

Project Abstract:

My current book project *Longing for Revolution: Narratives of Emancipation in Modern Islam* examines Muslim revolutionary thought and politics in the interwar period, with a focus on the context of South Asia. More specifically, it engages the intellectual and political career of a curious yet highly influential late 19th/early 20th century Indian Muslim scholar called ‘Ubaydullah Sindhi (d.1944), whose thought represents a critical node of contemporary Pakistani religious and political history. A Sikh convert to Islam, Sindhi was an anti-colonial conspirator who had transformed into a socialist revolutionary while traveling in exile in Afghanistan, Russia, Turkey, and Mecca from 1914 to 1939. *Longing for Revolution* explores ways in which Sindhi crafted an intellectual and political agenda that combined the socialist promise of proletariat revolution with the Qur’an’s emphasis on socio-economic justice and emancipation. Conceptually, this project examines how new political desires and anticipations, such as that of revolutionary politics, generate new ways of approaching and reconfiguring an ongoing discursive tradition like Islam. While focused on Sindhi, this project connects modern Muslim revolutionary discourses with global twentieth century narratives and movements for political and socio-economic emancipation. It thus intervenes in while seeking to integrate the often-disparate fields of Pakistan Studies, the intellectual history of modern revolutionary thought and politics, Islamic Studies, and South Asian history and studies.