

## **The *Faqir* of Ipi – A Mystic Warrior of Waziristan**

***Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat***

### ***Abstract***

*Mirza Ali Khan alias Faqir of Ipi remained a controversial figure and legendary character in the history of South Asia as his life had many facets, both overt and covert. While the local tribes believed, as they believe even today, that he was a pious man with all the qualifying attributes of mystics but to the British he was a 'devil incarnate' and to Muslim political agent he was 'saint warrior' and the protagonist of Pukhtunistan movement in tribal area even after the creation of Pakistan. For more than one decade his body and mind were full of tasks and thoughts against the British rule. He could not think of anything else but hostility against the British, which he haunted like a 'devil incarnate'. One should not lose sight of an important factor that in his entire struggle against the firangi, he was assisted in matters of money by the Afghan government as well as Germans and the Italians. The Axis Powers could not find a fiercer fighter than the Faqir in all the British colonies during the Second World War. The implication of the Faqir's factor for that reason was an international one.*

*For the Government of Pakistan, the Faqir phenomenon was no more than a 'law and order' problem. Instead of taking it in its proper perspective, it was left to the power politics and authority of the political agent who has always held two traditional cards – carrot and stick – a policy that fails to work in the face of an ideological hostility.*

The rising tides of opposition to the British *raj* in the Indian subcontinent took various forms and expressions at different places and among different communities. After the rise of the British power in the NWFP, Pukhtuns, under their religio-political leaders, not only defied their rule but also gave a hard time to the encroaching imperialist power. Such

dynamic leaders included Haji Sahib of Turangzai<sup>1</sup> and Mullah Hadda<sup>2</sup> in the north, Mullah Powinda<sup>3</sup> and the *Faqir* of Ipi<sup>4</sup> in the south of the Frontier province. Their leadership rested upon two major interacting factors; religious charisma and political militancy. It was this type of leadership that gained prominence in a society, which normally rejects any kind of authority, or leadership over its head.

More than two decades after the death of Mullah Powinda, while his descendants and followers still continued their fundamental opposition to the British in South Waziristan,<sup>5</sup> another religious leader came to the forefront in North Waziristan. He was *Faqir* of Ipi.

*Faqir* of Ipi remained a controversial figure and legendary character throughout the history as his life had many facets, both overt and covert. While the local tribes believed, as they believe even today, that he was a pious man with all the qualifying attributes of a *Pir*, *Faqir*, *ghaus* and *qutub*,<sup>6</sup> to the British he was a 'devil incarnate'.<sup>7</sup> To a Muslim

<sup>1</sup> Haji Fazle Wahid, commonly known as Haji Sahib of Turangzai (1858-1937), belonged to a religious family of village Turangzai, district Charsadda. He was a *murid* (disciple) of the Mullah of Hadda (Ningrahar). He took part in the 1897 Frontier uprising. With Abdul Ghaffar Khan, he established a number of *Azad* (independent) schools and preached boycott of the government educational institutions. In 1915, the Haji left his home for tribal areas and settled in Mohmands territory. There he continued preaching *jihad* against the British and led several major and minor uprisings. He died on 15 December 1937.

<sup>2</sup> Najmud-Din alias Mullah Hadda was the *pir* (guide) of Haji of Turangzai, who led several tribal uprisings against the British in the Mohmands territory.

<sup>3</sup> Muhiyud-Din, known as Mullah Powindah, led Mahsuds of South Waziristan against the British encroachment from 1893 till his death in 1913.

<sup>4</sup> *Faqir* means an ascetic man. Ipi is the name of a village in Daur area of North Waziristan where Haji Mirza Ali Khan (*Faqir* of Ipi) settled after leaving his native village.

<sup>5</sup> Between the Kurram river (to the north) and the Gomal river (to the south) lies Waziristan, an area of about 13,000 square kilometres of barren and formidable tangle of hills. It now forms part of the F.A.T.A (Federally Administered Tribal Area) of Pakistan. It is divided into two agencies viz. North Waziristan and South Waziristan. A political agent heads each agency.

<sup>6</sup> Different stages in *sufi* (mystic) order.

<sup>7</sup> Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *The Saint Warrior* (Peshawar: Tribal Affairs Research Cell, Government of NWFP, Home & Tribal Affairs Department, 1980), p. 4.

APA (Assistant Political Agent) he is a ‘Saint Warrior’,<sup>8</sup> but to his detractors he was a plunderer, hypocrite and a ‘Pseudo-saint who sold Islam down the river at the altar of Pukhtun jingoism’.<sup>9</sup>

Mirza Ali Khan (his real name) was born in 1901 in a hamlet called Kurta (Maddi Khel) at a distance of about one kilometre from Khajuri Camp on the Bannu- Miranshah Road. He belonged to the famous Turi Khel clan of the Wazir tribe of North Waziristan Agency. He came from Bangal Khel sub-section of Maddi Khel section of Turi Khel. That way he was a descendant of Musa Darwesh, commonly known as Musa Nikeh (Musa, the grandfather).<sup>10</sup>

His father Sheikh Arsala Khan and grandfather Mohammad Ayaz Khan were highly religious men in the area. It was but natural that young Mirza Ali Khan bore a conspicuous religious stamp on his personality. Like other tribal children, Mirza Ali Khan got his early education in Arabic, Persian, Pushto and Urdu from his father and the village Mullah.<sup>11</sup> He was twelve when his father died leaving a family of seven, consisting of his mother, three younger brothers and three sisters.<sup>12</sup> After the death of the village Mullah, he moved to the nearby Daur country<sup>13</sup> – Hasso Khel and Haidar Khel – in pursuit of knowledge. There Maulvi Manay Jan Daur and Maulvi Alam Khan Ipi Daur taught him.<sup>14</sup>

Getting basic knowledge in *tib* (homeopathy) and theology, Mirza Ali Khan went to Nurar village in Bannu tehsil, where he spent

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<sup>8</sup> Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, author of the above-cited booklet, was Assistant Political Agent of North Waziristan Agency in 1980. His other publications about the land and people of North Waziristan are: *Kaithu Valley opens Its Arms*, and ‘*Episode of 1979*’.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>10</sup> The shrine of Musa Darwesh is situated in the extreme west of Darwesh Khel Wazir country, this side of the Durand Line in Pakistan at a distance of about one and a half kilometres from the border. (Unpublished MA Thesis of Jehanzeb Khan, *Faqir of Ipi*, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Peshawar, 1983, pp.4,8).

<sup>11</sup> One who leads Muslims in prayers.

<sup>12</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.8.

<sup>13</sup> Daur is another prominent tribe of Waziristan scattered in the fertile Tochi valley along the Tochi River.

<sup>14</sup> Maulvi Manay Jan was Hassan Khel Daur and Maulvi Alam Khan was also a Daur from Ipi village. See Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.7.

some years with Maulvi Gul Kheodad,<sup>15</sup> a prominent leader of the *Khilafat* movement. As his thirst for knowledge could not be quenched in those traditional local centres of learning, he took to visiting place after place in search of a true teacher and guide. He went to various *khanqahs* and *madrassahs*<sup>16</sup> of contemporary saints and scholars of Peshawar, Kohat, Khost and Jalalabad.<sup>17</sup> It was at Jalalabad that he became a *murid* of Sayed Hassan, commonly popular as Naqib Sahib of Jalalabad, a prominent *sufi* and *gadi nashin* of the Qadariyya<sup>18</sup> order in Afghanistan. Impressed by the piety and obedience of Mirza Ali Khan, Naqib Sahib bestowed upon him his robe of lieutenancy. Thus in the company of Naqib Sahib, Mirza Ali Khan reconstructed his religious and temporal thoughts and decided to go back to his native village.

In Afghanistan, Mirza Ali Khan had the opportunity of meeting Qari Hayat-ud-Din alias Sherdad Bannuchi<sup>19</sup> who had migrated to Afghanistan along with his family during the *Hijrat* movement of 1920.<sup>20</sup> Upon the requests of his friends, Mirza Ali Khan married his daughter. He left Afghanistan along with his wife and returned to his native hamlet in Waziristan. On his arrival, some Dauris of village Ipi invited him to their village for permanent settlement. Mirza Ali Khan accepted the invitation and shifted with his family to Ipi. Inhabitants of Ipi gifted him a house and a mosque. He busied himself in imparting religious education and spiritual guidance to poor illiterate people. Hence, the

<sup>15</sup> Gul Ayub Khan Gul Ayub Khan Saifi *Bannu Au Da Waziristan Tarikh* (Pushto), Vol.I (Peshawar: Shaheen Printing Press, 1969), p.288; See Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.9.

<sup>16</sup> *Khanqah* means a sufic monastery and teaching centre whereas *madrassah* means a Muslim seminary.

<sup>17</sup> Khost is an administrative division in southern Afghanistan and Jalalabad is the capital of Ningrahar province in the eastern parts of Afghanistan.

<sup>18</sup> *Gadi-Nashin* means a saintly-seat holder, and the Qadariyya is a famous sufic order in Islam. See also Abdul Hamid Abdul Hamid Tareen, *Faqir Ipi* (Urdu) (Karachi: Taj Company Ltd., 1984), pp.65-6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66. See also Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.9. Qazi Hayat-ud-Din alias Sherdad was a Bannuchi of village Fatima Khel Kalan of Bannu.

<sup>20</sup> In the summer of 1920, about sixty thousand Muslims of British India went to Afghanistan in protest against their infidel rulers. This also excited many Pukhtuns and in August 60,000 of them sold their homes and hearths and migrated to Afghanistan. The movement ended in disaster. See James W. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1963), p.163. See also a letter of Dr. M. Naeem Qureshi to Dr. Muhammad Anwar Khan, former Director, Area Study Centre and Vice-chancellor, University of Peshawar, dated 6 November 1985.

mosque became a centre of knowledge in theology and blessing in spiritualism in Waziristan and the surrounding areas. It was after his arrival from Afghanistan that Mirza Ali Khan performed *Haj*.

Waziristan was a chronic problem for the British administration in the Frontier Province. It was but natural that after coming to Waziristan, Mirza Ali Khan could not remain unsusceptible and indifferent to politics at the provincial as well as all-India level. His own approach to the Indian political cauldron was two-pronged. In that he seemed bogged down in political duality, if not in character dichotomy, as his detractors would make us believe.

He could not help siding with the *swarajist* elements in the province. Most of them happened to be in the Congress camp, e.g., the *Khudai Khidmatgars* and the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema*. This extremist anti-British group, which was more in line with the Congress rather than with the Muslim League, easily gained the support of Mirza Ali Khan. The former gave him all-out backing as long as he could mobilise his followers against the British forces in Waziristan. This was one aspect of Mirza Ali Khan's political life which, to all content and course, was anti-British (*raj*) and that of a freedom fighter who believed most in military power than in political solutions.

Another aspect of Mirza Ali Khan's political life was that even when he supported Congress for its struggles for freedom, he seemed to the Congressites like a rank communalist. In all the religious and political brawls between Hindus and Muslims, he sided with his co-religionists for which he was accused of preaching communalism. In communal incidents like that of the Shaheed Ganj Mosque<sup>21</sup> in Lahore, nationalist leaders of the Frontier Province like Abdul Ghaffar Khan<sup>22</sup> adopted non-communalist stance and advocated Hindu-Muslim unity, whereas Mirza Ali Khan came out openly against what seemed to him as the Hindus hate for Muslims.

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<sup>21</sup> Hindus demolished Shaheed Ganj Mosque, a small historic mosque in Lahore, situated on the grounds of a *gurdwara* (Sikh place of worship) in July 1936, with the approval of British government. This aroused intensive communal and anti-government feelings in the Indian Muslims.

<sup>22</sup> Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as Bacha Khan, was born in 1890 at village Utmanzai, tehsil Charsadda, district Peshawar. He formed an organisation called the Afghan Jirgah in September 1929, and in the same year organised a volunteer corps called the *Khudai Khidmatgars* (Servants of God). The British dubbed the latter as Red Shirts. For his life see D.G. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, Delhi, 1967 and Abdul Ghaffar Khan's autobiography, *Zama Zhwand Au Jadu Jehd*, Kabul, N.D.

His contemporary critics, both Hindus and Muslims, could not understand the two conflicting stances of Mirza Ali Khan. While he supported the Congress movement despite his animosity towards Hindus in their communal tussle with Muslims, he stood firmly beside his co-religionists in defence of the Muslim rights and honour although he was not in favour of the Muslim League.

To ignite communal frenzy, and as bad luck would always have it in such circumstances, an incident took place that worsened further the communal tension between Hindus and Muslims in the province. It engulfed the entire Bannu district and drew attention of Muslims and Hindus all over India. It involved the ruling Congress Party led by Doctor Khan Sahib and the opposition Muslim League led by Sardar Aurangzeb Khan so much that the latter used the incident as a propaganda tool against the former in the Frontier Province.

In March 1936, a young Hindu girl named Ram Kori of village Isaki Jandu Khel (near Bannu city) fell in love with a Muslim school teacher Sayed Amir Noor Ali Shah living at Jandu Khel.<sup>23</sup> She left her village, embraced Islam and married the Sayed. Change of faith led to change of name. Ram Kori turned into Islam Bibi, a name, which she loved to be called with. Her husband named her Noor Jehan,<sup>24</sup> but her own choice (Islam Bibi) became most favourite with the Muslim populace of the Bannu district. She herself got registered this name at the Ghoriwala Police Station<sup>25</sup> after her arrest. It may be mentioned that Ram Kori, the Islam Bibi of Bannu, was unwittingly repeating history of another Hindu girl, named Chuni Bai, who came from Mianwali to Karbogha, embraced Islam and married Nur Muhammad of that village. She was the first convert who was given this Muslim name of Islam Bibi. This happened in July 1928.

The news of Ram Kori's conversion to Islam and her marriage with a Muslim spread like a wildfire in the surrounding areas of Bannu which led to a breach of communal peace. In Bannu city, the Hindu community, full of fury and hatred, alleged that Ram Kori (Islam Bibi) had been kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam by the Sayed. They demanded restoration of the girl to her mother. On the other hand, the Muslims supported the husband of Ram Kori, claiming that she embraced Islam and entered the wedlock with the Sayed with her own consent. They were of the opinion that Islam Bibi was the lawful wife of

<sup>23</sup> Syed Amir Noor Ali Shah was a descendant of Syed Shah Ghaus Bahaul-Haq Multani, living in village Jandu Khel, Bannu. Saif, *op.cit.*, p.266.

<sup>24</sup> Gul Ayub Khan Saifi *op.cit.*, p.268. See also Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.13.

<sup>25</sup> Ghoriwala Police Station is situated on Bannu – D.I. Khan Road.

the Sayed, and, moreover, her act was quite in accordance with the *shariat*.<sup>26</sup>

Mensa Devi, mother of Islam Bibi and widow of Mewa Ram, lodged a report in the police station of Domail<sup>27</sup> against the Syed and his brother Syed Abdullah Shah for kidnapping of her daughter. She also stated in the FIR (First Information Report) that Ram Kori had taken away cash, jewellery and ornaments from her home.<sup>28</sup> The police searched out the houses of both the accused brothers but no incriminating evidence was found there. The *jirgah* of local maliks, formed by the district administration, settled the dispute through affecting a compromise between the mother of Islam Bibi and the Syed brothers, resulting in withdrawal of the case. After the compromise, the couple moved to Puk Ismail Khel (Surani) and settled in the house of Syed Mirza Ali Shah, a cousin of the Syed. There Islam Bibi was taught the fundamental Islamic beliefs and other day-to-day religious rites and rituals by her husband.<sup>29</sup>

The *jirgah*'s decision did not turn out in favour of the Hindu community of Bannu city and specially the wishes of Islam Bibi's Hindu relatives who were worried for and greedy of her personal property that she had inherited from her father after his death. They instigated Mensa Devi and her brother-in-law Herman Das again and again and compelled them to initiate a civil suit in the court of Deputy Commissioner, Bannu, against Syed Amir Noor Ali Shah, Syed Abdullah Shah Makhar and Syed Amir Zad Shah.<sup>30</sup> During the court proceedings Mensa Devi claimed that Ram Kori was minor and the accused husband and his relatives had violated section 363 of the Indian Penal Code.<sup>31</sup>

The deputy commissioner and police officers of Bannu were pressurised by the Hindu community to put pressure on Abdullah Shah, a retired school head master, to return the girl within officially fixed time. Police officers also promised that Noor Ali Shah would be acquitted if he handed over Islam Bibi to her mother. When Abdullah Shah briefed Islam Bibi about the new situation, she refused to go back to her mother and replied; 'It was against the principles of Pukhtunwali to hand over one's own wife to another. I would prefer death rather than humiliation,

<sup>26</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.13. See also Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.62.

<sup>27</sup> Domail is a town on Bannu-Kohat Road.

<sup>28</sup> Gul Ayub Khan Saifi *op.cit.*, p.269.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.269. See also Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.14.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.269.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p.270. See Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p. 90. Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.17.

which I would face in the Hindu society of my paternal home if I go back to my mother.<sup>32</sup>

The couple left Ismail Khel for a place called Gombati, near Bannu, whence they decided to go to Afghanistan via Spinwam, North Waziristan. But Arbab Attaullah Khan, a Muslim sub-inspector in the C.I.D, informed them that the political authorities of Agency had already made arrangements for their arrest.<sup>33</sup> Some other Muslim government officers and maliks like Ghulam Hussain Khan a Revenue Officer, Abdullah Khan Superintendent of Police Bannu, and Khan Habibullah Khan Marwat<sup>34</sup> secretly extended all possible help to the Syed brothers.

They changed their route and decided to go via Sham to Afghanistan. For safe journey and guidance the *badraga* (escort) demanded Rs.120 for every five miles.<sup>35</sup> Both the brothers could not afford to meet demand of the *badraga* for such a long journey. They chose an alternate route of Sham via Tank. Abdullah Shah hired a taxi owned by a Hindu in order to avoid suspicion of the police and Hindus. The government knew about their plan and movements. When the taxi reached near the police station of Ghoriwala, the police stopped it and arrested them. In police station, Islam Bibi confessed *inter-alia* that her Muslim name was Noor Jehan but out of reaction to her Hindu relatives she wanted to be called Islam Bibi.<sup>36</sup> Both husband and wife were sent to the Bannu jail.

A *jirgah* of Muslim chiefs of the Bannu district, consisting of Khan Bahadur Ghazi Marjan Wazir, Muhammad Khan Chief of Ghoriwala and Khan Bahadur Sher Ali Khan Marwat of Takhti Khel tried to meet the deputy commissioner to discuss the case, but the latter declined to meet the *jirgah*. Next day Abdullah Shah lodged an application in the court of the deputy commissioner to get the statement of Islam Bibi<sup>37</sup> recorded. It was accepted and the girl was presented in the court for statement. In her statement she repeated that she had embraced Islam on her own will without any duress and was the legal wife of Syed Amir Noor Ali Shah.<sup>38</sup> During the court proceedings she exchanged some hot words with her mother and other relatives. The

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.271.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.272.

<sup>34</sup> Late Khan Habibullah Khan Mina Khel Marwat was a lawyer and member of Legislative Council, Gul Ayub Khan Saifi *op.cit.*, pp.272, 430.

<sup>35</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.16.

<sup>36</sup> Gul Ayub Khan Saifi *op.cit.*, p.273.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>38</sup> Tareen *op.cit.*, p.62. Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.9.



deputy commissioner convicted her and sent her to jail for six months for contempt of court.<sup>39</sup>

After passing through several stages, the case was ultimately presented to Judicial Commissioner, Middleton who then had the status of a High Court in the province. Middleton<sup>40</sup> referred the case to the Civil Surgeon for medical report. The civil surgeon endorsed in the medical certificate that Islam Bibi was less than 16 years at the time of elopement with Noor Ali Shah.<sup>41</sup> In spite of clear contradiction between a previous statement of Mensa Devi that her daughter was mature, the court rejected the statement of Islam Bibi on medical grounds and decided that her consent is considered to be no consent in the law.<sup>42</sup>

After a few days of this verdict, Islam Bibi was released for a fine<sup>43</sup> of Rs.200 and was given in temporary custody of a Sikh named Dr. Samandar Shah Singh,<sup>44</sup> an honorary magistrate, for the purpose of brain washing. The Syed brothers had already been convicted under section 363 of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment. They were sent to Haripur jail.<sup>45</sup>

With this decision of the court, the Muslim community of Bannu and the surrounding villages encircled the house of Dr. Samandar Shah Singh and latter the bungalow of the deputy commissioner. The angry and riotous mob attacked the court and set the stationery and furniture on fire. However, the police rescued Dr. Samandar and Islam Bibi was given in the custody of Khan Bahadur Ghulam Hussain Khan and Malik Taj Ali Khan.<sup>46</sup>

On 27 September 1936, Islam Bibi was handed over to her mother who without losing a moment rushed her to Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur district. There she was converted back to Hinduism and was married to a Hindu. Her husband Noor Ali Shah was released after 18 months of imprisonment.<sup>47</sup> Soon after his release, his brother Abdullah Shah got him married with another girl from whom he had a daughter. After spending one year with his new wife, Noor Ali Shah left his home

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<sup>39</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.16. Gul Ayub Khan Saifi *op.cit.*, p.275.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.63. Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.9.

<sup>42</sup> Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.9.

<sup>43</sup> Gul Ayub Khan Saifi *op.cit.*, p. 277.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.276. Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.63.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.287.

<sup>46</sup> Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p. 963. Gul Ayub Khan Saifi *op.cit.*, p.280.

<sup>47</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.17.

in search of his beloved Islam Bibi and never came back. His whereabouts are still not known.

Muslims considered decision of the court an outright interference in their religious affairs. They doubted the British impartiality in regard to the two communities. The case of Islam Bibi was now not only a religious question, but also that of Pukhto and Pukhtunwali.<sup>48</sup> *Badal* (revenge) was the cry of the day. Muslims of Bannu district and Waziristan agencies organised protest meetings in *hujras* and mosques. They demanded justice in the case of Islam Bibi and guarantee of non-interference in their religious affairs, but all to no avail. During these protests, Wazirs kidnapped 4 Hindu girls in complicity with local *maliks*.<sup>49</sup> Mirza Ali Khan, who became popular as the Faqir of Ipi, attended almost all *marakas* (meetings)<sup>50</sup> in Waziristan and Bannu. In Waziristan, Tori Khel and their neighbours Madda Khel clans were the first to raise the standard of rebellion under the cries of *badal* and *ghaza* (holy war) of the Faqir of Ipi. Since he was a student and disciple of the anti-British mullahs and pirs, Mirza Ali Khan cast away the robe of a *sufi* and wore armour for the defence of Islam and Pukhto.

Syed Mazhar Ali Shah observes that the Islam Bibi episode could not be taken as the only cause of Faqir of Ipi's crusade against the British. He had been influenced considerably by earlier *jihad* declarations against the British made by Maulana Gulap Din Sarki Khel Wazir, Kaka Sahib Utmanzai Wali Khel Wazir, Bady Faqir Hasan Khel Wazir, Mullah Hamzullah Bizan Khel Wazir, Powinda Mullah Shabi Khel Mahsud, Qazi Haji Muhammad Qhwardzai, and above all, his own father who was a die hard anti-British scholar.<sup>51</sup> The incident of Shaheed Ganj mosque, Lahore, and two months later the Islam Bibi case turned into immediate causes of his rising in rebellion against the British *raj*.

A *jirgah* of different clans of Wazir, Mahsud, Bhattani, Bannuchi, Khattak, Marwat and the trans-border tribes was held at a place known as Matasai to discuss *inter-alia* the selection of an *amir* (chief) and declaration of *ghaza* against the British.<sup>52</sup> There were several

<sup>48</sup> 'Pukhto' or 'Pushto' is not only the language of Pukhtuns but also their code of life. 'Pukhtunwali' is the unwritten customary/conventional/traditional constitution. Though it is not in a codified form but in Orakzai and Kurram Agency some of its elements are in written form, known as *Turizoona* or *Rewaj*.

<sup>49</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.18.

<sup>50</sup> Gul Ayub Khan Saifi, *op.cit.*, p.288.

<sup>51</sup> Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.10.

<sup>52</sup> Ghaza means *jihad* or holy war.

maliks, khans, chiefs, religious scholars and eminent mullahs hoping for the grand post. But the *jirgah* elected Haji Mirza Ali Khan as their *amir* and unanimously declared *ghaza*.<sup>53</sup> 'Like *Mullah Powinda* before him', writes Andre Singer, 'he possessed all the characteristics necessary for leadership in Pushtun society, charisma, courage, a religious cause and religious heritage'.<sup>54</sup>

With the assumption of political leadership, *Faqir* of Ipi visited Haji Sahib of Turangzai, Pir Sahib Nasim Shah of Landai and Seen Gul Faqir of Shewa and discussed with them the strategies and tactics of *ghaza*.<sup>55</sup> He also gained the support of Naqib Sahib of Jalalabad, Gian Mullah (Afghanistan), Spin Gul Faqir of Shoor, Maulvi Waris Shah Manzar Khel, Mullah Sher Ali Mahsud, Sherzada Fazal Din Mahsud, Din Faqir Bhattani, Zunday Qazi of Bannu and Ghazi Marjan Tori Khel against the British who had committed *mudakhilat-fid-din* (interference in religion).<sup>56</sup>

Before declaring *ghaza* against *firangis*, *Faqir* of Ipi put the following demands before the British government in the Frontier Province as the criteria for peace:

1. Restoration of Islam Bibi to Syed Amir Noor Ali Shah.
2. Restoration of the Shaheed Ganj mosque, Lahore.
3. A surety of non-interference in religion.<sup>57</sup>

The first two demands were rejected in toto by the government while the third one was accepted. Governor Sir George Cunningham flew to Bannu and, in a press release, said; 'Islam was never in danger under the British rule'.<sup>58</sup>

*Faqir* of Ipi organised a group of *Sar Terie* (death squads) and selected leading personalities from various tribes as his khalifas and generals. His war council including the following khalifas and generals:

*Khalifa* Sher Ali Khan Mahsud, *Khalifa* Sardari Khan Marwat, *Khalifa* Mir Ahmad Khan Marwat, *Khalifa* Mehr Dil Khattak, *Khalifa* Din Faqir Bhattani, *Khalifa* Gul Nawaz Khan Kotka Allah Dad, Bannu, *Khalifa* Latif Tori Khel Wazir, *Khalifa* Tawildar Madda Khel Wazir, General Rab Nawaz Khan Wazir, General Awal Mir Tori Khel Wazir,

<sup>53</sup> Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.67.

<sup>54</sup> Andre, Andre Singer, *Lord of the Khyber, the Story of the North-West Frontier* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p.173.

<sup>55</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.21; Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, pp.66-7.

<sup>56</sup> Abdul Hamid Tareen, *ibid.*, Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.13.

<sup>57</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.22.

<sup>58</sup> Rai Bahadur Diwan Chand Obhrai, *The Evolution of North-West Frontier Province* (Peshawar: London Book Co., 1938), p.81.

General Janat Mir Tori Khel Wazir, General Sarguli Khan Macha Madda Khel Wazir, General Musk Ali Khan Macha Madda Khel Wazir, General Hamzoni Data Khel, General Faqira Punjabi, Sher Nawaz Khan Macha Madda Khel Wazir, Ghazi Marjan Tori Khel Wazir and Alam Gul Macha Madda Khel Wazir.<sup>59</sup>

Some members of the war council proposed mobilisation of a tribal *lashkar* against the cantonment of British forces at Bannu, but *Faqir* of Ipi disapproved of the idea of general mobilisation and called for guerrilla warfare that best suited the strategic and geographic conditions of the area. The generals agreed to his strategy.

The *Faqir* of Ipi who had already organised a tribal *lashkar* shifted his headquarters from Ipi to the Khaisora plain. The British turned to Daur maliks and tried to break the back of their allegiance to the *Faqir*. Daur elders were arrested and the house and mosque of the *Faqir* at Ipi villages were demolished.<sup>60</sup>

### Skirmishes with the British forces

In November 1936, a military plan to wipe out the *Faqir*'s stronghold at Khaisora was put into operation. On 25 November, two brigades of the British army, accompanied by 120 pro-British tribal elders, moved into Bechi Kaskai from four directions.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, various tribal *lashkars* assembled at Khaisora to fight under the leadership of the *Faqir* of Ipi. Early in the morning of 26 November the *Faqir*'s *lashkar* with the total strength of 2500 *ghazis*<sup>62</sup> swooped on the British forces. The *Faqir* had divided the *lashkar* into two columns: one to oppose the army from Damdol and the other to resist the forces from Mir Ali.<sup>63</sup>

The *lashkar* ambushed the British army on their way to Khaisora, killed 19 including two British officers and wounded 102 soldiers.<sup>64</sup> Further advance of the British forces resulted in the first open clash with the *lashkar* at Alam Shiri graveyard in Bichi Kaskai area of Mir Ali Tehsil. After severe fighting, the losses sustained by the army were reported as many as 1836 dead including 25 British officers.<sup>65</sup> Fifty

<sup>59</sup> Tareen *op.cit.*, p.69; Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, pp.26-7.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Sultan Daur at Peshawar, dated. 12-6-1980.

<sup>61</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.30; Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.15.

<sup>62</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, quoted from Notes on Waziristan Situation for D.D.I., 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1936. File No. 260, Vol., I, Civil Secretariat, NWFP, (Political Branch), Peshawar.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.15.

men of Ipi's *lashkar* were killed. Despite heavy losses in men and arms the British army reached Khaisora. In another encounter, 107 English soldiers, including Captain F.L. Boyed, Captain A.R. Phillips, Lt. W.J. Flatcha and Captain J.R.H Peacock, were killed.<sup>66</sup> Total loss of the British troops was reported as 2300.<sup>67</sup>

These successful encounters brightened the name of the *faqir* and spread his fame throughout India. His mystical reputation enhanced his followers who still remember vividly the encounters in which they participated.

Haji Sahib (the *Faqir*) told us that if we threw a stone into the air it would turn into a hailstorm and would kill *firangis* and Hindus; and slivers of wood from an olive tree would turn into rifles. Once, if we start the hailstorm, the enemy would not be able to escape, not even in England. We killed many *firangis* and turned many of their women widows.<sup>68</sup>

The *Faqir* again shifted his headquarters from Khaisora to Mahsud area where he settled down at Aarsal Kot in the Shatu Valley. Here Gurbaz, Tani, Gian Khel and Zadran tribesmen from across the border joined him. From his new headquarters, he organised a number of small bands of Tori Khel Wazirs and Mahsud youths and sent them to harass British personnel and attack their installations wherever they were.

On 15 January 1937, the British authorities fined Tori Khel Wazirs Rs.50,000 and dismissed 120 *khasadars* from that clan for supporting the *Faqir*.<sup>69</sup> Three weeks after the decision of fining the tribe was taken, a British captain J.C.O Killness of the South Waziristan Scouts was killed by Mahsuds. Again on 7 February 1937 Madda Khel Wazirs murdered Lt. R.N. Betty,<sup>70</sup> the British Political Agent at Miranshah, near the Boya Bridge. According to J. W. Spain, these events were followed by a series of raids into the settled districts in which Hindus suffered heavily, 31 being kidnapped, 10 killed and 60 having their houses sacked and burnt.<sup>71</sup>

The Royal Air Force planes bombarded Aarsal Kot, the headquarters of the *Faqir*, five times between 31 December 1936 and 18

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>67</sup> Jehanzeb *op.cit.*, p.31.

<sup>68</sup> Andre Singer, *op.cit.*, p.174.

<sup>69</sup> Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.17.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.92.

<sup>71</sup> James W. Spain, *op.cit.*, p.185.

January 1937, but all in vain. On the night of 21 March, a band of the *Faqir* attacked a piquet of the 5<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Battalion.<sup>72</sup> On 29 March, British forces were attacked while patrolling the road and 63 rifles were snatched away from them.<sup>73</sup> In April 1937, Faqir's *lashkar* under the command of Khonia Khan, a Jelal Mahsud, attacked a British convoy of 50 vehicles near Shahur Tanga on way from Jandola to Wana in South Waziristan. It led to heavy fighting that lasted until the day broke. Forty-seven British soldiers were reported killed and 50 wounded, while 16 of the *lashkar* were killed and 26 wounded.<sup>74</sup> In retaliation, the British command set up a large expedition in April from troops at Jandola, Wana, Damdol, Miranshah, Mir Ali and Bannu. It launched advance from four directions. Forces from Wana and Jandola that had already reached Razmak advanced through Shah Wali. Contingents from Gardi Rogha and Damal marched via Dosali and Abinki, and from Miranshah and Mir Ali through Tanga.<sup>75</sup> On the other side, the *Faqir* also divided his *lashkar* into four parts to cover an area of about 500 kilometres. Despite tough resistance from the Faqir's *lashkar*, the British army reached Aarsal Kot.<sup>76</sup> After decisive encounters of 40 days, resulting in more than 600 army casualties, the British forces succeeded in occupying Aarsal Kot, the headquarters of the *Faqir*.

During the two-month campaign, the British army employed 32,000 regular troops plus 5000 scouts. The total cost of the expedition was estimated at 12,000,00 to 15,000,00 pounds.<sup>77</sup>

The *Faqir* of Ipi again shifted his headquarters from Aarsal Kot to Bhutanese and later to a remote corner in the Mahsuds area. Here he raised a fresh *lashkar* from various tribes. After several skirmishes with the British forces, the *Faqir* settled at Mazdak with Madda Khel Wazirs. There, they built shelters by cutting rocks to set up the new headquarters. The British mobilised more than 40,000 troops<sup>78</sup> against the Faqir. The army faced resistance by the *lashkar* on its way to Mazdak with heavy losses on both sides.

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<sup>72</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.44.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.45.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p.32.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32; James W. Spain, *op.cit.*, p.185.

<sup>77</sup> James W. Spain, *ibid.*, p.185. C.E. Bruce, *Waziristan: 1936-37* (Aldershot: Gale And Poldon Ltd., 1938), p.27. Sir William Barton, *India's North-West Frontier* (London, John Murray, 1939), p.232.

<sup>78</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.33.

Following these events, and on the advice of his close associates like *Khalifa* Ghazi Marjan Tori Khel Wazir, Sherzada Bannuchi and Alam Gul Madda Khel, the *Faqir* of Ipi shifted his headquarters from Mazdak to Gurweikht in 1937. Gurweikht lies on the west of Razmak, almost astride the Afghan border. The British policy of gold and gun failed in capturing the *Faqir*. As a new stratagem they extended olive branch instead of gun to the *Faqir* with the following proposals.

- All mosques of the *Faqir* of Ipi, damaged by the British action, would be reconstructed.
- British would not interfere in religious affairs of the Muslims.
- The British would demand no compensation for the losses they had sustained at the hands of the *Faqir*'s lashkars.<sup>79</sup>

Syed Mazhar Ali Shah observes 'The *Faqir* of Ipi, however, gave an evasive reply to the British that he would consider the proposals if his followers agreed to those also'.<sup>80</sup> Shocked by the diplomatic reply from the *Faqir*, the government again resorted to military action against him. This time, too, the expedition turned into a sheer fiasco, as they could not even reach the *Faqir*'s base at Gurweikht. There the *Faqir* had organised various departments and installed an ordinance factory with the help of certain Punjabi technicians. He had a printing press machine at Gurweikht, which was handled by Fatehul Mulk (Nang) Yousafzai from Swat.<sup>81</sup> *zakat*, *ushar*, *shukrana* and *ghanimat* were some of the financial sources of the *Faqir*. Different religious organisations and persons in other provinces of India sent donations to the *Bait-ul-Mal* of the *Faqir*.<sup>82</sup>

After accomplishment of these defensive measures, the *Faqir* planned to destroy the British army's line of communication with military camps. Two lashkars and ghadis (gangs) were sent to attack the army camps at Spinwam and Damdol. The *lashkar* besieged the camp of Spinwam and the supply routes were blocked. It destroyed the bridges on the Spinwam-Mir Ali road. The government sent troops from Bannu, Miran Shah and Razmak. After 18 days of fighting, the *lashkar* retreated from that front and besieged the camps at Damdol, Dosali and Gardi Rogha.<sup>83</sup> The government used tanks and aircraft in the operation. The *Faqir* managed to elude the British forces despite bombing and raids on

<sup>79</sup> Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.13.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32; Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.27.

<sup>82</sup> *Zakat* is one of the five fundamentals of Islam, meaning wealth tax; *ushar* (tenth of the crops); *Shukrana* (offering); *Ghanimat* (war booty).

<sup>83</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, pp.35-6.

his various hideouts and substantial rewards for assistance to get him dead or alive. In the spring of 1938, a band commanded by Mullah Sher Ali almost wiped out a detachment of South Waziristan scouts, killing its English Captain also, at Splitoi.<sup>84</sup>

A short time later the Wana-D.I.Khan road was blocked by *Khalifa* Farmanullah Khan. The road was reopened by dint of air action after heavy losses on both sides. *Khalifa* Farmanullah Khan was among those who embraced martyrdom<sup>85</sup>. Another open armed clash took place in the North Waziristan. The Datta Khel post in Tochi valley was besieged. Mehr Dil Khattak, relieved from the Datta Khel post operation, attacked the Bannu city with a *lashkar* of 400 tribesmen. They killed 12 Hindus and wounded another 20 before they made their escape good with a loot worth Rs.100, 000.<sup>86</sup> A major part of the city was set on fire. Erland Jansson writes, 'the Muslim villagers seemed to help the raiders, and speeches in mosques and meetings (were) little short of open incitement to the raiders to intensify their efforts.'<sup>87</sup> Twenty civilians were kidnapped and the loss of property was estimated as worth Rs.4,00,000.<sup>88</sup>

The last open armed clashes took place in the Daur country. The volunteers of the *Faqir* started gathering in the area. They had been challenged by the government, which had managed to enter Tapi village. A heavy-armed clash took place in the vineyards of Tapi village. About 40 men of the *lashkar*, including *Khalifa* Madraz Khan Daur of Mohammad Khel, Amir Khan Daur of Isori, Bakhat Jamal Daur of Ipi and Adam Khan Daur of Haider Khel, were killed.<sup>89</sup> Another encounter took place at Hamzoni in Daur area. Here *Khalifa* Daulat Khan and *Khalifa* Shodi Khel,<sup>90</sup> the trusted followers of the *Faqir*, laid down their lives in the path of Allah.

Between 1925-26 and 1934-35, the total tribal raids into the two districts of Bannu and D.I. Khan exceeded an average of ten per year.

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<sup>84</sup> Mullah Sher Ali Mahsud was one of the principal lieutenants of the *Faqir* of Ipi. James W. Spain, *op.cit.*, p.185. Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.156.

<sup>85</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.37.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-3; James W. Spain, *op.cit.*, p.185. Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, pp.159-60.

<sup>87</sup> Erland Jansson, *India, Pakistan or Pukhtunistan, The Nationalist Movement in the North West Frontier Province, 1937-1947*, Stockholm, 1981, p.86.

<sup>88</sup> Stephan Alan Rittenberg, *The Independence Movement in India's North West Frontier Province, 1901-1947*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University, 1977, p.269.

<sup>89</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.38; Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.167.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38; Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.167.



But from 1935-36 onward, the increasing figures in the Table reflect intensity of the situation.<sup>91</sup>

Year	Bannu	D. I. Khan	Total
1935 – 36	1	12	13
1936 – 37	11	2	13
1937 – 38	34	23	57
1938 – 39	45	20	65
1939 – 40	94	25	119

Communal implications of raids into settled districts created a delicate problem for the Frontier Congress government. In support of their co-religionists, the Hindu Congressites of the Frontier province demanded strong action against the tribesmen. They blamed the British for having instigated *Khalifa* Mehr Dil Khattak for the raid on Bannu. A typical resolution in a Congress meeting ran:

that the Bannu raid was the out-come of a conspiracy to bring the Congress Ministry into disrepute, of promoting disunity between Hindus and Muslims and of justifying the Government's policy in Waziristan'.<sup>92</sup>

In order to cope with the law and order situation and the problem of raids and plunders in Bannu and D.I. Khan districts, the government decided to recruit a special force of five hundred men.<sup>93</sup> The British official reports of the period confirm that the government had employed some 40,000 troops in their expeditions against the *Faqir* and the war expenditure amounted to 15,00,000 pounds.<sup>94</sup> According to Ainslie Embree, the British spent 'more than 5 million pounds... and at one point 10 thousand troops were required to keep communications alone intact'.<sup>95</sup>

In April 1940, the Inspector General of the Frontier police announced rewards for the arrest of the following persons associated with the *Faqir*:

- Sher Gul son of Majon Wazir, Hati Khel of village Kamar Kila, Police Station Domail, Bannu: Rs. 5,000,
- Gul Nawaz Khan son of Babu Jan, Bannuchi of Surani, Police Station Saddar, Bannu: Rs. 5,000,

<sup>91</sup> Erland Jansson, *op.cit.*, p. 86 quotes Memorandum by His Excellency the Viceroy on Frontier Policy, Appendix III, Linlithgow Papers, India Office Library MSS Eur. F 125/168.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87 quotes Governor's Report 23-8-1938.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-4-1939

<sup>94</sup> Stephan Alen Rittenberg, *op.cit.*, p.268.

<sup>95</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.268.

- Mehr Dil son of Muzaffar Khan Khattak of village Garori, Char Khel, Police Station Karak, Kohat: Rs. 5,000 and
- Sardar son of Awaz Gul Wazir of Mohammad Khel, Police Station Saddar, Bannu: Rs. 5,000.<sup>96</sup>

Those people who were loyal to the British government and were rendering useful services against the *Faqir* were generously rewarded. The rewards were in forms of cash money, *lungi*, *khillat*, titles and sanads.<sup>97</sup>

By the outbreak of the World War II, the British had been able to restore some sort of order in Waziristan but only through a policy of attrition, by using five times the armed forces and introducing the aircraft and armoured cars. During the war period some followers of the *Faqir* defected him and joined the British Army to earn money. However, most of his followers remained steadfast to prove a great source of trouble for the government. With the end of World War II, and after the British had left India, the *Faqir* became one of the prominent fighters for independent Pukhtunistan.

On 12 May 1948, the *Faqir* of Ipi published and issued an anti-Pakistan poster from his headquarters at Gurweikht. He claimed that Pakistan was the creation of the British...he would start an operation against the Government of Pakistan.<sup>98</sup>

On 15 June, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested near Bahader Khel,<sup>99</sup> while he was on his way to the southern districts of the Frontier province. He was charged with 'sedition against the State' and planning to declare independent Pukhtunistan in co-operation with the *Faqir* of Ipi. The next day he was put on a summary trial under section 40 of the FCR and was sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment.<sup>100</sup>

The Frontier government issued a long press communiqué charging that, 'the Faqir of Ipi with a small group of hostile followers on June 15 (1948) started attacking a few posts in North Waziristan. The coincidence of this hostile action by the Faqir of Ipi with the appearance of Abdul Ghaffar Khan at Bannu, ostensibly on a propaganda tour, suggests a clear, close liaison between the two in their endeavour to

<sup>96</sup> The *Daily Khyber Mail*, Peshawar, dated 21 April 1940. Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.63.

<sup>97</sup> *Lungi* (turban), *khillat* means robe of honour; *sanad*, letter of credit.

<sup>98</sup> Jehanzeb *op.cit.*, pp. 64-5; See also Raza Hamdani, *Razmia Dastanee* (Islamabad: Lok Virsa, National Institute, 1981), pp.421, 425-26.

<sup>99</sup> Bahadur Khel is a village on Bannu-Kohat Road.

<sup>100</sup> Erland Jansson, *op.cit.*, p.233; James W. Spain, *op.cit.*, p.201.

foment unrest on the North-West Frontier'.<sup>101</sup> Faridullah Shah, who had served as a political agent in North Waziristan, strongly denied that there ever was any link between the two.<sup>102</sup>

Whether or not Abdul Ghaffar Khan was guilty remains open to research. The *Faqir* of Ipi, however, had already identified himself actively with the 'Pukhtunistan Movement' sponsored by the Afghan government. Pakistan government appears to have had some reason to believe that co-ordinated Indian and Afghan attacks were planned on respective borders in the spring of 1948.

I. I. Chundrigar, the then Ambassador of Pakistan at Kabul, reported in May 1949, that 'for a long time, the *Faqir* of Ipi had been aspiring to become the King of Waziristan. He, therefore, did not view with favour the establishment of Pakistan, as the establishment of this great Muslim state was bound to frustrate his ambitions. Afghan government saw in him an ally, who would be useful in creating trouble for Pakistan and continued to help him with money, food-grains... arms and ammunitions. With the deterioration of relations between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue, the Indian embassy appeared on the scene and is believed to have helped the *Faqir* of Ipi with money. In the earlier part of the year there was four-pronged offensive against Pakistan, from the Afghan government, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's party in the North West Frontier Province, the *Faqir* of Ipi and the Government of India acting as instigators and suppliers of money through the Indian embassy in Kabul'.<sup>103</sup>

On 12 August 1949 a number of Afridi tribesmen and their *Sarishta* Party<sup>104</sup> met at Tirah Bagh, the centre of their homeland. The flag of 'Independent Pukhtunistan' was hoisted there and the following declaration by the 'Pukhtunistan National Assembly' (Tirah Branch) was published, addressed to all the people of Pukhtunistan, to the entire Muslim world and particularly Afghanistan, to all Pukhtuns living abroad and to the United Nations Organisation. The proclamation ran as:

We, the Tirah branch of the National Assembly of Pukhtunistan, having formed the first nucleus of a Free and Democratic Muslim Government amidst the lofty mountains of Tirah, hereby express the hope that with

<sup>101</sup> Erland Jansson, *op.cit.*, p.233; quotes *Civil & Military Gazette*, 24 July 1948.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p.233.

<sup>103</sup> I.I. Chundrigar Personal Papers, Karachi.

<sup>104</sup> Tribal Party for the enforcement of Pukhtun customs or the appointment of profit and loss among the Afridi tribal sections.

the help of Almighty Allah and the support of the brave and freedom loving Pukhtuns, this young plant will, in a short time, grow into a sturdy and fruitful tree, which will not only benefit Pukhtunistan (from Chitral to Balochistan and from Khyber and Bolan to the banks of Indus) but will also fulfil its obligation towards the progress and peace of the world.<sup>105</sup>

According to a broadcast from Radio Kabul, the proclamation was greeted with great enthusiasm in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan announced that it was extending immediate recognition and support to the independent state of Pukhtunistan. In the same month a *jirgah* of different tribes of Waziristan visited Kabul with the consent of the *Faqir* of Ipi. Afghan authorities assured the *jirgah* of all sorts of help.<sup>106</sup>

Meetings of various tribes of Waziristan, Khattak, Marwat, Bhattani, Turi and Bannuchi were held on January 11, 12 and 15, 1950 for election of Pukhtunistan National Assembly (Waziristan Branch) and its President. The assembly elected unanimously the *Faqir* Ipi as its first president.<sup>107</sup> In that capacity, the *Faqir* demanded withdrawal of Pakistani forces from the Pukhtun territories and freedom of the land of seven million Pukhtuns, 'otherwise they (Pakistan) will themselves be responsible for its consequences'.<sup>108</sup> He also appealed to the United Nations for recognition of Pukhtunistan and requested the Afghan authorities for its publicity.<sup>109</sup>

Under his presidency there existed, as it was claimed, departments with several functions of the 'state'. Heads of departments lived with him at Gurweikht. The *Faqir* claimed control of an area of 5,000 square miles centring on Gurweikht, but actually managed to assert his authority in considerably less than 500 square miles'.<sup>110</sup> There is an 'evidence', says Mazhar Ali Shah, 'that the *Faqir* of Ipi used to receive one crore and thirty six lacs Afghanis as pay for Ahmadzai, Utmanzai, Mahsud and Bhattani followers and ten lacs annually for his own use from the Afghan Government'.<sup>111</sup> He further says, 'Colonel Muhammad Hussain Khostwal, Sufi Muhammad Khostwal and Muhammad Qarar

<sup>105</sup> Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, *Pukhtunistan*, London, 1952, p.124.

<sup>106</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.65.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.66-7. Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.43.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> James W. Spain, *op.cit.*, p.237.

<sup>111</sup> Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, p.45.

Khostwal were Afghan agents who worked as intermediaries for all money transactions between the Government of Afghanistan and the *Faqir*. Zar Khan Tori Khel Haibati and Agha Jan Pipali Kabal Khel were his special messengers for a long time who used to shuttle between Gurweikht and Kabul'.<sup>112</sup>

In August 1951, a special delegation consisting of Malik Abdullah Khan Mada Khel, Malik Ata Muhammad Khan, Malik Behram, Malik Jani and Malik Badshah visited Kabul with a special message from the *Faqir* of Ipi. King Muhammad Zahir Shah received it in audience. It also held meetings with late Sardar Daud Khan and the ambassadors of India and Iran.<sup>113</sup>

In 1954, Christopher Rand, a correspondent of the *New Yorker*, was able to interview the *Faqir* of Ipi at Gurweikht. Shortly afterwards two Soviet officials, Messrs Alexovitch and Demrovitch, members of a Soviet technical mission at Kabul, called on the *Faqir* at Gurweikht.<sup>114</sup> Even in June 1941, German and Italian agents had visited Gurweikht and paid him 16,000 Afghanis to carry out pro-Axis propaganda in the Frontier areas to create trouble for the British.<sup>115</sup>

In 1952-53, the flow of money from the Afghan government to Gurweikht was greatly reduced due to some misunderstandings between the *Faqir* and the Pukhtunistan leaders based in Kabul. However, through the efforts of Faiz Muhammad, the Afghan *Wali* (Governor) of the southern province, the subsidies were restored.<sup>116</sup> The *Faqir*'s position was weakened when his close associates and principal Lieutenant *Khalifa* Mehr Dil Khattak surrendered to Pakistani officials at Bannu in November 1954, bringing seventy followers with him.<sup>117</sup>

It was reported in October 1958 that 'the *Faqir* of Ipi who was the pivot of the so-called Pukhtunistan Movement' has recently turned absolutely indifferent, if not openly hostile, to Afghanistan, the reason being that the Afghans realised the futility of their monetary aid to him and stopped paying the tribes through him. He has discarded the so-called Pukhtunistan flag and has hoisted instead his own flag, which is called '*Faqiri* Flag'.<sup>118</sup> Maulvi Amir Saeed Alias Jangi Mullah and

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Personal collection of the authors.

<sup>114</sup> Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.68; James W. Spain, *op.cit.*, p.239.

<sup>115</sup> V. Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan* (California: Stanford University Press, 1969), p.384.

<sup>116</sup> James W. Spain, *op.cit.*, p.239.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, *op.cit.*, p.241; Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.160.

<sup>118</sup> File No. 1399, Tribal Research Cell, Peshawar.

Maulvi Akbar Zaman Bannuchi, close associates of the *Faqir*, distributed in the Hamzoni Daur area copies of newspaper 'Azad Pukhtun' published at Gurweikht. The paper, inter-alia, published detailed account of the visit of the *Faqir* to Waziristan. 'Amir-ul-Muslimin (the *Faqir*), along with his lieutenants, is on a tour of Waziristan. Presently his tour has a good effect on the Bhattani tribe as well as on other tribes. A number of old disputes were settled among the Wazirs, Mahsuds and Bhattanis. A large quantities of weapons and cash were collected in the Mahsud territory for the *Faqir*'s exchequer'.<sup>119</sup> Though during his tour the *Faqir* remained silent about Pakistan, he never turned pro-Pakistan. After that tour of Waziristan, the *Faqir* of Ipi holed up himself in a Cliffside cave at Gurweikht until his death of asthma on 16 April, 1960.<sup>120</sup> Maulvi Pir Rahman led his funeral prayer, which was attended by thousands of people.

### Conclusion

The *Faqir* was a product of conflicting circumstances in which many more like him could not find an easy task of conscience to reconcile with later events. He was a heroic *ghazi* of the days of the British *raj*. He could not tolerate the Hindus hatred for the Muslims whether in the Frontier or in any other part of India. The Shaheed Ganj Mosque of Lahore and the Islam Bibi case of Bannu were the events that boiled his blood. Hence, his rising in arms, phenomenon was perpetuated by the never ceasing punitive ground and air operations of the British rule on the Frontier.

For more than one decade (1937-1947), his body and mind were full of tasks and thoughts against the British rule. He could not think of anything else but hostility against the British. One should not lose sight of an important factor that in his entire struggle against the *firangi*, he was assisted in matters of money by the Afghan government as well as Germans and the Italians. The Axis Powers could not find a fiercer fighter than the *Faqir* in all the British colonies during the Second World War. The implication of the *Faqir*'s factor for that reason was an international one.

<sup>119</sup> *The Azad Pukhtun*, Gurweikht, 7 Rabi-ul-Sani, 1378 A.H.

<sup>120</sup> Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, *op.cit.*, pp. 4, 48 gives the *Faqir*'s year of death as 1962; Jehanzeb Khan, *op.cit.*, p.11, as 1961; Dupree, *op.cit.*, p.480, as 1959; J.W. James W. Spain, *The Way of the Pathan* (Karachi: Oxford Press, 1972), p.131, as 1986; Abdul Hamid Tareen, *op.cit.*, p.215, as 1960, whereas we personally confirmed the year of his death from *Khalifa* Latif, a close associate of *Faqir*.

The oriental desks of the German and Italian legations at Kabul knew him as a *ghazi* whose services against British imperialism in India were open to any power in Europe. To that point a reader can easily appreciate him. But indeed one is really shocked to note that the Frontier's *ghazi* of the Axis Powers became as much antagonist to the creation of the Muslim state of Pakistan as he was to the British *raj*. Even though he cannot be absolved of his inimical attitude towards Pakistan, one can certainly see objective reasons behind his anti-Pakistan activities. A study of the Faqir's anti-Pakistani stance offers us a good deal of lesson of how to convert an internal foe into an eternal friend. Taken him as a case study we can analyse the *Faqir* phenomenon on the following lines:

The *Faqir* of Ipi was simply a true Muslim fundamentalist whose life-object was to oppose any movement, which was not Islamic, and in that direction he did not mind to get assistance from which ever organisation or government.

During the struggle for Pakistan in the Frontier province, the forefront of the Frontier Muslim League was occupied by certain personalities whose background and reputation was definitely pro-British. They were either themselves the creation of the British in the Frontier or the sons of Khan Bahadurs, Khan Sahibs, Nawabs and Arbabs who were invariably on the side of the *raj*, when confronted by nationalist freedom fighters. Hence for all ostensible purposes it seemed to many anti-British nationalist leaders of the Frontier that the propagation of the idea of Pakistan, even genuine *per se*, was in the hands of persons whose character and performance were all but Islamic.

The above 'assumption' after creation of Pakistan turned into more forceful conviction when the *shariat* aspirants observed that Pakistan did not bring about the rule of Islam in which propaganda the Khans and Arbabs had turned many Pukhtun nationalist Muslims of the province as 'Hindus' and '*kafirs*'. Pakistan for all practical purposes seemed to them nothing but a perpetuation of the old laws and codes 'made in Britain'.

Since these *shariat* seekers could not appreciate the limitations and difficulties of the nascent state of Pakistan in turning the British administrative and judicial machinery into an ideal Islamic model, it was but natural that they began looking at their struggle and sacrifices for Pakistan, even when they remained aloof, as mere 'game' and 'drama' which the Nawabs and Arbabs had played upon the Frontier simpletons. In the simplistic background of their observation and understanding, the return of Sir George Cunningham to the Frontier governorship by the Quaid-i-Azam was resented in all possible modes of propaganda wherein

Pakistan was identified with every sort of wrong ideas. It is, therefore, no wonder that even some of the most ardent *ulema* in the Frontier Muslim League were disillusioned. For them the post-partition intrigues and dubious manoeuvres of certain top-notch League leaders were shocking. Hence their disappointment and frustration. Unless we do acknowledge at the national level there is every possibility to miss the actual for the factual, which is most unfortunate in shaping a nation's direction.

This attitude of ignoring the organisational mistakes and goal in the League leadership led to another chronic mismanagement on the part of the governmental agencies. As they were never in a position to eradicate the internal disruptive factors, they laid the whole blame at the thresholds of neighbouring governments whose involvement and active support to the disruptionist elements cannot be over-looked.

For the Government of Pakistan, the *Faqir* phenomenon was no more than a 'law and order' problem. Instead of taking it in its proper perspective, it was left to the power politics and authority of the political agent who always holds two traditional cards, carrot and stick, which always fail in the face of an ideological hostility. Instead of dealing with the *Faqir* in an honourable way, the government used its local Maliks to nullify him. The *Faqir* knew the true background of these Maliks. Hence seeking a short-term solution for a lasting and a serious situation was another political blunder committed by the government in regard to the *Faqir* of Ipi.