



# **HINDUSTANI FANATICS, INDIA'S PASHTUNS, AND DEOBANDISM – CONNECTIONS**

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# Hindustani Fanatics, India's Pashtuns, and Deobandism – Connections

*There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.*

Henry David Thoreau

*... but the wretched Rohillas had no country; the country they had left had long been possessed by others, and where were these miserable people to seek for a place of shelter – from the persecution of whom? Of Englishmen – natives of a country renowned for its justice and humanity. They will carry their melancholy tale into the numerous tribes and nations among whom they are scattered, and you may depend upon it the impression which it will make, will, sooner or later, have its effect.<sup>1</sup>*

Charles James Fox

The British literature about the military problems they encountered with the Pashtun<sup>2</sup> tribes in the region lying along the border with Afghanistan is filled with references to antagonists they referred to as “Hindustani Fanatics.” Again and again, the huge British Empire went to war with these people, but they are little understood. The purpose of this paper is to explain who the “Fanatics” were, their tribal connection, and their links to both Islamic extremism and Deobandism. This study will also illustrate how political-religious leaders can modify a religion in order to match with the general beliefs of the population they are attempting to sway toward supporting a new movement.

There are several important keys to understanding this paper:

- The widespread unrest in India reflected in this paper was related to the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. This produced multiple opportunities for regional warlords to create independent states while chaos produced nearly constant local warfare and rapidly shifting alliances. European entry into the subcontinent during this period increased the unrest.
- Northern Pashtuns, primarily from the Yusufzai and Bangash tribes, had migrated into northern India where they were called “Rohillas” and served interchangeably as mercenaries and trader merchants. This process began during the 13<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the period of Mughal disintegration.
- The military immigrants maintained contact with the original segments of their tribe that didn't migrate. Like the European Vikings, these warrior-traders gradually established their own nations.

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1. Fox, Charles James, *The Speeches of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox in the House of Commons: With a Biographical Memoir, and Introductions and Explanatory Notes*, Aylott and Co., 1853, pg. 256.s

2. There are three names frequently used when referring to this large tribe: Pashtun, Pakhtun, and Pathan. This study will use the rendering used in the southern portion of the tribal region, Pashtun.

- These Pashtuns spoke a unique common language that wasn't understood by their southern cousins, even though they shared a common written language. They remained a separate culture within India where the Indians referred to them as "Pathans" to connect them to one of their major population centers, Patna. This eastern Indian city shows the breadth of Pashtun penetration into India, far from their original homeland near Afghanistan.
- The greater percentage of the Pashtuns were from the Yusufzai tribe, a group reported by the British known for quickly turning to religious leaders for advice and control during tribal unrest. They accepted respected outsiders as leaders who could mediate between squabbling subtribes rather than select a member of any of their subtribes as a leader who would only polarize current animosities rather than minimize them.
- The Pashtuns were exceptionally religious and tended to view any external threat to the tribe as a parallel threat against Islam, itself. This perception of a dual threat allowed leaders to mobilize the tribes quickly to face outsiders, particularly those from another religion.
- Pashtunwali's *Badal*, the cultural requirement to seek revenge, keeps an insult to the tribe or tribes current in the memories of new generations.
- "Storytelling" and visits from wandering Pashtun poets<sup>3</sup> to isolated compounds having few other forms of entertainment, especially during periods of extreme winters, keeps the memory of tribal heritage, religion, and revenge fresh in the minds of succeeding generations. Hafiz Rahmat, the Rohilla chief killed by the British, was a recognized poet and his poetry and tales of his demise probably lingered long among northern Pashtuns.

There were four key events that occurred within the Indian subcontinent during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the effects, while little understood, remain as very significant factors in the religious politics of the Pashtun region lying between Afghanistan and Pakistan – the Pashtun belt. First, the Rohilla Pashtun "statelets" that were located in northern India were destroyed by their Indian enemies and the British in 1774. Second, the relocation of Sayed<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Shah of Bareilly, a city within the lost Rohilla territory, from what is today's Uttar Pradesh state to the region of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province is quite significant. He and his "Hindustani Fanatics" carried a new political-religious ideology system to the Pashtuns that was essentially indistinguishable, except for minor details, from Wahabbism. Third, and interrelated, was the "Sepoy Mutiny of 1857" that had a significant involvement of Sayed Ahmad Shah's followers and supporters within the lost Rohilla territory in leadership positions among the "mutineers." Finally, Deobandism was developed by two of Sayed Ahmad Shah's adherents in the aftermath of the failed "Mutiny." This revolt was worse within the Rohilla territory that had been destroyed in 1774. The purpose of this research is to demonstrate the very plausible connection between these "Rohillas" and today's political and religious strife found along the border separating Afghanistan's Pashtuns from their cousins living in Pakistan.

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3. There is a serious connection between Pashtu songs, actually their prized poetry, and the destruction of the Rohilla states. In 1887, James Darmesteter studied their songs and concluded, "... the literary poet, who can read ... who has composed a Divan. Every educated man is a *Sha-ir*, though, if he be a man of good taste, he will not assume the title. Writing Ghazal was one of the accomplishments of the old chiefs. Hafiz Rahmat, the great Rohilla captain, and Ahmad Shah, the founder of the Durrani empire, had written Divans, were 'Divan people.'" "Afghan Life in Afghan Songs," *Science*, Vol. 10, No. 246, October 21, 1887, pg. 195. Amazingly, Hafiz Rahmat was viewed as an equivalent of Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1887 and poets affiliated with the Pashtuns disseminated his poetry and stories about his fate down through the generations in a culture having revenge as a major tenet.

4. There are multiple English transliterations of this word. The Pashto rendering, Sayed, will be used in this study.

Missing in the available literature is an understanding of the Pashtun tribal connections to all of this new form of “revolutionary Islam”, as it developed deeply within northeast India where scholars consistently refer to the Rohillas as “Afghans”, but there is an excellent reason for the speed with which Sayed Ahmad Shah’s political-religious message was accepted by the Pashtuns, especially the Yusufzai tribe. The answer is simple: the initial “Hindustani Fanatics” were simply returning home to Pashtun country. Most of the original group that followed and supported Sayed Ahmad Shah, if not all of them, *were probably* Yusufzai Pashtuns. At a minimum, they were born and raised in a part of India that was once controlled by the independent Rohilla Pashtuns, most of whom were members of the Yusufzai tribe.

Iqbal Husain, in his first-rate study, *The Rise and Fall of the Ruhela Chieftaincies in 18<sup>th</sup> Century India*, provides the necessary history that allows connections to be made with early Pashtun military immigrations into India and the 19<sup>th</sup> century anti-British Islamic to impose shari’a on their Muslim cousins. They established a cultural antagonism that revolutionaries seeking power that continues to exist today, possibly within some of the descendents of the original Hindustani Fanatics that fought nearly continuous wars with the Sikhs and the British throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Husain, however, does not identify these military immigrants as Pashtuns and refers to them, generically, as “Afghans.” *They were far more than just Afghans.* These people were northern Pashtuns with warrior traditions and great amounts of combat experience gained while fighting as mercenaries inside India.

From Husain:

“The immigration of Afghans into India dates back to the time of the Ghorian conquests<sup>5</sup>: they are found serving the Sultans of Delhi in the 13<sup>th</sup> century with their own settlements at Gopalgir (Mewat), Afghanpur (Delhi), Bojpur, Kampil, Patiyali, and other places. During the Sultanate period, after many vicissitudes, they rose from being petty mercenaries to a position where they acquired control of the Delhi Sultanate under the Lodis and Surs. During the entire period stretching from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, the process of Afghan immigration to India seems to have been a continuous one; but after the fall of the Lodis<sup>6</sup>, and still more, the Afghan immigrants suffered greatly and their settlements in various areas were either destroyed or deprived of their prosperity.”<sup>7</sup>

Much of this information escaped most western historians, but Husain’s use of both Urdu and Persian primary sources for his study of the Ruehelas, known by their Anglicized name, Rohillas, clearly identifies these migrant soldiers and traders in their occupations used interchangeably

5. The Ghorian conquests occurred around A.D. 1200. See Irfan Habib’s “Pursuing the History of Indian Technology: “Pre-modern Modes of Transmission of Power”, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 20, No. 3 / 4 (Mar. – Apr., 1992), pg. 16.

6. The Sultanate of Delhi which was established in 1206 by the Indian viceroy of Sultan Mu’izz al-Din Muhammad ibn Sam of Ghor, continued to flourish for over a century and a half, but fell on evil days during the reign of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388) who was destined to see the disruption of an empire which under his predecessor had embraced nearly the entire subcontinent. After his death the throne of Delhi was continually contested by rival factions until Timur’s invasion in 1398 virtually put an end to the Tughluq dynasty. The Sayyids who emerged in 1414 owed their rise to Timur’s benevolence, but their greatest achievement, perhaps, was to repulse further Mughal attacks and delay the Mughal occupation of India by about a century. They were superseded in 1541 by the Lodi Afghans who extended the boundaries of the Sultanate and founded a new capital at Agra. The last Lodi Sultan was defeated by Babur at the battle of Panipat in 1526, but the Afghans under Sher Shah Sur recaptured the throne in 1538 from Babur’s son, Humayun, and continued to enjoy sovereignty till 1555 when Humayun was able to re-establish Mughal rule. See ud-Din, Hameed, “Historians of Afghan Rule in India,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Jan. – Mar., 1962), pg. 44.

7. Husain, Iqbal, *The Rise and Decline of the Ruehela Chieftaincies in 18<sup>th</sup> Century India*, New Delhi: Oxford, 1994, pp. 1-2.

by the Pashtuns settling into India as far back the thirteenth century. As the new arrivals gained property and commerce brought them prosperity and access to power, the continuous flow of additional Pashtuns continued as some migrant tribes actually gained control of the Indian empire.

From Husain:

“Most Afghan immigrants came from three distinct regions. The first was the region to the north and west of Attock, comprising Bajaur, Tiran and Swat and the intervening areas, mainly inhabited by the Lodis and Yusufzais. The second was a large, and in parts fertile, district, called Bangash, which lay to the south of the Tirah range, bounded by the Safed Koh Range in the north-west and by the Indus on the west. The Afghans of this range mainly settled in Northern India, including present Uttar Pradesh. The third region, which comprised southeastern Afghanistan and the adjoining parts of Pakistan, contained the Panni, Tarin and Kakar tribes, amongst others who largely settled in Gujarat and the Deccan....<sup>8</sup>

“...they served as soldiers, but were also ready to act as merchants or engage in trade, particularly in horses. The Afghans generally retained these characteristics until the beginning of the twentieth century.... Those who had engaged in trade often changed their profession and became soldiers.”<sup>9</sup>

It was during the period that the Mughal Empire began to disintegrate that provided the chaos in local governance to allow the Pashtun colonists and their relatively newfound wealth to actually take control over broad regions of India, including the imperial capital, Delhi, and its entire sultanate. It was in India's northern region, today's Uttar Pradesh state, that the aggressive Pashtuns, primarily Yusufzai tribesmen, were able to gain full control and create an essentially independent principality.

Husain explains:

“The decay of the Mughal empire after Aurangzeb's death accelerated the process of Afghan immigration into India. Local chiefs, contending for supremacy against neighboring zamindars<sup>10</sup>, were increasingly tempted to recruit Afghans as mercenaries for their own needs. Alternately, the Afghans having themselves become local potentates, invited their kinsmen and compatriots over from Roh<sup>11</sup> both to aid them and to share in the gains. Afghan settlements in the north, especially in Katehr<sup>12</sup>, therefore, continued to grow even without imperial patronage, as is shown by the profusion with which the eighteenth century settlements appear....

“An early Afghan settlement after Aurangzeb's death took place at Bioli which was assigned to Daud Khan Ruhela, an Afghan adventurer, in the service of Madar Shah<sup>13</sup>, an important zamindar. Daud Khan and his companions gradually occupied neighboring villages. This encouraged

8. Ibid, pg. 3.

9. Ibid, pg. 4.

10. A landlord, the *zamindar* was an appointed official responsible for collecting rents from peasants. Many of them became quite powerful and wealthy over the years of having access to significant amounts of funds.

11. Roh was the name of the area around Peshawar city, in today's Pakistan.

12. The Pashtuns later called Katehr “Rohilkhand.” See *Rheula Chieftaincies*, pg. 4, for additional details. Katehr literally means soft well aerated loam that is extremely suitable for cultivation.

13. The name “Madar” identifies this man as a Pashtun as it is probably derived from the “Madar Khel,” a subdivision of the Pashtun Dotani tribe.



other Afghans to emigrate to Katehr. Originally a stronghold of the Katehriyas.... It continued to be held by the Katehriyas till A.D. 1730 when Ali Muhammad Khan Ruhela killed Duja, chief of the clan, seized it, and made it his capital.

“The settlement of Mirganj (Bareilly) was established at about the same time as other Afghan settlements in Rohilkhand.<sup>14</sup>

“Useha, where the Afghans settled during the ascendancy of the Bangash<sup>15</sup> Afghans of Furrukhabad, is described as an ancient place. Qaim Khan, the Bangash chief, held the pargana<sup>16</sup> till his defeat and death in the battle of Daunri in 1748, when victorious Ruhelas seized the pargana and assigned it to Fath Khan....<sup>17</sup>”

The aggressive Rheulas, or Rohillas, and their martial experience soon dominated a wide region in north India after capturing lands belonging to the Katehriyas. They soon turned their expansionist tendencies toward their Pashtun cousins, the Bangash Pashtuns who were also military colonists and captured their territory that surrounded the major town of Furrukhabad. Their “Rohilkhand” consisted of independent “chieftaincies,” as Husain labeled them, in an area that extended from the Himalayan foothills southward for approximately 600 kilometers and west of Delhi for approximately 250 kilometers. They were able to defend their territorial gains with forces of experienced warrior tribesmen that numbered as high as 80,000 fighters, many of whom were cavalymen.

The *Imperial Gazetteer of India* explains the growth of Rohilla supremacy that developed within the power vacuum following the death of Aruangzeb, the Mughal ruler, and the break up of the Mughal Empire, in its discussion of the city where Sayed Ahmad Shah originated, Bareilly:

“...In 1657 Raja Makrand founded the new city of Bareilly, cut down the forest to the west of the old town and expelled all the Katehriyahs from the neighborhood. A succession of regular governors followed during the palmy [sic] days of the great Mughal emperors; but after the death of Aruangzeb, in 1707, when the unwieldy organization began to break asunder, the Hindus of Bareilly threw off the imperial yoke, refused their tribute, and commenced a series of anarchic quarrels among themselves for supremacy.

“Their dissensions only afforded an opportunity for the rise of a new Muhammadan power. Ali Muhammad Khan, a leader of the Rohilla Pathans, defeated the governors of Bareilly and Moradabad, and made himself supreme throughout the whole Katehr region. In 1744 the Rohilla chieftain conquered Kumaun right up to Almora; but two years later the emperor Muhammad Shah marched against him, and Ali Muhammad was taken a prisoner to Delhi. However, the empire was too much in need of vigorous generals to make his captivity a long one, and in 1748 he was restored to his old post in Katehr....”<sup>18</sup>

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14. Ibid, pp. 15-16.

15. The Bangash are also a large Pashtun tribe found in the same region as the Yusufzai tribe, Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province and its Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

16. From Wikipedia: A *pargana* is a former administrative unit of the Indian subcontinent, used primarily, but not exclusively, by the Muslim kingdoms.

17. Ibid, pp. 17-18.

18. Hunter, William Wilson, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. 7. pp. 3-5.

But Ali Muhammad and the other Rohilla leaders were more than just military leaders. They also remained in contact with the region that is today's Afghanistan through profitable horse-trading along developed, protected trading routes while also building a solid agricultural base for their economy in northern India. Both are important factors that made them relatively wealthy, but this new wealth also attracted powerful enemies.

“... most Afghan states were formed along horse-trading routes, ... the formation of the Rohilla state in Rohilkhand vividly illustrates the theme of horse trader turned state builder. Using money embezzled from his own adopted father, one of the founders of the Rohilla state, Da'ud Khan, bought horses at north Indian fairs and then launched a dazzling career as highwayman, revenue farmer, cavalry officer, and local landowner, all while recruiting other Afghans who migrated to Rohilkhand with their horses. By the 1730's his adopted son, Ali Mohammad, had carved out an effective state, styling himself nawab, and was acknowledged as such by the Mughal emperor. But the Rohilla phenomenon was no “tribal breakout.” In addition to fostering in Rohilkhand, a semipastoral economy sustained by close ties with horse markets in Afghanistan, the Rohillas also promoted deforestation in the territories they controlled, dug wells and canals, and generally promoted land reclamation and agrarian wealth.<sup>19</sup>”

According to Safia Haleem's *Study of the Pathan Communities in Four States of India*, the Rohillas that settled in Katehr, once they suitably conquered it, were immigrants and descendents of the Mandar Yusufzai Pashtuns, one of probably several migrant Pashtun tribes that entered India, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The region under their control was reported to be very fertile and composed of well-aerated loam soil that was easily cultivated. But in addition to its fertile land, Rohilkhand was a key trade crossroads with intersecting routes coming from several directions. For example:

“During 18<sup>th</sup> Century the eastern track [of the Grand Trunk Road] shifted northwards entering Rohilkhand via central Awadh [also known as Ould and Oudh in the literature] and Farrukhabad. From there traffic could bypass Delhi altogether and continue either south to Jaipur and other Rajput cities or through Bareilly, along the hills via Najibabad. The route circumvented the Punjab and Delhi and caravans could reach Peshawar and Kabul without touching Sikh territory.<sup>20</sup>”

“Hafiz Rahmat Khan, guardian to his sons [of Ali Mumammad], succeeded to the governorship of Rohilkhand....”<sup>21</sup> And he was also involved in the horse trade, moved to Rohilkhand around 1730. He used to purchase horses from the north of present day Afghanistan disposed them off in Delhi while going to his new home in Aonla<sup>22</sup>.

Wealth and the promise of additional prosperity to come from both trade and agriculture made a target out of the Rohilla tribal lands in India. One of the most powerful men in Delhi's court soon moved against the region once controlled by the Bangash Pashtuns, Farrukhabad, and Safdar Jang<sup>23</sup> sought to expand his control outward from Delhi. Fortunately for the Rohillas, another Pashtun leader, Ahmad Shah Durrani, was in the

19. Eaton, Richard M., *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 56, No.2 (May, 1997), pp. 518-520. This is a review of Jos J. Gommen's *Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire c. 1710-1780*.

20. See Safia Haleem's "Study of the Pathan Communities in Four States of India" at <http://www.dawatnet.com/full2.php?id=334>, accessed August 13, 2008.

21. Hunter, William Wilson, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. 7. pp. 3-5.

22. Aonla is a city located in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh.

23. From Wikipedia: Safdar Jang, popularly known as Safdarjung (1708-5 October 1754) was the second Nawab of Awadh, of the Awadh dynasty. Safdarjung was an able administrator. He was not only effective in keeping control of Awadh, but also managed to render valuable assistance to the weakened Muhammad Shah. He was soon given governorship of Kashmir as well, and became a central figure at the Delhi court. During the later years of Muhammad Shah, he gained complete control of administration in the Mughal Empire. When Ahmad Shah Bahadur ascended the throne at Delhi, Safdarjung became his *Wazir ul-Mamalik-i-Hindustan* or Chief Minister of India. However, court



process of invading India from Afghanistan and his presence and de facto alliance with his fellow Pashtuns, the Rohillas, left Rohilkhand under the control of Hafiz Rahmat Khan. The *Imperial Gazetteer of India* provides some details:

“The Ould [Awadh] Wazir, Safdar Jang, plundered the property of the Farrukhabad Nawab after his death, and this led to a union of the Rohilla Afghans with those of Farrukhabad .... But the Wazir called in the aid of the Maratha, and with them defeated [Hafiz] Rahmat Khan and the Rohillas.... He then besieged them for four months at the foot of the hills; but owing to the invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani terms were arranged, and Hafiz Rahmat Khan [guardian to the sons of Ali Muhammad] became de facto ruler of Rohilkhand.”

Unfortunately for the Rohillas, the death of Safdar Jang in 1754 brought little long-term relief from the military pressures they were under. His son, Shuja-ud Daulah, was determined to undermine the Pashtuns and gain control of their territory and he embarked on a clever balance of power exercise between the Rohillas, the Marathas, and the English of the East India Company.

His goal was made considerably easier as the Afghans under Ahmad Shah Durrani began to withdraw from India toward the west under pressure from the Sikhs. In 1767 the Afghan Durrani Pashtuns lost Lahore to the Sikhs as large numbers of Sikhs moved east into the Delhi region, attacking Rohillas as the moves were made.

The Marathas had lost two of their districts to the Rohillas when they were given to the Pashtuns during Ahmad Shah Durrani's invasion of India and their goal involved the recovery of lost territory. As they moved in the direction of Rohilkhand in 1768, Rohilla leader Hafiz Rahmat Khan was encumbered with grumbling troops who had been unpaid for seven months and looted villages near Farrukhabad, but he was able to send men to the assistance of Ahmad Khan Bangash as the Marathas approached. By June 1772, the Rohillas had signed a treaty with Shuja-ud Daulah, one that had considerable financial consequences for the leaders of Rohilkhand.

Additional unprecedented tribal intrigue resulted, primarily over conflicting goals. Hafiz Rahmat Khan worked to eliminate the large financial obligation he had incurred as Shuja-ud Daulah worked to undermine the alliance in his efforts to gain control of Rohilkhand's rich lands and control of multiple trade routes. The external threat to both of them, the Marathas, was forced to withdraw as Hafiz Rahmat Khan found himself in the least desirable position. He was faced with a powerful enemy in Shuja-ud Daulah, a leader who was allied with a powerful new force in India, the English, in a strange triangular relationship in which both Shuja and Hafiz Rahmat Khan courted the English commanders.

The animosity felt by Shuja-ud Daulah toward the Rohillas is difficult to understand. They were allied together while supporting the Afghan leader, Ahmad Shah Durrani, during his invasion of India, but Shuja turned on his former ally for an unknown reason. Part of his motivation involved their different religions, however. Shujah-ud Daulah, the Nawab of Awadh, was a Persian and a Shi'a<sup>24</sup>, while the Rohillas were Sunni Sufis, and they occupied some of the same rich land in northern India at a time when the Mughal Empire was breaking apart during the period following the death of Aurangzeb. Survival depended on the acquisition of resources and Shuja planned on surviving.

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politics eventually overtook him and he was dismissed in 1753.

24. <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/SRR/Volume12/airavat.html#3> (Accessed August 23, 2008).

Hafiz Rahmat Khan assembled his Sardars, or chiefs, in an effort to raise the large sum of money demanded by Shuja-ud Daulah, but none of the chiefs were willing to contribute money and the Rohilla chief was forced to prepare for a war he didn't want to fight. As troops began to move Shuja increased his demand for additional money to avoid the war as Hafiz Rahmat Khan attempted to get the British commander in the region, Colonel Champion, to mediate. Shuja-ud Daulah knew the advantage was on his side. He had been allied with the British before and knew they would tilt toward him as the conflict approached.

In the end, the two very mismatched forces engaged one another on April 23, 1774 and while the smaller Rohilla force fought gallantly the outcome was preordained. A British officer present during the battle wrote of the Rohillas:

“... gave proof of a good share of military knowledge by showing inclination to face both our flanks at the same time, and endeavoring to call our attention by brisk fire on our centre.... It is impossible to describe a more obstinate firmness of resolution than the enemy displayed; numerous were their gallant men who advanced and often pitched their colours between both armies in order to encourage their men to follow them.”<sup>25</sup>

The British army was experiencing their first encounter with men they would later know as “Hindustanic Fanatics,” men who fought bravely against great odds in a manner that impressed at least one English officer. The battle ended quickly after a shot from a cannon struck Hafiz Rahmat Khan in the chest, killing him instantly. His two sons, commanders in the center of the Rohilla line, also lost their lives as the Rohilla survivors soon fled the battlefield for prepared sanctuaries, but they left 2,000 bodies of their men behind. Soon, they would have even more reasons to hate the British enough to continue their efforts against the British colonial authorities for several additional generations.

As the Rohilla army left the field the victors in the battle began to set deep, and lasting, hatred into motion. The victorious allies, Shuja-ud Daulah and Colonel Champion, remained on the battlefield for an additional three days as small detachments of their troops were sent into the countryside where they embarked on what Iqbal Husain described as a “reign of terror”<sup>26</sup>. More than a thousand villages were burned and thousands of various structures were destroyed in what must have appeared to be an attempt at “ethnic cleansing” by Shi’a Shuja-ud Daulah’s men, in spite of Colonel Champion’s protests.<sup>27</sup>

But the Rohillas learned little from their recent defeat and instead of regrouping under a single leader, they fragmented further with some of them, including some of Hafiz Rahmat Khan’s sons, seeking to accommodate with Shuja-ud Daulah. Their principle city, Bareilly, fell without resistance. Leaders of some of the Rohilla tribes remained neutral, but they were quickly attacked and their possessions looted. According to Iqbal Husain, nearly 20,000 Rohillas sought refuge at Agra, but by the end of the campaign the Rohilla Confederacy had been destroyed<sup>28</sup>. Adding to the instability, Sikh raiders attacked the weakened Rohillas. In the end, Shuja-ud Daulah overcame his enemies, gained territory with rich agricultural land, enhanced his treasury with loot confiscated from Rohilla families, and the British, the Shi’as, and the Sikhs got the blame from the Rohillas who seem to have never forgotten that Colonel Champion allied himself with Shuja-ud Daulah instead of Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Rohillas were primarily

25. Husain, pp. 131. Iqbal Husain presents an excellent account of the politics surrounding the final battle between the British and Shuja-ud Daulah against the Rohillas beginning on page 131.

26. Husain, pg. 168.

27. Husain, pg. 170. His text mentions that the treatment of Hafiz Rahmat Khan’s family was “one of studied harshness and designed to inflict humiliation.

28. Husain, pg. 172.

Yusufzai Pashtuns, a culture that looks at significant losses through lenses of “blame” rather than the “guilt” that is seen in western culture. Added to the “blame” aspects of their culture, there is another significant aspect of the Pashtuns that developed over thousands of years: Pashtunwali. And its primary tenet is simple: revenge. The survivors of the Rohilla wars who lost to the Shi’a and Sikhs would not forget the British and the role Colonel Champion played in the destruction of their principalities inside northern India – and very possibly the humiliation of Hafiz Rahmat Khan’s family also played a role in their tribal anger. It appears that this animosity may have continued into modern times.

Britain’s Sir John Strachey attempted to justify, if not explain away, the British complicity in the destruction of the Rohillas in his 1892 book. An interesting point Strachey made in his preface shows how Pashtuns remember their history, especially the negative aspects of it:

“Several years of my Indian service were passed in the province of Rohilkhand. When I was first sent there, old men were still living who remembered having heard in their childhood the story of Hafiz Rahmat, the great Rohilla chief, of his defeat by the English, and his death.”<sup>29</sup>

Strachey prepared an able defense of British actions against the Rohillas and explained that the Rohillas “were not a nation at all, but a comparatively small body of rapacious Afghan adventurers who had imposed their foreign rule on an unwilling Hindu population, and the story of their destruction is fictitious.”<sup>30</sup> His account may have been well received by Victorian England, but the descendants of the Rohillas believed the story the old men told about a very dead chief who was killed with British assistance while trying to defend their nation.

The anger and frustration of the Rohilla survivors may have been worsened by probable forced conversions of their people from Islam to Hinduism and Sikhism in the regions where they sought refuge. There are reports of “Rohilla Hindus,” possibly explainable as the result of early Pashtun Rohilla immigrants arriving into regions ruled by Hindu Rajaputs, who later lost their territory to these same Pashtuns, but there is no doubt that religious conversions occurred. Zabita Khan, one of the last Rohilla leaders, converted to Sikhism to become “Dharam Singh,” for example<sup>31</sup>. The Rohillas lost their lands, families were disrupted – if not murdered – by Shi’a Shuja-ud Daulah’s looting, marauding troops, and many of them may have been forcibly converted to become Hindus or Sikhs by those conquering them or by those leaders agreeing to shelter them in return for religious conversions. This early form of “ethnic cleansing” may have had a very significant impact on the survivors, many of whom would eventually become the “Hindustani Fanatics” and their supporters who provided funds and recruits from the dismantled Rohilla territory.

Enter Sayed Ahmad Shah<sup>32</sup> of Bareilly

Into this complex cultural mix, with its recent losses to the Shi’a, Sikhs, and the British, the next leader of the militants was born in Bareilly on November 29, 1786<sup>33</sup> – a little over twelve years after the destruction of the Rohilla’s adopted homeland. While the historical record shows that Ahmad Shah was a “Sayed<sup>34</sup>,” or could trace his family genealogy directly to the Prophet Mohammad, it is nearly a certainty that he was a member of

29. Strachey, John, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pg. vii.

30. Ibid, pg. vii.

31. <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/SRR/Volume12/airavat.html#3> (Accessed August 24, 2008).

32. His name is often rendered “Sayed Ahmad Shahid” or “Sayed Ahmad Shaheed” to reflect his status as a “martyr.”

33. Malik, Hafeez, *Moslem Nationalism in India and Pakistan*, Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1963, pg. 154.

34. Many Afghans claimed family connections to the Prophet when there were none. The may have happened with Ahmad Shah’s family generations before they migrated to north India. It may have been real or a family or clan attempt to gain status or protection afforded by a direct family connection to the Prophet.

the Yusufzai tribe, like the other Muslims living in this region. He was well aware of the military aspects of the area where he lived and, according to Hafeez Malik, he played war games with his playmates and divided them into an “army of Islam” and an “army of infidels”, reflecting the seriousness the population viewed their recent defeat by Shujah-ud Daulah, the Sikhs, and the British army. If the contemporary sources are correct, even his mother took seriously her young son’s determination to fight the infidels, yet another indication that the surviving Rohillas accepted the Pashtunwali requirement for revenge. Shujah-ud Daulah, a Shi’a, was a Muslim; but the Sikhs and the British were not and they appear to have been singled out as primary enemies for Sayed Ahmad Shah. It seems that young Ahmad Shah was indoctrinated from a very early age to become a combatant. And his mother was not to be disappointed.

Associated with young Sayed Ahmad Shah’s ambitions to take war to the Sikhs and British enemies of Islam, infidels, was the relatively new political-religious ideology created by Shah Waliullah as he observed the chaos of repeated succession crises within the Mughal Empire as it began to fall apart. Waliullah probably associated the threat to Muslim rule in India with similar threat to Islam.

Shah Waliullah was also from northern India<sup>35</sup> and would have been very familiar with the Rohillas who controlled much of the region where he was born. The district where he originated, Uttar Pradesh’s Muzaffarnagar district, had begun as an Afghan settlement<sup>36</sup> and he may have been a Rohilla, himself. The district remained under Rohilla control until 1780, eighteen years after Waliullah’s death in 1762, when it was plundered by Sikhs.<sup>37</sup> His religious work seemed to focus on a revival of traditional Islam that he felt had been contaminated by beliefs absorbed from their contacts with India’s Hindu population. He also probably viewed the gradual disintegration of the Mughal Empire as a parallel decline of Islam and worked against this trend as political instability began to spread. While he was a “traditionalist,” Waliullah was also revolutionary in some of his methods. For example, he was the first to translate the Koran into Persian, something that must have been condemned widely as an “innovation” by other religious leaders as Waliullah opened many schools that carried his religious views to large numbers of young Muslim students.

He also pointed out that while there was no provision for national churches for each country within the Islamic concept of the “Ummah,” Waliullah explained his belief that there were significant differences among the Muslim nations and each of them had generally developed separate schools of Islamic thought. Turkey had a significant Sufism influence, Iranian nationalism was centered on its Shi’a faith, and Arabia was closely connected to Wahabbism. Waliullah’s religious beliefs developed a school of Islamic thought that is relatively unique and is found primarily in today’s Pakistan.<sup>38</sup>

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35. From Wikipedia: Shah Waliullah was born in 1703 CE, in the town of Phulat in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, India. It is said his father, Shah Abdur Raheem, was foretold of the birth of a pious and obedient son by Hazrath Qutubuddin Bakhteyaar-e-Kaaki, who made Shah Abdur Raheem promise that the boy will be named after him as Qutubuddin Ahmad. So he named his boy Qutubuddin Ahmad. The name Shah Waliullah is given to him by people because Waliulla means “close to God” as he was very pious man. So his complete name was Shah Waliullah Qutubuddin Ahmad. His genealogy can be traced back to the second Caliph of Islam, Hazrath Umar Farooq (RA) from the paternal side and to Hazrath Musa Kazim (RAH) on the maternal side. His grandfather, Sheikh Wajihuddin, was an important officer in the army of Shah Jahan who supported Prince Aurangzeb in the war of succession. The forefathers of Shah Waliullah, Shaikh Shamsuddin Mufti came to the subcontinent and settled in Rothak during the initial period of Islamic rule. Although the mark of identification of this family was their command over religious sciences of Islam, one of his family members, Shaikh Mehmood, adopted the profession of a soldier after which tales of bravery remained associated with this family for a long time.

36. Husain, pg. 16.

37. Ibid, pg. 183.

38. Malik, Hafeez, pp. 71-72. This section of Malik’s book has a good discussion related to religious nationalism.

The schools he founded trained religious nationalists and under the guidance of his eldest son, Shah Abdul Aziz, their goal was the liberation and the development of a state ruled by a caliph using the religious principles developed by Waliullah who carried his message to the upper classes in the region. Abdul Aziz took the message to the common people that they shouldn't wait for the return of al-Mahdi, their Messiah, who would deliver them from "the bondage of the infidels," but they should take their destiny in their own hands. Sayed Ahmad Shah was one of his best students.<sup>39</sup> By the end of his training, Sayed Ahmad Shah had been trained into the Naqshbandi, Qadriya, and Chistiya Sufism orders.<sup>40</sup>

As Sayed Ahmad Shah was receiving his religious training, the disintegration of the Mughal Empire continued as other powers moved to fill the political-military vacuum. From Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Durrani fought the Sikhs and defeated them several different times, but the Sikhs continued to grow in power and after gaining control of Lahore, they continued to spread their control, and at the expense of the Muslims. At the same time, the Muslims of India were being squeezed by the other growing power in India, the British. And as normally happens when Islam is perceived to be threatened, the religious leaders manage to take control of the political process and the entire Muslim community turns toward violence.

From Hafeez Malik:

"Shah Abdul Aziz ... made a serious, concerted and organized effort to regain political control of some provinces. It was, therefore, decided that a national militia should be created which would be the nucleus of the future armed forces. Shah Abdul Aziz established two boards of directors, one for military purposes and the other to serve as a surveillance committee for the maintenance of the ideological and doctrinal purity of the movement.... Shah Abdul Aziz let it be understood that the unanimous decisions of the two committees would be tantamount to his own judgment."<sup>41</sup>

Shah Abdul Aziz died on July 17, 1823. But the Muslims now were prepared for a war of liberation. Their enemies were the Sikhs and the British and Abdul Aziz appointed Sayed Ahmad Shah of Bareilly the leader of their liberation movement.<sup>42</sup> Maulana Ismail Shahid, one of Waliullah's grandsons, was instrumental in ensuring that Sayed Ahmad Shah was recognized as the future Caliph of the Muslim forces when he declared that Sayad Ahmad Shah "instinctively attained perfection and being spiritually closest to the Prophet Muhammad." Hafeez Malik correctly concluded that "although Saiyad Ahmad Shahid<sup>43</sup> was officially declared Caliph of the Moslem<sup>44</sup> forces in 1827, the doctrine supporting his elevation had been enunciated much earlier."<sup>45</sup>

In order to learn military matters, Sayed Ahmad Shah served in the armed forces of Amir Khan, the Nawab of Tonk, where he remained for six years. Nawab Amir Khan traced his ancestry to the Salarzai tribe of Buner from where his grandfather had migrated. By late 1815, the Nawab had been maneuvered into a position where he came under the control of the British to become a part of the *Dar-ul Harb* that Shah Abdul Aziz had decreed could not be supported. Consequently, Sayed Ahmad Shah left the service of Amir Khan, disappointed that the Nawab's forces would not become the nucleus of a liberation movement in India. But his departure was a shrewd strategic move and he gained the support of Nawab-ud-Daulah,

39. Ibid, pp. 140-141.

40. Hafiz, pg. 157. According to Hafiz, Sayed Ahmad Shah took the oath of bayat at the hand of Shah Abdul Aziz in 1807.

41. Malik, pg. 152.

42. Ibid, pg. 159.

43. "Shahid" is defined as "martyr" and Hafeez Malik refers to Sayed Ahmad Shah as "Shahid" throughout his book.

44. Malik used "Moslem" throughout his book.

45. Ibid, pp. 158-159.



the heir-apparent to the throne of Tonk. Soon, Sayed Ahmad Shah received the allegiance of the immediate members of Shah Abdul Aziz's family, and he then had the religious and financial base that would support his movement as he continued to preach about the need for an all-out war for the liberation of Dar-ul Islam. Large numbers were involved in his preaching and approximately 15,000 men and women took an oath of allegiance to him in a single month. More importantly, a man named Wilayat Ali, a son of one of Sayed Ahmad Shah's key supporters in Patna, joined the movement at this time and would eventually inherit the entire movement.<sup>46</sup>

Sayed Ahmad Shah left for Mecca with a very large group of followers and was away from India for a period as long as six years. According to Charles Allen, when he returned to India an important change occurred in his preaching:

“He went ashore briefly in Bombay and was feted as a saint by all sections of the Muslim community of the city. Again, there was talk of prophecies being fulfilled and of the approach of the end of days – and it seems to have been at this point that Mahdism first entered Syed<sup>47</sup> Ahmad's newly enlarged religious vocabulary.”<sup>48</sup>

There had been others proclaiming themselves Mahdis in this period and one, in particular is noteworthy in its connection to modern extremists.

Charles Allen explains a harbinger from the past that is seen again today:

“...adherents, who had proclaimed themselves the Mahdaws and set up a cult characterized by extreme asceticism, and violence towards other Muslims. ‘They always carried swords and shields, and all kinds of weapons,’ wrote the chronicler Nizamuddin Ahmad in his history *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, ‘and going into cities and bazaars, wherever they saw anything that was contrary to the law of the Prophet, at first they forbade these things, with gentleness and courtesy. If this did not succeed, they made people give up the forbidden practices, using force or violence.’ The Mahdawi cult<sup>49</sup> gained many converts among the Afghan leadership in India, so many in fact that it eventually provoked an orthodox backlash and was declared a heresy. Nevertheless, the belief in a messiah figure who would appear from the mountains to the west as the King of the West took hold in all sections of the Muslim community in India, becoming increasingly popular as Muslim power there waned.”<sup>50</sup>

Allen continued:

“There was thus a well-established predisposition among all sections of the Muslim community in India to respond to the call of the true Imam-Mahdi in a time of religious crisis, and this now became an established part of Amir Syed Ahmad's Wahhabi platform in India: the belief that the end of days was drawing nigh and with it the imminent return of the Hidden Imam-Mahdi, the King of the West.”<sup>51</sup>

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46. Ibid, pp. 160-163.

47. This is an alternate spelling of “Sayed.”

48. Charles Allen, pg. 73.

49. These people maintained the expectation of the coming of Imam Mahdi that was especially strong in western India. The members of the Mahdawi sect were fierce fanatics toward those failing to share their beliefs.

50. Ibid, pg. 74.

51. Ibid, pg. 74.



And Charles Allen described the scene they were entering into:

“The Hindustan to which Syed Ahmad returned was fast being reshaped on British terms.... Except for the Punjab, where the Sikhs still held sway, all Hindustan was now under direct or indirect East India Company control. So it was not surprising that Syed Ahmad and his twin messages of Islamic revival and armed struggle against the infidel were received with an enthusiasm bordering on hysteria. And nowhere was this enthusiasm more marked than at Patna, the seat of his most loyal supporters, headed by the three families of Fatah Ali, Elahi Bux, and Syed Muhammad Hussain.”

By this point, Sayed Ahmad Shah had developed a highly popular political theology that soon proclaimed him to be the leader of the new revolutionary movement that he was planning to create in the “west” to fulfill the Mahdist prophesy. He was preparing for the move he had planned to make for most of his life.

There is some controversy in the available literature’s slim pickings regarding the religious underpinnings of Sayed Ahmad Shah and its connection to Saudi Wahhabism. One of the problems in comprehending this complex religious and political situation involves the inclusion of Sufism in Sayed Ahmad Shah’s early religious training and Hafeez pointed this important variable out clearly when he wrote “...by the end of his training, Sayed Ahmad Shah had been trained into the Naqshbandi, Qadriya, and Chistiya Sufism orders.” And he swore bayat to Shah Waliullah in what was clearly a pir-murid relationship. But Sayed Ahmad Shah was an equally astute politician. Knowing how prevalent the “Mahdist” theology was in India, this was a blending of Sunni and Shi’a approaches to religion that had powerful military foundations in India and when Sayed Ahmad Shah returned from Mecca he came bearing a clearly less tolerant, and aggressive form of Islam. This was obviously inspired by contact with Wahhabi teachers, regardless of the fact that the Wahhabis had been driven from Saudi Arabia’s urban areas during the decade prior to his visit<sup>52</sup>. But while the Wahhabi armies and its leaders had been driven into the deserts and its theologians had been killed following a four-day religious debate that failed to sway them, the Wahhabi approach to Islam still had to be prevalent in Mecca at the time of his visit. We need only to look at the early Christian survival within polytheist and murderous Rome as a reminder of how an underground religion can survive, if not thrive, within a hostile political environment.

In the end, Sayed Ahmad Shah created a hybrid form of Islam that maximized his opportunity to attract militant followers and financial supporters as he added the Shi’a concept of the Madhi to his political, Wahhabi-like, revolutionary movement that aimed to force the Sikhs and British from India. He was not, however, intending to bring democracy to India after winning his jihad. His goal was the imposition of Muslim control over the entire subcontinent in a form of government that required “blind and implicit obedience to their spiritual guides or *peers* [pirs].”<sup>53</sup>

But in addition to his religious preparations and the huge supporting auxiliary population that was backing him within India, Sayed Ahmad Shah and key members of Shah Abdul Aziz’s religious family continued to present him as the heir to their family’s distinguished religious lineage, another critical variable in the coming religious-political equation. His final political preparations ensured his acceptance as the “coming Imam-Mahdi” who would appear in the region to the west, the homeland of the Salarzai Pashtun, Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk, who he served as a soldier and now had sworn bayat to the young religious leader. The Imam-Mahdi legends prevalent in India foretold the appearance of the “King of the West” and it seems very probable that Sayed Ahmad Shah was planning to fulfill this legend as he prepared to depart for the “West.” It is also very possible

52. Charles Allen provides an excellent review of the destruction of Saudi Arabia’s Wahhabis that was nearly complete by 1818; pp. 65-68.

53. Charles Allen provides a list of Sayed Ahmad Shah’s “five articles of faith” on pg. 76. “Pir” is a Sufi concept.

that he had prepared a contingency plan in case of his death after which his disappearance would allow his heirs to claim that he was now a “Hidden Imam” who was continuing the jihad from a cave, again borrowing from the Shi’a.

Again, it is Charles Allen who got this part of history right:

“Various qualifications were required of the Imam-Mahdi. He would be an imam and a caliph, bear the name Muhammad, be a descendent of the Prophet through his daughter Fatima, arise in Arabia and be forty years old at the time of his emergence. Syed Ahmad Shah fulfilled the most important of these qualifications: he was a Saiyyed, had been raised as ‘Muhammad’ (of which ‘Ahmad’ was a diminutive), and he became forty in 1826. In January of that year he began his hijra accompanied by a band of some four hundred armed and committed jihadis.”<sup>54</sup>

The British seem to have generally ignored Sayed Ahmad Shah’s activities. His stated enemies were the Sikhs and it is very probable that as long as the Islamic revolutionaries surrounding him were focused on the Sikhs, the British derived some benefit from their activities. According to Hafeez Malik, “When two thousands Moslems had congregated in Rai Bareli to sacrifice their lives in the war with the Sikhs, Shahid decided that the time was right.”<sup>55</sup>

His route westward had to bypass the Sikh territories of Ranjit Singh and this newly created Amir of India’s jihadis departed Tonk’s relative safety along a southerly route through Sind and across Baluchistan through six hundred miles of difficult, sometimes desert terrain to Afghanistan’s Kandahar before they turned toward the north to Kabul. Finding little support there, Sayed Ahmad Shah’s little army marched east through the Khyber Pass to arrive in the vicinity of Peshawar.

A man who lost his life while working among the Pashtuns, Sir Pierre Louis Napoleon Cavagnari, wrote about the arrival of Sayed Ahmad Shah into Yusufzai territory:

“About the year 1823 appeared one of those religious impostors on the arena of Yusufzai politics who have at all times and seasons beguiled the incredulous and simple Pathan race for their own ends, and have been the means of creating discord, up-heaving society, and fomenting rebellions which have been checked and crushed with the utmost difficulty. The career of Pir Tarik in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and that of Sayad<sup>56</sup> Ahmad of Bareilly and the Akhud of Swat in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, show but too clearly what single men are able to perform amongst the credulous Pathans. This man was Sayad Ahmad Shah<sup>57</sup>, a resident of Bareilly, who, after visiting Mecca-Kabul, suddenly appeared in the Peshawar district with about 40 Hindustani

54. Ibid, pg. 79.

55. Hafeez Malik, pg. 165.

56. This paper uses the original rendering of this name.

57. Allen, Charles, The Hidden Roots of Wahhabism in British India, *World Policy Journal*, Summer, 2005. Allen wrote “The man credited with importing Wahhabism into India is Syed Ahmad of Rae Bareilly (1786–1831), who returned from pilgrimage in Mecca in 1824 to begin a holy war against the Sikhs aimed at restoring the Punjab to Muslim rule. But the argument that Syed Ahmad picked up his ideas of Wahhabi intolerance and jihad while in Arabia is untenable. The reality is that he had already accepted the basic tenets of Wahhabism long before sailing to Arabia, as a student of the Madrassa-i-Ramiyya religious seminary in Delhi and as a pupil of its leader, Shah Abdul Aziz, son of the reformer Shah Waliullah of Delhi. Shah Waliullah is the key figure here— a man as much admired within Sunni Islam as a great modernizer (the historian Aziz Ahmad rightly describes him as “the bridge between medieval and modern Islam in India”) as Abd al-Wahhab is reviled. The one, after all, was a follower of the tolerant, inclusive Hanafi school of jurisprudence and a Naqshbandi Sufi initiate, while the other belonged to the intolerant, exclusive Hanbali school, was viciously anti-Sufi and anti-Shia, and deeply indebted

followers, and gave out that he had been commissioned to wage a war of extermination against the Sikhs and other infidels. It was just the time to raise the spirits of the Yusufzais and other Pathans, which had been lowered by the crushing defeat they and the Peshawar sardars had received from Ranjit Singh at the battle of Nowshera, by religious exhortations. Followers speedily surrounded the new prophet, who was aided by Mir Baba of Sadum and the Khans of Zeyda and Hind. A numerous army, animated by a zeal of fanaticism, though wanting in discipline, was now at his disposal; his own Hindustani band had been increased by recruits till it numbered 900 men. In addition to this the Peshawar sardars, feeling the influence of the movement and hoping to break the Sikh rule, joined in the crusade against their oppressors.”<sup>58</sup>

The Yusufzai tribe was ideal for Sayed Ahmad Shah's proselytizing. The British recorded key comments about their tribal culture that played directly into his plans. Not only did the Yusufzai still smart under their recent defeat at the hands of the Sikhs, they accepted holy men into their confidence quickly. Sayed Ahmad Shah had recently been in Mecca, was a Sayed, and had inherited the considerable religious mantle of Shah Waliullah, a man well known in Muslim India. The British wrote of the Yusufzai:

“Their superstition is incredulous and has no limits. Miracles, charms, and omens are believed in as a matter of course. An inordinate reverence for saints and religious classes generally is universal, and their absurdly impossible and contradictory dicta are received and acted upon with eager credulity.”<sup>59</sup>

And:

“The Yusufzai clans are always famed for turbulence and rebellion wherever they have settled, and in occupying lands they now possess they did not improve. They gave equal trouble to Akbar, Arangzeb, Shah Alam, Nadir Shah, to the Durrans, and to the Sikhs.”<sup>60</sup>

There is another very important factor that ensured Sayed Ahmad Shah's acceptance by the Yusufzai and other Pashtun tribes in the region where he arrived. He was from Bereilly, now a city in India's Uttar Pradesh state, where much of the Muslim population were Rohilla Pashtuns. According to multiple sources, the Rohillas were Yusufzai Pashtuns who immigrated into that area over time. If he was not a Rohilla, he was definitely a Muslim whose family lived within Rohilla ruled territory before his birth. Given his early interest in jihad and his mother's encouragement in that direction, he was very possibly a Rohilla and spoke Pashtu. Given the traditional and deeply ingrained xenophobia found with all of the Pashtun hill tribes, it is highly unlikely that anyone, regardless of his Sayed status, its lineage derived from the Prophet Mohammad, and his recent trip to Mecca – there were many, many men having these attributes in the region – that someone speaking a foreign language would ever have found acceptance within the Pashtun tribes, much less with the speed that Sayed Ahmad Shah was elected as their leader and about to lead them into a war with the powerful Sikhs. Sayed Ahmad Shah was probably a Rohilla or his mother belonged to that group of Pashtuns. There are few other explanations for the speed with which he became the war leader of the Yusufzai and allied Pashtun tribes.

in his prejudices to the notorious fourteenth-century jurist of Damascus, Ibn Taymiyya—the ideologue whose reinterpretations of militant jihad are today cited by every Islamist. Yet these two key figures have far more in common than their respective admirers are willing to accept. Not only were they exact contemporaries, they almost certainly studied in Medina at the same period—and had at least one teacher in common.”

58. Cavagnari, P.L.N., Selections From the Records of the Government of the Punjab, 1875, pg. 44.

59. Gazetteer of NW Frontier. 1887, pg. 2105.

60. Ibid, pg. 2116.

The jihad against the Sikhs could only be declared by an imam and Sayed Ahmad Shah was soon selected by the assembled Pashtun tribal leaders to become their “imam” and they also proclaimed him to be the “Amir ul-Momineen,” a title the modern world would see again. But this was very significant and Charles Allen explains it succinctly:

“Amir ul-Momineen Imam Sayed Ahmad was now presented to the entire Muslim community on the Indian frontier as their long-awaited saviour.”<sup>61</sup>

And the war began between the Yusufzai Pashtuns under Sayed Ahmad Shah of Bareilly. The first action was a disaster for the Pashtuns and Sayed Ahmad Shah seems to have barely escaped, but continued with his chosen course. According to multiple sources, one of his key allies, Khadi Khan of Hund, switched sides during the battle and according to Sayed Ahmad Shah’s rigid view of Islam, Khadi Khan was guilty of apostasy and deserved punishment.

After gathering his few remaining supporters, he attacked Khadi Khan and entered into an unusual episode of Pashtun history that also had a continuing influence in the region. Interestingly, and in keeping with the confusion of the history of this region, there are two accounts of this intra-Pashtun fighting. Hafeez Malik, writing in 1963 from a particularly Pakistani nationalist perspective, reported:

“On August 8, 1829, Hand [Hund] was besieged by nationalist forces and Khade [Khadi] Khan was cut down.”<sup>62</sup>

The British reported much the same thing:

Fanatics murdered Khadi Khan of Hund in 1827. (Meeting brokered by man who would later become Akhund of Swat.)<sup>63</sup>

An 1895 British intelligence report explained a few details that Hafeez Malik ignored:

“It leaked out them that the Saiad’s attempt on Attock had been a failure through the treachery of Khadi Khan of Hund, who had disclosed his intention to Ranjit Singh, and who since the defeat of Saiad Ahmad had withdrawn his allegiance and support from him. The Pathans still believed in his miraculous powers; thousands swarmed around his standard, and joined by Mir Baba, the Sadum chief, and others, he determined to chastise the Khan of Hund for his misconduct. The parties met, with no decisive result; but by an act of treachery in which he was aided by the late Akhund of Swat, the *Saiad* induced Khadi Khan to visit him in a friendly way, and had him seized and slain instantly.”<sup>64</sup>

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61. Allen, pp. 83-84.

62. Hafeez Malik, pg. 176.

63. Military Report and Gazetteer of Buner, pg. 107, 109

64. Mason, A.H., Lt. Col, *Report on the Hindustani Fanatics*, compiled in the Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General’s Department, Simla, 1895. This report is located in the British Library.

Charles Allen provided additional details of this incident that defines Sayed Ahmad Shah:

“Despite this near annihilation, Syed Ahmad held to the hard line that characterized his vision of Islam, as demonstrated by his response when one of his most influential local allies, Khadi Khan of Hund, switched sides after suffering heavy losses among his tribesmen. To the Amir ul-Momineen Imam this was an act of apostasy. He immediately rallied his remaining friends and marched against Hund. After an untidy melee which neither side could claim as a victory, a much-loved Sufi hermit, revered on all sides as a saint, stepped in to act as an intermediary. This was a young man of humble origins named Abdul Ghaffur, known then as ‘Saidu Baba’ but later to achieve great eminence among the Pathans as the Akhund of Swat. Abdul Ghaffur duly interceded and persuaded Khadi Khan to come to the Hindustani camp under flag of truce, whereupon he was separated from his companions and had his throat cut – an act of treachery justified by Syed Ahmad on the grounds that under sharia the crime of apostasy was only punishable by death.

“Because of his role in the affair, Abdul Ghaffur was driven from his hermitage into exile. Already alienated by the Amir’s attempts to impose the Wahhabi version of the law upon them, a number of villages in the plains now publicly expressed their disquiet. This, too, was interpreted as apostasy – the worst of all sins in the Wahhabi book – and orders went out for the twin villages of Hoti and Mardan to be looted and fired as an example to other waverers. A decade later, when Hoti Mardan was chosen as the base for the new border force to be known as the Guides, this outrage was still remembered. It helps to explain why the irregulars who joined the Guides Cavalry and Infantry in later years regarded the Hindustanis in the hills as their inveterate enemies.”<sup>65</sup>

The people the British referred to as “Hindustani Fanatics” in their reports were now deeply embedded in what was to become northwest Pakistan and they brought something with them that took deep root in the immediate region: Sayed Ahmad Shah’s modified version of Wahhabism. British records continue:

“Sayad Ahmad had now seated himself so firmly as to take tithes from the Yusafzais, and his power was independent of the khans who derived their authority from him, amongst whom was Mir Balm Khan, of Sadhum. His army was not very numerous, composed chiefly of Hindustanis and fanatics, but when-ever required he could summon a host of Pathans. Looking upon the Durránis as enemies, he kept them constantly under alarm by threatening Hashtnaggar, and inciting the Khaibaris to annoy them on that side, many of which tribe took service with him, being inimical to the Barakzai sardars, who had stopped the allowances formerly made them by the Saddozai Princes.”<sup>66</sup>

At this point in Afghanistan’s history, the “Saddozai Princes” – from the Popalzai tribe that ruled the nation from its inception – had been replaced by the Khan Khel of the Barakzai tribe, the Mohammadzai. Interestingly, some of the hostility currently seen between the Government of Afghanistan where Popalzai Hamid Karzai serves as president and receives considerable support from the Durrani Confederation may have developed through the long ago influence of the leader of the “Hindustani Fanatics” with the northern Pashtun tribes. Soon Sayed Ahmad Shah’s supporters moved from Swat to settle in the remote village of Sitana.

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65. Allen, pp. 84-85.

66. Mason, pg. 44.



“Sitana<sup>67</sup> is a village on the right bank of the Indus river, at the east foot of the Mahaban mountain, 13 miles above Topi. The village was originally made over by the Utmanzai to Syud Zanian, from Takhta-band in Buner. His descendants allied themselves to Sayad Ahmad, who settled in Sitana, and they aided him in all his ambitious struggles to establish a Wahhabi empire of Muhammadan reformers on the Peshawar border. The ablest of the Sitana Syads was Syad Akbar, who, in 1849 or 1850 was chosen to be badshah or king of Swat.”<sup>68</sup>

A British report from the period explains the next stage of Sayed Ahmad Shah's plan:

“It is impossible to say how long this priestly rule and anomalous power of the Sayad might have existed, or to what extent it might have swelled, holding in restraint a wild, brave and independent people, and overpowering, with its undisciplined hordes the regular armies of ruling chiefs in a manner which served to give some color to the popular superstition that he possessed the faculty of silencing guns and rendering bullets harmless, had he not, in the pride of his success, forgotten to be moderate, and ventured to impose upon his subjects a strict and oppressive regime, from which even their superstitious reverence revolted.

“Attended by but few followers at Panjtár, he avoided all stately pretensions, and maintained the appearances of a life passed in devotional exercises, fastings and prayer; but, with all this affectation of pious zeal, his mind was bent on intrigue and ambitious scheming. His paid retainers were scattered over the country, collecting fines and dues, and reporting the most trifling incidents to their master. Even the exactions and insolence of his soldiery might have been borne, but he now began to interfere with Pathan customs, and found too late that he was thereby exceeding his bounds. The Afghans have retained many peculiarities contrary to Muhammadan law and usage, and the strictly orthodox have been shocked at the open sale of their daughters carried on by them. Sayad Ahmad ordained that this practice should cease; and, to assist in its abolition, decreed that all Patháns should give their daughters in marriage at an early age, without receiving money, and if not then betrothed they might be claimed by their nearest relatives. This domestic interference, combined with the sayad's growing demand for wealth, determined the Yusafzais to throw off the yoke, and at a secret council a day was appointed for the slaughter of his soldiers and agents throughout the country. The proposed massacre was spoken of in the interval under the phrase of threshing makai<sup>69</sup>, and a signal was concerted of lighting a bonfire when the work was to commence. It seems probable that the Peshawar sardars [Barakzai Durranis] were associated in the plot, for on the stated Friday, whilst the fires of Yusafzai notified the carnage enacting there, they slew Maulvi Mazhar Ali, the agent left with them, and Faizulla Khan, Hazárkhaníwála, who had aided the sayad on his visit to Peshawar, and by whose abandonment of them they had been compelled to make terms.

“Several thousands were slain on this occasion, and the excited Ahmad Shah escapes....”<sup>70</sup>

The Amir ul-Momineen had exceeded his religious authority by placing demands that had an impact on Pashtun culture and the Yusafzai tribe turned on him. But the violent Wahhabi-like sect now had arrived among the Pashtuns of future Pakistan and Afghanistan's border regions and more would be heard from them for a full century. Later, Sayad Ahmad Shah was killed fighting the Sikhs and punitive operations and raids conducted by

67. Allen, *God's Terrorists*. Sitana is located at Tarbela Lake and is nearly submerged.

68. Balfour, Edward, *The Cyclopedia of India and Southern Asia*, 1885, pg. 206.

69. Makai is a grain that is milled into flour.

70. Hastings, G.G., *Report of the Regular Settlement of the Peshawar District of the Punjab*, 1878, pg. 49.



the British forced the “Hindustani Fanatics” to retreat further into more inaccessible areas in Dir, Swat, and Bajaur. Driven from Sitani, they moved their colony to Chamarkand<sup>71</sup> in southern Bajaur agency.

The death of Sayed Ahmad Shah was a true disaster for his movement since there was no other leader available to replace him. Additionally, there were questions regarding the legality of the war in the absence of the “Caliph,” but Wilayat Ali, one of the sons of a member of the six-man leadership council of the Wahhabi movement in Patna, developed – or implemented – a plan that resulted in a pamphlet claiming that Sayed Ahmad Shah had not died, but “had been ordered by God Almighty to spend some time in the mountains in silent prayers and a forty-day fast. People could actually go and see him, ‘like the bright sun illuminating the universe.’”<sup>72</sup>

From the keenly observant Charles Allen:

“It appears to have been Wilayat Ali who first grasped the significance of the doubts emerging about their leader’s death, and who made the first public announcements of his survival. He then let it be known that he himself had heard Syed Ahmad foretell his disappearance some years earlier in a sermon. Now he could report the glad tidings that their beloved master was indeed alive and well, but that God, displeased by the faint-hearted response of the Muslims to His prophet’s call to arms, had withdrawn him from the eyes of men. Their Imam and Amir ul-Momineen was even now hidden in a cave in the Buner mountains, waited on by his two faithful disciples. Only when his followers had proved their faith by uniting once more to renew the jihad would their lost leader reappear. He would then manifest himself as padshah<sup>73</sup> and lead them to victory against the unbelievers.

“This was, in essence, a retread of the Shi’a version of the Imam-Mahdi story, in which the Hidden Imam absented himself from the sight of man in a cave in the mountains, awaiting the summons of the faithful to make himself known as King of the West.”<sup>74</sup>

This story was quite durable and Wilayat Ali was actively preaching and converting additional Indian Muslims to his followers. In 1839 he was preaching in Hyderabad where he received support from the city’s noble families. Not many years passed before the British were driven from Afghanistan and following their January 1842 retreat from Kabul in which a single officer, a physician, survived to arrive at Jalalabad, the opportunity arrived once again for Wilayat Ali to make his move. Letters were received in Patna summoning the faithful to rally in Buner where the holy war would be continued. It was during this phase of the Fanatic’s history that they were joined by non-Pashtuns from eastern India in their revolts. British commentators described the capture of smaller, darker men on their way to Sittana and these were probably the result of the widespread preaching done in Bengal by Wilayat Ali. Interestingly, the final survivors later split into two groups, possibly following ethnic lines.

The letters were obviously the work of Wilayat Ali and Charles Allen discussed their impact and some failed theatrics that also occurred in an effort to maintain the Imam-Mahdi story of Sayed Ahmad Shah:

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71. Spain, pg. 88. Chamarkand is situated in Bajaur, FATA., Pakistan, its geographical coordinates are 34° 41’ 23” North, 71° 13’ 20” East and its original name (with diacritics) is Kūz Chamarkand.

72. Hafeez Malik, pg. 185.

73. Title of monarch.

74. Allen, pg. 98.

“The mystique of Syed Ahmad, both as martyr and lost leader in waiting, had grown over the years and to many young men of faith he now came to be seen as a unique symbol of Islamic resistance and resurgence.... Large numbers of mujahedin volunteers responded to the call, among them a devout but unusually independent-minded mullah from Hyderabad named Maulvi Zain ul-Abdin, who had been converted to Wahhabism by Wilyat Ali during one of his visits to the city. Traveling across India in small parties to escape detection, Zain ul-Abdin and almost a thousand recruits from the Deccan<sup>75</sup> made their way to Sittana to begin their military training. However, Zain ul-Abdin was determined to meet the Hidden Imam whose call he and his fellow Hyderabadis had answered. He demanded to see the Amir ul-Momineen and, after being repeatedly fobbed off with excuses, was finally led into the mountains above the Hindustani camp to a point where he and a number of other curious mujahedin could make out a distant cave, at the entrance of which stood three figures dressed in white robes. These, he was told, were the Amir ul-Momineen and the two disciples who attended to his daily needs. The spectators were then made to promise not to go any closer, because if they or anyone else did so the Hidden Imam would again disappear, and remain hidden from the sight of man for fourteen years.

“Thrilled as he and the others were by this distant glimpse of their leader, Zain ul-Abdin found himself unable to contain his curiosity. Finally, he and a number of comrades bolder than the rest went back up the mountain to take a closer look. They clambered right up to the cave and found, to their horror, that the three figures were nothing more than effigies. As Zain ul-Abdin later reported it, he examined the figure of the supposed imam ‘and found it was a goatskin stuffed with grass, which with the help of some pieces of wood, hair, etc. was made to resemble a man. The supplicant enquired from Qasin Kazzab [Maulvi Qasim Panipati, the Wahhabi’s caliph at Sittana] about this. He answered that it was true, but that the Imam Humam had performed a miracle, and appeared as a stuffed figure.

“Thoroughly outraged by this deception, Zain ul-Abdin promptly decamped from Sittana together with most of his thousand volunteers from Hyderabad.”<sup>76</sup>

The followers of Sayed Ahmad Shah were far from being finished with their attacks on the British, however. A British intelligence assessment on the “Hindustani Fanatics” prepared in 1895 concluded:

“...[I]t will be seen that during the past half century the Hindustanis have come into collision with us on no less than six occasions; each time they have suffered severely and been obliged to shift their residence, but, as was stated at the beginning of the report, they still remain a factor for mischief, although in a less degree than formerly, in any complication which may arise with the independent tribes on this part of the Punjab frontier.”<sup>77</sup>

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75. From Wikipedia: The Deccan Plateau, also known as the Peninsular Plateau or the Great Peninsular Plateau, is a large plateau in India, making up the majority of the southern part of the country. It is located between three mountain ranges and extends over eight Indian states. Its uplands make up a triangle nested within the familiar downward-pointing triangle of the Indian sub-continent’s coastline. It is technically a vast plateau with a wide range of habitats, encompassing most of central and southern India.

76. Allen, pp. 105-106. This story may be apocryphal as there is a similar story about Dost Mohammad’s eunuch wazir investing this cave and making the same discovery. There are either two stories or there were two separate visits to the same cave with its effigies.

77. Mason, A.H., *Report on the Hindustani Fanatics*, Simla. 1895, pg. 15.

The report was correct, except the part regarding “in a less degree than formerly” and within two years the British would have yet another uprising. The population of the Lower Swat region had been cooperating with local authorities and trade had developed between nearby Bajaur and adjacent areas. The Swatis were described as “contented.” A reporter for *The Times* reported on an abrupt change in their attitude:

“Yesterday, without the least warning, the attitude of the population of the Lower Swat Valley underwent a sudden change. The first news which reached Malakand was that a disturbance had taken place at Thana, near Chakdara bridge. A few hours later further news was received that the “mad mullah,” a priest who is apparently known locally, had gathered about him a number of armed men with the view of raising a *jihad*.”

The reporter concluded: “Malakand, which is a fortified position, is too strong to be stormed, but the garrison must be reinforced in order that the Swat Valley may be kept clear and that Chakdara may be relieved. Unless this be done, the rising may spread among the neighboring clans. The news of the attack quickly became known along the frontier, and it may possibly have an effect in Waziristan, stimulating the tribesmen there to action....”<sup>78</sup>

*The Times*’ reporter made a very accurate prediction and the tribesmen were soon “stimulated.” The “mad mullah,” or Lewanai<sup>79</sup> Faqir, claimed to have “been visited by all deceased Fakirs” and relied upon the usual assertions that bullets would be turned to water and that a pot of rice would feed multitudes. Mobilizing the Pashtuns against the British was a comparatively easy task for Saidullah<sup>80</sup>, the Lewani Faqir. Soon, Saidullah would be positioned to take advantage of this belief within a highly superstitious population and invoke the legend of the Fanatic’s Hidden Imam by claiming to have discussed the new revolt with “deceased Fakirs” to good effect against the British, much like Sayad Ahmad had done against the Sikhs 70 years earlier. But this rebellion fell apart, as they all did.

Sir Olaf Caroe provided an insightful review of a major weakness found within Pashtun tribes that shows why they generally unite for only special purposes and fail to remain united in a dynamic social system that is only strong in the short term:

“A leader appears, and united tribal sentiment in a surge of enthusiasm that carries all before it. For a while internal jealousies are laid aside, and an enthusiastic loyalty is forthcoming. Individuals are found ready to face death for a cause, and no one counts the cost. The idea of sacrifice is in the air. The crest of the wave bursts over the barrier, and the victory seems won. Then the leader gives way to vain-glory, the stimulus which gave unity fails, envy and malice show their heads. The effort, steady and sustained, which is needed to maintain the position won proves to be beyond the tribal reach. The ground won is lost, and the leader forfeits confidence and is discarded.”<sup>81</sup>

This short paragraph seems to be axiomatic when conflicts involving Pashtuns are considered. This pattern repeats itself again and again as tribal leaders during conflict reach for the broad secular power denied them during less turbulent times. As their power grows, their list of powerful enemies, many within their own families, also expands.

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78. Edwards, David B., *Heroes of the Age*, pp. 173-175.

79. Edwards, pg. 187. Edwards points out that the term *Lewani Faqir* also translated to “mad faqir,” but to the Pashtuns indicates a madness that is more of an “intoxication” while in close proximity to God.

80. Edwards, *Heroes of the Age*, pg. 187.

81. Caroe, Olaf, *The Pathans*, pp. 305-306.

## Rohillas during the Mutiny of 1857

Charles Allen, in *God's Terrorists*, explains the complex situation the British were attempting to manage in Indian kingdoms they recently annexed:

“In January 1857 the first of a series of disturbances occurred among the sepoys at the military depot of Barrackpore outside Calcutta, fed by rumours that new cartridges being introduced to the infantry were greased with cow and pork fat. Despite assurances from Halliday and from Lord Dalhousie's successor as Governor-General, Lord Canning, that the Government would continue to treat ‘the religious feelings of all its servants, of every creed, with respect’, these rumours spread up-country. In Lucknow, former capital of the annexed Kingdom of Oude<sup>82</sup>, there was widespread support for the restoration of the deposed Nawab – support that extended to large numbers of sepoys and sowars in the Bengal Army many of whom were originally from Oude. In and around Delhi, too, there were just as many who wished to see the old emperor to his former glory and an end to the humiliations heaped on him by the British.

“Had these various conspirators acted together, the outcome of the 1857 Mutiny would have been very different. That they failed to do so was in some measure due to the Wahhabis, who alone had a well-thought-out plan to overthrow the British and the links to co-ordinate its execution. But theirs was a plan that called for an exclusively Sunni Muslim jihad and for the strike against the British to come not from a city in Hindustan but from Sittana and in alliance with the Afghan border tribes. The surviving evidence suggests that the Wahhabi council in Patna, under the leadership of Muhammad Hussain as the movement's senior imam, with Ahmadullah, eldest son of Elahi Bux, acting as his counselor, held themselves aloof when approached by other non-Wahhabi conspirators from Lucknow.”<sup>83</sup>

There were other reasons that the men of Sittana and Patna didn't cooperate with the mutineers from Oudh. This was the region ruled by Shujah ud-Daulah when Rohilkhand was destroyed in 1774 by combined armies of Shujah and the British East India Company. The other major reason involved the fact that Shujah was Shi'a and neither factor sat well with the Sunni “Fanatics” in Sittana. There was little thought of cooperation with the Shi'a who worked with the British to kill their leader, Hafiz Rahmat Khan, humiliate his family, and destroy their nation, Rohilkhand.

Rohilkhand was reported to be quiet following the destruction of Rohilla rule following their defeat in 1774. There is evidence that the descendents of the defeated Rohillas found employment for their military skills in the British army where they were well positioned to participate in the Mutiny. Charles Allen wrote:

“... cavalry *sowars* <sup>84</sup>of the Bengal army ... were Muslim cavalryman of Pathan-Afghan origin whose forebears had settled in Delhi and in Rohilkhand, the fertile plains east of the Jumna.”<sup>85</sup>

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82. From Wikipedia: Awadh, known in various British historical texts as Oudh, Oundh, or Oude, is a region in the centre of the modern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, which was before Independence known as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. The traditional capital of Awadh has been Lucknow, the capital of the modern day Uttar Pradesh.

83. Allen, pg. 125. Charles Allen wrote another book with details regarding the 1857 Mutiny, *Soldier Sahibs*.

84. *Sowars* seems to be a synonym for mounted soldiers. No clear definition was located.

85. Allen, pg. 107.

The region was ripe for revolt. Allen also wrote that “... since Syed Ahmad’s day Bareilly had been an outpost of Wahhabism on a par with that other Pathan bastion, Tonk.”<sup>86</sup>

The *Imperial Gazetteer of India* has the following information regarding the situation in Rohilkhand:

“In 1805, Amir Khan<sup>87</sup>, the Pindari, made an inroad into Rohilkhand, but was driven off. Disturbances occurred in 1816, in 1837, and in 1842, but the peace of the district was not seriously endangered until the mutiny of 1857.

“In that year the troops at Bareilly rose on May 31. The European officers, except three, escaped to Naini Tal; and Khan Bahadur, Hafiz Rahmat’s grandson, was proclaimed Nawab Nazim of Rohilkhand.... But the rebellion at Bareilly had been a revival of Muhammadan rule, and when the commander-in-chief marched on Jalalabad, the Nana Sahib fled back to Oudh.... The principle insurgents were congregated together in Bareilly when the English army arrived on May 5. The city was taken on May 7, and all the chiefs fled with Khan Bahadur into Oudh.”<sup>88</sup>

Much like their “Hindustani Fanatic” cousins following the British defeat in Afghanistan in 1848, the Rohilla Pashtuns also had been biding their time until an opportunity arose. There is only a small amount of literature available regarding the ethnic divisions during the mutiny, but the intensity with which it occurred in northwestern India suggests that the survivors of the 1774 war were much like Sayed Ahmad Shah’s mother and had prepared their offspring for revenge attacks against the British. The *Journal of Asian Studies* had an informative article that explained much:

“Rohilkhand, at the time of the Mutiny of 1857, was a division ... comprising the districts of Bijnor, Moradabad, Budaun, Bareilly, and Shahjahanpur. It was here and in neighboring Oudh that the uprising achieved its greatest intensity.... The Mutiny in Rohilkhand was accomplished by the Muslims, especially the Rohillas. They provided the leadership, the organization, and the momentum. The other classes, with the natural exception of the predators, were largely inactive. There can be no doubt that the Rohillas of Bareilly were aware of the intention of the local troops to mutiny and they quickly assumed command.”<sup>89</sup>

Interestingly, the region of the Mutiny’s greatest intensity was in Rohilkhand, where the Rohillas were defeated and their nation destroyed by the British and their Shi’a ally. As evidence that revenge is as important to a Rohilla Pashtun as it was to his Yusufzai forebears, the leader of the Rohilkhand mutineers was the grandson of the very Rohilla chief who was killed in the 1774 war. “The rebel leader of Rohilkhand, Khan Bahadur Khan, ... the grandson of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, the ruling chieftain at the time of Hastings’ invasion of 1774.”<sup>90</sup>

Additional research is needed in this interesting history and if the naming conventions of Rohillas are analyzed carefully for family connections or a leadership genealogy was available, much would be revealed about the probable intensity of the Rohillas during this attack against British interests in India. Far more of these Pashtuns were involved in the 1857 Mutiny than just Khan Bahadur Khan.

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86. Ibid, pg. 137.

87. This was Amir Khan, later to become the Nawab of Tonk, and Syed Ahmad Shah of Bareilly served in his mercenary company along with his older brother. See Charles Allen, *God’s Terrorists*, pg. 82. Amir Khan was a Pashtun originally from Buner.

88. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, pg. 5.

89. Brodtkin, E.I., “Proprietary Mutations and the Mutiny in Rohilkhand,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 28, No. 4 (Aug. 1969), pg. 667.

90. Ibid, pg. 680.



## Deobandi origins: A Highly Probable Connection to the Rohillas

“It will be remembered that after the martyrdom of Syed Ahmad at Balakot divisions had opened up between the Wahhabi ‘Patna-ites’ led by Wilayat Ali and the Wahhabi ‘Delhi-ites’. For many years the latter were led by Shah Waliullah’s grandson, Shah Muhammad Ishaq, whose cousin and brother-in-law were Syed Ahmad’s first two disciples. Following the death of his cousin with Syed Ahmad in 1831, Shah Muhammad Ishaq and a group of his disciples had migrated to Arabia. After an absence of many years he and his followers returned to Delhi, where Shah Muhammad Ishaq placed himself at the head of a radical circle of scholars working within the traditions established by his grandfather. After Shah Muhammad Ishaq’s death in 1846 the Madrassah-i-Rahimiya broke up into a number of interlinked schools, of which the most obviously Wahhabi was that led by Maulana Sayyid Nazir Hussain of Delhi.

“Born in 1805 Sayyid Nazir Hussain had begun his religious studies in Patna at the Sadiqqore house of one of the heads of the three Patna families, Muhammad Hussain, and it was there that he first heard Syed Ahmed speak in the 1820s. He later moved up to Delhi to sit at the feet first of Shah Abdul Aziz and then of his son and successor, Shah Muhammad Ishaq, becoming in time a highly respected teacher of Hadith. The degree to which Sayyid Nazir Hussain participated in the 1857 Mutiny can only be guessed at.

“The undisputed facts are that on 19 May 1857, eight days after the arrival of the mutineers from Meerut<sup>91</sup>, a group of mullahs erected a green banner on the roof of the city’s greatest mosque, the Jama Masjid and published a fatwa proclaiming jihad. As soon as he heard of it, the Emperor ordered the banner to be removed and denounced the jihad fatwa as great folly because it would alienate his Hindu supporters. His actions were supported by the Wahhabi ‘Delhi-ites’, but for very different reasons. Sayyid Nazir Hussain is said to have considered this declaration of jihad to be ‘faithlessness, breach of covenant and mischief’, and to have pronounced that it was a sin to take part in it. But his reasons for doing so were essentially doctrinal: he and other Sunni fundamentalists viewed the emperor as ‘little better than a heretic’ on account of his insistence on working with Shias and Hindus; and he did not consider Delhi to be a Dar-ul-Islam, making it unlawful to proclaim jihad from there. All the evidence suggests that the ‘Delhi-ites’ and other Sunni hard-liners in the city initially remained aloof from the mutineers and kept their own counsel.

“However, everything changed with the arrival in Delhi on 2 July of a large contingent of sepoys accompanied by ‘three or four thousand ghazis [warriors of the faith but, in British eyes, fanatics]’. A significant number of these ghazis, led by one Maulvi Sarfaraz Alu, were Wahhabis. They had come from the town of Bareilly (not to be confused with Syed Ahmad’s birthplace in Oude, Rae Bareli), capital of Rohilkand, which in earlier days had been an Afghan-Pathan stronghold in the plains. Ever since Syed Ahmad’s day Bareilly had been an outpost of Wahhabism on a par with that other Pathan bastion, Tonk.”<sup>92</sup>

As the Delhi mutineers began to split, there were some among them who decided to leave the city to create their own Dar-ul-Islam, an abode of faith from which jihad could be proclaimed. Two of Nazir Hussain’s disciples leaving Delhi were Muhammad Qasim and Rashid Ahmad, key leaders soon to become even more significant in the political-religious aspects of India.

Charles Allen’s excellent work continued to explain this phase of the Mutiny:

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91. Meerut is located in Uttar Pradesh, the region formerly controlled by Rohillas.

92. Allen, pg. 137.



“It was probably at this low point in early August that Sayyid Nazir Hussain’s disciple Imadadullah and three of his students – Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and Rahmatullah Kairanawi – decided to make their own jihad. For reasons that are unclear but were most probably linked to their doubts about Delhi’s religious status as a seat of jihad, these four left the city and with a number of supporters made their way along the river Jumna to the districts of Thana Bhawan<sup>93</sup>, about fifty miles due north of Delhi. Here they raised their own green banner and proclaimed holy war. The town of Thana Bhawan and the surrounding area fell to them without a fight, the British civil authorities having abandoned their posts long before.

“Hajji Imdadullah and his jihadis now set about transforming the district into a theocracy modeled on that first tried in Peshawar by Syed Ahmad thirty years earlier. Imdadullah acted as the group’s imam, but it was twenty-four-year-old Muhammad Qasim who emerged as the real leader of the group. He appointed himself its military commander, with twenty-eight-year-old Rashid Ahmad serving as his lieutenant and judge and the slightly older Rahmatullah acting as the link-man between their group and the rebels in Delhi.”<sup>94</sup>

The British counteroffensive continued against the mutineers within the walls of Delhi. Allen continues:

“As Delhi’s walls were being breached and the city stormed on September 12, a cavalry squadron moved on the second stronghold, Thana Bhawan. Meeting strong resistance, they moved to the town of Shamlee where they left a detachment to secure the town. Returning later, they found the remains of the men they left behind, victims of a massacre during a last stand they attempted in a mosque.”<sup>95</sup>

The cavalry squadron soon found itself in a difficult position, blocked by superior forces to their front and pursued by determined and well-led men from their rear. As several Muslim troopers deserted as the remaining cavalymen turned to charge, an aggressive action that resulted in victory and the deaths of “several men of importance.”<sup>96</sup>

Back to Charles Allen:

“However, it seems that the true leaders of the revolt at Thana Bhawan were not among the dead.... Two years later Rashid Ahmad was arrested as a suspected rebel, but was released after six months’ detention for lack of evidence. In due course he and the man who may well have commanded the rebels at Thana Bhawan, Muhammad Qasim, went back to Delhi to resume their studies under their old teacher Maulana Sayyid Nazir Husain.”<sup>97</sup>

Following the end of the mutiny and the trials of captured mutineers, the religious leaders of Delhi split into two groups, one that remained confrontational with the British authorities while the other group moved from confrontation toward educating a new generation of Muslim leaders.

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93. From Wikipedia: Thana Bhawan is a small town in Muzaffarnagar District in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. According to Iqbal Husain, “The fort of Ghausgarh was built at a very strategic spot, around it was settled a considerable Afghan population, the major settlements being at Jalalabad in the north, Lohari in the east and Thana Bhawan in the west.” See pg. 180 for full details regarding this Rohilla region.

94. Allen, pg. 158.

95. Allen, pg. 159.

96. Ibid, pg. 159.

97. Ibid, pp. 159-160.

Allen explains the more pragmatic approach taken by the other group, led by Muhammad Qasim and Rashid Ahmad:

“Their leaders were Muhammad Qasim and Rashid Ahmad, two of the four-man group of jihadis that had left Delhi in the summer of 1857 to create their own Dar ul-Islam at Thana Bhawan. Muhammad Qasim had acted as the group’s military commander and may well have had a hand in the massacre at Shamlee mosque; Rashid Ahmad had presided over the imposition of sharia as the group’s judge.

“In May 1866, one year after the ending of the Patna trial, these two mullahs set up their own madrassa at Deoband, a small town seventy-five miles north of Delhi and within a day’s march of their earlier stamping-ground at Thana Bhawan.”<sup>98</sup>

Firm evidence connecting Muhammad Qasim and Rashid Ahmad to the Rohilla Pashtuns is not available in the literature surveyed to this paper, but sufficient circumstantial evidence can be found to support this assertion. For instance, Thana Bhawan, located north of Delhi is inside India’s current Uttar Pradesh state, the Rohilla homeland destroyed by Shuja ud-Daulah and Warren Hasting’s East India Company forces in 1774. Iqbal Husain explains that this region was populated by large numbers of “Afghans” that we now know were Rohillas, or probably Yusufzai Pashtuns.

Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi’s surname was derived from his village of origin, Nanauta, which is located in Uttar Pradesh’s Saharanpur district. According to Iqbal Husain, Nanauta was under Afghan control and they lost some of the land they had owned by 1844.<sup>99</sup>

Rashid Ahmad Gangohi’s surname was also derived from his village of origin, Gangoh, another of Uttar Pradesh’s Afghan villages that was also located in Shahranpur district.<sup>100</sup>

Finally, not only was Deoband within a “day’s march” of Thana Bhawan, Gangoh and Nanauta were even closer. Deoband is also located in what was once Rohilkhand, populated and once dominated by Yusufzai Pashtuns. It appears probable that the Deobandi Madrassa was probably created by a pair of Yusufzai Pashtuns, probably taught in Pashto, as well as Arabic, and the missionaries created at Deoband were quickly accepted by the Pashtuns on the Afghan frontier, especially in the northern sections where they called themselves “Pakhtuns” in a Pashto dialect that was essentially unintelligible in the Pashtun south and where Qadiriya Sufism’s influence remained strong. The difference was simple: the early graduates of Deoband’s new madrassa, probably Rohilla Yusufzais in many cases, were unable to communicate with the southern Pashtuns and their efforts were concentrated in the Pashtun belt’s northern areas where the missionaries shared a common language with those tribes they sought to influence and convert to the new form of Islam.

The connection to India’s Pashtuns appears to have occurred well before Sayed Ahmad Shah led his followers to the region adjoining Peshawar. Shah Waliullah, the mentor of many of India’s future religious revolutionaries, was from the town of Phulat in what is now Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh – the center of the Rohilla Pashtuns. One of his ancestors migrated to India and settled in the town of Rohtak<sup>101</sup>, a location connected to the Pashtuns by the word “Roh” in its name – Rohilla. While Rohtak<sup>102</sup> is located in a strategic location west of Delhi, it is very possible

98. Ibid, pg. 206.

99. Husain, pg. 7.

100. From Wikipedia: Gangoh is a city and a municipal board in Saharanpur district in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

101. From Wikipedia: The forefather of Shah Waliullah, Shaikh Shamsuddin Mufti came to the subcontinent and settled in Rohtak during the initial period of Islamic rule.

102. Lying close to the imperial city of Delhi, the tract which now comprises the Rohtak district, was often granted in military Jagir by the Sultan and Mughal emperors to the Nobles of the court. For this reason Rajput, Brahman, Afghan, and Baluch chiefs have at different times enjoyed its revenues. <http://rohtak.nic.in/ginfl.htm> (accessed 25 September 2008)

that Shah Waliullah's ancestors were Pashtuns or influenced religiously by them.

Shah Waliullah was taught by Muhammad Hayat, a Naqshbandi Sufi, who was a contemporary – if not a fellow student – of Abd al-Wahhab. Charles Allen explains this connection:

“In the case of Abd al-Wahhab the facts are not quite so well documented, but we know that he studied Hadith in Medina in his late twenties under the Indian Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi, a Naqshbandi sufi and a Shafi jurist who was an admirer of Ibn Taymiyya and a student of Ibrahim al-Kurani—the teacher who taught Hadith to Shah Waliullah and introduced him to the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya. So we have the intriguing possibility that the two greatest Sunni reformers of their age not only sat at the feet of the same teachers but may even have sat in the same classes. We can also be confident that some of these teachers encouraged their students to follow Ibn Taymiyya's hard line and to regard militant jihad as a prime religious duty—which is what both Abd al-Wahhab and Shah Waliullah then went home to implement.”<sup>103</sup>

Muhammad Hayat's specific area of origin is hard to document, but this is easy to accomplish with his teacher, Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi, also an admirer of Ibn Taymiyya. Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi al-Farooqi an-Naqshbandi, was born in Sarhind on June 26, 1564.<sup>104</sup> Sarhind was located in a region under the control of Pashtuns, particularly the Lodis and Surs,<sup>105</sup> and it was destroyed by the Sikhs in 1761. Ahmad Sarhindi also lived and studied in Sialkot, another Pashtun town that was located in a part of India that was under the control of Pashtuns.<sup>106</sup> Ahmad Sarhindi may or may not have been a Pashtun, himself, but he spent most of his early life in towns in which Pashtuns were the dominant portion of the population. He passed the concept of militant jihad he shared with Abd al-Wahhab to his students, a group that included Muhammad Hayat. Hayat passed this belief to Shah Waliullah who shared it with his son, Shah Abdul Aziz, and with Sayed Ahmad Shah of Bareilly. These were the common experiences they shared: Naqshbandi Sufism, acceptance of the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya, a belief that militant jihad was a religious duty, and strong connections with India's Pashtuns, particularly the Rohillas that had their state destroyed by a Shi'a leader originating from Persia and the British East India Company. The combination of a belief in militant jihad as a religious duty and Pashtunwali's *badal*<sup>107</sup> now entered into the religious beliefs of a large population that also believed that Islam was also endangered by foreign invaders.

Charles Fox provides the impact the tragedy of the Rohillas has had on modern history as their resistance to British colonialism developed into the “Hindustani Fanatics” and the six major campaigns over half of a century that were fought to control them, repetitive insurgencies that may be continuing today:

*They will carry their melancholy tale into the numerous tribes and nations among whom they are scattered, and you may depend upon it the impression which it will make, will, sooner or later, have its effect.*<sup>108</sup>

103. <http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/articles/wpj05-2/allen.html>

104. <http://islamic-world.net/baca2.php?ArtID=139>

105. Husain, pg. 1.

106. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sialkot> (accessed 28 September 2008)

107. Badal is translated as honor-related revenge.

108. Fox, Charles James, *The Speeches of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox in the House of Commons: With a Biographical Memoir, and Introductions and Explanatory Notes*, Aylott and Co., 1853, pg. 256.s

## APPENDIX

Mason, A.H., Lt. Col, *Report on the Hindustani Fanatics*, compiled in the Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's Department, Simla, 1895.

Hindustani Fanatics – 1887 Gazetteer (by Abbott)

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Mason, A.H., Lt. Col, *Report on the Hindustani Fanatics*, compiled in the Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's Department, Simla, 1895.

### Preface

The following report on the Hindustani Fanatics has been prepared for the most part from the “Record of Expeditions against the North-West Frontier Tribes,” compiled by Lieutenant-Colonel Paget in 1873 and revised and brought up to date by me in 1884. In this report the history of the colony has been continued from 1884 up to the present time.

In view of possible contingencies in connection with the military operations now being carried on beyond the Peshawar border, it may be convenient to have the history of our past dealings with this fanatical colony in a convenient form.

A.H.M.  
G.H.M-M.

Intelligence Branch,  
Simla;  
*The 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1895.*

## REPORT on the HINDUSTANI FANATICS

The Hindustani Fanatics have been a constant source of trouble and a thorn in the side of the British Government since the annexation of the Punjab, but although they have been the immediate cause of several punitive expeditions against the independent tribes on the Peshawar border, yet, generally speaking, their origin and history are but little known. For this reason it has been thought that a short report on their rise and of their dealings with the British Government may not be without interest. Over and over again have these fanatics received punishment from our arms, and yet, as lately as the Hazara expedition of 1891, they were still to the fore, and are even now, although with nothing like the power they once had, a factor for mischief in any complications which may arise with the independent tribes on the Peshawar and Hazara frontiers. It is proposed in this report, first to describe the origin of the sect, if such a term can be applied to a band of discontented fanatical Muhammadans, and then to relate briefly the circumstances under which, under various occasions, they have come into contact with our arms, and their history generally up to the present time.

About the year 1823, one of those saintly adventurers made his appearance on the Yusafzai frontier, who have at all times managed to beguile the credulous and simple Pathan race for their own ends, and have been the means of creating discord, upheaving society, and fomenting rebellions, which have been checked and crushed with the utmost difficulty. This man was Saiad Ahmad Shah of Bareilly. At one period of his life he was the companion-in-arms of the celebrated Amir Khan, Pindari, who was himself a Pathan, born in the valley of Buner. Saiad Ahmad Shah studied Arabic at Delhi, and then proceeded to Mecca by way of Calcutta. It was during this journey that his doctrines obtained the ascendancy over the minds of the Muhammadans of Bengal, which has ever since led them to supply this colony with fresh recruits. Although the *Saiad* in after-life attempted to disguise the fact, his doctrines were essentially those of the *Wahabi* sect, inculcating the original tenets of Islam, and repudiating commentaries on the *Koran*, the adoration of relics, etc. It was in 1824 that the adventurer arrived by way of Kandahar and Kabul amongst the Yusafzai tribes of the Peshawar border, with about forty Hindustani followers.

It was just the time to raise the spirits of the Yusafzais and other Pathans, which had been lowered by the crushing defeat they and the Peshawar *Sirdars* had received from Ranjit Singh at the battle of Nowshera, by religious exhortations

Saiad Ahmad gave out that he was a man of superior sanctity, and divinely commissioned to wage a war of extermination, with the aid of all true believers, against the infidel; amongst a race so simple and superstitious, the mission of all enthusiasts like Saiad Ahmad is eminently successful. Animated by a spirit of fanaticism, and with the desire of freeing themselves from their Sikh oppressors, a numerous, although ill-disciplined, army was soon at his disposal. His own Hindustani followers had been increased by recruits till they now numbered 900 men. In addition to this, the Peshawar *Sirdars*, feeling the influence of the movement, and hoping to break the Sikh rule, joined in the crusade.

Collecting his army together, and strengthened by the contingents of Khadi Khan of Hund, Ashraf Khan of Zeyda, and the followers of the Peshawar *Sirdars*, the Saiad proceeded to Naoshera with the intent of laying siege to the fort of Attock. He found Ranjit Singh warned, Hari Singh with a large army awaited him on the Indus, and Budh Singh was sent across the river with a considerable force. Moving up to Saidu to meet the fanatics, he entrenched his army. The *Saiad* surrounded his force, and in time reduced it to great distress. Budh Singh at length determined to fight,

and, warning the *Sirdars* of the near approach of Ranjit Singh and the fate that awaited them if they acted with Saiad Ahmad, commenced the battle. The *Sirdars*, with Yar Muhammad at their head, accepting the warning, fled immediately. This act of treachery had the desired effect, and the Muhammadans were routed with great slaughter by the Sikh soldiery. Yar Muhammad derived little benefit from his act, for Ranjit Singh doubled the amount of the Peshawar tribute, desecrated the mosques, despoiled the country, and ultimately retired, taking Yar Muhammad Khan's son as a hostage.

Saiad Ahmad after this defeat, which occurred in the spring of 1827, escaped with a few followers, *via* Lundkhwar, to Swat. Thence he proceeded to Buner, and ultimately, at the invitation of some of the *Khans*, returned to Yusafzai. It leaked out then that the *Saiad's* attempt on Attock had been a failure through the treachery of Khadi Khan of Hund, who had disclosed his intention to Ranjit Singh, and who since the defeat of Saiad Ahmad had withdrawn his allegiance and support from him. The Pathans still believed in his miraculous powers; thousands swarmed around his standard, and joined by Mir Baba, the Sadum chief, and others, he determined to chastise the Khan of Hund for his misconduct. The parties met, with no decisive result; but by an act of treachery in which he was aided by the late Akhund of Swat, the *Saiad* induced Khadi Khan to visit him in a friendly way, and had him seized and slain instantly.

After this he proceeded to Panjtar (see map), and was heartily welcomed by Fateh Khan, the chief of the Khudu Khels. This connection strengthened his position among the Pathans. Aided by Fateh Khan and his own band of Hindustanis, the *Saiad* commenced a series of exploits which eventually placed the whole of Yusafzai and Peshawar under his control. He subdued the Khans of Hund and Hoti, and levied tithes from the Yusafzai clans. In 1828, by night attack he defeated the Barakzai force, which advanced against him as far as Zeyda. Subsequently he took possession of Amb. In 1829, having again defeated the Barakzais at Hoti, he occupied Peshawar. But his successful career was now brought to a close. His exactions had become oppressive to the Pathans, an attempt on his part to put a stop to their taking money on the betrothal of their daughters was still more distasteful. There was a general insurrection against him, and many of his followers, including the deputy left at Peshawar, were massacred. Fateh Khan also, having derived every advantage from the *Saiad's* presence at Panjtar, was now desirous of getting rid of his obnoxious ally. He therefore joined heartily in the scheme for the assassination of the *Saiad's* followers; but when the beacon was lighted on top of Karamar, which was the arranged signal for the slaughter, Fateh Khan found that Saiad Ahmad and his compact little army of 1,600 Hindustanis under Mullah Ismail, was a force he dared not attack openly. Finding the Mahaban no longer a safe asylum, the Hindustanis crossed the Indus and proceeded to Balakot. Here the followers of the *Saiad* again rallied round him, and army under Sher Singh marched against him. In spite of the disparity of numbers and the warning of his friends, he determined to fight. Three times did his small band of Hindustanis beat back the Sikh regiments. At last, overpowered by numbers, they were defeated and destroyed, only three hundred of their number escaping, the *Saiad* himself being slain.

Of his disciples who escaped with their lives a portion found their way to Sittana. This village had been given as a *muqfi*<sup>109</sup> grant by the Utmanzais to the *Saiads* of Tiringi on their first arrival. The village then belonged to one Saiad Akbar Shah, a man who was held in great veneration by the Utmanzais, Gaduns, and neighboring tribes, and who was declared enemy of the Sikhs. Sittana was at the time a refuge for outlaws and offenders from Yusafzai and Hazara, and was the rendezvous of all the discontented *Khans* and their followers. Saiad Akbar had served as treasurer and counselor to Saiad Ahmad, and on this account he willingly allowed the Hindustanis to gather round him. Here they settled and established a colony, and also constructed a fort near Sittana, which they called Mandi. After the British annexation of the Peshawar valley, Abdul Ghafur, the well-known Akhund of Swat, prevailed on the people of Swat to receive Saiad Akbar as their king and he was accordingly proclaimed King of Swat.

109. Rent Free



The first occasion of our coming into collision with this Hindustani colony occurred in 1853, after the expedition against the Hassanzaïs of the Black Mountain, under Lieutenant-Colonel Mackeson, C.B. The Hindustanis had then co-operated with the Hassanzaïs against our feudatory Jehandad Khan of Amb, and had actually seized a small fort of his, named Kotla, in the Amb territory, on the right bank of the Indus, and it was necessary that it should be recovered and restored to the Amb chief. Accordingly, a force was moved to a point on the left bank of the Indus opposite (see map) Kotla.

None of the tribes around had joined the Hindustanis, but the latter, in answer to the warning to them to withdraw from Kotla to their own settlements, gave no written reply, and, according to some verbal reports, sent a defiance; Maulvi Inayat Ali Khan, the leader of the Hindustanis, declaring he had come to die.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, with the aid of two boats, a force consisting of two regiments of Sikh infantry, two mountain guns, and two regiments of Dogras of the Kashmir army, under the command of Major J. Abbott, were crossed over the Indus to retake the fort.

In spite of the boasts of the Hindustanis, on the two Sikh regiments and the guns commencing the ascent of the hill on which the fort of Kotla was situated, the lost heart and fled, pursued by some of the people of Amb, who cut down more than a score of them. The rest climbed over a spur of the Mahaban separating Amb from Sittana, and night required the relinquishment of the pursuit; but it would have been easy next day to have destroyed their settlement at Sittana, which had been abandoned. It was not, however, thought necessary to do this as it was considered their flight, without offering resistance, would generally increase the contempt in which they were held by the surrounding tribes, and be more useful to us than any prosecution of them could be.

The troops bivouacked for the night near Kotla, and re-crossed the Indus the following day.

The only portion of the Peshawar district in which advantage of the Sepoy Mutiny was taken by the people to disturb the country was on the Yusafzai frontier, and this was principally due to the presence of the Hindustani Fanatics, who were supported by contributions of men and money from the traitorous princes and individuals in Hindustan.

The Yusafzai country is controlled by the fort of Mardan, which is usually garrisoned by the Corps of Guides; but in the middle of May 1857, this regiment moved down to form a portion of the Punjab Moveable Column, its place being taken by the 55<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry. At the end of May the 55<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry broke into mutiny, when about 100 sepoys were put to the sword, and about 150 taken prisoners by a column which had moved out from Peshawar under Lieutenant-Colonel John Nicholson, some 600 sepoys of the regiment making good their escape to Swat.

Two powers had hitherto reigned in Swat – the *Akhund*, or priest, and the *Badshah*, or king, whom the *Akhund* had set up for carrying on the temporal government (see above). Had these two been united in harbouring the 55<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry, and at that moment declared a *jahad* against us, there can be no doubt that it would have set fire to the valley of Peshawar and placed us in considerable difficulties. But Saiad Akbar, the king, had just died. He had long survived his popularity, and had he then been alive, would not have been allowed by the *Akhund* and chiefs of Swat to entertain

a disciplined army of Hindustani sepoy. The crisis roused these chiefs to the preservation of their liberties, and they first expelled Saiad Mubarak Shah, the son of the late king, and then the refugees of the 55<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry, who were conducted by the disciples of the *Akhund* through mountain paths to the River Indus, which they crossed at a point far above our territory, with the desperate design of making their way to Kashmir and seeking an asylum with Maharaja Gulab Singh but they were destroyed before they arrived at their destination.

A few of the sepoy of the 55<sup>th</sup> regiment had, however, shrunk from encountering the perils of the journey to Kashmir, and had joined the young Saiad Mubarak Shah, who had taken up his abode at the village of Panjtar. Not far from this village, at a place called Mangal Thana, a settlement of the Hindustanis under some *mauleis* of the Wahhabi sect had spring up, being a branch of the parent colony at Sittana. Mukarrab Khan, chief of the Khudu Khel tribe, who succeeded to the position of khan on the death of his father Fateh Khan in 1841, was also hostile to us. In 1837 his cousin Mobaraz Khan invited the Hindustani Fanatics under Maulvi Inayat Ali Khan to his village of Chinglai.

It was at this time that some of the border villages began to give way to the influences by which they were tempted to disaffection, and having refused to pay their revenue, they appealed to Mobaraaz Khan of Chinglai and the Hindustanis to come down and begin a war for Islam. The defaulting village of Shekh Jana was accordingly occupied by 250 men from Chinglai.

On this being reported Major Vaughn, 5<sup>th</sup> Punjab Infantry, commanding at Mardan, moved out on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1857, with a small force of cavalry and infantry, and attacked Shekh Jana, and with slight loss to our side drove out the enemy and pursued them to the foot of the hills.

A fortnight after the affair of Shekh Jana, the Hindustani Fanatics, under the leadership of Maulvi Inayat Ali Khan, crossed the border and raised the standard of religious warfare at the mountain village of Narinji (see map). Narinji is on the extreme border, and, being very difficult of access, had become an asylum for bad characters, and had several times defied the authorities in Yusafzai; at the last moment, however, the *maliks* had always hitherto saved the place from destruction by submission and reparation. The villagers were proud that the place had more than once been attacked by a Sikh force without success.

The number of Hindustani followers with the *Maulvi* was about 150 people and he had also some 30 or 40 of the men of the late 55<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry. The fighting men of Narinji were about 400, and 40 horsemen had joined the party from Panjtar, under the brother of Mukarrab Khan. A few horsemen had also come down from Swat, and several of the fugitives from Shekh Jana were with the *Maulvi*.

On the night of the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1857, a force of 700 infantry, a troop of cavalry, four guns, and some mounted levies and police, under the command of Major Vaughan marched from Mardan with the object of surprising Narinji. The village was sighted at daylight on the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. The surprise was complete, the enemy making such hasty preparations as were possible after the troops were seen.

The position of the village was very strong. It was built in terraces, and situated at the foot of a precipitous hill, the spurs of which surrounded it on three sides; but in the front the ground was open and practicable for cavalry. A broad sandy *nala* ran along the foot of the hill, on the other side of which *nala*, facing Narinji, was another range of heights. The slopes of the hill above Narinji were very steep, though practicable for infantry.

Major Vaughan's force was not strong enough to enable him to crown the heights above the village before attacking it in front; moreover, the men had had a long night's march, the season of the year was very trying, and it was not advisable to attempt the long and laborious operation of crowning the heights, or, whilst the enemy's strength was undeveloped, to divide the fire. So taking up a position favourable for artillery fire, the mountain guns opened with shot and shell on the place.

The maliks had been previously called upon to give up the Maulvi, but as in their reply they ignored his presence, the infantry advanced in skirmishing order, and, after a tenacious resistance on the part of the enemy, made themselves masters of the lower part of the village, and of the rocks which flanked it. There were several strong breastworks in the upper part of the village, and the enemy, who were very numerous, then pressed down to try and drive the infantry out of the position they had won, but though they fought with great bravery, and some even descended into the plain, they were driven back with loss, and the destruction of the village was commenced. A desultory fire was maintained on the troops from above, whose efforts to destroy the village were materially impeded, but soon columns of smoke rose in all directions and the lower village was destroyed.

About 8 A.M. Major Vaughan determined on retiring, as it was not probable that further injury could be inflicted that day.

The troops had been severely worked, and soon would have become exhausted from the almost intolerable heat. To show the trying nature of the weather, it is only necessary to say that the force had forty men, soldiers and camp-followers, struck down by the sun during the previous day, nine of whom died, including the farrier-sergeant of the Peshawar Mountain Train Battery. The supply of water, too, would have become scarce, as it had to be brought from the villages in the rear by the people and on donkeys. The villagers behaved well in this respect, and there was an abundant supply during the time the troops were employed.

The retirement was effected without the slightest opposition on the part of the enemy, although the ground was most favourable for them, and the troops reached their camp at 10 A.M.

The losses of the enemy had been severe. Independently of those who must have been killed or wounded by the guns on the higher slopes above the village which the infantry did not reach, fifty of the enemy fell in the lower village alone; many of these were Hindustanis. The wounded were estimated at fifty more.

Our loss had been five killed and twenty-one wounded.

But the people of Narinji remained stubborn and would not expel the *Maulvi*, and soon after a raid was made on cattle in British territory so nothing remained to be done but to renew the attack on that place.

It was known, too, that reinforcements had been received, including Hindustanis, from Mangal Thana and Sittana, and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August there were 1000 men in Narinji. Early on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, Major Vaughan, who had received reinforcements from Peshawar, for the second time advanced against the village. A force having been detached to take the enemy in flank and rear the main body moved forward and came in sight of Narinji soon after sunrise. As the force approached many of the auxiliaries fled, Maulvi Inayat ali Khan being among the first to leave the village.

As soon as the main body had come into position opposite the village, fire was opened upon it from the guns, which was only feebly replied to. The turning column in the meantime, after encountering determined opposition, had arrived in the rear of Narinji, and the village was carried by a simultaneous advance from front and rear.

The work of destruction was then commenced. Not a house was spared; even the walls of many were destroyed by elephants. The towers were blown up and the village was soon a mass of ruins. Three prisoners were taken – one was a Bareilly maulvi, the second a Chamla standard-bearer, and the third a vagrant of Charouda; they were all subsequently executed.

When the destruction of the village was completed, the troops were withdrawn. Not a shot had been fired at them during the six hours they held possession of the place; nor was a shot fired at them as they withdrew.

At the end of October following the destruction of Narinji related above, Lieutenant J.C. Horne, Assistant Commissioner of the Yusafzai, whilst encamped at Shekh Jana with a small escort, was attacked by the Hindustanis and Chinglai Khudu Khels, aided by the Shekh Jana and Narinji people. Lieutenant Horne was forced to fly (as Shekh Jana would not receive him), and take refuge in a ravine. Being favoured by darkness, he saved his life. All of his baggage was, however, taken, and five of his servants were killed. There is no doubt that Mukarrab Khan and nearly all the *maliks* of Shekh Jana were in league with the Fanatics.

To punish this flagrant outrage, Lieutenant-Colonel H.B. Edwardes, the Commissioner of Peshawar, strongly urged that, as soon as troops were available, due punishment should be inflicted for these wanton and unprovoked hostilities.

Accordingly a large force (4,877 of all ranks) under Major-General Sir Sydney Cotton was assembled in April 1858, and advanced across the border into the Khudu Khel country. Panjtar was destroyed, and on the 26<sup>th</sup> April the village of Chinglai, containing about 1000 houses, was destroyed together with its fort and crops.

After the destruction of Panjtar and Chinglai, the troops returned to British territory, but on the 28<sup>th</sup> April Sir Sydney Cotton again advanced into the Khudu Khel country with the objective of destroying Mangal Thana, the headquarters of Maulvi Inayat Ali Khan. On the morning 29<sup>th</sup> April the force arrived at Mangal Thana. Not a shot had been fired at the troops as they laboured up the steep and wooded path, and the fort was found abandoned with every sign of hasty and recent flight. Mangal Thana consisted of two villages, in the upper of which was the fortified house of Inayat Ali Khan, with enclosures for Hindustani followers. Other fortifications had been laboriously constructed of large stones and fine timbers, and the Hindustani Fanatics and thieves who flocked to this place must have lived in great enjoyment and security, and it was easy to understand the prestige that surrounded them.

The advanced troops bivouacked at Mangal Thana for the night, the sappers being engaged all night in mining the buildings. At daylight on the 30<sup>th</sup> April, the troops being drawn off, the mines were fired, and when the dust and smoke cleared away, Mangal Thana existed no longer.

The site of Mangal Thana was probably between 5,000 and 6,000 feet above the level of the sea. The trees grew thickly, and the scenery about it was much like that of Murree.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> April the whole of the British troops returned to British territory and halted on the 1<sup>st</sup> May.

It now only remained to deal with the colony of fanatics at Sittana, for which the purpose of the force, under the command of Major-General Cotton proceeded towards Khabal (see map), distant from Sittana about four miles, where it encamped on the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

On the evening of the same day, the Major-General, having reconnoitered the hills and villages of the enemy, determined to make the assault on the following morning. Arrangements had been made to assault the enemy's position from the east and south simultaneously, and the enemy was driven from their main position, which they defended desperately, with considerable loss. The fanatics had Pathan allies from the neighboring Gadun tribe, but their heart was not in the business, and they fled precipitately.

The fighting of the Hindustanis was marked with fanaticism; they came boldly and doggedly on, going through all the preliminary attitudes of the Indian prize-ring, but in perfect silence, without a shout or word of any kind. All were dressed in their best for the occasion, mostly in white; but some of the leaders wore velvet cloaks.

The position of the enemy being carried at all points, and their villages destroyed, the Major-General determined to withdraw the troops. In the afternoon, the enemy, chiefly Pathans, rallied again upon another height; they had been joined by considerable numbers during the day, but the Major-General, in concert with the Commissioner, determined to adhere only to the object in hand, and not pursue the enemy further into the hills, where the troops would have come in collision with the Gadun and the other independent tribes.

As the troops withdrew, the enemy followed up closely, but were kept in check by the rear guard, aided by the fire of two 5 ½ mortars,

It was dusk before all the troops had descended the hill, and the force encamped for the night on the Sittana plain by the bank of the Indus.

Our losses were six killed and twenty-nine wounded; those of the enemy were – Hindustanis fifty, Pathans ten killed. The number of the wounded was not known, but the enemy acknowledged that they were numerous. Two Hindustanis were taken prisoners, one a native of Rampur, the other a Bengali, and they were summarily hanged at Sittana. On the 5<sup>th</sup> the force returned to Khabal, and thence marched to Naoshera, where it was broken up.

As a result of these operations the Utmanzai and Gadun tribes entered into an agreement not to allow the Hindustanis to re-occupy Sittana.

After this, the fanatics retired to Malka, a village on the slopes of Mahaban, granted to them by the Amazai tribe.

In 1861, however, they again came down to a place called Siri, just overhanging their old haunt at Sittana, and commenced sending robbers

into Hazara to carry off Hindu traders. The offence of the Gaduns were accordingly placed under blockade, and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1861 they came in and made their submission, and consented to enter into fresh engagements to exclude the Hindustanis.

During the autumn of 1862, and ensuing cold season, there was a considerable immunity from these kidnapping practices; but on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1863, it was reported that the Hindustanis had suddenly reoccupied Sittana. No attempt to prevent their doing so was made by the Gadun or Utmanzai tribes, and some of their members actually invited them. These tribes, being called upon for their reasons for having broken their engagements they had entered into, only afforded evasive replies; the Gaduns laying the blame on the Utmanzais, and the Utmanzais on the Gaduns; and as the *siaids* and Hindustanis were sending threatening messages to our feudatory, the chief of Amb, a blockade of the Gadun and Utmanzai tribes was again imposed, and militia were entertained for the defense of the territory of the Amb chief.

Maulvi Abdulla with his Hindustani followers now commenced to act in the bitterest spirit against the British Government; the leaders of the colony expressly declared that they were embarked on determined opposition to the infidel, and called on all good Muhammadans to quit the friendship of the unbelieving and join the would-be martyrs of the faith. A letter to this effect was sent to the chief of Amb.

The neighboring tribes, such as the Hassanzais and Mada Khels, instigated by the *Maulavi* of Sittana, now commenced to give trouble, and it was considered that the time had arrived when it became absolutely necessary to have recourse to military operations, as the majority of the Hazara border tribes were now arrayed against the British Government.

An expedition was accordingly sanctioned by the Supreme Government, the first object of which was to effectually rid the frontier of the chronic cause of the disturbance – the Hindustani Fanatics. Their mere expulsion from the right bank of the Indus back upon their old posts at Malka, and on the south bank of the Barandu, was not considered enough; nor was it though advisable that they should find shelter in Swat, and making that powerful tribe the future focus of disturbance on the frontier. If possible, the line of retreat of the fanatics towards the Barandu was to be cut off; and although their extirpation might not be possible, yet their dispersion would be in lines of direction favourable to their capture, if the co-operation of the well-disposed sections of the tribes could be obtained.

With this object in view it was decided to advance by the Ambela pass into the Chamla valley so as to attack the Hindustanis from the north, and force them to fight with their backs to the plains (see map).

It is not proposed to enter into the history of the Ambela expedition, the most serious, both as regards the opposition offered and the losses sustained, of the many frontier expeditions which have been undertaken on the Punjab border since the annexation.

A brief summary of the events of the campaign will not, however, be out of place.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1863, the force under the command of Brigadier-General Sir Neville Chamberlain advanced from Nawakila into the Ambela pass, meeting with but slight opposition. Owing to the difficulties of the road the baggage became blocked, and to allow this to come up the force was halted in the pass on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The following day a reconnaissance was sent forward into the Chamla valley, which was found unoccupied,



but on the return of the party they were attacked by large numbers of Bunderwals who had descended from their hills on the north to cut off the retirement of the force. The enemy were repulsed, with the loss of three killed and twenty wounded on our side, among the former being an officer. It subsequently appeared that a letter had been sent to the Buner chiefs by Maulvi Abdulla, the leader of the Hindustani fanatics, warning them that although the object of the expedition was ostensibly to punish the Hindustanis, it was in reality to lay waste and annex Chamla, Bunder, and Swat. This letter, as rousing the suspicions of the Buner people, may have had something to do with the unexpected opposition by them.

That the Buner people thus should have taken a decidedly hostile part against us was extremely serious, and not only altered our position in the hills but necessitated a change in the plan of operations.

With a powerful and warlike tribe like the people of Buner in declared hostility on the left flank of the proposed line of march, it was extremely doubtful if the advance into Chamla was feasible.

Moreover, it was reported that a portion of all events of the Hindustanis had already joined the Bunerwals, so that now they would have to be sought elsewhere than on the spurs of the Mahaban.

In the meantime the communications with the rear had been improved, and the sick together with all spare carriage was sent to the rear. Reinforcements from neighboring tribes were daily joining the enemy and steps were taken to strengthen the position occupied by our troops on the crest of the pass so as to be prepared to resist all attacks.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> October the enemy made a determined attack on our position, their efforts being chiefly directed against what was known as the “Eagle’s Nest” picquet, but were eventually repulsed with a loss of some 250 killed, besides many wounded. Our losses had also been severe and included two officers killed and two wounded. The enemy consisted of the Hindustanis and Bunerwals. Upwards of thirty bodies of the former were counted on the ground after the fighting was over.

It was observed that both the wounded and dead bodies of the Hindustanis on this and subsequent occasions were left by their allies, who seemed to look upon the Hindustanis as they might upon earthen vessels, to be thrown at our heads in the day of battle, when no doubt their utility was appreciated, but of which it was quite superfluous to think of picking up the fragments if they happened to get broken in the fray. But what their allies would not do was performed by our troops; for under the orders of Sir Neville Chamberlain, these mutilated rebels of our own territories, together with some Bunerwals, were taken into our hospitals and carefully and tenderly treated. Two of the wounded Hindustanis appeared to be soldiers of the late 55<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry, and many of them were young men, apparently from Bengal; they used the old pattern musket and Government ammunition.

The Hindustani fanatics were under the leadership of Maulvi Abdalla. They numbered at the commencement of the operations about 900 men, most of whom had been wrought up to a pitch of fanaticism, and were all prepared to lay down their lives. It is, indeed, only man animated by this spirit who can be found willing to leave their homes in India, and take up their residence in these rugged mountains. Widely separated in language, manners, and interests from the people amongst whom they dwelt, receiving only a bare subsistence from the *Maulvi* who entertained them, and paying exorbitantly for all the supplies they consumed, their life was passed in a manner no means congenial to natives of Hindustan. They were

drilled on our system, and some were clothed like the sepoy of the old Indian army. Three of the *jamadars* had been non-commissioned officers in the late 55<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry. The *Maulvi* himself had been about four years in these parts. He was the nephew of that Maulvi Inayat Ali Khan who gave so much trouble in 1857 at Naranji (see above), and was a man of good ability. He it was who appropriated all the contributions received from India for the colony, from which he derived a rich income.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> news was received that the Akhund of Swat<sup>110\*</sup> had joined, with large contingents of men from Swat, Dir, and Bajaur, and it was computed that the total number of men in arms against us was now about 15,000. Old animosities were for the time in abeyance, and, under the influence of fanaticism, tribes usually hostile to each other had joined, or were hastening to join, the *Akhund's* standard, and to fight for the sake of their common faith.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> October, the first result of the combination between the *Akhund* and the *Maulvi* showed itself. On the right of our position above the main picquets was a high rock, subsequently known as the "Crag." The ascent to this was most precipitous, but it was found necessary to hold it to prevent it being occupied by the enemy, as it was the key of the whole position. About half an hour before daylight on the 30<sup>th</sup> this picquet was attacked, and the small party holding it were overpowered and driven off the rock. Orders were given for the position to be retaken, and after a severe hand-to-hand fight the enemy were driven out at the point of the bayonet, the position recovered, and three standards taken.<sup>111ψ</sup>

The attack had been made by the Hindustani fanatics, who lost fifty-four killed on the spot and some wounded.

While this fighting was going on, attacks had been made on other parts of the camp, but by 10 A.M. the enemy had been beaten off at all points. Our losses during the day had been fifty-five killed and wounded.

Between 31<sup>st</sup> October and the 5<sup>th</sup> November the enemy kept up a desultory fire on our picquets, but on the 6<sup>th</sup> November a determined attack was made on the troops covering parties working on the road towards the village of Ambela. This attack was only repulsed after severe loss, including three officers killed and two wounded.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> and again on the 10<sup>th</sup> a flag of truce was shown by the enemy, but the war party was still in the ascendant, and nothing was affected.

On the night of the 12<sup>th</sup>, an attack was made on the "Crag" picquet. This had been much enlarged and strengthened since the attack on 30<sup>th</sup> October, and the enemy were eventually driven off. The following night the attack was renewed and this time with better success, and for the second time the "Crag" fell into the hands of the enemy. The defenders appear to have been seized with an unaccountable panic, but the nature of the ground and the thickness of the brushwood enabled the enemy to concentrate a large force on the picquet without being observed. Lieutenant Davidson, 1<sup>st</sup> Punjab Infantry, who commanded, behaved in a most heroic manner, and, after endeavoring in every way to recall the men to a sense of their duty, was killed at his post.

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110. \* The Akhund of Swat was a very remarkable man. Originally a *saiad* of Buner, he had passed his life in close study and ascetism, and at this time must have been about seventy years of age. He had gained an immense ascendancy over the minds of the Muhammadans in general, and more particularly over the tribes of the Peshawar frontier, and his position towards them can best be illustrated by comparing it with that of the Pope of Rome.

111. ψ Lieutenants Fosbery and Pitcher subsequently received the Victoria Cross for their distinguished conduct on this occasion.

On news of this disaster being received, reinforcements were at once ordered up, and the height was stormed and the picquet retaken by the 101<sup>st</sup>, joined *en route* by detachments from other regiments. The enemy's loss in this affair was 230, 57 bodies being left on the ground. Our loss was 51 killed and 107 wounded.

From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> November no serious attempts were made by the enemy. On the 18<sup>th</sup> a change of positions was effected, and the whole force was concentrated to the south of the Ambela pass. This movement seems to have led the enemy to suppose that the force was in retreat, and consequently they came down in great numbers and attacked the advanced picquets, but were eventually driven off with the loss of 130 killed and upwards of 200 wounded. Our loss was 43 killed (including four British officers) and 75 wounded. The following day the enemy kept up a fire on the picquets and we suffered some slight loss, including one officer killed and another wounded.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> the enemy began to collect in large numbers in the neighborhood of the "Crag" picquet, and having advanced under cover within a few yards of the breastworks, they made a determined attack, and at 3 P.M. they again obtained possession of the post. Two officers whilst endeavoring to rally the men were killed at the breastworks. On the fall of the "Crag" coming to the notice of Sir Neville Chamberlain, he ordered up strong reinforcements, and the 71<sup>st</sup>, supported by the 5<sup>th</sup> Punjab Infantry and 5<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas, stormed and recaptured the position. The commanders of these three regiments were all wounded during the day, and Sir Neville Chamberlain also received a severe wound, which subsequently obliged him to relinquish the command of the force, his orderly officer being also wounded.

Thus for the third time the "Crag" picquet was lost and won – a spot which, from the heavy losses sustained there on both sides, had become known in the country as "Kutlgar," or the place of slaughter.

The action of the 20<sup>th</sup> seemed to have had a depressing effect upon the enemy, notwithstanding that they had gained a temporary success, and had wounded the Brigadier-General, which last injury it would have been natural for them to make and think a great deal of. However, from the 20<sup>th</sup> November to the 15<sup>th</sup> December (as will be seen hereafter) they made no further attack in force, and at one time their gathering had dwindled down so much that there appeared a possibility of their giving up the game altogether.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> November, Major-General Garvock arrived in camp and assumed command of the force, which had now been strongly reinforced. In the meantime negotiations had been going on with the enemy, but these having failed, orders were issued on the 14<sup>th</sup> December for offensive measures to be undertaken the next day. Accordingly at daybreak on the 15<sup>th</sup> December the attacking force, consisting of 4,800 men, moved out of camp.

The enemy occupied a formidable position, known as the "Conical" hill, which was strengthened by stone breastworks offering no ordinary obstacle. Under cover of the mountain guns this position was assaulted and carried at the point of the bayonet, and the enemy were soon in full flight. Fighting continued all day, but by evening the enemy had been driven back in great confusion into the plain below, leaving their dead on all sides. The troops bivouacked for the night on the ground they had gained. Our losses during the day had been 16 killed and 67 wounded, while those of the enemy were 400 killed and wounded.

On the following day the force continuing the advance debouched into the open plain, and advanced across the valley to the pass entering into Buner, where the enemy had taken up a strong position.

The village of Ambela was fired *en route*, and the troops then advanced against the enemy's position. The brunt of the fighting fell on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Pioneers, upon whom as they advanced the enemy made a furious onset, sword in hand. These regiments staggered for the moment by the suddenness of the onslaught, turned quickly on their assailants and destroyed the whole of them, not allowing one to escape. Upwards of 200 of their bodies were left upon the field, forty of whom were Hindustanis. Among the casualties on our side, in these two regiments, one officer was killed and four wounded. Flushed with success, the Pioneer regiments pushed forward into the pass, driving the enemy before them. But the day being far spent, the withdrawal of the troops was ordered, and this was effected without any molestation whatever on the part of the enemy, and the force bivouacked for the night in the neighborhood of the village of Ambela. During the night the enemy were all in rapid flight towards their homes, and the following morning the Buner *jirga* came in to camp and not even talking of terms, asked for orders.

They were accordingly required to send a party to completely destroy the Hindustani settlement of Malka, and to see this work properly carried out some British officers were to accompany the party. This was agreed to, and late on the afternoon of the 21<sup>st</sup> December the Buner *jirga* with the British officers arrived at Malka, where they took up their quarters for the night.

Malka was situated on an elevated plateau, on a northern spur of the Mahaban range. It was a larger and more substantial place than any known in those hills, containing several large edifices, among which the *Maulvi's* hall of audience, barracks for the soldiers, stabling, and a powder manufactory, formed conspicuous objects. There were no regular fortifications, but the outer walls of the houses were connected, and formed a continuous line of defense with posterns. There was also a tower at the gateway.

The place was found deserted, and on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> December the whole settlement was entirely destroyed and the party returned to the camp in the Ambela pass, which was reached on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the whole force returning to British territory.

The total loss on our side during the above operations had been 908 killed and wounded, including 15 British officers killed and 21 wounded.

The loss of the enemy was estimated at 3,000 killed and wounded.

It now only remained to destroy the fort which the Hindustanis had built at Mandi near Sittana, where they had returned in the previous July, and to effect this a brigade was moved to Khabal, and the *jirgas* of the Utmanzais and Gaduns were required to destroy the place. Mandi had been recently much improved and contained some substantial houses. On the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1864, the whole was destroyed and burnt by the *jirgas*, and the walled enclosure, denominated a fort, was leveled. Sittana was found still a ruin as it had been left by Sir Sydney Cotton in 1858. On the 5<sup>th</sup> the troops returned to British territory, where the Gaduns and Utmanzais, having executed fresh agreements not to permit the return of the Hindustanis to any part of their country, and the Mada Khel and Amazai having signed similar agreements, the force was broken up.

The history of the Hindustani fanatics subsequent to the Ambela campaign is not very easy to follow, but it appears that after their expulsion from Malka, the greater number of the fanatics, led by Maulvi Abdulla, retreated into the Chagarzai country, north of the Barandu river. After a time they obtained from the Chagarzais grants of the villages of Tangor and Batora, where they made permanent settlements, and remained undisturbed up to the commencement of 1868. Their position was, however, by no means comfortable. The people amongst whom they dwelt made them pay dearly for the protection afforded them, and for the supplies they received; and it was only by the greatest efforts that their agents in Hindustan were enabled to forward to them sufficient money for their support. They were, moreover, frequently threatened with expulsion by their hosts, who forcibly prevented the completion of two towers which the *Maulvi* had commenced to erect in Batora. The *Akhund* also looked upon them with no friendly eye; their Wahhabi inclinations were abhorrent to him, and their position in the country was a standing menace; for their leaders maintained their position only by intrigue, and were ready tools in the hands of the rival faction in Buner and elsewhere, followers of the Kota *Mulla*.<sup>112\*</sup>

It is not surprising that, with this constant pressure on them both at home and abroad, the community was several times on the point of dissolution. During the autumn of 1866, Muhammad Isak and Muhammad Yakub, two of their leaders, made several attempts to open communications with Colonel J. R. Becher, C.B., the Commissioner of Peshawar, through the instrumentality of Saiad Muhammad (formerly in our service); their letters were received, and messages sent to them, but their plans were entirely frustrated by the vigilance of Maulvi Abdulla, who appears to have gained an entire ascendancy over all the other leaders. Matters remained thus until the beginning of 1868, the fanatics being too engaged with their own quarrels and intrigues to annoy us or continue the system of highway robbery in our territories which had first led to the recommendation by the Punjab government for punitive expeditions in 1858 and 1863.

In February 1868 that the fighting men of the Hindustanis, numbering 400 or 500, had moved from Tangor and Batora to Bajkatta in Buner, on the invitation of Azim Khan of Bajkatta, an opponent of the *Akhund* and firm supporter of his rival the Kota *Mulla*. Azim Khan offered to give the Hindustanis houses and lands in his village if they would erring over their families and settle there permanently; his offer was accepted, and the fanatics accordingly abandoned Tangor and Batora. Nothing more was heard of them until the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, when the arrival of Feroz Shah, the son of the last king at Delhi, at Bajkatta, was reported by Azim Khan himself, who wrote to the Commissioner of Peshawar to make his excuses for harbouring men whom he knew to be mortal enemies of the British Government. Feroz Shah had arrived some months before at Saidu, the residence of the *Akhund*, in great poverty, and with only four attendants; he was well received, and reported to be in high favour, until the evil news of the arrival in Buner of some of his countryman reached the *Akhund*.

The movement of the fanatics into Buner was fatal to them; at a distance they might have been tolerated, and in time possibly have regained their prestige. The *Akhund* now lost no time in exerting all his influence to get rid of what he knew would be a fruitful source of trouble to him.

By skillful management he was enabled to conciliate and bring over all the Buner tribes of the opposite faction, Azim Khan, Zaidulla Khan, Nawab Khan, and a few other chiefs along holding aloof. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, at a large meeting of all the Buner tribes convened by Mirji Khan, and most trusted of the itinerant *shekhs* of the *Akhund*, it was determined it was determined that the Hindustanis should be expelled from Buner, their presence being displeasing to the *Akhund* and contrary to the terms of the treaty made with the British Government. In consequence of this resolve, the fanatics, to the number of 700 fighting men, accompanied by Feroz Shah and Azim Khan, made a precipitate retreat to Malka, where they commenced

112. \* Kota was a village in the south-west corner of Yusufzai. Saiad Amir, better known as the Kota Mulla, was at this time one of the rivals of the Akhund in the religious world.



to re-build their houses, and made arrangements with the Amazais for supplies. In the meantime, Maulvi Abdalla in person visited the *Akhund*, and found means to turn away his anger, for Mirja Khan was recalled, and permission given to the Hindustanis to re-settle in Buner. The greater portion of them returned to Bajkatta, but had not been there very long before the intrigues of their leaders again brought them into trouble. Maulvi Abdalla was induced to join a league that had been formed by Azim Khan and other Buner chiefs, together with the Amazai and Mukarrab Khan, chief of the Khudu Khel, to oppose the influence of the *Akhund*, and obtain for Mukarrab Khan recovery of his former possessions and reinstatement at Panjtar. Mukarrab Khan – who, after his expulsion from the Totalai villages and the destruction of Panjtar and Mangal Thana in 1858 by our troops, had come in to the Commissioner of Peshawar, and been allowed to reside in British territory, was the prime mover in this plot, by which he sought to regain his former possession; his money cemented the various alliances, and purchased the neutrality of some of the Buner chiefs. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, Zaidulla Khan committed the first overt act of hostility by seizing a number of Swat traders passing through his lands. The *Akhund* immediately mustered his followers, and directed the Buner tribes to break up the league by expelling the Hindustanis and putting to death the refractory chiefs. In pursuance of his orders, Zaidulla Khan was treacherously assassinated in his own house. On the 12<sup>th</sup> August they arrived, together with the *Akhund's* followers, before Bajkatta, and sent a message to the *Maulvi*, giving him one day to remove all his followers, women, and children.

The fanatics at first thought of resistance, and exchanged a few shots with the Salarzais, but were induced by Azim Khan to give in and commence preparations for a retreat. The next day the whole body evacuated Bajkatta, the women and children being sent on ahead, and the rear brought up by a guard of fifty or sixty men armed with rifles. For the first few miles all went well; the Buner men being occupied in plundering and burning the deserted settlement; but as the fugitives neared the pass between Bajkatta and Batora they saw that the hills on both sides were held by the *Akhund's* followers. The mass of fugitives, including Mauvli Abdalla, Azim Khan, and the Buner chiefs, pushed on through the pass, and made their escape with slight loss, but the rear guard was cut off, and after a gallant stand, entirely destroyed. From Batora the fugitives fled to Gulima Bori, in Chagarzai territory; here they obtained a short respite, and even conceived hopes of being able to establish themselves permanently, being promised support, in the event of an attack, by the Amazais and one section of the Chagarzais.

The power of the *Akhund*, increased by his complete triumph over the rival faction in Buner, was, however, too great for them. The Chagarzais, in obedience to his orders, expelled the fanatics, who continued their flight through Tangor to Bihar, on the right bank of the Indus, where they arrived about the 18<sup>th</sup> of September with some twenty or thirty wounded men. Later accounts of them are very conflicting, but it is certain that the *Maulvi*, with some hundreds of followers, came over to Judha, and that many of them remained there till the British force arrived on the crest of Black Mountain in 1868. The fanatics were welcomed and given the grant of a hamlet in Judha, and were enabled to purchase several rafts, thus getting command of the river, and making themselves independent of the extortionate Pathan ferrymen whilst at Judha. The *Maulvi* received letters in 1868, it is said, from the Tikari chief, who offered to give the whole body of fugitives an asylum in his fort, and land in the Tikari valley, and also from the Allai *jirga* and the chief of Thakot, who promised to come to Judha to hold a great council and discuss measures of resistance against the British. Mubarak Shah was also summoned, and the war party, cis-Indus, was daily increasing. It seems probable that, a month later, the force under Major-General Wilde would have found a powerful coalition and some organized plan of defense, but our rapid approach disconcerting them, the fanatics hastily re-crossed the river, deserting their Chagarzai hosts, thereby departing from their profession as soldiers of the faith, and destroying the last remnant of their former prestige, already injured by the treatment they had met with at the hands of the *Akhund* and his disciples. The main body of them then went to Palosi, a village of the trans-Indus Hassanzais, who refused, however, to allow them a permanent settlement. From Palosi, they went to Thakot, but finding no resting-place there, moved down the river to Bihar and Judha of the Chagarzais; and being obliged to abandon this refuge also, they at last threw



themselves on the mercy of the Hassanzais. Here they received some land called Maidan near the village of Palosi, which is on the right bank of the Indus, about fifteen miles from Darband. At Maidan they erected buildings surrounded by a mud wall and flanked by towers, forming a kind of fort, and here the colony, numbering 600 to 700, lived under their aged chief Maulvi Abdulla, paying to the Hassanzais some Rs. 800 a year as rent for their lands, gardens, and buildings.

During the Buner complications in 1885 the Hindustani colony was not actually hostile, but their missionaries were very active, and it is probable that, had an expedition been sent into Buner, they would have joined the Bunderwals against the Government, and as a fact they made the probability of such an expedition a reason for asking for contributions from their supporters throughout India.

In May 1885, Maulvi Abdulla sent a letter to the Deputy Commissioner of Hazara, complaining that there was a debt due the colony of Rs. 8000 from two men residing in British territory, and requesting that the claims might be settled by the Government, and threatening that, if this were not done, reprisals would be undertaken. It appeared on enquiry that there was no ground for this claim, and the Commissioner was directed, if he considered it necessary to reply at all to the *Maulvi's* communications, to inform him that letters accompanied by threats could not be attended to.

In the complications with the Black Mountain tribes which immediately preceded the dispatched the expedition of 1888, the aged Maulvi Abdulla with 120 Hindustanis from Maidan joined the Hassanzais on the crest of the Black Mountain and in making demonstrations against British territory.

In July, orders were issued for the colony of fanatics to be included in the blockade of the Black Mountain tribes. When it was rumored that an expedition was to be sent to punish those tribes, Mullah Abdalla held back as far as his profession would allow; and if he did not actually counsel submission, he did not encourage opposition, knowing that the brunt of fighting would fall upon his followers, that the result was a foregone conclusion, and that to stand up and fight meant annihilation. He judged more correctly than the tribesmen that they could not fight against breech-loaders, that the river could be crossed, and roads blasted out of the rocks where even the country traders' mules could not pass. When the hour of trial came, only some one hundred of his band, joined by a few score of fanatics from among our own subjects and neighboring clans, tempted fate at Kotakai and charged sword in hand to be mown down like grass. Of the 88 dead counted on the spot where the *Ghazi* rush was made during the action of Kotkai on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1888, only 48 were identified as Hindustanis. Maulvi Abdulla and the main body watched events from the further bank of the Indus, a sad falling off from their profession of the faith, and one which had the effect of lowering still more their prestige and fame.

Nine days later a force was crossed over to the right bank of the Indus, and after blowing up its principal bastions, burned the Hindustani fort and settlement of Maidan to the ground, without a blow being struck in its defence.

Subsequent to the Hazara expedition of 1888, Maulvi Abdalla and his following, still numbering some 600, took up their quarters near Kabalgram among the Chagarzai and Akhund Khel of the Indus valley, and they were located there when the hazara expedition of 1891 took place. Although they were bound by the exigencies of their peculiar position as a band of "irreconcilables" settled among foreigners to take the lead again in opposing our troops, they did not dare another open attack by daylight, but resorted to an attempt to affect a night surprise. On the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1891, about 100 Hindustanis, backed up by some fifty of the more adventurous spirits among the Chagarzai and other clans, made a most

determined attack on the village of Ghizikot, our advanced post on the left bank of the Indus, held by a company of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sikh Infantry. Under the cover of darkness they collected in front of the village among rocks, and charged sword in hand. They passed by an advanced picquet undeterred by its fire, and the picquet retired in good order by direction of Subadar Dheru, who commanded the main body of the company holding the village. The defenders, being outnumbered, were forced back through the village, disputing every wall and street until the last house, the *masjid*, was reached. Here a stand was made until reinforcements arrived from Kunhar, when the village was cleared and the enemy driven off. The company of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sikhs behaved with the greatest gallantry. Subadar Dheru and three non-commissioned officers were rewarded with the Order of Merit. Jemadar Darshanu fought bravely until his sword broke and he was cut down. The Hindustanis left 22 of their number on the ground and their loss amounted to at least double that number. The casualties among the defenders were 4 killed and 21 wounded.

The failure of this attack greatly disheartened the *Maulvi's* followers, and they took no further part during the expedition in actively opposing our troops.

Subsequent to 1891 the Hindustanis deserted their quarters in Chagarzai country, possibly under pressure from that clan, who looked upon them as inconvenient neighbors, and settled among the Amazai on the slopes of Mahaban. This was in contravention of the agreement made with the Amazai in 1864, but, as circumstances had considerably changed since then, it was not considered necessary to take any notice of this movement.

At the beginning of last year, when endeavours were being made to get up a combination to attack Chilas, an invitation was sent to the Hindustanis to join, but this did not meet with any response.

The latest information about the fanatics is that they are reported to be dissatisfied with their treatment in the Amazai country, and are trying to secure some other place in Swat or elsewhere for the location of their colony.

From the above report it will be seen that during the past half century the Hindustanis have come into collision with us on no less than six occasions; each time they have suffered severely and been obliged to shift their residence, but, as was stated at the beginning of the report, they will remain a factor for mischief, although in a less degree than formerly, in any complications which may arise with the independent tribes on this part of the Punjab frontier.

## Hindustani Fanatics – 1887 Gazetteer (by Abbott)

A band of fanatics who have inhabited various portions of the Yusafzai hills on the British border, and who have incessantly given trouble to the British authorities by their intrigues since the annexation of the Panjab [sic].

The following account of their origin is taken from a report by Major Abbott:-

“About A.D. 1823, and during the reign of Ranjit Singh in the Panjab, there came to Panjtar, in the Khudu Khel country, a pilgrim from Mecca, named Saiad Ahmad, accompanied by 140 Hindustani disciples. He proclaimed that he had, when at Mecca, heard a voice crying – ‘Go to the north country of the Yusufzai, and with them wage war on the infidel Sikhs.’”

“The chief of Panjtar, Fateh Khan, received him hospitably and became his disciple. He first subdued two chiefs of the Yusafzai who disowned his mission, and then made war on Yar Mahammad [sic], governor of Peshawar, for the Sikhs, and, having slain him, returned to Panjtar in triumph.

“Satana at that time belonged to Painsa Khan, the chief of Amb and western Tanawal; but the *Saiad* attacked and drove him from it. He then went against Peshawar a second time and defeated the Duranis [sic] a second time, and, leaving a garrison to hold it for him, returned to Panjtar. His force had now swelled to many thousand armed disciples, men full of enthusiasm in his cause as that of Heaven. For their support taxes were levied upon the surrounding villages, and armed parties were posted in various parts for their collection. Confident in his power, he now began to insist upon a strict performance of all the ceremonies enjoined in the Koran. The people, who had prayed twice, or at most thrice, in 24 hours, were obliged to pray five times. Fathers who had kept back their daughters until tempted by large presents to bestow them in marriage were punished severely if they kept a daughter unmarried after the age of 15, and thus in a single day 300 marriages were celebrated. He next began to compass the destruction of Fateh Khan of Panjtar, at least that chief believed, or chose to believe, such to be the case. Though considering how useful an agent this chief had proved, and how out of character anything like treachery or concealment was with the rest of the *Saiad's* actions, this charge appears very doubtful. It is more probable that Fateh Khan like others of his disciples in those parts, finding his own consequence annihilated and the tyranny of the *Saiad* unsupportable, was glad of any pretense for conspiring against him. It is certain that wherever his authority had spread, the people were heartily tired of him, and longed for the freedom he had overthrown.

“Saiad Ahmad was of the sect of the Wahabis [sic]. He denied the authority of all books excepting the Koran, and rigidly expected obedience to that volume. One of the peculiarities of the Afghan is the reverence in which they hold the tombs of their reputed saints, so that often a saint has with them more authority than God. Saiad Ahmad insisted upon the desecration of all their shrines, and by this act excited against him the strongest religious prejudices of those whom he had already exasperated by his tyranny. A secret and deep-laid conspiracy against the Saiad was set on foot by Fateh Khan. At an appointed hour of a certain night the armed inhabitants of each village rose upon his disciples posted in various parts for collection, and, having slaughtered them, lighted fires on conspicuous points to witness the deed. The whole country that night was afire. The Saiad was at Panjtar with 1,100 of his armed followers and some field pieces taken from the Duranis.

He was too strong to be openly attacked. Indeed, his probably reputed sanctity would have prevented Fateh Khan from attacking his person. That chief came therefore before him, apparently in great affliction, represented the horrible atrocity which had been committed upon his disciples, and offered in person to escort the Saiad to some region of the mountains where the people were not as yet hostile to him.

“They accordingly marched through the valley of Buner; but as the guns were represented to the Saiad as being far too heavy for conveyance by the wild paths he must follow, he during the night had them buried under his tents, it is believed in or near Panjtar. They were ten in number, and were demanded of Fateh Khan by the Sikhs; and Dost Mahammad, when encamped on the Indus in A.D. 1848, made the same demand, but in vain. Wherever buried, the secret has been well kept.

“The people of Buner had no wish for a master, and the Saiad left their valley for the mountain of the Chagharzais, trans-Indus, and thence crossing the river went to Tahkot, to the Tikri and Nandihar valleys north of Hazara. Thence he proceeded to Balakot, on the river Nainsukh, where he made proselytes of the Saiads of Khagan and some others.

“The heir-apparent of Ranjit Sing [sic], Rana Sher Sing, with a large army, now marched against him from Kashmir, and, bridging the Nainsukh at Ghari Habibula, crossed into Pakli, marched up the Bogarmang glen, climbed the intervening ridge of mountain, and came down upon the Saiad's rear as he camped in the valley of Balakot. It was in vain that his friends entreated him to retreat to defensible ground, which he could easily have done. His answer was – ‘Sher Sing has come far to meet me. I will not disappoint him.’

“He stood his ground in the valley, where resistance against such an overwhelming force was manifestly hopeless. Not one of his Hindustani disciples flinched, but the men of the hills, unable to fight in such open ground, early deserted him. Three times the Hindustanis charged, and thrice beat the Sikh regiments. The young prince then put himself at the head of some fresh corps, surrounded the little party, and destroyed them to a man. A boy alone escaped slaughter. The head of the Saiad was cut off by a Nihang,<sup>113</sup> but the body was identified by the peculiarities of the hands and feet. It was buried with reverence by his conqueror, wrapped in Kashmir shawls, but the Sikh governor of Hazara, fearing it might become a shrine attracting all the fanatics of India, afterwards had it dug up, cut into pieces, and thrown into the river Nainsukh.

“The Saiad's lieutenant, Mula Wali Mahamad, had been sent across the Nainsukh with some hundreds of the disciples to plunder the Sikh camp. They therefore escaped the slaughter, and, resorting to Nandihar, set up there and waged war upon the people of Alahi and Tikri. Being defeated, they fled to Panjtar. Here they were welcomed by Fateh Khan, who in the interim had endeavored to extract for himself the tribute taken by the saiad, but had been defeated and humbled. He now renewed this attempt with the aid of Wali Mahamad, but the people still resisted, and drove the Mula out of the country. He fled to Buner, and soon after Painda Khan of Amb and made him the collector of the Agror valley, where he made war with the people of Tikri, who at length induced Painda Khan to remove him.

“Mula Wali Mahamad then retired to Satana, and collecting 1,500 followers from those at feud with Fateh Khan of Panjtar, a battle occurred at Topi, and the Mula was defeated with great slaughter and fled to Hindustan.

“About A.D. 1846, one of the disciples, Mula Kasim, writing to Hindustan that Saiad Ahmad was still alive, had soon around him some 600 disciples at Balakot. With these he defeated Amir Khan of Ghari, and took from him his castle. He then entreated Dost Mahamad to send a force in aid of the holy war, which he was assured the Saiad had risen from the dead to conduct; and through that chief would gladly have recovered by such instrumentality Peshawar and Kashmir, either or both, he wished to know before he lent any aid whether the Saiad had really escaped the slaughter, and therefore sent a eunuch, on whose sagacity he could rely, to ascertain this point.

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113. Editor's note: This is the name of a Sikh sect that is derived from the Persian word for *crocodile*.

“The emissary on reaching the place where the Saiad was supposed to be insisted upon paying his respects in person. He was told that the Saiad could not be approached without certain destruction to the intruder, but that he condescended a distant glance of his sacred person to his most favoured followers. They led him accordingly to the mouth of a dark cavern, made him take off his shoes and approach with much ceremony. He looked in and saw the saint kneeling at his devotions, and pretending to be seized in a fit of enthusiasm, rushed in exclaiming, ‘Oh, holy martyr, accept my services!’ No answer came, and his near approach assured him of the nature of the deception. He snatched the cloak from the shoulders of the saint, and found beneath that and the turban a goat’s skin inflated with air. These he threw out of the cave, and beat the man who had charge of the entrance. In spite of this trickery, many believe to this day that the Saiad was not slain, or, at any rate, that he is still alive.

“The faith of his proselytes there assembled was not shaken, and when, after the surrender to Captain Edwardes of Kahsmir, Lieutenant Lumsden led back the Sikh forces by the valley of the Jhelam, he was opposed at the Dub mountain, close to Muzaffarabad, by the Fanatics, with whom were associated the Saiads of Khagan and people of Balakot. But he forced this mountain by great personal exertion and exposure, and by the most masterly stratagem won the pass beyond the Nainsukh into Pakli and surprised the Fanatics at Balakot, threatening them with his camp equipage, flags, and trumpets from the eastern bank of the river, whilst his whole force, which crossed in the night, had ascended the Bogarmang glen, and came down on the rear of the fanatic army as they were gazing at the tremendous display on the other side. They fled up the valley to Khagan, and he followed and drove them up into the snow, when they surrendered, and were let loose south of the Margala pass upon condition of never returning.

“In spite of this, a small body of them soon after collected at Satana, where gradually they increased, built a cantonment, had their drills and their bugle-calls, and sometimes swelled to the number of 800 or 900.

“During the second Sikh war Dost Mahamad openly took part against the British, and, fearing punishment, he is said to have induced Saiad Akbar to set up as king of Swat, hoping that the strength of those mountains would keep us employed, and prevent us for some time meddling with him. The Swatis, however, never entered heartily into these views. The Akhund was a man of sense, and dissuaded them from molesting the British and bringing upon themselves their vengeance.

“Saiad Ahmad, though an enthusiast in religion, was fond of power, and might, had he lived, have set up a little kingdom of his own. His immediate followers had employed enthusiasm as a means of conquest, attacking Musalmans as readily as infidels. But since the annexation a new turn was given to the movement, and the fanatic levy of the Panjab maintained for the avowed purpose of restoring the Mahamadan authority in India. With the exception of Saiad Akbar, the Hindustanis were objects of suspicion and fear to all the inhabitants of the Mahaban and the river borders. They were maintained by remittances sent them in gold coin concealed in various ways by fakirs from Hindustan. These remittances at one time amounted to not less than Rs. 40,000 per annum. They are believed to have been collected and sent them by Musalman friends in Central India.

“Soon after the annexation of the Panjab, Major Abbott wrote the Panjab government, noting the great increase of the Fanatics at Satana, and asking permission to attack and disperse them, which then could have been done easily, because the people of the river border were our friends and their ill-wishers. Colonel George Lawrence, then deputy commissioner of Peshawar, being consulted, gave his voice against this, pronouncing them to be utterly contemptible. In reply, Major Abbott urged that ‘it was most imprudent to leave live sparks, however contemptible, in our thatch until a wind should rise and give them power.’

“In 1852 the fanatics attacked the chief of Amb, and wrested from him his little castle of Kotla, trans-Indus; and soon afterwards the Saiads of Khagan, relying upon their aid, set up the standard of rebellion in that strong and remote valley.

The Wazir of the chief of Amb also, who is said to have had an understanding with the fanatics, was reported about the same time to have incited some Hasanzais of the Black Mountain (cis-Indus) to waylay and murder Messrs. Carne and Tapp, who, in spite of every remonstrance, had pursued a route which alarmed the Wazir's jealousy. This caused expeditions against the Khagan and the Black Mountain.

“In 1853 the Panjab government agreed to Major Abbott's crossing the Indus to attack the fanatics. The Hindustanis lost heart as he approached the castle, and fled from it, pursued by some of the people of Amb, who cut down more than a score of them. The rest climbed over a spur of the Mahaban separating Amb from Satana, and night obliged the relinquishment of the pursuit; and it would have been easy next day to have destroyed their cantonment, and to have slain all who resisted; but this was not permitted.”

In 1858 they had again become so troublesome that an expedition on a large scale was launched against them under General Cotton (*vide* Satana). This dispersed them for the time, and the Saiads and Hindustanis then retired to Malka, a village on the slopes of Mahaban, which was granted them by the Amazai tribe.

Engagements were then taken from the Utmanzais and Jaduns to unite in expelling and keeping out the Saiads and their followers. In 1861 these engagements were broken, but a blockade against the tribes induced them to compel the Hindustanis to retire. Fresh engagements were then taken, but were repeatedly broken. The Utmanzais represented that they were powerless to oppose the advance of the fanatics, who were supported by the Jadun tribe in violation of their engagements.

Whether there was collusion or inability to offer successful opposition, the result was that the Saiads and their fanatical followers re-occupied the forbidden lands of Satana, in consequence of which a blockade was established against the Jaduns.

On this threatening messages were sent to the British feudatory, the chief of Amb. The chief Maulvi of the Hindustanis directed in person a night attack against the camp of the corps of guides; a fire was kept up across the Indus at one of our outposts; and a letter was sent to the Amb chief summoning all good Mahamadans to war against the infidel.

The Hasanzai tribe in the month of September also attacked some outposts of Amb in the Black Mountain, and subsequently the levies of the Tanawal chief, killing several men.

The peace of our Hazara border for several years had been more or less disturbed by the fanatical preaching by the Hindustanis, and by the rapine of Saiad Mubarak Shah and his braves, who were in the habit of crossing the Indus, seizing and, in the event of close pursuit, murdering Hindi traders; and some respite had been procured by the removal of the fanatics and marauders from Satana on the southern to Malka on the northern slopes of the Mahaban, but their sudden return showed that stronger measures were necessary. The supreme government, therefore, ordered an expedition



to be undertaken with the object of destroying Malka, and of expelling the fanatics from the country within the area defined by the Barandoh stream and the Guru and Mahaban mountains. Prior to the advance of the force, Maulvi Abdulla sent a letter to one of the chiefs of Buner, calling on him to occupy the Sarpatai and Chinglai passes, over the Mahaban into Chamla valley, which would otherwise, it was intimated, together with Buner and Swat, be annexed by the infidels to British territory, and during the operations which ensued the Hindustanis were among the most determined of our enemies. (For an account of the campaign *vide* Ambela.)

On the eventual defeat of the tribes by the force under the command of Sir J. Garvock, Major James, the commissioner of Peshawar, required that the Bunerwals should furnish a contingent of their own men to accompany Colonel Taylor, whom he deputed with an escort formed of the guide corps to burn Malka. This was effected without resistance; a signal proof was given of the power of the British government to punish its enemies in their most inaccessible fastnesses, in spite of the combined resistance of the whole hill population, and an obstruction to the future reunion of the Hindustanis with the Bunerwals was thus established.

The Hindustanis excluded from the Amazai and Buner cantons scattered in divided bodies, – some to Swat, others to the north of the Barandoh; but they did not relinquish their intrigues.

The accident of a police officer, named Ghazan Khan, led to the discovery that money and men had for many years past had been sent up from Hindustan and Bengal to the Hindustani fanatics at Satana and Malka. Patna, it was found, was the centre of operations. There was the family which supplied some of the principal leaders of the colony; there the pulpits from which the Wahabi doctrines were systematically preached, and the duty of contributing towards the expense of a religious war proclaimed; and from thence natives of Bengal were recruited and sent up in parties of five and six at a time to join the camp in the independent hills. At Thanesar they were received by a Rain lambardar named Jafar, a disciple strongly imbued with the Wahabi tenets and with personal devotion to Saiad Ahmad Shah, whom he designated as the “Imam of the world, the middle Mahdi, the Caliph of his time,” and whom, though long ago killed in action with the Sikhs, he believed to be still living and about to re-appear.

Ghazan Khan's conduct deserves special notice. He had formerly served on the Peshawar border, and knew something of the doings and appearance of the fanatics. He was thus led to apprehend a party travelling down-country. The Magistrate, however, released them. Ghazan Khan then sent his son to Malka, and obtained intelligence concerning the part played by Jafar, who was therefore apprehended.

Another principal agent was Mahamad Shafi, a contractor for the supply of meat for the Europeans in all the cantonments from Ambela to Naoshera. This man's money, position, and numerous servants in so many places, not within the superintendence of the organized police, enabled him to aid the cause effectually. It is not improbable that he communicated with the fanatics when procuring cattle for slaughter from the hills.

Eventually, through the exertions of Captain Parsons, Superintendent of Police, who was specially deputed to Patna to investigate the case, the individuals above mentioned, with some of the principal ringleaders, were brought to trial before Sir Herbert Edwardes, the Commissioner of Ambela, and sentenced to transportation for life.

After their expulsion from Malka, the greater number of fanatics retired, led by the Maulvi, to the Barandoh river; a few, including Mahamad Isak and Mahamad Yakub, two of their best leaders, returned to and remained at Malka with Mobarak Shah, son of Saiad Akbar, who succeeded Saiad

Ahmad, and was elected king of Swat, and died in 1857. After a time the fanatics obtained from the Chagharzias grants of the village of Tangora and Batora, where they made a permanent settlement, and remained undisturbed up to the commencement of 1868. Their position was, however, by no means comfortable. The people amongst whom they dwelt made them pay dearly for the protection afforded them, and for the supplies they received; it was only by the greatest efforts that their agents in Hindustan were enabled to forward to them sufficient money for their support. They were, moreover, frequently threatened with expulsion by their hosts, who forcibly prevented the completion of two towers which the Maulvi Abdullah had commenced to erect in Batora. The Akhund also looked upon them with no friendly eye; their Wahabi inclinations were abhorrent to him, and their position in the country was a standing menace, for their leaders maintained their position only by intrigue, and were ready tools in the hands of rival faction in Buner and elsewhere, followers of the Kota Mulla. The reports received between 1863 and 1868 show that the Akhund and the chief Maulvi were at constant feud, for former denouncing the latter as a Wahabi and nonbeliever, and the Maulvi in turn accusing the Akhund of having deserting them, and betraying the cause of Islam by making peace with the infidels and allowing them to destroy Malka.

It is not surprising that with this constant pressure on them, both at home and abroad, the community was several times on the point of dissolution. During the autumn of 1866, Mahamad Ishak and Mahamad Yakub made several attempts to open communication with Colonel Becher through the instrumentality of Saiad Mahamad (formerly in our service); their letters were received and messages sent to them, but their plans were entirely frustrated by the vigilance of Maulvi Abdulla, who appears to have gained an entire ascendancy over all the other leaders. Matters remained thus until the beginning of 1868, the fanatics being too much engaged with their own quarrels and intrigues to annoy us or continue the system of highway robbery in our territories which had first led to the recommendation by the Panjab government of punitive expeditions of 1858 and 1863. In February 1868 news was received that the fighting men of the Hindustanis, numbering 400 or 500, had moved from Tangora and Batora to Bazkata in Buner on the invitation of Azin Kmah of Bazkata, an opponent of the Akhund and firm supporter of his rival, the Kota Mula. Azim Khan offered to give the Hindustanis houses and land in his village if they would bring over their families and settle there permanently. His offer was accepted, and the families abandoned Tangora and Batora, a few only remaining at Malka. Nothing more was heard of them until the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, when the arrival of Firoz Shah at Bazkata was reported by Azim Khan himself, who wrote to the commissioner of Peshawar to make his excuses for harbouring men whom he knew to be mortal enemies of the British government.

Firoz Shah had arrived some months before at Thana, the residence of the Akhund, and reported to be in high favour, until the evil news of the arrival in Buner of his countrymen reached the Akhund.

This movement of the fanatics into Buner was fatal to them; at a distance they might have been tolerated, and in time possibly regained their prestige; but the Akhund now lost no time in exerting all his influence to get rid of what he well knew would be a fruitful source of trouble to him. By skillful management he was able to conciliate and bring over all the Buner tribes of the opposite faction, Azim Khan, Zaidulla Khan, Nawab Khan, and a few other chiefs remaining aloof. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, at a large meeting of all the Buner chiefs convened by the Mirji, the favourite minister of the Akhund, it was determined that the Hindustanis should be expelled from Buner, their presence being displeasing to the Akhund, and contrary to the terms of the treaty made with the British government. In consequence of this resolve, the fanatics, to the number of 700 fighting men, accompanied by Firoz Shah and Azim Khan, made a precipitate retreat to Malka, where they commenced to rebuild their houses and make arrangements with the Amazai for supplies. Afterwards the Maulvi Abdulla was induced to join a league that had been formed by Azim Khan and other Buner chiefs, together with the Amazais and Mubarak Khan, ex-chief of the Khudu Khels, to oppose the influence of the Akhund, and obtain for Mubarak Khan

recovery of his former possessions and reinstatement at Panjtar. Mubarak Khan, who after his expulsion from the Totalai village, and the destruction of Panjtar and Mangal Thana by our troops, had come in to the commissioner of Peshawar, and been allowed to reside in British territory, was the prime mover in this plot, by which he sought to regain his former position. His money cemented the various alliances, and purchased the neutrality of some of the Buner chiefs; and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August Zaidulla Khan (Bunerwal) committed the first overt act of hostility by seizing a number of Swat traders passing through his lands. The Akhund immediately mustered his followers and directed the Buner tribes to break up the league by expelling the Hindustanis and putting to death the refractory chiefs. In pursuance of these orders, the Isazai and Salarzai Bunerwals attacked and killed Zaidulla Khan in his house. On the 12<sup>th</sup> they arrived, together with the Akhund's followers, before Bazkata, and sent a message to the chief Maulvi, giving him one day to remove all his followers, women and children. The fanatics at first thought of resistance, and exchanged a few shots with the Salarzais, but were induced by Azim Khan to give in and commence preparations for a retreat. The next day the whole body evacuated Bazkata, the women and children being sent on ahead, and the rear brought up by a guard of 50 or 60 men armed with rifles. For the first few miles all went well, the Buner men occupied in plundering and burning the deserted settlement; but as the fugitives neared the pass between Bazkata and Batora, they saw the hills on both sides held by the Akhund's followers. The mass of fugitives, including the Maulvi Abdulla, Azin Khan, and the Buner chiefs, pushed on through the pass and made their escape with only slight loss; but the rear-guard was cut off, and, after a gallant stand, entirely destroyed. From Batora the fugitives fled to Galima Bori in Chagharzai. Here they obtained a short respite, and even conceived hopes of being able to establish themselves permanently, being promised support in the event of attack by the Amazais and Guni Khel section of the Chagharzais.

The power of the Akhund, increased by his complete triumph over the rival faction in Buner, was however too great for them. The Chagharzais obeyed his order to expel the fanatics, who continued their flight through Tangora to Bihar, on the banks of the Indus, where they arrived about the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1868 with 20 or 30 wounded men. Later accounts of them are very conflicting, but it is certain that the chief maulvi, with some hundreds of followers, came over to Jodhbai, and that many of them remained there till the British force arrived on the crest of the Black Mountain. The fanatics were welcomed and assisted by the Pirzada, son of the late Haji of Kunhar, by the son of Baj Khan of Kabilgram, Akhund Khel, and by the Kahil Mian and the Saiads of Bihar. Through their instrumentality they obtained the grant of a hamlet in Jodhbai, and were enabled to purchase several rafts, thus getting command of the river, and making themselves independent of the extortionate Pashtun ferrymen. Whilst at Jodhbai, the Maulvi received letters (it is said) from Ghafur Khan of Tikri, who offered to give the whole body of fugitives an asylum in his fort and land in the Tikri valley; and from the Alahi jirga and chief of Tahkot, who promised to accompany the Pirzada to Jodhbai to hold a big council, and discuss measures of resistance against the British. Mubarak Shah was summoned by him, and the war party cis-Indus was daily increasing. It seems probable that a month later the force under General Wilde would have found a powerful coalition and some organized plan of defence; but its rapid approach disconcerting them, the fanatics hastily re-crossed the river, deserting their Chagharzai hosts, and thereby departing from their profession as soldiers of the faith, and destroying the last remnant of their former prestige, already injured by the treatment they had met with at the hand of the Akhund and his disciples. The main body went to Palozai, a village of the trans-Indus Hasanzais, who, however, refused to allow them a permanent settlement. From Palozai they went to Tahkot, but finding no resting place there, they moved down the river to Bihar and Jodhbai of the Chagharzais; but ultimately being obliged to abandon this refuge also, they at last threw themselves on the mercy of the Hasanzais. Here they received some land called Maidan, which was granted them chiefly through the influence of the two leading men of Palozai, Malik Habib, and the Pirzada of the Hasanzais. The settlement now comprises a mud fort surrounded by huts, all erected by the Hindustanis themselves (*vide* Kala Mujhi-i-Din). They are said now to muster 400 efficient fighting men; and though not so well equipped and armed as they were at Ambela, they are still better armed than the neighbouring tribesmen, which fact, combined with their superior intelligence, gives them a certain amount of influence. They possess percussion muskets with bayonets, and

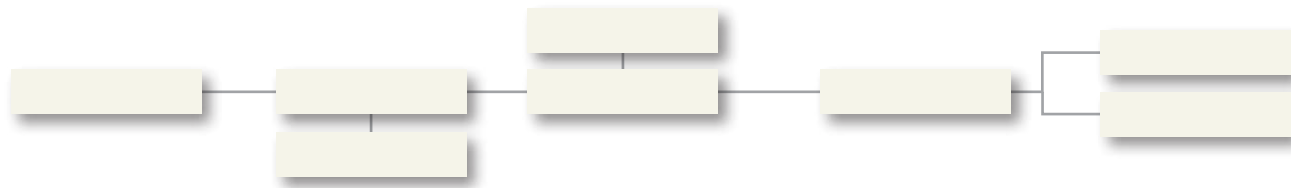
manage to obtain caps for them. They also are reported to have four small brass guns. It is generally given out that they still receive money from Hindustan for their support. There are many Hindustani Wahabis in the Peshawar cantonments; the number of Wahabis in the city is not considerable at present, but it is said to be gradually increasing. Many of the Kazi Khel and Khalil Arbabs are also said to be Wahabis. Maulvi Ghulam Jalani, Mula Majid, and Kazi Mansur, in the Peshawar city, and Pir Ghias of Palozai in the Khalil division, are the leaders of the Wahabi sect in the Peshawar district.



# TRIBAL ANALYSIS CENTER

Traditional anthropological research conducted among tribes inhabiting remote areas where insurgents and criminals operate has become increasingly difficult to implement. Studies carried out among people living in small-scale societies now are nearly impossible due to the physical dangers associated with the civil and religious unrest found in those areas. Swat, for example, has become so dangerous that Frederick Barth's studies only could be repeated at the risk of the investigator's life. Similar research is not feasible among Burma's Rohingya tribes located on both sides of the border with Bangladesh, as well as with the Pashtuns in Afghanistan's interior and within Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, where even Pakistan's army enters with reluctance.

Given the difficulties of conducting direct fieldwork in conflictive areas, the Tribal Analysis Center utilizes an indirect approach. Using multidisciplinary research, we seek to collect and analyze data obtained from a wide variety of sources, both current and historical. In the absence of new ethnographic fieldwork to update our base of knowledge, the Tribal Analysis Center compiles and summarizes existing research and documents on tribal societies, combining this material with contemporary press reports and articles. We assume that much can be gleaned from well-informed observers who are not anthropologists, ranging from journalists and travelers to government officials.



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