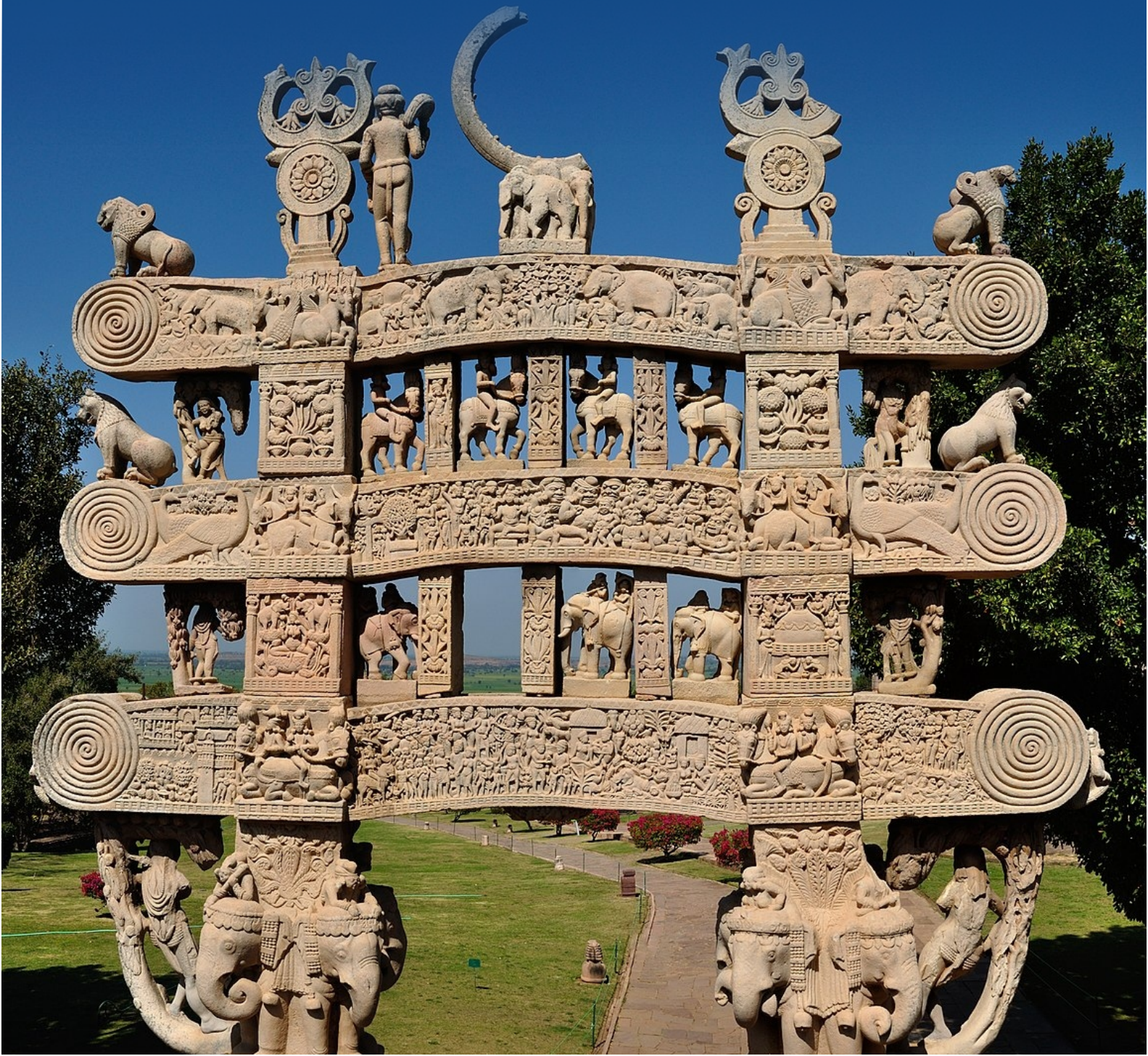
Encyclopedia of Indian History

19th Century, Vol 2

Gordon McConnell



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF INDIAN HISTORY

19TH CENTURY, VOL 2

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF INDIAN HISTORY

19TH CENTURY, VOL 2

Gordon McConnell

BIBLIOTEX
Digital Library

Encyclopedia of Indian History: 19th Century, Vol 2
by Gordon McConnell

www.bibliotex.com

Ebook ISBN: 9781984668103

Published by:
Bibliotex
Canada
Website: www.bibliotex.com

Contents

Chapter 18

Syed Ahmad Barelvi

Syed Ahmad Barelvi or **Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed** (1786–1831) was an Indian Muslim revivalist from Raebareli, a part of the historical United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (now called Uttar Pradesh). He is considered as a scholarly authority by Ahl-i Hadith and Deobandi movements. The epithet *Barelvi* is derived from Rae Bareilly, his place of origin. His ancestors had migrated to India in the early 13th century AD.

Early Life and Militia Service

Born in Rae Bareli in 1786, Syed Ahmad received his initial education in his home town and went to Lucknow at the age of 18 in search of a job but failed. He then moved to Delhi where he became a disciple of Shah Abdul Aziz. He resided there from 1806 to 1811, then at the age of 25, he joined the militia of Amir Khan, a military expeditionary. This was the era of military campaigns in India during which nawabs and governors established their power by occupying territories. Syed Ahmad spent seven years in the service of Amir Khan, who only fought to loot and plunder. In 1817, after the Third Anglo-Maratha War, Amir Khan allied with the East India Company, the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, The Marquess of Hastings, resolved to defeat the Pindaris whom they deemed a menace. The Treaty of Gwalior severed the link between them and Scindia. Moreover, the treaty required the latter to join forces with the East India Company to eliminate the Pindaris and Pathans. Bowing to the inevitable, Amir Khan

assiduously came to terms with the British, agreeing to disband his men in return for a large stipend and recognition as a hereditary ruler. Amir Khan was recognized as a hereditary nawab, disbanded his forces and quietly settled down to consolidating his little state. He became a faithful friend to the British, earning praise and consideration from successive pro-consuls. From Syed Ahmad's perspective, this was a financial cum spiritual disaster, because for him the British were Christian heretics. Syed Ahmad was unemployed again with 30,000 other soldiers. Syed Ahmad came to Delhi after the end of his service and from here he decided to become a power player like Amir Khan. Barbara Metcalf theorizes this period in Syed Ahmad's life as a time of maturation when he began to synthesize his experience in militia-making and his commitment to the Sharia. Two members of the theologian Shah Waliullah's family: Shah Ismail Dehlavi (1771-1831) and Maulvi Abdul Hai (died 1828) became his disciples, an event that raised his mystic confidence. This endorsement only added to Syed Ahmad's reputation, and his popularity grew with adherents flocking to him by the thousands.

Reform Movement

According to Olivier Roy, Barelvi was "the first person to realize the necessity of a movement which was at the same time religious, military and political." He also was the first to address the people, not traditional leaders in his call for jihad. His evangelism —based on networks of preachers, collectors and judges— also addressed the common people and not the rulers' courts. The reform movement started with the idea of a wahabist understanding of monotheism, and the fight against

the local interpretations and customs that, according to him, had corrupted Islam. Barbara Metcalf writes:

"*Syed Ahmad's reformist teachings were set down in two works that, when printed on the new lithographic press of the day, soon achieved wide circulation. The Sirat'ul Mustaqim (the Straight Path) was compiled by Muhammad Ismail in 1819. Written initially in Persian, it was translated into Urdu to reach a wider audience. The second work, Taqwiyatul-Iman or the strengthening of the faith, was written directly in Urdu. The two works stressed above all the centrality of tawhid, the transcendent unity of God, and denounced all those practices and beliefs that were held in any way to compromise that most fundamental of Islamic tenets. God alone was held to be omniscient and omnipotent. He alone, entitled to worship and homage. There were, the followers of Syed Ahmad argued, three sources of threat to this belief: false Sufism, Shia doctrines and practices, and popular custom*".

According to Andreas Rieck, Syed Ahmad visited towns of North Indian planes from 1818 to 1821 with hundreds of missionaries to preach against Shia beliefs and practices. Syed Ahmad repeatedly destroyed tazias, an act that resulted in subsequent riots and chaos. Barbara Metcalf offers the following explanation to his anti-Shi'ism:

"*The second group of abuses Syed Ahmad held were those that originated from Shi'i influence. He particularly urged Muslims to give up the keeping of tazias which were replicas of the tombs of the martyrs of Karbala taken in procession during the mourning ceremony of Muharram. Muhammad Isma'il wrote,*

'A true believer should regard the breaking a tazia by force to be as virtuous an action as destroying idols. If he cannot break them himself, let him order others to do so. If this even is out of his power, let him at least detest and abhor them with his whole heart and soul'.

Syed Ahmad himself is said, no doubt with considerable exaggeration, to have torn down thousands of Imambaras, the building that house the tazias".

In 1821, Syed Ahmad left for Hajj along with a group of devotees. He returned from Haj in 1823, and once again visited different parts of India.

For Syed Ahmad and the followers of the Faraizi movement, India was "Dar ul Harb" the capital of war and therefore jihad was obligatory for the Muslims. In his book, Sirat-e-Mustaqeem, Shah Ismail Dehlavi wrote:

"*A large part of present-day India has become "Dar-ul-Harab". Compare the situation with the heavenly blessings of India two and three hundred years ago*".

Comparing India with his utopia of Dar ul Islam, he said:

"*Compare India with Rome and Turkey in terms of heavenly blessings*".

Sayyid Ahmad's opponents labeled him a "Wahhabi," a follower of the puritanical Saudi form of Islam, but he did not consider himself as such.

Jihad and Islamic State

His target was the Sikh kingdom of Ranjit Singh, which was expanding further, close to Afghanistan. Barelvi intended to establish an Islamic bastion on the north-west frontier in the Peshawar valley.

When the action began, some Muslim nawabs, like his former employer Amir Khan, provided funds but did not join him for jihad. Around 8,000 holy-warriors who accompanied him were mostly clergymen or poor people who joined the militia were looking for employment. The rulers of Tonk, Gwalior and Rampur supported him with British consent because they were dependent on British forces and they knew well enough that the British would not stop them from aiding an enemy of a nation they would soon be at war with. Arriving in Peshawar valley in late 1826, Syed Ahmad and his followers made their base in towns of Hund and Zaida in Swabi District Barelvi preached jihad amongst the local Pashtun tribes, demanding they renounce their tribal customs and adopt the Sharia. The traditional khans were replaced by ulama (clerics) and a system of Islamic taxes was established to finance the jihad. Only after this evangelist campaign and sharia system were set up was jihad declared. He sent a message to Ranjit Singh to

"*either become a Muslim, pay Jizyah or fight and remember that in case of war, Yaghistan supports the Indians*".

The mujahideen received both ideological preaching and physical training sessions. Syed Ahmad organized wrestling, archery training and shooting competitions. The mujahideen

also sang anthems. One such anthem have survived, known as "*Risala Jihad*", it goes as follows:

"*War against the Infidel is incumbent on all Musalmans;*

make provisions for all things.

He who from his heart gives one farthing to the cause,

shall hereafter receive seven hundredfold from God.

He who shall equip a warrior in this cause of God,

shall hereafter obtain a martyr's reward;

His children dread not the trouble of the grave,

nor the last trump, not the Day of Judgement.

Cease to be crowded; join the divine leader, and smite the Infidel.

I give thanks to God that a great leader has been born,

in the thirteenth of the Hijra".

In December 1826 Syed Ahmad and his followers clashed with Sikh troops at Akora with some success. On 11 January 1827, allegiance was sworn on his hand and he was declared *Caliph* and *Imam.* Syed Ahmad's claim of leadership (Caliphate) was viewed with suspicion in the Frontier region as well as in the clerical circles of North India. When the Friday sermon was read in his name, it became clear to the tribal chiefs that he

wanted political power for himself. According to Khadi Khan, a Pathan Sardar:

"*it is the job of the Sardars to take care of the people, not a Maulvi who spends his life on donations. Maulvies are ill-equipped to run the affairs of a State*".

Syed Ahmad tried to explain that his aim was not this-worldly but to lead a jihad against the infidels. In one of his letters, he writes:

"*We thank and praise God, the real master and the true king, who bestowed upon his humble, recluse and helpless servant the title of Caliphate, first through occult gestures and revelations, in which there is no room for doubt, and then by guiding the hearts of the believers towards me. This way God appointed me as the Imam (leader)*".

Criticizing his opponents, Shah Ismail Dehlavi wrote:

"*therefore, obedience to Syed Ahmad is obligatory on all Muslims. Whoever does not accept the leadership of His Excellency or rejects it after accepting it, is an apostate and mischievous, and killing him is part of the jihad as is the killing of the disbelievers. Therefore, the appropriate response to opponents is that of the sword and not the pen*".

Regarding his Imamate, Syed Ahmad wrote to Nawab Wazir up-Dawla, the ruler of Tonk:

"believe me, the person who sincerely confesses to my position is special in the eyes of God, and the one who denies it is, of

course sinful. My opponents who deny me of this position will be humiliated and disgraced".

Mubarak Ali writes:

"*After the conquest of Peshawar, Syed Ahmad launched a violent policy to enforce Sharia and announced the abolition of all tribal rituals that he considered illegal. The most important of these rituals were: the bride was paid a regular price for marriage, the wives of the deceased were divided among his heirs, more than four marriages were practised, women could not inherit property, internecine wars were considered jihad and plunder was considered booty. Therefore, after the conquest of Peshawar, orders were issued that those who can give half of the agreed money to the brides can take them. The young girls (9-year-old and above) who are eligible for marriage should be married immediately. To enforce Sharia law, he appointed Imam Qutbuddin as an ombudsman, accompanied by 30 armed soldiers, who accompanied him to nearby villages to beat up the people who had abandoned prayers. Beatings and flogging had become the norm, that if the ombudsman went to any village, panic would spread. The punishment was carried out with extreme violence and people were even hanged on tree branches. Even among women, those who missed prayers were punished in the women's quarters, so people soon became fed up with these policies because these judges and ombudsmen started harassing people and imposed fines on them beyond their means*".

In addition to the stated social agenda, Syed Ahmad also attempted to collect the Islamic tithe (usher) of ten per cent of crop yields. The alliance was defeated and the Islamic reformers finally occupied Peshawar. Over several months

during 1830, Sayyed Ahmad tried to conciliate established power hierarchies. But before the end of 1830, an organized uprising occurred and the agents of Syed Ahmad in Peshawar and the villages of the plain were murdered and the movement retreated to hills. There in the town of Balakot in 1831, Syed Ahmad was killed by the Sikh Army. He was beheaded.

Battle of Balakot

Syed Ahmad's political and religious power created strong opposition against him in the Frontier region and the locals started to revolt. The decisive moments for Syed Ahmad came in 1830. The Pukhtuns rose against him and around two hundred Mujahidin were killed in Peshawar valley which compelled him to migrate and try his luck in Kashmir, his long-cherished dream.

On 6 May 1831, on the day of Holy Jumu'ah 23 Zulqa'da 1246 AH, Syed Ahmad Barelvi's Mujahideen forces prepared for the final battle at Balakot Maidan in the mountainous valley of Mansehra district. It is to be noted that the total number of fighters in the Mujahideen was 600 and the number of Sikh soldiers was 10,000. Sikh troops started landing at Balakot Maidan from Metikot hill and Syed Ahmad Barelvi and most of the Mujahideen were staying in and around the Masjid-i Bala. Note that, The 700-strong Mujahideen force was encamped far along the Satban waterfall. Syed Ahmad Barelvi suddenly left Masjid-e-Bala to attack the Sikhs and reached Masjid-e-Yarin. He then marched towards the foot of Metikot with the Mujahideen forces. Most of the Sikh soldiers who landed at the foot of Metikot were killed. But already every inch of Tiller in Metikot was filled by troops. They came down from every place

and launched a fierce attack on the Mujahideen. Syed Ahmad Barelvi was at the forefront of the Mujahideen forces. Suddenly, Syed Ahmad Barelvi was killed in the fountain of Metikot. A large group of Mujahideen did not realize the death of Syed Ahmad Barelvi and went in search of him. Besides, small groups of Mujahideen were killed while fighting in different places. This battle lasted at least two hours. Then the people of Gojar's group started shouting in different groups that Syed Ahmad had been taken to the top of the hill. So you all come to the top of the hill. As a result, the Mujahideen moved towards the mountains to the north. And thus the war came to an end. The reason why the people of Gozar do this is that, Either they did it at the instigation of the Sikhs. Because if the Mujahideen were fighting in Metikot, many more Sikh fighters would have been killed. Or it may be assumed that the remaining Mujahideen had to resort to such tactics for migration. Another rumour about the Death of Syed Ahmad Barelvi, the Emir and Commander-in-Chief of the Mujahideen forces, is that he was at the forefront of the Mujahideen and infiltrated a group of Sikh soldiers. The peaks surrounded him which his followers did not notice. Thus he was killed and his body could not be identified by the Mujahideen. For this reason, even after a long time, the remaining Mujahideen could not believe that the death of Syed Ahmad Barelvi was true.

Exhumation

After Sher Singh left the area, Sikh soldiers dug up the grave of Syed Ahmad Barelvi and threw his dead body into the river. It was never found as the water in the Kunhar river flows too fast in that area. However, around 15 km downstream, in the graveyard of the hamlet of Talhatta, local people claim about a

grave to be his. Panni, in "Tarikh-i-Hazara", has included a manuscript of a British official, Mahtab Singh who worked under James Abbot. It mentions exhumation, disarticulation of the body and setting it into the river.

Legacy

Syed Ahmad is thought by at least one scholar (Edward Mortimer), to have anticipated modern Islamists in waging jihad and attempting to create an Islamic state with strict enforcement of Islamic law, and by at least one other (Olivier Roy), to be the first modern Islamic leader to lead a movement that was "religious, military and political," and to address the common people and rulers with a call for jihad.

Chapter 19

Ramakrishna

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (18 Feb 1836 – 16 August 1886), born **Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya**, was an Indian Hindu mystic, saint, and religious leader in 19th century Bengal. Sri Ramakrishna experienced spiritual ecstasies from a young age, and was influenced by several religious traditions, including devotion toward the Goddess Kali, Tantra, Bhakti and Advaita Vedanta.

As a priest at the Dakshineshwar Kali Temple, his mystical temperament and ecstasies gradually gained him widespread acknowledgement, attracting to him various spiritual teachers, social leaders, and lay followers; he eventually taught disciples, who would later form the monastic Ramakrishna Order. He was generally revered by Bengali elites and within religious circles, which led his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda to found the Ramakrishna Math, which provides spiritual training for monastics and householder devotees and the Ramakrishna Mission to provide charity, social work and education.

Biography

Birth and childhood of Ramakrishna

Sri Ramakrishna was born on 18 February 1836, in the village of Kamarpukur, in the Hooghly district of West Bengal, India, into a very poor, pious, and orthodox Bengali Brahmin family.

Kamarpukur was untouched by the glamour of the city and contained rice fields, tall palms, royal banyans, a few lakes, and two cremation grounds. His parents were Khudiram Chattopadhyay and Chandramani Devi. According to his followers, Sri Ramakrishna's parents experienced supernatural incidents and visions before his birth. In Gaya his father Khudiram had a dream in which Bhagwan Gadadhara (a form of Vishnu), said that he would be born as his son. Chandramani Devi is said to have had a vision of light entering her womb from (Yogider Shiv Mandir) Shiva's temple.

The family was devoted to Hindu God Rama, and male children of Khudiram and Chandramani were given names that started with Ram or Rama: Ramkumar, Rameswar, and Ramakrishna. There has been some dispute about the origin of the name Ramakrishna, but there is "...evidence which proves beyond doubt that the name 'Ramakrishna' was given to him by his father..." Ramakrishna confirmed this himself, as recorded in "M"s diaries, "I was a pet child of my father. He used to call me Ramakrishnababu."

Although Ramakrishna attended a village school with some regularity for 12 years, he later rejected the traditional schooling saying that he was not interested in a "bread-winning education". Kamarpukur, being a transit-point in well-established pilgrimage routes to Puri, brought him into contact with renunciates and holy men. He became well-versed in the *Puranas*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagavata Purana*, hearing them from wandering monks and the *Kathaks*—a class of men in ancient India who preached and sang the *Purāṇas*. He could read and write in Bengali.

Ramakrishna describes his first spiritual ecstasy at the age of six: while walking along the paddy fields, a flock of white cranes flying against a backdrop of dark thunderclouds caught his vision. He reportedly became so absorbed by this scene that he lost outward consciousness and experienced indescribable joy in that state. Ramakrishna reportedly had experiences of similar nature a few other times in his childhood—while worshipping the Goddess *Vishalakshi*, and portraying God Shiva in a drama during the *Shivaratri* festival. From his 10th or 11th year of school on, the trances became common, and by the final years of his life, Ramakrishna's *samādhi* periods occurred almost daily. Early on, these experiences have been interpreted as epileptic seizures, an interpretation which was rejected by Ramakrishna himself.

Ramakrishna's father died in 1843, after which family responsibilities fell on his elder brother Ramkumar. This loss drew him closer to his mother, and he spent his time in household activities and daily worship of the household deities and became more involved in contemplative activities such as reading the sacred epics. When Ramakrishna was in his teens, the family's financial position worsened. Ramkumar started a Sanskrit school in (Jhama pukur lane) Kolkata and also served as a priest. Ramakrishna moved to Kolkata in 1852 with Ramkumar to assist in the priestly work.

Priest at Dakshineswar Kali Temple

In 1855 Ramakrishna was appointed as the priest of Dakshineswar Kali Temple, built by Rani Rashmoni—a wealthy female zamindar of Kolkata who was well known for her kindness and benevolence to the poor and also for her religious

devotion, she belonged to the *kaivarta* community. Ramakrishna, along with his nephew Hriday, became assistants to Ramkumar, with Ramakrishna given the task of decorating the deity. When Ramkumar died in 1856, Ramakrishna took his place as the priest of the Kali temple.

First vision of Kali

After Ramkumar's death, Ramakrishna became more contemplative. He began to look upon the image of the goddess Kali as his mother and the mother of the universe, and became desperate for a vision of her. After many days of meditation, wherein he failed to receive a vision, he reportedly came to a point of such anguish that he impulsively decided to end his life. Seeing a sword hanging in a nearby room in the temple, he ran for it and was just about to reach it when he suddenly had a vision of the goddess Kali as the Universal Mother. He became overwhelmed, and before fainting, observed that to his spiritual sight, "... houses, doors, temples and everything else vanished altogether; as if there was nothing anywhere! And what I saw was an infinite shoreless sea of light; a sea that was consciousness. However, far and in whatever direction I looked, I saw shining waves, one after another, coming towards me."

Marriage

Rumors spread to Kamarpukur that Ramakrishna had become unstable as a result of his spiritual practices at Dakshineswar. Ramakrishna's mother and his elder brother Rameswar decided to get Ramakrishna married, thinking that marriage would be a good steadying influence upon him—by forcing him to accept

responsibility and to keep his attention on normal affairs rather than his spiritual practices and visions. Ramakrishna himself mentioned that they could find the bride at the house of Ramchandra Mukherjee in Jayrambati, three miles to the north-west of Kamarpukur. The five-year-old bride, Saradamani Mukhopadhyaya (later known as Sarada Devi; she is also considered as an avatar) was found, and the marriage was duly solemnised in 1859. Ramakrishna was twenty-three at this point, but this age difference for marriage was typical for nineteenth-century rural Bengal. They later spent three months together in Kamarpukur. Sarada Devi was fourteen, while Ramakrishna was thirty-two. Ramakrishna became a very influential figure in Sarada's life, and she became a strong follower of his teachings. After the marriage, Sarada stayed at Jayrambati and joined Ramakrishna in Dakshineswar at the age of eighteen.

By the time his bride joined him, Ramakrishna had already embraced the monastic life of a sannyasi; the marriage was never consummated. As a priest, Ramakrishna performed the ritual ceremony-—the *Shodashi Puja (in his room)*–where Sarada Devi was worshipped as the *Divine Mother*. Ramakrishna regarded Sarada Devi as the Divine Mother in person, addressing her as the Holy Mother, and it was by this name that she was known to Ramakrishna's disciples. Sarada Devi outlived Ramakrishna by thirty-four years and played an important role in the nascent religious movement.

As a part of practicing a spiritual mood, called *mādhurā bhavā sādhana*, Ramakrishna dressed and behaved as a woman. Disciple Mahendranath Gupta quotes the Master as follows:

How can a man conquer passion? He should assume the attitude of a woman. I spent many days as the handmaid of God. I dressed myself in women's clothes, put on ornaments and covered the upper part of my body with a scarf, just like a woman. With the scarf on, I used to perform the evening worship before the image. Otherwise, how could I have kept my wife with me for eight months? Both of us behaved as if we were the handmaid of the Divine Mother.

Formative religious practices and teachers

While Ramakrishna was a temple priest at Dakshineswar, itinerant sadhus could come and stay for a while, practicing their particular mode of worship. Several of these people became Ramakrishna's teachers in the various schools of Hinduism. He had grown up practicing Bhakti (devotion) to Rama. His duties as priest at the Dakshineswar temple led him to practice worship of Mother Kali. Then, in

- 1861, Bhairavi Brahmani initiated Ramakrishna into Tantra,
- 1864, Ramakrishna took up the practise of vātsalya bhāva under a Vaishnava guru Jatadhari,
- 1865, Naga Sannyasi (monk) Tota Puri initiated Ramakrishna into sannyasa and non-dual (Advaita Vedanta) meditation;
- 1866, Govinda Roy, a Hindu guru who practised Sufism, initiated Ramakrishna into Islam,
- 1873, Ramakrishna practiced Christianity, and had the Bible read to him.

After more than a decade of sadhana in various religious paths, each culminating in the realization of God by that path, his personal practices settled, and he is said to have remained in bhavamukha, a level of blissful samadhi. He would meditate in the Panchavati (a wooded and secluded area of the Dakshineswar Temple grounds), go to the Kali temple to offer flowers to the Mother, and wave incense to the assorted deities and religious figures, whose pictures hung in his room.

Rama Bhakti

At some point in the period between his vision of Kali and his marriage, Ramakrishna practised *dāsya bhāva*, during which he worshiped Rama with the attitude of Hanuman, who is considered to be the ideal devotee and servant of Rama. According to Ramakrishna, towards the end of this *sadhana*, he had a vision of Sita, the consort of Rama, merging into his body.

with her the *Raghuvir Shila*, a stone icon representing Ram and all Vaishnava deities. She was learned of some texts of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and practised Tantra. According to the Bhairavi, Ramakrishna was experiencing phenomena that accompany *mahabhava*, the supreme attitude of loving devotion towards the divine, and quoting from the *bhakti shastras*, she said that other religious figures like Radha and Chaitanya had similar experiences.

The Bhairavi initiated Ramakrishna into Tantra. Tantrism focuses on the worship of *shakti* and the object of tantric training is to transcend the barriers between the holy and unholy as a means of achieving liberation and to see all

aspects of the natural world as manifestations of the divine *shakti*. Under her guidance, Ramakrishna went through sixty-four major tantric sadhanas which were completed in 1863. For all the sixty-four sadhana, he took only three days each to complete He began with mantra rituals such as japa and purascarana and many other rituals designed to purify the mind and establish self-control. He later proceeded towards tantric sadhanas, which generally include a set of heterodox practices called *vamachara* (left-hand path), which utilise as a means of liberation, activities like eating of parched grain, fish and meat along with drinking of wine and sexual intercourse. According to Ramakrishna and his biographers, Ramakrishna did not directly participate in the last two of those activities (some even say he didn't indulge in meat eating), all that he needed was a suggestion of them to produce the desired result. Ramakrishna acknowledged the left-hand tantric path, though it had "undesirable features", as one of the "valid roads to God-realization", he consistently cautioned his devotees and disciples against associating with it. The Bhairavi also taught Ramakrishna the *kumari-puja*, a form of ritual in which the Virgin Goddess is worshipped symbolically in the form of a young girl. Under the tutelage of the Bhairavi, Ramakrishna also learnt Kundalini Yoga. The Bhairavi, with the yogic techniques and the tantra, played an important part in the initial spiritual development of Ramakrishna.

Vaishnava Bhakti

In 1864, Ramakrishna practised *vātsalya bhāva* under a Vaishnava guru Jatadhari. During this period, he worshipped a small metal image of Ramlālā (Rama as a child) in the attitude

of a mother. According to Ramakrishna, he could feel the presence of child Rama as a living God in the metal image.

Ramakrishna later engaged in the practice of *madhura bhāva*, the attitude of the Gopis and Radha towards Krishna. During the practise of this *bhava*, Ramakrishna dressed himself in women's attire for several days and regarded himself as one of the Gopis of Vrindavan. According to Sri Ramakrishna, *madhura bhava* is one of the ways to root out the idea of sex, which is seen as an impediment in spiritual life. According to Ramakrishna, towards the end of this *sadhana*, he attained *savikalpa samadhi* (god seen with form and qualities)—vision and union with Krishna.

Ramakrishna visited Nadia, the home of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Nityananda Prabhu, the fifteenth-century founders of Bengali Gaudiya Vaishnava bhakti. According to Ramakrishna, he had an intense vision of two young boys merging into his body while he was crossing the river in a boat. Earlier, after his vision of Kali, he is said to have cultivated the *Santa bhava*—the child attitude – towards Kali.

Totapuri and Vedanta

In 1865, Ramakrishna was initiated into *sannyasa* by Totapuri, an itinerant Naga Sannyasi (monk) of Mahanirvani Akhara who trained Ramakrishna in *Advaita Vedanta*, the Hindu philosophy which emphasises non-dualism.

Totapuri first guided Ramakrishna through the rites of *sannyasa*—renunciation of all ties to the world. Then he instructed him in the teaching of *advaita*—that "Brahman alone is real, and the world is illusory; I have no separate

existence; I am that Brahman alone." Under the guidance of Totapuri, Ramakrishna reportedly experienced *nirvikalpa samadhi*, which is considered to be the highest state in spiritual realisation. He remained in that state of non-dual existence for six months without the least awareness of even his own body.

Totapuri stayed with Ramakrishna for nearly eleven months and instructed him further in the teachings of *advaita*. Ramakrishna said that this period of *nirvikalpa samadhi* came to an end when he received a command from the Mother Kali to "remain in *Bhavamukha*; for the enlightenment of the people". *Bhavamukha* being a state of existence intermediate between *samādhi* and normal consciousness.

Islam and Christianity

According to Swami Saradananda's biography, in 1866 Govinda Roy, a Hindu guru who practised Sufism, initiated Ramakrishna into Islam, and he practiced Islam for three days. During this practice, Ramakrishna had a vision of a luminous figure, and Swami Nikhilananda's biography speculates that the figure was 'perhaps Mohammed'. According to these accounts, Ramakrishna "devoutly repeated the name of Allah, wore a cloth like the Arab Muslims, said their prayer five times daily, and felt disinclined even to see images of the Hindu gods and goddesses, much less worship them—for the Hindu way of thinking had disappeared altogether from my mind." After three days of practice he had a vision of a "radiant personage with grave countenance and white beard resembling the Prophet and merging with his body". Kripal writes that this "would have been a heretical experience through and through"

for most Muslims. during this time, Ramakrishna felt an urge to take Cow beef. However, this urge could not be satisfied openly. But one day as he sat on the bank of the Ganges, a carcass of a cow was floating by. He then entered the body of a dog "astrally" and tasted the meat of dead cow, Thus his Muslim Sadhana was now complete.

At the end of 1873 he started the practice of Christianity, when his devotee Shambhu Charan Mallik read the Bible to him. According to Swami Saradananda's biography, Ramakrishna was filled with Christian thoughts for days and no longer thought of going to the Kali temple. Ramakrishna described a vision in which a picture of the Madonna and Child became alive, and he had a vision in which Jesus merged with his body. In his own room amongst other divine pictures was one of Christ, and he burnt incense before it morning and evening. There was also a picture showing Jesus Christ saving St Peter from drowning in the water.

Popularisation

Keshab Chandra Sen and the "New Dispensation"

In 1875, Ramakrishna met the influential Brahmo Samaj leader Keshab Chandra Sen. Keshab had accepted Christianity, and had separated from the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Formerly, Keshab had rejected idolatry, but under the influence of Ramakrishna he accepted Hindu polytheism and established the "New Dispensation" (*Nava Vidhan*) religious movement, based on Ramakrishna's principles—"Worship of God as Mother", "All religions as true" and "Assimilation of Hindu

polytheism into Brahmoism". Keshab also publicised Ramakrishna's teachings in the journals of *New Dispensation* over a period of several years, which was instrumental in bringing Ramakrishna to the attention of a wider audience, especially the Bhadralok (English-educated classes of Bengal) and the Europeans residing in India.

Following Keshab, other Brahmos such as Vijaykrishna Goswami started to admire Ramakrishna, propagate his ideals and reorient their socio-religious outlook. Many prominent people of Kolkata—Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, Shivanath Shastri and Trailokyanath Sanyal—began visiting him during this time (1871–1885). Mazumdar wrote the first English biography of Ramakrishna, entitled *The Hindu Saint* in the *Theistic Quarterly Review* (1879), which played a vital role in introducing Ramakrishna to Westerners like the German indologist Max Müller. Newspapers reported that Ramakrishna was spreading "Love" and "Devotion" among the educated classes of Kolkata and that he had succeeded in reforming the character of some youths whose morals had been corrupt.

Ramakrishna also had interactions with Debendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath Tagore, and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, a renowned social worker. He had also met Swami Dayananda. Ramakrishna is considered one of the main contributors to the Bengali Renaissance.

Vivekananda

Among the Europeans who were influenced by Ramakrishna was Principal Dr. William Hastie of the Scottish Church College, Kolkata. In the course of explaining the word *trance* in

the poem *The Excursion* by William Wordsworth, Hastie told his students that if they wanted to know its "real meaning", they should go to "Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar." This prompted some of his students, including Narendranath Dutta (later Swami Vivekananda), to visit Ramakrishna.

Despite initial reservations, Vivekananda became Ramakrishna's most influential follower, popularizing a modern interpretation of Indian traditions which harmonised Tantra, Yoga and Advaita Vedanta. Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna order, which eventually spread its mission posts throughout the world. Monastic disciples, who renounced their family and became the earliest monks of the Ramakrishna order, included Rakhal Chandra Ghosh (Swami Brahmananda), Kaliprasad Chandra (Swami Abhedananda), Taraknath Ghoshal (Swami Shivananda), Sashibhushan Chakravarty (Swami Ramakrishnananda), Saratchandra Chakravarty (Swami Saradananda), Tulasi Charan Dutta (Swami Nirmalananda), Gangadhar Ghatak (Swami Akhandananda), Hari Prasana (Swami Vijnanananda) Swami Turiyananda and others.

Other devotees and disciples

As his name spread, an ever-shifting crowd of all classes and castes visited Ramakrishna. Most of Ramakrishna's prominent disciples came between 1879–1885. Apart from the early members who joined the Ramakrishna Order, his chief disciples consisted of:

- *Grihasthas* or *The householders*—Mahendranath Gupta, Girish Chandra Ghosh, Mahendra Lal Sarkar, Akshay Kumar Sen and others.

- A small group of women disciples, including *Gauri Ma* and *Yogin Ma*. A few of them were initiated into *sanyasa* through *mantra deeksha*. Among the women, Ramakrishna emphasised service to other women rather than *tapasya*(practice of austerities). Gauri Ma founded the Saradesvari Ashrama at Barrackpur, which was dedicated to the education and upliftment of women.

In preparation for monastic life, Ramakrishna ordered his monastic disciples to beg their food from door to door without distinction of caste. He gave them the saffron robe, the sign of the Sanyasi, and initiated them with *Mantra Deeksha*.

Last days

- In the beginning of 1885 Ramakrishna suffered from clergyman's throat, which gradually developed into throat cancer. He was moved to Shyampukur near Kolkata, where some of the best physicians of the time, including Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, were engaged. When his condition aggravated, he was relocated to a large garden house at Cossipore on 11 December 1885.

During his last days, he was looked after by his monastic disciples and Sarada Devi. Ramakrishna was advised by the doctors to keep the strictest silence, but ignoring their advice, he incessantly conversed with visitors. According to traditional accounts, before his death, Ramakrishna transferred his spiritual powers to Vivekananda and reassured Vivekananda of his avataric status. Ramakrishna asked Vivekananda to look

after the welfare of the disciples, saying, "keep my boys together" and asked him to "teach them". Ramakrishna also asked other monastic disciples to look upon Vivekananda as their leader.

Ramakrishna's condition gradually worsened, and he died in the early morning hours of 16 August 1886 at the Cossipore garden house. According to his disciples, this was *mahasamadhi*. After the death of their master, the monastic disciples led by Vivekananda formed a fellowship at a half-ruined house at Baranagar near the river Ganges, with the financial assistance of the householder disciples. This became the first Math or monastery of the disciples who constituted the first Ramakrishna Order.

Practices and teachings

Bhakti, Tantra, and God-realization

Ramakrishna's religious practice and worldview, contained elements of Bhakti, Tantra and Vedanta. Ramakrishna emphasised God-realisation, stating that "To realize God is the one goal in life." Ramakrishna found that Hinduism, Christianity and Islam all move towards the same God or divine, though using different ways: "So many religions, so many paths to reach one and the same goal," namely to experience God or Divine. Ramakrishna further said, "All scriptures - the Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantras - seek Him alone and no one else." The Vedic phrase "Truth is one; only It is called by different names," became a stock phrase to express Ramakrishna's inclusivism.

Ramakrishna preferred "the duality of adoring a Divinity beyond himself to the self-annihilating immersion of nirvikalpa samadhi, and he helped "bring to the realm of Eastern energetics and realization the daemonic celebration that the human is always between a reality it has not yet attained and a reality to which it is no longer limited." Ramakrishna is quoted in the Nikhilananda Gospel, "The devotee of God wants to eat sugar, and not to become sugar."

Max Müller portrayed Ramakrishna as, "...a Bhakta, a worshipper or lover of the deity, much more than a Gñânin or a knower." Postcolonial literary theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak wrote that Ramakrishna was a "Bengali *bhakta* visionary" and that as a *bhakta*, "he turned chiefly towards Kali."

Indologist Heinrich Zimmer was the first Western scholar to interpret Ramakrishna's worship of the Divine Mother as containing specifically Tantric elements. Neeval also argued that tantra played a main role in Ramakrishna's spiritual development.

The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

The principal source for Ramakrishna's teaching is Mahendranath Gupta's *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita*, which is regarded as a Bengali classic and "the central text of the tradition". Gupta used the pen name "M", as the author of the Gospel. The text was published in five volumes from 1902 to 1932. Based on Gupta's diary notes, each of the five volumes purports to document Ramakrishna's life from 1882 to 1886.

The most popular English translation of the *Kathamrita* is *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by Swami Nikhilananda. Nikhilananda's translation rearranged the scenes in the five volumes of the *Kathamrita* into a linear sequence.

Swami Nikhilananda worked with Margaret Woodrow Wilson, daughter of President Woodrow Wilson, who helped the swami to refine his literary style into "flowing American English". The mystic hymns were rendered into free verse by the American poet John Moffitt. Wilson and American mythology scholar Joseph Campbell helped edit the manuscript. Aldous Huxley wrote in his Forward to the Gospel, "...'M' produced a book unique, so far as my knowledge goes, in the literature of hagiography. Never have the casual and unstudied utterances of a great religious teacher been set down with so minute detail."

Philosopher Lex Hixon writes that the Gospel of Ramakrishna is "spiritually authentic" and a "powerful rendering of the *Kathamrita*". Malcolm Mclean and Jeffrey Kripal both argue that the translation is unreliable, though Kripal's interpretation is criticized by Hugh Urban.

Style of teaching

Ramakrishna's teachings were imparted in rustic Bengali, using stories and parables. These teachings made a powerful impact on Kolkata's intellectuals, despite the fact that his preachings were far removed from issues of modernism or national independence.

Ramakrishna's primary biographers describe him as talkative. According to the biographers, Ramakrishna would reminisce

for hours about his own eventful spiritual life, tell tales, explain Vedantic doctrines with extremely mundane illustrations, raise questions and answer them himself, crack jokes, sing songs, and mimic the ways of all types of worldly people, keeping the visitors enthralled.

As an example of Ramakrishna's teachings and fun with his followers, here's a quote about his visit to an exhibition, “I once visited the MUSEUM There was a display of fossils: living animals had turned into stone. Just look at the power of association! Imagine what would happen if you constantly kept the company of the holy.” Mani Mallick replied (laughing): “If you would go there again we could have ten to fifteen more years of spiritual instructions.”

Ramakrishna used rustic colloquial Bengali in his conversations. According to contemporary reports, Ramakrishna's linguistic style was unique, even to those who spoke Bengali. It contained obscure local words and idioms from village Bengali, interspersed with philosophical Sanskrit terms and references to the Vedas, Puranas, and Tantras. For that reason, according to philosopher Lex Hixon, his speeches cannot be literally translated into English or any other language. Scholar Amiya P. Sen argued that certain terms that Ramakrishna may have used only in a metaphysical sense are being improperly invested with new, contemporaneous meanings.

Ramakrishna was skilled with words and had an extraordinary style of preaching and instructing, which may have helped convey his ideas to even the most skeptical temple visitors. His speeches reportedly revealed a sense of joy and fun, but he was

not at a loss when debating with intellectual philosophers. Philosopher Arindam Chakrabarti contrasted Ramakrishna's talkativeness with the Buddha's legendary reticence, and compared his teaching style to that of Socrates.

Divine nature

To a devotee, Sri Ramakrishna said:

It has been revealed to me that there exists an Ocean of Consciousness without limit. From It come all things of the relative plane, and in It they merge again. These waves arising from the Great Ocean merge again in the Great Ocean. I have clearly perceived all these things.

Ramakrishna regarded the Supreme Being to be both Personal and Impersonal, active and inactive:

When I think of the Supreme Being as inactive - neither creating nor preserving nor destroying - I call Him Brahman or Purusha, the Impersonal God. When I think of Him as active - creating, preserving and destroying - I call Him Sakti or Maya or Prakriti, the Personal God. But the distinction between them does not mean a difference. The Personal and Impersonal are the same thing, like milk and its whiteness, the diamond and its lustre, the snake and its wriggling motion. It is impossible to conceive of the one without the other. The Divine Mother and Brahman are one.

Ramakrishna regarded maya to be of two natures, *avidya maya* and *vidya maya*. He explained that *avidya maya* represents dark forces of creation (e.g. sensual desire, selfish actions, evil passions, greed, lust and cruelty), which keep people on lower

planes of consciousness. These forces are responsible for human entrapment in the cycle of birth and death, and they must be fought and vanquished. *Vidya maya*, on the other hand, represents higher forces of creation (e.g. spiritual virtues, selfless action, enlightening qualities, kindness, purity, love, and devotion), which elevate human beings to the higher planes of consciousness.

Society

Ramakrishna taught that *yatra jiv tatra Shiv* (wherever there is a living being, there is Shiva). His teaching, "Jive daya noy, Shiv gyane jiv seba" (not kindness to living beings, but serving the living being as Shiva Himself) is considered as the inspiration for the philanthropic work carried out by his chief disciple Vivekananda.

In the Kolkata scene of the mid to late nineteenth century, Ramakrishna was opinionated on the subject of Chakri. Chakri can be described as a type of low-paying servitude done by educated men—typically government or commerce-related clerical positions. On a basic level, Ramakrishna saw this system as a corrupt form of European social organisation that forced educated men to be servants not only to their bosses at the office, but also to their wives at home. What Ramakrishna saw as the primary detriment of Chakri, however, was that it forced workers into a rigid, impersonal clock-based time structure. He saw the imposition of strict adherence to each second on the watch as a roadblock to spirituality. Despite this, however, Ramakrishna demonstrated that Bhakti could be practised as an inner retreat to experience solace in the face of

Western-style discipline and often discrimination in the workplace.

His spiritual movement indirectly aided nationalism, as it rejected caste distinctions and religious prejudices.

Reception and legacy

Ramakrishna is considered an important figure in the Bengali Renaissance of 19th–20th century. Several organisations have been established in his name. The Ramakrishna Math and Mission is the main organisation founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897. The Mission conducts extensive work in health care, disaster relief, rural management, tribal welfare, elementary and higher education. The movement is considered as one of the revitalisation movements of India. Amiya Sen writes that Vivekananda's "social service gospel" stemmed from direct inspiration from Ramakrishna and rests substantially on the "liminal quality" of the Master's message.

Other organisations include the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society founded by Swami Abhedananda in 1923, the Ramakrishna Sarada Math founded by a rebel group in 1929, the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission formed by Swami Nityananda in 1976, and the Sri Sarada Math and Ramakrishna Sarada Mission founded in 1959 as a sister organisation by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote a poem on Ramakrishna, *To the Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva*:

Diverse courses of worship from varied springs of fulfillment have mingled in your meditation.

The manifold revelation of the joy of the Infinite has given form to a shrine of unity in your life

where from far and near arrive salutations to which I join my own.

During the 1937 Parliament of Religions, which was held at the Ramakrishna Mission in Calcutta, Tagore acknowledged Ramakrishna as a great saint because

...the largeness of his spirit could comprehend seemingly antagonistic modes of sadhana, and because the simplicity of his soul shames for all time the pomp and pedantry of pontiffs and pundits.

Max Müller, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sri Aurobindo, and Leo Tolstoy have acknowledged Ramakrishna's contribution to humanity. Ramakrishna's influence is also seen in the works of artists such as Franz Dvorak (1862–1927) and Philip Glass.

Views and studies

Transformation into neo-Vedantin

Vivekananda portrayed Ramakrishna as an Advaita Vedantin. Vivekananda's approach can be located in the historical background of Ramakrishna and Calcutta during the mid-19th century. Neevel notes that the image of Ramakrishna

underwent several transformations in the writings of his prominent admirers, who changed the 'religious madman' into a calm and well-behaving proponent of Advaita Vedanta. Narasingha Sil has argued that Vivekananda revised and mythologised Ramakrishna's image after Ramakrishna's death. McDaniel notes that the Ramakrishna Mission is biased towards Advaita Vedanta, and downplays the importance of Shaktism in Ramakrishna's spirituality. Malcolm McLean argued that the Ramakrishna Movement presents "a particular kind of explanation of Ramakrishna, that he was some kind of neo-Vedantist who taught that all religions lead to the same Godhead."

Carl Olson argued that in his presentation of his master, Vivekananda had hid much of Ramakrishna's embarrassing sexual oddities from the public, because he feared that Ramakrishna would be misunderstood. Tyagananda and Vrajaprana argue that Oslon makes his "astonishing claim" based on Kripal's speculations in *Kali's Child*, which they argue are unsupported by any of the source texts.

Sumit Sarkar argued that he found in the *Kathamrita* traces of a binary opposition between unlearned oral wisdom and learned literate knowledge. He argues that all of our information about Ramakrishna, a rustic near-illiterate Brahmin, comes from urban *bhadralok* devotees, "...whose texts simultaneously illuminate and transform."

Amiya Prosad Sen criticises Neevel's analysis, and writes that "it is really difficult to separate the Tantrik Ramakrishna from the Vedantic", since Vedanta and Tantra "may appear to be

different in some respects", but they also "share some important postulates between them".

Psychoanalysis

In 1927 Romain Roland discussed with Sigmund Freud the "oceanic feeling" described by Ramakrishna. Sudhir Kakar (1991), Jeffrey Kripal (1995), and Narasingha Sil (1998), analysed Ramakrishna's mysticism and religious practices using psychoanalysis, arguing that his mystical visions, refusal to comply with ritual copulation in Tantra, *Madhura Bhava*, and criticism of *Kamini-Kanchana* (women and gold) reflect homosexuality.

Romain Rolland and the "Oceanic feeling"

The dialogue on psychoanalysis and Ramakrishna began in 1927 when Sigmund Freud's friend Romain Rolland wrote to him that he should consider spiritual experiences, or "the oceanic feeling," in his psychological works. Romain Rolland described the trances and mystical states experienced by Ramakrishna and other mystics as an "'oceanic' sentiment", one which Rolland had also experienced. Rolland believed that the universal human religious emotion resembled this "oceanic sense."

In his 1929 book *La vie de Ramakrishna*, Rolland distinguished between the feelings of unity and eternity which Ramakrishna experienced in his mystical states and Ramakrishna's interpretation of those feelings as the goddess Kali.

The Analyst and the Mystic

In his 1991 book *The Analyst and the Mystic*, Indian psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar saw in Ramakrishna's visions a spontaneous capacity for creative experiencing. Kakar also argued that culturally relative concepts of eroticism and gender have contributed to the Western difficulty in comprehending Ramakrishna. Kakar saw Ramakrishna's seemingly bizarre acts as part of a *bhakti* path to God.

Kali's Child

In 1995, Jeffrey J. Kripal in his controversial *Kali's Child: The Mystical and the Erotic in the Life and Teachings of Ramakrishna*, an interdisciplinary study of Ramakrishna's life "using a range of theoretical models," most notably psycho-analysis, argued that Ramakrishna's mystical experiences could be seen as symptoms of repressed homoeroticism, "legitimat[ing] Ramakrishna's religious visions by situating psychoanalytic discourse in a wider Tantric worldview. Jeffrey J. Kripal argued that Ramakrishna rejected Advaita Vedanta in favour of Shakti Tantra.

Kripal also argued in *Kali's Child* that the Ramakrishna Movement had manipulated Ramakrishna's biographical documents, that the Movement had published them in incomplete and bowdlerised editions (claiming, among other things, hiding Ramakrishna's homoerotic tendencies), and that the Movement had suppressed Ram Chandra Datta's *Srisriramakrsna Paramahamsadever Jivanavrttanta*.

These views were disputed by several authors, scholars, and psychoanalysts, including Alan Roland, Kelly Aan Raab, Somnath Bhattacharyya, J.S. Hawley, and Swami Atmajnanananda, who wrote that *Jivanavrttanta* had been reprinted nine times in Bengali as of 1995,

Jeffrey Kripal translates the phrase *kamini-kanchana* as *lover and gold*. The literal translation is *Women and Gold*. In Ramakrishna's view, lust and greed, are obstacles to God-realization. Kripal associates his translation of the phrase with Ramakrishna's alleged disgust for women as lovers. Swami Tyagananda considered this to be a "linguistic misconstruction." Ramakrishna also cautioned his women disciples against *purusa-kanchana* ("man and gold") and Tyagananda writes that Ramakrishna used *Kamini-Kanchana* as "cautionary words" instructing his disciples to conquer the "lust *inside* the mind."

The application of psychoanalysis has further been disputed by Tyagananda and Vrajaprana as being unreliable in understanding Tantra and interpreting cross-cultural contexts in *Interpreting Ramakrishna: Kali's Child Revisited* (2010).

Chapter 20

First Anglo-Afghan War

The **First Anglo-Afghan War** also known by the British as the **Disaster in Afghanistan**) was fought between the British Empire and the Emirate of Afghanistan from 1839 to 1842. Initially, the British successfully intervened in a succession dispute between emir Dost Mohammad (Barakzai) and former emir Shah Shujah (Durrani), whom they installed upon capturing Kabul in August 1839. The main British Indian force occupying Kabul along with their camp followers, having endured harsh winters as well, was almost completely annihilated during its 1842 retreat from Kabul. The British then sent an *Army of Retribution* to Kabul to avenge the destruction of their previous forces, defeating the Afghans and having demolished parts of the capital. After recovering prisoners, they withdrew from Afghanistan by the end of the year. Dost Mohammed returned from exile in India to resume his rule.

It was one of the first major conflicts during the Great Game, the 19th century competition for power and influence in Central Asia between Britain and Russia.

Causes

The 19th century was a period of diplomatic competition between the British and Russian empires for spheres of influence in Asia known as the "Great Game" to the British and the "Tournament of Shadows" to the Russians. With the

exception of Emperor Paul who ordered an invasion of India in 1800 (which was cancelled after his assassination in 1801), no Russian tsar ever seriously considered invading India, but for most of the 19th century, Russia was viewed as "the enemy" in Britain; and any Russian advance into Central Asia, into what is now Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, was always assumed (in London) to be directed towards the conquest of India, as the American historian David Fromkin observed, "no matter how far-fetched" such an interpretation might be. In 1832, the First Reform Bill lowering the franchise requirements to vote and hold office in the United Kingdom was passed, which the ultra-conservative Emperor Nicholas I of Russia openly disapproved of, setting the stage for an Anglo-Russian "cold war", with many believing that Russian autocracy and British democracy were bound to clash. In 1837, Lord Palmerston and John Hobhouse, fearing the instability of Afghanistan, the Sindh, and the increasing power of the Sikh kingdom to the northwest, raised the spectre of a possible Russian invasion of British India through Afghanistan. The British tended to misunderstand the foreign policy of the Emperor Nicholas I as anti-British and intent upon an expansionary policy in Asia; whereas in fact though Nicholas disliked Britain as a liberal democratic state that he considered to be rather "strange", he always believed it was possible to reach an understanding with Britain on spheres of influence in Asia, believing that the essentially conservative nature of British society would retard the advent of liberalism. The main goal of Nicholas's foreign policy was not the conquest of Asia, but rather upholding the *status quo* in Europe, especially by co-operating with Prussia and Austria, and in isolating France, as Louis Philippe I, the King of the French was a man whom Nicholas hated as an "usurper". The duc

d'Orleans had once been Nicholas's friend, but when he assumed the throne of France after the revolution of 1830, Nicholas was consumed with hatred for his former friend who, as he saw it, had gone over to what he perceived as the dark side of liberalism. The idea that Russia was a threat to the East India Company is one version of events. Scholars now favour a different interpretation that the fear of the East India Company was in fact the decision of Dost Mohammed Khan and the Qajar Ruler of Iran to form an alliance and extinguish Sikh rule in Punjab. The British feared that an invading Islamic army would lead to an uprising in India by the people and princely states therefore it was decided to replace Dost Mohammed Khan with a more pliant ruler. "Rumours could cost lives and Empire itself. Therefore instead of fixating on the oriental other, the East India Company played up the threat of the Russian bear".

The Company sent an envoy to Kabul to form an alliance with Afghanistan's Amir, Dost Mohammad Khan against Russia. Dost Mohammad had recently lost a strategic city of Peshawar to the Sikh Empire and was willing to form an alliance with Britain if they gave support to retake it, but the British were unwilling. Instead, the British feared the French-trained *Dal Khalsa*, and they considered the Sikh army to be a far more formidable threat than the Afghans who did not have a well-disciplined army, instead having only a tribal levy where under the banner of *jihad* tribesmen would come out to fight for the Emir. For this reason, Lord Auckland preferred an alliance with the Punjab over an alliance with Afghanistan. The British could have had an alliance with the Punjab or Afghanistan, but not both at the same time.

When Governor-General of IndiaLord Auckland heard about the arrival of Russian envoy Count Jan Prosper Witkiewicz (better known by the Russian version of his name as Yan Vitkevich) in Kabul and the possibility that Dost Mohammad might turn to Russia for support, his political advisers exaggerated the threat. Alexander Burnes, the Scotsman who served as the East India Company's chief political officer in Afghanistan, described Witkiewicz: "He was a gentlemanly and agreeable man, of about thirty years of age, spoke French, Turkish and Persian fluently, and wore the uniform of an officer of the Cossacks". The presence of Witkiewicz had thrown Burnes into a state of despair, leading one contemporary to note that he "abandoned himself to despair, bound his head with wet towels and handkerchiefs and took to the smelling bottle". Dost Mohammad had in fact invited Count Witkiewicz to Kabul as a way to frighten the British into making an alliance with him against his archenemy Ranjit Singh, the Maharaja of the Punjab, not because he really wanted an alliance with Russia. The British had the power to compel Singh to return the former Afghan territories he had conquered whereas the Russians did not, which explains why Dost Mohammad Khan wanted an alliance with the British. Burnes wrote home after having dinner with Count Witkiewicz and Dost Mohammad in late December 1837: "We are in a mess home. The emperor of Russia has sent an envoy to Kabul to offer...money [to the Afghans] to fight Rajeet Singh!!! I could not believe my own eyes or ears." On 20 January 1838, Lord Auckland sent an ultimatum to Dost Mohammad telling him: "You must desist from all correspondence with Russia. You must never receive agents from them, or have aught to do with them without our sanction; you must dismiss Captain Viktevitch [Witkiewicz] with courtesy; you must surrender all claims to Peshawar".

Burnes himself had complained that Lord Auckland's letter was "so dictatorial and supercilious as to indicate the writer's intention that it should give offense", and tried to avoid delivering it for long as possible. Dost Mohammad was indeed offended by the letter, but in order to avoid a war, he had his special military advisor, the American adventurer Josiah Harlan engage in talks with Burnes to see if some compromise could be arranged. Burnes in fact had no power to negotiate anything, and Harlan complained that Burnes was just stalling, which led to Dost Mohammad expelling the British diplomatic mission on 26 April 1838.

British fears of a Persian and Afghan invasion of India took one step closer to becoming a reality when negotiations between the Afghans and Russians broke down in 1838. The Qajar dynasty of Persia, with Russian support, attempted the Siege of Herat. Herat, in Afghanistan, is a city that had historically belonged to Persia that the Qajar shahs had long desired to take back and is located in a plain so fertile that is known as the "Granary of Central Asia"; whoever controls Heret and the surrounding countryside also controls the largest source of grain in all of Central Asia. Russia, wanting to increase its presence in Central Asia, had formed an alliance with Qajar Persia, which had territorial disputes with Afghanistan as Herat had been part of the Safavid Persia before 1709. Lord Auckland's plan was to drive away the besiegers and replace Dost Mohammad with Shuja Shah Durrani, who had once ruled Afghanistan and who was willing to ally himself with anyone who might restore him to the Afghan throne. At one point, Shuja had hired an American adventurer Josiah Harlan to overthrow Dost Mohammad Khan, despite the fact Harlan's military experience comprised only working as a surgeon with

the East India Company's troops in First Burma War. Shuja Shah had been deposed in 1809 and been living in exile in British India since 1818, collecting a pension from the East India Company, which believed that he might be useful one day. The British denied that they were invading Afghanistan, claiming they were merely supporting its "legitimate" Shuja government "against foreign interference and factious opposition." Shuja Shah by 1838 was barely remembered by most of his former subjects and those that did viewed him as a cruel, tyrannical ruler who, as the British were soon to learn, had almost no popular support in Afghanistan.

On 1 October 1838 Lord Auckland issued the Simla Declaration attacking Dost Mohammed Khan for making "an unprovoked attack" on the empire of "our ancient ally, Maharaja Ranjeet Singh", going on to declare that Suja Shah was "popular throughout Afghanistan" and would enter his former realm "surrounded by his own troops and be supported against foreign interference and factious opposition by the British Army". As the Persians had broken off the siege of Herat and the Emperor Nicholas I of Russia had ordered Count Vitkevich home (he was to commit suicide upon reaching St. Petersburg), the reasons for attempting to put Shuja Shah back on the Afghan throne had vanished. The British historian Sir John William Kaye wrote that the failure of the Persians to take Herat "cut from under the feet of Lord Auckland all ground of justification and rendered the expedition across the Indus at once a folly and a crime". But at this point, Auckland was committed to putting Afghanistan into the British sphere of influence and nothing would stop him from going ahead with the invasion. On 25 November 1838, the two most powerful armies on the Indian subcontinent assembled in a grand review

at Ferozepore as Ranjit Singh, the Maharajah of the Punjab brought out the *Dal Khalsa* to march alongside the sepoy troops of the East India Company and the British troops in India with Lord Auckland himself present amid much colorful pageantry and music as men dressed in brightly colored uniforms together with horses and elephants marched in an impressive demonstration of military might. Lord Auckland declared that the "Grand Army of the Indus" would now start the march on Kabul to depose Dost Mohammed and put Shuja Shah back on the Afghan throne, ostensibly because the latter was the rightful Emir, but in reality to place Afghanistan into the British sphere of influence. The Duke of Wellington speaking in the House of Lords condemned the invasion, saying that the real difficulties would only begin after the invasion's success, predicating that Anglo-Indian force would rout the Afghan tribal levy, but then find themselves struggling to hold on given the terrain of the Hindu Kush mountains and Afghanistan had no modern roads, calling the entire operation "stupid" given that Afghanistan was a land of "rocks, sands, deserts, ice and snow".

Forces

British India at this time was a proprietary colony run by the East India Company, which had been granted the right to rule India by the British Crown. India was only one of several proprietary colonies in the British Empire around the world, where various corporations or individuals had been granted the right to rule by the Crown, with for instance Rupert's Land, which was a vast tract covering most of what is now Canada being ruled by the Hudson's Bay Company, but India was

easily the most wealthy and profitable of all the proprietary colonies. By the 19th century, the East India Company ruled 90 million Indians and controlled 70m acres (243,000 square kilometres) of land under its own flag while issuing its own currency, making it into the most powerful corporation in the world. The East India Company had been granted monopolies on trade by the Crown, but it was not owned by the Crown, though the shares in the East India Company were owned by numerous MPs and aristocrats, creating a powerful Company lobby in Parliament while the Company regularly gave "gifts" to influential people in Britain. The East India Company was sufficiently wealthy to maintain the three Presidency armies, known after their presidencies as the Bengal Army, the Bombay Army and the Madras Army, with the supreme field headquarters for commanding these armies being at Simla. The East India Company's army totaled 200,000 men, making it one of the largest armies in the entire world, and was an army larger than those maintained by most European states. The majority of the men serving in the presidency armies were Indian, but the officers were all British, trained at the East India Company's own officer school at the Addiscombe estate outside of London. Furthermore, the politically powerful East India Company had regiments from the British Army sent to India to serve alongside the East India Company's army. Officers from the British Army serving in India tended to look down on officers serving in the Company's army as mercenaries and misfits, and relations between the two armies were cool at best.

The regiments chosen for the invasion of Afghanistan came from the Bengal and Bombay armies. The commander in India, Sir Henry Fane chose the regiments by drawing lots, which led

to the best British regiment, the Third Foot, being excluded while the worst, the Thirteenth Light Infantry were included in the Grand Army of the Indus. The units from the Bengal Army going into Afghanistan were Skinner's Horse, the Forty-third Native Infantry and the Second Light Cavalry, which were all Company regiments while the Sixteenth Lancers and the Thirteenth Light Infantry came from the British Army in India. The units from the Bombay Army chosen for the Grand Army of the Indus were the Nineteenth Native Infantry and the Poona Local Horse, which were Company regiments, and the Second Foot battalion of the Coldstream Guards, the Seventeenth Foot, and the Fourth Dragoons, which were all British Army regiments. Of the two divisions of the Grand Army of the Indus, the Bombay division numbered fifty-six hundred men and the Bengal division numbered ninety-five hundred men. Shuja recruited 6,000 Indian mercenaries ("Shah Shujah's Levy") out of his pocket for the invasion. Ranjit Singh, the elderly and ailing Maharaja of the Punjab was supposed to contribute several divisions from the *Dal Khalsa* to the Grand Army of the Indus, but reneged on his promises, guessing that the Anglo-Indian force was sufficient to depose his archenemy Dost Mohammad, and he did not wish to occur the expenses of a war with Afghanistan. Accompanying the invasion force were 38,000 Indian camp followers and 30,000 camels to carry supplies.

The Emirate of Afghanistan had no army, and instead under the Afghan feudal system, the tribal chiefs contributed fighting men when the Emir called upon their services. The Afghans were divided into numerous ethnic groups, of which the largest were the Pashtuns, the Tajiks, the Uzbeks, and the Hazaras, who were all in their turn divided into numerous tribes and

clans. Islam was the sole unifying factor binding these groups together, though the Hazaras were Shia Muslims while the rest were Sunni Muslims. The Pashtuns were the dominant ethnic group, and it was with the Pashtun tribes that the British interacted the most. The Pashtun tribesmen had no military training, but the ferociously warlike Pashtuns were forever fighting each other, when not being called up for service for the tribal levy by the Emir, meaning most Pashtun men had at least some experience of warfare. The Pashtun tribes lived by their strict moral code of *Pashtunwali* ("the way of the Pashtuns") stating various rules for a Pashtun man to live by, one of which was that a man had to avenge any insult, real or imagined, with violence, in order to be considered a man. The standard Afghan weapon was a matchlock rifle known as the jezail.

British invasion of Afghanistan

Into Afghanistan

- The "Army of the Indus" which included 21,000 British and Indian troops under the command of John Keane, 1st Baron Keane (subsequently replaced by Sir Willoughby Cotton and then by William Elphinstone) set out from Punjab in December 1838. With them was William Hay Macnaghten, the former chief secretary of the Calcutta government, who had been selected as Britain's chief representative to Kabul. It included an immense train of 38,000 camp followers and 30,000 camels, plus a large herd of cattle. The British intended to be comfortable – one

> regiment took its pack of foxhounds, another took two camels to carry its cigarettes, junior officers were accompanied by up to 40 servants, and one senior officer required 60 camels to carry his personal effects.

By late March 1839 the British forces had crossed the Bolan Pass, reached the southern Afghan city of Quetta, and begun their march to Kabul. They advanced through rough terrain, across deserts and 4,000-metre-high mountain passes, but made good progress and finally set up camps at Kandahar on 25 April 1839. After reaching Kandahar, Keane decided to wait for the crops to ripen before resuming his march, so it was not until 27 June that the Grand Army of the Indus marched again. Keane left behind his siege engines in Kandahar, which turned out to be a mistake as he discovered that the walls of the Ghazni fortress were far stronger than he expected. A deserter, Abdul Rashed Khan, a nephew of Dost Mohammad Khan, informed the British that one of the gates of the fortress was in bad state of repair and might be blasted open with a gunpowder charge. Before the fortress, the British were attacked by a force of the Ghilji tribesmen fighting under the banner of *jihad* who were desperate to kill *farangis*, a pejorative Pashtun term for the British and were beaten off. The British took fifty prisoners who were brought before Shuja, where one of them stabbed a minister to death with a hidden knife. Shuja had them all beheaded, which led Sir John Kaye, in his official history of the war, to write this act of "wanton barbarity", the "shrill cry" of the *Ghazis*, would be remembered as the "funeral wail" of the government's "unholy policy".

On 23 July 1839, in a surprise attack, the British-led forces captured the fortress of Ghazni, which overlooks a plain leading eastward into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The British troops blew up one city gate and marched into the city in a euphoric mood. During the battle, the British suffered 200 killed and wounded, while the Afghans suffered 500 killed and 1,500 captured. Ghazni was well-supplied, which eased the further advance considerably.

Following this and an uprising of Tajiks in Istalif, the British marched to Kabul with no resistance from Dost Mohammad's troops. With his situation rapidly deteriorating, Dost Mohammed offered to accept Shuja as his overlord in exchange for becoming his wazir (a common practice in Pashtunwali), which was promptly turned down. In August 1839, after thirty years, Shuja was again enthroned in Kabul. Shuja promptly confirmed his reputation for cruelty by seeking to wreak vengeance on all who had crossed him as he considered his own people to be "dogs" who needed to be taught to obey their master.

In the absence of the traditional winter capital of Peshawar, on November 2nd Shuja left the Bala Hissar to seek refuge from the cold in Jalalabad.

Qalat/Kalat

On 13 November 1839, while en route to India, the Bombay column of the British Indian Army attacked, as a form of reprisal, the Baloch tribal fortress of Kalat, from where Baloch tribes had harassed and attacked British convoys during the move towards the Bolan Pass.

Dost Mohammed flees to Bukhara

Dost Mohammad fled to the emir of Bukhara who violated the traditional code of hospitability by throwing Dost Mohammad into his dungeon, where he joined Colonel Charles Stoddart. Stoddart had been sent to Bukhara to sign a treaty of friendship and arrange a subsidy to keep Bukhara in the British sphere of influence, but was sent to the dungeon which Nasrullah Khan decided the British were not offering him a big enough bribe. Unlike Stoddart, Dost Mohammad was able to escape from the dungeon in August 1841 and fled south to Afghanistan. Dost Mohammed fled the dubious hospitality of the embrace of the Emir of Bukhara and on 2 November 1840 defeated the 2nd Bengal Cavalry. This was principally because the Indians in the 2nd Bengal Cavalry failed to follow their officers who charged towards Dost Mohammed, "The explanation offered by the cavalrymen for not fighting was "that they object to the English sabres" . The simple fact was that despite Britain’s industrial revolution, the handcrafted Afghan jezail and sword were far superior to their British counterparts. Indeed Captain Ponsoby's sword was nearly cut in two."

Occupation and rising of the Afghans

The majority of the British troops returned to India, leaving 8,000 in Afghanistan, but it soon became clear that Shuja's rule could only be maintained with the presence of a stronger British force. The Afghans resented the British presence and

the rule of Shah Shuja. As the occupation dragged on, the East India Company's first political officer William Hay Macnaghten allowed his soldiers to bring their families to Afghanistan to improve morale; this further infuriated the Afghans, as it appeared the British were setting up a permanent occupation. Macnaughten purchased a mansion in Kabul, where he installed his wife, crystal chandelier, a fine selection of French wines, and hundreds of servants from India, making himself completely at home. Macnaughten, who had once been a judge in a small town in Ulster before deciding he wanted to be much more than a small town judge in Ireland, was known for his arrogant, imperious manner, and was simply called "the Envoy" by both the Afghans and the British. The wife of one British officer, Lady Florentia Sale created an English style garden at her house in Kabul, which was much admired and in August 1841 her daughter Alexadrina was married at her Kabul home to Lieutenant John Sturt of the Royal Engineers. The British officers staged horse races, played cricket and in winter ice skating over the frozen local ponds, which astonished the Afghans who had never seen this before.

Afghanistan had no army, and instead had a feudal system under which the chiefs would maintain a certain number of armed retainers, principally cavalry together with a number of tribesmen who could be called upon to fight in a time of war; when the Emir went to war, he would call upon his chiefs to bring out their men to fight for him. In 1840, the British strongly pressured Shuja to replace the feudal system with a standing army, which threatened to do away with the power of the chiefs, and which the Emir rejected under the grounds that Afghanistan lacked the financial ability to fund a standing army.

Dost Mohammad unsuccessfully attacked the British and their Afghan protégé Shuja, and subsequently surrendered and was exiled to India in late 1840. In 1839–40, the entire rationale for the occupation of Afghanistan was changed by the Oriental Crisis when Mohammad Ali the Great, the *vali* (governor) of Egypt who was a close French ally, rebelled against the Sublime Porte; during the subsequent crisis, Russia and Britain co-operated against France, and with the improvement in Anglo-Russian relations, the need for a buffer state in Central Asia decreased. The Oriental Crisis of 1840 almost caused an Anglo-French war, which given the long-standing Franco-Russian rivalry caused by Nicholas's detestation of Louis-Philippe as a traitor to the conservative cause, inevitably improved relations between London and St. Petersburg, which ultimately led to the Emperor Nicholas making an imperial visit to London in 1844 to meet Queen Victoria and the Prime Minister Lord Peel. As early as 1838, Count Karl Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister, had suggested to the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Lord Clanricarde, that Britain and Russia sign a treaty delimiting spheres of influence in Asia to end the "Great Game" once and for all. By 1840 Clanricarde was reporting to London that he was quite certain a mutually satisfactory agreement could be negotiated, and all he needed was the necessary permission from the Foreign Office to begin talks. From Calcutta, Lord Auckland pressed for acceptance of the Russian offer, writing "I would look forward to a tripartite Treaty of the West under which a limit shall be placed to the advance of England, Russia and Persia and under which all shall continue to repress slave dealing and plunder". Through Britain rejected the Russian offer, after 1840 there was a marked decline in Anglo-Russian rivalry and a "fair working relationship in Asia" had developed. The British Foreign

Secretary Lord Palmerston rejected the Russian offer to end the "Great Game" as he believed that as long as the "Great Game" continued, Britain could inconvenience Russia in Asia to better achieve her foreign policy goals in Europe much more than Russia could inconvenience Britain in Asia to achieve her foreign policy goals in Europe. Palmerston noted that because the British had more money to bribe local rulers in Central Asia, this gave them the advantage in this "game", and it was thus better to keep the "Great Game" going. Palmerston believed it was Britain that held the advantage in the "Great Game", that the Russian offer to definitely mark out spheres of influence in Asia was a sign of weakness and he preferred no such treaty be signed. From Palmerston's viewpoint accepting the Russian offer would be unwelcome as the end of the "Great Game" in Asia would mean the redeployment of Russian power to Europe, the place that really counted for him, and it was better to keep the "Great Game" going, albeit at a reduced rate given the tensions with France. At the same time, the lowering of Anglo-Russian tension in the 1840s made holding Afghanistan more of an expensive luxury from the British viewpoint as it not longer seemed quite as essential to have a friendly government in Kabul anymore.

By this time, the British had vacated the fortress of Bala Hissar and relocated to a cantonment built to the northeast of Kabul. The chosen location was indefensible, being low and swampy with hills on every side. To make matters worse, the cantonment was too large for the number of troops camped in it and had a defensive perimeter almost two miles long. In addition, the stores and supplies were in a separate fort, 300 yards from the main cantonment. The British commander, Major-General George Keith Ephinstone who arrived in April

1841 was bed-ridden most of the time with gout and rheumatism. Between April and October 1841, disaffected Afghan tribes were flocking to support resistance against the British in Bamiyan and other areas north of the Hindu Kushmountains, organised into an effective resistance by chiefs such as Mir Masjidi Khan and others. In September 1841, Macnaghten reduced the subsidies paid out to Ghilzai tribal chiefs in exchange for accepting Shuja as Emir and to keep the passes open, which immediately led to the Ghazis rebelling and a *jihad* being proclaimed. The monthly subsidies, which were effectively bribes for the Ghazi chiefs to stay loyal, was reduced from 80,000 to 40,000 rupees at a time of rampant inflation, and as the chiefs' loyalty had been entirely financial, the call of *jihad* proved stronger. Macnaughten did not take the threat seriously at first, writing to Henry Rawlinson in Kandahar on 7 October 1841: "The Eastern Ghilzyes are kicking up a row about some deductions which have been made from their pay. The rascals have completely succeeded in cutting communications for the time being, which is very provoking to me at this time; but they will be well trounced for their pains. One down, t'other come on, is the principle of these vagabonds".

Macnaughten ordered an expedition. On 10 October 1841, the Ghazis in a night raid defeated the Thirty-fifth Native Infantry, but were defeated the next day by the Thirteenth Light Infantry. After their defeat, which led to the rebels fleeing to the mountains, Macnaughten overplayed his hand by demanding that the chiefs who rebelled now send their children to Shuja's court as hostages to prevent another rebellion. As Shuja had a habit of mutilating people who displeased him in the slightest, Macnaghten's demand that the

children of the chiefs go to the Emir's court was received with horror, which led the Ghazi chiefs to vow to fight on. Macnaghten who just been appointed the governor of Bombay was torn between a desire to leave Afghanistan on a high note with the country settled and peaceful vs. a desire to crush the Ghazis, which lead him to temporize, at one moment threatening the harshest reprisals and the next moment, compromising by abandoning his demand for hostages. Macnaghten's alternating policy of confrontation and compromise was perceived as weakness, which encouraged the chiefs around Kabul to start rebelling. Shuja was so unpopular that many of his ministers and the Durrani clan joined the rebellion.

On the night of 1 November 1841, a group of Afghan chiefs met at the Kabul house of one of their number to plan the uprising, which began in the morning of the next day. In a flammable situation, the spark was provided unintentionally by Burnes. A Kashmiri slave girl who belonged to a Pashtun chief Abdullah Khan Achakzai living in Kabul ran away to Burnes's house. When Ackakzai sent his retainers to retrieve her, it was discovered that Burnes had taken the slave girl to his bed, and he had one of Azkakzai's men beaten. A secret *jirga* (council) of Pashtun chiefs was held to discuss this violation of *pashtunwali*, where Ackakzai holding a Koran in one hand stated: "Now we are justified in throwing this English yoke; they stretch the hand of tyranny to dishonor private citizens great and small: fucking a slave girl isn't worth the ritual bath that follows it: but we have to put a stop right here and now, otherwise these English will ride the donkey of their desires into the field of stupidity, to the point of having all of us arrested and deported to a foreign field". At the end of his

speech, all of the chiefs shouted "*Jihad*". November 2nd 1841 actually fell on 17 Ramadan which was the anniversary date for the battle of Badr. The Afghans decided to strike on this date for reasons of the blessings associated with this auspicious date of 17 Ramadan. The call to jihad was given on the morning of 2 November from the Pul-i-khisti mosque in Kabul

Lady Sale wrote in her diary on 2 November 1841: "This morning early, all was in commotion in Kabul. The shops were plundered and the people all fighting." That same day, a mob "thirsting for blood" appeared outside of the house of the East India Company's second political officer, Sir Alexander 'Sekundar' Burnes, where Burnes ordered his sepoy guards not to fire while he stood outside haranguing the mob in Pashto, attempting unconvincingly to persuade the assembled men that he did not bed their daughters and sisters. Captain William Broadfoot who was with Burnes saw the mob march forward, leading him to open fire with another officer writing in his diary that he "killed five or six men with his own hand before he was shot down". The mob smashed in to Burnes's house, where he, his brother Charles, their wives and children, several aides and the sepoys were all torn to pieces. The mob then attacked the home of the paymaster Johnston who was not present, leading to later write when he surveyed the remains of his house that they "gained possession of my treasury by undermining the wall...They murdered the whole of the guard (one officer and 28 sepoys), all my servants (male, female, and children), plundered the treasury...burnt all my office records...and possessed themselves of all my private property". The British forces took no action in response despite being only five minutes away, which encouraged further revolt.

The only person who took action that day was Shuja who ordered out one of his regiments from the Bala Hissar commanded by a Scots mercenary named Campbell to crush the riot, but the old city of Kabul with its narrow, twisting streets favored the defensive with Campbell's men coming under fire from rebels in the houses above. After losing about 200 men killed, Campbell retreated back to the Bala Hissar. After hearing of the defeat of his regiment, Shuja descended into what Kaye called "a pitiable state of dejection and alarm", sinking into a deep state of depression as it finally dawned on him that his people hated him and wanted to see him dead. Captain Sturt was sent to the Bala Hissar by Elphinstone to see if it were possible to recover control of the city later that afternoon, where his mother-in-law Lady Sale noted in her diary: "Just as he entered the precincts of the palace, he was stabbed in three places by a young man well dressed, who escaped into a building close-by, where he was protected by the gates being shut." Sturt was sent home to be cared for by Lady Sale and his wife with the former noting: "He was covered with blood issuing from his mouth and was unable to articulate. He could not lie down, from the blood choking him", only being capable hours later to utter one word: "bet-ter". Lady Sale was highly critical of Elphinstone's leadership, writing: "General Elphinstone vacillates on every point. His own judgement appears to be good, but he is swayed by the last speaker", criticising him for "...a very strange circumstance that troops were not immediately sent into the city to quell the affair in the commencement, but we seem to sit quietly with our hands folded, and look on".." Despite both being in the cantonment, Elphinstone prefer to write letters to Macnaughten, with one letter on 2 November saying "I have been considering what can done tomorrow" (he decided to do

nothing that day), stating "our dilemma is a difficult one", and finally concluding "We must see what the morning brings". The British situation soon deteriorated when Afghans stormed the poorly defended supply fort inside Kabul on 9 November.

In the following weeks, the British commanders tried to negotiate with Akbar Khan. Macnaghten secretly offered to make Akbar Afghanistan's vizier in exchange for allowing the British to stay, while simultaneously disbursing large sums of money to have him assassinated, which was reported to Akbar Khan. A meeting for direct negotiations between Macnaghten and Akbar was held near the cantonment on 23 December, but Macnaghten and the three officers accompanying him were seized and slain by Akbar Khan. Macnaghten's body was dragged through the streets of Kabul and displayed in the bazaar. Elphinstone had partly lost command of his troops already and his authority was badly damaged.

Destruction of Elphinstone's army

On 1 January 1842, following some unusual thinking by Elphinstone, which may have had something to do with the poor defensibility of the cantonment, an agreement was reached that provided for the safe exodus of the British garrison and its dependents from Afghanistan. Five days later, the withdrawal began. The departing British contingent numbered around 16,500, of which about 4,500 were military personnel, and over 12,000 were camp followers. Lieutenant Eyre commented about the camp followers that "These proved from the very first mile a serious clog on our movements". Lady Sale brought with her 40 servants, none of whom she named in her diary while Lieutenant Eyre's son was saved by a female

Afghan servant, who rode through an ambush with the boy on her back, but he never gave her name. The American historian James Perry noted: "Reading the old diaries and journals, it is almost as if these twelve thousand native servants and sepoy wives and children didn't exist individually. In a way, they really didn't. They would die, all of them - shot, stabbed, frozen to death - in these mountain passes, and no one bothered to write down the name of even one of them". The military force consisted mostly of Indian units and one British battalion, 44th Regiment of Foot.

They were attacked by Ghilzai warriors as they struggled through the snowbound passes. On the first day, the retreating force made only five miles and as Lady Sale wrote about their arrival at a village of Begramee: "There were no tents, save two or three small palls that arrived. Everyone scraped away the snow as best they might, to make a place to lie down. The evening and night were intensely cold; no food for man or beast procurable, except a few handfuls of *bhoosay* [chopped stew], for which we had to pay five to ten rupees". As the night fell and with it, the temperatures dropped well below freezing, the retreating force learned that they lost all of their supplies of food and their baggage. On the second day all of the men of the Royal Afghan Army's 6th regiment deserted, heading back to Kabul, marking the end of the first attempt to give Afghanistan a national army. For several months afterwards, what had once been Shuja's army was reduced to begging on the streets of Kabul as Akbar had of all of Shuja's mercenaries mutilated before throwing them on the streets to beg. Despite Akbar Khan's promise of safe conduct, the Anglo-Indian force was repeatedly attacked by the Ghilzais, with one especially fierce

Afghan attack being beaten off with a spirited bayonet charge by the 44th Foot.

While trying to cross the Koord-Kabual pass in the Hindu Kush that was described as five miles long and "so narrow and so shut in on either side that the wintry sun rarely penetrates its gloomy recesses", the Anglo-Indian force was ambushed by the Ghilzai tribesmen. Johnson described "murderous fire" that forced the British to abandon all baggage while camp followers regardless of sex and age were cut down with swords. Lady Sale wrote: "Bullets kept whizzing by us" while some of the artillerymen smashed open the regimental store of brandy to get drunk amid the Afghan attacks. Lady Sale wrote she drank a tumbler of sherry "which at any other time would have made me very unlady-like, but now merely warmed me." Lady Sale took a bullet in her wrist while she had to watch as her son-in-law Sturt had "...his horse was shot out from him and before he could rise from the ground he received a severe wound in the abdomen". With his wife and mother-in-law by his side in the snow, Sturt bled to death over the course of the night. The gentle, kindly, but naive and gullible Elphinstone continued to believe that Akbar Khan was his "ally", and believed his promise that he would send out the captured supplies if he stopped the retreat on 8 January. Adding to the misery of the British, that night a ferocious blizzard blew in, causing hundreds to freeze to death.

On 9 January 1842, Akbar sent out a messenger saying he was willing to take all of the British women as hostages, giving his word that they would not be harmed, and said that otherwise his tribesmen would show no mercy and kill all the women and children. One of the British officers sent to negotiate with

Akbar heard him say to his tribesmen in Dari (Afghan Farsi) – a language spoken by many British officers – to "spare" the British while saying in Pashto, which most British officers did not speak, to "slay them all". Lady Sale, her pregnant daughter Alexandria and the rest of British women and children accepted Akbar's offer of safe conduct back to Kabul. As the East India Company would not pay a ransom for Indian women and children, Akbar refused to accept them, and so the Indian women and children died with the rest of the force in the Hindu Kush. The camp followers captured by the Afghans were stripped of all their clothing and left to freeze to death in the snow. Lady Sale wrote that as she was taken back to Kabul she noticed: "The road was covered with awful mangled bodies, all naked".

In the early morning of 10 January, the column resumed its march, with everyone tired, hungry, and cold. Most of the sepoys by this time had lost a finger or two to frostbite, and could not fire their guns. At the narrow pass of Tunghee Tareekee, which was 50 yards long, and only 4 yards wide, the Ghizye tribesmen ambushed the column, killing without mercy all of the camp followers. The Anglo-Indian soldiers fought their way over the corpses of the camp followers with heavy losses to themselves. From a hill, Akbar Khan and his chiefs watched the slaughter while sitting on their horses, being apparently very much amused by the carnage. Captain Shelton and a few soldiers from the 44th regiment held the rear of the column and fought off successive Afghan attacks, despite being outnumbered. Johnson described Shelton as fighting like a "bulldog" with his sword, cutting down any Afghan who tried to take him on so efficiently that by the end of the day no Afghan would challenge him. On the evening of 11 January 1842,

General Elphinstone, Captain Shelton, the paymaster Johnston, and Captain Skinner met with Akbar Khan to ask him to stop his attacks on the column. Akbar Khan provided them with warm tea and a fine meal before telling them that they were all now his hostages as he reckoned the East India Company would pay good ransoms for their freedom, and when Captain Skinner tried to resist, he was shot in the face. Command now fell to Brigadier Thomas Anquetil.

The evacuees were killed in huge numbers as they made their way down the 30 miles (48 km) of treacherous gorges and passes lying along the Kabul River between Kabul and Gandamak, and were massacred at the Gandamak pass before a survivor reached the besieged garrison at Jalalabad. At Gandamak, some 20 officers and 45 other ranks of the 44th Foot regiment, together with some artillerymen and sepoys, armed with some 20 muskets and two rounds of ammunition to every man, found themselves at dawn surrounded by Afghan tribesmen. The force had been reduced to fewer than forty men by a withdrawal from Kabul that had become, towards the end, a running battle through two feet of snow. The ground was frozen, the men had no shelter and had little food for weeks. Of the weapons remaining to the survivors at Gandamak, there were approximately a dozen working muskets, the officers' pistols, and a few swords. The British formed a square and defeated the first couple of the Afghan attacks, "driving the Afghans several times down the hill" before running out of ammunition. They then fought on with their bayonets and swords before being overwhelmed. The Afghans took only 9 prisoners and killed the rest. The remnants of the 44th were all killed except Captain James Souter, Sergeant Fair, and seven soldiers who were taken prisoner. The only soldier to

reach Jalalabad was Dr. William Brydon and several sepoys over the following nights. Another source states that over one hundred British were taken prisoner. One British NCO fled from Gandamak to Gujrat India on foot according to a source cited from The Times of 2 March 1843 by Farrukh Husain who writes: "The oddest account of escape from Gundamuck concerns that of a dark-skinned faqir who appeared in India in rags but was in fact a Scottish non commissioned officer who fled all the way to a British army Camp Deesa in Gujrat India, "This morning a strange man came into camp, covered with hair, and almost naked his face burnt very much; he turned out to be Lance-Sergeant Philip Edwards of the Queen's 44th Regiment who escaped at the general slaughter at Gundamuch, Afghanistan, and after travelling 15 months in a southerly direction by the sun, he found his way into camp here, not knowing where he was.""

Many of the women and children were taken captive by the Afghan warring tribes; some of these women married their captors, mostly Afghan and Indian camp followers who were wives of British officers. Children taken from the battlefield at the time who were later identified in the early part of the 20th century to be those of the fallen soldiers were brought up by Afghan families as their own children.

Second British expedition

At the same time as the attacks on the garrison at Kabul, Afghan forces beleaguered the other British contingents in Afghanistan. These were at Kandahar (where the largest British force in the country had been stationed), Jalalabad (held by a force which had been sent from Kabul in October 1841 as the

first stage of a planned withdrawal) and Ghazni. Ghazni was stormed, but the other garrisons held out until relief forces arrived from India, in spring 1842. Akbar Khan was defeated near Jalalabad and plans were laid for the recapture of Kabul and the restoration of British control.

However, Lord Auckland had suffered a stroke and had been replaced as governor-general by Lord Ellenborough, who was under instructions to bring the war to an end following a change of government in Britain. Ellenborough ordered the forces at Kandahar and Jalalabad to leave Afghanistan after inflicting reprisals and securing the release of prisoners taken during the retreat from Kabul.

In August 1842 General William Nott advanced from Kandahar, capturing Ghazni and partially demolishing the city's fortifications. Meanwhile, General George Pollock, who had taken command of a demoralized force in Peshawar used it to clear the Khyber Pass to arrive at Jalalabad, where General Sale had already lifted the siege. From Jalalabad, General Pollock inflicted a further crushing defeat on Akbar Khan. The combined British forces defeated all opposition before taking Kabul in September.

A month later, having rescued the prisoners and demolished the city's main bazaaras an act of revenge for the destruction of Elphinstone's column, they withdrew from Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass. Dost Muhammad was released and re-established his authority in Kabul. He died on 9 June 1863. During his lifetime no Russian mission was established in Afghanistan. Dost Mohammad is reported to have said:

I have been struck by the magnitude of your resources, your ships, your arsenals, but what I cannot understand is why the rulers of so vast and flourishing an empire should have gone across the Indus to deprive me of my poor and barren country.

Aftermath

Many voices in Britain, from Lord Aberdeen to Benjamin Disraeli, had criticized the war as rash and insensate. The perceived threat from Russia was vastly exaggerated, given the distances, the almost impassable mountain barriers, and logistical problems that an invasion would have to solve. In the three decades after the First Anglo-Afghan War, the Russians did advance steadily southward towards Afghanistan. In 1842 the Russian border was on the other side of the Aral Sea from Afghanistan. By 1865 Tashkent had been formally annexed, as was Samarkand three years later. A peace treaty in 1873 with Amir Alim Khan of the Manghit Dynasty, the ruler of Bukhara, virtually stripped him of his independence. Russian control then extended as far as the northern bank of the Amu Darya.

In 1878, the British invaded again, beginning the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

Lady Butler's famous painting of Dr. William Brydon, initially thought to be the sole survivor, gasping his way to the British outpost in Jalalabad, helped make Afghanistan's reputation as a graveyard for foreign armies and became one of the great epics of empire.

In 1843 British army chaplain G.R. Gleig wrote a memoir of the disastrous (First) Anglo-Afghan War, of which he was not one

of the few survivors as alleged by some authors such as Dalrymple, but in fact someone who interviewed the survivors and wrote his account as declared on the first page of his book which is described as an "Advertisement" but is in fact the preface. He wrote that it was

a war begun for no wise purpose, carried on with a strange mixture of rashness and timidity, brought to a close after suffering and disaster, without much glory attached either to the government which directed, or the great body of troops which waged it. Not one benefit, political or military, was acquired with this war. Our eventual evacuation of the country resembled the retreat of an army defeated".

The Church of St. John the Evangelist located in Navy Nagar, Mumbai, India, more commonly known as the Afghan Church, was dedicated in 1852 as a memorial to the dead of the conflict.

Battle honour

The battle honour of 'Afghanistan 1839' was awarded to all units of the presidency armies of the East India Company that had proceeded beyond the Bolan Pass, by gazette of the governor-general, dated 19 November 1839, the spelling changed from 'Afghanistan' to 'Affghanistan' by Gazette of India No. 1079 of 1916, and the date added in 1914. All the honours awarded for this war are considered to be non-repugnant. The units awarded this battle honour were:

- 4th Bengal Irregular Cavalry – 1st Horse
- 5th Madras Infantry

- Poona Auxiliary Horse – Poona Horse
- Bombay Sappers & Miners – Bombay Engineer Group
- 31st Bengal Infantry
- 43rd Bengal Infantry
- 19th Bombay Infantry
- 1st Bombay Cavalry – 13th Lancers
- 2nd, 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry – mutinied in 1857
- 2nd, 3rd Companies of Bengal Sappers and Miners – mutinied in 1857
- 16th, 35th, 37th, 48th Bengal Infantry – mutinied in 1857
- 42nd Bengal Infantry (5th LI) – disbanded 1922

Fictional depictions

- The First Anglo-Afghan war is depicted in a work of historical fiction, *Flashman* by George MacDonald Fraser. (This is Fraser's first *Flashman* novel.)
- The ordeal of Dr. Brydon may have inspired the story of Dr. John Watson in Conan Doyle‘s first Sherlock Holmes novel

A Study in Scarlet, although his wound was suffered in the second war.

- Emma Drummond's novel *Beyond all Frontiers* (1983) is based on these events, as are Philip Hensher's *Mulberry Empire* (2002) and *Fanfare* (1993), by Andrew MacAllan, a distant relation of Dr William Brydon.
- G.A. Henty's children's novel *To Herat and Kabul* focuses on the Anglo-Afghan War through the

perspective of a Scottish expatriate teenager named Angus. Theodor Fontane's poem, *Das Trauerspiel von Afghanistan* (*The Tragedy of Afghanistan*) also refers to the massacre of Elphinstone's army.

- *Victoria* (2017) episode "A Soldier's Daughter" dramatizes Brydon's survival in the retreat. In the show, Queen Victoria responds to the loss of life in the retreat with a speech at the launch of HMS *Trafalgar*, and by privately meeting and honouring Brydon.

Chapter 21

First Anglo-Sikh War

The First Anglo-Sikh War was fought between the Sikh Empire and the British East India Company in 1845 and 1846 in and around the Ferozepur district of Punjab. It resulted in defeat and partial subjugation of the Sikh kingdom and cession of Jammu and Kashmir as a separate princely state under British suzerainty.

Background and causes of the war

The Sikh kingdom of Punjab was expanded and consolidated by Maharajah Ranjit Singh during the early years of the nineteenth century, about the same time as the British-controlled territories were advanced by conquest or annexation to the borders of the Punjab. Ranjit Singh maintained a policy of wary friendship with the British, ceding some territory south of the Sutlej River, while at the same time building up his military forces both to deter aggression by the British and to wage war against the Afghans. He hired American and European mercenary soldiers to train his artillery, and also incorporated contingents of Hindus and Muslims into his army.

Events in the Punjab

Ranjit Singh died in 1839. Almost immediately, his kingdom began to fall into disorder. Ranjit's unpopular legitimate son, Kharak Singh, was removed from power within a few months, and later died in prison under mysterious circumstances. It

was widely believed that he was poisoned. He was replaced by his able but estranged son Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, who also died within a few months in suspicious circumstances, after being injured by a falling archway at the Lahore Fort while returning from his father's cremation. At the time, two major factions within the Punjab were contending for power and influence: the Sikh Sindhanwalias and the Hindu Dogras. The Dogras succeeded in raising Sher Singh, the eldest surviving legitimate son of Ranjit Singh, to the throne in January 1841.

The army expanded rapidly in the aftermath of Ranjit Singh's death, from 29,000 (with 192 guns) in 1839 to over 80,000 in 1845 as landlords and their retainers took up arms. It proclaimed itself to be the embodiment of the Sikh nation. Its regimental panchayats (committees) formed an alternative power source within the kingdom, declaring that Guru Gobind Singh's ideal of the Sikh commonwealth had been revived, with the Sikhs as a whole assuming all executive, military and civil authority in the State, which British observers decried as a "dangerous military democracy". British representatives and visitors in the Punjab described the regiments as preserving "puritanical" order internally, but also as being in a perpetual state of mutiny or rebellion against the central Durbar (court).

Maharajah Sher Singh was unable to meet the pay demands of the army, although he reportedly lavished funds on a degenerate court. In September 1843 he was murdered by his cousin, an officer of the army, Ajit Singh Sindhanwalia. The Dogras took their revenge on those responsible, and Jind Kaur, Ranjit Singh's youngest widow, became regent for her infant son Duleep Singh. After the vizier Hira Singh was killed, while attempting to flee the capital with loot from the royal treasury

(toshkana), by troops under Sham Singh Attariwala, Jind Kaur's brother Jawahar Singh became vizier in December 1844. In 1845 he arranged the assassination of Peshaura Singh, who presented a threat to Duleep Singh. For this, he was called to account by the army. Despite attempts to bribe the army he was butchered in September 1845 in the presence of Jind Kaur and Duleep Singh.

Jind Kaur publicly vowed revenge against her brother's murderers. She remained regent. Lal Singh became vizier, and Tej Singh became commander of the army. Sikh historians have stressed that both these men were prominent in the Dogra faction. Originally high caste Hindus from outside the Punjab, both had converted to Sikhism in 1818.

British actions

Immediately after the death of Ranjit Singh, the British East India Company had begun increasing its military strength, particularly in the regions adjacent to the Punjab, establishing a military cantonment at Ferozepur, only a few miles from the Sutlej River which marked the frontier between British-ruled India and the Punjab. In 1843, they conquered and annexed Sindh, to the south of the Punjab, in a move which many British people regarded as cynical and ignoble. This did not gain the British any respect in the Punjab and increased suspicions of British motives.

The actions and attitudes of the British, under Governor General Lord Ellenborough and his successor, Sir Henry Hardinge, are disputed. By most British accounts, their main concern was that the Sikh army, without strong leadership to

restrain them, was a serious threat to British territories along the border. Sikh and Indian historians have countered that the military preparations made by these Governors-General were offensive in nature; for example, they prepared bridging trains (prefabricated bridges) and siege gun batteries, which would be unlikely to be required in a purely defensive operation.

The British attitudes were affected by reports from their new political agent in the frontier districts, Major George Broadfoot, who stressed the disorder in the Punjab and recounted every tale of corrupt behaviour at the court. For some British officials, there was a strong desire to expand British influence and control into the Punjab, as it was the only remaining formidable force that could threaten the British hold in India and the last remaining independent kingdom not under British influence. The kingdom was also renowned for being the wealthiest, the Koh-i-Noor being but one of its many treasures. Despite this, it is unlikely that the British East India Company would have deliberately attempted to annex the Punjab had the war not occurred, as they simply did not have the manpower or resources to retain the territories (as proven by the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Sikh War).

Nevertheless, the unconcealed and seemingly aggressive British military build-up at the borders had the effect of increasing tension within the Punjab and the Sikh Army.

Outbreak of war

- After mutual demands and accusations between the Sikh Durbar and the East India Company, diplomatic relations were broken. An East India Company army

began marching towards Ferozepur, where a division was already stationed. This army was commanded by Sir Hugh Gough, the Commander in Chief of the Bengal Army, and was accompanied by Sir Henry Hardinge, the British Governor General of Bengal, who placed himself beneath Gough in the military chain of command. The British East India Company forces consisted of formations of the Bengal Army, with usually one British unit to every three or four Bengal infantry or cavalry units. Most of the artillery on the British side consisted of light guns from the elite Bengal Horse Artillery.

The Sikh Army at that time was led by General Raja Lal Singh who, with Tej Singh, betrayed the Sikhs during the course of the war. The two generals were regularly supplying information and even receiving instructions from British officers.

In response to the British move, the Sikh army began crossing the Sutlej on 11 December 1845. Although the leaders and principal units of the army were Sikhs, there were also Punjabi, Pakhtun and Kashmiri infantry units. The artillery consisted mainly of units of heavy guns, which had been organised and trained by European mercenaries.

The Sikhs claimed they were only moving into Sikh possessions (specifically the village of Moran, whose ownership was disputed) on the east side of the river, but the move was regarded by the British as clearly hostile and they declared war.

Course of the war

Ladwa battles

Battle of Wadni Fort

After Raja Gurdit Singh's death, his son Ajit Singh succeeded him. Ajit Singh upgraded his fort at Ladwa to face the danger of the British. During the First Sikh war in 1845, he fought on the side of the Sikh army against the British. He was defeated.

Battle of Phillaur Fort

This battle was the last fought by the Raja of Ladva, Ajit Singh. The fort was designed by Dewan Mohkam Chand, with the assistance of Ranjit Singh's French and Italian generals. It was constructed as a response to the British, who built Lodhi fort in nearby Ludhiana. The fort's architecture has a distinct European character, with channels dug out along the boundary of the fort, watchtowers on the two gateways, four bastions on four nooks and high walls around the fort. Ajit Singh Of Ladva won this battle due to this fort. He surrendered after seeing that he was no match for the British.

Lahore battles

Battle of Mudki

An army under Tej Singh crossed the Sutlej and advanced against the British outpost at Ferozepur, although they did not attempt to attack or surround it. Another force under Lal

Singh clashed with Gough's and Hardinge's advancing army at the Battle of Mudki late on 18 December. The British won an untidy encounter battle, suffering heavy casualties.

Battle of Ferozeshah

On the next day, Gough's army came in sight of the large Sikh entrenchment at Ferozeshah. Gough wished to attack at once, but Hardinge used his position as Governor General to overrule him and order him to wait for the division from Ferozepur to arrive. When they appeared late on 21 December, Gough attacked in the few hours of daylight left. The well-served Sikh artillery caused heavy casualties among the British, and their infantry fought desperately. On the other hand, the elite of the Sikh army, the irregular cavalry or ghodachadas (alt. gorracharra, horse-mounted), were comparatively ineffective against Gough's infantry and cavalry as they had been kept from the battlefield by Lal Singh.

By nightfall, some of Gough's army had fought their way into the Sikh positions, but other units had been driven back in disorder. Hardinge expected a defeat on the following day and ordered the state papers at Mudki to be burned in this event. However, on the following morning, the British and Bengal Army units rallied and drove the Sikhs from the rest of their fortifications. Lal Singh had made no effort to rally or reorganise his army.

At this point, Tej Singh's army appeared. Once again, Gough's exhausted army faced defeat and disaster, but Tej Singh inexplicably withdrew, claiming that British cavalry and artillery which were withdrawing to replenish ammunition were

actually making an outflanking move. The Sikh defenders of Wudnee surrendered on 30 December as the Sikh defeat at Ferozeshah preveted the Sikh army reinforcing them.

Operations temporarily halted, mainly because Gough's army was exhausted and required rest and reinforcements.

Battle of Baddowal

Ranjur Singh Majithia, was the son of Desa Singh Majithia, one of the most able ministers under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Ranjodh Singh commanded a large army, (ten thousand infantry and some regular cavalry with sixty guns) and crossed the Sutlej in force and was joined by Ajit Singh, of Ladva. They marched towards Ludhiana and burnt a portion of the British cantonment. Harry Smith (afterwards Governor of Cape Colony), who was sent to relieve Ludhiana, marched eastwards from Ferozepur, keeping a few miles away from the Sutlej.

On learning of the Sikh strength, and receiving further orders from Gough, Smith instead force-marched his troops via Jagraon, collecting a British regiment there, to reach Ludhiana ahead of the Sikh main body.

On 21 January, as he left Baddowal, the Sikh irregular cavalry (the *Gorchurras*) continually attacked his rearguards. They captured most of Smith's baggage animals (mules, bullocks and elephants), and cut down any straggling troops. Nevertheless, Smith succeeded in reaching Ludhiana, with his troops exhausted. A brigade of troops from Delhi, including two Gurkha battalions, reinforced him.

Battle of Aliwal

After resting his troops, Smith once again advanced to Baddowal. The Sikhs had withdrawn to Aliwal on the Sutlej, awaiting reinforcements. On 28 January, Smith advanced against them, cautiously at first. Finding a weak point in the Sikh position, he won a model victory, eliminating the Sikh bridgehead.

Battle of Sobraon

The Sikhs had been temporarily dismayed by their defeats and by their commanders' inaction, but rallied when fresh units and leaders, including Sham Singh Attariwala, joined them, and Maharani Jind Kaur exhorted 500 selected officers to make renewed efforts.

Gough had intended to attack the Sikh army in its entrenchments at Sobraon as soon as Smith's division rejoined from Ludhiana, but Hardinge forced him to wait until a heavy artillery train had arrived. At last, he moved forward early on 10 February. The start of the battle was delayed by heavy fog, but as it lifted, 35 British heavy guns and howitzers opened fire. The Sikh cannon replied. The bombardment went on for two hours without much effect on the Sikh defences. Gough was told that his heavy guns were running short of ammunition and is alleged to have replied, "Thank God! Then I'll be at them with the bayonet."

Two British divisions under Harry Smith and Major General Sir Walter Gilbert made feint attacks on the Sikh left, while another division under Major General Robert Henry Dick made

the main attack on the Sikh right, where the defences were of soft sand and were lower and weaker than the rest of the line. (It is believed that Lal Singh had supplied this information to Major Henry Lawrence, the Political Agent at Gough's headquarters.) Nevertheless, Dick's division was driven back by Sikh counter-attacks after initially gaining footholds within the Sikh lines. Dick himself was killed. As the British fell back, some frenzied Sikh soldiers attacked British wounded left in the ditch in front of the entrenchments, enraging the British soldiers.

The British, Gurkhas and Bengal regiments renewed their attacks along the entire front of the entrenchment, and broke through at several points. On the vulnerable Sikh right, engineers blew a breach in the fortifications and British cavalry and horse artillery pushed through it to engage the Sikhs in the centre of their position. Tej Singh had left the battlefield early. It is alleged in many Sikh accounts that he deliberately weakened the pontoon bridge, casting loose the boat at its centre, or that he ordered his own artillery on the west bank to fire on the bridge on the pretext of preventing British pursuit. British accounts claim that the bridge simply broke under the weight of the numbers of soldiers trying to retreat across it, having been weakened by the swollen river. Whichever account is correct, the bridge broke, trapping nearly 20,000 of the Sikh Khalsa Army on the east bank.

None of the trapped Sikh soldiers attempted to surrender. Many detachments, including one led by Sham Singh Attariwala, fought to the death. Some Sikhs rushed forward to attack the British regiments sword in hand; others tried to ford or swim the river. British horse artillery lined the bank of the

river and continued to fire into the crowds in the water. By the time the firing ceased, the Sikhs had lost between 8,000 and 10,000 men. The British had also captured 67 guns.

Battle of Kangrah

This was the only battle fought between the Sikh forces of Kangra and the British. The British controlled the valley after defeating them and the fort.

Aftermath

In the Treaty of Lahore on 9 March 1846, the Sikhs were made to surrender the valuable region (the Jullundur Doab) between the Beas River and Sutlej River. The Lahore Durbar was also required to pay an indemnity of 15 million rupees. Because it could not readily raise this sum, it ceded Kashmir, Hazarah and all the forts, territories, rights and interests in the hill countries situated between the Rivers Beas and Indus to the East India Company, as equivalent to ten million of rupees. In a later separate arrangement (the Treaty of Amritsar), the Raja of Jammu, Gulab Singh, purchased Kashmir from the East India Company for a payment of 7.5 million rupees and was granted the title Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.

The estate of Ladwa, belonging to Ajit Singh who had fought against the British at Buddowal and Aliwal, was confiscated in 1846. "The Raja of Ladwa, with an estate of 10,000 pounds a year, almost openly avowed his treason, and, after a time, went over to the enemy (the British Raj) with all his troops and artillery", reads the Dispatch of the Governor General, sent to London on November 17, 1846. On September 22, 1847,

through a ‘sanad’, the British awarded his house at Haridwar to the Raja of Patiala. Ajit Singh was taken into custody and sent as a prisoner to the Allahabad fort. He contrived to escape, after killing his keeper, and after long wanderings in hills, is supposed to have died in Kashmir. His children, who held in joint tenure eight villages along with Bhadour sardars, were dispatched by the British to these villages. Thus, the brave sons of Ladwa lost in obscurity have little trace except their fort and so their reminiscences.

Maharaja Duleep Singh remained ruler of the Punjab and at first his mother, Maharani Jindan Kaur, remained as Regent. However, the Durbar later requested that the British presence remain until the Maharaja attained the age of 16. The British consented to this and on 16 December 1846, the Treaty of Bhyroval provided for the Maharani to be awarded a pension of 150,000 rupees and be replaced by a British resident in Lahore supported by a Council of Regency, with agents in other cities and regions. This effectively gave the East India Company control of the government.

Sikh historians have always maintained that, in order to retain their hold on power and maintain the figurehead rule of Duleep Singh, Lal Singh and Tej Singh embarked on the war with the deliberate intent of breaking their own army. In particular, Lal Singh was corresponding with a British political officer and betraying state and military secrets throughout the war. Lal Singh's and Tej Singh's desertion of their armies and refusal to attack when opportunity offered seem inexplicable otherwise.

The Sikh empire was until then one of the few remaining kingdoms in India after the rise of the company and the fall of

the Mughal empire. Although the Sikh Army was weakened by the war, resentment at British interference in the government led to the Second Anglo-Sikh War within three years.

Vasudev Balwant Phadke

Vasudev Balwant Phadke (4 November 1845 – 17 February 1883) also known as 'Father Of Indian Armed Rebellion' was an Indian independence activist and revolutionary who sought India's independence from colonial rule. Phadke was moved by the plight of the farming community and believed that Swaraj was the only remedy for their ills. With the help of the Koli, Bhil, Mahar, Mang, Ramoshi and Dhangar communities in the region, he formed a revolutionary group of the Ramoshi people. The group started an armed struggle to overthrow the colonial government, launching raids on wealth European businessmen to obtain funds for the purpose. Phadke came to prominence when he got control of the city of Pune for a few days after catching colonial soldiers off-guard during one a surprise attack.

Early years

Phadke was born on 4 November 1845 in Shirdhon village of Panvel taluka, now in Raigad district, Maharashtra. As a child, he preferred learning skills like wrestling, riding over high school education and dropped out of school. Eventually he moved to Pune and took the job as a clerk with military accounts department in Pune for 15 years. Krantiveer Lahuji Vastad Salve a then prominent social figure based in Pune was his mentor. Salve, an expert wrestler, operated a TALIM

(training center for wrestling). Salve preached the importance of independence from colonial rule. Salve belonged to the Mang community, an untouchable community, taught Phadke the importance of getting backward castes into mainstream independence movement. It was during this period that Phadke began attending lectures by Mahadeo Govind Ranade which mainly focused on how the economic policies of the colonial government hurt the Indian economy.

Phadke was deeply hurt by how this was leading to widespread ill-effects in the society. In 1870, he joined a public agitation in Pune that was aimed at addressing people's grievances. Phadke founded an institution, the Aikya Vardhini Sabha, to educate the youth. While working as clerk, he was not able to see his dying mother due to the delay in approval of his leave. This incident enraged Phadke and was to be the turning point in his life.

Co-founding of Maharashtra Education Society

Phadke was one of the earliest persons to graduate from a British-established institution in Bombay presidency. In 1860, along with fellow social reformers and revolutionaries Laxman Narhar Indapurkar and Waman Prabhakar Bhave,

Phadke co-founded the Poona Native Institution (PNI) which was later renamed as the Maharashtra Education Society (MES). Through the PNI, he went on set up Bhave School in Pune. Today, the MES runs over 77 institutions in various parts of Maharashtra.

Rebellion

In 1875, after the then Gaekwad ruler of Baroda was deposed by the colonial government, Phadke launched protest speeches against the government. Severe famine coupled with the apathy of the colonial administration propelled him to tour the Deccan region, urging people to strive for an independent Indian republic. Unable to get support from the educated classes, he gathered a band of people from the Ramoshi caste. People from the Kolis, Bhils and Dhangars were also included later. He taught himself to shoot, ride and fence. He organised around 300 men into an insurgent group that aimed at gaining Indian independence from colonial rule. Phadke intended to build an army of own but lacking funds they decided to break into government treasuries. The first raid was done in a village called Dhamari in Shirur taluka in Pune district. The income tax which was collected and sent to the colonial government was kept in the house of local business man Balchand Fojmal Sankla. They attacked the house and took the money for the benefit of famine stricken villagers. There they collected about four hundred rupees but this led to his being branded as a dacoit. To save himself Phadke had to flee from village to village, sheltered by his sympathisers and well-wishers, mostly the lower class of the society. Impressed by his zeal and determination, the villagers of Nanagaum offered him protection and cover in the local forest. The general plot would be to cut off all the communications of British forces and then raid the treasury. The main purpose of these raids was to feed famine-affected farmer communities. Phadke performed many such raids in areas near Shirur and Khed talukas in Pune.

Meanwhile, the leader of Ramoshi, Daulatrav Naik, who was the main supporter of Phadke, headed towards the Konkan area on the western coast. On 10–11 May 1879, they raided Palaspe and Chikhali, looting around 1.5 lakh rupees. While returning towards Ghat Matha, Major Daniel attacked Naik, who was shot dead. His death was a setback to Phadke's revolt: the loss of support forced him to move south to the Shri Shaila Mallikarjun shrine. Later, Phadke recruited about 500 Rohilas to begin a fresh fight.

Capture and death

Phadke's plans to organise several simultaneous attacks against the colonial government nationwide were met with very limited success. He once had a direct engagement with the colonial army in the village of Ghanur, whereafter the government offered a bounty for his capture. Not to be outdone, Phadke in turned offered a bounty for the capture of the Governor of Bombay, announced a reward for the killing of each European, and issued other threats to the government. He then fled to Hyderabad State to recruit Rohilla and Arabs into his organisation. A British Major, Henry William Daniell and Abdul Haque, Police Commissioner to the Nizam of Hyderabad, pursued the fleeing Phadke day and night. The British move to offer a bounty for his capture met with success: someone betrayed Phadke, and he was captured in a temple after a fierce fight at the district of Kaladgi on 20 July 1879 while he was on his way to Pandharpur.

From here he was taken to Pune for trial. Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi, also known as Sarvajanik Kaka, defended his case. Phadke and his comrades were housed in the district session

court jail building, near Sangam bridge, which now happens to be the state C.I.D. building. His own diary provided evidence to have him sentenced for life. Phadke was transported to jail at Aden, but escaped from the prison by taking the door off from its hinges on 13 February 1883. He was soon recaptured and then went on a hunger strike, dying on 17 February 1883.

Recognition

Phadke became known as the father of the Indian armed rebellion in that he provided the inspiration for fellow members of the independent movement. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's patriotic novel *Anand Math* incorporated various contemporary acts performed by Phadke during his activities. As the colonial government did not like this, Bankim had to print up to five editions of the book to tone down these stories.

In 1984, the Indian Postal Service issued a 50 paise stamp in honour of Phadke. A chowk in South Mumbai near Metro Cinema is named in his honour.

Vasudev Balwant Phadke, a Marathi movie directed by Gajendra Ahire, was released in December 2007.

Rani Rashmoni

Rashmoni Das popularly known as **Rani Rashmoni** (28 September 1793 – 19 February 1861) was the founder of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, Kolkata and remained closely associated with Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa after she

appointed him as the priest of the temple. Her other construction works include the construction of a road from Subarnarekha River to Puri for the pilgrims, Babughat (also known as Babu Rajchandra Das Ghat), Ahiritola Ghat and Nimtala ghat for the everyday bathers at the Ganges. She also offered considerable charity to the Imperial Library (now the National Library of India), the Hindu College (now Presidency University).

Presently, the Lokmata Rani Rashmoni Mission is situated at Nimpith, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, 743338, India.

Biography

- Rashmoni was born on 28 September 1793. Her father, Harekrishna Das, lived in Kona village, in present-day Halisahar, North 24 Parganas. Her mother Rampriya devi died when she was just seven years old. She was married to Babu Rajachandra Das (Marh) of Janbazar, Kolkata, a member of a wealthy *zamindar* family, when she was eleven years old. They had four daughters.

After her husband's death in 1836, Rashmoni assumed responsibility of the zamindari and finances.

Rashmoni had clashes with the British in India. By blocking the shipping trade on a part of the Ganges she compelled the British to abolish the tax imposed on fishing in the river, which threatened the livelihood of fishermen. When Puja processions were stopped by the British on the charge that

they disturbed the peace, she defied the orders. The British withdrew the penalty imposed on her.

Rashmoni also had to her credit numerous charitable works and other contributions to society. She oversaw the construction of a road from Subarnarekha river to Puri for pilgrims. She funded the construction of ghats such as Babughat (in memory of her husband), Ahiritola Ghat and Nimtala Ghat for the daily bathers in the Ganges. Rahmoni donated to the then Imperial Library (now the National Library of India) and Hindu College (now Presidency University). Prince Dwarkanath Tagore had mortgaged a part of his Zamindari in now South 24 Parganas (part of present-day Santoshpur and adjoining areas) to Rashmoni for his passage to England. This part of land which was then a part of the Sunderbans was marshy and almost uninhabitable except for some families of thugs who found the area convenient to stay and venture out for plunders in far away places mounted on stilts. Rashmoni persuaded these families and helped them to build up fisheries in the surrounding water bodies that later turned into large, rich bheris. They gradually gave up their 'profession' of plundering and transformed into a community of fishermen.

Though having such a great spiritual nature, the society then had discriminated her. Being born in Chasi-Kaibartta family and being a middle-caste Shudra origin, no Brahmin was ready to be the priest in her temple.

Rani Rashmoni's House at Janbazar was venue of traditional Durga Puja celebration each autumn. This included traditional pomp, including all-night *jatras* (folk theatre), rather than by entertainment for the Englishmen with whom she carried on a

running feud. After her death in 1861, her sons-in-law took to celebrating Durga Puja in their respective premises.

In popular culture

Rani Rashmoni has also been subject of a biographical film in Bengali language, titled *Rani Rasmani (film)* (1955), directed by Kaliprasad Ghosh, and wherein lead played by famous theatre personality and actress Molina Devi.

Zee Bangla features a daily soap depicting the life of the illustrious Rani, captioned Karunamoyee Rani Rashmoni which premiered on 24 July 2017 and is telecasted daily.

Monuments

- An avenue in Esplanade, Kolkata is named after her as *Rani Rashmoni Avenue*, where her statue is also located.
- A road is named after her as *Rani Rashmoni Road* near her ancestral house at Janbazar, Kolkata.
- A road is named after her as *Rani Rashmoni Road* at Dakshineshwar.
- The Department of Post of Government of India issued a postage stamp to memorialize the bicentennial of Rani Rashmoni in 1993
- A Ferry Ghat known as Rani Rashmoni Ghat has been built for ferry services in Barrackpore, West Bengal and in Hooghly, West Bengal (just after the Hooghly District Correctional Home)

- One of the 5 Fast Patrol Vessels of Indian Coast Guard has been named after Rani Rashmoni. It was commissioned in June 2018 and will be based in Visakhapatnam (indigenously built by Hindustan Shipyard).

Santhal rebellion

The **Santhal rebellion** (also known as the **Sonthal rebellion** or the **Santhal Hool**), was a rebellion in present-day Jharkhand, Eastern India against both the East India Company (EIC) and zamindari system by the Santhal. It started on June 30, 1855 and on November 10, 1855, martial law was proclaimed by the East India Company which lasted until January 3, 1856 when martial law was suspended and the rebellion was eventually suppressed by the Presidency armies. The rebellion was led by the four Murmu Brothers - Sidhu, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav.

Background

The rebellion of the Santhals began as a reaction to end the revenue system of the East India Company (EIC), usury practices, and the zamindari system in India; in the tribal belt of what was then known as the Bengal Presidency. It was a revolt against the oppression of the colonial rule propagated through a distorted revenue system, enforced by the local zamindars, the police and the courts of the legal system set up by the East India Company.

The Santhals lived in and depended on forests. In 1832, the EIC demarcated the Damin-i-koh region in present day

Jharkhand and invited Santhals to settle in the region. Due to promises of land and economic amenities a large numbers of Santhals came to settle from Cuttack, Dhalbhum, Manbhum, Hazaribagh, Midnapore etc. Soon, mahajans and zamindars, as tax-collecting intermediaries employed by the EIC, dominated the economy. Many Santals became victims of corrupt money lending practices. They were lent money at exorbitant rates. When they were unable to repay the loan, their lands were forcibly taken and they were forced into bonded labour. This sparked the Santal rebellion by Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu, two brothers who led the Santals during the rebellion.

Rebellion

On 30 June 1855, two Santal rebel leaders, Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu, mobilized roughly 60,000 Santhals and declared a rebellion against the East India Company. Sidhu Murmu had accumulated about ten thousand Santhals to run a parallel government during the rebellion. The basic purpose was to collect taxes by making and enforcing his own laws.

Soon after the declaration, the Santhals took to arms. In many villages, the Zamindars, money lenders, and their operatives were executed. The open rebellion caught the Company administration by surprise. Initially, a small contingent was sent to suppress the rebels but they were unsuccessful and this further fueled the spirit of the revolt. When the law and order situation was getting out of hand, the Company administration finally took a major step and sent in a large number of troops assisted by the local Zamindars and the Nawab of Murshidabad to quell the Rebellion. The East India

Company announced an bounty of Rs. 10,000 to arrest Sidhu and his brother Kanhu Murmu.

A number of skirmishes occurred after this which resulted in a large number of casualties for the Santhal forces. The primitive weapons of the Santhals proved to be unable to match the gunpowder weapons of the East India Company military. Troop detachments from the 7th Native Infantry Regiment, 40th Native Infantry, and others were called into action. Major skirmishes occurred from July 1855 to January 1856, in places like Kahalgaon, Suri, Raghunathpur, and Munkatora.

The revolt was eventually suppressed after Sidhu and Kanhu were killed in action. War elephants, supplied by the Nawab of Murshidabad, were used to demolish Santhal huts during the rebellion. Of the roughly 60,000 tribesmen (many of whom were milkmen and blacksmiths) who had been mobilized during the rebellion, over 15,000 were killed, and tens of villages were destroyed.

A British Army officer, Major Jervis, commented on the suppression of the rebellion:

It was not war; they did not understand yielding. As long as their national drum beat, the whole party would stand, and allow themselves to be shot down. Their arrows often killed our men, and so we had to fire on them as long as they stood. When their drum ceased, they would move off a quarter of a mile; then their drums beat again, and they calmly stood till we came up and poured a few volleys into them. There was not a sepoy in the war who did not feel ashamed of himself."

Legacy

English author Charles Dickens, in *Household Words*, wrote the following passage on the rebellion:

There seems also to be a sentiment of honor among them; for it is said that they use poisoned arrows in hunting, but never against their foes. If this be the case and we hear nothing of the poisoned arrows in the recent conflicts, they are infinitely more respectable than our civilized enemy, the Russians, who would most likely consider such forbearance as foolish, and declare that is not war."

Mrinal Sen's film *Mrigayaa* (1976) is set during the Santhal rebellion

Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856

The **Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856**, also **Act XV, 1856**, enacted on 26 July 1856, legalised the remarriage of Hindu widows in all jurisdictions of India under East India Company rule. It was drafted by Lord Dalhousie and passed by Lord Canning before the Indian Rebellion of 1857. It was the first major social reform legislation after the abolition of sati by Lord William Bentinck.

To protect what it considered family honour and family property, upper-caste Hindu society had long disallowed the remarriage of widows, even child and adolescent ones, all of

whom were expected to live a life of austerity and abnegation. The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856, provided legal safeguards against loss of certain forms of inheritance for remarrying a Hindu widow, though, under the Act, the widow forsook any inheritance due her from her deceased husband. Especially targeted in the act were Hindu child widows whose husbands had died before consummation of marriage.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was the most prominent campaigner. He petitioned the Legislative council, but there was a counter petition against the proposal with nearly four times more signatures by Radhakanta Deb and the Dharma Sabha. But Lord Dalhousie personally finalised the bill despite the opposition and it being considered a flagrant breach of Hindu customs as prevalent then.

The Law

The preamble and sections 1, 2, and 5:

Whereas it is known that, by the law as administered in the Civil Courts established in the territories in the possession and under the Government of the East India Company, Hindu widows with certain exceptions are held to be, by reason of their having been once married, incapable of contracting a second valid marriage, and the offsprings of such widows by any second marriage are held to be illegitimate and incapable of inheriting property; and

Whereas many Hindus believe that this imputed legal incapacity, although it is in accordance with established custom, is not in accordance with a true interpretation of the

precepts of their religion, and desire that the civil law administered by the Courts of Justice shall no longer prevent those Hindus who may he so minded from adopting a different custom, in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience, and

Where it is just to relieve all such Hindus from this legal incapacity of which they complain, and the removal of all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows will tend to the promotion of good morals and to the public welfare;

It is enacted as follows:

- No marriage contracted between Hindus shall be invalid, and the issue of no such marriage shall be illegitimate, by reason of the woman having been previously married or betrothed to another person who was dead at the time of such marriage, any custom and any interpretation of Hindu Law to the contrary notwithstanding.
- All rights and interests which any widow may have in her deceased husband's property by way of maintenance, or by inheritance to her husband or to his lineal successors, or by virtue of any will or testamentary disposition conferring upon her, without express permission to remarry, only a limited interest in such property, with no power of alienating the same, shall upon her re-marriage cease and determine as if she had then died; and the next heirs of her deceased husband or other persons entitled to the property on her death, shall thereupon succeed to the same ....

- Except as in the three preceding sections is provided, a widow shall not by reason of her re-marriage forfeit any property or any right to which she would otherwise be entitled, and every widow who has re-married shall have the same rights of inheritance as she would have had, had such marriage been her first marriage.

Chapter 22

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (23 July 1856 – 1 August 1920), born as **Keshav Gangadhar Tilak**, was an Indian nationalist, teacher, and an independence activist. He was one third of the Lal Bal Pal triumvirate. Tilak was the first leader of the Indian independence movement. The British colonial authorities called him "The father of the Indian unrest." He was also conferred with the title of "Lokmanya", which means "accepted by the people (as their leader)". Mahatma Gandhi called him "The Maker of Modern India".

Tilak was one of the first and strongest advocates of Swaraj ("self-rule") and a strong radical in Indian consciousness. He is known for his quote in Marathi: "Swarajya is my birthright and I shall have it!". He formed a close alliance with many Indian National Congress leaders including Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghose, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Early life

Keshav Gangadhar Tilak was born on 23 July 1856 in an Marathi Hindu Chitpavan Brahmin family in Ratnagiri, the headquarters of the Ratnagiri district of present-day Maharashtra (then Bombay Presidency). His ancestral village was Chikhali. His father, Gangadhar Tilak was a school teacher and a Sanskrit scholar who died when Tilak was sixteen. In 1871, Tilak was married to Tapibai (Née Bal) when

he was sixteen, a few months before his father's death. After marriage, her name was changed to Satyabhamabai. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts in first class in Mathematics from Deccan College of Pune in 1877. He left his M.A. course of study midway to join the L.L.B course instead, and in 1879 he obtained his L.L.B degree from Government Law College. After graduating, Tilak started teaching mathematics at a private school in Pune. Later, due to ideological differences with the colleagues in the new school, he withdrew and became a journalist. Tilak actively participated in public affairs. He stated: "Religion and practical life are not different. The real spirit is to make the country your family instead of working only for your own. The step beyond is to serve humanity and the next step is to serve God."

Inspired by Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, he co-founded the New English school for secondary education in 1880 with a few of his college friends, including Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Mahadev Ballal Namjoshi and Vishnushastri Chiplunkar. Their goal was to improve the quality of education for India's youth. The success of the school led them to set up the Deccan Education Society in 1884 to create a new system of education that taught young Indians nationalist ideas through an emphasis on Indian culture.

The Society established the Fergusson College in 1885 for post-secondary studies. Tilak taught mathematics at Fergusson College. In 1890, Tilak left the Deccan Education Society for more openly political work. He began a mass movement towards independence by an emphasis on a religious and cultural revival.

Political career

Tilak had a long political career agitating for Indian autonomy from British colonial rule. Before Gandhi, he was the most widely known Indian political leader. Unlike his fellow Maharashtrian contemporary, Gokhale, Tilak was considered a radical Nationalist but a Social conservative. He was imprisoned on a number of occasions that included a long stint at Mandalay. At one stage in his political life he was called "the father of Indian unrest" by British author Sir Valentine Chirol.

Indian National Congress

Tilak joined the Indian National Congress in 1890. He opposed its moderate attitude, especially towards the fight for self-government. He was one of the most-eminent radicals at the time. In fact, it was the Swadeshi movement of 1905–1907 that resulted in the split within the Indian National Congress into the Moderates and the Extremists.

During late 1896, a bubonic plague spread from Bombay to Pune, and by January 1897, it reached epidemic proportions. The British Indian Army was brought in to deal with the emergency and strict measures were employed to curb the plague, including the allowance of forced entry into private houses, the examination of the house's occupants, evacuation to hospitals and quarantine camps, removing and destroying personal possessions, and preventing patients from entering or leaving the city. By the end of May, the epidemic was under control. The measures used to curb the pandemic caused widespread resentment among the Indian public. Tilak took up

this issue by publishing inflammatory articles in his paper Kesari (Kesari was written in Marathi, and "Maratha" was written in English), quoting the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, to say that no blame could be attached to anyone who killed an oppressor without any thought of reward. Following this, on 22 June 1897, Commissioner Rand and another British officer, Lt. Ayerst were shot and killed by the Chapekar brothers and their other associates. According to Barbara and Thomas R. Metcalf, Tilak "almost surely concealed the identities of the perpetrators". Tilak was charged with incitement to murder and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment. When he emerged from prison in present-day Mumbai, he was revered as a martyr and a national hero. He adopted a new slogan coined by his associate Kaka Baptista: "Swaraj (self-rule) is my birthright and I shall have it."

Following the Partition of Bengal, which was a strategy set out by Lord Curzon to weaken the nationalist movement, Tilak encouraged the Swadeshi movement and the Boycott movement. The movement consisted of the boycott of foreign goods and also the social boycott of any Indian who used foreign goods. The Swadeshi movement consisted of the usage of natively produced goods. Once foreign goods were boycotted, there was a gap which had to be filled by the production of those goods in India itself. Tilak said that the Swadeshi and Boycott movements are two sides of the same coin.

Tilak opposed the moderate views of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and was supported by fellow Indian nationalists Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab. They were referred to as the "Lal-Bal-Pal triumvirate". In 1907, the annual session of the Congress Party was held at Surat, Gujarat. Trouble

broke out over the selection of the new president of the Congress between the moderate and the radical sections of the party. The party split into the radicals faction, led by Tilak, Pal and Lajpat Rai, and the moderate faction. Nationalists like Aurobindo Ghose, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai were Tilak supporters.

When asked in Calcutta whether he envisioned a Maratha-type of government for independent India, Tilak answered that the Maratha-dominated governments of 17th and 18th centuries were outmoded in the 20th century, and he wanted a genuine federal system for Free India where everyone was an equal partner. He added that only such a form of government would be able to safeguard India's freedom. He was the first Congress leader to suggest that Hindi written in the Devanagari script be accepted as the sole national language of India.

Sedition Charges

During his lifetime among other political cases, Tilak had been tried for sedition charges in three times by British India Government—in 1897, 1909, and 1916. In 1897, Tilak was sentenced to 18 months in prison for preaching disaffection against the Raj. In 1909, he was again charged with sedition and intensifying racial animosity between Indians and the British. The Bombay lawyer Muhammad Ali Jinnah appeared in Tilak's defence but he was sentenced to six years in prison in Burma in a controversial judgement. In 1916 when for the third time Tilak was charged for sedition over his lectures on self-rule, Jinnah again was his lawyer and this time led him to acquittal in the case.

Imprisonment in Mandalay

On 30 April 1908, two Bengali youths, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose, threw a bomb on a carriage at Muzzafarpur, to kill the Chief Presidency Magistrate Douglas Kingsford of Calcutta fame, but erroneously killed two women traveling in it. While Chaki committed suicide when caught, Bose was hanged. Tilak, in his paper *Kesari*, defended the revolutionaries and called for immediate Swaraj or self-rule. The Government swiftly charged him with sedition. At the conclusion of the trial, a special jury convicted him by 7:2 majority. The judge, Dinshaw D. Davar gave him a six years jail sentence to be served in Mandalay, Burma and a fine of ₹ 1,000 (US$14). On being asked by the judge whether he had anything to say, Tilak said:

All that I wish to say is that, in spite of the verdict of the jury, I still maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destinies of men and nations; and I think, it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may be benefited more by my suffering than by my pen and tongue.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was his lawyer in the case. Justice Davar's judgement came under stern criticism in press and was seen against impartiality of British justice system. Justice Davar himself previously had appeared for Tilak in his first sedition case in 1897. In passing sentence, the judge indulged in some scathing strictures against Tilak's conduct. He threw off the judicial restraint which, to some extent, was observable in his charge to the jury. He condemned the articles as "seething with sedition", as preaching violence, speaking of murders with approval. "You hail the advent of the bomb in

India as if something had come to India for its good. I say, such journalism is a curse to the country". Tilak was sent to Mandalay from 1908 to 1914. While imprisoned, he continued to read and write, further developing his ideas on the Indian nationalist movement. While in the prison he wrote the *Gita Rahasya*. Many copies of which were sold, and the money was donated for the Indian Independence movement.

Life after Mandalay

Tilak developed diabetes during his sentence in Mandalay prison. This and the general ordeal of prison life had mellowed him at his release on 16 June 1914. When World War I started in August of that year, Tilak cabled the King-Emperor George V of his support and turned his oratory to find new recruits for war efforts. He welcomed The Indian Councils Act, popularly known as Minto-Morley Reforms, which had been passed by British Parliament in May 1909, terming it as "a marked increase of confidence between the Rulers and the Ruled". It was his conviction that acts of violence actually diminished, rather than hastening, the pace of political reforms. He was eager for reconciliation with Congress and had abandoned his demand for direct action and settled for agitations "strictly by constitutional means" – a line that had long been advocated by his rival Gokhale. Tilak reunited with his fellow nationalists and rejoined the Indian National Congress during the Lucknow pact 1916. .

Tilak tried to convince Mohandas Gandhi to leave the idea of Total non-violence ("Total Ahimsa") and try to get self-rule ("Swarajya") by all means. Though Gandhi did not entirely concur with Tilak on the means to achieve self-rule and was

steadfast in his advocacy of *satyagraha*, he appreciated Tilak's services to the country and his courage of conviction. After Tilak lost a civil suit against Valentine Chirol and incurred pecuniary loss, Gandhi even called upon Indians to contribute to the Tilak Purse Fund started with the objective of defraying the expenses incurred by Tilak.

All India Home Rule League

Tilak helped found the All India Home Rule League in 1916–18, with G. S. Khaparde and Annie Besant. After years of trying to reunite the moderate and radical factions, he gave up and focused on the Home Rule League, which sought self-rule. Tilak travelled from village to village for support from farmers and locals to join the movement towards self-rule. Tilak was impressed by the Russian Revolution, and expressed his admiration for Vladimir Lenin. The league had 1400 members in April 1916, and by 1917 membership had grown to approximately 32,000. Tilak started his Home Rule League in Maharashtra, Central Provinces, and Karnataka and Berar region. Besant's League was active in the rest part of India.

Thoughts and views

Religio-Political Views

Tilak sought to unite the Indian population for mass political action throughout his life. For this to happen, he believed there needed to be a comprehensive justification for anti-British pro-Hindu activism. For this end, he sought justification in the supposed original principles of the

Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita. He named this call to activism karma-yoga or the yoga of action. In his interpretation, the Bhagavad Gita reveals this principle in the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna when Krishna exhorts Arjuna to fight his enemies (which in this case included many members of his family) because it is his duty. In Tilaks opinion, the Bhagavad Gita provided a strong justification of activism. However, this conflicted with the mainstream exegesis of the text at the time which was predominated by renunciate views and the idea of acts purely for God. This was represented by the two mainstream views at the time by Ramanuja and Adi Shankara. To find support for this philosophy, Tilak wrote his own interpretations of the relevant passages of the Gita and backed his views using Jnanadeva's commentary on the Gita, Ramanuja's critical commentary and his own translation of the Gita. His main battle was against the renunciate views of the time which conflicted with worldly activism. To fight this, he went to extents to reinterpret words such as karma, dharma, yoga as well as the concept of renunciation itself. Because he found his rationalization on Hindu religious symbols and lines, he alienated many non-Hindus such as the Muslims who began to ally with the British for support.

Social views against women

Tilak was strongly opposed to liberal trends emerging in Pune such as women's rights and social reforms against untouchability. Tilak vehemently opposed the establishment of the first Native girls High school (now called Huzurpaga) in Pune in 1885 and its curriculum using his newspapers, the Mahratta and Kesari. Tilak was also opposed to intercaste

marriage, particularly the match where an upper caste woman married a lower caste man. In the case of Deshasthas, Chitpawans and Karhades, he encouraged these three Maharashtrian Brahmin groups to give up "caste exclusiveness" and intermarry. Tilak officially opposed the age of consent bill which raised the age of marriage from ten to twelve for girls, however he was willing to sign a circular that increased age of marriage for girls to sixteen and twenty for boys. He fully supported social reforms but in his opinion self-rule took precedence over any social reform. On the whole Tilak was not against social reforms. Though he was against the age of consent bill, he arranged his daughter's marriage at the age of fifteen. He also advocated widow marriages. He also congratulated Dhondo Keshav Karve when he married a widow after the death of their first wife. He was in the favour of social reforms but without the interference of British Government.

Child bride Rukhmabai was married at the age of eleven but refused to go and live with her husband. The husband sued for restitution of conjugal rights, initially lost but appealed the decision. On 4 March 1887, Justice Farran, using interpretations of Hindu laws, ordered Rukhmabai to "*go live with her husband or face six months of imprisonment*". Tilak approved of this decision of the court and said that the court was following Hindu Dharmaśāstras. Rukhmabai responded that she would rather face imprisonment than obey the verdict. Her marriage was later dissolved by Queen Victoria. Later, she went on to receive her Doctor of Medicine degree from the London School of Medicine for Women.

In 1890, when an eleven-year-old Phulamani Bai died while having sexual intercourse with her much older husband, the

Parsi social reformer Behramji Malabari supported the Age of Consent Act, 1891 to raise the age of a girl's eligibility for marriage. Tilak opposed the Bill and said that the Parsis as well as the English had no jurisdiction over the (Hindu) religious matters. He blamed the girl for having "defective female organs" and questioned how the husband could be "persecuted diabolically for doing a harmless act". He called the girl one of those "dangerous freaks of nature". Tilak did not have a progressive view when it came to gender relations. He did not believe that Hindu women should get a modern education. Rather, he had a more conservative view, believing that women were meant to be homemakers who had to subordinate themselves to the needs of their husbands and children. Tilak refused to sign a petition for the abolition of untouchability in 1918, two years before his death, although he had spoken against it earlier in a meeting.

Esteem for Swami Vivekananda

Tilak and Swami Vivekananda had great mutual respect and esteem for each other. They met accidentally while travelling by train in 1892 and Tilak had Vivekananda as a guest in his house. A person who was present there(Basukaka), heard that it was agreed between Vivekananda and Tilak that Tilak would work towards nationalism in the "political" arena, while Vivekananda would work for nationalism in the "religious" arena. When Vivekananda died at a young age, Tilak expressed great sorrow and paid tributes to him in the Kesari. Tilak said about Vivekananda:

"No Hindu, who, has the interests of Hinduism at his heart, could help feeling grieved over Vivekananda's samadhi.

Vivekananda, in short, had taken the work of keeping the banner of Advaita philosophy forever flying among all the nations of the world and made them realize the true greatness of Hindu religion and of the Hindu people. He had hoped that he would crown his achievement with the fulfillment of this task by virtue of his learning, eloquence, enthusiasm and sincerity, just as he had laid a secure foundation for it; but with Swami's samadhi, these hopes have gone. Thousands of years ago, another saint, Shankaracharya, who, showed to the world the glory and greatness of Hinduism. At the fag of the 19th century, the second Shankaracharya is Vivekananda, who, showed to the world the glory of Hinduism. His work has yet to be completed. We have lost our glory, our independence, everything."

Conflicts with Shahu over caste issues

Shahu, the ruler of the princely state of Kolhapur, had several conflicts with Tilak as the latter agreed with the Brahmins decision of Puranic rituals for the Marathas that were intended for Shudras. Tilak even suggested that the Marathas should be "content" with the Shudra status assigned to them by the Brahmins. Tilak's newspapers, as well as the press in Kolhapur, criticized Shahu for his caste prejudice and his unreasoned hostility towards Brahmins. These included serious allegations such as sexual assaults by Shahu against four Brahmin women. An English woman named Lady Minto was petitioned to help them. The agent of Shahu had blamed these allegations on the "troublesome brahmins". Tilak and another Brahmin suffered from the confiscation of estates by Shahu, the first during a quarrel between Shahu and the Shankaracharya of Sankareshwar and later in another issue.

Social contributions

Tilak started two weeklies, *Kesari* ("The Lion") in Marathi and *Mahratta* in English (sometimes referred as 'Maratha' in Academic Study Books) in 1880–1881 with Gopal Ganesh Agarkar as the first editor. By this he was recognized as 'awakener of India', as Kesari later became a daily and continues publication to this day. In 1894, Tilak transformed the household worshipping of Ganesha into a grand public event (Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav). The celebrations consisted of several days of processions, music, and food. They were organized by the means of subscriptions by neighbourhood, caste, or occupation. Students often would celebrate Hindu and national glory and address political issues; including patronage of *Swadeshi* goods. In 1895, Tilak founded the Shri Shivaji Fund Committee for the celebration of "Shiv Jayanti", the birth anniversary of Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire. The project also had the objective of funding the reconstruction of the tomb (Samadhi) of Shivaji at Raigad Fort. For this second objective, Tilak established the Shri Shivaji Raigad Smarak Mandal along with Senapati Khanderao Dabhade II of Talegaon Dabhade, who became the founder President of the Mandal.

The events like the Ganapati festival and Shiv Jayanti were used by Tilak to build a national spirit beyond the circle of the educated elite in opposition to colonial rule. But it also exacerbated Hindu-Muslim differences. The festival organizers would urge Hindus to protect cows and boycott the Muharram celebrations organized by Shi'a Muslims, in which Hindus had formerly often participated. Thus, although the celebrations

were meant to be a way to oppose colonial rule, they also contributed to religious tensions. Contemporary Marathi Hindu nationalist parties like the Shiv Sena took up his reverence for Shivaji. However, Indian Historian, Uma Chakravarti cites Professor Gordon Johnson and states "It is significant that even at the time when Tilak was making political use of Shivaji the question of conceding Kshatriya status to him as Maratha was resisted by the conservative Brahmins including Tilak. While Shivaji was a Brave man, all his bravery, it was argued, did not give him the right to a status that very nearly approached that of a Brahmin. Further, the fact that Shivaji worshiped the Brahmanas in no way altered social relations, 'since it was as a Shudra he did it – as a Shudra the servant, if not the slave, of the Brahmin'".

The Deccan Education Society that Tilak founded with others in the 1880s still runs Institutions in Pune like the Fergusson College. The Swadeshi movement started by Tilak at the beginning of the 20th century became part of the Independence movement until that goal was achieved in 1947. One can even say Swadeshi remained part of Indian Government policy until the 1990s when the Congress Government liberalised the economy. Tilak said, "I regard India as my Motherland and my Goddess, the people in India are my kith and kin, and loyal and steadfast work for their political and social emancipation is my highest religion and duty".

Books

In 1903, Tilak wrote the book "The Arctic Home in the Vedas". In it, he argued that the Vedas could only have been composed in the Arctics, and the Aryan bards brought them south after

the onset of the last ice age. He proposed a new way to determine the exact time of the Vedas. In "The Orion", he tried to calculate the time of the Vedas by using the position of different Nakshatras. The positions of the Nakshtras were described in different Vedas. Tilak wrote "Shrimadh Bhagvad Gita Rahasya" in prison at Mandalay – the analysis of 'Karma Yoga' in the Bhagavad Gita, which is known to be a gift of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

Descendants

Tilak's son, Shridhar campaigned for removal of untouchability in late 1920s with dalit leader, Dr. Ambedkar. Both were leaders of the multi-caste Samata sangh. Shridhar's son, Jayantrao Tilak (1921–2001) was editor of the Kesari newspaper for many years. Jayantrao was also a politician from the Congress party. He was a member of the Parliament of India representing Maharashtra in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament. He was also a member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council.

Rohit Tilak, a descendant of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, is a Pune-based Congress party politician. In 2017, a woman with whom he had an extra-marital affair accused him of rape and other crimes. He is currently out on bail in connection with these charges.

Legacy

On 28 July 1956, a portrait of B. G. Tilak is put in the Central Hall of Parliament House. The portrait of Tilak, painted by

Gopal Deuskar, was unveiled by the then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru.

Tilak Smarak Ranga Mandir, a theatre auditorium in Pune is dedicated to him. In 2007, the Government of India released a coin to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Tilak. The formal approval of the government of Burma was received for the construction of clafs-cum-lecture hall in the Mandalay prison as a memorial to Lokmanya Tilak. ₹35,000 (US$490) were given by the Indian Government and ₹7,500 (US$110) by the local Indian community in Burma.

Several Indian films have been made on his life, including: the documentary films *Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak* (1951) and *Lokmanya Tilak* (1957) both by Vishram Bedekar, *Lokmanya: Ek Yugpurush* (2015) by Om Raut, and *The Great Freedom Fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak - Swaraj My Birthright* (2018) by Vinay Dhumale.

Chapter 23

Narayana Guru

Narayana Guru (20 August 1856 – 20 September 1928) was a philosopher, spiritual leader and social reformer in India. He led a reform movement against the injustice in the caste-ridden society of Kerala in order to promote spiritual enlightenment and social equality.

Biography

- Narayana Guru, né Nanu, was born on 20 August 1856 to a family of the Ezhava caste, Madan Asan and his wife Kuttiyamma, in the village of Chempazhanthy near Thiruvananthapuram, in the erstwhile state of Travancore, in British India. His early education was in the gurukula way under Chempazhanthi Mootha Pillai during which time his mother died when he was 15. At the age of 21, he went to central Travancore to learn from Raman Pillai Asan, a Sanskrit scholar who taught him Vedas, Upanishads and the literature and logical rhetoric of Sanskrit. He returned to his village in 1881 when his father was seriously ill, and started a village school where he taught local children which earned him the name *Nanu Asan*. A year later, he married Kaliamma but soon disassociated himself from the marriage to commence his public life as a social reformer.

Leaving home, Guru traveled through Kerala and Tamil Nadu and it was during these journeys, he met Chattampi Swamikal, a social and religious reformer, who introduced Guru to Ayyavu Swamikal from whom he learned meditation and yoga. Later, he continued his wanderings until he reached the Pillathadam cave at Maruthwamala where he set up an hermitage and practiced meditation and yoga for the next eight years. In 1888, he visited Aruvippuram where he meditated for a while and during his stay there, he consecrated a piece of rock taken from the river, as the idol of Shiva, which has since become the Aruvippuram Shiva Temple. The act, which later came to be known as *Aruvipuram Pratishta*, created a social commotion among the upper caste Brahmins who questioned Guru's right to consecrate the idol. His reply to them that "This is not a Brahmin Shiva but an Ezhava Shiva" later became a famous quote, used against casteism. It was here, the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP Yogam) was founded on 15 May 1903 by the efforts of Padmanabhan Palpu, better known as *Dr. Palpu*, with Narayana Guru as its founder president.

Guru shifted his base to Sivagiri, near Varkala in 1904 where he opened a school for children from the lower strata of the society and provided free education to them without considering their caste. However, it took him seven years to build a temple there, the Sarada Mutt was built in 1912. He also built temples in other places such as Thrissur, Kannur, Anchuthengu, Thalassery, Kozhikode, and Mangalore and it took him to many places including Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon) where he made his final visit in 1926. On his return to India, he was involved in a number of activities including the planning of the Sivagiri pilgrimage which was planned after his visit to Pallathuruthy in 1927 to attend the anniversary of the

S.N.D.P. Yogam. Soon after the meeting at Pallathuruthy, which was the last public function he attended, Guru became ill and underwent treatment at places such as Aluva, Thrissur, Palakkad, and finally to Chennai; the physicians attended to him included Ayurvedic physicians like Cholayil Mami Vaidyar, Panappally Krishnan Vaidyar and Thycauttu Divakaran Moos as well as allopathic physicians viz. . Krishnan Thampi, Panikker, Palpu and a European physician by name, Noble. He returned to Sarada Mutt and it was here, he died on 20 September 1928, at the age of 72.

Legacy

Fight against casteism

Casteism was practised in Kerala during the 19th and early 20th centuries and the lower caste people such as Ezhavas and the untouchable castes like Paraiyars, tribals and Pulayars had to suffer discrimination from the upper caste community It was against this discrimination that Guru performed his first major public act, the consecration of Siva idol at Aruvippuram in 1888. Overall, he consecrated forty five temples across Kerala and Tamil Nadu..His consecrations were not necessarily conventional deities; a slab inscribed with the words, *Truth, Ethics, Compassion, Love*, a vegetarian Shiva, a mirror and a sculpture by an Italian sculptor were among the various consecrations made by him. He propagated the ideals of compassion and religious tolerance and one of his noted works, *Anukampadasakam*, extols various religious figures such as Krishna, The Buddha, Adi Shankara, Jesus Christ.

Vaikom Satyagraha

The social protest of Vaikom Satyagraha was an agitation by the lower caste against untouchability in Hindu society of Travancore. It was reported that the trigger for the protest was an incident when Narayana Guru was stopped from passing through a road leading to Vaikom Temple by an upper caste person. It prompted Kumaran Asan and Muloor S.Padmanabha Panicker, both disciples of Guru, to compose poems in protest of the incident. T. K. Madhavan, another disciple, petitioned the Sree Moolam Popular Assembly in 1918 for rights to enter the temple and worship, regardless of the caste. A host of people including K. Kelappan and K. P. Kesava Menon, formed a committee and announced *Kerala Paryatanam movement* and with the support of Mahatma Gandhi, the agitation developed into a mass movement which resulted in the opening of the temple as well as three roads leading to it to people of all castes. The protest also influenced the Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936.

Sivagiri pilgrimage

Sivagiri pilgrimage was conceived by three of the disciples of Guru viz. Vallabhasseri Govindan Vaidyar, T. K. Kittan Writer and Muloor S. Padmanabha Panicker which Guru approved in 1928, with his own recommendations. He suggested that the goals of the pilgrimage should be the promotion of education, cleanliness, devotion to God, organization, agriculture, trade, handicrafts, and technical training and advised Vaidyar and Writer to organise a series of lectures on these themes to stress the need for the practice of these ideals, stating this to be the core purpose of Sivagiri pilgrimage. However, his death

soon after delayed the project until 1932 when the first pilgrimage was undertaken from Elavumthitta in Pathanamthitta District.

Writings and philosophy

Guru published 45 works in Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil languages which include Atmopadesa Śatakam, a hundred-verse spiritual poem and Daiva Dasakam, a universal prayer in ten verses. He also translated three major texts, *Thirukural* of Valluvar, *Ishavasya Upanishad* and *Ozhivil Odukkam* of Kannudaiya Vallalaar. It was he who propagated the motto, *One Caste, One Religion, One God for All* (Oru Jathi, Oru Matham, Oru Daivam, Manushyanu) which has become popular as a saying in Kerala. He furthered the non-dualistic philosophy of Adi Sankara by bringing it into practice by adding the concepts of social equality and universal brotherhood.

All Religions' Conference

Guru organized an *All Religion Conference* in 1923 at Alwaye Advaita Ashram, which was reported to be first such event in India. It was an effort to counter the religious conversions Ezhava community was susceptible to and at the entrance of the conference, he arranged for a message to be displayed which read, *We meet here not to argue and win, but to know and be known*. The conference has since become an annual event, organised every year at the Ashram.

Notable disciples

- Bodhananda Swamikal
- Nataraja Guru
- Kumaran Asan
- Sahodaran Ayyappan
- T. K. Madhavan
- C. V. Kunhiraman
- Padmanabhan Palpu
- Muloor S. Padmanabha Panicker
- Velutheri Kesavan Vaidyar

Public acceptance, honours and veneration

In 1916, Ramana Maharshi hosted Narayana Guru at his Tiruvannamalai ashram when Guru was returning from a trip to Kancheepuram where Swami Govindananda, a disciple of Guru, had established the Sree Narayana Seva Ashram. Rabindranath Tagore met Narayana Guru at the latter's ashram in Sivagiri in November 1922. Tagore later said of Narayana Guru that, "I have never come across one who is spiritually greater than Swami Narayana Guru or a person who is at par with him in spiritual attainment". Three years later, Mahatma Gandhi visited Guru during his 1925 trip to Kerala to participate in the Vaikom Satyagraha after which the Indian independence movement leader stated that "it was a great privilege in his life to have the darshan of an esteemed sage like Sree Narayana Guru."

On 21 August 1967, Narayana Guru was commemorated on an Indian postage stamp of denomination 15 nP. Another commemorative stamp on him was issued by Sri Lanka Post on 4 September 2009. The Reserve Bank of India issued two sets of commemorative coins depicting Guru's image, each valued at ₹5 and ₹100 respectively, on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary.

The first of the several statues of Narayana Guru was erected at Jagannath Temple, Thalassery in 1927 while he was still alive. His statues are seen in many places in Kerala which include a 24 feet statue at Kaithamukku in Thiruvananthapuram. The Government of Kerala observe the birthday, the Sri Narayana Jayanthi, and the date of death (Sree Narayana Guru Samadhi) of Narayana Guru as public holidays.

In popular media

The life of Narayana Guru has been portrayed in a number of movies starting with the 1986 film *Sree Narayana Guru*, made by award-winning director P. A. Backer. *Swamy Sreenarayana Guru*, an Indian Malayalam-language film directed by Krishnaswamy, released the same year. Almost a decade and a half later, R. Sukumaran made a film on the life of Guru, titled *Yugapurushan* in 2010 with Thalaivasal Vijay playing the role of Guru and the film also featured Mammootty and Navya Nair. *Brahmashri Narayana Guru Swamy* is a Tulu film made in 2014 by Rajashekar Kotian on Guru's life and the film was the 5oth film made in the language. His life during the eight years he spent at Maruthwamala (also known as Marunnumamala) has been adapted into a docufiction, titled *Marunnumamala* and the

film was released by Pinarayi Vijayan, the chief minister of Kerala on 9 August 2016.

Works

In Malayalam

- Narayana Guru's tomb in Sivagiri, Kerala
- *Swanubavageethi*
- *Aathmopadesh shathaksm*
- *Adwaitha deepika*
- *Arivu*
- *Narayana Guru (1988). Daivadasakam. Trivandrum: Narayana Gurukula.*
- *Narayana Guru; Bhāskaran, Ti (1981). Śivaśatakaṃ (in Malayalam). Tiruvanantapuram]; Kōṭṭayaṃ: N.M. Sajee Bhaskaran ; Vitaraṇaṃ, Nāṣanal Buksṯāḷ. OCLC 13027019.*
- *Jeevakarunya Panchakam*
- *Anukamba Dasakam*
- *Jathi Nirnayam*

- *Jathi Lakshanam*
- *Chijjada Chinthanam*
- *Daiva vichinthanam – 1 & 2*
- *Athma Vilasam*
- *Narayana Guru; Bhaskaran T (1981). Shivasathakam. Sajee Bhaskaran.*
- *Kolatheereshastavam*
- *Bhadrakaalyashtakam*
- *Gajendra moksham vanchipattu*
- *Ottapadyangal*
- *Sree Krishnana Darsanam*
- *Mangalasamsakal*
- *Narayana Guru (1987). Subrahmanya keerthanam. Varkala: Narayana Gurukula.*
- *Subramanya Ashtakam*
- *Sadasiva Darsanam*
- *Samasya*
- *Swanubhava Geethi*
- *Indrya Vairagyam*
- *Narayana Guru (1976). Nyayadarsanam. Varkala: Narayana Gurukula.*
- *Narayana Guru (1988). Prapanchasudhidasakam anubhoothidasakam. Varkkala: Narayana Gurukula.*
- *Narayana Guru (2003). Kalinatakam (2nd ed.). Varkkala: Narayanagurukulam.*
- *Narayana Guru, Sree (1993). Baahuleyaashtakam. Varkala, Narayana Gurukulam.*
- *Narayana Guru (1985). Sree Narayana Guruvinte Sampoorna Kruthikal (in Malayalam). Calicut, Mathrubhumi.*

- Narayana Guru; Bālakr̥ṣṇan Nāyar, G (1972). Kuṇḍalini-pāṭṭu' (in Malayalam). Trivandrum: Sree Narayana Publishing House. OCLC 499830611.
- Narayana Guru; Narayana Prasad; Narayana Gurukula (2003). Kāḷināṭakaṃ. Varkkala: Nārāyaṇagurukulaṃ. OCLC 58526535.

In Sanskrit

Narayana Guru (2004). Darsanamaala. Varkkala: Narayana Gurukula.

- Narayana Guru (1985). Brahmavidyapanjakam. Varkkala: Narayana Gurukulam.
- Narayana Guru; Śāstrī, Harihara (1998). Darśanamālā. Naī Dillī: Ḍī. Ke. Priṇṭavarlḍa. ISBN 9788124601099. OCLC 671596309.
- Nirvruthi Panchakam
- Slokathrayi
- Vedantha Suthram
- Homa Manthram
- Municharya Panchakam
- Asramam
- Dharmam
- Charama Slokangal
- Homa Mantram
- Chidambarashtakam
- Guhashtakam
- Bhadrakaliashtakam
- Vinayaka Ashtakam
- Sree Vasudeva Ashtakam
- Janani Navaratna Manjari

In Tamil

- *Thevarappathinkangal*

Translations

- *Thirukural*
- *Isavasyo Upanishad*
- *Ozhivil Odukkam*

Translations of Guru's works into other languages

Narayana Guru; Narayana Prasad (translator) (2007). Garland of visions: Darśanamālā of Narayana Guru. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld. ISBN 9788124603918. OCLC 167576536.

- *Nataraja Guru; Narayana Guru (2001). An integrated science of the absolute: based on the Darśana mālā (Garland of visions) of Narayana Guru. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld. ISBN 9788124601846. OCLC 50756278.*
- *Narayana Guru; Narayana Prasad (translator) (2009). Shorter philosophical poems of Narayana Guru: Brahmavidyā pañcakam, Advaita dīpikā, Aṛivu, Homa mantram, Daiva daśakam. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld. ISBN 9788124605158. OCLC 653807175.*
- *Narayana Guru; Narayana Prasad (translator) (1997). The Vedānta-sūtras of Nārāyaṇa Guru: with an English translation of the original Sanskrit and commentary. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld. ISBN 9788124600856. OCLC 37282506.*

- *Narayana Guru (1977). Life divine and spiritual values. Bangalore: Swami Sivananda Spiritual Centre : Copies can be had from Satsangha Seva Samithi. OCLC 615117867.*
- *Narayana Guru; Sreenivasan (translator), K (1994). The song of the self: a new translation of atmopadesasatakam (one hundred verses of self-instruction). Thiruva-nanthapuram, Kerala: Jayasree Publications. OCLC 222527764.*
- *Narayana Guru; Nataraja Guru (translator) (1969). One hundred verses of self-instruction (Atmopadesasatakam). Varkala, Kerala: Gurukula Pub. House. OCLC 695387.*
- *Narayana Guru; Atmananda (translator); Narayana Prasad (2007). Nārāyaṇasmṛtiḥ (in Sanskrit). New Delhi: D.K. Printworld. ISBN 9788124603925. OCLC 733026527.*
- *Narayana Guru; Nityacaitanya Yati (translator) (1982). Vinayakashtakam: eight verses in praise of Vināyaka. Varkala: Narayana Gurukula. OCLC 863337667.*
- *Narayana Guru (1969). One hundred verses of self-instruction. OCLC 606239200.*

Chapter 24

Indian Rebellion of 1857

The **Indian Rebellion of 1857** was a major, but ultimately unsuccessful, uprising in India in 1857–58 against the rule of the British East India Company, which functioned as a sovereign power on behalf of the British Crown. The rebellion began on 10 May 1857 in the form of a mutiny of sepoys of the Company's army in the garrison town of Meerut, 40 mi (64 km) northeast of Delhi (that area is now Old Delhi). It then erupted into other mutinies and civilian rebellions chiefly in the upper Gangetic plain and central India, though incidents of revolt also occurred farther north and east. The rebellion posed a considerable threat to British power in that region, and was contained only with the rebels' defeat in Gwalior on 20 June 1858. On 1 November 1858, the British granted amnesty to all rebels not involved in murder, though they did not declare the hostilities to have formally ended until 8 July 1859. Its name is contested, and it is variously described as the **Sepoy Mutiny**, the **Indian Mutiny**, the **Great Rebellion**, the **Revolt of 1857**, the **Indian Insurrection**, and the **First War of Independence**.

The Indian rebellion was fed by resentments born of diverse perceptions, including invasive British-style social reforms, harsh land taxes, summary treatment of some rich landowners and princes, as well as scepticism about the improvements brought about by British rule. Many Indians rose against the British; however, many also fought for the British, and the majority remained seemingly compliant to British rule. Violence, which sometimes betrayed exceptional cruelty, was

inflicted on both sides, on British officers, and civilians, including women and children, by the rebels, and on the rebels, and their supporters, including sometimes entire villages, by British reprisals; the cities of Delhi and Lucknow were laid waste in the fighting and the British retaliation.

After the outbreak of the mutiny in Meerut, the rebels quickly reached Delhi, whose 81-year-old Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was declared the Emperor of Hindustan. Soon, the rebels had captured large tracts of the North-Western Provinces and Awadh (Oudh). The East India Company's response came rapidly as well. With help from reinforcements, Kanpur was retaken by mid-July 1857, and Delhi by the end of September. However, it then took the remainder of 1857 and the better part of 1858 for the rebellion to be suppressed in Jhansi, Lucknow, and especially the Awadh countryside. Other regions of Company-controlled India—Bengal province, the Bombay Presidency, and the Madras Presidency—remained largely calm. In the Punjab, the Sikh princes crucially helped the British by providing both soldiers and support. The large princely states, Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore, and Kashmir, as well as the smaller ones of Rajputana, did not join the rebellion, serving the British, in the Governor-General Lord Canning's words, as "breakwaters in a storm."

In some regions, most notably in Awadh, the rebellion took on the attributes of a patriotic revolt against British oppression. However, the rebel leaders proclaimed no articles of faith that presaged a new political system. Even so, the rebellion proved to be an important watershed in Indian and British Empire history. It led to the dissolution of the East India Company, and forced the British to reorganize the army, the financial

system, and the administration in India, through passage of the Government of India Act 1858. India was thereafter administered directly by the British government in the new British Raj. On 1 November 1858, Queen Victoria issued a proclamation to Indians, which while lacking the authority of a constitutional provision, promised rights similar to those of other British subjects. In the following decades, when admission to these rights was not always forthcoming, Indians were to pointedly refer to the Queen's proclamation in growing avowals of a new nationalism.

East India Company's expansion in India

Although the British East India Company had established a presence in India as far back as 1612, and earlier administered the factory areas established for trading purposes, its victory in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 marked the beginning of its firm foothold in eastern India. The victory was consolidated in 1764 at the Battle of Buxar, when the East India Company army defeated Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. After his defeat, the emperor granted the Company the right to the "collection of Revenue" in the provinces of Bengal (modern day Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha), known as "Diwani" to the Company. The Company soon expanded its territories around its bases in Bombay and Madras; later, the Anglo-Mysore Wars (1766–1799) and the Anglo-Maratha Wars (1772–1818) led to control of even more of India.

In 1806, the Vellore Mutiny was sparked by new uniform regulations that created resentment amongst both Hindu and Muslim sepoys.

After the turn of the 19th century, Governor-General Wellesley began what became two decades of accelerated expansion of Company territories. This was achieved either by subsidiary alliances between the Company and local rulers or by direct military annexation. The subsidiary alliances created the princely states of the Hindu maharajas and the Muslim nawabs. Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, and Kashmir were annexed after the Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1849; however, Kashmir was immediately sold under the 1846 Treaty of Amritsar to the Dogra Dynasty of Jammu and thereby became a princely state. The border dispute between Nepal and British India, which sharpened after 1801, had caused the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814–16 and brought the defeated Gurkhas under British influence. In 1854, Berar was annexed, and the state of Oudh was added two years later. For practical purposes, the Company was the government of much of India.

Causes of the rebellion

Historians have identified diverse political, economic, military, religious and social causes of the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

An uprising in several sepoy companies of the Bengal army was sparked by the issue of new gunpowder cartridges for the Enfield rifle in February 1857. Loading the Enfield often required tearing open the greased cartridge with one's teeth, and many sepoys believed that the cartridges were greased with cow and pig fat. This would have insulted both Hindu and

Muslim religious practices; cows were considered holy by Hindus, while pigs were considered unclean by Muslims.

Underlying grievances over British taxation and recent land annexations by the British East Indian Company (BEIC) also contributed to the anger of the sepoy mutineers, and within weeks, dozens of units of the Indian army joined peasant armies in widespread rebellion. The old aristocracy, both Muslim and Hindu, who were seeing their power steadily eroded by the BEIC, also rebelled against British rule.

Another important source of discontent among the Indian rulers was that the British policies of conquest had created significant unrest. In the decade prior to the rebellion, the BEIC had imposed a "doctrine of lapse" (of Indian leadership succession), and the policy of "subsidiary alliance", both of which deprived many Indian rulers of their customary powers and privileges.

Frictions

Some Indians were upset with the draconian rule of the Company who had embarked on a project of territorial expansion and westernization that was imposed without any regard for historical subtleties in Indian society. Furthermore, legal changes introduced by the British were accompanied by prohibitions on Indian religious customs and were seen as steps towards forced conversion to Christianity. As early as the Charter Act of 1813 Christian missionaries were encouraged to come to Bombay and Calcutta under BEIC control. The British Governor-General of India from 1848 to 1856 was Lord Dalhousie who passed the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856

which allowed widows to remarry, like Christian women. He also passed decrees allowing Hindus who had converted to Christianity to be able to inherit property, which had previously been denied by local practice. Author Pramod Nayar points out that by 1851 there were nineteen Protestant religious societies operating in India whose goal was the conversion of Indians to Christianity. Christian organisations from Britain had additionally created 222 "unattached" mission stations across India in the decade preceding the rebellion.

Religious disquiet as the cause of rebellion underlies the work of historian William Dalrymple who asserts that the rebels were motivated primarily by resistance to the actions of the British East India Company, especially under James Broun-Ramsay reign, which were perceived as attempts to impose Christianity and Christian laws in India. For instance, once the rebellion was underway, Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar met the sepoys on 11 May 1857, he was told: "We have joined hands to protect our religion and our faith." They later stood in Chandni Chowk, the main square, and asked the people gathered there, "Brothers, are you with those of the faith?" Those European men and women who had previously converted to Islam such as Sergeant-Major Gordon, and Abdullah Beg, a former Company soldier, were spared. In contrast, foreign Christians such as Revd Midgeley John Jennings, and Indian converts to Christianity such as one of Zafar's personal physicians, Dr. Chaman Lal, were killed.

Dalrymple further points out that as late as 6 September, when calling the inhabitants of Delhi to rally against the upcoming Company assault, Zafar issued a proclamation stating that this was a religious war being prosecuted on behalf of 'the faith',

and that all Muslim and Hindu residents of the imperial city, or of the countryside were encouraged to stay true to their faith and creeds. As further evidence, he observes that the Urdu sources of the pre- and post-rebellion periods usually refer to the British not as *angrez* (the English), *goras* (whites) or *firangis* (foreigners), but as *kafir* (disbeliever) and *nasrani* (Christians).

Some historians have suggested that the impact of British economic and social reforms has been greatly exaggerated, since the Company did not have the resources to enforce them, meaning that away from Calcutta their effect was negligible.

Economics

Many Indians felt that the company was asking for heavy tax from the locals. This included an increase in the taxation on land. This seems to have been a very important reason for the spread of the rebellion, keeping in view the speed at which they ignited in many villages in northern India where farmers rushed to get back their unfairly grabbed title deeds. The resumption of tax-free land and confiscation of jagirs (the grant or right to locally control land revenue) caused discontent among the jagirdars and zamindars. Dalhousie had also appointed Inam Commission with powers to confiscate land. Several years before the sepoys' mutiny, Lord William Bentinck had attacked several jagirs in western Bengal. He also resumed the practice of tax-free lands in some areas. These changes caused widespread resentment not only among the landed aristocracy but also caused great havoc to a larger section of the middle-class people. Lands were confiscated from the landlords and auctioned. Rich people like the merchants

and moneylenders were, therefore, able to speculate in British land sales and drive out the most vulnerable peasant farmers.

Sepoys

During the late eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century, the armies of the East India Company, in particular those of the Bengal Presidency, were victorious and indomitable — the term "high noon of the sepoy army" has been used by a military historian. The company had an unbroken series of victories in India, against the Marathas, Mysore, north Indian states, and the Gurkhas, later against the Sikhs, and further afield in China and Burma. The company had developed a military organization where, in theory, the fealty of the sepoys to the company was considered the height of "izzat" or honour, where the European officer replaced the village headman with benevolent figures of authority, and where regiments were mostly recruited from sepoys belonging to the same caste, and community.

Unlike the Madras and Bombay Armies of the BEIC, which were far more diverse, the Bengal Army recruited its regular soldiers almost exclusively amongst the landowning Bhumihars and Rajputs of the Ganges Valley. Though paid marginally less than the Bombay and Madras Presidency troops, there was a tradition of trust between the soldiery and the establishment — the soldiers felt needed and that the company would care for their welfare. The soldiers performed well on the field of battle in exchange for which they were rewarded with symbolic heraldic rewards such as battle honors in addition to the extra pay or "batta" (foreign pay) routinely disbursed for operations committed beyond the established borders of Company rule.

Until the 1840s there had been a widespread belief amongst the Bengal sepoys in the *Iqbal* or continued good fortune of the East India Company. However much of this sense of the invincibility of the British was lost in the First Anglo-Afghan War where poor political judgment and inept British leadership led to the massacre of Elphinstone's army (which included three Bengal regiments) while retreating from Kabul. When the mood of the sepoys turned against their masters, they remembered Kabul and that the British were not invincible.

Caste privileges and customs within the Bengal Army were not merely tolerated but encouraged in the early years of the company's rule. Partly owing to this, Bengal sepoys were not subject to the penalty of flogging as were the European soldiers. This meant that when they came to be threatened by modernizing regimes in Calcutta, from the 1840s onwards, the sepoys had become accustomed to very high ritual status, and were extremely sensitive to suggestions that their caste might be polluted. If the caste of high-caste sepoys was considered to be "polluted", they would have to expend considerable sums of money on ritual purification before being accepted back into society.

There had been earlier indications that all was not well in the armies of the East India Company. As early as 1806, concerns that the sepoys' caste may be polluted had led to the Vellore Mutiny, which was brutally suppressed. In 1824, there was another mutiny by a regiment ordered overseas in the First Anglo-Burmese War, who were refused transport to carry individual cooking vessels and told to share communal pots. Eleven of the sepoys were executed and hundreds more sentenced to hard labor. In 1851-2 sepoys who were required

to serve in the Second Anglo-Burmese War also refused to embark, but were merely sent to serve elsewhere.

The pay of the sepoy was relatively low and after Awadh and the Punjab were annexed, the soldiers no longer received extra pay (*batta* or *bhatta*) if posted there, because this was no longer considered "foreign service". Since the batta made the difference between active service being considered munificent or burdensome, the sepoys repeatedly resented and actively opposed inconsiderate unilateral changes in pay and batta ordered by the Military Audit department. Prior to the period of British rule, any refusal to proceed on service until pay issues were resolved was considered a legitimate form of displaying grievance by Indian troops serving under Indian rulers. Such measures were considered a valid negotiating tactic by the sepoys, likely to be repeated every time such issues arose. In contrast to their Indian predecessors, the British considered such refusals at times to be outright "mutinies" and therefore to be suppressed brutally. At other times however, the Company directly or indirectly conceded the legitimacy of the sepoy's demands, such as when troops of the Bengal and Madras armies refused to serve in Sindh without batta after its conquest.

The varying stances of the British government, the reduction of allowances, and harsh punishments, contributed to a feeling amongst the troops that the Company no longer cared for them. Certain actions of the government, such as increased recruitment of Sikhs and Gurkhas, peoples considered by the Bengal sepoys to be inferior in caste to them, increased the distrust of the sepoys who thought that this was a sign of their services not being needed any more. The transfer of the

number 66th which was taken away from a regular Bengal Sepoy regiment of the line disbanded over refusal to serve without batta, and given to a Gurkha battalion, was considered by the Sepoy as a breach of faith by the company.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, British officers were generally closely involved with their troops, speaking Indian languages fluently; participating in local culture through such practices as having regimental flags and weapons blessed by Brahman priests; and frequently having native mistresses. Later, the attitudes of British officers changed with increased intolerance, lack of involvement and unconcern of the welfare of troops becoming manifest more and more. Sympathetic rulers, such as Lord William Bentinck were replaced by arrogant aristocrats, such as Lord Dalhousie, who despised the troops and the populace. As time passed, the powers of the commanding officers reduced and the government became more unfeeling or distant from the concerns of the sepoys.

Officers of an evangelical persuasion in the company's Army (such as Herbert Edwardes and Colonel S.G. Wheler of the 34th Bengal Infantry) had taken to preaching to their Sepoys in the hope of converting them to Christianity.

The General Services Enlistment Act of 1856 required new recruits to serve overseas if asked. The serving high-caste sepoys were fearful that this requirement would be eventually extended to them, violating observance of the Kala Pani prohibition on sea travel. Thus, the Hindu soldiers viewed the Act as a potential threat to their faith.

In 1857, the Bengal Army contained 10 regular regiments of Indian cavalry and 74 of infantry. All of the Bengal Native Cavalry regiments and 45 of the infantry units rebelled at some point. Following the disarming and disbandment of an additional seventeen Bengal Native Infantry regiments, which were suspected of planning mutiny, only twelve survived to serve in the new post-mutiny army. Once the first rebellions took place, it was clear to most British commanders that the grievances which led to them were felt throughout the Bengal army and no Indian unit could wholly be trusted, although many officers continued to vouch for their men's loyalty, even in the face of captured correspondence indicating their intention to rebel.

The Bengal Army also administered, sometimes loosely, 29 regiments of irregular horses and 42 of irregular infantry. Some of these units belonged to states allied to the British or recently absorbed into British-administered territory, and of these, two large contingents from the states of Awadh and Gwalior readily joined the growing rebellion. Other irregular units were raised in frontier areas from communities such as Assamese or Pashtuns to maintain order locally. Few of these participated in the rebellion, and one contingent in particular (the recently raised Punjab Irregular Force) actively participated on the British side.

The Bengal Army also contained three "European" regiments of infantry and many artillery units manned by white personnel. Due to the need for technical specialists, the artillery units generally had a higher proportion of British personnel. Although the armies of many Rajas or states which rebelled contained large numbers of guns, the British superiority in

artillery was to be decisive in the siege of Delhi after the arrival of a siege train of thirty-two howitzers and mortars.

There were also a number of regiments from the British Army (referred to in India as "Queen's troops") stationed in India, but in 1857 several of these had been withdrawn to take part in the Crimean War or the Anglo-Persian War of 1856. The moment at which the sepoys' grievances led them openly to defy British authority also happened to be the most favorable opportunity to do so.

The Enfield Rifle

Sepoys throughout India were issued with a new rifle, the Pattern 1853 Enfield rifled musket—a more powerful and accurate weapon than the old but smoothbore Brown Bess they had been using for the previous decades. The rifling inside the musket barrel ensured accuracy at much greater distances than was possible with old muskets. One thing did not change in this new weapon — the loading process, which did not improve significantly until the introduction of breech loaders and metallic, one-piece cartridges a few decades later.

To load both the old musket and the new rifle, soldiers had to bite the cartridge open and pour the gunpowder it contained into the rifle's muzzle, then stuff the paper cartridge (overlaid with a thin mixture of beeswax and mutton tallow for waterproofing) into the musket as wadding, the ball being secured to the top of the cartridge and guided into place for ramming down the muzzle. The rifle's cartridges contained 68 grains of FF black powder, and the ball was typically a 530-grain Pritchett or a Burton-Minié ball.

Many sepoys believed that the cartridges that were standard issue with the new rifle were greased with lard (pork fat) which was regarded as unclean by Muslims and tallow (cow fat) which angered the Hindus as cows were equal to a goddess to them. The sepoys' British officers dismissed these claims as rumors, and suggested that the sepoys make a batch of fresh cartridges, and greased these with pig and cow fat. This reinforced the belief that the original issue cartridges were indeed greased with lard and tallow.

Another suggestion they put forward was to introduce a new drill, in which the cartridge was not bitten with the teeth but torn open with the hand. The sepoys rejected this, pointing out that they might very well forget and bite the cartridge, not surprising given the extensive drilling that allowed 19th century British and Indian troops to fire three to four rounds per minute. British and Indian military drills of the time required soldiers to bite off the end of the Beeswax paper cartridge, pour the gunpowder contained within down the barrel, stuff the remaining paper cartridge into the barrel, ram the paper cartridge (which included the ball wrapped and tied in place) down the barrel, remove the ram-rod, return the ram-rod, bring the rifle to the ready, set the sights, add a percussion cap, present the rifle, and fire. The musketry books also recommended that, "Whenever the grease around the bullet appears to be melted away, or otherwise removed from the cartridge, the sides of the bullet should be wetted in the mouth before putting it into the barrel; the saliva will serve the purpose of grease for the time being" This meant that biting a musket cartridge was second nature to the Sepoys, some of whom had decades of service in the company's army, and who had been doing musket drill for every day of their service. The

first sepoy who rebelled by aiming his loaded weapon at a British officer was Mangal Pandey who was later executed.

Prophecies, omens, signs and rumours

There was rumor about an old prophecy that the company's rule would end after a hundred years. This took the form of Muslim millenarianism, with preachers in Lucknow foretelling the end of the raj. In some districts like Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur, Bose and Jalal argue that "the revolt took on a distinctly millenarian flavor." Their rule in India had begun with the Battle of Plassey in 1757.

Before the rebellion, there were reports that "holy men" were mysteriously circulating chapatis and lotus flowers among the sepoys. Leader of the British Conservative Party and future prime minister Benjamin Disraeli argued these objects were signs to rebel and evidence of a conspiracy, and the press echoed this belief.

After the rebellion, there was rumour in Britain that Russia was responsible.

Onset of the rebellion

Several months of increasing tensions coupled with various incidents preceded the actual rebellion. On 26 February 1857 the 19th Bengal Native Infantry (BNI) regiment became concerned that new cartridges they had been issued were

wrapped in paper greased with cow and pig fat, which had to be opened by mouth thus affecting their religious sensibilities. Their Colonel confronted them supported by artillery and cavalry on the parade ground, but after some negotiation withdrew the artillery, and cancelled the next morning's parade.

Mangal Pandey

Mangal Pandey was an Indian soldier who played a key part in the events immediately preceding the outbreak of the Indian rebellion of 1857. He was a sepoy (infantryman) in the 34th Bengal Native Infantry (BNI) regiment of the British East India Company. In 1984, the Indian government issued a postage stamp to remember him. His life and actions have also been portrayed in several cinematic productions.

Early life

Mangal Pandey was born in Nagwa, a village of upper Ballia district, Ceded and Conquered Provinces (now in Uttar Pradesh).

Mangal Pandey had joined the Bengal Army in 1849. In March 1857, he was a private soldier (sepoy) in the 5th Company of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry.

On the afternoon of 29 March 1857, Lieutenant Baugh, Adjutant of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry, then stationed at Barrackpore was informed that several men of his regiment were in an excited state. Further, it was reported to him that one of them, Mangal Pandey, was pacing in front of the

regiment's guard room by the parade ground, armed with a loaded musket, calling upon the men to rebel and threatening to shoot the first European that he set eyes on. Testimony at a subsequent enquiry recorded that Pandey, unsettled by unrest amongst the sepoys and intoxicated by the narcotic bhang, had seized his weapons and run to the quarter-guard building upon learning that a detachment of British soldiers was disembarking from a steamer near the cantonment.

Baugh immediately armed himself and galloped on his horse to the lines. Pandey took position behind the station gun, which was in front of the quarter-guard of the 34th, took aim at Baugh and fired. He missed Baugh, but the bullet struck his horse in the flank bringing both the horse and its rider down. Baugh quickly disentangled himself and, seizing one of his pistols, advanced towards Pandey and fired. He missed. Before Baugh could draw his sword, Pandey attacked him with a *talwar* (a heavy Indian sword) and closing with the adjutant, slashed Baugh on the shoulder and neck and brought him to the ground. It was then that another sepoy, Shaikh Paltu, intervened and tried to restrain Pandey even as he tried to reload his musket.

A British Sergeant-Major named Hewson had arrived on the parade ground, summoned by a native officer, before Baugh. He had ordered Jemadar Ishwari Prasad, the Indian officer in command of the quarter-guard, to arrest Pandey. To this, the *jemadar* stated that his NCOs had gone for help and that he could not take Pandey by himself. In response Hewson ordered Ishwari Prasad to fall in the guard with loaded weapons. In the meantime, Baugh had arrived on the field shouting 'Where is he? Where is he?' Hewson in reply called out to Baugh, 'Ride to

the right, sir, for your life. The sepoy will fire at you!' At that point Pandey fired.

Hewson had charged towards Pandey as he was fighting with Lieutenant Baugh. While confronting Pandey, Hewson was knocked to the ground from behind by a blow from Pandey's musket. The sound of the firing had brought other sepoys from the barracks; they remained mute spectators. At this juncture, Shaikh Paltu, while trying to defend the two Englishmen called upon the other sepoys to assist him. Assailed by sepoys who threw stones and shoes at his back, Shaikh Paltu called on the guard to help him hold Pandey, but they threatened to shoot him if he did not let go of the mutineer.

Some of the sepoys of the quarter-guard then advanced and struck at the two prostrate officers. They then threatened Shaikh Paltu and ordered him to release Pandey, whom he had been vainly trying to hold back. However, Paltu continued to hold Pandey until Baugh and the sergeant-major was able to get up. Himself wounded by now, Paltu was obliged to loosen his grip. He backed away in one direction and Baugh and Hewson in another, while being struck with the butt ends of the guards' muskets.

In the meantime, a report of the incident had been carried to the commanding officer General Hearsey, who then galloped to the ground with his two officer sons. Taking in the scene, he rode up to the guard, drew his pistol and ordered them to do their duty by seizing Mangal Pandey. The General threatened to shoot the first man who disobeyed. The men of the quarter-guard fell in and followed Hearsey towards Pandey. Pandey then put the muzzle of the musket to his chest and discharged

it by pressing the trigger with his foot. He collapsed bleeding, with his regimental jacket on fire, but not mortally wounded.

Pandey recovered and was brought to trial less than a week later. When asked whether he had been under the influence of any substances, he stated steadfastly that he had mutinied on his own accord and that no other person had played any part in encouraging him. He was sentenced to death by hanging, along with Jemadar Ishwari Prasad, after three Sikh members of the quarter-guard testified that the latter had ordered them not to arrest Pandey.

Mangal Pandey's execution took place on 8 April. Jemadar Ishwari Prasad was executed by hanging on 21 April.

Aftermath

The 34th B.N.I. Regiment was disbanded "with disgrace" on 6 May as a collective punishment, after an investigation by the government, for failing to perform their duty in restraining a mutinous soldier and their officer. That came after a period of six weeks while petitions for leniency were examined in Calcutta. Sepoy Shaikh Paltu was promoted to havildar (sergeant) for his behavior on 29 March but he was murdered in an isolated part of the Barrackpore cantonment shortly before the regiment was disbanded.

The Indian historian Surendra Nath Sen notes that the 34th B.N.I. had a good recent record and that the Court of Enquiry had not found any evidence of a connection with unrest at Berhampore involving the 19th B.N.I. four weeks before (see below). However, Mangal Pandey's actions and the failure of

the armed and on-duty sepoys of the quarter-guard to take action convinced the British military authorities that the whole regiment was unreliable. It appeared that Pandey had acted without first taking other sepoys into his confidence but that antipathy towards their British officers within the regiment had led most of those present to act as spectators, rather than obey orders.

Motivation

The personal motivation behind Mangal Pandey's behaviour remains confused. During the incident itself he shouted to other sepoys: "come out – the Europeans are here"; "from biting these cartridges we shall become infidels" and "you sent me out here, why don't you follow me". At his court-martial, he stated that he had been taking bhang and opium, and was not conscious of his actions on 29 March.

There were a wide range of factors causing apprehension and mistrust in the Bengal Army immediately prior to the Barrackpore event. Pandey's reference to cartridges is usually attributed to a new type of bullet cartridge used in the Enfield P-53 rifle which was to be introduced in the Bengal Army that year. The cartridge was thought to be greased with animal fat, primarily from cows and pigs, which could not be consumed by Hindus and Muslims respectively (the former a holy animal of the Hindus and the latter being abhorrent to Muslims). The cartridges had to be bitten at one end before use. The Indian troops in some regiments were of the opinion that this was an intentional act of the British, with the aim of defiling their religions.

Colonel S. Wheeler of the 34th B.N.I. was known as a zealous Christian preacher. The wife of Captain William Halliday of the 56th B.N.I. had the Bible printed in Urdu and Hindi and distributed among the sepoys, thus raising suspicions amongst them that the British were intent on converting them to Christianity.

The 19th and 34th Bengal Native Infantry were stationed at Lucknow during the time of the annexation of Oudh in 1856 because of alleged misgovernment by the Nawab. The annexation had negative implications for sepoys in the Bengal Army (a significant portion of whom came from that princely state). Before the annexation, these sepoys had the right to petition the British Resident at Lucknow for justice — a significant privilege in the context of native courts. As a result of the East India Company's action, they lost that special status, since Oudh no longer existed as a nominally independent political entity.

The 19th B.N.I. is important because it was the regiment charged with testing the new cartridges on 26 February 1857. However, right up to the mutiny the new rifles had not been issued to them, and the cartridges in the magazine of the regiment were as free of grease as they had been through the preceding half-century. The paper used in wrapping the cartridges was of a different colour, arousing suspicions. The non-commissioned officers of the regiment refused to accept the cartridges on 26 February. This information was conveyed to the commanding officer, Colonel William Mitchell; he took it upon himself to try to convince the sepoys that the cartridges were no different from those they had been accustomed to and that they need not bite it. He concluded his exhortation with

an appeal to the native officers to uphold the honour of the regiment and a threat to court-martial such sepoys as refused to accept the cartridge. However, the next morning the sepoys of the regiment seized their bell of arms (weapons store). The subsequent conciliatory behaviour of Mitchell convinced the sepoys to return to their barracks.

Court of Enquiry

A Court of Enquiry was ordered which, after an investigation lasting nearly a month, recommended the disbanding of the 19th B.N.I. The same was carried out on 31 March. The 19th B.N.I. were allowed to retain items of uniform and were provided by the government with allowances to return to their homes. Both Colonel Mitchell of the 19th B.N.I. and (subsequent to the incident of 29 March) Colonel Wheeler of Pandey's 34th B.N.I. were declared unsuited to take charge of any new regiments raised to replace the disbanded units.

Consequences

The attack by and punishment of Pandey is widely seen as the opening scene of what came to be known as the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Knowledge of his action was widespread amongst his fellow sepoys and is assumed to have been one of the factors leading to the general series of mutinies that broke out during the following months. Mangal Pandey would prove to be influential for later figures in the Indian Nationalist Movement like V.D. Savarkar, who viewed his motive as one of the earliest manifestations of Indian Nationalism. Modern Indian nationalists portray Pandey as the mastermind behind a conspiracy to revolt against the British, although a recently

published analysis of events immediately preceding the outbreak concludes that "there is little historical evidence to back up any of these revisionist interpretations".

During the rebellion that followed, Pandee or Pandey became the derogatory term used by British soldiers and civilians when referring to a mutinous sepoy. This was a direct derivation from the name of Mangal Pandey.

Film, stage and literature

A film based on the sequence of events that led up to the mutiny entitled *Mangal Pandey: The Rising* starring Indian actor, Aamir Khan along with Rani Mukerji, Amisha Patel and Toby Stephens, directed by Ketan Mehta was released on 12 August 2005.

The life of Pandey was the subject of a stage play titled *The Roti Rebellion*, which was written and directed by Supriya Karunakaran. The play was organized by Sparsh, a theatre group, and presented in June 2005 at The Moving Theatre at Andhra Saraswat Parishad, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

Samad Iqbal, a fictional descendant of Mangal Pandey, is a central character in Zadie Smith's debut novel *White Teeth*. Pandey is an important influence on Samad's life and is repeatedly referenced and investigated by the novel's characters.

Commemoration

The Government of India commemorated Pandey by issuing a postage stamp bearing his image on 5 October 1984. The stamp and the accompanying first-day cover were designed by Delhi-based artist C. R. Pakrashi.

A park named *Shaheed Mangal Pandey Maha Udyan* has been set up at Barrackpore to commemorate the place where Pandey attacked British officers and was subsequently hanged.

Unrest during April 1857

During April, there was unrest and fires at Agra, Allahabad and Ambala. At Ambala in particular, which was a large military cantonment where several units had been collected for their annual musketry practice, it was clear to General Anson, Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army, that some sort of rebellion over the cartridges was imminent. Despite the objections of the civilian Governor-General's staff, he agreed to postpone the musketry practice and allow a new drill by which the soldiers tore the cartridges with their fingers rather than their teeth. However, he issued no general orders making this standard practice throughout the Bengal Army and, rather than remain at Ambala to defuse or overawe potential trouble, he then proceeded to Simla, the cool "hill station" where many high officials spent the summer. Although there was no open revolt at Ambala, there was widespread arson during late April. Barrack buildings (especially those belonging to soldiers who had used the Enfield cartridges) and British officers' bungalows were set on fire.

Meerut

At Meerut, a large military cantonment, 2,357 Indian sepoys and 2,038 British soldiers were stationed along with 12 British-manned guns. The station held one of the largest concentrations of British troops in India and this was later to be cited as evidence that the original rising was a spontaneous outbreak rather than a pre-planned plot.

Although the state of unrest within the Bengal Army was well known, on 24 April Lieutenant Colonel George Carmichael-Smyth, the unsympathetic commanding officer of the 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry, ordered 90 of his men to parade and perform firing drills. All except five of the men on parade refused to accept their cartridges. On 9 May, the remaining 85 men were court martialled, and most were sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment with hard labour. Eleven comparatively young soldiers were given five years' imprisonment. The entire garrison was paraded and watched as the condemned men were stripped of their uniforms and placed in shackles. As they were marched off to jail, the condemned soldiers berated their comrades for failing to support them.

The next day was Sunday. Some Indian soldiers warned off-duty junior British officers that plans were afoot to release the imprisoned soldiers by force, but the senior officers to whom this was reported took no action. There was also unrest in the city of Meerut itself, with angry protests in the bazaar and some buildings being set on fire. In the evening, most British officers were preparing to attend church, while many of the British soldiers were off duty and had gone into canteens or into the bazaar in Meerut. The Indian troops, led by the 3rd

Cavalry, broke into revolt. British junior officers who attempted to quell the first outbreaks were killed by the rebels. British officers' and civilians' quarters were attacked, and four civilian men, eight women and eight children were killed. Crowds in the bazaar attacked off-duty soldiers there. About 50 Indian civilians, some of them officers' servants who tried to defend or conceal their employers, were killed by the sepoys. While the action of the sepoys in freeing their 85 imprisoned comrades appears to have been spontaneous, some civilian rioting in the city was reportedly encouraged by kotwal (local police commander) Dhan Singh Gurjar.

Some sepoys (especially from the 11th Bengal Native Infantry) escorted trusted British officers and women and children to safety before joining the revolt. Some officers and their families escaped to Rampur, where they found refuge with the Nawab.

The British historian Philip Mason notes that it was inevitable that most of the sepoys and sowars from Meerut should have made for Delhi on the night of 10 May. It was a strong walled city located only forty miles away, it was the ancient capital and present seat of the nominal Mughal Emperor and finally there were no British troops in garrison there in contrast to Meerut. No effort was made to pursue them.

Delhi

- Early on 11 May, the first parties of the 3rd Cavalry reached Delhi. From beneath the windows of the King's apartments in the palace, they called on Bahadur Shah to acknowledge and lead them. He did nothing at this point, apparently treating the sepoys

> as ordinary petitioners, but others in the palace were quick to join the revolt. During the day, the revolt spread. British officials and dependents, Indian Christians and shop keepers within the city were killed, some by sepoys and others by crowds of rioters.

There were three battalion-sized regiments of Bengal Native Infantry stationed in or near the city. Some detachments quickly joined the rebellion, while others held back but also refused to obey orders to take action against the rebels. In the afternoon, a violent explosion in the city was heard for several miles. Fearing that the arsenal, which contained large stocks of arms and ammunition, would fall intact into rebel hands, the nine British Ordnance officers there had opened fire on the sepoys, including the men of their own guard. When resistance appeared hopeless, they blew up the arsenal. Six of the nine officers survived, but the blast killed many in the streets and nearby houses and other buildings. The news of these events finally tipped the sepoys stationed around Delhi into open rebellion. The sepoys were later able to salvage at least some arms from the arsenal, and a magazine two miles (3 km) outside Delhi, containing up to 3,000 barrels of gunpowder, was captured without resistance.

Many fugitive British officers and civilians had congregated at the Flagstaff Tower on the ridge north of Delhi, where telegraph operators were sending news of the events to other British stations. When it became clear that the help expected from Meerut was not coming, they made their way in carriages to Karnal. Those who became separated from the main body or who could not reach the Flagstaff Tower also set out for Karnal

on foot. Some were helped by villagers on the way; others were killed.

The next day, Bahadur Shah held his first formal court for many years. It was attended by many excited sepoys. The King was alarmed by the turn events had taken, but eventually accepted the sepoys' allegiance and agreed to give his countenance to the rebellion. On 16 May, up to 50 British who had been held prisoner in the palace or had been discovered hiding in the city were killed by some of the King's servants under a peepul tree in a courtyard outside the palace.

Supporters and opposition

The news of the events at Meerut and Delhi spread rapidly, provoking uprisings among sepoys and disturbances in many districts. In many cases, it was the behaviour of British military and civilian authorities themselves which precipitated disorder. Learning of the fall of Delhi, many Company administrators hastened to remove themselves, their families and servants to places of safety. At Agra, 160 miles (260 km) from Delhi, no fewer than 6,000 assorted non-combatants converged on the Fort.

The military authorities also reacted in disjointed manner. Some officers trusted their sepoys, but others tried to disarm them to forestall potential uprisings. At Benares and Allahabad, the disarmings were bungled, also leading to local revolts.

In 1857, the Bengal Army had 86,000 men, of which 12,000 were British, 16,000 Sikh and 1,500 Gurkha. There were

311,000 native soldiers in India altogether, 40,160 British soldiers (including units of the British Army) and 5,362 officers. Fifty-four of the Bengal Army's 74 regular Native Infantry Regiments mutinied, but some were immediately destroyed or broke up, with their sepoys drifting away to their homes. A number of the remaining 20 regiments were disarmed or disbanded to prevent or forestall mutiny. Only twelve of the original Bengal Native Infantry regiments survived to pass into the new Indian Army. All ten of the Bengal Light Cavalry regiments mutinied.

The Bengal Army also contained 29 irregular cavalry and 42 irregular infantry regiments. Of these, a substantial contingent from the recently annexed state of Awadh mutinied *en masse*. Another large contingent from Gwalior also mutinied, even though that state's ruler (Jayajirao Scindia) supported the British. The remainder of the irregular units were raised from a wide variety of sources and were less affected by the concerns of mainstream Indian society. Some irregular units actively supported the Company: three Gurkha and five of six Sikh infantry units, and the six infantry and six cavalry units of the recently raised Punjab Irregular Force.

On 1 April 1858, the number of Indian soldiers in the Bengal army loyal to the Company was 80,053. However large numbers were hastily raised in the Punjab and North-West Frontier after the outbreak of the Rebellion.

The Bombay army had three mutinies in its 29 regiments, whilst the Madras army had none at all, although elements of one of its 52 regiments refused to volunteer for service in Bengal. Nonetheless, most of southern India remained passive,

with only intermittent outbreaks of violence. Many parts of the region were ruled by the Nizams or the Mysore royalty, and were thus not directly under British rule.

Most Muslims did not share the rebels' dislike of the British administration and their ulema could not agree on whether to declare a jihad. There were Islamic scholars such as Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi who took up arms against the colonial rule, but many Muslims, among them ulema from both the Sunni and Shia sects, sided with the British. Various Ahl-i-Hadith scholars and colleagues of Nanautavi rejected the jihad. The most influential member of Ahl-i-Hadith ulema in Delhi, Maulana Sayyid Nazir Husain Dehlvi, resisted pressure from the mutineers to call for a jihad and instead declared in favour of British rule, viewing the Muslim-British relationship as a legal contract which could not be broken unless their religious rights were breached.

Although most of the mutinous sepoys in Delhi were Hindus, a significant proportion of the insurgents were Muslims. The proportion of *ghazis* grew to be about a quarter of the local fighting force by the end of the siege and included a regiment of suicide *ghazis* from Gwalior who had vowed never to eat again and to fight until they met certain death at the hands of British troops.

The Sikhs and Pathans of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province supported the British and helped in the recapture of Delhi. Historian John Harris has asserted that the Sikhs wanted to avenge the annexation of the Sikh Empire eight years earlier by the Company with the help of *Purbiyas*

('Easterners'), Biharis and those from the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh who had formed part of the East India Company's armies in the First and Second Anglo-Sikh Wars. He has also suggested that Sikhs felt insulted by the attitude of sepoys who, in the Sikhs' view, had beaten the Khalsa only with British help; they resented and despised them far more than they did the British.

The Sikhs feared reinstatement of Mughal rule in northern India because they had been persecuted heavily in the past by the Mughal dynasty. Sikh support for the British resulted from grievances surrounding sepoys' perceived conduct during and after the Anglo-Sikh Wars. Firstly, many Sikhs resented that Hindustanis/Purbiyas in service of the Sikh state had been foremost in urging the wars, which lost them their independence. Sikh soldiers also recalled that the bloodiest battles of the war, Chillianwala and Ferozeshah, were won by British troops, and they believed that the Hindustani sepoys had refused to meet them in battle. These feelings were compounded when Hindustani sepoys were assigned a very visible role as garrison troops in Punjab and awarded profit-making civil posts in Punjab.

The varied groups in the support and opposing of the uprising is seen as a major cause of its failure.

The revolt

Initial stages

Bahadur Shah Zafar was proclaimed the Emperor of the whole of India. Most contemporary and modern accounts suggest that

he was coerced by the sepoys and his courtiers to sign the proclamation against his will. In spite of the significant loss of power that the Mughal dynasty had suffered in the preceding centuries, their name still carried great prestige across northern India. Civilians, nobility and other dignitaries took an oath of allegiance. The emperor issued coins in his name, one of the oldest ways of asserting imperial status. The adhesion of the Mughal emperor, however, turned the Sikhs of the Punjab away from the rebellion, as they did not want to return to Islamic rule, having fought many wars against the Mughal rulers. The province of Bengal was largely quiet throughout the entire period. The British, who had long ceased to take the authority of the Mughal Emperor seriously, were astonished at how the ordinary people responded to Zafar's call for war.

Initially, the Indian rebels were able to push back Company forces, and captured several important towns in Haryana, Bihar, the Central Provinces and the United Provinces. When British troops were reinforced and began to counterattack, the mutineers were especially handicapped by their lack of centralized command and control. Although the rebels produced some natural leaders such as Bakht Khan, whom the Emperor later nominated as commander-in-chief after his son Mirza Mughal proved ineffectual, for the most part they were forced to look for leadership to rajahs and princes. Some of these were to prove dedicated leaders, but others were self-interested or inept.

In the countryside around Meerut, a general Gurjar uprising posed the largest threat to the British. In Parikshitgarh near Meerut, Gurjars declared Choudhari Kadam Singh (Kuddum Singh) their leader, and expelled Company police. Kadam Singh

Gurjar led a large force, estimates varying from 2,000 to 10,000. Bulandshahr and Bijnor also came under the control of Gurjars under Walidad Khan and Maho Singh respectively. Contemporary sources report that nearly all the Gurjar villages between Meerut and Delhi participated in the revolt, in some cases with support from Jullundur, and it was not until late July that, with the help of local Jats, and the princely states so the British managed to regain control of the area.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India states that throughout the Indian Rebellion of 1857, Gurjars and Ranghars (Muslim rajputs) proved the "most irreconcilable enemies" of the British in the Bulandshahr area.

Mufti Nizamuddin, a renowned scholar of Lahore, issued a Fatwa against the British forces and called upon the local population to support the forces of Rao Tula Ram. Casualties were high at the subsequent engagement at Narnaul (Nasibpur). After the defeat of Rao Tula Ram on 16 November 1857, Mufti Nizamuddin was arrested, and his brother Mufti Yaqinuddin and brother-in-law Abdur Rahman (alias Nabi Baksh) were arrested in Tijara. They were taken to Delhi and hanged. Having lost the fight at Nasibpur, Rao Tula Ram and Pran Sukh Yadav requested arms from Russia, which had just been engaged against Britain in the Crimean War.

Siege of Delhi

The **Siege of Delhi** was one of the decisive conflicts of the Indian rebellion of 1857.

The rebellion against the authority of the East India Company was widespread through much of Northern India, but essentially it was sparked by the mass uprising by the sepoys of the units of the Army which the company had itself raised in its Bengal Presidency (which actually covered a vast area from Assam to Peshawar). Seeking a symbol around which to rally, the first sepoys to rebel sought to reinstate the power of the Mughal Empire, which had ruled the entire Indian subcontinent during the previous centuries. Lacking overall direction, many who subsequently rebelled also flocked to Delhi.

This made the siege decisive for two reasons. Firstly, large numbers of rebels were committed to the defence of a single fixed point, perhaps to the detriment of their prospects elsewhere, and their defeat at Delhi was thus a very major military setback. Secondly, the British recapture of Delhi and the refusal of the aged Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II to continue the struggle, deprived the rebellion of much of its national character. Although the rebels still held large areas, there was little co-ordination between them and the British were inevitably able to overcome them separately.

Outbreak of the rebellion

After several years of increasing tension among the sepoys (Indian soldiers) of the British East India Company's Bengal Army, the sepoys at Meerut, 43 miles (69 km) northeast of Delhi, openly rebelled against their British officers. The flashpoint was the introduction of the Pattern 1853 Enfield rifle. The cartridges for this were widely believed to be greased with a mixture of cow and pig fat, and to bite them open when

loading the rifle (as required by the drill books) would defile both Hindu and Muslim soldiers.

Eighty-five men of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry stationed at Meerut refused to accept their cartridges. They were hastily court martialled, and on 9 May 1857 they were sentenced to long periods of imprisonment and were paraded in irons before the British and Bengal regiments in the garrison. On the evening of the following day, soldiers of the Bengal regiments (3rd Light Cavalry, 11th and 20th Infantry) rebelled, releasing the imprisoned troopers and killing their British officers and many British civilians in their cantonment.

The senior Company officers at Meerut were taken by surprise. Although they had ample warning of disaffection among the Bengal Army after earlier outbreaks of unrest at Berhampur, Barrackpur and Ambala, they had assumed that at Meerut, where the proportion of European to Indian troops was higher than anywhere else in India, the Bengal units would not risk open revolt. They were fortunate that they did not suffer disaster. The Bengal regiments broke into rebellion on Sunday, when European troops customarily attended evening Church parade without arms. Due to the increasingly hot summer weather, the Church services on 10 May took place half an hour later than on previous weeks, and when the outbreak occurred, the British troops had not yet left their barracks and could quickly be mustered and armed.

Other than defending their own barracks and armouries, the Company's commanders at Meerut took little action, not even notifying nearby garrisons or stations. (The telegraph had been cut, but dispatch riders could easily have reached Delhi before

the sepoys, had they been sent immediately.) When they had rallied the British troops in the cantonment and prepared to disperse the sepoys on 11 May, they found that Meerut was quiet and the sepoys had marched off to Delhi.

Capture of Delhi by the rebels

Delhi was the capital of the Mughal Empire, which had been reduced to insignificance over the preceding century. The Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, who was eighty-two, had been informed by the East India Company that the title would die with him. At the time, Delhi was not a major centre of Company administration although Company officials controlled the city's finances and courts. They and their families lived in the "Civil Lines" to the north of the city.

There were no units of the British Army or "European" units of the East India Company forces at Delhi. Three Bengal Native Infantry regiments (the 38th, 54th and 74th) were stationed in barracks 2 miles (3.2 km) north-west of the city. They provided guards, working parties and other details to a "Main Guard" building just inside the walls near the Kashmiri Gate on the northern circuit of walls, the arsenal in the city and other buildings. By coincidence, when the regiments paraded early in the morning of 11 May, their officers read out to them the General Order announcing the execution of sepoy Mangal Pandey, who had attempted to start a rebellion near Barrackpur earlier in the year, and the disbandment of his regiment (the 34th Bengal Native Infantry). This produced much muttering in the ranks.

Later in the morning, the rebels from Meerut arrived quite unexpectedly, crossing the bridge of boats over the Jumna River. The leading sowars (troopers) of the 3rd Light Cavalry halted under the windows of the Palace and called on the Emperor to lead them. Bahadur Shah called for them to go to another palace outside the city, where their case would be heard later. Company officials then tried to close all the city gates but were too late to prevent the sowars gaining entry through the Rajghat Gate to the south. Once inside, the sowars were quickly joined by mobs which began attacking Company officials and looting bazaars.

Some Company officers and civilians tried to take refuge in the Main Guard, but the sepoys there joined the revolt, and they were slaughtered. Other officers arrived from the barracks, accompanied by two field guns and several companies of sepoys who had not yet joined the rebellion, and recaptured the Main Guard, sending the bodies of the dead officers to the cantonments in a cart. In the city meanwhile nine British officers from the Ordnance Corps, led by George Willoughby were conducting the Defence of the Magazine (containing artillery, stocks of firearms and ammunition). They found that their troops and labourers were deserting, using ladders provided from the palace to climb over the walls. The officers opened fire on their own troops and the mobs, to prevent the arsenal falling intact into the rebels' hands. After five hours, they had run out of ammunition and blew up their magazine, killing many rioters and onlookers, and badly damaging nearby buildings. Only three of them escaped and received the Victoria Cross.

Shortly after this, the troops at the Main Guard were ordered to withdraw. The sepoys there who had hitherto remained aloof from the revolt turned on their officers, a few of whom escaped after the sepoys left to join the looting.

About half the European civilians in Delhi and in the cantonments and Civil Lines were able to escape and fled as best they could, first to the Flagstaff Tower on the ridge to the north-west of Delhi where telegraph operators were trying to warn other British stations of the uprising. After it became clear that no help could arrive from Meerut or elsewhere, and the cart carrying the bodies of the officers killed at the Main Guard in the morning arrived at the tower by mistake, most of the Europeans fled to Karnal, several miles west. Some were helped by villagers on the way, others fell prey to plunderers.

Mughal restoration

On 12 May, Bahadur Shah held his first formal audience for several years. It was attended by several excited sepoys who treated him familiarly or even disrespectfully. Although Bahadur Shah was dismayed by the looting and disorder, he gave his public support to the rebellion. On 16 May, sepoys and palace servants killed 52 British who had been held prisoner within the palace or who had been discovered hiding in the city. The killings took place under a peepul tree in front of the palace, despite Bahadur Shah's protests. The avowed aim of the killers was to implicate Bahadur Shah in the killings, making it impossible for him to seek any compromise with the Company.

The administration of the city and its new occupying army was chaotic, although it continued to function haphazardly. The Emperor nominated his eldest surviving son, Mirza Mughal, to be commander in chief of his forces, but Mirza Mughal had little military experience and was treated with little respect by the sepoys. Nor did the sepoys agree on any overall commander, with each regiment refusing to accept orders from any but their own officers. Although Mirza Mughal made efforts to put the civil administration in order, his writ extended no further than the city. Outside, Gujjar herders began levying their own tolls on traffic, and it became increasingly difficult to feed the city.

News of the rebellion at Meerut and the capture of Delhi spread rapidly throughout India. Rumours and envoys from the rebels spread the tidings fast, and precipitated widespread rebellions and uprisings, but the Company learned of the events at Delhi even more quickly, thanks to the telegraph. Where the commanders of stations were energetic and distrustful of their sepoys, they were able to forestall some of the most dangerous revolts.

Company moves

Although there were several Company units available in the cool "hill stations" in the foothills of the Himalayas, it took time before any action could be taken to recapture Delhi. This was partly due to lack of transport and supplies. After the end of the Second Anglo-Sikh War, the Bengal Army's transport units had been disbanded as an economy measure, and transport had to be improvised from scratch. Also, many of the

senior British officers were widely regarded as dotards, far too senile to act decisively or sensibly.

Nevertheless, a Company force under General George Anson, the commander in chief in India, was able to move from Ambala to Karnal starting on 17 May. On 7 June, they were joined at Alipur by a force from Meerut, which had fought several skirmishes *en route*. The Meerut force was led by Brigadier Archdale Wilson, who had conspicuously failed to prevent the rebel sepoys' move to Delhi on 11 May. Anson died of cholera at Karnal on 27 May. Under his successor, Major General Henry Barnard, the combined force advanced on Delhi.

On 8 June, they found the mutineers had entrenched themselves outside the city. They drove the large but disorganised rebel force from the field at the Battle of Badli-ki-Serai 6 miles (9.7 km) west of Delhi, and captured Delhi ridge 2 miles (3.2 km) north of the city and the Bengal infantry units' barracks to the west of it. As a gesture of defiance and contempt, they set fire to the barracks. This was a senseless act, as it condemned the besiegers (and all their sick and wounded and noncombatants) to live in tents through the hot weather and monsoon rain seasons.

The ridge was of hard rock, about 60 feet (18 m) high, and ran from a point only 1,200 yards (1,100 m) east of the Kabul Gate on the city walls to the Yamuna River 3 miles (4.8 km) north of the city. Fortunately for the besiegers, a canal ran from the Yamuna west of their encampments, protecting the rear of their camp and also providing drinking water. The besiegers occupied various fortified posts along the top of the Ridge. The nearest to the city and the most exposed was known as "Hindu

Rao's house", defended by the 60th Rifles and Gurkhas of the 8th (Sirmoor) Local Battalion. South of it was a maze of villages and walled gardens, called the Subzi Mundi, in which the rebel forces could gather before launching attacks on the British right.

The siege: June through July

- It was quickly apparent that Delhi was too well-fortified and strongly held to fall to a *coup de main*. Barnard ordered a dawn assault on 13 June, but the orders were confused and failed to reach most of his subordinates in time. The attack had to be called off, amidst much recrimination. After this, it was accepted that the odds were too great for any assault to be successful until the besiegers were reinforced.

The first reinforcements to arrive at Delhi, the Corps of Guides, made an epic forced march of several hundred miles through the hottest season of the year, which also coincided with the month of Ramadan during which their Muslim soldiers could neither eat nor drink during the day. They nevertheless went into action almost immediately when they arrived at the Ridge.

The major force dispatched from the Punjab to Delhi were a "Flying Column" of 4,200 men under Brigadier John Nicholson and a siege train. Nicholson himself arrived on 14 August. The rebels had heard of the imminent arrival of the siege train, and sent a force out of the city to intercept it. On 25 August, Nicholson led a force against their position at the Battle of Najafgarh. Although the monsoon had broken, and the roads

and fields were flooded, Nicholson drove his force to make a rapid march and gained an easy victory, raising European morale and lowering that of the rebels.

The siege train arrived at the beginning of September, comprising six 24-pounders, eight 18-pounder long guns, six 8 inch howitzers and four 10 inch mortars, with almost 600 ammunition carts. On 8 September a further 4 guns arrived. With the guns already present, the besiegers had a total of fifteen 24-pounder guns, twenty 18-pounder guns and twenty-five mortars and howitzers.

The capture of Delhi

The bombardment

By early September, the British had assembled a force of some 9,000, which consisted of 3,000 regular troops and 6,000 Sikhs, Punjabis, and Ghurkas.

Wilson's chief Engineer Officer, Richard Baird Smith, had drawn up a plan to breach the city walls and make an assault. Wilson was unwilling to risk any attack, but was urged by Nicholson to agree to Baird Smith's plan. There were moves among the British officers, in which Nicholson was prominent, to replace Wilson as commander if he failed to agree to make the attack.

As a preliminary step, on 6 September the Company forces constructed "Reid's Battery", or the "Sammy House Battery", of two 24-pounder and four 9-pounder guns, near the southern

end of the ridge, to silence the guns on the Mori Bastion. Under cover of Reid's Battery, on 7 September the first siege battery proper was established, 700 yards (640 m) from the Mori Bastion. Opening fire on 8 September, four of its guns engaged the artillery on the Kashmir Bastion, while six guns and a heavy mortar silenced the rebels' guns on the Mori Bastion after a long duel. The direction of this attack also deceived the rebels that the storming attempt would be made from the east, rather than the north.

A second battery, consisting of nine 24-pounder guns, two 18-pounder guns and seven 8-inch howitzers, was set up near a flamboyantly-designed house known as "Ludlow Castle" in the Civil Lines, and opened fire against the Kashmir Bastion on 10 September. A third battery of six 18-pounder guns and 12 Coehorn mortars was set up near the old Custom House less than 200 yards (180 m) from the city walls, and opened fire against the Water Bastion near the Yamuna next day. A fourth battery of ten heavy mortars was set up in cover near the Khudsia Bagh, opening fire on 11 September. Because the element of surprise had been lost and these batteries were being enfiladed from across the river, the Indian sappers and pioneers who carried out much of the work of constructing the second and third batteries and moving the guns into position suffered over 300 casualties, but the batteries quickly made breaches in the bastions and walls. 50 guns continued to fire day and night and the walls began to crumble away.

The opening of this phase of the siege seems to have coincided with the exhaustion of the ammunition the rebels had captured from the magazine, as the rebel fire became suddenly much less effective. By this time also, the rebels had become

depressed through lack of supplies and money, and by defeatist rumours which were spread by agents and spies organised by William Hodson.

Preparation for the assault

The attack was scheduled for 3 a.m. on 14 September. The storming columns moved into position during the night of 13 September. The future Field Marshal Lord Roberts, then a junior staff officer, recorded their composition:

- 1st Column – Brigadier General Nicholson
- 75th Foot – 300
- 1st Bengal Fusiliers – 250
- 2nd Punjab Infantry (*Greene's Rifles*) – 450
- Total – 1000
- 2nd Column – Brigadier Jones
- 8th Foot – 250
- 2nd Bengal Fusiliers – 250
- 4th Sikhs – 350
- Total – 850
- 3rd Column – Colonel Campbell
- 52nd Foot – 200
- Kumaon Battalion (Gurkhas) – 250
- 1st Punjab Infantry (*Coke's Rifles*) – 500
- Total – 950
- 4th Column – Major Reid
- Sirmur Battalion (Gurkhas)
- Guides Infantry
- Collected picquets
- Total – 850
- Plus Kashmir contingent in reserve – 1000

- 5th Column – Brigadier Longfield
- 61st Foot – 250
- 4th Punjab Infantry (*Wilde's Rifles*) – 450
- Baluch Battalion (one "wing" only) – 300
- Total – 1000

Detachments (totalling 200) of the 60th Rifles preceded all the columns, as skirmishers. Engineers and sappers were attached to lead each column.

There was also a cavalry brigade in reserve, under James Hope Grant, which probably consisted of:

- 6th Carbineers (one "wing" only)
- 9th Lancers
- Guides Cavalry
- 1st Punjab Cavalry (one squadron)
- 2nd Punjab Cavalry (one squadron)
- 5th Punjab Cavalry (one squadron)
- Hodson's Horse (irregular levies)

The assault

The first three columns, under Nicholson's overall command, gathered in and behind a building known as the Khudsia Bagh, a former summer residence of the Mughal Kings, about a quarter of a mile from the north walls. The fourth column was intended to attack only when the Kabul Gate on the west of the city walls was opened from behind by the other columns. The fifth column and the cavalry were in reserve.

The attack was supposed to be launched at dawn, but the defenders had repaired some of the breaches overnight with

sandbags, and further bombardment was required. Eventually, Nicholson gave the signal and the attackers charged. The first column stormed through the breach in the Kashmir Bastion and the second through that in the Water Bastion, by the Jumna River, but this was not without difficulty as most of the scaling ladders were broken before they could be emplaced.

The third column attacked the Kashmiri Gate on the north wall. Two sapper officers, Lieutenants Home and Salkeld (both of whom subsequently won the Victoria Cross), led a suicidal mission, a small party of British and Indian sappers which placed four gunpowder charges and sandbags against the gate, under fire from just 10 feet (3.0 m) away. Several of them were wounded and killed trying to light the fuse. The explosion demolished part of the gate, a bugler with the party signalled success and the third column charged in.

Meanwhile, the fourth column encountered a rebel force in the suburb of Kishangunj outside the Kabul Gate before the other columns attacked, and was thrown into disorder. Major Reid, its commander, was seriously injured and the column retired. The rebels followed up, capturing four guns from the Kashmiri troops, and threatened to attack the British camp, which had been emptied of its guards to form the assault force. The artillery batteries at Hindu Rao's House (directed by Chamberlain from a doolie) stopped them until Hope Grant's cavalry and horse artillery could move up to replace Reid's column. The cavalry remained in position under fire from guns on the Kabul Gate and suffered heavy casualties, until relieved by infantry.

In spite of this reverse, Nicholson was keen to press on into the city. He led a detachment down a narrow lane to try to capture the Burn Bastion, on the walls north of the Kabul Gate. Rebel soldiers held most of the flat rooftops and walled compounds, and guns mounted on the bastion fired grapeshot down the lanes between the houses. After two rushes were stopped with heavy casualties, Nicholson led a third charge and was mortally wounded.

Temporarily repulsed, the British now withdrew to the Church of Saint James, just inside the walls of the Kashmir Bastion. They had suffered 1,170 casualties in the attack. Archdale Wilson moved to the Church, and faced with the setback, he wished to order a withdrawal. When he heard of Wilson's indecision, the dying Nicholson threatened to shoot him. Eventually, Baird Smith, Chamberlain and other officers persuaded Wilson to hold on to the British gains.

The capture of the city

The British and Company forces were disordered. Many British officers had been killed or wounded, and their units were now in confusion.

The British foothold included many of the liquor stores and over the next two days, many British soldiers became drunk and incapacitated on looted spirits. However, the rebel sepoy regiments had become discouraged by their defeats and lack of food, while the irregular *mujahhadin* defended their fortified compounds with great determination but could not be organised to make a coordinated counter-attack.

Wilson eventually ordered all liquor to be destroyed, and discipline was restored. Slowly, the attackers began to clear the rebels from the city. They captured the magazine on 16 September. Another Victoria Cross was earned here, by Lieutenant Thackerey for extinguishing a fire in the magazine, whilst under musket fire. Bahadur Shah and his entourage abandoned the palace on 18 September, and a British force captured the great mosque, the Jama Masjid, and the abandoned palace the next day. They also captured the Selimgarh Fort, attached to the palace and dominating the bridge of boats over the River Yamuna. Most rebels who had not already left the city now did so before the Company forces captured all the gates and trapped them.

The city was finally declared to be captured on 21 September. John Nicholson died the next day.

Aftermath

The cost to the British, Company, and loyal Indian armies in besieging Delhi from the start of the siege to the capture of the city was 1,254 killed, and 4,493 wounded, of which 992 were killed, 2,795 were wounded and 30 missing in action during the last six days of brutal fighting in the city during the final assault. Of that total of 3,817 casualties during the capture of the city, 1,677 were loyalist Indian soldiers. It is almost impossible to say how many rebels and their supporters were killed during the siege, but the number was far greater. Unofficial sources place the rebel casualties at over 5,000.

It is also impossible to estimate how many civilians died during the fighting in Delhi which included those killed by the

rebels, those killed by the British, or those killed randomly and accidentally in the cross-fire. After the siege, many civilians were subsequently expelled from the city to makeshift camps in the nearby countryside, as there was no way of feeding them until order was restored to the entire area. The British, Sikh and Pakhtun soldiers were all fairly callous with regard to life. For four days, after the fall of the city, there was extensive looting, although many British soldiers were more interested in drink than material possessions. Prize agents later moved into the city behind the troops, and organised the search for concealed treasure on a more systematic basis.

But the British, eager to avenge the killing of several of their countryfolk in Delhi, Cawnpore, and elsewhere in India, were in no mood to take prisoners. Several hundred rebel prisoners as well as suspected rebels and sympathisers were subsequently hanged without a trial or much legal process. In many cases, the officers of the "Queen's" Army were inclined to be lenient, but East India Company officials such as Theophilus Metcalfe were vengeful.

Bahadur Shah and three of his sons had taken refuge at Humayun's Tomb, 6 miles (9.7 km) south of Delhi. Although he was urged to accompany Bakht Khan and rally more troops, the aged King was persuaded that the British were seeking vengeance only against the sepoys they regarded as mutineers, and he would be spared. On 20 September, a party under William Hodson took him into custody on promise of clemency, and brought him back to the city. The next day, Hodson also took prisoner three of Bahadur Shah's sons, but with no guarantee of any sort. On the pretext that a mob was about to release them, Hodson executed the three princes at *Khooni*

Darwaza (Bloody gate). Their heads were later presented to Bahadur Shah.

By recapturing the Indian capital city, the British and Company forces dealt the Indian Army mutineers a major military and psychological blow, while releasing troops to assist in the relief of Lucknow, thus contributing to another British victory.

A total of 29 Victoria Crosses were awarded to recipients for bravery in the Siege of Delhi. A Delhi clasp was authorised for the Indian Mutiny Medal.

Cawnpore (Kanpur)

The **Siege of Cawnpore** was a key episode in the Indian rebellion of 1857. The besieged Company forces and civilians in Cawnpore (now Kanpur) were unprepared for an extended siege and surrendered to rebel forces under Nana Sahib, in return for a safe passage to Allahabad. However, their evacuation from Cawnpore turned into a massacre, and most of the men were killed. As an East India Company rescue force from Allahabad approached Cawnpore, 120 British women and children captured by the Sepoy forces were killed in what came to be known as the Bibighar Massacre, their remains being thrown down a nearby well in an attempt to hide the evidence. Following the recapture of Cawnpore and the discovery of the massacre, the angry Company forces engaged in widespread retaliation against captured rebel soldiers and local civilians. The murders greatly embittered the British rank-and-file against the Sepoy rebels and inspired the war cry *"Remember Cawnpore!"*.

Background

Cawnpore was an important garrison town for the East India Company forces. Located on the Grand Trunk Road, it lay on the approaches to Sindh (Sind), Punjab and Awadh (Oudh).

By June 1857, the Indian rebellion had spread to several areas near Cawnpore, namely Meerut, Agra, Mathura, and Lucknow. However, the Indian sepoys at Cawnpore initially remained loyal. The British General at Cawnpore, Hugh Wheeler, knew the local language, had adopted local customs, and was married to an Indian woman. He was confident that the sepoys at Cawnpore would remain loyal to him, and sent two British companies (one each of the 84th and 32nd Regiments) to besieged Lucknow.

The British contingent in Cawnpore consisted of around nine hundred people, including around three hundred military men, around three hundred women and children, and about one hundred and fifty merchants, business owners, drummers (salesman), engineers and others. The rest were the native servants, who left soon after the commencement of the siege.

In the case of a rebellion by the sepoys in Cawnpore, the most suitable defensive location for the British was the magazine located in the north of the city. It had thick walls, ample ammunition and stores, and also hosted the local treasury. However, General Wheeler decided to take refuge in the south of the city, in an entrenchment composed of two barracks surrounded by a mud wall. There was a military building site to the south of Cawnpore, where nine barracks were being constructed at the dragoon barracks. The British soldiers

found it difficult to dig deep trenches, as it was hot summer season. The area also lacked good sanitary facilities, and there was only one well (which would be exposed to enemy fire in case of an attack). Also, there were several buildings overlooking the entrenchment that would provide cover for the attackers, allowing them to easily shoot down on the defenders.

General Wheeler's choice of this location to make a stand remains controversial, given the availability of safer and more defensible places in Cawnpore. It is believed that he was expecting reinforcements to come from the southern part of the city. He also assumed that, in case of a rebellion, the Indian troops would probably collect their arms, ammunition and money, and would head to Delhi and therefore, he did not expect a long siege.

Rebellion at Fatehgarh

The first sign of the rebellion at Cawnpore came in the form of a rebellion at Fatehgarh (or Futteghur), a military station on the banks of the Ganges. To disperse the Indian troops away from Cawnpore, and lessen the chances of a rebellion, General Wheeler decided to send them on various "missions". On one such mission, he sent the 2nd Oudh Irregulars to Fatehgarh. On the way to Fatehgarh, General Wheeler's forces under the command of Fletcher Hayes and Lieutenant Barbour met two more Englishmen, Fayrer and Carey.

On the night of 31 May 1857, Hayes and Carey departed to a nearby town to confer with the local magistrate. After their departure, the Indian troops rebelled and decapitated Fayrer.

Barbour was also killed, as he tried to escape. When Hayes and Carey came back the next morning, an older Indian officer galloped towards them and advised them to run away. However, as the Indian officer explained the situation to them, the rebel Indian sowars (cavalry troopers) raced towards them. Hayes was killed as he tried to ride away, while Carey escaped to safety.

Outbreak of rebellion at Cawnpore

There were four Indian regiments in Cawnpore: the 1st, 53rd and 56th Native Infantry, and the 2nd Bengal Cavalry. Although the sepoys in Cawnpore had not rebelled, the European families began to drift into the entrenchment as the news of rebellion in the nearby areas reached them. The entrenchment was fortified, and the Indian sepoys were asked to collect their pay one by one, so as to avoid an armed mob.

The Indian soldiers considered the fortification, and the artillery being primed, as a threat. On the night of 2 June 1857, a British officer named Lieutenant Cox fired on his Indian guard while drunk. Cox missed his target, and was thrown into the jail for a night. The very next day, a hastily convened court acquitted him, which led to discontent among the Indian soldiers. There were also rumours that the Indian troops were to be summoned to a parade, where they were to be massacred. All these factors influenced them to rebel against the East India Company rule.

The rebellion began at 1:30 AM on 5 June 1857, with three pistol shots from the rebel soldiers of the 2nd Bengal Cavalry. Elderly Risaldar-Major Bhowani Singh, who chose not to hand

over the regimental colours and join the rebel sepoys, was subsequently cut down by his subordinates. The 53rd and 56th Native Infantry, which were apparently the most loyal units in the area, were awoken by the shootings. Some soldiers of the 56th attempted to leave. The European artillery assumed that they were also rebelling, and opened fire on them. The soldiers of the 53rd were also caught in the crossfire.

The 1st N.I. rebelled and left in the early morning of 6 June 1857. On the same day, the 53rd N.I. also went off, taking with them the regimental treasure and as much ammunition as they could carry. Around 150 sepoys remained loyal to General Wheeler.

After obtaining arms, ammunition and money, the rebel troops started marching towards Delhi to seek further orders from Bahadur Shah II, who had been proclaimed the *Badshah-e-Hind* ("Emperor of India"). The British officers were relieved, thinking that they would not face a long siege.

Nana Sahib's involvement

Nana Sahib was the adopted heir to Baji Rao II, the former peshwa of the Maratha Confederacy. The East India Company had decided that the pension and honours of the lineage would not be passed on to Nana Sahib, as he was not a natural born heir. Nana Sahib had sent his envoy Dewan Azimullah Khan to London, to petition the Queen against the Company's decision, but failed to evoke a favourable response. In May 1857, Nana Sahib arrived in Cawnpore with 300 soldiers, stating that he intended to support the British: Wheeler asked him to take charge of the government treasury in the Nawabganj area.

Amid the chaos in Cawnpore in 1857, Nana Sahib entered the British magazine with his contingent. The soldiers of the 53rd Native Infantry, which was guarding the magazine, were not fully aware of the situation in the rest of the city. They assumed that Nana Sahib had come to guard the magazine on behalf of the British, as he had earlier declared his loyalty to the British, and had even sent some volunteers to be at the disposal of General Wheeler. However, Nana Sahib joined the rebels.

After taking possession of the treasury, Nana Sahib advanced up the Grand Trunk Road. His aim was to restore the Maratha Confederacy under Peshwa tradition, and he decided to capture Cawnpore. On his way, Nana Sahib met with rebel soldiers at Kalyanpur. The soldiers were on their way to Delhi, to meet Bahadur Shah II. Nana Sahib initially decided to march to Delhi and fight the British as a Mughal subordinate, but Azimullah Khan advised him that leading the rebels in Kanpur would increase his prestige more than serving a weak Muslim king.

Nana Sahib asked the rebel soldiers to go back to Cawnpore, and help him in defeating the British. The rebels were reluctant at first, but decided to join Nana Sahib, when he promised to double their pay and reward them with gold, if they were to destroy the British entrenchment.

Attack on Wheeler's entrenchment

On 5 June 1857, Nana Sahib sent a polite note to General Wheeler, informing him that he intended to attack on the following morning, at 10 AM. On 6 June Nana Sahib's forces

(including the rebel soldiers) attacked the British entrenchment at 10:30 AM. The British were not adequately prepared for the attack, but managed to defend themselves for a long time, as the attacking forces were reluctant to enter the entrenchment. Nana Sahib's forces had been led to falsely believe that the entrenchment had gunpowder-filled trenches that would explode if they got closer.

As the news of Nana Sahib's advances against the British garrison spread, several of the rebel sepoys joined him. By 10 June, he was believed to be leading around twelve thousand to fifteen thousand Indian soldiers.

The British held out in their makeshift fort for three weeks with little water and food supplies. Many died as a result of sunstroke and lack of water. As the ground was too hard to dig graves, the British would pile the dead bodies of their killed outside the buildings, and drag and dump them inside a dried well during the night. The lack of sanitation facilities led to spread of diseases such as dysentery and cholera, further weakening the defenders. There was also a small outbreak of smallpox, although this was relatively confined.

During the first week of the siege, Nana Sahib's forces encircled the entrenchment, created loopholes and established firing positions in the surrounding buildings. Captain John Moore of the 32nd (Cornwall) Light Infantry countered this by launching night-time sorties. Nana Sahib withdrew his headquarters to Savada House (or Savada *Kothi*), situated about two miles away. In response to Moore's sorties, Nana Sahib decided to attempt a direct assault on the British

entrenchment, but the rebel soldiers displayed a lack of enthusiasm.

On 11 June, Nana Sahib's forces changed their tactics. They started concentrated firing on specific buildings, firing endless salvos of round shot into the entrenchment. They successfully damaged some of the smaller barrack buildings, and also tried to set fire to the buildings.

The first major assault by Nana Sahib's side took place on the evening of 12 June. However, the attacking soldiers were still convinced that the British had laid out gunpowder-filled trenches, and did not enter the area. On 13 June, the British lost their hospital building to a fire, which destroyed most of their medical supplies and caused the deaths of a number of wounded and sick artillerymen who burned alive in the inferno. The loss of the hospital was a major blow to the defenders. Nana Sahib's forces gathered for an attack, but were repulsed by the canister shots from artillery under the command of Lieutenant George Ashe. By 21 June, the British had lost around a third of their numbers.

Wheeler's repeated messages to Henry Lawrence, the commanding officer in Lucknow, could not be answered as that garrison was itself under siege.

Assault on 23 June

The sniper fire and the bombardment continued until 23 June 1857, the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Plassey, which took place on 23 June 1757 and was one of the pivotal battles leading to the expansion of British rule in India. One of the driving forces of the sepoy rebellion was a prophecy which

predicted the downfall of East India Company rule in India exactly one hundred years after the Battle of Plassey. This prompted the rebel soldiers under Nana Sahib to launch a major attack on the British entrenchment on 23 June 1857.

The rebel soldiers of the 2nd Bengal Cavalry led the charge, but were repulsed with canister shot when they approached within 50 yards of the British entrenchment. After the cavalry assault, the soldiers of the 1st Native Infantry launched an attack on the British, advancing behind cotton bales and parapets. They lost their commanding officer, Radhay Singh, to the opening volley from the British. They had hoped to get protection from cotton bales; however, the bales caught fire from the canister shot, and became a hazard to them. On the other side of the entrenchment, some of the rebel soldiers engaged in a hand combat against 17 British men led by Lieutenant Mowbray Thomson. By the end of the day, the attackers were unable to gain an entry into the entrenchment. The attack left over 25 rebel soldiers dead, with very few casualties on the British side.

Surrender of the British forces

The British garrison had taken heavy losses as a result of successive bombardments, sniper fire, and assaults. It was also suffering from disease and low supplies of food, water and medicine. General Wheeler's personal morale had been low, after his son Lieutenant Gordon Wheeler was decapitated by a roundshot. With approval of General Wheeler, a Eurasian civil servant called Jonah Shepherd slipped out of the entrenchment in disguise to ascertain the condition of Nana Sahib's forces. He was quickly imprisoned by the rebel soldiers.

At the same time, Nana Sahib's forces were wary of entering the entrenchment, as they believed that it had gunpowder-filled trenches. Nana Sahib and his advisers came up with a plan to end the deadlock. On 24 June, they sent a female European prisoner, Mrs Rose Greenway, to the entrenchment with their message. In return for surrender, Nana Sahib promised the safe passage of the British to the Satichaura Ghat, a landing on the Ganges from which they could depart for Allahabad. General Wheeler rejected the offer, because it had not been signed, and there was no guarantee that the offer was made by Nana Sahib himself.

The next day, 25 June, Nana Sahib sent a second note, signed by himself, through another elderly female prisoner, Mrs Jacobi. The British camp divided into two groups – one in favour of continuing the defence, while the second group was willing to trust Nana Sahib. During the next 24 hours, there was no bombardment by Nana Sahib's forces. Finally, General Wheeler decided to surrender, in return for a safe passage to Allahabad. After a day of preparation, and burying their dead, the British decided to leave for Allahabad on the morning of 27 June 1857.

Satichaura Ghat massacre

On the morning of the 27 June, a large British column led by General Wheeler emerged from the entrenchment. Nana Sahib sent a number of carts, dolis and elephants to enable the women, the children and the sick to proceed to the river banks. The British officers and military men were allowed to take their arms and ammunition with them, and were escorted by nearly the whole of the rebel army. The British reached the

Satichaura Ghat by 8 AM. Nana Sahib had arranged around forty boats, belonging to a boatman called Hardev Mallah, for their departure to Allahabad.

The Ganges river was unusually dry at the Satichaura Ghat, and the British found it difficult to drift the boats away. General Wheeler and his party were the first aboard and the first to manage to set their boat off. There was some confusion, as the Indian boatmen jumped overboard after hearing bugles from the banks, and started swimming toward the shore. As they jumped, some fires on the boats were knocked over, setting a few of the boats ablaze.

Though controversy surrounds what exactly happened next at the Satichaura Ghat, and who fired the first shot, soon afterwards, the departing British were attacked by the rebel sepoys, and were either killed or captured.

Some of the British officers later claimed that the rebels had placed the boats as high in the mud as possible, on purpose to cause delay. They also claimed that Nana Sahib's camp had previously arranged for the rebels to fire upon and kill all the British. Although the East India Company later accused Nana Sahib of the betrayal and murder of innocent people, no evidence has ever been found to prove that Nana Sahib had pre-planned or ordered the massacre. Some historians believe that the Satichaura Ghat massacre was the result of confusion, and not of any plan implemented by Nana Sahib and his associates. Lieutenant Mowbray Thomson, one of the four male survivors of the massacre, believed that the rank-and-file sepoys who spoke to him did not know of the killing to come.

After the fighting began, Nana Sahib's general Tatya Tope allegedly ordered the 2nd Bengal Cavalry unit and some artillery units to open fire on the British. The rebel cavalry sowars moved into the water, to kill the remaining British soldiers with swords and pistols. The surviving men were killed, while the women and children were taken into captivity, as Nana Sahib did not approve of their killing. Around 120 women and children were taken prisoner and escorted to Savada House, Nana Sahib's headquarters during the siege.

By this time, two of the boats had been able to drift away: General Wheeler's boat, and a second boat which was holed beneath the waterline by a round shot fired from the bank. The British people in the second boat panicked and attempted to make it to General Wheeler's boat, which was slowly drifting to safer waters.

General Wheeler's boat had around sixty people aboard, and was being pursued down the riverbanks by the rebel soldiers. The boat frequently grounded on the sandbanks. On one such sandbank, Lieutenant Thomson led a charge against the rebel soldiers, and was able to capture some ammunition. Next morning, the boat again stuck on a sandbank, resulting in another charge by Thomson and eleven British soldiers. After a fierce fight on shore, Thomson and his men decided to return to the boat, but did not find it where they expected to.

Meanwhile, the rebels had launched an attack on the boat from the opposite bank. After some firing, the British men on the boat decided to fly the white flag. They were escorted off the boat and taken back to Savada house. The surviving British men were sat on the ground, and Nana Sahib's soldiers got

ready to fire on them. Their wives insisted that they would die with their husbands, but were pulled away. Nana Sahib granted the British chaplain Moncrieff's request to read prayers before they died. The British were initially wounded by the guns, and then killed with swords. The women and children were confined to Savada House, to be reunited later with their remaining colleagues, who had been captured earlier, at Bibighar.

Being unable to find the boat, Thomson's party decided to run barefoot to evade the rebel soldiers. The party took refuge in a small shrine, where Thomson led a last charge. Six of the British soldiers were killed, while the rest managed to escape to the riverbank, where they tried to escape by jumping into the river and swimming to safety. However, a group of rebels from the village started clubbing them as they reached the bank. One of the soldiers was killed, while the other four, including Thomson, swam back to the centre of the river. After swimming downstream for a few hours, they reached shore, where they were discovered by some Rajput matchlockmen, who worked for Raja Dirigibijah Singh, a British loyalist. These carried the British soldiers to the Raja's palace. These four British soldiers were the only male survivors from the British side, apart from Jonah Shepherd (who had been captured by Nana Sahib before the surrender). The four men included two privates named Murphey and Sullivan, Lieutenant Delafosse, and Lieutenant (later Captain) Mowbray Thomson. The men spent several weeks recuperating, eventually making their way back to Cawnpore which was, by that time, back under British control. Murphey and Sullivan both died shortly after from cholera, Delafosse went on to join the defending garrison during the Siege of Lucknow, and Thomson took part in

rebuilding and defending the entrenchment a second time under General Windham, eventually writing a firsthand account of his experiences entitled *The Story of Cawnpore* (London, 1859).

Another survivor of the Satichaura Ghat massacre was Amy Horne, a 17-year-old Anglo-Indian girl. She had fallen from her boat and had been swept downstream during the riverside massacre. Soon after scrambling ashore she met up with Wheeler's youngest daughter, Margaret. The two girls hid in the undergrowth for a number of hours until they were discovered by a group of rebels. Margaret was taken away on horseback, never to be seen again (it was later rumoured that she survived and was married to a Muslim soldier) and Amy was led to a nearby village where she was taken under the protection of a Muslim rebel leader in exchange for converting to Islam. Just over six months later, she was rescued by Highlanders from Sir Colin Campbell's column on their way to relieve Lucknow.

Bibighar massacre

The surviving British women and children were moved from the Savada House to Bibighar ("The House of the Ladies"), a villa-type house in Cawnpore. Initially, around 120 women and children were confined to Bibighar. They were later joined by some other women and children, the survivors from General Wheeler's boat. Another group of British women and children from Fatehgarh, and some other captive European women were also confined to Bibighar. In total, there were around 200 women and children in Bibighar.

Nana Sahib placed the care of these survivors under a sex worker called Hussaini Khanum (also known as Hussaini Begum). She put the captives to grinding corn for *chapatis*. Poor sanitary conditions at Bibighar led to deaths from cholera and dysentery.

Nana Sahib decided to use these prisoners for bargaining with the East India Company. The Company forces, consisting of around 1,000 British, 150 Sikh soldiers and 30 irregular cavalry, had set out from Allahabad, under the command of General Henry Havelock, to retake Cawnpore and Lucknow. The first relief force assembled under Havelock included 64th Regiment of Foot and 78th Highlanders (brought back from the Anglo-Persian War), the first arrivals of the diverted China expedition, 5th Fusiliers, part of the 90th Light Infantry (seven companies), the 84th (York and Lancaster) from Burma, and EIC Madras European Fusiliers, brought up to Calcutta from Madras. Havelock's initial forces were later joined by the forces under the command of Major Renaud and Colonel James Neill, which had arrived from Calcutta to Allahabad on 11 June. Nana Sahib demanded that the East India Company forces under General Havelock and Colonel Neill retreat to Allahabad. However, the Company forces advanced relentlessly towards Cawnpore. Nana Sahib sent an army to check their advance. The two armies met at Fatehpur on 12 July, where General Havelock's forces emerged victorious and captured the town.

Nana Sahib then sent another force under the command of his brother, Bala Rao. On 15 July, the British forces under General Havelock defeated Bala Rao's army in the Battle of Aong, just outside the Aong village. On 16 July, Havelock's forces started advancing to Cawnpore. During the Battle of

Aong, Havelock was able to capture some of the rebel soldiers, who informed him that there was an army of 5,000 rebel soldiers with 8 artillery pieces further up the road. Havelock decided to launch a flank attack on this army, but the rebel soldiers spotted the flanking manoeuvre and opened fire. The battle resulted in heavy casualties on both sides, but cleared the road to Cawnpore for the British.

By this time, it became clear that Sahib's bargaining attempts had failed and the Company forces were approaching Cawnpore. Nana Sahib was informed that the British troops led by Havelock and Neill were indulging in violence against the Indian villagers. Pramod Nayar, believes that the ensuing Bibighar massacre was a reaction to the news of violence being perpetrated by the advancing British troops. Other suggestions are that there was a fear of future identification of key ring leaders if the prisoners were liberated.

Nana Sahib, and his associates, including Tatya Tope and Azimullah Khan, debated about what to do with the captives at Bibighar. Some of Nana Sahib's advisors had already decided to kill the captives at Bibighar, as revenge for the executions of Indians by the advancing British forces. The women of Nana Sahib's household opposed the decision and went on a hunger strike, but their efforts went in vain.

Finally, on 15 July, an order was given to murder the women and children imprisoned at Bibighar. The details of the incident, such as who ordered the massacre, are not clear.

The rebel sepoys executed the four surviving male hostages from Fatehghar, one of them a 14-year-old boy. But they refused to obey the order to kill women and the other children.

Some of the sepoys agreed to remove the women and children from the courtyard, when Tatya Tope threatened to execute them for dereliction of duty. Nana Sahib left the building because he didn't want to be a witness to the unfolding massacre.

The British women and children were ordered to come out of the assembly rooms, but they refused to do so and clung to each other. They barricaded themselves in, tying the door handles with clothing. At first, around twenty rebel soldiers opened fire from the outside of the Bibighar, firing through holes in the boarded windows. The soldiers of the squad that was supposed to fire the next round were disturbed by the scene, and discharged their shots into the air. Soon after, upon hearing the screams and groans inside, the rebel soldiers threw down their weapons and declared that they were not going to kill any more women and children.

An angry Begum Hussaini Khanum denounced the sepoys' act as cowardice, and asked her aide to finish the job of killing the captives. Her lover hired butchers, who murdered the captives with cleavers; the butchers left when it seemed that all the captives had been killed. However, a few women and children had managed to survive by hiding under the other dead bodies. It was agreed that the bodies of the victims would be thrown down a dry well by some sweepers. The next morning the rebels arrived to dispose of the bodies and they found that three women who were still alive, and also three children aged between four and seven years old . The surviving women were cast into the well by the sweepers, who had also been told to strip the corpses. The sweepers then threw the three little boys into the well one at a time, the youngest first. Some victims,

among them small children, were therefore buried alive in a heap of butchered corpses. None survived.

Recapture and retribution by the British

The Company forces reached Cawnpore on 16 July, and captured the city. A group of British officers and soldiers set out to the Bibighar, to rescue the captives, assuming that they were still alive. However, when they reached the site, they found it empty and blood-splattered, with the bodies of most of the 200 women and children having already been dismembered and thrown down the courtyard well or into the Ganges river. Piles of children's clothing and severed women's hair blew on the wind and lodged in tree branches around the compound; the tree in the courtyard nearest the well was smeared with the brains of numerous children and infants who had been dashed headfirst against the trunk and thrown down the well.

The British troops were horrified and enraged. Upon learning of the massacre, the infuriated British garrison engaged in a surge of violence against the local population of Cawnpore, including looting and burning of houses, with the justification that none of the local noncombatants had done anything to stop the massacre. Brigadier General Neill, who took the command at Cawnpore, immediately began a program of swift and vicious drumhead military justice (culminating in summary execution) for any sepoy rebel captured from the city who was unable to prove he was not involved in the massacre. Rebels confessing to or believed to be involved in the massacre were forced to lick the floor of the Bibighar compound, after it

had been wetted with water by low caste people, while being whipped. The sepoys were then religiously disgraced by being forced to eat (or force fed) beef (if Hindu) or pork (if Muslim). The Muslim sepoys were sewn into pig skins before being hanged, and low-caste Hindu street sweepers were employed to execute the high-caste Brahmin rebels to add additional religious disgrace to their punishment. Some were also forced by the British to lick clean buildings stained with the blood of the recently deceased, before being publicly hanged.

Most of the prisoners were hanged within direct view of the well at the Bibighar and buried in shallow ditches by the roadside. Others were shot or bayonetted, while some were also tied across cannons that were then fired, an execution method initially used by the rebels, and the earlier Indian powers, such as the Marathas and the Mughals. It is unclear whether this method of execution was reserved for special prisoners, or whether it was merely done in the retributive spirit of the moment.

The massacre disgusted and embittered the British troops in India, with "Remember Cawnpore!" becoming a war cry for the British soldiers for the rest of the conflict. Acts of summary violence against towns and cities believed to harbour or support the rebellion also increased. In one of the villages, the Highlanders caught around 140 men, women and children. Ten men were hanged without any evidence or trial. Another sixty men were forced to build the gallows of wooden logs, while others were flogged and beaten. In another village, when around 2,000 villagers came out in protest brandishing lathis, the British troops surrounded them and set the village on fire. Villagers trying to escape were shot dead.

Mass rapes of Indian women were also reported by sources. Drunk British soldiers, enraged at the reports of atrocities committed against British civilians, committed mass rapes against the native women of Cawnpore.

Aftermath

On 19 July, General Havelock resumed operations at Bithoor. Major Stevenson led a group of Madras Fusiliers and Sikh soldiers to Bithoor and occupied Nana Sahib's palace without any resistance. The British troops seized guns, elephants and camels, and set Nana Sahib's palace on fire.

In November 1857, Tatya Tope gathered an army, mainly consisting of the rebel soldiers from the Gwalior contingent, to recapture Cawnpore. By 19 November, his 6,000-strong force had taken control of all the routes west and north-west of Cawnpore. However, his forces were defeated by the Company forces under Colin Campbell in the Second Battle of Cawnpore, marking the end of the rebellion in the Cawnpore area. Tatya Tope then joined Rani Lakshmibai.

Nana Sahib disappeared and, by 1859, he had reportedly fled to Nepal. His ultimate fate was never determined. Up until 1888, there were rumours and reports that he had been captured and a number of individuals turned themselves in to the British claiming to be the aged Nana. As the majority of these reports turned out to be untrue, further attempts at apprehending him were abandoned.

British civil servant Jonah Shepherd, who had been rescued by Havelock's army, spent the next few years after the rebellion

attempting to put together a list of those killed in the entrenchment. He had lost his entire family during the siege. He eventually retired to a small estate north of Cawnpore in the late 1860s.

Memorials

After the revolt was suppressed, the British dismantled Bibighar. They raised a memorial railing and cross at the site of the well in which the bodies of the British women and children had been dumped. Meanwhile, the British forces conducted a punitive action under the lead of General Autrum by blowing down Nana Sahib's palace in Bithoor with cannons, in which Indian women and children including Nana Sahib's young daughter Mainavati were burned alive. Also, the inhabitants of Cawnpore were forced to pay £30,000 for the creation of the memorial as a 'punishment' for not coming to the aid of the British women and children in Bibighar. *The Angel of the Resurrection* was created by Baron Carlo Marochetti and completed in 1865. It has been called by various names throughout the centuries and came to be the most visited statue of British India. The chief proponent and private funder was Charlotte, Countess Canning, wife of the first Viceroy of India, Earl Canning. She approached her childhood friend, Marochetti, for models. In turn, Marochetti suggested that other sculptors be invited. Following the Countess's death, Earl Canning took over the commission. Canning rejected a number of designs accepting, in the end, a version of Marochetti's Crimean War memorial at Scutari, Turkey. The understated figure is an angel holding two branches of palm fronds across her chest. Despite assurances,

'The Angel' had some damage during the Independence celebrations of 1947 and she was later moved from her original site over the Bibi Ghar well to a garden at the side of All Soul's Church, Kanpore (Kanpur Memorial Church).

The remains of a circular ridge of the well can still be seen at the Nana Rao Park, built after Indian independence. The British also erected the All Souls Memorial Church, in memory of the victims. An enclosed pavement outside the church marks the graves of over 70 British men captured and executed on 1 July 1857, four days after the Satichaura Ghat massacre. The marble Gothic screen with "mournful seraph" was transferred to the churchyard of the All Souls Church after Indian independence in 1947. The memorial to the British victims was replaced with a bust of Tatya Tope.

There is a plaque to Capt. W Morphy and Lieut. Thomas Mackinnon who were killed on 28 November 1857 in Lichfield Cathedral.

An additional memorial detailing the losses suffered by the 32nd Cornwall Regiment Light Infantry is located inside the west entrance to Exeter Cathedral.

Literary references

Many references to the event were made in later novels and films. Julian Rathbone describes the brutality of both British and Indian forces during the siege of Cawnpore in his novel *The Mutiny*. In the novel, the Indian nurse Lavanya rescues an English child, Stephen, during the Satichaura Ghat massacre. In *Massacre at Cawnpore*, V. A. Stuart describes the siege and

the British defence through the eyes of the characters Sheridan, and his wife Emmy. George MacDonald Fraser's *Flashman in the Great Game* also contains lengthy scenes set in the entrenchment during the siege and also during the ensuing escape. Tom Williams' novel, *Cawnpore*, is also set against the background of the siege and massacre, which is seen from both the European and the Indian perspective. The contemporary Indian report by Kalpi devi in the local journal Hindupanch covered the incident of the punitive action by the British and burning down of Nana Sahib's palace along with his young daughter Mainavati in a prose.

The British press used it to describe the brutality involved in the public feeding of reptiles at the London zoological garden. In 1876, the Editor of the Animal World drew Dr. P L Sclater's attention to this and the press charged the Zoological Society of London with encouraging cruelty, "pandering to public brutality" while one writer in the Whitehall Review (27 April 1878), protested against "the Cawnpore Massacre enacted diurnally," and headed his article, "Sepoyism at the Zoo."

Lucknow

The **siege of Lucknow** (Hindi: लखनऊकीघेराबंदी) was the prolonged defence of the Residency within the city of Lucknow during the Indian Rebellion of 1857. After two successive relief attempts had reached the city, the defenders and civilians were evacuated from the Residency, which was then abandoned.

Background to the siege

The state of Oudh/Awadh had been annexed by the British East India Company and the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was exiled to Calcutta the year before the rebellion broke out. This high-handed action by the East India Company was greatly resented within the state and elsewhere in India. The first British Commissioner (in effect the governor) appointed to the newly acquired territory was Coverley Jackson. He behaved tactlessly, and Sir Henry Lawrence, a very experienced administrator, took up the appointment only six weeks before the rebellion broke out.

The sepoys (Indian soldiers) of the East India Company's Bengal Presidency Army had become increasingly troubled over the preceding years, feeling that their religion and customs were under threat from the evangelising activities of the Company. Lawrence was well aware of the rebellious mood of the Indian troops under his command (which included several units of Oudh Irregulars, recruited from the former army of the state of Oudh). On 18 April, he warned the Governor General, Lord Canning, of some of the manifestations of discontent, and asked permission to transfer certain rebellious corps to another province.

The flashpoint of the rebellion was the introduction of the Enfield rifle; the cartridges for this weapon were believed to be greased with a mixture of beef and pork fat, which was felt would defile both Hindu and Muslim Indian soldiers. On 1 May, the 7th Oudh Irregular Infantry refused to bite the cartridge, and on 3 May they were disarmed by other regiments.

On 10 May, the Indian soldiers at Meerut broke into open rebellion, and marched on Delhi. When news of this reached Lucknow, Lawrence recognised the gravity of the crisis and summoned from their homes two sets of pensioners, one of sepoys and one of artillerymen, to whose loyalty, and to that of the Sikh and some Hindu sepoys, the successful defence of the Residency was largely due.

Rebellion begins

On 23 May, Lawrence began fortifying the Residency and laying in supplies for a siege; large numbers of British civilians made their way there from outlying districts. On 30 May (the Muslim festival of Eid ul-Fitr), most of the Oudh and Bengal troops at Lucknow broke into open rebellion. In addition to his locally recruited pensioners, Lawrence also had the bulk of the British 32nd Regiment of Foot available, and they were able to drive the rebels away from the city.

On 4 June, there was a rebellion at Sitapur, a large and important station 51 miles (82 km) from Lucknow. This was followed by another at Faizabad, one of the most important cities in the province, and outbreaks at Daryabad, Sultanpur and Salon. Thus, in the course of ten days, British authority in Oudh practically evaporated.

On 30 June, Lawrence learned that the rebels were gathering north of Lucknow and ordered a reconnaissance in force, despite the available intelligence being of poor quality. Although he had comparatively little military experience, Lawrence led the expedition himself. The expedition was not very well organised. The troops were forced to march without

food or adequate water during the hottest part of the day at the height of summer, and at the Chinhat they met a well-organised rebel force, led by Barkat Ahmad with cavalry and dug-in artillery. Whilst they were under attack, some of Lawrence's sepoys and Indian artillerymen defected to the rebels, overturning their guns and cutting the traces. His exhausted British soldiers retreated in disorder. Some died of heatstroke within sight of the Residency.

Lieutenant William George Cubitt, 13th Native Infantry, was awarded the Victoria Cross several years later, for his act of saving the lives of three men of the 32nd Regiment of Foot during the retreat. His was not a unique action; sepoys loyal to the British, especially those of the 13th Native Infantry, saved many British soldiers, even at the cost of abandoning their own wounded men, who were hacked to pieces by rebel sepoys.

As a result of the defeat, the detached turreted building, Machchhi Bhawan (Muchee Bowan), which contained 200 barrels (~27 t) of gunpowder and a large supply of ball cartridge, was blown up and the detachment withdrew to the Residency.

Initial attacks

Lawrence retreated into the Residency, where the siege now began, with the Residency as the centre of the defences. The actual defended line was based on six detached smaller buildings and four entrenched batteries. The position covered some 60 acres (240,000 m) of ground, and the garrison (855 British officers and soldiers, 712 Indians, 153 civilian volunteers, with 1,280 non-combatants, including hundreds of

women and children) was too small to defend it effectively against a properly prepared and supported attack. Also, the Residency lay in the midst of several palaces, mosques and administrative buildings, as Lucknow had been the royal capital of Oudh for many years. Lawrence initially refused permission for these to be demolished, urging his engineers to "spare the holy places". During the siege, they provided good vantage points and cover for rebel sharpshooters and artillery.

One of the first bombardments following the beginning of the siege, on 30 June, caused a civilian to be trapped by a falling roof. Corporal William Oxenham of the 32nd Foot saved him while under intense musket and cannon fire, and was later awarded the Victoria Cross. The first attack was repulsed on 1 July. The next day, Lawrence was fatally wounded by a shell, dying on 4 July. Colonel John Inglis of the 32nd Regiment took military command of the garrison. Major John Banks was appointed the acting Civil Commissioner by Lawrence. When Banks was killed by a sniper a short time later, Inglis assumed overall command.

About 8,000 sepoys who had joined the rebellion and several hundred retainers of local landowners surrounded the Residency. They had some modern guns and also some older pieces which fired all sorts of improvised missiles. There were several determined attempts to storm the defences during the first weeks of the siege, but the rebels lacked a unified command able to coordinate all the besieging forces.

The defenders, their number constantly reduced by military action as well as disease, were able to repulse all attempts to overwhelm them. On 5 August an enemy mine was foiled;

counter mining and offensive mining against two buildings brought successful results. Several sorties were mounted, attempting to reduce the effectiveness of the most dangerous rebel positions and to silence some of their guns. The Victoria Cross was awarded to several participants in these sorties: Captain Samuel Hill Lawrence and Private William Dowling of the 32nd Foot and Captain Robert Hope Moncrieff Aitken of the 13th Native Infantry.

First relief attempt

On 16 July, a force under Major General Henry Havelock recaptured Cawnpore, 48 miles (77 km) from Lucknow. On 20 July, he decided to attempt to relieve Lucknow, but it took six days to ferry his force of 1500 men across the Ganges River. On 29 July, Havelock won a battle at Unao, but casualties, disease and heatstroke reduced his force to 850 effectives, and he fell back.

Havelock managed to get a spy through to the Residency, telling them that 2 rockets would be fired at a certain time on the night when the relief force was ready to attack.

There followed a sharp exchange of letters between Havelock and the insolent Brigadier James Neill who was left in charge at Cawnpore. Havelock eventually received 257 reinforcements and some more guns, and tried again to advance. He won another victory near Unao on 4 August, but was once again too weak to continue the advance, and retired.

Havelock intended to remain on the north bank of the Ganges, inside Oudh, and thereby prevent the large force of rebels

which had been facing him from joining the siege of the Residency, but on 11 August, Neill reported that Cawnpore was threatened. To allow himself to retreat without being attacked from behind, Havelock marched again to Unao and won a third victory there. He then fell back across the Ganges, and destroyed the newly completed bridge. On 16 August, he defeated a rebel force at Bithur, disposing of the threat to Cawnpore.

Havelock's retreat was tactically necessary, but caused the rebellion in Oudh to become a national revolt, as previously uncommitted landowners joined the rebels.

First relief of Lucknow

Havelock had been superseded in command by Major General Sir James Outram. Before Outram arrived at Cawnpore, Havelock made preparations for another relief attempt. He had earlier sent a letter to Inglis in the Residency, suggesting he cut his way out and make for Cawnpore. Inglis replied that he had too few effective troops and too many sick, wounded and non-combatants to make such an attempt. He also pleaded for urgent assistance. The rebels meanwhile continued to shell the garrison in the Residency, and also dug mines beneath the defences, which destroyed several posts. Although the garrison kept the rebels at a distance with sorties and counter-attacks, they were becoming weaker and food was running short.

Outram arrived at Cawnpore with reinforcements on 15 September. He allowed Havelock to command the relief force, accompanying it nominally as a volunteer until Lucknow was reached. The force numbered 3,179 and was composed of six

British and one Sikh infantry battalions, with three artillery batteries, but only 168 volunteer cavalry. They were divided into two brigades, under Neill and Colonel Hamilton of the 78th Highlanders.

The advance resumed on 18 September. This time, the rebels did not make any serious stand in the open country, even failing to destroy some vital bridges. On 23 September, Havelock's force drove the rebels from the Alambagh, a walled park four miles south of the Residency. Leaving the baggage with a small force in the Alambagh, he began the final advance on 25 September. Because of the monsoon rains, much of the open ground around the city was flooded or waterlogged, preventing the British making any outflanking moves and forcing them to make a direct advance through part of the city.

The force met heavy resistance trying to cross the Charbagh Canal, but succeeded after nine out of ten men of a forlorn hope were killed storming a bridge. They then turned to their right, following the west bank of the canal. The 78th Highlanders took a wrong turning, but were able to capture a rebel battery near the Qaisarbagh palace, before finding their way back to the main force. After further heavy fighting, by nightfall the force had reached the Machchhi Bhawan. Outram proposed to halt and contact the defenders of the Residency by tunnelling and mining through the intervening buildings, but Havelock insisted on an immediate advance. (He feared that the defenders of the Residency were so weakened that they might still be overwhelmed by a last-minute rebel attack.) The advance was made through heavily defended narrow lanes. Neill was one of those killed by rebel musket fire. In all, the

relief force lost 535 men out of 2000, incurred mainly in this last rush.

By the time of the relief, the defenders of the Residency had endured a siege of 87 days, and were reduced to 982 fighting personnel.

Second siege

Originally, Outram had intended to evacuate the Residency, but the heavy losses incurred during the final advance made it impossible to remove all the sick and wounded and non-combatants. Another factor which influenced Outram's decision to remain in Lucknow was the discovery of a large stock of supplies beneath the Residency, sufficient to maintain the garrison for two months. Lawrence had laid in the stores, but died before he had informed any of his subordinates. (Inglis had feared that starvation was imminent.)

Instead, the defended area was enlarged. Under Outram's overall command, Inglis took charge of the original Residency area, and Havelock occupied and defended the palaces (the Farhat Baksh and Chuttur Munzil) and other buildings east of it. Outram had hoped that the relief would also demoralise the rebels, but was disappointed. For the next six weeks, the rebels continued to subject the defenders to musket and artillery fire, and dug a series of mines beneath them. The defenders replied with sorties, as before, and dug counter-mines. Twenty-one shafts were sunk and 3,291 feet of gallery were constructed by the defenders. The rebels dug 20 mines: three caused loss of life, two did no injury, seven were blown

in, and seven were tunnelled into and their galleries taken over.

The defenders were able to send messengers to and from the Alambagh, from where in turn messengers could reach Cawnpore. (Later, a semaphore system made the risky business of sending messengers between the Residency and the Alambagh unnecessary.) A volunteer civil servant, Thomas Henry Kavanagh, the son of a British soldier, disguised himself as a sepoy and ventured from the Residency aided by a local man named Kananji Lal. He and his scout crossed the entrenchments east of the city and reached the Alambagh to act as a guide to the next relief attempt. For this action, Kavanagh was awarded the Victoria Cross and was the first civilian in British history to be honoured with such an award for action during a military conflict.

Preparations for second relief

The rebellion had involved a very wide stretch of territory in northern India. Large numbers of rebels had flocked to Delhi, where they proclaimed the restoration of the Mughal Empire under Bahadur Shah II. A British army besieged the city from the first week in June. On 10 September, they launched a storming attempt, and by 21 September they had captured the city. On 24 September, a column of 2,790 British, Sikh and Punjabi troops under Colonel Greathed of the 8th (The King's) Regiment of Foot marched through the Lahore Gate to restore British rule from Delhi to Cawnpore. On 9 October, Greathed received urgent calls for help from a British garrison in the Red Fort at Agra. He diverted his force to Agra, to find the rebels had apparently retreated. While his force rested, they

were surprised and attacked by the rebel force, which had been close by. Nevertheless, they rallied, defeated and dispersed the rebel force. This Battle of Agra cleared all organised rebel forces from the area between Delhi and Cawnpore, although guerrilla bands remained.

Shortly afterwards, Greathed received reinforcements from Delhi, and was superseded in command by Major General James Hope Grant. Grant reached Cawnpore late in October, where he received orders from the new commander-in-chief in India, Sir Colin Campbell, to proceed to the Alambagh, and transport the sick and wounded to Cawnpore. He was also strictly enjoined not to commit himself to any relief of Lucknow until Campbell himself arrived.

Campbell was 64 years old when he left England in July 1857 to assume command of the Bengal Army. By mid-August, he was in Calcutta preparing his departure upcountry. It was late October before all preparations were completed. Fighting his way up the Grand Trunk Road, Campbell arrived in Cawnpore on 3 November. The rebels held effective control of large parts of the countryside. Campbell considered, but rejected, securing the countryside before launching his relief of Lucknow. The massacre of British women and children following the capitulation of Cawnpore was still in recent memory. In British eyes, Lucknow had become a symbol of their resolve. Accordingly, Campbell left 1,100 troops in Cawnpore for its defence, leading 600 cavalry, 3,500 infantry and 42 guns to the Alambagh, in what Samuel Smiles described as an example of the "women and children first" protocol being applied.

British warships were dispatched from Hong Kong to Calcutta. The marines and sailors of the *Shannon*, *Pearl* and *Sanspareil* formed a Naval Brigade with the ships' guns (8-inch guns and 24-pounder howitzers) and fought their way from Calcutta until they met up with Campbell's force.

The strength of the rebels investing Lucknow has been widely estimated from 30,000 to 60,000. They were amply equipped, the sepoy regiments among them were well trained, and they had improved their defences in response to Havelock's and Outram's first relief of the Residency. The Charbagh Bridge used by Havelock and Outram just north of the Alambagh had been fortified. The Charbagh Canal from the Dilkusha Bridge to the Charbagh Bridge was dammed and flooded to prevent troops or heavy guns fording it. Cannon emplaced in entrenchments north of the Gumti River not only daily bombarded the besieged Residency but also enfiladed the only viable relief path. However, the lack of a unified command structure among the sepoys diminished the value of their superior numbers and strategic positions.

Second relief

At daybreak on 14 November, Campbell commenced his relief of Lucknow. He had made his plans on the basis of Kavanagh's information and the heavy loss of life experienced by the first Lucknow relief column. Rather than crossing the Charbagh Bridge and fighting through the tortuous, narrow streets of Lucknow, Campbell opted to make a flanking march to the east and proceed to Dilkusha Park. He would then advance to La Martiniere (a school for British and Anglo-Indian boys) and cross the canal as close to the River Gumti as possible. As he

advanced, he would secure each position to protect his communications and supply train back to the Alambagh. He would then secure a walled enclosure known as the Secundrabagh and link up with the Residency, whose outer perimeter had been extended by Havelock and Outram to the Chuttur Munzil.

For 3 miles (4.8 km) as the column moved to the east of the Alambagh, no opposition was encountered. When the relief column reached the Dilkusha park wall, the quiet ended with an outburst of musket fire. British cavalry and artillery quickly pushed past the park wall, driving the sepoys from the Dilkusha park. The column then advanced to La Martiniere. By noon, the Dilkusha and La Martiniere were in British hands. The defending sepoys vigorously attacked the British left flank from the Bank's House, but the British counter-attacked and drove them back into Lucknow.

The rapid advance of Campbell's column placed it far ahead of its supply caravan. The advance paused until the required stores of food, ammunition and medical equipment were brought forward. The request for additional ammunition from the Alambagh further delayed the relief column's march. On the evening of 15 November, the Residency was signalled by semaphore, "Advance tomorrow."

The next day, the relief column advanced from La Martiniere to the northern point where the canal meets the Gumti River. The damming of the canal to flood the area beneath the Dilkuska Bridge had left the canal dry at the crossing point. The column and guns advanced forward and then turned sharp left to Secundra Bagh.

Storming of Secundra Bagh

- The Secundra Bagh is a high-walled garden approximately 120 yards square, with parapets at each corner and a main entry gate arch on the southern wall. Campbell's column approached along a road that ran parallel to the eastern wall of the garden. The advancing column of infantry, cavalry and artillery had difficulty manoeuvering in the cramped village streets. They were afforded some protection from the intense fire raining down on them by a high road embankment that faced the garden. Musket fire came from loopholes in the Secundra Bagh and nearby fortified cottages, and cannon shot from the distant Kaisarbagh (the former King of Oudh's palace). Campbell positioned artillery to suppress this incoming fire. Heavy 18-pounder artillery was also hauled by rope and hand over the steep road embankment and placed within 60 yards (55 m) of the enclosure. Although significant British casualties were sustained in these manoeuvres, the cannon fire breached the southeastern wall.

Elements of the Scottish 93rd Highlanders and 4th Punjab Infantry Regiment rushed forward. Finding the breach too small to accommodate the mass of troops, the Punjab Infantry moved to the left and overran the defences at the main garden gateway. Once inside, the Punjabis, many of whom were Sikhs, emptied their muskets and resorted to the bayonet. Sepoys responded with counter-attacks. Highlanders pouring in by the breach shouted, "Remember Cawnpore!" Gradually the din of battle waned. The dwindling force of defenders moved

northward until retreat was no longer possible. The British numbered the sepoy dead at nearly 2000.

Storming of the Shah Najaf

- By late noon, a detachment of the relief column led by Adrian Hope disengaged from the Secundra Bagh and moved towards the Shah Najaf. The Shah Najaf, a walled mosque, is the mausoleum of Ghazi-ud-Din Haider, the first king of Oudh in 1814. The defenders had heavily fortified this multi-story position. When the full force of the British column was brought to bear on the Shah Najaf, the sepoys responded with unrelenting musketry, cannon grape shot and supporting cannon fire from the Kaisarbagh, as well as oblique cannon fire from secured batteries north of the Gumti River. From heavily exposed positions, for three hours the British directed strong cannon fire on the stout walls of the Shah Najaf. The walls remained unscathed, the sepoy fire was unrelenting and British losses mounted. Additional British assaults failed, with heavy losses.

However, retiring from their exposed positions was deemed equally dangerous by the British command. Fifty Highlanders were dispatched to seek an alternate access route to the Shah Najaf. Discovering a breach in the wall on the opposite side of the fighting, sappers were brought forward to widen the breach.

The small advance party pushed through the opening, crossed the courtyard and opened the main gates. Seeing the long

sought opening, their comrades rushed forth into the Shah Najaf. Campbell made his headquarters in the Shah Najaf by nightfall.

Residency reached

Within the besieged residency, Havelock and Outram completed their preparations to link up with Campbell's column. Positioned in the Chuttur Munzil, they executed their plan to blow open the outer walls of the garden once they could see that the Secundra Bagh was in Campbell's hands.

The Moti Mahal, the last major position that separated the two British forces, was cleared by charges from Campbell's column. Only an open space of 450 yards (410 m) now separated the two forces. Outram, Havelock and some other officers ran across the space to confer with Campbell, before returning. Stubborn resistance continued as the sepoys defended their remaining positions, but repeated efforts by the British cleared these last pockets of resistance. The second relief column had reached the Residency.

The evacuation

Although Outram and Havelock both recommended storming the Kaisarbagh palace to secure the British position, Campbell knew that other rebel forces were threatening Cawnpore and other cities held by the British, and he ordered Lucknow to be abandoned. The evacuation began on 19 November. While Campbell's artillery bombarded the Kaisarbagh to deceive the rebels that an assault on it was imminent, canvas screens were erected to shield the open space from the rebels' view. The

women, children and sick and wounded made their way to the Dilkusha Park under cover of these screens, some in a variety of carriages or on litters, others on foot. Over the next two days, Outram spiked his guns and withdrew after them.

At the Dilkusha Park, Havelock died (of a sudden attack of dysentery) on 24 November. The entire army and convoy now moved to the Alambagh. Campbell left Outram with 4,000 men to defend the Alambagh, while he himself moved with 3,000 men and most of the civilians to Cawnpore on 27 November.

Aftermath

The first siege had lasted 87 days, the second siege a further 61. The rebels were left in control of Lucknow over the following winter, but were prevented from undertaking any other operations by their own lack of unity and by Outram's hold on Alambagh, which was easily defended. Campbell returned to retake Lucknow, with the attack starting on 6 March. By 21 March 1858 all fighting had ceased.

During the siege, the Union Jack had flown day and night (against the usual practice, which is to strike national flags at dusk), as it was nailed to the flagpole. After the British re-took control of Lucknow, by special dispensation (unique within the British Empire), the Union Jack was flown 24 hours a day on the Residency's flagpole, for the rest of the time the British held India. The day before India became independent, the flag was lowered, the flagpole cut down, and the base removed and cemented over, to prevent any other flag from ever being flown there.

The largest number of Victoria Crosses awarded in a single day was the 24 earned on 16 November, during the second relief, the bulk of these being for the assault on the Secundrabagh. Among the recipients was William Hall, a Black Nova Scotian, for manning a gun at the Shah Najaf action despite the loss of all but one of his crew mates.

The Indian Mutiny Medal had three clasps relating to Lucknow:

- Defence of Lucknow, awarded to the original defenders - 29 June to 22 November 1857
- Relief of Lucknow, awarded to the relief force - November 1857
- Lucknow, awarded to troops in the final capture of Lucknow - November 1857

Representation in popular culture

- The Relief of Lucknow was a silent film, filmed in 1911 at Prospect Camp, St. George's Town and other locations in Bermuda by the Edison Company and released in 1912.
- The siege, with significant differences, was fictionalised in J. G. Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur*. He made extensive use of memoirs and journals of survivors of the Siege, such as those of Mrs Julia Inglis and Mrs Maria Germon.
- Dion Boucicault's *Jessie Brown or the Relief of Lucknow* was a play written immediately after the events and was very popular in the theatre, playing for twenty years.

- Maxwell Gray's 1891 *In the Heart of the Storm* is set partially in Lucknow during the siege.
- G. A. Henty's *In Times of Peril* and George MacDonald Fraser's *Flashman in the Great Game* also contain lengthy scenes set in the Residency during the siege.
- Mark Twain's non-fiction book *Following the Equator* devotes an entire chapter to the rebellion, quoting extensively from Sir G. O. Trevelyan.
- M. M. Kaye's *Shadow of the Moon* (copyright 1956/1979) is a fictional account of the last days of the British Raj in India with many scenes set in Lucknow and environs. Most of the latter part of the book is set in Lucknow during the Siege.
- The plot of Philip Pullman's *Ruby in the Smoke* relies heavily on fictional events that supposedly occurred during the siege.
- Anurag Kumar's *Recalcitrance* is mostly based on the part played by commoners during the siege. It describes the siege as well as the final relief. It is almost entirely based on the events in Lucknow. It also describes the part played by Raja Jai Lal Singh, a commander of revolutionary forces whose contributions were highlighted for the first time by the author through newspaper articles. His contributions caused a memorial park to be built around the place where this mysterious revolutionary soldier was hanged at the end of the Great Uprising of 1857. The novel was first published in 2008 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the mutiny.

- Valerie Fitzgerald's novel *Zemindar* is set in the lead up to and siege of Lucknow with the evacuation, seen from perspective of women in the Residency.
- In the British television series *Downton Abbey* (Season 2, Episode 1), the Dowager Countess, Violet Crawley, tells her granddaughter during World War I, "War deals out strange tasks. Remember your great-aunt Roberta...She loaded the guns at Lucknow."
- The arrival of the second relief force is the subject of "The Relief of Lucknow", by Robert Traill Spence Lowell.
- William McGonagall's poem *The Capture of Lucknow* also describes the events of the second relief.
- The 1981 Muzzafar Ali Film Umrao Jaan depicts civilians fleeing Lucknow after the British's attempted siege

Jhansi

Jhansi State was a Maratha-ruled princely state in Bundelkhand. When the Raja of Jhansi died without a biological male heir in 1853, it was annexed to the British Raj by the Governor-General of India under the doctrine of lapse. His widow Rani Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, protested against the denial of rights of their adopted son. When war broke out, Jhansi quickly became a centre of the rebellion. A small group of Company officials and their families took refuge in Jhansi Fort, and the Rani negotiated their evacuation. However, when they left the fort they were massacred by the rebels over whom the Rani had no control; the British suspected the Rani of complicity, despite her repeated denials.

By the end of June 1857, the Company had lost control of much of Bundelkhand and eastern Rajasthan. The Bengal Army units in the area, having rebelled, marched to take part in the battles for Delhi and Cawnpore. The many princely states that made up this area began warring amongst themselves. In September and October 1857, the Rani led the successful defence of Jhansi against the invading armies of the neighbouring rajas of Datia and Orchha.

On 3 February, Sir Hugh Rose broke the 3-month siege of Saugor. Thousands of local villagers welcomed him as a liberator, freeing them from rebel occupation.

In March 1858, the Central India Field Force, led by Sir Hugh Rose, advanced on and laid siege to Jhansi. The Company forces captured the city, but the Rani fled in disguise.

After being driven from Jhansi and Kalpi, on 1 June 1858 Rani Lakshmi Bai and a group of Maratha rebels captured the fortress city of Gwalior from the Scindia rulers, who were British allies. This might have reinvigorated the rebellion but the Central India Field Force very quickly advanced against the city. The Rani died on 17 June, the second day of the Battle of Gwalior, probably killed by a carbine shot from the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars according to the account of three independent Indian representatives. The Company forces recaptured Gwalior within the next three days. In descriptions of the scene of her last battle, she was compared to Joan of Arc by some commentators.

Indore

Colonel Henry Marion Durand, the then-Company resident at Indore, had brushed away any possibility of uprising in Indore. However, on 1 July, sepoys in Holkar's army revolted and opened fire on the cavalry pickets of the Bhopal Contingent (a locally raised force with British officers). When Colonel Travers rode forward to charge, the Bhopal Cavalry refused to follow. The Bhopal Infantry also refused orders and instead levelled their guns at British sergeants and officers. Since all possibility of mounting an effective deterrent was lost, Durand decided to gather up all the British residents and escape, although 39 British residents of Indore were killed.

Bihar

The rebellion in Bihar was mainly concentrated in the Western regions of the state; however, there were also some outbreaks of plundering and looting in Gaya district. One of the central figures was Kunwar Singh, the 80-year-old Rajput Zamindar of Jagdispur, whose estate was in the process of being sequestrated by the Revenue Board, instigated and assumed the leadership of revolt in Bihar. His efforts were supported by his brother Babu Amar Singh and his commander-in-chief Hare Krishna Singh.

On 25 July, mutiny erupted in the garrisons of Danapur. Mutinying sepoys from the 7th, 8th and 40th regiments of Bengal Native Infantry quickly moved towards the city of Arrah and were joined by Kunwar Singh and his men. Mr. Boyle, a British railway engineer in Arrah, had already prepared an

outbuilding on his property for defence against such attacks. As the rebels approached Arrah, all British residents took refuge at Mr. Boyle's house. A siege soon ensued – eighteen civilians and 50 loyal sepoys from the Bengal Military Police Battalion under the command of Herwald Wake, the local magistrate, defended the house against artillery and musketry fire from an estimated 2000 to 3000 mutineers and rebels.

On 29 July 400 men were sent out from Danapur to relieve Arrah, but this force was ambushed by the rebels around a mile away from the siege house, severely defeated, and driven back. On 30 July, Major Vincent Eyre, who was going up the river with his troops and guns, reached Buxar and heard about the siege. He immediately disembarked his guns and troops (the 5th Fusiliers) and started marching towards Arrah, disregarding direct orders not to do so. On 2 August, some 6 miles (9.7 km) short of Arrah, the Major was ambushed by the mutineers and rebels. After an intense fight, the 5th Fusiliers charged and stormed the rebel positions successfully. On 3 August, Major Eyre and his men reached the siege house and successfully ended the siege.

After receiving reinforcements, Major Eyre pursued Kunwar Singh to his palace in Jagdispur; however, Singh had left by the time Eyre's forces arrived. Eyre then proceeded to destroy the palace and the homes of Singh's brothers.

In addition to Kunwar Singh's efforts, there were also rebellions carried out by Hussain Baksh Khan, Ghulam Ali Khan and Fateh Singh among others in Gaya, Nawada and Jehanabad districts.

In Lohardaga district of South Bihar (now in Jharkhand), a major rebellion was led by Thakur Vishwanath Shahdeo who was part of the Nagavanshi dynasty. He was motivated by disputes he had with the Christian Kol tribals who had been grabbing his land and were implicitly supported by the British authorities. The rebels in South Bihar asked him to lead them and he readily accepted this offer. He organised a *Mukti Vahini* (people's army) with the assistance of nearby zamindars including Pandey Ganpat Rai and Nadir Ali Khan.

Other regions

Punjab

What was then referred to by the British as the Punjab was a very large administrative division, centred on Lahore. It included not only the present-day Indian and Pakistani Punjabi regions but also the North West Frontier districts bordering Afghanistan.

Much of the region had been the Sikh Empire, ruled by Ranjit Singh until his death in 1839. The kingdom had then fallen into disorder, with court factions and the Khalsa (the Sikh army) contending for power at the Lahore Durbar (court). After two Anglo-Sikh Wars, the entire region was annexed by the East India Company in 1849. In 1857, the region still contained the highest numbers of both British and Indian troops.

The inhabitants of the Punjab were not as sympathetic to the sepoys as they were elsewhere in India, which limited many of the outbreaks in the Punjab to disjointed uprisings by

regiments of sepoys isolated from each other. In some garrisons, notably Ferozepore, indecision on the part of the senior British officers allowed the sepoys to rebel, but the sepoys then left the area, mostly heading for Delhi. At the most important garrison, that of Peshawar close to the Afghan frontier, many comparatively junior officers ignored their nominal commander, General Reed, and took decisive action. They intercepted the sepoys' mail, thus preventing their coordinating an uprising, and formed a force known as the "Punjab Movable Column" to move rapidly to suppress any revolts as they occurred. When it became clear from the intercepted correspondence that some of the sepoys at Peshawar were on the point of open revolt, the four most disaffected Bengal Native regiments were disarmed by the two British infantry regiments in the cantonment, backed by artillery, on 22 May. This decisive act induced many local chieftains to side with the British.

Jhelum in Punjab saw a mutiny of native troops against the British. Here 35 British soldiers of Her Majesty's 24th Regiment of Foot (South Wales Borderers) were killed by mutineers on 7 July 1857. Among the dead was Captain Francis Spring, the eldest son of Colonel William Spring. To commemorate this event St. John's Church Jhelum was built and the names of those 35 British soldiers are carved on a marble lectern present in that church.

The final large-scale military uprising in the Punjab took place on 9 July, when most of a brigade of sepoys at Sialkot rebelled and began to move to Delhi. They were intercepted by John Nicholson with an equal British force as they tried to cross the Ravi River. After fighting steadily but unsuccessfully for

several hours, the sepoys tried to fall back across the river but became trapped on an island. Three days later, Nicholson annihilated the 1,100 trapped sepoys in the Battle of Trimmu Ghat.

The British had been recruiting irregular units from Sikh and Pakhtun communities even before the first unrest among the Bengal units, and the numbers of these were greatly increased during the Rebellion, 34,000 fresh levies eventually being raised.

At one stage, faced with the need to send troops to reinforce the besiegers of Delhi, the Commissioner of the Punjab (Sir John Lawrence) suggested handing the coveted prize of Peshawar to Dost Mohammed Khan of Afghanistan in return for a pledge of friendship. The British Agents in Peshawar and the adjacent districts were horrified. Referring to the massacre of a retreating British army in 1842, Herbert Edwardes wrote, "Dost Mahomed would not be a mortal Afghan ... if he did not assume our day to be gone in India and follow after us as an enemy. British cannot retreat – Kabul would come again." In the event Lord Canning insisted on Peshawar being held, and Dost Mohammed, whose relations with Britain had been equivocal for over 20 years, remained neutral.

In September 1858 Rai Ahmad Khan Kharal, head of the Khurrul tribe, led an insurrection in the Neeli Bar district, between the Sutlej, Ravi and Chenab rivers. The rebels held the jungles of Gogaira and had some initial successes against the British forces in the area, besieging Major Crawford Chamberlain at Chichawatni. A squadron of Punjabi cavalry sent by Sir John Lawrence raised the siege. Ahmed Khan was

killed but the insurgents found a new leader in Mahr Bahawal Fatyana, who maintained the uprising for three months until Government forces penetrated the jungle and scattered the rebel tribesmen.

Bengal and Tripura

In September 1857, sepoys took control of the treasury in Chittagong. The treasury remained under rebel control for several days. Further mutinies on 18 November saw the 2nd, 3rd and 4th companies of the 34th Bengal Infantry Regiment storming the Chittagong Jail and releasing all prisoners. The mutineers were eventually suppressed by the Gurkha regiments. The mutiny also spread to Kolkata and later Dacca, the former Mughal capital of Bengal. Residents in the city's Lalbagh area were kept awake at night by the rebellion. Sepoys joined hands with the common populace in Jalpaiguri to take control of the city's cantonment. In January 1858, many sepoys received shelter from the royal family of the princely state of Hill Tippera.

The interior areas of Bengal proper were already experiencing growing resistance to Company rule due to the Muslim Faraizi movement.

Gujarat

In central and north Gujarat, the rebellion was sustained by land owner Jagirdars, Talukdars and Thakors with the support of armed communities of Bhil, Koli, Pathans and Arabs, unlike the mutiny by sepoys in north India. Their main opposition of British was due to Inam commission. The Bet Dwarka island,

along with Okhamandal region of Kathiawar peninsula which was under Gaekwad of Baroda State, saw a revolt by the Waghers in January 1858 who, by July 1859, controlled that region. In October 1859, a joint offensive by British, Gaekwad and other princely states troops ousted the rebels and recaptured the region.

Orissa

During the rebellion, Surendra Sai was one of the many people broken out of Hazaribagh jail by mutineers. In the middle of September Surendra established himself in Sambalpur's old fort. He quickly organised a meeting with the Assistant Commissioner (Captain Leigh), and Leigh agreed to ask the government to cancel his and his brother's imprisonment while Surendra dispersed his followers. This agreement was soon broken, however, when on 31 September escaped the town and make for Khinda, where his brother was located with a 1,400 man force. The British quickly moved to send two companies from the 40th Madras Native Infantry from Cuttack on 10 October, and after a forced march reached Khinda on 5 November, only to find the place abandoned as the rebels retreated to the jungle. Much of the country of Sambalpur was under the rebels' control, and they maintained a hit and run guerrilla war for quite some time. In December the British made further preparations to crush the uprising in Sambalpur, and it was temporarily transferred from the Chota Nagpur Division into the Orissa Division of the Bengal Presidency. On the 30th a major battle was fought in which Surendra's brother was killed and the mutineers were routed. In January the British achieved minor successes, capturing a few major villages like Kolabira, and in February calm began to be

restored. However, Surendra still held out, and the jungle hampered British parties from capturing him. Additionally, any native daring to collaborate with the British were terrorized along with their family. After a new policy that promised amnesty for mutineers, Surendra surrendered in May 1862.

British Empire

The authorities in British colonies with an Indian population, sepoy or civilian, took measures to secure themselves against copycat uprisings. In the Straits Settlements and Trinidad the annual Hosay processions were banned, riots broke out in penal settlements in Burma and the Settlements, in Penang the loss of a musket provoked a near riot, and security was boosted especially in locations with an Indian convict population.

Consequences

Death toll and atrocities

Both sides committed atrocities against civilians.

In Oudh alone, some estimates put the toll at 150,000 Indians killed during the war, with 100,000 of them being civilians. The capture of Delhi, Allahabad, Kanpur and Lucknow by British forces were followed by general massacres.

Another notable atrocity was carried out by General Neill who massacred thousands of Indian mutineers and Indian civilians suspected of supporting the rebellion.

The rebels' murder of British women, children and wounded soldiers (including sepoys who sided with the British) at Cawnpore, and the subsequent printing of the events in the British papers, left many British soldiers outraged and seeking revenge. Aside from hanging mutineers, the British had some "blown from cannon," (an old Mughal punishment adopted many years before in India), in which sentenced rebels were tied over the mouths of cannons and blown to pieces when the cannons were fired. A particular act of cruelty on behalf of the British troops at Cawnpore included forcing many Muslim or Hindu rebels to eat pork or beef, as well as licking buildings freshly stained with blood of the dead before subsequent public hangings.

Practices of torture included "searing with hot irons...dipping in wells and rivers till the victim is half suffocated...sequencing the testicles...putting pepper and red chillies in the eyes or introducing them into the private parts of men and women...prevention of sleep...nipping the flesh with pinners...suspension from the branches of a tree...imprisonment in a room used for storing lime..."

British soldiers also committed sexual violence against Indian women as a form of retaliation against the rebellion. As towns and cities were captured from the sepoys, the British soldiers took their revenge on Indian civilians by committing atrocities and rapes against Indian women.

Most of the British press, outraged by the stories of alleged rape committed by the rebels against British women, as well as the killings of British civilians and wounded British soldiers, did not advocate clemency of any kind towards the Indian

population. Governor General Canning ordered moderation in dealing with native sensibilities and earned the scornful sobriquet "Clemency Canning" from the press and later parts of the British public.

In terms of sheer numbers, the casualties were much higher on the Indian side. A letter published after the fall of Delhi in the *Bombay Telegraph* and reproduced in the British press testified to the scale of the Indian casualties:

.... All the city's people found within the walls of the city of Delhi when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot, and the number was considerable, as you may suppose, when I tell you that in some houses forty and fifty people were hiding. These were not mutineers but residents of the city, who trusted to our well-known mild rule for pardon. I am glad to say they were disappointed.

From the end of 1857, the British had begun to gain ground again. Lucknow was retaken in March 1858. On 8 July 1858, a peace treaty was signed and the rebellion ended. The last rebels were defeated in Gwalior on 20 June 1858. By 1859, rebel leaders Bakht Khan and Nana Sahib had either been slain or had fled.

Edward Vibart, a 19-year-old officer whose parents, younger brothers, and two of his sisters had died in the Cawnpore massacre, recorded his experience:

The orders went out to shoot every soul.... It was literally murder... I have seen many bloody and awful sights lately but such a one as I witnessed yesterday I pray I never see again. The women were all spared but their screams on seeing their

husbands and sons butchered, were most painful... Heaven knows I feel no pity, but when some old grey bearded man is brought and shot before your very eyes, hard must be that man's heart I think who can look on with indifference ...

Some British troops adopted a policy of "no prisoners". One officer, Thomas Lowe, remembered how on one occasion his unit had taken 76 prisoners – they were just too tired to carry on killing and needed a rest, he recalled. Later, after a quick trial, the prisoners were lined up with a British soldier standing a couple of yards in front of them. On the order "fire", they were all simultaneously shot, "swept... from their earthly existence".

The aftermath of the rebellion has been the focus of new work using Indian sources and population studies. In *The Last Mughal*, historian William Dalrymple examines the effects on the Muslim population of Delhi after the city was retaken by the British and finds that intellectual and economic control of the city shifted from Muslim to Hindu hands because the British, at that time, saw an Islamic hand behind the mutiny.

Approximately 6,000 of the 40,000 British living in India were killed.

Reaction in Britain

embellished reports of atrocities carried out against British and British civilians by the rebels. Accounts of the time frequently reach the "hyperbolic register", according to Christopher Herbert, especially in the often-repeated claim that the "Red Year" of 1857 marked "a terrible break" in British experience. Such was the atmosphere – a national "mood of

retribution and despair" that led to "almost universal approval" of the measures taken to pacify the revolt.

Incidents of rape allegedly committed by Indian rebels against British women and girls appalled the British public. These atrocities were often used to justify the British reaction to the rebellion. British newspapers printed various eyewitness accounts of the rape of English women and girls. One such account was published by *The Times*, regarding an incident where 48 English girls as young as 10 had been raped by Indian rebels in Delhi. Karl Marx criticized this story as false propaganda, and pointed out that the story was written by a clergyman in Bangalore, far from the events of the rebellion, with no evidence to support his allegation. Individual incidents captured the public's interest and were heavily reported by the press. One such incident was that of General Wheeler's daughter Margaret being forced to live as her captor's concubine, though this was reported to the Victorian public as Margaret killing her rapist then herself. Another version of the story suggested that Margaret had been killed after her abductor had argued with his wife over her.

During the aftermath of the rebellion, a series of exhaustive investigations were carried out by British police and intelligence officials into reports that British women prisoners had been "dishonored" at the Bibighar and elsewhere. One such detailed enquiry was at the direction of Lord Canning. The consensus was that there was no convincing evidence of such crimes having been committed, although numbers of British women and children had been killed outright.

The term 'Sepoy' or 'Sepoyism' became a derogatory term for nationalists, especially in Ireland.

Reorganisation

Bahadur Shah was arrested at Humanyun's tomb and tried for treason by a military commission assembled at Delhi, and exiled to Rangoon where he died in 1862, bringing the Mughal dynasty to an end. In 1877 Queen Victoria took the title of Empress of India on the advice of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.

The rebellion saw the end of the East India Company's rule in India. In August, by the Government of India Act 1858, the company was formally dissolved and its ruling powers over India were transferred to the British Crown. A new British government department, the India Office, was created to handle the governance of India, and its head, the Secretary of State for India, was entrusted with formulating Indian policy. The Governor-General of India gained a new title, Viceroy of India, and implemented the policies devised by the India Office. Some former East India Company territories, such as the Straits Settlements, became colonies in their own right. The British colonial administration embarked on a program of reform, trying to integrate Indian higher castes and rulers into the government and abolishing attempts at Westernization. The Viceroy stopped land grabs, decreed religious tolerance and admitted Indians into civil service, albeit mainly as subordinates.

Essentially the old East India Company bureaucracy remained, though there was a major shift in attitudes. In looking for the

causes of the Rebellion the authorities alighted on two things: religion and the economy. On religion it was felt that there had been too much interference with indigenous traditions, both Hindu and Muslim. On the economy it was now believed that the previous attempts by the Company to introduce free market competition had undermined traditional power structures and bonds of loyalty placing the peasantry at the mercy of merchants and money-lenders. In consequence the new British Raj was constructed in part around a conservative agenda, based on a preservation of tradition and hierarchy.

On a political level it was also felt that the previous lack of consultation between rulers and ruled had been another significant factor in contributing to the uprising. In consequence, Indians were drawn into government at a local level. Though this was on a limited scale a crucial precedent had been set, with the creation of a new 'white collar' Indian elite, further stimulated by the opening of universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, a result of the Indian Universities Act. So, alongside the values of traditional and ancient India, a new professional middle class was starting to arise, in no way bound by the values of the past. Their ambition can only have been stimulated by Queen Victoria's Proclamation of November 1858, in which it is expressly stated, "We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to our other subjects...it is our further will that... our subjects of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge."

Acting on these sentiments, Lord Ripon, viceroy from 1880 to 1885, extended the powers of local self-government and sought to remove racial practices in the law courts by the Ilbert Bill. But a policy at once liberal and progressive at one turn was reactionary and backward at the next, creating new elites and confirming old attitudes. The Ilbert Bill had the effect only of causing a white mutiny and the end of the prospect of perfect equality before the law. In 1886 measures were adopted to restrict Indian entry into the civil service.

Military reorganisation

The Bengal army dominated the Indian army before 1857 and a direct result after the rebellion was the scaling back of the size of the Bengali contingent in the army. The Brahmin presence in the Bengal Army was reduced because of their perceived primary role as mutineers. The British looked for increased recruitment in the Punjab for the Bengal army as a result of the apparent discontent that resulted in the Sepoy conflict.

The rebellion transformed both the native and British armies of British India. Of the 74 regular Bengal Native Infantry regiments in existence at the beginning of 1857, only twelve escaped mutiny or disbandment. All ten of the Bengal Light Cavalry regiments were lost. The old Bengal Army had accordingly almost completely vanished from the order of battle. These troops were replaced by new units recruited from castes hitherto under-utilised by the British and from the minority so-called "Martial Races", such as the Sikhs and the Gurkhas.

The inefficiencies of the old organisation, which had estranged sepoys from their British officers, were addressed, and the post-1857 units were mainly organised on the "irregular" system. From 1797 until the rebellion of 1857, each regular Bengal Native Infantry regiment had had 22 or 23 British officers, who held every position of authority down to the second-in-command of each company. In irregular units there were fewer British officers, but they associated themselves far more closely with their soldiers, while more responsibility was given to the Indian officers.

The British increased the ratio of British to Indian soldiers within India. From 1861 Indian artillery was replaced by British units, except for a few mountain batteries. The post-rebellion changes formed the basis of the military organisation of British India until the early 20th century.

Awards

-  Victoria Cross

Medals were awarded to members of the British Armed Forces and the British Indian Army during the rebellion. The 182 recipients of the Victoria Cross are listed here.

-  Indian Mutiny Medal

290,000 Indian Mutiny Medals were awarded. Clasps were awarded for the siege of Delhi and the siege and relief of Lucknow.

-  Indian Order of Merit

A military and civilian decoration of British India, the Indian Order of Merit was first introduced by the East India Company in 1837, and was taken over by the Crown in 1858, following the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The Indian Order of Merit was the only gallantry medal available to Native soldiers between 1837 and 1907.

Nomenclature

There is no universally agreed name for the events of this period.

In India and Pakistan it has been termed as the "War of Independence of 1857" or "First War of Indian Independence" but it is not uncommon to use terms such as the "Revolt of 1857". The classification of the Rebellion being "First War of Independence" is not without its critics in India. The use of the term "Indian Mutiny" is considered by some Indian politicians as belittling the importance of what happened and therefore reflecting an imperialistic attitude. Others dispute this interpretation.

In the UK and parts of the Commonwealth it is commonly called the "Indian Mutiny", but terms such as "Great Indian Mutiny", the "Sepoy Mutiny", the "Sepoy Rebellion", the "Sepoy War", the "Great Mutiny", the "Rebellion of 1857", "the Uprising", the "Mahomedan Rebellion", and the "Revolt of 1857" have also been used. "The Indian Insurrection" was a name used in the press of the UK and British colonies at the time.

Historiography

Adas (1971) examines the historiography with emphasis on the four major approaches: the Indian nationalist view; the Marxist analysis; the view of the Rebellion as a traditionalist rebellion; and intensive studies of local uprisings. Many of the key primary and secondary sources appear in Biswamoy Pati, ed. *1857 Rebellion*.

Thomas Metcalf has stressed the importance of the work by Cambridge professor Eric Stokes (1924–1981), especially Stokes' *The Peasant and the Raj: Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India* (1978). Metcalf says Stokes undermines the assumption that 1857 was a response to general causes emanating from entire classes of people. Instead, Stokes argues that 1) those Indians who suffered the greatest relative deprivation rebelled and that 2) the decisive factor in precipitating a revolt was the presence of prosperous magnates who supported British rule. Stokes also explores issues of economic development, the nature of privileged landholding, the role of moneylenders, the usefulness of classical rent theory, and, especially, the notion of the "rich peasant".

To Kim Wagner, who has conducted the most recent survey of the literature, modern Indian historiography is yet to move beyond responding to the "prejudice" of colonial accounts. Wagner sees no reason why atrocities committed by Indians should be understated or inflated merely because these things "offend our post-colonial sensibilities".

Wagner also stresses the importance of William Dalrymple's *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857*. Dalrymple was assisted by Mahmood Farooqui, who translated key Urdu and Shikastah sources and published a selection in *Besieged: Voices from Delhi 1857*. Dalrymple emphasized the role of religion, and explored in detail the internal divisions and politico-religious discord amongst the rebels. He did not discover much in the way of proto-nationalism or any of the roots of modern India in the rebellion. Sabbaq Ahmed has looked at the ways in which ideologies of royalism, militarism, and Jihad influenced the behaviour of contending Muslim factions.

Almost from the moment the first sepoys mutinied in Meerut, the nature and the scope of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 has been contested and argued over. Speaking in the House of Commons in July 1857, Benjamin Disraeli labelled it a 'national revolt' while Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, tried to downplay the scope and the significance of the event as a 'mere military mutiny'. Reflecting this debate, an early historian of the rebellion, Charles Ball, used the word mutiny in his title, but labelled it a "struggle for liberty and independence as a people" in the text. Historians remain divided on whether the rebellion can properly be considered a war of Indian independence or not, although it is popularly considered to be one in India. Arguments against include:

- A united India did not exist at that time in political, cultural, or ethnic terms;
- The rebellion was put down with the help of other Indian soldiers drawn from the Madras Army, the

Bombay Army and the Sikh regiments; 80% of the East India Company forces were Indian;

- Many of the local rulers fought amongst themselves rather than uniting against the British;
- Many rebel Sepoy regiments disbanded and went home rather than fight;
- Not all of the rebels accepted the return of the Mughals;
- The King of Delhi had no real control over the mutineers;
- The revolt was largely limited to north and central India. Whilst risings occurred elsewhere they had little impact because of their limited nature;
- A number of revolts occurred in areas not under British rule, and against native rulers, often as a result of local internal politics;
- "The revolt was fractured along religious, ethnic and regional lines.

A second school of thought while acknowledging the validity of the above-mentioned arguments opines that this rebellion may indeed be called a war of India's independence. The reasons advanced are:

- Even though the rebellion had various causes, most of the rebel sepoys who were able to do so, made their way to Delhi to revive the old Mughal empire that signified national unity for even the Hindus amongst them;
- There was a widespread popular revolt in many areas such as Awadh, Bundelkhand and Rohilkhand. The

rebellion was therefore more than just a military rebellion, and it spanned more than one region;

- The sepoys did not seek to revive small kingdoms in their regions, instead they repeatedly proclaimed a "country-wide rule" of the Mughals and vowed to drive out the British from "India", as they knew it then. (The sepoys ignored local princes and proclaimed in cities they took over: *Khalq Khuda Ki, Mulk Badshah Ka, Hukm Subahdar Sipahi Bahadur Ka* – "the people belong to God, the country to the Emperor and authority to the Sepoy Commandant"). The objective of driving out "foreigners" from not only one's own area but from their conception of the entirety of "India", signifies a nationalist sentiment;
- The mutineers, although some were recruited from outside Oudah, displayed a common purpose.

150th anniversary

The Government of India celebrated the year 2007 as the 150th anniversary of "India's First War of Independence". Several books written by Indian authors were released in the anniversary year including Amresh Mishra's "War of Civilizations", a controversial history of the Rebellion of 1857, and "Recalcitrance" by Anurag Kumar, one of the few novels written in English by an Indian based on the events of 1857.

In 2007, a group of retired British soldiers and civilians, some of them descendants of British soldiers who died in the conflict, attempted to visit the site of the Siege of Lucknow.

However, fears of violence by Indian demonstrators, supported by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, prevented the British visitors from visiting the site. Despite the protests, Sir Mark Havelock was able to make his way past police to visit the grave of his ancestor, General Henry Havelock.