

# THE WAHABI MOVEMENT IN INDIA

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**Dedicated To  
Mother  
to whose love and care I owe my education**

## PREFACE

Soon after my appointment as Research Fellow, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, in 1952, I was deputed by the Government of Bihar to assist Dr. K. K. Datta, then Joint Honorary Director of the Institute, in the preparation of the Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh. During the course of that work I delved into the relevant records of practically all the District and Divisional Record Rooms in Bihar as well as those of the Central Records Office, Patna, Calcutta, Allahabad and the National Archives, Delhi. The main subject of my enquiry then was the Movement of 1857-59 in Bihar, but many of the records I came across related also to the Wahabis and their activities during those fateful years. The piecemeal information that I got about the Wahabis aroused my interest in the subject.

The work of reconstructing the full history of the Wahabi Movement was arduous and painstaking. Scattered but important pieces of information had to be collected from different Government archives, and neglected collections of private papers, old books and manuscripts had to be searched and studied. Besides, some rare, out of print and proscribed Wahabi pamphlets had to be 're-discovered' before the full picture of the Movement emerged.

Although the word Wahabi is a misnomer its adoption in the title became unavoidable on account of its wide prevalence. To have described the followers of Syed Ahmad Barelvi as *Ahl-i-Hadis* or Puritans or Reformists and used the word Wahabi in brackets all along would have been cumbrous, to say the least. The insistence of the English as also some Indian writers on the use of this appellation seems to be deliberate, and actuated by ulterior motives. Some of the early and rather over-zealous acts of the Arabian Wahabis to do away with what they regarded as 'un-Islamic' practices had given them a bad name among

the general body of the Muslims in India and elsewhere. In the eyes of the British Government the word Wahabi was synonymous with 'traitor' and 'rebel'. Thus by describing the followers of Syed Ahmad as Wahabis the contemporary Government officers aimed at killing two birds with one stone—branding them as 'rebels' in the higher circles of the government and as 'extremists' and 'desecrators of shrines' in the eyes of the general Muslims. The epithet became a term of religio-political abuse. The prevalent title of Wahabis has been retained in the book without, however, subscribing in the least to the unwarranted implications involved in it.

The book is based, substantially, on the thesis for the degree of Ph.D. which, I submitted in the Patna University in 1961. It has since been revised, re-arranged and expanded with the help of some fresh materials obtained from outside the country. This explains, partly, the rather long delay in its publication.

The book owes much to many people. It is difficult to express adequately my feelings of gratitude to my two respected teachers, Dr. K. K. Datta, Vice Chancellor, Patna University, and Professor S. H. Askari. Without Dr. Datta's scholarly guidance and gentle persuasion and interest the thesis and the present work would, perhaps, not have been completed. With his extensive studies on the subject, the advice and help of Professor Askari was invaluable. It was readily available and facilitated my work. Dr. R. S. Sharma, another respected teacher of mine, went through the typescript, and gave several valuable general suggestions. The late Fasihuddin Balkhi Saheb of the Persian Manuscript Section of the Patna University Library, was also a valuable source of help. Dr. J. S. Jha, Research Fellow, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, helped me by drawing my attention to some records on the subject.

I am grateful to the authorities of the National Archives, Central Records Office, **Patna, Calcutta, Allahabad and Patiala**, and the Keeper of Records, Divisional Commissioner's Office, Patna. Mr. J. C. Goswami of the Calcutta Records Office, in particular, was an unfailing source of help. I am also obliged to the authorities of the National Library, the Bihar Research Society and the Patna College Libraries for the various facilities I obtained during the period of research.

My brother, Hesam, helped me in preparing and correcting the typescript. I am particularly thankful to my wife for her constant and unobtrusive help and interest through the long and, at times, difficult period of the preparation of the book. I would also like to record my appreciation of the care and patience with which Mr. K. L. Mukhopadhyay saw the book through the Press.

The map showing the British campaigns against the Wahabis on the Frontier has been reproduced from Paget & Mason's book, and the sketch showing the ground plan of the Sadiqpur premises from an exhibit in the Ahmadullah Trial papers.

The Indian names have been arranged in the Index in the usual and traditional form—**Syed Ahmed Berelvi, Wilayat Ali, Muhammad Jafar—but the European names** are arranged according to surnames.

An irritatingly large number of printing errors has occurred due, mainly, to my faulty proof-reading. The attention of the readers is particularly drawn to the mistake about place-names on pages, 61, 62, 110, 112, 128, and 131.

9th September, 1966.

Q. AHMAD

Khaja Kalan, Patna City.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Wahabi Movement was one of the earliest, most consistent and protracted and the 'most remorselessly anti-British' movements which characterised the political history of India in the second half of, the 18th. and the early 19th. centuries. It is, however, regrettable that this great Movement, though barely a century old, is neither treated adequately nor presented in its proper perspective in any historical work. Until recently there was no single comprehensive work on the Wahabis except the book of Sir William Hunter, published in 1871. Even recent studies on the social awakening and reforms in India in the 19th. century do not give any account of the Wahabi Movement which, apart from its political aspect, represents an important attempt at the socio-religious reformation of the Indo-Muslim society.

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Some isolated information on the early history of the Movement, particularly for the period up to the death of Syed Ahmad, lies scattered in a number of manuscripts, old and scarce books and journals in Persian, Urdu and English. A survey of these existing sources of information will not be out of place here.

The earliest work on the life of Syed Ahmad is the *Makhzan-i-Ahmadi*<sup>1</sup> by Syed Muhammad Ali, the nephew, disciple and close associate of the great leader of the Movement. It contains a general account of his life up till his return from Arabia, and has been utilised by all the subsequent biographers. It is dedicated to and was prepared at the instance of Nawab Vaziruddaula (1834-64)

1. O.P.L. ms. copy, dated A.H. 1262, scribe Ehsan Ali. It is the earliest existing copy of the work which was originally written in 1261. Mehr (vol. 1, p. 16) seems to have a wrong impression that the work was completed in 1283.

of Tonk, who along with his father, Nawab Amir Khan, was an important supporter of the Wahabi Movement. In fact Tonk was an important centre of the Wahabis, and the old State Library of Tonk contained a valuable collection of materials on the subject. Vaziruddaula himself was the author of a book, entitled *Wasaya-i-Vaziri*, which contains an account of Syed Ahmad and some of his companions. It was published from the Mufid-i-Aam Press, Agra, by Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan in 1881-82.

Another important biographical account of Syed Ahmad is the *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiya* by Jafar Ali Naqvi. The author was a good scribe and was appointed by Syed Ahmad as his Chief Munshi, in charge of official papers. As such he was in a privileged position to write about the Wahabis. He also participated in many of the events described by him. He was in the N.W. Frontier with Syed Ahmad but returned to India after his death, and compiled the work in 1272 (1855). Mehr refers to a manuscript copy of the work in the Punjab University Library, Lahore, which contains an account of the Rising of Titu Mir in Bengal—a topic which is not mentioned in any other Persian work. Unfortunately, I could not procure a copy of this valuable manuscript.

The *Waqai Ahmadi* or the *Tarikh-i-Kabir* is a voluminous account in which the various reminiscences of some associates of Syed Ahmad have been collected. This also was compiled under the auspices of Nawab Vaziruddaula, who brought many of the comrades of Syed Ahmad together and got their accounts noted. The first volume of the work was completed in A. H. 1276 (1859). Several copies of the work are known to exist at different places, including the Rampur State Library. It gives some valuable details about the life of Syed Ahmad and the Frontier campaigns but, primarily, it is an anecdotal compilation, and is not quite free from the credulous element.

The *Tarikh-i-Hazara* gives an account of the establishment of the Sikh rule over the Hazara area and the adjacent parts of Jammu and Kashmir up to the accession of Gulab Singh. It was written at the instance of James Abbott, the first English administrator of the Hazara area, by Mahtab Singh, a Kayastha of Kanpur district, who had gone to the N.W. Frontier in search of employment and had served for short periods under Kunwar Kharak Singh, Fatah Singh Man and Hari Singh. In 1881 Samvat (1824) he was appointed in the Daftar of Sarkar Hazara and held that post for the next thirty years, up to 1854, when Abbott ordered him to prepare an account of the Hazara area. The present copy, belonging to the Commonwealth Relation's Office Library, London, is dated 1854. It gives a detailed account of the important battle of Balakote between Syed Ahmad and Sher Singh, the Sikh general. Its authenticity is increased by the fact that it was written by one who had the rare privilege of being present on the spot during the whole period from 1824 to 1854, and who also had all the revenue papers available to him. The author claims that he had witnessed many of the events described by him. Writing under the aegis of the English the author could well afford to take a dispassionate view of the struggle between the two erstwhile enemies of his masters. The work was quite unnoticed up till now. Even Mehr, who has made a painstaking survey of all possible sources of information about Syed Ahmad's Frontier campaigns, seems to have missed it.

The *Sirat-i-Musatqim*, compiled jointly by Shah Ismail and Abdul Hai on the basis of the sayings and observations of Syed Ahmad, has been wrongly represented by some to be the 'Quran' of the Wahabis. It embodies the essential teachings of Syed Ahmad, and also describes some of the prevailing socio-religious practices among the Muslims. It may be regarded as a manifesto of the socio-religious objectives of the Movement. Several published



editions, as also an Urdu translation of the work are extant. I have used a rare manuscript copy which was prepared for the personal use of Shah Muhammad Husain, the first 'Khalifa' of Syed Ahmad. The rare Sanad of Khilafat given by Syed Ahmad to Shah Muhammad Husain is also given at the end of this copy. For reference purpose I have used a published edition of the work.

There are many collections of letters of Syed Ahmad and some of his associates. Several such collections exist at different places. One very important copy of Letters of Syed Ahmad belongs to the Manuscript Section of the Patna University Library. It has a supplement containing an account of the independent State set up by the Wahabis on the Frontier

Among the printed works in Urdu the following may be mentioned : *Tawarikh-i-Ajiba* or *Sawanih Ahmadi* by Muhammad Jafar Thanesarī. He was a prominent Wahabī, and was convicted of high treason in the Ambala Trial. He was sentenced to transportation for life to the Andaman Islands, and wrote the book on his return home after serving an imprisonment of eighteen years. It contains a comprehensive account of the careers of Syed Ahmad and some of his companions. It also gives the text of many of Syed Ahmad's letters written to different persons.

Muhammad Jafar wrote two other works ; *Tarikh-i-Ajib*, also known as *Kala Pani*, and *Tawarikh-i-Ajib*. The slight variations of the titles are noteworthy : they constitute chronograms, giving the respective dates of publications. The former, written in 1884, contains an account of the proceedings of the Ambala Trial, and the sufferings of the prisoners during their journey to and imprisonment in the Andaman islands, about which not much information is otherwise available. The other was written during the

author's imprisonment, and gives a geographical account of the Andamans.

*Sirat-i-Syed Ahmad Shahid* by Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi. Until the publication of Mehr's comprehensive work it was the most detailed work on the life of Syed Ahmad. It is based mostly on Persian sources, and does not take into account the prevailing political condition.

*Hindustan ki Pahl Islami Tahrik* by Syed Masud Alam Nadvi. It is concerned primarily with the activities of the Patna Wahabis. In addition to the Persian and Arabic sources the author has also utilised some important English works and official records. The treatment of the subject is rational and historical, and there is less of the excessively reverential attitude towards Syed Ahmad which, unfortunately, mars the historical value of some of the other works, mentioned above. Two generally neglected topics, viz. the attitude of the Wahabis to the Movement of 1857-59, and the supposed influence of Najdi Wahabis on their Indian counterparts have also been discussed.

There are several works written by the members of the Sadiqpur family. The most important of these is the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa* by Abdul Rahim, who was a co-convict with Jafar and, like him, wrote his book after his return from imprisonment. A biographical account of the family, it is very useful for reconstructing the careers of the Patna leaders, particularly Wilayat Ali, Enayat Ali, Yahya Ali and Ahmadullah. According to family tradition the original draft of the book contained more information, but owing to the exigencies of the time and the advice of some friends the author toned down the anti-government contents of the book before publishing it. It was first published by Nurul Huda, the younger son of the author, in 1901. I have used a copy of the second edition which

belonged to the late Abdul Ghaffar Saheb of Sadiqpur. He was closely related to the author, and one of the best informed men in the family about the history of the Movement. His copy contains extensive marginal notes in his hand, supplementing many important details about the members of the family and the organisation of the Patna Centre. The third edition was brought out by Hakim Abdul Khabir Saheb, the grandson of Abdul Rahim, in 1964. It has a supplement containing additional information on some points, compiled by Hakim Abdul Khabir.

*Risail-i-Tisa*. It is a collection of some writings of Wilayat Ali, Enayat Ali and Fayyaz Ali, dealing with various theological and social topics. Like the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim*, it enunciates the views of the Wahabis on certain social and theological matters.

*Masnavi-i-Shahar Ashob* by Hakim Abdul Hamid. The author was the eldest son of Ahmadullah, and as the head of the family bore the brunt of the eviction proceedings in 1865. He composed a versified account in Persian of the sufferings of the family following the conviction of Ahmadullah. It was printed in the Unani Dawakhana Press, Allahabad. I am also in possession of a manuscript copy of the work which was in the personal use of the author.

*Durr-i-Maqal* by Abdul Haque of Arrah. It is a versified account in Persian of the battle of Ambeyla. The author spent several years in the N.W. Frontier centre, then took employment under Jabbar Shah, the chief of Sittana, and died there subsequently. It was composed in A.H. 1280 (1869). Mehr (Vol. 1, pp. 25-26) refers to the original manuscript copy in the possession of Syed Jabbar Shah. He makes no mention of the publication of the work. However, a published edition of the work, belonging to Professor Muhammad Muslim of St. Columbus

College, Hazaribagh, is preserved in the Manuscript Section of the Patna College Library. It is said to have been published by the efforts of Hakim Abdul Hamid who came across a moth-eaten manuscript of the work. As the damage was extensive and the blank portions could not be suitably filled in, it was published as it was.

Ghulam Rasul Mehr's four volumes on Syed Ahmad and the Wahabi Movement are by far the latest and the most comprehensive study of the subject. The painstaking labour and zeal of the author is evident from the perusal of a couple of thousand and odd pages which the four volumes together contain. The first two volumes, entitled *Syed Ahmad Shahid*, are bound together. The other two are entitled (iii) *Jamaat-i-Mujahdin* and (iv) *Sarguzasht-i-Mhjahdin*.<sup>2</sup> In the sources utilised by the author although a remarkably large mass of materials (some of them being noticed for the first time) has been consulted the contemporary official records have not been so thoroughly tapped. There is an absence of a discussion of the Wahabi Movement in relation to the Movement of 1857-59. The author has surveyed the full history of the Wahabi Movement from about 1818 to 1947. The Movement of 1857-59 was an important development during that period, and it should have been discussed in relation to the other one. There is no mention of the causes of the failure of the Wahabi Movement, or its contribution in the different fields.

An old Urdu monthly magazine (now extinct), the *Ishaat-i-Sunnat-i-Nabviya*, (Vol. IV, no. 11, November, 1881) printed from the Reyaz-i-Hind Press, Amritsar, contained three articles by an unnamed author on Wahabism. The first two contain legal arguments refuting the allegation that the followers of Syed Ahmad are Wahabis, and asserting that they were, really, Hanfi Muslims. The

2. The respective volumes have been referred to, hereafter, as Mehr Vol. I, II, etc.

third contains a brief history of the Wahabi Movement in India, which has been divided into the following four phases : (i) 1823-30, early campaigns of Syed Ahmad, (ii) 1831-47, capture of Peshawar and death of Syed Ahmad, (iii) activities of Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali up to their arrests in the Punjab and their repatriation to Patna, (iv) their return to the N.W. Frontier and their subsequent activities.

Some back numbers of the *Maarif* also contain useful articles, particularly those of Masud Alam Nadvi, on various aspects of the Movement.

Among the English printed sources Hunter's *Our Indian Mussalmans* is the most valuable single work. It has been discussed, separately, in the book. Mention may also be made of the early volumes of J.R.A.S., London, Bombay and Calcutta. The long and informative articles by O'Kinealy in the Calcutta Review are invaluable for all students of the subject. Rehatsek made a general survey of Wahabism in Arabia and India in the J.R.A.S., Bombay. About the military campaigns against the Wahabi centre on the N.W. Frontier there are several works, such as the *Records of Expeditions Against the N.W. Frontier Tribes* by H.W. Paget (Calcutta, 1874),<sup>1</sup> *A General Report on the Yusufzais* by H.W. Bellew, (Lahore 1864), and *Sitana* by Colonel Adye, (London 1867). Besides these there are the Memoirs or biographies of some of the commanders who led the expeditions against the Wahabis. These works deal primarily with the military aspect of the struggle against the Wahabis.

The contemporary English and Vernaculars newspapers and journals also refer to some aspects or episodes of the Movement. Hunter contributed several articles on

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3. It was revised and brought upto date by A. H. Mason (London, 1889).

'Mohammadanism' in general and the social position of the Muslims under the English rule in the *Englishman* and the *Pioneer* during 1864-78. The *Englishman* of 2 May 1864 published a long commentary on the judgment of Herbert Edwardes on the Ambala Trial. Some articles on the day to day proceedings of the different military expeditions against the Wahabis were published in the *Bengal Harkaru*.

The survey<sup>4</sup> of the sources cited above will show that they mainly relate to the early history of the Movement (up to 1831) and the wars on the Frontier. But the bulk of the present study is based, largely, on the contemporary official records of the Government of India and the Government of Bengal, which provide valuable information about all aspects of the Movement, its leaders, their activities, and the measures adopted by the Government against them. Though biased here and there, they are the most substantial extant source material on the subject. These records range from small marginal notes in pencil, written on small bits of papers, and hand written drafts to long authenticated printed memoranda. Primarily, they consist of the correspondence between local officers, such as the Magistrates, Superintendents of Police and the Commissioners, on the one hand, and the Provincial or the Central Government, on the other. They sometimes include translations of or excerpts from Persian and Urdu documents and pamphlets or the private correspondence of the Wahabis seized by the Police. Up to the year 1859 the records are in manuscript form, preserved either in bundles or bound registers, but from after that date they are also included in the printed Proceedings Volumes of the Government of Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

4. The list is not exhaustive. Only some important works have been discussed in order to show the nature of information available in them, and the period to which they relate.
5. Detailed description of these records has been given as and when referred to in the course of the book, and also in the Bibliography.

Private collections of papers, particularly those of some members of the Sadiqpur family, also proved to be useful. The valuable library of Ahmadullah was seized and confiscated along with the other family properties in 1865, but some papers were left over, and a search among these old, decaying papers led to the discovery of some important documents. One is the copy of Shah Muhammad Husain's Sanad of 'Khilafat'. A more important one is the copy of a letter written by Syed Ahmad jointly to several members of the Sadiqpur family, thanking them for the supply of men and money. It also gives instructions about the way in which money was to be transmitted to the N.W. Frontier through Delhi without any risk of interception. Hardly any of the letters of Syed Ahmad contains a reference of this topic.

## ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>
5	12	squabbles	squables
7	16	canons	cannons
8	19-20	hereticism in disguise	hereticism in disguise"
10	2	life which	life to which
11, 16	27, 19	especially	specially
12	13	Sufism	Suffism
16	20	latter	later
25	12	Collections	Collection
30	2	widow-remarriage	widow's remarriage
32	33	A prominent	Some prominent
40	15	consists in	consists is
43	27	letter to Hindu Rao .	later to Hindu rao
45	17	keep	ketp
46	20	with the chance	with chance
56	12	ratarded	retarted
61, 62	f.n. 87, 97, 100, 105	Manshera	Nowshera
77	3	In spite	In-spite
79	21	harassed	harrassed
83	8	habit	habits
84	20	intentions	intensions .
89	27	f.n. 35 should be read as f.n. 55	
90	3, 5	harassing, harass	harrassing, harra
98		f.n. 64 may be read as "Vide infra, see also I.M., pp. 99- 100, Selections, pp. 140-44."	



<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>
99	1-2	Wahabi Movement from 1831 to 1858 is to a great extent	Wahabi Movement, at least from 1831 to 1858 is to great extent
101	8, 35	Ali Brothers	Brothers
109	22	contained	obtained
110	27	Nawashahar	Nowshera
112	1, 5	• " "	" "
113	26	feint move •	faint move
127	28	Mubariz, and of	Mubariz as of
128	28	read f.n. 99 as f.n. 93	
128	32	Nawashahar	Nowshera
131	9	"	"
129, 131	1, 11	cannon	cannons
131	23	from the Salars	the Salars
135	f.n. 29	P.U. MS.	P.U. M.S.
137	f.n. 92	Supra, pp. 109-113.	Supra, pp. 73-76
150	3	traitors	traitor
152	14	in charge •	in-charge
153	35	beggars	beggers
165	1	all the writers	most writers
172	26	Movement of 1857-59	General Movement
174	f.n. 42	1850	185
181	17	contented	contended
181		from the English	from among the English
187	27	Nawakilla	Nawaklai
188	19	while things	while the things
190	24	interval between	interval of
198	1	to lie	to-lie
199	10	cannon	cannons
202	33	objections	objection
203	26	firstly,	first,
210	f.n. 3	pp. 326-7.	pp. 270-72.
210	f.n. 6	p. 154.	pp. 106-7.

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Correct</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>
218	29	days of Syed Ahmad	days of the Syed Ahmad
229	27	to the English	to English
230	3	flights	flights
231	f.n. 12	Ali Kareem	All Kareem
232	3	was the chief	were the chief
234	6, 34	Parsons	Parson
235	1	Parsons	Parson
249	24	co-ordination <sup>57</sup> .	co-ordination
254	26	a local woman	some local womans
283	19	Ahmadullah	Abdullah
310	12	Buner	Burner
314	31	Magistrate, Patna,	Magistrate
315	last but one line	halo	holo
316	26	was the victim	were the victims
320	f.n. 59	last line may be treated as deleted.	
329	27	not a word	note a word
331		at the end of para 2 the following may be added; Cunningham, the famous historian of the Sikhs, who was in personal contact with a brother-in-law and close associate of Syed Ahmad observes, significantly, "After an absence of four years he returned to Delhi, and called upon the faithful to follow him in a war against the infidels. <i>He acted as if he meant by unbelievers the Sikhs alone, but his precise objects are imperfectly understood</i> ". (Cunningham, op. cit. p. 265. Italics are mine).	
336	29	have been	has been
342	f.n. 19	p. 55.	p. 36.
345	31	period he was	period was
351	23	Amir-ul-Mominin	Amir-ul-Momin

## ABBREVIATIONS

B.K.S.	... <i>Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh.</i>
B.P.P.	... Bengal : Past and Present.
Commr.	... Commissioner.
C.R.	... Calcutta Review.
D.M.	... <i>Durr-i-Maqal.</i>
D.I.G.	... Deputy Inspector-General (Police).
For. Dept. Pol. Cons.	Foreign Department Political Consultations.
For. Dept. Sec. Cons.	Foreign Department Secret Consultations.
H.G.	... Hazara Gazetteer.
I.G.	... Inspector-General (Police).
I.M.	... <i>Our Indian Mussalmans.</i>
J.B.R.S.	... Journal of the Bihar Research Society.
J.I.H.	.. Journal of Indian History.
J.R.A.S.	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society.
J.R.A.S.B.	... Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal.
Judl. Dept. Progs	Judicial Department Proceedings.
L.P.	... Lower Province.
Magt.	... Magistrate.
N.I.	... Native Infantry.
O.C.	... Original Consultation.
O.P.L.	... Oriental Public Library.
P.I.T.	... <i>Hindustan Ki Pahli Islami Tahrik.</i>
Progs. I.H.C.	... Proceedings of Indian History Congress.

Progs. I.H.R.C.	. Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission.
P.U. MS.	... Patna University Library; Manuscript Copy of Syed Ahmad's Letters.
<i>Sawanih</i>	... <i>Swanih Ahmadi</i> also known as <i>Tawarikh-i-Ajib</i> .
S.M.R.	. <i>The Sepoy Mutiny and Revolt of 1857.</i>
Sec. Cons.	... Secret Consultations.
Secy.	... Secretary.
Sirat	... <i>Sirat-i-Syed Ahmad Shahid</i> .
S.M.	... <i>Sirat-i-Mustaqim</i> .
T.A.	.. <i>Tawarikh-i-Ajib</i> .
T.S.	.. <i>Tazkira-i-Sadqa</i> .
Selections	... <i>Selections from the Records of the Govt. of Bengal, Vol. XLII</i>

## CHAPTER I

### THE GENESIS OF THE WAHABI MOVEMENT AND SOME OF ITS PRINCIPAL FEATURES

#### I The Background : *Political, Social and Religious conditions on the eve of the Movement.*

The central phenomenon in the political history of India in the 18th century was the gradual disintegration of the Mughal Empire. The final and formal extinction was yet to come but the light which had been burning bright and steady for the last two centuries had started flickering and casting ominous shadows. The process of disintegration gained rapid momentum as the century drew towards its close. The period witnessed the establishment of three separate and quasi-independent units out of the original stock. Asaf Jah Nizamulmulk laid the foundation of his separate principality, down south, in 1713; Saadat Ali Burhanulmulk in Oudh and Aliwardi Mahabat Jung in Bengal followed suit in 1723 and 1740, respectively. The creation and consolidation of these provincial kingdoms meant the consequent withering away of the Empire. This created a power vacuum in the political arena of the country. Three different and contending powers were converging in to fill up this vacuum—the Marhathas, the Sikh and the English, to mention only the important ones. The other European powers had by that time fallen back in the race for political power and had more or less reconciled themselves to the predominance of the English. The latter had, however, yet to decide the issue in conflict with the remaining two indigenous contenders. This was the kernel of the political situation in India in the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries.

Another very significant political factor was the increasing political ambition and strength of the English,

particularly in the Eastern Provinces of Bengal and Bihar. With political anarchy and disorder prevailing in and around Delhi the centre of activity was slowly but steadily shifting to this region. In fact the foundation of the future political supremacy of the English in India was being laid here.

Under the able and semi-autonomous stewardship of Nawab Alivardi Khan the two provinces had enjoyed comparative peace and prosperity. The regular despatch of the substantial amounts of revenue from Bengal was one of the few solid sources of incomes left to the tottering Imperial Government. Now even this vital source was being threatened by certain political developments which culminated in the battle of Plassey (1757).

The battle has been rightly regarded as a landmark in the history of the country. Its main result was the emergence of the English as an important political power in the country. Mir Jafar, for all practical purposes, became a puppet in their hands. Immediately after the battle a veritable loot of the Nawab's Government set in. All sorts of exorbitant monetary demands were made by the victorious English upon the helpless Nawab and the Exchequer was nearly drained dry. Mir Qasim was brought upon the *Masnad* primarily because he was expected to find the wherewithal to make good the wild promises which the previous Nawab had been forced to make and which he was unable to fulfil. The new Nawab, however, proved to be of a different mettle and was not as amenable to the wishes of his English patrons as his father-in-law. There ensued a subtle series of intrigues, diplomatic negotiations and wars which ended finally in the battle of Buxar (1764) and the grant of *Diwani* (1765). This in its turn ushered in a new era of economic unrest and spoliation. •

Monopolising the different items of trade in favour of the East India Company and the English traders,

in general, was the main feature of the economic policy of the period. The privations brought about by this economic exploitation were immense and poignant. Karam Ali, the author of the *Muzaffarnama*<sup>1</sup>, the famous history of Bihar and Bengal in the 18th century, gives a succinct account of their ruinous effects.

The English also struck at the other main source of income of a great majority of the people—the different kinds of land holdings. This was done through a series of Land Resumption Proceedings. These Proceedings were a gradual and protracted process encompassing the whole province and aiming at the resumption of rent free tenures and their assessment for paying revenue<sup>2</sup>. Numerous grants of rent free lands had been made, by the Mughal Emperors, Provincial Governors and other high officials. It was a prevalent method of bestowing favours, giving rewards and paying remuneration to officials. In fact these grants had been made on such an extensive scale that when the English took over the revenue administration of Bihar and Bengal the revenues of one-fourth of the whole Province(s) had been transferred from the State<sup>3</sup>. As a result, undoubtedly, much confusion and anomaly prevailed. Many people were enjoying rent free tenures on fictitious title deeds and forged documents. However, the methods adopted by the English Revenue Officers to bring such lands under assessment were harsh and ruthless. Even Hunter felt constrained to admit that “we demanded an amount of proof in support of rent free tenures which in the then uncertain state of real property law they could not have produced in support of their acknowledged estate,” and that “the climate and white ants had been making havoc of their title deeds and Sanads.”<sup>4</sup> A perusal of some of the case-records<sup>5</sup> under the Land Resumption Regulations will show that even though in some cases fictitious rent free tenures were rightly resumed, in a great majority of cases the proceedings were aimed at expropriation of the tenure-holders under

a thinly veiled pretence of legality. They caused widespread economic distress, social dislocation and political dissatisfaction. Hunter ruefully remarked that "the panic and hatred which ensued (as a result of these) have stamped themselves for ever on the rural records,"<sup>6</sup> and has quoted<sup>7</sup> the then officer incharge of Wahabi Prosecutions (James O'Kinealy) as citing these to be the second cause of the decline and dissatisfaction of the Muslim Community. They later on also served as a contributing factor in the great conflagration of 1857 in Bihar.<sup>8</sup>

The advent of the European trading companies struck at the very roots of the age-old economic system and values of the country. It opened up new avenues of trade. This, in its turn, created a new mercantile class, rich avaricious and unscrupulous and eager to stand up to the scions of the old nobility who had so long occupied a place of honour in the social heirarchy. Wealth and not birth came to be regarded as the criteria of social distinction. Since the interests of this new mercantile class were intertwined with and very often dependent on the English they acted in accordance with the interests of their foreign benefactor even at the cost of their national interests. The Seth family of Bengal is an instance to the point. This, in fact, was destined to be one of the baneful features of the country's history during the period.

It was a period of travail and transition when the Medieval Society was dying and the new modern age was yet to take its place." It, therefore, witnessed all the social degeneration which are inherent in such periods. Moral and ethical values were thrown to the winds, larger national interests were neglected for the sake of personal gratification and local aggrandisement. The future appeared to be dark and foreboding and so every one was anxious to have the best of times so long



as he could. Luxuries, wine and dancing parties were the essential ingredients of an average nobleman's life and these were imitated by his lower counterparts on a correspondingly lower scale. The literature of the period, of which we have ample examples, also catered to this prevailing mood of indolence and indulgence. This depressing picture was somewhat relieved by the fact that some of the finer traits of the previous age like valour, chivalry, loyalty and sense of honour were still present among the people even though cultivated in a wrong manner. Valour was, thus, wasted in petty squables and internal feuds, loyalty over small and local objects, steadfastness in clinging to outmoded and ruinous formalities and customs, large heartedness in extravagance and learning in writing copious commentaries on old texts instead of adding fresh knowledge to the existing stock.

The religious life of the period was in an even more deplorable condition. The growth of Islam in India was largely due to the pioneering efforts of some of the earlier Sufi saints. The golden period of their activity was during the 14th and 15th centuries when the bands of these selfless and zealous itinerant preachers traversed the entire country for the propagation of their faith. Their scrupulous and ethical ways of life, their large-hearted humanitarianism, their charitable works of medical relief, etc., all these touched the hearts and won the allegiance of many of the local inhabitants. These missionaries were men of vision whose ideal life and sincere services went a long way in increasing the number of the adherents of their faith. With the passage of time, they passed away and Sufistic orders and monastic institutions came to be established in the names of some of them. With the grants of large charitable donations these centres became affluent and their previous missionary zeal and spirit of service were considerably lessened. It were these Sufistic centres with all their attendant trappings which

dominated the religious life of the country during the period under review.

An essential feature of the teaching of the various Sufi orders and centres is the principle of discipleship (*Muridee*) on the path of knowledge and Salvation. Without a spiritual guide or *Pir* neither of the two is possible. This excessive dependence on and reverence to the *Pir*, not bad in itself, was often carried to unreasonable lengths. It was held by the Wahabis to be contrary to the spirit of Islam which laid stress on the principles of direct understanding of the message of God based on the texts of the Quran and supplemented by the authentic Hadises. It is of interest to note, in this connection that the Quran and Hadis, the two pillars of Islam, were both in Arabic, a language not understood by the great majority of the people of India. This, too, was a factor which rendered essential the dependence of the general people on the Ulemas. The first Persian translation of the Quran in India was done by the famous Shah Wahullah (A.H. 1114-1176) and was greeted with a furious outcry by the Ulemas.<sup>10</sup> As for Hadis (Tradition), though introduced in India much earlier, impetus was given to its study only by the great Traditionist, Abdul Haq of the 16th century A.D.

Some of the prevailing features in the socio-religious life of the people are precisely described and severely criticised in the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim*<sup>11</sup> which mentions, *inter alia*, the following :

- (1) "Among the innovations of the 'heretics in Sufistic garb'<sup>12</sup> which are prevailing among the peoples of this age . . . is the use of blasphemous language in relation to God and the ordinances enjoined by Him. Seekers after Truth must refrain from hearing such utterance even if the speaker is supposed to be a virtuous person and must never utter such words themselves. Disrespect can never bring forth any good result."

(2) "Another innovation of the 'heretics' of the '*Wajudia* order'" which is prevalent among the people and which is supposed to be in consonance with the sayings of the great leaders of Sufistic orders, is the "heretical" talk about *Tauhid-i-Wajudi* (Panthestic conception of God). These (Sufis) imagine themselves to be in 'union' with God and derive sensuous pleasure from this sense of comingling. They, due to Satanic delusions and perverse self deception, imagine themselves to have an insight into the knowledge of divine truth. They waste their precious time in obnoxious talks"<sup>15</sup>.

(3) "Another innovation of 'heretic Sufis', which has widely spread among Muslim in general, is the controversy and discussion on the question of Fate. Belief in predestination is one of the important doctrines of the faith of Islam and is obligatory by the cannons of *Shara*. Therefore, controversy over this question is objectionable. The *Shara* has forbidden any deliberation on this intricate and deep subject. It is, therefore, incumbent on all Muslim to be content with the acceptance of this in toto and to abstain from plunging into the choppy sea of high waves which the scrutiny of this question implies."<sup>16</sup>

(4) "Among the innovation of 'Sufistic polytheists' which are in vogue in our time, particularly in India . . . . . is the excessive and extreme respect shown to the Pir or spiritual guide, to the extent of regarding him as a deity or a prophet. The moderate limits (in this matter) must be understood. The spiritual guide is undoubtedly a means to reach the path of God . . . and it is hardly possible to find the Path (of salvation) without a guide. But he should be one who never acts contrary to the *Shara* which means treading on the straight path with implicit faith in the Quran and the Hadis."<sup>17</sup>

(This is the crux of the Wahabi doctrine—that the primary obligation is to the Quran, Hadis and *Shara*.

The guide is to be followed to the extent only that his actions are in consonance with the *Shara*).

(5) "Among the innovations of 'polytheistic Sufis,' which appear to be virtuous in people's eyes, one is the observance of disgusting rites, over the graves of the pious . . . . In the same category comes the imploring from the dead for help and support . . . . By this supplication the people commit polytheism . . . . God has ordained that the process of teaching and guidance should continue and benefits should be derived from those who are alive. If by chance any person does not find a living person, helpful for the purpose, he should not perform a journey to the tombs but should follow the Quran and the Hadis which are the key to all intricate problems."<sup>3</sup>

(6) "Among the innovations of the 'Sulistic polytheists' which are extremely in vogue among all classes of Muslims and the general public are *Nazr-o-Niaz* (offering of prayer and eatables to please the souls of the dead ones). This involves the committing of hereticism in disguise." It may be mentioned that, although in principle this is valid and its proper performance is based on the *Shara*, the general people had introduced their own imaginations and superstitions into it and the posterity not only followed it but also exceeded the limits, (by) adding new things to what had previously existed; the virtuous principles had fallen into the background and the evil off-shoots, assiduously produced by fabrications, had prevailed."<sup>4</sup>

\* A few of the social customs and practices prevailing at the time, have also been described and criticised.

"The obnoxious ceremonies on the occasions of marriages and mournings, prevalent among the people in India, are so deep-rooted that their discontinuance is felt to be extremely difficult owing to the fear of taunts and reproaches (for doing so). The ignorants consider' this

more important than the performance of obligatory rites and their discontinuance harder than that of the things prohibited by religion . . . For instance, the pompous arrangements observed on the occasion of circumcision require so much money that circumcision is often delayed and the boys grow fairly old by the time it actually takes place. This is shameful and indecent. Similar delays take place in betrothal and marriages. Prolonged waiting (for marriage) makes the young people susceptible to commission of sinful acts. Although mourning cannot admit waiting, the arrangements of certain customary practices regarding the funeral and digging of graves cause disturbance and delays in (the performance of) other necessary affairs. Lavish and extravagant spending is indulged in on the occasions of the ceremonies held on the third and fourth day after the death of a person. This fear of incurring social ridicule often drives people to the limits of selling their properties for the performance of these ceremonies . . . It is apparent that one is not so much reproached for absence from performing prayers as for neglect in arranging for 'Urs', or singing and dancing on the occasions of marriages''<sup>21</sup>.

## II. *Origin and Development of 'Wahabism' in India.*

In order to understand the origin and development of Wahabism in its proper perspective we have to go back a little and recapitulate some of the salient features of Islam, their development through the ages and to take a general view of the Islamic world in the 18th century A.D.

Islam is a way of life encompassing all aspects of the life of an individual as well as a community. It represents more a way of living than a mere set of rituals and dogmas. Accepting Islam means undertaking a discipline of one's soul as well as in the conduct of one's daily life. The word Islam itself means surrender and obedience (to God's will).

In the beginning this undertaking involved a big change from the rather lax way of life to which the pre-Islamic Arabs were used to and it involved a certain amount of internal stress and strain. But those who were privileged to live in the company of the Prophet and his immediate Companions drew deep from the fountain of his ideal and pious life and in them the change-over was full and complete. Among those who followed him, unfortunately, the change was not so thorough. Some of the Pre-Islamic and non-Islamic tendencies kept on struggling within them and finally came to the surface. These tendencies took different forms of expression and appeared, either, in the form of an urge for the monarchical form of Government or a racial reaction against the Arabs, who were the torch-bearers of Islam in its early days. With the phenomenal growth of the political boundaries of Islam the Arabs came into contact with non-Arab racial entities and new and different civilizations. The absorption of new cultural traditions had a profound effect on the growth of and the spirit of Islam in its early days. The influence of the materially prosperous and culturally advanced Persians on the Arabs is very important in this respect. Traces of Iranian influence on the several developments during the period of Abbassid Caliphate are quite evident. The origin of Sufism which dominated the religious life of India was itself, according to one school of thought, due to Persian influences.

Another important factor in the early history of Islam was the passing of the political power from the Arabs to the Turks. The latter had been converted to Islam during the course of its advance into their habitat, in Central Asia, during the eighth and ninth centuries. Their change of faith had been comparatively recent. The comprehensive change of character brought about amongst the Arabs under successive centuries of Islamic rule was not possible in their case. As a vigorous racial entity the Turks revived the ebbing political fortunes of Islam but the rot in the

spiritual and ethical contents of the Faith continued unabated.

Islam came to India through the Turks. Leaving aside the earlier Arab invasion of Sind which, although not entirely devoid of results, petered out on the Western borders of India the political conquerors of India were not Arabs, but newly converted Turks. So the Islam which came to India was not only already conditioned by non-Arab influences but, what is more, it was confronted in India by a well established civilization distinctly opposite and much older. After the dust of campaigns had settled down the mutual process of inter-influencing began to take effect. While it is difficult to draw an exact balance sheet of this process of give and take it is evident that Islam in India was considerably influenced by its new environment.

It is a generally prevalent, though not well founded, view that the Muslim rulers of India were champions of Islam and the spread of that religion owes much to them. It is, however, overlooked that in spite of some formal trappings of a theocratic state, and an occasional emphasis upon that aspect for some military or other consideration, the government's policy was guided by purely political and military or other considerations. Even during the hey-day of the Mughal Empire there was a distinct sense of dissatisfaction with some aspects of the religious policy of the Mughal Emperors, specially Akbar's. This dissatisfaction might well have been narrow minded but it was there. It was felt that Islam had 'deviated' much from its original moorings and that there was need for its Reformation and rejuvenation. Like many other religions Islam, too, had its share of Revivalist Movements both in and outside India. The Revivalist urge consisted primarily, of the belief in the coming of a *Messiah* promised by God, who would make a clean sweep of existing political, social and religious evils of the times

and restore Islam to its pristine glory. Political considerations were also often mixed up with some of these *Movements*.

The first to raise the banner of Reformation and Revivalism in India was Syed Ahmad Sarhindi,<sup>23</sup> better known as *Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani* (The Renovator of First Millenium) who was a contemporary of Akbar. Although we are not concerned with the details of his religious views and theories a bare outline of some of his thoughts is being given below.

The central phenomenon of the religious life of India, in this period, was Sufism and its excessive hold over the minds and lives of the people. Sufism which is a system based on the theory of developing mystic feelings of communion with and knowledge of God. It emphasises the mystic and inner aspects of Shariat. This 'union' with God can be achieved by journeying on the Path (*Tariqat*), involving several stages (*Muqamats*), of spiritual guidance. In the course of time the *Tariqat* gained greater prominence than the *Shariat* and the Pantheistic conception of God as developed into the famous theory of *Wahdat-ul-Wujud* also gained an increasing prominence. The *Mujaddid* stressed the fact that God was self-existent and self-evident, that everything else was created by Him and that Salvation could better be achieved through adherence to the *Shariat* than through mystic processes of achieving communion with Him. He further held that much of the prevailing laxity and deviation from the *Shariat* was due to the connivance of the Ulemas. They had not the courage of their convictions, and allowed considerable latitude to their political masters in bypassing the *Shariat* in matters affecting their personal comforts and convenience. This had been rendered possible by giving new meanings to the words of Quran and Hadis and by evolving a new variety of "innovations" called *Bidat-i-Hasna* or one which, although an innovation, was not



sinful and hence permissible. According to the *Mujaddid*, *Bidat* was *Bidat* and there could be no gradation of degrees in it. The *Mujaddid* was emphatic on this point and there are numerous references to it in his letters.

Syed Ahmad Sarhindi's method of work was however conditioned by the times in which he lived. His campaign was primarily a one-man affair. He concentrated his energies on writing religious treatises and corresponding with many of his eminent contemporaries. Lack of modern means of communication and, probably also, the lack of the consciousness of the utility of wider mass contact prevented him from establishing a wider based popular Movement. In spite of some of its short-comings his Movement was highly significant. It cried halt, for the first time, to the prevailing drift and declared the urgency of reforms in Islam, even in the hey-day of its political supremacy in India when the Mughal Empire was pulsating with youthful vigour.

The thoughts and efforts of the *Mujaddid* have been treated at some length because they were in a great measure the prototype of the Movement launched by his namesake—Syed Ahmad of Bareilly some two centuries later. The work and activities of the *Mujaddid* were continued by his son and *Khalifas*. However, his true mission was taken up by Shah Waliullah<sup>24</sup> of Delhi, one of the intellectual giants of India in the 18th century. This century witnessed the general decadence of the two great contemporary Muslim Empires—the Ottoman and the Mughal. It set some of the Muslim intellectuals of the period enquiring into the causes of the malady. Muhammad-bin-Abdul Wahab of Arabia and Shah Waliullah of India were, among others, two such prominent thinkers.

Shah Waliullah came to the conclusion that the development of monarchical form of Government, as

opposed to the early republican tradition of Islam, and the cessation of *Ijtehad*<sup>25</sup> had much to do with the prevailing sad state of affairs. These two factors had affected originality of thinking and initiative among the Muslims as a community. Islam instead of being regarded as a revolutionary movement for the emancipation of mankind from various inequities had become transformed and circumscribed into a set of dogmas and creeds. The entire edifice of Islam, according to his thinking, had been built on the character of its followers which in its turn centred on certain moral and spiritual principles based on the Quran and the Hadis. These reformed and inspired individuals had been coalesced into a powerful and well-knit organisation for the Common Brotherhood of Man. Since the character of the individuals, the cells, had deteriorated the whole body itself was affected. Political degeneration and social decay were inevitable under the circumstances. The emphasis, thus, was no more on the reform of some individuals at the top but on the reform of the Community as a whole and hence the need for a wider based mass Movement. This fundamental shift in the nature of thought is significant and should be noted. This realisation was also facilitated by another contemporary circumstance.

During this period attempts were being made in the political field to restore the sagging fortunes of Muslim political ascendancy. Mir Qasim, in Bihar, and Tipu Sultan, down south, in spite of their other shortcomings, were the symbols of this political revival<sup>26</sup>. They, in common, emphasised the necessity of training and equipping their armies on Western lines in order to match the English in their superior military organisation. But they did not realise that an individual, howsoever gifted and high-spirited but at the head of an ill organised people, loyal as yet to a person and not to a cause, is bound to fail against a nation, better organised and imbued with a national cause. It was not due to a lack of personal

qualities that they failed, the real causes were far deeper — corroding of the entire socio-religious basis of the Indo-Muslim society. This failure of the political struggle, led by the princely ruling classes, also diverted the attention of the people from princely leadership to religious reformation and the reorganisation of the community.

Such was the background of the political, social and religious condition on the eve of the Movement. The prevailing socio-religious degradation and the increasing loss of political power to the non-Muslims were the two forces behind the rise of the Movement. The two essential features of the Movement, in fact, were the amelioration of the society as well as the winning back of the country's freedom from the "European infidels."<sup>27</sup> For the achievement of one it was necessary to abstain from "pernicious religious innovations" and for the other to resort to *Jihad* whose virtues and advantages have been repeatedly extolled<sup>28</sup>. This *Jihad*, however, is to be understood in its broad meaning of a general struggle and not necessarily a religious one.

### III. Some Important Features of Wahabism.

During this period there were four recognised and well established Sufi orders in India. These were the Chishti, the Sohrawardi, the Qadri and the Naqshbandi<sup>29</sup>. Syed Ahmad Bareilvi himself followed a rather novel procedure of taking *Bai'at*<sup>30</sup> first in these four orders and then in the Muhammadi order which he claimed to have developed himself. He explained<sup>31</sup> that the *Shariat* had two aspects, internal and external. The former related to the discipline and training of one's soul for attainment of spiritual bliss and this was attended to by the regular Sufi orders, named •above. The other was concerned with the observance of a correct and ethical code of conduct in one's daily life. This was provided for by the Muhammadi order. The taking of *Bai'at* in both these methods, thus, encompassed

both the internal discipline of the soul as well as the external one in the daily chores of the life of an individual. Another probable explanation of this novel procedure may be that the Sufi orders, even though much devoid of their original zeal and spirit of service, were deeply embedded in the popular mind. People were habituated to taking *Bai'at* in one of those orders and any sudden and total abandonment of those orders might have proved impracticable. The details of the correct living as conceived by the Muhammadi order have been set forth in considerable detail in the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim*<sup>12</sup> itself and in the various Wahabi writings, but two principles are very prominent in it; a strict and uncompromising belief in God (whose attributes are not to be assigned or even alluded to in any other being) and observance of practical morality in one's personal life.

It is essential to note that Wahabism as preached by Syed Ahmad was not a separate religion as has been insinuated by some of the English writers, specially Hunter<sup>13</sup>. The latter repeatedly refers to the Wahabi Movement as the religion, to Syed Ahmad as the Prophet and to the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* as the new Quran of the sect. It might give an impression that Wahabism was a new cult, instead of being an attempt to reform and restore Islam to its pristine glory. Neither Syed Ahmad nor Abdul Wahab of Najd were Prophets as Niebuhr<sup>14</sup> and Hunter have wrongly insinuated. It is interesting to mention here the observation of an authoritative historian<sup>15</sup> of Arabian Wahabism regarding the character of its founder. "Muhammad-ibn-Abdul Wahab died after nearly fifty years of unremitting toil in a cause which he himself initiated and which still perpetuates his memory in the sobriquet, first applied in derision by its opponents and subsequently acquiesced in by its votaries, though to this day they do not apply it to themselves. *The creed he taught never professed to be a new revelation or even a new interpretation of Islam; the teacher never*

claimed a *Prophetic status*." If Abdul Wahab was not a Prophet much less so was Syed Ahmad.

The Wahabis are not essentially different from the rest of the Muslims. They, however, lay greater emphasis on certain points<sup>36</sup>, among which the following may be mentioned:

I. *Monotheism*—God is self-existent and the Creator of all other Beings. He is unequalled in his attributes. Spiritual eminence and salvation consist in strict adherence to the commands of God as given in the Quran and laid down in the *Shariat* and not in developing mystical feelings of communion and mingling in His Being.

II. *Ijtehad*—The Wahabis admit the right of "interpretation" as given to the Muslims and stress the desirability of exercising this right. They hold that the followers of the four great Imams have, in effect, given up this right. Abdul Wahab wrote several treatises on this subject criticising the advocates of slavish imitation.

III. *Intercession*—The Wahabis do not believe in the theory of intercession, on someone's behalf, by some intermediaries who might be persons of saintly eminence and hence supposed to be nearer to God. God was nearer to man than his own "jugular veins" and it was open to everybody to pray to God without the help of an intermediary. They emphasise Action. Passive belief in the principles of Islam is not enough.

IV. *Innovation*—The Wahabis condemn and oppose many of the existing religious and social practices for which there is no precedent or justification in the *Shariat*. Prominent among these are tomb worship, exaggerated veneration of *Pirs*, excessive dowries in marriages and the general show of pomp on festive occasions such as circumcision and *Milad* (celebration of Prophet's birthday) and prohibition of widow-remarriages, etc.

Stress is also laid on the cultivation of some moral virtues.<sup>37</sup> The five essentials of Islam, Prayer, Fast, *Haj*, *Zakat* and *Jihad* have of course to be scrupulously observed. But along with these several other virtues like humility, contentment and perseverance have to be acquired while greed, jealousy and pride have to be eschewed. *Jihad* or the waging of war (when no other means is left) for the protection and preservation of one's religion and society was also an important principle of Syed Ahmad's preachings since the beginning of his career.<sup>38</sup>

#### IV. *Comparative Estimate of the Arabian and Indian Wahabi Movements*

The spectacular journey of Syed Ahmad to Arabia, for the performance of *Haj*, was an important and crucial event of his life. Some of the English writers have emphasised that Syed Ahmad's journey for *Haj* was the turning point of his career. According to them it was during his stay in Arabia that he came into closer contact with the Arabian Wahabism and having been deeply influenced by its doctrines, spread them into India. One such writer<sup>39</sup> observed "... it was at this time that one Syed Ahmad of Bareilly took back from the Meccan pilgrimage to India the seeds which, after his death in a *jihad* against the enemies in 1832, gave the Wahabi reaction of the Black Mountains and its reverberation elsewhere." Another and a more celebrated writer<sup>40</sup> on Indian Wahabism wrote, "while at Mecca Sayid Ahmad attracted the notice of the authorities by the similarity of his teachings to that of the Bedouin sectaries from whom the holy city of Mecca had suffered so much. He was publicly degraded and expelled from the town. The result of this persecution was that he returned to India no longer a religious visionary and a reformer of idolatrous abuses but a fanatical disciple of Abdul Wahab."

In order to examine the accuracy of these statements it is necessary to review, briefly, the history of the rise of

Wahabism in Arabia. The founder of Wahabism in Arabia was Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab, who was born at Ayaina in 1703<sup>41</sup>. He had his early education in Basra and Medina. The contemporary Arab society was full of socio-economic abuses which were even more glaring than those in India. Considering the fact that Arabia was the birthplace of Islam which had already redeemed the Arabian society from the "Days of Ignorance" these circumstances were all the more deplorable. In the pre-Islamic days, in spite of the other shortcomings, the Arabs had a well organised civilization and a mature literature. But now even this saving grace had disappeared.

The early efforts of Abdul Wahab for the reformation of society earned him the displeasure and enmity of the local authorities and resulted in his exile. He took refuge in the court of the neighbouring chief of Dariya (Najd), Amir Mohammad bin Saud. By 1765, Saud had conquered the greater part of Najd of which he became the temporal chief while Abdul Wahab looked after the religious side. The system of Government established jointly by these two was based on strict conformity to the injunctions of the Quran and Hadis. Amir Muhammad Saud died the same year and was succeeded by his son, Abdul Aziz. During his reign, too, the work was continued under the direct supervision of Abdul Wahab until his death in 1792<sup>42</sup>.

In the meantime political expansion continued under the aegis of Abdul Aziz, until the whole of Najd was brought under control. Hedjaz was also attacked and the holy city of Mecca was occupied in April, 1803. It was during this time that an attempt was made by the Wahabis to "free the Holy cities of some of the weeds of heresy"<sup>43</sup> and certain over-zealous acts of "reformation" were committed which earned them a bad name among the general body of Muslims. This expansion of Wahabi supremacy over the greater part of Arabia was viewed

with concern by Turkey and regarded as a political threat to the adjacent Turkish provinces of Baghdad and Basra. Abdul Aziz was assassinated by an Iranian Shia in 1803 and succeeded by his son, Saud bin Abdul Aziz. He once again captured Mecca and Medina in 1806, which had been retaken by the Turkish authorities, earlier. Having consolidated his power in Hedjaz he attempted to extend his sphere of influence to Syria and Iraq and over the Persian Gulf area.

By now the Turkish authorities were fully aroused to the political danger of this revival of Arab power. The Ottoman Emperor was, theoretically, the religious head and Caliph of the Muslim community and the keeper and protector of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. The loss of these two cities to the Wahabis gave a blow to his temporal and spiritual eminence. To the English authorities in India, too, the growth of Wahabi power in the Persian Gulf area was a grave political menace. Accordingly, in 1809 the Government of Bombay sent a fleet under Captain Wainwright and Colonel (afterwards General) Sir Lionel Smith who acted in concert with the Imam of Muscat and defeated the Wahabis.<sup>4</sup> The Turks also sought the aid of Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt for suppressing the Wahabis. This was a subtle and double-edged move on the part of Turks for the power of the Pasha himself was likely to be weakened in the process of defeating the Wahabis. Muhammad Ali Pasha started his preparations in 1809. The actual expedition to Hedjaz was sent under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Muhammad Ali, who started from the base, in Suez, in 1816. In the meantime Saud had been succeeded by his son Abdullah, in 1814. The latter was defeated by Ibrahim Pasha in 1818. He was captured and sent to Constantinople where, after being tortured, he was killed. The Wahabi capital was put to pillage and arson.<sup>5</sup> A special messenger was sent by the Indian Government to congratulate Ibrahim Pasha on



this occasion." The British Government were, however, equally apprehensive of the designs of the Egyptians in the area in which they had replaced the Wahabis and "Captain G. F. Sadler was immediately deputed to visit Ibrahim Pasha at Dariya and discuss the intention of the new rulers of Arabia with the object of discouraging any new tendency on their part to establish themselves on the shores of the Persian Gulf"<sup>47</sup>.

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The political power of the Wahabis was thus broken but the moral and social regeneration brought about by them remained a permanent factor, with the details of which we are not concerned here.

As for the theory of the influence of Arabian Wahabism on its Indian counterpart there is no documentary evidence or authoritative proof. The early career of Syed Ahmad is covered by the period when the efforts of the Arabian Wahabis were confined to Najd. They came into world-wide prominence much later. The visit of Syed Ahmad to Mecca is often referred to as the occasion when he came into contact with and imbibed the Arabian influence. Hunter's statement in this connection has already been quoted above but apart from the fact that he does not substantiate his statement there is positive evidence, to the contrary, of the high regard in which Syed Ahmad was held by some of the learned men of Arabia during his stay there<sup>48</sup>. Moulvi Abdul Hai translated the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* into Arabic at the request of many of the local learned men and distributed its copies. It is also to be noted that at the time of Syed Ahmad's pilgrimage the holy cities were already under the control of Turks. All Najdi Wahabis were suspects and their presence was hardly tolerated. The question of his having come into contact with them, therefore, hardly arises. Moreover, Syed Ahmad had already been convinced of the necessity of

campaigning against the prevailing socio-religious state of things and of waging war against the foreigners much before he proceeded for *Haj*. The *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* bears testimony to this contention.

The fact is that there are certain similarities between the two movements owing to their, both, being inspired by the common source of the Quran and the Hadis. Similar set of circumstances were prevailing in both the countries on the eve of the growth of the respective movements and both stressed the necessity of reasserting certain principles of Islam, the chief of which were the emphasis on the oneness of God and abstinence from "innovations". The *Al Tauhid* of Abdul Wahab and the *Taqwiatul Iman* of Shah Ismail are unanimous in stressing these cardinal features.

But at the same time there are certain important points of difference between the two. The first was the markedly political aspect of the Movement in India." As a corollary, there was a greater emphasis on the struggle for the political emancipation of the country. This aspect was absent in Arabia owing to the different circumstances prevailing there. There was no loss of political power in Arabia and Arabian Wahabis represented essentially an attempt for socio-religious reformation. Another distinctive feature of the Indian Wahabism was its identification, at one stage, with the *Mahdavi Movement*. The death of Syed Ahmad was followed by the production of a copious literature by the Indian Wahabis on the doctrine of the coming of a Saviour or *Mahdi*. This process of identification with the *Mahdavi Movements* was never in evidence in Arabia.

It is, therefore, clear that the apparent similarity between the two movements was the result of a common source of inspiration and a similar set of prevailing circumstances and not necessarily the result of one following the other.

## REFERENCES

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2. See author's article, "Some historically valuable Persian papers preserved in Muzaffarpur Collectorate", J. B. R. S., Vol. XLI, pt. iv, pp. 515-516.
3. Hunter, W. W., *Our Indian Mussalmans*, London, 1871, p. 182.
4. *ibid.*
5. A large number of such case records are available in the Persian records of the Divisional Commissioner's Office, Patna, as also in various other Government Record Rooms.
6. I.M., p. 182.
7. *ibid.*, p. 181.
8. Datta, K. K., *Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh*, Patna, 1957, pp. 91-92.
9. Spear, P., *Twilight of the Mughals*. Cambridge, 1951, pp. II ff.
10. Sirat, p. 25.
11. This work compiled, jointly, by Shah Ismail and Abdul Hai during 1818-1820 is one of the most dependable primary sources for an understanding of the main features of Syed Ahmad's teachings.
12. Syed Ahmad used such strong epithets in regard to certain types of Sufis whose preachings he objected to. They speak of the strength of his feelings on the point.● They also show a lack of moderation in relation to his opponents.
13. S. M., p. 51.
14. There are two broad categories among the Sufis believing in the Wajudia and Shahudia schools of thought, respectively. The former theory, to which the largest number of Indian Sufis adhered, is somewhat similar to the pantheistic conception of God and is summed up in the formula of *Hama Ust* or Everything is a Hum. The other school of thought is summed up in the formula of *Hama az Ust* or Everything is from Hum. Whereas the former holds that God is present in part of everything the latter maintains a distinction between the entities of the Creator and the Created.
15. S. M., pp. 51-52.
16. *ibid.*, pp. 52-53.
17. *ibid.* p. 57.
18. *ibid.* pp. 58-59.
19. *ibid.* pp. 60-61.
20. Annual commemorative celebration at the tomb of some saint is ● known as *Urs*.
21. S. M., pp. 71-72.  
Yasin, M., *A Social History of Islamic India*. Lucknow, 1958, pp. 132-144.
23. *ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

24. Shah Waliullah wrote a large number of works on various aspects of religion. Himself a Sufi of Naqshbandi Order he wrote many treatises developing a compromise formula for the various conflicting theories within Islam. Even his purely academic contributions to the literature of Islam are enough to immortalise his name, but the active influence that he and his family members exercised on the rejuvenation of the Indo-Muslim society is even more remarkable.
25. *Ijtehad* is a process, sanctioned by Tradition, of arriving at logical conclusions through deductions on question of law and theology. The person doing this deductive thinking is known as a *Mujtahid* and is a person well versed in Islamic jurisprudence.
26. The Marhattas were another such force but I am discussing here only the Muslim powers.
27. *Syed Ahmad's Letters*, P. U. Ms. 'copy, p. 129.
28. S. M., pp. 105-106.
29. One branch of this was known as the *Mujaddadiya* Order following the name of Syed Ahmad Sarhindi, the *Mujaddid* or the renovator.
30. *Bai'at* is a formula of fealty and signifies the acceptance of one's spiritual preceptor. It confirms one's initiation into and adoption of one of the various Sufi Orders. It is generally done by placing one's hands in the hands of the preceptor.
31. *Sawanih*, pp. 29-30. The text of Syed Ahmad's *Sanad of Khilafat* given to Shah Muhammad Husain (vide infra) also explains the main features of the Muhammadi Order.
32. S. M., pp. 75-115.
33. I. M., pp. 51-54.
34. Carsten Niebuhr was the leader of a Danish scientific mission to Jeddah and Yemen. On his return to Europe he published, in 1764, "Description de la Arabie". He was the first European to publish the news of the rise and progress of the Wahabis.
35. Philby, J. B., *Arabia*, London, 1930, p. 51. Italics are mine.
36. An article, "What actually is Wahabism." by Sir Hafiz Wahaba in the *Islamic Culture*, December 1949, discusses in detail the essential features of Wahabism.
37. S. M., pp. 75-115.
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40. I. M., pp. 60-61.
41. Philby, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
42. *ibid.*, p. 54.
43. *ibid.*, p. 83.
44. Selections, p. 121.
45. Philby, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.
46. P. I. T., p. 21.
47. Philby, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
48. Mehr, I, p. 232; *Sirat*, pp. 266-267.
49. The point has been discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LIFE AND ACTIVITIES OF SYED AHMAD BARELVI

#### I. *Early Life and Missionary Work*

Syed Ahmad belonged to a respectable family of saintly renown settled at Bareilly. He was the son of Syed Muhammad Irfan and was born in the month of *Safar* A.H. 1201<sup>1</sup> (November, 1786). He has been described<sup>2</sup> as a tall, fair and strongly built man with close-knit eyebrows, broad forehead, thick beard, moustache and a pleasing countenance. He had his early education at home. It is wrongly believed that Syed Ahmad did not have much of a general education. Besides the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* which is based on his own observations and sayings we know of several pamphlets written by him.<sup>3</sup> The existing Collection of his letters some of which were written at his dictation also bear testimony to his learning and command of language.

Syed Ahmad's father died some time in 1800. Soon after that he proceeded to Lucknow in search of employment. From there he moved to Delhi where he met Shah Abdul Aziz, the son and spiritual successor of Shah Waliullah, and took *Bai'at* on his hands some time in A.H. 1222<sup>5</sup> (1806).

It is important to note that the beginnings of some of the characteristic features of the Wahabi Movement are traceable to this time. The author of *Makhzan* states various incidents of the early life of Syed Ahmad which show his abhorrence of and opposition to some of the prevailing customs and practices like 'worship' of dead saints and supplication at their tombs, excessive veneration of *Pirs*, etc. He returned from Delhi to Bareilly in the beginning of A.H. 1223 (1808) and stayed

there for two years. During that period he was married and had a daughter named Sarah. He also started preaching on a minor scale.

During his two year's stay at Bareilly Syed Ahmad spent much time deliberating over his mission and the methods for achieving it. He felt from the beginning the necessity of developing an organisation, preferably military, for defeating the "alien people from distant lands" and for clearing the Augean stable of "innovations" prevailing among the Muslims. This led him once again in A.H. 1224 (1809) to a journey to Delhi and then to his joining the army of Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk', a little later.

Syed Ahmad's elder brother, Syed Ibrahim, was already in the Nawab's army. Syed Ahmad was appointed to the post of *Pesh-Imam* on account of his piety and learning. This post, incidentally, enabled him to exercise his moral influence and extend his teachings to the armymen and thus attempt to bring about the desired transformation of character among them. Various incidents of his life during this period and the influence he exercised over the lives and conduct of the soldiers have been described by the author of the *Makhzan*. Syed Ahmad also had his baptism of fire in the course of several military engagements in which he participated during the period.

The action of Syed Ahmad in joining the Army of Amir Khan has been misconstrued and uncharitably commented upon by some of his critics. He has been charged with mercenary motives in joining Amir Khan's army. It is, however, to be remembered that he was already convinced of the necessity of having an armed organisation for the achievement of his mission. He joined Amir Khan's army because it represented an organisation, armed and experienced, and if it could be

re-oriented along his own line of thinking it was so much better than starting from a scratch and organising an army of his own. This interpretation is also borne out by the fact that he opposed Amir Khan's projected alliance with the English and finally left him after his alliance with the English. If the motive of Syed Ahmad had only been mercenary he would not have left Amir Khan's employment. By becoming an ally of the English, Amir Khan had lost his utility to Syed Ahmad and so he gave him up and returned to Delhi once again. During his stay there he started preaching and taking *Bai'at*.

An important event of that period was the offering of *Bai'at* on Syed Ahmad's hand by Shah Abdul Hai and Shah Ismail, son-in-law and nephew, respectively, of Shah Abdul Aziz. Next to Syed Ahmad himself, these two were the most important leaders of the Movement. Both of them were erudite scholars and were directly connected with the foremost saintly family of the times. Their adherence gave a fillip to the general standing of the Movement and had a profound effect on its subsequent history. It started their exemplary comradeship with Syed Ahmad which continued with ever-increasing devotion to him and participation in the Movement till their deaths. Their lives and careers deserves a separate and detailed treatment.<sup>8</sup> Shah Ismail, surnamed Shahid (Martyr), died fighting with Syed Ahmad in the battle of Balakote in May, 1831, while Abdul Hai died earlier in 1828. They were the joint compilers of the famous *Sirat-i-Mustaqim*. Shah Ismail was a prolific writer and his treatises<sup>9</sup> and letters contain some of the most lucid and forceful exposition of the aims and objects of the Movement. He was as prolific with his pen in the defence of the Movement as he was proficient with the sword in fighting for its cause. His exemplary valour in the battle of Shinkiari when he faced with only a dozen famished<sup>10</sup> men a Sikh Army much larger in number and performed feats of valour is an instance in point. In his

religious belief Shah Ismail was inclined to be an extremist and a *Ghair Muqallid* (non-conformist<sup>11</sup>) while Hai was comparatively moderate and a *Muqallid* (conformist). In fact the two provide an interesting comparative study—the one fiery and vigorous and the other quiet and unassuming.

After a short stay at Delhi Syed Ahmad sought the permission of his preceptor, Shah Abdul Aziz, to set out on a journey in response to the growing requests of the people from outside who wanted to offer *Bai'at*, but could not come to Delhi. His itinerary covered, generally, the Doab region between the Ganges and Jamuna and included Shahrānpur, Shahjahanpur, Phulit, Rampur, Mukhteshwar and many other places. The journey which was in fact a preaching tour was characterized by an overwhelming number of *Bai'ats* offered on Syed Ahmad's hands and a great increase in the number of his followers.

Syed Ahmad returned to Delhi on the completion of his tour and soon after left for his home town, Bareilly, and stayed there till his departure for *Haj*. Some of his chief collaborators such as Shah Ismail, Abdul Hai and Yusuf Phulti were also with him there. During the next few years he made similar preaching tours of some of the North Indian cities.<sup>12</sup> It was in the course of one such short tour that he visited Lucknow, at the invitation of Nasiruddaula the Vazir of the Oudh kingdom. Wilayat Ali of Patna was then studying at Lucknow under the guidance of Ashraf Ali. Both of them visited Syed Ahmad, more out of curiosity to assess his real worth than out of any intention to take *Bai'at*. They were, however, deeply impressed by his personality and both took *Bai'at* then and there. This act of the former was the prelude to the subsequent *Bai'ats* of the members of the Sadiqpur family of Patna which in its turn had such far reaching effect on the history of the Movement itself.



Syed Ahmad set a personal example during this period by disregarding the prevailing social taboo amongst the Muslims against widow-remarriage. He married the widow of his elder brother who had died some time ago. This act was the first of its kind among the higher classes of Muslims in India and it was an act of courage born out of conviction. Later, this precedent of Syed Ahmad was followed and ardently propagated by the members of Sadiqpur family who, too, were pioneers in this act of social reform in Bihar. Another and more important achievement of the activities of this period was the compilation of the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* which may be regarded as the social and religious Manifesto of the Movement. With its compilation the views of Syed Ahmad crystallised into well formulated theories.

Apparently, the missionary tours of Syed Ahmad were just like the other typical tours of *Pirs* during which *Bai'ats* were taken and religious discussions held. Its significance in his case was, however, different. It enabled him to come into contact with the wider masses. It also enabled him to see for himself the evils from which the Muslim society was suffering. These were the years of silent but solid organisational and missionary work. The select band of followers were also being given military training for the coming struggle.

It was at this juncture that Syed Ahmad decided to set out for the performance of *Haj*. The decision was rather unexpected for he had already made considerable preparations for the other journey—of Migration from British Indian territory<sup>13</sup>. Probably, one reason for the decision was that among the many 'deviations' prevailing at the time was one, endorsed by a *Fatwa*, condoning *Haj* owing to dangers to life from the pirates on the way<sup>14</sup>. Syed Ahmad probably wanted to set a personal

example of disregarding such 'innovation' as he had done in the case of widow's remarriage.

He invited volunteers from all over the country to join the proposed convoy. The volunteers were to assemble at Bareilly from where they were to proceed, by boats down the Ganges, to Calcutta. The whole party comprised some 400 persons and was divided into small units. The party proceeded leisurely down the Ganges, halting at important cities situated along the bank of the river, where an ever increasing number of people flocked to offer *Bai'at*. Many intending pilgrims for *Haj* joined the convoy on way.

The journey from Bareilly started on the last day of the month of *Shawwal*, 1236<sup>15</sup> (30th July, 1821). Unfortunately, not much information is available regarding the dates and the periods of Syed Ahmad's stay at the different places on the way. Only the dates of some of intermediate halts at important places such as Banaras, Patna and Calcutta are known. •

Thus, for instance, we know that after starting from Bareilly and after some minor halts the party arrived at Banaras where the *Baqrid* festival (10-12 Zilhij, 1236<sup>16</sup>; approximately 9-11 Sept., 1821) was performed. We also know that it being the height of the rainy season he halted there for one full month<sup>17</sup> (8th Oct., 1821). Leaving Banaras he reached Zamania the same day and after an over-night stay went to Ghazipur where he stayed for a few days. It was from that place that he entered Bihar.

The events which occurred during the course of the two journeys of Syed Ahmad through Bihar, on his way to Calcutta and back, have been dwelt upon at some length, firstly, because these are of great significance in the subsequent history of the Movement and, secondly, because none of the standard biographers of Syed Ahmad

have tried to resolve the various contradictory statements about some of those events.

The *Bai'at* of the members of the famous Sadiqpur family of Patna whose activities dominated the history of the Movement after the death of Syed Ahmad and who spread the Movement by their unparalleled "missionary zeal" all over Bihar, Bengal and the Deccan took place during this visit. Again it was in Patna, for the first time, that the seeds of a permanent organisation for enrolling new members and collecting funds for the impending struggle were laid. Before his visit to Patna Syed Ahmad had undertaken several missionary tours in the Gangetic Doab area and many people had taken *Bai'ats* during those tours. But there is no recorded instance of any one being appointed as a 'Khalifa' duly authorised to carry on the work on behalf of Syed Ahmad during that time. That was done for the first time in Patna where Shah Muhammad Husain was appointed a *Khalifa* (Vicegerent) by virtue of a *Sanad*<sup>18</sup>, the only one of its kind extant, which specifically authorised him to enrol new members and to organise the Movement generally in Bihar. A keen observer of the history of the Movement has very significantly observed. "On his return from Haj Syed Ahmad visited Patna where he was met by Syed Muhammad Hussain of Patna with a large body of Crescentaders. A general meeting of his Caliphs was held and a *permanent arrangement was made to forward supplies of men and money to support the enterprise (War on the frontier) long contemplated*".<sup>19</sup> Another chronicler<sup>20</sup> of the Movement has also emphasised the importance of Syed Ahmad's organisational work during his visit to Patna. He observed, "Having thus *established a central organisation at Patna* he (Syed Ahmad) continued his journey, along the banks of the Ganges, to Calcutta". It is thus clear that Patna had the rare distinction of being chosen as the first organised centre of the Wahabis by Syed Ahmad himself long before the actual

fight on the Frontier began. During the subsequent years the Patna Wahabis amply justified the confidence shown in them by Syed Ahmad and played a dominating role in the history of the Movement.

One member of the family, Wilayat Ali, had already taken *Bai'at* during the course of Syed Ahmad's visit to Lucknow. He did not stop short at merely taking *Bai'at*. It brought about a profound transformation of character in him. He belonged to an affluent family and was used to a high standard of living. After this *Bai'at*, however, he accompanied Syed Ahmad to Bareilly where he lived and worked as an ordinary and humble volunteer<sup>21</sup>. An old servant of the family, who was sent from Patna to enquire about his welfare, was astounded to see his erstwhile master working as an ordinary labourer engaged in the construction of a mud house and almost failed to recognise him.

Another important person who appears to have been previously acquainted with Syed Ahmad, before his arrival at Patna, was Mazhar Ali of Patna City. During his stay at Patna, Syed Ahmad visited his house where the members of his family took *Bai'ats*. He was also appointed as one of Syed Ahmad's *Khalifas* (Vicegerent)<sup>22</sup>. Apart from these two individual instances of *Bai'ats* the message of Syed Ahmad had not so far been preached in any part of Bihar and Bengal which had been left out of his earlier missionary tours in Northern India.

• The journey of Syed Ahmad through Bihar and his halts were characterised by a generally uniform sequence of events. At the different points of his halt many of the local people presented themselves and took *Bai'at*. Religious discussions and congregational prayers were held at some places. Some prominent and promising local man of zeal and sincerity was selected and appointed as

*Khalifa* with powers to take *Bai'at* on behalf of Syed Ahmad. The caravan moved on and the local initiate carried on the new preachings and enrolled new members.

This was the only course left to Syed Ahmad under the circumstances. He could not stay for a long time at a particular place and he could not, therefore, carry his message to the wider circle of people living away from the line of his route. The task was left to the local *Khalifas* who, however, were selected with due care and attention. This is evident from the invariably successful efforts of the local *Khalifas* in spreading the Movement and winning over an increasing number of adherents. It was like the sowing of seeds along the entire length of the Gangetic plain which were to blossom out so wonderfully in the subsequent years.

The first halt of Syed Ahmad's party, inside Bihar, was at Buxar where the local *Qazi* requested him to stay for some time. A large number of people from the adjacent villages, particularly Chousa Bara, took *Bai'at*. It later on became an important centre of the Movement. Having stayed overnight at Buxar he moved on to Chapra where also a brief halt was made. The next halt was at Dinapur, where many of the local persons, including some employed in the Cantonment area, were looking forward to his visit. A small group of persons had already gone forward to Banaras to receive Syed Ahmad and to conduct him to Dinapur. He stayed there for a comparatively long period—one week<sup>21</sup>. Shaikh Ali Jan<sup>24</sup> and Muhammad Sadruddin<sup>25</sup> were two of the important local persons who took *Bai'at* along with their family. Many congregational addresses were delivered by Moulvies Ismail and Abdul Hai as a result of which many a people "took to the path of rectitude"<sup>26</sup>. It was during his stay at Dinapur that Syed Ahmad paid a visit<sup>27</sup> to the famous nearby *Khanqah* of Phulwarisharif. The *Sajjadah Nashin* at that time was Shah Nematullah. At first Shah Ismail and a few other

persons came to meet him. That was followed by a visit by Syed Ahmad, Abdul Hai, Abdul Haq and a few others who were entertained to a sumptuous feast by Shah Abul Hasan Fard, the son and successor of Shah N'ematullah. The next day Abdul Hai again returned to the *Khanqah*, accompanied by Shah Ismail, and a religious discussion took place. Both Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail were favourably impressed by the learning of the *Ulemas* of Phulwarisharif and found the *Khanqah* free from some of the prevailing 'innovations'.

There is some difference of opinion about the date of this visit to Phulwarisharif. The author of *Sirat*<sup>20</sup> places this visit during the return journey from Haj. Mehr, too, states<sup>10</sup> that he came across no evidence of Syed Ahmad's visit to Phulwarisharif, except the one on the return journey. He, however, refers to certain family papers and traditions relating to Syed Ahmad's visit on the outward journey. This latter version appears to be the correct one. The original papers regarding Syed Ahmad's visit and the religious discourse held on that occasion are preserved among the *Khanqah* papers and these were utilized by the compiler of the *Diwan* of Abul Hasan Fard. The Supplement to this *Diwan* gives an account of the life of Fard and while mentioning the episode of the visit of Syed Ahmad it mentions the name of Abdul Haq as one of those who accompanied him. Since we know that the latter proceeded from Medina to Yemen and did not return with Syed Ahmad<sup>11</sup> the visit had obviously taken place on the outward journey.

After Phulwari the next halt was at Patna where the party stayed for a fortnight. They landed at Madrasa Ghat<sup>12</sup> near the site of the famous *Madrasa* of Saif Khan in Patna City. The biographer<sup>13</sup> of Nazir Husain Muhaddis quotes him to the effect that the party landed near Golghar at the western extremity of the city and that a

prayer was held in the nearby Maidan (Lawn), which was attended by a large number of people including Nazir Husain himself. However, the testimony of the author of *Makhzan* is more authentic and trustworthy on this point since he was a member of the *Haj* party and his work was written only twenty years after the event, whereas the other work was compiled at a much later date. Moreover, Madrasa Ghat is situated in the heart of the city area whereas Golghar is at the western extremity, outside the proper limits of the city. The bulk of city population then lived in the eastern part, now known as Patna City; the western extension of the city was a later development. Syed Ahmad also stayed and worked mostly in this eastern area. It is, therefore, more likely that the party landed at Madrasa Ghat from where it was easier and nearer to visit the city area than from Golghar at the opposite end. It is, however, just possible that a congregational prayer was held in the Lawn during the period of their stay at Patna. That does not, necessarily, indicate the landing of the party near Golghar.

There is a striking discrepancy in the accounts of this first visit of Syed Ahmad to Patna as given by A. H. A. Nadvi and G. R. Mehr, the two standard biographers of Syed Ahmad, on the one hand, and those of Jafar Thanasari and Abdul Rahim on the other.

The specific point of difference is whether the *Bai'at* of Sadiqpur family took place during the first visit or the next one, on the return journey from Mecca. The author of *Makhzan*, the contemporary and authentic biographer of Syed Ahmad, is silent on the point. Nadvi<sup>31</sup> and Mehr<sup>35</sup>, both, place it during the first journey. But Jafar Thanasari<sup>36</sup> and Abdul Rahim<sup>37</sup> state that although Shah Muhammad Husain and Fatah Ali, the two senior members of the Sadiqpur family, met Syed Ahmad during the first journey they could not take *Bai'at* owing to his

short stay. It was done later, during the return journey. The reason mentioned by these two authors is a bit strange since Syed Ahmad stayed for about a fortnight, during which period the *Bai'at* could have been easily taken. One possible explanation is the absence of Wilayat Ali himself from Patna during that time. According to the author of the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*, Wilayat Ali had written much earlier to his family about the great mission of Syed Ahmad, and his proposed visit to Patna and advised them to take *Bai'at*. He was, however, not at Patna when Syed Ahmad arrived there\* and so the matter, probably, was not given too much weight. When Wilayat Ali learnt about it he was very much disappointed. By the time of Syed Ahmad's return Wilayat Ali was back in Patna and he and Shah Muhammad Husain received him, ahead of Patna, at Monghyr and conducted him to the Sadiqpur house where he was entertained separately by them and by Maulvi Elah\* Bux. Thus, it appears that it was the absence of Wilayat Ali during the first journey which explains the non-performance of *Bai'at* at that time.

Moreover, the testimony of Abdul Rahim on this particular point carries more weight and importance. He was a member of the family and although he was born some sixteen years after the event he remained in very intimate contact with some of the persons who had taken *Bai'at* from Syed Ahmad. In writing the biographies of his family members, who achieved such eminence in the history of the Movement, he could not have made a mistake on such an important point. Besides, neither Mehr nor Nadvi have mentioned any specific reason or source of information in support of their contention.

One of the interesting events during the stay\* of Syed Ahmad at Patna was his meeting with a group of Tibetans comprising six males and three females who were on their way to *Haj*, but had been stranded at



Patna for lack of money. Syed Ahmad explained to them that *Haj* was essential for those who could afford it and since they were short of money they should return to their own country. He advised them further to spread his teachings in their own country. They took *Bai'at* on his hands and were given some money for their expense on the way back. He also authorised them to propagate his mission there<sup>39</sup>.

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After Patna the next halt was at Barh. Many people from the neighbouring localities came and took *Bai'at*. Among those whose names have been mentioned were Khaja Maula Bux, Khaja Afzal Ali, Wajid Ali Khan, Shaikh Supan and Akramul Haq<sup>40</sup>.

After Barh Syed Ahmad proceeded to Surajgarha (Monghyr distt.) where a considerable number of Syed and Pathan families lived. Many of the prominent persons took *Bai'at* there. Among them was one, Enayat Husain<sup>41</sup>, who continued to contribute to the Wahabi Fund till much later times. There were a fair number of Muslims in the neighbouring villages of Akbarnagar, Uren and Bilthu, many of whom also took *Bai'at*.

From Surajgarha Syed Ahmad proceeded to Monghyr where he stayed only for one day. A prominent local *Mukhtar*, Zakiuddin<sup>42</sup>, also took *Bai'at* there. The party then proceeded to Bhagalpur<sup>43</sup> where they stayed for one day, in order to purchase provisions and stores. The last halt in Bihar was at Rajmahal. One, Muhammadi Ansari, who had taken *Bai'at* earlier at Meerut waited on Syed Ahmad and persuaded him to go to his village which was situated at some distance from Rajmahal. All his family members took *Bai'at* there. Chief among them were Munshi Shah Muhammad, Munshi Raufuddin, Makhdum Baksh, Hasan Ali, Fazlur Rahman and Azizur Rahman. Shah Muhammad accompanied Syed Ahmad to Mecca for *Haj*.

Leaving Rajmahal, Syed Ahmad arrived at Calcutta (*Safar*, 1237, Sept., 1821) after short halts at Murshidabad and Katwa (Burdwan district). His stay at Calcutta was the longest — of over three months<sup>44</sup>. There, too, a large number of people from adjoining villages and from such far-off-places as Sylhet and Chittagong (now in Pakistan) came to offer *Bai'at*<sup>45</sup>.

At the time of departure from Calcutta the party had swelled to about 750 persons. They were divided in 10 units, each under a chief. The various units boarded separate ships, the whole party being spread over 11 ships<sup>46</sup>. Syed Ahmad paid by way of fares alone Rs. 13000<sup>47</sup>. Much of this had come as gift and offer from the various admirers and adherents.

Having performed the *Haj*<sup>48</sup>, Syed Ahmad returned to India. He landed at Bombay and after a few day's stay there he reached Calcutta by the same ship in the month of *Safar*, 1239 (Oct., 1823)<sup>49</sup>. He stayed at Calcutta for over two months. The next well established date is that of his arrival in his home town of Bareilly—29th *Shaban*, 1239<sup>50</sup>. During the return journey he once again halted at some of the places previously visited including Monghyr where the congregational Friday prayer was performed in the town mosque. Several guns and pistols, including a four barrelled gun was purchased from the local gun factory famous for its manufacture of guns and ammunitions<sup>51</sup>. Wilayat Ali and Muhammad Husain, who had been waiting there to receive Syed Ahmad, conducted him to Patna.

On arrival at Patna, Wilayat Ali invited Syed Ahmad to his house and got all the members of the family, males and females, 'initiated'. Next, Muhammad Husain entertained him at his house, where also all the members of the family took *Bai'at*. On the third day Elahi Bux, father of Ahmadullah, invited Syed Ahmad on the

occasion of the betrothal of his son. The *Nikah* was performed by Syed Ahmad himself<sup>52</sup>. A grand feast was held on the occasion in which 800 to 900 men participated. The original name of Ahmadullah was Ahmad Bux but he was renamed<sup>53</sup> by Syed Ahmad as Ahmadullah by which name he has been known ever since. His younger brother, originally named Wali Bux, also took *Bai'at* and was renamed Waliullah.

The *Bai'at* of the members of the Sadiqpur family marked a turning point in their individual as well as the family's fortune. The fulfilment of the aims of the Movement now commanded all their attention and energies. They started forth on an adventurous and hazardous career of active service in the far-off rocky heights of the N.W. Frontier area. Brief biographical sketches of some of these early and important adherents of the Movement have been given separately. It would be well, however, to describe here the career of Shah Muhammad Husain<sup>54</sup>, the first "Caliph" (Vicegerent) of Syed Ahmad appointed by virtue of a formal *Sqad* or order which is the only extant document of its kind.

*Shah Muhammad Husain* was the son of Shah Muhammad Mu'iz of Patna City, and was born in A.H. 1203 (1788-89). He had his early education from his uncle, Shah Muhammad Karim, and also took *Bai'at* from him. Subsequently, he took *Bai'at* on Syed Ahmad's hand with the permission of his previous preceptor. He was married to the daughter of Ghulam Mu'taba of Deora and, through the marriage, was connected with the family of the famous Mulla Shahbaz<sup>55</sup> of Bhagalpur. He was appointed as one of the earliest *Khalifas* of Syed Ahmad. A copy of the very rare *Sanad*<sup>56</sup> given to him by Syed Ahmad is still preserved<sup>57</sup>. A translation of its relevant portions has been given below :

"In the name of Merciful God; Be it known to those who seek the way of God in general and to those in

particular, present and absent, who are the friends of Syed Ahmad that the object of those who become disciples of holy men by the ceremony of joining hands (*Bai'at*) is to secure the way of pleasing God and depends on observance of the laws of his Prophet. He who believes that the way of pleasing God can be found without observing the laws of Prophet is a false and deluded man; his pretensions are false and untenable. The law of Prophet is founded on two things<sup>5b</sup>, viz.

1st. *The not attributing to any creature the attributes of God.*

2nd. *Not inventing forms and practices which were not observed in the days of Prophet or his successors or Khalifas.*

The former consists is not believing that angels, spirits, spiritual guides, disciples, teachers, students, prophets or saints remove one's difficulties, in abstaining from having recourse to any of the above creatures for the attainment of any wish or desire, in denying that any of them has the power of granting favour or removing evils, in considering them as helpless and ignorant as one's self in respect to the power of God . . . but merely to consider them as friends of God, to consider them as the guider to the way of pleasing of God.

With regard to the second point, viz., non-introduction of novelties in religion, it consists in strongly adhering to all the devotions and practices in the affairs of life which were observed in the time of Prophet. in avoiding such innovations as the marriage ceremonies, the adoring of tombs, the creation of large edifices over tombs, the lavish expenditures on the anniversaries of the dead, the construction of *Tazias*<sup>7</sup> and the like; and in endeavouring, as far may be practiceable, to put a stop to these practices . . . it behoves all who seek God to place these matters before their eyes and now by joining each other hands to abide by it, and to do so particularly with

Shah Muhammad Husain who has pledged to do the same by joining his hands with mine and to whom I have fully explained all the above matters, and authorised him to take such vows from you and to teach you holy practices in the room of myself, so it behoves the said Shah Muhammad Husain to adopt the law, as explained, to direct his body and soul to God, to follow the law in spirit and acts to shake off any dust of *Shirk* and of innovation (*Bidat*) that may be on him, to strive and incite the people to make their vows by joining their hands with his . . . May God grant that I and all my friends may be brought in the company of those who believe in the oneness of God and are of the followers of the law."

S E A L

Ismahoo  
Ahmad  
1235.

The date given in the above mentioned seal does not fit in with the generally accepted date of Syed Ahmad's visit to Patna on his way to and return from Mecca. He started from Bareilly in the month of *Shawwal*, 1236. There is no mention of his having ever come in contact with Muhammad Husain before his visit to Patna, and, therefore, the question of his taking *Bai'at* does not arise before the end of 1236 (1820-21) at the earliest. It may not be irrelevant to mention here that the date of Syed Ahmad's visit to Phulwarisharif has been mentioned by the biographer of Maulana Fard<sup>60</sup>, as A.H. 1233. If this date is correct then it tallies with the date of the *Sanad*, for if Syed Ahmad visited Phulwarisharif on the outward journey, in 1233, then the return journey (when Muhammad Husain took *Bai'at*) must have been in 1235. The difficulty in accepting this date in preference to the more authentic verdict of the *Makhzan* is that the biography of

Fard is a much later work and the author quotes no authority for the date of Syed Ahmad's visit as given in it. Anyway, the date given in the *Makhzan* and the *Waqai* must be treated as more trustworthy. In that case how is the date of *Sanad* of *Khilafat* (1235) to be explained ?

One likely explanation of this discrepancy of dates is the fact that some of the personal seals had dates engraved on them and these engraved dates were not changed immediately after the commencement of the next year and often many years more<sup>61</sup>, and hence there used to be a difference of dates mentioned in the seal on the top and that mentioned in the text.

Shah Muhammad Husain took up the work of the reorganisation of the Movement in right earnest. He revived and regularised the congregational prayers and *Khutba* in various mosques in the city. He renovated many deserted mosques, including the one at Nanmohia<sup>62</sup>, Patna City. He also preached and explained the main features of the teachings of Syed Ahmad and set personal examples by practising some of them<sup>63</sup>.

At the age of sixty he went for pilgrimage in A. H. 1262. (1846) and returned after two years. He died at the age of 74. His wife died a little later. He had six daughters, four of them being married to the sons of Elahi Eux and two to others.

Besides being well versed in religious matters he had also been given some military training. He was a noted horse rider and a good shot. He was also a poet (pen-name Hashmi) and composed verses in Persian and Urdu.

Leaving Patna Syed Ahmad paid short visits to Mirzapur, Benaras and Allahabad. He finally returned to Bareilly in April, 1824. Thus the whole journey for *Haj*

and back home took about 3 years and the total expenditure was about one hundred thousand rupees<sup>64</sup>.

For a period of about two years after his return Syed Ahmad was actively engaged in the preparations for the other and the most crucial journey of his life—Migration from British Indian territories to the independent tribal area in the North-West from where he was to wage his struggle. The intervening years were spent in missionary tours by some of the chief lieutenants of Syed Ahmad. They toured the neighbouring areas and explained the aims and objects of their mission and called for volunteers to join the journey of Migration. Their efforts were largely successful as evidenced by the large number of volunteers who joined Syed Ahmad at Bareilly and also the continued arrival of volunteers on the N. W. Frontier in the later years.

## II. *The Migration and the Campaigns on the N. W. Frontier*

The most active phase of Syed Ahmad's life after his return from Haj began with his Migration (*Hijrat*) to the Frontier. Having completed all preparations for the fateful journey Syed Ahmad started from Bareilly in the month of January 1826 (*Jamadi II*, 1241<sup>65</sup>). He proceeded by way of Dalmau, Fatehpur, Gwalior and Tonk. During his stay at Gwalior he was entertained by Maharaja Daulat Rao Sindhia<sup>66</sup>, who invited him to his palace where he had a long talk with Hindu Rao, the brother-in-law of the Sindhia. Later, Syed Ahmad addressed a very significant letter<sup>67</sup> to Hindu Rao from the Frontier. The Nawabs of Tonk, Amir Khan and his son Vaziruddaula, were ardent followers of Syed Ahmad and helped the Movement in various ways. Leaving Tonk Syed Ahmad marched through the deserts of Rajputana, Sind and Baluchistan and finally reached Peshawar in November, 1826.

The N. W. Frontier area was in a state of anarchy after the reign of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The successive

reigns of his son and grandson, Timur Shah and Zaman Shah, were characterised by internal dissensions, rebellions and break-up of the Empire<sup>68</sup>. The murder of Painda Khan Barakzai by Zaman Shah had antagonised the powerful and influential Barakzai tribe. Fatah Khan, the eldest son of the murdered chieftain, joined Mahmud Shah, the brother of Zaman Shah, who ruled over Kabul. The two, together, attacked Zaman Shah and defeated him. His brother, Shah Shuja, kept on a fight against Mahmud Shah for some time but at last took shelter with the English who settled him in the Punjab, where he was joined by his brother Zaman Shah. Both were granted political asylum by the English with a view to extending their influence into Afghanistan, through them, at some later and convenient occasion. The successes of Mahmud Shah were due, to a great extent, to the help and co-operation of Fatah Khan who as a result gained predominating influence in the affairs of kingdom. This was resented by Mahmud's son, Kamran, who got Fatah Khan murdered. The latter's brothers, known as Barakzai brothers, who held charge of the different areas of the kingdom rose in rebellion and declared themselves independent. Only the region of Herat and some adjacent areas remained under Mahmud Shah. The most famous among these Barakzai chiefs were Yar Muhammad Khan, Pir Muhammad Khan, Sultan Muhammad Khan and Azim Khan. Their united cooperation with and subsequent opposition to Syed Ahmad will be described hereafter. Among them Yar Muhammaad and Sultan Muhammad held the Peshawar area and were tributaries to Ranjit Singh. At heart they were opposed to the Sikh occupation of the Frontier area but their internal rivalries and jealousies stood in the way of concerted action against the former.

The series of political dispatches<sup>69</sup> by Capt. Alexander Burnes, during the course of his mission to Kabul, also give us valuable information about the political condition



in the Punjab<sup>70</sup> and the position of the Sikhs, west of the Indus, during this period.

After years of chaos and weakness caused by mutually warring factions the greater part of the Punjab had been brought under the effective control of Ranjit Singh. His relation with the English were friendly and based on ties of mutual political advantages. In the wider context of the threatened Russian advance towards the North Western borders of India a stable and strong government in the Punjab under Ranjit Singh was the only barrier to that threat. The latter also realised the danger to his own position in the case of the materialisation of that supposed threat and he was well aware that he could not stand against it, alone, without the help of English<sup>71</sup>. By the Amritsar treaty of 25th April, 1809, Ranjit Singh agreed to maintain peace and amity with the English, not to keep more troops on the left bank of Sutlej and not to make inroads against the Cis-Sutlej 'protected' Sikh chiefs. In return<sup>72</sup>, he was given a free field of expansion in the trans-Sutlej area. Ranjit Singh, fully conscious of the dangers of precipitating an open conflict with the English, scrupulously observed the terms the treaty in his lifetime, though considerable mutual suspicion existed about the extension of their respective spheres of influence to that area.

The trans-Sutlej region was parcelled out among various Pathan chiefs whose area of influence and whose allegiance kept on constantly shifting and were highly intricate and improvised. The most powerful among them were the Barakzai Brothers, described above. The rest, although nominally subservient to the Sikhs, were all the time engaged in a hit and run tactics against them. The Sikh control over the area was more in the nature of a military occupation than a stable civil government. Whenever an expedition was despatched to enforce collection of taxes or fines the tribesmen retreated to

their hideouts and the Sikhs retaliated by burning and destroying their villages. The fighting potential of these battle-hardened tribesmen was very great and was, perhaps, one of the reasons why Syed Ahmad had selected the area as the base of his operation. The course of the expansion of the political power of the Sikhs in this area, including Kashmir, was tortuous and interspread with wars and intrigues.

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Before setting out for the journey Syed Ahmad had written a series of letters to the different Frontier chiefs inviting them to join his mission. The contents as well as the significance of these letters, which are the most important and primary source of information on this phase of the Movement, have been examined separately. It will suffice to mention here only the fact that as a result of this series of correspondence supplemented, now and then, by the deputation of special envoys to some of the chiefs, a favourable interest had been created among them. The prospect of being united under a common organisation with chance of retrieving their homelands from the incursions of the Sikhs was welcome indeed.

The campaigns of Syed Ahmad were fought mostly in the areas now comprising the Hazara and Peshawar districts and the adjacent tribal areas of Swat and Buner. These can be divided, broadly, as (i) against the Sikhs and (ii) the local chiefs who turned 'treacherous'. For the sake of convenience, however, these have been studied in their chronological order.

After a short stay at Peshawar Syed Ahmad moved over to the neighbouring Yusufzai<sup>73</sup> country and stayed at Hashtnagar<sup>74</sup> and Nowshera. His arrival in that area generated a great political fervour and enthusiasm, which put the Sikh Darbar on its guard and a Sikh army of 10,000<sup>75</sup> under General Budh Singh, a cousin of Ranjit

Singh and one of the best Sikh generals, was sent to watch the situation. Having crossed the Indus, the Sikh general came near the Kabul river. Had he crossed it and entered the Sima<sup>70</sup> (Plains) area there would have been general panic among the tribes. It was, therefore, decided to engage him on the other side of the river.

The first encounter with the Sikhs took place at a place, known as Akora<sup>71</sup>, near Nowshera. Owing to the greater number of the Sikh army under Budh Singh a night attack was decided upon. The engagement took place on the 20th, December, 1826, and the Sikhs lost 500<sup>72</sup> men in it. In spite, however, of the initial success of the Wahabis, the Sikhs rallied again and the former suffered a set-back.

Shortly after, Khade Khan, the chief of Hund<sup>73</sup>, joined Syed Ahmad, took *Bai'at* and invited him to proceed to Hund where he promised to make all arrangements for the stay of his party. Syed Ahmad had not decided upon a permanent centre of his activities till then. He had been staying at Nowshera from after the battle of Akora. He, accordingly, agreed to Khade Khan's request and proceeded to Hund which thus became the first organised centre of his activities in the area. Khade Khan along with some other chiefs counselled a night attack on Hazru<sup>80</sup>, an important commercial mart of the Sikhs. These chiefs, as was evident later were motivated by greed and plunder. The aims of Syed Ahmad were different and higher and he dissociated himself and his followers from the proposed raid. The tribesmen, however, proceeded with the project and organised a typical tribal raid. They were opposed and chased out by the Sikhs. The retreat would have been an unmitigated disaster but for the timely support of the followers of Syed Ahmad who covered the retreat and saved the tribesmen from much loss of life. The episode is not directly connected with the account of Syed Ahmad but

has been mentioned here due to the fact that it marked a turning point in the plan of campaign of Syed Ahmad. He realised with considerable shock and disappointment that the tribesmen, even though they had joined him, were not moved by the same purity and sincerity of outlook. The aims of a great many of them were petty and base. They wanted only some plunder and loot. In fact this was to be the bane of the whole of Syed Ahmad's campaigns. The difference of outlook between the dedicated band of 'Syed Ahmad's followers, described as the 'Hindustani fanatics', and the mercenary tribesmen always upset the military calculations of Syed Ahmad. He, therefore, came to the conclusion that he must assume full and effective political and military control of the Movement. This involved a highly technical religio-political decision—the declaration of *Imamat*.

According to Islamic jurisprudence the election of an *Imam* was necessary for the control and guidance of the *Jihad*. The *Imam* had to conform to certain qualifications the details of which do not concern us here. The military situation on the Frontier necessitated the election of a leader with full and plenary powers. Syed Ahmad was, accordingly, elected Imam on the 12 *Jamadi II*, 1242 (Feb., 1827<sup>1</sup>). A circular letter, addressed to the Muslims of India, giving a resume of events up to the battle of Hazru and explaining the circumstances leading to the election of the Imam was despatched to different centres in 'India'<sup>2</sup>. In this letter Syed Ahmad wrote, "The strangest part of the situation is that on both these occasions (Akora and Hazru) the *Mujahidin* acted like a leaderless band and in matters of marching and campaigning also acted in a disorganised manner. It was accordingly decided by all those present at that time, faithful followers, Syeds, learned doctors of law, nobles and the generality of Muslims that the successful establishment of *Jihad* and the dispelling of disbelief and disorder could not be achieved without the election of an *Imam*."

Some of the Muslim theologians back home, bent on disparaging the Movement, criticised this decision as an assumption of dictatorial powers but, as explained above, it was absolutely necessary in the larger interest of the Movement which would otherwise have been lost in the welter of petty and minor skirmishes.

The declaration of *Imamat* was followed by the *Barat* of several important chiefs and 80,000 tribesmen. Yar Muhammad and Pir Muhammad Khan, two of the Barakzai Brothers in command of the Peshawar area, also took *Bai'at* by correspondence and sent messages of submission and cooperation. The sincerity of purpose of these two was doubted by some of the followers of Syed Ahmad from the beginning, but the latter took them on their word. He felt that these chiefs after years of internal dissensions and defeats at the hands of the Sikhs were suffering from a sense of inferiority complex and a general lack of a fixed aim. Being united and organised together for achievement of victory against their enemies would instil a general confidence among them and stabilise their wavering allegiance.

At a meeting with the chief of Peshawar and some other tribal chiefs it was decided to advance against the Sikhs with the united army of tribesmen and the *Hindustanis*. They, accordingly, advanced towards Nowshera where Budh Singh was still encamped. In the ensuing battle of Shaidu<sup>31</sup> Syed Ahmad was betrayed by the Peshawar chiefs who were won over by Budh Singh and who deserted him. There followed a period of great privation and suffering owing to the short supply of men and materials from India. Syed Ahmad abandoned his previous centre at Hund and moved for some time from one place to another until he finally settled at Panjtar<sup>32</sup>. It was during this difficult period that Talib Ali, younger brother of Wilayat Ali, who had taken part in the battle of Shaidu and was only 18 years at that time, died at Chinglai.

Following the battle Syed Ahmad made a missionary tour of the neighbouring tribal areas of Buner and Swat. He exhorted the people to join his mission and to shun some of the social and religious 'innovations' prevailing in the area. He also sent letters to the rulers of Chitral, Kashmir, Bukhara and other neighbouring areas. He received overtures of cooperation from the chief of Hazara area which was seething with discontent against the oppressive rule of Hari Singh Nalwa, the famous Sikh general and the Governor of Hazara. Hazara lay on the border of Kashmir and if it could be brought under control the road to Kashmir would be open.

Kashmir occupied an important place in Syed Ahmad's plan of campaign. Its occupation would have given him control of an extensive area with ample resources, a large majority of Muslim population and a strong line of natural defence, secure against Sikh incursions. It would have provided him with a well defended and stable base for his subsequent operations. In an earlier letter<sup>65</sup> to Shah Sulaiman of Kashghar he had referred to his intention to proceed to Kashmir after tackling the Peshawar chiefs. He had also referred to the promise of aid received from the ruler of Chitral and other<sup>66</sup> chiefs in case of his advancing to that side. He, accordingly, sent a detachment under Shah Ismail to the Pakhli<sup>67</sup> area while he himself stayed at Panjtar. Shah Ismail made a successful preaching and reconnaissance tour of this area during the course of which he visited Amb and Sittana. He also conducted several lightning raids on some of the Sikh military outposts, of which the engagement at Shinkari<sup>68</sup>, where he defeated and dispersed a much larger force of Sikhs with a small and famished party, is the most famous. His activities during this period covered the last quarter of 1827.

He was, however, soon after recalled by Syed Ahmad. The reason for this recall is not very clear. Probably,

Syed Ahmad wanted to deal first with the menace of the Durrani chiefs who were harassing the incoming caravans of volunteers from India and inciting the tribes, generally, against him. Soon after, Syed Ahmad moved to Khahar, (December 1827) an important town on the eastern bank of the river Swat in lower Swat. It was there that the death of Abdul Hai occurred on the 24th Feb. 1828<sup>89</sup>.

In the meantime the hostility of the Durrani chiefs, who were not sincere in their profession of alliance with Syed Ahmad, was increasing. In his dealings with them he was faced with a delicate situation not unmixed with a tragic irony of fate. He loathed the idea of fighting against the very people whose cooperation he expected and whose lot he wanted to improve and ameliorate. However, the advance of the Durrani chiefs towards Usmanzai forced the hands of Syed Ahmad. He decided to meet this threatened danger and to punish this source of perennial mischief, once for all, by occupying Peshawar, the centre of the Durrani chiefs, in cooperation with some of the tribes of the Khyber area. Messengers, including Mazhar Ali of Patna, were despatched to them to win their cooperation. The Durrani chiefs were defeated in the battle of Usmanzai (May<sup>90</sup>, 1828), but the advance on Peshawar had to be abandoned due, once again, to the defection of the tribesmen who were expected to help. The repeated defections of the tribal chiefs and the continuance of socio-religious evils convinced Syed Ahmad that it was essential, first, to bring about a moral and religious reformation in the character of the local people. In the absence of that they could never understand the real significance of the Movement; much less be loyal to it. Accordingly, a big religious gathering was organised (Feb., 1829) in Panjtar in which, among others, Fatah Khan Panjtari, Ashraf Khan of Zeda and Khade Khan were present. A renewed plea of allegiance was taken from all those present, to the effect

that they would administer their principalities according to the *Shariat* and would give up the prevailing 'evil' practices such as drinking of wine, family feuds, usury, polygamy, distribution of a deceased man's wife and children among his brothers, etc. Enforcement of the compulsory injunctions of Islam such as Prayer and Fasting, etc., were also insisted upon. The extent of success in this regard was, however, rather limited.

Panjtar now became the chief centre of Syed Ahmad's activities. This was resented by Khade Khan of Hund. He considered this transfer as a slight to himself. He was also dissatisfied with some other acts of Syed Ahmad. He started harassing the bands of volunteers coming from India which had to pass through his principality. He also picked up quarrels with Ashraf Khan and Fatah Khan, two of the staunch and prominent supporters of Syed Ahmad. Finally he entered into negotiation with General Ventura who had been sent to the Frontier by the Sikh *Darbar* for the usual collection of revenues. Khade Khan brought him round to agree to attack Panjtar. However, the attack was not successful. Soon after this Syed Ahmad determined to tackle Khade Khan finally. In the ensuing battle of Hund (Aug.<sup>91</sup>, 1829) Khade Khan was defeated and killed. This drastic step was taken much against the wishes of Syed Ahmad, but the continued intransigence of Khade Khan and his intrigues with the former's enemies left no choice to him. As it was to happen at the time of the capture of Peshawar, two years hence, Syed Ahmad refused to assume control over Hund. On the contrary, he was desirous of passing over the administration to some of the relations of Khade Khan. These, however, sought the alliance of Yar Muhammad Khan who, too, was disgruntled against the policies of Syed Ahmad. Taking this to be a good opportunity for ridding himself of the presence of Wahabis, which he thought would bring the Plains under his influence, Yar Muhammad advanced against Syed



Ahmad, jointly, with the aggrieved chiefs of Hund. The allies were, however, defeated and Yar Muhammad was killed in the battle of Zaida (Sept.<sup>92</sup>, 1829). It was the accidental presence of Ventura in Peshawar, on a mission of demand of money and the famous mare, Laili, for which Ranjit Singh had developed a fascination, that saved a possible attack on<sup>93</sup> it by the Wahabis.

Syed Ahmad had a design to 'liberate' Kashmir in order to develop it as a permanent base for his operations. In pursuance of that design Shah Ismail had been deputed on a reconnaissance expedition to Hazara in 1827. The disaffection of the chiefs of Sima (Plains) area had, however, forced him to postpone the venture for the time being. With the defeat of Yar Muhammad he had a, comparatively, stabilized position in the Plains and turned his attention to Kashmir once again. Soon after the battle of Zaida, he received a message from a local chief of Kashmir that the military outpost of the Sikhs at Tarbela<sup>94</sup> had no garrison and could easily be attacked. He, accordingly, advanced to Khabal where the local chief had promised to join him. The Sikh commander Hari Singh, however, got scent of the contemplated attack and immediately repaired to Tarbela. The projected attack was thus foiled.

During his stay at Khabal Syed Ahmad came into contact with the Syed chiefs of Sittana<sup>95</sup>. This place was destined to become the most important centre of the Wahabis on the Frontier. The Syed family remained steadfast in its devotion to the Wahabis and sacrificed all its material possessions for them. Their loyalty and devotion was a shining example in the prevailing atmosphere of selfishness and parochialism. Syed Akbar Shah, with whom Syed Ahmad was already in correspondence, came to meet him at Khabal<sup>96</sup> and invited him to Sittana, where the members of his family took *Bai'at*. He informed Syed Ahmad about the parochial and unstable nature of the local chiefs and advised him not to rely on them.

In the meantime messages were received from Painda Khan Tanaoli", the chief of Amb", expressing a desire to meet Syed Ahmad. His had been an eventful career. His succession had synchronised with the advance of the Sikhs in that area and he had been steadily holding his own against them. He was bold and valiant but years of a constant and unequal struggle against a wily and opportunist enemy had dimmed the finer traits of his character and had made him highly suspicious of every thing and everybody. His estate occupied a strategic place on the way to Kashmir. Syed Ahmad, therefore, met him with a view to winning his support for the projected advance into Kashmir. An advance unit was sent under Shah Ismail. Their plea for passage through Amb towards Kashmir was, however, refused by Painda Khan, strangely enough, on the plea that his doing so would antagonise the Sikhs. This plea, coming from one who had spent his lifetime in actively fighting against the Sikhs, was astonishing indeed. Syed Ahmad decided to force his way and Painda Khan was defeated in the battle of Amb. By an Agreement, dated March, 1830, he agreed to give the right of passage and also to cooperate with them. The area to the east of the Indus was allowed to remain under him and he was promised a further *Jagir* in Kashmir and Peshawar after these would be occupied. Having secured these terms from the chief of Amb Syed Ahmad made preparations for an advance into Kashmir. Offers of help and cooperation were also received from Zamin Shah of Kawai in the Kaghan Valley", which was adjacent to Kashmir. An advance to Phulera<sup>10</sup> was decided upon. •The detachment was under the command of Syed Ahmad Ali, the nephew of Syed Ahmad. It was, however, taken by surprise in a sudden attack by the Sikhs and suffered heavy casualties, including the leader of the unit (1829).

The activities of Syed Ahmad's followers were by now causing sufficient concern to the Lahore *Darbar*. Ranjit Singh, therefore, sent a force under Sher Singh,

Allard and Ventura<sup>101</sup>. At the same time he sent a mission to Syed Ahmad consisting of Vazir Singh and Azizuddin<sup>102</sup>. He offered<sup>103</sup> the trans-Indus area to Syed Ahmad on the condition that he gave up incursions to the south-east of the river. Syed Ahmad, however, refused the offer as accepting it would have compromised his real intention of advancing against the English.

By now the whole area from Panjtar to Amb was securely in alliance with and under the control of Syed Ahmad. His attempts at religious and social reformation, however, caused some discontent among the chiefs and other vested interests. The promised amount of *Ushr*<sup>104</sup> had also not been sent by some of the chiefs of the Plains. An expedition was, therefore, sent to collect the *Ushr* dues and also to enforce adherence to the *Shariat*. The expedition was largely successful. However, Ahmad of Hoti Mardan raised an opposition, but being forced to abandon his fortress he fled to Peshawar where he started instigating Sultan Muhammad Khan, the chief of Peshawar and brother of Yar Muhammad, to rise against Syed Ahmad.

Sultan Muhammad ever since the death of his brother, Yar Muhammad, had been nursing a secret bitterness against the vanquisher of the latter. Some time earlier he had attacked the small band of Wahabis who held charge of the fort of Hund and occupied it. He had, further, threatened to advance on Panjtar itself, the head-quarter of Syed Ahmad, which was then unguarded. The latter, however, had returned to Hazara and Sultan Muhammad had retreated. At the instigation of Ahmad he once again advanced against Syed Ahmad. The battle of Mayar, the defeat of Sultan Muhammad and the subsequent advance on and capture of Peshawar (Oct., 1830) followed in quick succession.

The conduct of Syed Ahmad on the occasion of the capture of Peshawar is a shining example of selfless idealism. He could have occupied Peshawar and laid the

foundation of a small principality of his own. His aims were, however, different and higher. He restored the government of Peshawar to Sultan Muhammad. The decision caused some misgivings among his compatriots even at that time and has been criticised since then by others also. Even though the subsequent events justified the misgivings of Syed Ahmad's followers his decision was the only right one under the circumstances and in consonance with his ideals and objectives. Any other course would have resulted in prolonged enmity with Sultan Muhammad and a protracted and ruinous struggle which would have retarded the achievement of the real mission.

The government of Peshawar was restored but a few of Syed Ahmad's followers were deputed in Peshawar to enforce the running of the administration according to Islamic injunctions. Mazhar Ali was appointed as the Qazi of Peshawar and a party of some other persons from Bihar, including Qamruddin, was deputed with him. The battle of Mayar and the capture of Peshawar represents the high watermark of the Wahabi influence and political expansion in the lifetime of Syed Ahmad. The most important of the local chiefs had been suppressed and Syed Ahmad could now turn his attention to the Sikhs in right earnest.

However, a severe calamity was soon to befall the Wahabis. Owing to their extended area of influence small parties of Wahabis were stationed in the different places, including Peshawar. Sultan Muhammad and some other tribal chiefs, true to their dubious ways, were busy secretly organising a raid against those very men who had, with a rare magnanimity of character, restored them to power. Some measures of social reform enforced by the Wahabis and certain got-up religious charges against them were utilized for inciting the general population against the Wahabis. A secret and sudden *coup* was organised all over the places where small batches of Wahabis were stationed. A beginning was made with Peshawar where

Mazhar Ali, the Qazi, and the others were treacherously killed. Similarly the other parties were treacherously set upon and murdered. Only a few escaped to Panjtar to tell the sad story. This final and crowning piece of treachery proved too much even for Syed Ahmad who had constantly and selflessly attempted to forget and forgive all the previous similar acts in the hope that he would, perhaps, be able to reform them and win their willing cooperation by moral persuasion and religious preachings.

Towards the end of 1830 Syed Ahmad left Panjtar finally and moved out north to the Kaghan valley. Early in January, next year, he arrived at Rajduari which was an important strategic place commanding all the passes into the Pakhli plain. Soon after, the nearby pass of Bhogarmang<sup>11</sup>, a little above Shinkiari, which was a military outpost of the Sikhs, was occupied. Another detachment was sent to Muzaffarabad on the information given by Zabardast Khan, the displaced chief of that place, that it was lying unguarded. The detachment occupied the cantonment area and the small Sikh unit which had hurriedly returned to Muzaffarabad took shelter in the Garhi. That, too, was attacked but could not be taken as the local ally Zabardast Khan, like so many others, wavered at the final moment. The detachment was recalled by Syed Ahmad to Balakote where he had arrived in April, 1831.

Sher Singh having heard of the attack on Muzaffarabad had immediately returned from Peshawar, but on finding that the Wahabis had left it he took position, first, at Garhi Habibullah and, then, moved to Balakote where Syed Ahmad himself was present. Apparently, he was planning to have a final show down with the full Wahabi force which was present there. Syed Ahmed, too, recalled all his scattered units at Bhogarmang, Rajduari, Muzaffarabad, etc., to Balakote which was to witness the final battle of his career.

## REFERENCES

1. *Makhzan*, f. 9b; Mehr (Vol. I, p. 35) has mentioned the date of the month also — — — 6th Safar.
2. *Sawanih*, p. 4.
3. Mehr, II, pp. 478-479.
4. The different biographers of Syed Ahmed differ about the exact date of his departure but they are, generally, agreed that he was 17-18 years of age at that time.
5. *Makhzan*, f. 14.
6. Syed Ahmed's letter, P.U. MS. pp. 102-103.
7. Prinsep, H.T., *Memoirs of a Pathan Soldier of Fortune, Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk*, Calcutta, 1832. It contains a full biographical account of the famous historical personage.
8. The only work which treats the life of Shah Ismail in detail is Mirza Hairat's *Hyat-i-Tayyaba*. It is, however, not very authentic.
9. Some of these are : (i) *Mansab-i-Imamat*, (ii) *Taqwat-ul-Iman*, (iii) *Tanwir-ul-Aiy'nain*, (iv) *Usul-i-Fiqh*, etc. The J.R.A.S. Vol. XIII, 1852, pp. 310-372, contains a very important article by Mir Shahamat Ali, giving a biographical account of Shah Ismail and a full translation of No. (II).
10. Mehr, II., p. 18.
11. One who, in matters of religion, does not accept any guidance other than that of the Quran and the Hadis.
12. For details of tours see Mehr, I.
13. Mehr, I., p. 178.
14. *ibid.*, pp. 179-180.
15. *ibid.*, p. 186. The *Makhzan*, which is the primary and most authentic source of information on this point, mentions the year as A.H. 1238 (f. 56 b.) This, evidently, is a copyist's mistake for it is written on another folio that the party entered Mecca on 28th *Shaban*, 1237. Considering the time taken in the performance of the journey and the date of return being *Ziq'd*, 1238, as given in *Makhzan* itself (f. 102 b.), it is evident that the outward journey started in 1236 and not in 1238. Unfortunately, this mistake has been repeated in the subsequent published editions of the work.
16. Mehr, I., p. 202.
17. *ibid.*
18. *Vide infra*.
19. C.R., Vol. 51, (1870), pp. 82-83. Italics are mine.
20. J. R. A. S., Bombay, Vol. XIV, (1880), p. 353.
21. T. S., pp. 111-112; Mehr, I. pp. 169-171.
22. *Sirat.*, p. 218.
23. *Makhzan*, f. 64 b.
24. A resident of village Dankha, district Patna.

25. He was a butcher by profession, but a very wealthy man of charitable disposition.
26. *Makhzan*, f. 64 b.
27. Mehr, I., pp. 206-207.
28. *ibid.*; Hakim Shoaib, *Diwan-i-Fard*, Supp., Kanpur, A.H. 1332, p. 49.
29. p. 281.
30. Mehr, I., p. 206.
31. Mehr, I., p. 207.
32. *Makhzan*, f. 64 b.
33. Husain, F., *Hayat-e-bad-ul-Mamat*, Agra, 1901, pp. 25-28.
34. *Sirat*, p. 218.
35. Mehr, I., pp. 207-208, footnote 2.
36. p. 208.
37. T. S., pp. 112-113, 268.
38. The absence of Wilayat Ali, both, from Syed Ahmad's party and his house is itself a little inexplicable. According to *Tazkira-i-Sadqa* (pp. 111-112) after he had taken *Bas'at* at Lucknow, he accompanied Syed Ahmad to Bareilly and stayed there. However, he was not present in Syed Ahmad pilgrimage party when it started from Bareilly nor he was at Patna at that time. It, therefore, seems probable that after staying for sometime at Bareilly he returned to Lucknow for completing his studies, which he had left abruptly after meeting Syed Ahmad.
39. Mehr, I., pp. 208-209; *Sirat*, pp. 218-219.
40. Mehr, I., p. 210.
41. He was the great-grandfather of Prof. Akhtar Ahmad Orainwi of Patna University.
42. He was a resident of village Jamgaon (Dist. Bhagalpur), where he lies buried by the side of a mosque built by him in A.H. 1262 (1845). He took a prominent part in the Movement of 1857-59 in the Bhagalpur and Monghyr districts. According to the testimony of his descendants who are still residing in the ancestral house at Jamgaon-Zakruddin also took *Bas'at* during Syed Ahmad's stay at Monghyr (where he practised).
43. *Makhzan*, f. 64 b. According to the testimony of Shadiq Sahab, the maternal uncle of the present *Sajjadah Nashin* of the famous shrine of Mulla Shahbaz in Bhagalpur; the party of Syed Ahmad laid anchor at Brari Ghat where they stayed in their boats and did not enter inside the city. Maulana Ismail, however, came to the *Khanqah* to meet the *Sajjadah Nashin* and to arrange for a meeting in the *Khanqah* to preach his mission. The Shah Saheb, however, did not agree and the party proceeded on. Reference to this visit is contained in the *Khanqah* papers.
44. Mehr, I., p. 216.
45. *ibid.*, p. 219.
46. There were other passenger, too, on board those ships.
47. Mehr, I., pp. 220-221.
48. For details of his stay in Mecca and Medina see *Makhzan*.
49. *Makhzan*, f. 103 b.

50. *ibid.*
51. Mehr, I. p. 239.
52. T. S., p. 113.
53. *ibid.* p. 11.
54. T. S., pp. 268-271.
55. A famous saint of Bhagalpur who was a contemporary of Shahjahan. The *Madrasa* founded by him still exists.
56. Syed Ahmed appointed numerous '*Khalifas*' all over the country but the text of not a single *Sanad* of appointment has so far been procured. Thus one was seized from the house of Yahya Ali when it was being searched by police and was presented as an Exhibit in Ahmadullah's Trial. Its full translation in English is available in the printed trial proceedings (Selection pp. 32-34). A Persian copy of the original *Sanad* is still extant and belongs to Mr. Zaid of Sadiqpur, Patna City. The copy of the *Sanad-e-Mustatim* belonging to Shah Muhammad Husam, referred to above also contains a copy of it.
57. T. S., p. 269.
58. *Itahis* are many. These represent the quintessence of the socio-religious aspect of the Wahabi doctrine.
59. Paper and representation of the manuscript at Kuthala brought out in *Muharram*.
60. Hakim Shoaib, *op. cit.* p. 48.
61. I have seen a large number of old Persian *Sanads* and other documents in which the dates engraved on the seal are often anterior by a few years to the ones mentioned in the text.
62. The local Wahabis still held their weekly congregational prayer in this mosque.
63. There is even now very little awareness, much less appreciation, of these pioneer work of social reforms performed by the members of the Sadiqpur family.
64. Mehr, I, p. 241.
65. *Makhzan*, I, 199 b; Mehr, I, p. 282.
66. Mehr, I, pp. 287-288.
67. Vide *infra*.
68. For Dept. Pol. Cons., Nos. 72-76, dated 20th Oct., 1837.
69. For Dept. Pol. Cons., Nos. 69-72, dated 20th Oct., 1837.
70. Cunningham, J. D., *History of the Sikhs*, Calcutta, 1901, pp. 256-314.
71. McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, London, 1816, Vol. I, pp. 203-204.
72. *ibid.*, p. 163. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, App. IX, pp. 503-504.
73. The Yusufzai area comprised lands extending to the plains of Peshawar and of some situated in the hills to the north of Anbh. It was inhabited by a group of powerful Afghan tribes subdivided into the following smaller units: Usmanzai, Kamalzai, Razai, Omer Khel, Aba Khel, and Khudu Khel. The chief of the last mentioned tribe, Fatah Khan Pantani, was the most prominent in rank and position and in opposing the Sikh's hegemony. The Sikhs exercised control over the area by stationing regular detachments of troops in the plains north of Attock.



74. It is a pargana, comprising 8 villages, in the Peshawar district. It is inhabited by the Mahmudzai tribes. The actual village where Syed Ahmad stayed was Charsada.
75. Letter of Syed Ahmad quoted in Sawanah, p. 249.
76. The area between the mountain ranges to the east and west of Hazara is covered by a number of plain tracts of varying sizes. These areas are known by the general name of Sima which means plain.
77. A village on the western bank of the river Kabul in the Peshawar district. It is inhabited by the Khattak tribes.
78. Griffin, L., *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1892, p. 211.
79. A place of considerable antiquity, situated 17 miles east of Attock, on the right bank of the river Indus. It was a ferry centre for crossing the river.
80. A famous trading and manufacturing centre of tobacco in Campbellpur district, situated some 7 miles away from the Indus.
81. Syed Ahmad's letters quoted in Sawanah, p. 250.
82. *ibid.*, p. 248-251.
83. It is situated south of Akora where the first engagement took place.
84. It was the chief town of the Khudukhel tribal area to the north-west of Mardan and the seat of Fatah Khan. The old town was completely destroyed by the English during the expedition of 1858. The present town developed later.
85. P.U. MS. copy, pp. 115-119.
86. Mehr, II, p. 5.
87. One of the plain and level areas of the Hazara district, situated in the Nowshera Tehsil. It stretches 21 miles north to south and 10 miles east to west. It is a fertile and well cultivated area and is irrigated by the Siran river.
88. It is situated on the left bank of the Siran river a little south-west of Balakote.
89. Mehr, II, pp. 35-36.
90. *ibid.*, p. 53.
91. *ibid.*, p. 112, f. n. 1.
92. *ibid.*, p. 136.
93. McGregor, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 197.
94. Tarabela comprises a group of villages at the confluence of river Siran with the Indus, about 12 miles N. W. of Haripur. Siran is an important river of the Hazara district. It rises in the north of Bhogarmang valley and flows through Pakhli and the feudatory states of Amb and Phulera.
95. Sittana is situated in the Buner territory on the western bank of the Indus under the Mahabun mountain range. It was the seat of a saintly family of Syeds who were the foremost supporters of the Wahabis on the Frontier. Later on it became the chief centre of the Wahabi activities.
96. Situated on the right bank of the Indus, opposite Tarabela, some 5 miles from Sittana.

97. Apart from the three *tehsils* of Nowshera, Abbotabad and Haripur the Hazara district comprises a tract known as Fendal Tanawal which occupies the centre of the western half of Hazara.
98. The principality of Amb lies on the right bank of the Indus, Amb is also the name of the chief village in the territory.
99. Kaghan valley is situated like a wedge between Kashmir on the east and the tribal area on the west. Its length from N. E. to S. W., as the crows flies, is 60 miles. River Kunhar is the main stream in the valley. Kawai is a village in this valley, situated on the left bank of the Kunhar.
100. Phulera is the chief village of the estate bearing that name. It is situated on a small elevation, a mile from the right bank of Siran and 10 miles west of Nowshera.
101. These two European soldiers of fortune joined the service of Ranjit Singh during 1822. The former received a command in the cavalry and the latter in the infantry. Their annual salary was fixed at Rs. 50,000-. They were expert soldiers and were chiefly instrumental in imparting strict discipline and striking efficiency in the Sikh Army. The services of Ventura continued till later than Allard. Following the First Anglo-Sikh war a clause was inserted in the treaty to the effect that no European or American shall be retained by the Sikhs without the permission of the English (McGregor, op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 190-191).
102. Faqir Azizuddin was one of the most important courtier and counsellor of Ranjit Singh. He was his close adviser on foreign affairs and was often sent out as an emissary on important secret missions.
103. Meht. II, p. 202. *Sawanh*, p. 145.
104. Comprising 1/10th of the produce of lands.
105. The chief village in the valley of the same name in Nowshera *tehsil*

# CHAPTER III

## THE BATTLE OF BALAKOTE AND THE FARAIZI MOVEMENT

### I *Battle of Balakote :*

A detailed description of the famous battle has been compiled by Mehr<sup>1</sup> on the basis of the account given in the *Manzura* and the *Waqai*. These accounts are by far the fullest and the most reliable for this incident. However, both these are lacking in certain points, particularly those relating to the events of the last few hours of the battle, the death of Syed Ahmad, the identification of his body, his burial, etc. This is quite natural for most of Syed Ahmad's associates who were fighting with him died in the battle. Some others who survived and who were collected together to recall and compile their respective versions did so much later. Also, none of them was an eye-witness of those events.

Fortunately, a very important and unpublished account<sup>2</sup> of the Sikh version of the event is also available to us. It is contained in the Reports of the Newswriter in the Court of Ranjit Singh. Extracts from these Reports were forwarded by C. R. Wade, the Political Assistant at Ludhiana, to the Government of India. Finally, we have the most valuable account of the event as given by Mahtab Singh, the author of the *History of Hazara* who<sup>3</sup> compiled his work in 1854 and who was posted at Hazara as a revenue official from 1824 to 1854.

In the following lines I have, first, summarised the account as given by Mehr on the basis of the *Waqai* and the *Manzura* and then given a fuller summary of the versions contained in the *Tawarikh-i-Hazara* and the

News writer's Report. A comparative study of all the three sources will help a better understanding of those important events.

The forces of Sher Singh and those of Syed Ahmad faced each other across the river Kunhar. The village of Balakote was situated on an elevation on the western bank of the river. Sher Singh's forces were encamped on the eastern bank, a short distance down Balakote. Sher Singh could attack Balakote along two ways, (i) move up, along the eastern bank, opposite to Balakote and cross the river, (ii) ascend the mountains from the Pakhli side to the west of Balakote and rush down upon it. He chose the former course. Between the foot of Matikot hillock and the habitated portion of Balakote there was a low-lying area containing agricultural fields. The low ground had been excessively watered and made slushy with a view to hamper the progress of the Sikhs, should they come down that course. A small guard had also been placed by Syed Ahmad to protect the secret mountain path leading up the hillock. But once again treachery played its part. The secret path was divulged to the Sikhs and the small detachment guarding it was surprised and overwhelmed before any reinforcement could be sent. It was a major tactical blow to the Wahabis' plan of campaign because immediately after it the Sikhs swarmed all over the hill whose heights commanded Balakote. As the day of battle dawned Syed Ahmad ordered his followers to let the Sikhs come down the hill and plod through the slushy fields. The Wahabis were to open fire when the Sikhs came panting up the high ground on which the houses stood. It was as good a plan as could be chalked out under the circumstances. When the Sikhs started coming down the hills the Wahabis stood their ground as planned. Then, suddenly, Syed Ahmad himself took the lead and dashed out with some followers towards the foothills. The battle was then joined. The small band of Wahabis

got split up in even smaller groups and lost contact with each other. The battle was a pitched one and fought at close quarters. Syed Ahmad fell down fighting bravely at the foot of the hills. No one actually saw him falling down—all those fighting with him having died along with him.

The battle took place on Friday, 24th. Ziqad, 1246, corresponding to 6th. May, 1831.

Following the battle Sher Singh sought for the dead body of his adversary. A headless body was brought before him which, it was said, was of Syed Ahmad. He tried to get it identified. Later, the head was also found and he got the body buried by the side of the river. The next day he crossed the river on his way back. On the following day some of the Akalis who had stayed behind disinterred the body and threw it in the river. The head and body were later discovered at two different places, down the river, and were buried at Garhi Habibullah and Telhatta respectively. The present tomb at Balakote was reconstructed after a thorough enquiry into the events of that fateful day. It is not, however, certain that it is situated exactly at the spot from where the body was dug out.

The account given in the *Tawarikh-i-Hazara*<sup>6</sup> is as follows :

After the treacherous Massacres Syed Ahmad left Panjtar and was brought to Rajduari by Habibullah Khan Garhiwala, who was then disaffected against the Sikhs. Later, Syed Ahmad moved to Bhogarmang and then into the Kaghan valley. He gave it out that he intended to advance into Kashmir and started giving *jagirs* in Kashmir territory to Habibullah Khan and other local chiefs.

On hearing about Syed Ahmad's advance towards Kashmir Ranjit Singh felt disturbed and deputed Sher

Singh with 8000 men and guns to check Syed Ahmad. Other chiefs who were in Sher Singh's army were Sardar Attar Singh Kalianwala, Sardar Shyam Singh, Sardar Partap Singh Atariwala, Sardar Ratan Singh Garjakhia, Sadhu Singh Kanhal, Ratan Singh Kunglu, Wazir Singh Rangharikalia, Gurmukh Singh Lahna, and Lakhmir Singh, uncle of Jwala Singh Phidana (Bahramia?). This army was engaged in settling the affairs of the Yusufzai area. Having collected the revenues and the horses<sup>2</sup> Sher Singh, passing through Hazara, encamped at Shinkiari in Pakhli. Syed Ahmad was then at Bhogarmang, some 16-20 miles from Shinkiari. It was resolved by the Sikh chiefs that their assignment was to prevent Syed Ahmad from creating disturbances in the area belonging to the *Darbar*. He was then in Bhogarmang which belonged to the *jagir* of Sardar Hari Singh who should take care of Syed Ahmad and that they, themselves, should proceed to Muzaffarabad. Sardar Mahan Singh<sup>3</sup> objected to the plan and pointed out that it would be a mistake to proceed to Muzaffarabad without tackling Syed Ahmad first, but he was overruled. Sher Singh proceeded to Muzaffarabad and the besieged fortress was relieved. Najaf Khan Ghuriwala joined hands with Sher Singh and was admitted as the sole ruler of Muzaffarabad.

In the meantime Syed Ahmad moved to Balakote which was an important village in the Kunhar Pass. The local people came and offered allegiance to him. Mahan Singh (who had been left behind with a small force) wrote to Sher Singh that Syed Ahmad's men were collecting the revenues and the local people were joining him. How, then, could he support his troops? Sher Singh, thereupon, ordered Mahan Singh to withdraw with his troops and those of Wazir Singh Rangharikalia and Sadhu Singh Kanhal and Ratan Singh Kunglu to the *Garhi* (Garhi Habibullah). All these men numbered about 800. On reaching the *Garhi* (a few miles south of Balakote)

Mahan Singh started repairing the fortress known as Fatahgarh. While the repairs were going on a rumour reached them that Syed Ahmad's men intended making a surprise raid after crossing the river. The Sikhs became panicky. They dug up trenches and surrounded them with thorny bushes and then made a great din and bustle by firing their guns and blowing conches and running to and fro.

At the same time they sent a swift messenger to convey the news of their 'dire plight' and seeking reinforcement that very night. Sher Singh immediately ordered his troops to proceed to Garhi Habibullah. The hard-pressed Sikhs who had passed the night in great consternation were relieved to see the reinforcement columns next morning.

The fortress was fully repaired during the next sixteen days. After that the Sikhs moved their encampment to Phallakot, situated 6 miles from Balakote, on the eastern side of the river.

The commanders of the two armies kept a steady watch on each other from their respective encampments between which ran the river. Sher Singh often rode up with his officers to a point opposite Balakote and inspected the enemy's camp by binoculars.

One day Syed Ahmad played a trick. He got some grain scattered near his dwelling as a result of which a large number of birds flocked near the place. At the same time he sent some 500 men across the river to lay in hiding in the forests near the Sikh encampment. When Sher Singh during the course of his daily watch on the enemy's camp fixed up his binocular and saw large number of birds hovering on the other side he thought that the Wahabis had, probably, moved out and withdrawn. He sent a reconnaissance party to go to the other

side and report. The party was ambushed by the men sent by Syed Ahmad. Only two somehow swam across the river and told the sad tale.

Sher Singh once again took counsel on how to attack Syed Ahmad. It was, thereupon, resolved that part of the Army should remain where it was and that the Kashmir contingent comprising 1000 gunmen along with Tik Singh, *Thanadar* of Uri fort, was to guard the camp. The rest of the army crossed the river at a convenient spot and passing through Basiyan they got a foothold on the Matikot hillock.

The Hazara and Shinkari contingents also reached atop the hillock by another route through Tamri (?). The small party of the Wahabis who were deputed to guard the secret path leading to the top were overwhelmed and three or four of them were killed. The rest fled. A relief column sent by Syed Ahmad arrived too late to be of any help to the small guard and returned. The Sikhs spent the night on the top of the hillock.

On reaching the top the Sikhs faced a great difficulty. There was no water to be had anywhere. But luck came their way. There was a thunderstorm and a shower of hailstorms fell on their camps.

Next morning the attack commenced. Originally it was decided that the top should be guarded by a small force. So Mahan Singh with the Hazara Army and Lakhmir Singh, uncle of Jwala Singh Phidana, were sent to attack the Wahabis while the rest were to remain on the top and send reinforcements as the situation developed. As the attacking party marched down Shyam Singh Atariwala pointed out that it would not look nice at the time of reporting victory (if they won) that only those two *Sirdars* had fought nor would it look better in the case of defeat. Moreover, if they were defeated the



rest could not hope to return to Lahore across all the enemy-held territory. So it was better that they should attack together.

At the foot of the Matikot hillock there was a low ground after which stood, on an elevation, the village of Balakote in which Syed Ahmad and his followers were sitting ready with their bows and arrows and guns (zambooraks). An exchange of fire commenced between the two sides. The Sikhs had brought a cannon from Kashmir. They set it down and started firing shells. From morning till noon a brisk exchange of fire continued. The standard bearers of both Mahan Singh's and Jwala Singh's troops were shot down by the Wahabis and as the standards fell other Sikhs rallied to hold them aloft. On seeing the standard falling all the Wahabis remaining in Balakote come out. Syed Ahmad himself and Maulvi Ismail lead the attack and dashed towards the lowlands which lay between the two armies and cried out aloud that the enemy was falling back and that they should attack. The other Wahabis, too, started towards the hillock where the troops of Sardar Aitar Singh Kalianwala and Gurmukh Singh Lahna stood on one side. Those of Mahan Singh and Kunwar Sher Singh, too, arrived there and the battle was joined.

At first the Sikhs started falling back. Sher Singh drew out his sword and wanted to go to the battle-ground himself, but Mahan Singh and others asked him not to go alone. He, however, did not listen to them and started rallying the Sikhs. He abused and threw stones at the retreating Sikhs and thrust them back again in the battle-field. He sent a messenger to Shyam Singh and Partap Singh ordering them to start firing their guns and sent another person to Attar Singh for the same purpose. They started firing. 187 Wahabis along with Khalifa Syed Ahmad fell in that low ground. Another 400 *Hindustanis* who adored Syed Ahmad also fell. The dead body of

Syed Ahmad bore marks of bullet injuries on the right hand and on the chest below the left nipple.

The remnant of the Wahabis, numbering some eighty odd persons, made three attempts to take away the body of their leader but they failed due to heavy firing. At last one Wahabi cut off his head and ran with it. (This is highly improbable. Mutilating a dead body is considered a sin by Muslims. No follower of Syed Ahmad would have done this to the body of his cherished leader). That man was shot and finding it impossible to go further with the head he hid it in a heap of harvested mustard plants.

The Sikhs entered the village and looted and burnt the houses of Syed Ahmad and others. Eight guns (zambooraks), one elephant, ten horses and ten mules were captured.

Sher Singh on inspecting the battlefield saw the dead body of Syed Ahmad and thinking it to be of some chief he took it to his camp and asked his men to arrange for its identification. Nawab Khan Tanaoli who had been with Syed Ahmad for 2-3 years was brought before Sher Singh. He said it was difficult to identify without the head, but pointed out that Syed Ahmad's body bore some marks of personal identification—all the nails of his toes were 'deformed' (*naqis*). On lifting the shroud it was seen that the nails of all the toes were deformed. Some doubt, however, still remained. In the meantime a servant of Alam Khan Tanaoli came forward to say that he could disclose the whereabouts of Syed Ahmad's head if he were given a reward of twenty five rupees. Sher Singh at once gave him Rs. 25/- and deputed 25 *Sawars* and 50 foot soldiers to go with him. He pointed out the hidden head. When the *Sawars* were returning with the head of Syed Ahmad the Sikh soldiers, mistakenly, took them to be Wahabi horsemen and started arming themselves. Later, their true identity was revealed and every

body took a sigh of relief. The head was put along with the body and Nawab Khan Tanaoli was again called and he duly identified it. The body was handed over to some Muslims who were among the camp-followers of the Sikh Army. They recited the Quran for the whole night and on the next day having obtained order from Sher Singh buried the body in a grave by the side of the river (Kunhar). Sher Singh departed on the next day. Sardar Mahan Singh and Lakhmi Singh were ordered to supervise the withdrawal of the baggage towards Garhi Habibullah and to follow after all the troops had crossed the river. During Sher Singh's absence those two *Sardars* conspired among themselves to this effect; Syed Ahmad had caused them enough trouble in his lifetime and if his dead body was allowed to remain in a grave the Muslims would make it a 'centre of worship'. It would, therefore, be better if it was disintombed and thrown in the river. There were 7 or 8 Nahang<sup>10</sup> Sikh standing by and the two *Sardars* gave them Rupees twentyfive and told them that they would be doing a pious work if they would disintomb the *Khalifa's* body and throw it in the river. They did it immediately and having cut the body in several pieces threw them into the river. Having done this deed the two *Sardars* marched to Nowshera and thereafter they along with Sher Singh entered Lahore.

The battle between Khalifa Syed Ahmad and Kunwar Sher Singh occurred on the 27th. *Baisakh*, 1337 (*Samrat*), corresponding to 7th. May, 1831<sup>11</sup>.

The version given by Wade is as follows.

In his letter, dated Camp Desooha, 17th. May, 1831, Wade sent the following Extract from the Newswriter's report, dated 10th. May. "Despatches (have) arrived from Kuer Sher Singh and Bheman Singh (Mahan Singh?) Governor of Cashmere, stating that having obtained information of Syed Ahmad being at Doobh in the most (?) of

Hills difficult to access they left their position and engaged him. As the troops of the State were ignorant of the strongholds and passes of these Hills they were defeated with the loss of nearly 300 men and about the same number wounded. At length finding it impossible to maintain the contest they retreated seven and eight 'kos' and encamped. They added that it was their intention to resume the offensive immediately but the grain was dear in their camps, five small seers of wheat for the rupee. On hearing the intelligence, the Maharaja sent for his astrologers, Sankernath and Madosooden and after explaining the affairs desired them to ascertain by Astrology whether Kuer Sher Singh would be victorious or not in his intended attack. They replied that they would enquire and let him know."

Wade went on to add that since the foregoing information was sent letters had been received in the *Darbar* announcing the "entire defeat" of the fanatics. "Syed Ahmad had taken post in a strong place called Balakote where Sher Singh proceeded to attack him. The Syed left his position to receive the attack and was overpowered... The Syed's body was identified and was burnt by the Sikhs."

In a subsequent letter, dated Camp Mookerian 18th May, 1831, Wade quoted another report of the Newswriter, dated 14th inst. "A dispatch arrived from Kuer Sher Singh that Syed Ahmad having with a force of two or three thousand men consisting chiefly of peasantry of the country established himself across the *Nullah* at Malako' (Balakote?): he, the Kuer, advanced about noon on the 8th inst. aided by some *zamindars* of that part of the country, with the force of Partap Singh Atariwala<sup>12</sup>, Ratan Singh Gharchaker and other *Sirdars* amounting about 5 thousand men and crossing the *Nullah* by a ford took the enemy by surprise and investing them on all sides drew their swords from the scabbards and

killed the Syed with five hundred of his people taking their tents and baggage, an elephant, several swivels, swords, the rest of the party seeking their safety in flight."

The version given in the *Tawarikh-i-Hazara* besides being a completely unnoticed one is important from another point of view too. It explains some of the vague points in the *Manzura* and the *Waqai* and other published works of a later date.

It confirms Paget and Mason's account of the initial reverses of the Sikhs under the impact of the first Wahabi attack.

It explains the sudden and crucial decision of Syed Ahmad to move out of the entrenched positions to meet the Sikhs, across the low lands, near the foot of Matikot. It was, probably, the sight of the two falling standards of the Sikhs which made the Wahabis rush out thinking that the former were about to retreat.

Mehr has pointed out that the sudden abandoning of the previous plan was surprising and that it has been held by some followers of Syed Ahmad to be responsible for the Wahabi defeat. Mehr, however, has disagreed with this view and opined that the plan was abandoned possibly because the Sikhs started advancing from the South also and started a cannonade on Balakote from across the river. Neither of these two developments have been referred to in the *Tawarikh-i-Hazara* which is otherwise quite rich in details of the battle. Mehr himself admits that his above supposition has no facts in support but is the most likely one explaining the situation. The reason given in the *Tawarikh-i-Hazara* is another and a more likely one.

From the *Manzura* and the *Waqai* it is clear that both the forces remained facing each other across the river for sometime but these sources do not give the exact

period. The MS. is more helpful. It says that after Sher Singh's arrival 16 days were spent in repairing the *Garhi* and the battle took place soon after that.

It specifies the number of those who were fighting with Syed Ahmad during the last few hours and who fell fighting with him.

The Sikh reverse causing a loss of 300 men, referred to in the Newswriter's Report, might have occurred during one of the skirmishes with Mahan Singh's forces or during the 16 days while the *Garhi* was being repaired.

As for the date of the battle all the three sources mention three different dates. The margin of difference between these is not, however, much — 6th May according to Mehr, 7th May according to the *Tawarikh-i-Hazara*, and 8th May according to the Newswriter's Report. The last one is dated 10th May, 1831, and being the nearest in time is most likely to be the correct one.

## II. *Political Effects of Syed Ahmad's Frontier Campaigns.*

The episode of the struggle between Syed Ahmad and the Sikhs has been neglected or altogether omitted in most of the general works on the history of the Sikhs. This is due, partly, to the lack of availability and accessibility of materials on the subject in English. However, even the stray references that are available indicate that the threat caused to the Sikh *Darbar* by the activity of Syed Ahmad was not altogether insignificant. Even though Syed Ahmad was not directly interested in political matters his campaign did have at least one important political result.

Ever since the Treaty of 1809, Ranjit Singh had been casting his eyes towards Sind and on Shikarpur in particular. The British Government, in the beginning, confined itself to watching the Sikh intentions and moves in this connection without having any definite policy of its own.

P. N. Khera in his brief but brilliant work has succinctly summed up the position thus, "The decade from 1820 to 1830 was, with one minor exception in 1825, marked by what may be called non-interference, coupled with keen watchfulness. From 1825, when Ranjit Singh's army was well-organised, until the early years of Lord William Bentinck's period, when the British Government changed its policy of non-interference and developed further interest in Sind in pursuit of peaceful commercial projects, Ranjit Singh could have attacked Sindh and probably seized a portion of that country without inviting even a British protest, let alone British interference."<sup>13</sup> In fact the British were not then 'interested' in Sind. Ranjit Singh realising this even made preparations for the projected advance on the plea of demanding tribute which the Amirs paid to the Afghan Empire to which Ranjit Singh claimed succession. His plan was, however, baulked owing to the emergence of a new danger in the N.W. Province. "A formidable foe of the Sikhs, the fanatic Syed Ahmad, offered armed opposition and engaged the whole attention of the Sikh ruler for several years. Thus though the Syed was finally defeated and killed by Kanwar Sher Singh in 1831, he had indirectly saved Sindh from falling into the hands of the 'infidels'!"<sup>14</sup> By 1831 when Ranjit Singh was relieved of this danger he found that the English attitude towards Sind had changed.

The defeat and death of Syed Ahmad afforded a great relief to Ranjit Singh. Wade in his above-mentioned letters observed, "Ranjit Singh is elated with joy at a victory which relieved him of a constant source of agitation and inquietude to his government. He ordered a Royal Salute to be fired and the city of Amritsar to be illuminated in honour of the event." The messenger bringing the happy news was awarded "a pair of gold bracelets valued at Rs. 300/- besides a turban and a pair of Shawls." A letter was despatched to the Kunwar acknowledging the receipt of his Dispatch and the important services he had

rendered and promising an additional *Jagir* to him after his return. Faqir Imamuddin, Governor of Govindgarh, was at the same time ordered to fire a salute of 11 guns from every gun in that Fortress.

The Government of India also instructed<sup>16</sup> their Political Assistant to offer the congratulations of the Governor-General to His Highness on the "final extinction" of the commotion excited by that individual (Syed Ahmad).

The events concerning the last moments of Syed Ahmad's life were shrouded in mystery. That led to a controversy, which continued for sometime, regarding his actual end. He was last seen fighting in the thick of a pitched, close, hand-to-hand battle and then disappeared. Nobody actually saw him falling down. It led to the circulation of the view, among a section of the Wahabis, that Syed Ahmad had not died but "disappeared" and would reappear at a future date.

It is clear in the relentless light of logic and reason that Syed Ahmad certainly died in that battle. However, to the survivors of Balakote and to a great many of his followers it was a bitter and sudden shock difficult to swallow. They had sacrificed all their earthly belongings and suffered incredible hardships along with him for the achievement of a mission they had set up for themselves. Now by a sudden and stunning turn of fortune all that was on the verge of being lost.

The theory of 'disappearance' has to be viewed in this background. It was essentially an emotional reaction, an inability to believe in the death and removal of their cherished leader from the scene of his earthly operations. It also represented, symbolically, a fervent belief not necessarily in his actual life but in the continuance of his mission.



The deaths of Hitler and Subhas Chandra Bose are contemporary events of our own times. Their deaths, too, were shrouded in mystery. In spite of a thorough enquiry into the death of the former aided by latest scientific methods of investigation and the repeated findings of the Government of India, in the case of the latter, belief in the survival of these two respective leaders still exists among a section of their respective countrymen. If only political leaders could inspire such persistent devotion and loyalty one can imagine the fervour and attachment generated among his followers by one who was not only a political leader but the very personification, to them, of all that was good and ideal.

The house of Sadiqpur especially Wilayat Ali has been criticised both by English<sup>17</sup> and Indian<sup>18</sup> writers for their belief in and propagation of the theory of the re-appearance<sup>19</sup> of Syed Ahmad. He has been charged with deliberate dishonesty in propagating this belief. The step has been depicted as one motivated by a desire to keep alive the ebbing fortunes of the Movement and to maintain his own leadership of it.<sup>20</sup>

As explained above, this belief was a momentary emotional reaction. We need not necessarily take an uncharitable view of it. The services of Wilayat Ali and his brother, Enayat Ali, to the Movement were too solid and substantial to be supported by this weak prop of a doubtful advantage.

The intensity of belief in this doctrine got dimmed with the passage of time, the great healer of all shocks. A document<sup>21</sup>, dated 1845, specifically mentions that by the time when Enayat Ali first assumed the leadership of the Movement, in about 1839, belief in this doctrine had ceased to be a matter of cardinal importance. People could believe in it if they were so inclined but there was no compulsion about it nor was there any stigma attached

to those who did not believe in it. The same transformation of attitude also occurred in the case of the author of *Sawanih* who was originally a believer in this doctrine but with the passage of time he lost<sup>22</sup> faith in it.

Syed Ahmad died in the fateful battle of Balakote and along with him died the pick of his followers. After a brief period of despondency and chaos Sheikh Muhammad Wali Phulṭi was elected as the leader and took *Bai'at* from all those present. Another batch of the Wahabis which had been deputed to Muzaffarabad on the eve of the battle of Balakote returned from the former place and joined the group under Sheikh Muhammad Phulṭi.

During the next few years the Wahabis wandered from one place to another and sought the aid of different chiefs in order to recoup and to reorganise their resources. But the tribal chiefs were mostly governed by personal and parochial interests. They only wanted to use the Wahabis who were an armed, disciplined and battle-scarred group, for the extension of their own petty dominions or spheres of influence.

The first halt after Balakote was at a place called Nandihar<sup>23</sup>, where they remained for some ten months. On finding the attitude of its chief suspicious and non-cooperative they moved over to Panjtar, which had served as a centre of their activities during the lifetime of Syed Ahmad. But there, too, the same difficulties arose and they moved out to Amb, in response to an offer of aid and hospitality by its chief Painsa Khan. He had been defeated earlier by Syed Ahmad in 1830. He however appeared to be in a reconciliatory mood and invited them to settle in his territory. He gave them the fort of Jassi and some connected lands inside the neighbouring territory of the chief of Agrore.<sup>24</sup> Apparently, this was a gesture of help but in reality he was trying to kill two birds with one stone. There was a long-standing enmity

between him and the chief of Agrore. His sister had been betrothed to the chief of Agrore but the marriage was held up due to some dispute between the two. When he was defeated and driven out by Syed Ahmad his family was left behind and fell into the hands of the latter. They were handed over by him, in complete good faith, to the chief of Agrore to be sent back to Painsa Khan. The former while returning the rest held back Painsa Khan's sister who was betrothed to him. Painsa Khan never forgave him for it and harboured a secret enmity towards him. Now by granting the Wahabis a piece of land bordering on the principality of that chief he hoped to create a strife between the two. He hoped that the Wahabis would suppress him and, in the process, would be weakened themselves. He very nearly succeeded in his design. The Wahabis having realised his intention decided to give up his hospitality and proceeded to their old friend and benefactor, Syed Akbar Shah of Sittana. For the next three years they stayed at Sittana<sup>25</sup> (1838) during which period they gained the necessary breathing spell to reorganise their harrassed and disorganised band. Sheikh Muhammad Phulti had divided the group into two parties entrusted with two distinct missions. Once the Wahabis were settled at Sittana he proceeded to Takht-band, in Buner, and brought the family members of Syed Ahmad to Sittana. They wanted to go to Sind to join the remaining members of the family living there. Sheikh Muhammad's efforts were directed solely towards that task which he finally performed sometime in 1836-37.<sup>26</sup> He, therefore, did not take any appreciable part in the wars that followed. That was done by the other party under Nasiruddin Manglori, a resident of Shahjahanpur, in U.P.

Even after the Wahabis had got a temporary shelter in Sittana they were faced with the secret intrigues and inimical designs of several tribal chiefs who were planning for their defeat and ruination. To their west lay the territories of Fatah Khan. The tribesmen of the

Plains had turned into their enemies ever since their treacherous conduct against the Wahabis in 1830. The Sikhs, their most powerful opponent, were also there. However, these three years were a period of quiet and organised recuperation under the leadership of Nasiruddin. Funds and recruits from India were arriving regularly.

The caravans coming from India had to pass through the territory of Fatah Khan. Being opposed to the Wahabis but unable to drive them out, he took recourse to harassing and even looting the incoming caravans from India. This was striking the Wahabis at a very sore spot, for these caravans were the bearers of the valuable material help from India without which the struggle could not be carried on. The Wahabis therefore decided to deal in earnest with this source of interference. An attack was made on Manara<sup>2</sup>, a village where an Indian party had been intercepted and looted. Another erring village, Topi, was also attacked. The attacking party was, however, trapped inside the village by the men of Fatah Khan who cut their line of retreat and then with their superior forces surrounded and defeated the Wahabis. Nasiruddin, the leader, was killed. Thus ended one phase of the post-Balakote period. The next was to begin under the leadership of another Nasiruddin<sup>3</sup>, of Delhi. In the interval before his arrival Mir Aulad Ali, a resident of village Surajgarha, district Monghyr, was elected as the leader.

### III. *The Sind Party under the Leadership of Nasiruddin.*

The fortunes of the Wahabi Movement were at a critical juncture during this period. Their number had decreased as a result of years of desultory and petty skirmishes against one local chief or the other. The hostility of Fatah Khan had affected the flow of men and money from India. It was, therefore, felt necessary to elect a new leader who could imbibe a new spirit among the followers of the Movement. Nasiruddin was accordingly

elected. Being closely connected with the famous saintly house of Delhi, his election was a great source of inspiration. He started from Delhi in 1835 and marching through Tonk, Ajmer and Jaipur he arrived in Sind in 1837. During the course of the journey he was joined by various parties of recruits from India and, at Tonk, he also received valuable financial help from the Nawab. He first stayed at Pirkot, the centre of Hurs, where the family members of Syed Ahmad had been living. From there he proceeded to Hyderabad where he met the Amirs. They entertained him but did not extend any promise of substantial aid. According to the statement<sup>11</sup> of one of the emissaries of Nawab Mubarezuddaula of Hyderabad, who had been sent to Sind at about that time, Nasiruddin and his party had been ordered to quit Sind under the advice of Col Pottinger<sup>12</sup> but some influential persons had intervened on their behalf and they had been allowed to stay for sometime more. Nasiruddin thereafter retired to Pirkot again. He also stayed for sometime at Shikarpur where the above mentioned emissaries met him, and reported that there were some 200 followers with Nasiruddin who were expecting the arrival of the 'Bengal Army'.

The original plan of Nasiruddin was to proceed to the Frontier. However, owing to certain political circumstances he decided to stay on in Sind<sup>13</sup>, and make it a centre of his activities. He addressed letters from there to different persons and important chiefs in British India seeking their help and co-operation. The response to his appeal was encouraging and men and money reached him from different parts of the country, especially from Bihar, and Bengal where the Ali Brothers were at work. The name of Wilayat Ali has been repeatedly mentioned in Nasiruddin's letters in this connection.<sup>14</sup>

• In order to understand the reason for the selection of Sind as a centre of activity by Nasiruddin the prevailing political conditions of Sind have been briefly recounted

here. The account is based on the series<sup>33</sup> of reports submitted by Capt. Wade, the Political Agent of the English at Ludhiana.

The Amirs of Sind occupied a politically precarious position during the period. Hedged around by the three powerful kingdoms of the Sikhs, the Durrani and the English, they were afraid of aggrandizement from each of them. Their policy was, accordingly, improvised and opportunistic — siding with one or the other of these three powers according to the needs of the situation. During the heyday of the Durrani Empire Shikarpur belonged to it. Later the Talpurs of Sind gained possession over it but they paid tribute to the Durrani. With the decline of the Durrani Empire they withheld the tribute, but were always apprehensive of the renewal of the demand. As a matter of fact they paid 5 lakhs to Shah Shuja when he set out for the reconquest of Afghanistan and passed through Shikarpur. He was, however, defeated and after his return once again raised the question of arrears of tribute. In desperation the Amirs even thought of handing over Shikarpur to the Sikhs, in order to save themselves from Shuja's demand.<sup>34</sup>

Ranjit Singh after being checkmated in the south-east by the Anglo-Sikh Treaty of 1809 sought to extend<sup>35</sup> his political frontiers towards the south-west—Sind. He had even settled Abdul Nabi, a representative of the Kulhoras from whom the Talpurs had wrested Shikarpur, on his south-western border with a view to setting him up against the Talpurs in future. In his report, dated 18th May, 1831, Capt. Wade, with remarkable political acumen, had drawn the attention of the Government, immediately after the battle of Balakote, to the fact that the Sind area might next engage the attention of Ranjit Singh. "The Sikhs" he wrote, "having finally achieved the extinction of Syed who had afforded employment for their arms for the last five years nearly are now speculating on the future field of their exploits... It is in the direction

of Shikarpur, therefore, (to the acquisition of which from the Sindhians, Ranjit Singh has often looked with anxious eyes) or the possession of the Nawabs of Bahawalpur, situated to the west of Sutlej, that he is now likely to send his troops. About five years ago the Maharaja demanded from the envoys of the Amirs of Sind present at his Court the payment of tribute which the Amirs had been in the habits of paying to the Government of Afghanistan on the plea that since the dismemberment of the Cabool Empire he had acquired the greatest share of that throne and had succeeded to its share.<sup>40)</sup>

The Amirs were, at heart, desirous of opposing the Sikhs but had neither the resources nor the strength to do so openly. They, however, found a convenient ally in the Mazaris<sup>41)</sup> who were a tribe of Baluchis carrying on border warfare with the Sikhs. They enjoyed the tacit support of the Amirs and some other elements in the Sind politics. To check their incursions the Sikh Governor of Multan occupied the border fortress of Rojhan (August, 1836) and put a Sikh garrison there.

The English had their own designs in regard to Sind. In 1830 Alexander Burnes of the Bombay Army was deputed to carry, through Sind, the horses and some other presents sent by the King of England to Ranjit Singh. Commenting on the real design of this trip Trotter wrote, "His overt object was to get the Indus opened to British trade, but he was also to look well about him, to learn what he could of Sind politics, to explore the great river of which we then knew little, and try to make friends with the chiefs along its banks. Burnes's mission was highly distasteful to the Amirs of Sind who had no wish to open their country to foreign traders and distrusted all overtures from a power known to them only for its territorial greed. 'The mischief is done', said a Baluchi officer, 'the English have seen our country'.<sup>42)</sup>

The Amirs tried to thwart the Burnes mission by various pleas. Their opposition was, however, resented

both by the English and the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh took it as a personal affront since the mission was, ostensibly, to carry the royal presents to him. He wrote and pressed the Amirs to grant passage. The latter, while explaining to Ranjit Singh their reasons for opposing the mission, wrote that "the object of the Burnes mission, as given out, was a mere pretext, that the carriage which he was bringing was full of gold *Mohurs* for the purpose of being given to Syed Ahmad, the Maharaja's enemy."<sup>39</sup> The Amirs thus cleverly tried to exploit the fear of Syed Ahmad in Ranjit Singh's mind, in order to oppose the Burnes mission. They, however, failed in their designs and it was largely due to a military demonstration by Ventura, ordered by Ranjit Singh, that they finally agreed to it. Thus after many delays the young envoy was allowed to pursue his way, up the Indus, to the Sikh *Darbar*. Two years later (June, 1832) Col. Henry Pottinger concluded the Treaty which opened the Indus for irrigational and commercial purposes to the English.<sup>40</sup>

The English were apprehensive of the intentions of Ranjit Singh towards Sind, but did not want to oppose him openly. They also did not want the Amirs to encourage the Mazais in their guerilla war with the Sikhs lest this should give them a plea for more direct interference in Sind.

Ranjit Singh, in his turn, was equally suspicious of the political designs of the English in Sind. Capt. Burnes, in his above mentioned mission, was closely questioned on the point. Burnes tried to explain the objects of the English policy in terms which, he thought, would allay the suspicions of Ranjit Singh and contradicted the rumour, current in the Sikh *Darbar*, that the English had captured Shikarpur.<sup>41</sup> Commenting on the reply of Capt. Burnes, Wade in a letter to the Government expressed dissatisfaction with the reply. In his opinion Capt. Burnes could have better reiterated the observation of the Governor General-in-Council that the greatest object of



British Policy was the establishment of mutual good understanding as well as the preservation of peace and harmony among all the neighbouring powers, "an observation which has the merit of declaring what the wishes of the Government are without exhibiting them in a selfish form which is not of course likely to be pleasing to the Maharaja whose co-operation, in our view, I have been desired to secure by no other means than those of conciliation." It is thus clear that the English while wary of Ranjit Singh's designs were reluctant to antagonise him openly. They realised the value of his help and co-operation in meeting the supposed threat of a Russian advance in Central Asia — which then seemed so real and imminent. It was to meet that eventuality that they had given political asylum to the two exiled rulers of Afghanistan, Shah Zaman and Shah Shuja, through whom they wanted to extend their influence in Afghanistan which was the bone of contention between the English and Russian Imperialists.

Thus, both these major powers had aggressive designs about Sind and were watching each other closely. In fact, it is difficult to judge exactly as to what extent the English were hastened into action for the annexation of Sind by apprehensions of the Sikhs forestalling them.

Such was the political condition in Sind when Nasiruddin arrived there. He found the Mazaris a valuable ally, especially as they were carrying on a guerilla war with the Sikhs. They were neither under the influence of Sikhs nor the English. This is one more instance of the determination of the followers of the Syed Ahmad, even after his death, to keep away from the alliance of such Indian powers who were under the English. They preferred the alliance of those who, even though less resourceful, were more anti-English.

Nasiruddin accordingly settled in the territories of the Mazaris which was situated on the border of Khairpur

and corresponded to the south-western portion of the modern Dera Ghazi Khan district. In November, 1837, he attempted to recover the fort of Rojhan from the Sikhs.<sup>42</sup> But in the ensuing battle of Rojhan and Kan<sup>43</sup> his followers suffered defeats because of the defection of the Mazaris who made peace with the Sikhs through the mediation of Dewan Sawan Mal, the Sikh Governor of Multan. Once again the old pattern of events of the N. W. Frontier repeated itself—the Wahabis were deserted by their unstable allies. The Mazaris, like the tribesmen of the Frontier, were an indisciplined set of people who had neither the resources nor the organisation to fight consistently against the Sikh *Darbar*. At the first major repulse and also on some inducement from Sawan Mal they made peace with the Sikhs, leaving the Wahabis in the lurch. The position of Nasiruddin, naturally, became difficult. Their presence was felt as a source of political embarrassment by the various local chiefs whose shelter or help they sought. Nasiruddin, therefore, proceeded to Afghanistan. He was already in correspondence with some of the chiefs there.

In the meantime the relations between the English and the Afghan ruler, Dost Muhammad, the son of Painda Khan Barakzai, were heading towards a crisis. The events leading to the first Anglo-Afghan war and the thoroughly unprovoked and unjustified aggression of the English are well-known and we need not recapitulate them here. On the eve of the battle Dost Muhammad thought it useful to utilize also the services of the organised Wahabi forces. He, therefore, invited Nasiruddin and the latter moved with a party of one thousand persons towards Kabul. Nasiruddin himself encamped near Dadur and sent forward a detachment of 300 men who were posted for the defence of Ghazni.<sup>44</sup> They fell down fighting when the citadel was stormed by the English. Once again Nasiruddin's action demonstrated the fact that the Wahabis were eager to join hands with any power fighting against the English. "They were always happy"

remarked Hunter, "to get a chance for inflicting a blow upon the English infidels." Nasiruddin and the remnant party reached Sittana after a strenuous march towards the end of 1839 or early 1840. A small party of Wahabis under Aulad Ali was already present there. On his arrival Nasiruddin was elected the leader<sup>45</sup> but died soon after and was buried in Sittana.

Once again, as after the death of Syed Ahmad, the Movement was faced with a crucial situation but as on so many other occasions of history circumstances themselves brought out the man of the hour. This time it was the good fortune of Bihar, and Patna in particular, to provide the men destined to keep the Movement alive. To quote the powerful and picturesque language of Hunter<sup>46</sup>, "Again the fanatic cause seemed ruined. But the missionary zeal of the Patna Caliphs<sup>47</sup> and the immense pecuniary resources at their command once more raised the sacred banner from the dust. They covered India with their emissaries and brought about one of the greatest religious revivals that has ever taken place."

The activities of the Patna *Khalifas*, among whom the Ali Brothers admittedly occupy the foremost position, and their services to the cause of the Movement form the subject of a subsequent chapter. However, it is well at the conclusion of the present one to give an account of the almost forgotten Faraizi Movement and the inter-connected Baraset Rising of Bengal.

#### IV. *The Faraizi Movement*

The founder of the Faraizi Movement<sup>48</sup> was Haji Shariatullah of village Bahadurpur in Faridpur district. He was born in 1764. He set out for *Haj* at the early age of 18 and stayed in Arabia for the next twenty years. His Movement for the social reform of the Muslim society, started in 1802, was quite similar to that of Muhammad-ibn-Abdul Wahab of Najd. It denounced the "un-Islamic" innovations, customs and rituals and declared Bengal,

under the rule of the English, to be a *Dar-ul-Harb*. It inculcated a spirit of uncompromising puritanism among its follower who were characterised by a strict adherence to the commands of God, as given in the Quran alone.

The Movement was further organised and consolidated in the time of the founder's son and successor, Maulvi Muhammad Muslim<sup>10</sup> better known as Dudu Mian (1819-1860) under whose leadership its political aspects came into greater prominence.

The Muslim peasantry of East Bengal was being oppressed by the rapacity of the English Indigo planters and the newly created class of landed proprietors. Dudu Mian championed the cause of this oppressed class. He welded them into a well-knit organisation and appointed his *Khalifas* to look after the organisation of their respective centres in the districts of Paraset', Jessore, Pabna, Malda and Dacca. He also made them successfully boycott the English Courts of law and persuaded them to get their disputes adjudged in their own *Panchayats*.<sup>1</sup>

To the simple and oppressed peasants the doctrine of the social equality of all men as well as the repudiation of exorbitant and illegal cesses, as preached by Dudu Mian, was warmly welcome. He afforded protection to the peasants against the levy of unjust cesses. As a result many of the *ryots* of the local *zamindars* and the tenants of Dunlop, the local Indigo planter, went over to Dudu Mian's side. This was resented by the *zamindars* and they instituted several criminal proceedings against Dudu Mian. In 1847 the factory of Dunlop at Panchgarh(?) was attacked and looted. A series of suits and counter-suits between the two parties followed during the years 1847-57. Dudu Mian was finally put to confinement in the Alipore jail as a State prisoner.<sup>2</sup>

In its later stages the Faraizi Movement got merged into the wider Wahabi Movement and a local contem-

porary movement under the leadership of Mir Nisar Ali, alias Titu Mir.<sup>54</sup> Nisar Ali was a resident of village Chandpur in Baraset district. Belonging to a middle class landowning family he had a chequered career during his youth. Having come into contact with some members of the Delhi Royal family he accompanied them for pilgrimage to Mecca. He met Syed Ahmad there and became his disciple.<sup>55</sup> Having returned to India in 1827, he settled at Haidarpur near his former residence and began to preach his doctrines which were characterised by a similarity with those of Syed Ahmad. He successfully toured the districts to the east and north of Calcutta and enrolled a large number of followers. Very soon he gathered together a large number of followers and the three districts of 24 Parganas, Nadia and Faridpur came under his influence.

Nisar Ali, too, like Dudu Mian, championed the cause of the oppressed peasantry whom he tried to organise and raise from the age-old stupor. His efforts for reforms were naturally resented by the *zamindar* class. Some of the tenants also felt alarmed and aggrieved at the teachings which, *inter alia*, denounced some of their cherished social practices and customs. Taking cover of the complaints of these second category of *ryots* the *zamindars* tried "to check the growth of an association which treated them with scant respect and exhibited a power of combination which might hereafter affect their interest.<sup>55</sup>" It was the forceful collection of such fines which precipitated matters finally.

Kishen Dev Roy, the *zamindar* of village Poorna on the bank of Ichchamati river, had imposed a collective fine on some villages where a minor scuffle had taken place. The employees of the *zamindars* who went to collect the fines from one of the offending village, Surfrazpur where a considerable number of Titu Mir's followers were present, were opposed and finally beat back

(July 1831). Complaints and counter complaints followed in the local *thana* and finally both parties were acquitted. However, the *zamindar* began harrassing them in various ways. "He fraudulently exercised his powers to arrest for arrears of rent in order to harrass his opponents, he instituted fictitious suits against them in the Company's courts and had them arrested in execution of decrees.<sup>56</sup>" In the meantime the progress of the Movement continued in the other districts and it also become more militant. The victories of Syed Ahmad on the Frontier during the years 1829-30 gave a new vigour and hope to the adherents of the Movement who now felt more emboldened. The series of fruitless and troublesome court proceedings had wearied off their patience and they now resorted to more direct methods.

The village of Narkulbaria was the Headquarters of the insurgents and it was fortified with a bamboo stockade. Grains and arms were collected and stored in the house of one, Muizuddin Biswas. At about that time Titu Mir was joined by Miskin Shah, a *Faqir* hailing from the Punjab area who, it was said, was the instigator of the rising.

The first move of the armed insurgents was directed against the *zamindar* of Poorna who had harassed them so much. The village was attacked and plundered (October, 1831). "They assaulted a native Christian named Smith who happened to be passing at that time, maltreated those Mohammadans who did not belong to their sect and openly proclaimed the extinction of the Company's rule." Some<sup>57</sup> other acts of communal nature were also committed. Commenting, however, on the general deportment of the insurgents and the discipline in their rank, O'Kinealy has observed, "Everything seems to have been done deliberately in pursuance of a settled design... The insurgents affected a kind of military order and marched in ranks under Ghulam Masum."<sup>58</sup> They then advanced into the adjacent Nadia district and attacked other villages.

Piron, an Assistant of the Indigo factory at Bhaduria (Baggurrea?), informed his employers at Calcutta, early in November, about these disturbances and declared that unless repressive measures were taken "serious danger to the Government would ensue."

His employer, Storm, represented to the Magistrate of Baraset and the Lieut. Governor. The Government, however, in their usual short-sighted manner were reluctant to take any step. In the meantime detailed reports of the continued disturbances arrived at Calcutta from the Magistrates of Nadia and Baraset also.

A detachment of the Calcutta Militia was, therefore, sent to the Salt Agency at Bagundi (14th Nov., 1831) and Alexander, an employee of the Agency, was directed to join the force there and to proceed to Narkulbaria. He took with him the *Darogha* of Basirhat and some *Barkandazes* and proceeded with a force of 100 men. The insurgents numbered 600 men and were led by Ghulam Masum, riding on a horse. Taking a rather contemptuous view of the fighting qualities of the insurgents Alexander advanced to meet them. His force was, however, completely routed. The *Jamadar* of the Calcutta Militia, 10 Sepoys and 13 *Barkandazes* were killed. The *Darogha* of Basirhat and the *Jamadar* of Kalinga thana were wounded and taken captive. Alexander himself "ran for his life, pursued by the insurgents with drawn swords<sup>59</sup>," and escaped with great difficulty. Following the defeat complete panic prevailed at the Agency. The treasures were immediately put on a boat and sent, via Sunderbans, to Calcutta under Alexander's charge. In the meantime other factories in the Nadia district were attacked and the police declared themselves unable to meet the situation. The Magistrate collected all the available police force and together with Andrews of Rudrapur factory sailed down Ichchamati with a party of some 300 men to quell the disturbances. On reaching Bhaduria (Baggurrea?) factory they found that it had been attacked and its property looted as a

reprisal against Piron's lodging information with the authorities regarding the insurgents.<sup>60</sup> They also received news of the defeat of Alexander's party at Narkulbaria. It made them hesitate for a while to move against the insurgents, but finally they moved ahead. The Europeans, mounted on elephants and followed by *Barkandazes*, arrived at Narkulbaria where the insurgents were found to be a thousand strong and "drawn up in regular order led by Titu Mir." Thinking discretion to be the better part of valour the party decided on retreat. As soon as they turned their back they were attacked. After a slight skirmish in which a few *Barkandazes* were killed the party ran back to their boats and attempted to defend their position by firing some volleys. They were, however, pursued even after they had taken to the boats and the Europeans having abandoned their boats on the opposite bank ran to their elephants which were about a mile off. They retreated to Mulnath factory, some 26 miles away. One elephant, several boats and other paraphernalia fell in the hands of the insurgents. They then proceeded to attack the Hubli factory whose manager was arrested and brought before Titu Mir who demanded complete and unconditional submission. The manager "wisely assented and agreed to sow indigo for them as rulers of India."<sup>61</sup> By now the civil authorities in the affected districts were completely defeated and paralysed into inaction. The insurgents were supreme, for the time being, in the districts concerned.

Alexander had in the meantime arrived at Calcutta to narrate his tale of woes. The authorities, now awakened to the seriousness of the situation, took immediate steps. A detachment consisting of 10 Regiments of N. I., a troop of Horse Artillery with a few guns and some troops of the Bodyguard was directed to join Alexander at Baraset and they proceeded together to Narkulbaria which was reached on the 19th Nov., 1831. The troops advanced on the bamboo stockade which was taken after a spirited defence. Titu Mir, the leader of the insurgents, fell fighting in the



general action that followed. Ghulam Masum the Commander and 350 followers were taken captive. They were tried at Alipore and the former was sentenced to death and the rest to varying terms of imprisonment.<sup>62</sup>

Thus ended the brief but stirring episode of the Baraset Rising. The Government contented themselves with the remarks, on the report of the local Magistrate, Colvin, that "the insurrection was strictly local caused by factors which had operation in a small extent of the country." They however expressed astonishment at the 'temerity' and 'extravagance' of the 'rioters.' Commenting on this short-sighted attitude of the Government O'Kinealy wrote in the above-mentioned article, "Even now after the lapse of 40 years one cannot read the history of the insurrection without astonishment at the apathy displayed by the Government. In 1822 Syed Ahmad had preached war against the non-Muslim rulers of India without any impediment.. Liberal supplies of men and money were openly forwarded to him from Bengal. There was no attempt at concealment. Government must well have been aware of his conquests in the Punjab. Yet when his followers, trusting to their strength, rose in open rebellion within 30 miles of Calcutta the disturbance was treated as inexplicable and the rebels were treated as men devoid of intelligence, incapable of any design."<sup>63</sup> The Press, too, did not share the Government's reading of the nature of the Rising. On the contrary, it gave expression to a feeling of apprehension at the dangerous potentiality of the sect. O'Kinealy gives an extensive quotation from an issue of the 'Hindu Patriot', dated 2nd August, 1870, on this point. The newspaper observed that "Such sects as the Faraizis and Wahabis even if impotent themselves for a great Movement may gather all the discontents, hatreds, ambitions... which under the present not very wise, however beneficent and brilliant, rule must be numerous enough... The Faraizis, though a Bengal sect, are heard of outside in the Native states... There are scores of villages in Bengal but the Government

and the public alike are quite in dark as to them or their organisation, their politics or their religions. This bespeaks of a great neglect."

The Faraizi Movement and the Baraset Risings have been wrongly regarded as isolated episodes. These have to be studied in the wider background of the general Wahabi Movement. Although the origin of the Faraizi sect was anterior to that of the Wahabi Movement and it anticipated many of the essential features of the latter it gradually became merged in the Wahabi Movement and paved the way for its spread in Eastern Bengal in particular. It is significant to note that the period of the Baraset Rising coincided with the first phase of the Enayat Ali's missionary tours of Bengal.<sup>64</sup>

A word of explanation is also necessary in regard to the view that the Rising was purely communal.<sup>65</sup> It is unfortunate that the only account of the episode coming down to us is based on a few contemporary letters of the officials concerned and an article written by O'Kinealy. The other side of the picture is not available to us. However, certain facts can be gleaned from these very sources. The really important aspect of the Movement, viz. its struggle with the European planters is lost sight of or neglected in emphasis by the scholars. The areas covered by these disturbances comprised parts of the districts of Nadia and Baraset which were "studded with Indigo factories, and not far from the Salt Agency at Bagundi."<sup>66</sup> The oppression of these Indigo planters on the local peasantry should be familiar to students of the economic history of the 19th century. It is also significant that the initial efforts against the insurgents were made by the planters themselves. It was due to their persistent representations that the authorities finally took steps against the rebels. Their representations themselves are proof of the fact that the Rising was directed against and affected the vital interests of the planters as a class. As the above-mentioned account of the events shows the

first battle took place with the planter's force which was defeated and it was only when they failed that regular Government troops were sent and finished the job. The declaration of the cessation of the Company's rule is another significant fact to be considered. These facts are certainly not in consonance with the aims of a Movement alleged to be solely directed against the Hindus.

The Rising was essentially the effort of an oppressed peasantry hounded and harassed by the double pronged depredations of an unscrupulous and exploiting planter's class and the newly created class of landed proprietors. The latter had been enabled under the proprietary rights given to them by the Permanent Settlement to treat their tenants with impunity. Even Colvin, the Magistrate, in his report on the Rising noted that "the power possessed by the *zamindars* enabled them to exercise a petty jurisdiction among their *ryots* and to make petty exactions on all kinds of pretexts."<sup>77</sup>

Dr. Chaudhri in his highly informative study of the nature of the various anti-British Movements in India has very aptly observed about the Faraizis that "In its social and economic aspect the Wahabis were<sup>78</sup> on the side of the helpless peasants whom they helped to resist the tyranny and oppression of the upper classes<sup>79</sup>."

Another point is also worth emphasising. This was the attempt to inculcate a spirit of passive non-cooperation among the masses by refusing to take service under the English and by refusing to go to English Courts. It was the significant beginning of a principle on the basis of which a magnificent structure was to be raised in the subsequent history of India's Freedom Movement.

## REFERENCES

1. Mehr. II, pp. 385-414.
2. For. Pol. Cons. Nos. 39-41, dated the 17th June, 1831.
3. Vide Introduction.
4. Mehr. II, p. 414.
5. Diwan Amarnath, the author of *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* gives the interesting information that Sher Singh ordered an expert painter to prepare a painting of Syed Ahmad. It was sent to the Lahore *Darbar* where it was seen by the chronicler himself (pp. 193-95).
6. *ib.* 78b-86b.
7. This is by far the fullest list of the important Sikh chiefs accompanying Sher Singh. Some of the names have not been given in any other source.
8. Horses were a highly valued form of tribute or gift.
9. Man Singh was the son of Sardar Hari Singh and was deputed with a small force to join Sher Singh (*Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* p. 193). This explains why he was anxious to tackle Syed Ahmad first -- his presence in Balakote must have posed a threat to his father's *yagu*.
10. A sub-sect of the Sikhs noted for its uncompromising religious and militant fervour.
11. Actually the MS. mention the year 1837. Obviously, it is a copyist's mistake for the Vikram Sambat year 1887 mentioned alongside, corresponds to 1830-1831 and not 1837.
12. The author of *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh* mentions the names of Sardar Ratan Singh Gharjania, Partap Singh Mariwala, Sardar Iyala Singh Bahramia, Sham Singh Nahang, Hari Singh and Attar Singh among those who accompanied Sher Singh.
13. P. N. Khera, *British Policy towards Sind upto the Annexation 1843*, Lahore, 1941 p. 8.
14. *ibid.* p. 9.
15. *ibid.* pp. 9-21.
16. For. Pol. Cons. No. 44, dated 17th June, 1831.
17. C.R., Vol. 51, pp. 186, 392; I.M., pp. 61, 64.
18. Obaidullah, M. (Sindhi), *Shah Waliullah Aur Unki Siyasi Tahrik*, pp. 159-61, 195.
19. Wilayat Ali's article, entitled *Risala Dawat* published in *Risail-i-Tisa*.
20. I.M., pp. 47-48.
21. P.U. MS., Supp. p. 220.
22. *Sawanah*, pp. 179-80.
23. Nandihar is situated in the Swat area between the Daishi, Kosh and Bhogarainang valleys.
24. Agrore is a small valley in Manshera *Tehsil*, lying at the foot of the Black Mountains. It is separated from Pakhli by the Chir-clad ridge of Chinglai.

25. Bellow, H.W., op. cit., p. 91.
26. Mehr, IV, p. 124.
27. A village originally situated on the bank of the Indus. It was washed away during the great flood of 1841.
28. He was the son-in-law of Moulvi Ishaq, the grandson and spiritual successor of Shah Abdul Aziz.
29. For. Dept. Sec. Cons. No. 21, dated 10th July, 1839.
30. Lieut. Col. Pottinger was the Political Agent at Kutch. He was instrumental in concluding the Agreement of the 20th April, 1839, which opened the Indus to the English for commercial use. Later on he became a Resident in the Court of the Amirs and played an important role in the annexation of Sind.
31. According to Mehr, (Vol. IV, p. 118.) Nasiruddin was advised, during his stay at Tonk, by Nawab Vaziruddaula to make Sind his centre.
32. Mehr, IV, pp. 171-72.
33. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. Nos. 65-69, dated 20th Dec., 1837. Also see P. N. Khera, op. cit., pp. 6-51 and Cunningham, op. cit., pp. 285-300.
34. Cunningham, op. cit., p. 285.
35. Khera, op. cit., pp. 25 ff.
36. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 41, dated 17th June, 1831.
37. Khera, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
38. Trotter, L.J., *Lord Auckland*, Oxford, 1893, p. 40.
39. Khera, op. cit., p. 12.
40. Ibid, Appendix VI, pp. 69-70.
41. Pol. Cons. No. 66, dated 20th Oct., 1837.
42. Mehr, IV, p. 192.
43. Ibid, pp. 193-94.
44. I.M., p. 21; C.R. Vol. 51, pp. 188, 381; J.I.H., August, 1933, pp. 251-268.
45. The distinction between this party and the other party of the Wahabis on the Frontier who were the remnants of Balakote and were under the leadership of Nasiruddin Manglori should be borne in mind. Some of the earlier activities of the latter were simultaneous with those of his namesake in Sind.
46. I.M., pp. 49-50.
47. Wilayat Ah and Enayat Ah.
48. The term *Faraizi* is derived from *Farz* or the commandment of God, which alone the followers of the Movement accepted as the guide of their action.
49. Mehr, IV, p. 215.
50. Selections, p. 140.
51. Mehr, IV, p. 215.
52. Selections, p. 141.
53. A detailed account of the Movement is given in an article, entitled 'History of the Wahabis in India', in the *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 51, (1870), pp. 177-192 and in Thornton, E., *History of India*, London, 1843, Vol. V, pp. 179-183. S. B. Chaudhri, *Civil Disturbances in India*, Calcutta, 1955, pp. 95 ff. also contains an account of this rising.

54. I.M., p. 15; Thornton, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 179. The MS. copy of *Tarikh-i-Ahmadi* belonging to the West Punjab University Library also contains an account of Nisar Ali's Rising. Unfortunately, inspite of my best efforts I could not obtain copies of the relevant portion of this MS.
55. C.R., Vol. 51, p. 177.
56. Ibid; p. 179.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid; p. 181.
60. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept. O.C. No. 5 dated 3rd April, 1832.
61. C.R., Vol. 51, p. 183.
62. Ibid, p. 184.
63. Ibid.
64. Vide infra.
65. S.M.R., pp. 37-38
66. C.R., Vol. 51. p. 180.
67. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept. O.C. No. 5 dated 3rd April, 1832.
68. He has used the word Wahabi in a wider ense including the Faraizis.
69. S. B. Chaudhri. op cit., p. 50.

## CHAPTER IV

### WILAYAT ALI AND ENAYAT ALI

#### I. *Careers and Activities of Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali.*

The history of the Wahabi Movement, at least from 1831 to 1858, is to great extent the history of the activities of Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali of the Sadiqpur family of Patna. Their selfless zeal for the promotion of the Mission and their various sacrifices in the service of the Movement have earned the ungrudging praise of even Sir William Hunter. He observed, "Indefatigable as missionaries, careless of themselves, *blameless in their lives, supremely devoted to the overthrow of the English Infidels*<sup>1</sup>, admirably skilful in organising a permanent system for supplying money and recruits, the Patna Caliphs stand forth as the types and exemplars of the Sect. Much of their teaching was faultless and it had been given to them to stir up thousands of their countrymen to a purer life and truer conception of the Almighty."

Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali were the sons of Fatah Ali of Sadiqpur, Patna City.<sup>2</sup> Wilayat Ali, the elder of the two, was born in A.H. 1205 (1790-91). He was a man of average height, dark complexion and a fat build. He had a beard and close-knitted eyebrows. He received his early education from his father. Later he was sent to Lucknow where he took training under Ashraf Ali of the Farangi Mahal.<sup>3</sup> It was there that he met Syed Ahmad and took *Bai'at*. Subsequently he persuaded his family members to take *Bai'at* on Syed Ahmad's hands. He accompanied him when he left Patna.

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Wilayat Ali was first married at the age of fifteen to Bibi Amiran, the daughter of Maqsud Ali of village Labna Pakhtoli in the district of Arrah. She died issueless. He married again, during the course of his stay in Hyderabad

(Deccan), the daughter of a local nobleman, Mirza Wahid Beg. He had several issues from this marriage, including Abdullah the leader of the Wahabis during the well-known Ambeyla campaign. Again in order to propagate the principle of widow-remarriage, he married the widowed daughter of Elahi Bux. The first case of widow-remarriage among the local Muslims of high family and social status, it created quite a sensation at the time but demonstrated his courage of conviction.

Enayat Ali, the younger brother, was born in A.H. 1208 (1794). He was a man of medium height and fair complexion. He was bearded and had a fine muscular body and an impressive personality. He, too, had his early education from his father. Later he became the student of Syed Muhammad Musafir, a prominent gentleman of rank and a great teacher of exegesis, living in Patna City. He first married Muhammad Musafir's daughter, Amna. After her death he did not marry again for fifteen years, when he was mostly touring Bihar and Bengal for missionary work. After the death of Akbar Ali, son of Elahi Bux, Wilayat Ali got Enayat Ali married to Bibi Sharifan, the widow of Akbar Ali and daughter of Muhammad Husain, who lived with her husband at Jessore in the house of Mufiduddin and always accompanied him on his missionary tours. He, too, took Bai'at along with other members of his family and joined Syed Ahmad later on the Frontier.

The life and activities of Enayat Ali are remarkable for the energy and zeal he displayed in the cause of the Movement. He kept on working, alternatively, in two such far-flung places as the N. W. Frontier and Eastern Bengal, waging and supervising an active war in the former, and preaching and enrolling new members in the latter.

After a short stay on the Frontier both the brothers were deputed by Syed Ahmad to do missionary and



organisational work in India. Unfortunately, we do not know the exact date of their return to India. Syed Ahmad in his letter to the Patna leaders<sup>1</sup> mentioned the deputation of the Ali Brothers to India. From that time till the departure of Enayat Ali to the Frontier in 1839 both of them were engaged in organisational and constructive work in the greater part of eastern and southern India.

The Brothers were at first reluctant to leave the company of Syed Ahmad and to come away from the Frontier. However, he persuaded them to agree, remarking that he was spreading them out like seeds. His prophecy came only too true and their efforts came to fruition in the later years. They were the pioneers in perfecting a system of relay of men and money from India which continued with wonderful efficiency and fool-proof accuracy for a long time.

The two important sources of information on this phase of their career are the *Sawanih* and the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*. The account of Wilayat Ali as given in the latter is primarily based on that of the former, which itself is a general and summary account without much of a chronological sequence. Thus, for instance, in connection with the account of Wilayat Ali's activities immediately after his return to Patna, on hearing the news of the death of his father (about 1831), the author of the *Sawanih* has described the arrival of Syed Abbas and Zainul Abedin who had escaped from Hyderabad following the Mubarizuddaula's Conspiracy, which occurred much later, in 1839, but has been mixed up with the events of 1831.

The activities of the Ali Brothers during this period were purely missionary and organisational. They were selfless and zealous promoters of the cause. Owing both to their temperament as well as the necessity of the circumstances, the Brothers did not keep any record of their activities. For this phase, therefore, we have very

little information about them either in the Wahabi pamphlets or the Government records. The latter referred to them only when they drew the attention of the Government on account of their "treasonable activities." That happened later, from after 1840, and we have a fuller account from that period.

Wilayat Ali along with Syed Karamatullah and Abdul Qadir of Bihar was deputed by Syed Ahmad to work in Bombay and the Deccan. At the former place he replaced Muhammad Ali Rampuri who went to Madras. He was still in the South when the sad tidings of the disaster at Balakote reached him. At about the same time his father, Fatah Ali, also died at Patna. He, therefore, returned to Patna travelling via Madhya Pradesh. Enayat Ali had returned earlier on hearing the news of the illness of his father.

At Patna, Wilayat Ali took charge of the reorganisation of the Movement. Many persons renewed their *Bai'at* on Wilayat Ali's hands. He appointed Muhammad Husain in charge of the local Nanmohia mosque, one of the earliest and important centres of Wahabis in Patna. He also placed him in charge of the Movement in Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Chapra districts.<sup>6</sup> He re-established the weekly congregational prayer in another mosque in the city, known as Fakhruddaula's mosque.<sup>7</sup> Meetings were also held at his house in which the Quran and Hadis were taught in plain and simple language and lectures given on theological and political matters. The idea was to make the people understand for themselves the commandments of God. The emphasis was on direct understanding of the Quran and on the need to do away with the intermediary *Ulema* class against some of whose prevailing practices the Movement was originally directed. The gatherings included women, children and uneducated laymen. The translation of the Quran by Abdul Qadir<sup>8</sup> and of the *Mishkat* by Qutubuddin of Delhi was requisitioned from Delhi and its copies distributed in large numbers among the members of the gathering.

Wilayat Ali also went on tours. He often stayed at a particular place for several months concentrating on the initiation and training of one man and entrusting the organisation of the local unit to him. These tours took him to people in all walks of life, the farmers in their fields and the weavers at their spinning wheels. He also visited Biharsharif, which was a great centre of Sufistic influence, and tried to spread his message there.<sup>8</sup>

Enayat Ali after his return from the N. W. Frontier did extensive missionary work in the countless villages of the eastern districts of Bengal. Detailed and authentic information about his work is available to us in the contemporary police records.<sup>9</sup> As early as March, 1843, the Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces, reported<sup>10</sup> to the Government the existence of a band of 'Muhammadan Mullahs', moving about the districts of Baraset, Jessore, Pubna and Rajshahi etc., preaching a religious war against the Sikhs, "the allies of Government" and "endeavouring to procure recruits and money for that purpose." The leading man of the party was a "native of Patna, called Enayat Ali." The report added that while their efforts for procuring recruits had not met with much success the collection of funds was progressing more satisfactorily.

A subsequent report from the same officer gave additional information about the other leaders among the *Mullahs*, the aims and objects of their preachings, as well as his own efforts to counter the effects of their preachings among the masses. It was reported<sup>11</sup> that besides Enayat Ali, Karamat Ali<sup>12</sup> and Zynooddeen (Zainul Abedin) of Hyderabad were also working in the above-mentioned districts. Their appeal for recruits was getting encouraging response and they had fixed upon the village Narayanpore, near Jungypur in Murshidabad district, as the place where the followers were to collect before proceeding to the 'North-West.'

The Superintendent of Police further observed that the Muhammadan population in the Eastern districts was largely composed of "Faraizis, that is Wahabis, strongly united together, very fanatic, under control of particular leaders, *inimical to our Government*, and they required to be most carefully watched for if there is any danger of an outbreak in these provinces it is from the excited religious fanaticism of this sect.<sup>13</sup>"

Steps were being taken, added the Superintendent of Police, by the Magistrates of the districts concerned, particularly of Murshidabad, to keep an eye on the assemblage of these men and to propagate among the people the 'folly' of such preachings. If any coercion was needed such force would be taken out "as at once to overawe the people."

In another letter<sup>14</sup> the Superintendent of Police reported that Enayat Ali had for some time been visiting different parts of Bengal collecting money from his followers, "making use, I understand, of the topic of a religious war and the resurrection of Syed Ahmad as a pretext for calling for aid... He has however left this part of the country to go to Patna." In yet another letter<sup>15</sup> it was reported to the Government that he had written to the Magistrate of Bhagalpur requesting him to report whether any groups of men were passing through his district to the North-West, and that from the reply of the Magistrate it appeared that men from the districts of Baraset, Jessore, Mymansingh and Rajshahi had passed in different bodies to the number of 800 or 900 stating that they were proceeding to Mecca.

The Government, in a consolidated reply<sup>16</sup> to all these reports of the Superintendent of Police, while expressing their disinclination to "attend much importance to the preaching,<sup>17</sup>" directed him to use a guarded mixture of advice and admonition in conveying to the leaders in particular and the people in general that they would be

held responsible for any "outrage" or "breach of peace" into which they or their followers might be involved. The Magistrates might also adopt a similar procedure in their respective districts and might, on suitable occasions, give a well-timed warning to the people of the consequence of "riotous assemblage and tumult." They were also desired to send weekly reports of such activities in their districts and the Superintendent of Police was directed to visit such of those as appeared to be most "obvious to suspicion." The people in general were also to be placed on their guard against unusual meetings and "extraordinary collections of Muhammadans." The Superintendent of Police was further desired to "report frequently to the Government on the results of the inquiries into the subject."

The most important contribution of Enayat Ali's work in Bengal during this period was the inculcation and development of a civic and corporate spirit among the villagers, the adoption of a policy of civil disobedience to the Government, and the boycott of some of its administrative organs, particularly the courts.

O'Kinealy stresses a very important aspect of the teachings of the Wahabi missionaries sent to the villages of Bengal by Enayat Ali. It was proclaimed, he observes, that "those who were not in a position to abandon this country and join in *Jihad* were recommended to resist passively and refrain from all intercourse, with their *Kafir* rulers, to form, as it were, a power within the Government and totally opposed to it. Assistance should not be demanded from the infidels, their courts, which decreed interest, should be avoided and all complaints between brother and brother should be decided by the local leaders."<sup>10</sup>

The centre of this newly formed corporate life was the village mosque. The *Imam* of the mosque besides his religious duties was also entrusted with the judicial work

of deciding disputes among the followers. People were forbidden to take their cases to the Government Courts and persuaded to get them settled by their own corporate bodies. Some important locality with a bigger mosque was selected as a higher unit covering an area of over 10 miles. A well-educated man was appointed as an *Imam* there, with appellate authority in judicial and other matters requiring higher consultation and advice. The mosques also served as the collecting centres of local contributions. It will be seen that this was a system which drew heavily upon the earlier Faraizi organisation. It was largely owing to Enayat Ali's successful missionary work in the area that in the subsequent stages Bengal became foremost in the supply of men and materials for the prosecution of the war on the Frontier.

During this period Wilayat Ali himself proceeded on an inspecting tour of Bengal. Earlier, Zainul Abedin and Abbas had arrived at Patna from Hyderabad and had been deputed by Wilayat Ali to Orissa and Allahabad as '*Khalifa*' to organise the Movement there<sup>19</sup>. He appointed Badiuzzaman as the local '*Khalifa*' at Calcutta and gave him the charge of the Misrigunj mosque there. Afterwards he left for Bombay on way to Hedjaz for the performance of *Haj*. At the former place he stayed for two months and appointed Enayatullah as his '*Khalifa*'. After performing the *Haj* he travelled to Yemen, Najd, Yasir and Muscat. During that tour he met the famous Qazi Shukani<sup>20</sup> from whom he took a certificate of proficiency in exegesis and also brought several of his works to India. He returned to India after two years and, having once again toured some of the districts of Bengal, came back to Patna with his younger brother. Thus ended the first phase of their work which consisted mainly of laying the foundations of a stable and efficient internal organisation. •

The second and more active phase of their careers was to begin in the Frontier in the year

immediately following the death of Ranjit Singh. The death of Ranjit Singh (1839) and the generally anarchical conditions prevailing in the Punjab after it, leading to the first Anglo-Sikh war, served as a background for the activities of the Ali Brothers on the Frontier. According to the terms of the Treaty of 9th March, 1846,<sup>21</sup> the Sikhs ceded to the English the Jullundar Doab and agreed to pay a cash indemnity of 15 million rupees. Since the treasury was short of the cash the whole of the mountainous area between the rivers Beas and Indus, including Kashmir and upper Hazara, was also ceded to the English in lieu of 10 million of the indemnity. The balance was to be paid at the time of the confirmation of the treaty. Out of the ceded area the lands to the west of Ravi and east of the Indus were sold to Gulab Singh, the Governor of Hazara and Kashmir, for seven and half million Nanakshahi rupees. Upper Hazara was also included in that area. In the lower Hazara, on the other hand, the various local Pathan tribes, convinced of the utter breakdown of the Sikh Government, were in a state of semi-independence and striving for complete freedom from the Sikh tutelage. Even in upper Hazara Gulab Singh was far from exercising any effective control over the newly acquired territory. He could reach it only after gaining effective control over Kashmir. But the Governor of Kashmir, Imamuddin, on secret instruction from Lahore, refused to give charge to Gulab Singh.<sup>22</sup> So far all practical purposes both Kashmir and upper Hazara were out of control and seething with discontent and revolt. At both these places there developed centres of opposition to the Sikhs. These centres of opposition were led in upper Hazara by Enayat Ali and in lower Hazara by Akbar Shah.

To restore some semblance of order in the financial and administrative affairs of the newly acquired areas Abbott had been posted at Hazara. At the same time Henry Lawrence, the Resident at the Lahore Court, moved with a small force to Jammu from where he sent Herbert

Edwardes to Imamuddin. The latter was won over and induced to hand over Kashmir to Gulab Singh.

It was during these years of disturbances and anarchy that Syed Zamin Shah<sup>21</sup> wrote to Wilayat Ali and invited him to come and take up the broken threads of Syed Ahmad's work for which the circumstances were favourable.<sup>22</sup> Wilayat Ali, accordingly, recalled his younger brother from Bengal where he was preaching at that time. Enayat Ali came to Patna with a party of some two thousand followers. In order to avoid suspicion of the Government the full party was broken up into small batches. Each batch moved out of Patna after short intervals and the whole party was thus sent out in about five months. The process of departure started in July, 1843, but Enayat Ali himself started a little later, in November, reaching the Frontier towards the end of 1844.<sup>23</sup> Prominent among those who accompanied him was Aulad Ali of Surajgarh. He was in the Frontier at the time of the death of Syed Ahmad and for some time afterwards but had returned to arrange for reinforcements.

The events between the period of the death of Syed Ahmad (1831) and the departure of Enayat Ali (1844) are briefly mentioned by several English writers. According to Bellew<sup>24</sup> Fatah Khan Panjtari, the erstwhile supporter of the Wahabis, had turned against them, and was harassing their small bands settled in Sittana. Enayat Ali and Maqsd Ali had, therefore, been sent from Patna with large supplies of men and money. They were joined by Aulad Ali at Pakhli and they occupied the country and levied tributes.

According to O'Kinealy<sup>27</sup> Maulvi Qasim of Panipat, who was in the Sind party of Nasiruddin, moved to Kaghan where Zamin Shah and his brother, Naubat Shah, the two chiefs of Kaghan valley, became his disciples. He sent letters to the different *Khalifas* in India reminding them of the impending resurrection of Syed Ahmad and asking



them to come. Enayat Ali, therefore, proceeded from Patna and drove out the Sikhs from Balakote. Zainul Abedin, too, went with Enayat Ali and took part in one of the encounters with the Sikhs in support of Najaf Khan of Kaghan who had been deprived of his possession. Soon afterwards he had a misunderstanding with Qasim over the intricate question of "re-appearance" of Syed Ahmad and returned to Calcutta. The defection of such an important follower of the Movement was a sad blow to its fortune, but the perseverance of the Ali Brothers overcame all obstacles and in a short time rendered it as powerful, if not more so, as it was in the time of Syed Ahmad.

According to the Hazara Gazetteer<sup>28</sup> the Wahabis defeated the Sikh units posted in the forts of Shinkiari, Birkhand, Garhi Habibullah and Agrore and occupied them.

It will be noted that all these different accounts, except for some minor differences, are corroborative of each other.

More authentic and important information on the subject is obtained in a joint letter,<sup>29</sup> dated 9th Ziqad, 1262, (29th Oct., 1846) written by several persons belonging to Patna, Jessore, Faridpur, Baraset, Dacca, Calcutta, Rampur, etc. It was, probably, a sort of general report sent to the followers of the Movement in British India from the Frontier giving a full account of the events there and inviting volunteers from the interior of the country to come and join the Movement and share its glories in the hour of its triumph which, the writers hoped, was near at hand. Similar letters may have been sent to different persons in different places. Unfortunately, this is the only available one of its kind. It gives full details for the events of the period December, 1845, to October, 1846.

The account begins with the statement that Enayat Ali was elected as *Amir* in Zilhij, 1261, (Nov., 1845), by

all the *Mujahids*, Chiefs and *Maulvis* present in the Wahabi State. Zamin Shah of Kaghan also offered allegiance to him. After resuming the command Enayat Ali started appointing soldiers and reorganising his resources. Shortly before this Balakote had been recaptured from the Sikhs. In the month of Muharram, 1262, (Dec., 1845), a surprise attack was made on Garhi Habibullah. Fatehgarh was then besieged and captured after a month. Owing to the weakness and disorganisation of the central government at Lahore many of the Sikh garrisons in those outlying areas were facing a precarious situation and many of them were abandoning the forts. Enayat Ali sent messages to some of the Sikh commanders calling for their surrender to which some of them replied in conciliatory terms and others haughtily. In a short time, however, some twenty-two<sup>30</sup> forts in the areas of Pakhli, Dhamtaur,<sup>31</sup> Orish<sup>32</sup> Tanawal and Hazara were surrendered and large quantities of armaments and other materials captured. Many wealthy money-lenders were also arrested.<sup>33</sup>

In the meantime a Sikh garrison had arrived in Pakhli. Its arrival created some consternation among the local tribes and they deserted the Wahabis and joined the Sikhs. They also sarcastically asked the Wahabis who went to collect tithes from them, to defeat the Sikh Army first. Undaunted, Enayat Ali sent a force, composed partly of salaried soldiers and some 60 Wahabis under Munshi Shujauddin, towards Nowshera adjacent to Dhamtaur. Maulvi Maqsood Ali with 200 men was sent to Muzaffarabad to help Sultan Husain.

The encounter with the Sikh Army is described thus: the Sikhs, numbering 900 *sowars* and 5000 infantry, were gathered on the slopes of the mountains on both the sides. In the rear there were some 12000 local tribesmen who, true to their usual attitude, were outwardly with the Wahabis but were actually in secret understanding with the Sikhs and waiting to loot the former as soon as they were (so they hoped) defeated. The encounter began

after the noon prayers and was heralded by a severe bombardment from the Sikh side. The flag bearer of the Wahabis, Muhammad Usman, was hit in the arm by a bullet and on seeing the standard falling the tribesmen thought that the Wahabis were defeated. However, the standard was kept aloft by the same standard bearer; the Wahabis rallied and the Rohillas made a concerted attack. The Sikhs could not withstand it and retreated, hotly pursued by the Wahabis.\* Their stores worth more than a lakh of rupees were looted by the local tribesmen. Owing to the slushy grounds (it being the rainy season) and the tall '*Shali*' grass it was not easy for the Sikhs to beat a hasty retreat. They were relentlessly pursued by the local people who on seeing the Wahabi victory turned upon the Sikhs and killed them in order to loot their arms and other provisions. The hunting down of the stragglers of the defeated Sikh Army continued for three days. Although they were all strong-bodied men they let themselves be looted by men who were, physically, no match for them.

Among the 'hypocritical' chiefs who had sided with the Sikhs, Nawab Khan Tanaoli,<sup>34</sup> Madad Khan,<sup>35</sup> and Muhammad Ali were arrested and produced before Enayat Ali. He, however, pardoned them on the intercession of some of the faithful chiefs such as Amir Khan.<sup>36</sup>

The encounter occurred some time between July and September, 1846, and after it the Sikhs did not venture to move towards the Jadun country for some time.

Wilayat Ali arrived in the Frontier from Patna in September, 1846. He was accompanied by Yahya Ali, Fayyaz Ali and Akbar Ali, the three younger brothers of Ahamdullah. He was also accompanied by a large number of volunteers and brought with him considerable arms and stores. Enayat Ali sent forward a detachment to receive him at Mankali, the border outpost of the Wahabi State. A series of welcomes were arranged in the honour of Wilayat Ali at the various places of his halts inside the

new State. On his arrival at Nowshera the local fort commander, Darogha Riyasatullah, came out and fired a gun salute. Maqsud Ali who, too, had been sent by Enayat Ali with a detachment of cavalry and infantry reached Nowshera and joined in the reception. The next halt was at Liberokote,<sup>37</sup> where Zamin Shah and Amin Khan had been sent to welcome the august guest. Enayat Ali himself, with his personal standard and a posse of the Rohilla army, advanced one stage to receive his elder brother. The meeting took place in the plain of Uttarsisa.<sup>38</sup> It was a grand and happy occasion, and everybody celebrated it with thanks-giving to God. Having taken their midday meal at Uttarsisa they moved to Fatahgarh, now renamed Islamgarh, the capital of the Wahabi State where the local chiefs assembled to pay allegiance and tributes. Soon after, Enayat Ali, without any hesitation, took *Bai'at* on Wilayat Ali's hands who assumed the leadership of the State and the Community.<sup>39</sup> Wilayat Ali reciprocated the gesture by advising all those who were present to treat Enayat Ali as their chief, as before.

The writers of the letter, finally, extended an invitation to their "Indian brothers." Although the number of those present on the Frontier was sufficient, "their hearts ached for meeting their brethren." The latter were assured of a warm welcome and hospitality. They were also assured of employment and services which were decidedly more meritorious than serving under the '*Kafirs*'. At the same time those who were in a position to help were asked to send monetary aid to the State. As for the question of re-appearance of the *Imam* (Syed Ahmad), there were some who believed in the theory and some who did not. There was no insistence on the latter to believe in it. In any case whether the re-appearance of *Imam* was near at hand or not the *Imamat* (Chieftainship) of Enayat Ali and Wilayat Ali was already established.

The summary of the events, as contained in the joint letter mentioned above, ends at this point. The other portion, containing an account of the area and administration of the Wahabi State has been summarized in a subsequent section.

The Wahabis came into open conflict with the English in the battle of the Doob Pass<sup>40</sup> which occurred soon after the arrival of Wilayat Ali. The English were actively helping the Sikh authorities<sup>41</sup> and Gulab Singh in the restoration of their power in the disturbed Frontier regions. Henry Lawrence, the English Resident at Lahore, and under him a band of energetic young officers such as Abbott, Edwardes, Taylor etc. were, in fact, laying down the foundations of the English rule in those areas.

The English having helped Gulab Singh get possession of Kashmir thought it advisable<sup>41</sup> to send a detachment of English troops along with a Sikh army under the command of Diwan Karam Chand to march from Kashmir down to Lahore, restoring order on the way. Two English officers, Lumsden and Vans Agnew, were deputed with this force. Along with this show of force the usual English diplomacy was also set in motion and many of the local tribal chiefs, including Zamin Shah,<sup>42</sup> were won over by false promises.

While the Wahabis were preparing to face this army coming from Muzaffarabad side, a faint move was made, in collaboration with the local chief to give the false impression that a Sikh army was also coming from another, the Pakhli side. The threat of a double-pronged attack unnerved many of the local adherents of the Wahabis and they deserted. Left alone and faced with a force consisting of 10 Regiments the Wahabis, including the Ali Brothers, surrendered after a brief encounter.

There is a considerable difference of opinion among the authorities about the events following the surrender.

According to Bellew,<sup>43</sup> the Sikh army under Lieut. Agnew defeated and dispersed the *Mujahidin*. Maqsd Ali was arrested and sent to Lahore. Enayat Ali fled to Patna City. Only Aulad Ali with a few men escaped to Sittana.

O' Kinealy<sup>44</sup> gives more or less the same version with the addition that the Ali Brothers were sent to Patna under a surety bond. On reaching Patna they offered security bonds of Rs. 10,000 each promising not to leave Patna for four years.

The authors of the *Sawanih*<sup>45</sup> and the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*<sup>46</sup> give the following account of events.

The Ali Brothers had been successfully fighting against Gulab Singh and had achieved considerable success. Finding himself unable to meet the Wahabi opposition Gulab Singh sought the aid of the English. The English wrote a letter to the Ali Brothers saying that the area in dispute was under their (English) control and that they should cease fighting. Soon after that Lumsden and Vans Agnew were sent to help Gulab Singh. They won over some of the local supporters of the Wahabis including Zamin Shah through financial inducements. The Wahabis were thus forced to seek some understanding which would enable them to go to Akbar Shah at Sittana. In order to go to Swat they had to pass through some territories under the English control for which they wanted a guarantee of safe passage. It was given, in writing, by Lumsden and Agnew. The Wahabis accordingly marched down, but on reaching the English territory they were surrounded and arrested. The written guarantee of safe passage was revoked on the plea that it was given by the local subordinate officials without the permission of higher authorities. The Rohillas were furious at the treachery and wanted to fight, but Wilayat Ali counselled restraint. The Wahabis, including the Ali Brothers, surrendered along with their arms and ammunitions and were forwarded to Lahore where John Lawrence, the

"Commissioner",<sup>46</sup> welcomed them and praised their bravery. They were persuaded to sell off their arms and ammunitions and to disband the Rohilla army which was paid out of the sale proceeds of the arms. They were then sent back to Patna. Lawrence entertained them to a feast and also gave them some money for the return passage. On their arrival at Patna they were given a warm welcome by a large number of people who came out to have a look of the, by now, famous Frontier *Mujahidins*. The Commissioner of Patna visited their house and asked them to execute security bonds of Rs. 200 each for 2 years' good conduct.

Mehr<sup>48</sup> rejects the above-mentioned version on the ground of certain 'misstatements' of facts contained therein. He points out that neither the Punjab had yet been fully annexed by the English nor was Lawrence its Chief Commissioner<sup>49</sup> at that time. Syed Akbar, too, had not yet been crowned as the King of Swat and, finally, the Hazara area was not under the control of the English. Mehr is perfectly right in pointing out these inaccuracies. Before, however, coming to a decision we should bear in mind the fact that both the authors of the *Sawanih* and the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa* were primarily concerned with giving a general account of the activities of Syed Ahmad and some of his important followers. Their treatment of the subject is neither very comprehensive nor detailed. Their knowledge of the general history of the period was limited. At least Abdul Rahim was altogether innocent of the English language. At the time when the two accounts were written the post of Commissioner was in existence. The exact technical difference<sup>50</sup> between the posts of Resident and Chief Commissioner might have been overlooked by them. As for the areas under question not being under English control it should be remembered that ever since 1845 the English were the *de facto* rulers of the area and since in this particular episode the whole negotiation was mainly carried on by the English commanders the

Wahabis may have gained the impression that the area belonged to the English.

A modern writer<sup>51</sup> has discussed at length the primary role of the English in quelling the revolt in Kashmir and in helping, by means of direct military aid, the restoration of the power of the nominal Sikh Court and Gulab Singh in their respective areas. The writer has expressed amazement at the "remarkable spectacle of the English Agent marching at head of the Sikh troops, supported by the English forces to wrest Sikh territory from Imamuddin."<sup>52</sup>

The statement of Abdullah, given below, also refers to the "Lord Saheb" (Henry Lawrence) himself telling Wilayat Ali that the country (Punjab) "now belonged" (in effect) to the English.

Moreover, the episode of the surrender of the Ali Brothers on a guarantee given by Agnew is also supported by the evidence of contemporary English records. The Lahore Political Diarics contains an entry,<sup>53</sup> dated 22nd March, 1847, regarding the arrest of a 'Moulvi from Hazara', who headed the revolt there, and his arrival in Lahore. The Moulvi referred to was, obviously, Wilayat Ali.

Finally, the accounts of the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa* and the *Sawanih* are corroborated by a rare and near contemporary English document.<sup>54</sup> This is a statement by one, Abdullah, son of Jan Ali, resident of Hajipur, district Muzaffarpur, taken by the Assistant Commissioner, Rawalpindi, on the 12th of October, 1869. Abdullah first became a disciple of Muhammad Ali Rampuri and then, later, of Wilayat Ali whom he accompanied to the Frontier. He specifically mentions the battle of Doob in which he himself participated, and also the events following it. In view of the importance of this eye-witness account on a controversial point its relevant portions have been quoted below:



“... After the Sikhs escaped, six battles were fought at Muzaffarabad, and about 1200 of the Sikhs went up to the hills called Doab; these Sikhs were sent by the English for at that time *the English had possession of Lahore*.<sup>55</sup> At that time Moulvi Wilayat Ali and the rest were defeated and the *Sirdars* of Kaghan viz. Naubat Shah,<sup>56</sup> Zamin Shah and others joined the Sikhs and they plainly told Wilayat Ali, “we cannot help you any more.” Abbott was then at Hazara and he *directed a Sikh Sardar (whose name I do not recollect just now) to fetch us down the hill promising to let us go, and telling him to take charge of us, and also stating that if we sold the arms which we had with us he would pay us their value. We received Rs. 12,000 for the guns, zamborraks, camels etc.... We were then about 400 men. On reaching Beerka Durah we met Mr. Abbott who accompanied us to Balakote where there were 12 Regiments belonging to the English and no end of men at Hazara. At this place Mr. Abbott asked Wilayat Ali ‘Now where will you go?’ He replied ‘to Sittana.’ On this Mr. Abbott said ‘you better come to Hazara and meet the Lord Saheb’ and you can do as he commands’. They were then helpless and were obliged to go to Hazara and had to encamp close to the fort. After some days the Lord Saheb sent for Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali, Maqsd Ali, Fyaz Ali and Yea (Yahya) Ali. When they entered the tent they were asked whether they were not inhabitants of Sadiqpore in Azimabad and whether they were not English subjects and whether they did not pay revenue to Government? ‘Why have you come to this country?’ They replied that ‘according to our faith we must fight with the Kaffirs, the Sikhs<sup>58</sup> were our enemies and therefore we came to fight them’. But the Lord Saheb said ‘the country belongs to the English. What will you do now?’ They said ‘we will go to Cabool,’ but the Lord Saheb said “that country is Yagistan (Independent) up to Cabool, if you go there you will again plot and fight with the English; for this reason I cannot permit you to go there’.<sup>59</sup> He then ordered that we should return to our homes. On this we dispersed. Moulvi Wilayat Ali, Enayat*

Ali, Maqsd Ali, Fyaz Ali and Yahya Ali returned to their respective homes at Azimabad, and they were bound under *moochulka* (security bonds) not to leave Patna for four years. I went to my home in Hajipur and built a house there and married at Dinapur."

In view of this authentic corroboration by one who personally participated in the events described by him, the accounts of *Sawanih* and the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*, in spite of minor inaccuracies in details, must be accepted as substantially correct.

The return of the Ali Brothers to Patna and the second migration to the Frontier is referred to in a letter<sup>60</sup> of the Magistrate of Patna. "They (the Ali Brothers) were sent down in the end of 1847 or beginning of 1848 from the N.W. Provinces, that security might be taken from them to remain at their houses and not to disturb the Government. Unfortunately, Mr. Lushington, then Magistrate, did not take "*Nazar Zamini*", consequently they returned shortly afterwards to the North West. But as they have now joined the Swat leader in open war with our Government the security for good behaviour which was taken from them is, I believe, forfeited and in the case the Government should think fit I can seize the party who was their security. But as such a step may cause some stir<sup>61</sup> in this evil and degraded city I await the orders of Government."

According to O' Kinealy,<sup>62</sup> having been bound down on bails of Rs. 10,000 each for four years, they stayed quietly at Patna for a few months but soon after entered into correspondence with Aulad Ali, the leader of the remnant group at Sittana. Enayat Ali was once again despatched to his chosen field of work in Eastern Bengal. His "treasonable preaching" there soon brought him to the attention of the Magistrate of Rajshahi who drew up a proceeding against him following a complaint that Enayat Ali, who had been previously turned out of the district

for 'treasonable' activities, was once again enrolling 'Crescentaders'. In a subsequent proceeding, however, the Magistrate of Rajshahi reversed his earlier opinion about the 'treasonable' designs of Enayat Ali and forwarded it to his counterpart at Patna. He even went to the extent of calling upon the complainant to show cause why he should not be prosecuted for lodging a false complaint. The Magistrate of Patna, however, being more familiar with the earlier activities of Enayat Ali declined to believe in his harmlessness and again bound him for a security of Rs. 1,000.

Wilayat Ali spent the period in the work of reorganisation and preaching. He toured the Province and delivered discourses. On a few months remaining for the completion of the period of security for good behaviour he disposed of his movable and immovable properties and migrated in September, 1849.<sup>63</sup> He had, in the meantime, received letters of invitation from Syed Akbar Shah of Swat. Enayat Ali, who was then in Bengal, was asked to wind up his affairs and join his elder brother at Patna for the migration. The latter took six months in doing this. On reaching Patna he informed his mother of his intention to migrate finally. She gave him, by way of his share, the village Doabpur Arhat (Gaya district) which he sold for Rs. 20,000. He also gave a letter of satisfaction in regard to his remaining share in the family property<sup>64</sup> and thus having arranged his material affairs, which took about three months, he finally started towards the middle of 1850, some nine months after Wilayat Ali. He met the latter at Khanna Ki Sarai in the Punjab from where they proceeded together.

Farhat Husain,<sup>65</sup> the younger brother of Wilayat Ali, was left in charge of the organisation at home. Three other members of the family, Yahya Ali, Fayyaz Ali and Abdullah along with a party of 250 men and women, set out later and met Wilayat Ali near Arrah. Practically all the important members of the family, except Farhat Husain,

thus set out on the fateful journey. The first halt was at Koilwar, a few miles west of Patna, where a local gentleman, Imam Ali, entertained them. They were also entertained by Chaudhari Bashir of Arrah on reaching there. The next halt was at Ghazipur where Muhammad Fasih was their host. The male party was lodged in the mosque and the female in the house of the host. From there onwards Wilayat Ali marched in easy stages halting at various places and delivering lectures.

He finally reached Delhi after a journey of over a year. He halted there in a house said to have been ghost-infested and deserted which was near the Fatehpuri Mosque. The party stayed there for some two months. According to O'Kinealy his lectures attracted wide attention. Among the important persons present in his lectures, which were delivered in the Jama Masjid and other mosques, were the famous Urdu poet, Momin, and Imam Ali, the tutor of Zinat Mahal, the chief queen of Bahadur Shah II. Both Momin and Imam Ali took *Bai'at* and also mentioned his activities to the King who expressed a desire to meet him and accordingly an audience was granted. It was held in the *Diwan-i-Khas* and Wilayat Ali went there with a party of 75 persons. He delivered a lecture on the transitoriness of life and the punishment of Hell awaiting those who did not act in conformity with the commands of God. It was a powerful and moving oration, delivered in contravention of the Court etiquette that unpleasant topics should not be dwelt upon in the presence of the King. The audience, including the King, were deeply moved.<sup>66</sup> Towards the end of the discourse the King interrupted to say that he, too, had composed some verses on the transitoriness of life. In reply, Wilayat Ali recited a Quranic verse to the effect that one should not interrupt in the course of the recitation of Quranic texts. Later the King's verses were recited by the Resident.<sup>67</sup> The party were then taken round the Imperial buildings by the Resident. On return to their abode they were entertained with a dinner, comprising 50 trays, sent on behalf of the

King. The dinner was brought by Imam Ali and Momin. The King also expressed a desire that the party should stay on for some time more since the month of Ramzan was near. However, Wilayat Ali had become suspicious on account of some close questioning by the Resident about his antecedents and the object of his journey.<sup>68</sup> Taking leave he immediately left the city, crossed the Jamuna and marching by quick stages reached Ludhiana where he halted at Khanna-ki-Sarai, waiting for Enayat Ali.

The meeting between the two brothers occurred in November, 1850, and the two marched together.

Commenting on the leisurely and uninterrupted progress of the Ali Brothers through the entire length of the country with the declared aim of fighting the English, O'Kinealy expresses astonishment at the "great gulf between the rulers and the governed;--how little care is taken to know anything of even the most dangerous sect. The war of Syed Ahmad, the rebellion at Baraset, the resistance and subsequent surrender of the fanatics at Hureepur were forgotten as soon as over; the Government awoke when it was too late to find that the Patna Maulvies had returned to Sittana to disturb and agitate the mind of the hilly tribes." Only at one place, Khabal,<sup>69</sup> a half-hearted interception was attempted by the police and a few camels with baggages were captured. These, too, were ordered to be returned to the owners by the Deputy Commissioner, Peshawar, to whom they were forwarded. Indeed the long stay of Wilayat Ali at Delhi, his audience with the King and his being conducted around the Palace by the Resident in spite of his past career and activities and the recorded proceedings of the Patna Magistrate denote an utter lack of co-ordination in Government's policy towards the Wahabis.

During the course of their second visit to the Frontier some difference of opinion developed between the brothers. This has been unnecessarily exaggerated and magnified by

some writers who have gone to the length of remarking that Wilayat Ali was more soft towards the English than his brother.

O'Kinealy,<sup>70</sup> for instance, remarks that "Wilayat Ali had not that rancorous feeling towards the British Government which was characteristic of his brother." He attributed this to Wilayat Ali's wide travels in Central India, Deccan, Bombay and Sind which gave him a better idea of the prowess of the British Government. According to him, Wilayat Ali thought that their strength was not yet sufficient for facing the English and that half-hearted attempts with insufficient strength would only fritter their energies and forewarn the English who, once aroused to their real design, would cut off their supply line from inside India. Enayat Ali was more impatient of waiting which, he thought, smacked of a lack of faith. He was more zealous and idealist.

The differences, according to O'Kinealy, rose to such a pitch that the entire party was divided into two groups, the Bengalis favouring Enayat Ali (who had worked amongst them) and the rest favouring Wilayat Ali. Further unpleasantness was saved by the graceful action of the latter who, in view of the growing differences, appeared before both the parties, offered to relinquish the command and prayed that "the Lord would preserve them in their hour of need and prevent a war of brother against brother." Enayat Ali reciprocated the gesture and left Sittana and moved to Mangalthana.<sup>71</sup> This happened in Muharram 1268<sup>72</sup> (Oct.-Nov., 1851).

The author of *Tazkira-i-Sadqa* refers<sup>73</sup> to the comparatively sharp temper of Enayat Ali and points out how it further deteriorated towards his old age into a sullenness and an angry temperament. A man of forthright and outspoken habits he was second to none in his services to the Movement both in the field of battle as well as in missionary work. He was eager to have it out with the English, and

when his efforts were thwarted by the treachery of local chiefs or other factors he chafed and angered. This mental make-up also partly led to the misunderstanding between the two brothers.

It is interesting to learn that Yahya Ali, who was still on the Frontier, made several attempts for effecting a reconciliation between the two.<sup>74</sup> He enjoyed the good opinion of both the parties. His efforts, however, were not successful. Shortly after the death of Wilayat Ali and the succession of Enayat Ali he returned to Patna and remained there till his arrest.

The real difference was one of approach and not of the objective itself. The issue which precipitated it was the opposition of Jehandad Khan of Amb who, like many other local chiefs, had gone over to the English and was creating obstacles in the passage of the caravans from India. Enayat Ali wanted immediate action against him but the elder brother, taking into account wider considerations, did not want to get entangled in local fights. He was also considerate of the feelings of the Syeds who had helped the Movement so much and who were related to Jehandad Khan.

In perspective, it appears that Wilayat Ali's was the more correct attitude. He was rightly conscious of the better resources of the English and the lack of his own. It is tempting to speculate on what would have been his attitude had he been alive at the time of the outbreak of 1857-59. He may well have utilised the opportunity as a source of strength in his fight against the English. That was, however, not to be. He died on the 5th November, 1852, a little over a year after his return to the Frontier and was buried at Sittana.

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After his death Enayat Ali returned to Sittana and was elected as the leader. Although he had withdrawn to Mangalthana in deference to the views of his elder brother

he was still convinced of the correctness of his own plan of action. His subsequent actions during the next few years confirm this contention. He immediately started a series of border attacks against the English outposts and harassed them generally by running a guerilla warfare. On the outbreak of the Rising of 1857-59, too, he utilised the general unrest prevailing among the Sepoys in the border outposts and organised attacks on Narinji and Shaikhjana. His military exploits during that time have been considered in detail in a 'separate chapter. These, however, did not produce any deeper and effective result and he only frittered his own strength. It was precisely because of this that Wilayat Ali opposed them. The closing year of Enayat Ali's life were spent in circumstances of dire pecuniary stress and political set-backs. He died in Chinglai in 1858.

The Movement suffered a great shock and general set-back by the death of Enayat Ali which was followed by the dispersal of some of its followers and their return to Patna. The three sons of Wilayat Ali, Abdullah, Rahman and Muhammad Hasan, who were not pulling on well<sup>75</sup> with Enayat Ali returned to Patna soon after that event. Their uncle, Farhat Husain, was ailing at Patna and finally died in 1858. Yahya Ali, too, returned to Patna. Fayyaz Ali although not entirely at one with Enayat Ali stayed on the Frontier and died there subsequently.

## II. *The Wahabi Conspiracy in Hyderabad*

Since the Hyderabad Conspiracy<sup>76</sup> case (1839), in which Nawab Mubarizuddaula, the brother of the Nizam, was the central figures, owed its origin to the activities of Wilayat Ali it is well to give an account of this important event here.

The deputation of Wilayat Ali to the Deccan has been referred to above. Having arrived in Hyderabad he started his missionary and preaching activities. In course of time his fame as a preacher reached Mubarizuddaula who



deputed two of his learned men, Zainul Abedin and Muhammad Abbas, to meet Wilayat Ali. They both took *Bai'at* on Wilayat Ali and were later appointed as his '*Khalifas*'. Mubarizuddaula himself took *Bai'at* and became an ardent follower of the Movement.

The Conspiracy which took place as a result of the activities of Wilayat Ali and his local followers has to be viewed in the general background of the rising political threat of a Russian advance in Central Asia and the attempt of the English to induce the Nizam to abrogate, in effect, all his powers to them. Fraser, the Resident in Hyderabad, writing much later has thus stated the ultimate aims of the Court of Directors in regard to Hyderabad; "only one thing was wanting to give us the power of reforming the administration, viz., the formal assurance of His Highness that he would abstain in future from interfering in public affairs. This abstinence has already for most part been practised but were an assurance of this nature given it could be beneficial to the highest degree by inducing all Ministers, solely, to look to the Resident."<sup>77</sup> It was primarily against this projected increase of political control over the affairs of the state that the plot was directed.

Taking advantage of the absence of the English troops (in Afghanistan) the adherents of Mubariz planned the Rising. As a preliminary step there was an attempt to win over the allegiance of some units of the 'Native' troops stationed in Hyderabad and other places in the South. A number of Indian chiefs and princes, including the Nawab of Kurnool, were involved in the Conspiracy.<sup>78</sup>

The Raja of Satara and the princes of Jodhpur, Udaigiri, Bhopal and Rampur were in correspondence with the organisers of the Conspiracy.<sup>79</sup> The first two were discontented with the English out of personal and political considerations. A variety of motives influenced the decisions of the Rajas, but the common factor of an anti-English sentiment was present throughout. Reporting on the

activities of Mubariz and his adherents, Fraser enclosed<sup>80</sup> the statement of one, Haji Syed Ismail, who was an ex-employee of Mubariz. It stated that extensive military training was being undertaken by Mubariz himself and his followers. It also referred to Mubariz's intention to "*move out, collect Wahabi adherents and slaughter the English to possess himself of the country and the Government.* His followers had gained admittance into the companies of various officers and soldiers in the guise of *faqirs*, etc. and were endeavouring to seduce the Sepoys to Wahabism and conjointly with it, in all probability, to sedition."<sup>81</sup> A ceaseless flow of intelligence reports from these agents kept on arriving before Mubariz. They reported that the men of the Regiments were of one mind and were looking forward to Mubariz's moving out in order that they might join him.<sup>82</sup> In preparation for his coming to power Mubariz had got prepared two seals engraved with the legends, "Protector of Established Religion, the Defender of Faith and of Mussalmans" and "Mubariz, the Naib of Martyred Syed Ahmad."<sup>83</sup>

According to another statement,<sup>84</sup> Mubariz in response to an appeal from Nasiruddin, the leader of the Wahabi party in Sind, had sent his envoys, Asif, Qasim and others, to Sind to report on the general condition of the Wahabis there and the attitude of the Amirs of Sind towards them. The envoys who were the followers of Wilayat Ali consulted<sup>85</sup> him by post regarding their mission and on his advice proceeded, via Bombay and Karachi, to Shikarpur where Nasiruddin was staying at that time.<sup>86</sup> They sent in the desired report from there which mentioned, among other things, the approach of the 'Bengal Army'.

The plot was first discovered owing to the suspicion aroused by the unusually large influx of people from North India, Kabul and Persia in the Madras Presidency. 'A Sikh who was arrested on suspicion gave information regarding the conspiracy. Stonehouse, the Magistrate of Nellore, was the first to report<sup>87</sup> it to the Government of

Madras. The latter, while forwarding it to the Secretary to the Government of India, summed up the position as follows: "that a considerable number of Muhammadans in different parts of India had embraced Wahabism, among whom are persons who, from rank and position, exercise considerable influence over their Brethren; that they have actively been engaged for some time past in making proselytes, raising men and money for the prosecution of a war against the Infidels, that there can be little doubt that their *ultimate object had been the overthrow of British power in India and that with this view they had been endeavouring to make converts among the Native army.*"<sup>88</sup>

Enquiries were conducted against Mubariz by Fraser, the Resident, Malcolm, his assistant, and one Persian Muslim who was the representative of the Bombay Merchants in the Nizam's Court and who was later recommended for a reward of Rs. 2,000 (and Rs. 1,000 for expenses) for his services in this connection. As a result of his enquiry Fraser reported<sup>89</sup> to the Secretary to the Government of India that it had been established, *inter alia*, that Mubariz had not only entertained treasonable designs against his sovereign (the Nizam) but also had *hostile intention more specifically directed against the British Government as manifested by the extraordinary pains he and his Agents had taken to 'tamper' with the allegiance of Native Infantry especially at Secunderabad and Nagpur.* He further stressed the distinction between the religious and political activities of Mubariz as of Wahabis in general. He had no objection to their normal missionary work and spread of their 'sect' but their political intrigues were a different matter and had to be checked and curbed, in whatever guise. In his view the Nizam was committing the mistake of viewing his brother's activities only in a religious light. He advised that the Nizam should be informed of the full extent of the treasonable activities of his brother (the enquiry had so far been carried on mainly on the Resident's initiative) and his consent obtained for confining Mubariz as a State prisoner

in the Golconda Fort. He, however, advised against making public his own role or that of the Nizam in this lest it might precipitate a Rising.

Mubariz was tried by a Commission<sup>90</sup> of Enquiry consisting of British Officers and some Indians. The Court was convened in June, 1839, and after a protracted series of sitting closed its proceedings in April, 1840. Mubariz was sentenced for life and confined to the Golconda Fort where he died in 1854. His adherents, most of whom were Wahabi Moulvis, were taken in custody pending further enquiries. The Government of India, however, did not see any dangerous portent in this episode. Instead, Lord Auckland, the Governor-General observed that he was not one of those "who believe that there exists any universal and active spirit of aversion in India to British Supremacy."<sup>91</sup> It typifies the general official attitude to such, apparently, isolated events. It shows a lack of understanding of the wider political unrest against the British rule of which these were the symptoms. The same attitude was shown by the authorities at the time of the Faraizi Risings in Bengal, and it was to cost the authorities very dear in the years to come.

### III. *An Account of the Wahabi Principality on the Frontier*

A comprehensive account of the independent state founded on Frontier by the Ali Brothers is available to us from the unique letter referred to above.<sup>92</sup> It gives information under different heads such as Boundary, Pay of the different ranks in the Army, Levy of Tributes, etc. In view of its rare importance<sup>93</sup> a full translation of this document which forms the concluding portion of the letter under reference is given below:

"1. *Boundaries*: The boundary of the Islamic State was fixed at Nowshera which is adjacent to Sikandarpur in Hazara. A large quantity of materials including

cannons, camels, horses and tents and other materials came into the possession of the *Momins*. Minor items out of these were given to local tribesmen. As the Islamic Army entered victorious all the 'countries' like Jadun, Tanawal,<sup>28</sup> Nandhiar, Bhogarmang, Pakhli, Dhamtaur, Dares (?) etc. agreed to the payment of *Ushr* and the acceptance of our suzerainty. Earlier, tributes had been demanded from the chiefs of the Kanhar Valley, Bhogarmang, Upper and Lower Pakhli and Kandi (?) to which they were reluctant but, finally, finding themselves helpless, accepted the demand. By the grace of God collection of tribute from all sides is continuing. Rewards, Gifts, *Maafi* (rent-free assignment of land) and *jagirs* are being granted to people according to their respective merits. About a thousand Rohilla soldiers are being employed at present. Besides, more than 10,000 are employed in this manner; they have been given lands on the condition of rendering services in times of war. Further it is the custom of this country that whenever a (tribal) chief goes anywhere for fight one arms bearing man, per house, accompanies him. Counting all these, apart from the employed professional soldiers, there are 30,000 troops but out of these only the professionals are trustworthy and brave.

II. *Salaries of Soldiers*<sup>29</sup>: The salary of infantry is from Rs. 6 to 10 (monthly), that of Marksman (artillery?) and *Havaladar* Rs. 9 to 12 and of Ironsmith Rs. 30; these (remunerations) are according to the prevailing custom of the area.

III. *Post Held By Different Persons*<sup>30</sup>: The following are the names of the different functionaries and officers; *Darogha* Riyasatullah, the officer of Manshera Fort<sup>31</sup>; *Haji* Gadai Rampuriwalia, Collector of Revenue, Manshera; *Munshi* Shujauddin, *Thanadar* of Mankali Tower in Jadun country; Ramzan Ali Khan Azimabadi, resident of Dhanki, Patna district, Officer of Balakote Fort; *Munshi* Ghulam Ali, *Patnawala*, *Munshi* of the above mentioned fort; *Haji* F—9

Najju Azimabadi, Collector of Revenue of the said fort; Yahya Ali,<sup>99</sup> the Qazi of (Balakote ?); Malik Ahmad Ali of village Irki,<sup>100</sup> (who is a relation of Khairat Ali) trooper ; Muhammad Ali Azimabadi, *Jamadar* of the Main gate of Fatahgarh Fort ; Haji Shamsheer Khan of Sahebganj,<sup>101</sup> *Jamadar* of the Bodyguards and Bahadur Khan of Sahebganj, Collector of Revenue, Fatahgarh. Abdullah<sup>102</sup> Azimabadi has been appointed for giving military training to the troops. He holds military drill daily after morning prayers. Sirajuddaula holds the charge of the Armoury and Stable Department. Nazir Raihanuddin is (a sort of) special officer in charge of Court matters<sup>103</sup> and also the Superintendent of Prisons. Badruddin Burhanwal (?) is the 'Protector of Treasury' and Maqsood Ali<sup>104</sup> is the Commander-in-Chief. Sufi Muizuddin holds charge of the Stores and Nazim Faridpuri of Grains and in a like manner there are different posts and services.

IV. *Criminal Rules and Punishments*: *Hudud*<sup>105</sup> and *Qasas*<sup>106</sup> are prevalent in accordance with the *Shara*. The punishment for absenting oneself from one of the five prayers is, for a chief, one rupee, and for a poor man five seers of grain. The rule of Friday prayer is similar. Highway robbers are killed and hung up so that others may take lesson. Mulla Asad Akhundzada has been appointed as *Mufti* and Censor of the Public Morals in Kanhar Valley. Several hundred students are deputed with him so that they may tour in the interior villages and enquire about those who did not know how to perform prayers and teach them to do so and to restrain the people from the performance of the prohibited usages on the occasion of marriages and mournings and to levy fines on those who did so. The expenses of these students are met out of the levy of such fines.<sup>107</sup> Muhammad Husain Akhundzada has been appointed *Waiz*<sup>108</sup> of Pakhli.

V. *Account of the Durbar* : *Rajas*, *Salatins*<sup>109</sup> and *Sardars* are always in attendance upon the Maulana (Wilayat Ali). No one, whether a *Raja* or *Sultan*, can enter inside the Fort without an entrance pass. *Risaladars*

and *Jamadars*, on being called, present themselves with one constable for offering *Salami*. Twenty gunners are always in attendance upon the Maulana. No one can dare raise his head. Sheikh Karnaluddin, the *Subedar* of Kashmir, has expressed desire for friendly relations and has appointed two *Hurcaras* for transmission of letter. He accordingly sends two or three letters, each month, expressing love and friendship. When the news of the victory of Nowshera reached the Sheikh he gave rewards to the messenger for bringing this happy news and fired cannons for celebrating the occasion. Letters expressing friendship and desire for alliance also arrive occasionally from Muhammad Akbar and Dost Muhammad of Kabul. In short the alliance of Sardars and Khans of this country, from Kashmir and Peshawar to Kabul and Qandhar has been secured in a like manner. All this is due to the grace of *Imam* (Syed Ahmad) but nothing like this had occurred before the battle of Balakote even in the time of the *Imam*.

VI. *Account of Tributes* : The details of the revenues are like this: Tribute from the Kanhar Valley Rs. 16,000/-; from Bhogarmang Valley, Rs. 5000/-; from Kandhi Rs. 7000/-; from Pakhli Rs. 26,000/-; the *Salars*<sup>109</sup> (tribe) Rs. 3000/- and from the Hasanzais<sup>110</sup> Rs. 30,000/-. The tribute from Muzaffarabad is Rs. 40,000/-; from Karna, Rs. 10,000/-; from Nandhiar Rs. 20,000/- and from Alai, Rs. 20,000/-. Apart from *Jagirs* for servants in Alai and Muzaffarabad, *Ushr* (in addition to the tribute) has also been demanded and it is not less in amount to that of the tribute (Sic). From the rest only tributes are demanded. The collection from Bhogarmang and Alai has been completed, that of Pakhli will be completed in about a week. Collectors of tributes have been deputed to various places and on completion of the collections of Pakhli, God willing, that of Nandhiar and Muzaffarabad shall commence."

It will be evident from the above account that under the Ali Brothers an independent Republic of considerable

area had been founded in the Frontier. It had a large and efficient army, a sizeable income of over five lakhs of rupees and a skeleton staff of civilian functionaries.

A word of comment regarding the description of the 'Court' will not be out of place here. This account of the *Durbar* related to a period when a regular independent state had been set up with all its paraphernalia of the soldiers and civilians. The head of the State had to maintain the dignity of the State and to establish the various organs necessary for its efficient working. Moreover, this maintenance of an outer facade of awe and grandeur was necessary if the State was to command any respect in the eyes of the people amidst whom it was set up. The sturdy local people understood only the language of force. Finally, it indicates the fact that the Wahabi leaders were not just "religious fanatics" but were alive to the political implications of their Movement.

A novel administrative experiment was the utilization of student-supervisors under the *Qazis*, for touring in the villages and keeping an eye on public morals and bringing the delinquents to book. Their expenses were met out of the collection of fines thus imposed. The arrangement, however, contained a draw-back in the fact that the cost of maintenance of these student-supervisors was dependent on the collection of fines they imposed and hence they might well have become a little more inclined to do so on every possible occasion.

The introduction of 'Islamic' influences in the administration of the State, outwardly, looks like something of a theocracy. But the origin of the Movement was bound to determine the nature of the Wahabi State, especially at a time when secular ideas were not very strong in India. Further, the area held by the Wahabis was populated almost exclusively by Muslims. Their system of administration did not involve any preferential treatment on religious grounds for the Muslims in con-



trast to the others, which is the main characteristic of a theocracy. However, within the general mass of their Muslim subjects they did try to impose certain instructions and enforce certain prohibitions which they considered essential. For this the Wahabis should not be judged too harshly—any ruling faction or party which comes to power tries to run the administration on principles which it considers essential according to its own light. The Wahabis showed a lack of political acumen not in enforcing certain socio-religious reforms but in the uncompromising intensity and the rapid pace with which they tried to bring them about.

The administration evolved by the Wahabis in their newly found state was rudimentary and improvised. Circumstances did not allow them any reasonable respite to work out a comprehensive system of government. The shadows of war and internal rebellion always hung over the fortunes of the small state during its all too brief existence. Peace-time conditions were never available to allow the evolution of a normal administrative set up. Everything was conditioned by the exigencies of war. Hence only two sets of non-combatant staff—the revenue collectors and judicial officers—were introduced. Other civilian departments such as education, health, etc. could not be established. The student of the history of the Movement is left only to speculate on the shape of things had the two essential conditions of Time and Peace were available.

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## REFERENCES

1. Italics are mine.
2. I. M., p. 68.
3. T. S., pp. 110-140.
4. It was a famous institution of Islamic learning.
5. Vide Appendix II.
6. T. S., pp. 115, 269.
7. It is situated at a short distance east of Khaja Kalan Police Station, Patna City.
8. T.S., p. 116.
9. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept. Cons. Nos. 21-24 of 29th May, 1843. The information based on these records is being published for the first time. It was vaguely known on the basis of O'Kinealy's articles in the Calcutta Review, (1870) that Enayat Ali worked in E. Bengal at this time. But these original sources of information had not been noticed so far. Neither do the Wahabi sources themselves give much information about this phase of Enayat Ali's work.
10. Letter from W. Dampier, S.P., L.P., to F.J. Halliday, Secretary, Government of Bengal, Judl. Dept., No. 581, dated 29th March, 1843.
11. Ibid, Letter No. 680, dated 5th April, 1843.
12. A native of Jaunpur (1800-1833), he had taken *Bai'at* on Syed Ahmad at the early age of 18. On being deputed to Bengal he did extensive missionary work there.
13. The S.P. showed a deep insight in the characteristic features of the Wahabi and Faraizi Movements by underlining the similarity of ideas between the two. It was in fact the groundwork done by the Faraizis which facilitated the subsequent work of the Wahabis in Bengal. In a subsequent letter, dated 13th April, 1843, the S.P. also noticed the distinction between the followers of Karamat Ali and Enayat Ali "owing to difference in formula in prayers" and added that the followers of the former were not interested in the Movement of Enayat Ali which was more powerful in the districts visited by him (mentioned above).
14. Letter from W. Dampier, S.P., L.P., to the Secretary, Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., No. 714, dated 10th April, 1843.
15. Ibid, No. 736, dated 13th April, 1843.
16. Letter from Secy. Govt. of Bengal to W. Dampier, S.P., L.P., No. 348, dated Fort William, 24th April, 1843.
17. This was in line with the usual attitude of the Government as expressed on some previous occasions like the Hyderabad Conspiracy. It was, however, in direct contrast to the very thorough instructions issued by the Government in regard to the preventive steps against the danger. Perhaps, it represented an attempt at putting up a brave face before the subordinate authorities.
18. C.R., Vol. 51, (1870), p. 393. Italics are mine.

19. T.S., p. 115.
20. A celebrated authority on Exegesis.
21. Cunningham, op. cit., App. XVII, pp. XIV-XVI.
22. Ibid, pp. XXIV-XXV.
23. Zamin Shah, the son of Hasan Ali Shah, was the chief of Kaghan valley and was a constant supporter of the Wahabis and helped them in re-occupying Balakote and Upper Hazara. He died in 1871. His brother, Naubat Shah, was also a staunch supporter of the Wahabis.
24. T.S., pp. 122-123.
25. Ibid, p. 235.
26. Bellew, op. cit., p. 95.
27. C.R., Vol. 51, pp. 186-87.
28. H.G., pp. 132-33.
29. The letter forms the concluding portion of the P.U. M.S. of Syed Ahmad's letters and covers the pages 220-29 in it. It has been referred to, hereafter, as P.U. MS. Supplement. G.S. Mehr also referred to and utilised this letter. He got a copy of it from the late Masud Alam Nadvi who procured it from the Asafiya Library, Hyderabad. Surprisingly enough the late M.A. Nadvi did not use it fully in his own small work on the Movement. The whole of chapters III-V of Section III of volume IV of Mehr's book are based on this document.
30. P.U. MS. Supp. p. 221.
31. Dhamtaur is a large and prosperous village 5 miles east of Abbottabad on the right bank of the river Dor. Formerly it gave its name to the whole area.
32. One of the plain tracts in Hazara District situated to the south of Mangal tract. The Abbottabad cantonment is situated at its Southern edge.
33. The letter says that the events upto this period were witnessed by Mamariz Khan (?) the messenger from Tonk who had since returned.
34. He was the son of Sarbuland Khan and was known as Chief of Shangeri.
35. He was the younger brother of Painsa Khan of Amb. He had been assigned Phulera as jagir by Painsa Khan. He died in 1878.
36. Chief of Garhi Habibullah and the son of Habibullah, the chief who gave his name to the fortress (Garhi). He died in 1868.
37. Situated between Nowshera and Uttarsisa.
38. Situated between Nowshera and Garhi Habibullah, 9 miles from the latter.
39. This was a noble gesture on the part of Enayat Ali, symbolic of a selfless zeal which admitted of no personal ambitions or desires.
40. Doob is a famous pass situated at an altitude of 5000 ft. between Garhi Habibullah and Muzaffarabad. It is 3 miles from the former and 5 miles from the latter.
41. Letter of Lumsden, dated 6th Feb., 1847, to his father, in England, giving an account of this battle: Quoted by Mehr, IV., p. 262.
42. T.S., pp. 123-24.
43. Bellew, op. cit., p. 95.

44. C.R., Vol. 51, (1870), pp. 381. ff.
45. pp. 215-17.
46. pp. 123-24.
47. The Resident (not Commissioner) in the Lahore Durbar, at that time, was Henry Lawrence and not John Lawrence. The confusion in names might have been caused owing to the common surname of the two.
48. Mehr., IV, p. 255.
49. H. M. Lawrence was the Resident in the Lahore Durbar from the latter half of 1846 to Nov., 1847, when he proceeded on sick leave to Europe. Earlier, he had once been absent at Simla from August, 21, to October 17, 1847, during which time John Lawrence held charge. The designation of Commissioner came, later, in 1848.
50. According to the terms of the Treaty of 1845, H.M. Lawrence was appointed as Agent to the Lahore Durbar. In December, 1846, the designation was changed to Resident and Agent to the Governor General. This designation continued till March, 1848, when it was changed to Resident and Chief Commissioner. Cis. and Trans Sutlej States. (Lahore Political Diaries, Vol. III. Preface).
51. R.R. Sethi, 'The Revolt in Kashmir', B.P.P., Vol. XLVI, pp. 112-121.
52. Ibid, p. 113.
53. Lahore Political Diaries. Vol. III, p. 70. The entry specifically refers to the guarantee of Vans Agnew to the Wahabis. It however says that the guarantee of safe passage was for Hindusthan and not to Sittana.
54. Enclosure to a letter from J.H. Reilly, D.I.G. to I.G. Police, L.P., No. 207, dated 13th Oct., 1869.
55. Italics are mine.
56. Mehr, (Vol. IV, p. 265) has rejected the version of Sawanib and T.S. regarding the defection of Zamin Shah. This contemporary account however supports the first two versions.
57. H.M. Lawrence, who was the Resident in the Lahore Durbar and Agent to the Governor-General.
58. This was a convenient subterfuge to conceal their real objective. That the English themselves were very well aware of this objective (anti-English struggle) is evident from the reply of the 'Lord Sahib'.
59. Italics are mine.
60. Letter from T. Tucker, Magistrate, Patna, to C. Bradon, Secretary, Govt. of India, dated 19th Aug., 1852.
61. This is a testimony, perhaps unintended to the popularity of the Ali Brothers among the masses of the city.
62. C.R., Vol. 51 (1870), pp. 381-83.
63. Mehr., IV, p. 270.
64. T.S. p. 137.
65. He was the father of Abdul Rahim, the author of *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*.\*
66. T.S., pp. 126-27. The King got down from his throne and shook hands with the members of the party and enquired about their welfare. Mehr (IV, p. 272. f.n. 1) also corroborates this. Further on, in another connection, the T.S., (pp. 153-54) states that

the youngest son of Wilayat Ali, Muhammad Hasan Zabih, then aged 5 years, (he subsequently laid the foundation of a primary Madrasa in Patna City, now grown up in the shape of M.A.A. Higher Secondary School) was also present with his father on that occasion. The King took him in his lap and asked as to what he read. The boy replied 'Quran', and recited a verse from it. The King was very much surprised at this precociousness.

67. *Sawanih*, p. 223.
68. *Ibid*.
69. Situated on the right bank of Indus, opposite Tarbela, some 5 miles from Sittana.
70. C.R. Vol. 51 (1870), p. 383.
71. A strong and fortified place in the Mahabun ranges in the Khudikhel area.
72. This date has been taken from Mehr (IV, p. 276) who took it from among the miscellaneous papers of Abdul Majid, son of Enayat Ali, which were kept at Asmast, a later centre of Wahabi activities.
73. pp. 132-33.
74. This information is given in a marginal note by the late Maulvi Ghaffar in his copy of T.S. (p. 132) which I have consulted. As explained earlier, he was the senior-most member of the family and possessed large number of records and MSS. on the subject. He was also in possession of oral information which are not available to us now. As such, his marginal notes have considerable weight and value.
75. Bellew, op. cit. p. 96.
76. An interesting, although isolated, account of this Conspiracy was written by N. C. Chaudhury in his article, entitled "The Wahabi Conspiracy in Hyderabad 1839-40," in I.H.C. Prog. Vol. XIX. 1956.
77. Fraser. H., *Our Faithful Ally, the Nizam*, London, 1865, p. 238.
78. For. Sec. Dept. Cons. No. 23, dated 10th July, 1839.
79. N. C. Chaudhury's article on "Wahabi Conspiracy in Hyderabad" vide ante.
80. For. Dept. Sect. Cons. No. 23, dated 10th July, 1839. Enclosure.
81. For. Dept. Sect. Cons. No. 113, dated 10th July, 1839.
82. For. Dept. Sect. Cons. No. 23, dated 10th July, 1839.
83. For. Dept. Sec. Cons. No. 113, dated 10th July, 1839.
84. For. Dept. Sect. Cons. No. 21, dated 10th July, 1839.
85. Mehr, IV, p. 183.
86. For. Dept. Sect. Cons. No. 21, dated 10th July, 1839.
87. *Ibid*.
88. *Ibid*. No. 20, dated 10th July, 1839.
89. For. Dept. Sec. Cons. No. 113, dated 10th July, 1839.
90. Fraser, op. cit, pp. 241-42.
91. Sec. Cons. No. 12, dated 2nd June, 1839.
92. *Supra*, pp. 73-76.
93. This brief account of the Wahabi Republic established on the Frontier is being published in English for the first time.

94. Probably, what is actually meant is the area occupied by the Jadun tribes. This was the area comprising the Mangal tract, the Rash and Rajoia plains, etc.
95. The area occupied the centre of the Western half of the Hazara District.
96. This portion has not been included by Mehr.
97. The great majority of the names, exclusively from Bihar, suggests the predominating role they played in the Movement during this period. It may also be, partly, because the letter mentioned only those officers who were from Bihar since the letter was addressed to the leaders in Patna.
98. Manshera is a large town and the headquarter of the Tehsil bearing that name.
99. The letter refers to a period when Yahya Ali of Sadiqpur was also there but it is not definite whether this Yahya Ali was the same person.
100. It is situated in Gaya district.
101. District Santhal Parganas.
102. He was the son of Wilayat Ali and was noted since his early youth for his expert knowledge of military training and fort construction.
103. The actual Persian word used in *Nizam-ul-Huzuri*.
104. He hailed from Surajgarha, District Monghyr.
105. Islamic Code of Criminal Procedure.
106. Provision for cash payment in lieu of major crimes like murder, etc.
107. This important point has been omitted in Mehr's Extract (p. 249). But it is quite clearly written in the P.U. MS. (Suppl.) copy.
108. Preacher. He also, often, conducted the prayers.
- 109 & 110. These two are the sub-sections of Jadun tribe. They live in the Rajoia plain and the Mangal tract.

## CHAPTER V

### THE INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE WAHABI MOVEMENT

The Wahabi Movement had two important aspects—socio-religious and political—the former requiring the preaching of certain social and religious reforms and the latter the urging for the struggle against the “alien people from distant lands” and “traders and vendors of goods”. Both these requirements presupposed the organising of a dedicated band of missionaries and preachers who could move about and explain the mission to the masses. The earliest efforts in this connection, as shown above, were made by Syed Ahmad and his chief associates. But they languished after his migration in 1826. After his death the need was felt for reviving the organisational side of the Movement inside British India. It was in this work that the Patna leaders made their most valuable contribution to the Movement. Patna now became, and remained till the very end, the most active centre of the Movement in British India, the headquarters of what Hunter describes as the “Central Propaganda”.

Although the system remained essentially the same—touring, preaching, initiation, etc.—as in the time of Syed Ahmad, the Patna leaders gave a greater cohesiveness to the organisation, created a well-knit training centre at Patna with a number of subordinate zones and circles all over the country and allotted local preachers to each zone. These local agents preached in their respective zones, distributed pamphlets, collected *Zakats* and other monetary contribution and transmitted them to the Headquarters at Patna. This remarkable system, which withstood for a long time the might and the full resources of the English Government to trace and root it out from their dominion, has been studied under four broad headings: (i) Central Organisation at Patna, (ii) Itinerant Preachers, (iii) District Centres, (iv) Collection of Funds.

### I. Central Organisation at Patna

We may first describe the building of the Wahabi Headquarters in Patna, the famous '*Kafila*' as the Wahabis themselves described it in their secret code or the '*Caravan Sarai*' for rebels and traitors as Hunter preferred to describe it. A graphic description of the buildings, subsequently razed to the ground by the orders of the Government, and the teachings imparted in it is preserved for us by Hunter<sup>2</sup> and is reproduced below.

"In the Mussalman quarter of the ancient city of Patna there is an alley called Sadikpur Lane much frequented by travellers. On the left side of the alley is a group of buildings<sup>3</sup> in the Moorish style with considerable frontage and running back some distance from the lane, their exteriors have that mournful dilapidated look which the brick and stucco buildings permanently assume after the first wet season and which present such a squalid contrast to our pre-conceptions of the gorgeous East. The prominent edifice of the group is a mosque of very plain interior in which public prayer is held every hour of the day and a *Khutba* or lecture is delivered every Friday. These Friday lectures in the Sadikpur mosque are different to those in the other mosques in the city. They are vehement harangues, exposing the inefficiency of works without Faith, warning the hearers of the great spiritual danger and urging them to cultivate the Inward Life. They contrast the simple worship of Prophet with the cumbrous rituals, the endless mummeries, bowings and genufluxions of the mosques and bitterly inveigh against those who by traditions have rendered the written words of no effect. The Moulvies of the other city mosques, while forced to acknowledge the learning and eloquence of the Sadikpur Lane preachers, denounce them as rejectors of the holy Sacrament, Unitarians and Schismatics" The description is finally completed with an account of the surrounding buildings. "Around the mosque are the dwelling houses of the priest and their zenana with a



small college for the students of the reformed theology, a hospice for pious travellers and several little white shrines in which repose the bones of the Wahabi Saints."

A steady flow of volunteers from all walks of life kept pouring in the headquarters for receiving instructions in the doctrines of the 'sect' and getting training in the more arduous work of missionaries and recruits. Care was taken in the selection of the volunteers, who were assigned work according to their educational qualification and social status. Thus, the youths of high promise were "received in the College and trained in the theology and dialects of Islam" while men of humbler capacity were more hastily trained in the striking doctrines of the 'reformed faith' and sent forthwith to the Frontier. Volunteers of a still lower order were also preferred. They were 'kindly received' at the hospice and were put under the charge of Abdul Ghaffar, the 'lay brother' and the bursar of the hospice who lectured to them on the desirability and necessity of fighting for the cause in which they believed. In these cases not much 'doctrinaire training' was required. Theirs was a more active duty on the Frontier. The zeal and enthusiasm of these raw recruits were so much aroused by skilful 'indoctrination' that, leaving behind their hearths and homes, they set forth voluntarily for the front lines. "The zeal of the fanatics for their religion and their hatred for the Sikhs, *which they also transferred to the successors of the Sikhs, the English*, was so great that recruits and money flowed abundantly into Sittana from British India, many years after the apostle, Syed Ahmad, had perished".

All this work was organised under the direction of the local chief who was also described as the *Khalifa*. Among the *Khalifas* appointed by Syed Ahmad himself from Patna were Muhammad Hussain, Wilayat Ali and Mazhar Ali. They, in their turn, had been authorised to appoint their own *Khalifas* and thus the chain of *Khalifas* continued.

Among the notes and private papers of the late Moulvi Ghaffar Saheb (referred to earlier) is a list<sup>6</sup> of the persons upon whom the *Khilafat* (Deputyship) of Syed Ahmad devolved one after another. Each *Khalifa* was assisted by a Committee of Counsellors, a 'Minister' of War, Finance, etc.

The list is as follows:

- (1) Syed Muhammad Husain, assisted by a committee consisting of Akbar Ali, Fayaz Ali, Yahya Ali, Waizul Haq and Maqsud Ali.
- (2) Wilayat Ali, Amir; Enayat Ali, Minister for War; Farhat Husain, in charge of Finance and recruitment of volunteers.
- (3) Farhat Husain (*Khalifa* of Wilayat Ali), Amir; Yahya Ali, Adviser; Ahmadullah and Abdul Rahim, Counsellors.
- (4) Yahya Ali (*Khalifa* of Farhat Husain), Amir; Abdul Rahim, in charge of Finance; Ahmadullah, Counsellor; along with the surviving ones of the Counsellors mentioned above.
- (5) Ahmadullah, Amir; Mubarak Ali, in charge of Finance; Iradat Husain, Counsellor; names of other members unknown.
- (6) Mubarak Ali, Amir; Muhammad Hasan,<sup>9</sup> Finance.
- (7) Muhammad Hasan, Amir; (no other name is given in the list).
- (8) Abdul Rahim (probably after his return from the Andaman Island), Amir; Muhammad Ibrahim, Abdullah of Ghazipur, and Abdul Aziz Rahimabadi, Counsellors.<sup>10</sup>

This list is an important document. It gives us an idea of the Working Committee of the Wahabi Movement. It was

the highest body organising and conducting the Movement. For obvious security reasons its composition and working were not based upon written regulations. All the members were imbued with the same spirit of sacrifice and service and the system worked smoothly on the basis of tacit understanding. It is also evident from the list that the Head (Amir) succeeded by seniority in the service of the Movement and not by seniority of age or rank. The list is also in complete accord with what we know from documentary evidence of the subsequent history of the Movement and the ends of the careers of the Amirs.

For some time during the period of revival under the Ali Brothers the *Khalifa* at Patna was Yahya Ali and it was his organising genius which ministered to the multifarious requirements of the chief centre at Patna. His duties, to mention only a few, included public ministrations in the mosque, lecturing to the students on 'doctrinaire' points, corresponding with the District centres, inspecting the arms to be forwarded to the Frontier and personally supervising the complicated system of drafts by which large sums of money were secretly transmitted. Abdul Ghaffar, the bursar, assisted him in the management of the temporal affairs such as the boarding and lodging of the volunteers and students but the central organising genius was Yahya Ali. It will not be out of place to note here a few extracts from the judgment of Herbert Edwardes on the Ambala Trial in which Yahya Ali was one of the chief accused persons. Remark-ed the judge: "It has been proved against Yahya Ali that he was the main spring of the great treason which this trial has laid bare . . . He has enlisted subordinate Agents to collect money and preach Muslim Jihad. He has deluded hundreds of thousands of his countrymen into treason and rebellion. He has plunged the Government of British India by his intrigues into a Frontier War which has cost hundreds of lives . . . What he has done he has done with forethought, resolution and the bitterest treason. He belongs to a hereditarily disloyal and fanatical family".<sup>11</sup>

It could hardly have occurred to Edwardes that a day would come when his own very bitter denunciation of Yahya Ali would be quoted as a testimony to the latter's patriotic efforts.

## II. *Itinerant Preachers*

The itinerant preachers were the linchpin of the internal organisational set-up of the Wahabis. These were a dedicated and self-effacing band of workers who traversed over the whole country, spreading their message into the interior areas and collecting funds for the Movement. The climatic conditions of India and also the age-old traditions of wandering Yogis and *Sanyasis* rendered feasible and even attractive this system of wandering missionaries. The rigours of climate 'which sends men to seek shelter' were not so stringent in the country and for the greater part of the year these preachers could move about unhampered. The spectacle of a wandering *Faqir* was nothing new to the simple unsophisticated villagers. On the contrary, they were quite often welcomed and offered free board and lodge for short periods. Here is a typical example of the preacher on his march, drawn out in the inimitable language of Hunter, "Much more does the Wahabi Missionary's lonely life render him an object of interest to the villagers upon his route. Throughout many months of the year he enters the doors of no human dwelling. He comes from a distant Province, and during the long journey he admits no companion, save perhaps a faithful disciple, to interrupt his self communings. His serenity of demeanour and indifference to external surroundings make him a visibly different being from ordinary men. It is not surprising, therefore, that the villagers cluster around him and forget for a moment their dispute about water courses, and their long standing boundary feuds."<sup>12</sup>

These teachers took pains to see that there was nothing in their teaching to excite the suspicion of the authorities. In connection with the activities of Enayat Ali it has

already been described how the Magistrate of Rajshahi went to the extent of asking a complainant against the 'seditious' activities of the former to show cause why he should not be prosecuted for filing a false complaint. In fact the persistent failure of the authorities to glean the real significance of the work of these preachers, upon which the super-structure of rebellion was raised, is striking and is severely criticised both by Hunter and O'Kinealy. Their teachings were a guarded mixture of expounding the necessity of socio-religious reforms and that of the struggle against the foreign rulers. Naturally enough, in many of the villages the age-old traditions and usages were too deeply embedded and the disappointed preacher had "to shake off the dust of obdurate hamlets from his feet."<sup>13</sup> But his message also struck a favourable response in many a home.

Care was taken to train intensively a select individual. When circumstances appeared favourable the missionary often settled down as a village teacher or in some such other avocation, married locally and thus helped form the nucleus of a local unit. Having done his work thoroughly he moved on leaving the local man as a trustworthy deputy. Besides such local leaders, many more villagers were also 'initiated' and they were often asked to accompany the preachers and during their long journeys they were prevailed upon to attend to the call of the hour—a war was waging on the Frontier, volunteers were needed there, it was the highest service one could render, the choicest eminence one could achieve; wouldn't they take the chance of a lifetime which had come their way? There could hardly be any other answer to such repeated exhortations after months of living in a company surcharged with zeal, enthusiasm and a selfless spirit of independence, and so the flow of volunteers to the Frontier continued. Hunter rightly remarks that "they (the wandering missionaries) have enveloped the whole of Bengal in their meshes and converted many thousands of useful British subjects, first, into vagrant fanatics and then into bitter traitors to the Crown."<sup>14</sup>

(iii) *District Centres*

The next unit in the hierarchical structure of the internal organisation were the District Centres. These came to be established as a result of the itinerant preachers settling down in the interior villages when they found the response encouraging. Such centres were spread over the whole of Bengal and many other parts of the country. Hunter<sup>15</sup> gives a detailed account of two such centres in the Malda district of Bengal, along with a description of the system of their working.

About 1841 one Abdul Rahinan, a resident of Lucknow and one of the *Khalifas* of Wilayat Ali, came to Malda during the course of his preaching tours and having married and taken up a job as school teacher settled there permanently. His job enabled him to meet people of all sections and particularly to exercise his influence over the young. He carried on the double task of raising men and money from his circle and forwarding them to Patna. In this work he was ably assisted by one Rafique Mandal who was originally a cultivator but had been appointed as a 'tax-collector' by Abdul Rahman. Their work continued undisturbed for a long time until the authorities became suspicious in 1853. Rafique Mandal's house was searched and some papers proving "the seditious character of his trade" were discovered and he was arrested. He was, however, released soon after owing to what Hunter describes (and criticises) as the official policy of "contempt towards petty conspirators." After his release Rafique Mandal gave over his work to his son, Amiruddin, who proved to be a worthy successor and carried on the work with great ability, circumspection and success. Under him the Malda Centre grew in importance and became the favourite rendezvous of practically all the District heads in Bengal and served as a convenient halting place for many of the Patna leaders<sup>16</sup> (Enayat Ali, Fayyaz Ali and Maqsd Ali) during their tours of Bengal. The work of the centre went on, undisturbed, for over a decade because the District authorities and in particular

“an English Magistrate in India had all the reluctance of a Prefect of the Augustan Empire to intermeddle with the various beliefs and superstitions of the races over whom he rules. Treason can thus safely walk about under a religious habit.”<sup>17</sup> The Ahmadullah Trial in 1865 drew the attention of the authorities towards the working of this important centre of Wahabi influence. Even then Amiruddin continued his activities. In 1868 he invited the son of the Patna chief to vitalise the slackening zeal of the followers in his area. His jurisdiction spread over three districts,<sup>18</sup> including the whole of Malda and parts of the districts of Murshidabad and Rajshahi. The number of recruits he sent to the Frontier could not be ascertained exactly but Hunter computes<sup>19</sup> that in one single Wahabi outpost on the Frontier, containing over 400 men, more than 10 per cent had been sent from areas under his jurisdiction. This active centre was dispersed and its leaders arrested in 1869, of which a detailed account is given hereafter.

This, in brief, is the story of the working of one of the typical Wahabi District Centres. The working of hundreds of other centres all over the country must have been more or less similar.

#### (iv) *Collection of Funds*

For the purpose of collection of funds several villages were grouped into ‘fiscal circles’ each under a chief ‘tax-collector.’ Under him there were collectors for each village. Populous villages had, besides the tax-collector, a chief priest who led the public prayers in the mosque, a lay chief who was a sort of General Manager and a *Dak-Sardar*<sup>20</sup> whose duty was to arrange for messengers who carried out the hazardous secret missions of transmitting letters and money out of the country. The chief tax collectors made annual tours<sup>21</sup> of their circles to see that all the due amounts had been collected. In between their tours they received regular transmissions of the funds collected by the local men and sent these on to

Patna where a ledger was maintained of the receipts of such amounts.

Hunter refers<sup>22</sup> to the statement of an Indigo Planter of Uttar Pradesh to the effect that his Muslim employees kept aside regularly a portion of their wages as contribution to the Wahabi Fund. The more daring among them took periodical leave and went out to render active service on the Frontier. Between 1830-46 the Muslim bailiffs of these Indigo planters frequently urged the necessity of joining the Wahabi centre on the Frontier as a ground for a few months' leave.

Contributions to the Wahabi Fund could be made both in cash and kind. The following were the chief forms of contributions:

(1) *Zakat* : It is one of the obligatory payments in Islam. It is a sort of income tax levied at a fixed annual rate from persons within certain categories of income. Originally this levy was meant to create a sort of a Welfare Fund out of which the needs of the indigent were met. The Wahabis, however, used it primarily to finance the war against the English.

(2) *Alms* were also given by the devout both in cash and in kind. The sale proceeds of the latter were collected and transmitted in consolidated amounts. The skin of goats and sheep, sacrificed on the occasion of *Baqrid*, were also collected,<sup>23</sup> processed and sold.<sup>24</sup>

(3) Another levy of a universal kind was the *Muthia* or a handful of rice or other grains. Under this system each household was treated as a unit and expected to set aside one *Muthi* or handful of grain, out of the daily quota of consumption, for the common fund. Such small savings did not put any strain even on the poor class of contributors<sup>25</sup> and at the same time enabled sufficiently large quantities of grains to be stocked. These were gathered and sent periodically to the headquarters. This *Muthia*



system was a well-known and useful method of collection of funds and was, later on, recommended for adoption by the leaders of other political parties, including the early Congress Party. Surendranath Bannerjee, at a meeting held in Calcutta in July, 1883, while moving a resolution for raising a National Fund for financing the agitation for constitutional rights, observed, "How do the Wahabis raise their fund? I speak of the Wahabi reformers and not the Wahabi rebels,"<sup>26</sup> so, you need not be afraid. They do it in this way. Every householder puts by a handful of rice before he takes his meal and these handfuls are all collected in the course of a week and then they are taken to a mosque for the Wahabi Missionary to come round and take them up. In this way a Fund is raised for the maintenance of the Wahabi Mission."<sup>27</sup>

The preachers invariably emphasised the necessity and the 'blessings' of donating generously for the Movement. It was specially recommended for those who, for some reason, could not go to the Frontier and participate personally in the war.

Besides these regular levies, special payments were also made on periodical occasions such as marriages, births, festivals and mournings. These were known as *Khyrats*, *Fitra*, *Sadqa*,<sup>28</sup> etc. Large amounts of lump sum donations were also secretly sent from time to time by the wealthy followers of the Movement inside British India.

#### *Transmission of Money*

Such was the Wahabi system of collection of funds. The other and more difficult work was the organising of a system for secretly transmitting the amounts thus collected to the Frontier. It was in this work that the Pathā leaders, and particularly Yahya Ali, excelled. He organised a system of Wahabi hospices along the entire length of the route to the Frontier and placed, each, under the charge of a proven disciple. Hunter gives the follow-

ing graphic description of the working of this system. "The great North road was divided into suitable sections and the Wahabi traitor on their way to our Enemy's Camp journeyed in safety through strange provinces in the full assurance that at the end of each stage there were friends upon the look out for their arrival. The Wahabi agents incharge of the hospices were men of diverse ranks of life, *all devoted to the overthrow of the British Rule* and each the head of a local committee of traitors. Yahya Ali must have displayed a very deep knowledge of character in selecting these men for neither fear of detection nor hope of reward has induced a single one of them to appear against their leader in the hour of his disgrace and at this moment although it is known that a chain of asylums, like that of Thanesar, connected Patna with the Punjab Frontier yet no one can come forward and put his fingers upon the particular spots."<sup>29</sup>

This delicate and difficult operation (transmitting of money) was performed by a host of Secret Agents.<sup>30</sup> Although by force of necessity their work was shrouded in secrecy and not much detail is available about them a brief account of the hazardous task is being given below on the basis of such references as are available.

These agents proceeded with the cash (usually in gold *Mohars* or Guineas) from Patna. In order to lessen the weight and bulk of the assorted collection of cash they were converted into guineas which were sewn in jackets, shoes or on other parts of the body of the messenger. In the work of exchanging the cash into Gold *Mohars* Amir Khan, the famous hide merchant of Patna with his Agency in Calcutta, was of great assistance. Services of some money agents in Delhi were also utilised. In Syed Ahmad's time Delhi occupied a more important place in the scheme for transmission of money. The chief agent for this work in Delhi was a person named Ishaq.<sup>31</sup> Syed Ahmad in his letter to the Patna leaders mentions the name of Ishaq as a safe and dependable person for trans-

mitting money. Later, Patna became the centre and the transmission was done via Thaneswar and Rawalpindi. The secret agents proceeded along the entire length of the country, sometimes alone and in disguise, and often in groups along with other and bigger caravans. They proceeded by stages, staying in the different centres established along the entire Grand Trunk Road by the organizing genius of Yahya Ali. Their journeys, however, were not always as easy and secure as Hunter's description, quoted above, would have us believe. Sometimes prior information about the intended route of the messenger bringing the money leaked out and yet they had to brave the hazard. We do not have many accounts left of the brave exploits of these resourceful and sincere agents. Only one story of the mission<sup>2</sup> of Pir Mohammad, the ace Agent in Syed Ahmad's time, is mentioned below which will give some idea of the perilous nature of their work. He was going from Delhi to the Frontier after receiving a draft of Rs. 3,000/- and 1,000 gold *Mohars* in cash. Ranjit Singh came to know of this and instructed General Ventura to be on the look-out for the messenger. He was finally traced out and searched and the hidden money on his person was found out. Pir Mohammad was given a good beating and put under arrest in Lahore. The Wahabis, who too had their own means of getting information, came to learn of his arrest through the local sympathisers of Syed Ahmad in Lahore. Finally, Hakim Mughisuddin of Saharanpur who was acquainted with Begam Samroo, the widow of William Reinhardt, the famous German soldier of fortune, got a letter written by her to General Ventura and Pir Mohammad was released. He returned to Frontier after many other vicissitudes.

Another means of transmitting money was by drafts. Cash money was deposited with the bankers in Delhi and in Peshawar who forwarded them to the Frontier after a deduction of 12 per cent as commission. The rate charged was exorbitant but they were reliable and there is hardly any instance on record of money being held up or

mislaid in transmission. Drafts of small amounts were preferred as they were easily cashed. Often instructions were given to bankers to keep aside some amount for being paid to the dependents of the volunteers left in India. Special care was taken to look after them. It is a remarkable testimony to the character and integrity of the men doing this work that there is not a single instance of their ever defaulting with a single pie out of the huge amounts entrusted to them. Their travelling expenses were paid for separately and even when this was exhausted due to some unforeseen emergency on the way (illness, arrest or hold-up) they replenished it by doing odd manual jobs and never drew upon the amount meant for transmission.

During the time when Ahmadullah was in-charge of the funds, a register was maintained in which the different amounts received from time to time were noted. This register was kept in the name of Abdul Ghaffar. Elahi Bux (who turned approver in the Ahmadullah Trial Case) was entrusted with the work of purchasing gold *Mohars* and getting *Hundees* (Drafts) prepared. Both these works were vital links in the system of transmission of money and it is noteworthy that they were done through Hindu bankers. The names<sup>11</sup> of the firms of Ramkishan Fatahchand and Manohar Das (Patna) Juggernath and Mukoond Lal (Delhi), Lalchand Kurrum Singh (Benares), Samunt Rai and Sheo Buksh(?) and Santu and Moti (of Manora, Frontier) may be mentioned in this connection. Some idea of the large amounts of money which were transmitted by the Patna leaders can be had from the fact that during the three years, 1862-65, (when the Ambeyla Campaign was going on) a sum of Rupees one lakh was transmitted from Patna through one banker, Manohar Ram only.<sup>12</sup> It can safely be said on the basis of this that very large amounts of money were sent during the long period of time that the system had been in vogue. ●

### *Cyphers and Code Messages*

An intricate system of code words for secret messages

and for acknowledging receipts of money was in use right from the time of Syed Ahmad himself. One cypher code used in a document,<sup>35</sup> seized in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case, still remains to be decoded. Aliases were also used. As far as possible direct use of the names of the writers and the addressees was avoided. Literary and religious similes and allusions were used to convey secret meanings. The system of code words<sup>36</sup> and aliases was developed to a high degree of efficiency by the Patna leaders who depended much upon it for transmitting the funds collected by them.

The attention of the Government was on several occasions drawn to the existence in India of a network of "treasonable correspondence" and supplies of men and money to the Frontier 'colony' of which Patna was the chief centre.

James Abbott, the Deputy Commissioner of Hazara, drew<sup>37</sup> the attention of the Board of Administration, Punjab, as early as 1849 to the "existence of a remarkable nest of Emigrants from Hindoostan who bring with them their own arms and means of subsistence and sit down at Sittana" which was a rallying post of all who hoped to "see a successful Ghazwa" (battle). He also referred to the secret smuggling by these emigrants of "golds on their persons and letters in bamboo canes." Nawab Wazir Muhammad Khan of Tonk, a disciple of Syed Ahmad, was also reported to be sending large sums of money annually. Their number in the previous two years was 60 or 80 but it had increased in the last fortnight to over two hundred and thousands more were expected. In subsequent letters<sup>38</sup> James Abbott repeatedly drew the Board's attention to the continued collection of men at Sittana from the different parts of India, particularly Rajputana and Rohilkhand. They came, via Attock, "disguised as beggars and students." The ragged garments were cast off on reaching Sittana. Godowns were also being constructed in Sittana where large supplies of wheat, brought on

camels, were being stored. Capt. Abbott was apprehensive "of the existence of these enthusiasts in the strong country of Hazara" where they could always be utilised as the nucleus of anti-Government activities in the event of trouble from the Sikhs or the Durranis. He thought that in the event of any fresh trouble in the Punjab Hazara might be selected as the theatre of the first outbreak. "The elements of strife are numerous, the ground is high and distant from the capital and the consummate judgment which selected Mooltan would not be slow to perceive the points of parallel." He advised the establishment of armed posts along the Indus to cut out the source of supply to Sittana. The Board,<sup>10</sup> however, did not share the apprehensions of Capt. Abbott. They did not agree to the establishment of such armed posts in forward areas without suitable means of communications. They perceived no grounds for an insurrection in Hazara. "All the enemies of the British Government have recently been signally defeated . . . The people of Hazara . . . fickle then, and faithless as they are, the time has not yet come for a religious war, whatever fanatics may preach or whatever a few desperadoes may determine." The difference over policy between the man on the spot, Capt. Abbott, and the Board of Administration continued increasing in bitterness of tone and finally Abbott had to leave his charge in 1853. It is, however, only fit to admit the remarkable political sagacity of Capt. Abbott whose assessment of the situation was far more correct than that of the Board which was destined to be soon disillusioned in its pious hope of receiving continued loyalty from the "people of Hazara who had experienced nothing but favours at our hands."

Patna once again figured in 1852 as the centre of treasonable correspondence and of supply of men and money to the Wahabi colony on the Frontier. The Government, as on so many previous occasions, failed to realise the real seriousness of the situation. The Governor of Bengal contented himself with drawing up a Minute,

dated 26th August, 1852, on the subject which stated that "that a correspondence exists between persons in Patna and the fanatics in Swat and Sittana, I have no doubt." Although the Governor did not share the apprehension of the Magistrate he considered it "expedient to watch the conduct and proceedings of the parties implicated and in the event of armed men being assembled (by the Wahabis, as reported by the Magistrate), he would take proper measures for upholding of the Government's authority."<sup>40</sup>

It was this system of supply of men and money from India which kept the struggles of the Wahabi principality on the Frontier alive. Without the continuance of this vital support the struggle could not have been carried on. It was the accidental discovery of this source of supply in 1863 which led the Government of India, chastening under the heavy blows of the Ambeyla Campaign, to devote all their resources to tracing out these "centres of sedition" inside India and to seal them off. After that, even though the Wahabi centre continued on the Frontier, its strength and effectiveness was gone. Once the perennial flow of the vital supplies from the fertile Gangetic plains was stopped the young sapling of the Wahabi State shrivelled up on the hot barren rocks of the Frontier.

## II. *Infiltration by the Wahabis into the Indian Army*

The other main plank in the organisational work of the Wahabis was their attempt to infiltrate into the Indian units of the British army. Syed Ahmed himself had realised very early in his career the necessity of having a trained and disciplined armed force for the coming struggle. His idea was not, however, of just a mercenary army but a band of dedicated volunteers trained on the basis of certain ethical and moral standards. It was with this motive that he had joined the army of Amir Khan of Tonk where he was given the key post of a religious preacher. It enabled him to give the type of moral training to the soldiers which he wanted. The author of the *Makhzan* narrates several "miracles" performed by Syed

Ahmad during his stay there. These may well have enabled him to exercise some influence over the minds of the raw soldiers.

The model set up by the leader of the Movement was followed with certain modifications by his followers in the subsequent period.

The formation and growth of the Indian Units of the East India Company's Army, the so-called Sepoys, is an absorbing and important subject in itself.<sup>12</sup> They played a vital role in promoting the growth of the British Empire in India. Indian history in the 19th century affords ample examples of how Indian Units raised from one part of the country were employed in conquering another part of it. The role of the Bengal Army, first, in the Kabul Wars (which ironically enough led to the germination of the first seeds of discontent among them) and, later, in the Anglo-Sikh wars; and then, as if to complete the irony of the situation, the crucial importance of the services of the Sikh Regiments in suppressing the Movement of 1857, of which the Bengal Army were the standard bearers, are only a few such instances. The biographer of Lord Lawrence, one of the main architects of the recovery of Delhi in 1857, remarks with a tinge of praise on the policy pursued by Lawrence of "availing himself of the hostility which he knew to exist between the different races in the Punjab, he enrolled 3,000 Pathans (during the Second Anglo-Sikh War); thus following the reverse of the process which afterwards stood us in such good stead in the Mutiny."<sup>13</sup>

It were the French and mainly Dupleix who first gave practical shape to the "profitable" idea of raising Indian units to form part of the French Army to be employed in promoting the French interests by participating in the different local wars characterising the history of the Indian peninsula in the latter half of the 18th century. However, it was Clive, the more lucky rival of Dupleix, who



made full use of this brilliant idea of his political adversary and in fact made it the chief instrument of his work—laying the foundation of the British Empire in India. It was during his first visit to Bihar, in 1758, that he, “not unmindful of military matters,” raised a small unit“ consisting exclusively of the inhabitants of Shahabad district noted for their robust physique and martial spirit. These units, raised locally, were drilled and trained along European lines and were commanded by a select band of European officers who did their task with a perfection surpassing even the imagination of the promoter of the idea. The disintegration of the Mughal Empire and its break-up into local dynasties, long years of internecine local wars, absence of any larger national outlook and, finally, the peculiar spirit of camaraderie, born out of fighting together, which binds men of diverse races and creeds into ties of loyalty and friendship unaffected by caste and creed had helped mould these Indian Units and their European Officers into an efficient and effective military organisation. It was only with the passage of time and, probably, owing to a fuller realisation of the extent to which they had helped the English raise their Empire in India, as also owing to many local grievances fanned by religious considerations that the spirit of discontent raised its head in the Indian Units resulting, first, in a series of minor “risings” and “conspiracies” and culminating, finally, in the great conflagration of 1857 which very nearly brought about the destruction of the mighty structure of the Empire in the East raised by the sweat and blood of the Sepoys themselves.

It is to the credit of the Wahabi leaders that they realised very early in their struggle with the English that the Indian Army occupied a key position in it. This was the main instrument of the power of the English and if this could somehow be ‘neutralised’ half the battle would be won. It was this realisation which made the Wahabi agents repeatedly bring home to the Indian Sepoys the full extent of the immense power wielded by them and

of the dependence of the English on them. From the following accounts of some of the well known and recorded instances of Wahabi infiltrations in the Indian Army it will be evident that their work encompassed the whole of India. They did not know which unit would be sent next to fight against them. So their agents were deputed to all important military stations "from the Sutledge to Calcutta" and tried to neutralise the effectiveness, by sapping the loyalties, of as many units as possible. Where simple preaching and appeal to patriotism failed the more sure, if more sordid, approach of monetary inducement (in the Patna Conspiracy of 1845 money was extensively distributed among the Indian Troops) was also tried. The strategy of infiltrating in the Army Units was standardised by the Wahabis from a very early date and in the different recorded instances of their 'tampering' with Army Units, noticed below, a fairly uniform pattern of working is clearly evident.

The first recorded instance of the Wahabi infiltration into the ranks of the Indian Army for 'tampering with their allegiance' relates, strangely enough, to Southern India. An account of the Hyderabad conspiracy in 1839 has already been given. During the course of investigations by the Government into that conspiracy it was found that an extensive network of Wahabi agents<sup>15</sup> was working in different civil and military stations in Madras and other important centres down south. Their activities were reported to the Government by the Officer Commanding, Vellore.<sup>16</sup> He informed that Wali Muhammad, the *Mufti* of the District Court and Hubullah, 'Sadr' of the Collector's Court, used to receive a Persian newspaper named *Suttarah Akhbar* printed by one Rajab Ali at Calcutta. This latter person was the 'Caliph' of Muhammad Ali<sup>17</sup> Rampuri who had earlier been turned out of Madras for 'treasonable' activities in the Carnatic area. The newspaper gave prominence to the impending war between Dost Muhammad and the English and prophesied that the former would soon drive the English out of India. Moulvi

Mudin (Mobin ?), the head priest of the mosque near the Fort, and other followers of the said Mohammad Ali Rampuri used to address the gatherings after evening prayers and preached *Jehad*. The same type of speeches were delivered in the other three mosques in the city—the Fort Mosque, the Subby Street Mosque and Piran Sahib's Mosque. In the last named mosque the head priest was a discharged trooper.

In a subsequent letter, dated 15th June, 1839, the Officer Commanding, Vellore, informed<sup>48</sup> the Madras Government about a certain Cowda Mian (?) who was in the *habit of addressing the Sepoys at Palaverum and who was frequently present in the officers' quarter on the pretext of playing chess*. He also informed about the publication of a pamphlet containing seditious matters by a person known as Burra Saheb.<sup>49</sup>

In another letter, dated the 10th June, 1839, the same officer forwarded to the Government of Madras a list of the *Khalifas* or agents of the above-mentioned Muhammad Ali who were working in the different civil and military stations in the South.

A more widespread and better organised conspiracy was hatched in Patna in 1845, in which the Wahabis figured prominently. This event has not yet received the full attention of the historians and the brief and summarised version given by Kaye<sup>50</sup> has remained, till recently, the only published account of it. A comparatively fuller treatment of the subject has been done recently<sup>51</sup> when, in connection with the study of the Movement of 1857-59 in Bihar, the original papers bearing on the subject were discovered and studied. However, in both these works it was admitted that the full antecedents of the organisers of the Conspiracy were not known. Kaye<sup>52</sup> admitted that "to what dimensions the conspiracy really extended, and from what central point it radiated, is not known, and now never will be known." The other work also expressed the

same inability. "He (Saif Ali) remained till the last a mysterious personality."<sup>53</sup> Moreover, this second work was primarily concerned with the biography of Kunwar Singh, the leader of the 1857 Movement in Bihar, and the conspiracy has been studied from that point of view, especially because there was some mention of Kunwar Singh being involved in it.<sup>54</sup> It is because the identities of the main organisers have not been properly studied that the point about the Wahabis being one of its chief organisers has been missed.

The genesis of the Conspiracy has to be sought in the prevailing discontent in Bihar against the Government owing to some of its social and economic policies. The Land Resumption proceedings and the activities of the missionaries also added to the list of grievances of the people. The fears and apprehensions of the people were carefully utilised by anti-government agitators.

The broad facts of the Conspiracy are briefly recounted below to enable us to make a critical appraisal of the episode. Towards the end of 1845 it was reported<sup>55</sup> to the Government that there existed a widespread conspiracy "to tamper with the allegiance of the native officers and sepoys," stationed in Dinapur. The chain of events<sup>56</sup> leading to this conspiracy started with a meeting between Peer Bux, the Regimental Munshi of the 1st Regiment N.I. and Rahat Ali, a wealthy local Zamindar, well-known for his anti-government activities for some time past. This occurred in September, 1845, and the purpose of the meeting (according to Peer Bux's statement) was to get some loan from Rahat Ali to whom the former had been recommended by a mutual friend. Saif Ali, one of the main organisers of the Conspiracy, was also present there and was introduced to Peer Bux. On the strength of that introduction Saif Ali met Peer Bux in the Regimental Line, in December next, on the pretence of selling some books. The latter refused to have anything to do with him (Allowance has to be made in this statement for the fact

that Peer Bux had turned an approver and was trying to save himself). Later, Saif Ali introduced Peer Bux to Khaja Hasan Ali, another important organiser of the plot.<sup>51</sup> An interview took place between the three on the upper storey of the house of the Khaja in Patna. The conversation between the three is highly revealing and bears repetition. The Khaja asked the Munshi about the condition of his employment, pay, etc. and then exclaimed "O, Munshi, Hindusthan has become a place for battle (echo of Dar-ul-Harb theory of the Wahabis!) and what tyranny is taking place in the jails . . . the Magistrate of Bombay has closed the ways for men of Islam to proceed to Mecca."<sup>52</sup> The Munshi thereupon enquired about the intentions of the Khaja to which the latter replied that he wanted to be introduced to "those who are high in the Army such as *Soobahdars* and *Jamadars*." The Munshi tried to dissuade the Khaja from such "treasonable" designs. At this stage the Khaja asked a man to bring up Rs. 100/-, tied in a handkerchief, to give it to the Munshi who deposited it with Saif Ali. He asked the Munshi to "persuade the Sirdars of the Regiment to engage with us and not to let this be known to the Sipahis for the present." He also gave him Rs. 100/- tied in a piece of cloth. The Munshi asked whether similar attempts had been made to contact the other Regiments, and the Khaja mentioned Kanpur, Benares, Allahabad, Sagauli (district Champaran) and Doranda (district Hazaribagh) as the places where they were working. He added that if the Sirdars of the Regiment would accept this "entertainment" he would give them one month's pay and that he had powers to spend up to one crore of rupees. He did not want the Sirdars to be at present on "our side" and fight, but that when there would be a rebellion they should be on his side. On being asked whether he was in charge of arrangements up to Kanpur or further up, he replied that "beyond that (Kanpur) there is someone else managing." The Munshi said that Durga Prasad, the Pandit of the Regiment, could better serve their purpose and establish contact for them with the Sirdars. Saif Ali then asked

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Peer Bux to introduce him to the Pandit. Thus the first interview ended. The Munshi mentioned the matter to Durga Prasad and Bhikhan Jamadar. The former promised to speak to the Sirdars. Peer Bux again met Rahat Ali on the pretext of obtaining some small loan (how else could he explain his frequent meetings with Rahat Ali !). He also met Saif Ali and informed him that he had communicated their message to the Sirdars. Saif Ali, therefore, accompanied him to Dinapur and asked him to call the *Havaldar* Major. On the latter's arrival he gave him Rs. 75/- which he refused to take. The Pandit also came and stated that he "had done much endeavour" and that "some persons were assenting, others were not." Saif Ali gave the Pandit ten rupees and promised further rewards including a feast to forty Brahmins and a cash gift of ten rupees to each of them. Saif Ali then returned to Patna.

After a fortnight the Pandit visited Peer Bux and informed him that the Sirdars had agreed to take money. Moti Misra, and Ram Swarup, Jamadar and Soobadar respectively, of the 4th Company were starting for Gaya and they wanted their share to be paid at Patna, near Golghar. The Pandit asked Peer Bux to go to Patna, meet Saif Ali and arrange for the money. Saif Ali took the Munshi to the house of the Khaja and from there brought him to his own house. He then brought Rupees two hundred, laid eighty-two (being the actual amount of pay of the *Havildars*) in two separate handkerchiefs and the two proceeded to Golghar on two separate *Ekkas*. On reaching there they learnt that the two Sirdars had gone to call on the Magistrate. Saif Ali and the Munshi went there and waited at the gate of the compound. When they came out Peer Bux gave them the money. (These two had already divulged the plan to Major Rowcroft and were receiving the money on his instruction. This was not known to Peer Bux at the time he gave this statement.) Peer Bux and Saif Ali then returned to Dinapur. There, Bhikhan Jamadar also came

and demanded his share and was given Rupees thirtytwo. Then the Pandit told Saif Ali that one Kewal Tiwary, *Soobadar*, wanted money for other five Sirdars. Saif Ali did not have that much money and returned to Patna to bring it. In the meanwhile Peer Bux who had some enmity with Kewal Tiwary suspected some foul play on the latter's part and sent a message at midnight to Saif Ali stating that Kewal Tiwary would probably betray them. Saif Ali wanted Peer Bux to come over and join him but the latter stayed on. Kewal Tiwary insisted on the money being paid to him and the Munshi but the Pandit stalled on some pretext or the other. Soon after, on the following Sunday, the expected blow fell and the Munshi was arrested.

Some additional information regarding the "tampering" of Regiments stationed in other places in Bihar is also available from these papers. Peer Bux, for instance, had stated in an earlier statement<sup>59</sup> that the 66th N.I. had also agreed to take money. The 7th Irregular Cavalry stationed at Sagauli (district Champaran) had also been contacted<sup>60</sup> through Baqar Ali, the *Kotgust Darogha* of Patna City. Sums of Company Rupees 16, 60, and 101, corresponding to the pay of "Native Officers" and privates of the Irregular Cavalry, had been found tied in a piece of cloth in the house of Rahat Ali.<sup>61</sup>

The aftermath of the Conspiracy and the subsequent history of some of its chief organisers are also interesting. Peer Bux, the Munshi, turned an approver and was pardoned. Durga Prasad, the Pandit, and Bhikhan *Jamadar* were tried by Court Martial. They were held guilty and sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment and dismissal from service respectively. On the intervention<sup>62</sup> of the C. in C. who regarded the sentences to be light these were increased; in the case of the Pandit, to death, and in the case of the *Jamadar*, to imprisonment for life. Surprisingly enough, the C. in C. once again intervened and got the original sentences restored. Rahat Ali was released as

Peer Bux modified his earlier statement and exonerated him of complicity. Khaja Hasan Ali remained underground for about one year and could not be traced out in spite of the best efforts of the Government. He finally surrendered in October, 1846, and was put to trial. But Peer Bux, the chief prosecution witness, refused to identify him as the same person he had met, as deposed by him. The Government was obliged to release him. The Superintendent of Police was convinced that Peer Bux had been "bought off" but the Government could do nothing; they had been stumped neatly and cleanly !

Saif Ali just disappeared from the scene and nothing was heard of him since then.

We will now examine the Conspiracy in its proper perspective and study the antecedents of its chief organisers. It is evident that the Conspiracy was not an isolated episode. Its ramifications spread even outside Bihar. It was based on a wide range of misgivings and discontent prevailing in the Province which were skilfully exploited by some anti-government agitators, from both Bihar and outside.

Patna was a noted centre of the Wahabis whose anti-government activities were of old standing.<sup>63</sup> Tayler, writing during the Rising of 1857, cited the local Wahabis with their well-knit organisation and disciplined and selfless outlook as one of the "sources from which he expected trouble."<sup>64</sup> Is it likely that such an anti-government faction of old standing would have stood aloof from a Conspiracy being hatched right in their own headquarters?

This may be characterised as a negative approach. We will, therefore, proceed to more definite and positive evidences. A close perusal of the events would clearly reveal that the Conspiracy was divided into two parts, (i) local discontentment, (ii) its channelising into an anti-government agitation and carrying it into the ranks of the Indian Units of the Army. This vital aspect has been



glossed over by most writers on the subject. To the contemporary officers, however, the two phases were distinct and clear. The Commissioner, Patna, observed that the "emissaries who, it is alleged, have been sent to every division of the Army from the Sutledge to Calcutta, would naturally ascertain all the local causes of discontent in order to foment them and make the acquaintance of persons who from their known character for intrigue would be likely to aid in the subversion of our power. To the Mohammadans they . . . held out the hope of restoration of the family of Timoor to the throne of Delhy, and to the Hindus the fear of conversion to Christianity."<sup>65</sup> Rahat Ali was exactly such a local man of anti-government inclinations. As far back as 1829 he along with one Abdullah had been instrumental in organising a demonstration in the Court of Elliot, the Resumption Officer, against the severity of Resumption Proceedings.<sup>66</sup> He was therefore chosen as a local collaborator by the "emissary from other parties to the North-West." Saif Ali represented the other party—the outside party, in the Conspiracy. He was the connecting link between the local leaders and the organisers from outside, "the North-West." That this latter unit was the actual organiser of the Conspiracy is established by the testimony of the investigating police officer to the effect that the "plan (of conspiracy) came down from above,"<sup>67</sup> with their emissary, Saif Ali. He was the key figure in the Conspiracy. It was he who showed initiative in contacting the sepoys, he repeatedly visited the Regimental Lines and he handled the cash. The prime role of Saif Ali is acknowledged by the Magistrate who remarked that "he (Saif Ali) was the first person who sounded the Munshi (Peer Bux) and who introduced him to the Khaja."<sup>68</sup> The Superintendent of Police also remarked that if Saif Ali had been arrested more light would have been thrown on the affair.<sup>69</sup>

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Now, who was Saif Ali? The Superintendent of Police who had given a vague clue about Saif Ali being an agent from the North-West in his letter dated 16th March, 1846,

came out subsequently<sup>70</sup> with the more definite and crucial information — which has been altogether missed by all writers on the topic—that Saif Ali was the “Agent of the son of the celebrated Mohammadan Sirdar, Amir Khan, now holding the *Jagir* of Tonk.” Saif Ali’s description as given in Peer Bux’s statement, referred to above, also tallies with his being the agent of a ruling Prince. Peer Bux described him as a man who was “well educated” and acquainted with accounts. In answer to a question whether Saif Ali was a man of responsibility and consequence, Peer Bux described him as “a young man, good-looking, noble in appearance, wearing good clothes, with beard and moustache, black, tall stature.” The connection between Waziruddaula as also his more famous father, Amir Khan, and the Wahabi Movement and their valuable services to and patronage of the Movement need no elucidation. Once this major fact has been assimilated many oblique references in these records would be clear. Thus, for instance, the reference to emissaries from the North-West,<sup>71</sup> the quotation from the Quran in Peer Bux’s letter to Rahat Ali, “Leave your Homes, Fight in the Path of the Almighty” and the reference in another letter to the well-known Urdu literary work, *Anwar Suhaili* for certain lessons, all indicate unmistakably the Wahabi technique. The emphasis, unlike in 1857, was not on an immediate rising but on remaining neutral, if not in active support, when the necessity arose. This too accorded with the Wahabi strategy. There are clear references to the fact that the conspiracy was spread beyond Bihar and “others were managing it beyond Kanpur.” Only the Wahabis with their all-India network of anti-English activities could possibly be this other party.

The other main figure in the conspiracy was Rahat Ali. He was the son of Salamat Ali, Sudder Amin, and a resident of village Neora,<sup>72</sup> district Patna. We do not know for certain whether he was a Wahabi but the following information about some of his closest relatives would be of relevance here. In 1870 one Muhammad Umar of Dina-

pur was arrested as a prominent Wahabi leader engaged in anti-government activities. The Government during the course of investigation discovered that he was a nephew (sister's son) of Rahat Ali. The antecedents of Rahat Ali being well-known, minute investigation about Muhammad Umar's relations was made and it was discovered<sup>73</sup> that Rahat Ali had three sisters, one of them being married to Imdad Ali, Sudder Amin, Tirhut. He had two sons, Najmuddin and Wahiduddin. The former was for some time a *Sarishtadar* of Patna Opium Agency and subsequently the *Dewan* of the Raja of Bettiah. He was arrested by Tayler in 1857 as a suspected anti-government agitator. The sons of his second sister were Farzand Ali, Pleader, Chapra Civil Court, Munshi Ismail and Abdul Karim, *Amlah* of Judge's Court, Patna, and A. Wahab. The third sister's son was Muhammad Umar, the Wahabi leader. His two brothers, Muhammad Yahya and Sadiq were *Munsiff*, Patna, and Keeper of Records, Judge's Court, Patna, respectively. All of them were suspected of being active Wahabi sympathisers.<sup>74</sup> Thus many of the relations of Rahat Ali held different posts in the Government and were suspected of anti-government activities since earlier and it was definitely established in 1870 that many of them were Wahabis.

Finally, we may give consideration to the writing of Malleson,<sup>75</sup> also, on this subject. He distinctly mentions this conspiracy as the work of the Wahabis. Analysing the various local causes of discontent in Bihar and recounting the series of Wahabi activities in Patna he makes the interconnection between the latter and the Conspiracy of 1845 more clear and specific at another point in his work. He observes, "a plot had been hatched (Patna, 1845) by a band of conspirators; when cash had been distributed to the sepoy; a scroll discovered containing the names of one hundred of the principal families:—a city (Patna) which was the headquarters of the two notorious vice-regents (Ali Brothers) of the great Prophet (Syed Ahmad)"<sup>76</sup>.

In view of all these significant points which had not so far been studied in their proper context it is clear that the Wahabis were the main organisers of the Conspiracy of 1845.

The Wahabis once again figured in an attempt to "tamper with the allegiance" of Indian troops in 1852. The attempt was made this time up in the North, near Rawalpindi. A number of letters was intercepted in the house of Muhammad Wali, a Regimental *Munshi* of the 4th Native Infantry stationed in Rawalpindi. The *Munshi* acknowledged himself to be a disciple of Syed Ahmad.<sup>77</sup> The bunch of letters recovered from him and written in the familiar Wahabi style included many from Akramullah, in Sittana, to Hussain Ali Khan of Dugber toli,<sup>78</sup> Patna City. These reported the arrival of volunteers from India in Swat and gave detailed instructions for the guidance of future parties on way to the Frontier.

It was also learnt<sup>79</sup> from the intercepted letters that the men and ammunition were sent to Swat via Meerut and Ludhiana. The arms were deposited in Meerut with one, Qazi Muhammad or Sarfraz Ali, while the Agent in Ludhiana was Abbas Ali who lived near the local Abdul Qadir's mosque.

The Deputy Commissioner, Rawalpindi, wrote to the Magistrates of Patna and Meerut and the Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana, to search the houses of the persons named under their respective jurisdictions and to seize papers found in their possession. Abbas Ali of Ludhiana was arrested and some additional letters incriminating one "Abu Abdool Raheem" of Patna were found in his possession. Philip Goldney, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana, also wrote to the Magistrate, Patna, to enquire about this person who "was connected with the Swat leaders."

The Magistrate of Patna accordingly made enquiries and searched the house of Husain Ali. In his report<sup>80</sup> the

Magistrate observed that the search was a mistake for Husain Ali, was only a *Khansaman* (steward) of Ahmadullah and the letters were addressed to his house merely as a blind. The real addressee was Ahmadullah. The Magistrate had no authority to search his house which in any case would have required the "assistance of Military." Ahmadullah had received previous information about the impending search. He had received this information from a Hakim of Lahore who arrived in Patna two days before the letter from Rawalpindi.<sup>81</sup> All the papers were accordingly destroyed. The Magistrate went on to remark that the sect was on the increase in the city. Meetings were held on Fridays in which "the tenets of the sect were explained and converts made." What was more ominous was that Ahmadullah had assembled some five hundred men and had declared that if the Government would take harsh measures for suppression he would raise the standard of revolt. The state of things was sufficiently serious to deserve the attention of the Government. As regards "Abu Abdool Raheem" mentioned in Goldney's letters the Magistrate remarked that there was no such person. He, however, suspected that the person involved was Abdullah, the eldest son of Wilayat Ali, and the above name was merely a blind.

Neither the Board of Administration, Punjab, nor the Government of Bengal shared the apprehension of their respective subordinate local officials. The Lieut. Governor of Bengal contented himself with drawing up the Minute, dated 26th August, 1852, referred to above. In a separate letter<sup>82</sup> to the Board of Administration, Punjab, the Secretary to Government of India, while reiterating the sentiments expressed in the above-noted Minute, added that *Patna undoubtedly was the headquarters of Wahabis in India. Letters had been found there, parties of volunteers had proceeded from there to the Frontier Colony.* The Governor-General in Council also directed that an "example should be made of the Regimental *Munshie* of

4th N.I." who had been the channel for the anti-Government correspondence.<sup>83</sup>

That the Wahabi activities narrated above were not as innocuous as the Governor General-in-Council would have us believe is evident from the expeditions sent shortly afterwards against the Hasanzais tribe and the Wahabis in 1852. Hunter correctly assesses the significance of this attempt in Rawalpindi and observes, "In 1852 . . . treasonable correspondence with our troops was seized by the Panjab authorities. A skilful attempt had been made to tamper with the 4th Native Infantry stationed at Rawalpindi, conveniently near to the Fanatic Colony, and one of the first Regiments which, on their invading our Province, would have been sent to act against them."<sup>84</sup>

The next attempt was made further up in Peshawar in 1857. Once again some treasonable letters written by some Wahabis of Patna were intercepted in the possession of Shaikh Karimullah, Naib of the 64th N.I. stationed in Peshawar. He was the son of Shaikh Qudrutullah of village Irki, district Gaya. He had a host of relatives occupying different positions in various other units.<sup>85</sup> The letters found in his possession had been written by one, Shaikh Nathoo. All the letters were written on the eve of the Rising of 1857. Karimullah used to pass them on to the Wahabis in Sittana and also spread the message among his own men. Translations and abridged versions of these letters were sent to Patna for tracing out the writers.<sup>86</sup>

. The event has to be viewed in the background of the prevailing political conditions on the Hazara border at that time. The prospect, although apparently quiet, was 'gloomy' and dangerous. The district lay on the border of Yusufzai tribal area which was in a state of ferment. Mubarak Shah, the dispossessed chief of Swat who felt aggrieved with the English, was staying in the neighbouring Panjtar. Not far from it was the Wahabi headquarters at Mangalthana. Wilayat Ali had died in 1852 and his

younger and more intrepid brother, Enayat Ali, was the leader of the Wahabis. He was eager to utilise the crisis of 1857 for striking severe blows upon the English while their hands were full of troubles in other quarters. In preparation for this he was actively engaged in infiltrating into the ranks of the Indian troops stationed in the neighbourhood.

It is important to bear in mind the fact that the Rising of 12th May, 1857, had already occurred by this time and the conflagration was spreading fast from one military station to another. In the particular case of Peshawar Division, the two distinct influences of the general Movement of 1857 and the Wahabi Movement were working simultaneously and the different units reacted differently to these two influences. As a result the thread of the events during this crucial period has become very complex and quite often the influence of the Wahabis on the course of events during this period has been ignored.<sup>87</sup> A close study of the events would, however, reveal that the two influences were working separately. Thus, for instance, the 51st N.I. was greatly excited over the 'cartridge affair'<sup>88</sup> with which the Wahabis had nothing to do. But many other units, specially the 55th N.I. (with detachments at Mardan and Nowshera), the 69th N.I. at Peshawar and the 10th Irregular Cavalry were definitely under Wahabi influence. Edwardes, in course of his report<sup>89</sup> on the events in the Division, observed that "there had long been intrigues going on between 55th and 64th N.I. and the 10th Irregular Cavalry and the Hindusthani fanatics in Swat and the neighbouring hills" and that two "Hindusthani Moulvies"<sup>90</sup> (agents of Wahabis) in the Collectorate of Mardan were the hosts of the emissaries who passed to and fro." Paget and Mason, the famous chroniclers of the British Expeditions sent to the Frontier, are more forthright in their observation regarding the Wahabi influence. "The only portion of the Peshawar district in which advantage of the Sepoy Mutiny was taken by the people to disturb the country was on the

Yusufzai border and this *was principally due to pressure of the Hindusthani fanatics*, who were supported by contributions of men and money from traitorous princes and individuals in Hindusthan."<sup>91</sup> The subsequent action of the 55th N.I. after they had broken out from their station, which has been narrated hereafter, also confirms this view for they headed straight to Swat and then to Mangalthana, a centre of the Wahabis. Unfortunately, the sudden and untimely death of Akbar Shah, king of Swat and a staunch supporter of Wahabis, just on the day of the Meerut outbreak changed the political situation in favour of the English. If only the Swatis under their religious leader, the Akhund, had joined hands with the Sepoys of the 55th and the Wahabis, other tribes might also have probably joined in and the English would have been overwhelmed.<sup>92</sup> However, instead of the expected support and cooperation the sepoy of the 55th, owing largely to the hostility of the Akhund of Swat, found opposition all around and were chased out—some to die wandering in the inhospitable hills<sup>93</sup> and some others to find their way to Mangalthana, the headquarters of Enayat Ali. Of these latter we would hear more in the subsequent chapter. It is thus clear that the Wahabis were actively working against the English in the Frontier on the eve of and right through the Movement of 1857. The reasons why they acted separately and did not join the General Movement form another topic which is discussed in a separate chapter.



## REFERENCES

See Appendix III.

C.R., Vol. XL, pp. 130-31. Italics are mine.

The site is now occupied by the buildings of the old Patna City Municipality's Office and the adjoining *Hat* grounds.

C.R., Vol. XL, 1864, p. 131.

JRAS, Bombay, Vol. XIV, 1880, pp. 363-64. Italics are mine.

The list is also copied in the copy of *Tuzkira-i-Sadqa* belonging to the late A. Ghaffar (p. 58). For note on the importance of this valuable copy of the work, see Introduction.

Muhammad Husain and Wilayat Ali were appointed *Khalifas* direct by Syed Ahmad. Farhat Husain, younger brother of Wilayat Ali, was appointed *Khalifa* by the latter (T.S., p. 41). Most of the Counsellors were members of the Sadiqpur family. For their biographical details see Appendix I.

8. He was a resident of Hajipur (district Muzaffarpur). Further details vide *infra*.
9. He was the youngest son of Wilayat Ali. Further details vide *infra*.
10. This regular organisation broke down after Abdul Rahim.
11. C.R., Vol. XL, 1864, p. 132.
12. I.M., p. 72.
13. C.R., Vol. XL, p. 133.
14. *ibid*.
15. I.M., pp. 78-81.
16. *ibid*. p. 82.
17. *ibid*. p. 80.
18. *ibid*. f. n. 3.
19. *ibid*. p. 80.
20. *ibid*. p. 81, f. n. 3.
21. *ibid*. p. 82.
22. *ibid*. p. 20.
23. *ibid*., Also see Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept. Prog. No. 166, dated Nov., 1866.
24. This is still one of the recognised methods amongst the Muslims of donating to orphanages where boys collect the skins on the occasion of Baqrid, process them, sell them and collect the proceeds.
25. Selections, p. 138.
26. This distinction between the efforts of Wahabi preachers and Wahabi rebels was, probably, drawn out purposely. Otherwise the authorities would have objected to the adoption of a method used by "rebels."
27. Printed Report of the Progs. of National Fund Meeting held on the 17th July, 1883, Sen Press, (Calcutta) 1883.
28. Selections, p. 138.
29. C.R., Vol. XL, 1864, p. 136.

30. For List of Secret Agents see Selections.  
 31. Mehr, III, p. 53.  
 32. Mehr, III, pp. 93-96.  
 33. Mehr, III, p. 55; Selections, p. 71.  
 34. Selections, p. 98.  
 35. Secret Cons., No. 15, dated 12th June, 1839, App. B. The message in cypher is as follows. The figures are in Arabic numerals:

81169	169161	161911	616961
11696	116966	161911	116961
11696	116911	169116	1691161
112116	11611211	991169	169611

36. See Appendix III.  
 37. For. Dept. Sec. Cons. No. 11, dated 29th Sept. 1849.  
 38. *ibid.*, Letters from James Abbott, Dy. Commissioner, Hazara, dated 10th, 19th and 31st July, 1849.  
 39. *ibid.*, Letter from H. P. Burn, Dy. Secy. to Board of Administration, to Major Abbott, Dy. Commissioner, Hazara, dated 9th Aug., 1849.  
 40. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 86, dated 15th Oct., 1852.  
 41. *Makhzan*, II. 26-27b. Mehr, I, pp. 98-99.  
 42. See A. Brome, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army*, London 185, pp. 199 ff., J. W. Kaye, *History of the Sepoy War in India*, London 1872, Vol. I, pp. 200 ff.  
 43. R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Laurence*, London. 1883, Vol. I., p. 253.  
 44. Broome, *op. cit.*, p. 199.  
 45. It was customary at that time to appoint a *Moulvi* and a *Pandit* to each Regiment. In quite a few cases the Wahabis worked through the Regimental *Moulvis* and *Pandits*.  
 46. For. Dept. Sec. Cons. No. 23, dated the 10th July, 1839: Extract of a letter from Officer Commanding, Vellore, dated 6th June, 1839.  
 47. He was deputed by Syed Ahmad to work in South India.  
 48. For. Dept. Sec. Cons., No. 23, dated 10th July 1839.  
 49. It is interesting to note here that Wilayat Ali was usually referred to as "*Barc Hazrat*" in the circle of his close associates and in their correspondence, in order to distinguish him from Enayat Ali, known as "*Manjhle Hazrat*."  
 50. J. W. Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 303-310.  
 51. K. K. Datta, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-69.  
 52. Kaye, *op. cit.*, p. 304.  
 53. Datta, *op. cit.*, p. 64.  
 54. This was, however, controverted in a subsequent letter from the Magistrate, Patna, to Secretary Govt. of Bengal, No. 68, dated 30th January, 1846.  
 55. Letter from E. S. Lillie, Magistrate, Patna, to Secretary., Govt. of Bengal, dated 26th December, 1845.

56. This account of events is based upon the Deposition of Peer Bux, one of the persons involved in the conspiracy, under Act V of 1840, on 7th March, 1846.
57. He was employed in the Gwalior State for several years and also acted for sometime as its *Vakil* (Agent) in Calcutta. He was thus described by Peer Bux, "an old man, his hairs are white, he wears a beard, average height, neither stout nor lean, wheaten (sic) complexion."
58. At about that time a pilgrim ship carrying passengers for *Haj* had been quarantined in Bombay and it led to spread of rumours that Government was interfering with the performance of *Haj*.
59. Letter from Offg. Magt., Patna, to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, No. 43C, dated 20th January, 1846, Enclosure.
60. *ibid.*, No. 16, dated 14th January, 1846.
61. *ibid.*, from C. A. Lushington, Jt. Magt., Patna, to Magt., Patna, dated 25th December, 1845.
62. Letter from Lt.-Col. R. J. H. Buch, Judge Advocate-General to Capt. Cotton, Judge Advocate-General, Dinapur, dated Simla, 30th May, 1846.
63. G. B. Malleson, *History of Indian Mutiny*, London, 1878 (second Edition), Vol. I, pp. 40, 52-53, 547 ff.
64. Letter from Commissioner, Patna, to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, No. 623, dated 17th July, 1857.
65. Letter from Commissioner, Patna, to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, No. 1002, dated 8th January, 1846.
66. Letter from Magt., Patna, to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, dated 3rd January, 1846.
67. Letter from Supdt. of Police, L.P., to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, dated 27th October, 1846. No. 2414.
68. Letter from Magistrate, Patna, to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, dated 3rd January, 1846.
69. Letter from Supdt. of Police, L.P., to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, dated 6th October, 1846.
70. *ibid.*
71. It has been almost automatically assumed that the reference to North-West indicated Punjab where the Anglo-Sikh War was in the offing. That was of course the major political event of the period. However, we should remember that this exactly was the period when the Ali Brothers were fighting against an Anglo-Sikh force in Hazara. Was it not likely for them to seek to create disturbance back home where a well established anti-government faction was at their disposal?
72. He was an influential *Zamindar* of Neora and a relation of the late Sir Ali Imam. A brick tower built by him, with holes for fixing of guns, still stands in Neora.
73. Letter from Ishree Prasad, Dy. Magistrate to Commissioner, Patna, dated 27th August, 1870.
74. *ibid.*
75. G. B. Malleson, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 547 ff.
76. *ibid.*, p. 550.

77. For Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 88, dated 15th October, 1852.
78. It is a small mahalla situated near the Pachchim Darwaza, Patna City, at a short distance from Sadiqpur.
79. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 86, dated 15th Oct., 1852, Letters from J. R. Carnac, Dy. Commissioner, Rawalpindi.
80. *ibid.*, Letter from H. Tucker, Offg. Magst., Patna, dated 19th August, 1852.
81. This shows, both, the presence of Wahabi accomplices in Government offices and the alertness of their organisation.
82. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 92, dated 15th October, 1852.
83. It is not known what actual punishment was meted out to this Munshi.
84. I. M., p. 22. Itahes are mine.
85. Kadir Ali, Shaikh Makhdum, Shaikh Anla Ali, Shaukat Ali Afzal in the 18th Irregular Cavalry; Babar Ali, Mohib Ali and Ra Ali in 7th Risala at Jullundur.
86. Letter from Dy. Judge Advocate-General, Peshawar, to Commissioner, Patna, dated 29th March, 1858.
87. Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 185 ff.
88. The 51st. Regt. wrote a letter to the "whole of Herriot Regiment" (64th. N.I.) expressing their discontent with the "cartridge affair" and inviting them to come and join hands with them (letter from H. B. Edwardes, Commissioner, Peshawar, to R. Montgomery, Judicial Commissioner for the Punjab, No. 61, dated 23rd March, 1858). Col. Edwardes characterised this letter as a most valuable document for it expressed the genuine confidence of one Regiment into another on the question of the 'Mutiny.'
89. Letter quoted above, vide Punjab Govt. Records (Mutiny Period) Vol. VIII, pt. II: Also see Kaye, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 496.
90. They both fled on the night the force from Peshawar arrived to disarm the units. One was later on arrested and hanged.
91. Paget and Mason, *Records of Expeditions against the N.W. Frontier Tribes*, London, 1881, p. 84.
92. Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 448; Holmes, *Indian Mutiny*, p. 318.
93. Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 193. The wandering of the 55th. after they had been driven out of Swat and the inhuman treatment received by them from the local populace is indeed one of the most tragic episodes in the history of the Movement.



## M A P

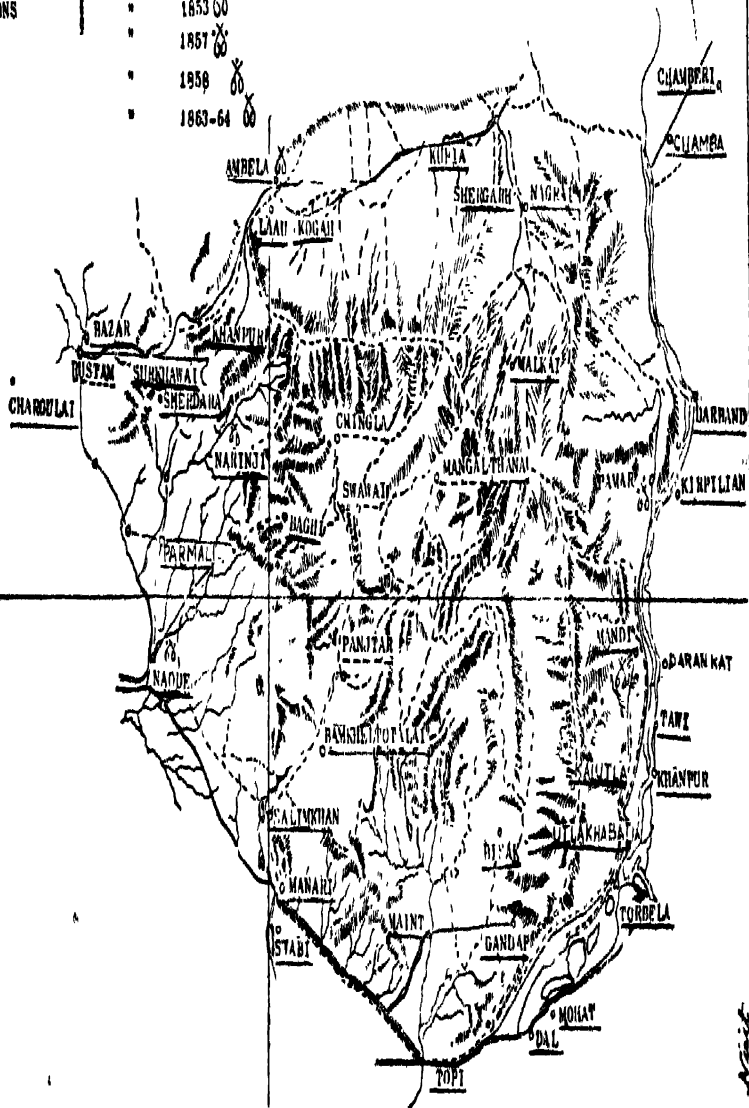
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## CHAPTER VI

### THE FRONTIER CAMPAIGNS (1852-63)

#### *The Campaign of 1852*

The first series of the Wahabi campaigns on the Frontier was fought under Syed Ahmad himself during the years 1826-31.<sup>1</sup> Due to certain historical factors, which have been discussed in a separate chapter, most of these campaigns were directed against the Sikhs and some recalcitrant Frontier chiefs. That, however, did not mean that Syed Ahmad was unmindful of the real source of danger to the country—the English. A large number of his letters<sup>2</sup> bears testimony to the fact that he was quite clear in his mind that the real struggle was to be against the English.<sup>3</sup>

The second series—directed against the British Government—commenced later and covered the years 1852 to 1863 during which some of the bitterest battles were fought under the leaderships of Wilayat Ali, Enayat Ali and Abdullah. In fact the small but powerful nucleus of the Wahabis on the Frontier represented a political threat and caused much concern to the British government for well over two decades from after 1852.

Following the annexation of the Punjab the Hazara area came under the control of the English by virtue of an exchange of territories with Gulab Singh and James Abbott became its first Deputy Commissioner (1849). Abbott gave early attention to the existence of a 'remarkable nest of emigrants from Hindoostan' in this area and to their activities, which were considered by him to be dangerous for the government in case of trouble in the south or by the Durrani to the west. He also picked up a quarrel with the Syeds of the Kaghan Valley in the north, particularly with Zamin Shah of that place who was a staunch supporter of the Wahabis. Apparently, the

cause of action against the Syeds was the complaint by some of their Gujar tenants against their high-handedness; but that was only a pretext, for during the investigations carried out by Abbott in the matter he was "perhaps, too ready to listen to the tales told by the Saiad's enemies".<sup>4</sup> The real reason was the suspicion that the Syeds were in league with the Wahabis, who were stirring up other tribes such as the Dhunds, etc. for a general rising against the English.<sup>5</sup> A force comprising six regiments, six guns and numerous tribal levies was sent against the Syeds who were defeated. Zamin Shah was exiled and the Kaghan Valley brought under the control of the English.

The immediate objective having been gained there developed a conflict between Abbott and his superiors on the further steps to be taken in those areas.<sup>6</sup>

Soon after the Kaghan expedition the English had to organise the first Black Mountain Expedition in 1851, which led to their earliest armed conflict with the Wahabis. After taking over the administration of Hazara the English in their characteristically thorough manner set up several departments of administration under the over-all control of the Board of Administration, Punjab. One of these was the Department of Salt which regulated the import of "prohibited" Kohat salt from across the border. Two local officers of the department, Carnac and Tappe, set upon themselves the task to investigate the route along which the prohibited salt came. It was reported to them that it passed through the trans-Indus portion of the territory of Amb, which bordered on the independent tribal areas of the Hasanzais. During their investigation they went perilously close to the independent Hasanzai area, a rash act done against the express wishes of their superiors.<sup>7</sup> They paid the penalty for it and were killed by some unknown tribesmen, suspected<sup>8</sup> to be Hasanzais. The murder was attributed to motives of greed and robbery. However, it was really inspired by economic motives. The Hasanzais suspected that the two officers would extend



the preventive salt line to their area and would thus affect their trade in salt, which they considered to be an interference with and an encroachment on their livelihood. At first the English suspected Jahandad Khan, the chief of Amb and their feudatory, to be in complicity with the Hasanzais. He was, therefore, asked to hand over all the Hasanzais, who happened to be in his territory, to the English as hostages. Jahandad Khan complied with the demand, but it provoked the Hasanzais against him and they declared war on him and seized his border outposts of Chamberi and Shinglai.

The English intervened to save their ally from the consequences of the action he was forced to take at their behest and thus started the first Black Mountain Expedition. The Black Mountain Range<sup>9</sup> is spread over the North-Western border of the Hazara district. It is bounded on the north by the territory of Agrore, on the south by Tanawal and the Indus skirts its northern extremity and then turns due south. Between the river and the crest of the Mountain the slopes are inhabited by the great Yusufzai tribe of which the Hasanzais were a sub-division. Abbott made persistent demands for avenging the death of Carnac and Tappe, which was considered necessary to maintain the prestige of the Government among the tribes. The Governor-General-in-Council were, however, at first reluctant to take any steps, not because of an "indifference to the fate of these gentlemen"<sup>11</sup> (Carnac and Tappe) but because engaging in the hostilities proposed by Abbott would "place us in a worse position". After much hesitation, and owing to the pressure of Col. Mackesen who supported Abbott in this instance, a force consisting of detachments of the Guides and some police force advanced in three columns against Hazara (December, 1851). It ascended the Black Mountain range, chastised the Hasanzais and burnt their villages.<sup>12</sup>

The comparatively easy success of the military expedition, about which the authorities were so hesitant in the

beginning, took the Government by surprise. They were fulsome in their praise for Col. Mackeson, who was equally surprised at the easy victory and remarked that "they (English) shall have all the credit with Jahandad Khan of having assisted him effectively in his extremity",<sup>13</sup> with such ease. At the same time he expressed doubts whether Jahandad Khan deserved their help and for how long he would benefit from it. Mackeson was prophetic in his remark, for on return from the Hasan-zai expedition the force found itself faced with a new adversary—the Wahabis.

Taking advantage of the English attack upon the Hasan-zais, Enayat Ali, started working among the other tribesmen exhorting them to rise against the English and to fight in aid of their brother tribesmen, the Hasan-zais. He considered this as a good opportunity for gaining the wider sympathy of all the Frontier tribes which was so vital and necessary for the success of his own mission. Once again Jahandad Khan's territory, which lay on the way, was attacked and the outpost of Kotla belonging to him was occupied. However, as on so many previous occasions, the tribesmen failed to unite. It was left to a band of "Hindustani" volunteers hailing from the far away plains of Bihar and Bengal to rise in defence of a Frontier tribe under the attack of the English while the neighbouring tribes themselves remained silent and indifferent spectators. The English tried to dissuade the Wahabis also from helping the Hasan-zais, but Enayat Ali contemptuously turned down the offer and declared that "he had come to die."<sup>14</sup> Once again the Government hesitated in sending a force against the Wahabis. Col. Mackeson himself in a report, dated 6th January, 1852, to the Board of Administration, Punjab, observed, "I hesitated much whether I would interfere at all in the Kotla business. Nothing but a confidence from seeing the ground that we could well protect our crossing and re-crossing and could reduce the (Wahabi) garrison to extremity . . . induced me to venture to send a force across

Finally, a force<sup>16</sup> under the command of Major Abbott advanced, on the 6th January, 1852, to re-occupy the fort of Kotla, which was situated in the village of Ashra at an elevation of about a thousand feet on a spur of the mountain. The British forces in conjunction with those of Jahandad Khan, their ally, advanced from three different sides. The Wahabis were thus caught between two forces, superior in numbers and arms. While the English force, crossing the Indus, advanced in front Jahandad Khan's levies cut out their line of retreat. The Wahabis fighting a spirited rearguard action withdrew from Kotla in which they lost some seventy persons who died fighting under command of Karam Ali of Dinapur.<sup>17</sup> However, Enayat Ali, with the main body of his followers, safely withdrew from Kotla. Sittana, the Headquarters of the Wahabis, now lay exposed to a British attack. But they contended themselves with the re-occupation of Kotla and did not advance upon Sittana, because Sittana had already been denuded of all stores and ammunitions which had been removed to Kotla.

Some very important particulars<sup>18</sup> of the Sittana principality are available to us from among the English papers relating to this campaign. We have the statements of some injured Wahabis picked up by Lyell, Assistant Surgeon attached to the Guide Corps, and brought by him to Peshawar for treatment.

Paying a tribute to their remarkable sense of fidelity and honour Lyell remarks that even in their distressed condition they always pretended complete ignorance of everything and refused to make any statement for fear of incriminating their comrades. Only after a sepoy of the Regiment had gained their confidence could something be elicited from them. It appeared from their statement<sup>19</sup> that the Wahabis numbered some 600 men and that Wilayat Ali was "formerly director of all their proceedings" but since his death, a year ago, the leadership had devolved upon his younger brother, Enayat Ali. Four of

Syed Akbar's (of Swat) brothers lived with their party and enjoyed considerable influence among them. Their chief source of revenue was collection of funds by the priests spread all over the country.<sup>20</sup> Their principal benefactor, the Nawab of Tonk, used to send Rs. 20-40 thousands a year. Nawab Nasiriddaula of Hyderabad also sent money. One of the prisoners stated that last year one man from Bengal alone had sent Rs. 40,000. The other main source of income was the 900 *bighas* of land in Sittana given by Akbar Shah, which were all cultivated. There were some forty men having their own landed property, which was all put in a common fund. Their food comprised, mainly, *Dal* (pulse) and bread. The party was regularly drilled, the word of command being *Allah-o-Akbar* (God is Almighty). They had some ten horses of good quality. Half their numbers had carbines. On the whole they were not well armed.

Such was the small band of dedicated fighters for freedom, who in spite of their admittedly scanty material resources had challenged the might of the British Government. They did not come out with flying colours in their first encounter with the British, but their effort should not be judged exclusively in terms of military victories. The urge for freedom and the spirit of sacrifice which moved them are the real criteria of their greatness.

After the battle of Kotla Enayat Ali moved over to Nawagai in the Chumla territory. During the next few years he moved about in different places in Swat and Buner area. Mehr refers<sup>21</sup> to some stray events about Enayat Ali's activities during this period on the basis of a diary<sup>22</sup> of his son, Abdul Majid. It appears from an entry of this diary that he urged Syed Akbar Shah and the Akhund<sup>23</sup> to join hands with him in fighting against the English. The Akhund, however, did not show much enthusiasm for the proposal. From the very beginning he appeared to be lukewarm in his support to the Wahabis. He, probably, discerned in their increasing influence a

threat to his own prestige. The reluctance of the Akhund made it difficult for Enayat Ali to do much from his old centre at Sittana, but underterred by such difficulties he decided to work from somewhere else.

Accordingly, at the invitation of Syed Abbas, Enayat Ali agreed to establish his centre at Mangalthana, situated in the Khudikhel territory on the spur of the Mahabun mountain, west of Sittana. Leaving the old centre of Sittana under the charge of Yahya Ali he moved over with his own family and that of Wilayat Ali to Mangalthana. With this change of venue of the centre the scene of Wahabi activities also shifted from Hazara to the Peshawar border.

From his new centre Enayat Ali continued to work among the Yusufzai tribes who lived in the plain bordering Peshawar and Mardan and to organise them against the English. The attempts to infiltrate into the ranks of the Indian Army also continued. O'Kinealy gives the following account of his activities during this period, "He (Enayat Ali) laboured to organise his followers and fire them with a hatred of *English Kafirs*. The crescentaders were drilled daily, sometimes twice a day and, on parade, were taught to recite songs extolling the glories of *jihad*...and on Fridays...sermons exhorting them to wait patiently until the time appointed for subjugation of *British India* would arrive."

Mehr refers<sup>35</sup> to some events of this period on the basis of Abdul Majid's diary. According to one of its entries the Mubarakkhel tribe accepted the leadership of Enayat Ali in December, 1855, and on their invitation he visited Nagrai in January next. Soon after, Waziruddin, a messenger from India, arrived with some money from Patna. Mehr also notes that during this period the English authorities wrote a letter addressed, generally, to all Wahabis offering pardon and return passage home to all those who would surrender and threatening punishment

(including 3 years rigorous imprisonment) to those who would refuse to accept these terms. The offer was, however, treated with contempt and turned down.

A brief account of the outbreak of the 55th. N. I. at Mardan has already been given. After leaving their cantonment they headed straight for Swat where they hoped to join hands with Akbar Shah of Swat. However, by a curious coincidence he died just on the day of the outbreak at Meerut and his death completely changed the state of affairs there. Swat had a peculiar dual form of government in which power was shared equally by Akbar Shah, the king, and the Akhund who was the religious head. The Akhund exercised a greater influence on the credulous masses by virtue of his religious sanctity and eminence. Up till the time of Akbar Shah the Akhund had pulled on well with the king, but after his death the Akhund opposed the succession of his son, Mubarak Shah and got him expelled out of Swat. The latter took refuge, first, in Sittana and then settled in Panjtar whose chief was Muqarrab Khan. Mangalthana lay close to it. Mubarak Shah met Enayat Ali after some time and the two together planned an attack on the fort of Mardan, which commanded the entire Yusufzai plain. In the meantime the 55th. N. I. had been dismissed from Swat owing to the opposition of the Akhund and were wandering in search of joining some anti-English party. Their scattered bands were collected by Enayat Ali's men who offered them a welcome in Mangalthana.

The outbreak of 1857 gave Enayat Ali a golden opportunity to harass the English authorities in Peshawar district by organising raids on some border villages and military stations. The neighbouring<sup>26</sup> principality of Panjtar was then engaged in an internecine quarrel between Muqarrab Khan, its chief, and some of his subjects, particularly, the Totalis. His cousin, Mubariz Khan of Chinglai, was also against him. Soon after the outbreak Mubariz invited Enayat Ali to come and join him in attacking the

English areas. The first advance was accordingly made on Nawakilla, a village close to Chinglai, whose inhabitants were known to be sympathetic to the Wahabis. The village along with the neighbouring one of Shaikh Jana was occupied. A relieving force from Mardan was sent by the Assistant Commissioner, Lieut. Horne, under the command of Major Vaughan of the 5th Punjab Infantry and it re-occupied Shaikh Jana (July, 1857). Seven of the villagers were executed as a punishment.

A fortnight later Enayat Ali made another attack upon Narinji under his personal command and occupied it. The village, although in British area, was situated on the extreme border and was difficult of access. Its inhabitants were well known for their spiritedness and love of independence. Enayat Ali's men numbered about a hundred and fifty and there were some forty men belonging to the 55th. N. I. Some horsemen from Panjtar and Swat had also joined the party. From this point of vantage in Narinji Enayat Ali continued to exhort the Yusufzai tribe to rise against the English. The latter were, therefore, forced to take some preventive steps. The occupation of Narinji was a challenge in itself.

On July 18th, 1857, a Force<sup>27</sup> under Major Vaughan again marched from Mardan. The position of the village (Narinji) was very strong. It was built in terraces and situated in the upper reaches of a precipitous hill. The action was heralded by a bombardment of the village and then the infantry advanced in skirmishing order. After a tenacious resistance by the Wahabis the British forces occupied the lower portion of the hill. Their further progress was impeded by strong breastworks on the upper reaches of the village as well as the bravery of the enemy.<sup>28</sup> Even after the village had been occupied an attempt to destroy it by setting fire to it was 'materially impeded' by a desultory fire from the enemy above. The Wahabi losses<sup>29</sup> included fifty wounded and 50 killed including many sepoys of the 55th N. I. whose dead bodies

were identified by the English from their arms and uniforms. The English losses were 5 killed and 25 injured.<sup>29</sup>

This was, however, not the end of the Narinji affair. Narinji had only been reduced but not captured. Enayat Ali though defeated had not given up hope. The people of Narinji were with him and refused to give him up on the demand of the English. Mubariz Khan and Alam Khan, brothers of Muqarrab Khan, were procuring men from Buner for the aid of Enayat Ali. Chumla had sent seven standards (amounting to 200 men) and further reinforcements were expected after the impending *Eid* festival. Promise of aid had also been received from Swat. On the 3rd August, therefore, a greater force<sup>31</sup> assembled at Shewa and proceeded to Narinji. A detachment was sent by a bye-road, a mile and a half ahead of Narinji, to ascend upon it by a secret path and attack the enemy's rear. A cannonade was opened upon the village with the two 24-pounder howitzers and Mountain Guns. The Wahabis had no matching guns but kept up a returning fire from matchlocks from their position on the heights. After half an hour of bombardment the assault began. The Wahabis fought bravely but had to give way to a superior force attacking from two sides. Enayat Ali withdrew from Narinji to a safer place up the mountain. The destruction of the village is thus described by Captain James accompanying the force as Political Officer. "The work of destruction then commenced. Not a house was spared, even the walls of many were destroyed by elephants. The towers were then blown up under the direction of F. S. Taylor... of the Engineers and the village was soon a mass of ruins..."<sup>32</sup> Three prisoners were taken captive and subsequently executed. The execution of prisoners of wars was an extraordinary procedure, to say the least. They could not have been executed on the plea of being 'rebels' for they represented a state which was independent for all practical purposes.



The period following the battle of Narinji was one of overwhelming difficulties and distress for the Wahabis. The success of the English in some recent encounters had affected the loyalty and steadiness of some of the tribesmen who with characteristic short-sightedness had switched off their co-operation with the Wahabis. What was worse the flow of aid from India was also temporarily stopped. The leaders of the Wahabis back home, Ahmadullah and Muhammad Husain, had been put in preventive detention by the Commissioner, Tayler. That also upset the arrangements for collection and transmission of money. With the outbreak of 1857 a more close watch was kept on the Indus ferrying *ghats* which made it difficult for messengers to come across. The letters of Nuthoo Khalifa,<sup>33</sup> referred to above and written at about this time, refer to the stoppage of *Dak* from the West. As if all this was not enough, the tribesmen also began harassing them generally and even murdered a few stray Wahabis here and there.

It gives us some idea of the high spirit and perseverance of the Wahabis that even in this state of disorganisation and weakness they did not remain idle. The initiative in war was maintained. In October, 1857, a bold and audacious night attack was made with the help of the inhabitants of Shaikh Jana and Narinji (who in spite of the two punitive expeditions on the border were still sympathetic to the Wahabis) on the village of Nawaklai where the Assistant Commissioner of the Yusufzai area, Horne, was camping. The attack was made under the leadership of Shariatullah. "A large booty fell into the hands of the attacking party and five of Horne's men were killed", Horne himself barely escaping with his life.\* This was the last active engagement between Enayat Ali and the English.

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The severity of some of the difficulties mentioned above increased with the passage of time. Troops were in arrears, Enayat Ali himself and his son, Abdul Majid,

lay seriously ill. The latter's daughter had died only some time before. No grain had been available for the last several months and the famished party had been eating the roots and leaves of trees. Most of them were suffering, as a result, from blood dysentery. Enayat Ali himself was in high fever and had passed ten days without medicine or food. It was truly a period of severe trial even for a dedicated soul like that of Enayat Ali. He, however, did not falter and rather than accept the English offer of surrender continued his efforts to re-organise his resources. He died soon afterwards, towards the end of March, 1858. Thus ended the career, under conditions of acute distress, of one who, having dedicated himself to the noble cause of freeing his country from foreign thralldom, had left behind a happy and affluent home. The least we owe to his memory is to acknowledge his position in the history of the achievement of our country's freedom.

The Wahabi centre naturally suffered a setback after his death and for a while the things were in a disorganised state. No immediate successor was chosen after him. His son, Abdul Majid, was considered unfit for the post on account of a slight stammering in his speech.<sup>35</sup> So a triumvirate was formed with Ikramullah, Nurullah and Mir Taqi.<sup>36</sup> Nurullah, being the senior, acted as the chief among the three. Of these, the first named person died in a battle near Sittana which occurred soon after.

• It has been shown how a serious threat to the stability of the English power in the Yusufzai area had developed as a result of the activities of Enayat Ali there in 1857-58.<sup>37</sup> It was tackled, in the beginning, in an improvised manner by small counter-attacks here and there. That was the only course possible owing to the exigencies of the war during the second half of 1857 when the entire resources of the Punjab, under the tireless and energetic guidance of Lawrence, were staked upon the recovery of Delhi. With the gradual easing of the situation it was decided to tackle the Wahabi problem in earnest.

*The Campaign of 1858*

A powerful expeditionary force<sup>38</sup> was gathered under the command of Sir Sydney Cotton, with the express object of destroying the Wahabi centres at Sittana and Mangalthana.<sup>39</sup> The force having collected in the village of Salim Khan started on the 25th April, 1858. This attack coincided with a period of set-back in the history of the Wahabi centre on the Frontier. Following Enayat Ali's death and owing to the stoppage of aid from India the centre was in a weak state. Their number was also pitifully small. The chief supporters of the Wahabis, the Syeds, had just suffered a reverse in an encounter with the Usmanzais, which will be described presently. The tribesmen in their usual manner turned against the Wahabis as soon as they saw a punitive expedition being sent against them. The first tribe to disown their own chief (let alone the Wahabis) were the Khudukhels. They attacked Panjtar and drove out Muqarrab Khan. The English forces arriving at a Panjtar already deserted did the rest and set fire to it on 25th April. The destruction of Chinglai also took place on the same day.<sup>40</sup>

The next move was upon Mangalthana. The Wahabis had decided on concentrating all their strength at Sittana and had withdrawn from Mangalthana. Muqarrab Khan, however, on being driven away from Panjtar had sent his family to seek shelter in the abandoned fortress. Its destruction was considered essential by the English as "it would render the chastisement of the Khan (Muqarrab) more complete and memorable" if this remaining fortress was also destroyed. It enjoyed a great prestige among the tribesmen and was considered impregnable, being so embedded in the mountain fastness as to be seemingly inaccessible. It was the pride of all the tribes around and such was the prestige attached to it that its reduction alone was considered enough to overawe the tribes. A vivid account, the only remaining one of its kind, of the prosperous settlement of Mangalthana and its destruction is

preserved in the words of Cotton, its destroyer, himself; "Mangalthana stands on the chief spur of the Mahabun mountain and was the headquarters of Enayat Ali who so perseveringly endeavoured (1857-58) at Narinji and other places to raise the Eusufzye in rebellion... (it) consists of two villages, upper and lower. The lower consists of 30 or 40 houses and is occupied by Syeds... upper Mangalthana stands upon a plateau in the midst of three crests which are themselves outworks when held by the Garrison, but as soon as carried by an enemy command the place. On this plateau stood, first, the fortified house of Enayat Ali with enclosures for his *Hindusthani* followers, secondly, the fortified house of Syed Abbas and, thirdly, (Syed) Akbar's citadel, a white masonry tower, the whole having 30 or 40 houses. The fortifications had been laboriously constructed by large stones and fine timber, the *Hindusthani* fanatics and the thieves flocking to Akbar's citadel must have lived there in considerable enjoyment and security and it is easy to understand the prestige that surrounded them."<sup>42</sup> The prosperous settlement was destroyed<sup>43</sup> on the 29th April and its fortifications razed down. The troops having halted over-night amidst the ruins of their own making left the next day and returned to Salim Khan.

In between the brief interval of the sack of Mangalthana and that of Sittana there occurred an event whose beginnings, although traceable to a much earlier period, had a direct bearing on the destruction of Sittana and in fact rendered it much easy.

Between the territory on the right side of the Indus and the British frontier outpost of Topi, in the Yusufzai plain, lies a narrow strip of land by the side of the river and under the shadow of Mahabun mountain. Situated outside British India, this land belonged to the Usmahzai tribes. It contained, besides a few other hamlets, the villages of upper and lower Kyah and Khabal and upper and lower Sittana. Sittana had, a long time ago, been given

as a rent-free grant to Syed Zamin Shah of Takhtbund in Buner, a religious recluse of great eminence who had been expatriated from his own area owing to a feud. His grandsons, Umar Shah and Akbar, had taken part in the Movement since earlier and the latter had acted as the treasurer of Syed Ahmad. He had also invited the Wahabis to Sittana and let them settle there. He had been elected leader of the revolt against the Sikh Darbar in Lower Hazara in 1846-47, described earlier. When Hazara passed under the English control he went back to Swat and was elected the king there. During his absence Umar Shah was the chief of Sittana. Both he and Akbar Shah had collected some tithes from the villages of Kyah and Khabal as a measure of their political overlordship and also with a view to defraying the cost of the Wahabi centre there. The Usmanzais resented this levy but found themselves powerless to oppose it, especially as the local people of the two villages supported the Syeds. Now, on the eve of the Cotton expedition, they saw a good opportunity to drive away the Syeds in the wake of Cotton's army. Edwardes, the Commissioner of Peshawar, was forcing agreements<sup>44</sup> from the Frontier tribes pledging themselves not to give protection to the Syeds or the Wahabis. Accordingly the Usmanzais attacked Sittana on the 30th April, 1858, and in the ensuing battle Umar Shah was killed. Thus the way for the subsequent British victory was paved, for the leader of resistance, Umar Shah, was already dead. Mangalothana was destroyed because the tribesmen had turned against their own leader, Muqarrab Khan; now Sittana was to be destroyed because the Usmanzais had already broken the back of the resistance right on the eve of the attack. A welcome coincidence for the English but a sad commentary on the mentality of the tribes!

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The English Army under Cotton proceeded against Sittana on the 4th May, 1858. Having crossed the Indus the English advanced from the south while the levies of

Jahandad Khan of Amb took position on the Northern hills. According to the author of the *Durr-i-Maqal*<sup>46</sup> the local tribesmen had informed Mubarak Shah, of the advance of the English upon Sittana, and the former finding himself unable to offer resistance retreated with his family members to Malka, some 35 miles up Sittana, on the northern slope of the Mahabun mountain. Only a small party of Wahabis, numbering forty, and some Jadun tribesmen remained behind in Sittana. They took position on a hillock called *Shah Noor-Ki-Lari*, some distance ahead of Sittana, and awaited the arrival of the English. The leader of the party<sup>46</sup> was Ikramullah, one of the members of the triumvirate. The result was a foregone conclusion but the small band of Wahabis gave a good account of themselves. Neville<sup>47</sup> quotes from the authoritative records of British campaigns against the Frontier tribes, the following account of the calm and resolute behaviour of the Wahabi warriors fighting against heavy odds and against a much larger force. "The fighting of the Hindusthanis was strongly marked with fanaticism, they came boldly and doggedly on... in perfect silence without a shout or word of any kind. All were dressed in their best for the occasion, mostly in white but some of the leaders wore velvet cloaks."<sup>48</sup> Another writer also comments favourably on the spirited resistance of the Wahabis which was in striking contrast to the much vaunted fighting qualities of the Pathans. The latter "escaped as best as they could, but the Hindusthanis stood to a man... The fight was short, desperate and decisive and in the end everyone of these brave, if misguided, warriors was either killed or captured."<sup>49</sup> Some 30 of the Wahabis including their leader were killed.<sup>50</sup> The English also suffered some losses. Sittana, like Mangalthana, was remorselessly destroyed. Elephants were used to bulldoze all structures. Fortifications were blown off. Trees were cut down and the barks of those which could not be cut were scrubbed so that they might not grow again.<sup>51</sup> Punitive expeditions were also taken against some other

tribes like the Jaduns and Agreements taken from them as also the Usmanzais not to let the Wahabis come back and settle in Sittana again. Apparently, the English had done everything possible to blot Sittana out of existence but they had not reckoned with the steadfastness and perseverance of their foe. Sittana was destined to live up again.

After the battle of Sittana the Wahabis were invited by the Syeds to Malka which also belonged to them, but had been lying practically uninhabited. Now with the settling of the Syeds and the Wahabis a prosperous<sup>52</sup> habitation quickly grew up there.

The Wahabis were now under the leadership of Nurullah and Muhammad Taqi, the remaining two of the triumvirate. They once again began the painful task of picking up the lost threads and organising anew the centre from a scratch. The crisis caused in the affairs of the Wahabis by the stoppage of supplies from Patna eased with the release of Ahmadullah and the other leaders. At about this time Maqsud Ali, who had left for Patna earlier to arrange for reinforcements, also returned to the Frontier after a perilous journey via Meerut where he was arrested but was later released. He also visited Peshawar<sup>53</sup> where he stayed for some three months and made arrangements for supply of men and money through the usual channels and for circulating some Proclamations (asking for volunteers and aids) of Ali Brothers. He had left Patna early in 1859 and reached the Frontier the next year. In the meantime Nurullah, too, died on his way to Kabul to meet the *Amir*. We do not have any details about the object of this journey, but it is relevant to recall that the Wahabis had rendered valuable services to the *Amir* in the first Anglo-Afghan War and this journey might well have been meant for obtaining his help in this hour of difficulties for the Wahabis. From after Nurullah's death till 1862 Maqsud Ali was the leader of the party. He, too,

died in 1862. There were two likely leaders after his death; Abdullah, the son of Wilayat Ali, and Ishaq, the son of Maqsud Ali. Of these the former was elected because of his greater experience and knowledge of military affairs. Ishaq was elected to the next higher rank, that of the treasurer.<sup>54</sup>

Earlier, Abdullah had returned to Patna after the death of his father. He was held up there for some time owing to the illness of his uncle, Farhut Hussain, who was in charge of the home organisation. He set out from Patna soon after the death of his uncle, early in 1858, and after visiting Mecca and Afghanistan proceeded to the Frontier. He arrived there some two years before the death of Maqsud Ali, i.e., in 1860.<sup>55</sup> His period of leadership is spread well over four decades and the most stirring event of that period was the Ambeyla Campaign, which is to be considered presently.

#### *The Ambeyla Campaign, 1863.*

The Ambeyla Campaign<sup>56</sup> was the most important and powerful single campaign led by the English against the Wahabis. In terms of both men and money, it represented a supreme effort by the English to root out the Wahabis. It was directed solely against the Wahabis. In some of the previous campaigns the objects of chastisement were both the Wahabis and the tribesmen, the former often getting involved because of their help to the latter. On this occasion the roles were reversed. The expedition was aimed against the Wahabis primarily, but was prolonged because the latter succeeded, only for a brief period, in making the tribesmen join the resistance.

The origin of the war is to be found in the continuation of the conflict between the Syeds and the Usmanzais,<sup>57</sup> described above. Following the withdrawal of the Syeds and the Wahabis from Sittana the Usmanzais re-occupied the village and brought the fields under



cultivation. Mubarak Shah, the son of Akbar Shah and now the leader of the Syeds, had not, however, given up his claim to the ancestral patrimony of Sittana. He had been planning for its re-occupation ever since his exile. He, first, sought the aid of the Jadun tribes for this and they agreed.<sup>58</sup> With their aid as also that of the Wahabis he constructed a fortified tower, known as Siri's tower, situated between Kyah and Sittana, and from there he organised raids on Sittana and the other villages. He succeeded soon in driving away the Usmanzais from their newly acquired fields by these harassing tactics. They even sent word to Mubarak Shah that they were withdrawing and that he could get Sittana cultivated by his own men and take tribute from them. He also started levying an octroi duty on all merchandise passing through Sittana territory. The aim of Mubarak Shah in pursuing such harassing tactics was to overawe, generally, the Usmanzais and make them retreat. He very nearly succeeded in his design but soon after some unscrupulous elements joined his party and the Siri's tower gained notoriety as a den of wayside robbers and lawless men who took refuge there and carried on petty raids, robberies and kidnapping of wealthy merchants<sup>59</sup> on the border villages.

This was the state of affairs when Mahmud Shah, the son of Umar Shah and cousin of Mubarak Shah, arrived in Sittana. On the death of his father, Mahmud Shah had received a nominal employment under the English as a *Resaladar* or head of a unit of irregular cavalry.<sup>60</sup> He served, first, in the Musgrave's<sup>61</sup> Horse Column and, then in the Lahore Police. He had received the appointment through the recommendation of Jahandad Khan, the ally of the English, who was also related to him. The English had a political motive also in giving him the employment for it was hoped that this would keep him away from the Frontier and the disturbing of peace there. After the 'Mutiny', during the course of which he was sent to Delhi and Lucknow, his *Resala* was disbanded and

having refused a regular employment<sup>62</sup> as a Cavalry Officer in the Frontier force Mahmud Shah applied to the Government for Sittana being reassigned to him. The Lieutenant-Governor refused his application on the plea that Sittana was outside British India and that they "could not give what did not belong to them."<sup>63</sup> The prince then applied, in April, 1863, for permission to take possession of Sittana himself without seeking English aid. This, too, was turned down with the strange order that "Tell him, nothing of the kind would be listened to." The attitude of the English towards Mahmud Shah was exasperatingly equivocal. They were neither willing to give him his ancestral property nor allowing him to do so on his own and feeling disgusted the latter left with his men and returned to Sittana. He returned there at a time when Mubarak Shah had been carrying on his above-mentioned activities. Mahmud Shah represented a moderate policy and had accordingly been striving for a peaceful transfer of Sittana to himself. However, the English refusal forced him to join hands with his cousin who had been carrying on a more active policy in this regard.

Among the Usmanzais, too, there were two parties, one favouring the return of the Syeds, and the other trying to oppose it with the help of the English. On the occupation of Sittana by the Syeds the latter group fled to the English outpost of Tarabela, opposite Khabal, and complained to the English that the Syeds and Wahabis were on the war path. The panic also spread among the people of Amb and its young chief Akram Khan, son of Jahandad Khan, also fled. The local English officers also over-emphasised the supposed aggressive designs of the Wahabis and sent exaggerated reports to the Government to that effect. This is clear from the fact that the English themselves suspected in the beginning that the 'anti-Syed group of Usmanzais were deliberately creating a panic to bring about the intervention of the English.'<sup>64</sup> The Deputy Commissioner, Hazara, candidly admitted in

a letter to the Commissioner, Peshawar, dated 3rd July, 1863, that "the inhabiting of Sittana may be the *primary object of the Movement* though of course there are manifold rumours of other designs on the part of the Syeds, the Usmanzais holding that their object is ravaging of Kyah and Khabbal and Muhammad Siphon (Minister of Amb) anticipating the attack and plunder of Umb."

The genesis of the Ambeyla Campaign has been traced at some length in order to bring out clearly the respective roles of the Syeds and the Wahabis in it and also the aggressive policy of the English. The Wahabis were indebted to the Syeds in more ways than one. Sittana belonged to the Syeds and the Wahabis considered their efforts to reoccupy it as justified and gave them, besides tacit support, some limited assistance also. They, however, did not participate in the series of raids, robberies and general depredations carried on by Mubarak Shah's men with the deliberate object of terrifying the Usmanzais and making their strength felt by the English, the supporter of the latter. However, the respective roles of the two are confused by most of the English writers<sup>65</sup> on the subject who represent the campaign as one of retaliation by the English initiated, very reluctantly, against the lawless activities of the Wahabis. However, the Deputy Commissioner of Hazara, draws a sharp distinction between the activities of the Wahabis and the tribesmen.<sup>66</sup> The former represented a political threat, whereas the petty raids and robberies were the result of the activities of some of the desperadoes, from outside, who had taken shelter in Siri's tower. The relevant portion of the letter, from the Secretary to the Government of Punjab summarising the candid and forthright views of the Deputy Commissioner is given below: "*The Hindoostanees themselves withhold their hands from all murder and robbery; it is necessary that this point should be clearly noted. It is not known that any of their members have ever participated in kidnapping and murder of our Hindoo subjects. They form undoubtedly a centre of*

political intrigue and occasionally despatch *Ghazis* to-lie in wait to murder Infidel *Feranghees* (Christians) . . . our immediate concern with them at present is that it is from their presence and support that Mubarak Shah derives his strength and importance . . . it will be very necessary, in the event of operations being undertaken, and of its not being found possible to *destroy them entirely* to guard against their making any fresh settlement near our border . . . <sup>1967</sup>

It is thus clear that the only fault of the Wahabis was their very existence. They were a potential source of political threat and the petty raids of some desperadoes, largely unconnected with them, was considered a good occasion to root them out. The Provincial Government of the Punjab were bent upon a war of aggression and in their eagerness to proceed ahead with their design they even failed to keep the Government of India or the Commander-in-Chief fully informed. In fact the expedition was taken against the advice of the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, it has to be remembered that the dispute between the Syeds and Usmanzais related to an area which lay, outside British India, in the independent tribal area. The British had refused Mahmud Shah's request for help on this very plea and yet when he took steps independently to achieve this object the principle of non-intervention was given a go-bye and taking a false plea of protecting their feudatory, the chief of Amb, from a supposed threat the English staked so much in an attempt to intervene.

The efforts of Mubarak Shah to reoccupy Sittana had started earlier, in 1861, and the incidents described above took place during 1861-63. In July, 1863, the Syeds re-occupied Sittana, without any opposition from the Jaduns or Usmanzais, and the border attacks followed. In September, 1863, an attack was made, before the commencement

of regular hostilities, on Topi<sup>69</sup> where troops and stores were being collected for the impending advance.

We have a very detailed account<sup>70</sup> of the strength and composition of the Wahabi party on the Frontier at this time. They numbered between 1,200 to 1,400 and comprised, largely, recruits from Bengal,<sup>71</sup> Oudh, Central and North Provinces (modern M.P. and U.P.) and the lower Punjab. They had adopted a military organisation and were drilled daily. They were well supplied with arms, including a couple of small cannons. Malka, the centre, had a foundry and a powder manufactory. The whole party was divided into 10 companies, each under a separate leader, as follows:—

- (1) The *Jamait* (group) of Mian Usman; 120 men, 20 percussion muskets, and 10 flintlocks.
- (2) The *Jamait* of M. Shariatullah; 150 men, 30 percussion muskets, 10 flintlocks.
- (3) The *Jamait* of Abdul Ghaffar; 130 men, 30 percussion muskets, 20 matchlocks.
- (4) *Jamait* of Qaim Khan; 130 men, 6 percussion muskets, 20 matchlocks. This was the oldest (senior most) *Jamait*, called *Hindi Jamait* and composed exclusively of *Hindusthanis*.
- (5) The *Jamait* of Najaf Khan; 130 men, 15 percussion caps, 20 matchlocks. Half of them were Bengalees and half *Hindustanians*.
- (6) The *Jamait* of Naimuddin; 125 men, mostly Bengalees, 6 muskets, 30 matchlocks.
- (7) The *Jamait* of Munshi Taufirullah; 100 men, 10 muskets, 20 matchlocks. This was called the *Nai* (new) *Jamait*.
- (8) The *Jamait* of Munshi Bashiruddin; 100 men, 6 percussion muskets, 20 matchlocks.

(9) The *Jamait* of Muhammad Ibrahim; 130 men, 4 percussion muskets and 20 matchlocks.

(10) The *Jamait* of Bahramuddin Bunairi; 40 men, no firearm. This was called the *Desi* (local) *Jamait* and comprised of men of Hazara, Bunair and the neighbouring areas.

After much discussion<sup>72</sup> between the civil and military authorities regarding the different routes of march and the respective military advantages of each it was finally decided to march through the Chumla valley, advance up the comparatively easy and accessible side of the Mahabun mountain and attack Malka from the rear, thus obviating the chances of Wahabis falling back to some other mountain fortress, farther up. The entrance to the Chumla Valley was (from the side of the Yusufzai plains) through a narrow pass at whose other end stood the village of Ambeyla, giving the name to the pass. It was a narrow pass, with a rocky and jungle infested track, some nine miles long.

The plan of advance was based upon an important presumption—the neutrality, if not active support, of the Bonair tribes—whose lands were separated from the valley by a narrow belt of very low hills. Ambeyla itself belonged to them. Thus the English forces were to march perilously close to the borders of a powerful tribe about whose history and political inclinations the English knew very little. What was even more of a risk was the decision not to inform the Bonairs of the intended march. In their anxiety to keep the route secret the English did not consult even those tribes who were friendly to the Bonairs and who knew better about the likely reaction of the Bonairs to the proposed stealthy march by the side of their territory<sup>73</sup>. It was considered inadvisable to consult the Bonairs for it was most likely that they would object and moreover the plan itself would have been betrayed and the element of surprise, so vital

for its success, would have been taken away from it. It was proposed to enter the pass and take position in the Chumla valley suddenly and quickly so that the Bonairs might be presented with a *fait accompli*. The whole thing, it was expected, would be over in about two weeks. Accordingly, on the 19th October, 1863, "when it would be too late for the Chumla or other tribes to make any preparation...for impeding the march of the troops,"<sup>44</sup> Taylor, the Commissioner of Peshawar accompanying the troops, sent a proclamation to the Bonair tribe explaining that the expedition was against the *Hindustanis* and that they need not have any apprehensions. In the opinion of James, the succeeding Commissioner of Peshawar, it was an unwise step and likely to have results just the opposite of what was intended. He opined that it was unlikely that "a brave race of ignorant men would pause to consider the purport of a paper they could not read, when the arms of a supposed invader were glistening at their doors"<sup>45</sup>. Moreover, the English had reckoned without Abdullah. By a master stroke of diplomacy he too sent a proclamation<sup>46</sup> exhorting the tribes to oppose the advance of English troops and explaining to them the real danger of the situation. The proposed object, just then, were the Wahabis but how long, it asked, would it take for their turn to come? The enemy was "deceitful and treacherous" and would possibly lure them with gold but they should be on their guard.

The Grand Army<sup>47</sup> assembled under the command of Gen. Chamberlain and advanced across the Yusufzai plain on the 18th October, 1863, and the pass was reached on the 20th. Part of the Army entered the Chumla valley and occupied the entrance without much opposition. However, this was only the beginning of the difficulties. The baggage and stores were still coming down the pass and were cramming and blocking it. Chamberlain, therefore, decided not to move further until the rear portion had crossed the pass. However, by now the

proclamation of Abdullah had done its work<sup>78</sup> and the Bonairs had been roused and made hostile to the English. General Chamberlain wrote in his Despatch of October 23rd., 'that their conduct (hostility of the Bonairs) has been promoted by Hindostanee fanatics at Sittana there can be no doubt. Some papers have been intercepted which show that ever since it became known that the present Expedition was being organised against them the Hindostanees have been endeavouring to obtain the assistance of Bonairs by alarming them as to our intention of annexing their country<sup>79</sup>'. With the Bonairs turned hostile the English found themselves trapped with the only line of retreat, down the pass, blocked by masses of men, animals and stores still coming up. The English troops were in a deep gorge, flanked by huge mountains on either side and a powerful tribe assembled on their slopes poised to strike against them. Not only was the main object of the expedition relegated to a secondary place, the safety of the army itself was in danger. The whole situation had been masterfully exploited by Abdullah. Hunter describes the situation thus; 'A great political catastrophe was now dreaded. Our Army, wearied out with daily attacks, might at any moment be seized with panic, and driven back pell-mell, with immense slaughter, through the pass<sup>80</sup>'.

During the next few days, up to the middle of November, the English troops remained entrenched in the narrow defile under the constant fire of the Wahabis and the tribesmen. General Chamberlain asked for reinforcements which were hurriedly sent forward by a panic-stricken Provincial government. It was deeply perturbed over the adverse turn of events, especially because it had undertaken the expedition in spite of the objection raised by the Commander-in-Chief, some of which were proving only too true. The Provincial government felt shame-faced and in the reports sent to the Government of India they were at pains to explain as to how defection of the



Bonairs was something totally unexpected, but for which everything would have been so easy.<sup>81</sup>

The flow of reinforcements continued so much so that the whole of the Punjab was denuded of forces<sup>82</sup> in an attempt to provide succour to the hard pressed garrison. The Commander-in-Chief himself hurried to Lahore. The reinforcement on the English side was counterbalanced by a steady flow of fresh batches of volunteers from different tribesmen. Abdullah and Syed Umran, the uncle of Mubarak Shah, wrote a letter to the Akhund of Swat seeking his co-operation and valuable assistance.<sup>83</sup> The Akhund responded readily and, by virtue of his religious hold over a vast area, brought forth with him a large number of tribesmen. Other tribes of Chumla and Dir also responded. Faiztalub Khan of Bajour alone brought 300 men. The Afridis and the Usmanzais also sent in recruits. The Expedition, from its original limited objective, had been transformed into a major Frontier War against a coalition of tribes the like of which had never been seen so far.<sup>84</sup>

During the period many tenacious local engagements were fought in which heavy casualties were inflicted on both sides. We are not concerned here with these local fights<sup>85</sup> but an account of the several encounters that took place at the Crag Picquet is being given here, first, because these are typical of the various local fights and, secondly, because the Wahabis figured prominently in these attacks. Reconciling himself to a long period of virtual siege Chamberlain had occupied two lofty hill-tops high up on either side of his position in the gorge below and established picquets there. These were known as the Crag's Picquet and the Eagle's Nest. Both were vital points to hold and both, consequently, witnessed several bloody actions. The Crag Picquet alone was attacked and captured four times by the Wahabis and retaken as many times. The troops from both sides showed remarkable courage and perseverance but Adye draws out a sharp

distinction between the "bold and vigorous attitude" of the Wahabis and the 'dogged resistance' of the English and the 'discouraging effect' of prolonged defensive warfare on the latter. Between the period of 30th October to 20th November several bold and spirited attacks were made on the Crag Picquet by the Wahabis. They captured the hill-top but were forced out by an overwhelmingly large number of relieving forces. In the third attack, on November 13th, so strongly supported was the Wahabi onslaught that "not only the (English) Picquet, now one hundred and twenty strong, was thrown away but something like a panic spread among the followers in the camp."<sup>86</sup> The relieving force was unable to "drive out the swarms of warriors, grimly holding the vantage point." The last attempt on Crag picquet was made on the 20th November. "So determined was the attack that the British garrison was swept from the hill with considerable loss. The position of affairs was so critical that Chamberlain himself determined to lead the column detailed to assault and retake the Picquet."<sup>87</sup> The peak was retaken but the English suffered a casualty of 153 men including the Commander of the army, Chamberlain himself, who was severely wounded in the arm. A large amount of stores and ammunitions fell into the hands of Wahabis. Some English were also taken captive.<sup>88</sup>

The provincial Government, not fully aware of the situation on the Front, still pressed for the accomplishment of the original objective, the destruction of Malka. However, Chamberlain did not think it advisable to advance without first securing his flank threatened by the coalition of tribes. Committing himself to a long period of this wearying war and in order to have an alternate route for returning to the Yusufzai Plain he ordered the construction of a road over the mountain slopes. Work on another road, forward to Malka, was also taken in hand to facilitate an advance on it in case it became feasible. The Wahabis were, however, quick to retaliate. The parties of engineers which were often isolated and spread over

different ridges, separated from one another by deep ravines, were attacked and driven away. The portions of roads already built were broken up and blocked with rocks and trees.<sup>89</sup>

By December about 9,000 Regular troops, including picked Regiments like the 93rd Highlanders, etc., were deployed on the Frontier and it "seemed hard to believe that a powerful British Army should thus remain cooped within the pass week after week, harassed by the attack of the enemy, and unable to strike a blow."<sup>90</sup> The real reason according to Hunter for this was that the English "underrated the hold which the Fanatical colony had acquired over the Frontier. Those who had joined them for the sake of Faith were burning with hopes of plunder or of martyrdom, while the less bigoted clans were worked upon by the fear of their territory being invaded by the British." The situation was getting difficult both militarily and politically. The Commander of the Force, Gen. Chamberlain, had been injured and lay incapacitated. The Governor-General, Lord Elgin, lay on his death-bed in the "interior hills" out of touch with the developments and unable to give any guidance. The weight of events lay heavy on the shoulders of a perplexed and somewhat apprehensive Lieutenant-Governor. The Despatch of Gen. Chamberlain following the encounter of November 20th so unnerved the Provincial Government that they contemplated ordering even a general retreat. However, the perseverance of Sir Hugh Rose, the Commander-in-Chief, and the supply of powerful reinforcements saved this humiliating move. There was also another danger, "Faithful and courageous as our native Frontier Regiments had as yet proved themselves still it was contrary to the human nature to suppose that they would go on week after week fighting against their own kith and kin."<sup>91</sup> The political situation was even more serious. The entire Frontier was in commotion. Even in Kabul there was considerable sympathy if not active support for the tribal confederates.<sup>92</sup>

Having failed to achieve their object in straight battle the British authorities set in motion political intrigues aided by the never-failing inducement of the weighty yellow metal. James, the Commissioner and the Political Officer, in particular, started sowing seeds of disunity among the confederate tribes.<sup>95</sup> Hunter candidly admits that "a coalition of mountain tribes is always capricious; and *what our arms had failed to accomplish, dissensions and diplomacy began to effect.*"<sup>96</sup> Early in December, James submitted a Memorandum to Major General Garvock, who had succeeded in command to General Chamberlain, reporting the existence of internal feuds and animosities among the Bonairs. The Bonairs, fighting originally in defence of their homeland, were weary of war and divided amongst themselves. The repeated pressures of James coupled with monetary inducements<sup>96</sup> finally succeeded in weaning the Bonairs away. The war which had begun so encouragingly for the Wahabis amidst unprecedented enthusiasm and co-operation of the tribes came to an unsuccessful end largely because of tribal dissensions and selfishness. The Akhund tried in the beginning to steer clear of the tide of tribal defections, but failed in his attempt and in the end remained a helpless spectator.

In the final stages of the war the Wahabis were left practically alone, with a few Bajouries, to face the formidable host. Abdullah made one supreme, although foolhardy, attempt to offer battle with the small band of his own followers in the hope of stirring up the tribal sense of honour and inducing them to re-join the battle. He made a spirited speech before the commencement of this last engagement emphasising upon his followers the transitoriness of life and the honour of dying in battle rather than surrendering. Moved by his eloquence and fired by a selfless zeal the Wahabis fought valiantly; their lives "stood unyielding like a wall of steel".<sup>96</sup> A large number of Wahabis fell down fighting. Abdullah retreated to appear once more against the English at a later stage.

The battle was over but the professed object of the expedition, the destruction of Malka, yet remained to be fulfilled. Even after the Bonairs had withdrawn the English remained where they were. They had once taken the neutrality of the Bonairs for granted and knew what it had cost them, once bitten twice shy, and now they were reluctant—so panic-stricken they were—to venture far out in the Amzai and Madikhel tribal area which was necessary if the English troops were to go to Malka. The author of the *Durr-i-Maqal* dwells at length<sup>97</sup> on the fear and hesitation of the English even after their victory and shows how they had to buy the assistance of the Amzais<sup>98</sup> and Bonairs for performing the destruction of Malka. He writes, satirically, how the Bonairs marched ahead (for this work) and the “ever-valiant” English made the rear.

It was James once again who conceived of a novel plan<sup>99</sup>. The actual work of destruction was to be done by the Bonairs, Amzais and Khudikhel tribes for these latter “having once committed themselves thus openly against the fanatics it was the surest guarantee that they would not re-admit them.” But to make matters more sure and to see that the destruction was actually carried out a few British officers were to accompany the party. They started on the 19th December accompanied by Col. Taylor as the Political Officer. The place was reached on the 21st and after an overnight stay the work of destruction began. James gives the following account of the place and its destruction, “Malka was situated on an elevated plateau on a northern spur of the Mahabun ridge. It was a much larger and more substantial place than any known in those hills, containing several large edifices amongst which the Moulvie’s hall of audience, barracks for the soldiers, stabling and a *powder manufactory* formed conspicuous objects. There was no regular fortification but the outer walls of the houses were connected and formed a continuous line of defence with posterns: there was also a tower at the gateway. The place was found deserted...

and was completely destroyed by noon". (22nd, December). Mehr refers to the testimony of Abdul Jabbar Shah, a direct descendant of Syed Mahmud Shah of Sittana, to the effect that Malka was not actually burnt. But the testimony of the English records on this point is definite. James in his letter, quoted above, also speaks of an attempt by some Amzais to save a large portion of the village on the plea that it belonged to them and not to the Wahabis, but the plea was overruled and the whole place burnt.

The campaign had cost the English heavily both in men and money. Their losses amounted to 847 killed<sup>103</sup> and wounded or close to one-fourth of the entire force, when it numbered 9000. This was in the pass alone and exclusive of men invalidated by exposure and disease. The loss on the other side, including the tribesmen, was 3000.<sup>103</sup>

The Provincial Government while summing up the result of the expedition observed that on no former occasion had the fighting in the hills been so severe and of such a sustained character and that on account of the Wahabi's initiative a formidable combination of tribes had been effected in which "their (Wahabi's) counsels have had the ascendancy."<sup>104</sup> The long time taken by such a large British force in achieving the comparatively small original object caused a serious damage to their prestige in the eyes of the tribesmen. And even after all this sacrifice the more far-sighted of the English officers and contemporary writers were not slow to realise that the perennial source of opposition had not been finally disposed off. Adye observed, "In retrospect, the Campaign was not altogether satisfactory."<sup>105</sup> Hunter bewailed the fact that "Our prison gates have closed upon batch after batch of unhappy misguided traitors; the Courts have sent one set of ring-leaders after another to lonely islands across the sea; yet the whole country continues to furnish money and men to the Forlorn Hope of Islam on our Frontier and persists in its bloodstained protest against Christian rule."<sup>106</sup> James in his letter, quoted above, remarked that "the colony of

fanatics so perseveringly hanging on our borders, a blemish to our administration...has been *half-destroyed*, forced to retreat to more inhospitable and uncongenial regions and will shortly, I trust, be eradicated for ever." That James was sadly mistaken in his trust was to be soon evident from the next campaign—the second Black Mountain Expedition—and the subsequent ones.

The foregoing account would show that the English considered the very existence of the Wahabi principality on the Frontier as a potential threat to the stability of their rule in India. The English were justified in their appraisal of the situation for it would be evident from an account of some of the subsequent struggles against the Wahabis that even when they were not the main opposition "they have proved to be at the bottom of most of the tribal complications...they seem never to lose an opportunity of ill-feeling and to be always ready to join hands with any lawless Khan that can be persuaded into taking initiative"<sup>107</sup> (against the English). To maintain in the face of these incontrovertible facts that the Wahabi Movement was directed solely against the Sikhs and not the English is to ignore completely the greater portion of the history of the Movement.

## REFERENCES

1. *Vide supra.*
2. The references to "English" or "Christians" in the published versions of some of these letters were substituted by the words "Sikhs" and modified in other ways, *vide Appendix VI.*
3. *Vide infra*, pp. 270-72.
4. H.G., p. 155.
5. *ibid.*
6. *Vide supra*, pp. 106-7.
7. For. Dept. Pol. Cons., No. 92, dated 15th Oct., 1852.
8. It was not definitely ascertained as to where actually they were ~~when~~ they were killed.
9. The Black Mountains occupy an important place in the history of British Expeditions sent to the Frontier. Three full-fledged campaigns were fought in quick succession against the tribes living on their slopes; *vide*, Paget and Mason, *op. cit.*
10. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. Nos. 89-90, dated 15th. Oct., 1852.
11. *ibid.*, No. 91.
12. Paget and Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-41.
13. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 166, dated 28th Jany., 1853.
14. *ibid.*, No. 162.
15. *ibid.*, No. 163.
16. Mountain Train Battery, 2 Guns; 1st Sikh Infantry, 3rd Sikh Infantry; 2 Regts. of Dogras of Kashmir Army; 6 Wall Pieces, and 6 *zambooraks*.
17. C.R., Vol. 51, (1870), p. 396.
18. It is to be noted that the sources of information about the state of affairs in the Wahabi centre at this time are very few. As such this contemporary account is of great value.
19. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 116, dated 24th Mar. 1853.
20. These volunteers, on their way to the Frontier, were fed out of contributions from the towns and villages through which they passed.
21. Mehr, IV, p. 290.
22. Mehr saw the original diary in Asmast, the centre of the Wahabis on the Frontier in the later years.
23. The actual name of the Akhund (or the religious chief) was Abdul Ghaffar. He was born in 1794 and belonged to a comparatively unknown family. He was a popular and influential religious leader in Yusufzai and Swat area. He had been an adventurous and wandering life. His attitude towards the Wahabis passed through varying stages. He associated himself with Syed Ahmad during the early phase of the Wahabi Movement, but subsequently, during 1857-58, he was rather cold and unhelpful towards the Wahabis. However, in 1863 he joined whole-heartedly with them in the Ambeyla



- campaign. For further details see Bellew, op. cit., pp. 102-7; Oliver, *Across the Border*, pp. 280-85.
24. C.R., Vol. 51, p. 396. Italics are mine.
  25. Mehr, IV, p. 290.
  26. Paget and Mason, op. cit., pp. 84-89.
  27. Peshawar Mountain Battery—4 Guns; 2nd Punjab Cavalry—1 Troop; 4th Infantry—300 Bayonets; 5th Infantry—400 Bayonets; Mounted Police—40 *Sawars*; Multan Levies—100 *Sawars*.
  28. Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 87.
  29. *ibid.*
  30. *ibid.*
  31. 24-Pr. Howitzer—2 Guns.  
Peshawar Mountain Train Battery—4 Guns  
27, 70 and 87 Regts.—500 Bayonets each  
5, 6 and 16 Punjab Infantry—400, 200 and 150 Bayonets, respectively.  
21. Native Infantry—50 Bayonets  
2 Punjab Cavalry—150 Sabers  
Police and Levies—225 Mounted, 100 Foot.
  32. Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 89.
  33. Letter from Dy. Judge Advocate General, Peshawar, to Commr., Patna, dated 29th Mar., 1856; Enclosure No. 1.
  34. Bellew, op. cit., p. 98.
  35. It shows how exacting were the qualifications for being elected as the leader of the Movement.
  36. Bellew, op. cit., p. 98.
  37. Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 84.
  38. A detailed break-down of the composition of this Army is given below:

	Europeans	Non-Europeans	Total
Artillery	131	88	219
Cavalry	16	535	551
Infantry	632	3,472	4,107
	779	4,095	4,877

Vide For. Dept. Pol. 'A' Cons. No. 191, dated Augt.,

39. A full account of this campaign is given in General S. Cotton's *Nine Years in India*, London 1868, pp. 218 ff. The author was the leader of that expedition and describes it in details. Abdul Haq, the author of the versified account of the battle of Ambeyla, also gives a brief account of this campaign in the beginning of his work, *Durr-i-Maqul*. Also, Paget and Mason, op. cit., pp. 90-97.
40. D. M., p. 26; For. Dept. Sec. Cons. Nos. 553-55, dated 28th May 1858.
41. Cotton, op. cit., p. 227.
42. *ibid.*, pp. 226 ff.
43. D. M., pp. 28-29.
44. Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. II. pp. 415-418.
45. D. M., pp. 29-30.
46. *ibid.*, p. 31.

47. Neville, H. L., *Campaigns on the Frontier*, London, 1912, p. 41.
48. Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 95.
49. Younghusband, G. J., *The Story of the Guides*, London, 1908, p. 77.
50. D.\*M., p. 38.
51. Mehr, IV, p. 314.
52. For details see D. M. pp. 34-36.
53. Bellew, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
54. *ibid.*
55. T.S., p. 147. Mehr (IV, p. 319) gives the date of his journey from Patna as January, 1859. He makes no mention of the visit to Mecca and Afghanistan.
56. A purely military account of this Campaign is contained in Col. Adye's *Sitana*, London, 1867. It is a small book, now extremely rare and out of print, and it gives a concise narrative of the Campaign. The author himself was an officer, in the Artillery, in that Campaign. Also see Paget and Mason, op. cit., Neville, op. cit. Among non-English sources, *Durr-i-Maqal* is the only one of its kind. Its author, too, was an eye-witness of the events described.
57. D. M., pp. 37-47; Mehr, IV, pp. 319-330.  
For. Dept. Pol. 'A' Cons. Nos. 140-43, dated Sept., 1863; Letter from Dy. Commissioner, Hazara, to Commissioner, Peshawar, dated 6th July, 1863; Mehr., IV, pp. 319 ff.
59. In many cases the wealthy traders held for ransom happened to be Hindus and the English writers have made much of this. However, the Wahabis did not commit these depredations. (For. Dept. Pol. "A" Cons. Nos. 191-193, dated August, 1862, vide infra).
60. The English authorities in the Punjab were then employing several batches of Irregular Horsemen. They were not regular soldiers in employment but were recruited on emergency basis. They kept their own horses and men and were paid according to the numbers of horse-men maintained by them—something like the Mughal *Mansabdars*.
61. For. Dept. Pol. 'A' Cons. No. 193 dated Augt., 1862; Letter from Dy. Commissioner, Hazara, to Commissioner, Peshawar, dated 28th July, 1862.
62. The refusal was on sentimental grounds of not serving under the English.
63. Letter from Secy., Govt. of Punjab to the Commr. and Supdt. Peshawar, No. 543½, dated 15th July, 1863.
64. For. Dept. Pol. 'A' Cons. No. 140-43, dated Sept., 1863; Letter of Deputy Commissioner, Hazara, to Commissioner, Peshawar, dated 6th July, 1863.
65. I. M., pp. 25-26; Neville, op. cit., p. 50; Adye, op. cit., p. 18; H.G., p. 168; Paget and Mason, op. cit., p. 102 ff.
66. For. Dept. Pol. 'A' Cons. No. 193, dated Augt., 1862.
67. *ibid.*, No. 191, dated August 1862. Italics are mine.
68. Adye, op. cit., pp. 29-32.
69. Younghusband, G.J., op. cit., p. 87.
70. Bellew, op. cit., pp. 99-102. From the meticulous details given, it appears that the information was collected by some spy deputed for this specific purpose.

71. The word 'Bengal', as used in the list given below meant the areas comprising the old Bengal Presidency including those now forming Bihar.
72. For a summary of these technical and lengthy discussions, see For. Dept. Pol. Cons. Nos. 14 & 15, dated March 1864.
73. Adye, op. cit., pp. 22, 27.
74. *ibid.*, p. 26.
75. *ibid.*, p. 27.
76. The full text of the Proclamation is given in Appendix IV.
77. The composition of the Army was as follows :

<i>Regulars</i>	<i>Punjab Irregular Force</i>
1/4 Belt, Royal Artillery, 3 Guns on Elephants,	8 Native Mountain Batteries,
71st. Highland Light Infantry	8 small Guns on mules back,
71st. Royal Bengal Fusilliers,	Regt. of Guides, N.I.,
20 & 32 Regts. of N.I.,	1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th Regts., N.I.,
11th Bengal Cavalry,	5th Gurkhas.,
2 Cos. of Native Sappers,	Guides Cavalry,

In numbers the composition was as follows :

<i>Regulars</i>	<i>Irregulars</i>
Infantry	5,150
Cavalry	200
Artillery	280
	100 Under Civil command and 13 Guns.

A quarter of the total number were English troops.

78. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 15, dated March, 1864 ; Taylor's letter No. 15, dated 21st Jany., 1864, paras 72-76.
79. Adye, op. cit., p. 41.
80. I. M., p. 35.
81. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 14, dated March 1864, Davies' letter to Secretary, Govt. of India, dated 1st Febr., 1864.
82. I.M., p. 34 ; Adye, op. cit., p. 55.
83. D. M., pp. 54-57.
84. Adye, op. cit., p. 54.
85. For details see Adye, op. cit., pp. 44 ff. ; Gazette of India, Extraordinary, dated 30th January, 1864, pp. 2-55 ; Younghusband, op. cit., pp. 87-90.
86. Younghusband, op. cit., p. 89.
87. *ibid.*, p. 90 ; D. M., pp. 259-64.
88. D. M., 261.
89. A detailed account of the guerilla warfare by the Wahabis is given in the D. M., pp. 196-206.
90. I. M., p. 36.
91. Adye, op. cit., p. 74.
92. For. Dept., Pol. Cons. No. 15, dated March, 1864 ; James's letter No. 9, referred to above.
93. *ibid.*, James's Memoranda, dated 5th, 7th, and 14th Dec., 1863.

94. I. M., p. 37.
95. D. M., pp. 348-49.
96. *ibid.*, pp. 317-20.
97. *ibid.*, pp. 330 ff.
98. A. Haq mentions the exact amount of 400 Dinars (Guineas) which was given to them for this work, D. M., p. 349.
99. For Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 15, dated March, 1864. James's letter No. 9 referred to above.
100. *ibid.*, para 49. Italics are mine.
101. Mehr, IV, p. 365.
102. I. M., p. 38 ; Adye, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-72. A detailed list of the casualties is given in the India Gazette, 1864, pp. 51-79.
103. For Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 15, dated March, 1864. James letter No. 9 referred to above, para 66.
104. *ibid.*, No. 14, dated March, 1864. Letter from H. R. Davies, dated 1st Feb., 1864, para 114.
105. Adye, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
106. I. M., pp. 122-23.
107. Oliver, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-91.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WAHABIS AND THE MOVEMENT OF 1857-59

The century following the battle of Plassey (1757) witnessed the gradual expansion and consolidation of the British Empire in India. At the same time it was characterised by a series of conspiracies, risings and generally anti-English Movements of varying nature and extent. Among these latter the Movement of 1857 and the Wahabi Movement stand out as the two most pre-eminent ones. Whereas the former has been the subject of some very authoritative and comprehensive studies<sup>1</sup> soon after the date of its occurrence—supplemented by a few more valuable ones in recent years<sup>2</sup>—there has been, yet, no adequate treatment of the latter.

A very brief and isolated account of that phase of the Wahabi Movement which relates to the years 1857-59 has been given by some of the standard historians of the Movement of 1857-59. But their treatment suffers from one important and obvious shortcoming. The account has been given out of its proper context. For instance, the origin and antecedents of the Wahabis, the aims and objects of their Movement, their organisation and leaders and many other similar points have been left out altogether. What is more important, the significance of the continuing process of the anti-English activities of the Wahabis has not been properly brought out. When the great conflagration of 1857 took place the Wahabis had already been working for about three decades but this fact has not been properly emphasised, with the result that in the general histories of the Movement of 1857-59 the Wahabis are made to appear as an inexplicable and incongruous element. Which group they represented ? Why

English by force of arms. Undoubtedly, there was a widespread civilian support to the rising, which was spear-headed by the army units, and particularly in the Shahabad area of Bihar and in Oudh the Movement assumed the proportion of a national rebellion<sup>8</sup>, yet, primarily, it was a revolt from inside. During the course of the rising the British rule practically ceased to exist in many parts of the country, but no separate administrative machinery grew up in its place—there was no time for it, for the English reoccupied the areas soon after. In some of the places in Bihar where some sort of an improvised administration was set up it was a replica of the existing British models.

The indirect influence of the Wahabi Movement on some aspects of the other one is also very significant.

The Wahabis with their compact organisation, covering the whole of Northern India, their secret cells in the Indian Army Units and their contacts in various princely states such as Tonk, Hyderabad, etc. had provided a solid organisational base which was copied and utilised directly by some of the non-Wahabi leaders of the Movement of 1857-59. It also enabled the Wahabis themselves, at some places, to capture the leadership of the other Movement—for instance Bakht Khan's supersession of Mirza Mughal in the control of the Delhi forces<sup>9</sup>.

These differences between the two Movements have to be borne in mind for a proper understanding of the attitude of the Wahabis to the Movement of 1857-59.

In Bihar we find that ever since the days of the Syed Ahmad, Patna had been functioning as an active centre of anti-English activities. The existence of a group of "Wahabi agitators" as also their activities had been reported to the Government from time to time. During the succeeding decades, Patna had come to be the rallying centre of several groups of persons engaged within the knowledge

of one another but mostly on their own initiative, in anti-governmental activities. In fact the study of the working of the leaders of these groups in Patna, from 1830 to the outbreak in the middle of 1857, offers a fascinating field of study which has not yet received the full attention which it deserves.

William Tayler, who was the Divisional Commissioner of Patna from 1855, was one of the very few farsighted English officers in Bihar and he had been persistently warning the Provincial Government of the gathering momentum of the anti-governmental activities in the town. It goes to his credit that he was conscious of the separate identities of the various groups working in Bihar and noted in particular the fact that the Wahabis were a distinct group. Writing on the state of affairs prevailing in the division towards the middle of June 1857, the different quarters from which he expected trouble and the steps he took to forestall each of them, he observed<sup>10</sup>, "Although I have believed that in carrying out the great anti-Christian League...all sects would be willing to merge their own sectarian differences for the time and to make common cause against the *Nasranees* (Christians) there were yet two special quarters from which danger might be looked for at Patna, firstly, the partisans and adherents of the Lucknow party since the annexation of Oudh; secondly, from the numerous and fanatical sect of Wahabis. In addition to this was the great danger to be expected from the excitement which might break out among the general mass of people if an outbreak occurred."

This general appraisal of Tayler is also supported by what we know of the genesis of the brief and brilliant Patna uprising of the 3rd July, 1857. The details<sup>11</sup> of the important episode do not concern us here and it would be sufficient to mention that owing to some of the policies of the Government a widespread discontent was prevailing all over Bihar and particularly Patna, which was characterised by Tayler as the "very sink of disaffection"

There were several groups of persons working against the Government. The chief agent of the Lucknow group was Pir Ali, the hero of the 3rd July Rising, working in collaboration with Mehdi Ali, the *Daroga* of *Cotegast* (police outpost) in Patna City. Ali Kareem,<sup>12</sup> a wealthy *zamindar* of Dumri (district Patna), working with Waris Ali, a police *Jamadar* of *Thana Bandraj* (district Muzaffarpur), represented the other or Delhi group. Finally, there were the local Wahabis who had been working against the Government for a much longer time but whose activities were primarily conditioned by the consideration as to how it would affect the centre of their main activity—the independent State on the Frontier. The great aim of Pir Ali in accordance with the instructions of his collaborator, Mashiuzzaman of Lucknow, was to effect a co-ordination of the activities of these distinct groups and to harmonise the comparatively diffused feeling of discontent into a powerful and homogenous movement against the Government. The letters of Masihuzzaman to Pir Ali, many of which were seized after the suppression of the Rising, bear ample testimony to his efforts for achieving this object. In one of his letters to Pir Ali he directed him to contact Ali Kareem whose co-operation was considered valuable and necessary. He added, further, that "if in the family of *Velayat Ali* or *Muksood Ali* (the leaders of Wahabis) you are on friendly terms with any one you think is able for our work, you may inform me. I think we should not disagree with any caste, and even with Hindoos for we should try and get our work done and in disagreeing there are countless disputes. For my part I am on terms with the Wahabis, with those who are weak and wavering and with many even of *Shias* and *Rafzees*." It is clear from this contemporary letter that the Wahabis represented a distinct group.

We also have the valuable testimony of the author of the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*<sup>13</sup> about Pir Ali contacting Farhat Husain, the local leader of the Wahabis at Patna, to join



the contemplated Rising. The latter, however, declined to do so for reasons which will be discussed presently.

Tayler dealt with all the above-mentioned three "sectors of intrigue and disaffection" in his own characteristically thorough, if unscrupulous, manner. We are concerned here primarily with his dealings with the Wahabis. Since it is one of the major incidents in which the local Wahabi leaders figured prominently it has been studied in detail and on the basis of the account<sup>14</sup> given by Tayler himself, the main actor of the fateful drama.

The most striking characteristic of the Wahabis, according to Tayler, was the entire subservience which "they yield to their head or *Pir*." Without writing a line a Wahabi leader could convey a confidential message from Patna to Lahore in an incredibly short space of time and an order from the chief would be met with "unquestioning acquiescence." Tayler, therefore, decided to "take possession" of their leaders, more as hostages for the good conduct of the whole brotherhood *than from any expectation of having* sufficient evidence to punish them." He was, however, afraid of arresting them openly for it might have led to resistance. So he thought of a novel and unorthodox plan. He issued a circular letter to the "respectable natives" of the city asking them to come to his home to discuss the adoption of some preventive measures in case of any outbreak of trouble. The next morning (June 19th) the gentlemen presented themselves, including Ahmadullah, Muhammad Husain and Waizul Haq. Seats were placed for them round the dining table and when they had assembled Tayler himself entered, accompanied by the Collector, Capt. Rattray, Soobadar Hidayat Ali and a few others. The 'supposed consultations' were gone through while Tayler was all the time 'inexpressively amused' at the demeanour of the three intended victims who 'perhaps knew something of the coming arrest,' but he admired their fortitude. When the dismissal of the meeting was announced the three Wahabi

leaders were 'politely' requested to remain seated and then, after the others had left, Tayler announced their arrest explaining that although he had no positive proof of their guilt he thought it a necessary preventive measure to keep them under arrest. The *Moulvies* took the blow "with a wonderful presence of mind and a politeness of manner worthy of all admiration." Soon after they were despatched under an escort of the Sikh Regiment to the then Circuit House where they were put under detention. Tayler was particular to drop in a parting threat. He told Ahmadullah that he had not arrested his father, Elahi Bux, who was an old and invalid man but made it clear to him that the temporary concession was strictly dependent upon the good behaviour of his followers. "Remember . . . his (Elahi Bux's) life is in your hands, yours in his."

Tayler gloats with unconcealed glee over this diabolical acts of his. "To this day I look at the detention of these men as one of the most successful strokes of policy which I was able to carry into execution."<sup>15</sup> The action of Tayler has been the subject of heated controversy among historians. While some have compared it to the murder of Macnaghten by Akbar Khan during the Anglo-Afghan war, others have held it to be a bold and sagacious stroke of policy. In retrospect, it is clear that purely from the point of view of the Government's interests the action served the purpose for which it had been undertaken. The arrest of these leaders certainly upset the Wahabi arrangements for transmission of money to the Frontier where, as a result, acute privations prevailed. But Tayler was wrong in his assertion that *this act withheld the Wahabis from joining in the Movement of 1857*. Tayler, it appears, had no understanding of the wider ideological influences under which the Movement worked. What he failed to realise was that the attitude of the Wahabis would have remained the same even if no preventive detention had been effected. The Wahabi action in this matter was based on deeper considerations of principles than on superficial personal considerations.

Tayler seems to have been obsessed with the idea that it was his preventive detention of the Wahabi leaders, coupled with the unconcealed threat to Elahi Bux, which held the Wahabi group in check during those crucial days.<sup>16</sup> In order to justify his irregular detention of the Wahabis, Tayler advanced the argument that it was this action which forced Elahi Bux, father of Ahmadullah, to lodge information with the local Magistrate about the impending Rising of Pir Ali. In this, however, Tayler was guilty of a grave and possibly deliberate withholding and misrepresentation of facts. Throughout the letters<sup>17</sup> he wrote during this period he maintained that the information was lodged by *Elahi Bux, father of Ahmadullah*. Following him a recent writer<sup>18</sup> on the subject has repeated this unmerited charge.

The actual informer of this episode had, however, come to Louis, the Magistrate of Patna, and not Tayler, and his statement was taken down by the Magistrate, who gives the following version; "Statement of Ilahi Buksh, son of Sufadar Ally, of Mouzah Darwah, Thannah Barh July 1st (1857). There are arms and men collected at the house of Pir Ali Khan a booksellers in Thannah Khajehkallan. I have been sent to give this information by Moulvi Ilahee Buksh (father of Ahmadullah) who heard it from some persons whose names I do not know."<sup>19</sup> It is thus clear that the actual informant was a 'lad'<sup>20</sup> named *Elahi Bux, of Barh who said he had come from Elahi Bux, the ageing and infirm father of Ahmadullah*. We have no evidence to judge the veracity of the lad's version that he had been actually sent by his namesake. The lad was a resident of Barh and was in no way connected with Elahi Bux of Sadiqpur. It may very well have been a typical case of incriminating one's opponent or enemy by making false complaints against him. Such cases abounded in the prevailing atmosphere of witch-hunting and false incriminations, then widespread in Patna. This is what the English Magistrate of Patna had to say about the false and indiscriminate charges and counter-charges

levelled, during that period, by unscrupulous *Goindas* (spies) against respectable citizens from whom they wanted to extort money. "I had come utterly to distrust spies and underhand information not only from having been grossly misled by one of your *Goindas* . . . but also from what I heard afterwards of the doings of this spy; armed with a *Perwanah* (order) from you levying contributions on many respectable Hindoos and others in the city . . . Much mischief resulted from such powers being placed even temporarily in the hands of unscrupulous persons."<sup>21</sup> The Magistrate also refers to the case of a spy of Tayler who misled him into searching the house of a "Wahabee Moulvie" on the 20th June (1857) in which, after the strictest search "nothing whatever was found." The Magistrate later learnt that the said informer was an *Amin* to whom the said "Wahabi gentleman had once refused an unjust demand of Rs. 5/-."<sup>21</sup> Another contemporary officer, the succeeding Commissioner of Patna after Tayler, also made the following significant observations on this subject. He wrote, "*Goindas* in this country are much more formidable to innocent men from whom they extort money by threats of accusations than to criminals who can generally secure their silence by bribery or intimidation."<sup>23</sup> Ealhi Bux, the informer in question, might have been one more of this self-seeking tribe of spies. Being a young boy of obscure family connections whose words could not carry much weight with the authorities he might have quoted the name of Ealhi Bux of Sadiqpur, who was one of the most respectable local gentlemen. Or possibly the boy was just a pawn used by some enemy of Sadiqpur Wahabis, of whom there were many in Patna, who wanted to involve them in some governmental enquiry.

The above contention would be appreciated better if one takes into account the family history of the leaders of Sadiqpur. Having dedicated their lives and having sacrificed almost their entire material possession for the promotion of the cause they had taken up, they were not likely to be influenced by such small considerations.

Elahi Bux, in particular, was the father, besides Ahmadullah, of Yahya Ali, Fayyaz Ali, and Akbar Ali. All the three of them had been fighting against the Government on the Frontier for a long time and their activities were well known. His nephews, the famous Ali Brothers, were 'proclaimed rebels.' *If the life and safety of Elahi Bux was to be dependent, in the eyes of the Government, on the "good conduct" of his sons, it was already forfeit on the above counts.* The actions of one of his sons could not have mattered much either way. A man who had willingly sent three of his sons and many more of his nearest relations to fight against the English (knowing full well the great risks to their lives, and to his own, involved in it) was not likely to flinch at the prospect of a supposed danger to the safety of one of his sons, against whom there were no charges at all. It is simply inexplicable why a man the greater number of whose family were deeply involved in anti-government activities, and a greater portion of whose wealth had been staked for the prosecution of the struggle against the Government, would give information to Government about a rising which was to take place against it. The doubt is aggravated when we find that Tayler deliberately made use of the strange coincidence that the name of the *actual informer* also happened to be Elahi Bux. The Magistrate in his letter, quoted above, specifically drew the attention of Tayler ("to prevent confusion") to the fact that the names of both the *actual informer* and the *person from whom the information was said to have come* were one and the same. Tayler, however, everywhere passed off the name as that of Ahmadullah's father. He was clearly doing this in a vain attempt to justify his arrest of Ahmadullah and the others.

●As remarked earlier, the Wahabi Movement was a highly centralised one, working on the basis of certain well marked principles. The Frontier, on the one hand, and Bihar and Bengal, on the other, were the two pivots

around which the Movement revolved. Each had a particular role assigned to it which was strictly adhered to. The main task of the centres inside India was the collection of men and materials and their transmission to the Frontier. The Wahabi leaders with their remarkable political sagacity realised the fact that if the activities of the Indian centres were displayed too openly the Government would naturally take steps to suppress them and thus their supply lines would be cut. It is this essential consideration which explains the apparently contradictory phenomenon that while one group of Wahabis, under Enayat Ali, was actively waging war on the Frontier during 1857-58<sup>24</sup> their compatriots in India, particularly in Bihar, kept quiet. The leader of the Patna centre at that time was Farhat Husain, the younger brother of Enayat Ali, and his attitude towards the English was not different from that of his elder brother. The only reason why he acted differently was the iron discipline of the organisation which had assigned to him a different task to which he strictly adhered. In retrospect, one must concede that the appraisal of the political situation by the Wahabi leaders was right. Had the Wahabis come out in open opposition in Bihar they too would have surely been suppressed and the Movement would have come to an end much earlier than when it did. By keeping low the Wahabis survived the violent storm of 1857-59. The Patna centre lived on, active and energetic as before, and rendered invaluable services during the Ambeyla Campaign of 1863—the severest opposition presented by the Wahabis. There would have been no Ambeyla Campaign in 1863 had the Wahabis in Bihar acted differently from what they did in 1857.

The fresh lease of life thus gained by the Patna centre was, however, a very short one. In fact it was the virtually complete dependence of the Wahabis on the centres in India for all sorts of material support that constituted one of the main weaknesses of the Movement.

Among all the recent writers on the Movement of 1857 only Dr. S. N. Sen and Dr. R. C. Majumdar have pointed out the significant fact that the Wahabis as a community did not identify themselves with the "revolt."<sup>25</sup> While this is true of the Wahabi centre in Bihar (which acted thus under certain considerations of basic policy, discussed above) both Dr. Sen and Dr. Majumdar have made this remark general, and applicable to all the Wahabi centres. They have suggested that if the Wahabis in the Frontier and the Punjab had decided to cast their lot with the leaders of the 'revolt' Lawrence would have found it difficult to denude the Punjab of European Troops. We know it from the above-mentioned account of Enayat Ali's activities during 1857-58 that he joined hands with the men of the 55th N. I. who had fled across the border, gave them shelter, and fought with them many engagements on the Frontier. It is incorrect to maintain that the Wahabis did not fight against the English at all during the crucial years 1857-59. It is true that they did not join hands with the leaders of the Movement but their Frontier party, under Enayat Ali, constantly fought against the English during the period. But the superior and better organized resources of the English, which helped them meet the challenge of so many scattered "centres of revolt" all over Northern India, enabled them to meet this one additional source of trouble as well. Material and technological superiority was the one crucial advantage possessed by the English over their Indian opponents and it could not have been materially affected by the action of the Wahabis. The above-mentioned contention of Dr. Sen is true enough in the sense that if the whole of Punjab had risen up against the English during this critical period not only could Lawrence not have played his gamble with the forces of the Punjab but the history of the Movement itself would have been different. But the whole of the Punjab was not a Wahabi sphere of influence and the latter could in no way be held responsible for the attitude of the general people of the Punjab. On the other hand, it was the attitude of the Sikhs

(leaving aside the Gurkhas) which made all the difference in the eventual outcome of the struggle.

The causes for the general antipathy of the people in the Punjab to the Movement of 1857-59 were many and varied. A variety of motives—often contradictory—led the three major sections of the population, the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims to remain, on the whole, quiescent during this crucial period.<sup>26</sup>

The Machiavellean policy of Lawrence in using the Sikh soldiery against the *Purbiah* sepoys who, only a decade ago, were instrumental in the annihilation of the Sikh Army at the hands of English has already been referred to<sup>27</sup> and it also played some part in determining the attitude of Sikhs.

Dr. Sen also refers to the Minute of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, dated 30th September, 1858, to the effect that "nothing was at any time proved or even alleged against the Wahabis." This assertion of the Lieutenant Governor is not only misleading but its latter part is positively wrong. It has already been shown that ever since 1839, and more particularly since 1852 local officers from such far-flung places as Hazara, Patna, and Rajshahi had been drawing the attention of the Provincial Governments as well as the Government of India to the existence of "a remarkable nest of emigrants from Hindustan" on the Frontier as also to their "treasonable activities" inside the country. The apprehensions of the local officials were not shared fully by the higher authorities. However, it is worth noting that the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal himself had recorded a Minute, dated 26th August, 1852, observing that "a correspondence exists between persons in Patna and fanatics in Sittana and Swat..." and that "it was expedient to watch the conduct and proceedings of the parties implicated." To hold, in face of all this, that nothing was alleged against the Wahabis is curious indeed. The fact



is that the higher authorities exhibited, in the beginning, a peculiarly shortsighted attitude of complacency in regard to the Wahabi activities. The inexorable logic of facts as also the hard knocks taken by the English forces in the Ambeyla Campaign opened the eyes of these "august authorities," at a later stage, to the true extent of the danger.

A mistaken notion has often prevailed that it would detract from the anti-English character of the Movement if it was contended that the Wahabis inside British India, particularly those of Bihar, did not openly participate as a group in the Movement of 1857-59. This curious notion is based upon a double fallacy. Firstly, it presumes that the Wahabis of Bihar were different from the main body and that the character of the entire Movement has to be judged exclusively on the basis of their activities during 1857-59 and, secondly, that they *did not take any part at all in the struggle* against the English. Both the propositions are patently wrong. The Wahabis of Bihar, as of any other province, were an integral part of the wider entity, and they all worked under a centralised plan. The same set of persons, intertwined in the closest ties of kinship, worked both in Bihar and the Frontier. Rather, the same persons—for instance the Ali Brothers, Yahya Ali, Fayyaz Ali and many others—worked alternately in the two places. The Wahabis of Bihar were no more soft to English than those of the Frontier. Both carried on the struggle in the form required by the circumstances in the respective centres. The open struggle of the Frontier was not feasible, under certain basic considerations of policy, in Bihar. But the more substantial, if less spectacular, work of procuring the vital material resources went on uninterruptedly.

\* Many amongst us are apt to look with wondering eyes at the exploits of a daring pilot of a bomber who makes spectacular flights over the enemy's territory on a bombing mission and feel inclined to share in his glories.

But how many of us give a thought to the ceaseless toils of the members of the ground crew without whose silent and rather prosaic labours such flights are unthinkable? If the ground crew were to be negligent in one small detail of their work, let alone stopping work altogether, where would the pilot and his dashing plane be? Such had been the role of the Patna Centre.

Writing about the respective merits of these two different types of work, Mehr remarks,<sup>38</sup> "The trials of this field of work (organisational and supplying) are in no way less than those of the field of battle. On the contrary, I would say that it is easier to die swiftly in the raging fire of the field of battle than to pass the slow-winding hours of the long and unending days of constant worries and ever present risks. These warriors (Patna leaders) lost their hearths and homes, spent their days in the dark dungeons of prisons and the terrible wastes of the Andaman Islands, they cheerfully accepted eternal separation from one another so much that even in death the brothers (Ahmadullah and Yahya Ali) were denied the grace of having their tombs at one place—and yet their resolve was never shaken, their steps never faltered."

It is a remarkable fact that practically the entire burden of leading, for over half a century, a vigorous Movement against a powerful foreign government was borne by the members of a single family—the Sadiqpuris of Patna. They looked after both the works—combatant and non-combatant and worked in both the centres. And they did all this at a time when there was no hope of appreciation, let alone co-operation, from a large number of their own countrymen. This is the real criterion of judging their selfless zeal and dedicated service to the cause of their country's freedom.

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3. Vide supra.
4. Malleson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 547-66.
5. S. N. Sen, op. cit., p. 402.
6. *ibid.*, Foreword, pp. XV-XVI.
7. Almost all the Wahabi pamphlets and treatises stress the desirability and necessity of *Hijrat*. Also see C. R., Vol. 51, pp. 385 ff.; Hunter, op. cit.
8. Datta, B. K. S., pp. 112-113.
9. See K. M. Ashraf's article, entitled "Muslim Revivalists and Revolt", in "Rebellion, A Symposium," by People's Publishing House. 1957.
10. Letter from Commissioner, Patna, to Secretary, Govt. of Bengal, dated 17th July, 1857.
11. Datta, op. cit., pp. 70-88.
12. For a detailed account of Ali Kareem's life and activities, see author's article on his career, I.H.R.C., Vol. XXXIII, 1958, pp. 9-15.
13. p. 143.
14. W. Tayler, *Our Crisis*, Calcutta, 1858, pp. 26-36.
15. *ibid.*, p. 32.
16. Letters from Commr. Patna, to Secy., Govt. of Bengal. Nos. 493 and 543 dated 8th & 11th July, 1857.
17. *ibid.*,
18. "The Patna Conspiracy of 1857", I. H. R. C. Prog. Vol. XXXII, (1956), p. 79.
19. Divisional Commissioner's Office, Patna, "Mutiny Records" (Bundles); Letter from J. Louis, Magistrate, Patna to W. Tayler, Commissioner, Patna, dated 21st July, 1857.
20. Tayler in one of his letters on the subject used this expression about Elahi Bux. the informer. Obviously, therefore, this Elahi Bux could not be the father of Ahmadullah who was a very old man at the time.
21. Louis's letter, referred to above, (f. n. 19).
22. *ibid.*,
23. Letter from Commr., Patna to Secy. Board of Revenue, dated 22nd Sept., 1857.
24. Vide Supra, Chapter VI.
25. Sen, op. cit., p. 248; S. M. R., p. 37.
26. For a detailed discussion of these motives see 'The Great Rebellion' by Talmiz Khaldun; "Rebellion, A Symposium; 1957.
27. Supra, p. 156.
28. Mehr, IV, p. 372. The quotation is an English translation from the original.

## CHAPTER VIII

### STATE TRIALS OF SOME WAHABI LEADERS 1863-1865

It has been shown in a previous chapter that the collection of men and money and their transmission to the North West Frontier were the chief work of the Wahabi centres inside the country. It was the constant and steady flow of this valuable aid which kept the struggle of the Wahabis on the Frontier alive. From time to time the attention of the Government had been drawn by various local officials to the dangerous and 'seditious' nature of the activities of these Wahabi centres and their organisers. But the timely warnings had been, generally, ignored by the Government. The series of Frontier Expeditions against the Wahabis or their tribal allies and in particular the hard knocks suffered by the Army during the Ambeyla campaign awakened the higher authorities to a greater sense of reality in their dealing with the Wahabi centres—the 'nests of intrigues'—inside the country. It was this increasing realisation by the Government of the dangerous potential of the Wahabi centres in India, coupled with some accidental circumstances, which resulted in a series of State Trials of some of the eminent Wahabi leaders in the country of which the Ambala Trial and the Patna Trial were the earliest and the most important.

#### 1. The Ambala Trial, 1864

The chain of events leading up to the Ambala Trial started with the arrest of Muhammad Jafar, a *Lambardgr*<sup>1</sup> of Thanesar town in Ambala district on the 11th December, 1863. The arrest itself was the result of an accidental circumstance<sup>2</sup> which occurred a few months earlier. In

May, 1863,<sup>1</sup> Ghuzzan Khan, a Pathan police Sergeant at Chowki Panipat, Karnal district<sup>2</sup>, found some persons, whose appearance indicated them to be hailing from the Eastern Provinces, moving up the Grand Trunk Road. The Sergeant, feeling inquisitive, asked them as to where they were going. He was told that they hailed from Bengal and were going to the Frontier for waging war against the British Government. They invited the Sergeant also to join them. The latter, however, arrested them promptly and produced them before the local authorities. The case was heard in the court of the Extra Assistant Commissioner, Ambala, who observed in his judgement that the arrested persons were *bonafide* travellers and ordered them to be set free. Ghazzan Khan took this acquittal as a slight upon his honour and set upon himself the task of vindicating the correctness of his charge. He deputed his son to go and join the Frontier centre and try to learn everything he could about the activities of the Wahabis there. The dutiful son performed the task thoroughly. On his return from the Wahabi State he reported the existence of a widespread network for transmission of men and money from all over India to the Frontier, in which Thanesar was one of the main depots and Jafar was one of its chief organisers.

Mehr<sup>3</sup> stresses the fact that the revengeful activities of Ghuzzan Khan started much earlier than the Ambeyla Campaign. He points out that the narrative of those events, as given by Jafar, conveys the impression that those events occurred after the commencement of the campaign. While it is true that the episode of the arrest of Wahabi volunteers occurred much earlier it may be pointed out that it was done on Ghuzzan Khan's personal initiative and the Government had nothing to do with it. The latter commenced regular enquiries into the case some time in October-November<sup>4</sup> when the Government troops in the Chumla Pass were in a dire state. In fact the grave military situation imparted urgency and importance to those enquiries. Hunter also, remarks that the

trial of 1864 was the natural outcome of the disastrous fanatic war in 1863.<sup>7</sup>

Ghuzzan Khan gave to the Government the information brought by his son. Investigations were accordingly set in motion by the Government of the Punjab, and Parson, the Superintendent of Police, Ambala, hurriedly encircled the house of Jafar at Thanesar in the early hours of December 12, 1863. He insisted on searching the house then and there. Some letters were found in the house of Jafar which mentioned the names of Muhammad Shafi, a meat contractor at Ambala and other military cantonments, and some persons of Patna. Although the full implications of many of the coded letters were fully understood by the authorities only later, the police officers of those respective places were telegraphically informed to search the houses of the persons implicated and to arrest them. One, Abdul Ghaful of Hazaribagh, and a Bengali boy, who were present in the house of Jafar, were arrested the same night and taken away. Jafar himself was, curiously, not arrested that night and taking advantage of the opportunity he decided on a bold attempt to escape. He left Ambala the same night and escaped to Delhi, via Panipat. At Delhi he stayed in the house of a co-worker, Bashruddin. He met there two persons from Patna, named Husaini and Abdulla alias Muazzam Sirdar, who were carrying Gold *Mohars* from Patna to the Frontier. Jafar took the money from Husaini and gave it to another person of the same name, of Thanesar, with instruction to take it to the Frontier. Jafar himself along with Husaini of Patna and Abdulla continued his eastward journey.<sup>8</sup>

In the meantime Shafi and his nephew, Abdul Karim, were arrested at Ambala. The next evening (December 13) when Parson arrived at Thanesar to arrest Jafar he learnt of his flight. He at once let loose a reign of terror on the family members of Jafar who were severely beaten and humiliated.<sup>10</sup> On learning from the younger brother

of Jafar that he had fled to Delhi Parson immediately started for Delhi, taking the younger brother of Jafar with him. In Delhi, too, he missed Jafar by a few hours. The latter had left for Koil (Aligarh) by road. Telegraphic message was sent to Aligarh to look out for Jafar and his party and they were arrested there and brought back to Ambala. Husaini of Thanesar who was deputed by Jafar to take the gold *Mohars* to the Frontier was also arrested on his way up at Pipli, the *Tehsil* headquarter of Thanesar.

Having rounded up the persons of the Punjab, involved in the conspiracy, the authorities turned their attention to those belonging to Patna.

Among the papers seized at Jafar's house there were some letters written by two persons belonging to Patna, namely Elahi Bux and Mohiuddin. Husaini of Patna when arrested with Jafar had also stated that he had been sent by the above-mentioned Elahi Bux to deposit a draft of Rs. 2,500/- with a person named Alauddin, a shoe-merchant of Delhi. The other Husaini of Thanesar, who was arrested at Pipli, was also found to be carrying some Gold *Mohars* on his person. The number of these gold *Mohars* corresponded exactly with the number mentioned in the letter of Mohiuddin<sup>11</sup> to Abdul Ghafur, arrested at Thanesar. The identity of this Mohiuddin was established later.

The Punjab Police sent a series of confidential and urgent communications<sup>12</sup> to the authorities at Patna to arrest Elahi Bux. There was some confusion in the beginning about the identity of this Elahi Bux. The particulars given by the Punjab Police did not tally fully with those learnt by the Magistrate of Patna. The Magistrate, to be on the safe side, searched on the 18th December the house of a shoe-merchant, named Elahi Bux, living in the city and seized all the papers found there. On enquiry the Magistrate learnt that Elahi Bux was the son of Karim

Bux, who was also alive. He had gone to Delhi<sup>13</sup> in poor circumstances on the eve of the 'Mutiny' and had returned some time later as a rich man and started a shoe-shop in Muchurhatta, Patna City.<sup>14</sup> He imported shoes from Delhi by taking loans from different local bankers. The profits earned were distributed equally between his bankers and himself. James Alexander, the Magistrate of Patna, arrested him and demanded two sureties of Rs. 5,000/- each. Soon after, the Punjab authorities wired that Parsons was himself proceeding to Patna to conduct the enquiries. He arrived on the 10th January, 1864.

A large number of letters<sup>15</sup> was found in the house of Elahi Bux which showed that various amounts of money had been sent from time to time by Elahi Bux (through Husaini) to Jafar and to different persons in Delhi, ostensibly for purchase of shoes and other merchandise. The most important discovery among these papers was a letter written by Yahya Ali of Sadiqpur to Fukhruddin of Arrah. The handwriting of this letter was exactly the same as that of the one written by Mohiuddin to Abdul Ghafur, mentioned above. It was thus established that Mohiuddin was no other than Yahya Ali "the chief of the whole sect and a man of much influence". So the enquiries were switched over to Sadiqpur. On the 21st January Alexander and Parsons, along with a batch of armed force, raided the Sadiqpur premises and searched the house of Ahmadullah and Yahya Ali.<sup>16</sup> The former had gone out to Calcutta to attend a meeting called by the Lieutenant Governor.<sup>17</sup> All the papers, manuscripts and registers found in the house were seized and taken away. Abdul Rahim was also subjected to a searching cross examination which lasted from the morning till the evening. One, Abdul Ghaffar, who was present in the house and who, on being questioned, declared himself to be a servant of Abdul Rahim, was also interrogated. He stated that Abdul Rahim, his master, carried on monetary transactions with Elahi Bux in his (Ghaffar's) name. On examining Elahi Bux's accounts it was found that large sums of money had been withdrawn



by Ghaffar from the credit in his name with Elahi Bux. It was suspected that these withdrawn amounts (for which no account of expenditure was forthcoming) had been sent to the Frontier through Jafar. A draft letter<sup>18</sup> was also found in the house of Abdul Rahim which mentioned, *inter alia*, the name of some persons (Yaqub, Nasiruddin, etc.) who were known to be in the Frontier. Both Abdul Rahim and Ghaffar were, accordingly, arrested. These two were remanded to *Hajat* and after two days sent to jail. Yahya Ali too was asked to deposit a security of Rs. 10,000/-. This was arranged by Abdul Hamid, his nephew and the eldest son of Ahmadullah.

Soon after this two witnesses, Salimuddin and Aminuddin, were brought from Dacca. They testified that they had stayed in the *Kafla*, the Sadiqpur house, on their way to the Frontier and that at Sadiqpur Yahya Ali used to preach the desirability of fighting against the English. They also stated that many others besides them had stayed at the *Kafla* on their way. On receipt of this information Yahya Ali's bail was cancelled and he was arrested on the 8th February, 1864,<sup>19</sup> and put in jail along with Abdul Rahim and Ghaffar. All these three prisoners were forwarded to Ambala early in March, 1864. From March till the end of the Session Trial the prisoners were kept in separate solitary cells measuring 5'×4' with a high roof and a small opening high up in the wall.<sup>20</sup> The door of this room was opened once in twentyfour hours when a *jamadar* gave the prisoners a pot of water and some bread and *dal* and the sweeper cleaned the commode. The prisoners were subjected to most inhuman treatment during all this period.<sup>21</sup>

The preliminary committal proceedings, lasting over a week, were held in the court of Tighe, the Deputy Commissioner, Ambala. The Session Trial opened in the court of Herbert Edwardes, the Session Judge, Ambala, in April 1864. The judge was assisted by four Assessors—two Hindus and two Muslims. In all eleven persons faced

the charge of waging war against the Queen. They were the following :

1. Yahya Ali of Sadiqpur, Patna. Age 47 years (Biographical details, vide Appendix).

2. Muhammad Jafar, son of Mian Jivan, *Lambardar* of Thanesar, a prosperous businessman, referred to as Peero Khan in code letters. Age 28 years.

3. Abdul Rahim of Sadiqpur, Patna. Age 28 years (Biographical details, vide Appendix).

4. Muhammad Shafi, son of Muhammad Taqi, Meat contractor to military cantonments, prosperous businessman. Turned approver. Referred to as Shafaat Ali in code letters.

5. Abdul Karim, relative and employee of Muhammad Shafi. Age 35 years.

6. Abdul Ghaffar. Described as a servant of Abdul Rahim. Actually, he was a trusted worker of the Movement and also a collaborator of the Sadiqpur leaders.

7. Qazi Mian Jan of Comercolly, district Pubna. Had several aliases. Very old at the time of arrest. Died in detention at Ambala, pending transportation to Andaman.

8. Abdul Ghafur, son of Shah Ali of Hazaribagh. Age 25 years. Arrested in the house of Jafar.

9. Husaini of Patna, son of Meghoo, Patna city. Age 35 years. Servant of Elahi Bux.

10. Husaini of Thanesar, son of Muhammad Bux. Age 25 years. Had fought under Enayat Ali on the Frontier.

11. Elahi Bux, son of Karim Bux, Shoe merchant of Patna City. Also acted as Ahamadullah's *Mukhtar*. Turned approver in Ahmadullah's trial. Released in 1865.

The prisoners were charged under Section 121 of Indian Penal Code for waging war against the Queen. We are not concerned here with the legal arguments in the case. These are summarised in the voluminous official proceedings of the case and are also included in the works of two of the accused persons who lived to write about their own arrests and trials.<sup>22</sup> The broad facts of the prosecution case were true enough but the government had not sufficient materials and witnesses to prove the actual guilt of all the accused persons. As discussed in details hereafter, the manner in which the witnesses were tutored,<sup>23</sup> often under severe beatings and even threats of hanging, further marred the judicial character of the proceedings.

On behalf of the prisoners not much was said in defence. Only Shafi, who was a wealthy man, employed a lawyer in the beginning. Jafar did his own cross-examination and also argued his case. Yahya Ali refused to have any lawyer and also said nothing in his defence. Throughout the trial he used to keep on reciting Quranic verses and also an Arabic quatrain which was to the effect that one should not care how one died, for in any case one had to return to God.<sup>24</sup>

Later, however, Abdul Rahim on the insistence of Shafi employed, on his own and on Yahya Ali's behalf, a noted lawyer of Calcutta, named Plowden.<sup>25</sup> He agreed to work on the fabulous fee of Rs. 21,000/-. Muhammad Hasan, the youngest son of Wilayat Ali, who was only 18 years at that time and Haji Mubarak Ali showed remarkable resourcefulness in making the necessary arrangements for the defence.

The judgement was delivered on the 2nd. May. Yahya Ali,<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Jafar and Muhammad Shafi were sentenced to death and the rest to transportation for life. All the properties of the convicts were ordered to be confiscated. The judgement is a very lengthy document spread

over more than a hundred pages of the Proceedings. It would suffice to give here a summary of the respective crimes of each of the prisoner, quoted by Hunter on the basis of the text of the judgement :

'Yahya Ali has been the mainspring of the great treason which this trial has laid bare...He has deluded hundreds and thousands of his countrymen into treason and rebellion. He has plunged the Government of British India, by his intrigues, into a Frontier War, which has cost hundreds of lives. He is a highly educated man who can plead no excuse of ignorance. What he has done, he has done with forethought, resolution and bitterest treason.'

Jafar : 'It is impossible to exceed the bitter hostility, the treasonable and mischievous ability of this prisoner. He is an educated man and a Headman in his village. There is no doubt of his guilt and no palliation of it.'

Abdul Ghaffar: 'He managed the whole temporal affair of the hospice, daily lectured the recruits on the high duty of Holy War...What he did, he did with perfect sincerity of heart, and at last stood undaunted by his master's side in the dock at Ambala.'<sup>27</sup>

'It is proved against the prisoner Abdul Rahim, that at his house these treasons have been carried on...It was his servant who kept the treasure, fed the recruits, and remitted the subscription to the Fanatics; ...he has done what in him lay against the State.'

'It is proved against Husaini of Patna (servant of Elahi Bux) that...he has been employed by him in effecting remittances for treasonable purposes; ...that he thoroughly understood the treasonable nature of the service on which he was engaged.'

'It is proved against Abdul Ghafur that he was a disciple of Yahya Ali at Patna; that the latter deputed him

to be an assistant of the prisoner Jaffir in the rebel recruiting depot at Thanesar that he did so assist.'

'It is proved against Kazi Mian Jan that he preached and recruited for the Crescentade in Bengal...collecting and remitting funds, forwarding letters, etc. The most treasonable correspondence has been found in his house...he used four aliases.'

'It is proved against Ilahi Bux that he has been the channel through which the Patna Maulavis forwarded the funds they collected up-country to Jaffir at Thanesar to be passed on to Mulka and Sittana.'

'It is proved against Abdul Karim that he was the confidential agent of Muhammad Shafi (the meat supplier) in cashing the Patna money orders for treasonable purposes.'

'Husaini of Thanesar was a confidential agent and go-between of the prisoners, Muhammad Jaffir and Muhammad Shafi, in their treason and that he was seized in the act of conveying 290 pieces of gold from Jaffir to Muhammad Shafi for remittance to the Queen's enemies.'

Shafi was originally sentenced to death but on turning an approver he was reprieved and set free after having been in jail for two years. His property, which was confiscated earlier, was not restored.

The sentences were referred to Roberts, the Judicial Commissioner, for confirmation. After a prolonged protraction, to enable the consultation with the Home Government,<sup>28</sup> the judgement was delivered on the 24th. August, 1864. The sentences were slightly modified. The capital punishment awarded to the three accused persons was commuted to transportation for life. The final order of the Lieutenant Governor was passed in September. The prisoners remained in the Ambala Jail from the

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commencement of the Trial to February, 1865. European families living in the cantonment area used to come to see them as prize specimens.<sup>29</sup> Once, during this period, a warder of the jail offered to let them escape and suffer the punishment which might be given to him for this neglect of duty. The prisoners, however, refused this offer.<sup>30</sup>

Commenting on the characters and 'crimes' of the leading 'conspirators' Hunter felt constrained to pay this grudging tribute to the 'earnestness' and 'conscientiousness' of Yahya Ali and Jafar, who 'made no pretension to loyalty, and sought nothing at our hands. They were earnest, conscientious men, who pricked themselves with the poisonous weapons which a false religion had put in their hands; and now that Laertus-like they have paid the price of their treachery history may dwell with emotions akin to pity on their fate.'<sup>31</sup>

About Shafi, the man who turned traitor both to his colleagues and the cause in order to save his skin, Hunter remarked, 'but for Muhammad Shafi there can be no such feeling. He licked our hand in order to bite it', and 'he appears throughout the keen, sharp-sighted, sordid schemer...'

From February, 1865, when the first batch of the prisoners was transferred to Lahore on their way to the dreaded penal settlement of the Andaman Islands, which they reached almost after an year, began a period of nightmarish sufferings and inhuman severities for the prisoners. They were transferred from Ambala to Lahore on the 22nd February; the journey between these two places being performed on foot.<sup>32</sup> Abdul Rahim was detained at Ambala for some time in the hope of using him as an intermediary in arranging the surrender of Abdullah and the others on the Frontier. He, however, refused to oblige his captors and was soon despatched to the Andaman. Shafi and Abdul Kareem turned approvers and were detained at Ambala. The other prisoners were transferred

from Lahore to Multan Jail in the end of October, the same year. During the journey the prisoners were chained together and locked in a closed compartment which was opened only on reaching the destination.<sup>33</sup> They were put on a steamer from a point near Multan and travelled down the Indus to Karachi. During this journey, covering a week, the prisoners were seated together on a wooden plank and an iron chain was stretched through their chains from one end to the other so that they could not stand up from their seats. Even the calls of nature had to be attended to in this uncomfortably fixed posture.<sup>34</sup> The total weight of iron handcuffs and chain on the legs of the prisoners during this time was not less than half a maund per head.<sup>35</sup> From Karachi they were brought to Bombay where they were put in the (then) dreadful Thana Jail, which was situated in an old deserted Marhatta fort. The prison was well-known for the severe and harsh penalties inflicted on its prisoners—only the worst type of prisoners being lodged there.

This brief account gives us some idea of the corporal punishment suffered by the Wahabis during their transit to the Andaman; it also shows that the present day political detentions, with arrangements for supply of newspaper, etc., are so much easier as compared to what the prisoners suffered at that time. The last leg of the journey to the Andaman commenced on the 8th December, the latter place being reached on the 11th January, 1866. The subsequent period of the lives of the prisoner on the Andaman Islands has been described separately.

## II. The Patna Trial, 1865

The Patna Trial was a direct sequel to the Ambala Trial. During the course of the searches then held at Patna the house of Ahmadullah had also been searched. He was not, however, arrested at that time owing to some difference of opinion between the Punjab and the Patna authorities<sup>36</sup> in regard to the desirability of that step.

Early in October, 1864, the Secretary, Government of Punjab, addressed a letter<sup>37</sup> to his counterpart in the Government of Bengal, enclosing two very long letters from the Deputy Commissioner, Ambala, dated 16th and 19th September, 1864, on the subject of the complicity of Ahmadullah in the conspiracy against the Government. The letters stated that the statements of some of the prosecution witnesses in the Ambala Trial had revealed that Ahmadullah was frequently present in the secret meetings addressed by Yahya Ali. It was also proved from the statement of Elahi Bux, one of the accused in the Ambala Trial, that some of the money deposited with him (for transmission to Frontier) had been credited through Ahmadullah, that it was at his orders that various amounts of money were withdrawn and transmitted, that it was he who had directed the accounts to be maintained by Elahi Bux in the name of Abdul Ghaffar instead of his own name (Ahmadullah). The old records on the subject of Wahabi's activities, in the archives of the Government of the Punjab, were also delved into and the following report on Ahmadullah was found in one of them. At the time when Fayaz Ali and Yahya Ali were encamped at Sittana, 'Moulvi Furhat Ali, brother of Moulvi Wilayat Ali, at Azimabad and Moulvy Ahmadullah...at their houses, in their villages collecting money from others, send weapons and supplies.' In view of the above mentioned circumstances (more investigations were expected to yield further details) the Deputy Commissioner, Ambala, advised the Patna authorities to arrest Ahmadullah, particularly on the following counts, viz., for allowing the premises occupied by him in common with the other members of the family as a recruiting depot for the 'Sittana fanatics', for his intriguing at Patna during the 'late Mutinies',<sup>38</sup> for his being the head of a family which had been warned much earlier (1847) by the Board of Administration, Punjab, not to 'disturb the Frontiers' and, finally, for having not only failed to stop these activities in his house but, on the contrary, having encouraged and helped these.



The letter from the Government of Punjab had not come a moment too soon. Ahmadullah, as a matter of fact, was already under a cloud since the time of Yahya Ali's arrest. The local authorities of Patna were deeply suspicious of his complicity in the acts for which Yahya Ali and the others were being prosecuted. As early as the middle of 1864 when the appeal of the Ambala convicts was pending in the High Court, Plowden, the Defence Counsel, had informed the prisoners about the impending arrest of Ahmadullah<sup>39</sup>. Some self-seeking individuals of Patna, who felt jealous of Ahmadullah's high social status and official rank, had also poisoned the ears of the officers in regard to his complicity.<sup>40</sup> Tayler, the dismissed Divisional Commissioner of Patna and a staunch persecutor of the Wahabis, still lived in the city. He and Ishree Prasad,<sup>41</sup> a young Sergeant of Police, out to prove his zeal to the government by his exertions in the prosecution of the Wahabis, offered their services in this connection. The latter in fact, showed such zeal in this lucrative assignment<sup>42</sup> that his services were repeatedly called for by the government in the subsequent Wahabi trials.<sup>43</sup>

The question of the complicity of Ahmadullah in 'treasonable activities' requires a word of comment as doubts have been expressed by some about the extent of the services rendered by him to the Movement. Mehr states<sup>44</sup> that Ahmadullah did not take much active part in the organisational or the more active works of the Movement. This is not only unsubstantiated,<sup>45</sup> but is controverted by the large mass of documentary evidence produced in the case<sup>46</sup> Elahi Bux, the star prosecution witness, stated that Ahmadullah was appointed by one of the *Khalifas* of Syed Ahmad to hold charge of all the money collected and to look after the connected matters and that letters were received by him from Jafar, under the pseudonym of Ahamd Ali. We have already seen above that not only was Ahmadullah the Head of the 'Working Committee' at Sadiqpur after the death of Yahya

Ali, but had also acted as Counsellor<sup>47</sup> previously. He was then invested with the work of collection and distribution of money—a work upon which his conviction in 1865 was primarily based. It is true that he did not go to the Frontier and participate in the battles there but throughout the period of the absence of Yahya Ali he continued to be the silent and unobtrusive organising genius behind the scene.<sup>48</sup> It has also to be remembered that Ahmadullah was not only a salaried government official but also held several other honorary official positions and as such he could not afford to openly participate in the anti-government activities as some other members of the family did.

The views of the Punjab Government regarding Ahmadullah's complicity in 'treason' were duly conveyed by the Government of Bengal to the Divisional Commissioner and Magistrate, Patna, for investigation and their own opinion. The Lieutenant-Governor also directed that Ahmadullah be at once removed from the offices he holds under Government and that he be considered incapable of ever again serving Government in any capacity. The Magistrate expressed grave doubts about procuring sufficient legal proofs to prove in a court of law the treasonable design of Ahmadullah in 'knowingly allowing Bungallees to assemble in his house for purposes which he must have been aware were treasonable'.<sup>49</sup> He also submitted that 'it would be very much better to let the matter altogether drop than raise the question of his guilt unsuccessfully.' However, in the final analysis he felt that the principal proofs in the case would be based on the statements of the Prosecution witnesses in the previous Trial and those would be supplemented with information gathered by local investigations. He, therefore, submitted that investigations should be started against the accused.

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Ahmadullah was, arrested in November. Earlier, a year ago, he had been relieved of the Deputy Collectorship of Income Tax on the reduction of the Establishment.<sup>50</sup>

After the pronouncement of judgement on the Ambals Case and the conviction of his brother. Yahya Ali, of "high treason", he was removed from the Membership of the Patna Committee of Public Instruction.

The prosecution of the case was entrusted to Ravenshaw, the Magistrate of Patna, on leave at Simla. He was directed to come to Patna, via. Ambala, and to make necessary consultation with the authorities at the latter place. All local officers were instructed to render every assistance to Ravenshaw in his investigation.

The preliminary committal proceedings were held in the court of Monro, the Officiating Magistrate, Patna. Ahmadullah was charged on the 16th January, 1865, with the following offences;

1. 'That he, on or about the years 1861, 1862 and 1863, attempted to wage war against the Queen... an offence punishable under Section 121 I.P.C.
2. That he, at the same time, abetted the waging of war against the Queen... an offence under Sections 109 and 121.
3. That he, at the same time, abetted the attempt to wage war against the Queen (I.P.C. 109 and 121), the attempt having been committed as a result of the abetment.
4. That he, on or about the same year, abetted the collection of men with the intention of waging war against the Queen.
5. That he by acts and illegal omissions concealed the existence of a design to wage war against the Queen.'

The Session Trial was held in the court of Ainslie, the District Judge, Patna. He was assisted by a Board of Assessors. Many prosecution witnesses had

been brought from Ambala, chief among them being Elahi Bux and Abdul Kureem.

The defence counsel argued that Section 121 related to attempts to wage from within the country. He also argued that no one could be convicted of treason except on the evidence of two persons (Sec. 28, Act II of 1855)<sup>51</sup>, and that in this case Ahmadullah was being convicted solely on the evidence of Elahi Bux. He characterised Elahi Bux's evidence as not 'fit to hang a dog upon', he was a man sentenced to transportation for life and confiscation of property, a man 'with nothing left to fear and all to hope.'<sup>52</sup> He also argued that all the prosecution witnesses who now identified Ahmadullah had not done so earlier at Ambala or Howrah. All these arguments were, however, rejected by the Judge. He observed in his judgement that it was quite clear that there was a regularly organised system of forwarding men and money to the Frontier for the purpose of carrying on war against the British Government'<sup>53</sup>, that among the persons engaged in this 'treasonable' work were some of the very close relatives of the prisoner (Ahmadullah), that the prisoner was appointed 'General Manager of the temporalities of the Kafilah,' that 'he received monies, attended meetings where treason was preached' and that he was a 'member of the Committee which organised the treason.'<sup>54</sup>

The Judge held the prisoner guilty on the second fourth and fifth counts. He acquitted him of the first count and considered the second to be merged in the third. The Assessors also held him guilty of the fifth count. The prisoner was sentenced, on 27th February, 1865, to death and his properties were directed to be confiscated.

The sentence was referred to the High Court for confirmation. The High Court<sup>55</sup> having taken into consideration the full proceedings of the Session's court resolved, on the 13th April, 1865, that the evidence before

them was 'sufficient to support the conviction of the prisoner under section 121 of the Indian Penal Code upon the second count, but as we do not find from the evidence that the prisoner took a more active part in this conspiracy than others who have been convicted and sentenced we decline to confirm the sentence of death passed by the Session Judge but direct that the prisoner Ahmadullah be transported for life and forfeit all his properties to the Government.'<sup>56</sup>

Ahmadullah was, accordingly, transported to the Andaman Islands. He was sent there via Calcutta and reached the place in June, 1865, ahead of the other convicts of the previously held Ambala Trial.

The Ambala and the Patna Trials were closely inter-linked. The same set of prosecution witnesses and pieces of evidence were utilised to a great extent in both the cases. As regards the men convicted, except Jafar and Shafi, most of the principal accused in both the cases belonged to a particular place and were closely inter-related. In fact, with a little more of co-ordination and planning between the officers at Ambala and Patna Ahmadullah might have been arrested earlier. The Magistrate of Patna was not slow to express his distress over this lack of co-ordination.

Commenting on the three most conspicuous features of the Ambala Trial Hunter<sup>58</sup> enumerates these as the admirable sagacity with which so widely spread a treason had been organised; the secrecy with which its complicated operations were conducted; and the absolute fidelity to one another which its members maintained. Indeed the working of the scheme had been planned with great ingenuity, the genuine and bonafide work was so cunningly mixed with the anti-government activity that it was very difficult for the authorities to determine the two. Elahi Bux, for instance, apart from the money he transmitted to the Frontier also sent money for genuine

purchases of shoes and other articles. The fidelity of the great majority of the workers to the Movement was also remarkable.

The methods employed by the prosecution in both these trials also require a word of comment. It is true of course that the charges levelled against the prisoners in both the cases were substantially correct. It is also true that in all the defence arguments the existence of a widespread network for supply of men and money was nowhere denied. Yahya Ali, one of the main accused persons, refused to put up any defence altogether.

However, all the above facts taken together did not mean that their guilts could be legally proved in a court of law on the basis of documentary and oral evidence. As stated above, the prosecuting authorities were themselves doubtful whether the 'treasonable intent' of Ahmadullah could be satisfactorily proved. On the eve of the trial of Ahmadullah the Magistrate of Patna had observed that the "depositions of the witnesses at Ambala" would be the principal proof in the case, and that the other proofs, procured locally, would only supplement the former. As we have seen above, this "depositions of the witnesses at Ambala" boiled down to the evidence of one man—Elahi Bux who, as Ravenshaw himself admitted, was "himself a life convict on a similar charge",<sup>5)</sup> and who throughout the Trial was kept in virtual imprisonment by the Magistrate and was never allowed to see anyone.

Some of the brutal excesses committed by the Police during the investigation of the case, and also later in the jail, are described at length both by Jafar and Abdul Rahim in their works.<sup>6)</sup> Widespread and indiscriminate arrests of a large number of people were made with a view to terrorising them into giving evidence against the prisoners. Some of the members of the families of Jafar

and Shafi were beaten in order to elicit, in the former case, the whereabouts of Jafar after he had fled from Ambala. On arriving at Delhi, in pursuit of Jafar, Parsons created a reign of terror in the city. "All the gates of the city and the inns were closed, thousands of persons were searched and about a hundred were arrested."<sup>61</sup> Even during the hearing of the case many persons were won over by intimidations including threats of arrest and even hanging and also by monetary inducements to give evidence against the prisoners.<sup>62</sup>

The official records, themselves, corroborate the fact of money being paid to witnesses. On the conclusion of the trial Elahi Bux was not only pardoned and set free but his residential house in Mohalla Nagla, Patna City, which had been confiscated earlier, was restored to him.<sup>63</sup> In addition Rs. 500/- out of the sale proceeds of his other confiscated properties was also given to him to set up some business again. The other witnesses brought from the Punjab, numbering ten, were also awarded a sum of Rs. 470/- (Rs. 50 to nine and Rs. 20 to one).<sup>64</sup> This was given, ostensibly, as a compensation for the 'loss of time and absence from their various employments.' The Magistrate was at pains to emphasise in his report, recommending the above-mentioned rewards, that their detention was 'voluntary'. We, however, know from another letter of the same Magistrate<sup>65</sup> that during their stay in Patna the witnesses were kept in the Magistrate's own compound and were not allowed to go out or meet anyone. It is, therefore, likely that their food was also provided out of the Magistrate's establishment. Where, then, was the justification for the compensatory allowances? We also know that similar awards had been given in the Ambala case.<sup>66</sup>

\* In the jail also various brutalities were inflicted upon the prisoners. Jafar refers to the sadistic pleasure with which the jail authorities made preparations (purchasing a new silk cord and a wooden plank) for hanging the con-

victed persons.<sup>67</sup> At the same time the prisoners were tempted with offers of release and better treatment in the jail for eliciting information from them.<sup>68</sup> Shafi, who had turned approver, was given the choicest food in the presence of other prisoners who were semi-starved following a severe bout of illness. Jafar also narrates the incident of a young boy, aged 14 years, who was tutored by the prosecution to give evidence along a certain line. On coming to the dock the boy forgot his lesson and for that he was beaten to death by the police. It was given out, later, that he had died of natural illness.<sup>69</sup>

The apparent gesture of mercy by the Judicial Commissioner, in commuting the death sentences, was also motivated according to Jafar, by a desire for revenge. He wrote that when the authorities learnt that the prisoners welcomed the sentence of death, thinking that they would become martyrs, by dying for the mission, they denied them this pleasure and commuted the sentences.<sup>70</sup> Hunter, incidentally, corroborates this contention of Jafar when he applauds the "wise revenge" the authorities took in denying, "even to the most treasonable among them (Ambala prisoners) the glory of martyrdom."<sup>71</sup> As regards the Patna Trial, Abdul Rahim refers to the transfer of the Session Judge of Patna on the commencement of Ahma-dullah's trial. The transferred Judge was known for his sense of justice and stern independence of opinion.<sup>72</sup>

Even after allowance has been made for the fact that these statements came from men who were themselves convicted it is fairly obvious that the prosecution used methods which were extraordinary, to say the least.

It may be pointed out that Jafar in recording the events connected with his arrest, trial and conviction freely narrates incidents about his own weaknesses and faults.<sup>73</sup> He states that during the period when Shafi was being given nice food, while the rest were semi-starving,



he once stole some '*pulao*' from the former's food. Similarly he once kept Rs. 10/- to himself from out of the money sent to Shafi (He returned the amount to Shafi after he earned some money in the Andaman). These incidents depict human weaknesses which are understandable. They also enhance the authenticity of Jafar's account.

The official records also throw some light on the methods and motives of the prosecution. Thus the Magistrate of Patna himself reported<sup>74</sup> to the Commissioner that Elahi Bux was brought from Ambala secretly and was taken down at Khagual station from where he was brought "disguised as a woman" in an *Ekka* and kept in a bungalow in the Magistrate's compound under the strictest vigilance. No one knew of his presence in Patna until he was produced in the witness box. The other prisoners brought from the Punjab were similarly kept confined in the Magistrate's compound. During his period of detention at Patna, Elahi Bux was kept in charge of three men of the Punjab Police Force who, too, were specially called down from the Punjab. Later on, after the conviction of Ahmadullah, these three Police officers were given a gratuitous reward totalling Rs. 400/- for their having been held up at Patna.<sup>75</sup> When we remember the fact that it was upon Elahi Bux's evidence alone that Ahmadullah was convicted, the manner in which the authorities kept him confined throughout the trial and later awarded him handsomely becomes highly suspicious. About Ishree Prasad, a local minor official, who showed so much zeal in the investigation of the case, the Magistrate wrote that he "could not speak too highly of him." He was also given a cash reward besides promotion in service.

### III. *Life of the Convicts in the Andaman Islands*<sup>76</sup>

The penal settlement colony of the Andaman Islands, popularly known as *Kala Pani*, comprised a group of islands of various sizes, separated from one another by shallow seas and wide rivers. Most of the islands were

jungle-infested and interspersed with mountain ranges, the highest peak of Mt. Herriott being above 11,000 ft. high. As a result, the area of cultivable land was not much. The 'natives' of the islands lived in jungles where they had developed small patches of cultivable land. Grains for feeding the convicts and the officers of the penal settlement was brought from Calcutta, which was five days' journey by steamer, and distributed at a uniform rate. Means of communications were almost non-existent and supplies of essential articles scarce. The climate was so 'poisonous' that anyone having a wound usually died soon after as a result of its getting gangrenous.<sup>77</sup>

In one respect the transportation to this penal settlement was better than confinement in other prisons. Except certain classes of particularly dangerous prisoners the rest were not confined to cells. On reaching the islands the prisoner's chains were cut and they were allowed to live normally after the performance of such manual labours as had been imposed on them in accordance with the current rules and regulations of the settlement. Those who were educated were employed in some clerical and technical jobs. For this they received remunerations. They could also have personal servants if their means permitted. After completing 12 years of imprisonment a convict could set up some business with the capital he might have saved. He could also, own a house, marry some local woman or co-convict or have his family brought over.

One inhuman practice, formerly in vogue in the island, was the branding of the words 'transported for life' on the prisoner's forehead.<sup>78</sup> This practice was stopped just a little before the Wahabi prisoners arrived so that they were saved from this torture. However, each one of the prisoners was assigned a number and was referred to by it. When the question of the release of the Wahabi prisoners was taken up (1882) a detailed statement<sup>79</sup> was submitted by the Superintendent of the Island on the conduct of the prisoners. It mentioned the following prisoners with their

Nos.; Abdul Rahim (No. 11561), Muhammad Jafar (11450) Abdul Ghaffar (No. 11451).

Another revolting feature of the life in the islands was the socio-religious discrimination, a rudimentary form of the modern apartheid, enforced by the authorities. European convicts or even Christians of India were given preferential treatment. They were not only allowed first rate bungalows but were also given servants free of charge. Jafar narrates the pathetic story of the Raja of Jagarnath Puri who was sent to the island in 1879. Being of black complexion he was put to work with the shoemsmiths and given the coarsest meals while an Anglo-Indian of "low descent", who had arrived simultaneously, was given the most preferential treatment. Unable to bear these indignities and the corporal punishments the unfortunate Raja died soon after.<sup>80</sup>

As remarked earlier, Ahmadullah was the first among the Wahabi prisoners to reach Port Blair. On his arrival there he was met by Akbar Zaman, the kind-hearted Head *Munshi* of the Chief Commissioner of the island. Zaman was himself a convict, sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for participating in the Movement of 1857.<sup>81</sup> Later he was employed as a *Munshi*. He obtained permission for Ahmadullah's staying with him and working as his *Naib* (Assistant). He lived with him for the next five years which was a period of comparative ease for him. When Yahya Ali and Abdul Ghaffar arrived in January, 1866, Ahmadullah, who had received intimation of their arrival (probably through Akbar Zaman, the Head *Munshi*), was ready to receive them. Yahya Ali and Abdul Ghaffar were also taken in by Akbar Zaman as his Assistants. Thus at long last after that fateful 8th February, 1864, when Yahya Ali was suddenly arrested and whisked away to Ambala, the two brothers met together and lived for some time under the same roof. Abdul Rahim who arrived in December, 1867, was also employed as a *Ghat Munshi*. During this period

all the Wahabi prisoners lived in the Ross Island where most of the officials lived.

Yahya Ali who was gradually getting old and infirm as a result of the protracted severities suffered by him fell ill in February, 1868, and was admitted to the Island's hospital. Abdul Rahim who was then employed as a *Mohurrir* in the Marine Department and lived in a distant island used to come daily to attend on him. This was necessary as Ahmadullah, his elder brother, was himself too old and weak to go daily to the hospital which was situated on a high ground. Finally, after an illness of two weeks, Yahya Ali died on the 20th February, 1868, and was buried in the cemetery at Ross Island. Some 2,500 Muslims living in the different islands as well as many Hindus attended the funeral procession.<sup>82</sup>

In February, 1872, occurred an event in a secluded island of the Andaman whose reverberations were heard all over the country. This was the murder of Lord Mayo by a Frontier Pathan, named Sher Ali. Although the Wahabis were in no way connected with this affair, an attempt was made to involve them in it and thus to subject them to the revenge and ire of the island's officers.<sup>83</sup>

The officers of the Bengal Provincial Service were quite familiar with the whole history of the Wahabi Movement and the nature and the extent of the threat caused by that Movement to the Government. The Wahabi prisoners were, therefore, the particular objects of their revenge and brutalities.<sup>84</sup> As soon as the news of Lord Mayo's murder reached Calcutta the old anti-Wahabi class of officers started trying to get the Wahabis involved in that affair.<sup>85</sup> Ishree Prasad of Patna, who had by now achieved renown in the official circles as an expert on the Wahabis, was rushed to the Andaman Islands along with the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, to find out

some clues about the presumed Wahabi complicity. However, General Stuart, an officer of the Madras Provincial Service, who held charge of the island and who, being unfamiliar with the background of the Wahabis, had an unbiased attitude towards the prisoners, refused to encourage this witch-hunting."

But in spite of the impartial attitude of General Stuart the Wahabis came to be looked upon with suspicion. So long most of them had been employed in different offices in the main island where most of the officers lived. Now, they were transferred to the outlying jungle-infested islets. Ahmadullah was sent to the Viper island where the worst type of hardened criminals were kept. He was appointed as a *Mohurrir* in the Medical Department on a monthly salary of Rs. 10 and was given a rent-free house. Abdul Rahim was also transferred to another outlying island where he was appointed as a *Mohurrir* in the hospital.

Ahmadullah was now getting old and infirm. There was no one to look after him—Yahya Ali being already dead, Abdul Rahim, therefore, used to come daily to attend on him. After completing 12 years of imprisonment Abdul Rahim was permitted, under the bye-laws of the penal colony, to start some business out of his savings and he started a shop in Aberdeen, situated near the principal station of the island. His son, Abdul Fattah, was permitted to visit him on the island. He stayed with his father for over an year, but had to leave finally on account of the inclement climate of the place. A similar request by Ahmadullah to let his son, Muhammad Yaqin, then living in Calcutta, visit him was refused.

With the starting of his business Abdul Rahim was in a better financial position. Ahmadullah, on the other hand, was suffering from rapid deterioration in health. The former, therefore, requested the authorities to permit

him to keep his ageing uncle with him. But this as well as many subsequent attempts in this connection failed because of persistent official refusals. Abdul Rahim used to go to Ahmadullah's place frequently to look after him but he was not permitted to stay there. Therefore, during the next two weeks, he went daily to see Ahmadullah. For this he had to leave his house in the early morning, walk over 2 miles to reach the *ghat*, cross a shallow sea, over 2 miles wide, to reach the *ghat* of the Viper Island and then once again walk to Ahmadullah's residence.<sup>87</sup> His son, Abdul Fattah, looked after the shop in his absence. One day (22 November, 1881) when Abdul Rahim was on his daily trek to the Viper Island, he learnt that his old uncle had died, alone and unattended, the previous night. Abdul Rahim, although shocked and distressed by this sudden blow, hurried back to his home to make necessary arrangements for his burial. One last request was made on behalf of the deceased for permission to bury him by the side of his younger brother, Yahya Ali. The local authorities did not have the grace to allow even this harmless request. Even in the wilderness of the Andamans it was not destined for the two brothers to be buried at one place. Ahmadullah was buried at Dundas Point on the Viper Island.

#### IV. *Confiscation of the Properties of the Wahabis*

Although some accounts, however brief, of the corporal punishments suffered by the Wahabis of Patna are extant no information is available about the material losses suffered by them following their arrests and convictions. Even the Wahabi sources themselves are silent on this point.<sup>88</sup>

The Sadiqpur family, which was the torch-bearer of the Movement after Syed Ahmad's death, was not only noted for its academic eminence but enjoyed a very high position in the city by virtue of the high social status and rank enjoyed by its members. The family was divided

in three main branches, the members of which were closely inter-related with one another. These three branches were headed by (i) Muhammad Husain, (ii) Elahi Bux, and (iii) Fatah Ali. Muhammad Husain had six daughters, four of whom were married with the sons of Elahi Bux and thus the two units merged in one. Fatah Ali and Elahi Bux were also inter-related by marriage.

Elahi Bux had served in a very high position under the Nawabs of Murshidabad and had been granted,<sup>80</sup> for his services, the *Mauzas* of Bhuyee (area 400 *Bighas*, income Rs. 15,000) and Bijay Gopalpur (area 700 *Bighas*, income Rs. 4,000) in Patna district. These were inherited by his sons Ahmadullah, Yahya Ali and other, and were part of the properties confiscated by the Government. Ahmadullah himself was one of the most important social figures of Patna in his own time and held various honorary and salaried posts.

Fatah Ali was the son-in-law of Rafiuddin Husain who was the son of Ruhuddin Husain Khan. The last named person was appointed as *Naib Nazim* of Bihar by Shah Alam II.<sup>81</sup> He continued to hold that post even under the *Diwani* regime. He was given the title of *Muin-ul-Mulk*, *Aminuddaula*, *Nasir Jung*, by the East India Company for having saved the life of Ellis, the English chief at Patna, during the disturbances of 1763. His son, Rafiuddin, succeeded to his father's post as well as his extensive *Jagirs*. A portion of this was inherited by Fatah Ali, his son-in-law. Even this portion must have been highly valuable for we find that the share of one of Fatah Ali's son (Enayat Ali), who sold it at the time of his final migration from India (1850), was, alone, worth above Rs. 20,000.<sup>82</sup>

• The above mentioned facts would help us appreciate the extent and value of the landed properties of the Sadiqpur family.

After the pronouncement of the judgement on the Ambala Trial a list of the convicts from Patna was forwarded to the Government of Bengal with a request that their movable properties be confiscated. An inventory<sup>2</sup> was accordingly prepared.

The Lieutenant-Governor also directed the Commissioner under Section 7 of Regulation XIX of 1810 to report how the immovable properties were to be dealt with. At the same time he recommended to the Government of India that the "land and house properties escheated, within the City, be made over to the Municipal Commissioner for the use of the city." In reply to this recommendation the Government of India directed that the premises at Sadiqpur, where the conspiracy was carried on, be made over to the Municipality "with a view to their being razed to the ground and an open market built on this site and to devote a portion of the sale proceeds of the escheated property of the traitors to the Municipality."<sup>3</sup>

A legal hitch developed<sup>4</sup> subsequently in giving effect to this order of the Government of India. It was found that the Sadiqpur premises belonged, jointly, to three units of the family. The largest share belonged to the three brothers Ahmadullah, Yahya Ali and Fayyaz Ali all of whom were 'proclaimed' and their shares escheated. The smaller block belonged to Wilayat Ali and his brothers, Enayat Ali and Farhat Husain. The first named had four sons out of whom two, Abdullah and Abdul Qadir, were on the Frontier and were 'proclaimed.' The other two Muhammad Husain and Hidayatullah, were living at Patna and Barh, respectively. Their shares could not be attached. Enayat Ali had only one son, Abdul Majid, who was 'proclaimed' and his share was, therefore, escheated. Farhat Husain had two sons of whom Abdul Rahim had been convicted at Ambala; the other, Abdul Rauf, lived in Patna and his share could not be taken.





In view of this complication the Lieutenant-Governor recommended that the remaining portions, not escheated, should be taken over "for public purpose under Act VI of 1857." Compensation for those portions was to be paid out of the proceeds of the escheated property and the whole was to be made over to the Municipality.

Apart from the ancestral house the Patna leaders had extensive landed property both in the district of Patna and outside. Yahya Ali and Ahmadullah, together, had landed properties with an estimated gross annual income of Rs. 7,971-7-10. Abdul Rahim's property had a gross annual income of Rs. 1,395-7-1.<sup>95</sup> All this valuable property was taken away with one stroke of pen and sold at throw away prices.<sup>96</sup> The women and the children were thus literally thrown out on the streets (as a result of the seizure of the house) and rendered penniless.

The inmates of the house were forced to leave the premises with only the clothes they had on their bodies. They were prohibited from taking away even a small needle with them.<sup>97</sup> They were also made to hand over every single item which had been found in the house and entered in the inventory, prepared earlier. If any item was found missing they were made to pay for it at rates ten times higher than the estimated prices.<sup>98</sup>

The eldest son of Ahmadullah, Abdul Hamid, who had to bear the brunt of the eviction proceeding as the eldest member of the family succinctly sums up the mute protest of those innocent women and minors in a beautiful verse of his Persian *Masnawi* describing the humiliation and spoliation of the family:

•       *"Ahmadullah bud mujrim-i-Shah*  
           *Tiflak-i-begunah ra che gunah."*

[Ahmadullah was the culprit of the Government (but) what was the crime of the innocent children?]

By a cruel turn of fortune this blow fell on the unfortunate inmates of the family on the day of Eid, the well-known festival of jubilations. Ahmadullah rightly wailed out.<sup>99</sup>

*"Chun Shab-i-Eid ra Sehar Kardand*

*Hama ra az Makan Badar Kardand*

*and*

*Maya-i-Aish Saze-e-Matam Shud.*

*Eid-i-ma ghurra-i-Muharram Shud."*

[As the day of Eid dawned, all were turned out of the House; the Symphony of Gaeity was transformed into a Dirge, (Verily) our Eid turned into the first day of Muharram.]<sup>100</sup>

The Lieutenant Governor recommended that it was desirable that the sale proceeds of the properties should not be absorbed in the general revenue, and it would be "more becoming to spend the money for local purposes."

The Government of India accepted all the recommendations of the Lieutenant Governor. In regard to the manner of utilising the sale proceeds of the landed properties, it was observed that while the Government of India did not agree with the proposition that such proceeds should not be incorporated in general revenues, in this particular case it had no objection to the Lieutenant Governor's suggestion. The orders were accordingly given effect to.<sup>101</sup>

The subsequent history<sup>102</sup> of the large sums of money realised by the Government from the sale of landed properties of the Wahabis, the Wahabi Fund as it was called, is also very interesting.

The total amount realised out of the sale was Rs. 1,21,948-4-1, out of which Ahmadullah's share was worth Rs. 42,119-10-3. The latter amount was held in

reserve by the Government because of a suit filed by his wife claiming that those properties had been given to her in dowry. Out of the remaining Rs. 79,828-9-10, a grant of Rs. 33,407-7-6 was given to the Patna Municipality in 1869 for the construction of a municipal market on the site where the ancestral houses of the Wahabis stood. It was in response to a proposal<sup>108</sup> by the Municipal Commissioner to construct "single storied massonry shop rooms"<sup>104</sup> on the three sides of a square area. The fourth side, on the North, facing the road was to be left open for passage. The shops were estimated to yield an annual rent of Rs. 3,000. Another Rs. 3,000 were spent on the construction of a road from the Patna City railway station to Patna Ghat Station. A further sum of Rs. 30,000 was spent for certain works of expansion and renovation in the Patna College buildings.<sup>105</sup> These included the construction of a Lecture Room (in the eastern wing of the old Block) a Laboratory, Staircase, Museum and Asphalt-ing of the road. The total estimated cost for these work was Rs. 1,27,017 out of which the above mentioned amount was paid from the Wahabi Fund and the rest from the College Fund and other heads.

While carrying out the orders of the Government for pulling down the Wahabi premises at Sadiqpur the local authorities did not spare even the family graveyard which was levelled and the graves were uprooted. Even Abdul Rahim who throughout his work studiously avoids any harsh comment on the Government's action in regard to the Wahabis was unable to control his suppressed anger and protest over this act of vandalism. Writing about his reaction on finding the graves of his ancestors uprooted and rendered traceless he observes, "It is difficult to describe in words the sense of shock which I felt on finding this treatment meted out to our dead ones. Even now it makes my hairs stand on edge to recall it (this treatment) I can't understand why our ancestor's graves were dug up and why that graveyard was confiscated, and why our "just government" acted in this manner."<sup>106</sup>

The broken fabrics of the family's fortune were pieced together again, slowly and gradually. While some members of the family, notably Abdullah, continued to live on the Frontier to form a small nucleus which is still present there some of the others, showing a remarkable recuperating capacity and will power, set forth on a new track of life and carved out new careers for themselves. They returned from the Frontier, changed their names and took to the learning of English and achieved equal eminence in this new field of their activity. Ashraf Ali,<sup>107</sup> son of Ahmadullah, became a Professor of Mathematics in the Aligarh College and also held high appointments in various States, such as Bahawalpur, Junagadh, etc. Amjad Ali,<sup>108</sup> son of Yahya Ali, also achieved high academic eminence and was also given the title of *Shamsul Ulema*. He did his M.A. from the Hindu University, Benares, and was appointed Professor of Philosophy in Aligarh College. Abdul Hamid,<sup>109</sup> another (eldest) son of Ahmadullah, achieved unrivalled acclaim and fame in another field of learning—medicine. He was one of the most famous physicians of his time and earned a princely fortune. Muhammad Hasan,<sup>110</sup> youngest son of Wilayat Ali, who was the founder of one of the earliest Urdu newspapers in Patna, *The Institute Gazette*, and the local M. A. A. School, set up a prosperous business in Calcutta. As a result of the joint efforts of these eminent members, the fortunes of the family revived again. The family residence of Hakim Abdul Khabir, the senior-most member of the family living at present is situated just opposite the Municipal building which stands over the site of the old house.<sup>111</sup> The great-grandsons of Wilayat Ali live in the house next door. Abdul Hamid after the confiscation of the house had moved up a mile to the East and established a dispensary in Khaja Kalan, where he also purchased a new house. The house was renovated and expanded by his grandson, Azimuddin Ahmad,<sup>112</sup> whose sons are still living there.

### V. *Release of the Wahabi Convicts*

The release of the Wahabi convicts, although belonging chronologically to a much later period, has been dealt with here to make the account of the State Trials of 1863-65 complete. The release took place in 1883, and was facilitated by the fact that the Government had succeeded to a great extent in suppressing the Wahabi Movement during the period 1863-1880. It could, therefore, afford to take a more lenient view of the question of their release.

By 1883 the Wahabi Movement had been thoroughly suppressed. It no more represented a political threat to the Government of India.

It was in this setting of things that the wife of Abdul Rahim submitted a petition to the Governor General, early in 1882, stating that the Session Judge, Ambala, had observed in regard to Abdul Rahim that his sentence might be reconsidered after 15 years, provided his conduct in jail had been "satisfactory". She prayed that it was now 18 years past instead of 15. The Government of India referred the matter to the Government of the Punjab for their opinion. The latter recommended<sup>113</sup> that in view of the long lapse of time since their conviction and the changed circumstances, not only Abdul Rahim but the other Wahabi convicts<sup>114</sup> who had since been convicted should also be released. The Government of India informing the Government of Bengal about this recommendation asked for their opinion about it. The latter did not favour the proposed release. They referred to the views of Halliday, the Commissioner of Patna, who had been consulted and who had written that three sons of Ahmadullah were already living in the city and if Abdul Rahim and Ghaffar returned they "might attempt to cause mischief if opportunity arose."<sup>115</sup>

The Superintendent of the Andaman Penal Settlement was asked to report on the conduct of prisoners. This was one point on which the Government could not

find fault with the prisoners. The conduct of all the Wahabi prisoners on the island had been scrupulously correct and blameless. Ahmadullah, Yahya Ali and the others after performing their usual office work spent their times in prayers and preachings.<sup>116</sup>

From the Report submitted by the Superintendent of Andaman colony it appeared that the conduct of the prisoners during the 18 years of imprisonment had been extraordinarily good. Abdul Rahim had not committed even a single 'local offence' during all that period, Ghaffar had been fined only once (1-2-1870) for absence and Jafar had been 'named and warned' once for contravention of some bye-law. Jafar's conduct had, however, been generally good and he was a "remarkably able and intelligent man."

On completion of all these enquiries the Government of India resolved<sup>117</sup> in December, 1882, that all the Wahabi prisoners who were still undergoing imprisonment "shall now be released and permitted to return to their homes conditionally on police surveillance and subject to such restriction as to residence as the local Government may see fit to prescribe."

Of the eleven prisoners convicted at Ambala, only Abdul Rahim, Jafar and Abdul Ghaffar were still under imprisonment, and were duly released. Amiruddin of Malda and Tabarak Ali of Patna, who had been convicted subsequently and sentenced to transportation to Andaman, were also released at the time. Masud Gul of Bogra, about whose arrest and conviction no particulars are available, was also released.

All the six prisoners were released on the 5th February, 1883.<sup>118</sup> Among them Abdul Rahim, Ghaffar and Tabarak Ali belonged to Patna and desired to be allowed to live there. The Magistrate of Patna was opposed to the proposal of letting them return to the city. He pointed out

that although the "Wahabi issue was dormant the fanaticism of the sect still exists, the released Wahabis would undoubtedly be objects of sympathy...and reference to their supposed wrongs, their conviction and transportation, would inflame feelings."<sup>119</sup> The Magistrate, however, added that if the Government favoured the idea of their release it would be better if the ex-convicts were asked to live in Bhagalpur rather than Patna. Police surveillance in a crowded city like Patna would be more difficult to exercise. The contiguous cities of Dinapur and Phulwari were full of Wahabis and it would be difficult to prevent communications.

The Government, however, did not agree with this view, and the Wahabis of Patna were allowed to return to their homes on condition of reporting their movements regularly to the Police.

Abdul Rahim and four<sup>120</sup> out of the six released Wahabis sailed from Port Blair early in March, 1883, and reached Patna in the following month. They were asked to execute bonds agreeing to report personally to the local Superintendent of Police on the 1st of every month and not to move out without prior permission. This order was strictly enforced for the next seven years after which it was partly relaxed.<sup>121</sup>

Of the other two, Masud, at first, applied for permission to stay for six months more in order to wind up his affairs and was allowed to do so. Subsequently he got this order modified and sailed by the S. S. 'Maharani' on the 28th April,<sup>122</sup> 1883.

Jafar's release was held up for some time owing to the fact that his convict-wife (who was a life prisoner) had not been released. She was, however, released in May, 1883, in response to a prayer from Jafar<sup>123</sup> and the latter started preparations for his returning home. At the time of his departure Jafar wanted to convert his house



into a mosque and put it under *Waqf* (trust) for the local Muslims. But the Deputy Commissioner, Birch, refused permission for this lest the mosque became a centre for further Wahabi intrigues.<sup>19</sup> Finally Jafar sailed in November, reaching his home towards the end of the year.

### REFERENCES

1. *Lambardar* was the fiscal representative of a township dealing, on its behalf, with Government's higher revenue officials.
2. I. M., pp. 84-86 ; Mehr, IV. pp. 376-78.
3. I. M., p. 85.
4. Muhammad Jafar, *Tarikh-i-Ajib*, Ambala, A. H. 1302, p. 3.
5. Mehr, IV. pp. 378-79.
6. The Wahabi volunteers were arrested by Ghazzan Khan in May. The subsequent deputation of his son to the Frontier, his stay there and return must have taken time so that the arrest of Jafar took place on 11th December and further investigations followed.
7. I. M., p. 84.
8. T. S., p. 67. According to Mehr (Vol. IV, p. 386) he was a resident of Shahabad.
9. Muhammad Jafar, op. cit. pp. 3-6.
10. *ibid.*
11. In the coded language of the letters the *Asharjis* (Gold Mohars) were referred to as 194 large stones and 96 small (Victoria) stones. The same number of gold *Mohars* were found sewn in the coat of Husaini. These were wrapped in paper to avoid clinking against one another.
12. For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 209, dated March, 1864.
13. Elahi Bux in his own statement said that he and his father had a shop in Arrah which was looted in the 'Mutiny' and afterwards they came over to Patna and set up a shop there.
14. Government of Bengal, Judl. Progs. No. 122, dated Oct., 1865.
15. See texts of these letters in For. Dept. Pol. Cons. No. 209, dated March, 1864.
16. Letter from Magt. to Comm., Patna, dated 16th Feb., 1864.
17. T. S., p. 66.
18. See text of this letter in the letter from Magt. Patna, to Commr. Patna, dated 13th Feb., 1864.
19. *ibid.*
20. T. S., p. 66.

21. *ibid*, pp. 67 ff ; T. A., pp. 7 ff.
22. T. A. ; T. S.
23. T. A., pp. 9, 10, 37 ff ; T. S., p. 70
24. T. A., p. 39 ; T. S., p. 59.
25. On his arrival at Ambala, he was not allowed by the Judge to see his clients in jail. When he appealed to the Judicial Commissioner he, too, refused the plea. It was only after he appealed to the Lieut. Governor that he was allowed to see his clients. Two weeks were thus wasted in obtaining this elementary right of a defence lawyer ; T. S., p. 69.
26. I. M., pp. 90-91, 93 and 96-97.
27. This observation is Hunter's own, p. 91.
28. T. A., p. 44.
29. T. A., pp. 44-45.
30. *ibid.*, p. 45.
31. I. M., p. 95.
32. T. A., pp. 52-53.
33. *ibid.*, p. 55.
34. *ibid.*, p. 56.
35. *ibid.*
36. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Prog. Nos. 51-56, dated May, 1865.
37. *ibid.*
38. Ahmadullah's house was searched early in June, 1857, and he himself was arrested by Tayler a few days later.
39. T. A., p. 51.
40. T. S., pp. 47-48 ; *Shahar Ashob*, pp. 5-7.
41. T. S., p. 48 ; T. A., p. 10.
42. For his services during this and the subsequent Trials Ishree Prasad was promoted to the post of Dy. Collector. He was also given a cash reward of Rs. 2,500/- ; T. A., p. 79 ; Government of Bengal Judl. Dept., No. 126, dated Oct., 1865.
43. Vide *infra*.
44. Mehr, IV, pp. 404 ff.
45. Mehr himself admits (p. 405) that he could not get the full proceedings of Ahmadullah's Trial. These were published under the Selections from Govt. of Bengal Records Series as Selections No. XLII. A perusal of these records would have left him in no doubt about the valuable contributions of Ahmadullah to the Movement.
46. Vide Selections.
47. Selections, p. 74.
48. *ibid*, pp. 79, 95.
49. Letter from J. Monro, Cfig. Magt., Patna, to Commr., Patna, dated 31st Oct., 1864.
50. Letter from G. F. Cockburn Commr., Patna, to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, dated 4th Nov., 1864.
51. Selections, p. 80.

52. *ibid.*, p. 83.
53. *ibid.*, p. 73.
54. *ibid.*, p. 79.
55. The Bench consisted of Hon'ble C. B. Trevor and Hon'ble G. Lock, Judges.
56. *Selections*, p. 103.
57. Govt. of Bengal, Jud. Dept. Prog. Nos. 51-56, dated May, 1865.
58. *I. M.*, p. 98.
59. *Selections*, p. 165.
60. *T. A.*, pp. 9 ff., 37-38.
61. *T. A.*, p. 7.
62. *T. A.*, p. 37.
63. *Selections*, pp. 165-66.
64. *ibid.*, p. 3.
65. *ibid.*, p. 110.
66. *T. A.*, pp. 37-38.
67. *ibid.*, p. 47. By a curious coincidence it so happened that the sentences of death of Jafar and the rest were commuted; and the rope and the wooden plank were used, instead, for the hanging of a European, sentenced to death, in the same jail.
68. *T. A.*, pp. 49-50.
69. *ibid.*, p. 38.
70. *ibid.*
71. *I. M.*, p. 98.
72. *T. S.*, p. 48.
73. *T. A.*, p. 50.
74. *Selections*, pp. 110-111.
75. *ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
76. The following account is based, largely, on the works which two of the prisoners themselves survived to write on their return. This has been supplemented by such references as are available in the Government records.
77. *T. A.*, p. 65.
78. *ibid.*, p. 60.
79. Letter from Suptd. of Port Blair and Nicobar Islands (Convict's Board Dept.) to Secy. Govt. of Bengal, No. 611, dated 15th Sept. 1882, Ahmadullah and Yahya Ali were dead by this time and so their names are not mentioned.
80. *T. A.*, pp. 67-68.
81. He completed his sentence and returned to his native place, Agra, where he died in 1904.
82. *T. S.*, p. 78.
83. *T. A.*, p. 79.
84. *ibid.*, p. 73.
85. Tayler, W. *Thirty Eight Years in India*, London, 1882, Vol. II, pp. 555, 561.

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86. T. A., p. 79.
87. T. S., p. 55.
88. Abdul Rahim, for instance, while describing in detail the arrest and trials of the members of the family does not say much about the confiscation of the properties.
89. T. S., p. 42.
90. *ibid.*, p. 203.
91. *ibid.*, p. 137.
92. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Progs. Nos. 122-127, dated Oct., 1865.
93. *ibid.*, No. 126.
94. *ibid.*, No. 94, dated April, 1866.
95. *ibid.*, No. 123, dated Oct., 1865.
96. Abdul Rahim's share was sold away for only Rs. 1364.
97. Abdul Hamid, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
98. *ibid.*, p. 16.
99. *ibid.*, p. 11.
100. Muharram is the month of mourning for all Muslims in connection with the commemoration of the historic martyrdom of Imam Husain at Karbala.
101. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Progs. No. 39, dated April, 1866.
102. These details are based on a group of confidential papers preserved, separately, in the Commissioner's Office, Patna. These are not formal official letters, but office notes and drafts, bearing pencilled initials. However, a careful scrutiny of their contents helps establish the fact as to which draft is from whom and to whom.
103. Letter from Commissioner, Patna to the Secy. Govt. of Bengal, dated 27th Feb., 1869.
104. Mahmud Hasan, son of Wilayat Ali, lived for some time, after the confiscation of his ancestral house, in one of these rooms, which he took on rent.  
...
105. General Dept. (Education Branch), Progs., No. 9-12, of March, 1880.
106. T. S., p. 179.
107. *ibid.*, pp. 84-87.
108. *ibid.*, pp. 101-103.
109. *ibid.*, pp. 82-84.
110. *ibid.*, pp. 152-160.
111. Mahalla Sadiqpur, P. S. Alamganj, Patna City.         .
112. He was a Professor and Head of the Dept. of Arabic, Patna College, Patna. He died in 1949.
113. Letter from Secy., Govt. of Punjab, to Secy., Govt. of India, Home Dept., No. 182, dated 17th June, 1882.
114. Of the Ambala convicts only Jafar, Ghaffar and Abdul Rahim were still serving their sentences. Some more Wahabis had been convicted in 1870-71, *vide infra*.
115. Letter from Secy., Govt. of Bengal, to Secy., Govt. of India, Home Dept., No. 754D Confidential, dated 7th Oct., 1882.

116. T. S., pp. 50, 51, 77, etc.
117. Govt. of India, Home Dept., Prog. No. 1871, dated For William 31st Dec., 1882.
118. Letter from Suptd., of Port Blair and Andaman to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, No. 1184, dated 6th Feb., 1883.
119. Letter from Magt., Patna, to Commr., Patna, No. 903C., dated 10th Feb., 1883.
120. They were Abdul Rahim, Tabarak Ali, Jafar and Ghaffar.
121. T. S., p. 178. Even when Abdul Rahim was permitted to go to Ha, the following year, he was ordered to report to S. P. Bombay on arrival there and also to the British Consul at Jedda, T. S., p. 181.
122. Letter from Suptd. of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, No. 96, dated 28th April, 1883.
123. T. A., p. 90.
124. *ibid.*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CONCLUDING PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT

#### I. *Wahabi Activities in India, 1868-82*

The Ahmadullah Trial forms a landmark in the history of the Wahabi Movement. His arrest and conviction definitely weakened the Wahabi organisation in India. However, it did not, as is generally supposed, mark the end; rather it was the beginning of the end. The continuation of the work of the Wahabis is evidenced by the holding of several other trials subsequent to the one of 1865. The investigations which led to these trials were very comprehensive and covered practically the whole country. The Police authorities, and particularly Reily, the D.I.G., Police, Special Department, who was the chief investigating officer, showed remarkable promptness and efficiency in prosecuting the complex enquiries and in following the several inter-linking clues spread over places as distant as Peshawar and Dacca, Rawalpindi and Poona. The contemporary diaries of Reily and his Assistants, Nobokishtto Ghose and Ishree Prasad, as also their reports on their investigations, which are the primary source of information for this period, are, at a cursory glance, very confused; one day it is dated Abbottabad, the following week Malda or Rajmahal. In the narrative given below an attempt has been made to give a chronological account of the various enquiries in the several Wahabi centres in the sequence in which they occurred. The subject has been studied under the following two broad headings, (I) the working of the Movement inside British India and the Trials, (II) its concluding phase in the Frontier State of the Wahabis.

The sudden arrest of Ahmadullah and his subsequent deportation stunned the Wahabis and paralysed the organisation for sometime, but the work was resumed by Haji Mubarak Ali<sup>1</sup> of Hajipur, district Muzaffarpur.

He was one of the early associates of Wilayat Ali. Having established his contact with him, Mubarak Ali came over to Patna City and settled in a house adjacent to that of Wilayat Ali. At the time of his arrest Ahmadullah had entrusted the work of the organisation to him. For some time Mubarak Ali was engaged in arranging for the defence of Ahmadullah and other matters connected with the Trial. After the conclusion of the Trial he turned his attention to the organisation.

Some of the Wahabi centres in Bihar and Bengal were still working. An account of the Malda centre and its leader, Rafique Mandal, has already been given. The activities of Rafique's son, Aniruddin, had come under the notice of the authorities in 1865, but no action was taken against him at that time, probably, because the authorities were then more concerned with Ahmadullah.

Towards the end of 1868 the attention of the Government was drawn to the continued working of the centres, particularly those of Rajmahal<sup>2</sup> and Malda. A comprehensive report on the origin and the course of the Wahabi activities in those two places was given by Reily, the D.I.G. of Police, in two consecutive letters.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Ibrahim Mandal of Rajmahal*

The initial report on the Wahabi activities in the area was given by the Commissioners of Rajshahi and Bhagalpur. Wilmot, the Assistant Commissioner at Rajmahal, suggested to Reily the deputation of Nobokishto Ghose, an Extra Assistant of the Police Department, to village Kaliachak in Malda district which appeared to be the chief centre. Ghose proceeded there and, having stayed there for a week in disguise as a silk merchant, collected a lot of information and evidence which tended to show that contributions were openly made in several villages adjacent to Kaliachak for a Jihad or 'religious war against the English with the intention of restoring the Muhammadan rule and driving

*the Kafir, the English, out of the country*'. He also found out that one, Nazir Sirdar, was one of the chief agents for collections in the area. After sometime, Ghosh found that his real identity had been exposed. Seeing that no useful purpose could now be served by his stay, he went to the Magistrate<sup>5</sup> of Malda and 'applied for warrants of arrest against eight persons,<sup>6</sup> suspected to be engaged in collecting of funds for the Wahabis.

They were accordingly arrested and Reily rushed to Kaliachak and got the accused persons examined before the Magistrate and their statements recorded. Some additional witnesses were also examined.

The statements showed that Nazir Sirdar of village Qazigram was the local leader, that he had taken an active and prominent part for several years past and that he had also induced several persons of the district to go to the Frontier. The contributions were levied in the various forms as described above. Those who did not contribute were socially boycotted.

The evidence also implicated one, Ibrahim Mandal, as the 'head centre' to whom all the collected money was forwarded by Nazir Sirdar. Ibrahim Mandal lived in village Islampur, close to the Deputy Magistrate's Court at Pakur, and not far from the railway line. The Magistrate of Malda was requested to issue a warrant against Ibrahim. As a precautionary measure Reily did not proceed direct to Rajmahal lest Ibrahim got scent and escaped. He sent Ghose by road to Islampur. The latter arrived there in disguise as a Muslim private tutor in search of some teaching job. By chance he met a nephew of Ibrahim who took him straight to the house of his uncle, the intended victim, who, he said, was the most likely person in the village to aid the 'teacher.' Ibrahim was immediately arrested with the help of two constables who were closely following Ghose. Wilmot, the Assistant Commissioner, and his assistant, Beames also arrived on



the spot. They had come from Rajmahal on elephants to help Ghose capture Ibrahim.

Reilly reported in the light of the evidence taken that 'similar collections and preachings have been general among the Muhammadan population in the other districts and unless active measures are adopted to check this fanatical Movement it was likely to spread'. He also remarked that 'this Movement does not include any influential *zamindar* or landholders'. The chief inducement held out to the landless ryots was the prospect of holding their lands rent-free in the event of success. Naturally, the *zamindars* were not likely to support such a movement.

It is a noteworthy fact that time and again the greatest response to the Movement, in Bihar and Bengal, had come from the landless peasantry. They were in the forefront at the time of the Baraset Rising also. Although the economic under-currents of the Movement, especially in Bengal, have been largely overshadowed by its political aspect (and the religious label tagged to it by such writers as Hunter and O'Kinealy) they are significant and deserve attention.'

It is of interest to note that Grey, an indigo planter, was prominently associated with O'Kinealy in these enquiries and was of 'great assistance' to him<sup>8</sup>. In the Baraset Rising too<sup>9</sup> the interests of the indigo planters was primarily involved and they led the initial counter-attack. They were still apprehensive of the Wahabis working amongst the peasants of the area and its likely repercussions on their interests.

Besides the evidence regarding collection of money, it was subsequently learnt that seditious pamphlets were also being distributed. The Magistrate of Malda reported<sup>10</sup> that out of the many pamphlets seized by the police he had studied two. One was the *Tafsir-i-Moradiya* printed

at Misriganj in A.H. 1280. This was a commentary on the *Am Sipara*, one of the most frequently used verses of the Quran. The other was a compilation of *Fatwas* (canonical decrees) on different religious subjects by Haji Budruddin of Dacca, 'one of the most active supporters of the Patna conspirators in Eastern Bengal'. It was written in Bengali verse, 'admirably adapted to attract an ignorant Bengali'.

Finally, Reily reported his intention to charge the arrested persons under Sections 108 and 122 of the Indian Penal Code for abetment of an attempt to wage war against the Queen. He admitted that although there was no proof of the collected money having passed beyond the custody of Ibrahim Mandal the intention of the arrested persons to that effect was established by evidence already recorded.

The Provincial Government referred the matter to the Legal Remembrancer for his advice in regard to the charges to be framed against the arrested persons. He replied that although it was clear that 'seditious preaching of disaffection had been continuously followed in various districts', the difficulty arose from the want of proof of the final disposal of the money collected.<sup>11</sup> Drawing attention to the Ahmadullah case, which was similar to the present one, he observed that in the former case money had been traced from Patna to the Frontier—a fact which was lacking in the present case. He expressed doubt whether charges under Sections 120 and 122 I.P.C. could be framed unless more evidence was forthcoming about the disposal of the money. He also advised that printed copies of the Proceedings<sup>12</sup> of Ahmadullah's case should be distributed among all the officers working on the case as it was a useful guide on the subject of Wahabjis, their organisation and arrest and prosecution of some of their leaders.

The Government were faced with a legal difficulty. The above-mentioned persons had been arrested on some

*prima facie* evidence. However, detailed investigations had to be carried on at several places for gathering actual proofs of their guilt. All these persons could not be detained indefinitely unless the Government of India was moved to invoke Reg. III of 1818. This Regulation, the precursor of the Defence of India Act, armed the Central Government with certain extraordinary powers for the preventive detention of persons and holding them in prison without trial for such period as it considered necessary<sup>12a</sup>. The Lieutenant Governor, while reporting the matter to the Government of India, recommended that only the leaders of the Movement be detained and the rest released. The activities of the released persons would, however, be watched. The Lieutenant Governor also observed that although there was no proof of the money collected going to the Frontier the village Islam-pur itself contained families of men who were either at the Frontier or had died there. Their family members were looked after by Ibrahim out of the collected funds. The purpose, in both cases, was virtually the same—helping the Wahabis. In accordance with this opinion the Lieutenant Governor ordered that only Ibrahim Mandal and Nazir Sirdar be detained. The rest were released.<sup>13</sup>

Ibrahim Mandal was put in the Rajmahal jail. He was a man of fairly advanced age, but he was confined in a very small and damp room which the Jail Doctor himself describes thus, 'It is damp and badly ventilated. There is no *Charpoy* (bed) to sleep on, there is no night privy attached to it, one end of the room is used for that purpose: This latter arrangement could not but render it at times quite disagreeable and hurtful as a bedroom'.<sup>14</sup> It has to be remembered that this was the treatment meted out to a man who had been arrested under Reg. III the preamble of which expressly laid down that 'due attention' had to be paid to the health of the prisoner concerned and that 'suitable provision' should be made according to the 'rank in life' of the prisoner. Moreover, the Government of Bengal had already

instructed the officer-in-charge of each Jail in which such prisoners were lodged that they were State Prisoners and should not be treated like criminals.<sup>15</sup> Ibrahim was later transferred from the Rajmahal to the Monghyr jail.

*Mubarak Ali of Patna.*

Among the witnesses who had given statements at Malda was Enayatullah, son of Faizullah of village Shaikhpora, district Monghyr. His detailed statement<sup>16</sup> shows that Patna was the key-centre and served as the connecting link between Bengal and the N.W. Frontier.

Enayatullah deposed that his father-in-law was a *Murid* of Haji Mubarak Ali of Patna who became the *Sirdar* after the arrest of Ahmadullah. He had sent for Enayatullah in the month of *Ziqad*, 1281, (1864) and spoken to him about the task of transmitting money, and had pointed out to him the 'blessings' of participating in the work. On further enquiries he was directed to go to Rajmahal and to meet Ibrahim who would give him detailed instructions. He also gave the witness some books to be delivered to Ibrahim. The witness stayed with Ibrahim for a fortnight, and during that period he saw Nazir Sirdar and many others come to Ibrahim and deposit various amounts of money. On the occasion of *Baqrid*, particularly, large sums of money were collected—sometimes as much as Rs. 50,000 or 60,000 was collected. The cash was converted into Gold Mohurs often with the help of Amir Khan, a well-known hide merchant of Patna who had his firm in Calcutta. The amounts were then sent to Mubarak Ali who sent them to the Frontier through Secret Agents, among whom Maula Bux, a resident of Maner, district Patna, 'a short brown man who spoke Pushtu fluently', was the most efficient and trustworthy. Other Agents also worked. Benares was an important staging centre on the road to the Frontier.

Enayatullah's evidence clearly involved certain persons in Patna. Reilly tried to get Ishree Prasad, who

had proved so efficient and useful in the previous investigations against the Wahabis, deputed to Patna, but he was preparing for his departmental examination at Monghyr and did not want to be sent away from there. So Ghose was deputed to Patna. He, however, was such an unpopular figure and the populace of Patna was so much against him for certain previous acts<sup>17</sup> of his that the Commissioner asked him to leave Patna at once, and also admonished Reily for having deputed Ghose without consulting him. Reily's remonstrance in favour of Ghose was not heeded to. Instead Elahi Bux, the 3rd Extra Assistant, then at Purnea, was called to Patna and given the work of investigation. Subsequently, Ishree Prasad was deputed to Patna to assist Reily.<sup>18</sup>

With the arrival of Ishree Prasad, enquiries were set in full motion. It was found that the 'conspiratorial organisation' was spread over practically the whole of Northern India. The Governments of the Punjab and the N. W. Province (U.P.) were addressed to and requested to give all facilities to Reily and his Assistants in their investigations. The Governments of Madras and Bombay were also asked to report on the state of Wahabi activities in their areas.<sup>19</sup> The main enquiries were, however, carried out in Patna.

#### *Wahabi Activities in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies*

At the time when Reily was investigating the Wahabi activities in Bengal, he had learnt that money was often sent from India to Mecca through Bombay, the main port of embarkation for the *Hajis*. It was then redirected from there to the Frontier. He asked the Inspector General of Police to move the Government of Bengal to contact the Governments of Madras and Bombay Presidencies and get enquiries made there about the Wahabi activities in those areas and also to ascertain whether any connection existed between them and the Wahabis of Bihar and Bengal. The following brief account of the

Movement in south-west India is based on the two reports of the respective Governments. Although these reports form a part of the Records relating to the general Wahabi enquiries of 1869-70 they constitute a separate group. Reily was primarily interested to know whether a possible connection existed between the Wahabis on the Frontier and those in the south-west. To that question the answer in most cases was that no ostensible evidence to that effect existed. Hence Reily did not personally visit those areas as he did the northern and western areas. He took no further interest and the matter rested there.

However, the Wahabis had also been fairly active in south-western India. The two main tasks which the Wahabis inside British India were desired to perform, viz., collection of funds and dissemination of anti-English literature were being zealously performed. The work of infiltration in the army units, begun in 1839, was still being continued. Newspapers and pamphlets were also being circulated and widely contributed to.

The Inspector-General of Police, Madras, reported<sup>20</sup> that the Wahabi Movement in Madras had been watched for some time past. In 1866 a man named Muhammad Ismail, formerly a sepoy in the 37th N.I. and 'a zealous Wahabi missionary', had been confined in Madras under Reg. II of 1819 (the equivalent of Reg. III of 1818 in Bengal). *He had been earlier turned out of the Lines in 1852 for preaching sedition. In 1857 he was suspected of similar activities in Guntur. After that he went over to Burma where he continued to preach Wahabi doctrines to 'Native' Troops. He was deported on that account from Thyetmeo (Burma) to Calcutta and was again suspected of seditious activities in Vizianagram in 1863. He was finally imprisoned in 1866 for similar activities in the Northern Circars.*

Another noted Wahabi preacher who had done much work in Madras, particularly in the units of the Regiments

of the 'Native' Infantry stationed in Madras, was a man from Bengal, named Ahmadullah. His activities, especially those in the army units, had alarmed some of the top military authorities. The Adjutant-General, Madras, on instruction from the Commander-in-Chief, Madras Army, circulated an order to all officers commanding stations and Regiments in Madras to be watchful of a 'bigoted Wahabi, a native of Bengal (Ahmadullah) whose chief object is to stir up the sepoys to sedition...is engaged in travelling from place to place *where Madras troops are* and carrying on seditious communications'.

Ahmadullah was arrested at Raipur in October 1869. The Superintendent of Police, reporting<sup>21</sup> his arrest to the Inspector General of Police, Lower Provinces, wrote that the man had come to Raipur in the previous September and had been visited by some known Wahabis. The police authorities, already in possession of the circular of the Adjutant-General, referred to above, arrested Ahmadullah. After his arrest he admitted that he had been to Vizianagram in 1860 and met some men of the 11th N.I. The Superintendent of Police noted, significantly, that the Regiment was now stationed at Raipur.<sup>22</sup> He added that Ahmadullah was the *Pir* of Ismail Khan, a noted Wahabi who was arrested a few years ago at Berhampur for preaching sedition among the sepoys of the 28th Madras N.I. and was imprisoned for life in the Coimbatore jail. Ahmadullah had also visited Ellore (Godavari district) in 1862, and Wahabism had been on the increase ever since then.<sup>23</sup>

Ahmadullah stated that he traded in clothes, hides and bones. He purchased clothes from Bombay and sold them at various places. That explained his frequent travels. It is, however, quite clear that he was employing the standard Wahabi technique of mixing missionary work with genuine business which could be satisfactorily proved if ever the necessity arose.

The Superintendent of Police, Raipur, asked for additional particulars about Ahmadullah which might be helpful in preparing the Prosecution case against him. Reily replied<sup>24</sup> that he had received some information about Ahmadullah from Ali Kureem of Patna. Ali Kureem was one of the famous leaders of Bihar during the Movement of 1857-59. He had escaped from Bihar in June, 1857, and had fought in several engagements in Gorakhpur and Tanda. After the suppression of the Movement, he had gone over to Bhopal. The warrant of arrest pending against him in Bihar was withdrawn on the intercession of the *Begum* of Bhopal, and he came back and settled in Patna. On return to Patna he had offered his services to Reily to furnish information regarding the Wahabis.<sup>25</sup> Although Reily recommended that his offer be accepted by Government it was rejected. Reily wrote that no further information about Ahmadullah could be expected from Ali Kureem now, but added that there was enough evidence to detain Abdullah under Reg. III of 1818.

Giving his general impression about the Wahabi activities in Madras the Inspector General reported that it consisted primarily of the propagation of their religious tenets and that although no overt acts had been committed by them '*it was likely that their innate feelings under a forced Christian rule would occasionally find expression.*'"<sup>26</sup>

In Madras town the Wahabis brought out a newspaper, named *Belchi* (Mattock), whose subscribers were spread all over the Presidency.<sup>27</sup> 'That also showed that they must have been in touch with the progress of the Movement in other places or else they could not have subscribed to an obscure newspaper in a remote city'.

In reply to a similar query from the Government of Bengal, the Government of Bombay reported<sup>28</sup> that the



different Commissioners of Police in the Presidency had given the following report about their respective areas.

The Commissioner of Police, Bombay City, reported that there were about 100 Wahabis in the Presidency town. There was no evidence to indicate that they were connected with their compatriots in Bengal.

The Superintendent of Police, Kaira, reported that about six months ago some Wahabis had set up a mosque in Neriad, but the Bohras had turned them out. In Surat and Broach also the Wahabi influence was not much because 'the tenets of their creed are so opposed to those of the local population'. However, while the railway bridge near Nerbada was being repaired some of the workmen there (non-Bombayites) were said to have been Wahabis. They had left after the completion of the work.

The Commissioner of Police, Southern Division, reported that in Kalladghee district there were some families of Wahabis living at Talikote. They were mostly weavers.

The Superintendent of Police, Panchmahal, reported that some 7 years ago (1862) a considerable number of Wahabis had come to Gondhra from Tonk for the propagation of their 'creed'.

In Poona one, Barkatullah of Farrashkhana, Delhi, had come some time ago and preached *Jehad*. 'No Moulvie had ever been heard to preach sedition at Poona in so strong a language as this man did'.<sup>29</sup> He was also warned out of the Lines of a native Regiment. He had left on the pretence of going to Mecca, but went, instead, to Bombay where he stayed with a wealthy Wahabi, Enayetullah. The few Wahabis that lived in the city and the *Sadar Bazar* did not tell much about their avocation.

Reports had also been received from Bijapur that a Wahabi Moulvie from the 'direction of Madras' had arrived there. Many of the local Wahabis were recruited from among the weavers caste.

Simultaneously with the above-mentioned enquiries investigations at Patna, the main centre, also continued.

Reily learnt from an informant that Khurshid Ali, brother of late Elahi Bux (approver in Ahmadullah case), who now managed his shop on behalf of Elahi Bux's infant son, was the person through whom Mubarak Ali transmitted money to Delhi and the Frontier.<sup>30</sup> Elahi Bux's shoe shop, connected with Delhi (from where he purchased shoes and sent money for it), was a convenient medium. Reily commented on the audacity of Mubarak Ali for selecting that very shop which had earlier been searched by the police, thinking that the authorities would not suspect it. Khurshid's shop was searched and the papers seized. They showed entries of credits of various amounts and transmissions of two amounts of Rs. 9,728 and Rs. 11,914 in the years A.H. 1284 and 1285 (1866 A.D.). No explanation was forthcoming for these transmission nor did the extent of the business justify such profits. Both Khurshid Ali and Mubarak Ali were arrested in December, 1868.

### *Enquiries in Delhi*

During the course of his enquiries at Patna Ishree Prasad learnt that Mubarak Ali had written some letters to one, Umeed Ali, a resident of Backerganj (Bengal) who lived in Delhi. Ishree Prasad immediately rushed to Delhi and having traced Umeed Ali got his house searched and papers seized. The search yielded fruitful results and furnished important clues about the Wahabis at various places in the Punjab, N.W. Frontier and Bihar.

Umeed Ali admitted<sup>31</sup> that he had received letters and money from Mubarak Ali, and also forwarded letters to him from the Frontier. He also named some of the Wahabi Agents who carried money to the Frontier, including Tabarak Ali, (also known as Qadir Bux) son of Mubarak Ali of Patna. Tabarak Ali was arrested at Patna.

Umeed Ali gave another significant piece of information.<sup>32</sup> He said that one day while he was sitting in the shop of Muhammad Amin, a co-worker, he saw several men coming to see the latter. On being asked about them Amin informed Umeed Ali that they had come from Prince Firoze Shah<sup>33</sup> who lived in the Frontier. They had brought letters from Firoze Shah addressed to some *Rajas* of the Deccan. The Prince had reminded them about promises of help made during the 'Mutiny' of 1857 and asked them to join him at the river Oxus. The letters bore the seal of Firoze Shah which was 'a span in diameter' with the names of all the kings of Timur's family in a circle and Firoze's own name in the centre. The letters were to be delivered to Prince Izad Bux, brother of Firoze, who lived with his mother in a hut in Delhi and had a cloth shop.<sup>34</sup> Izad Bux, on being questioned, stated that he was unwilling to receive the letters from his brother's messengers. He had, however, agreed to meet them while on his way to Nazir Husain who lived near Phatak Habsh Khan in Delhi.

Nazir Husain, the famous authority on exegesis and Islamic jurisprudence, belonged originally to Surajgarha in Monghyr. Subsequently he migrated to Delhi and settled there. His early contact with Syed Ahmad might have had some influence and rendered him a sympathiser of the Movement although no definite proof to that effect was found to exist. Umeed Ali's statement, however, clearly involved Nazir Husain who, he said, was present when the messengers of Firoze Shah had come. The search of Nazir Husain's house revealed

## THE CONCLUDING PHASE

many letters of a suspicious nature some of which had been written to Nazir Husain by the well-known Wahabis, such as Jafar of Thanesar and Tabarak Ali of Patna. There was also a letter written by Nazir Husain to Abdullah the Wahabi chief on the Frontier.<sup>35</sup> Reily recommended his arrest under Reg. III. However, he was a very well-known and influential *Alim*, and the Government, in the absence of satisfactory evidence against him, was reluctant to take this 'extreme' step. But they reported the matter to the Government of the Punjab (under whose jurisdiction Delhi area lay) with a request to take such steps as they considered desirable. The Government of the Punjab ordered his detention in jail for six months as a preventive measure but released him soon after.

In December, 1869, Reily submitted some additional information<sup>36</sup> against Nazir Husain. He pointed out that according to the statement of Abdulla given in Rawalpindi in October, 1869, Nazir Husain was the chief Wahabi Agent in Delhi. Another witness from Rajmahal also stated that he had been induced by Nazir Husain to go to the Frontier. Reily recommended that Nazir Husain's case should be re-examined and he be confronted with the witnesses. The papers were once again referred<sup>37</sup> to the Government of the Punjab, but no action seems to have taken against him, and he once again figured prominently in the subsequent enquiries.

Umeed Ali, along with a few others, was put under preventive detention. Another accused, Muhammad Ameen or Aminuddin, who was a resident of Backerganj and had fled to Dacca on the arrest of Umeed Ali was also arrested.

Carr Stephen, the Magistrate of Delhi, who recorded the statements of Umeed Ali and others reported<sup>38</sup> that the clues given by Umeed Ali regarding the Wahabi Agents in other Provinces should be followed through

and, in the meantime, Umeed Ali be detained and the rest released.

### *Amiruddin of Malda*

While at Malda, in connection with Ibrahim Mandal's arrest, Reilly had learnt that one of the most influential men in Malda, next to Ibrahim Mandal, was Amiruddin of village Sandipa Narainpur. His activities had continued for a pretty long time and were not unknown to the authorities. Ghose was directed<sup>39</sup> in March, 1869, to go to Malda where he arrested Amiruddin on the 30th March, 1869. Significantly enough, on this occasion, also there was some information to the effect that Amiruddin was connected<sup>40</sup> with the Indigo disputes in the districts in which Grey's (referred to above) factories were situated. Amiruddin was found to be a most 'active' agent who had been working for years. Pending Government's sanction for his prosecution he was put under arrest. The Magistrate, Malda, reported<sup>41</sup> that he was not being formally charged just then and that the investigations against him would be treated as a preliminary measure to put the Government in possession of sworn evidence for his eventual prosecution.

Reporting on all these investigations at the different places the Lieutenant Governor, Bengal, in a letter to the Government of India observed that the 'Wahabi Movement is extensively ramified, that there are agents stationed at Saharanpur, Jhelum, Roorkee, Dinapur and several other places'.<sup>42</sup> The Lieutenant Governor was doubtful whether proceedings could be successfully launched against the suspected persons in the criminal courts. He was of the opinion that there was no provision in the Penal Code, as it existed, for meeting the sort of activities in which the Wahabis indulged. Hunter describes the predicament of the authorities in the following words. 'The evil is so widely diffused, that it was difficult to know where to begin. Each District-Centre spreads disaffection through thousands of families; but the only possible

witnesses against him are his own converts who would prefer death to the betrayal of their master'.<sup>42a</sup>

### *Enquiries at Patna and Dinapur*

During the next phase of enquiries the spotlight shifted to Patna and Dinapur. The enquiries revealed that Dinapur was also a very active centre. What was more important, some of the persons involved were found to have been active in 1857 also. It was found that letters had been written from Rawalpindi to Pir Muhammad of Orderly Bazar, Dinapur. Another resident of Dinapur, Haji Din Muhammad, had been posted at Rawalpindi along with a few others by Abdullah, the leader of the Wahabis on the Frontier.<sup>43</sup> Rawalpindi was an important station of the Wahabis agents, and Din Muhammad's duty was to receive the money sent from Patna and to pass it on the Frontier. Din Muhammad's letter, which was intercepted, made allusions, in symbolical language, to matters connected with illegal transmission of money. Reilly drew the attention of the Government to the fact that 'in so important a place as Dinapur, where native Regiments are quartered it was advisable that the whole band of Wahabi conspirators should be secured'.<sup>44</sup> He applied for the arrest of Pir Muhammad under Reg. III. The Provincial Government was more cautious and wanted a report from the Commissioner about Pir Muhammad's antecedents. The Magistrate, Patna, while supporting the demand of Reilly, reported<sup>45</sup> that Pir Muhammad was a man without any independent income of his own and lived out of the collection charges paid to him for doing the Wahabi's work. He also quoted the observation of Emerson, the Cantonment Magistrate, the Pir Muhammad was suspected in 1857 and though then looked upon by Tayler as a minor fry he was mentioned as a 'likely individual to join in an intrigue with those opposed to the Government.' He was also the father-in-law of Tabarak Ali, son of Mubarak Ali, both of whom were known Wahabis and had been arrested. Accordingly, a warrant of arrest under

Reg. III was issued against him and he was arrested and lodged in Digha Jail on the 14th June, 1869. Later he was transferred, on a request from the inspector General, Police, to Bhagalpur Jail.<sup>46</sup> Haji Din Muhammad, too, was arrested shortly after this, when he came to Dinapur from the N. W. Frontier to pull up the local people for their slackness in the work of collection. While being taken to Delhi under an escort of two constables Din Muhammad jumped from the running train and escaped.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Amir Khan and Hashmatdad Khan*

The information given in regard to Pir Muhammad involved many people including the well-known hide marchants of Patna, Amir Khan and Hashmatdad Khan. The authorities suspected them since much earlier; they were reported to have stood security at the time when the Ali Brothers were asked to execute bonds for 'good behaviour'. Now, some definite proofs, including a letter of Amir Khan, were discovered.

Many persons had given statements on the eve of Pir Muhammad's arrest. Among these the statement of Sheikh Jhagroo<sup>48</sup> is of particular importance as it reveals some of the *modus operandi* of the Wahabis in transmitting money as also the respective 'areas' of collections assigned to some of the collectors. The witness deposed, *inter alia*, that money was also remitted through *women agents* (they were less likely to create suspicion). It was also 'a common practice to send men and money with detachments and regiments when they marched. The men (Wahabi agents) acted as *camp-followers on such occasions*.'

The statement gives additional proof of the fact that Indian Regiments occupied an important place in the Wahabi scheme of work. Not only were the men in the units subjected to a careful indoctrination, the movements of the Regiments themselves were skilfully utilised.

to help perform one of the most difficult and dangerous tasks. The Wahabis believed in bold tactics : who could look for 'traitors' and 'enemy agents' following right in the wake of the Army units?

Jhagroo further stated that Haji Din Muhammad and Karim Bux made collections in Hajipur and Aligunj Siwan, Abdul Rehman (of Dinapur) in Maynpura, Sultanpur, Shugga (all neighbouring villages) and Khuda Bux in old Dinapur and Leslieganj. Budhye Khan and Umdu Khan also collected subscriptions in the adjacent areas.

Following these investigations about a dozen persons,<sup>49</sup> all belonging to Dinapur, and the hide merchants, Amir Khan and Hashmatdad Khan, were arrested under Reg. III. Amiruddin of Malda, who had been arrested earlier was also charged under Reg. III. Hashmatdad Khan and his *Mukhtar*, Elahi Bux, were at Patna at that time but were not immediately arrested lest it put Amir Khan, the senior partner at Calcutta, on guard. He was arrested at Calcutta on the 9th July, 1869, and brought to the Gaya jail, but soon after he was transferred to the Alipur Jail, Calcutta. Hashmatdad and his *Mukhtar* were arrested subsequently.

Ishree Prasad also learnt during the course of his enquiries that secret letters from the Wahabis in the N. W. Frontier were addressed to Karamat Ali of Dinapur, who had been posted at Barabanki in Oudh to receive the letters there and then redirect them to the parties concerned in Bihar. Some villages lying within the jurisdictions of Bihta, Behea and Buxar (all in Shahabad district) Post Offices were suspected to contain persons to whom such letters were sent.<sup>50</sup> The Inspector-General, Police, wanted authority for censoring these letters, but the Provincial Government disagreed with the necessity of this 'extreme course'. When the matter was referred to the Government of India it supported the request of



the Chief of the Police<sup>51</sup> and the Post Master General was directed to order the Post Masters concerned to let the letters passing through their offices be censored. Similarly, the Commissioner of Oudh was authorised to censor letters addressed to Karāmat Ali at Barabanki. These orders were valid for a period of three months. During that period several letters were seized and examined.

Waizul Haque of Patna who had been arrested by Tayler in 1857 was also held in suspicion at this time.<sup>52</sup> After his release he had gone to Mecca and had returned home. As money was often transmitted to the N.W. Frontier through Mecca Waizul Haque was suspected. The information against Waizul Haque was lodged by his nephew, Azizul Haque. The Commissioner made a full enquiry into the allegations but was not quite certain about his complicity.<sup>53</sup>

The main phase of enquiries in Bihar and Bengal had been completed by now and most of the top leaders of the Movement had been arrested. However, investigations in the other places, particularly in the Punjab and the N. W. Frontier, had yet to be carried on. Reilly accordingly proceeded to the Punjab.

Cases were not instituted against the persons arrested in Bihar and Bengal because it was felt necessary to complete the investigations in the north-west before doing so. The whole organisation was inter-connected and the Government wanted to post itself with as much information as could be collected before proceeding with the prosecution. This explains the unusual delay between the actual arrests of the persons (December, 1868 to July, 1869) and the institution of cases against them (October, 1870 to March, 1871). Many of the prisoners were transferred during this period from one jail to another for the purpose of giving statements and for confronting

suspected persons at the different places where investigations were going on simultaneously.

Reily on his journey to the Punjab (September, 1869) had taken with him a man named Murtaza, a resident of Malda, who had once been to the Wahabi centre in the N.W. Frontier. Reily had taken him with the express object of pointing out to him such men as he had seen with the Wahabis in their centre or whom he knew to be associated with them. Murtaza more than fulfilled Reily's expectations.<sup>54</sup> He pointed out several men in Peshawar as Wahabi Agents. Among them were Mufti Husaini (also known as Muhammad Husain, Ghulam Husain, etc.), Ahmad Ali (of Dinapur), 'the well known cossid who had so often successfully run the cordon of our police from Patna to Peshawar'<sup>55</sup>, Ghulam Rabbani, the seller of scents and *Sharbat* (cold drinks) in the city of Peshawar, Syed Khan, *Khansaman* to General Haly, the local Commander, whose arrest 'created a sensation in the city', Fayaz Ali, a converted Hindu of Dinapur, and many others. The case of Mufti Husaini is quite interesting. He had been pretending for a long time to be acting as a spy of the Government and he had maintained this pretence so successfully that the authorities never suspected him.<sup>56</sup> On the contrary, when he was arrested and searched he was found to be in possession of some certificates of good character from several high-ranking civil and military officers. It was only after the sudden confrontation with Murtaza that he was finally exposed. Among the papers seized in his house was a letter from one, Imdad Ali, at one time a Deputy Magistrate of Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh, who had joined the 'rebels' in 1857, fled to the Frontier and was then with Prince Firoze Shah.

In the same month Reily proceeded with Murtaza far up in the Tribal area, 'thirty miles as the crow flies', from the border of the Wahabi centre. From there he deputed a spy to go to the centre itself and report on the state of affairs there. The information he sent from there is

highly valuable in reconstructing the history of the principality and will be described presently. In the meantime Reily got hold of another important witness, Abdullah of Hajipur, who gave a statement before the Assistant Commissioner, Rawalpindi, on the 12th October, 1869, referred to earlier.<sup>57</sup> The statement gives valuable information about the organisation of the Wahabis in North Bihar, particularly Tirhut district which, as Reily commented, had not so far been 'touched' by the police authorities and from where substantial amounts were transmitted. It also gave information about the Agents in the Punjab, etc.

Abdullah deposed, *inter alia*, that Ahmadullah of Muzaffarpur, a *Khalifa* of Wilayat Ali, was an influential Wahabi of Tirhut and contributed Rs 1,200/- annually. He had several *Murids*, and sub-agents in the district. Maula Bux and Hafiz Jafar Ali of *Mahalla* Syudpur, Muzaffarpur, Mustafa Ali of Darbhanga, Abid Husain of village Sheohore (?) district Darbhanga and Seikh Subhan Ali of village Mahna, (Darbhanga) were some of the local chiefs who sent money to the Patna centre regularly. The funds from Muzaffarpur and Sherghati (Gaya) were collected by Pir Muhammad. Among the agents who carried these amounts to the Frontier, Maula Bux and Ahmad Ali of Patna and Nizamuddin of Lucknow were the most trustworthy and experienced. Abdul Haq of Surajgarha (Monghyr), brother of Abdul Ghani, was another trustworthy agent.

. Among the patrons of the Movement, Amir Khan and Zorawar Khan of Patna were the most eminent. The former's contribution amounted to over Rs 1,200/- annually. He had also given Rs 7,000/- to Abdullah when he was migrating to the Frontier. An even more important patron of the Movement was the Nawab of Tonk. The money was received from the Nawab by Muhammad Ismail and Abdul Rahman, nephews of Syed Ahmad, and passed on to the Frontier.

Earlier, in May, 1869, the Government of the Punjab had forwarded to the Government of Bengal a letter<sup>58</sup> from the Commissioner, Rawalpindi, intimating the arrests of a person named Fakhrullah (Faquirullah?) suspected to be a Wahabi Agent. In the statement of Abdullah, referred to above, the following account is given of the agents in the Punjab.

After Fakhrullah was arrested at Rawalpindi Abdul Aziz, the other Agent, was directed to go in hiding and he escaped to Dinapur. Mufti Husain of Peshawar went over to take his place and lived in the *Lal Kothi* in Rawalpindi. Another Agent there was Alimuddin, the *Imam* of the *Pucki Musjid*. His duty was to pass on the money collected from *Lal Kothi* and the other places to the *Cossids* or Messengers from across the Frontier. Among these latter was Murad Ali who lived in a deserted cemetery in Hazara, posing as a hermit. In Jhelum<sup>59</sup> the Agent was Muhammad Niaman who, too, sent money through Murad Ali. He had also requisitioned two books, *Sirat-e-Mustaquim* and *Balugh-ul-Moram* (a collection of *Had'ses*) from Din Muhammad of Patna who had at once complied with the request.

The investigations which had been unceasingly carried out throughout the country in 1869 were continued in the following year. Early in March, 1870, the Deputy Commissioner of the Santhal Parganas, arrested Ghulam Shah Haji along with eight other persons suspected to be Wahabis. It was reported that Ghulam Shah Haji of Rajmahal had succeeded as the chief after the arrest of Ibrahim Mandal and was continuing his work.<sup>60</sup> The Commissioner, Bhagalpur, while conveying this information to the Government observed that there had been a recrudescence of the Wahabi activities in the area and it would be better if Reily paid another visit to Rajmahal. He also informed that he had directed Wood, the Deputy Commissioner, to detain only Ghulam Shah and release the rest,

in accordance with the Government's policy of detaining only the leaders and not getting lost in a maze of minor arrests and enquiries.

Reily visited Rajmahal and reported that 'since my last visit to this part of the country in October, 1868, I find that there is a marked change in these fanatics. *They are undoubtedly much bolder* and ready to take the initiative.' He noted with concern that the 'dreaded' punishment of social ex-communication was effectively used against those who did not participate either in subscribing or co-operating generally with the work of the Movement. The threat of social boycott, the *Hooka Pani Bund*, as he put it, was a 'terrible engine of intimidation' among ignorant rural folks and the Wahabis were making full use of it. About Ghulam Shah, in particular, Reily noted that he was formerly a resident of Calcutta who became a disciple of Moulvi Abdul Jabbar<sup>61</sup> and was deputed to Rajmahal area some seventeen years ago. He had been living there since then and had set up a tailor's shop, but in reality he was one of the most able assistants of Ibrahim Mandal and helped him both in 'collecting money and making proselytes'. Since the latter's arrest he was the local chief. Maula Bux, a nephew of Ibrahim (who had been arrested with Ghulam Shah and, later, released in accordance with the Commissioner's order) was another important Wahabi worker. He had been active not only in the Santhal Parganas but 'preached sedition' in the Malda district also. Reily recommended not only the detention of Ghulam Shah under Reg. III but also stressed the desirability of getting Maula Bux re-arrested immediately.

Reily also visited Malda and reported<sup>62</sup> that village Hanspokhar of that district was another 'active centre of sedition'. He recalled that Government's attention had been drawn to the activities of the Wahabis of this village as early as 1865.<sup>63</sup> Collections for *Jehad* were still going on in the village mosque. The local inhabitants

carried on extensive correspondence with the men of the Frontier centre where a large number of recruits from this village still lived. Amanut Mandal was the local *Sirdar*. His arrest, he thought, would put an end to the seditious activities and he recommended his arrest under Reg. III. He also wanted to 'make an example' of the village as a warning to the general inhabitants.

During the next few months many more suspected Wahabis were put under preventive detention both in Bihar and Bengal. In May, 1870, Reily got information from Lal Muhammad, a prosecution witness in the late Ambala Trial, that three men, namely Sharfullah and Nazir Muhammad of village Dhanaru, district Rangpur, and Nazir Muhammad of Bogra, who used to give military training to the Wahabi recruits on the Frontier and had participated in several campaigns against the English on the Frontier, had since returned to India and were residing in their respective villages.<sup>64</sup> Reily applied for the issue of warrants of arrest against them under Reg. III but he was directed to get the depositions of the above-mentioned persons recorded before a Magistrate and if the Magistrate thought that a *prima facie* case could be made out against them only then he should take necessary action.

Reily's attention was also drawn to Buxar and the adjacent areas. Earlier, while he had been working in the N. W. Frontier with Murtaza the latter had informed him that the Shahabad district was one of the most important recruiting centres of the Wahabis. Recruits from that area were known to have gone to the Frontier where 'they formed the pick of the Wahabi sepoys'.<sup>65</sup> Reily thought that investigations which had, till then, been exclusively carried out in Patna and Dinapur should be extended to the other parts of the Province, and directed Ishree Prasad in June, 1870, to visit Buxar.

The enquiries shifted to Buxar and a cluster of villages near it, extending into the Ghazipur district of

the Uttar Pradesh. Ishree Prasad after visiting the area reported<sup>66</sup> that Syed Ahmad during the course of his journey through Bihar had visited a village, Chowsa Bara, in that area. The village containing 500 houses of Pathans, was divided into two halves—eastern and western, each of which was sub-divided into four 'patties'. The residents of the western *patti*, who had taken *Bai'at* on Syed Ahmad, were the followers of the 'Sadiqpur Moulivies', and regularly sent 1/40th of their incomes, as subscriptions, to Patna. The information had been given to Ishree Prasad by a boy, Muhammad Ali Khan, who belonged to the eastern *patti* whose men were the followers of a 'rival Hanfi Moulvie', Muhammad Fasih of Ghazipur.

Another young informant, Muhammad Ishaq<sup>67</sup> of village Dehree (P. S. Masaurhi, district Patna) informed Ishree Prasad about two other Wahabi Agents, named Muhammad Umar of Dinapur and Musharraf Ali of the above-mentioned village. The informant said that both the Agents collected funds from different parts of Bihar. He also presented a book which, he claimed, belonged to Muhammad Umar and which showed details of the subscriptions collected over the last few years. Preliminary enquiries disclosed that there was not much evidence against Musharraf Ali and no action was taken against him. The house of Muhammad Umar was, however, searched and the letters<sup>38</sup> which had been written to him by different persons, including some employed in Units of the 32 Regt. stationed at Roorkee and Nainital, were found there. The writers sought Umar's assistance either for the dependants they had left behind in India or financial help for themselves for going to the Frontier. There were also some who had returned from the Frontier and were stranded on the way back and sought help. All the letters emphasised the fact that he was the leader after the arrest of Pir Muhammad and hence the requests for help to him. Muhammad Umar was arrested on the

22nd July, 1870, and put in *Hajat*, and the Government of India was requested for issue of warrant of arrest against him under Reg. III.<sup>69</sup> The Government of Bengal, however, considered the grounds insufficient for invoking Reg. III and called for further particulars about him before they moved the Government of India.

In the meantime Reily and Ishree Prasad were asked to trace out the writers of above-mentioned letters. Subsequently, the authorities learnt that Muhammad Umar was the nephew (sister's son) of Rahat Ali, one of the main organisers of the Patna Conspiracy of 1845. This new information hastened further governmental enquiries. It was found out that Umar was also related to many other influential persons who had taken active part in the Movement of 1857. The Magistrate observed<sup>70</sup> that since Umar had influential relations in practically all the courts in the Province, powerful influences would be at work to destroy evidence against him even if he was held in custody. He had been put in *Hajat* only for a week which period had expired long ago. He could not be detained further without invoking Reg. III. The Magistrate, therefore, thought it more advisable to release him on bail, keep an eye on his movements and to continue to collect evidence against him. From the absence of any further reference to Umar it appears likely that Reg. III was not after all invoked against him.

By the middle of 1870 most of the prominent Wahabi leaders all over India had been traced out and put under detention. However, in spite of the fact that vigorous investigations had been going on for over a year the Government still felt uncertain whether the evidence in their possession was sufficient to warrant the successful prosecution of the arrested Leaders in a court of law. Although most of the arrests had been made in 1869 and many of the prisoners had been in detention continuously since then, till the middle of 1870 neither the grounds of their arrest had been intimated to them nor had they



been charged with any definite crime. Most of the prisoners were men belonging to the lower middle class whose moderate means made it impossible for them to challenge this unwarranted harassment. But two of them, Amir Khan and Hashmatdad Khan, were men of high social status and material resources, and they did not take this high-handed 'oppression' lying down. They challenged the Government's action in a series of legal battles which have made their case the *cause celebre* of its times.

Both the brothers belonged to a distinguished Pathan family of Mewat whose origins went back to the times of Babar. They were residents of Alamganj,<sup>71</sup> Patna City, and owned a prosperous hide and skin business in Calcutta whose assets were worth over a million. Both were men of a ripe old age; Amir Khan, at the time of his arrest was 75 and the other was 67 years old, and both were used to a comfortable and luxurious standard of living. They had been kept in jail for over a year under conditions of acute discomfort. Their prolonged detention, besides affecting their health, was also ruining their business which they could no longer supervise. They had submitted several petitions<sup>72</sup> to the Government during this period requesting it to let them know the grounds for their detention or, alternatively, to put them to trial at an early date. All this had proved unavailing.

Finally, they took recourse, in August, 1870, to the last remedy open to them under the law. They moved the Calcutta High Court, for the issue of writs of *habeas corpus*. Three of the top-most English lawyers in India at that time, Anstey, Ingram,<sup>73</sup> and Evans<sup>74</sup> appeared on behalf of the petitioners. The Government was represented by the Advocate-General, Graham, and the Standing Government Counsel, Paul. The cases were heard in the court of Justice Norman. The case of Amir Khan was taken up first but as the facts in both the cases were similar the arguments made in one case were held to have

been made in the other also. The details of the arguments which raised, *inter alia*, the fundamental issue whether all British subjects, including the Indians, had the same right of freedom from arbitrary arrests as was guaranteed in England under the Magna Carta, Bill of Rights and the other acts of Parliament, do not concern us here.<sup>75</sup> The arguments of the Counsels for the Petitioners, particularly those of Ingram, which still strike one as models of dispassionate eloquence in the defence of an individual's right for freedom, failed to carry the day. The judgment, delivered on 29th August, refused the issue of writs.

It will not be out of place to mention here the assassination of Justice Norman which like that of the more well-known episode of Lord Mayo is wrongly attributed to the Wahabis. The attack on Norman took place a year after the pronouncement of the judgment on Amir Khan's case. The assassin was a Punjabi, named Abdullah, who was in no way connected with the Wahabis, and who was officially declared to be an insane man.<sup>76</sup> As remarked earlier, Amir Khan's case was a famous one of its time, the attack had occurred so soon after it, and the anti-Wahabi group of officials<sup>77</sup> as well as some public men thought it a good opportunity to involve the Wahabis in this foul deed.

While the hearings for the issue of writs were continuing a case was filed on behalf of the petitioners against Lord Mayo and Lord Grey, the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor, respectively, in a court in England for 'Oppression and Injury' caused by them to the petitioners.<sup>78</sup> Nothing is known, however, of what came out of this case.

Immediately after the pronouncement of judgment by Justice Norman, Anstey submitted petitions before the Chief Justice and Justice Markby appealing against the judgment. The Chief Justice 'refused to receive the

petition but directed the Appellants, if so advised, to lodge them to the Registrar's Office according to the practice of the Court'.<sup>79</sup> He also refused to fix an early date for hearing the Appeal as 'one of the Lordships would be engaged'.<sup>80</sup>

On the 14th September, Anstey sought leave for Appeal to the Privy Council both against the judgments of Justice Norman and that of the Chief Justice. This, too, was declined on the same date. Thus ended the first round of the legal duel between the Government and an individual claiming his inalienable right of freedom from arbitrary arrest.

The efforts of Amir Khan were successful in one respect. They forced the hands of the Government to expedite the institution of proceedings against prisoners so long held without trial. The trials of Amiruddin and Ibrahim Mandal were taken up first. They were tried in October, 1870, at Malda and Rajmahal, respectively. Both were sentenced to transportation for life in the Andaman Island and their properties were ordered to be confiscated.

Amiruddin arrived in the Andaman in March, 1872.<sup>81</sup> Some of the amenities granted to the convicts of the Island, described above, had since been abrogated and more stringent rules had been enforced. Amiruddin had, therefore, to suffer many hardships for the next few years. He was later appointed as a teacher in the local *Madrassa*.

He was released in 1883 along with the other Wahabi prisoners<sup>82</sup>. Pending Government's permission to let him live in his native city he stayed with Abdul Rahim at Patna. Like a few others he too had to report to the local Superintendent of Police once every month and could not go out anywhere without informing the Police.

Although Ibrahim Mandal was also sentenced to transportation for life it is not known whether he was actually sent to the Andaman. Jafar is not quite explicit on this point. At one place he makes a general remark that Amiruddin, Tabarak Ali and Ibrahim were all arrested and 'they' were transported to the Andaman, but it is not clear whether 'they' included Ibrahim also, for although Jafar subsequently mentions the arrival of the first two in the island and their release in 1883 he makes no mention of Ibrahim anywhere.<sup>83</sup> Another writer says that Ibrahim was not actually sent to the Andaman.<sup>84</sup> He was released along with Amir Khan in 1878 and died in the early years of the present century.<sup>85</sup> This seems more likely.

The second round of the trial of the Wahabi leaders began in Patna in March, 1871. In this case prosecution was launched against seven persons charged under different sections of the Penal Code. The accused persons were Tabarak Ali, Pir Muhammad, Din Muhammad, Amiruddin, Amir Khan, Hashmatdad Khan and Mubarak Ali. Amir Khan and Hashmatdad Khan were charged with the offence of rendering financial assistance to the Movement. Mubarak Ali was charged with the collection and transmission of funds. His son, Tabarak Ali, was accused of having led a unit of the Wahabi forces against the English in the Ambeyla campaign. He was also accused of having given military instructions and drilled the recruits on the Frontier. The other three were accused of having assisted the rebels in various ways.

The accused persons had been arrested at different times and in different places. Some among them, such as Mubarak Ali, had been released in the interval. Others had been frequently transferred from one jail to another all over the Bengal Presidency. Still some others, such as the Khan Brothers and, probably, Tabarak Ali, had been continuously in detention since July, 1869. At the

time of the trial, however, they were all brought together and Mubarak Ali, too, was re-arrested.

The committal proceedings were held in the court of D. M. Barbour, the Joint Magistrate, Patna. All the accused were committed to the Session's Court on the 27th March. The trial was held in the court of Prinsep, the District Judge, and commenced on the 29th May, 1871. Over a hundred prosecution witnesses hailing from all over the country were examined in the course of the trial which continued, with intervals, till the 19th July. Anstey and Ingram, who had appeared on behalf of the Khan Brothers in the hearings for issue of writs of *habeas corpus*, represented them in this case also.

All the accused, except Hashmatdad Khan who was released as no *prima facie* case could be established against him, were sentenced to the standardised sentence of transportation for life and confiscation<sup>66</sup> of all properties. Pir Muhammad was released later on appeal to the High Court.

Amir Khan because of his old age (he was above 80 years of age at that time) and due to the earnest efforts of his relatives was not sent to the Andamans. He was released in November 1878 on the intercession of the Governor-General, Lord Lytton, after having spent over nine years in jail. He died soon after his release. His brother, Hashmatdad Khan, died a little earlier in 1877. Both lie buried in Patna. Mubarak Ali died as a result of severe beating while under trial.<sup>67</sup> The rest of the prisoners were transferred to the Andaman. Tabarak Ali reached there along with Amiruddin in March 1872. After having suffered severe hardships for quite a few years he was appointed as a Station Muharrir<sup>68</sup> (clerk). He was released at the time of the General Amnesty in 1883 and returned to Patna with Abdul Rahim.

Thus ended the last round of proceedings against the Wahabis. The Government had done everything possible

to root out the Movement by arresting and convicting its leaders to long terms of imprisonment on the far-off convict colony of the Andaman Islands and confiscating all their material possession. But the flame which had been lit by Syed Ahmad was not altogether extinguished. The embers continued to smoulder under the surface and occasionally burst out in sharp flashes.

#### 1875 : *Wahabis in Bhopal and Rangoon*

On the eve of the visit of the Prince of Wales to Bihar the Government felt apprehensive of some trouble from the Wahabis. An enquiry was made into their existing organisational centres and their activities. The undermentioned confidential report was prepared by Ishree Prasad in December, 1875.

The Report stated that there were three centres of Wahabi activities in the country. These were Patna, Bhopal and Rangoon. The first named centre had been very much weakened by the arrests of the local Wahabis and their convictions and so the Wahabis had dispersed their activities over a wider area. The two active Wahabi Agents in Patna were Muhammad Hasan, son of Wilayat Ali, and Abdullah, an Afghan national. One of the sons of the former was reported to have gone to the Andaman Islands on the eve of the assassination of Lord Mayo and was suspected to be implicated in it<sup>88a</sup>. The other agent, Abdullah, owned a fruit shop in Guzri, Patna City, but that was just a front. He was travelling to the different 'native' Indian states on the pretence of selling a valuable pearl. His real object, however, was collection of funds from those States. Closely allied to the Patna centre was the one at Surajgarha, the birth-place of Nazir Husain, who was still regarded as a prominent leader of the Wahabis in India, and bore the title of *Madar-ul-Muham* (chief of the difficult work).

The second centre was Bhopal whose chief was Munshi Jamaluddin who had married one of the late

*Begums* of Bhopal. The other prominent Wahabis living there were Sadiq Hasan, Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Rahman and Ali Karim. The last named was particularly a 'desperate character.'

Rangoon was another centre. The Wahabis there carried on frequent correspondence with the Bhopal centre. One of Muhammad Hasan's sons was reported to have gone there also.<sup>89</sup>

#### 1882 : *Wahabi Activities in Shahabad*

In 1881 the Shahabad district of Bihar figured prominently as an important centre of Wahabi influence. The leading man was Ibrahim, son of Abdul Ali Hakim, who was the *Foujdari Nazir* of Arrah Court during the 'Mutiny.' Ibrahim's elder brother, Ali, had taken a prominent part in the Rising of 1857, but he was later arrested and sentenced to death. The father whose duty it would have been to make the arrangements for the hanging of his own son resigned from his post. He died some time later leaving behind some landed property with an annual income of Rs 3,000/-.

Some information about Ibrahim's activities in 1880-81 is available from the Intelligence Reports of the Calcutta Police,<sup>90</sup> one of which reported that in February, 1880, an attempt was made by Badiuzzaman (of Dacca?) to arrange a meeting of prominent Wahabis, including Nazir Husain at Delhi. Being well aware that he was under surveillance of the police Nazir Husain advised against holding it at Delhi. He suggested some remote village for the purpose. Ibrahim then suggested that the meeting be held at Tajpore, a village near Muzaffarpur. Some 30 prominent 'Wahabi Moulvies' were present in the meeting of which the chief object was to plan a strategy for 'spreading sedition'. It was also decided to raise funds for various 'sectarian purposes'. Schools

were to be opened in Delhi, Patna and Arrah in which the Wahabi tenets would be taught. Books and pamphlets were also to be printed for distribution. Printed appeals for subscription were distributed in the meeting and also circulated at other places. The report said that the response to the appeal was very encouraging and that even poor classes of people, such as tailors, washermen and water-carriers were subscribing readily. Some of the *Moulvies* present were also given the pamphlets and asked to go on preaching tours. Ibrahim travelled to Calcutta, Delhi, Lucknow, Ghazipur, Benares, etc. and delivered lectures in those places.

A subsequent police report<sup>91</sup> informed the Commissioner of Patna that another meeting of prominent Wahabis was held at Sirajganj where Nazir Husain had gone under the pretence of attending the marriage of his niece. The ceremony provided a convenient excuse for an assemblage of the Wahabis. Chief among those present were Nazir Husain, Muhammad Husain of Lahore and Ibrahim of Arrah. 'The meeting was convened by Ibrahim with the object of securing their co-operation and... proclaiming this country as *Dar-ul-Harb*'. It was also decided that because the Wahabi principality on the Frontier had become very weak owing to comparative loss of contact and aid from India efforts should be made to send more volunteers and aid from India. News of the secret meeting had reached the authorities and the Magistrate hastened to the spot to surprise the Moulvies, but nothing incriminating was found at the place and none of them could be arrested.

In July 1881, P. Nolan, Superintendent of Police, Patna, reported<sup>92</sup> to the Commissioner that Ibrahim during one of his visits to Calcutta had preached that it was incumbent on all Muslims to resign from Government service and that it was better to work in non-Government jobs at half the wages than to work under Government.



for double the wages, for the same sort of job. Commenting on some of the particularly dangerous aspects of Ibrahim's preaching Nolan observed that Ibrahim used 'all the methods of agitation, disturbance, law-suits, raising of subscription, inciting *Government servants to resign, in a way which would tell upon the Sepoys*'. Ibrahim seemed certainly a man who should be watched, added Nolan. It was also reported that Ibrahim was collecting funds 'by a sort of income-tax of one pice in the rupee'. The *Begum* of Bhopal was one of the prominent contributors to the fund which was being raised ostensibly for financing a civil suit<sup>84</sup> in which the Wahabis of Arrah district were engaged, but it was really meant for the 'Sittana Fanatics'.<sup>84</sup>

It would be clear from the account given above that even as late as 1881 the method of work still continued to be the same which had been laid down in the time of the Ali Brothers or even earlier. The emphasis was still upon gathering of recruits, collection of funds and inciting of sepoys. The remarkable disciplinary strength of the organisation is shown by the fact that old the line of action was still being unswervingly followed even though much of the old structure had broken down under successive blows.

Enquiries against Ibrahim were continued in the following year when two Inspectors of Police submitted a detailed report about him to the Superintendent of Police, Shahabad.<sup>85</sup>

They reported that Ibrahim, like Muhammad Umar, was a well-connected man with powerful and influential relations. He was also related by marriage to the Sadiqpur family. He along with Abdul Aziz of Rahmanabad, district Darbhanga, Azmat Husain, *Mukhtar*, of Calcutta, Abdul Rauf, nephew of Abdul Rahim, Latif Husain and his brother, Abdul Ghafoor of Mehdawan,<sup>86</sup> was continuing the collection of funds. The amounts collected

(that year) totalled well over Rs 10,000/-. It was distributed by Ibrahim, but it was not known where he deposited it. Out of the amounts collected only a very small portion was spent over schools and such other professed objects. The bulk of the amount remained unaccounted for, it was probably sent to the Frontier.

The Report finally observed that the Wahabis in general were in a very straitened circumstance owing to the conviction of their leaders in 1870-71 and earlier in 1862-65, but that there was a deep under-current of resentment among them against the convictions. It added that 'this resentment may break out against the Government whenever they may have the power to do so'.

This, in fact, was an apt appraisal of the position of the Wahabis in India in the closing decades of the last century. Relentlessly pursued by the powerful police organisation of the Government, almost crippled under the successive blows of convictions and deportations, the Wahabis had been rendered practically innocuous and the general body of their followers was very weak and helpless indeed. And yet such was the effect of what they had done in the preceding half a century that the Government felt apprehensive of even this weakened body of men for a long time after 1870—a date which is usually taken to mark the end of the Wahabi struggle in India.

#### *The Wahabi Centre on the Frontier, 1863-1902*

Following the battle of Ambeyla (1863) most of the Wahabis led by Abdullah went over into the Chagarzai country, north of the river Brandu. Their relation with the Akhund was still cordial and he got some arrangements made for their stay in that area. After some time the Wahabis obtained the settlements of the two villages of Tangor and Batora from the Chagarzais and stayed there undisturbed till the beginning of 1868<sup>97</sup>. They lived, however, under conditions of a perpetual veiled hostility from some of the neighbouring tribesmen.

One of the important reasons for the existence of this state of affairs was the difference of opinion and the strained relations<sup>98</sup> existing between the Akhund of Swat and another spiritually eminent personality of the area—the Mulla of Kotha.<sup>99</sup> The latter was one of the early associates of Syed Ahmad, whose followers were by now openly dubbed as 'Wahabis', a term which had become almost a term of religious abuse. The Akhund, whose co-operation with the Wahabis was accompanied with certain mental reservations, was openly opposed to the Kotha Mulla who also commanded considerable influence and following in the very areas of Buner and Swat. The Akhund looked with apprehension upon the growing influence of his 'rival'.<sup>100</sup> However, among the simple and unsophisticated Muslims of the area the label of 'Wahabism' was found to be a convenient stick to beat the Kotha Mulla with, and his followers were denounced as 'Wahabis'. The *Hindustanis* were even more suspect in the eyes of the followers of the Akhund. They still represented a power of which the foundation was laid by Syed Ahmad. Moreover, they were an armed and disciplined body of men who could prove to be a source of strength to his 'rival', the Mulla of Kotha.

During this period certain circumstances as well as the veiled hostility of the Akhund forced the Wahabis to take some steps which further aroused the suspicion of the Akhund. They had so long been living in the Chagarzai country, but the exactions of the local people who made them pay dearly for the protection afforded and for the supplies rendered was making their position very difficult. The Chagarzais were also under pressure from the Akhund to drive away the Wahabis, as Abdullah and his followers were dubbed, from their midst.<sup>101</sup> Under the circumstances the Wahabis readily accepted the offer of Azim Khan of Bajkatta, in Buner, to come over to his area and settle there. The Wahabis left Batora and moved over to Bajkatta, where they were joined by Prince Firoze Shah. The arrival of the party

in Buner, which the Akhund regarded as his area of influence, coupled with the fact that Azim Khan, their patron, was a firm supporter of the Mulla of Kotha was regarded by the Akhund as a direct threat to his influence. He called a general meeting of all the Bonair tribes and won over their support by 'skilful management.' He made them agree to expel the *Hindustanis* from Buner. Finding themselves in a minority the *Hindustanis* along with Azim Khan retreated from Bajkatta and repaired to their old centre, Malka, where they commenced to re-build their old deserted houses and fortifications. Shortly afterwards, Abdullah met the Akhund, removed the existing misunderstandings and obtained his consent for the return of the *Hindustanis* to Bajkatta. However, they were not destined to live there for long. Azim Khan, referred to above, and Muqqarrab Khan, the dispossessed chief of Panjtar, again tried to form a league of some Bonair tribes and the Amzais in order to oppose the influence of the Akhund and to restore Muqqarrab Khan to his lost possession.<sup>102</sup> Abdullah was also induced to join this alliance. In September, 1863, the Akhund mustered his followers, appeared before Bajkatta and demanded an immediate evacuation of the place by the *Hindustanis*. They thought at first of resistance and even exchanged a few shots with the attacking party, but were advised by Azim Khan to agree to the evacuation which began the next day. The women and the children were sent ahead while the rear was formed by a guard of 50 or 60 men armed with rifles. While the party of evacuees was passing through a narrow defile between Batora and Bajkatta they were treacherously attacked by the followers of the Akhund. The main body, including Azim Khan and Abdullah, successfully ran the gauntlet and crossed the pass but the rear-guard was 'cut off and after a gallant stand entirely destroyed'.<sup>103</sup>

After the encounter the *Hindustanis* stayed for sometime in Gulima Bori in the Chagarzai area, where

they were promised support against further pressure from the Akhund by the Amzai tribesmen and one section of the Chagarzais. However, the Akhund's power had increased further by his triumph over his 'rival' and he put pressure on the Chagarzais to expel the *Hindustanis* from their area. So the Wahabis once again set out in search of a haven of safety and, after a brief stay in Bihar on the right bank of the Indus, came to Judbai towards the end of 1868. They received offers of help from the chief of Tikari who offered them asylum in his fort and also some land in the valley. The chief of Thakot and the Allai *Jirga* also sought their help in discussing 'measures of a resistance against the British'. However, the authorities were watching these war preparations and before the allies could muster strong Major-General Wilde took them by surprise in 1868-69 and the allies dispersed quickly.<sup>104</sup> The *Hindustanis* then went over to Palosi, a village belonging to the trans-Indus Hasanzais. This marked the end of the almost continuous shifting of the *Hindustanis* under adverse circumstances from one place to another. Palosi continued to be the centre of the Wahabis for a fairly long time from after this period.

A detailed account of the 'state of the Wahabi colony', the number and composition of their fighting strength and their relations with the Akhund is available to us from some of the reports sent by Reily when he visited the Frontier in connection with his investigations, mentioned above.<sup>105</sup> He reported that the general body of the *Hindustanis*, numbering over 300 fighting men, were living in Bihar across the Indus. The chief among them were, besides Abdullah, Fayyaz Ali, brother of Ahmadullah, and Abdullah's three sons, Amanullah, Matiullah, and Abdul Quddus. Another important man Ishaq, brother of Maqsud Ali, was living in Malka at that time. Attempts were being made to induce him to desert his compatriots and to return to India. The fighting force was divided into eight units, each under a

*Jamadar*. They were Rajab and Diyanatullah of Malda, Abdul Ghafur of Hakimpur, Moinuddin and Shariatullah of Rampur Bauleah, Nooruddin of Jessore, Muhammad Akbar of Azimghur, and Zinatullah. The 'fighting men or sepoys' numbered 362 of whom 57 came from Arrah and Ghazipur. The women and children numbered 70. They had 27 horses and 27 mules which were kept in Balooah. They were also reported to have two small guns, some percussion muskets with bayonets and managed to procure caps for them.<sup>106</sup> Conditions of general distress were, however, prevailing among them on account of the stoppage of aid. This last factor, Reily reported, was forcing some of the followers of Abdullah to desert. However, Abdullah had impressed on them the fact that only 'the prison and the gallows' awaited those who wanted to return. Reily recommended that it would be very helpful if it was proclaimed that all those who returned, except Fayyaz Ali and Abdullah, would be pardoned. That would set in a wave of defection among Abdullah's men and he would be left practically alone and would, probably, retire to Mecca.<sup>107</sup>

Reily finally added, that the Hasanzais had invited the *Hindustanis* with offers of land to settle in. The acceptance of the invitation had been delayed by the illness of Abdullah in Bihar. As soon as he recovered there was no doubt, remarked Reily, 'he would be fighting against us'. It seemed strange to Reily that evidence should be required (he was making investigations at that time for the Malda and Patna Trials) 'that these fanatics are waging war with the Queen, *they are in a state of continued hostility against the English. Their professed object is to drive out the English, their attitude is one of perpetual hostility*'.<sup>108</sup>

\* Reily also enclosed<sup>109</sup> the report of one, Faizulla, who was employed by the Deputy Commissioner of Abbottabad to watch the *Hindustanis*. The Extracts of his Diary cover the period December, 1868 to April, 1869. These

Indicate the continued hostility of the Akhund against the *Hindustanis*, some account of which has already been given above.

Under the date-line of 30th March, 1869, Faizullah reported that Fayyaz Ali had given it out that if his brothers, Ahmadullah and Yahya Ali, who had been transported to the Andamans, were released and allowed to return to Patna and if Ibrahim Mandal of Islampur, then under detention, was also released, he would cease fighting along with 300 of his followers and go to Mecca. His expenses for the journey to Mecca would also have to be paid by the Government. Reily saw in this information a 'good confirmation' of his proceeding against Ibrahim Mandal who was evidently 'an important man' among the Wahabis and whose arrest had 'inflicted a great blow' upon Abdullah. He urged upon the Government the necessity of isolating Abdullah by letting all the waverers among his followers return to their homes.

The question of the policy to be adopted by the Government in regard to the reported proposal of some of the Wahabis on the Frontier cropped up once again in 1873 when the Government received certain proposals from Elahi Bux, brother of Muqsud Ali of Surajgarha, and Muhammad Hasan, son of Wilayat Ali, about permitting *some of the Wahabis* on the Frontier to return to their homes. (The Government had grave doubts whether these two persons really represented the Wahabis on the Frontier). This was not exactly an offer of surrender. Rather, they wanted certain guarantees from the Government, including immunity from reprisals, after their return. The Magistrate felt that although the Wahabis were no more 'a significant body of men' their presence on the Frontier was a great evil, unsettling the minds of the 'ignorant and superstitious Mohammdans'.<sup>10</sup> He wanted the Government to agree to the grant of unconditional pardon to *those who wanted to return*. The Commissioner was, however, more conscious of the

Government's prestige. He was not in favour of an unconditional pardon. He advised<sup>117</sup> the laying down of two conditions, first, that *all the Wahabis including the leaders* should return and not just such of them as liked to do so and, second, that those who returned would live within certain specified areas under police surveillance. At the same time he added that all this discussion was premature since the Government had received no formal offer of surrender from the Wahabis and it was 'certainly not the part of the Government to take initiative in such matters'. Ishree Prasad also prepared a comprehensive memorandum for the Commissioner on the subject of the Wahabis and the grant of pardon to them. He emphasised the vital point that 'the *Mujahdeen* were in a country from which they could not derive their subsistence. They must anyhow be supported by the contributions from this country'. So long as the centre on the Frontier existed, he pointed out, the leaders there would continue inciting the Indian Wahabis for seditious activities. It was generally presumed that after waiting for some time for the supposed re-appearance of Syed Ahmad the Wahabis on the Frontier would lose heart and return themselves. But, he pointed out, they might also select another 'Prophet'. The Akhund of Swat was a widely respected and influential man on the Frontier. Abdullah, the chief of the Wahabis, was also well-known on the Frontier as a 'pious man.' He might try to win over the affection of the Akhund, an old man 'on the verge of the grave', and try to succeed him. He would then command the allegiance of a very large number of Pathans and use them in anti-Government activities.<sup>118</sup> Ishree Prasad discounted the possibility of Abdullah being a Wahabi coming in the way of his succession to the Akhund, for 'the Akhund himself is a Gujar, perhaps a Hindu by caste'. Ishree Prasad, therefore, thought it more advisable to let all the Wahabis return to their homes, 'loaded with shame and disgrace'. Their return itself would remove the halo of glory around their personalities and expose the weakness of their cause.



However, nothing came out of these 'premature' discussions. The Wahabi leaders, particularly Abdullah, were men who had dedicated their lives to a cause. Abdullah, had already suffered a series of hardships and reverses in the long and arduous struggle with the Government and he was not likely to falter at the fag end of his career. The Wahabis had burnt their boats and there was no question of craving the Government's permission for return. The Government, on the other hand, was not willing to show any initiative in the matter as it was considered derogatory to its prestige. Moreover, it was not willing to permit only some of the rank and file to return and let the leaders remain on the Frontier. That would have, in its opinion, left the wounds festering.

The comparatively long period of stay in Palosi gave the Wahabis a much needed respite to reorganise their scattered resources. During the preceding decade they had been harassed and persecuted by the various tribes largely under the hostile influence of the Akhund. This, apart from its other damaging effects, was tending to create a rift within their already depleted ranks. They complained that they had left their hearths and homes not for fighting against the tribesmen but against the English.<sup>113</sup> What they failed to realise was that the fighting was not of their own seeking. The small but gallant band were the victims of narrow sectarian differences which had all but drowned the wider and higher issues of their mission.

The *Hindustani* party still represented a fighting force of great potentiality. They were still better armed than the neighbouring tribes which fact combined with their superior intelligence gave them 'a certain amount of influence'.<sup>114</sup> The crafty tribesmen were not slow to perceive this factor. Abdullah, too, was struggling hard to bring to a close the sad phase of internecine quarrels with the tribesmen and to steer back his followers to the original but temporarily forsaken path of the mission.

During the several subsequent Black Mountain Expeditions (1881-88) led by the English forces the Wahabis figured prominently.<sup>115</sup> They fought gallantly and spiritedly in several encounters during that period. However, their role in those encounters was clearly subsidiary. They appeared more as the allies of the tribesmen under attack. They had become too weak a body of men to be a serious threat to the English. But they still represented a languishing but yet alive symbol of the urge for freedom. Apart from keeping alive a 'forlorn hope' in the hearts of their compatriots back home, they represented an ever-active nucleus of resistance to the spread of English influence in the semi-independent tribal areas. They still had the potentiality to organise the persistent anti-English feeling among the tribesmen into a concerted and powerful movement. They were, therefore, repeatedly subjected to aggressive blows from the advancing English forces and they were always on the defensive during the period.

Following the fourth Black Mountain Expedition (1891) the Hasanzais, too, were forced to evict the *Hindustanis* from their area. It was a time of dire distress for Abdullah. His request to several other tribes for the lease of some land to enable his men to build up a settlement was refused under the pressure of the English. Finally, Abdullah appealed to Firoze Shah, son of Mubarak Shah, their old patron and supporter, to give him the village Tilwai for settlement.<sup>116</sup> The latter after some hesitation agreed to the request. The party maintained a precarious existence in this centre until the death of Abdullah in 1901.

The period of his leadership spanned over four decades and, at an apparent glance, the most glorious phase of his leadership was the period of the Ambeyla Campaign. However, the real test of his courage, perseverance and leadership came during the period following that. During that time he was continuously faced with

an unbroken chain of severe adversities and the hostilities of the tribesmen which were more than enough to waver the faith of any man. His steadfast resolve, however, never faltered. He scrupulously refused to entertain any idea of surrender. Besides, he effectively countered and stopped the slight wavering of resolve which had momentarily manifested itself among some of his followers.<sup>117</sup>

After his death, his brother Abdul Karim was elected as the leader and under him the centre was shifted to Asmast (1902)<sup>118</sup>, a fertile village situated on the bank of the Brandu. By now all effective contact with India had ceased and the centre, although it still exists,<sup>119</sup> became merged in the local political surroundings.

## REFERENCES

1. Letter from D.I.G., Police, to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 397, dated Calcutta, 28th Nov., 1868 ; Enclosure.
2. Rajmahal originally belonged to the Malda district and was later included in the Murshidabad district. At present it is a Sub-division of the Santhal Parganas district of Bihar. Malda district, although situated in Bengal, lies opposite the Rajmahal area, across the Ganges. The two centres worked in close collaboration.
3. Letters from D.I.G., Police, to P.A. to the I.G., Police, L.P., Nos. 287 and 319, dated 13th. Oct. and 2nd. Nov., 1868.
4. Italics are mine.
5. James O'Kinealy was the Magistrate. It was during this time, when he came to conduct the enquiries in the Wahabi organisation, that he became interested in the subject. Later, in 1870, when the Malda Trials opened he was appointed as the chief prosecuting officer and was awarded Rs. 3,000/- for his able prosecution of the case (Progs. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Nos. 118 of Oct., 1870, and B. 46 of October, 1871). Soon after, he contributed his famous series of articles in the Calcutta Review (1870).
6. Nazir Sirdar of V. Qazigram, Abdul Wahid of V. Lakhipore, Ghuran Khan of V. Muazzampur, Jamuran Shaikh of V. Lakhopore, Bunnoo Ghazi of V. Muazzampur, Soorkun Mullah of V. Agamilkee, Nawazi. Mullah of V. Muazzampur and and Dhoka Mullah of V. Agamilkee.
7. *Supra*, pp. 89-95.
8. From Magt., Malda, to Offg. Under Secretary to Govt. of Bengal, Judicial Dept., No. 424, dated 20th. Oct. 1869. Also see letter from D.I.G. to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 18 Conf., dated 16th. April, 1869.

9. *Supra*, pp. 89-95.
10. Letter from Magt., Malda, referred to above.
11. Letter from Offg. Supdt. & Legal Remembrancer to Secy. Govt. of Bengal, No. 1859. dated Fort William, 30th. Oct., 1868.
12. *Selections from the Records of the Govt. of Bengal*, No. XLII.
- 12A. I.M., pp. 100 ff.
13. Letter from Offg. Secy. to Govt. of Bengal to Secy. Govt. of India, No. 6051, dated 10th. Nov., 1868.
14. Letter from R. C. Chandra, Civil Asst. Surgeon, Santhal Parganas, to Asst. Commr., Rajmahal, No. 240, dated Deoghar, 17th. Oct., 1869.
15. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Prog. No. 184 of July, 1869 ; I.M., p. 102.
16. Statement made before C. M. Wilmot, Asst. Commr., Santhal Parganas, on 30th. Nov., 1868. Enclosure to letter from D.I.G. to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 399, dated 28th. Nov., 1868.
17. Letter from D.I.G. to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 399. dated 29th. Nov., 1868. Also see Appendix V.
18. Letter from Secy. Govt. of Bengal to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 198, dated 11th Jany., 1869.
19. Government of Bengal, Judl. Dept.. Prog. No. 49 of June, 1869.
20. *ibid.*, No. 37 of Sept., 1860.
21. Letter from Major F. G. Stuart, Suptd. of Police, Raipur, (M.P) to I. G., Police, L. P., dated Raipur, 28th. Sept., 1869.
22. *ibid.*
23. *ibid.*
24. Letter from J. H. Reily, D.I.G., to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 324, dated Calcutta, 1st. Dec., 1869.
25. *ibid.*
26. Judl. Dept., Prog. No. 37 of Sept., 1869, referred to above. Italics are mine.
27. *ibid.*
28. Letter from J. Jardine, Actg. U. Secy., Govt. of Bombay, to Secretary Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., No. 3999, dated Bombay Castle, 12th. Nov., 1869.
29. *ibid.*
30. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Prog. No. 314, of Jany., 1869.
31. Letter from D.I.G., to I.G., Police, L. P., No. 52, dated Delhi 13th. Feb., 1869.
32. *ibid.*
33. Firoze Shah was a cousin of Bahadur Shah II, being the son of the brother of Akbar II. He had gone out for *Haj* in 1856 and returned at the time when the Rising was still going on. He took prominent part in the Rising and after its suppression went over to the Frontier area in 1868 and stayed with the Wahabis for some time.
34. Reily wrote this of Prince Izad Bux 'Anyone in Delhi may buy a yard of Calico from one of the Princes of Delhi. So passes the Glory of the World'.

35. Govt. of Bengal., Judl. Dept., Prog. No. 219 of April, 1869.
36. Letter from D.I.G. to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 335, dated 10th Dec., 1869.
37. Letter from Secy., Govt. of Bengal to Secy., Govt. of Punjab, No. 87, dated 7th. Jany., 1870.
38. Letter from Magt., Delhi, to Dy. Commr., Delhi, dated 19th. March, 1869.
39. Letter from D.I.G., to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 13, Conf., dated Bankipur, 16th. April, 1869.
40. *ibid.*  
234, dated 12th. April, 1869.
41. Letter from E. E. Lowis, Magt., Malda, to Commr., Rajshahi, No.
42. Letter from Secy., Govt. of Bengal to Secy., Govt. of India, Home Dept., No. 2813, dated 22nd April, 1869.
- 42A. I.M., p. 100.
43. Statement given by Abdullah, *vide infra*.
44. Letter from D.I.G., to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 185, dated Calcutta, 25th. June, 1869.
45. Letter from Magt., Patna, to Commr., Patna, dated 1st. June, 1869.
46. Letter from Secy., Govt. of Bengal to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 4753, dated 28 June, 1869.
47. Letter from Supdt. of Police, Patna, to D.I.G., Police, L.P., dated Patna, the 31st. Nov., 1868.
48. Statement of Shaikh Jhagroo, 58, son of Faqir Muhammad of Dinapur, taken under Act V of 1840 before the Cantonment Magt., Dinapur, on 21 June, 1869. Enclosure to letter from D.I.G. to I.G., Police, No. 195, dated 25th June, 1869.
49. Haji Din Muhammad, Peer Muhammad, Budhu Khan, Abdul Rahman, Karim Bux, Khuda Bux, Elahi Bux, Budyhe Khan, Umdu Khan, Ali Hasan and Sukhu. Some persons from Bengal including Mithu Paramanik and Jublu of Murshidabad and Ghuran Khan of Malda were also arrested.
50. Letter from D.I.G. to I.G., Police, L.P., No. 279, dated Patna Augt., 1869.
51. Letter from Secy., Govt. of India, Home Dept., to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, No. 1232, dated Simla, 27th Augt., 1869.
52. Letter from Offg. I.G., Police, L.P., to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, Judicial Dept., No. 7268, dated 9th. Oct., 1869.
53. Letter from Commissioner, Patna, to Secy., Govt. of Bengal, No. P., dated 10th Dec., 1869.
54. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Progs. No. 65, of Nov., 1869.
55. *ibid.*
56. *ibid.*
57. See p. 116.
58. Letter from Secy., Govt. of Bengal to Secy., Govt. of India, Home Dept., No. 4687, dated 26th July, 1869.
59. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Prog. Nos. 7-8 and 11 of Jany., 1870. (arguments in the case, may be consulted for the legal details.)

60. *ibid.*, Prog. No. 52 of Augt., 1870.
61. *Selections*, p. 155.
62. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Nos. 46-48 of Augt., 1870.
63. *Selections*, p. 187.
64. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Prog. Nos. 193-94 of May, 1870.
65. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Prog. Nos. 209-11 of June, 1870.
66. *ibid.*, Prog. Nos. 27-28 of Augt., 1870.
67. He was the son of Musharruf Ali against whom he gave information in the hope of getting some Government job.
68. Enclosures to letter from J. H. Reily, D.I.G. to I.G., Police, L.P., dated Malda, 7th Augt., 1870.
69. Letter from Magt., Patna, to the Commr., Patna, dated 23rd July, 1870.
70. Letter from Magt., Patna, to Commr., Patna, dated 23rd Augt., 1870.
71. Their collaterals and descendants still live in *Mahalla* Pathan Toh, Alamganj, Patna City.
72. Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Prog. Nos. 32, of Jany., 1870 and 37 of April, 1870.
73. He was the leading legal practitioner of Calcutta. Also acted as Judge of the High Court for some time. Died in Bombay in 1873.
74. He also served as a Member of the Governor General's Council from 1877 to 1899.
75. *The Great Wahabi Case*, an anonymous compilation containing the arguments in the case, may be consulted for details.
76. Mehr, IV, p. 425. The assassin, although declared mad, was still sentenced to death.
77. Tayler, W., *Thirty Eight Years in India*, Vol. II, pp. 555, 561.
78. *The Great Wahabi Case*, p. 42.
79. *ibid.*, p. 29.
80. *ibid.*, p. 30.
81. T.A., p. 82.
82. Vide *Supra*.
83. In the Government records relating to the release of Wahabi prisoners in the Andamans, also, there is no reference to Ibrahim.
84. P.I.T., p. 155.
85. *ibid.*
86. The magnificent house of Amir Khan in Colootola Street, Calcutta, was sold and all his other valuable assets, worth millions, were seized. See Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept., Prog. Nos. B. 326-29, B. 234, B. 125 and B. 416-19 of April, June, August and July, 1874, respectively. Also Prog. Nos. B. 208-9 of August, 1875, B. 140-41, 301-2 of Nov., 1875 and B. 1100-1101 of June, 1875.
87. P.I.T., p. 158.
88. T. A., p. 83.
- 88a. The Wahabis were not involved in the assassination of Lord Mayo, vide *supra*. The idea was probably a projection of Ishree Prasad's wishful thinking for involving the Wahabis in it.

89. It is, probably, a wrong statement because no son of Muhammad Hasan is known to have gone to Rangoon at that time.
90. Abstracts of Secret Intelligence Reports, Calcutta Police; forwarded to Commr., Patna, by Lambert, Dy. Commr., Police, Calcutta, vide memo. No. 653, dated 23rd Feb., 1881.
91. *ibid.*, forwarded vide Memo. No. 1463, dated 5th May, 1881.
92. Letter from P. Nolan, S.P., Patna, dated 8th July, 1881. Italics are mine.
93. It related to a dispute between the Sunnis and the Wahabis of Arrah for reciting the words *Amin* loudly in prayer in a public mosque. It is one of the very insignificant but much exaggerated differences between the Sunnis and the Wahabis and it often led to dispute and fracas. In the present suit the Sunnis had won the case in the Lower Court but the Wahabis had appealed to the High Court.
94. Letter from G. H. Browne, Dy. Supdt. of Police, Delhi, to the S.P., Patna, dated Delhi, 21st July, 1881.
95. Letter from J. P. Lal and Bahadur Husain, Inspectors of Police, to Col. R. Skinner, S.P., Shahabad, dated 21st Mar., 1882.
96. Mahdawan is a village midway between Patna and Dinapur, just by the side of the main road. One branch of the Sadiqpur family (Elahi Bux's ancestors) belonged originally to Mahdawan.
97. Paget and Mason, *op cit.*, pp. 155-158.
98. Mehr, IV, pp. 465-71.
99. Syed Amir, better known as Kotha Mulla, was a religious divine of considerable influence in Swat and Buner areas. Kotha is situated in the S. W. corner of the Yusufzai area.
100. Mehr, IV, p. 465.
101. Faizullah's statement, *vide infra*.
102. Paget and Mason, *op cit.*, pp. 155-58.
103. *ibid.*
104. *ibid.*
105. *Supra*, p. 294.
106. Paget and Mason, *op cit.*, p. 158.
107. Letter from J. H. Reilly, No. 203, referred to above.
108. *ibid.*, Italics are mine.
109. *ibid.*, Enclosure.
110. Letter from Magt., Patna, to Commissioner, Patna, dated 15th Jany., 1873.\*
111. Letter from Commissioner, Patna, to Secretary, Govt. of Bengal, dated 17th Jany., 1873.
112. It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if the possibility pointed out by Ishree Prasad had actually come to fruition. That Ishree Prasad's speculation was not quite wild is clearly proved by the fact that Abdullah had once met the Akhund personally and succeeded in removing all his misgivings about the Wahabis, *vide supra*.
113. Faizullah's statement, referred to above.

114. Paget and Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
115. Paget and Mason, *op. cit.*
116. Mehr, IV, pp. 486-87.
117. Faizullah's statement, referred to above. Also see Paget and Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
118. Mehr, IV, p. 494.
119. The subsequent history of the centre has been narrated by Mehr (IV, pp. 494 ff.).



## CHAPTER X

### AN APPRAISAL OF THE WAHABI MOVEMENT

#### *I. Nature of the Wahabi Movement*

Starting originally under a socio-religious impulse the Wahabi Movement fast gained a political orientation, particularly during the period of the leadership of the Ali Brothers, and afterwards. Subsequently, its religious aspect was deliberately exaggerated by certain interested writers out of ulterior motives. One of the generally prevalent misconceptions about the Movement is that it was purely religious, and was directed solely against the Sikhs. This is not only an over-simplification of its whole history, but a deliberate distortion<sup>1</sup> of its true aims and objects.

An account of some of the battles fought by the Wahabis against the English has been given above. It has also been shown that their struggle continued till long after the Sikhs had ceased to exist as a political entity. It is true, however, that during the lifetime of Syed Ahmad the N. W. Frontier area was selected as the base of operations, and that the first round began with a struggle against the Sikhs.

For an understanding of these two factors it is necessary to indicate briefly the Islamic doctrine of *Hijrat* or Migration. It postulates that if a country, formerly under Islamic rule, is conquered by a non-Islamic power, or when the internal conditions there become such as to render the performance of one's religious duties impossible, it is the duty of the Muslims living in such a country to migrate to an Islamic country, or one where there are no such impediments to the observance of their religious rights.

The former type of country is known as *Darul Harb* and the latter as *Darul Islam*. It is also one's duty to fight for the restoration of one's rights in the *Darul Harb*. The struggle is to be guided and conducted by an *Imam*, who has to be a man possessed of high spiritual and administrative qualifications. Many abstruse arguments have been raised by a section of the Indian *Ulema* as to whether India could be considered a *Darul Harb*,<sup>1a</sup> and also about the exact qualifications of an *Imam*. Without getting involved in these disputations it is fair to state that Syed Ahmad, according to his own light, felt that with the coming into power of the English and the consequent loss of independence by India the country had ceased to be a *Darul-Islam*. He, therefore, thought it incumbent upon himself to migrate to an independent area which was outside the control of the English and to wage war from there. Having once arrived at this decision it remained for Syed Ahmad to select such a suitable base.

India by that time had to a great extent passed either under the direct control of the English or was ruled by local powers who were closely allied with and subordinated to the English through the network of the Subsidiary Alliances. Even those few powers which were not under the influence of the English were afraid of antagonising them in any way.

The N. W. Frontier was one of the few areas still outside the influence of the English. Its people were reputed for their valour and love of independence. They were already chafing under the harsh semi-military control of the Sikhs and were willing to join hands with anyone who could hold out a reasonable prospect of leading them into freedom. The situation of this area was also such that Syed Ahmad was free from the danger of hostile activity in his rear. Behind it lay the uninterrupted belt of certain principalities with whose chiefs Syed Ahmad had already been corresponding for the last several years and explaining his mission to them. Again in case of his

projected advance down south and east he could expect friendly co-operation from the States of Baluchistan, Bahawalpur and Sind, flanking his proposed route.

The selection of the Frontier area as his base by Syed Ahmad was largely influenced by these considerations. It, however, also made it inevitable that the first clash would be with the Sikhs whose dominions lay on the main route of Syed Ahmad's advance to the east. It may be argued that the Wahabis should have tried to form a common front with the Sikhs against the English, but neither side showed this political maturity. On the contrary, the Sikhs had already entered into a treaty of friendship with the English. The conflict with the Sikhs was just an accidental circumstance; and it did not represent the true aim of the Movement. It was only a preliminary step for the eventual trial of strength with the English. For Syed Ahmad's own writings bear testimony to the fact that he was quite clear in his mind that his real adversaries were the English,<sup>2</sup> 'the traders and vendors of goods'.

Syed Ahmad's letters repeatedly refer to this fact. To quote only a few of these; 'Since some years past', wrote Syed Ahmad in one of his letters to Sikandar Jah of Hyderabad, 'through the command of God the Indian polytheists and *European infidels* have gained predominance over the territories of various persons of rank and honour. The grandeur and glory of men of learning and integrity have been ruined'.<sup>3</sup> In another letter to Hindu Rao, the brother-in-law of Daulat Rao Sindhia, Syed Ahmad wrote, '*The alien people from distant lands* have become the rulers of territories and times and traders and vendors of goods have attained the rank of sovereignty'.<sup>4</sup> And again, 'My real object is the establishment of *Jehad* and carrying the War into Hindusthan and not to stay on in the lands of Khorasan'.<sup>5</sup> Shah Ismail, the next in command to Syed Ahmad, in reply to certain queries about the true objects of the Movement explained them even more explicitly.

He wrote, in reply to Mir Shah Ali, 'Our powers may not be equal to that of Ranjit Singh and the *Company* but who has told you that the Imam has a design of proceeding to Lahore and *Calcutta* with this little force? On the other hand, he is busy, day and night, in increasing the forces of Muslims. . .'<sup>6</sup> These extracts are self-evident and need no comments.

It is significant that in all the voluminous mass of Syed Ahmad's letters there is hardly any hostile reference to the Hindus or one indicating the Movement to be directed against them as such. On the contrary, there is a significant letter addressed by him to an important Hindu chief, Hindu Rao of Gwalior, assuring him that the powers of the various ruling chiefs would be restored, subject to certain conditions, after the English had been defeated. Syed Ahmad wrote to him, 'As soon as the land of Hindusthan is cleared of *alien enemies* and the efforts of these people result in the achievement of their objective the rank and offices of the State and Government would be handed over to the seekers (of these) and the basis of their power and authority would be strengthened'.<sup>7</sup> Syed Ahmad further asked him to look after and render assistance to the families of the volunteers who had migrated to the Frontier with him. That Syed Ahmad not only gave the above-mentioned assurance to Hindu Rao but also sought his more positive aid is highly significant.

There are also several instances of the Hindus contributing to the funds raised by the Wahabis. Rehatsek noticed with surprise the instance of a meeting in Bombay being addressed by a Wahabi missionary 'where, strangely enough, the audience was chiefly composed of Hindus and the speaker held forth to them his ideas about the Christian religion'.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It is also to be noted that the highly secret and dangerous work of transmitting money to the Frontier was carried by bankers among whom many were Hindus.<sup>9</sup>

All these facts do not warrant any denial of the religious aspect of the Movement. In fact its mainspring, at least during the lifetime of Syed Ahmad, was religious. But this religious aspect *related to the reformation of certain socio-religious evils in the body politic of the community*, and not the inculcation of a religious bias against other communities. Syed Ahmad was relentless in his denunciation of the 'polytheistic' and 'hypocritical' Muslims. In fact he spent more time in fighting against such Muslims than against the Sikhs. The need for socio-religious reforms in the Muslim society was itself preached with a view to making it stronger and fitter for the coming political struggle which represented the other aspect of the Movement. James O'Kinealy, Sir Syed and many others after them have erred not in pointing out the religious aspect—that is obvious—but in representing the whole Movement to be a religious one and directed against the Sikhs. To maintain that is to shut one's eye, in the face of direct evidence, to the whole history of the Movement.

One of the ironies of the history of the Wahabi Movement has been that its true aims and objects were misrepresented not only by some of its critics such as Hunter and other European writers but also by many Indians themselves and, stranger still, by some of its own followers.

As is well-known, one of the earliest and most comprehensive accounts of the Movement was published by Hunter. He wrote that all Muslim, *per se*, were anti-Government, owing to certain politico-economic factors. This is evident from the very title of ~~the work~~, "*Our Indian Mussalmans, Are they bound in Conscience to rebel against the Queen.*" The contribution of Hunter to the reconstruction of the history of the Wahabi Movement and in particular to the understanding of its organisational set-up is very valuable indeed, and although his reading of the anti-English character of the Movement is remarkably accurate his general treatment of the subject suffers from

an exaggerated emphasis upon the communal aspect. He has tried to explain everything in terms of Hindu-Muslim communal clash of interest. In doing this he has missed the wider politico-religious background of the Movement.

This contention of Hunter was resented and refuted by a section of Indian Muslims who considered the labelling of the general body of Muslims as anti-Government to be a 'stigma' upon the community. The large mass of 'literature' produced by writers of this class in loud protestation of their loyalty to Government and in refutation of Wahabi teachings—some even refused to recognise the Wahabis as Muslims—are too many and too transparently servile to be discussed here in detail. It would suffice to point out that even Hunter was sceptical of these 'louder-mouthed'<sup>10</sup> protestations of loyalty.

Hunter's thesis was also repudiated by another and more responsible section of Indian Muslims out of more basic considerations. Among these Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the most important and his Review of Hunter's work typifies the writings of this group of persons. His 'Review'<sup>11</sup> was expressly written in refutation of Hunter's assertion. He maintained that the Muslims were neither anti-English nor anti-Government. He also emphasised that the Wahabi Movement was directed solely against the Sikhs. Some of his observations on the Movement are worth noticing. He wrote about Shah Ismail that 'throughout the whole of his career, not a word was uttered by this preacher calculated to incite the feelings of his coreligionists against the English'. At another place he observed that he (Shah Ismail) said that 'under the English rule the Mohammedans were not persecuted'. About the Ali Brothers he wrote that 'with regard to Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali, and their small following, nothing has ever transpired to show that they ever conspired against the British power in India'. He finally summed up that 'the Wahabi jihad—represented by our author (Hunter) to have been one against the British—was intended solely for the conquest of the Sikhs'.

The pioneering services of Sir Syed in the field of social and educational regeneration of the Muslims is too well-known to be recalled here. However, Sir Syed's views about the political aspect of the Wahabi Movement are quite unrelated to facts. We can account for his peculiar views on this subject if we examine them in the background of his campaign for propagation and adoption of Western ideas and education among the people. He represented a new school of thought which postulated that the future of the Indian Muslims lay not in keeping aloof from or being hostile to Western ideas but in adapting themselves to those very ideas. The establishment and continuance of a political movement directed against the English Government and Western ideas ran counter to his school of thought and hence his peculiar interpretation of the nature of the Movement. At the same time a feeling of sympathy and admiration for the efforts of the Wahabis to bring about some of the much-needed socio-religious reforms is quite evident in the various parts of the Review.

Among the other group of writers, the Wahabis themselves, who for obvious reasons gave out this distorted interpretation the earliest was Muhammad Jafar of Thanesar. In the concluding section of his work<sup>12</sup> he published the texts of some 59 of Syed Ahmad's letters and also those of a few others, such as Shah Ismail. It is to be noted that several other collections of Syed Ahmad's letters were already in existence but these were in manuscript and not easily accessible. Their published version was easily available and coming as the work did from the pen of a prominent member of the Movement it commanded much weight and respect. The authenticity of the letters published in it went unchallenged until very recently when these were compared with the manuscript copies.<sup>13</sup> The comparisons revealed the astounding fact that various subtle substitutions of words and other modifications had been made in the texts of some of the letters.<sup>14</sup> These modifications were such as to change the whole meaning in certain fundamental respects.

It may well be said in explanation of Jafar's action that his work was published at a time when the English were firmly installed in power and he had to take this fact into consideration. But he may have salved his conscience by not publishing these letters altogether. By deliberate substitutions of words he was guilty of distorting facts and also doing a disservice to the Movement. Another writer who also suffered from the same dilemma was Abdul Rahim of Patna. Although not guilty of deliberate distortions, he went out of his way to emphasise in his valuable work, the *Tazkira-e-Sadqa*, the tolerance, justice and benevolence of the English rulers and also tried to tone down the anti-English attitude of the Ali Brothers.

It will be interesting to note, along with these views of the Wahabis themselves, the observations of some of the English writers who are more forthright in emphasising the anti-English character of the Movement even in the time of Syed Ahmad himself. Bellew, in his *Report on the Yusufzais*, writes about Syed Ahmad, 'This was no other than Mir Syed Ahmad of Bareilly better known in these parts as Syed Badshah . . . (who) for a brief period enjoyed a very successful career while stirring up the kings and peoples of the different adjacent Sunni Muhammadan Governments to flock to his standard which was unfurled to re-establish the Empire of Islam and to rid the Indian peninsula of its infidel people—the *British and the Sikhs*.'<sup>15</sup> Another writer, while describing the Raushaniya Movement of the 16th Century on the Frontier, observes, 'He (Bayazid Pir Raushan, the leader of *Raushanias*), and his followers became to Akbar what the Wahabis were to the Sikhs and the *Hindusthani fanatics* to the British Government.'<sup>16</sup> The same writer remarks at another place, 'Nevertheless the colonies re-established by Syed Ahmad's lieutenants . . . were left as a legacy to the British Government, perhaps one of the most troublesome legacies we took with the Punjab.'<sup>17</sup>

The general survey of some of the characteristic features of the Movement during the lifetime of Syed



Ahmad will remain somewhat incomplete without noticing another important aspect of his personality which also, to some extent, influenced the nature of the Movement.

His transparent sincerity of purpose and dedication to his mission is evident from practically all his letters.<sup>18</sup> He was the acknowledged and undisputed leader of a well-knit organisation and a disciplined army and held command over a considerable area. Yet he never assumed any temporal powers for himself. In fact, he draws a clear distinction between the office of an *Imam* and a *Sultan*, and reiterates his firm resolve to restore the administrative powers to the respective ruling chiefs after the performance of his task—the driving away of the *Farangis* (Christians) and the removing of the socio-religious evils. His letter to Hindu Rao, quoted above, is an instance in point. In another letter to Sayeed Muhammad, brother of Yar Muhammad Khan of Peshwar, he writes, 'I have neither the desire for obtaining rank, dignity and false prestige nor the wish for gaining power of administration nor did it ever occur in my heart to amass wealth.' That this oft-repeated profession was not just an empty pose of humility is evident from his conduct after the fall of Peshawar. He restored its administration to Sultan Muhammad who had been clearly defeated in an open battle. He confined himself only to the appointment of *Quazis* and Censors of Public Morals to enforce conformation to certain codes of public behaviour. His rejection of the earlier offer of Ranjit Singh for the grant of an independent principality in some trans-Sutlej area<sup>19</sup> in return for the cessation of hostilities is another instance in point. It is clear that the aim of Syed Ahmad was not the carving out of a small principality for himself but a much higher and loftier one.

Syed Ahmad's conception of State has some remarkable features. It envisaged the co-existence of the secular authority of the Sultan along with the religious office of the Imam. He even laid down, vaguely, the field of activity for the former, but, at the same time, claimed a sort of

over-all supervisory (though unobtrusive) functions for the latter. The theory, however, remained embryonic, and it could not be implemented or fully worked out in his lifetime.

Syed Ahmad was deeply moved by some aspects of the socio-religious conditions and the fast increasing threat of foreign political domination. He rose from his, comparatively, humble rank in life to fight for the removal of those evils. His motives were sincere and selfless. On the completion of his mission he, perhaps, intended returning to his former avocation. In fact, he seems, in many respects, to be somewhat of an Indian Garibaldi. But unlike the latter he was not destined to see the successful completion of his task in his lifetime.

The political aspect of the Movement, clearly discernible in the lifetime of Syed Ahmad himself, gained the upper hand during the subsequent period. There was a change in emphasis from the purely religious and ethical teachings to political preachings. Hunter also comments on this subtle change : 'the religious element in the revival soon began to lose its power. Even under the early leaders of the Movement it showed signs of wearing out... The Patna Propaganda clearly perceived this, and suited their teachings to the new requirements of the times'.<sup>19a</sup> In the records bearing on the teachings of the Wahabi missionaries, during this period, there is hardly any reference to purely religious topics. Of course, stress was still laid on the observance of such essentials of Islam as Prayer, Fast and Zakat, etc. but the main work of the Wahabi Agents related to the collection of funds, and 'tampering' of the army units. The burden of their preachings was on the 'obligation' to fight against the foreign rulers.

\* The series of wars against the English from 1845 onwards, culminating in the Ambeyla campaign, had hardly any religious issue at stake. On the contrary, during that

period and till later the Wahabis presented a purely political threat to the English. They represented an ever-active nucleus of opposition which was always eager to fan some minor local tribal disaffection into a general anti-English war.

It is also significant to note that the area of the Wahabi activities as also the extent of their influence had considerably expanded during the period. The network of Wahabi 'centres of intrigues' which Hunter found earlier 'enmeshing' the whole of Bengal was found during the enquiries of 1869-70 to be covering the greater part of the country stretching from Peshawar to Bijapur and from Dacca to Poona.

It is evident that such a widespread movement could not have been sustained for long without the active support of the wider non-Wahabi masses. The participation of the Hindu bankers in the work of secret transmissions of money to the Frontier, which had already been going on from before, increased further during the period. There are many references in the contemporary official records to Hindu bankers whose business was spread over the whole of Northern India. Quite a few if not all the bankers must have known that the transactions, in which they were participating, were not normal commercial ones but had some deeper, possibly dangerous, purpose behind them. Merely the desire for earning some extra money by realising exchange rates for transmitting and encashing the Drafts cannot explain the ready participation of so many bankers in this dangerous work.

It was this and similar other measures of tacit support by non-Wahabi elements which give the Movement its national character. They were, naturally, not interested in points of religious disputations or sectarian hair-splittings. Rehatsek, the chronicler of the Movement in India, draws attention to this significant point in the following words. 'These tidings of rebellion gradually so

encroached themselves upon the original tenets of Wahabis, such as morality, purity of life, abolition of idolatrous usages, which were at first ardently insisted on, that they threw them completely in the background'.<sup>20</sup> Instances where the missionaries discoursed only on religious and abstained from the political topics were rare and had moreover the effect of thinning the audiences.<sup>21</sup> Hunter also refers to this vital change in the nature of the Movement. 'Starting with an admirable system of morality', he observes, 'they by degrees abandoned the spiritual element in their teaching, and strengthened their declining cause by appealing to the worst passion of human heart.'<sup>22</sup>

It will thus be seen that the masses, as was natural, were not interested in the purely religious aspect of the Movement. Its political and anti-Government appeal was something more tangible which they understood and were ready to follow. The change in the nature of the Movement thus led to a broadening of its appeal to the masses and an increase in its support.

A modern writer, while examining the nature of the various anti-English risings in India in the second half of the 18th and early 19th centuries, has made the following observation in regard to the Wahabi Movement. 'The popular basis of the Wahabi Movement stands vindicated by its well-knit and integrated organisation drawing recruits and money from the whole expanse of the country extending from Dacca to Peshawar. It has also to be admitted that of *all the Movements which the British rule in India called into existence the Wahabi Movement was the most remorselessly anti-British and this sequence was maintained in all their activities . . .*'<sup>23</sup>

The Wahabi Movement had two main features—socio-religious and political. The former involved the reformation of the Muslim society while the latter related to the fight against the English. The important point to be

attempts to win them over, or to 'tamper their allegiance', as the contemporary official records put it.

Another significant contribution of the Wahabi Movement was that it set off a reaction, symbolised by Sir Syed, which advocated the adoption of Western education and technology by the Muslims. The Wahabi Movement was not only politically directed against the English, but in common with many other revivalist movements one of the essential elements of its teaching was an emphasis on the restoration of the idyllic past. This necessarily implied an indifference to and a boycott of the modern ways and methods. While the need for a return to the purer past was admittedly great in the social and religious fields, the Wahabis ignored many other important realities of the contemporary society.

The political supremacy of the English, which was merely a symbol of the material and technological superiority of the West, and which had come to stay in India, was one such reality. It had to be met with and countered : but how ? By boycotting and opposing it, or by assimilating it, as the Japanese had done ? The Wahabi Movement gave no clear answer to this vital question, but on the whole its actions seemed to be guided by the former attitude—which had failed to deliver the goods. Sir Syed stood for the other method, that of assimilation. It has, however, to be remembered that the Movement of Sir Syed, the precursor of all modern social and educational reforms among the Muslims, came into being as a reaction against the Wahabi Movement, and to that extent owed its origin to it.

As regards the failure of the Movement, politically, one of its main cause was the frequent defection and intermittent hostility of the tribesmen. On account of certain considerations, discussed earlier, Syed Ahmad had selected the Frontier area as the base of his operations. Many of

these considerations were quite sound in theory. However, one important basis of his calculations,—the hope of winning over not only the support but the active co-operation of the tribesmen—was sadly belied by the subsequent events. Instead of the expected sympathy and support of the tribes he encountered veiled hostility and also open resistance.

The supreme tragedy of the Wahabi Movement was the failure of the tribesmen to realise the true spirit of the Movement and to give their real and continuous support to its leaders. For this the Wahabis certainly were not at fault. Right from the time of Syed Ahmad they had exhibited an extraordinary forbearance and perseverance in their dealings with the tribesmen. Again and again they were betrayed by the tribesmen with terrible losses in men and money, and yet they forgave them. They tried in vain for over half a century to inculcate among these tribesmen a sense of unity of purpose and sacrifice for freedom, by preaching as well as by action,—but all these were of no avail. The facile, but futile, argument has often been advanced, mostly by the English writers and following them by some modern writers too, that it was the puritanical zeal of the Wahabis which alienated the sympathies of the tribesmen. But there is no evidence to warrant the conclusion that the attitude of the tribesmen would have been any different if the so-called puritanical measures had not been followed. On the contrary, right from the beginning, when the Wahabis were simply powerless to enforce any strict regulation on their own the tribesmen exhibited an erratic and at times treacherous attitude in their dealings with the former. This was due mainly to the fundamentally different mental attitude of the Wahabis and the tribesmen towards the Movement. Tribal people are loyal only to their chiefs and are, usually, influenced more by ties of kinship than of religion or other wider considerations. The tribesmen never really had the selfless and dedicated zeal with which the Wahabis were actuated. They always remained

at heart opportunists and mercenaries. Had they realised, even remotely, the real issues involved in the struggle they would surely have managed to do with some of the supposedly puritanical measures (granting the usual version of strict measures enforced by the Wahabis) 'imposed' upon them. But the real failure of the Wahabis was their inability to impart to the tribesmen even a fraction of the zeal and idealism which moved them and to raise them to their own standards of action. It is true, that in all movements, the rank and the file are not always enthused to the same extent as the leaders. But in this case, except for the solitary and brilliant case of the Syeds of Sittana, the tribesmen never really imbibed the true spirit of the Movement for any length of time. It was this which rendered the Wahabis increasingly dependent on the support from their Indian centres—the Achilles heel of the Wahabis.

The virtually complete dependence of the Wahabis on their centres in India for all sorts of material support constituted the second important cause of their failure. These centres were completely at the mercy of the English authorities and could be suppressed and even rooted out altogether without much effort on their part.

The securing of a safe and short line of supply, easily defensible, is one of the elementary principles of military strategy and the Wahabis must surely have realised the great risks involved in having a supply-line not only thousands of miles long but *running right through the enemy's territory*. Secrecy and fidelity alone, howsoever meticulously maintained, could not have saved it for long. The Wahabis realised this very much but there was no way out for them, at least for some time.

The Wahabi Movement laid great emphasis upon the 'obligation' of all the able-bodied men to migrate to the Frontier; almost all the Wahabi pamphlets are full of

exhortations to that effect. At the same time they gave option to those who, for some reasons, could not migrate *just then* to extend financial help to the Movement until they were in a position to migrate. Thus there developed a powerful group of financial helpers of the Movement in India. The Wahabis, perhaps, intended that as soon as they had consolidated their position on the Frontier they would become independent of the aid from the Indian centres. But that stage never came.

Finally, the failure of the Wahabis to develop material resources even remotely matching those of their adversaries was another important cause of their failure. Sheer enthusiasm and spiritedness, howsoever essential for the success of a mission, could never be a total substitute for material resources. In this the Wahabis, as the whole of the Orient in the 18th and 19th centuries, were powerless victims of circumstances beyond their control. The Industrial Revolution and the subsequent technological advancements had made available to the West material resources, particularly instruments of war, far superior to anything that the Orient could hope for procuring in the near future. The crude powder manufactory of the Wahabis at Malka and the even cruder hand-made guns of bamboo sticks could never be a match for the just invented Enfield Rifles which were used for the first time in the Frontier during Cotton's Expedition of 1858. In the final analysis it was this material superiority of the West which proved to be the deciding factor in the struggle against the Wahabis. It had proved to be the deciding factor in many bigger and more fundamental conflicts between the East and the West, ranging from the Opening of China and the defeat of the decaying Mughal Empire to the suppression of the Movement of 1857. The Wahabis too fell a victim to it. The tragedy of the situation lay in the fact that the significance of this crucial factor, demonstrated again and again from the 18th century onwards, was never fully realised either by the leaders of



the Movement of 1857 or by the Wahabis. When the significance of a factor itself is not realised the question of taking remedial measures against it, naturally, does not arise.

## REFERENCES

1. See Appendix VI.
- 1.A. C. R., Vol. 51 (1870), pp. 385 ff, contain a detailed discussion of this subject.
2. Vide infra ; Also Appendix VI.
3. P.U. ms. copy, p. 129. Italics are mine.
4. *ibid.*, pp. 102-103. Italics are mine.
5. *ibid.*, p. 81. Italics are mine.
6. *ibid.*, p. 99. Italics are mine. Also see Appendix VI for comments.
7. *ibid.*, pp. 102-103. See full text of the letter in Appendix VIII.
8. J. R. A. S., Bombay, Vol. XIV, p. 363.
9. Mehr, III, p. 55 ; Selections, p. 71.
10. I. M., p. 142.
11. The Review, published separately, was reproduced extensively in Graham's *Life and Works of Sir Syed Ahmad*, London, 1885, pp. 205-244, from which the following extracts have been taken.
12. *Sawanih Ahmadi*.
13. Mehr 1, pp. 251-266. Also see article, entitled *Political Significance of the Movement of Syed Ahmad Bareilvi*, by S. H. Askari in I.R.H.C. Progs. Vol. XXX I, 1955, pp. 174-181.
14. Vide Appendix VI.
15. Bellew, op. cit., p. 84.
16. Oliver, op. cit., p. 288.
17. *ibid.*, p. 290. Italics are mine.
18. P.U. ms. copy, pp. 23, 28, 30, 37, 79, 102, 108-109, etc.
19. *Supra*. p. 36.
- 19A. I.M., p. 68.
20. J.R.A.S., Bombay, Vol. XIV, p. 362.
21. *ibid.*
22. I.M., p. 69.
23. S. B. Chaudhri, *Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India*, Calcutta, 1955, p. 50. Italics are mine.
24. See Appendix VII.
25. Vide *supra*, p. 149.

## APPENDIX I

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF SOME IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE SADIQPUR FAMILY

The contributions of the members of the Sadiqpur family to the growth and development of the Wahabi Movement are substantial and of considerable significance. The names of Wilayat Ali, Enayat Ali, Ahmadullah, Yahya Ali, Abdul Rahim and Abdullah, to mention only the most prominent ones, are well known in this connection. At the same time many other members of the family also rendered services to the Movement which, even if less known and less spectacular, were none the less motivated by the same selfless zeal and sincerity. Their periods of time varied as also the extent and nature of their contributions. Brief biographical sketches of some of these persons, based on the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*, are given below.

*Elahi Bux*<sup>1</sup> was the son of Shaikh Hedayat Ali of village Mehdawan (near Maner). He was born in A.H. 1201 (1786 A.D.). He was married to Bibi Latifan, the daughter of Shah Muiz of Nanmohia, Patna City. Through the efforts of his maternal uncle, Abdul Ali, he got a high post in the employment of the Nawab of Murshidabad, but later resigned his job and returned to his home. For his services he was granted two very large *mauzas* (villages), viz., Bhuye<sup>2</sup> and Bijay Gopalpur.<sup>3</sup> He invited Syed Ahmad to his house and got his sons 'initiated,' but did not take *Bai'at* himself for some reasons. Subsequently, he took *Bai'at* on Wilayat Ali's hands. He also got his widowed daughter, (wife of Qamruddin, who died on the Frontier) Jamilat-un-Nisa, remarried to Wilayat Ali. He sent three of his sons, Fayyaz Ali, Yahya Ali and Akbar Ali with Syed Ahmad at the time of his departure. The other two, Ahmadullah and Waliullah, stayed back at Patna. Elahi Bux was described by Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna in 1857, as the leader of the Wahabis in Patna. He died at the ripe age of 74 in A.H. 1275 (1859 A.D.) and was buried in the cemetery attached to the Nanmohia mosque.

He was an important personality of the town and was a noted philanthropist and patron of books. He inherited a valuable collection of books in which he himself made

important additions. The library was inherited by his eldest son, Ahmadullah, but was partly confiscated and partly got dispersed at the time of his arrest.<sup>4</sup> Elahi Bux was a famous physician but did not practise as a professional; rather he distributed free medicine. He was also well versed in military training.

*Ahmadullah*<sup>5</sup> was the eldest son of Elahi Bux and was born in A.H. 1223 (1808 A.D.). He had his early education from Wilayat Ali and other members of the family. He was married to one of the daughters of Muhammad Husain. He had six sons and two daughters from the first marriage. Later, he married again and had a son from the second wife. His eldest son, Hakim Abdul Hamid, was one of the most famous physicians of India in his time. Like his father, Ahmadullah, too, was an important luminary of the social and official circle of the city. In a reply to a query from the Government of India, relating to the list of Oriental works printed in Patna and the literary taste of the populace, the Collector, A. Littledale, wrote<sup>6</sup> that he had met Maulvi Ahmadullah 'one of the most learned native gentlemen in the city' whom he considered a good authority on the subject and according to his opinion the Collector understood that the 'taste for literature had rather decreased than otherwise'. He was on terms of friendship with local government officials as well as the prominent men of the city. He served in various public bodies and acted for sometime as a Deputy Collector and a member of the Board of Assessors for Income Tax. He was also appointed a member of the Patna Committee of Public Instruction.<sup>7</sup> In 1857 he was arrested by Tayler along with Shah Muhammad Husain and Waizul Haq of Gurhatta, Patna City, on suspicion of being one of the leaders of the Wahabis and of plotting against the Government. He was subsequently released after an internment of three months. This episode along with his eventual arrest and trial in 1865 has already been described.

*Fayyaz Ali*<sup>8</sup> was the second son of Elahi Bux and was born in A.H. 1233 (1818 A.D.). He, too, married one of the daughters of Shah Muhammad Husain. He had his early education from Wilayat Ali and took *Bai'at* from him and also accompanied him on the first journey to the Frontier and participated in the various engagements there. He returned with him in 1847 and again accompanied him on

the second journey. After Wilayat Ali's death he was recalled to Patna by Farhat Husain. For sometime he helped him in the organisational work in Bihar. He was temperamentally quiet and retiring. He seldom did public preaching. That was usually done by his younger brother, Yahya Ali. After the death of Farhat Husain he once again went to the N. W. Frontier and stayed there till his death. He died issueless.

*Yahya Ali* He was the youngest son of Elahi Bux, younger to Fayyaz Ali by 10 years. He was of medium height, fair complexion and fat build. He had a small beard and his face bore a few pox marks. He was married to Hamida, daughter of Shah Muhammad Husain. He took *Bai'at* from Wilayat Ali and was one of his *Khalifas*. He accompanied Wilayat Ali to the Frontier on both the journeys and returned to Patna after the former's death in 1852. He was a valiant fighter and many stories of his courage in the face of great danger are narrated in the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*.

It was during the twelve years (1852-63) of his stay in Patna that Yahya Ali played the most important role of his life. He took charge of the Central organisation at Patna after the death of Shah Muhammad Husain. On each Friday he used to go to Nannohia, (where Muhammad Husain lived) a short distance away from Sadiqpur, where he led the congregational prayers, met the disciples and discussed various matters; returning late at night to Sadiqpur. On Tuesdays he delivered lectures in the house of Wilayat Ali. He also gave lessons in theology and other subjects to new recruits coming from distant places. During the period was the guiding head of the highly secret and complex organisation at Patna for supply of men and materials to the Frontier. His correspondences during the period were carried on, for obvious security reasons, under the assumed name of Mohiuddin.<sup>19</sup> He had five sons and a daughter from his first wife and one son from the second.

The copy of the *Tazkira-i-Sadqa* which I have used contains a copy of a letter, dated Sunday 21, Jamadi I, 1866,<sup>20</sup> which Yahya Ali wrote to his wife on hearing the news of the demolition of the Sadiqpur house. The letter, the only one of its kind now left, is of considerable human value and importance. After the usual salutations and

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references to previous letters, Yahya Ali wrote, 'I want matter to write about is that I learnt from the letter of Muhammad Hasan, (May he live long), about the demolition of both the houses. My heart was grieved and I was deeply shocked (to hear it) because these were our ancestral houses and the more so because recitation of God's name and performances of his commandments were so often done there (As such) true *Momins* loved them as their kith and kin.' The letter then mentions a dream in which Yahya Ali saw a vision of the Prophet who consoled him that God tests the allegiance and faith of his true believers and those who come out successful in the test are graced with eternal bliss, that just as the mosque of *Aqsa* was temporarily destroyed by the enemies of God, but was ultimately rebuilt and its destroyers vanquished, so shall the destroyers of their house come to grief and the house shall be rebuilt once again.

*Waliullah* was the second son of Elahi Bux. He, however, could not render much service to the Movement like his three brothers as he became mentally deranged at an early age. He died at the age of fifty.

*Fatah Ali*<sup>19</sup> Like Elahi Bux, whose contemporary he was, Fatah Ali, too was blessed with a number of sons who achieved high distinction in the history of the Movement. He was the son of Waris Ali and a descendent, from the maternal side, of the famous saint of Bihar, Hazrat Ahmad *Chirmposh*. He was also connected with the illustrious saintly family of Hazrat Sharfuddin, the well-known 14th Century saint of Bihar. There was considerable vogue of initiation and discipleship in his house, on the usual pattern of the *Khanqahs*, but on the occasion of Syed Ahmad's arrival at Patna he invited him to his house and took *Bai'at* along with his three sons. This was done largely through the persuasion of his eldest son, Wilayat Ali. He also expressed a desire to accompany Syed Ahmad on the journey to the Frontier but was persuaded to stay back on account of his advanced age. He died shortly after the battle of Balakote (1831 A. D.).

His first wife, a daughter of Shaikh Hedayat Ali of Mehdawan, died issueless soon after the marriage. He had six sons from his second wife, the daughter of Rafiuddin Husain Khan, a wealthy nobleman of Moghulpura,

Patna City. Of his six sons, two died young. The lives of the first two, Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali, have already been discussed. Talib Ali went to the Frontier and died there fighting. Farhat Husain remained at Patna in charge of the home centre.

Fatah Ali, too, had a valuable collection of books and manuscripts which were all confiscated at the time of the arrest of his grandson, Abdul Rahim.

Talib Ali was the younger brother of Wilayat Ali. He took Bai'at on Syed Ahmad's hands and accompanied him to the Frontier where, after participating in some of the earlier engagements, he died of pleuresy in Chinglai.

Farhat Husain<sup>14</sup> was born in A. H. 1226 (1811 A.D.) He was a man of small height, fair complexion and thin build. He had a small beard, close-knitted eyebrows and a red mole on his forehead between the two eyebrows. He was married to the daughter of Shah Muhammad Husain. His son, Abdul Rahim, the author of *Tazkira-i-Sadqa*, was born out of his first marriage. Later, he married twice. He died in 1274 A. H. (1857-58) at the age of 48.

He held charge of the organisation at home and acted as the *Khalifa* of Wilayat Ali during his various absences from Patna. Daily meetings were held in his house where lectures were delivered on different subjects of a religious and social nature. Women also attended such meetings. They were lectured separately by him and sometime by his wife. The house also served as a Madrasa where a large number of students took their courses in different subjects. Many of the classes were taken by Yahya Ali also. The boarding and lodging expenses of the students were met out of the common fund.

On the eve of the Patna Rising,<sup>14</sup> Pir Ali and other leaders of the Rising approached Farhat Husain, the leader of the Wahabis, to join hands with them.<sup>15</sup> The reasons why he did not do so as also the general attitude of the Wahabis to the Movement of 1857-58 have already been examined.

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Abdullah<sup>16</sup> was the son of Wilayat Ali, born from his second wife, Muradun Nisa. He was born in Hyderabad in A.H. 1246 (1830-31 A.D.). He accompanied his father

during his various journeys to the Frontier and took part in the different engagements there. After his return to Patna in 1847, he devoted himself to his studies. During that time he was married to the daughter of Farhat Husain.

After the death of his father he did not pull on well with his uncle, Enayat Ali, and returned to Patna. He stayed with Farhat Husain for the next five years and assisted him in the organisational work. On the death of Farhat Husain he set out on a journey for pilgrimage along with his two sons and two brothers. From Hedjaz he returned to Afghanistan and then proceeded to Swat to meet Syed Akbar Shah, the old patron and host of the Wahabis on the Frontier. He was elected as the leader of the Wahabi colony there. The Ambeyla Campaign was fought under his leadership. He died in A.H. 1320 (1902 A.D.) and was succeeded by his brother, Abdul Karim. He was noted for his expert knowledge of fort construction, gunmanship and riding.

*Abdul Rahim*" was the son of Farhat Husain and was born on the 14th *Shabaan*, A.H. 1252 (1836 A.D.). He had his early education from the various elders of the family, such as Fayyaz Ali, Abdul Hamid, etc. After the death of his father and the departure of Abdullah to the Frontier the weight of organisational work at home fell, jointly, on Yahya Ali's and his shoulders. Along with the former he was tried in the Ambala Case and was imprisoned for life. After serving 18 years of his term his sentence was reprieved in 1883 and he returned to Patna only to find the ancestral house demolished beyond recognition and the members of the family scattered and dispersed. Even the family graveyard" which had been in use for the past fourteen generations was not spared. Political surveillance over his activities continued even after his release and he had to report fortnightly to the Police.

He found the life, both among his own relations as well as in the city, changed beyond recognition during the past 20 years of his internment. He felt himself alone and unhappy in this new world which had become, to him, if anything a little more irreligious and immoral. He felt lonely and unhappy in the changed environment. He, therefore, sought Government's permission to go to Haj which was granted to him after considerable difficulties. Police surveillance on him continued right upto Bombay

and Hedjaz, where he was asked to report to the British Consul. He performed another *Haj* subsequently in A.H. 1310.

After his return from the Andamans he resumed the broken thread of his domestic life. He had several issues during this time and performed the marriages of several of his children. It was also during this period that he prepared the biographical account of the members of his family which is better known as *Tazkira-i-Sadqa* and which is one of the most important printed sources on the history of the Movement. He died at the ripe old age of 92 in 1923.

*Baqar Ali* was the first cousin of *Wilayat Ali*, being the son of *Basharat Ali*, the brother of *Fatah Ali*. His father died when he was young and he was brought up by his uncle. During the early years of *Syed Ahmad's* stay in the Frontier, *Baqar Ali* was incharge of the work of the distribution of rations.<sup>19</sup> He assisted *Muhammad Wali Phulti* in the general work of procurement, storage and distribution of provisions. He had the distinction of being the first to lay down his life in the cause which he had taken up. He fell fighting in the battle of *Akora* on the 30th December, 1826. He was only 19 years of age at the time.

*Qamruddin Husain* was the son of *Ruknuddin Husain* and the grandson of *Rafiuddin Husain Khan* of *Mughalpur*, *Patna City*. He was married to the sister of *Ahmadullah*. Having accompanied *Syed Ahmad* to the Frontier he was deputed with *Mazhar Ali* when the latter was appointed *Qazi* of *Peshwar*. He, too, fell a victim with *Mazhar Ali* to the coup of *Sultan Muhammad*. His widow was re-married to *Wilayat Ali*.

*Abdul Ali* was the son of *Iradutullah* of *Sadiqpur*. He held the post of a judge in *Patna* during the administration of *Nawab Muzaffur Jang* of *Bengal*. He was a man of saintly habits and charitable disposition. He was given many rewards and a robe of honour by the *Nawab* but he distributed them all to the poor and needy. He met his own expenses by copying and selling copies of the *Quran*. He also took *Bai'at* on the hands of *Syed Ahmad* when he visited *Patna*. He is mentioned as one of the addressees



in Syed Ahmad's letter to the Sadiqpur leaders. He died at an advanced age of nearly 100 years in A.H. 1245 (1829-30 A.D.).

Mazhar Ali,<sup>20</sup> although not belonging to the Sadiqpur family, was one of the important local leaders of the Movement and a brief account of his early life will not be out of place here. He had taken *Bai'at* on Syed Ahmad's hands, probably, before the latter's arrival in Patna. During his stay in Patna Syed Ahmad is said to have stayed for sometime with Mazhar Ali.

Mazhar Ali was a zealous and intrepid follower of the Movement. He was once prosecuted for having destroyed a *Tazia* being taken out in procession. On being released on bail he fled to Gorakhpur. Later, when he met Syed Ahmad, the latter reprimanded him for having put his security holder in a wrong position by fleeing away and directed him to go back. He obeyed the instruction, but the case was dropped soon after he arrived.

He accompanied Syed Ahmad to the Frontier where he took part in the various engagements. He was especially cited by Shah Ismail for his bravery in the battle of Mardan. When Peshawar was occupied in 1830 and restored to its defeated chief, Sultan Muhammad, Syed Ahmad left Mazhar Ali as his representative there. He was also appointed as the *Qazi* and Censor of Public Morals. Both these posts were of key importance under the roughly improvised system of government established by the Wahabis and his appointment bears testimony to his piety and learning as well as the trust and confidence reposed in him by Syed Ahmad. During his stay in Peshawar he sensed the perfidious design of Sultan Muhammad and the impending treacherous coup. He wrote a full account of the state of affairs to Shah Ismail. The latter in the course of a long letter<sup>21</sup> replied to the various false accusations of the partisans of Sultan Muhammad which were conveyed to him by Mazhar Ali. He could have come out of Peshawar well in time to save his life but he stayed on to get a fuller idea of the ominous developments and to report them to his chief until it was too late. He was murdered in cold blood during the treacherous *coup* of Sultan Muhammad.

## APPENDIX II

### A RARE AND UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF SYED AHMAD

There are many existing Collections of the Letters of Syed Ahmad, both published and in manuscript. This letter is, however, not present among any of these. It is addressed specially to the members of the Sadiqpur family and as such it is quite in fitness of things that its copy was found among the old papers of that family.<sup>1</sup>

It is a letter addressed, jointly, to all the important members of the Sadiqpur family and other 'Momins from the district of Patna.' Unfortunately, the copy is undated. However, a rough idea of its date can be formed from its contents. It was written sometime after the departure of Wilayat Ali and Enayat Ali from the Frontier. This event could not have occurred later than 1828 or the end of 1827 for Abdullah, the son of Wilayat Ali from his second marriage in Hyderabad, was born there sometime in A.H. 1246 (1830-31 A.D.). Allowing time for the journey from the Frontier to the Deccan and Wilayat Ali's settling in Hyderabad and getting married, we can tentatively fix the time of his arrival in Hyderabad towards the middle of 1828 at the latest.

The full text of the letter, in English translation, is given below :

"From *Amir-ul-Momin*, Syed Ahmad, to the address of the Repositories of Knowledge and Enlightenment, the Abodes of Sincerity and Unity, *Maulanas* Abdul Ali, Fatah Ali, Elahi Bux, Akramul Haq, Waizul Haq, Mun'imul Haq, Muhammad Husain, Shaikh Ali Jan, Syed Jamal Ali, and other *Momins* of the city of Azimabad ;<sup>2</sup>

After Salutations and wishing well of you all, be it known that ;

Your letter arrived and its contents informed (me) of the state of affairs. Praise be to God, that I am well and am engaged, day and night, in promoting the mission and by grace of God ample help has been received for the

establishment of *Jehad* and the prosecution of war against the infidels. The *Momins* of this country, gentries, commoners and Syeds all are ready for the *Jehad* and for laying down their lives and have accepted the bond of obedience to me. God willing, the news of victory shall soon reach you.

Every living being is busy in obtaining the good grace of God, and for laying down his life for the Creator; the Love of Him is higher than the love for anything else. But the achievement of such higher degree of sincerity and devotion and the realisation of such a select (Spiritual) rank is difficult to achieve for the general mass of people. But this much is compulsory for anyone who is the follower of the *Din* (Islam) that in times of war between Light and Darkness and conflict between Islam and Infidelity they should act upon their sense of Islamic honour. Any one who in such an eventuality does not join the ranks of the *Ansars* is guilty of misdemeanour and anyone who shies away from such eventuality for fear of life is guilty of disfiguring his ill-fated forehead with (the mark of) separation from God.<sup>3</sup>

The victories of the *Mujahids* are a source of inspiration to *Momins* and heart burning to the *Munafiqs* (Hypocrites). Rest assured. As to what you had written about the Draft of Rs. 2,168 worth of Gold *Mohars*, sent to Shaikh Abdul Latif for transmission to me, the position is this; that a letter of the said Shaikh to the same effect and that he had also transmitted a Draft of Rs. 7,000/- to me has been received, but the said amount has not been received as yet. God willing it will reach (soon). Thus the amount sent by you gentlemen has been practically received. But it should be noted that the transmission of money had been suspended before this and nothing was received. Now by the grace of God an easy method for the transmission of money has been evolved. The sincere *Momins* should send (the money) to Maulana Ishaque<sup>4</sup> at Delhi; it will be sent to me from there. I have written him (Ishaque) of an easy and foolproof procedure. Two or three thousand rupees for the expenses of the *Majahids* have been accordingly received. Therefore, anyone desirous of sending money should get a draft sent to Maulana Ishaque in Delhi and from there it shall reach (me).

Maulvi Wilayat Ali, Muhammad Zaki, Shaikh Baqar Ali and Qamruddin Husain and Shaikh Ali Jan had also written. These will be acknowledged at the time of the receipt of the transmitted amount. Rest assured. I had sent (earlier) Wilayat Ali towards the Deccan for the performance of the task. Maulvi Enayat Ali also left for that district (Patna) in accordance with my wishes. The rest of the men from that district are all right, except Maulvi Talib Husain who died of natural death. It is an occasion of Patience and Perseverance (for his relatives). Hafiz Qutubuddin has been sent to that side (?) for instructing the *Momins* and the sincere ones. If he reaches that district (Patna) try to extend your help and co-operation to him. Salutations."

### APPENDIX III

#### KEY TO TERMS USED IN THE WAHABI CORRESPONDENCE AND THE ALIASES BY WHICH THE CHIEF CONSPIRATORS WERE KNOWN.<sup>1</sup>

Recruits for the war were called *Jehadis*, *Khidmutgars* (Servants) *Beoparies* (Merchants), *Musafirs* (Travellers), *Nargao* (Bullocks).

Bands of recruits were called *Kafilas* (Caravans), *Malka* and *Sittana* were spoken of as the *Bara* (Big) Godown and *Patna* as the *Chota* (Small) Godown.

A battle was called *Moquddama* (Suit or case in Court). God was spoken of as the *Mukhtar* or agent.

Gold *Mohars* were called large red rubies, large Delhi gold embroidered shoes and large birds.

Half *Mohars* were called small red beads and small gold embroidered shoes.

Remittances in *Mohars* were spoken of as rosaries of red beads.

• Drafts or *Hundies* were called white stones and the amounts intimated by the number of white beads, as on the rosary.

Remittances of money were spoken of as the price of books and merchandise.

The word *Kafila* was used to designate the premises belonging to the family of 'Sadiqpur Moulvies' in Patna City, and more particularly the part formerly occupied by Wilayat Ali and by Abdul Rahim.

#### WAHABI ALIASES

Ahmadullah, alias Ahmad Ali, Muhammad Ali or Ahmad Khan.

Abdullah, alias Baboo Sahib, Baboo Jan Khan Sahib, and Baboo Mian Jan Khan Saheb.

Fayyaz Ali, alias Basiruddin or Fayyaz Alam.

Isa, alias Ruhullah.

Hafiz Abdul Majid, alias Hafiz Saheb.

Abdul Kareem, alias Kareem Bux.

Yahya Ali, alias Mohiuddin.

Abdul Rahim, alias Mirza Rahim Beg.

Muhammad Shafi, alias Shafaat Ali.

Qazi Mian Jan, alias Muhammad Shakur or Abdul Rahman.

Christians or British Troops were called the heirs of *Hazrat Roohullah* (Jesus Christ).

#### APPENDIX IV

##### ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A JOINT LETTER ADDRESSED BY ABDULLAH AND SYED UMRAN TO A FRONTIER TRIBAL CHIEF ON THE EVE OF THE AMBEYLA CAMPAIGN

"After compliments, a large force of the infidels has arrived at Selim Khan, Yar Husain, and Shaikh Jana, with the object of plundering this country. It is therefore incumbent on you immediately on the receipt of this letter to gird your waist and proceed to Chumla and after

issuing notices to the other allies of the Pass (Ambeyla) to occupy Sirpati and Landai, that is the Chinglai valley, and maintain a firm hold of your position. You should not allow a moment's delay in carrying out the above instructions. Should however any delay occur, the evil-doing infidels will plunder and devastate the whole of the hilly tract—especially the provinces of Chumla, Bonair, Swat, etc.—and annex these countries to their dominions, and then our religion and worldly possessions would entirely be subverted. Consequently, keeping in consideration a regard for Islam, the dictates of faith and worldly affairs, you ought by no means to neglect the opportunity. The infidels are extremely deceitful and treacherous, and will, by whatever means they can, come into these hills, and declare to the people of the country that they have no concern with them, that their quarrel is with the Hindoostanees, that they will not molest the people, even as much as touch a hair of their head but will return immediately after having extirpated the Hindoostanees, and that they will not interfere with their country. They will also tempt the people with wealth. It is therefore proper for you not to give in to their deceit, or else, when they should get an opportunity, they will entirely ruin, torment, and put you to so many indignities, appropriate to themselves your entire wealth and possessions, and injure your faith. You will then obtain nothing but regret. We impress this matter on your attention.”<sup>1</sup>

Seal of  
Syed Umran

Seal of  
Abdullah

## APPENDIX V

A Case Record of some of the high-handed and arbitrary methods of J. H. Reily and N. Ghose, D.I.G. and S.I. Police, Special Dept., Lower Provinces.

In August, 1867, a complaint was filed against Nobokisto Ghose, S.I., Police, for having wrongly and maliciously instituted criminal proceedings against one, Tiloke Singh, for theft of some *Thalees* (brass plates) with a view to harassing and injuring the complainant. The complaint was heard in the court of E. Drummond,

Magistrate, Patna, who committed the accused Ghose to Session Trial on the 19th August.

The trial<sup>1</sup> was held in the court of W. Anslie, the Session Judge, who was assisted by a jury. The accused was charged with having wrongly instituted proceedings against the complainant with an intention to injure him.

The Jury held him guilty and sentenced him to rigorous imprisonment for one year and a fine of Rs. 100/-. The Judge concurred with the findings of the jury.<sup>2</sup>

The judgement of Anslie on the case is in the best traditions of an independent and fearless Judiciary keen and vigilant to uphold the equality before law of all men, high and low. Some relevant extracts from this judgement are given below as they indicate the high-handed and arbitrary methods of Reily and his subordinate minions of law.

'The order even of a Government, if such an order could be imagined, in this case is no authority for an act opposed to the written law of the land; much less the order of an inferior authority. If Mr. Reily has pledged himself to hold the prisoner scatheless let him redeem his pledge—with that I have no concern. That with which I am concerned is that the law should have its course, that the charge against the prisoner brought before this court being within the jurisdiction of this court should be tried to conclusion . . . It is nothing to me whether the prisoner is convicted or acquitted on the merits of the case, but it is my duty to dispose of the plea under which it is sought to stop the action of this court. I cannot believe and no sane man can believe that the Government ever directed or authorised Mr. Reily and his subordinate to apprehend every man accused of an offence by such an informant as Lakha Dusadh, without first satisfying themselves by independent testimony that his accusation was probably true . . . and then, not before, to take steps involving risks to the liberty, even perhaps to the life of their fellow-subjects, their equals before the law . . .

I must proceed to go on to notice the plea that the Special Police are not bound by those parts of the law relating to the General Police which refer to officers in

charge of a police station . . . Mr. Reily says he can give no idea of the authority vested in his Department he cannot even refer to the Government order constituting it. Now, I cannot believe he could not enlighten me a little if he would or that his memory is so defective as it appears in this trial; his position as the Head of such a Department forbids my believing this . . .

The case was not related to the Wahabis. But it occurred just on the eve of the commencement of the Wahabi investigations in 1868. The two chief actors in this drama were also the same as in the Wahabi enquiries. Their arbitrary and vindictive methods in this case, so bluntly castigated by the Judge, are typical of their subsequent proceedings. The case gives us an inkling of the arrogant attitude of Reily who considered that his Special Department was something above the normal laws of the country and that it conferred upon him unfettered powers of arresting and prosecuting all and sundry.

The case also explains the unusual excitement and anger of the Divisional Commissioner, Patna, over the deputation, by Reily, of a man with such tarnished reputation to Patna (the very place where he had been convicted) to carry on the investigations against the Wahabis.

## APPENDIX VI

Translations, in English, of the differing versions of some of Syed Ahmad's letters as published by Muhammad Jafar and as written in the MS. copy.

### *Sawanih Ahmadi*

### *Patna University MS.*

1. We may not have powers and resources like Ranjit Singh but who has told you that the Imam intends to proceed with this little force to Lahore? On the contrary he is trying day and night for increasing the resources of the Muslims (pp. 289-90).

We may not have powers and resources like those of Ranjit Singh and the Company, but who has told you that the Imam intends to proceed to Lahore and Calcutta with this little force? (The following sentence is the same) p. 99.



2. My real object is the establishment of *Jehad* against the Sikhs of the Punjab and not to stay in the countries of Afghanistan and Yagistan. p. 248.

My real object is the establishment of *Jehad* and carrying of war into *Hindustan* and not to stay on in the lands of Khorasan. p. 81.

3. The long-haired infidels (Sikhs) who have suzerainty over Punjab are very experienced, clever and deceitful. p. 261.

The *Christian infidels* who have gained possession over *India* are very artful, and deceptive. p. 39.

4. The ill-natured Sikhs and the ill-fated polytheists have gained control over the Western parts of India from the banks of Indus to the capital city of Delhi. p. 257.

The ill-natured *Christians* and ill-fated *Mushriks* have gained control over the various parts of *India* stretching from the banks of Indus to the shore of the Ocean which covers a distance of six months' journey. p. 36.

It will be noted that in No. 1 the two significant words, 'Company' and 'Calcutta' have been omitted after 'Ranjit Singh' and 'Lahore', respectively. In No. 2, '*Jehad* against the Sikhs' had been substituted for '*Jehad* in India'. In No. 3 'long-haired infidels' (Sikhs) has been substituted for 'Christian infidels' and in No. 4 'Delhi' has been substituted for the 'shores of the Ocean'; the following qualifying sentence, about the distance being of six months journey, has altogether been omitted, otherwise the sentence would have been self-contradictory.

## APPENDIX VII.

### A NOTE ON WAHABI PAMPHLETS AND SOME ANTI-WAHABI LITERATURE

The Wahabi Movement gave a great impetus to the growth of Urdu prose writing, particularly in Bihar<sup>1</sup>, which remained for a long time the main centre inside British India. The Movement was essentially a missionary and

preaching one and, like all such Movements, it made increasing use of the vernacular which was widely understood by the masses in its attempt to reach to a wider circle of people. The Wahabi leaders wrote and compiled a large number of pamphlets and booklets on different topics. Most of these related to religious and social topics—explaining the various religious theories in easy and simple language so that the general people could understand them for themselves. They also wrote about various religious and social ceremonies—emphasising the understanding of the true spirit behind them and not just the mechanical following of certain rituals.

The Wahabi writers were careful not to put any 'seditious' teaching in their writings. That was generally left for the itinerant preachers. Even then some over-zealous Government officials tried to find out sinister meanings in purely religious tracts. However, some of the Wahabi works such as the *Jehadnama* and the *Hariq-ul-Ashrar* preached the 'blessings' of fighting for one's religion and freedom.

The majority of the Wahabi pamphlets is not extant now. Since the Wahabis themselves were suspected to be anti-government their writings were also suspect. People were afraid to be found in possession of these 'dangerous' works and were only too eager to dispose them off. They were thus gradually destroyed.

During the course of my work in the Divisional Commissioner's (Patna) Office I came across a number of Wahabi pamphlets and also a few anonymous works, suspected to have been written by the *Sajjadah Nashin* of Phulwari Sharif. From the connected papers it appears that the Government regarded these publications as objectionable and they were probably proscribed. Some more pamphlets, both published and in manuscript, were discovered in private collections of papers belonging to persons in Patna and other places. Many of these were written by members of the Sadiqpur family while some are anonymous.

•  
A brief descriptive list of some of the Wahabi *Risalas*, as also some of the anti-Wahabi writings, is given below :<sup>2</sup>

The most famous and generally available collection of writing by the Sadiqpur leaders is the *Risail-i-Tisa* or Collection of Nine Essays, published from *Maktaba-i-Faruqi*, Delhi, p. 156.

As the name itself suggests, it is a collection of nine *Risalas* written by Wilayat Ali, Enayat Ali and Fayyaz Ali on different topics. Some of the *Risalas* are in Urdu and some in Persian (with their Urdu translation also given). One is in Arabic. The collection comprises the following :—

I. *Risala-i-Radd-i-Shirk* : Persian, pp. 1-29. It was compiled by Wilayat Ali and translated in Urdu by Elahi Bux. Both the texts are written on the same page with a line drawn between the two. The language is simple and idiomatic. It is a concise edition of the famous *Risala* of Shah Ismail, *Taqwi'at-ul-Iman*. This work was also published separately under the title of *Hedayat-ul-Tauhid* from the *Matba-i-Darul Saltanat*, Calcutta, A.H. 1314, p. 47.

II. *Risala-i-Amal-bil-Hadis* : Persian, pp. 30-45. Compiled by Wilayat Ali, with an Urdu translation by Elahi Bux in a simple and chaste Urdu. Both the texts are given in the same page as in No. I. It relates to different matters of Islamic jurisprudence.

III. *Arba'in-fil-Mahdi'in* : Arabic, with Urdu translation also given; pp. 46-63. Compiled by Wilayat Ali, it contains a collection of *Hadises* relating to the advent of the *Mahdi* or the Messiah. The tract is the product of the so-called theory of the 'Re-appearance of Syed Ahmad' which held sway among a section of the Wahabis for sometime.

IV. *Risala-i-Dawat* : Urdu, pp. 64-78. Written by Wilayat Ali, it calls upon the different sections of Indian Muslims to accept Syed Ahmad's teachings and offer *Bai'at*. Also some references to the theory of 'Re-appearance'.

V. *Risala-i-Taysir-us-Salat* : Urdu, pp. 79-87. Written by Wilayat Ali, it relates to the performance of the different kinds of *Namaz* (Prayers).

An undated manuscript copy of this *Risala* was discovered recently by me in the private collection of a gentleman of Surajgarha (Monghyr)—an important centre of the Wahabis in Bihar.

VI. *Risala-i-Shajra-i-ba-Samar* : Urdu, pp. 88-94. Written by Wilayat Ali, it is in refutation of some of the prevailing methods of the Sufi orders and the excessive veneration of *Pirs*.

VII. *Risala-i-But Shikan* : Urdu, pp. 94-106. Written by Enayat Ali. It is written in a satirical style heaping ridicule upon those who brought out *Tazias* and 'worshipped' them. There are also a few Urdu verses on the same subject.

VIII. *Risala-i-Mamba-ul-Fayuz* : Persian, pp. 106-138. It is a collection of some questions asked from Fayyaz Ali, relating to different religious topics and his replies thereto. These were originally published under the title of *Faizul-Fayuz*. Later on the Persian text along with its Urdu translation by Elahi Bux was published under the title of *Mamba-ul-Fayuz* and included in the present work.

IX. *Tibyan-us-Shirk* : Urdu, pp. 142-156. Written by Wilayat Ali, it is, in effect, a revised and enlarged edition of *Risala* No. I.

The collections of the late Maulvi Ghaffar Sahib of Sadiqpur also include some *Risalas* on different subjects, such as performance of prayers, widow's remarriage, *Jehad*, etc. Unfortunately, some of them are incomplete and it is not possible to find out the names of the authors or years and places of their publication. The following may be mentioned.

1. (i) *Risala-i-Namaz* :<sup>2a</sup> Urdu, pp. 1-17. (ii) *Tafsir-i-Sura-i-Fateha* : Urdu, pp. 18-28. Both these are bound together and were published from Misriganj Press, Calcutta, in Muharram A.H. 1268.

2. (i) *Risala-i-Namaz-ba-Mani* : Urdu, pp. 1-4. It relates to the performance of *Namaz*. (ii) *Risala-i-Jehadia* : Urdu verse, pp. 5-7. A full English translation of this versified composition was done by O'Kinealy and published in his above mentioned article in the Calcutta

Review, Vol. 51, (1870). (iii) *Risala-i-Nikah-i-Bewagan* :<sup>3</sup> Incomplete, only one page. Relates to widow's re-marriage.

3. *Hariq-ul-Ashrar* : published from *Matba-i-Muhammadi*, Delhi, A.H. 1283, p. 32. It comprises 256 *Khamsas*,<sup>4</sup> written diagonally in frames (with horizontal line under each). Each page has 6 *Khamsas*. They relate to different subjects—praise of *Jihad*, the heroic fighting of Shah Ismail, criticism of 'deceitful' *Pirs* and false guides, etc. The book was probably proscribed by the Government. A copy of it was found among the proscribed Wahabi pamphlets kept in the Divisional Commissioner Office, Patna.

4. There is also an unnamed *Risala* (Manuscript) by Zahurul Haq of Azimabad, emphasising the merits of earning one's own livelihood by learning some craft or profession. It refutes, on the basis of *Hadises*, the prevailing misconception among Muslims that certain professions like weaving, tailoring, etc. were inferior and below dignity. The author refutes this 'misconception' and asserts that all professions are equally noble in the eyes of God.

It may be recalled that there are repeated references in the history of the Movement that the large majority of the adherents of the Wahabi Movement belonged to the professional classes or were agriculturists. This *Risala*, defending the social status of these classes, is a very interesting one and the only one of its kind.

#### WAHABIS AND THE PHULWARI SHARIF KHANQAH

It is interesting to note that Phulwari Sharif, the well-known Sufistic centre of old standing and repute, was also suspected, during the period 1875-83, of being sympathetic to the Wahabis. Some of the Proclamations issued by the *Sajjadah Nashin* calling for aid for the Turks and some of their published works concerning purely religious matters also came under suspicion. In fact a comprehensive memorandum was prepared for the use of Government on the subject of the complicity of the 'Phulwari Moulvies' with the Wahabis. It observed that the 'conduct of the Phulwaree people bears a close resemblance with that of Wahabis' and that 'Phulwaree has begun to

walk exactly in the footsteps of Sadiqpur'. It recommended that Phulwari be made a subdivision and a Deputy Magistrate 'as experienced (in Wahabi-baiting) as Baboo Ishree Prasad' should be posted there.

Some of the works of the 'Phulwari Moulvies' which incurred the Government's displeasure were the following:

3. *Radd-i-Tuhfa-i-Muhabbat* : (Persian). It was written in refutation of an earlier publication, entitled *Tuhfa-i-Muhabbat*, by some 'Sunni Hanafi Muslims' levelling certain 'religious' charges against the Wahabis. An interesting point about the publication of this book is that it was published in contravention of Act XXV of 1867. Neither the name of the author nor that of publisher was given. However, the Government suspected the chief 'Moulvi of Phulwarisharif' to be its author. The Government issued a Notification announcing that anyone giving information about the author and publisher of the book would receive half the amount of the fine (Rs. 1,000/-) levied on the parties concerned under the above mentioned Act.

*Miyar-ul-Mazhab* by Maulana Syed Ali 'Azam Qadri of Phulwari published, first, in A.H. 1288, second edition from *Matba-i-Nizami*, Kanpur, A.H. 1292, Persian, p. 162.

*Uswa-i-Hasna* by Shah Muhammad Ali Habib of Phulwari. Published from *Matba-i-Muhammadi*, in 1292. Persian.

All these works are concerned primarily with matters of religion and jurisprudence. However, objection was taken to the fact that the authors of the last two works had used epithets such as 'Sun of Spiritualism', 'Prop of the Pious' and 'Moon of the Godly' for the chief of the Wahabis.

### ANTI-WAHABI WRITINGS

During the period following the Ambala and Patna Trials there was a general witch-hunting of all those who were suspected to be Wahabis. To 'expose' suspected Wahabis was a favourite and lucrative pastime. Some others took it upon themselves to bring out books and pamphlets pretending to be sober criticisms of Wahabi

teachings but which, really, were written in vulgar taste, heaping abuses upon the Wahabis.

A representative specimen of this type of writings is the 'Epitome of the History of the Wahabis' by Imdad Ali, Judge, Small Cause Court, Tirhut and Secretary of Bihar Scientific Society.<sup>5</sup> The author attempts to 'prove' that the Wahabis were 'excluded from Islam', 'have no connection with Islam' and are 'a faithless, wicked, treacherous and seditious people'.

The rub for writers of this class was that their ulterior motives were so transparently clear that the Government officials, for seeking whose favours these were written, themselves looked down upon such people and their writings. Commenting on the anti-Wahabi activities of Imdad Ali the Commissioner of Patna, in a note to the Magistrate, observed, 'My own view is that Imdad Ali is again humbugging and trying to bring himself into prominence as an exposé of Wahabis and Wahabism'.<sup>6</sup>

Some of the local newspapers and periodical journals also engaged themselves in scurrilous attack on Wahabis. One such paper, was the *Chasma-i-Ilm*, an Urdu paper published by Suraj Mul, Deputy Inspector, Patna Normal School. In its issue, dated 16th April, 1875, it published an article, entitled 'New Devices of Wahabees'. Its opening sentence was—'The Wahabees have in these days commenced to bring out their heads like rats from their holes . . .'

Another noted Wahabi-baiter was a local dignitary, Najmuddin, father of Qutubuddin and a close friend of Wilayat Ali, of Guzri, Patna City. He had written a work, entitled *Jawab-Dwazdah Guna*, which was published from the Muhammadan Press, Patna, sometime in 1878. It contained '12 Answers refuting the claims of Wahabis'. Forwarding a copy of this work to Maloney, the Commissioner, Patna, the author claimed that he had written it to 'check the wickedness of the Wahabis'. He went on to assure the Commissioner that 'I do not neglect to try to know every thing respecting the chief of Wahabees . . . Syed Wilayat Ali and I will ever do so'.

## APPENDIX VIII

A letter of Syed Ahmad to Raja Hindu Rao, brother in law of Maharaja Daulat Rao Sindhia of Gwalior.

From the Chief of the Faithful, Syed Ahmad, for the perusal of Raja Hindu Rao, of high birth and exalted rank, the mine of generosity and graciousness, the refuge of the men of the sword and the pen, master of treasuries and offices, possessor of troops and armies, and formulator of the policy of State and administration; may he enjoy power, authority and success and may he remain pleased and happy in life !

Let it be known after the expression of (my) feelings of concord and unity that I, the poor man, with a few servants of the Almighty Preserver of the World am engaged in the vicinity of Peshawar in discharging my services to the Faith of Islam, and supporting the cause of the followers of the Imam of the Prince of living creatures (Prophet), and am expecting the fruits of good efforts from the Court of the Giver of Gifts (God). It is obvious to your exalted self that *the alien people from distant lands have become the rulers of territories and times, and the traders and vendors of goods have attained the rank of sovereignty.* They have destroyed the dominions of the big grandees and the estates of the nobles of illustrious ranks, and their honour and authority have been completely set at naught. Since the men of dominion and politics are sitting quietly in the retreat of obscurity, consequently a few men of poverty and humility have been compelled to gird up the loin of courage. This group of weak people have risen up with a view to serving the cause of the Faith of the Cherisher of the Two Worlds, and are on no account motivated with worldly things and their highest pleasures. It is only to serve the cause of the Glorious God, and not because of a covetousness for wealth and property that they have risen up. As soon as the land of Hindustan is cleared of the alien enemies and the efforts of these people result in the achievement of their objective the rank and offices of the State and government would be handed over to the seekers (of these), and the roots of



*their power and authority would be strengthened.* These weak ones have only this much to seek from the nobles and grandees of high station, that they should heartily help and support the cause of Islam and remain as occupants of the throne of kingdom.

Although this group of *Derveshes* is, apparently, utterly destitute of resources yet they are happy and contented with the fostering care and protection of the Lord and Master which they enjoy. They abhor the desires and yearnings for rank and dignity, and are free from cupidity and avarice for wealth and property. They do not aim at the satiation of personal or carnal desires for the present or for the future. They would strengthen the basis of the government of all those ancient chiefs who would strive to help and support them.

As the bearer of this, Haji Bahadur Shah, acceptable to the Court of God, is one of the elder companions of this weak one, therefore, the task of furnishing the details and explaining these points has been entrusted to his truthful tongue. What else remains to be written except a repeated emphasis on your getting at the essence of this letter and realising the importance of the situation.

I would like to add that the Haji Saheb has since long been engaged in serving the cause of the religion of the Almighty and as such is unable to look to the interests and comforts of his family. As he is determined to accompany the Islamic Army in the future also he is not expected to come to the rescue of his family even in future. Accordingly, it is being written to your exalted self that his brother and son be provided for with jobs in your state so that the Haji Saheb may be engaged wholeheartedly in serving the cause of God. Salutation.

## REFERENCES

### Appendix I.

- T. S., pp. 41-42.
- Situated in Pargana Biswack. It had a gross annual income of Rs. 15,000/-.
- Situated in Pargana Shahpur, near Maner. Ahmadullah had 8 annas and 4 annas share in these two *mouzas*, respectively. All these were confiscated along with other properties of Ahmadullah after his conviction.
- A small part of this collection, being mostly books on Medicine, Logic and Philosophy, is still extant.
5. T. S., pp. 44-59.
  6. Letter from Collector, Patna, to B. J. Colvin, Commissioner, Patna Division, dated 2nd August, 1853.
  7. Selections, p. 113.
  8. T. S., pp. 61-63.
  9. *ibid.*, pp. 63-78.
  10. Selections, p. 162.
  11. Curiously enough the name of the month is from the Persian calender while the year is in Christian era.
  12. T. S., pp. 109-110.
  13. *ibid.*, pp. 141-45.
  14. Datta, K. K., *op. cit.*, pp. 81-88.
  15. T. S., p. 143.
  16. *ibid.*, pp. 146-150.
  17. *ibid.*, pp. 163-193.
  18. On its site now stands the Municipal Corporation Building, Patna City Circle.
  19. Mehr, III, p. 228.
  20. *ibid.*, pp. 166-69.
  21. *Sawanih*, pp. 810-11.

### Appendix II.

1. It belongs to the sons of the late Maulvi Abdul Ghaffar Sahab, referred to earlier.
2. Among the addressees *Maulvies* Abdul Ali, Fatah Ali, Elahi Bux, and Muhammad Husain were members of the Sadiqpur family and their life-sketches have been given above. Akramul Haque and his brother Waizul Haque originally belonged to Barh. Akramul Haque had taken *Bai'at* on Syed Ahmad at the time of his visit to Barh. Ali Jan was a resident of Dinapur who had taken *Bai'at* on Syed Ahmad when he visited Dinapur and continued to work for the Movement till much later.

3. At this stage there is an abrupt break in the continuation of the sentence and a line is drawn at the spot. In the following sentence the letter switches on from enunciation of general principles to particulars regarding transmission of money.

## Appendix III.

1. Selections, pp. 161-62.

## Appendix IV.

1. Paget and Mason, op. cit.

## Appendix V.

1. Record Room of the District Judge's Court, Patna : Bundle no. 1 (1867), Session Cases I-56.
2. The present record relates to the Session trial in which Ghose was convicted. But he was, probably, acquitted later, otherwise he could not have continued in service in 1868 and afterwards. However, his acquittal is not referred to in these papers.

## Appendix VII.

1. A detailed evaluation of the contribution of the Wahabis to the growth of Urdu prose in Bihar has been done by Prof. Akhtar Ahmad Grainwi in *Bihar men Urdu Zaban wa Adab ka Irtiqā*, Patna, 1957.
2. Also see I. M., pp. 66-67 for a list of some of the Wahabi pamphlets.
- 2A-3. Mehr (Vol. II, p. 479) mentions two *Risalas* of the same names as having been compiled by Syed Ahmad. He, however, gives no further particulars about the *Risalas* or any extract from them. So it is not possible to identify the present *Risalas* as being the same.
4. *Khamasa* is a form of Urdu poetry, each stanza having five verses.
5. It was translated in English by Musa Ali, Translator, Calcutta High Court. The original book is not present but a hand-written copy of the translation is present.
7. Commissioner's (Patna) note on a letter from the Magistrate, Muzaffarpur, dated 28th Febr. 1871.
8. Letter from Syed Najmuddin to E. W. Maloney, Commissioner, Patna, dated 12th March 1878.

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These form a separate and important but neglected source-material. Many of these were previously proscribed by the Government soon after their publication and have been 're-discovered' in different Government offices. Some have also been found in private collections at different places in the Province, particularly in Surajgarha (Mon-ghyr district), a noted centre of the Movement. For details Appendix VII may be seen.

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