

## SWAT STATE AND BOLSHEVIK MOVEMENT<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*Swat State was formally established in 1915 by the first ruler of Swat State, Syed Abdul Jabar Shah. In the month of September 1917 he was dethroned on account of his alleged attachment with Qadyani/Ahmadi sect. After his removal from rule and subsequent exile, Miangul Abdul Wadud was installed as ruler of Swat in the month of September 1917. Swat State was recognized by the British Government in 1926. The recognition was granted with the condition that the state's rulers will not act against the British Government. When in 1917 the Bolshevik Movement emerged in Russia, it also influenced Swat and surrounding areas. Some people were found here who had affiliation with Bolshevik Movement. The colonial government's confidential records also show that some people of Swat were involved in secret activities of Bolshevik Movement. This article analyzes the expansion of Bolshevik Movement from Russia and Central Asia via Afghanistan to the frontier regions including Swat State. This paper also describes the steps taken by the British Government to control the activities of this movement.*

**Key Words:** Swat State, Bolshevism, Russian Revolution, Afghanistan, Pakhtunkhwa.

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## Introduction

Two great colonial powers of the world, the British and the Russians, were trying to extend towards each other as well as to defend and protect themselves from each other. In early twentieth century, Bolshevik Revolution started in Russia in 1917 and started to spread rapidly towards Central Asia and South Asia. Three groups of the society namely peasants, workers and soldiers, started challenging the anarchy and autocracy. This revolution was not only based on the philosophy of Karal Marx but on different experiences of intellectual, political and artistic nature of literati and artists. The main protagonists of this movement want its extension especially towards the colonies. During its expansion towards South Asia, its activities have also been noted in Swat State and surrounding areas. Swat State was established in 1915 by Syed Abdul Jabar Shah and after two years, in 1917, he was dethroned and Miangul Abdul Wadud was installed as ruler of Swat. British Government recognized Swat State in 1926 with the condition that the State's rulers will not involve themselves in the activities against British Government. British Government had a fear of extension of Bolshevik Movement towards their territories.

Opposing the extension of Bolshevism towards India has its roots in the fear of the British from Russia. The first Anglo-Afghan war was also caused due to this behavior. At that time Dost Muhammad Khan has 'pro-Persian sentiments' and 'hostile attitude towards the British ally Ranjit Singh'.<sup>2</sup> There were Russian soldiers and advisors in the army of Muhammad Shah Qajar that also increased the British fear that 'with the fall of Herat all of western Afghanistan, including Qandahar, would come under Russian influence.'<sup>3</sup>

Due to these historical reasons, the British government was very closely observing the activities of the Bolsheviks in the Swat State. Despite the assurance of the rulers of Swat State, the British government was always observing the suspected activities of Bolshevik Movement.

## Background of Bolshevik Movement

The Bolsheviks, Bolsheviks or Bolshevik literally meaning "one of the majority", were a faction of the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) which got separated from the Menshevik faction at the Second Party Congress in 1903. In 1903, there was a conference of the

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<sup>2</sup> Noelle, Christine. *State and Tribe in Nineteenth-Century Afghanistan: The Reign of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan (1826-1863)*, Curzon Press, 1997, p. 39

<sup>3</sup> Noelle, Christine. P.40

United Russian Social Democratic Party in London. All of the members of this conference divided into two parts on account of the strong interference of the Lenin. In this conference Lenin was of the opinion not to extend cooperation with the moderates and wanted a violent class war. He tried his best to manage a plan to get a temporary majority of the members. That is why that after that time the followers of Lenin called themselves Bolsheviks. Bolshevik is a Russian word which means 'majority'. Those who were in opposition of the Bolsheviks were known as Mensheviks, also a Russian word for minority. Although the professional revolutionaries and more strong groups in the party of Lenin were minority but they were calling themselves Bolsheviks.<sup>4</sup> The Russian Social Democratic Party (RSDLP) was a revolutionary socialist political party. It was formed in 1898 in Minsk in Belarus to unite the different organizations, working for revolution in the Russian Empire, into one party. In the Second Party Congress vote, the Bolsheviks won on the majority of important issues. That is why they are called Bolsheviks. Although at that time the Bolsheviks were not in majority (despite their name as mentioned above) on the soviets' Lenin was hopeful and he has speculated that they will get the support of both the public and of the workers. He was also sure that the people of both the urban as well as of the rural areas will support them. Besides, he also made it clear that the efforts for the revolution in March were not enough and in continuation of these efforts he has started struggles for another revolution and these efforts for the second time will help them in getting the goals. In this way he created favorable circumstances for the revolution which came in November and brought them (Bolsheviks) into power.<sup>5</sup> At last they became the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

A Marxist revolution came into existence by the situation and circumstances of the World War first. A rural society enabled this revolution. In this overwhelmingly rustic and rural society, on a small scale, there was urban and industrial development. All these internal and external factors paved the way for sudden changes in economic management and in the pattern of government. Great Russian Revolution or October Revolution is based on the philosophy of Karl Marx who believed in classless society, equal rights and equal opportunities. But It is also said that this revolution was not only based on the idea of Karl Marx but on different experiences of intellectual, political and artistic nature of literati and artists. Karl Marx was of the opinion that work (physical and mental) should be defined and accordingly wages should be awarded. This philosophy is based on social justice and economic distribution. Marx emphasized implementing this model in colonial societies because these societies were being exploited more. With

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<sup>4</sup> S.Reed Brett, *European History 1900-1960*. London, John Murray: 1967, p. 122

<sup>5</sup> S.Reed Brett, *European History 1900-1960*. London, John Murray: 1967, p. 123

emergence of this revolution in Russia, new signs, symbols, beliefs and values emerged. These new emerged signs, symbols, values and beliefs influenced the political, economic, cultural, artistic and linguistic landscape. Before the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, there was a gap between the state and intelligentsia. This revolution overthrew the Tsarist's autocracy. It was a universal communist ideology of revolution for a classless society and social justice in the world.

Before the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, there was anarchy and autocracy. Three groups of the society started challenging this anarchy and autocracy of the Tsarist state. They were peasants, workers and soldiers. Later on this idea reached everyone and thus it left deep artistic, social, spiritual and cultural influences on the mind of people. The influences of this revolution were not limited only to Russia and surrounding areas but worldwide. Finally, the three classes mentioned above, succeeded in defeating this autocracy and anarchy and achieved a classless society. Among the main protagonists of these efforts were Lenin and Tolstoy etc.

There are many phases of the Russian revolution. Among them the most significant one is that of October 1917, which brought the Bolsheviks or Reds<sup>6</sup> into power. Consequently in October 1917, they founded the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). There was general discontent with the Government by the autumn of 1917. It had neither achieved success according to the wishes of the people. People wished to take Russia out of the war. The clamour of peasants for land was an important issue in which the government could not succeed to pacify and satisfy the peasants. This displeasure of the peasants and discontent of the deprived class of the society continued. There were also some groups who wanted to use these discontented people for their own purposes. In that time the instruments ready to hand were the soviets<sup>7</sup>. The supreme leader was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov whose simpler pen-name was Lenin.<sup>8</sup> The main purpose of Bolsheviks at that time was getting peace and law and order. Peace was essential for the Bolsheviks to continue and implement their plans. At that time the Russian people also wanted peace and law and order. Lenin knew

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<sup>6</sup> Because of the red [colour] of their uniforms, the Khudai Khidmatgars were lumped together with the Bolsheviks and adherents of Bolshevism by the British. (Sultan-i-Rome, *The North-West Frontier (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) Essays on History*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 252). Ghafar Khan has contended that, until that time, they did not know that the Bolsheviks had red uniform and that they had adopted the red uniform accidentally: also, till then, neither had he read a book by Marx, Lenin, or Gandhi, nor did he know about them. (Sultan-i-Rome, *The North-West Frontier (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) Essays on History*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 261)

<sup>7</sup> Councils for the discussion of their needs and to express their views. (S.Reed Brett, *European History 1900-1960*. London, John Murray: 1967, 120)

<sup>8</sup> S.Reed Brett, *European History 1900-1960*. London, John Murray: 1967, p. 121

the priorities and psychology of the people. He also knew that if the people were not satisfied with the Bolsheviks' process of bringing peace they would bring to an end the Bolsheviks as they had swept their predecessors.<sup>9</sup>

The Bolsheviks, founded by Vladimir Lenin and Alexander Bogdanov, were by 1905 a major organization consisting primarily of workers under a democratic internal hierarchy governed by the principle of democratic centralism, who considered themselves the leaders of the revolutionary working class of Russia. Their beliefs and practices were often referred to as Bolshevism. 7<sup>th</sup> November 1917 was a concluding day as this was the day on which an All Russian Congress of Soviets meeting was going to be held at Petrograd. One night before this meeting the Bolshevik, troops were sent to key places and points like railway stations, the offices of telegraph and telephone, power plants etc. The Petrograd garrison recognized the authority of the Revolutionary Committee of the Soviets. Thus the Leninists gained control of the Provincial Government persons who were seized except for Kerensky who managed to escape.<sup>10</sup>

### **Expansion of Bolshevik Movement from Central Asia to South Asia**

It was such a strong movement that in a very short time it reached far and wide and left lasting impacts. The European countries started fearing from these new revolutionary ideas because these ideas were in contrast to the vested interests of capitalism. With this revolution, new ideas, theories and philosophies emerged. It was a challenge for the west to face these new theories and ideas. It was a threat not only for capitalism but for all of its institutions. To face this revolution, a counter revolution was started. A conflict started between the two ideologies and thus the world divided into two camps. These two camps continued their struggle on every point from local to regional and global. When protagonists of the Russian revolution (Bolsheviks) started spreading this movement to the other parts of the world, they faced a strong opposition from the European countries where capitalism was in vogue.

Although the anti-communists groups were very strong and they were opposing from different angles but at least the voice reached those who were being exploited by the elites in class based societies. These exploited communities also started asking different types of questions about society and economic distribution and social injustice. This revolution changed even basic perceptions related to education and peace etc.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.,p. 124

<sup>10</sup> S.Reed Brett, *European History 1900-1960*. London, John Murray: 1967, 123-24

Firstly the influences of this revolution reached to those countries that were near to Russia. It has also reached to Afghanistan. It left its lasting impacts on Afghanistan. All the top leadership of People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), have observed and studied this system in Russia and they have been impressed by this new idea of communism. Its impact is more visible on Central and South Asia. This impact reached to South Asia through Central Asia because modernity was imposed on it and it was perfectly sovietised. Progressive literary and political movements, trade unions and communist parties emerged in South Asia. Now the fear of capitalists increased manifold.

This revolution changed the basic perceptions of the people. It left deep artistic, social, spiritual and cultural influences on the mind of peoples. Its impact is more visible on central and South Asia. When the west started thinking how to counter this ideology, they adopted different strategies to encounter it from various angles. The capitalists funded different propaganda organizations and started executing it from social, economic and religious fields. They also started writing and spreading propaganda literature in different languages of the world. They mainly opposed this ideology through intellectual channels. To encounter socialism or communism in Afghanistan, a centre for producing propaganda literature was established in Peshawar. The name of this organization was Writers Union for Free Afghanistan. This organization was regularly publishing a magazine, called WUFA. *Animal Farm* has also been translated into Pashto language and published by this organization.<sup>11</sup> This revolution brought positive as well as negative effects to our society.

### **Bolshevism in Afghanistan**

Bolshevik revolution spread rapidly in Asia. This revolution “played the same role in Asia as the French Revolution in Europe.”<sup>12</sup> Although the educated people in different countries of Asia such as the Central Asian States, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan were not impressed by the different terms and ideologies used for this revolution as Bolshevism, Marxism, and Leninism, but they were impressed by one thing and that was revolution.<sup>13</sup> People were trying to interpret the ideas and concepts of this revolution according to their own concepts. They were looking into this movement

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<sup>11</sup> It is a novella written by George Orwell, first published in England in 1945.

<sup>12</sup> Marwat, Fazal ur Rahim, *The Bolshevik Revolution and Afghanistan (A Case Study of Afghan, Indian and Soviet Publication)*, in ‘Pashto’, Peshawar, Pashto Academy University of Peshawar, Vol. 42, No. 645 (July-December 2013), p. 6

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8

from anti-imperialist and general democratic positions and were not looking into it from class perspective.<sup>14</sup> Whatever interpretation was made of this ideology the fact is that it influenced many aspects of society.

Mainly people of the educated and intellectual class in Afghanistan were affiliated with communism and Bolshevism. Bolshevism provided to the elites an organization scheme and they started expressing their dissent through this organization scheme. They considered Bolshevism a very clear path against their masters as well as a key to the future.<sup>15</sup> Bolshevism reached Afghanistan through propaganda reports, Central Asian publications and individual merchants and travelers from Central Asia. Although these reports were biased, policy oriented and exaggerated.<sup>16</sup> About the Afghan Amir Habibullah Khan and Bolshevik Revolution he writes:

The pro-British Amir and his corrupt officials kept silence over the upheaval in their neighborhood and the Amir still stuck to his pro-British policy in neutrality in the First World War. But the constitutionalists, the young Afghans and nationalists “greeted the revolution with enthusiasm.”<sup>17</sup>

The Indian revolutionaries migrated to Tashkent, Kabul and other areas used this revolution for a struggle of independence from British colonial power.<sup>18</sup>

Bolshevists also tried to attract Afghan and Indian revolutionaries. Among the Indian revolutionaries, Barkatullah Bhopali and M.Pratap were propagating in favour of Bolshevism in Afghanistan, India and Central Asia. They wrote booklets and pamphlets against British and in support of this movement. Abdur Rab Berq Peshawari, Pratap Acharia, Barkatullah and Obaidullah Sindhi were among the prominent persons who were cultivating close relations between Bolshevik Russia and Afghanistan and spreading Bolshevism in India and Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup> One of the telegrams from Bravin to

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<sup>14</sup> Marwat, Fazal ur Rahim, *The Bolshevik Revolution and Afghanistan (A Case Study of Afghan, Indian and Soviet Publication)*, in ‘Pashto’, Peshawar, Pashto Academy University of Peshawar, Vol. 42, No. 645 (July-December 2013), p. 7

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 8

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 8

<sup>17</sup> Marwat, Fazal ur Rahim, *The Bolshevik Revolution and Afghanistan (A Case Study of Afghan, Indian and Soviet Publication)*, in ‘Pashto’, Peshawar, Pashto Academy University of Peshawar, Vol. 42, No. 645 (July-December 2013), p. 8

<sup>18</sup> Akbar, Abdul Akbar Khan, *Safar Nama Rusi Turkestan 1920-21* (Urdu), pp.78,88,82,112

<sup>19</sup> Marwat, Fazal ur Rahim, *The Bolshevik Revolution and Afghanistan (A Case Study of Afghan, Indian and Soviet Publication)*, in ‘Pashto’, Peshawar, Pashto Academy University of Peshawar, Vol. 42, No. 645 (July-December 2013), p. 11

the Eastern propaganda department On 21 May, 1919, Tashkent, intercepted by the British Agent in Tashkent, quoted by Marwat revealed:

Barakatullah should be reminded that he promised to write a pamphlet on 'Bolshevism in Koran [Quran]', that this work be expedited and that special courier should be sent urgently with 100,000 copies printed in Arabic, Hindustani and Persian.<sup>20</sup>

Amanullah was an active member of Young Afghan Party. His foreign policy was supported by Indian revolutionaries based in Kabul and Young Afghans. He has three distinct aspects of his foreign policy: establishment and maintaining good relation with Bolshevik Russia, normalization of relation with Britain and solidarity with Muslim world and other free countries.<sup>21</sup>

Amanullah's diplomatic relations with Bolshevik Russia is evident from the following passage:

On 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1919 the Afghan government again dispatched two letters to Moscow. One was a personal letter of Amir Amanullah and the other from Mahmud Tarzi, the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan to his Soviet counterpart G.V. Chicherin expressing a desire to develop and strengthen friendly relations between the two countries. Amir says, he "seizes the occasion of his ascending the throne of Afghanistan to announce to Russian Republic his strong adherence to the principles of equality of all men and peaceful union of all people. Hitherto Afghanistan has stood apart from all other nations but now the standard of Bolshevism has been raised by Russia." He hopes that the "honoured president of Russian Republic will not refuse to accept my friendly greetings."<sup>22</sup>

Due to these friendly relations with Bolshevik Russia, she recognized Amanullah's accession to the throne and independence of Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup> Commenting on a Soviet-Afghan Treaty, Lenin wrote to Amanullah:

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 13

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 14

<sup>22</sup> Marwat, Fazal ur Rahim, *The Bolshevik Revolution and Afghanistan (A Case Study of Afghan, Indian and Soviet Publication)*, in 'Pashto', Peshawar, Pashto Academy University of Peshawar, Vol. 42, No. 645 (July-December 2013), p. 16

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 16



The treaty between the two states has formally consolidated the friendship and mutual sympathies which have for two years already been developing and strengthening between Afghanistan and Russia....the two states value their independence and want to see each other and all peoples of the East... there are no issues between Afghanistan and Russia that might cause disagreement and cast a shadow on Russo-Afghan friendship. The old imperialist Russia has disappeared never to return and a new Soviet Russia that has stretched a hand of friendship and fraternity to all peoples of the East and first and foremost to the Afghan people...we are happy to note that the first treaty of friendship which the Afghan people concluded was a treaty with Russia.<sup>24</sup>

The attitudes of the two states and their perception of development in Central Asia clouded the friendly relations<sup>1</sup> between Russia and Afghanistan. It happened when the Bolshevik authorities tried to reinterpret the ideas of 'self-determination' to the Muslims of Central Asia. That is why Amanullah and his allies supported the cause of Central Asian Muslims and extended his cooperation with anti-Bolshevik Basmachis.<sup>25</sup> Commenting on the relations between Afghanistan and Bolshevik Russia, Marwat writes:

The ebb and flow in the relations between Afghanistan and the Bolshevik Russia during the years 1917-1929 was the natural corollary of the internal political changes as well as global political developments. The Bolsheviks shattered the myth of the might of Tsarism in the form of Bolshevik revolution in Russia and were trying to spread their own ideology through different means. They tried to use Afghanistan as a spring board for their anti-British activities, while Afghanistan rising from strict isolation to defensive neutralism contributed a lot in promoting the Soviet objectives in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 19

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 19

<sup>26</sup> Marwat, Fazal ur Rahim, *The Bolshevik Revolution and Afghanistan (A Case Study of Afghan, Indian and Soviet Publication)*, in 'Pashto', Peshawar, Pashto Academy University of Peshawar, Vol. 42, No. 645 (July-December 2013), p. 25

## **Impact of Bolshevik Movement on NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)**

Bolshevik movement has its impact on the peasant movements of NWFP (presently called KP), started in Ghala Dher Mardan in August 1938<sup>27</sup> and in Shumali Hashtnagar in 1970-78.<sup>28</sup> The member of the Peasents' Movement started in 1938 in Ghalla Dher Mardan also started joining Khudai Khidmatgar Movement (servants of God, formed in 1929). Although these peasants had economic hardships they participated in freedom movement during 1929-30. They were joining all these movements on account of their own economic exploitation for example high rents, taxes evictions and so on.<sup>29</sup> It is said that the leaders of the peasant movement have taken inspiration from different worldly movements including Marxism, Bolshevism of Russia etc.<sup>30</sup> In this regard Sarfraz Khan writes in the following words:

Bolshevik Russian peasant programme of R.S.D.L.P., had a great impact upon programme of peasant movements in NWFP [now called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa]. Numerous national progressive young men from NWFP who had studied at the University of Toilers, Moscow, in 1920s and inspired by the Russian Bolshevism subsequently joined the spontaneous peasant movement of Ghalla Dher, in 1938. They collaborated with local peasant leaders and shaped list of peasant demands. The peasant movement and their leaders were much influenced by local political movements such as the KKM [Khudai Khidmatgar Movement] and the Congress Socialist Party. Their struggle has been peaceful and political in nature. Hence, the impact of these peasant movements remained limited. They advocated forbidding forced eviction, withdrawal of heavy taxes, fines and practices such as Tora and Malba taxes etc. however, impact of the Bolshevism was more explicit and profound on peasant movement launched in the North Hashtnagar in 1970s. the movement had been more organized, leadership deeply influenced by Bolshevik

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<sup>27</sup> Khan, sarfraz and Rashid Hussain Mughal, *Impact of Bolshevik Russian Peasant Programme on Peasents' Movement in NWFP: From Ghalla Dher to Shumali (North) Hashtnagar*, in Central Asia, Issue No. 69 (Winter 2011), Peshawar, Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar, p. 9

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 11

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 9

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 16

Marxist ideology successfully evolved more advanced peasant programme than Ghalla Dher.<sup>31</sup>

N,-W.F.P C.I.D report regarding an 'alleged Bolshevik agent' states on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1933:

Information has been received that one Mirza Taj Muhammad, Safi of Ziarat, who had spent most of his time in Hoti Mardan with the Hakim of Ganderi and has now recently arrived in Pushat Salarzai via Malakand, is a news-writer of the Bolsheviks and is directly in touch with the Russian Minister at Kabul.<sup>32</sup>

In continuation of this inquiry, Captain W.R.Hay, Political Agent Dir, Swat and Chitral has written to The Assistant to I.G. of Police C.I.D, N.W.F. Province, Peshawar on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1933:

I have talked to the Nawab about Mirza Taj Mohd. The Nawab says he is an informer in the pay of Afghan Government. He visited the Nawab at the beginning of May, and is now, as far as the Nawab knows, at his home in Ziarat. He is paid Rs.20/- Kabuli by the Nawab whenever he comes to see him. A Bolshevik or pro-Amanullah agent is reported to be at Pashat giving lessons to the Khan but he is someone other than Mirza Taj Muhammad.<sup>33</sup>

In a secret report of 29<sup>th</sup> June 1933 Political Agent, Dir, Swat and Chitral writes:

In answer to enquiries about the suspected Bolshevik agent from Turkistan, Dilawar Khan of ...has written to the Nawab of Dir that these so-called Bolshevik agents are really outlaws from Peshawar.<sup>34</sup>

In an Intelligence Report by W.R.Hay on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1933 states:

The man who is teaching the Khan of Pashtat is Sahibzada Muhammad Alam of Bazid Khel Peshawar District... He is

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 21

<sup>32</sup> Tribal Research Cell Miscellaneous Files at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 17, Serial No. 264. Year 1932.

<sup>33</sup> Tribal Research Cell Miscellaneous Files at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 17, Serial No. 264. Year 1932.

<sup>34</sup> Tribal Research Cell Miscellaneous Files at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 17, Serial No. 264. Year 1932.

a companion of Sanubar Hussain and his original object in Bajaur was red shirt propaganda.<sup>35</sup>

### **Bolshevik and Swat**

A letter against the Wali of Swat, from the Khan of Khar on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1932, to the Political Agent of Dir, Swat and Chitral states that a few persons:

left India for tribal territory with a view to joining the agents of the Soviet Government of Russia, each of them has established direct connection with the Bolshevik workers whether they are in Kabul or in Teshkent, and up to this time they have not left alone this Tribal Territory but have established their centres and Departments everywhere.<sup>36</sup>

In this letter he further said:

On one side is the above agitation and on the other are the personal and territorial interests of the wali of swat who to help the trouble against Dir State sends pecuniary help to well known and leading men of the tribes.<sup>37</sup>

In response to this letter from the Khan of Khar, the Political Agent of Dir, Swat and Chitral has written to the Chief Secretary to the Government, North-West Frontier Province on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1932;

As far as I know the allegations made against the Wali are almost certainly false, and the statements made regarding Bolshevik intrigue may therefore well be either false or exaggerated.<sup>38</sup>

Swat became an independent state in 1915. On 22 May 1923, a special meeting was held in Saidu Sharif Swat. In this meeting the ceremony of *dastarbandi* of the heir apparent of Miangul Abdul Wadud was held and he was recognized by the British government. On this occasion Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province and political agent of

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<sup>35</sup> Tribal Research Cell Miscellaneous Files at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 17, Serial No. 264. Year 1932.

<sup>36</sup> Tribal Research Cell Miscellaneous Files at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 17, Serial No. 264. Year 1932.

<sup>37</sup> Tribal Research Cell Miscellaneous Files at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 17, Serial No. 264. Year 1932.

<sup>38</sup> Tribal Research Cell Miscellaneous Files at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 17, Serial No. 264. Year 1932.

Malakand were present. The ruler of Swat state assured the colonial government about his support against the Bolsheviks and their propaganda. He declared it as anti Islamic. A suspected agent of Bolshevism, Mulvi Abdul Aziz denied his links with Bolshevism and condemned it by stating the following words.

What was Bolshevism and its objects (?). He said that a denial from Bolshevism is the will of God. The objects of this movement is that all kings, Amirs, Rulers and religious 'peshwas' should be destroyed from the world and that all properties etc. belonging to them and public should be taken over and to bring them in their unfair use. He [denied his links with]... the Bolsheviks and... advise[d] all others that they should abstain from having any connection with this wicked body.<sup>39</sup>

Mulvi Abdul Aziz belonged to the Utmanzi (Charsada). He was a sincere friend of the ruler of Swat (Miangul Abdul Wadud). When the armies of the Nawabs of Dir and Bajaur were stationed in the Shamoza area of Swat and plotting to occupy Swat. In those days Mulvi Abdul Aziz was in Bajaur. When he came to know about the murder of Shahzada Sherin Jan, immediately he informed the Mullah of Babara (*da Babare Mullah*) and then both of them instigated the people against the Khan of Khaar, through their speeches. Especially they delivered their speeches to the Salarzai tribe.<sup>40</sup>

In March 1926, the British government recognized the Swat State.<sup>41</sup> Despite the assurance that the people of Swat will not support the Bolsheviks but the British government did not believe in it. The British did not trust Abdul Wadud and other important personalities in Swat because the British government considered that they were in touch with the activities of Bolsheviks, even though Abdul Wadud and his company had expressed their loyalty to British and the denunciation of Bolshevism. Political Agent of Malakand wrote to Miangul Abdul Wadud about his misgivings of Mulvi Abdul Aziz. Miangul replied to the Political Agent and strongly stressed that

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<sup>39</sup> Sultan-i-Rome, *Swat State (1915-1969) From Genesis to Merger*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, Second Impression 2009, p. 133.

<sup>40</sup> Khan, Muhammad Asaf, *Tarikh Riyasat-e-Swat wa Sawanih-e-Hayat Bani Riyasat-e-Swat Hazrat Miangul Gul Shahzada Abdul Wadud Khan Badshah Sahib*.n.p., [1958], pp. 249, 250.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.318.

the Mulvi had no connection with the Bolsheviks.<sup>42</sup> While recognizing the Swat State and heir after of Miangul Abdul Wadud it was also decided that 'he had also to show his ability to keep his hold on power, that he could consolidate the state and that he was willing to deal with anti-British elements like Sandakai Baba. He would have to show, too, that he had no sympathy for the Bolsheviks and was able to deal with them firmly, as with the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the previous Czarist legacy now had an ideological twist on it, and Swat was strategically placed in the 'military crescent' \_\_\_ the tribal belt of the NWFP, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan around the USSR.'<sup>43</sup> Same apprehensions, the British had of the Khudai Khidmatgar's movement. They thought that there are some politically inflammable elements in this movement that could easily be ignited by the soviets in pursuit of revolutionary goals.

The first primary school in Swat state was opened in Saidu Sharif around March 1922. The first teacher appointed in this school was Shams-ul-Haq, a resident of Adina [present district Swabi]. The confidential Weekly Provincial Diary says that formerly he was a school teacher at Turlandi, Kota, Jabbi and Kohat and that he was dismissed from the Education Department.<sup>44</sup> About the opening of the first school the confidential reports has been summarized by Sultan-i-Rome in these words.

After reading the confidential reports, one wonders why and under what programme the first school in Swat was opened. Reports of the Intelligence Bureau had alleged that it was under the Bolshevik influence and with their assistance that a new party was created, which was 'the direct representative locally of the Indo-Russian Revolutionary Organization,' and whose members were 'directly accredited to and financed by Maulvi Obedullah and Ahmad Hassan' 'alias Ahmad Ali a Lahore youth who absconded with other students of the Lahore Medical College in 1915.'<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Sultan-i-Rome, *Swat State (1915-1969) From Genesis to Merger*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, Second Impression 2009, pp. 133, 134.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 138.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.213

<sup>45</sup> Sultan-i-Rome, *Swat State (1915-1969) From Genesis to Merger*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, Second Impression 2009, p.213

The note in the confidential report has stated further that:

The aims of the Makhfi's party are typically Bolshevik. They intend to start schools all over tribal territory\_\_ and reports from different sources mention that three such schools, two in Bajaur and one in Swat, have already been started. In these schools everything will be free; a regular education will be given but distorted teaching of history and other subjects, on lines familiar to the student of Sinn Fein methods in Ireland<sup>46</sup>, will inculcate in the students fanatical, communistic and anti-British ideas, to be spread by them among the tribes as a whole. Side by side with the educational programme will proceed wholesale corruption of the tribesmen with Russian gold and the organization of a system for the transport from Tashkent and distribution in Tribal Territory of the arms which the Bolsheviks have ready for the purpose<sup>47</sup>

The educational schemes of Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Bacha Khan) has also a link with the opening of the first school in Swat. In this regard it has been stated:

It can be inferred from the presence of Maulwi Abdul Aziz of this party \_\_who was associated with the educational schemes of Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the lower districts of the province \_\_\_with Abdul Wadud in Saidu Sharif, and by their close collaboration, that the first school in Swat was opened before March 1922 under the scheme of Indian revolutionary leaders linked with and financed from Tashkent.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Its meaning in English is 'Ourselves or We Ourselves'. It is a left-wing Irish republican political party active in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Sinn Féin organisation was founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinn\\_F%C3%A9in](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinn_F%C3%A9in), retrieved on 7/9/2017).

<sup>47</sup> Sultan-i-Rome, *Education in the State of Swat*, in Hamdard Islamicus, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April-June 2008), Karachi, p.72

<sup>48</sup> List of Special Branch, List-II, , Peshawar, at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 83, Serial No. 1509. Year 1922.

As we know that Mulvi Abdul Aziz helped the ruler of Swat in establishing the first school and thus he was considered by the British as having contacts with the Bolsheviks. Maybe that is the reason that the British officers in Malakand started themselves inspecting the schools. Maybe they were looking into the curriculum and other activities of these schools. The Political Agent Malakand stated in December 1927 that:

With some assistance from the (British Indian) Government he (Abdul Wadud) has constructed and opened an A.V. Middle school at Saidu, and he has opened twelve primary schools in his state, his total expenditure on education being (Rs.) 18,000 p.a. (per annum). At the Wali's (ruler) request these schools are now regularly inspected by a (British Indian) Government officer of the Education Department.<sup>49</sup>

After that the ruler has closed many schools in Swat State. The then Director of Education Buner Khan has written the cause of the closure of these schools as low enrolment. In this regard he states:

The result was that all the schools were closed down for want of enrolment except one at Saidu Sharif and only one other such school survived with very small number of students. It was the primary school at Barikot.<sup>50</sup>

Sultan-i-Rome does not agree with the reason of low enrolment for closing these schools. He looks into other factors of closing these schools. In this regard he states:

It, was not, however, for want of enrolment that the schools in Swat State were closed down. The reason and sinister motive behind the closure of the schools lay somewhere else. It was after the agitation in the down country that the political Agent at Malakand warned the Bacha Sahib that as he was educating the people, they would agitate against him like those who, educated by the English, were agitating against them. Hence he closed all the schools save the one at Saidu Sharif and the other at Barikot. The plea of the want of enrolment was merely an overt attempt to save the face and conceal the real factor and motive behind the closure of the schools. This can

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<sup>49</sup> Sultan-i-Rome, *Education in the State of Swat*, in Hamdard Islamicus, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April-June 2008), Karachi, p.72

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.73



further be endorsed by the fact that in 1930s afterwards neither new schools were opened nor the closed ones were re-opened. In 1940s Wadudia school, Saidu Sharif was upgraded to the level of high school, and new schools were opened.<sup>51</sup>

But it is also inferred from the matter of closing these schools that maybe the British Government was afraid of the Bolshevik movement as the Government had already expressed its premonition about the activities of the Mulvi Abdul Aziz and the establishment of new schools in the Swat State.

Wali-e-Swat was also reading books on communism and claimed that he was aware of all social upheaval.<sup>52</sup> The archives record verifies organized efforts of the British Government to stop Bolshevik Movements. For this purpose the Government also produced *fitwas* against this movement. Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier province has addressed a letter to all Deputy Commissioners on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1920, he states:

300 copies of Urdu translation of *fetwa* an 5 copies of Prsian recently issued by Shaikh-ul-Islam of Constantinople denouncing Bolshevism from the Islamic point of view, are enclosed for distribution in your district, to special educated persons, so far as local conditions will admit.<sup>53</sup>

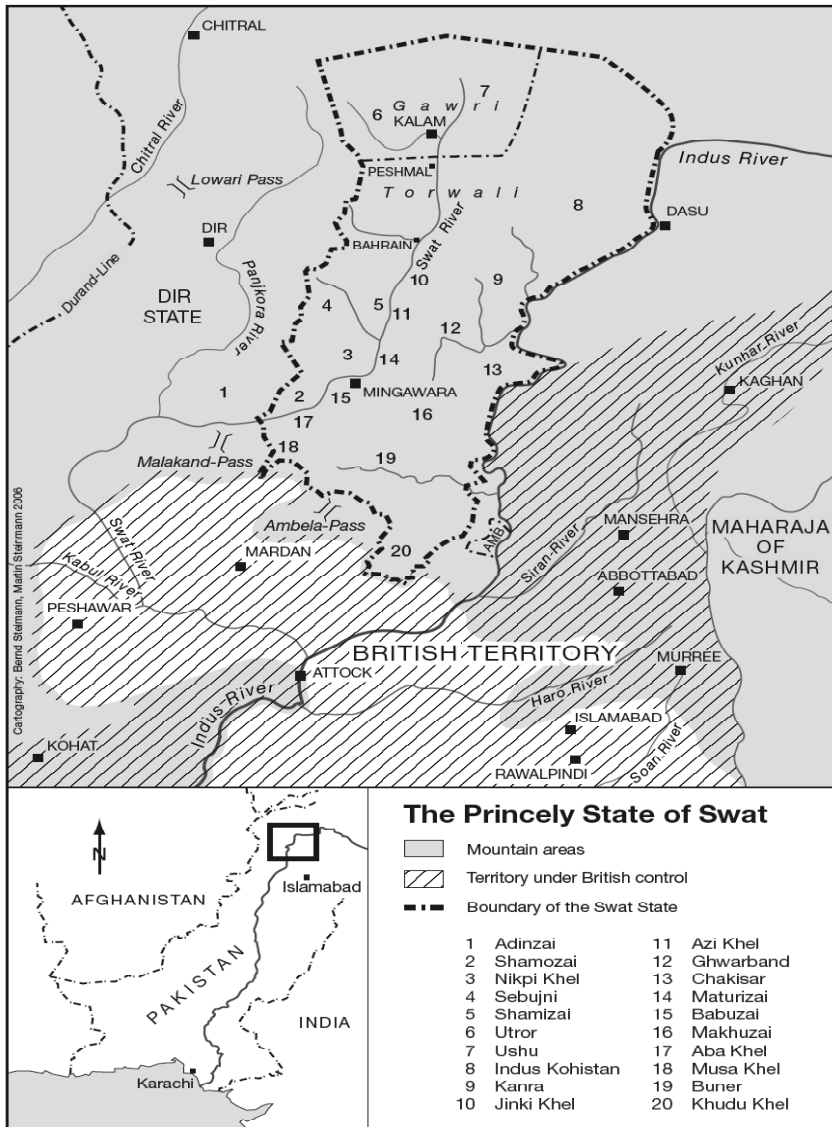
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<sup>51</sup> Sultan-i-Rome, *Education in the State of Swat*, in Hamdard Islamicus, Vol. 31, No. 2 (April-June 2008), Karachi., p.73

<sup>52</sup> Barth, the Last Wali of Swat, p.111

<sup>53</sup> Files of the Deputy Commissioner Office, Peshawar, at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 51, Serial No. 1423. Year 1920.

Swat State Map, Courtesy: Dr. Urs Geiser



## فتوے آقا کے شیخ الاسلام قسطنطنیہ

دوڑیں آیام کہ توتیہ اولیائے امور ملل بطرف بالشیوک جلب و معطوف گردیدہ ہر اسلام کہ ہادی و  
 آئینہ خیالات جم غفیر سے از بنی نوع بشر است فرض عین و عین فرض بیباک شد کہ عقیدہ خوش را با کما  
 حد کے عالم رسائے بہ افراد بشر عموماً و بہ مسلمانان دنیا خصوصاً بلغا مند \*  
 اصول و حقیقت بالشیوک ہرچہ باشد باشد؛ ولے چوں ہر روز و وجوداں مضر لعلوالم انسانیت  
 و موعودہ سے معاظرت افراد ناس با یکدیگر و متافی حقوق فرداً فرداً بشر از مایمکشان است بہ بیسیج  
 و مین الوجود با قوانین و اصول شریعت مقدسہ اسلام صحیح نہ تواند آمد \*  
 آزاد ہند اسے ظہور اسلام تازماننا ہذا افعال شنیعہ مثل قصد جلاں و اموال و سرقت و قتل نفوس  
 بیگناہ و ہنپ اموال و زنا سے محضہ شاماً تشبیح و تویج و در احکام مقدسہ مابین افعال قبیحہ نہ تہا لونیج  
 بل برائے ہر یک ہنزا و عقوبتی سخت معین و مقرر شدہ است \*  
 اسلام بہ بہبودی و ترفیہ حال و سعادت عمومی امر و از سلب مال و جان دیگران نہی و در رعایت  
 حقوق ناس منفرداً و مجتمعاً با شکیہ تاکید تو صیدہ میفرماید بہ موجب قوانین مستحکمہ دین حنیف اسلام  
 ہر یک از افراد بشر از تشدید مال او کثرت خوش کاملاً مجاز و مختار است کہ خواہ در آیام حیات بلذات  
 مائش بہ دیگرے منتقل گردد \*  
 تہذیب و اسراف در مذہب حقہ اسلام قطعاً جائز نیست و بر اسے جلو گیری مسرف و بلیغ  
 از تہذیر تمام ہیکش در مجبران حال شکستہ حالان نقص صریح است کہ باید قہمتی از شروت  
 با اقربا و ارحام و قہمتی دیگر بہ فقرا و ایتام بدل شود \*  
 پس بر مسلمانان لازم است کہ برائے حفظ بیعتہ اسلام تمام اقتدار و نفوذ خود را جمع ساختہ و با غری را سخ  
 برداشتہ بالشیوک کہ عالم تمدن و مساوات و حقوق انسان را در مخاطرہ و تزلزل انداختہ بہرہ و از بندہ

(مطبوعہ آری پریس شملہ)

Source: Files of the Deputy Commissioner Office, Peshawar, at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 51, Serial No. 1423. Year 1920.

An English version of the said *fitwa* is given on next page.

### **Fetwa denouncing Bolshevism issued by the Sheik-ul-Islam February 1920**

Bolshevism is at present engaging the attention of those who control the destinies of nations. It is the duty of Islam, which directs a great portion of humanity and reflects their sentiment to proclaim its attitude to all Mahomedans and to the world in general. Whatever may be the basic principles of Bolshevism the fact that their application is harmful to humanity, to social life and to the rights of individual property makes it quite impossible to reconcile them with the principles of Islam. Since the birth of Islam until now attacks upon life and property, theft, massacres, pillage and rape have always been condemned, and our sacred literature not only condemns but imposes penal sentences for such acts. Islam requires general progress, tranquility and happiness. It, therefore, forbids the taking of the life and property of others and ensures most emphatically the rights of property of individuals and communities. Consequently Islam rules that each individual has a complete right to bequeath his property, during his lifetime or after his death. Islam being unable to tolerate the spendthrift, and with a view to preventing the spendthrift from squandering his riches to the detriment of those who are left destitute, requires that the fortune be divided partly among the poor. It is to the interests of Islam that all its strength and influence should be concentrated to oppose the Bolsheviks, as a danger threatening civilization, justice and right.<sup>54</sup>

British Government also tried to stop money orders used by communist organizations. One of these reports states:

I am directed to refer to this office Confidential Memorandum dated the 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1919, on the subject of the detention of money orders remitted to this country by

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<sup>54</sup> Files of the Deputy Commissioner Office, Peshawar, at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 51, Serial No. 1423. Year 1920.

communists or communist organizations of which a list has already been supplied.<sup>55</sup>

A letter from Maulvi Fazal Rabbi, alias Pakhlai Maulvi, Risaldar Rukn-Uddin and Maulvi Makhfi through Abdul Aziz of Saidu Swat which was received by Amir Rahmatullah, head of the Samasta 'Fanatic Colony', is as under:

Our party at Bajaur unanimously requests and advises you to send without delay at least 300 men of your party to Thakot who should encamp themselves away from the village Abadi and while doing so please inform us so that we may reach the spot to make necessary arrangements for them. This party intends to form a Bolshevik centre to carry on propaganda in the adjacent British Territory without hindrance. If you cannot undertake the expenses of these your payment, this party and the Bolshevik party promise to pay the expenses.<sup>56</sup>

All these secrets reports confirm the existence of activists of Bolshevik Movement in Swat and surrounding frontier and tribal regions.

## Conclusion

The Bolshevik Revolution influenced psychological, linguistic, literary, cultural, political and economic aspects of life of the people of Central Asia and South Asia including Swat State. There can be seen some connections between the activists of Bolshevik Movement and some people of Swat. The establishment of first school in Swat state is also the result of this connection, as stated in the confidential reports of the colonial government. Various types of people from Swat were secretly participating in the activities of this movement.

When the British colonial government officials came to know about the suspected activities of Bolshevik Movement in Swat state, they took immediate measurements to stop the activities and tried to pressurize the activists and supporters of this movement in Swat state. Reports show that British government took the expansion of this movement seriously and they started in a systematic way to counter the ideology of this movement, which was against the vested interests of capitalism and all of its institutions. The British colonial government also tried to counter this revolution in different

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<sup>55</sup> Files of the Deputy Commissioner Office, Peshawar, at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 14, Serial No. 281.

<sup>56</sup> Special Branch Files List-II, of Intelligence Bureau N-W.F.P province, Peshawar, at the Directorate of Archives and Libraries, Peshawar. Bundle No. 83, Serial No. 1510.

ways. They pressurized the rulers of these independent states and used various types of people against this Bolshevik philosophy. British government also produced *fitwas*<sup>57</sup> from various religious scholars, translated and circulated these *fitwas* in various languages like Urdu and Persian etc. As a result, this movement did not get any success in Swat State.

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<sup>57</sup> In response to question by an individual or an institute, a formal ruling about an issue or a point, issued by a religious scholar (mufti) is called fitwa or fatwa.

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