



## UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

### Waging nonviolence: reflections on the history writing of the Pashtun nonviolent movement Khudai Khidmatgar

Bala, S.

**DOI**

[10.1111/pech.12009](https://doi.org/10.1111/pech.12009)

**Publication date**

2013

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Peace and Change

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Bala, S. (2013). Waging nonviolence: reflections on the history writing of the Pashtun nonviolent movement Khudai Khidmatgar. *Peace and Change*, 38(2), 131-154. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pech.12009>

**General rights**

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

**Disclaimer/Complaints regulations**

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, P.O. Box 19185, 1000 GD Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

*UvA-DARE is a service provided by the library of the University of Amsterdam (<https://dare.uva.nl>)*



WAGING NONVIOLENCE: REFLECTIONS ON THE  
HISTORY WRITING OF THE PASHTUN NONVIOLENT  
MOVEMENT KHUDAI KHIDMATGAR

by *Sruti Bala*

Is not the Pashtun amenable to love and reason?  
He will go with you to hell if you can win his heart,  
but you cannot force him even to go to heaven.<sup>1</sup>

The article investigates recurrent narratives in the cultural historiography of the early twentieth-century nonviolent movement of the Pashtuns, known as Khudai Khidmatgar (1929–1948). Commentaries and studies of this movement are ridden with three inter-connected problems: first, a cultural stereotyping of the Pashtuns, labeling acts of nonviolent resistance as an aberrant phase in a culture branded as inherently violent; second, a denial of the indigenous roots of the movement, viewing it as a provincial offshoot of Gandhianism; and third, an elitist privileging of the principles of nonviolence over concrete acts and practices. Employing a close reading of media reports and historical accounts, I argue that the Khudai Khidmatgar movement offered an example of radical nonviolent action, drawing from Islamic principles, and dialectically engaging with transnational debates. I propose a careful examination of the foreclosures and oversights in the historical narratives of nonviolent resistance movements.

---

THE PROBLEM OF FORECLOSURE IN CULTURAL HISTORY

The recent popular uprisings in the Arab world have led to a renewed interest in the subject of nonviolent protest, in the conditions of its success, and related to that, an interest in questions of how to write its history, as well as in the role of culture in protest. In what way does culture shape and create the conditions of possibility for the public articulation of protest? And conversely, how does the performance

of protest influence or inform the way we understand the history of a certain culture? This article seeks to review the historical writing of nonviolent protest and the role of culture therein. In response to the patterns representing contemporary nonviolent movements in Western and other mainstream media, it is worthwhile to re-examine one instance of nonviolent protest from early twentieth-century history. The case in question is the social reform and protest organization known as Khudai Khidmatgar (the Servants of God) in the Pashto<sup>2</sup> Language, founded in 1929 and ultimately banned in 1948 in the North-West Frontier Province of what was then British India and is today an area spanning both sides of the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The social and political movement that this organization spearheaded is arguably one of the least known and most misunderstood examples of nonviolent action in the twentieth century. The lack of extensive research is partly connected to the systematic destruction of crucial archival material during the colonial era, as well as by the Pakistani authorities following independence.

This article neither presents new facts and source materials related to the history of the movement nor does it claim authority in the interpretation of historical facts.<sup>3</sup> Rather, it is an investigation of the themes and narratives that run through the cultural historiography of this movement, as well as a critical analysis of how nonviolent movements are explained along culturalist lines. Employing a close reading of the speeches of the founder of the Khudai Khidmatgar, media reports and historical accounts on their activities, I argue that the Pashtun organization offered an example of radical nonviolent action, which emerged from complex interpretations and engagements with transnational debates and visions of social change, and was rooted in a very specific sociocultural context.<sup>4</sup>

The Khudai Khidmatgar was an organization pledged to the reform of Pashtun society and to nonviolent resistance to British colonial occupation. At different points in its brief eighteen-year history, the Khudai Khidmatgar was a social welfare organization, at other moments, it was the representative branch of a political party, namely the North-West Frontier section of the Indian National Congress, and in another phase, it served as an unarmed, rurally based, anticolonial protest force. Because of its organizational characteristics and institutional structure, it was often called an army, although its recruits explicitly took an oath to not touch any weapons. The Khudai Khidmatgar consisted of a militant and a social wing; the former were

organized as unarmed civilian guards in red uniform, staging road blocks, conducting patrols, preventing clashes between rival factions, and taking the lead in the so-called fill the jail (*jail bharo*) campaigns, courting mass arrest in civil disobedience actions calling for the boycott of British goods. The social wing of the movement organized training camps, coordinated voluntary services such as feeding the poor and conducting street and house repairs, sanitation drives, and running semiformal education programs.

Three interrelated problems complicate the historiography of this movement. First, the protest actions and achievements of the Khudai Khidmatgar are assessed as exceptional historical moments, as an aberrant phase in the history of the Pashtun peoples, which is predominantly viewed as a history of tribal violence and revenge. The image of the nonviolent Pashtun thus ironically serves to reinforce the dominant stereotype. The historical narratives explain the occurrence of organized, nonviolent collective protest in terms of a grammatical instance of exception, meant to prove the rule of an inherently violent culture.

Second, the Khudai Khidmatgar is described as a provincial offshoot of Gandhianism. Indian nationalist history writing, for instance, privileges the two brief visits of M. K. Gandhi to the North-West Frontier Province as landmark moments in the movement's history, thus ignoring and denying all attempts to identify the events deemed as key sources of inspiration for the movement from an indigenous perspective. Further, it appropriates the very local events and contexts of the North-West Frontier Province to a nationalist history writing agenda. The denial of the indigenous historical context of the movement and the excessive credit given to external factors in its achievements are both indicators of an unwillingness to locate the acts of nonviolent protest as integral and autochthonous to Pashtun cultural history.

Third, a theorization of nonviolence is put into application, which privileges the so-called principled, ideological stance on nonviolence over the actual, physical acts of nonviolent protest. This leads to a refusal to acknowledge the risky and contradictory realities of protest and mass mobilization, instead seeking to verify in some abstract, elitist way the extent to which an action may be deemed as genuinely nonviolent or not.

These three themes are very closely interlinked in the sense that nonviolent protest is seemingly connected to some inherent cultural values, implicitly present in some and absent in other cultures.

This culturally prejudiced view of nonviolent protest not only forecloses the possibility of its emergence in unfamiliar terrains and contexts, but also does not adequately and carefully analyze its articulations and material realities.

The following article seeks to highlight the physical acts and practices that characterized the movement, in order to throw a new light on the contribution of the Khudai Khidmatgar to the history of nonviolent civilian protest. No doubt, the question Gayatri Spivak asked of well-meaning academics, who inadvertently reinscribe in their research the structures that they seek to dismantle, remains pertinent here.<sup>5</sup> This can particularly happen when one is keen to rescue the Pashtuns from the stereotyping and negative portrayals of their colonial past or from the Indian nationalist narratives by throwing in more positive connotations and representations. By ironing out the complex representations of the Pashtuns, a manner of over praising one's subjects could creep into an otherwise scholarly analysis. Although this may serve to set right false assumptions and bring forth perspectives so far ignored or left unnoticed, caution must be taken to not assume that such a positive representation is the same as what the self-perception of the Pashtun subject would be, nor that any critical research can provide a complete explanation of the history of this movement.

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE KHUDAI KHIDMATGAR

The Khudai Khidmatgar was launched under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in 1929 as the interventionist force of a social reform movement.<sup>6</sup> Due to the dissipation of the traditional land distribution system (*wesh*) in the course of colonial rule, the emergence of a small landed elite, patronized and appointed by the British, who controlled and administered the province in return for privileges, traditional tribal authorities were gradually diminishing in their importance, particularly in dispute resolution. The ruling elite emerged as a group of powerful landlords who fought among each other, leading to increased rivalry among their clans. Introducing their own manner of punishment and control, including levies, fines, and even imprisonment, they gradually created a new culture of conflict, with its own rules of settlement. This was a major change in comparison with the tribal councils' traditional focus on limiting conflicts and

blame, and the practice of resolving feuds without punishment. Special regulations, such as the 1872 Frontier Crimes Regulation Act, also known as the Tranquility Act sanctioned punishments and mass arrests without trial and legal support and placed heavy restrictions on the free assembly of Pashtuns. They were far stricter in the Frontier Province than in any other part of British India and directly limited civil liberties. The infringements on various civil as well as basic human rights were legitimized by the apparent need to control the Western frontier as a defense line against Russian aggression and military advances in the region. Apart from this, they also served to clamp down on the interclan fighting that resulted from upheavals in the land distribution system, themselves initiated by the British in collusion with influential landlords. The introduction of these regulations may be described as the turning point in the movement's history, from being a Pashtun social reform organization to an antiimperialist movement.

The Khudai Khidmatgar thus emerged as a voluntary<sup>7</sup> action group to pursue social reform work within Pashtun society and counter British imperialism. At the time the social service wing was first launched, membership was estimated at a little more than one thousand soldiers. By 1934, there were at least 25,000 formal Khudai Khidmatgar recruits, although figures in various historical sources differ, with some estimations claiming membership to have exceeded 100,000.<sup>8</sup> The organization included both women and men, although existing research material does not reveal enough about the nature and extent of women's involvement in the Khudai Khidmatgar.<sup>9</sup>

The founder of the movement, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was an active member of the Indian National Congress, chief of the Frontier Province chapter of the Congress and a close ally to Gandhi. Unlike other nationalist leaders, he came from a rural background and did not receive as much formal higher education as some other Congress members. He became a prominent public figure with the founding of reform schools teaching in Pashto rather than Urdu, which were independent of both the Muslim clergy as well as the British. These were also the first schools open to educating girls and accessible to the rural poor. Abdul Ghaffar Khan belonged to a comparatively well-off land-owning family. Unlike Gandhi or Nehru, he was neither a man of Western learning nor a prolific writer. In fact, he was, as Aijaz Ahmad has described him, "a man of very large silences,"<sup>10</sup> a nationalist leader about whom comparatively little is known and whose life of

ninety-eight years, one-third of which was spent in jail, is steeped in myth and legend. To call him a nationalist leader itself is somewhat misleading, for *Badshah* or *Bacha Khan*,<sup>11</sup> as he was affectionately referred to by the Pashtuns, was “rooted in place, almost in the way of peasants.”<sup>12</sup> Many Congress politicians viewed him as a provincial leader rather than as a national figure. His primary political aim was the improvement of the lives and circumstances of the Pashtuns, a community in a region always referred to as “remote,” which was not even a full-fledged province of the British Empire at the time of his birth. Although the strategic location of the North-West Frontier Province cannot be overlooked, it did not play as major a role in Indian nationalist politics as mainland regions of India.

Khan spent nearly thirty-five years of his life in prison for his political activities and involvement in civil disobedience actions, mostly after Partition. The British and later the Government of Pakistan systematically destroyed most documents and material records of the movement, by raiding homes and confiscating anything related to the Khudai Khidmatgar from handkerchiefs to uniforms and flags to copies of the movement journal *Pakhtun*. An accurate chronology of the movement has thus remained close to impossible. Apart from colonial reports and police archive files, a few diaries and memoirs of Khudai Khidmatgar members remain, which are only slowly being accessed and analyzed by historians.

Without taking these aspects of Pashtun history into consideration, it is easy to fall into the orientalist discourse of viewing Pashtun culture as one that intrinsically values brutality and revenge. Indian nationalist historiography itself has unfortunately played a big role in perpetuating this image of the brute Pashtun, while not acknowledging or mentioning Indian complicity (e.g., the position of the Indian bourgeoisie, who were quite prepared to be a part of the structural and institutional violence in the Frontier Province, often eager to gain favors from the British). Paying more attention to the socioeconomic realities of the period can help to contextualize such a historiographical account, in which supposedly cultural attributes are used to explain historical events. The British ruled in the Pashtun provinces through rich and influential landlords. One of the most prestigious regiments in the British Indian Army, founded in 1847, was the Corps of Guides with significant Pashtun presence. Many of the activities of the Khudai Khidmatgar were thus addressed as much against Pashtun collaboration with the British, as directly against British colonial laws.

## NARRATING HISTORY THROUGH CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Almost without exception, every historical account of the Khudai Khidmatgar employs a narrative that begins with highlighting how the Pashtun culture traditionally glorified violence and revenge. Rather than speaking about the long and almost entirely unpleasant history of the Pashtuns as a community living at the borders between different civilizations, subject to attacks and threats to their survival, one finds instead a repeated reference to the image of the rugged, bloodthirsty, fanatic, courageous warrior dwelling in remote mountains, alongside the image of the supposedly oppressed women. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's biography written by Tendulkar is one such example of an assessment of Pashtun culture, which in fact perpetuates stereotypical platitudes about the "nature of the Pathan".<sup>13</sup>

The Pathan is a great lover of folk dances, music and poetry. He is fond of field sports, such as hawking, hunting with dogs and shooting. Even a child loves to carry a rifle. ... These men are hard as nails, live on little, carry nothing but a rifle and a few cartridges, a knife and a bit of food. Every man is a soldier.<sup>14</sup>

This prelude seems to represent a necessary, almost predictable narrative element in the story of the emergence of a nonviolent movement. The Pashtun image combines the reputation of being a courageous, proud, hospitable culture with qualities such as blind loyalty and revengefulness.

Studies and commentaries on the Khudai Khidmatgar, particularly by non-Pashtun scholars, ask in amazement "how it was possible for the Pashtun culture to produce one of the most remarkable pacifist movements."<sup>15</sup> The eighteen-year existence of the movement is described as an "outbreak of nonviolence"<sup>16</sup> in Pashtun cultural history. When Khan states in his autobiography that "there is nothing surprising in a Muslim or a Pathan like me subscribing to the creed of nonviolence,"<sup>17</sup> he in fact registers the surprise and sense of disbelief that surrounded the reception of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement in India and elsewhere.

Gandhi's speeches to the Pashtuns as well as his writings on his visits to the Khudai Khidmatgar camps reveal a clear mistrust of the authenticity of Pashtun nonviolence. This can be traced back to both a suspicion of the lower class Khudai Khidmatgar soldiers' capability

to embrace the “high” ideals of nonviolence, as well as a subtle anti-Muslim slant in his perception of the Pashtuns.

Gandhi visited the North-West Frontier Province in October 1938 for a second time, in order to meet with the Khudai Khidmatgar rank and file members, because he felt that “their nonviolence was sincere but incomplete”<sup>18</sup> and wanted to reassure himself that they were not enrolling as members of the peace force simply out of coercion or because they were enamored by the charisma of Badshah Khan.

I have known the Pathans since my South African days. [...] They were a rough and ready lot. Past masters in the art of wielding the lathi [*baton*], inflammable, the first to take part in riots, they held life cheap and would have killed a human being with no more thought than they would kill a sheep or a hen. That such men should, at the bidding of one man, have laid down their arms and accepted nonviolence as the superior weapon sounds almost like a fairy tale.<sup>19</sup>

The choice of the term “fairy tale” by Gandhi is indicative of the formulaic narrative employed in historical writing on the Pashtuns. In complete disregard for the complexity of their experience, the story of Pashtun resistance in the Khudai Khidmatgar movement is told in culturalist terms of magical transformation from violence to nonviolence, and the eventual return to a supposedly culturally more enduring state of violence.

Even if one were to grant the culturalist view some truth in the argument, and affirm the role that the Khudai Khidmatgar played in de-militarizing an area where it was considered respectable for every male Pashtun to carry a rifle, it is important to pay attention to the fine gradations in an array of cultural practices, governed by intricate norm-making systems. Mukulika Banerjee rightly points out that Pashtun violence, as culturally sanctioned, was governed by an elaborate system of rules, determining which acts of violence were permitted in which contexts and strictly disapproved of in other situations.<sup>20</sup> It is therefore plainly wrong to assume that the practice of restraint of anger as part of nonviolent training was something new or alien to Pashtun culture. In fact, restraint was written into the code of *badal* or revenge, which involved specific forms of revenge or attack under specific conditions and strictly prohibited other forms of violence. Cultural historiography faces the challenge of carefully distinguishing

between the culturally sanctioned practice of restraint inherent to Pashtun society and the perpetuation of the image of the crusading Pashtun through an oversimplification of the community's cultural values.

Another instance of historiography writing stereotypical cultural elements into the resistance movement is the translation of the oath, which every new member to the Khudai Khidmatgar took upon recruitment. The manner in which this oath is misquoted, mistranslated, and obviously appropriated in historical documents is very revealing. The most commonly quoted version of the oath appears in the English transcription of Khan's autobiography, compiled by his assistant, K. B. Narang.

I am a Khudai Khidmatgar (Servant of God); and as God needs no service, but serving his creation is serving him, I promise to serve humanity in the name of God.

I promise to refrain from violence and from taking revenge.

I promise to forgive those who oppress me or treat me with cruelty.

I promise to refrain from taking part in feuds and quarrels and from creating enmity.

I promise to treat every Pashtun as my brother and friend.

I promise to refrain from antisocial customs and practices.

I promise to live a simple life, to practice virtue and to refrain from evil.

I promise to practice good manners and good behavior and not to lead a life of idleness.

I promise to devote at least two hours a day to social work.<sup>21</sup>

This translation, with no verifiable sources mentioned, notably differs from Pashtun historian Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah's translation of the oath from Peshawar Police Archive files.

I call on God as a witness, and solemnly declare on oath that I will abide by the following principles:

1. With sincerity and faith, I offer my name for Khudai Khidmatgarship.
2. I will sacrifice my wealth, comfort and self in the service of my nation and for the liberation of my country.
3. I will never have “para jamba” (party feeling), enmity with or willfully oppose anybody; and I shall help the oppressed against the oppressor.
4. I will not become a member of any other rival party nor will I give security or apologize during the fight.
5. I will always obey every lawful order of every officer of mine.
6. I will always abide by the principle of nonviolence.
7. I will serve all human beings alike, and my goal will be the attainment of the freedom of my country and my religion.
8. I will always perform good and noble deeds.
9. All my efforts will be directed to seeking the will of God and not toward mere show or becoming an office-holder.<sup>22</sup>

While acknowledging that several versions of the oath are likely to have existed simultaneously in what remains a primarily oral culture, I would like to highlight how the translation of K. B. Narang misreads into the oath preconceptions about Pashtun culture, reinforcing the history of the Khudai Khidmatgar in terms of the stereotypical narrative of the brute Pashtun. In Shah’s translation, the new member pledges his service to the liberation of the country, whereas in Narang’s version from Khan’s autobiography, there is an explicit religious motivation in serving humanity. In Shah’s rendering of the oath, the Khudai Khidmatgar recruit pledges to serve all human beings alike, whereas in the version by Narang, this service is specifically addressed to the brotherhood of all Pashtuns. What is most striking in Narang’s translation is that practically every promise of nonviolent action contains an inherent reference to the violent act, to that which it seeks to overcome, as if that were the existent reality. The oath translated by Shah, on the other hand, is framed in terms of obeying lawful orders, committing to a set of collective goals and not misusing the office of membership. Shah’s translation of the oath is hardly referred to in studies on the Khudai Khidmatgar, although it offers us a more complex picture of the workings of its membership. Narang’s undoubtedly romanticized translation features in a text that is

regarded as the official autobiography of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, at least in Indian nationalist history. The fact that his autobiography was dictated in Pashto and Urdu and compiled by his assistant in English is an indication that the translation of the oath was not fully verified and that much was obfuscated in the process of narrating the life story of the leader of the movement.<sup>23</sup>

#### DENYING THE INDIGENOUS ROOTS OF NONVIOLENCE

The tendency to accentuate culturally stereotyped narratives that explain the Pashtun nonviolence movement as a state of exception in a culture otherwise seen as predominantly violent is further accompanied by the denial of indigenous historical and cultural roots of the movement. One of the main markers of this denial is the perception that the nonviolent politics of the Khudai Khidmatgar in the Frontier Province was just a variation of Gandhian nonviolence.<sup>24</sup> Particularly in Indian nationalist annals, Khan is generally placed in the shadow of Gandhi, often referred to as Gandhi's pupil or, even more patronizingly, as the "Frontier Gandhi." The formation of the movement as an army is also described as related to the Gandhian idea of the Peace Army (*Shanti Sena*), although the latter was indeed founded much later than the former. All this is not to deny that Mohandas Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan were closely affiliated with each other. They belonged to the same Congress party and shared similar views on several issues in the civil disobedience movement. They were also good friends, held each other in high regard and spent significant time working together. Yet, it is incorrect to place the movement of the Khudai Khidmatgar as a poor provincial attempt at replicating the mainland Gandhian ideology. Gandhi himself contributed largely to such a positioning of the movement. During his visits to the service and training camps of the Khudai Khidmatgar, he insisted on the incorporation of his ideas such as vegetarianism, fasting, and hand-spinning in their social reform activities (*Islahi*), in order to instill a "true" sense of nonviolence in the soldiers of the Khudai Khidmatgar.

Anecdotal references in Khan's biography indicate that such missionary attempts at making the Pashtun practices palatable to liberal upper caste Hindu sensibilities were often met with skepticism. In one remark, the Khudai Khidmatgar leader wryly notes that he had no

objections to eating vegetarian food in Gandhi's ashrams, but wished the Gandhians would not be so fussy when they came to the Frontier Province themselves.<sup>25</sup>

Terminology is another means of reading down the indigenous historical roots of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. The journals and pamphlets of the movement, *Pakhtun*, more frequently use the term *sabr* (forbearance, steadfastness, restraint) than the term *ahimsa* (noninjury), widely popularized by Gandhi. The Quranic notion of *sabr* has a vast range of connotations, referring to patient individual suffering of hardships without complaint, or enduring false accusations and trouble caused by others, or steadfastness in pursuing an Islamic way of life and mission.<sup>26</sup>

The way in which Khan uses the notion of *sabr* as forbearance in his speeches is probably conceptually the closest to nonviolence.

Our work is to observe forbearance, and it is such a weapon that even the guns, machine guns, aeroplanes and the armies cannot contest with. This is not a new weapon, it is of the time of the Holy Prophet.<sup>27</sup>

The concept is imbued with potency and strength and adapted as a proactive idea, therefore not just limited to noninjury of others, although it includes the idea of self-restraint and control of aggression. Most significantly, *sabr* is directly interpreted as a weapon, as sanctioned by Islam, and as the instrument fit to use against the colonial power's weapons. This is in clear distinction to the understanding of *sabr* as tolerating or putting up with injustice and unwarranted suffering. It also suggests an interpretation of the term that complies with masculine virtues of action.

Self-restraint and self-control in the face of aggression is also interestingly written into the discourse of trained bodily discipline, which then draws the link to military training. For a people historically marked as primitive and uncontrollably violent, the show of discipline was a way of protesting against the stereotypes and quasi-rationalizations of repressions against them. The training camps of the Khudai Khidmatgar inculcated a form of physical training which was complementary to a locally rooted concept of self-restraint. In this, the movement incorporated various seemingly contradictory elements, allowing new dispositions to emerge from the matrix of possibilities, not only at a discursive level, but primarily at the level of bodily

action, namely how they trained for nonviolent intervention and rehearsed their responses in crisis situations.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan's speeches employ a simple, repetitive, rustic, and emotionally direct language. On the one hand, he repeatedly urges the Pashtuns to be patient, to take the oath that "if somebody puts them to disgrace, they would not try to do the same."<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the Pashtuns are invited to "get up and gird up their loins,"<sup>29</sup> to do service (*khidmat*) to their people, to drive out the white foreigners (*firangis*), and to display pride (*ghairat*). All these phrases are indicative of a call to active engagement and intervention.

No other nation has the right to utilize the treasures of this country and the income thereof. The *Firangi* has no right to move about in motor cars, to eat five times a day, to eat biscuits, cakes, kebab, to drink wine and make revelry when we be dying of hunger and be naked out of poverty. The *Firangi* has no right to reside in bungalows when we be living in huts and cattle sheds.<sup>30</sup>

Apart from this, nonviolence in the form of *sabr*, the exercise of judicious restraint and bravely holding back in the face of pressure and oppression is translated back into the context of waging political struggles.

It is quite wrong to think there was a single method of fighting. There were two systems of waging wars. One of the methods is this which you see nowadays—the system of battles and oppressive actions. There is another method too—of which the old world was ignorant. Let the Muslims see their own history and they will find that this battle of nonviolence is not a new one.<sup>31</sup>

The extrapolation of nonviolent principles based on the Islamic concept of *sabr* allowed for an indigenous link to be drawn to political developments in the subcontinent. It crucially allowed for an understanding of nonviolence in terms of acts of unarmed resistance rather than in terms of the absence of violence. This multilayered concept was interpreted as a form of active and conscious restraint, a forbearance and capacity for endurance that brings about change and a refusal to be acted upon. It added a new collective dimension to the orthodox understanding of *sabr*, which viewed it mainly in terms of personal endurance.

While independence from British rule and the establishment of self-governance were obviously urgent goals, the activities and philosophy of the Khudai Khidmatgar ultimately strove toward a broader reform of Pashtun society. It sought religious and cultural legitimization and authority to forge a new performative interpretation of Pashtun identity, or, as one would say in the local dialect, of what it meant “to do Pashto.”

To argue that the movement had an indigenous history of emergence is not to suggest that it was disconnected to the developments in the rest of the subcontinent or bore no marks of the mechanisms of colonization. The emergence of the movement in the form of an army is a case that highlights the complexities of locally rooted protest groups that coexisted dialectically with transnational currents.

The Khudai Khidmatgar was hierarchically organized, using a combination of both the traditional model of the tribal council, *jirga*, with local village elders, as well as colonial military structures. Committees and branches in every village or subdistrict catered to the largest section of membership, consisting of landed and landless peasants. Honorary titles for rank holders of the Khudai Khidmatgar followed the structure of the British military, such as general, lieutenant, and colonel, with Abdul Ghaffar Khan at times appointing and at times himself acting as the commander in chief, *Salar e Azam*.<sup>32</sup> By explicitly referring to the Khudai Khidmatgar as an army and not only as a social welfare organization or a political party, a direct reference was made to the British army. This is also implicit in the distinction between a “Servant of God,” that is, a Khudai Khidmatgar on the one hand, and a British “government servant” on the other. This can be read both as a critique of the Indians and Pashtuns serving in the British legions, as well as an attempt to create an organization to parallel the British forces under a different leadership, particularly since there was a significant Pashtun presence in the Royal Army.<sup>33</sup>

The idea of the Khudai Khidmatgar was to establish a visible and easily identifiable presence of unarmed civilian guards, who would prevent clashes between rival factions and confront the opponents by refusing to obey their orders and refusing to go away. The wearing of dyed red uniforms vastly increased the visibility of the Khudai Khidmatgar, particularly in contrast to the traditional white or gray dress of the Pashtuns. This visibility distinguishes the movement from guerrilla-style tactics or other forms of evasion or “minor resistance,” as described by social historian James Scott.<sup>34</sup>

The social wing of the movement based its activities on the concept of *khidmat* or community service. Training camps were organized regularly, attended by up to a thousand members at a time, who gathered for several days at a stretch, undergoing disciplinary training by way of drilling and physical exercises, parades and patrols of the districts, schooling on the anti-imperialist struggle, and the political principles of nonviolence.<sup>35</sup> This training was combined with obligations to cook for and feed the poor. Membership to the Khudai Khidmatgar involved pledging two hours of voluntary work and training on a daily basis. The daily training partially adopted ideas from the Gandhian constructive program such as spinning, weaving, prayer, and fasting, but also included elements such as village sanitation drives, sending soldiers to help repair huts and village infrastructure, as well as acting as guards, showing visible presence in areas of tension and social unrest and arbitrators in family or clan feuds: all activities that could be called “civilian peacebuilding” in contemporary political vocabulary.<sup>36</sup> Influences can thus also be traced to Sufi and Sikh traditions, as evident in the adoption of collective days of social service and the organization of large-scale community kitchens.<sup>37</sup>

For the Khudai Khidmatgar, nonviolence was not a matter of individual soul-searching and achievement, but a principle for the entire community, requiring collective effort. This is another reason why I believe the Pashtun interpretation of nonviolence is very different from the individualistic approach that Gandhi adopted. The appeal to the “we,” to a call for solidarity based on a collective experience of discrimination, and a collective urge for shaping society, was deeply prevalent in the Pashtun imagination, even while it dialectically related to other contemporary visions of social transformation. It is interesting to note that the Khudai Khidmatgar has been historically delineated from phenomena as diverse as Gandhian nonviolence, the Salvation Army,<sup>38</sup> and the Bolsheviks.<sup>39</sup>

The notion of *khidmat* was crucial to the conceptualization and enactment of a nonviolent army and is a mark of the indigenous growth of the movement. The figure of the soldier in an army was symbolically reinvested with the idea of service to a larger cause. The term *Khidmatgar* also describes a rewriting and punctuation of the colonial vocabulary. In government contracts or documents, it was used to denote on the one hand “servant,” (i.e., lower class menial or domestic laborers) as well as in the phrase “civil servant,” (usually upper or middle class English-educated administrators). The term also

referred to “servicemen” or army recruits. In calling the nonviolent resisters by the same name as those who cooperated with the colonizers, the movement gave the role of the serviceman a completely new connotation.

#### PRIVILEGING THE PRINCIPLE OF NONVIOLENCE OVER THE PRACTICE

The Pashtuns had to prove themselves to be more capable of nonviolent action than any other community in the entire subcontinent. Scholars have repeatedly questioned whether the Khudai Khidmatgar were “merely acting,” that is, externally performing nonviolent acts, while remaining violent “at heart,” or whether they authentically embodied the principles of nonviolence?

Gandhi’s mistrust of Pashtun inclination toward nonviolent action is vivid in his 1938 speech to the assembly of the Khudai Khidmatgar recruits:

If the one lakh [100,000] Khudai Khidmatgars became truly nonviolent in letter and in spirit and shed their violent past completely, as a snake does its outworn skin, it would be nothing short of a miracle. That is why in spite of the assurance of your faith in nonviolence that you have given me, I am forced to be cautious and preface my remarks with an “if.”<sup>40</sup>

The language of this speech is surprisingly characterized by Christian notions of sinners shedding their violent past, of doubt in their faith and that of miraculous transformation, a mode of address strikingly resembling that of missionaries or charitable workers, claiming to reform Islam and rid it of its unchristian aspects. Gandhi gave this speech to an estimated 100,000 assembled movement members in Hoti Mardan, close to the city of Peshawar, just eight years after several hundred activists from the Khudai Khidmatgar, and other allied associations were killed when British troops opened fire without provocation on a crowd of unarmed demonstrators, in what is remembered as the *Qissa Khawani Bazaar* massacre of April 23, 1930.<sup>41</sup> By not mentioning and acknowledging the actual acts of nonviolent resistance, by demanding some additional moral cushioning and display of

credibility, there is an implicit conclusion that there is more to an act of nonviolence than the act itself.<sup>42</sup> The speech also presumes that the rank and file members of the army—predominantly farmers, landed or landless poor men and women, and predominantly Muslim—did not understand the philosophy of nonviolence, but had joined the organization without truly imbibing its principles. This attitude attaches a certain sense of moral superiority and unattainable stature to the non-violent ideology, suggesting that it is in fact inaccessible to peasants and tribal peoples. Although the leader of the army was never questioned in terms of his allegiance to the principles of nonviolence, the ordinary members of the resistance force were viewed as blind followers of a leader and reflecting a mob mentality.<sup>43</sup> Because of the political opposition of the Muslim League Party, under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who came to power in 1947 after Pakistani independence, none of the members of the Khudai Khidmatgar were listed under the postindependence government category of freedom fighters, which would have entitled those involved in the independence struggle to special pensions and widow benefits.<sup>44</sup> This is an indication of how the real political struggles of the Khudai Khidmatgar were simply excluded from the official archives and had palpable effects on the lives of the participants.

So how did these soldiers actually fight? From what we know, they drilled and marched like any other army regiment. They held public meetings in large numbers throughout the North-West Frontier Province, with speeches, poetry readings, and performances of patriotic Pashto plays. They conducted demonstrations, marched through villages, singing patriotic songs, and reciting couplets in Pashto. They held pickets in front of colonial institutions, calling for boycotts of British goods and for noncooperation with British authorities. The thrust of their activities was in visible public disobedience and disregard of colonial laws. Part of the daily two-hour social work program for some ranked members was to travel from village to village, persuading the locals and more influential Pashtun landlords to resign from government posts and not accept favors from or cooperate with British officers. They picketed and raided courts. When challenged by armed policemen, Khudai Khidmatgar soldiers sought arrest *en masse*. Besides the more dangerous activities which led to imprisonment, torture, and killings, there are records of more mischievous acts by the army, such as the story of how the house where the Provincial Governor was living while on a visit to the area was surrounded in the

nights by the bugle and drum band of the Khudai Khidmatgar, who kept up a constant noise throughout the night to show how unwelcome he was.<sup>45</sup> Outside the quarters of a regiment stationed in a certain town, the Khudai Khidmatgar set up a fake rival quarter guard, patrolling and marching around the area parallel to the British guards. It was also common practice for recruits to conduct flag marches through the same areas where British police forces usually conducted their marches. In this Congress Working Committee Report, Devdas Gandhi, M. K. Gandhi's son, describes the activities in the camps:

In the Peshawar district every village has its army of Khudai Khidmatgars. Their uniform is more or less of a military type. They love to wear these uniforms and to drill and march in military formation. There are many ex-servicemen among them. These form the training-staff. Even the ignorant villagers seem to take to drill and military parade easily. Drums and bugles are generally used during the marches. All weapons are eschewed, including *lathis*. Officers hold canes as emblems of supposed dignity rather than as a weapon of offense.<sup>46</sup>

Noteworthy is the report that minor ranked ex-servicemen of different army regiments acted as trainers of nonviolent action. This means that the conversion of ex-servicemen to the fold of nonviolent civilian resistance was a part of the strategy of the movement. Rather than disqualify persons with a background in the British military, their experiences and skills were sought to be integrated into the training activities of the camps, which placed great emphasis on physical fitness and discipline. The tone of the report hints at the general reverence and admiration that Pashtuns showed for the "military type" of action and training provided to them in the camps. The camps had the attraction and crowd-pulling status of fairs (*melas*). Ritualistic aspects of the military were adapted into status symbols, while the use of weapons was consciously omitted, and performatively elevated into an achievement and act of defiance.

The Khudai Khidmatgar movement does not fit into the distinction suggested by Gene Sharp between pragmatic and philosophical nonviolence.<sup>47</sup> It was in a sense neither a pragmatic nor a philosophical movement: it was both. On the one side, forming a nonviolent army was an active and constructive way of engaging with the legacy of violence in Pashtun society and of promoting a certain utopian vision guided by

Islamic principles of social reform, with guiding concepts such as *khidmat* and *sabr* (this would be classified as philosophical nonviolence by Sharp). On the other side, the movement marks the emergence of a civilian public sphere in Pashtun society, which for the first time was neither dominated by the religious clergy nor by the landed elite. The formation of the Khudai Khidmatgar was connected to real issues of survival, land rights, and civil liberties, in the expression of civilian engagement in public affairs, an experiment in adopting nonviolence as one instrument among others (this would be termed pragmatic nonviolence, according to Sharp). Members did not leave their social settings in order to join the nonviolent army, in the way Gandhian followers sometimes heroically renounced their working lives in order to join a Gandhian ashram or dedicate themselves to the *Satyagraha*, the independence struggle. The Khudai Khidmatgar continued to be housewives, laborers, farmers, or small traders whenever they were not picketing, demonstrating, and attending camps or spending time in jails.

#### CARING ABOUT HISTORY IN THE GLOBAL PRESENT

In a recent issue of *Public Culture* marking the centenary of Gandhi's famous manifesto *Hind Swaraj*, Arjun Appadurai asks the pertinent question of how to overcome the binary between "caring about history" and paying attention to the "sightings and sitings of the global present."<sup>48</sup> This article proposes one way of doing this by carefully examining the narratives through which the history of a nonviolent protest movement is remembered. In caring about how this history circulates, stagnates, reinforces fixed images, in paying attention to its oversights and foreclosures, we may hope to site and sight the narratives of nonviolent movements in the global present differently.

For the Khudai Khidmatgar, the critique of violence and the assertion of an ethics of nonviolent politics required the transformation of the institutions of violence just as much as it did the creation of new forms of nonviolent action. The connotations associated with the identities of a "soldier" or a "fighter" became constituted with an entirely different moral authority as well as a new mode of acting. This seems like a banal step, but the practices of setting up, conducting or being a soldier or member of a nonviolent army, reveal that the culturally specific articulations of nonviolent action are absolutely

essential to the constitution of a nonviolent ideology. The critique of the military was performed through a moral reinscribing of what it means to be a fighter, of what it means to sign up for combat. It was an elaborate mimetic statement, referring to earlier political orders as well as imagining new orders through performative acts. The emergence of the Khudai Khidmatgar in the form of a nonviolent army was a moment of critique and comment on the violence that an army perpetrates, but more importantly a constitutive moment of nonviolence, both as a principle and as a practice, combining and juxtaposing various seemingly incongruent positions and worldviews. In doing so, it made it possible to performatively transform codes of institutional violent action into nonviolent acts. The struggle was therefore not only over resources, over access to land and over questions of governance and exploitation, but also over meanings and practices.

The historiography of the Khudai Khidmatgar is most telling in terms of its underlying theorization of nonviolent action, often privileging an ethical or political positioning, without, however, acknowledging that ethical positions are made apparent in acts, responses, gestures, and opinions, not just in avowals and discursive statements. Where dominant Indian nationalist historiography repeatedly seeks and does not find an adequately genuine ideological critique of violence in the Khudai Khidmatgar, it views its practices as an aberrant moment in a culture attributed as being prone to violence. It therefore creates a false binary between the principles of nonviolence as opposed to the performance of nonviolence.

In their recent article "Nonviolent Resistance and Culture," Majken Jul Sørensen and Stellan Vinthagen rightly point out that nonviolent movements employ a variety of strategies of borrowing, remodeling, and creating alternative cultures, arguing that culture cannot be viewed as a tool or merely symbolic form alone.<sup>49</sup> I would like to add that those engaged in the analysis, interpretation, and history writing of nonviolent protest are themselves equally culturally embedded in their own ways. It is the task of cultural historians to site and sight the acts and practices that were overlooked and underestimated in the process of writing the history of nonviolent protests, to be circumspect about dominant narratives and patterns of theorization that themselves stem from a specific cultural worldview, and to pay attention to the complexities of cultural formation and articulation that shape the course of nonviolent movements worldwide.

## NOTES

1. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan quoted in Eknath Easwaran, *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam* (Tomales: Nilgiri Press, 1999), 95; cited with kind permission from the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation, founded by Eknath Easwaran, copyright 1984, 1999; reprinted by permission of Nilgiri Press, P. O. Box 256, Tomales, CA 94971, <http://www.easwaran.org>. Accessed June 18, 2012.

2. The language of the Pashtuns consists of two major branches or dialects: The northern *Pakhto* and southern *Pashto*, of which I use the latter as the common term. I use the spelling *Pashtun* instead of *Pakhtun*, *Pukhtun*, *Pashtoon*, or *Pathan*. The only exceptions are direct references to terms in the Pashto language, such as proper names or quotations from other sources.

3. I wish to thank Pashtun historian Dr. Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah and the anonymous peer review committee of the journal for their helpful observations related to my presentation of the organization's historical context.

4. In my doctoral dissertation, I undertake a detailed analysis of the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement in terms of its cultural and performative strategies; see Sruti Bala, "The Performativity of Nonviolent Protest in South Asia, 1929–1948," (Ph. D. diss, University of Mainz, 2009). <http://ubm.opus.hbz-nrw.de/volltexte/2009/1994/pdf/diss.pdf>. Accessed June 19, 2012.

5. Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Carey Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press 1988), 271–313.

6. For a detailed historical outline of the movement and its complex relations to social reform organizations such as *Anjuman-I-Islab-ul-Afaghana* (Society for Afghan Reform) and *Zalmo Jirga* (Pashtun Youth League) see Sayed Waqar Ali Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam, and Nationalism. Muslim Politics in the North-West Frontier Province 1937–47* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 16–52.

7. The extent to which membership was voluntary is debatable. Cases of members leaving the organisation are reported in Mukulika Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed. Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 113; as well as in the English version of Khan's autobiography, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, *My Life and Struggle*, as told to K.B. Narang, trans. Helen Bouman (New Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1969), 110. Clearly, desertion was not a simple process, and the level of pressure to join or stay resembled the coercive nature of membership to a religious institution; see also Sebastian Niesar, "Die Armee gewaltloser Soldaten. Abdul Ghaffar Khan und seine 'Rothemden'," *Informationsstelle Militarisierung—IMI-Analyse* No. 23 (2005), 2.

8. Most reliable in my view are the figures estimated from different Peshawar Police Archives by Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, 27. All reports by members of the Congress, including Gandhi's own figures, Mahadev Desai's frontier notes, and Pyarelal Nayyar's papers related to visits to the Frontier mention the *Khidmatgar* membership as one lakh, i.e., 100,000.

9. Banerjee concludes that it was mostly older women who participated in *Khudai Khidmatgar* activities, since they were not strictly bound to the tradition of *purdah*, requiring no public contact between women and men. She estimates there

were up to six hundred women members who took the oath of membership. Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed*, 59; 97ff.

10. Aijaz Ahmad, "Frontier Gandhi. Reflections on Muslim Nationalism in India," in *Social Scientist* 33, no. 1/2 (January–February 2005): 22.

11. *Bacha* (Pashto) or *Badshah* (Urdu): King of Kings; *Khan* is also a title for members of respected landowner families.

12. Ahmad, "Frontier Gandhi," 22.

13. The term Pathan carries derogatory connotations related to the British Empire and is almost never used as a self-description.

14. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, 5.

15. Karl E. Meyer, "The Peacemaker of the Pashtun Past," *New York Times*, December 7, 2001.

16. Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed*, 11.

17. Cited in Easwaran, *Badshah Khan*, 103.

18. Cited in Easwaran, *Badshah Khan*, 155. Another instance of Gandhi's mistrust of the genuineness of the Pashtuns is found in the following note: "I have come to the Frontier Province, or rather he [Abdul Ghaffar Khan] has brought me, to see with my own eyes what his men here are doing. I can say in advance and at once that these men know very little of non-violence. All the treasure they have on earth is their faith in their leader." M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 100 Volumes, Revised CD-ROM edition (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2001, hereafter cited as CWMG) Vol. 74, 91; *Harijan*, October 15, 1938.

19. Gandhi, CWMG Vol. 74, 115: Speech to the *Khudai Khidmatgar* at Hoti Mardan, October 16, 1938.

20. Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed*, 158.

21. This particular version is quoted from the English translation of Khan's autobiography, Khan, *My Life and Struggle*, 97.

22. Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, 44, note 38.

23. The most recent biography of Khan is written by Gandhi's grandson, Rajmohan Gandhi. Here an interview with a *Khudai Khidmatgar* rank holder is quoted, which mentions an apparently missing volume of handwritten autobiographical notes and letters, which Abdul Ghaffar Khan handed over to an affiliate named Sadaqat, asking him to edit to complete his autobiography. The colleague is later said to have denied having been given the documents at all. See Rajmohan Gandhi, *Ghaffar Khan. Nonviolent Badshah of the Pakhtuns* (New Delhi: Viking/Penguin, 2004), 260.

24. Unfortunately, even biographers of Khan, such as Tendulkar and Rajmohan Gandhi, only represent Khan in terms of his shared views with Gandhi, ultimately placing Khan in the footsteps of Gandhi. See also Rajmohan Gandhi, "Mohandas Gandhi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Middle East Today," in *World Policy Journal* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 89–94.

25. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, 174.

26. A. J. Wensinck, "abr," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel; and W.P. Heinrichs (Leiden: Brill, 2011). Brill Online, [http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam\\_SIM-6379](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-6379). Accessed June 18, 2012.

27. Abdul Ghaffar Khan in *Khudai Khidmatgar and National Movement: Momentous Speeches of Badshah Khan*, ed., P.S. Ramu (Delhi: S.S. Publishers, 1992), 139: Speech on December 14, 1931.

28. Khan in Ramu, *Momentous Speeches of Badshah Khan*, 101: Speech on December 01, 1931.

29. Khan in Ramu, *Momentous Speeches of Badshah Khan*, 144: Speech on December 15, 1931.

30. Khan in Ramu, *Momentous Speeches of Badshah Khan*, 102: Speech on December 01, 1931.

31. Khan in Ramu, *Momentous Speeches of Badshah Khan*, 64: Speech on November 10, 1931.

32. See Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, 30.

33. Rajmohan Gandhi, *Ghaffar Khan*, 84.

34. James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) and *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 290ff.

35. See Mary Barr, "A Red Shirt Camp," in *The Modern Review* 71, no. 1 (1941), article reprinted in Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, 268–71.

36. See also Thomas Weber, "From Maude Royden's Peace Army to the Gulf Peace Team: An Assessment of Unarmed Interpositional Peace Forces," in *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no. 1 (1993): 45–64.

37. Bearing in mind that religious categorizations through the mechanism of the census is a legacy of British rule and came with its own set of problems, it is nonetheless relevant to note that the 1921 Census records seven percent of the population of the North West Frontier Province as non-Muslims, including Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Jains. See *Census of India 1921*, volume XIV, North-West Frontier Province (Peshawar, 1912), 11; cit. in Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, 5.

38. The Salvation Army was active in the Indian subcontinent right from the 1920s, however not in the Frontier Province. It is unlikely that Khan found inspiration from the Salvation Army in setting up the *Khudai Khidmatgar*, because the organization was part of the British presence and outward-oriented as a helping agency, i.e., not focused on self-reform. However, the emphasis on physical discipline, callisthenics, hygiene, sanitation and social work, guided by religious motives, are elements common to both organizations.

39. Since *Khudai Khidmatgar* members dyed their clothes dark brown or red, they were often referred to in British press reports of the 1930s as "Red Shirts," and associated with the Bolsheviks. Protestors were rounded up and asked to put their thumbprints on a declaration stating they were not a "Red Shirt"; see Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, 268–71.

40. Gandhi, CWMG Vol. 74, 115: Speech at Hoti Mardan, October 16, 1938.

41. See Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, 60.

42. Gandhi's public statements need to be carefully contextualized. In this case, the speech at Hoti Mardan may have borne certain skepticism towards *Khidmatgar* loyalty to Gandhian principles due to the need to demonstrate to

anti-Congress factions that their participation in the nationalist struggle was an alliance grounded on shared principles, rather than shared tactics alone. The comment was possibly in immediate response to an incident of communal violence in Mayar village near Mardan in May 1938, where three Sikhs were murdered by Pashtun attackers. See Gandhi, CWMG Vol. 73, 152: Speech at Kalukhan, May 7, 1938, note 1.

43. This resonates in Tendulkar's biography, as well as in Congress Working Committee Reports, during their visits to the Northwest Frontier Province. See Narayan Desai, quoted in Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, 108–109. Gandhi repeatedly refers to this in his speeches during his 1938 tour of the Northwest Frontier, for instance: "You should renounce the sword because you have realised that it is the symbol not of your strength but of your weakness, because it does not make for true bravery. But if you put away your sword outwardly but there is the sword in your hearts, you shall have begun the wrong way and your renunciation will be devoid of any merit." Gandhi, CWMG Vol. 74, 104–5: Talk to the *Khudai Khidmatgar* – I.

44. Banerjee connects this issue with the question of national memory in Mukulika Banerjee, "Partition and the North West Frontier: Memories of Some Khudai Khidmatgars," in *The Partitions of Memory. The Afterlife of the Division of India*, ed. Suvir Kaul (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001), 30–73.

45. Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed*, 96.

46. Report submitted to Congress Working Committee by Devdas Gandhi, cited without exact source in Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, 108.

47. The distinction as a base for theorising nonviolence was perhaps first made by Gene Sharp, in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston, MA: Extending Horizon Books, 1973), Preface, v–vii. In German, the distinction is sometimes captured in the terms *gewaltlos* in opposition to *gewaltfrei*, where the former represents practical strategies of nonviolent action and *gewaltfrei* refers to the moral and ethical value systems of nonviolence that political actors abide by. See Barbara Müller, *Zur Theorie und Praxis von Sozialer Verteidigung*, Working Paper No. 3 (Wahle-nau: Institute for Peacework and Nonviolent Settlement of Conflict, February 1996), 2.

48. Appadurai, Arjun, "Our Gandhi, Our Times" in *Public Culture* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 263–264.

49. Majken Jul Sørensen and Stellan Vinthagen, "Nonviolent Resistance and Culture," in *Peace & Change* 37, no. 3 (July 2012): 444–470.