

## MUHAMMAD ASLAM SANJARI-UNSONG HERO OF FREEDOM MOVEMENT

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### **Abstract**

*It is an irony of fate that the colonial mindset of the ruling elite and official historians in our country tried to project the role of a few leaders in the freedom movement while ignoring the voice of others for their own political and ideological reasons. This article highlights the role of an unsung hero of our freedom movement, Muhammad Aslam Sanjari of Peshawar (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). How did Sanjari, a sub tribe of Kakar Pashtuns, migrate from Kandahar to Bolan (Balochistan) and how did they settled in Peshawar? Being a member of noble Afghan family, a young Aslam Sanjari was attracted by revolutionary movements and newspapers like Al-Hilal, Albilagh and Sirajul Akhbar Afghania in Peshawar valley. He spent many years in British jails and in solitary confinement and prisons in Kabul. Nevertheless, during imprisonment, he wrote excellent poetry in Pashtu, Urdu and Persian with notions of nostalgia and spirit of freedom. How he participated overtly and covertly in various political movements for the independence of our motherland and people's rights on both sides of the Durand Line is the main focus of the article.*

### **Key Word**

Sanjari, Rowlatt Act, Turnagzai, Lashkar, Amanullah Khan, Ubaidullah Sindhi, Muhajireen, Bacha-i-Saqao, Abdul Ghaffar Khan

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## Introduction

Although India was not a theatre of First World War (1914-1918) even then it played a major role in shaping and reshaping the overall economic, social and political scenario of the entire region. The war efforts of the British *Raj* put enormous stress and strain on India's fragile economic, social and political fabric and shattered the myth and might of the British Empire. The challenge to the British government was not only confined to constitution or institutional demands rather it took the form of mass-based nationalist movement with various ideological pastes in violent and non-violent colors and forms.

In this entire Post-War canvas and even before that the North-West Frontier Province (now KP) was intentionally deprived of the reforms package of the British government. Not a word was wasted on this province in the famous Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909 nor in the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. In April, 1919, the British army killed 379 and wounded 1208 people at Jalianwala Bagh (Amritsar) as a result of the countrywide agitation against the Rowlatt Act.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Muslims of India were perturbed by the war against Turkey and the pending peace negotiations. The result was mass movement in the form of the historical *Khilafat* Movement, a unique experience for the political actors of Indian subcontinent. Consequently, it took the form of the *Hijrat* Movement<sup>2</sup> to Afghanistan by declaring British India as *Darul Harb* (abode of War). As Peshawar was the main city on the way to Afghanistan, it became the hub of this movement. In such a situation, NWFP was made a police state with no rights for the indigenous populace. In the words of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan "our province is the gateway to India. We were born in the frontier. This is why we were doomed".<sup>3</sup> In a protest against Rowlatt Act, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan held a protest meeting at Utmanzai (Charsadda) of round about half a million people. This was the first anti-British meeting in the rural area of the settled districts of NWFP. It was alarming situation for the

provincial administration and as a result they immediately arrested and imprisoned Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and imposed fine of Rs. 30,000 on all villagers of Utmanzai. Over a hundred and fifty notables were kept in confinement as hostages, until the fine was paid.<sup>4</sup>

In this political turmoil and socio-economic unrest, a young Pakhtun revolutionary Muhammad Aslam Sanjari - born in 1895 at the house of Gulab Ahmad Sanjari son of Qazi Abdul Ghaffar Khan Sanjari who came to Peshawar along with Ahmad Shah Baba and started business in Peshawar and later on became Hakeem (traditional Physician) - took part in all anti-British activities in Peshawar and surrounding area.

Aslam Sanjari was very keen in studies from very childhood and also very sharp in learning his paternal profession of *Hikmat*.<sup>5</sup>

As a young boy he used to read newspaper *Al Hilal* and *Albilagh* of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, famous anti-British newspapers along with newspaper *Sirajul- Akhbar Afghania* of Mahmud Tarzi of Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> Almost all of his friends and relatives were regularly reading these newspapers at his *Hujra* and distributing secretly in other areas of Peshawar. These papers created political awareness in the youngsters of Peshawar.

During World War First (1914-1918), the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* of the Caliph in Turkey issued a *Jihad Fatwa* (religious decree) for all the Muslim population of the world against the British. This was followed in letter and spirit by the *Ulema* in the Indian subcontinent in general and Maulana Saif-ur-Rehman and Sheikh-ul-Hind (Maulana Mahmudul Hassan) in particular. With this new religio-political development and *Fatwa*, the "*Hizb Ullah*" (party of God) of Haji Sahib of Turnagzai (1856-1937)<sup>7</sup> became more active in NWFP and the tribal areas. Aslam Sanjari along with his friends used to collect money for the *Hizbullah* in Peshawar city. Even he made contacts with *Ghader Party*<sup>8</sup> of India. He was the focal person for correspondence with the other leaders including Maulana

Abul Kalam Azad. In the meantime Maulana Saif-ur-Rehman came to Peshawar from Deoband and had a secret meeting with Haji Sahib about the future strategy for *Jihad* against British *Raj*. Haji Sahib started propaganda against the British with full swing. The British authorities took notice of it and decided to tie him in bail and if Haji Sahib refused, he would be arrested. Mohammad Azam of Bara who was an employee in the DC office, informed Haji Sahib of the British intentions, So Haji Sahib left for Buner and settled at Totalai village. In Buner, Haji Sahib prepared an army of 4000. The Chief Commissioner of NWFP, Roos Keppel sent a *Jirga* of elders including Khan Saadullah Khan of Umerzai and Nawab Dost Mohammad Khan of Tehkal. At that time, Maulana Saif-ur-Rehman was also present. He delivered a speech of advices to the elders and they returned unsuccessful.<sup>9</sup>

Aslam Sanjari along with his young friends went to Bunir to join *Lashkar* of Haji Sahib. In Bunir, they were planning to attack the British cantonments in Mardan on the second day of *Eid*. Aslam Sanjari was assigned the duty to provide food, arms and equipments to the *Lashkar* of Haji Sahib. But unluckily, Gul Betani, an informer of the British authorities in Peshawar, informed Chief Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner at once sent troops to Soorkawai and they attacked the *Lashkar* of Haji Sahib. Nasrullah Khan Nasar, a contemporary writer and friend of Aslam Sanjari narrated in one of his books that Hakim Aslam Sanjari personally told him that during the whole war Haji Sahib was sitting on a *Moosalla* (praying mat) and prepared maps for freedom fighters. He sometimes took up sword in hand and sometimes pistol-puffing “dam” on it and issued orders to the commanders of the *Lashkar* through Maulana Abdul Aziz of Utamanzai. After three weeks battle and casualties from both sides the *Maliks* and elders of Buner went to Haji Sahib and told him that they were unable to fight with the government forces. Haji Sahib agreed with their proposal for rapprochement with the British government but himself went to Swat.<sup>10</sup>In

this battle, most of the followers of Hajji Sahib were either martyred or seriously injured. Aslam Sanjari also lost 35 of his friends in skirmish. Aslam himself got injured in this battle and round about 150 British soldiers lost their lives and left some canons and arms in the area. Aslam Sanjari and some others were declared by the British govern as the “most wanted Anti-British criminals”.<sup>11</sup>

Haji Sahib along with Aslam Sanjari and other followers continued their Anti-British efforts but due to government persecution of the local villagers he left for Bajaur from Swat and settled in village Lakarai. After some time he shifted again along with devoted followers to Mohmand area where the local tribes not only received them very warmly but also granted Haji Sahib some land where he built a mosque, a fort and some residences and gave it the name of “Ghazi Abad” due to which most of the Mohmands became his disciples. Haji Sahib established good relations with Amir Habibullah Khan (Afghan King). Haji Sahib continued to weaken the British. He raised a *Lashkar* of 6000 in 1916 in Mohmand area. This again annoyed the British. They arrested many of his relatives and supporters to harass him. Haji Sahib retaliated by attacking from Lakarai (Mohmands area) and besieging the Shabqadar Fort. This was a formidable stratagem putting the British in surprise. The Siege was finally lifted through British airstrikes.<sup>12</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1917, through an order of the Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, all his property in the settled area was confiscated.<sup>13</sup>

In this volatile political turmoil in NWFP (present KP), Sardar Nasrullah Khan (brother of King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan) exploited the situation by trying to raise a tribal *lashker* of 32000 in tribal area. The training camp was established in Thirah valley.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Haji Sahib of Turangzai received a letter from Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi who was in Kabul for purchase of arms and other equipments for Peshawar secretly from the German mission in Kabul. For this task, Haji Sahib deputed Aslam Sanjari with a fake name *Muhajir* Kashgheri along

with Akbar *Mujahid* to Peshawar. Sanjari became sick and was not feeling well because of unhealed wounds. However, he left for Peshawar in the dark night. When Aslam Sanjari secretly reached his home in Peshawar at night, he met another person namely Doctor Abdul Karim Alias Sadruddin of *Hizbullah* staying in front of his home. He had brought some money and foreign made bombs for the freedom fighters from Hindustan (Pakhtuns considered Peshawar or NWFP not as a part of India). Aslam Sanjari, as a young revolutionary, was very happy to meet such a man with common goals but his obsession and plan was once again shattered by the British intelligence. The very next day police raided his house and arrested Aslam Sanjari but luckily, they failed to find Doctor Abdul Karim or bombs etc because he along with case and ammunition was hiding in the basement of the house. Sanjari was arrested and awarded death sentence by the British court. Aslam Sanjari death sentence was later on converted into life imprisonment but his friend Akbar was hanged. The bazaar gossiping was that British Commissioner was once a student of Sanjari's father and for that very reason Aslam Sanjari was not hanged. To celebrate the victory of World War, the British government decided to set free all the prisoners in 1918. Along with some other freedom fighters he was also released from jail. However, he was kept under house arrest under the strict supervision of CID in Dera Ismail Khan (DIK). In the same case he was shifted from DIK to Multan and later on to Peshawar.<sup>15</sup>

In Peshawar city, Aslam Sanjari along with his young and revolutionary compatriots started protest against the Jalianwala Bagh Tragedy and Rowlatt Act. The British government issued warrants to arrest them, but they secretly went to Kandahar (Afghanistan) in May 1917 to meet Haji Sahib Turangzai.

On the other side of the Durand Line, Amanullah Khan, a revolutionary prince, assumed power after the assassination of his father Amir Habibullah Khan (1901-1919) in Afghanistan. The young King and his Young

Afghan<sup>16</sup> followers and the Indian Revolutionaries based in Kabul were restless for gaining independence from the British. A militant spirit of independence was the major manifestation of Afghan nationalism. *Istiqlal* or Independence that was lost as a result of the Anglo-Afghan Wars of the 19th century was the central and main issue of the Afghan politics in the 20th century. The Young Afghans and the nationalists wanted to regain *Istiqlal* and the "lost paradise" or the Pakhtun territory (under British occupation) by war or any other means.

Humphrys reported from Kabul that for the first few years of Amanullah's reign "independence" was perhaps the most overworked word in the language and "from the King downwards to the nomad camel driver, who swaggers through the bazaars of India and Central Asia, the breath of the nostrils of the Afghans is independence".<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Ghani, a contemporary writer and a close associate of Amanullah in his book describes not only the prevailing situation in the country but also the aim and goal of the new Amir by writing:

"...He (Amanullah) broke the foreign chains that had bound her (Afghanistan), and is naturally anxious to include in her all the Afghan (Pashtu) speaking races. He has Pan-Afghanic notions, which form the basis of his policy. His ambition is legitimate, though the present conditions of the world may not favor its fulfillment".<sup>18</sup>

By early spring of 1919, Amanullah decided to fulfill his promise with the nation about Afghanistan independence. He declared *Ghaza* (holy war) against the British Indian government in the *Eidgah* mosque in Kabul with the shouts *Ya-marg-Ya-Istiqlal* (death or independence) in the public. He took Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi and his close associates into confidence before declaring war against the British. Amanullah mobilized Afghan army towards the Indian frontier on three fronts with Afghan commanders and Kabul based Indian revolutionaries as liaison officers. Widespread tribal uprisings began almost at once along the Durand Line. The tribal *Lashkars* and deserted tribal Militia and Frontier

Scouts joined the Afghan army against the British. But poor means of communications and coordination, lack of arms, exaggerated reports of the agents of the "Provisional Government of India" about the Indian situation. The British airstrikes and precautionary measures in the Frontier province and particularly in Peshawar city compelled Amanullah to accept ceasefire on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1919. An Afghan delegation of eight members (including Dr. A. Ghani and Kabuli Hindu Narinjan Dass) was led by Sardar Ali Ahmad Khan (a cousin of Amanullah) arrived Rawalpindi (India, now Pakistan) on July 25 and after weeks of difficult negotiations a peace treaty was concluded on August 8, 1919. During negotiation Ali Ahmad argued that "if Afghanistan fell to the Communists, then it would bring them to the borders of British India, and if their influence spread across the frontier, they would destroy India..."<sup>19</sup>

He also suggested that since the British could not control Waziristan, it should be ceded to Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup> But Hamilton Grant (a British representative) rejected all such proposals and suggestions of the Afghan delegates. The five articles of the Rawalpindi Peace Treaty (not a friendship treaty) called for the withdrawal of British troops and the cessation of British subsidies and stopping the flow of Afghan war materials through India. It is interesting that the treaty made no mention of Afghan sovereignty or independence. On the insistence of the Afghan delegation a rider (letter) to the effect that it had been implied was attached to the treaty. The letter ran as follows:-

"...the said treaty and this letter leave Afghanistan officially free and independent in its internal and external affairs. Moreover, this war has cancelled all previous Treaties".<sup>21</sup>

As a result of the Rawalpindi Treaty, Britain secured peace but failed to gain the friendship and confidence of the Indian nationalists, and Afghanistan secured independence but was unable to gain the trans-Indus tracts of the Pakhtuns.

While Afghanistan's confrontation was under way, Amanullah pursued the policy of a *fait accompli* by initiating diplomatic relations with various countries. He played a

double role by cultivating relations with the Bolshevik government in Russia on the one hand, and on the other extended its support to Bukhara and Khiva with the aim to force the new Soviet Government to act on its promise to support the independence of these Islamic Khanates as well as to extend Afghan suzerainty over a Central Asian confederation in the new political set-up of Central Asia. The new Russian government was fighting on many fronts and their sympathies were with Anti-British Afghans and it was the first state in the world to recognize Afghanistan's independence and sovereignty on March 27th, 1919.

Besides various groups and factions of the Indian *Muhajireen* in Afghanistan, there were five notable persons, Maulana Bashir, Maulana Ahmad Ali, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, ArbabRaza Khan and Aslam Sanjari who served the *Muhajers*, tried for their unity and were against group politics. Aslam Sanjari's brothers and relatives even donated their own cloths to some of the refugees in Kabul.<sup>22</sup> Most of the refugees were aggressive and ill-disciplined. Moreover, the presence of a large number of British spies in the *Muhajirin* rank further aggravated the situation in Kabul. They demanded from the King Amanullah to wage a *Jihad* against the British government immediately which he was unable to do. This led to the condemnation of the Afghan monarch. Amanullah was accused of betrayal for not declaring war against the British. Disappointed at the attitude of the Afghan authorities, the *Muhajirin* started their back journey to Hindustan. On the way back to India, they faced miseries and hardships of the journey.

Meanwhile, with the help of Turkish advisors in Kabul, the new progressive King of Afghanistan Amanullah Khan launched a modernization and reforms program. L. B. Poullada, an authority on Amanullah's reforms program, divided his reforms period into three successive stages:

The first period (1919-1923), the second period (1923-1924) interrupted by the Khost Rebellion and the third period (1928-January 1929). The reforms of the first period concentrated on political, economic and social aspects of

administration. The most essential of the political transformation was the framing and enactment of the first *Assassi-Nizamnama* (Constitution) in March 1922. The law regarding land tax was passed in 1920 and accordingly confiscated *Waqaf* lands. The social reforms included the secularization of education, extension of social network etc.<sup>23</sup> The Young Afghan's reform program was opposed by some elements of the society mostly those who were either personally opposed to the King or his ministers or those who were misguided by the religious establishment or the British and Bolshevik agents or those conservative elements who even did not want a change in the old traditional set-up of Afghan society. Probably no single social reform was so misinterpreted and misreported as Amanullah's attempt to liberate women from some of the onerous customs and *purdah*.<sup>24</sup>

Aslam Sanjari who was living with other freedom fighters in Jalalabad was invited by King Amanullah Khan to the royal court. During discussions about war strategy in Daka (near Jalalabad) King Amanullah was extremely impressed by his ideas and plans and after few meetings, he was made political adviser. Because of his sacrifices, contacts and wisdom he became popular as "Hakeem Peshawari" in Afghanistan. When *Hijrat* Movement almost ended in 1920, a committee was formed for the settlement of Indian refugees in Afghanistan. Aslam Sanjari was made head of this committee. A new weekly *Isteglal-e-Afghan* was reportedly launched under his editorship.<sup>25</sup>

In 1928, when opposition grew more and more with the support of British agents to radical reforms of King Amanullah, he made an attempt to form a new political party *Istiqal-Wa-Tajadud* (Independence and Modernization) to gain the support of the masses for his reforms but his attempt met with little success. Amanullah, once again reaccelerated his reforms program in June 1928, when he returned from his successful tour of the Middle East, Turkey, the European Continent, England and Soviet Russia. Mahmud Tarzi himself was against the foreign tour of the King for different

reasons or he "sensed the rising opposition" against him.<sup>26</sup> The third time again Amanullah was confronted by the religious elements and anti-government's forces. The King and his cabinet were accused of "heresy" and "*Kufar*". Photographs in Western dress and in "privacy" of Queen Sourya were distributed throughout Afghanistan and in the tribal area by the British agents, *Mullahs* and the anti-Amanullah elements.<sup>27</sup> The British Intelligence and Tribal Affairs Department along with some tribal *Maliks* and Mujaddidi Shor- Bazaar, a prominent religious leader started a propaganda and popular uprising against Amanullah which resulted in the rise of Habibullah Kalkani, popularly known as *Bacha-i-Saqao* (son of water carrier)<sup>28</sup> and the fall of Amanullah. Besides, some internal and external factors and causes contributed to the downfall of Amanullah, Mustafa Chokaiev, a contemporary Central Asian scholar and ex-President of the Provisional Government of Autonomous Turkestan (1917) summed up some major mistakes of the Afghan King in one of his articles published in 1930. He writes:

"...it is clear that the state reforms of Amanullah were subjected to attacks by the up holders of the interests of the tribal order. The defense of the *Shariat* and of the tribal system constituted the source of the "popular wrath" against Amanullah....We have on one side the king reformer considering the Afghans as a united, single political organism, as a unified state nation; and on the other side, the Afghan tribes, who, looking at the state, can comprehend it only from the point of view of the tribal interests, to defend which the principles of the "sacred *Shariat* are put forward...."<sup>29</sup>

He further added:

"...the fault of Amanullah lies in the fact that he failed to take into account the psychological infancy of his people, and also in his over confidence in his own personal authority. Amanullah chose to follow in the footsteps of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal, but he forgot that the Turks had been for centuries in contact with the cultured world of Europe and that the governing class in Turkey had been long since Europeanized. King Amanullah forgot also that Turkey knew not the tribal regime and that she had comparatively well-ordered

centralized apparatus of power such as did not and does not exist in Afghanistan..."<sup>30</sup>

One may agree with all these analyses of scholars and diplomats about the fall of Amanullah but the fact remains that internal and external forces antagonistic to Amanullah and the Afghan nation sabotaged his reforms.

With the fall of Amanullah and the rise of *Bacha-i-Saqao* (Jan:14 to Oct: 13, 1929) a bright and progressive chapter in Afghan history had been closed and a dark reactionary chapter of ignorance, illiteracy, lawlessness and anarchy was opened with the cooperation of the religious establishment. According to Muhammad Ali, an Afghan historian and Muhammad Hussain B.A (Aligar), a contemporary writer and educationist, "By the order of *Bacha* libraries, laboratories, royal Museum of Kabul were sacked and modern schools were closed....Books and articles of value were either destroyed, burnt or sold at ridiculous prices....His chief victims were the officials of King Amanullah Khan, and wealthy merchants or influential and learned men....He suspected the students most and regarded them as his secret enemies..."<sup>31</sup>

Almost all progressive people including the Young Afghans, Pakhtun nationalists, pro-Amanullah elements and students of the modern schools resented the *Bacha* regime. The reaction against his rule in the Indian subcontinent and particularly in the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan was open and hostile. The *Siyasat*, the *Zamindar*, the *Pratap* of Lahore and other Indian newspapers reported on February 10, 1929, the anti-Amanullah activities of Hazrat Sahib of Shor-Bazaar in India.<sup>32</sup> The *Zamindar* even raised "Amanullah Fund" and appealed for contributions. In the same month, a society called the "*Jamiat-i-Naujawanan-i-Sarhad*" was formed in Peshawar to agitate in favour of Amanullah. Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Bacha Khan) participated in almost all anti-government and pro-Amanullah agitations. In September 1929, he formed *Afghan-Jirga* and later on the *Khudai-Khidmatgars* (the Servants of God) for the reformation of Pakhtun society, Hindu-Muslim unity and independence for India. During the Afghan civil war, he not

only championed the cause of Amanullah but also attempted to help the Afghan ruler by stopping the flow of supplies to *Bacha*. When Amanullah abdicated, Abdul Ghaffar Khan placed most of the blame on the British. Writing in his autobiography, he said:

"...We felt the destruction of Afghanistan as if it were our own ruin. And actually, the British led Afghanistan into ruin because of us. We were deeply impressed and affected by the progress we saw in Afghanistan and the British did not like that, neither did they want us to follow their example.... We tried to help Afghanistan, with men and money as far as was possible and we continued to do so till Nadir Khan came into power...Amanullah Khan used to call himself the revolutionary king of the Pakhtuns. And indeed, it was he who inspired us with the idea of the revolution. But the Afghans did not take as much advantage of it as we did, because they were asleep, and we were beginning to wake up".<sup>33</sup>

Abdul Ghaffar Khan also launched a propaganda campaign by publishing pro-Amanullah articles in his Pashtu journal the "*Pakhtun*". It was the first Pashtu journal started in May, 1928 and it became very popular in N.W.F. Province and Afghanistan.

Amanullah Khan was compelled to leave Kabul and went to Kandahar and later left for Europe via India to avoid more bloodshed in Afghanistan. Aslam Sanjari along with Muhammad Akbar Khan (Minister of Finance) his followers were stationed in Kabul to resist the pro- *Bacha Saqao* attacks but unluckily the royal forces were defeated by *Saqao* combatants in Ghazni. This event discouraged Amanullah and his followers in Kabul. *Bacha Saqao* forces occupied all important buildings of Kabul and defeated the remaining forces of Amanullah. Some of the pro-Amanullah elements escaped from Kabul while Aslam Sanjari family members were tortured and arrested. Aslam himself was hiding in various places in Kabul but ultimately arrested by *Saqao* forces after four months and imprisoned along with his followers in the special prison cell in the basement of Arrag (royal Palace). After one week they were presented in humiliating manner in *Saqao*

*Shariat* court of Qazi. The court decided a punishment of death sentence and execution for all of them for conspiracy against Bacha and supporting Amanullah. All of his followers were executed one by one but Sanjari remained alone in the prison. Again, one day he was brought in chains before Bacha Saqao. Bacha was lying on his bed because of some wounds on his back. Bacha Saqao told him that you are a criminal and prisoner, but you are *Hakeem*. Treat me and don't try to be smart as your family is under my custody. After a month Bacha Saqao recovered and his harsh behavior changed regarding Aslam Sanjari. Now and then he used to call him to his court. One day, he changed the punishment of his execution into life imprisonment on the advice of his close Minister Abdul Lateef Kohati.<sup>34</sup>

On June 14, 1929, Bacha's position was challenged by Sher Agha, the Hazrat of Shor-Bazaar, who was one of the main leaders of the uprising against Amanullah, by issuing a *fatwa* against Bacha and attempting to win the Ghilzai support for Nadir Khan, who appeared on the scene as the champion of Afghan cause. Nadir came to Peshawar with his two brothers and two Indian leaders Zafar Ali Khan and Sirajudin Paracha of Lahore. In Peshawar, the students of Islamia College requested him to help Amanullah and Abdul Ghaffar Khan extended his full support with men and money. Consequently, with the support of tribesmen of Waziristan and others, Nadir and his brothers captured Kabul and on October 15th 1929 he became the new Shah (King) of Afghanistan. After the execution of Bacha, his brother Hamidullah, Said Hussain and nine others of his government, Nadir Shah (now King) issued a ten point policy declaration.<sup>35</sup> Nadir was no doubt an experienced and gifted man. He knew himself, his people and his neighbors. But after restoration of peace in the country, Nadir was confronted by the remnants of supporters of Amanullah, the Young Afghans and Constitutionals and to tackle these elements was not so easy. In early 1930s, Anti-Nadir activities were started openly by Pro-Amanullah Young

Afghans, who had been students during the reign of Amanullah and mostly the followers of the earlier Young Afghans. To counter this, the Pro-Amanullah elements espoused the cause of Amanullah and constitutionalism with a new slogan "Amanism".<sup>36</sup>

People like Aslam Sanjari were still there in Kabul. He was not only released from prison with honor but for his pro Amanullah activities Nadir Khan wanted them to get information regarding Amanullah Khan and the freedom fighters of Russia and Afghanistan but for the time being he handled the situation politically. Nadir Khan was informed by Irbab Sikander Khan and British Embassy that Aslam Sanjari is very dangerous person and he is still in contact with pro-Amanullah elements in Afghanistan and secretly working for the restoration of Amanullah. On these accusations and false allegations, he was once again arrested by new king. He was imprisoned in the dark basement of Borj Jar Saeel in the royal palace. On the other hand, Nadir Khan killed the well-wishers of Amir Amanullah Khan very ruthlessly. In those days an Indian revolutionary Abdul Azim Khan decided to kill William Fraser-Tytler as he was considered to be a threat for all the freedom fighters based in Kabul. He went to embassy to kill him. On the way he met three persons. He asked from them that who was William Fraser Tytler amongst you. A Tranger, an Engineer pointed toward himself that I am William Fraser Tytler. At that time Abdul Azim Khan raised the slogan "long live Hakim Sanjari" and killed him with his pistol. Abdul Azim Khan was arrested. The whole family of Aslam Sanjari was kept under house arrest. Aslam Sanjari was sentenced to death and he was kept in Borj Jar Saeel for four years. Then on the recommendation of Mullah Shor-Bazaar his punishment was changed into life imprisonment.<sup>37</sup>

Aslam Sanjari spent fourteen years in the solitary confinement cell in the Kabul Arrg from 1930 to 1947. In those fourteen years he wrote excellent Pashtu, Farsi and Urdu Poetry. In September 1946 in the interim setup, the

British government announced immensity for all political prisoners in the Indian subcontinent. On the recommendations of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru Aslam Sanjari was released by Afghan government with the instruction to leave Afghanistan. He came from Kabul to Peshawar via Quetta but nobody from his own town city (Peshawar) welcomed him on the railway station.<sup>38</sup> He was forgotten by the people of his hometown and the young generation. Most of his relatives and friends were either dead or those non Muslims (friends) migrated to India from Peshawar. He was 72 and had no male issues. He spent his life in a small shop of Daki Nalbandi (Qissa Khwani Bazaar) with the miserable past memories with only a single joy and that was that ultimately, he gained freedom for his motherland. He died in January 1978 and buried in his ancestor graveyard in Peshawar.

### **Conclusion**

Most of the heroes involved in the struggle for freedom have been obscured from the students of history and our younger generation in this country; nevertheless, their marks left on this soil can never be erased from pages of our history forever. These heroes spent all their lives in the service of this nation but we either ignored them or consciously or unconsciously excluded them from our curriculum and official history. However, we expect our upcoming scholars and academicians to rewrite history with an unbiased mind and all-encompassing approach. Hopefully our shared and collective knowledge about our past will turn into practice, from practice to experience and will make an unending chain of anever-living righteousness. I hope that all unsung heroes like Aslam Sanjari will be rediscovered and will be highlighted in the people's histories by our young researchers.

### **References and Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, *The Peoples Power: Unarmed Pashtun Resistance against the British Raj during 1930-1940*, (Peshawar:

Baacha Khan Research Centre, Baacha Khan Markaz, 2011), PP.7-8. On March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1919 the British government passed an Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act known as Rowlatt Act recommended by a Committee under the chairmanship of Justice S. A. T Rowlatt. (The other members of the Committee were B. Scott, C. V. Kumarswami Sastri, H. V. Lovett and P. C. Mitter.) They, after long deliberations presented some suggestions which were accepted and enacted. This act authorized the government (a) to imprison any person suspected of terrorism living in the Raj for up to two years without a trial, and gave the imperial authorities power to deal with all revolutionary activities, (b) The unpopular legislation provided for stricter control of the press, arrests without warrant, indefinite detention without trial, and juryless *in camera* trials for proscribed political acts. The accused were denied the right to know the accusers and the evidence used in the trial. (c) Those convicted were required to deposit securities upon release, and were prohibited from taking part in any political, educational, or religious activities

- <sup>2</sup> The *Hijrat* Movement was one of the significant events of Indo-Pak history with significant impact on NWFP, tribal areas and Afghanistan. Contemporary writers and *Muhajirs* (refugees) have written many some books and articles in Urdu, Pashtu and English with their own perspective and experience on the mass migration from India. The second source, which is comparatively objective, is the British and Afghan government record. King Amanullah mastered the situation around his country by showing his sympathy with the Indian leaders of the *Khilafat* Movement. On January 14, 1920, he wrote a letter to the King-Emperor of England stating that he "shared the opinion of all Mohammedans with regard to the upholding of the Islamic *Khilafat*". He declared himself to be ready to sacrifice his life for the *Khilafat* and would welcome "*Muhajreen*" from India into Afghanistan. After a few weeks of Amanullah's offer and the *fatwa* of Maulana Abdul Bari of U.P (India) in May 1920 round about sixty to seventy thousand Indians migrated to Afghanistan. By this time the Afghan Government acquitted itself well within the limits of her limited resources and without the aid of any International organization.

<sup>3</sup> Ghaffar, Abdul: *Zama Zhwand Aw-Judujuhed*, Kabul, 1983, pp. 138-160.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Anwar Dewana, *Kia ye log Paggal Tey*, (Peshawar: Gulshan Market Church road Kohati gate, Peshawar, 1995) P.44.

<sup>6</sup> Mahmud Tarzi (1866-1933) was an Afghan reformist, Pan-Islamist, anti Imperialist and above all father of Afghan journalism, nationalism, modernism, preacher of new thoughts in 20<sup>th</sup> century Afghanistan.

Prolific writer of Pashto, Dari, Arabic and French, he had to his credit many books and articles. Tarzi was father-in-law of two Afghan princes, Amanullah Khan and Inayatullah Khan. The paper was revived and edited by him in October, 1911. It also published extracts from Indian, Turkish, Iranian and Central Asian newspaper. It projected spirit of nationalism, modernism and political awareness among Afghan masses.

<sup>7</sup>Fazli Wahid popularly known as Haji Sahib Turangzai was born in 1856 in a religious family of Turangzai (Charsadda) in the house of Syed Fazal Ahmad. His mother belonged to Kakakhels family of Totay area, Malakand. His ancestors had originally come from Kandahar and were famous for piety, teaching and public service. Haji Sahib initiated his work by opening local schools called Azad Madaris to counteract missionary schools in the Frontier. For this purpose Haji Sahib founded an Educational Board at Gadar to administer chain of schools, around 150 in number under its control. This number is doubted. The British record finds the number of schools as 34 but other sources place them as big as 72, 120 and 150. In the establishment of such schools Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Mohammad Akbar Khadim were also associated. This great freedom fighter died on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1937 at Ghazi Abad Mohmand tribal territory. His funeral was postponed to the 16<sup>th</sup> to enable his countless followers to attend it. Haji Sahib was buried at Ghazi Abad, the village which he had founded after migration to tribal territory. See for more detail Mohammad Ali Cheragh, *AkabireenTahreek-i-Pakistan*, (Lahore: 1980), 277; Aziz Javed, *Haji Sahib Turangzai*, (Peshawar: 1982).

<sup>8</sup>The *Ghadr* (rebel) Party was organized by Lala Hardayal in 1913 in USA for the liberation of India from British imperialism. See for more detail AjeetJaved, *Left politics in Punjab*, (Delhi: Durga Publications, 1988).

<sup>9</sup>NasrullahKhanNasar, *Da Turangzo Haji Sahib*, (Peshawar: 1951), PP.14-15; Dr. M. Anwar. Khan, *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle*, (Lahore: 2000), P. 29.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, PP.15-20.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.* PP.20-22; See A. Dewana *Opcit.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.* P. 135.

<sup>13</sup> The confiscated property of Haji Sahib was in Turangzai village (Charsadda) 132 Kanals, Utmanzai- 432 Kanals ad 7 marlas, Jalala- 60 Kanals and 5 marlas, and PirSaddo- 492 Kanals and 13 marlas. See for details. Shahr-re-Yar, '*Haji Sahib Turangzai: His life and Work*', (unpublished MA Thesis, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar, 1997-99), P.10

<sup>14</sup>A. Dewan *Opcit.* P 49

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.* PP.50-51

- <sup>16</sup>Just like the Young Turks, the Khivans and the Young Bukharans the educated, nationalist, Pan-Islamist, anti-British Young Afghans organized in different groups and factions for *Mashroota* (Constitutionalism) and independence of the country during the reign of Amir Habibullah and onward.
- <sup>17</sup>R. C. Maconachie, *A précis on Afghan Affairs 1919-1927* (secret document), Government of India Press, 1928. P.2
- <sup>18</sup>Abdul Ghani, *A Review of the political situation in Central Asia*, (Pakistan, 1980), P.137.
- <sup>19</sup>Abdul Hakim Tabibi, *Afghanistan A nation in love with freedom*,(U.S.A, 1985) P.75.
- <sup>20</sup>*Ibid.* P.75.
- <sup>21</sup>R.C. Maconachie, *A Précis on Afghan Affairs,part, I,(1919-1923)*,Government of India,1923.P.25.
- <sup>22</sup>Muhammad Hamid, *Sirguzast-i-Mujahid Ghazi Abdul Karim Chamarkandi*,Lahore.1981.p.28.
- <sup>23</sup>L. B Poullada, *Reforms and Rebellion in Afghanistan 1919-1929*, (London, 1973), P.69.
- <sup>24</sup>See for details Muhammad Anwer Khan, "The first constitution of Afghanistan: Its evolution and abolition". *Central Asia*, Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar. Winter 1978.
- <sup>25</sup>Dewana,A.:*Opcit*.P.54
- <sup>26</sup>Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, *The Evolution and Growth of Communism in Afghanistan 1917-1979: An Appraisal*, (Karachi: Royal book Company, 1997) .P.176
- <sup>27</sup>Interview with Murad Shinwar, Peshawar, May 9,1985. According to M. Shinwar the rebellion in Afridi area against Amanullah Khan was started by Mir Akbar Khan Afridi. The Indian writers like Muhammad Hussain B.A. Aligar also wrote an anti-Amanullah book with photographs of his family in Urdu. There is an express letter dated 23rd August 1928 from Secretary Chief Commissioner N.W.F.P to Foreign Simla writing:"...The political Agent Kurram again reports that he has received information which he is still unable to corroborate, to the effect that a plot is being matured throughout the country to overthrow the King, its leaders being the persons mentioned in his telegram 197-c dated the 31st May 1928".File No.453,I.B, Peshawar, no, 421/b.p.80.See also F.R.K .Marwat & A. Karim Khan, "Peshawar based information's on Amanullah's flight from Afghanistan", *Central Asia*, no.17,1985 Area Study Centre, Peshawar University.
- <sup>28</sup>Habibullah son of Abdur Rahman (Amanullah's father's name was also Habibullah and grandfather Abdur Rahman), age 40,popularly known asBacha-i-Saqao (son of water carrier)was a Tajek of Kalkan, a village situated near Khwaja Serai, half-way between Kabul and Charikar. Spent some time in KilaMurad Beg as servant of an Afghan official and then joined" *Qita Namuna*" regiment in Kabul after which he deserted with his rifle. According to Ustad Khalilullah Khalili (1980),a contemporary of

Habibullah, his most recent biographer and also once an official in his government, he(Bacha) had taken part in anti-Bolshevik wars in Bukhara and had received a note of recognition from Enver Pasha for his bravery in the battlefield. It was on the basis of the note from Enver Pasha that the Turkish officer in charge of the *Qita-Namuna* (the model battalion) recruited him into their ranks. He worked in a Tea-stall in Peshawar city and then went to Parachinar (Kurram Agency) where he was sentenced to eleven months imprisonment for house breaking. (In 1982-83, when I was a Lecturer at Parachinar Government College, the locals always recited Bacha stories and once I visited the house, where once Bacha was living)In 1924, Khost Rebellion he sided with Mangals and then he became a highway man, showed considerable generosity to the poor but was merciless to Afghan officials and wealthy travellers. The Shinwari revolt provided him the chance to emerge as an anti-Amanullah raider. As a result of the success gained by Bacha, Amanullah abdicated in favor of his elder brother Inyatullah on 14th January 1929. Bacha also fought against him and ultimately proclaimed himself as the King of Afghanistan with the title of *Habibullah Ghazi. Summary of Events in Afghanistan* op.cit.pp.19,20. Maulana Agha Rafiq, *Baghawat-i-Afghanistan, BachaSaquakeeDilchaspHalati-Zindagi*, (Delhi: n.d.) One of his adherents (perhaps)Shah Agha Mujadadi even published a book in Peshawar in 1987 entitled, *Amir Habibullah Khadim-i-din-i-Rasul-ullah*, Lahore. nd; KalilullahKhalili, *Ayari-az-Khurasan: Amir Habibullah Khadimi-i-din Rasul-uallah* ,(Peshawar:,1980,) PP.102-155.

<sup>29</sup>Chokaiev, M.: The situation in Afghanistan, *The Asiatic Review*, vol. xxvi, January- October, No, 85-88, London 1930.P.325.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*.P.330

<sup>31</sup>M.A, Muhammad Ali: *Progressive Afghanistan*, (Lahore:1933), PP.43,44; Muhammad Hussain B.A, *Afghanistan Mee-Meri-EkissBaras*, vol,1 , *Inqlab-i-Afghanistan*, Jalander,1931.P.19

<sup>32</sup>Zafar Ali Khan, “*Zamindar*”, a newspaper published from Lahore. *Secret Index: Vol.xxv* (N.W.F.P.) Police abstract of intelligence for the year ending 31 December,1929.P.41.

<sup>33</sup>Jayaprakash Narayan, *My life and Struggle* (autobiography of Badshah Khan as narrated to K.B. Narang ), (Delhi: 1969), PP.90 91,95; See for more detail Abdul Ghaffar, *Zama Zawand Aw-Judjuhed*, (Kabul:1983).

<sup>34</sup>Dewana, A.*Opcit*.P.57

<sup>35</sup>Marwatopcit, P.180.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>37</sup>Dewana, A.*Opcit*.P.59

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid*. P.60