

**THE POPALZAI FAMILY: ITS ROLE IN VARIOUS  
RELIGIO-POLITICAL MOVEMENTS  
IN BRITISH NORTH-WEST FRONTIER  
PROVINCE (NWFP), 1927 - 1940**

**JAVED KHAN<sup>I</sup>**

**PROF. DR. FAKHR-UL ISLAM<sup>II</sup>**

<sup>I</sup>Department of History, University of Peshawar  
e-mail: javedkhanoup342@gmail.com

<sup>II</sup>Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar  
e-mail: ifakhar@hotmail.com

**Abstract**

The present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the former North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) has served as base camp for various religio-political movements in the colonial period. Besides Pukhtun socio-political intelligentsia, the local ulama have extensively served during those campaigns. The Popalzai family, based in Peshawar was popular among the local Pukhtuns for its Islamic scholarship from Deoband, India. During the post-First World War period, the Deobandi Ulama went from active resistance to non-violent constitutional activism under Jamiat-ul Ulama-i-Hind (JUH) this stance was followed by the Pukhtun ulama in Peshawar. Maulana Abdul Ḥakim Popalzai, Maulana Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai, and Maulana Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai, the prominent members of the Popalzai family supported the Deobandi ulama in the politics of NWFP. Jamiat-ul Ulama-i-Sarhad (JUS) was formed and Maulana Abdul Ḥakim Popalzai was elected its president in 1927, who organized the local ulama on the platform of JUS. In 1929, he followed the instructions of JUH in agitating against the Sardah Act in NWFP and mobilized the local ulama and the masses from the platform of JUS to support the agitation. Abd-ur-Rahim, under the influence of Shah Waliullah and revolutionary thoughts of Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, earned himself the title of '*Ishterāki Mullah*' (Socialist Religious Scholar) for his involvement in popular agitation and championing the rights of the oppressed class such as *Kisān* (peasants), *Mazdūr*

(labourers,) and the *Khākrobs* (sweepers). Maulana Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai campaigned and struggled for the passage of the 'Shariat Bill' from the Legislative Council of NWFP under the guidance of Mufti Kifayatullah Delhvi. Abdul Qaiyum as the founding member of the Frontier Majlis-i-Ahrar contributed towards the anti-Qadiyani and anti-Khaksar struggle in NWFP. Lastly, these ulama worked hard for the reformation of the Pukhtun *riwāj* (culture) and led various movements to gain constitutional cover for Islamic principles under the campaign for Muslim Personal Law and to end the exploitation of the oppressed classes.

**Key Words:** Popalzai Family, Deobandi Ulama, organization, JUS, Sardar Act, Pukhtun *riwāj*, Oppressed Class, freedom struggle, Shariat Campaign, anti-Qadiyani movement.

### **Introduction**

After the un-successful War of independence in 1857, the successors of Shah Waliullah<sup>1</sup> (1703- 1762) began an educational movement with the establishment of Deoband madrasa in 1867.<sup>2</sup> The North West Frontier Province (NWFP) was given the status of a Chief Commissioner's province in 1901.<sup>3</sup> The early twentieth century is very important for both the history and politics of the Pukhtuns. On the eve of the First World War 1914, NWFP became the focus of Deobandi ulama, when Maulana Mahmud-ul Hasan (1851-1920) launched a resistance movement in collaboration and with the support of the local ulama and the Pukhtuns of 'Yaghistan',<sup>4</sup> (Presently, it has been merged with Khyber Pukhtunkhwa through the 25<sup>th</sup> amendment in Pakistan's constitution)<sup>5</sup> against the British Raj. However, that attempt too could not succeed and during the post War period, the Deobandi ulama turned from their militant struggle to non-violent political and constitutional methods. The organization of these Deobandi ulama further motivated them to come on a single platform and to pursue their scheme for the reformation of Indian Muslim society. Hence, Jamiat-ul Ulama-i- Hind (JUH), (the Assembly of Indian Ulama) was formed in 1919 during All India 'Khilafat Movement'. After its formation, JUH collaborated with ulama in different parts of India including NWFP and encouraged the formation of its local branches throughout India.

The ulama from the Popalzai family were very highly regarded among the Pukhtuns of NWFP for their religious assistance to the common masses in the province. There had been a committee headed by *Khaṭīb* of Masjid Qasim Ali Khan who used to announce the '*Ruet*' or evidence of Moon Sighting in accordance with the principles of Shari'at, for the

holy month of Ramazan and important Muslim celebrations of *Eid-ul Fitr* and *Eid-ul Azha*. Even in present days this tradition is regularly observed at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan, Peshawar. The present successor of Popalzai family, Maulana Shahbuddin Popalzai,<sup>6</sup> is the chairman of the committee of ulama, which decides whether a moon has been sighted. As the daily *Dawn* reports, “The Qasim Ali Khan mosque, situated in Peshawar’s Qissa Khawani bazaar is synonymous with the moon sighting debate,”<sup>7</sup> in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (former NWFP). Maulana Shahabuddin is also, an office bearer of International *Khatm-i-Nabuwatt* organization in Peshawar and has been active for the cause of the finality of prophet hood of (حَضْرَتِ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَاصْحَابِهِ وَسَلَّمَ)

The Popalzai family has long been associated with Masjid Qasim Ali Khan, as the family has served the mosque for more than 100 years. Masjid Mahabat Khan and Masjid Qasim Ali Khan are the two oldest and historic mosques built during the Mughul period and named after the respective Mughul governors in Peshawar.<sup>8</sup> The above mentioned mosques became the Centrum of political activism during the pre- and post- colonial periods in NWFP.

Three stalwarts of the Popalzai family, Maulana Abdul Hakim (1284-1348, A. H), (hereafter Abdul Hakim) his two sons Maulana Abd-ur Rahim (1890-1944) and Maulana Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai<sup>9</sup> (1912-1983) were active during the British period to achieve the JUH’s reforms in NWFP.

For the achievement of their objectives, these Ulama adopted various methods i.e. to visit different Pukhtun areas in the province; to organize and hold meetings of Ulama at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan; to organize Sharī‘at Conferences; to observe Sharī‘at Days, and to organize ulama under various committees, such as Anjuman-i- Saif-ul Islam, Tahafuzz-i- Namus-i Shariat Committees, Nawjawan Bharat Sabha and other socio-political organizations.

In the present study, the researchers shall analyze the role, contribution and involvement of the Popalzai family in various religious and socio-political movements in the following spheres:

1. The Influence of Deobandi Ulama in the politics of Frontier province.
2. A Brief Introduction of Popalzai Family: The Life and Thought of Abdul Hakim Popalzai.
- 2.1. Abdul Hakim Popalzai and the organization of Pukhtun Ulama: The Formation of Jamiat-ul Ulama-i- Sarhad (JUS) and agitation against Sardah Act.

3. The Influence of Shah Waliullah on ‘Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai.
- 3.1. The Major activities of Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai and his involvement in Pan-Islamic and national struggle against British Raj.
- 3.2. Abd-ur-Rahim against Feudalism and Popular Agitation in Colonial NWFP: The Ghallah Dher Movement.
- 3.3. Abd-ur-Rahim and the Sweepers’ agitation: His involvement in the Jihad of the Faqir of Ipi.
4. Life and thought of Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai.
- 4.1. The Activism of Maulana Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai for the Sharī‘at Campaign in NWFP.
- 4.2. Abdul Qaiyum and the Anti-Qadiani Movement in Colonial NWFP.

### **1. The Role of Deobandi Ulama in Frontier Politics**

At the end of the First World War, the Indian Muslims, in general, and the ulama, in particular, faced various challenges. To safeguard the religio-political interests of the Indian Muslims in that threatened situation, the Deobandi Ulama adapted new strategies of constitutional struggle and participated in Indian Muslim politics under the umbrella of the Khilafat Movement.<sup>10</sup> The central leadership of JUH was familiar with the Pukhtuns as the latter had shown great enthusiasm during the ‘Silk Letter Movement,’<sup>11</sup> launched by Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. JUH was inclined towards a larger role in the Pukhtun area of the Frontier province and the tribal area adjacent to Afghanistan. After the formation of JUH in 1919, local branches were extended to all parts of the country including NWFP. Abdul Ḥakim and Abdur-Rahim along with some other activists attended the Jamiat-ul-Ulama conference held in November 1920 at Delhi.<sup>12</sup> Abdul Ḥakim, a leader of the local Khilafat Committee and *Khaṭīb* at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan had great influence in Peshawar. Therefore, the latter furthered propagated the mission of JUH in the Frontier province.<sup>13</sup>

### **2. A Brief Introduction of Popalzai Family: The Life and Thought of Abdul Ḥakim Popalzai.**

Popal Khan, the ancestor of Popalzai family belonged to the Royal Family of Durrani Tribe of Afghanistan. Ahmed Shah Abdali (1722-1772) known as Ahmed Shah Baba<sup>14</sup> belonged to the Sadozai clan of Popalzai tribe and was a descendent of Popal Khan.<sup>15</sup> Abdul Ḥakim’s

grandfather, Abdur-Rahim was the chief justice during the rule of Amir Muhammad Azeem Khan. However, when Azeem Khan was defeated by the Sikhs, Abd-ur-Rahim had to abandon the post of Chief Justice and started to impart religious education to the people of Peshawar.<sup>16</sup>

Abdul Hakim son of Muhammad Amin of Gardi Khana, was born in Peshawar in 1284 (A. H.)<sup>17</sup> After completion of his early education at Peshawar, he proceeded to India, where after graduation from 'Deoband', he moved to Lucknow. Later, he traveled to Rampur and became the Head Master (*Ṣadr-i- Mudarris*) at madrasa 'Mueennia' at Ajmer Shareef.<sup>18</sup> After his return to his home town, he was appointed as 'Khatīb' at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan and became a teacher at "Madrasa Ta'leem-ul Qur'an" at Mohallah Jattan, Peshawar. Later, he was addressed as "Mufti-ī-Sarhad" (the Jurist of Frontier province). Abdul Hakim actively participated in the Khilafat movement, rose to prominence and became president of the Frontier Khilafat Committee. He also worked for the involvement of ulama in local politics and organized them on the platform of Provincial Khilafat Committee and JUS.<sup>19</sup>

The British government in NWFP was harsh against political activists. The British authorities ruled NWFP under special laws of: Public Safety Act, Frontier Tranquility Act, Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) Act, and other regulations in order to suppress any insurgency or protest against the British Government.<sup>20</sup> The Khilafat Movement became the platform through which local ulama became involved in the politics of NWFP. Sayed Akhtar Shah Bukhari has stated that: "Khilafat was considered as the true representative organization of Indian Muslims during those days."<sup>21</sup> Abdul Hakim was active in the Khilafat agitation and was arrested in 1920,<sup>22</sup> however, he remained the president of Frontier Khilafat Committee for life time. He made efforts for reforming the Muslim Pukhtun society and agitated against the Sardah Act.<sup>23</sup> He died in 1933 (1348 A. H.) and was buried in the graveyard of Rehman Baba, Peshawar.<sup>24</sup>

### **2.1. The Formation of Ulama Organizations in NWFP: The Role of the Popalzai Family.**

The imposition of Rowlatt Act in the war-ravaged NWFP multiplied the restrictions on the political liberty of the Pukhtuns. Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan (1863- 1937),<sup>25</sup> a member of the management committee of Masjid Qasim Ali Khan, Peshawar, and other local Pukhtun Muslim notables including Abdul Ghaffar Khan wanted the extension of

those political reforms as given to other provinces, to NWFP.<sup>26</sup> They also wanted the support of JUH and the local Ulama such as Abdul Ḥakim and the local Khilafat Committee to voice for the extension of political reforms in NWFP. As Abdul Ḥakim had studied at 'Deoband,' therefore, as *Khaṭīb* of Masjid Qasim Ali Khan, he used to invite ulama from 'Deoband' time and again to guide the local Muslims on such issues as the teachings of Islam on celebrating religious festivals such as '*Maulūd Sharīf*.'<sup>27</sup> Maulana Ahmed Sa'eed (d. 1959), General Secretary of JUH, while visiting Peshawar in 1926 was asked to support the proposal of holding a conference of Ulama at Peshawar.<sup>28</sup>

Maulana Ahmed Sa'eed, Abdul Ḥakim and Abd-ur Rahim supported organization of the proposed 'Jamiat Ulama Conference' in Peshawar. As a preliminary survey for the holding of the conference, Ahmed Sa'eed visited Peshawar in early of 1927. For the organization of the 'Conference', a 'Reception Committee' was formed and Abdul Ḥakim was elected as General Secretary of the Committee.<sup>29</sup> Maulana Ahmed Sa'eed, Abdul Ḥakim and Abdur-Rahim became actively strove for the success of the Conference and made extensive tours to collect donations/funds.<sup>30</sup> Various committees of ulama were dispatched to the local Pukhtuns seeking financial assistance,<sup>31</sup> These were not very successful as due to insufficient funds, the dates of the conference were postponed to December 1927.

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual conference of JUH was held in December where Jamiat-ul Ulama-i- Sarhad (JUS) was formed during the proceedings of the last day of the conference. Abdul Hakim was elected as its president and Abdur Rahim Popalzai as the member of its Working Committee.<sup>32</sup> The Ulama of Popalzai family, collaborated with the local ulama and other political groups from the platform of JUS for the political emancipation. These groups were; the local Khilafat Committee, the local Congress Committee, Khudai Khidmatgars (KK), Nawjawan Bharat Sabha, Anjuman-e- Saiful Islam (later Ahrar), and other local associations of *Kisān*, (peasants) and *Mazdur* (labourers). This collaboration resulted in a close bond between the JUS, KK and local Congress Committee and they collectively agitated against the government.

## **2.2. Sardah Act and the Frontier Ulama: The Role of Abdul Ḥakim Popalzai.**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the British encouraged communalism as a policy. The emergence of Hindi- Urdu controversy in 1867 century led

to Hindu extremist movements of 'Shudhi' and 'Sanghatan,' which further facilitated the imposition of Sardah Act in 1929.<sup>33</sup> The Deobandi Ulama who had initiated Islamic revivalism launched a protest movement under the auspices of JUH. In March 1929, Abdul Ḥakim was elected as president of the local 'Khilafat' Committee.<sup>34</sup> Abdul Ḥakim, the president of both JUS and the provincial Khilafat Committee endorsed the policy of JUH and initiated protest in NWFP. On November 15, 1929, a meeting was held at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan, after the Friday prayers. Abdul Hakim Popalzai appealed to the participants to observe '*Hartāl*' (strike) on November 29, 1929 against the Sardah Act.<sup>35</sup> After the successful strike in Peshawar city and other areas of the province, the local Khilafatists and JUS celebrated their triumph under the leadership of Abdul Ḥakim Popalzai on the same day at Shahi Bagh.<sup>36</sup> On the other side, the activists from All India Majlis-i-Ahrar were busy in 'Kashmir agitation and Abdul Ḥakim Popalzai supported the Aḥrars's cause in Kashmir as well.<sup>37</sup>

### **3. The Influence of Shah Waliullah on the Life and Thought of Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai:**

Abd-ur Rahim was the eldest son of Abdul Hakim, born in 1890 (1310, A.H.) at Muhallah Garhi Khana, Peshawar. He got his early education from local ulama including his father, in Peshawar and in 1908, he proceeded to Delhi for higher religious education of *Ḥadīth* (Tradition) and *Tafsīr* (Exegesis) first at Rampur and finally at Dar-ul Uloom, Deoband.<sup>38</sup> At Deoband, he became the disciple of Maulana Mahmud-ul Hasan, popularly known as Shaikh-ul-Hind. In 1912, after the completion of his education at Deoband, he came back to Peshawar. On the directions of his mentor, Mahmud-ul Hasan, Abd-ur Rahim established a madrasa, 'Islamia Al- Samadia' on March 27, 1914, at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan, Peshawar.<sup>39</sup>

Abd-ur Rahim's ideology was mainly influenced by Shah Waliullah, Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan,<sup>40</sup> his spiritual mentor, Maulvi Najmuddin (d. 1902), popularly known as Hadda Mullah,<sup>41</sup> Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi (1872- 1944), and Haji Sahib of Turangzai. Shah Waliullah (1703- 1762) had stressed the importance of social justice as a part of his reforms. He advocated "a delicate equilibrium" (balance) and has maintained that it was necessary for the sustenance and survival of a society. Importantly, "this equilibrium can be maintained only through justice."<sup>42</sup> He, therefore, subscribed to the provision of justice to all (for both, Muslims & non-

Muslims) for eliminating poverty, unemployment and the provision of equal economic share by offering fair opportunities of work.<sup>43</sup> Abd-ur-Rahim followed the footsteps of Shah Waliullah, and became active in the educational movement for the socio-religious reformation of the Pukhtuns. Later, he tried to implement the revolutionary scheme of Shah Waliullah. Abd-ur-Rahim might also be have been influenced by his contemporaries Mahatima Gandhi, Subash Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh as the majority of them were revolutionaries, therefore Abd-ur-Rahim gained prominence both, as freedom fighter as well as religious leader.

### **3.1. The Major Activities of Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai**

Dr. Abd-ul Jalil Popalzai<sup>44</sup> has traced the following major activities of Abd-ur-Rahim's life in three phases;<sup>45</sup>

- i. The first period is from 1912 to 1919. During this period, Abd-ur-Rahim was involved in enhancing educational reforms geared to the Freedom Struggle following in the footsteps of Shah Waliullah. Abd-ur-Rahim was an active member of the militant "Silk Letter Conspiracy"<sup>46</sup> and 'Hizb-ullah'<sup>47</sup> movements. He taught at Dar-ul-Uloom, Yaka Toot, Peshawar during this period, not neglecting his religious and educational duties
- ii. (1920 to 1935). Abd-ur-Rahim became active in Congress and participated in Hijrat and Khilafat Movements. He organized the Frontier Congress Committee during this period. In 1922, he travelled to Delhi on a preaching mission in order to counter the Shudhi movement and actively participated in the Tabligh mission which continued till 1924.<sup>48</sup> In 1924, he participated in the meeting held from April 3-4, 1924 where Jamiat-ul-Ulama, an organization of ulama from district Peshawar was formed. In 1927, Abd-ur-Rahim was elected as the member of the working committee of JUS.<sup>49</sup>
- iii. This is the most important period when Abd-ur-Rahim returned from Haj. In 1935, Abd-ur-Rahim went to 'Arabia for Haj, where he stayed at Makkah and Madinah for two years. At Hijaz, he also met Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, Amanullah Khan (Afghanistan) and Mustafa Kamal. This facilitated Abd-ur-Rahim and Maulana Sindhi in their deliberations about the Muslim component of the freedom struggle.<sup>50</sup> At this stage we can observe a shift in his strategy and he became involved in class struggle within specific

situations and achieved his objectives at large. He launched his indigenous movement to end the exploitation of the poor peasants, (*kisāns*), sweepers and other working classes of the society. During this period he was involved in the Jihad struggle of Faqir of Ipi and participated in Bannu conference held for expressing allegiance with the *Mujāhidīn* struggling against the British forces in Waziristan (1938-1940). At this stage he became involved in various movements discussed in detail in the following lines.

### **3.2. Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai and his Involvement in Pan- Islamic and National Struggle Against British Raj.**

Abd-ur Rahim was a staunch opponent of the British Raj and its oppressive policies. He was agitated about colonial atrocities and the prevailing injustices of the British towards the working class. The poor labourers, peasants and other lower class members had been suffering from the exploitation of the upper class, the Khans and the Nawabs in the Pukhtun society. These poor people were tortured and molested by the feudal lords of their areas frequently.

Since the political activities during Khilafat and Hijrat movements had created awareness among the Pukhtuns they rallied against the British Indian Government. However, during those days, Gandhi, Jinnah and Patel were opposing “absolute freedom,”<sup>51</sup> in favour of Dominion Status. Resultantly, the socialist organization<sup>52</sup> and other revolutionary elements in Indian society launched a freedom struggle against the British sponsored feudalism and capitalism.

As discussed earlier, under the influence of Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, Abd-ur-Rahim had socialist tendencies for the eradication of the social injustices and other evils of capitalism and feudalism. He first established a socialist organization of both the Hindu and Muslim local youth, Jamiat Naujawan-i- Sarhad<sup>53</sup> which became popular under the name of “Nawjawan Bharat Sabha”<sup>54</sup> (NBS) in 1927.<sup>55</sup> The policy of NBS was different from other contemporary organizations like the Congress and Khudai Khidmatgars, which believed in non-violence.

Thus, the youth belonging to ‘NBS’ had to struggle in life-threatening situations.<sup>56</sup> The members of NBS and Frontier Socialist Party augmented the popular struggle of Abd-ur-Rahim during Ghallah Dher Movement, Hazara Kisan Movement and the Sweepers’ Movement. The aim and objective of the organization was to establish Azad Government based on sound economic and financial grounds and to impede the atrocities

committed by the British government in NWFP.<sup>57</sup> To oppose the government's oppressive measures, Abdur Rahim launched a weekly *Sarfarosh* and contributed critical essays and columns against the savagery of the colonial authorities in the Frontier province which stirred the local Pukhtuns to seek their freedom.<sup>58</sup>

In November 1928, the Shinwari tribe rose in rebellion against King Amanullah Khan in Eastern Afghanistan. Ulama in NWFP, in general, and Abd-ur Rahim, in particular, were anxious about those developments as they considered it a conspiracy designed by the British Government in India.<sup>59</sup> *Fatwas* and pamphlets were issued by Pukhtun Ulama including Abd-ur Rahim in favour of Amanullah Khan (1892-1960) in order to pacify the situation. To bring peace and order in Afghanistan, various tribes of Eastern Afghanistan held a conference (*Jirga*) on March 12, 1929 at Hadda, Afghanistan. Ulama from Peshawar intended to participate, however, the government prevented them.<sup>60</sup> In April 1929, a delegation of Ulama was nominated<sup>61</sup> at the office of *Khilafat* Committee in Peshawar. Maulana Shah Rasool of Mardan was elected as the president and Abd-ur Rahim as the secretary of the delegation. The main objective of the delegation was to mediate between King Amanullah Khan and the insurgent tribes in Afghanistan. Although, the delegation visited Afghanistan via the Mohmand areas, through Kunar and negotiated with the rioting tribes, however, but achieved little success, and the delegation returned to Peshawar on May 6, 1929.<sup>62</sup>

The Sardah agitation launched in November 1929 and early 1930 gave an opportunity to the Pukhtun youth to agitate against the British Raj. The Khilafat Committee, JUS and its sub-committees organized a vigorous agitation against the Sardah Act. The Popalzai family, Abdul Hakim and Abd-ur Rahim actively participated in the movement. While addressing at a grand meeting held on November 26, 1929, at Islamia Club, Peshawar, Abd-ur-Rahim declared that the government was not ready to tolerate even the peaceful and non-violent protests of the Khilafatists He recalled the policy of non-interference into the religious issues made by the British Crown. They declared that the imposition of Sardah Act on Indian Muslims was against that declaration.<sup>63</sup>

Abd-ur-Rahim was very critical of the various prevailing oppressive laws and regulations including the FCR, Security Regulations, Murderous Outrages Regulation and Safety Act (a type of Martial Law). The Anjuman Naujawan-i- Sarhad and the local Congress Committee initiated a movement against these laws and intended to raise the issue with the Central Organization of the Congress.<sup>64</sup>

Abdur Rahim's strong stance against the atrocities of the government

was not tolerated and the government imprisoned him on April 23, 1930.<sup>65</sup> The local members of JUS, the Khilafists and the Red Shirts demonstrated at Qissa Khwani Bazar which resulted in the “Massacre of Qissa Khwani”<sup>66</sup>. Consequently, the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, Congress and JUS jointly launched a Civil Disobedience Movement which brought Peshawar international attention. After his release in 1931, Abdur Rahim made a furious speech in a meeting held at Uthmanzai and was again imprisoned for three years.<sup>67</sup> After the demise of his father, he was released in 1933, and became Imam on his father’s position at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan.<sup>68</sup> During the “Civil Disobedience” movement, the “Nawjawan Bharat Sabha,” the Frontier Congress Committee,” and other such Muslim socio-religious organizations like JUS and *Khudai Khidmatgars* (KK) were banned under the Frontier Tranquility Act.

In 1935 Abdur Rahim along with other young socialists of Frontier formed, ‘Frontier Socialist Party,’ however, as there were restrictions in NWFP due to Frontier Tranquility Act; therefore, the Socialist Party remained underground and struggled to strengthen itself in the rural areas of Peshawar, Charsaddah and Mardan.<sup>69</sup> The party became active when the provincial government of Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan restored these socio-political and religio-political organizations by repealing the Frontier Tranquility Act in 1937.<sup>70</sup>

In 1937-39, Abdur Rahim strove to end the exploitation of the peasants and labourers in Mardan and Hazara. In Hazara, he organized a conference of the peasants and struggled for their rights against the local khans and the government alike and succeeded in having the Sharī‘at Act passed by the provincial legislative assembly.<sup>71</sup>

### **3.3. Abd-ur-Rahim and Khanism, Feudalism and Popular Agitation in Colonial NWFP: The Ghallah Dher Movement.**

Khanism or Wadera Shahi was an important feudal feature and administrative tool of the British administration in Colonial India, in general, and in NWFP, in particular. These feudal lords had vast territories of agrarian land as endowments and awards for their services to the British Raj. Due to the geographic and strategic position of NWFP, the British authorities had to rely on the support of these local khans against the local religious elements and the frequent revolts of *mujāhidīn* and tribesmen in the area.<sup>72</sup> After the restoration of political activities in NWFP, Abdur Rahim Popalzai during the years of 1937-39, turned again to end the exploitation of the peasants and labourers at Ghallah Dher,

Mardan and Hazara.

### **Back Ground of the Ghallah Dher Movement**

The Ghallah Dher area was in the jurisdiction of Mardan District and was claimed by Nawab of Toru. The British forces occupied Mardan and the adjacent area in 1849.<sup>73</sup> Qader Khan, the ancestor of Nawab of Toru had facilitated the British to consolidate their position in the area. In return, the British authorities conferred him the title of Malik. The local British authorities, used to give concessions in revenue collection to Malik Qader Khan for his services and the latter established good relations with the local officers of the British Government.<sup>74</sup> Malik Mahabat Khan, son of Malik Qader Khan managed to get the ownership of Ghallah Dher and adjacent villages from the local management of the British Government.<sup>75</sup> The local peasants agitated against the confiscation of their land, however, under the pressure of the local administration, these peasants were made to accept the claims of the Nawab of Toru.<sup>76</sup> The local peasants became agitated when the descendant of the Nawab of Toru, Nawabzada Muhammad Azeem Khan<sup>77</sup> imposed some financial penalties on some poor peasants of the area which they were unable to pay due to the market crisis as the grains were cheap during those days.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the people of the area sought help from Dr. Khan Sahib in 1934, when he was a member of the Central Legislative Council but he declined support on the plea that it was a provincial matter.<sup>79</sup> As there was no alternative, these peasants then went to Nawab of Toru in the form of “*jirga*” but without any positive result.

The Socialist Party raised its voice for the affected peasants of Ghallah Dher in 1938.<sup>80</sup> Later, the agitation became a protest movement and a ‘War Council’ was formed. Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai was elected as a member of the Council.<sup>81</sup> Dr. Khan Sahib was the Chief Minister of Congress government in NWFP during those days. As the movement intensified, the police arrested time and again the leadership of the agitators including members of the ‘War Council.’ From July to August, the movement was on its peak, when Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai visited the area on July 12, 1938 and supported the demands of the peasants. However, despite the settlement of the matter, the provincial Congress government tried to suppress the agitation and arrested the agitators including Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai and other members of the ‘Council’ where the later was allotted category “C” in the jail.<sup>82</sup> Before the Congress government, the peasants of the area were facing torture by Nawab of

Toru since 1930 and also, the Nawab had dislodged about two hundred peasants from their houses. Therefore, they were disillusioned with Dr. Khan Sahib's government, however, even the provincial Congress Committee did not respond to the correspondence of the leaders of the movement.<sup>83</sup>

Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai was a staunch opponent of Feudalism; therefore, he became instrumental against the atrocities of both the government and the Nawab of Toru, and feudals of Hazara. Maulana Ubaydullah Sindhi also visited Hazara along with Abdur Rahim probably in May 1939.<sup>84</sup> He also fought against the atrocities of the feudal lords in Hazara district and led the Hazara agitation of the peasants and faced imprisonment, torture and molestation. He gave moral courage to the poor and lower classes of the society which in turn motivated those classes to agitate and struggle against their oppression and for their freedom.

#### **4.2. Abd-ur Rahim and the Sweepers' agitation: His Involvement in the Jihad of Faqir of Ipi.**

While Abd-ur Rahim was organizing the peasants, labours, masons and other workers for the awareness of their rights and to end their exploitation, it came to his knowledge that the sweepers were deprived of their human rights in the society.<sup>85</sup> The sweeper agitation started from Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Kohat. Abd-ur Rahim became the president of the Reception Committee of the conference. The first Provincial Sweepers' conference was held on February 4, 1939 at Chowk Fawara Peshawar Cantt.<sup>86</sup> Abd-ur Rahim while addressing the conference announced that, "not only the sweepers were fighting for freedom but the whole nation. Indian freedom was not possible without the organization and collaboration of all the deprived classes."<sup>87</sup> Abd-ur-Rahim was the first politician in NWFP who ignored his status for the cause of freedom and not only led the movement but also encouraged the sweepers in their campaign for their rights. Later, they were successful to achieve the right to vote and sent their representatives to the local councils for the resolution of their problems.<sup>88</sup>

In 1940, Abd-ur-Rahim became involved in the jīhād movement of Faqir of Ipi in Waziristan. Faqir of Ipi<sup>89</sup> was a freedom fighter who was busy against the British troops in Waziristan, had invited<sup>90</sup> Abd-ur-Rahim to visit Bannu and to participate in his movement against the British Raj. The government's air attacks in Waziristan was the continuation of its

‘Forward Policy,’ and the local Ulama were condemning that policy of the British Raj.<sup>91</sup> Abd-ur-Rahim also criticized the government’s policy in Waziristan.<sup>92</sup> In April 1940 when Abd-ur-Rahim was busy in Hazara Kisan Movement, he received a letter from Faqir of Ipi and he decided to visit Bannu. Abd-ur-Rahim along with Ram Sern Nagina, left for Bannu.<sup>93</sup> On Friday April 12, Abd-ur-Rahim delivered an emotional speech at *Masjid Qasaban* and encouraged the Pukhtuns of the area to unite for the cause of Islamic laws of Qur’an. He inspired the people to encourage their relatives to fight (jihad) against the British forces under the guidance of Faqir of Ipi.<sup>94</sup> Later, Abd-ur-Rahim was arrested for inciting people in his speeches against the government and was sent to Bannu jail for five years vigorous imprisonment. The Ulama from NWFP resented his arrest and a number of conferences were held to condemn the government for the arrest of Abd-ur-Rahim.<sup>95</sup> Due to his critical condition, he was released on January 17, 1943, but his health had badly suffered and he died on May 31, 1944 and was buried in the premises of Masjid Qasim Ali Khan.<sup>96</sup>

Abd-ur-Rahim pioneered popular politics from the platform of JUS, Frontier Congress Socialist Party, Naujawan-i-Sarhad known as Naujawan Bharat Saba and earned the title of “*Ishterāki Mullah*” (socialist religious leader). However, Abdur Rahim was not a socialist in the sense that he was promoting material ‘Socialism’ in the Pukhtun society, rather he followed in the footsteps of his spiritual mentors, Shah Waliullah and Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi.

## **5. Abdul Qaiyum’s Life and Thought**

The youngest son of Abdul Hakim, was born in 1912 at Peshawar. After completion of his early education at Peshawar, he moved to ‘Deoband’ in 1927 where he remained the disciple of Mufti Kifayatullah and got certificate of Hadith from him in 1935.<sup>97</sup> He returned to Peshawar in the same year and became active against the Qadianis and Khaksars in the NWFP. He was mainly influenced by Maulana Anwer Shah Kashmiri (1875-1933), Maulana Ata’ullah Shah Bukhari (1892-1961). Anwer Shah Kashmiri pioneered the anti-Qadiani struggle in India and Ata’ullah Shah was the organizer and activist of Ahrar movement in Punjab. Abdul Qaiyum pioneered the anti-Qadiani struggle in NWFP and introduced the Ahrar movement in Frontier province. He became the Imam of Masjid Qasim Ali Khan after the demise of his brother, Abdur Rahim. As a local leader of Majlis-i-Ahrar in NWFP, he preached

against the Qadianis and the false claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiyani till his last breath. He was appointed by the NAP/JUI government in 1972 as Mufti-i- Sarhad. He died in 1983 and was laid to rest at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan.<sup>98</sup>

### **5.1. The Activism of Maulana Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai for the Shari'at Campaign in NWFP.**

The JUH launched a movement for the reformation of the Indian Muslims particularly the Pukhtuns. Hence, Deobandi Ulama initiated a dynamic struggle for the institution of Muslim Personal Law under the 'Shariat Campaign' in NWFP. Though, Abdul Qaiyum was a student at Deoband during those days, however, from 1932 - 1935, he vigorously propagated JUH's sponsored 'Shariat Bill.' Ulama from Popalzai family, Abdul Hakim, Abd-ur-Rahim and Abdul Qaiyum challenged the existing British judicial system in the province. Ulama from JUS launched a movement to boycott English courts and established parallel "Shari'at Committees" under the headship of Ulama for the resolution of the civil cases of the masses. Various sub-committees under the title of *Tahaffuz-i- Namus-i Shari'at* were established in Peshawar and other areas of the province. These committees of ulama under the leadership of Abd-ur Rahim encouraged the local Pukhtun to bring their disputes to the panels of ulama instead of 'English Courts'.<sup>99</sup>

For the success of the Shari'at drive in NWFP, these Ulama employed various strategies for the mobilization of the Pukhtun masses. They used to visit the local Pukhtuns in their respective villages and cities, organized Shari'at conferences and appealed for observing strikes.<sup>100</sup> They celebrated Shari'at Days, for mounting pressure on the government. In early 1935, Abdul Qaiyum as president of the Reception Committee of the Provincial Shari'at Conference<sup>101</sup> struggled to mobilize public opinion in favour of the 'Bill'.

A draft of the 'Bill' was prepared by the local Ulama under the guidance of Maulana Mufti Kifayatullah, and tabled in the Legislative Council of NWFP with the support of Malik Khuda Bakhsh, Pir Bakhsh and other Independent Muslim representatives.<sup>102</sup> The "Shari'at Bill" embodied the women's rights on inheritance, marriage and divorce issues, in order to protect those rights in accordance with Shari'at principles of Islam and was passed as the, 'Muslim Personal Law Act' in 1935, later, it became the Shariat Application Act of 1937.<sup>103</sup> That 'Bill' was the first

attempt of JUH towards the institutionalization of Islamic principles as opposed to British and local customary or *riwāj* laws.

## **5.2. The Anti-Qadiani Movement in Colonial NWFP: The Role of Abdul Qaiyum.**

In 1929, after the formation of All India *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam* in Punjab, it rapidly spread throughout the country.<sup>104</sup> The Indian Muslims under the guidance of Maulana Ata'ullah Shah Bukhari (Ahrar's leader) initiated a religious movement against the Qadianis.

The anti-Qadiani agitation of the Ahrars' in Punjab and Kashmir motivated the Pukhtun Deobandi Ulama to launch a movement against the local Qadianis in Peshawar. In early 1934, Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai struggled for the formation of a society 'Anjuman-i- Saif-ul-Islam' at Peshawar.<sup>105</sup> The *Anjuman* raised its voice against the local Qadianis. Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi became active against the Qadianis in District Hazara. A branch of All India *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i- Islam* was extended to NWFP after the conclusion of the Shari'at Conference held at Peshawar in 1935. Maulana Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai was elected as its president and Maulana Abdul Wadud Sarhadi as its secretary.<sup>106</sup> The Masjid Qasim Ali Khan served as the 'Centrum' of the movement. The Fridays' congregations were utilized for convening public meetings. Abdul Qaiyum held meetings at various preimises including Masjid Qasim Ali Khan, the Ahrar's office at Jahangir Pura and the tea shop of Asmatullah for propagation against the Qadiani elements in Peshawar. The Ahrar movement was intensified during 1935 and 1936 however, it slowly disintegrated in Mardan.<sup>107</sup> Importantly, the *Majlis-i-Ahrar* was strengthened in Peshawar, Kohat, Hazara and D. I. Khan. Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai became instrumental in the promotion of the Ahrar's agitation in Peshawar.<sup>108</sup> For the success of the movement, Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai adopted various strategies, including courting arrests.<sup>109</sup> He travelled extensively, to different parts of the province as a regular delegate of Sho'ba-i- Tabligh *Majlis-i- Ahrar* for propagation against the Qadianis. However, factionalism resulted in division among the ulama. The emergence of pro- Muslim League and pro-Congress groups weakened the Ahrar movement in the Frontier province.

Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai was also very critical about the Khaksars. He considered them as a pro-government organization and struggled against the religious views of Khaksar's Leader, Allama Enayatullah Mashriqi.<sup>110</sup> He remained active against the Khaksars for its pro-British

stance till the disbanding of the party by its leader in Independent Pakistan.

After Pakistan's creation in 1947, Abdul Qaiyum remained in the Ahrar's circles and actively participated in the anti-Qadiyani struggle in 1953 and was arrested by Khan Qaiyum's government. However, he was released on the agitation of the people in Peshawar. When Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI) was revived in 1956, Abdul Qaiyum became active member of that organization till his death.

### Conclusion

Popal Khan, the ancestor of Popalzai family belonged to the Durrani, Sadozai tribe of Ahmed Shah Abdali, also called Popalzai. The prestige enjoyed by the Popalzai family from the people of Peshawar enabled them to influence both the masses and ulama of the area alike. Masjid Qasim Ali Khan served as the 'Centrum' for the activism of Popalzai Ulama in various religio-political movements in NWFP. Abdul Hakim Popalzai worked for JUH's agenda in Frontier province. The Popalzai family successfully organized, mobilized and collaborated with the Pukhtun ulama on the platform of JUS for the achievement of their goals and the reformation of Pukhtun cultural *riwāj* (customs)

Abd-ur Rahim and Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai fulfilled their father's ambition during the Sardah agitation in 1929, and made every effort under the banner of JUS and sub-committees of *Tahafuzz-i-Namus-i-Shari'at* to implement the JUH's scheme in the Frontier province.

The economic philosophy of Shah Waliullah and his concept of social justice had greatly influenced Abdur Rahim, and he struggled throughout his life to implement the teachings of Shah Waliullah. The revolutionary thought of Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi had a great impact on Abd-ur-Rahim's life and the latter earned for himself the appellations of 'Rebel', 'Extremist' and *Ishterāki Mullah* for his class struggle against the atrocities of the colonial authorities as well as the local khans and nawabs. He also pioneered popular politics in the Frontier province through his involvement as leader of Nawjawan Baharat Sabha and Frontier Socialist Party. He became active in the Ghallah Dher Movement of 1938, Sweeper's movement of 1939, Peasant movement of Hazara in 1939 and the jihad of Faqir of Ipi in 1940.

Abdul Qaiyum struggled for the success of JUH's "Shari'at Drive" in NWFP. He endeavored to institutionalize the Shari'at principles into the British Indian constitutional apparatus under the campaign of 'Shari'at Bill' and got it endorsed by the colonial authorities. The passage of

Muslim Personal Law (Shari‘at law) Application Act of 1937 became a law for the Muslims of British India. Later, that campaign of the ‘Shari‘at Bill’ became a popular demand of the Pukhtuns for the imposition of ‘Shari‘at’ in NWFP during the ‘Referendum’ Campaign in 1947. Moreover, the anti- Qadiani struggle initiated by Deobandi Ulama was augmented by Abdul Qaiyum in colonial NWFP, which later, became a law under the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan.

In sum, the three stalwarts of Popalzai family have influenced both the religious and socio- political fabric of the Pukhtun society. The popular politics initiated by Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai in colonial NWFP was revived by JUI during late 1960s in West Pakistan. The imprints of these ulama could be traced in the religious politics of JUI which indicates the influential role demonstrated by the Popalzai family in the field of religion and politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### Notes and References

1. He was an Indian Muslim scholar during eighteenth century who had initiated the religio- political reformation of Muslim Indian state and society and to retard the decline of Muslim rule in India.
2. Dr. Rasheed Ahmad Jalandhri, *Bartanwi Hind Mai Musalmanu Ka Nizam-i-Taleem: Aik Naqidana Jaiza, vol. 1, Darul- Uloom Deoband*. (Lahore: Idara-I Saqaffat-e Islamia, 1988), Pp- 115-125
3. Lal Baha, *N. W. F. P. Administration under the British Rule, 1901-1919* (Islamabad: National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research, 1978) pp. 4-25
4. Sana, Haroon. (2011). *Frontier of Faith: A History of Religious Mobilization in the Pakhtun Tribal Areas, 1890-1950*. (Karachi: Oxford University Press,2011), 28-30
5. Amir Wasim, “President Signs KP-FATA Merger Bill into Law.” *Dawn*, May 31, 2018. <https://www.dawn.com/news> (Accessed on May 22, 2019)
6. He is the successor and son of Maulana Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai. Presently, he is serving as the ‘Khatib, a Muslim scholar who delivers sermons and leads Friday’s and Eid’s prayers at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan. Maulana Shahab-ud-Din Popalzai, Interview to author, February 23, 2018.
7. *Dawn* Karachi, November 14, 2015.
8. Maulana Shahabuddin Popalzai in an interview has asserted that the Mosque was constructed four hundred years back during the Mughul Rule in Peshawar. At that time there was a stream of fresh water flowing from Bara River crossing the Qissa Khawni Bazar. Masjid Qasim Ali Khan and Masjid Mahabat K h a n were built on its western bank while on its eastern bank, Masjid Ganj Ali Khan and Masjid Dilawar were constructed and named after the governors of Peshawar respectively. Maulana Shahab-ud-Din Popalzai interview to author, February 23,

- 2018.
9. Hereinafter, Abdul Ḥakim, Abdur Rahim and Abdul Qaiyum, respectively.
  10. Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of The Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent (610-1947): A Brief Historical Analysis*. (Karachi: Ma'aref, 2nd edit. 1977), pp. 308-315
  11. It was an armed resistance plan initiated by Maulana Mahmud-ul Ḥasan (mentor of Deoband) and Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi in 1915 and was supported by Haji Sahib of Turangzai, Maulana Uzair Gul and Maulana Abdul Ḥakim Popalzai.
  12. The other five members were: Haji Jan Muhammad, (Peshawar), Abd-ur-Rahim, (Peshawar), Muhammad Jan, (Bannu), Abdul Rahim, Khilafat Committee, Bannu and Maulvi Abdul Aziz, Hazara. Special Branch Reports, File No. 917, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar.
  13. *Ibid.*
  14. Ahmed Shah Abdali, the ruler of modern Afghanistan was invited by Shah Waliullah to attack India in order to dislodge the Marhattas and Sikhs in 1761. Kenneth Pletcher, Ahmed Shah Durrani: Ruler of Afghanistan. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ahmad-Shah-Durrani> (Accessed on September 30, 2019). Also, Hafiz Qari Fuz-ur Rehman. *Mashaheer Ulama-i-Sarhad*. (Karachi: Majlis-i- Nashreyaat-e Islam) pp. 231-233
  15. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, (1991). *Rohaniyat Aur Awami Tehrik*. (Peshawar: Allama Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai Academy), pp. 12-13
  16. Wali Muhammad, *Maulana Abdul Rahim Popalzai, A Profile*, Unpublished Ph. D Thesis (Peshawar: Pakistan Study Centre, UOP, 1995-1996) p. 15
  17. Muhammad Qasim ed., *Tazkira-i-Ulama-i-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*. (Swabi: Dar-ul Qur'an, 2015), pp. 245-246
  18. *Ibid.*
  19. Special Branch Summary Report No. 1914, Para No. 241, Vol. No. 10, Record and Research Section, Directorate of Archives, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
  20. 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 Regulations were at once promulgated. The Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) was readily used as a means of political repression. Abdul Qaiyum, *Gold And Guns on the Pathan Frontier* (Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1945), p. 27
  21. Daily "*Shahbaz*" Peshawar, August 15, 1952
  22. After his arrest a grand meeting was held at Masjid Qasim Ali Khan and Sayed Lal Badshah was elected as his successor in the Khilafat agitation. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, (1991). *Rohaniyat Aur Awami Tehrik*. (Peshawar: Allama Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai Academy), P- 17
  23. Maulana Shahab-ud-Din Popalzai, interview to author, February 23, 2018.
  24. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Rohaniyat Aur Awami Tehrik*. (Peshawar: Allama Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai Academy, 1991), P- 14
  25. He is known as 'Sir Syed of the Frontier' and was a government nominated member of the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council of NWFP. He was also an active Khilafatist.
  26. Special Branch Reports, File No. 918, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record

- Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar.
27. The Sunni Muslims observe the birth celebrations of the prophet (حضرت محمد رسول الله خاتم النبيين صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وأصحابه وسلم) on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Islamic Month of Rabi'ul-Awwal. It was a common practice during those days (even in present days) that ulama used to go to 'birth celebrations of the Prophet for delivering speeches about the life and deeds of the Prophet (حضرت محمد رسول الله خاتم النبيين صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وأصحابه وسلم) for guidance of the common Muslim masses. *Ibid.*
  28. The influential Pakhtuns and the nationalists urged the introduction of political reforms to the province and sought help from JUH in that regard. Special Branch Reports, File No. 917, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar.
  29. *The Muslim Outlook*, Lahore, Dated January 20, 1927 in File No. 915, Bundle No. 54 Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.
  30. To augment the efforts of Abd-ul Hakim and Abd-ur-Rahim for the success of the conference, Maulana Ahmed Sa'eed also toured the southern parts of the province along with Maulana Shams-ul Haq Afghani of Uthmanzai during the Months of October and November in order to propagate the conference among the Pukhtuns and to raise funds for the conference. Special Branch Report, File No. 928, Bundle No. 54(B) , Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar.
  31. Special Branch Diary Report, File No. 919, Bundle No. 55, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar.
  32. Special Branch Reports, File, S. No. 920, Bundle No. 54 (B) Provincial Archives, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
  33. Sardah Act was a pro- Hindu and Sikh legislation. The Muslim organizations including the Indian Khilafat Committee and the JUH considered it an anti-Shari'at and anti- Islamic move of the government as it had outlawed the child marriage which was considered by the Muslim religious scholars (Ulama) as the interference in to the religious obligations of Muslims.
  34. Special Branch Diary, File No. 921, Bundle No. 55, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
  35. The strike was called by JUH. Maulana Ahmed Sa'eed, Secretary of JUH, had to visit Peshawar on November 26, to help the local ulama in organizing the procession and 'Hartal' in the province; however, he could not come and sent a letter to the local Khilafat Committee, Peshawar to support the *Hartal* (strike) against the Sardah Act. A complete strike was observed in India including Peshawar on the announced date. Department of Special Branch Diary, (November 16, 1929) and Confidential Diary No. 57, Kohat, File No. 914, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar.
  36. Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai while addressing the protestors endorsed the resolution of JUH that, 'the government should refrain from interfering in the matters of religion.' The Popalzai family also campaigned for a successful strike which was observed in Peshawar and other parts of the province on January 17, 1930. *Ibid.*

37. Maulana Abdul Hakim Popalzai as Vice- President of JUS decided to send a “*Jatha*” (armed group) for physical support of the Ahrar’s cause in Kashmir, however, it was postponed later. Special Branch Reports, File No. 922, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
38. The institute, established in 1867, was the continuation of Shah Waliullah’s socio-educational movement for the socio-religious reformation of the Indian Muslim society. Dr. Rasheed Ahmad Jalandhri, *Bartanwi Hindh Mai Musalmanun Ka Nizam-i Taleem: Aik Naqidana Jaiza*, vol. 1, Darul- Uloom Deoband. (Lahore: Idara-i- Saqafat-i- Islamia, 1988), pp-115-125
39. His father, Abdul Hakim, Maulana Abdul Maboood Shah (Kohistani mullah), a disciple of Haji Imdadullah, and Haji Sahib of Turangzai were the inaugurators of that madrassa. Special Branch Summary Report No. 1914, Para No. 241, Vol. No. 10, Record and Research Section, Directorate of Archives, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.Ibid.
40. He initiated a *Jihad’* for which he deputed Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi to Afghanistan via the Pakhtun area of “Yaghistan,” (present merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the Pak- Afghan Borderland). Later after the failure of the movement, Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi went to Russia.
41. Hadda Mullah, Sartor Faqir, Faqir Sahib of Swat Aka Khel Mullah and Chaknawar Mullah were such dignitaries of *Mujahiddin* who were behind the uprising of 1897 against the British Government and in *jihad* campaign in Tribal belt adjacent to Afghanistan border.
42. Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, *Ulema in Politics* (Karachi: Ma’aref Limited, 1972), pp-124- 125
43. Dr. Shafique Ali Khan, Nationalist ‘Ulama’s Interpretation of Shah Wali Allah’s Thought and Movement, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. xxxvii, Part iii, (Karachi July 1989). pp. 209-248.
44. Dr. Abd-ul-Jalil Popalzai is the grandson of Allama Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai and son of Professor Abd-ur-Rauf. He has established a research institute on the life and struggle of Allama Abd-ur-Rahim Popalzai. He himself has written various books on life and thought of his grandfather. By profession, he is medical doctor and is working as Professor of Pharmacology at Peshawar’s renowned medical college of Rehman Medical Institute (RMI). Interview with Dr. Abd-ul-Jalil Popalzai on June 08, 2021.
45. Dr. Abd-ul-Jalil Popalzai, edit. *Awami Jadd-o-Jihad-i- Azadi: Imam-i- Hurriyat ki Tahriron ky Ayeny Mai* (Peshawar: Allama Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai Academy, n.d.), pp-11-13
46. See for more details, Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani, *Tehrik Reshmi Roomal*. (The Silk Handkerchief Movement) edited by Maulana Abd-ur Rehman. (Lahore: Classic, 1960), pp-137-245
47. The ‘Silk Letter Movement was subdivided in to four categories, (1) Jami’at-ul-Ansar, which was under the supervision of Shaikh-ul-Hind and Maulana Ubaid-ullah Sindhi and its main aim was to support the ‘Mujahidin at ‘Yaghistan and Afghanistan, (2) The Finance Committee was under the charge of Dr. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan (3) The Faculty of Propagation, the 3rd faculty was engaged

- in the propagation of 'Jihād and the last category, (4) The 'Hizb-ullah was the actual organization of the "Mujāhīdīn. The Mujahidin were organized by Haji Sahib of Turangzai. Javed, *Ibid* pp. 95-135
48. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Suba Sarhad Ki Awami Tarikh: aur Imam-i- Hurriat Allama Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai Mufti-i-Azam Suba Sarhad*, Isharia (Peshawar: Al- Jamiat Academy, n.d), pp. 5-7
  49. His election to Jami'at was announced by Maulana Ahmed Sa'eed of Delhi. The other prominent ulama present were; Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana Sayed Suleman Nadvi and Maulana Hasrat Mohani.
  50. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, (1991). *Sarhad Ki Inqilabi Tehrikein aur Maulana Abdur Rahim Popalzai* (Lahore: Fiction House), pp. 43-45, also, Daily Dawn Karachi dated June 11, 2005, <https://www.dawn.com.news> (Accessed on May 24, 2019).
  51. Zareen Fatima, *Sarfaroshi Ki Tamanna Aur Bhagat Singh* (Karachi, City Book Point, 2012), pp. 44-48
  52. This organization was first established by Bhagat Singh at Lahore, Punjab in March 1926. Fatima, *Sarfaroshi Ki Tamanna Aur Bhagat Singh*, 45
  53. Dr. Abd-ul-Jalil Popalzai, edit. *Awami Jadd-o-Jihad-i- Azadi: Imam-i- Hurriat ki Tahriron ky Ayeny Mai* (Peshawar: Allama Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai Academy, n.d.), p. 16
  54. Fatima, *Sarfaroshi Ki Tamanna Aur Bhagat Singh, Ibid*, pp. 64-66
  55. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai has written about its formation in 1926, however, in government documents it appears as 1929. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai.
  56. The other aims of the organization were; 1. The members had to struggle secretly for bringing awareness among the local masses. 2. Through *Naujawan Sarhad Akhbar* (newspaper), it struggled to make the people aware about their political role. 3. The members of the organization were active under Frontier Socialist Party whose legal and constitutional struggle resulted in the extension of the political rights to the locals and they were able to send Dr. Khan Sahib as their representative to the Central Legislative Council. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Naujawan Bharat Sabha Aur Allama Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai* (Unpublished Book), pp. 18-19
  57. Maulana Dr. Abd-ud Dian Kaleem, *Su ba-i- Sarhad ke Ulama-i- Deoband ki Seyasi Khidmat* (Peshawar: Maktaba-i- Shuja'at, 2001), pp. 180-183
  58. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Sarhad Ki Inqilabi Tehriken aur Maulana Abdur Rahim Popalzai* (Lahore: Fiction House, 1991), p. 15
  59. On November 29, the revolted tribes augmented by Khogiyanis destroyed important and historical buildings at Jalal Abad. The uprising turned into a revolt and the revolting tribes declared Amanullah Khan as an infidel and 'Kafir.' The revolted tribes were demanding the abdication of Amanullah Khan. On January 10, 1929 King Amanullah Khan issued a *Shahi Farman* and declared himself as true Muslim. That situation was unbearable for the ulama and other well -wishers of King Amanullah Khan in NWFP, and Bucha Saqqa was installed by the external players. Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai, *Afghanistan Main Qiyam-i- Aman: Roedad-e Wafad Ulama-i- Soba-i- Sarhad* (Peshwar: Al- Jamiat Academy Mohallah Jangi, Second Edit., 1996), pp. 1-2
  60. The Peshawar Khilafat Committee sought permission for the delegation of Ulama,

however, the government denied the request and declared it as interference into the matter of Afghanistan. On the other hand the local ulama on March 25, 1929, declared that as negotiating for peace in Afghanistan was the religious duty of Ulama, therefore, the government was interfering in the religious matters of the Muslims. Mufti Sarhad Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai, *Afghanistan Mein Qiyam-i-Aman: Roedad-e Wafad Ulama-i- Suba-i-Sarhad* (Peshwar: Al- Jami'at Academy Mohallah Jangi, Second Edit., 1996), p. 5.

61. The following prominent Ulama were nominated as members of the delegation; Maulana Sham-sul Haq, Turangzai, Maulana Abdul Qahar (Marwat Mulla, Nowshera), Maulvi Shaista Gul (Mardan), Maulvi Amin-ul Haq (Marda), Maulvi Shakirullah (Nowshera), Maulvi Miranjan (Ziarat Kaka Sahib, Nowshera), Maulvi Israel (Uthmanzai, Charsadah), Maulana Abd-ur Rauf (Swabi) and Maulana Shad Muhammad (Mardan). North West Frontier Province, Police Abstract of Intelligence, 34/ 726, 1929, Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
62. Mufti Sarhad Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai, *Afghanistan Main Qiyam-i- Aman: Roedad-e Wafad Ulama-i- Soba-i-Sarhad* (Peshwar: Al- Jamiat Academy Mohallah Jangi, Second Edit., 1996), p. 8
63. He further added that Sardah Act has deprived the Muslims from their religious rights. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Awam Ky Insani Huqooq Aur Allama Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai* (Un-published Book), pp. 78-79
64. A meeting of local Congress Committee was held on December 29, 1929 under the headship of Dr. C. C Ghosh which adopted a third resolution which stated that, "this meeting request the All India National Congress (AINC) to visit NWFP and to constitute an inquiry commission for the recommendation against the tyrannical laws in NWFP. "Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Awam Ky Insani Huqooq Aur Allama Abd-ur Rahim Popalzai*" (Un-published Book), pp. 80-81
65. *Ibid.*
66. Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam And Nationalism: Muslim Politics in the North- West Frontier Province 1937-1947*. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 29-33
67. *Ibid.*
68. Special Branch Reports (1933), File No. 923, Bundle No. 55, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar
69. Ram Saren Nagina, *Tehrik-i- Ghallah Dher* (Lahore: Al- Mehmood Academy, 1994), pp. 26-27
70. *Ibid.*
71. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Sarhad Ki Inqilabi Tehrikein Aur Maulana Abdur Rahim Popalzai* (Lahore: Fiction House, 1991), 23.
72. Ram Saren Nagina, *Tehrik-i- Ghallah Dher* (Lahore: Al- Mehmood Academy, 1994), pp. 20-24.
73. Nagina, *Tehrik-i- Ghallah Dher*, pp. 21-24.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*

77. Nagina has written it as Azam Khan (in Urdu). *Ibid.*
78. The Nawab imposed Rs. 20 as penalty on a poor peasant who was unable to pay the fine. However, after paying the required fine, the aggrieved peasant devastated some plants of Nawabs' garden. Consequently, the Nawab Azam Khan imposed Re. 1 as a general fine on each house in the village. The fine was collected in an asperous manner which later matured in a mass agitation against the atrocities of the Nawab. Nagina, *ibid.* pp. 24-25.
79. Nagina, *ibid.* pp. 17- 27.
80. The defunct Socialist Party was revived in a conference held on April 28, 1938, at Akora where Maulana Abd-ur-Rahim hoisted the Red Flag of the Party. In the conference, the Socialist Party adopted a resolution about the Ghallah Dher issue. *Ibid.*
81. The other members of the Council were: Mian Akbar Shah, Mian Mukarram Shah, Mian Muhammad Shah, Waris Khan, Ajun Khan, Afzal Baba, Ghulam Muhammad Khan, Hazrat Gul and Lal Deen. *Ibid.*
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-45.
83. Ram Sern Nagina, *Tehrik Ghallah Dher* (Lahore: Al- Mahmud Academy, 1994), pp. 30-40.
84. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Hazara Key Mazlum Awaam Aur Allama Abdur Rahim Popalzai* (Lahore: Al- Mahmud Academy, 1994), p. 85.
85. The sweepers presented their 17 demands and requested Abd-ur-Rahim to voice for their rights and to end their exploitation. On May 13, 1938 a procession was made in the favour of the sweepers. Abd-ur-Rahim while addressing the gathering on the same night declared that, "this class was most deprived class and that he endorses their demands." Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Achoot Khakrob Mufti Islam Ki Qayadat Mai* (Lahore: Al- Mahmud Academy, 1994), pp. 12-31.
86. An organized publicity was made for the success of the conference by circulating pamphlets. Malik Khuda Bakhsh and other members of the legislative assembly had also been invited to participate in the conference. *Ibid.*
87. After a successful conference, Abd-ur Rahim led the procession of the *Khakrobs* (Sweepers), *Achoot* (un-touchable) which ended on the polo ground, at present Shami Road. *Ibid.*
88. *Ibid.*
89. The real name of Faqir of Ipi was Mirza Ali Khan Faqir. He was Imam-i- Masjid at village Ipi near Bannu and became popular due to his involvement in "Islam Bibi" incident. Islam Bibi was a hindu and she had converted to Islam and had married to a Muslim person, Noor Ali Shah. However, the local Hindu claimed her kidnapping and took the matter into the court. The local ulama also rose in agitation and meetings, protest rallies became a daily routine not only in Bannu but across the province. Abd-ur Rahim had visited Bannu and had delivered a speech to a big gathering at Majid Qasaban, Bannu during the campaign of that incident. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Hurriat Ka Akhiri Ma'areka* (Un-published Book), p. 30.
90. The letter contained information regarding the movement of Faqir of Ipi. Moreover, Abd-ur Rahim was invited to visit Bannu. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Hurriat Ka Akhiri Ma'areka* (Un-published Book), p. 44.
91. Special Branch Reports, File, S. No. 930, B. No. 55(A), List. II, Record and

- research Centre, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
92. On April 25, 1937, a meeting was held at Chowk Yadgar under the headship of Abd-ur-Rahim. He, while addressing the gathering condemned the government for bringing the people of Azad (independent) tribal areas into the clutches of slavery. Dr. Abdul Jalil Popalzai, *Hurriyat Ka Akhiri Ma'areka* (Un-published Book), p. 30.
  93. Abd-ur-Rahim left his dying daughter on death bed. She was 14 years old. *Ibid.*
  94. Abd-ur Rahim delivered speeches at seven different public meetings and encouraged the masses to follow Faqir of Ipi, a true Muslim, in his *jihad* campaign against the British forces in Waziristan. Special Branch Reports, B. No. 73, File No. 1353-1355, Record and research Centre, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
  95. A grand meeting of JUS, a branch of JUH was held under the presidentship of Maulana Hifz-ur rehman Seoharvi. Maulana Shams-ul Haq of Regi, Peshawar congratulated Abd-ur Rahim for his imprisonment and condemned the government. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-94.
  96. *Ibid.*
  97. Qasim ed., *Tazkira-i-Ulama-i-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*. pp. 316-317.
  98. *Ibid.*
  99. The Ulama in the committees would dispose the civil disputes of the people in the light of 'Sharriat.' This strategy was followed by other branches of JUS in the province. The JUS branch in Bannu, established the committee of Ulema who started their judicial activities in 1933. SBR, File, S. No. 923, B. No. 55(A), List II, Record and research Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar
  100. On November 2, 1934, JUS convened a Shari'at Conference at Shahi Bagh, Peshawar. About one thousand Muslims were present where Khuda Bakhsh, D. I. Khan, Qazi Habib-ur Rehman, Bannu, Maulvi Muhammad Daud, Hakim Abdul Salam, Hazara and Maulana Ahmad Saeed of Delhi delivered speeches in favour of the proposed Sharriat Bill. SBR, File, S. No. 927, B. No. 55(A), List. II, Record and research Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar
  101. The JUS convened the conference from 23- 24 February 1935, for which the JUS had struggled passionately, where the Conference was held at Masjid Muhabat Khan. The prominent ulama who participated in the Conference were; Maulana Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Hifzur Rehman Sewharvi, Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani, Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and other local ulama.
  102. SBR, File, S. No. 924, B. No. 55(A), List. II, Record and research Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
  103. Special Branch Reports, File, S. No. 927, B. No. 55(A), List. II, Record and research Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar
  104. Samina Awan, *Political Islam in Colonial Punjab: Majlis-i- Ahrar 1929-1949*. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1.
  105. Maulana Abdul Qaiyum Popalzai became its president. Another organization

was also active against the Qadianis under the title of Anjuman-i-Tahafuz-i-Shari'at. Special Branch Reports (1935), File No. 901, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.

106. Afterwards the district organization of Ahrar was established and next it was extended to Mardan. Finally, the provincial organization of Ahrar was formed with Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi as its president and was linked to All India Ahrar party, Lahore. *Ibid.*
107. Maulana Midrarullah, Maulana Muhammad Shaub and Ghulam Muhammad Lundkhwar switched over to Muslim League and the Ahrar movement died in Mardan but it continued with vigor in Peshawar, Hazara and in southern districts.
108. The Ahrars were active for 'the finality of Muhammad{ Follow Directives} (SAW) and against the false claims of Ghulam Ahmed of Qadian (India). Special Branch Reports (1935-1940), File No. 900, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar.
109. Special Branch Reports (1935), File No. 903, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.
110. Special Branch Reports (1945-1946), File No. 914, Bundle No. 54, Research and Record Section, Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar.