. Each had a different aim in view. The British wanted to persuade America that the Muslims were against the Congress. The League had to make good its claim that the Muslim Majority Provinces were with the League.

Four by-elections were held in the Muslim constituencies; all were won by the League. This, it was stated, showed the Muslims' increasing confidence in the League. Congressmen asserted that the elections were not regular; there were charges that the ballot papers of illiterate voters had been wrongly marked: that even ballot boxes had been tampered with. This resulted in accentuating the bitterness already prevalent in the Province. Under the rules a presiding officer can put an 'X' on the ballot paper for an illiterate voter. In the N.W.F.P. under the rules even the agent of a candidate cannot see this marking by the officer. Such was the suspicion rampant that when the by-election for a Sikh seat was held, Khudai Khidmatgar volunteers mounted guard on the Imperial Bank building where the ballot boxes had been deposited. They kept a constant vigil and accompanied the armed police when the ballot boxes were taken to the court to be opened.

As ten Congress M.L.A.'s were in jail, the Congress Party did not attend the first two sessions of the Provincial Assembly. After the budget session in 1944, five Congress M.L.A.'s were released, and a sixth was released soon afterwards on medical grounds. The assertion of the Congress that it was a minority Ministry was met by vehement denials from the League. The League Ministry received notice of a no-confidence



motion in the autumn of 1944, but did not summon the autumn session on the plea of lack of official business.

The budget session was summoned on March 2nd, 1945, and on March 12th the Ministry was defeated by the Congress Party by 24 votes against 18 votes—four Congress M.L.A.'s being still in jail.

Let us analyze the cause of the downfall of the League Ministry. First, it was a minority ministry: some of its supporters constantly threatened its existence, and the Ministers had at frequent intervals to make concessions to placate them. Secondly, it bungled in the matter of the control and distribution of food-stuffs. There was a good deal of nepotism and corruption among those dealing with the food problem. Thirdly, corruption had been pronounced in the public services, and even in some very high quarters, and the Ministers were . unable to check it. Fourthly, the League High Command, anxious to have a Ministry of its own to be used for purposes of bargaining with the Congress, did not care to examine the credentials of those whom it had put in power, some of whom had joined the League overnight only for a share of the spoils. They possessed neither the strength nor the courage to ask the Ministers to quit, even when they were convinced that those in authority were making a mess of things. Lastly, there was the well-organized Khudai Khidmatgar movement, well-knit by a series of sacrifices cheerfully endured in a common cause. In vain did some of the Muslim Leaguers knock at the door of the High Command requesting them either to mend the Ministry or end it. The High Command were in no mood to mend—and perhaps powerless to end—the caucus which had secured power mainly through British help. The Ministry started by promising an Islamic Government and pledged itself to abide by the dictates of the Shariat. Two years of Muslim League rule resulted in bitter disillusionment and resentment among the masses. So eager were the Ministers to hang on to office, that they and some of their supporters pinned their last hopes on Gandhij's coming to their rescue by forbidding the Congress from taking office. Gandhiji's appreciation of the situation was absolutely correct. The situation in the Province was such that there was a universal demand in favor of the Congress assuming power.

The League High Command, at present, is dominated by persons who hail from Provinces where the Muslims are in a minority. They have come to the forefront by playing on the fear complex among the Muslims and by raising the cry of Pakistan. Frontier Muslims have the greatest regard and affection for their co-religionists in other parts of India. Not only are they second to none in demanding that the Muslims should have a square deal in India, but they will not shrink from any sacrifice to secure that end. But they feel that you cannot have even Pakistan in India while a third party is in possession of the country. The prospects of a Pakistan subservient to British Imperialism does not, and will not, attract them. They are hundred percent for complete, unfettered self-determination for the Muslims; but equally are they convinced

that there can be no self-determination either for the Muslims or for any one else while India is not free.

The question of immediate freedom for India is, therefore, the problem which has got to be tackled soon. The only way it can be effectively tackled is through real unity among the Hindus, Muslims and others who inhabit this great land of ours. The problem of Indian unity is therefore the bedrock on which we shall have to raise a structure consecrated by the joint sacrifices of the sons and daughters of India, Hindu as well as Muslim. In Hindu-Muslim unity lies our strength, and without unity and sacrifices there can be no freedom.

There are stirrings of a new life in the Pathan homelands of the North-West, very marked in the N.W.F.P., but easily discernible in the Tribal Belt and Baluchistan as well. There has been a rapid development in political consciousness. Education is making rapid headway. The Pathan has been misunderstood and very much misrepresented in the past. He is now determined to take his rightful place as an equal partner along with people of other free Indian units, which together will, God willing, constitute the Free Indian Union of the near future. Let us hope the dark clouds which have now cast a gloom over the Indian horizon will soon roll away, ushering in that era of freedom for which we all hope and pray.