



A historical look at the reforms of Amir Amanullah Khan

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Abstract

Afghanistan is an ancient country located in Asia. Throughout history, it has experienced many vicissitudes, with great emperors such as Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, and Genghis Khan invading this resilient land. According to some Afghan scholars, Afghanistan is often referred to as the "cemetery of empires."

Afghanistan faced invasions from all directions until the era of Ahmad Shah Abdali. From the death of Ahmad Shah until the rise of Amanullah Khan, Afghanistan's foreign policy was entirely dependent on the British government. During this period, the rulers of Afghanistan can be considered as local governors under British India. However, when Amanullah came to power, a new chapter began in Afghanistan's history. Amanullah not only secured Afghanistan's independence, placing it on the global map as a sovereign nation, but also implemented significant reformist and modernist initiatives within the country. Despite these achievements, Amanullah ultimately undermined his own progress, undoing many of his accomplishments. Thus, Amanullah's role in modernization is as notable for its advancements as it is for its missteps. This research aims to provide a historical analysis of Amir Amanullah's reforms. This study employs a library-based methodology, utilizing documentary sources.

Keywords: Reforms, Amanullah, Independence, Education, Modernization.

Introduction

History, the most valuable and undeniable record of human events and societal transformations over time, serves as an essential guide to understanding the past. Just as civilization is born from the womb of history, a society without a historical record is like an individual without memory—crippled and incomplete (Amid, 1985). In today's world, where everything holds value, the price of history is human life itself. History acts as a reflective mirror, revealing the processes that shaped our current social structures. Without historical knowledge and experiences, humanity risks reverting to a primitive state, akin to the Stone Age.

When Amanullah Khan ascended to power, his reforms unfolded in two distinct phases: before and after his European trip. Upon assuming leadership, he addressed the nation, declaring:

"When the great nation placed the royal crown on my head, I pledged that the government of Afghanistan should be as free as other governments in the world, both internally and externally. Afghanistan will enjoy complete freedom, free from oppression, with people governed solely by the law. Forced labor is prohibited in all fields. Our government will implement reforms to ensure that our nation and country achieve their rightful place among the civilized nations of the world" (Majdadi, 2009, p. 353).

Amanullah Khan also enacted significant reforms in the field of education. Education became compulsory, and institutions such as Aman and Amani high schools were established, employing French and German instructors. Additional schools, including Rashid, Ghazi, Esteghlal, Telegraph, Painting, Carpentry, Architecture, Al-Sunnah, Agriculture, Darul Uloom Arabi, Darul Mu'allamin Herat, Police School, and Carpet Weaving School, were founded. More than 322 elementary school branches were constructed across all provinces of the country. By 1927, approximately 51,000 students were engaged in education nationwide (Saadat, 2016, p. 199).

Afghanistan is an ancient country with a unique geopolitical and geo-economic position. Throughout history, this position has made it a target for foreign invasions. In ancient times, it was invaded by the Achaemenids and the Greeks. During the medieval period, it faced invasions by the Arabs, the Umayyads, and the Abbasids. In the modern era, it endured invasions by the British, Russians, and others. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the British launched three major invasions of Afghanistan. The first invasion in 1839 AD ended in failure and left unfortunate consequences. The second invasion occurred in 1879 AD during the reign of Amir Shir Ali Khan. The third invasion in 1919 AD, during the reign of Amir Amanullah, resulted in a British defeat and the recognition of Afghanistan's independence. Amir Amanullah inherited a country that was struggling in all aspects. Politically, Afghanistan was dependent on Britain. Economically, the nation faced stagnation, and culturally and scientifically, it was underdeveloped. Recognizing the urgent need for change, Amir Amanullah implemented a series of comprehensive reforms in the political, economic, cultural, and social fields to strengthen the newly independent Afghanistan.

The current research focuses on the reforms initiated by Amir Amanullah between 1919 and 1929 AD. This study provides an overview of these reforms, examining key aspects through a qualitative research methodology. The data collection relies on documentary sources to offer a historical perspective on Amir Amanullah's transformative efforts.

Ghbar, Mirgholam Mohammad (2011), in his book *Afghanistan on the Path of History*, writes:

"In the legislative department, a council called the 'Government Council' was established. Its members included appointed officials and elected representatives from the provinces and supreme governorships (four supreme governorships in total). Additionally, a Shura Majlis was created, consisting of local government officials and elected representatives in equal numbers. At the highest legislative level, the Levi Jirga was organized by the king

when necessary, such as for approving or amending the constitution" (Ghabar, 2011, p. 794).

Farhang, Mohammad Sediq (2011), in his book *Afghanistan in the Last Five Centuries*, comments:

"Amanullah, the son of Amir Habibullah, was born in Kabul in 1882. His mother, Sarwar Sultan, was the daughter of Mahmoud Sarwar, one of the most influential nobles of the Barakzai tribe. In 1916, Amanullah married Soraya, the daughter of Mahmoud Tarzi, whose thoughts and ideas strongly influenced him. He received his political education at the ideological school of Siraj al-Akhbar. This education brought him closer to Tarzi and his intellectual circle. After the assassination of his father, Amanullah ascended to the throne at the age of 27" (Farhang, 2011, p. 589).

In his work titled *Emergence of Modern Afghanistan*, Gregorian comments on the subject as follows: In addition to achieving Afghanistan's independence, Amanullah's most significant reforms include:

Political reforms, which involved establishing relations with foreign governments, ending the country's historical isolation, and forming a cabinet. These were among the most important reforms initiated by Amanullah in this area. From 1880 to 1919, Afghanistan's rulers adopted a policy of isolation as the best means of protecting the country from the influence of the two superpowers, England and Russia. While isolationism was an effective tool against political conquest and economic exploitation by European powers, it also hindered the development of the country. During this period, Afghanistan remained culturally, politically, and economically isolated. Strengthening the army and military bases was prioritized as the primary strategy, whereas economic development was given a secondary role (Gregorian, 2008, p. 483).

Popalzai, in his work entitled *Dar al-Qada in Afghanistan: From the Beginning of the Islamic Era to the Era of the Republic*, comments as follows: To modernize and enhance the efficiency of the judicial system, two major changes were introduced:

1. Specialization of courts: For the first time in the country, the general jurisdiction of judges was limited based on the nature of the cases being considered. Different types of lawsuits were categorized according to their homogeneity, and a dedicated branch was established for each category. As a result, four types of courts were created, each consisting of various branches: the Court of Law, the Criminal Court, the Military Court, and the Bail Court.

2. Multiplicity of proceedings: Based on this plan, the litigation process and the handling of various lawsuits were structured into three separate stages. Through this longitudinal division, the three primary courts—Marafeh and Tamiz—were established (Vakili Popelzaei, 1990, p. 460).

Aminullah Dariz, in his work titled *Afghanistan in the 20th Century*, writes: Another significant development in this area was the establishment of consultative councils in the provinces, along with limiting the powers of the country's judges. In this context, the compilation of the book *Tamasak al-Qadat al-Amaniyah* was a milestone. With the

introduction of this book, criminal and civil laws replaced the discretionary judgments of individual judges. Furthermore, judicial reforms led to the creation of Afghanistan's first constitutional law, named Niznam of the Supreme State of Afghanistan. This law, consisting of 73 articles, was approved and implemented in 1924 AD / 1303 AH. Between 1919 and 1924, in addition to the Constitution, more than fifty other laws were enacted (Dariz, 2000, p. 129).

In his work entitled Historical Survey of the Durand Line, Mohammadi makes the following remarks: Amir Amanullah was a national figure, a patriot, and an independence seeker, who remains respected in our country's history. There is no doubt about his sincerity and honesty. After the truce in the War of Independence between Afghanistan and Britain, relations between Afghanistan and the British government remained stable (Mohammadi, 2015, p. 35).

Material and Method

In the present study, data analysis, conceptual definitions and component identification were conducted using a documentary research method. The data obtained from the statistical population were analyzed descriptively. The research is applied in terms of its purpose and qualitative in terms of its nature. The study utilized books written about the era of Amanullah Khan and his reforms. The research field encompassed various libraries, including the General Library of Kabul Education University, the Faculty of Social Sciences Library, and the Aqeedah Library. The statistical population consisted of books such as Afghanistan in the Course of History, The History of Afghanistan's Foreign Relations, A Concise History of Afghanistan, and others. Document collection was carried out through the review of various historical books related to Amanullah Khan's era and his reforms. The data, after careful examination, were incorporated into the current study and documented systematically.

Declaration of Emancipation

Amanullah, as the leader of the Second Constitutional Movement, after gaining power and ascending to the throne, along with other constitutionalists, considered himself obligated to implement the ten goals of constitutionalism. The first step was to achieve Afghanistan's independence. Therefore, at the beginning of his reign, in a statement on April 13, 1919, he declared Afghanistan's independence and instructed the British representative to inform his government of the matter. However, as the Indian government avoided announcing its position and postponed the issue indefinitely, Amanullah's forces began movements along the borders. With this, the Third Anglo-Afghan War commenced with Amanullah's support (Gregorian, 2008, p. 284).

Regarding the primary causes of the war, both parties blamed each other. The British, for instance, considered the war to be an Afghan conspiracy. They believed that the Afghans sought to leverage the Indian nationalist movement and regain Punjab by strengthening and supporting the Pathans. Molesworth attributed the cause of the war to Afghanistan's internal conditions, asserting that Amanullah, strongly suspected of participating in his father's murder, attacked India as a popular and strategic diversion. Gregorian posits that

despite the presence of various intellectual factions within the country, the root of the Third Anglo-Afghan War lies in the rise of Afghan nationalism and the increasing political and social aspirations within the nation. In his first royal statement, Amanullah promised to lead his people to complete freedom, a pledge that garnered widespread public support (Gregorian, 2008, p. 285).

In addition to fully utilizing the xenophobic sentiments of the Afghan people, particularly in the tribal areas, the constitutionalists supported the Indian freedom fighters and independence seekers, encouraging them to rebel and take practical measures against the British government in India. In this way, they gained a superior position on the battlefield against the British. The British, for their part, used air power for the first time, bombing the cities of Kabul and Jalalabad, which significantly weakened the morale of the Mujahideen. Due to Afghanistan's political and cultural isolation, the people were entirely unaware of the technological advancements of other countries, including in warfare, and were unprepared for this type of conflict. Consequently, both sides, concerned about the war's future, turned to negotiations. The peace talks were conducted in three stages. The first stage took place on July 26, 1919, in Rawalpindi, between Ali Ahmad Khan, the Afghan Minister of Internal Affairs and head of the Afghan delegation, and Sir Hamilton Grant, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs and head of the British delegation. The Afghan delegation presented two main demands:

1. Recognition of Afghanistan's independence.
2. Adjustment of the Durand Line to ensure that the free border, particularly the Waziristan region, would be ceded to Afghanistan. Ultimately, however, on August 8, 1919, the Rawalpindi Peace Treaty was signed. Under this treaty, Britain officially recognized Afghanistan's independence, but the Afghan delegation failed to secure their second demand (Farhang, 2010, p. 555).

The second stage of negotiations between Mahmud Tarzi, the head of the Afghan delegation, and Sir Henry Dobbs, the head of the British delegation and Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the Indian government, was held with the aim of consolidating friendship and normalizing relations between the two countries in the Mansoori region of India. These negotiations ended without results due to the mutual complaints and grievances of both parties. The third stage of negotiations, however, was held in 1921 in Kabul between Mahmud Tarzi and Sir Henry Dobbs, ultimately leading to the agreement signed on November 22, 1921, in Kabul. In the treaty finalized at this stage, Britain explicitly and officially recognized Afghanistan's independence, while Afghanistan confirmed the Durand Line as the border between the two countries. It was also agreed that diplomatic representatives would be established in both countries. Following this treaty, Abdul Hadi Dawi was appointed as Afghanistan's Minister Plenipotentiary in Britain, while Humphreys became the British Indian government's Minister Plenipotentiary in Kabul (Farhang, 2011, p. 656).

Some scholars believe that opposition to the Amani government led to two major uprisings. The first was the Mangal uprising in 1924, and the second occurred at the end of

Amanullah Khan's reign in 1928. These uprisings were reportedly influenced by British involvement. After the Paghman Loya Jirga in 1928, the majority of representatives concluded that they could no longer align their movement with Amanullah Khan (Zamani, 2012, p. 182).

Amir Amanullah's reforms

When Amanullah Khan came to power, he presented a detailed statement outlining his commitment to serving the people. In addition to securing Afghanistan's independence, some of Amanullah's most significant reforms were:

Political reforms

Amanullah's efforts to establish relations with foreign governments and end Afghanistan's historical isolation, as well as forming a cabinet, stand out as some of his most important reforms in this area. From 1880 to 1919, Afghanistan's rulers had adhered to a policy of isolation, viewing it as the best means to protect the country from the influence of the two superpowers, the United Kingdom and Russia. Although isolationism had successfully safeguarded Afghanistan from political conquest and economic exploitation by European powers, it came at a significant cost to the country's cultural, political, and economic development. During this period, the primary focus was on strengthening the military and fortifying defense bases, with economic development relegated to secondary importance (Gregorian, 2008, p. 483).

Amanullah brought an end to this one-and-a-half-decade-long isolation. His foreign policy revolved around three main axes: 1. Establishing political relations with powerful nations such as the United States, the Soviet Union, and European countries. 2. Normalizing relations with the United Kingdom. 3. Coordinating with Islamic countries. As a result, in addition to Russian and British embassies, political representatives from Turkey, Iran, France, Germany, and Italy were established in Kabul. Furthermore, Afghanistan's embassies and ministries were set up in these respective countries (Gregorian, 2008, p. 288).

Afghanistan's victory over the British in the Third Anglo-Afghan War bolstered Amanullah Khan's confidence and earned him fame across the Islamic world, particularly among Muslims under colonial rule. Consequently, during the early years of his reign, Amanullah vigorously pursued a policy of pan-Islamism. He supported the Emir of Bukhara against revolutionary forces and the Red Army, while also engaging with leaders of the religious nationalist movement and the anti-Soviet Samachi in Turkestan. Amanullah extended his support to the political and religious Caliphate Movement in India, whose adherents sought self-determination for all peoples and the preservation of the temporal and spiritual authority of the Ottoman Sultan. For many Muslims, the spiritual leadership of the Ottoman ruler was deemed essential for unity and welfare. Amanullah condemned British policies toward the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate, as well as their oppressive rule in India. This sentiment encouraged a wave of Muslim migration to Afghanistan in the summer of 1920, during which over 18,000 Muslims entered the country. Amanullah welcomed these migrants, most of whom were

impoverished. Due to commitments and promises made by their leaders, the migrants expected not only hospitality but also land. Some leaders even urged Amanullah to launch an attack on India to liberate its Muslims. In India, Muhammad Ali, a leader of the Caliphate Movement, declared that if Afghanistan attacked India, it would be the duty of every Muslim to join the jihad. Muhammad Iqbal, the renowned Indian Muslim philosopher and poet, dedicated his celebrated poem Payam-e-Mashriq to Amanullah. Similarly, Iranian poet Vahid Dastgardi praised Amanullah's commitment to Islam and pan-Islamism in his work Chakmeh Ittehad-e-Islami. However, after 1922, political and economic constraints compelled Amanullah to curtail his militant activities. Afghanistan's relations with its two powerful neighbors—Soviet Russia and British India—had deteriorated, and the country's limited financial resources, along with its landlocked geography, made extensive pan-Islamic endeavors impractical. (Grigorian, 2008, p. 295)

The separation of the three executive branches—the Cabinet of Ministers, the Legislature (Council of State), and the Judiciary—and the formation of the Cabinet were among Amanullah's key achievements. In 1920, the Ministry of Interior was established to address security concerns and enforce laws, followed by the creation of the Ministry of Justice in 1921, which placed all judicial affairs under its supervision and control. Amanullah's cabinet included Abdul Qudous as Prime Minister, Saleh Mohammad as Minister of War, Mahmoud Tarzi as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Ahmed as Minister of Interior, Mirza Mahmoud as Minister of Finance, Ghulam Mohammad as Minister of Trade, Abdul Habib as Minister of Education, Mohammad Ibrahim as Minister of Justice, Ali Jan as Minister of Agriculture, Ghulam Qadir as Minister of Transportation, and Mohammad Yaqoub as Court Minister (Farhang, 2010, p. 591).

To modernize and create efficiency in the judicial system, two major changes were implemented:

1. Specialization of Courts: For the first time in the country, courts were specialized based on the nature of the cases under consideration. Different types of lawsuits were categorized based on their homogeneity, and a dedicated branch was established for each category. Accordingly, four types of courts were created, each with different branches: the Court of Law, the Criminal Court, the Military Court, and the Bail Court.
2. Multiplicity of Proceedings: A three-stage process for handling litigation and various claims was introduced. Under this longitudinal division, three levels of courts were established: Primary Courts, Marafeh (Appellate Courts), and Tamiz (Higher Courts) (Popelzaei, 1990, p. 460).

Another significant reform was the establishment of consultative councils in the provinces and the limitation of judges' powers through the compilation of the book Tamasak al-Qadat al-Amaniyah. With the introduction of this book, criminal and civil laws replaced the subjective judgments of individual judges (Dariz, 2000, p. 129).

Judicial reforms culminated in the approval and implementation of the first Afghan constitution, Nizam Namah of the Supreme Government of Afghanistan, in 1924. This constitution consisted of 73 articles, and between 1919 and 1924, more than fifty other laws were enacted (Dariz, 2000, p. 129).

For the first time, alongside customs and Sharia law, the constitution served as a determinant of the duties of both the government and the people. In his revolutionary and reformist approach, Amanullah Khan sought to balance liberal Islamic nationalism with the ideas of figures like Syed Ahmad Khan. The constitution, drafted with the assistance of Turkish advisors, was heavily influenced by Turkey's example. It emphasized equal rights for all citizens. One of its most important provisions was Article 8, which promoted national unity: "All people living in Afghanistan are considered Afghan citizens without any religious discrimination." The constitution guaranteed freedom of personal rights and religious practices, including mourning rituals during Muharram for followers of the Imamiya sect. During this period, significant strides were made toward abolishing slavery, a practice inherited from the reign of Abdur Rahman Khan. In Kabul alone, approximately 700 enslaved individuals, including women and children, were freed. Furthermore, the inclusion of a Hindu representative in the provincial consultative councils of Kandahar, Ghazni, and Jalalabad, as well as the admission of Hindu children into schools and officer training centers, represented groundbreaking steps toward equality. Other notable achievements included the establishment of schools, the appointment of clerics, and the promotion of inclusive policies that canceled previous privileges held by certain families (Grigorian, 2008, p. 212).

In the legislative sector, the legislative branch was organized as a council known as the "Government Council," whose members included both appointed and elected representatives. At the provincial level, there were Majlis Shura councils in the five provinces and four supreme governorships. These councils consisted of an equal number of local government officials and elected representatives of the people. At the highest legislative level, there was the Levi Jirga organization, convened by the king when necessary, such as for approving or amending the constitution (Ghabar, 1390, p. 794).

Educational and Cultural Reforms

For the first time, a Ministry of Education and Training was established, with Sardar Abdur Rahman appointed as its first minister (Adamak, 2008, p. 85).

A dedicated budget was allocated to the ministry, which was ranked third in priority after the budgets for the Ministry of War and the Court. French educators played a significant role in shaping education in Kabul, alongside contributions from German and local professors. Several prominent institutions were established in Kabul, including Habibie High School and Aman and Amani High Schools. Additionally, specialized schools such as Rushdie, Ghazi Rushdie Schools of Esteghlal, Telegraph, Commercial Design, Architecture, Sunnah, Agriculture, Darul Uloom Arabi, Rushdie Mastorat, and Rushdiya schools in Jalalabad, Qadhar, Herat, Mazar Sharif, and Kattan were founded. Other

notable institutions included the Police School, Music School, Carpet Weaving School, Women's Home Planning School, Medical School, and Dar al-Moalmeen. Over 322 primary schools were opened across the provinces. By 1927, the number of primary school students had reached 51,000, while 3,000 students were enrolled in high schools and vocational schools, excluding those in military schools. In the same year, the number of primary school teachers increased by 650, and 100 additional teachers were hired for vocational and developmental schools. From 1923 to 1927, the Ministry of Education printed 133 volumes of textbooks, totaling 69,357 copies, and established the Education Press to support this effort (Ghabar, 2011, p. 673).

As mentioned earlier, apart from Habibieh High School, three other significant high schools were established during this period. Amani High School, which was renamed Nejat High School after the fall of Amanullah's government, was created by the Germans and managed under the supervision of Dr. Ivan. Its administration consisted of three German professors and several Afghan teachers, following the model of German schools. Another prominent institution was Amaniyah High School, later renamed Esteghlal High School after Amanullah's fall. This school was built by the French and, in terms of quality, was on par with French schools, operating according to the French educational model. The third major high school was Ghazi High School, established in 1927, where classes were conducted in English (Grigorian, 2008, p. 298).

Amanullah often emphasized the importance of education and training, stating, "Be diligent in learning science. Today, when you and I regard scholars and nobles with dignity and respect, it is all due to the blessing of science. You should try to study science in advance. Anyone who wishes to please God and know God will not succeed in his goal without knowledge, as if saving our hereafter is through knowledge" (Stanekzai, 2013, p. 32).

In primary education, small scholarships, along with clothing and food, were provided to encourage students to continue attending school. The government worked to establish schools across provinces with modern curricula. According to Amanullah and Mahmoud Tarzi, the goal of Afghanistan's new education system was twofold: to create an intellectual class necessary for the success of reforms and modernization and to train a competent governing group for the monarchy (Grigorian, 2008, p. 298). One of the most significant developments in this field was the establishment of public education for girls. This initiative began in 1921 with the founding of Ismat School, later renamed Malali School. Its system of education was not strictly structured but operated autonomously under the support and guidance of Queen Soraya, Amanullah's wife, and Mrs. Mahmoud Tarzi. Amanullah's efforts to provide education for girls were part of broader reforms aimed at improving the social status of women in Afghanistan. When Amanullah came to power, Afghan women had virtually no rights. Early marriages were widespread, inheritance laws were unfairly applied, widows were denied their legal rights, and they had no control over their late husbands' property or custody of their children. Women were also required to wear the burqa, which was strictly enforced. Amanullah was

determined to change this situation, insisting that his support for women's freedom was grounded in the true principles of Islam. During his short reign, he implemented more constructive reforms for women than all his predecessors combined. According to the government's education policy, primary education was declared compulsory and free for all citizens without discrimination. A primary school was established in each district, while secondary schools and mobile schools were introduced for nomadic communities in provincial centers. Vocational schools were opened in various fields, including industry, judiciary, language, telegraphy, art, painting, carpentry, agriculture, music, carpet weaving, engineering, medicine, police training, and home improvement. Darul Uloom Arabi in Kabul and Darul Mu'lam in Herat were also established for specialized teaching. Amanullah's dedication to education extended to personal involvement: he taught literacy classes for men, while Queen Soraya conducted literacy classes for women (Grigorian, 2008, p. 300).

During this period, the Education Printing House was established in Kabul, and textbooks began to be printed. The Education Association was formed to handle curriculum planning, the authoring and translation of books, and the preparation of teaching materials. Significant bills were enacted in this field. Hundreds of students were sent to study abroad in countries such as the Soviet Union, England, Germany, France, Italy, and Turkey. A notable development was the inclusion of female students, who were sent to Turkey, a fellow Islamic country, to pursue their education (Grigorian, 2008, p. 303).

In the field of cultural reforms, the Press Law was approved for the first time, leading to the flourishing of journalism. Numerous publications emerged, including *Irshad al-Naswan*, *Ithidat al-Mashriqi*, *Afghan Newspaper*, *Ayane Irfan*, *Aman Afghan*, *Urdu, Ekadh Islam*, *Ithitadh Newspaper*, *Balag Bidar*, *Haqit Stara Afghan*, *Tolo*, *Anis*, *Nasim Sahar*, *Nowruz*, and the re-release of *Siraj Al-Akhbar* under the name *Aman Afghan*. These efforts marked the beginning of free press in the country and significantly advanced journalism (Grigorian, 2018, p. 304).

A major cultural achievement of this period was the establishment of a large library in Kabul, known today as the Public Library. Additionally, the foundation for the Bakhtar Agency, a key press institution, was laid during Amanullah's reign. However, its formal activities under the name Bakhtar Agency began in 1318 AH when the press department was officially established (Dolatabadi, 2010, p. 663).

Attention to sports also emerged alongside social and cultural movements. Sports such as football, tennis, cricket, long jump, shot put, wrestling, traditional stick games, sprints, javelin, cycling, and others were introduced and encouraged. Prizes were awarded to promote athletic participation and competition.

Urban renewal:

In the realm of urban renewal, the municipality administration was established to regulate urban affairs. This body, later renamed "Municipal Administration," was a national office composed of elected representatives tasked with responsibilities such as building public gardens, electrifying cities, and establishing water supply networks. A major urban

development initiative during this period was the planning of a new city in Kabul, which included the construction of Dar al-Aman in 1923, designed with a modern urban layout (Dariz, 1990, p. 126).

Although political parties had not yet formed legally during this period, secret political circles from the time of Habibullah Khan were still active. These operated unofficially as political groups, the most notable of which were two prominent circles. The first was Afghan Youth, which pursued more radical and leftist objectives. Its members included Abdur Rahman Lodi, Taj Mohammad Paghmani, and Mir Gholam Mohammad Ghbar. The second circle, led by Seyed Qasim, advocated for more moderate reforms. One of the significant contributions of these groups was the establishment of a large national library in Kabul (Ghabar, 2011, p. 681). Amanullah Khan's government initiated the establishment of the Air Force, marking a major advancement in national defense. The country's first airfield was constructed in the Bibi Mehrovi area of Kabul. Several aircraft wings were acquired from the Soviet Union, while additional planes were purchased from Germany, providing the foundation for Afghanistan's nascent air force.

Economic and commercial reforms

Although Amanullah's reform agenda did not include a specific plan for economic development, the broader changes in governance and societal structure inevitably influenced the economy. Reforms in financial administration included the adoption of a new decimal system, the conversion of office bookkeeping from traditional methods, and the creation of an official budget to estimate government revenues and expenditures. Infrastructure development played a critical role in economic progress. Key roads such as the Kabul-Torkham, Kabul-Kandahar, Kandahar-Chaman, and various internal roads in Kabul were built or restored, facilitating commercial transportation. While some of these infrastructure projects had been initiated during the reign of the previous Emir, their completion and expansion under Amanullah's rule significantly improved trade logistics. The government also strengthened trade relations with European countries and revived domestic industries, contributing to a shift in the country's economic landscape. Amanullah's economic policy emphasized the development of exports, the limitation of imports, and the creation of domestic industries. These measures aimed to break Afghanistan's economic isolation following the declaration of independence, fostering qualitative transformations in the economy. One of the most notable outcomes was the gradual transition from a barter-based system to a cash-based economy (Farhang, 2010, p. 555).

The Amaniye Commercial Companies, such as Samar, Tanvirat, and Motar, along with the Afghan Comrades Alliance, were established and began operations during this period. Significant steps were taken toward economic and commercial reforms, including amendments to tax laws. These reforms transitioned tax collection entirely to a cash-based system, removed excessive taxes on the populace, and canceled pension privileges for the Muhammadzai clan as well as religious and ethnic influencers. The government also encouraged the use of domestic products by imposing restrictions on imported goods. Key

economic advancements included signing agreements with Moscow and Berlin for the extraction of Herat's oil and Badakhshan's lapis lazuli mines, constructing an iron smelter, and developing coal and iron mines. The establishment of the first National Industry Exhibition in Kabul marked a milestone in industrial development. Foreign experts played a crucial role in these reforms: Turks were active in health, military, and legislative affairs; Germans contributed to military, technical, and educational projects; and the French assisted in education and archaeology (Ghabar, 2010, p. 329).

During this period, Afghanistan was administratively divided into six provinces: Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Afghan Turkestan, Qattan, and Badakhshan. In addition, four supreme governments were established: Eastern, Southern, Farah, and Maimana, each governed under supreme authority (Azeimi, 2011, p. 76).

In 1302 AH (1923 CE), specific laws were established for agriculture and tax collection officers. The School of Governors was founded, and its graduates were appointed to manage local governments. In 1301 AH (1922 CE), the Law of Administration, detailing the duties of governors and officials, was enacted. Furthermore, in 1300 AH (1921 CE), the Law of Industrial Development was introduced to support the growth of industries (Majdadi, 2033, p. 380).

Amanullah's reforms after the European trip

Upon his return to Afghanistan, Amanullah not only brought military equipment and eight airplanes but also revisited his earlier retreat, which had taken place four years prior during the Paghman Loya Jirga, in response to the Paktia rebellion and the armed uprising of tribal leaders and traditional forces. Regretting his previous concessions, he sought to make amends through decisive actions, determined to continue his modernizing agenda with full intensity, regardless of public opinion or social conditions. This decision marked a turning point, as Amanullah divided his reforms into two phases, with the second phase beginning immediately upon his return. He was acutely aware of his country's extreme backwardness and, after his trip to Europe, was unwilling to accept gradual reforms or wait for scholars' approval to implement his development and political plans. As a first step, he convened a Levi Jirga in Paghman in Sanle 1307 (August 1928), which lasted eight days and included representatives from across the country, including tribal chiefs and people's representatives.

In this Levi Jirga, despite the distaste among the attendees, the laws were approved, which provided the traditional forces of the time with a strong justification for their opposition and ultimately led the country into a crisis. The Amir's haste to modernize Afghanistan was so intense that he even ordered the members of the Levi Jirga to wear European clothes instead of traditional national attire. Some of the key decisions made at this Levi Jirga included granting women freedom, mandating the removal of the hijab, banning the burqa, requiring men to wear hats instead of scarves, and imposing fines on those who did not wear suits or on women who wore the burqa. Other reforms included closing businesses on Thursday instead of Friday, the establishment of civil courts on Fridays, requiring Mullahs to hold certificates to prevent bribery, the designation of a national flag,

replacing the government council with an elected national council consisting of 150 literate representatives, and extending military service from two years to three years without an increase in salary. Furthermore, the reforms abolished child marriage, setting the minimum marriage age for girls at 18 and for boys at 22. The reforms also banned Deoband scholars from entering Afghanistan, imposed a public donation of five Afghanis per person, and required one month's salary from each government official to purchase weapons. The transformation of Queen Soraya into the official queen of the country, the appointment of her son Rahmatullah as crown prince, the limitation of the powers of rulers and judges in judicial matters, and the establishment of a public inspection office under the direct supervision of the Amir were also part of the reforms (Ghabar, 2010,p. 705).

In the summer of 1928, Amir founded the Women's Protection Association, disregarding public opinion and the criticism of his friends. Twelve female representatives from Kabul assumed the administration of the association. Additionally, a women's home improvement school was established in the Bagh Ali Mardan neighborhood under the supervision of female German and Turkish teachers. The government also announced its immediate and future plans, which included co-educational primary education for boys and girls, the establishment of Nafiseh industrial schools, agricultural reforms, the creation of two large libraries, the establishment of a government bank, the launch of a carpet-weaving company, the creation of Club Airlines, and the development of hospitals. In the World Red Cross and... (Farhang, 2010,p. 603).

At the World Red Cross and other international platforms, this trip brought out two negative traits in Amir's character: arrogance and a sense of inferiority. The respect and admiration he received from influential figures in Europe and Asia, combined with the widespread acceptance of his persona by Muslims, instilled in him a sense of wonder and arrogance. At the same time, witnessing the technological advancements and cultural progress of the West, juxtaposed with Afghanistan's relative backwardness, fostered a sense of inferiority. This duality made him impulsive in adopting foreign cultures and technologies without fully considering Afghanistan's unique contexts and requirements. As a result, upon his return from this trip, the Shah exhibited a shift in demeanor, becoming both overly proud and authoritarian. His approach to governance took on a totalitarian form, marked by hasty and uninformed decisions. During this period, tensions arose among constitutionalists still working to modernize the country. In the Loya Jirga of Paghman, a significant conflict occurred when Amanullah Khan announced the lifting of the hijab for women. Abdul Rahman Ludin, the Chief of Customs, and Abdul Hadi Dawi, the Minister of Trade—both prominent constitutionalists—opposed this reform. They warned that it might incite rebellion, claiming the British were conspiring to destabilize Afghanistan through such measures. In response, the king summoned Ludin and Dawi to the royal palace the following day, where they were compelled to resign from their positions (Farhang, 2010, p. 580).

A few months later, Nader Shah was sent to Europe, and Mahmoud Tarzi resigned from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while Mohammad Wali stepped down from the Ministry of War. However, instead of discouraging the constitutionalists or reflecting on his actions, Amanullah continued to emphasize and insist on pursuing his path to Turkestan. He appointed Ghulam Sediq Charkhi, an energetic and radical young man, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Abdul Aziz as the Minister of War (Navid, 2008, p. 188).

During this period, constitutionalism was divided into radical and moderate branches. While some members of its radical faction openly opposed Amanullah's policies, others—such as Mahmoud Tarzi, Nader Khan, and General Mohammad Wali Khan, who had been key pillars of the government's power—gradually withdrew their cooperation with the government (Navid, 2008, p. 191). As the disillusioned public distanced themselves from Amanullah, their absence was replaced by conservative, reactionary, and profit-seeking elements (Ghabar, 2010, p. 707). In May 1929, Amir Amanullah traveled to India and later to Italy, where he spent 31 years. He passed away on April 26, 1960, and his body was brought to Jalalabad for burial (Ansari, 2006, p. 168).

Conclusion

In addition to securing Afghanistan's independence, Amanullah implemented several critical reforms after assuming power.

Among the most significant political reforms implemented by Amanullah were initiating relations with foreign governments, ending the country's historical isolation, and forming a cabinet. From 1880 to 1919, Afghan rulers had adhered to a policy of isolation, considering it the most effective way to shield the country from the influence of the two dominant superpowers, England and Russia. While this approach successfully protected Afghanistan from political domination and economic exploitation by European powers, it also resulted in cultural, political, and economic stagnation, with primary attention directed toward strengthening the military and fortifying defenses while neglecting economic development. Amanullah ended this decades-long isolation within just a year and a half, establishing political relations with powerful nations such as the United States, the Soviet Union, and European countries, normalizing ties with England, and fostering unity and cooperation among Islamic nations. Additionally, embassies from countries such as Turkey, Iran, France, Germany, and Italy were established in Kabul, marking a significant step in integrating Afghanistan into the international community. Additionally, embassies and political missions representing countries such as Turkey, Iran, France, Germany, and Italy were established in Kabul. At the same time, Afghanistan set up embassies and ministries in these countries, marking the beginning of its active engagement in global diplomacy. Levy convened the Jirga and approved several significant reforms. These included advancing women's freedom, advocating for the removal of the hijab, banning the wearing of burqas, and promoting the wearing of darshi. Men were encouraged to wear hats instead of scarves, and fines were introduced for those who did not wear suits or for women who continued to wear burqas. Other reforms

included changing the official day of closure from Friday to Thursday, establishing Asra and civil courts, and requiring mullahs to obtain certification. Freedom of the press and publications was endorsed to curb bribery, while a national flag was formally adopted. The government council was transformed into a national council comprising 150 literate representatives elected by the nation. Military service was extended from two years to three years without a salary increase. Marriage reforms were introduced, setting the minimum legal age for marriage at eighteen for girls and twenty-two for boys, and minor marriages were abolished. Deobandi scholars were prohibited from entering Afghanistan, and public donations were mandated, requiring five Afghanis per person and one month's salary from each government official to fund weapons procurement. Mrs. Soraya was officially recognized as the queen, and her son, Sardar Rahmatullah, was designated as the crown prince. The powers of governors and judges in judicial matters were limited, and a public investigation department was established under the direct supervision of the Emir. In the summer of 1928, despite public criticism and opposition from friends, the Emir implemented additional reforms. Twelve women representatives from Kabul were assigned to administer the newly established Women's Protection Association. A women's home improvement school was opened in the Bagh Ali Mardan neighborhood, overseen by female German and Turkish teachers. Immediate and long-term government plans were also announced, including co-educational primary education for boys and girls, the establishment of Nafiseh industrial schools, agricultural development, the construction of two major libraries, the creation of a government bank, the formation of a carpet-weaving company, the launch of Club Airlines, and the expansion of hospitals.

In the tax sector, significant reforms were introduced, including the complete transition from in-kind payments to cash-based taxation, the removal of heavy taxes imposed on the population, and the cancellation of pension rights for the Mohammadzai clan as well as religious and ethnic influencers. Measures were also taken to encourage the use of domestic products by imposing restrictions on imported goods. Economic and commercial reforms included concluding contracts with Moscow and Berlin for oil extraction in Herat, utilizing the lapis lazuli mines of Badakhshan, constructing an iron smelter, developing iron and coal mines, and organizing the first national industrial exhibition in Kabul. Foreign specialists played a pivotal role in implementing these reforms, with particular contributions from Turks, Germans, and French experts. Turkish specialists were primarily active in the fields of health, military affairs, and legislation. German experts focused on military, technical, and educational advancements, while French specialists contributed significantly to education and archeology.

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Data Availability Statement:

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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