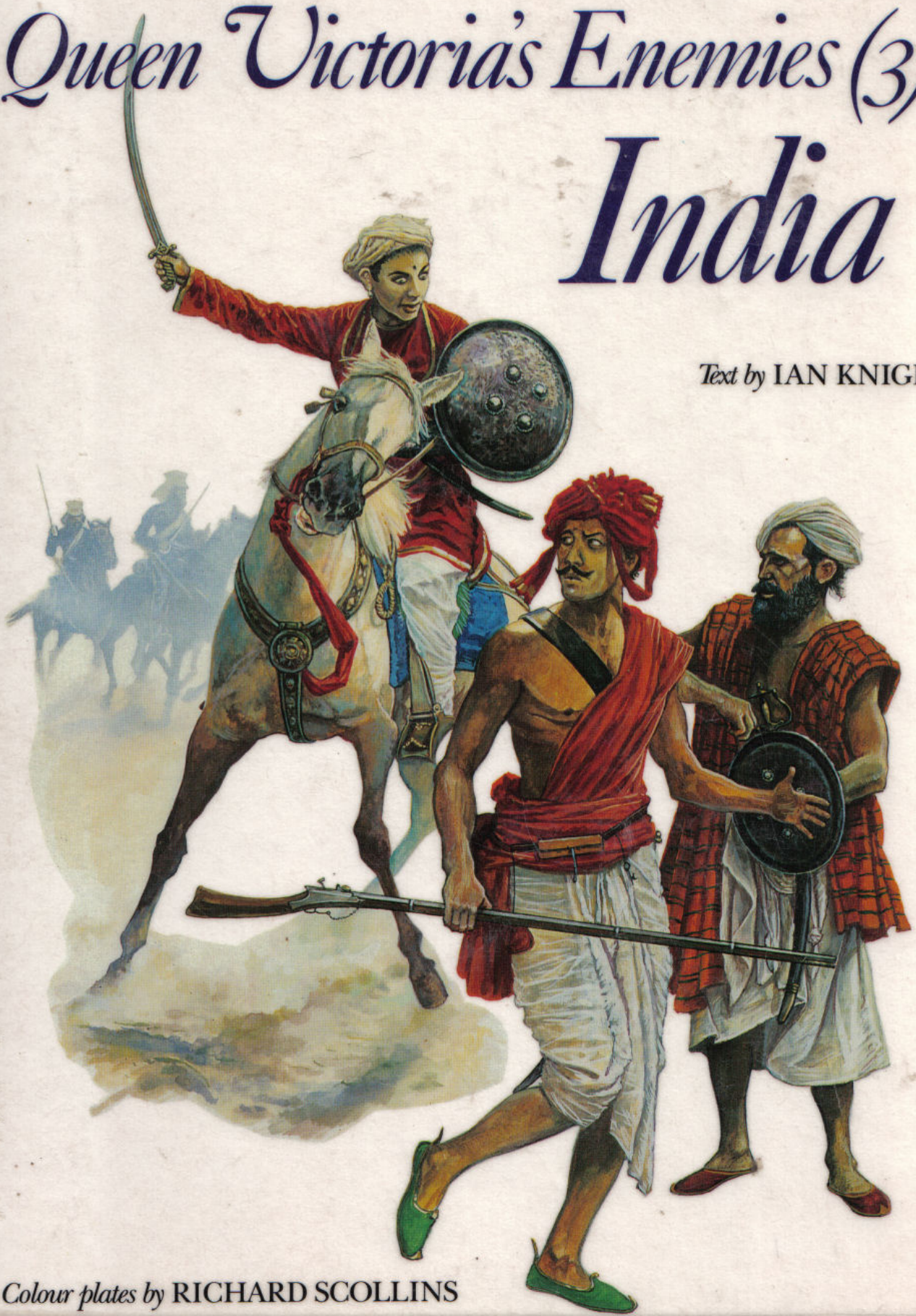
Queen Victoria's Enemies (3): India

Text by IAN KNIGHT



Colour plates by RICHARD SCOLLINS

MEN-AT-ARMS SERIES

EDITOR: MARTIN WINDROW

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Note
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Queen Victoria's Enemies (3): India

Introduction

On the last day of January 1600 Queen Elizabeth I affixed her great seal to the Royal Charter of the 'Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies'. At that time the Company was just one of several similar European concerns, bitter rivals in the competition for the spice trade, who maintained toeholds on the fringes of the Indian sub-continent at the tolerance of the Mughal Emperors. Yet the Mughals—descendants of the Asiatic hordes of Genghiz Khan—who had overrun India during the 15th century, were entering a period of decline, and warring Indian princes and their European allies were poised to step into the vacuum. Thus did the British East India Company develop from being a purely trading concern to an agent of Empire. By the time a former clerk in Company employ, Robert Clive, ousted the French *Compagnie des Indes* at Plassey in 1757, the Company was already established as a power in its own right, with a locally raised private army. In the late 18th century, it overthrew the Muslim Sultans of southern India; and in 1818 it broke the Maratha confederacy of the north and west. The last Mughal Emperor was reduced to the rôle of Company pensioner, with no power beyond the walls of his palace in Delhi.

By the time Queen Victoria came to the throne, India—some 1,600,000 square miles, ranging from soaring mountains to deserts and jungle swamps, populated by 400,000,000 people with a kaleidoscope of different cultures and religions—was firmly in the grip of a handful of Company administrators, either ruling directly, or through Indian nominees. Britain was preoccupied with the security of this 'brightest jewel' in her crown, and it shaped the development of her Empire around the world, from as far afield as Africa and China. The need to police India itself would provide employment for the armies of the Company's three so-called presidencies—Bengal, Madras and Bombay—as well as a garrison of British regular troops, known as the 'Queen's Regiments', to distinguish them from the Company's forces.

Throughout the 19th century the Company was concerned about its north-western borders. The great wall of the Himalayas ran across the north of India, providing a geographical barrier to would-be invaders from China and Tibet. A

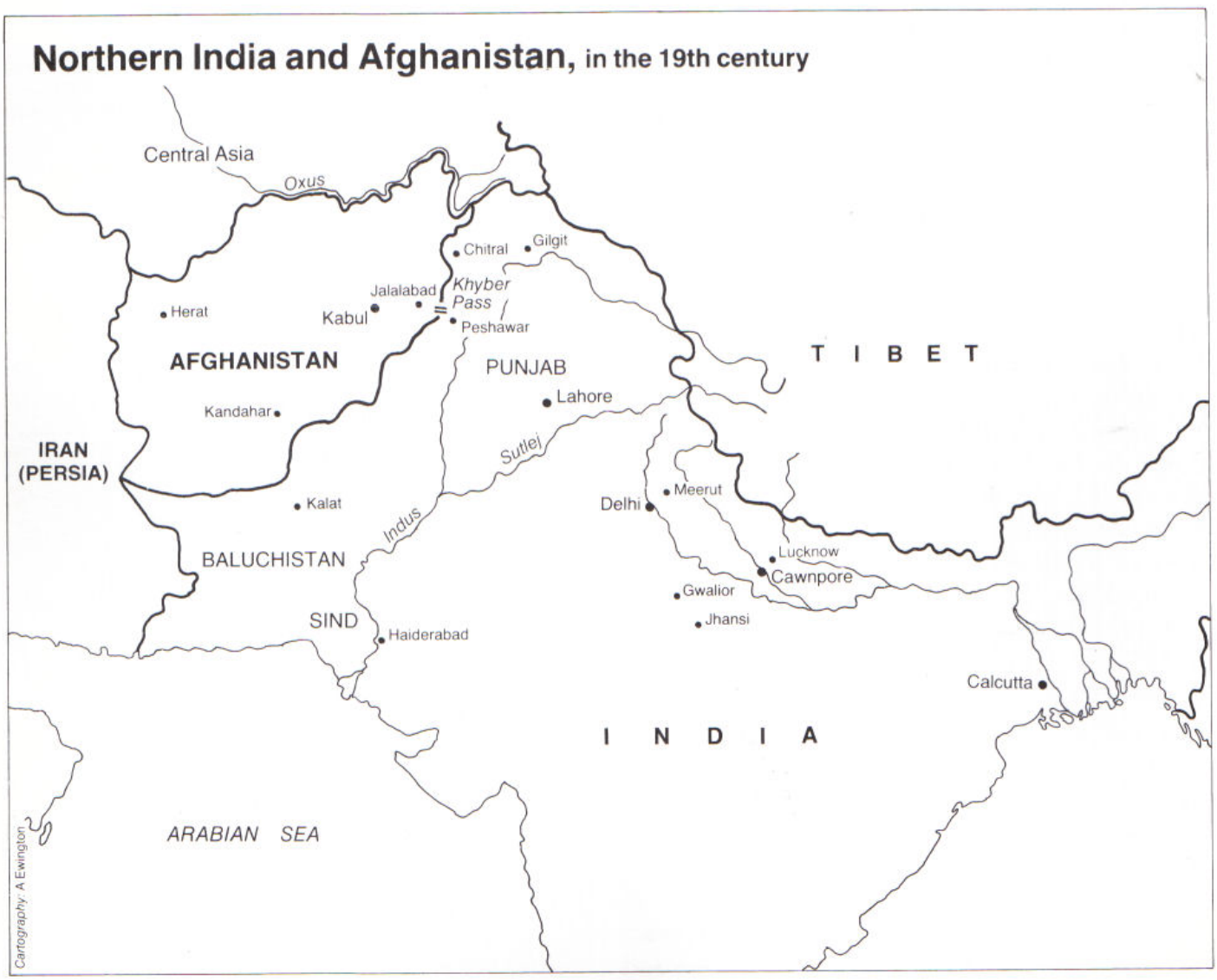
An Afghan in summer dress, c.1840. The typical loose *angarka* tunic and baggy trousers are clearly visible; note the ornate *jezail* and the long *chora* knife worn in the cummerbund. (National Army Museum)

successful campaign against Burma in 1824 extended Company influence beyond India's eastern boundary. On the opposite side of the country, however, the situation was far from secure; and the Company's search for a policy in the west embroiled it in a string of military campaigns, which included one of the worst disasters ever to befall a British army.

Afghanistan 1839-42

In the 1830s Company rule in one form or another extended west to a line running roughly north-south down the Sutlej river and along the Indus to the Arabian Sea. Across the Indus lay the independent Amirates of the province of Sind, and beyond the Sutlej was the fertile plain of the Punjab, ruled by the Sikh kingdom of Lahore. Further west, the land rose steeply to the great Afghanistan massif, where the peaks of the Hindu Kush rose to 20,000 feet.

Afghanistan was a wild and turbulent country, whose mountain passes had been the traditional gateway to India for invaders across the centuries, from Alexander the Great to the Mughals themselves. And it was from this direction that the Company feared any threat to its Indian possessions might come, for beyond Afghanistan's northern border, the River Oxus, lay the wastes of central Asia controlled by the Russian empire. Over 2,000 miles of some of the most inhospitable country in the world lay between the Sutlej and the nearest Russian outposts on the Oxus, and the Russian menace could scarcely seem more remote. And yet, in the 1830s, Russian policy was looking increasingly south, and as early as 1826 she had



defeated Iran (Persia) and supplanted British influence at the court of the Shah. Russian intervention in Iran posed a threat to neighbouring Afghanistan; indeed, in 1837 the Shah, with Russian support, launched his armies against the Afghan border town of Herat. When, a year later, a Russian adventurer made his way to the Amir of Afghanistan's court at Kabul, claiming to be an envoy from the Tsar, the Company's alarm bells began ringing, and the British took a careful look at the state of their western borders.

The situation was not encouraging. The Punjab was under the firm grip of the able and astute Sikh leader Ranjit Singh, who professed friendship to the Company; but the ability of the Sikhs to resist a Russian advance was questionable, and Ranjit Singh was an elderly man—it was impossible to predict the conditions which would follow his death. South across the Indus, the three Amirates of Sind lacked any form of secure government. Afghanistan itself had only recently emerged from a period of anarchy following the overthrow of the Amir Shah Shuja in 1809. The leader who had surfaced from the notoriously cut-throat world of Afghan palace politics was Dost Mohammed, who was strong and capable, but tainted in Company eyes by his apparent inability to halt Russian encroachment. Clearly, the Company would have to act to shore up its western boundaries, and Afghanistan, India's logical geographical boundary, was the obvious place to start. If a client regime could be established at Kabul, then the Russians could be stopped short long before the Indus.

Such a policy was not without its supporters on the frontier. Ranjit Singh had long been engaged in a territorial struggle in the Afghan foothills, and could see the advantage of letting the Company fight his battles for him. In return for territorial concessions he agreed to support a British expedition; he could even supply a candidate for the Afghan throne, Shah Shuja, who, unusually, had survived being driven from power, and had fled in exile to the Punjab. Thus, late in 1839, the Company began to assemble an army to invade Afghanistan and restore the compliant Shuja to his throne.

Little was known of the Afghans, and few credited them with the ability to withstand the

Two Afghan hillmen sketched in winter dress about the time of the First Afghan War. Both are wearing typical sheepskin *poshteens*. (National Army Museum)

advance of a modern army. The people themselves were of mixed descent, basically of Iranian stock, to which, over the ages, had been added the blood of the invaders who passed through them, Greeks, Turks, Huns and Mongols. Split into two related branches—the Afghans themselves, who lived to the south and west, and the Pathans, in the north and east—they were divided into tribes, which were further broken down into clans. The struggle to survive in a harsh environment had bred in them a fierce independence of spirit and a loathing of any form of authority, though they were staunch disciples of Islam, and could readily be rallied in the defence of the Faith. Their tribal leaders, or *maliks*, were scarcely able to control these unruly people, and the authority of the Amir depended on the support of the tribes. Many tribes in the mountains had become accustomed to preying on the traffic which used their passes, and a tough code of honour, which demanded payment in blood for an insult, had resulted in complex feuds between tribes and even clans.

Possessed of no regular army, the Afghans were none the less well used to warfare in their home environment. Their weapons were the long-barrelled flintlock rifle, the *jezail*, and the characteristic mêlée weapons of the sub-continent, the curved *talwar* sword and the round *dahl* shield of embossed leather or steel. They also favoured a long, straight knife with a 30-in. blade, known as the *chora*, or among the British, with some dread,

Typical horsemen of the Afghan plains, c.1840. Note the embossed *dahl* shield on the figure on the right. Variations on this type of shield were carried right across the Indian sub-continent. (National Army Museum)

as the 'Khyber knife'. They fought in their everyday dress, a loose smock, the *angarka*, and loose cotton trousers. A sash, or *lungi*, was wound round a pointed cap, the *kullah*, to form a turban, or sometimes worn thrown over the shoulders or around the waist. In the bitter Afghan winter they wore a sheepskin coat with the hair inside, called a *poshteen*, or a cloak, *chardar*. Most Afghan clothes were white, or as near white as their lifestyle allowed; but other colours were occasionally used, and the status of the maliks was reflected in the quality of their costume. One account of a malik of the Uthman Khel Pathans speaks of his scarlet waistcoat embroidered in gold, a white *angarka* with flowing sleeves gathered at the wrist, cotton trousers, pointed sandals, and a richly embroidered skull-cap, set off by an ornate inlaid *tulwar*.

The First Afghan War

The Company assumed that in order to defeat the Afghans all it had to do was march to Kabul, depose Dost Mohammed, and place Shah Shuja on the throne. There were a number of well-used passes through the mountains towards the capital. The best-known and most convenient was the Khyber, but that had to be approached through the Punjab, and Ranjit Singh politely pointed out that the terms of his alliance did not require him to so compromise himself as to allow a Company army into his territory. The alternative route involved entering Afghanistan from the south, passing through Sind, then north through the Bolan Pass. This was a longer route, but it had the advantage that the Amirs of Sind could be intimidated along the way. Accordingly, an army consisting of Queen's troops and Company soldiers in roughly equal portions, and supported by a tremendous train of non-combatants — drivers, contractors, traders, servants and wives — crossed the Indus in February 1839.

The going was tough through Sind's arid plains but the Amirs put up no more than a token resistance; the only serious opposition was encountered at the pass, where local tribesmen harassed the long column, swooping down to kill stragglers. Dost Mohammed made no attempt to defend his borders, and by May the British had entered the southern city of Kandahar. Here they formally crowned Shuja king, under the sullen gaze of his people.

When they pressed on towards Kabul, however, the British found that an Afghan force had taken up a position around the town of Ghazni. Ghazni, like many Afghan cities, was possessed of a magnificent fortress, with walls 70 feet high and surrounded by a moat; most of the gates into the city had been bricked up, and the British had left their siege guns at Kandahar. However, the Afghan ranks were typically riven with dissension, and one of the chiefs betrayed the knowledge that the Kabul gate was merely barricaded. On 23 July 1839 a party of sappers exploded a charge against it, and the British stormed the breach. After several hours of fierce street fighting the city fell. Afghan resistance collapsed, Dost Mohammed fled into the Hindu Kush, and on 6 August the British entered Kabul, passing a line of abandoned cannon across the road.

The invasion of Afghanistan had been accomplished with relative ease, and it was some time before the Company realised the true position. Shah Shuja moved into the royal palace, and asked the troops not to occupy the capital's great fortress, the Bala Hissar. Instead, they built a cantonment on the plain outside the city, protected by a ditch and rampart 'which an active cow could climb', according to one bitter observer. Some officers sent for their wives to join them, and the regiments were sent home or rotated as an economy measure. Yet Shuja was neither popular nor effectual and, despite Dost

Mohammed's subsequent surrender and exile, the countryside was quiet only where the British paid handsome subsidies to the chiefs. After two years, the Company officials in faraway Calcutta began to get impatient at the continuing expense. An infantry brigade was ordered to return to India via the Khyber, and at the same time the subsidies paid to the Pathan chiefs were cut. The result was immediate: before the troops could safely withdraw, the Afghans rose and attacked them. The column was forced to take refuge in the fortified town of Jellalabad.

The fragile basis of Company rule now became immediately apparent. Within weeks, British patrols and garrisons across the country had been attacked, and on 4 November 1842 the Kabul mob rose. Several British officials living in the city were hacked to death and the remainder were sent scurrying for the dubious safety of the cantonment. Shuja was unable to restore order, and the British commanders, old and incompetent, fell to bickering and indecision. Now the Afghans came into their own. The cantonment was ringed with heights which the Afghans occupied, and began sniping with their long rifles. Several irresolute sorties failed to disperse them, and at night they began to raid the cantonment. A fort containing the commissariat supplies was isolated and overrun. Morale among the British slumped.

The Afghan revolt had crystallised around the leadership of one of Dost Mohammed's sons, the dashing and charismatic Akbar Khan, and in early December the British opened negotiations with him. But when the Company's political agent, Sir William Macnaghton, rode out to meet Akbar, he was seized and killed. Adrift without his leadership, the British reluctantly accepted Akbar's terms. These were simply that they should be gone from Afghanistan as soon as possible. The quickest route lay east towards the garrison at Jellalabad, 90 miles away, and then to the Khyber. The road wound through a series of narrow, rocky defiles, which were potential death-traps if the Afghans attacked. Akbar promised safe conduct, but in truth he probably could not have contained the chiefs even had he wanted to. As the British moved out of Kabul on 6 January 1842 the Afghans, born plunderers seeking easy pickings, swooped down and overran the rear-guard, looting and burning the abandoned camp.

Akbar Khan, the dashing Afghan leader who was responsible for the British defeat in 1842. He is wearing a suit of Indo-Persian armour: a *khulah kud* helmet and suit of mail, with a shield slung on his back. (National Army Museum)

It was now the depths of the Afghan winter, and snow lay several inches thick upon the ground. That night, in 40 degrees of frost, hundreds froze to death. All trace of discipline collapsed, and the army rapidly fell apart. In just one week it would be completely destroyed. Some 4,500 troops—most of them Indians—and 12,000 followers had set out from the cantonment: at each pass, the Afghans blocked the way, shot them down from the heights, or cut the throats of helpless and apathetic stragglers. The end came on 13 January 1842 outside the village of Gandamak. Here the last survivors of HM 44th Foot stood back to back on a conical hill by the side of the road. The Afghans seemed prepared to allow them to surrender, but when the offer was rejected the sniping began, and at last the tribesmen rushed in with their swords. Only one man, a military surgeon named Brydon, escaped through the

Afghan tribesmen in typical dress pose in front of the domed hill where the 44th made its last stand at Gandamak in January 1842. (Bryan Maggs)

cordon and reached the garrison besieged at Jellalabad. Of the rest, the Afghans had taken some 50 Europeans as hostages; the others were all killed.

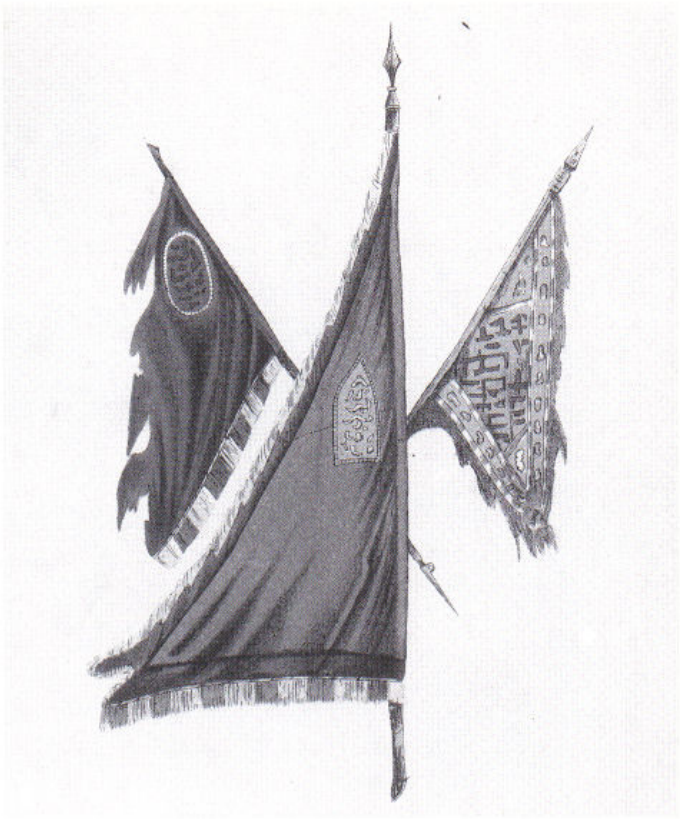
The complete destruction of the Kabul garrison did not bring the war to a close. Other garrisons held out at Jellalabad and Kandahar in the south, and the Company could neither abandon them nor allow its prestige to be so grossly slighted. A new army under an experienced Company officer, Gen. Pollock, was assembled, and, despite the protests of the Sikhs, marched into Afghanistan by the quickest route, the Khyber. Akbar's men attempted to block the passes; but Pollock realised that conventional European tactics were inappropriate in such a setting, and had his men deploy in skirmishing order to clear the heights before moving his columns into the valleys. One officer described the fighting in terms that would strike a chord with his successors for nearly a century: 'Every eminence, every crag shelters an enemy. Such a warfare is calculated to try, to its utmost stretch, the fortitude of man.'

Yet Pollock's tactics succeeded, and on 16 April 1842 he relieved Jellalabad after a siege of 155 days. It was the Company's intention that he should then quit Afghanistan as soon as possible, but the army was chafing to go on the offensive again to wipe out the stain of defeat. Reluctantly, Pollock was given permission to retire by way of

The Jugdulluk defile, a narrow gorge between Kabul and Jellalabad, where some of the worst massacres of the Retreat took place. This photo, taken during the Second Afghan War, suggests something of the terrain of the Frontier district. (Bryan Maggs)

Kabul. His men pushed on over the road still strewn with the corpses of the Kabul garrison, and on 15 September they entered the Afghan capital. The grand bazaar was burned as an act of retribution; the troops were unleashed to rampage through the streets and 'every kind of disgraceful outrage was suffered to go on in the town'. The British then marched out of Afghanistan, and by Christmas the army was back across the Sutlej in British India.

With an irony worthy of the whole sorry saga, Dost Mohammed was released from his exile and sent back to his throne with British blessings. The Russian threat failed to materialise, and he ruled for another 20 years. When the Company later had need of his support he was to prove a steadfast ally.



Afghan standards captured by the 13th L.I. in 1842; although this drawing is rather stylised, it suggests something of the shape and pattern of such banners, which were usually triangular and of various colours. (National Army Museum)

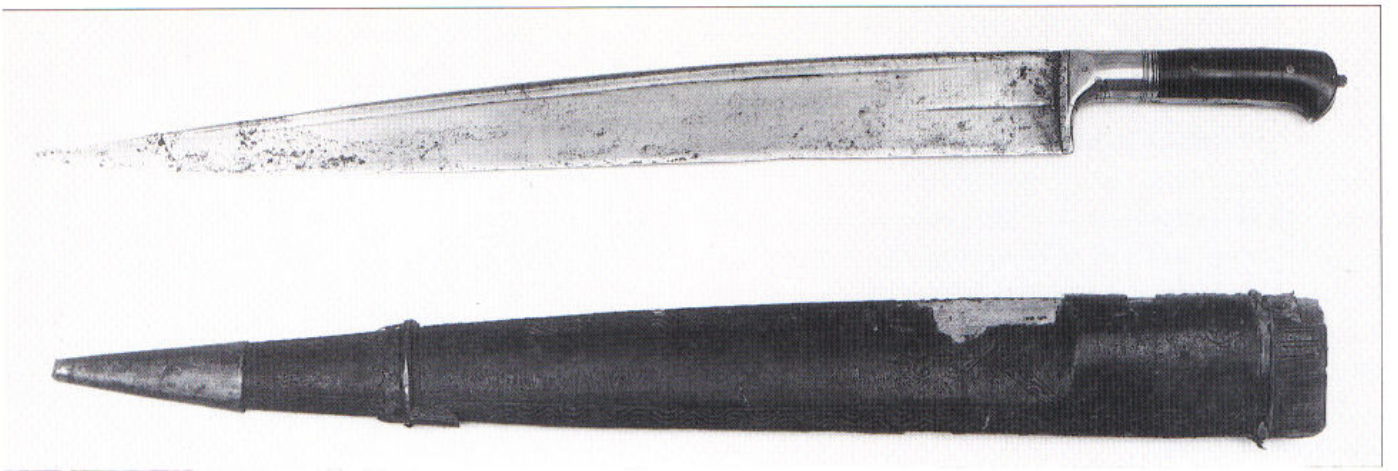
Sind and Gwalior 1843-45

The fiasco of the intervention in Afghanistan put an end, for the time being, to the Company's forward policy on the North-West Frontier. Not only was it forced back on the Sutlej-Indus line but, worse, its relations with the independent states across that line had been seriously compromised. In the north Ranjit Singh, who had supported the first expedition, had died, and the Sikhs' faith in the Company had been undermined. Further south in Sind the Amirs, who had hitherto been on good (if somewhat distant) terms with the British, were disaffected by the treatment inflicted on them when the Company's army had marched through their territory.

To try to restore its security the Company decided it was expedient to annex Sind. The job was given to the eccentric but dynamic Gen. Sir Charles Napier, who had few illusions about the task assigned to him: 'We have no right to seize Sind,' he wrote, 'yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, humane and useful piece of rascality it will be.' Another commentator observed that, 'Coming after Afghanistan, it put me in mind of a bully who had been kicked in the street and went home to beat his wife in revenge.'

The population of Sind consisted of Sindhis, Hindus and Baluchis. The latter were in the majority, and their tribal heartland lay to the west, around Kalat. They were a similar people to the Pathans, though their racial origins were more mixed, having a distinct Arab strain. Their dress consisted of a long robe gathered together at the waist, trousers and a turban. Many Baluchis preferred to dress completely in white, and wore their hair long, in contrast to the Pathans, who generally cropped theirs short. Like the Afghans, the Baluchis were armed with *jezails*, swords and shields, and had a reputation as fierce raiders. On the whole they respected the authority of their chiefs rather more than did the Pathans, though the three Amirates—Khairpur in the north, Mirpur, and Haiderabad in the south—were models of maladministration. The country they ruled over was for the most part semi-arid and flat, rising steeply towards the Afghan foothills.

Napier provoked a war with the Amirs by presenting them with a treaty he knew they could not accept. Popular discontent resulted in an attack on the British resident at Haiderabad, and Napier responded by entering Sind with 2,600



A typical *chora*, the dreaded 'Khyber knife', the favourite close-quarter weapon of the Afghan tribesman. Tradition had it that a strong man could disembowel his soldier opponent and cut through his waist-belt with one upward stroke, enabling him to strip off belts and ammunition pouches in one piece, preparatory to decamping with the captured rifle. (National Army Museum)

troops—including only a single Queen's regiment, the 22nd Foot—in February 1843. On the 17th he encountered a force of 20,000 Baluchis, including guns and cavalry, at Miani. The Baluchi line was drawn up in a dry river bed, and Napier, undaunted by odds of nearly 20:1 against him, plunged in. After several hours hard fighting at close quarters, the greater discipline and firepower of the Company troops prevailed, and the Baluchis reluctantly withdrew. Napier had lost 20 officers and 250 men, against an estimated Baluchi loss of 7,000.

The incumbent Khan of Kalat, c.1879. Kalat was one of the most important centres of Baluchistan, and this photo suggests something of Baluchi dress. Note that the men seated on either side of the group are dressed all in white, and that all wear their hair long. (Bryan Maggs)

The battle of Miani, 17 February 1843. Sir Charles Napier directs his men as they advance down into the *nullah* against an overwhelming Baluchi force, in one of the decisive battles for Sind. (National Army Museum)

Reinforced, Napier pressed on towards Haiderabad, only to find the Baluchis blocking the road once again outside the village of Dubba. The Baluchi position was well chosen, with one flank resting on a river and the other on a wood, and the line screened by entrenchments. Napier once more attacked with vigour, and the infantry drove the Baluchis out of their position, where they were repeatedly charged by Napier's cavalry. Napier's diplomacy was as forthright as his tactics; when the Amirs inquired what terms he offered, he replied, 'Life and nothing more. And I want your decision before twelve o'clock, as I shall by that time have buried my dead, and given my soldiers their breakfasts.' The Amirs submitted.

With the acquisition of Sind the border of British India had been pushed up to the southern boundary of Afghanistan. In this rugged hill-country, however, the Baluchis were disinclined to accept the Company's authority, and parties of horsemen would raid down into the more settled plains. Napier was faced with the problem of pacifying the borders. Without sufficient troops to garrison it effectively a deadly cat-and-mouse game of raid and counter-raid began, which was to foreshadow the later British experience along the whole length of the Frontier. In Baluchistan, however, the expedient of raising irregular troops from the local population proved most effective; and, by a policy of vigorous patrolling and swift punitive expeditions, the Baluchis were steadily suppressed. Not until 1854, however, was the local Company official able to report that 'peace, plenty and security everywhere prevail in a district where formerly all was terror and disorder'.

In the same year, 1843, another brief war was fought, the so-called '48 Hours War' against the Maratha state of Gwalior, east of Delhi. The Company was concerned that a build-up of Maratha forces, at the time of the tension in Sind and the Punjab, might further destabilise the western territories. Accordingly, In December 1843, Gen. Sir Hugh Gough was sent to occupy Gwalior with an army of 12,000 men. It was not expected that the Marathas would oppose the expedition, but at the village of Maharajpur on 29 December he ran into a force of 14,000 Maratha infantry, 3,000 cavalry, and as many as 100 guns.

Characteristically, Gough launched his men in a frontal assault across ground seamed with ravines, in the face of a withering fire from the

well-served Maratha guns. Maharajpur was taken at bayonet-point, and the Marathas were driven back through a succession of defended positions. The battle proved a hard slogging match, since Gough had no tactics other than direct attack, and his eventual victory was due entirely to his troops' willingness to press on in the face of determined resistance. As a result, Gough's losses amounted to 800 men, although the Marathas lost 3,000 men and 56 guns.

Coincidentally, another British column marching on Gwalior was attacked by 12,000 Marathas, with 40 guns, outside the town of Punniar on the same day. The Marathas had occupied a ridge overlooking the road, but were driven from it by a series of well-co-ordinated outflanking attacks, a distinct contrast to Maharajpur. Estimates of Maratha dead put the figure as high as 1,000, and a number of guns were captured. Within a few days the converging columns occupied Gwalior, and the Marathas were forced to accept terms which included the disbanding of their army.

The Sikh Wars 1845-49

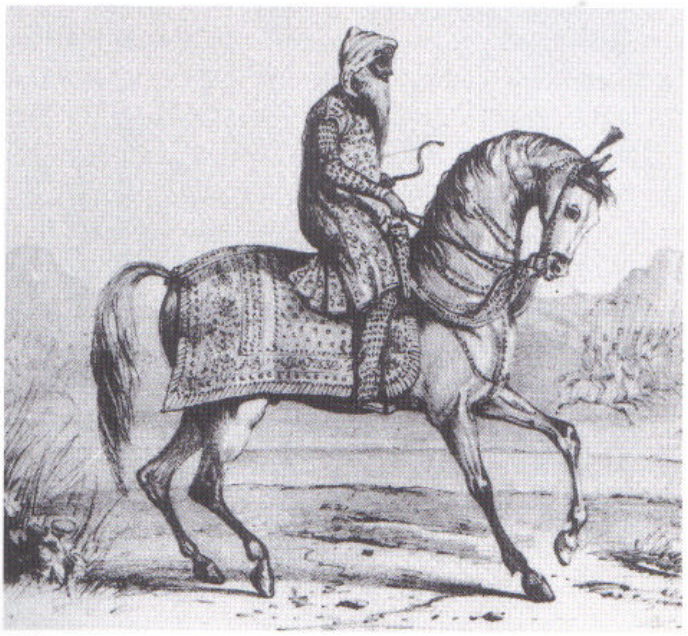
The implications of the conquest of Sind were not lost in the Punjab, which was now the only district not under Company control east of the Afghan hills. The resulting tension in the Sikh kingdom of Lahore led to a more aggressive policy towards the British, which resulted in two of the bloodiest wars the Company had yet fought on Indian soil.

The Sikhs were originally a reformist sect of the Hindu religion. The term itself is from the Sanscrit, and denotes a disciple, and the movement was founded by a religious leader in the 15th century who preached that both Islam and Hinduism confused and concealed a common true faith. Such a creed was intended to promote harmony, but it aroused the anger of the devoutly Muslim Mughals, who drove its followers into the inaccessible hills of the north. Here Sikh theology acquired a militant edge, and an armed brotherhood, the *Khalsa*, or 'Elect', was formed. Its members took the name *Singh*, or 'Lion'; they gave up alcohol and tobacco, ceased to shave their hair and beards, and carried five objects beginning with the letter K — long hair, loose trousers, a comb, a dagger and an iron discus (*kes*, *kaccha*, *kankan*, *kirpan* and *kangha*). They were urged to carry weapons about them at all times; and when the power of the Mughals declined, the Sikhs emerged from their refuges and established a formidable power-base in the Punjab.

Under the leadership of the Maharajah Ranjit Singh, the 'Lion of Lahore', early in the 19th century, the Sikh kingdom was consolidated. The army of Sikh faithful continued to be known as the Khalsa, but Ranjit developed a regular section, the *Fauj-i-Ain*, under the guidance of a number of European adventurers. These were veterans of the Napoleonic Wars, mostly French, and under their tutelage the *Fauj-i-Ain* was clothed in European uniforms, armed with artillery and muskets, and organised, trained and drilled along European lines. The result has been described as a 'Franco-British system in an Indian setting'. Such an army made Ranjit Singh the post powerful ruler on the North-West Frontier; but his relationship with the Company was cordial, and he preferred to expand his territory at the expense of the Afghans in the west.

In 1839, however, Ranjit died, and the

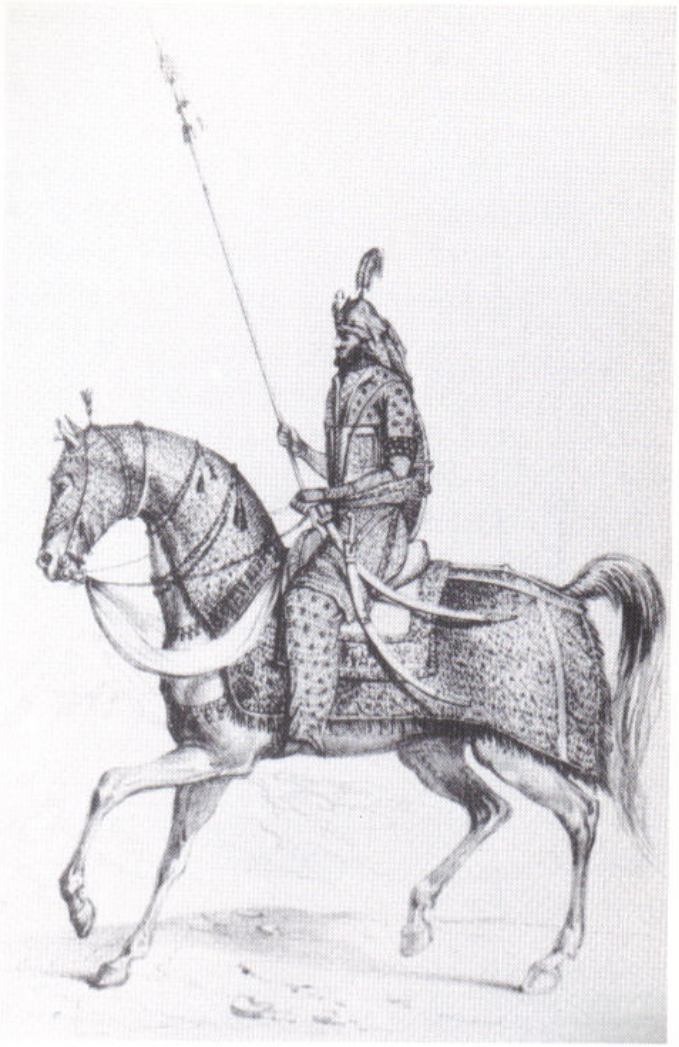
Maharajah Ranjit Singh, who founded the kingdom of Lahore in the Punjab, and was responsible for turning the Sikh army, the *Khalsa*, into one of the most formidable military organisations in India. (Author's collection)



kingdom of Lahore was plunged into a period of bitter power-struggles in which the army, deprived of a strong controlling hand, played an increasingly self-serving part. The disastrous Afghan War had severely tarnished the prestige of the Company, while the annexation of Sind led to the suspicion in Lahore that the Punjab would be next. Out of the turmoil of palace politics emerged a plan to send the army into British India as a pre-emptive strike. In December 1845 the Khalsa crossed the Sutlej and advanced on the British garrison at Ferozepore. There, with few clearly defined objectives and its leadership divided, it paused: 'an army listening in silence to the beating of its own heart'.

Estimates put the total strength of the Khalsa as over 150,000 in 1845, of which 71,000 were regulars of the *Fauj-i-Ain*. It consisted of infantry, cavalry and artillery. The regular infantry were organised into regiments, and each regiment contained two battalions, though in fact each battalion was a separate administrative and tactical unit. Each battalion was between 800 and 1,000 men strong, divided into eight companies, called *pelotons*, after the French system. Two *pelotons* constituted a *region* and four a *demi-battalion*. Each *peloton* was further sub-divided into two sections. Officer ranks and duties also followed European practice, and the battalions were named after their commanding officer. The troops were regularly drilled to the beat of the drum, and were perfectly capable of performing the European manoeuvres of the day, attacking in line or column or forming defensive squares.

British models were taken as the basis of uniform styles and, indeed, there is a suggestion that the Sikhs bought old British uniforms at border posts. In 1845 most Sikh infantry seem to have worn a scarlet coatee, with coloured regimental facings and white braid. Headgear was a turban with a loose end dangling at the back, either blue or white; and trousers were loosely cut, either dark blue with a red stripe down the outside leg, or white. Footwear was pointed Indian slippers. In the summer the troops wore white tunics and trousers, and red, yellow or green turbans, perhaps according to regiment. Impressed by the Company's use of Gurkha troops, Ranjit Singh raised his own Gurkha battalions, although most of the men were not true Gurkhas from Nepal but were from Kashmir. They were uniformed, like their Company counterparts, in green jackets with red facings, and black shakos. Equipment consisted of a pair of black leather cross-belts, one supporting a *talwar*, and the other a cartouche box. In the winter troops on the northern border wore sheepskin *poshteens*. Muskets were either Tower-proofed 'Brown Bess' flintlocks or well-made local copies. The uniform of the officers presented something of a contrast to that of the other ranks, as considerable personal choice prevailed, officers wearing an ornate mixture of Indian and European styles according to taste. Heavily braided jackets, gaudy sashes and coloured trousers were popular.



A Sikh nobleman in the lavish dress of the *Ghorchurra* irregular cavalry. He is wearing Indo-Persian armour—a *khulah kud* helmet and *chahar aina* 'four mirror' body armour—and carrying *talwar* and *shamshir* swords. His horse is covered by a richly decorated quilted coat. (Author's collection)

A pair of *Akalis*—Sikh religious warriors—wearing typical costume. Note the excessive number of weapons: swords, a matchlock, and steel throwing quoits carried around the turban. (Author's collection)

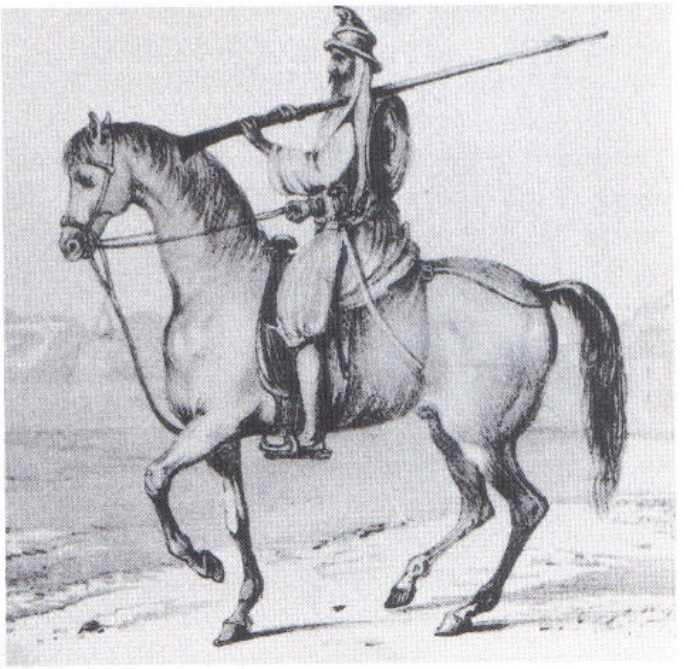
In peacetime the Khalsa was organised into brigades, each brigade consisting of three or four infantry battalions, an artillery battery, a cavalry component and a supporting body of irregulars. These were stationed at *derahs*, or camps, about the country, and a *derah* was both a geographical and organisational unit.

Ranjit Singh had been quick to appreciate the value of artillery, and the Sikh gunners were perhaps the best-trained and equipped soldiers in the *Fauj-i-Ain*. The artillery was divided into three types. The *Aspi*, or 'horse driven', batteries had been allocated the best horses in the kingdom and consisted of between five and 15 guns per battery, of between 4 pdr. and 6 pdr. weight. There were 32 such batteries in 1845, divided amongst the *derahs* and under the overall command of the Khalsa's senior leader, Lal Singh. The *Jinsi* was the Sikh heavy artillery, drawn by bullocks, and consisting mostly of 12 pdr. to 18 pdr. guns. This was an independent unit not distributed amongst the *derahs*. Finally, there were the *Zamburaks*, light swivel guns of less than 1 pdr. size and often mounted on camels; there were thought to be 388 such guns in 1845.

Like the infantry, the gun-crews were also uniformed in European styles. Their jackets were black with red facings and yellow braid, and their trousers were either blue with a red stripe, or white. They wore a distinctive headdress, which appears from contemporary illustrations to be a black bearskin with a red cord; improbable as this may seem in India, it is possible given the Napoleonic influence. Another suggestion is that it was actually made of felt stretched over a bamboo framework.

Because the *Aspi* batteries were allocated the best mounted resources, and because the cavalry arm was traditionally the preserve of the Sikh gentry, the cavalry was the weakest element in the *Fauj-i-Ain*. Cavalry regiments varied in strength between 200 and 500, and were poorly trained and disciplined. They did, however, wear the most extravagant uniforms, a flamboyant mixture of eastern and French styles. They wore a braided crimson light dragoon jacket, with the usual blue trousers with a red stripe. Their turbans were of crimson silk, drawn to a peak at the front, and or-

A mounted *Akali*. His dress is typical of that worn by the Sikh irregulars of the lower social orders. (Author's collection)



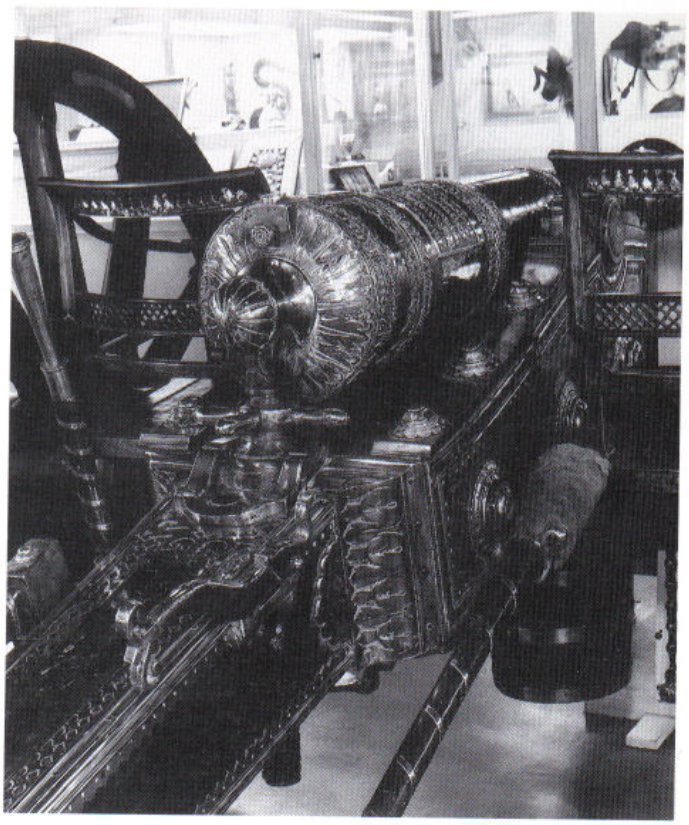
namented with a brass half-moon, decorated with a glittering sprig. They carried *talwars* from a leather sword belt over a waist-girdle, and were armed with carbines. Their horse furniture consisted of a crimson cloth, edged with a red and blue stripe, thrown over the saddle, and a harness adorned with brass studs.

The irregular cavalry, the *Ghorchurras*, were even more gaudy. These were men from the landed gentry, a social élite who provided their own equipment, and who revelled in their rôle as dashing light cavalry. They were attached to the various *derahs*, and traditionally fought on the flanks of the army, where their wild charges could be suitably awe-inspiring. They were almost totally without discipline, however, and experience would prove them unable to stand up to regular troops. Ranjit Singh had encouraged them to be as exotic and colourful as possible in their dress. Many possessed suits of armour in the Indo-Persian style. This consisted of a round, domed steel helmet, the *khulah kud*, with a spike on top, a nose-guard, two small plume-supports on either side, and often a curtain of mail hanging down the sides and back of the neck. Sometimes it was worn with a turban wrapped round it. Body armour consisted of either a coat of mail extending to the waist, or *Chahar Aina*, 'four mirror' armour. This comprised four plates worn strapped around the body, one each on the chest and back, and one on each side under the arm, as well as plates on the forearm, which included a mail guard for the back of the hand. The quality of the armour depended on the wealth and status of the individual; many of the mail shirts were rather roughly made, but the plates were often beautifully inlaid with gold decoration. The armour was worn over a brightly coloured coat, and baggy white trousers gathered at the ankle. Coloured sashes around the waist were a common adornment, and the *Ghorchurras*' horses were decorated with ornate bridles and coloured streamers. They carried a variety of weapons, from *dahl* shields, embossed and inlaid, *talwars* and *shamshirs*, a sword with a lighter hilt, to matchlocks, lances, daggers and Afghan knives.

The remainder of the Khalsa was made up of irregular infantry. These consisted of the odd battalion in an outlying garrison, not yet fully integrated into the *Fauj-i-Ain*, and levies drawn from each district of the Punjab. These were ordinary Sikhs of the lower social orders, who fought in traditional Indian costume, mostly white trousers and robes and a coloured turban. They were armed with matchlocks, swords and shields. They lacked the discipline and organisation of the regular troops, but were tenacious and courageous shock-troops.

One particularly colourful component in the irregular army were the *Akalis*, estimated at 3,000 strong in 1845. These were bands of wild religious zealots, accustomed to carrying weapons to a ludicrous degree even in peacetime, when their aggressive habits led many to consider them bandits. They carried matchlocks, two or three swords, pistols and daggers, as well as the characteristic Sikh weapon, the *charka*, or sharpened steel quoit. These they threw at the enemy at close range, and they were supposed to be capable of amputation at 60 or 70 yards range, although one visitor to Ranjit Singh's court 'several times invited them to show their dexterity, without witnessing any proof of it that could convince me of

A magnificently decorated Sikh gun captured during the First Sikh War, 1845. (National Army Museum)

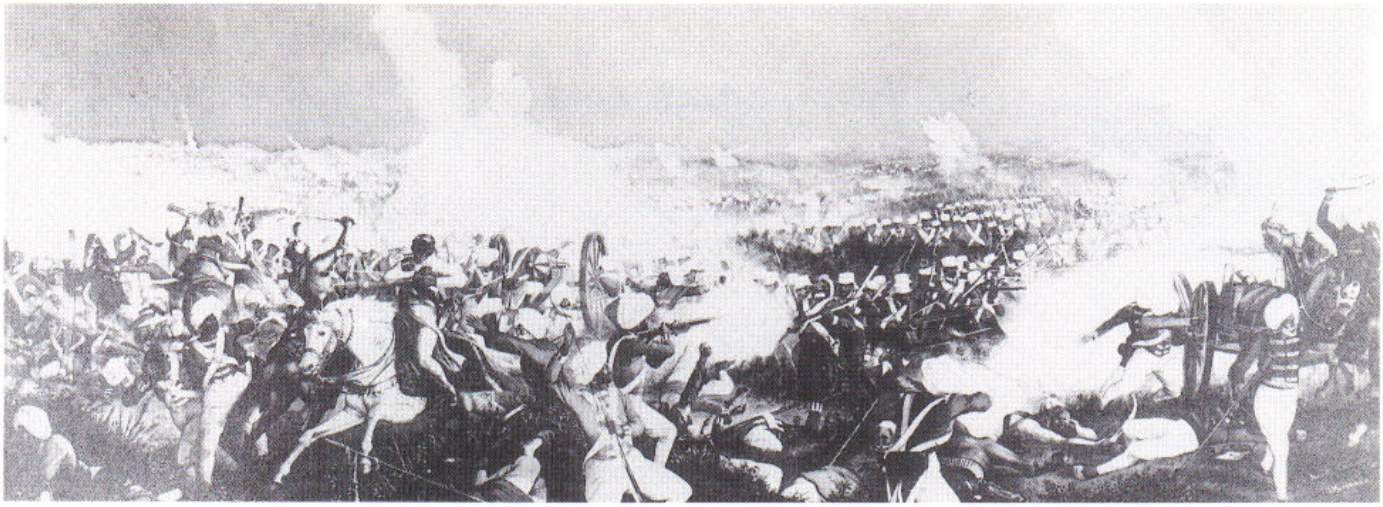


The 16th Lancers charging Sikh squares at the battle of Aliwal. The appearance and discipline of the Sikh regular infantry is well shown; the bullocks (right) indicate that the artillery is from the *Jinsi* batteries. (National Army Museum)

the truth of this supposed accuracy. In general, bystanders have been in greater danger than the object aimed at.' The *Akalis* wore a distinctive pointed cap around which they carried these unusual weapons, and a large turban, often blue in colour. They also wore long blue shirts, and baggy shorts or drawers, though many preferred to fight bare-chested. Although their military value was dubious, there can be no doubt of the psychological effect they had on their enemies.

The Khalsa was undoubtedly the most efficient enemy yet encountered by the Company, but it did have its weaknesses. Musketry drill and accuracy were good, but the regulars were not well trained in the use of the bayonet, which blunted their efficiency in attack. Worse, the officer corps was riddled with intrigue and inefficiency. After the death of Ranjit Singh many battalions elected 'regimental committees', from whom alone they would take orders. Many unpopular officers were murdered, and others were promoted for political or financial reasons rather than on merit. With the increase in tension with British India, most of the remaining European advisers left the Punjab. The Khalsa's involvement in court politics meant that its senior officers were increasingly concerned with matters other than military administration, and the result of all this was a steady erosion of discipline and direction. In the coming war the Sikhs would not be defeated by the Company so much as by inefficiency and treachery amongst their own officers.

As soon as the Khalsa crossed the Sutlej, the Company mustered an army under Sir Hugh Gough, and sent it to relieve the besieged city of Ferozepore. Gough was not a commander of great subtlety, and both his strategy and tactics were dominated by the need to 'be at them with the bayonet'. Advancing without proper scouting arrangements, Gough was surprised by a force of 22,000 Sikhs and 22 guns under Lal Singh which had moved to intercept him. The Sikh gunners took up a position masked by low jungle beyond the village of Mudki. Despite the fact that his troops were exhausted after a day's march, in the late afternoon of 18 December 1845, Gough launched a frontal assault on the Khalsa position. The Sikh guns—mostly 12 pdrs. and 18 pdrs. of the *Jinsi* batteries—were served with rare skill and coolness, and blasted great gaps in Gough's advancing line. On either wing, however, the *Ghorchurras* were no match for Gough's regular cavalry, which drove them back in disarray and threatened the Sikh flank, charging in amongst the guns in some places. Intimidated by the volume and accuracy of the Sikh fire, Gough's Company regiments held back, but his Queen's troops managed to charge home. After a vicious fight in the twilight the Sikhs extricated themselves under cover of darkness and retreated to their camp at Ferozeshah. The Khalsa lost 15 of



Sikh regular infantry attack the British 61st Regiment at Chillianwallah, 13 January 1849. Note the uniform of the infantry in the foreground, and of the gunners (right). (National Army Museum)

its guns captured and hundreds of men killed; but Gough sustained 872 killed and wounded, a high price to pay for his tactical ineptitude.

He learned little from his mistakes, however, and on 21 December pushed on to attack Ferozeshah. Here the Sikhs had some 35,000 infantry and 73 guns heavily entrenched behind a breastwork chest-high and a mile long. Delayed by the need to await reinforcements, Gough once again launched a frontal attack in late afternoon. Once more the efficient Khalsa artillery cut down Gough's men in swathes, but once more they fought their way through to the entrenchments.

The battle raged at close quarters until darkness fell, when Gough realised there was no hope of victory and pulled his men back. They lay out on the field that night, constantly fired upon by the Sikhs. In the morning they had no choice but to resume the attack. This time a determined attack overran battery after battery, and drove the Sikhs from Ferozeshah. Then, at the critical moment, further Sikh troops arrived from Ferozepore, and it seemed that Gough's exhausted troops must be defeated. The reinforcements remained uncommitted, however, and to Gough's surprise

British infantry charging Sikh guns at Mudki; note the distinctive head-dress of the gunners. The man kneeling left may be a regular cavalryman. (National Army Museum)

The 1853 pattern Enfield rifle, and one of the cartridges which provoked the Indian Mutiny. (National Army Museum)

withdrew instead of pressing home their advantage. Division and indecision amongst the Sikh commanders had cost them their greatest opportunity of the war. None the less, Gough's losses, at over 2,400 men, bore testimony to the courage and tenacity of their troops.

In the immediate aftermath of Ferozeshah both sides regrouped. A large siege train was despatched from Delhi, and Gough sat back to await its arrival. As it approached the front, however, the Sikhs moved out to intercept it, and Gough despatched Sir Harry Smith to head them off. Smith caught the Sikhs at Aliwal on 28 January 1846. Some 20,000 men and 70 guns were drawn up around an entrenched camp with its back to the Sutlej. Showing rather more tactical flair than his commander, Smith softened up the position with a bombardment which suppressed much of the Sikh artillery fire, and then launched his cavalry against the Sikh centre and left. The infantry of the *Fauj-i-Ain* formed squares to receive them, but the 16th Lancers broke through them repeatedly. Smith then followed up with his infantry, who cleared the trenches at bayonet-point. The Sikhs abandoned the field in disorder, and Smith captured all of their guns.

The successive British victories had left only one major concentration of Sikh troops east of the Sutlej, at Sobraon, where 30,000 men (the majority of them regulars) and 120 guns were emplaced three deep around a bridgehead on the river. Gough approached his objective in his usual style on 10 February; after a two-hour bombardment which scarcely damaged the Sikh positions, he sent his men forward across open ground. The fighting was a repetition of the previous battles; the assault troops suffered horrendous casualties and were repeatedly driven off before forcing a way through the Sikh line. A ferocious mêlée raged over several successive defensive positions until at last the Sikhs found themselves with their backs to the Sutlej, and only a narrow bridge of boats as a means of escape. As the press of troops tried to cross, the bridge collapsed, and hundreds of Sikhs were swept away. Gough's victory was complete; estimates of Sikh casualties vary between 8,000 and 12,000, and all their guns were captured. But Gough had once more paid a heavy price: 2,383 of his own men had been killed or wounded.

Sobraon broke the back of the Khalsa, and at Lahore on 8 March 1846 the Sikh kingdom accepted the Company's peace terms. The old Khalsa was dissolved, and a new defence force established, based on British rather than French systems. Old regiments were disbanded, and new ones formed along the lines of the Company's own troops. The strength of the army was reduced to 25 battalions of 800 men each, and 12,000 cavalry. The Punjab was not formally annexed, but Company officials were distributed around the country to administer a Protectorate. The country was not completely pacified, however, and the discontent of Sikh leaders and of members of the disbanded army erupted into violence within two years.

In April 1848 two British officers were murdered in the city of Multan, and the Sikh governor of the city, whom the British had deposed, placed himself at the head of an uprising. The Company garrisons hastily converged on the city and laid siege to it; but across the country members of the old army rose to join the rebellion. Gough once more advanced at the head of a combined Queen's and Company army. When he tried to cross the River Chenab at Ramnaggar on 22 November he found his advance blocked by Sikh artillery and his path hampered by boggy ground, and was forced to withdraw, later

crossing the river upstream and outflanking the Sikh position. On 13 January 1849 he blundered into a large Khalsa force well placed above the village of Chillianwallah. The Sikh guns faced over a marshy depression, with low jungle in front of it, and were supported by alternating regiments of infantry and cavalry.

Remembering the folly of earlier attacks on such positions, Gough did not intend to attack; but an opening barrage from the Khalsa guns provoked him: 'The impudent rascals fired on me. They put my Irish blood up and I attacked them.' The resulting battle was predictably and appallingly costly. Launched into the jungle, the British line had to advance across broken ground in the face of a devastating barrage. Where it reached the Sikh line the fighting raged back and forth until evening, when the Sikhs fell back on a stronger position in their rear. Gough captured 40 guns, but lost 2,400 killed and wounded, and had been fought to a standstill. The political repercussions were such that Sir Charles Napier, the conqueror of Sind, was sent to replace him; but before he could arrive Multan fell to the besiegers, and Gough felt able to press on to attack a Sikh concentration at Gujerat.

Here the Sikhs had been reinforced by a contingent of Afghans, and their infantry and guns were drawn up with flanks protected by water-courses. Their cavalry moved freely beyond these on either wing. But Gough had been reinforced by the siege-train from Multan, and for once his artillery was heavier than the Sikh guns. He manoeuvred his men into position with parade-group precision, then began a heavy barrage which largely suppressed the Sikh fire. The infantry then advanced and drove off the Khalsa infantry, whilst the cavalry dispersed the *Ghorchurras* on the flanks. Once the Sikhs began to retreat, Gough's cavalry harried them and turned a retreat into a rout. The mounted pursuit lasted for 15 miles.

Gough's uncharacteristically adroit victory at Gujerat ended the Second Sikh War. The Afghans retreated to their own country via the Khyber Pass, and on 12 March 1849 the Khalsa laid down its arms. This time there was to be no question of a Protectorate, and the Company formally annexed the Punjab. Those who objected were given a blunt choice by the head of the Company's regime: 'Will you be governed by the pen or by the sword? Choose.'

For most of the Sikhs there was indeed little choice. The Khalsa had proved tough and resilient, but its commanders were not united enough to sustain a prolonged campaign against the British, whose inexhaustible resources sustained them despite the heavy losses repeatedly inflicted upon them. Now the Khalsa had been broken up, and there seemed little point in reviving it. With the acquisition of the Punjab, some 80,000 square miles had been added to British India, and the Frontier was pushed forward along the line of the Afghan hills. The British would soon find that that particular region would be a source of incessant trouble; but scarcely had they time to install themselves before a fresh catastrophe, dwarfing all others on Indian soil, befell them.

The Indian Mutiny 1857-59

As has already been suggested, the power of the British East India Company rested squarely on its locally raised army. When the rival European powers had first arrived in the sub-continent, they could not expect military support from the professional armies of their various home governments, and it was impractical and expensive to import large numbers of European soldiers-of-fortune. Instead, they raised loosely organised mercenary armies from the surplus manpower in a society which was only too ready to take up the profession of arms.

It was a fundamental belief of the Hindu religion that Indian society was divided into four great pre-ordained, immutable classes. Each class had a specified profession, and since the rôle of the soldier was appointed to the highest classes, the military possessed great prestige. The highest class was that of *Brahman*, or priest, then *Ksatriya*, or lord, *Vaisya*, or merchant, and finally *Sudra*, or serf. Fighting was properly the duty of the *Ksatriya* class, the 'defenders of India'; but, since there were seldom enough religious posts to go round, it was also acceptable for the *Brahman* to become a soldier. Intimate contact between the classes was avoided, since defilement by a member of a lower

An officer and *sowars* of the 7th Bengal Light Cavalry, c.1845. This picture clearly demonstrates the extent to which the uniforms of the Company's regular cavalry regiments were influenced by British styles on the eve of the Mutiny. (National Army Museum)

class could mean ritual pollution, which at best might require expensive cleansing ceremonies, and at worst lead to eternal loss of class. Each class was further sub-divided into an infinite variety of castes, which were based not only on class, but upon racial or tribal origin, and profession.

By the 19th century, the Company's domains were organised into three so-called presidencies—Bengal, Madras and Bombay—each of which had its own armies, which were gradually being transformed away from their mercenary origins towards professional bodies in the Western mould. In Madras and Bombay the rôle of caste had not been allowed to interfere with military discipline, since in its worst manifestations it might prevent a high-caste *sepoy* (private soldier) from taking orders from a low-caste officer. Caste differences were effectively subordinated to the common brotherhood of the soldier, which became in effect a *de facto* caste, at least while the men were in Company service.

The Bengal army, however, had recruited from the princely states of northern India, one of the most conservative areas of the country, where class and caste ties had remained strong. Two-thirds of the Bengal army was composed of either *Brahman* or *Ksatriya* soldiers, the remainder being made up equally of other Indian castes and Muslims. Since all those outside the Hindu class-system, including Muslims and Christians, were *Mleccha*, 'untouchables', who offered the greatest threat of contamination, the Bengal army was a potential minefield of explosive sensitivities. It was perhaps inevitable that it should provide the focus for the violent explosion of discontent known variously as the Indian Mutiny, the Great Rebellion, or the First War of Freedom.

The establishment of the Bengal army on the eve of the uprising was a large one. In addition to a few regiments consisting entirely of European soldiers, the Indian forces consisted of ten regiments of regular light cavalry, 18 regiments of irregular cavalry, 74 infantry regiments, and 22 artillery batteries. All the regular regiments were organised and uniformed along the lines of the British units for whom they were intended to be an exact substitute. Each infantry regiment consisted of a single battalion, of ten companies of roughly 100 men apiece. Senior officers were all Europeans, but each company had two Indian officers—a *subedar*, or captain, and a *jemadar*, or lieutenant—and a full complement of Indian NCOs—*havildars* (sergeants) and *naiks* (corporals). Indian ranks were the subject of some discontent, however, since even the most senior Indian officers were subordinate to European NCOs, and promotion was strictly according to seniority. Thus a man who enlisted as a sepoy might have to wait until nearly the end of his career before reaching *havildar*.

Uniforms were also uncompromisingly British in style. The infantry wore red single-breasted coatees, with regimental facings on the cuffs, collar and shoulder straps. There were five pairs of white braid loops across the front of the jacket, three on each cuff, and more braid around the collars and shoulder straps. Battalion companies wore shoulder straps with white woollen tufts at the ends, while flank companies wore shoulder-wings. The jacket itself was not particularly popular with the sepoys, as it was often a tight fit under the arms, and considerably restricting. It was worn without a leather stock at the neck,

A British officer, Indian officer, and *sowar* of a Bengal Light Cavalry regiment in undress uniform. The Mutiny began amongst the 3rd Cavalry, many of whom fought at least during the early part of the war in this uniform. (National ArmyMuseum)

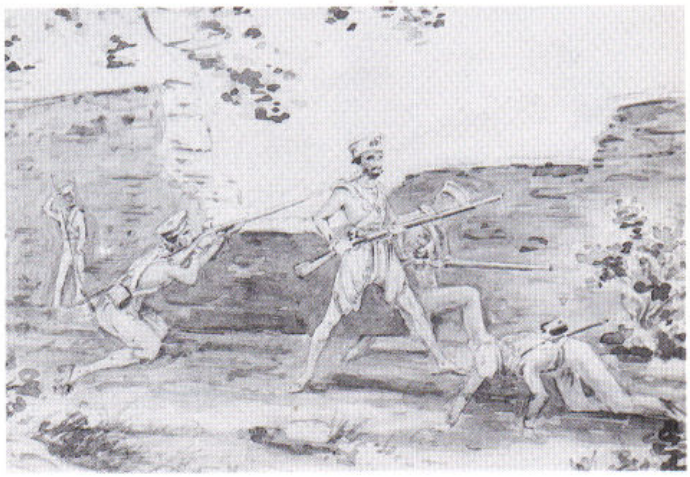
where many sepoys wore beads instead. A white drill-order jacket, with white collar and cuffs and evenly spaced buttons down the front, was marginally more comfortable. Trousers were either white or dark blue. In 1847 the tall leather shako with ball plume and regimental helmet-plate was replaced for most duties by a dark blue Kilmarnock cap with the regimental number on the front. It was often worn with a white cover which the sepoys were expected to provide themselves. Contemporary sketches show white leather cross-belts supporting a cartouche box and bayonet, and a waist-belt with a small percussion-cap pouch. In marching order the black knapsack was carried by straps around the shoulders.

A regular cavalry regiment consisted of 24 European officers and about 400 men, divided into six troops each of 60 *sowars*, or troopers. Although designated light cavalry, there was little in their appearance to suggest this, since they wore British Light Dragoon uniforms, which were highly inappropriate in the Indian climate, and were trained in the manner of heavy cavalry for use as shock troops. They wore tall leather shakos, and braided 'French grey' uniforms with orange facings. They were armed with European Light Dragoon pattern swords and pistols, and one man in four carried a carbine. A description of a *sowar* of the 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry in 1855 pictures him in undress, a French grey stable-jacket, with orange collar and cuffs piped white; French grey trousers with a white stripe; and a dark blue cap rather like a Kilmarnock with a white band. He has a plain black sabretache suspended from a white belt, and a black sheepskin is draped over his horse, covering the saddle but revealing a dark blue valise with 'III LC' in white on the round end.

The artillery was considered the most important part of the Company's army, and it received the best resources in terms of trained officers and equipment. Most of the artillery companies were composed of European gunners, but the 22 Indian companies equated to 22 batteries, four of them Horse Artillery, the rest Foot. Their uniforms differed little from the braided blue uniforms worn by the Queen's Royal Artillery, apart from an ornate neo-classical plumed helmet.

In addition to the regular forces there were a number of irregular units, some of them, like those raised in the Punjab, intended to police freshly conquered territories, whilst others were maintained by Indian princes who had recently accepted Company rule. They were raised from the former princely armies, but were organised as a bodyguard and commanded by British officers. Thus when the state of Oudh (Awadh) was annexed in February 1856—one of the primary

Sepoys of the 26th Bengal Native Infantry in action in the First Afghan War, 1842. The man kneeling left is wearing a Kilmarnock cap; the centre man has a white linen cover over his cap. Both have removed their uniform trousers and are fighting in *dhotis*. This was to be the fighting costume of the mutineers in 1857. (National Army Museum)



causes of the revolt—its independent army was disbanded, but a State Force of ten infantry regiments, three of cavalry and three artillery batteries was raised from it. Irregular cavalry regiments were organised on a much more practical local pattern. They had only three European officers to command them, and were raised on the *silladar* system; each *sowar* would receive a higher rate of pay, but provide his own horse, uniform and equipment, the last two being bought from regimental contractors to ensure uniformity. Such units dressed in Indian clothing, a *pagri* or turban, and a *kurta* frock coat, with white riding breeches. Their weapons were the *talwar* and *shamshir*.

The effective management of such an army required, in addition to the usual virtues of good leadership, a familiarity with the soldiers' beliefs and customs, and tact in dealing with them. Mutiny was not unknown in all three presidencies, being the sepoys' most drastic means of voicing discontent, but for the most part the relationship between European officers and their men was one of mutual trust. Yet the first half of the 19th century was a period of great change, within the narrow military sphere, in Anglo-Indian politics generally, and in the attitudes of the Company's ruling élite. Whereas early Company officers had not been ashamed to cultivate a paternal relationship with their sepoys, a new generation of officers from England, more conscious of growing theories of racial superiority, held themselves aloof and affected a contempt for all things native. The Company's campaign against such practices as *Sati* (widows throwing themselves on their husband's funeral pyre) and *Thagi* (ritual murder by travelling gangs acting in the name of the goddess Kali) aroused fears that the British were determined to degrade Indian re-

Mutineers at rifle practice on the eve of the Mutiny. Note the wings on the tunic of the man centre right, denoting the flank companies, and the white drill order of the man centre left. From a sketch by Capt. Atkinson of the Bengal Engineers. (National Army Museum)

Mutineers in an entrenchment outside Delhi. Most have abandoned their company uniforms in favour of white Indian dress. Note the skull-caps or turbans, and the beads worn by the officers. (National Army Museum)

A rebel sortie against a British position at Delhi. This captures the appearance of the mutinous sepoys, wearing their accoutrements over Indian clothes. (National Army Museum)

ligions. Many regimental officers openly preached Christianity to their men with a missionary zeal that was widely resented.

In 1856 the General Service Enlistment Act required new recruits to accept the possibility of serving overseas. This not only took soldiers away from the familiar surroundings of their home presidencies, but carried the risk of loss of caste. In the past, the Company had been prepared to pay a bounty for those accepting such service, which at least allowed them to soothe their qualms by undertaking purification rites; but each expedition meant a fresh round of protests and negotiations, and the Company at last lost patience.

In the same year Oudh was annexed, and even the most politically naive sepoy could not fail to be aware of the Company's apparently rampant acquisitiveness. Worse, the annexation had very specific practical repercussions within the Bengal army. Many of the sepoys had been recruited there, and the new regime deprived them of rights which, as Company soldiers, they had hitherto enjoyed at the king of Oudh's court. It seemed to the sepoys that the British were not only trying to prise them from their religions, they were seeking to break the monopoly of the higher classes within the ranks. Many young men who had hitherto expected to take up the honourable profession of arms now felt unable to do so, and the only alternative was the degrading life of the rural peasant. What was more, the British would then be free to fill the ranks with low-caste soldiers, untouchables and outsiders, such as Gurkhas or even Sikhs.

It was against this background of discontent that the famous issue of the greased cartridges achieved such significance. A few of the Company's regiments were still armed with the old Brown Bess musket, but most had the 1842 pattern percussion musket. In 1856, however, the authorities attempted to introduce the new Enfield, which, being rifled, had far greater range and accuracy. The Enfield came with a new style of cartridge and a new loading drill, which required the men to bite off one end and pour some of the powder down the barrel. The cartridge was then rammed home and to facilitate its passage down the barrel one end of it was smeared with grease. The story has it that in January 1857 a low-caste worker in the arsenal at Dum Dum quarrelled with a *Brahman* sepoy, and taunted him with the information that the grease on the cartridge was a mixture of cow and pig fat. Since the cow was a sacred animal to the Hindu, and the pig an unclean one to the Muslim, to allow any such fat into the mouth was an abomination to both religions. In fact, there was probably some truth in the story: regulations had not specified which fats were to be used in the grease, and contractors naturally used the cheapest available, tallow, which did contain common animal fats.

To the sepoys this was the last straw, proof that all their fears about the British were well founded.

Across the Bengal presidency the sepoys refused to accept the new cartridge. The Company responded by wheedling or bullying. Sympathetic officers tried to assure their men that the grease was harmless mutton fat; disciplinarians arrested objectors and publicly shackled them like common criminals. Mutiny was a serious crime, not undertaken lightly, and after the rising the British sought evidence of a conspiracy, supposing that the various signs and portents which were passed round were proof of an organising intelligence. But in truth, there was none; just a wave of fear and rumour which brought forth activists in the midst of each regiment, who played on their comrades' insecurities and goaded them into action. Once part of a regiment refused the orders of its officers, the whole unit was tainted by association, and fear of British retribution added to an unbearable tension which found an outlet in violence.

The beautifully embroidered *kurta* tunic worn by Tantia Topi, one of the most successful rebel generals of the Mutiny. (National Army Museum)

On 29 March 1857 Mangal Panday, a sepoy of the 34th Native Infantry stationed at Barrackpore, went beserk, attacking white officers and calling on his friends to support him. He was overpowered, tried, and hanged, and the 34th was partially disbanded. For the most part the Company's officers remained complacent about such outbreaks, many officers refusing to believe their own men would mutiny. They were to be disabused on Sunday 10 May 1857 at the garrison town of Meerut (Mirath).

Meerut commanded an important junction on the Grand Trunk Road, and housed a large garrison of both Queen's and Company troops including the 3rd Light Cavalry and the 11th and 20th Native Infantry. The 3rd had proved reluctant to accept the new cartridges, and a few days earlier their commanding officer had publicly humiliated 85 of their number by shackling them in front of their colleagues; the remainder of the regiment had been dismissed. On the 10th, incited by the bazaar mob, they stormed the gaol and freed their comrades. When their officers tried to intervene they were attacked. Officers of the infantry regiments, trying to calm their own men, were fired upon, and the colonel of the 11th killed. Meerut erupted into incendiarism and murder. White officers and civilians living in the town were set upon and killed. The senior British officers, who had a sizeable force of Queen's troops at their disposal, seemed paralysed with indecision, and by nightfall most of the mutineers had fled the town in the direction of Delhi 40 miles away. There was no pursuit. For a week northern India seemed stunned by the rising; then, one by one, the garrisons rose up across Bengal.

That the outbreak was unco-ordinated can be seen by the way in which it caught both sides unprepared. The British found themselves greatly outnumbered, with their only reliable troops—Company European and Queen's regiments—scattered in small garrisons across the presidency, and no means of knowing how far the rebellion would spread. Clearly they would have to go onto

Afghan tribesmen, 1839-80:
see text commentary for details.

1: Baluchi tribesman, 1840s
2: Tribal chief, Sind, 1840s
3: Matchlock-man, Gwalior, 1840s

B


1: Sikh Ghorchurra cavalryman, c.1845
2: Akali zealot, Sikh War, c.1845
3: Sikh irregular infantryman, c.1845
1
2
3

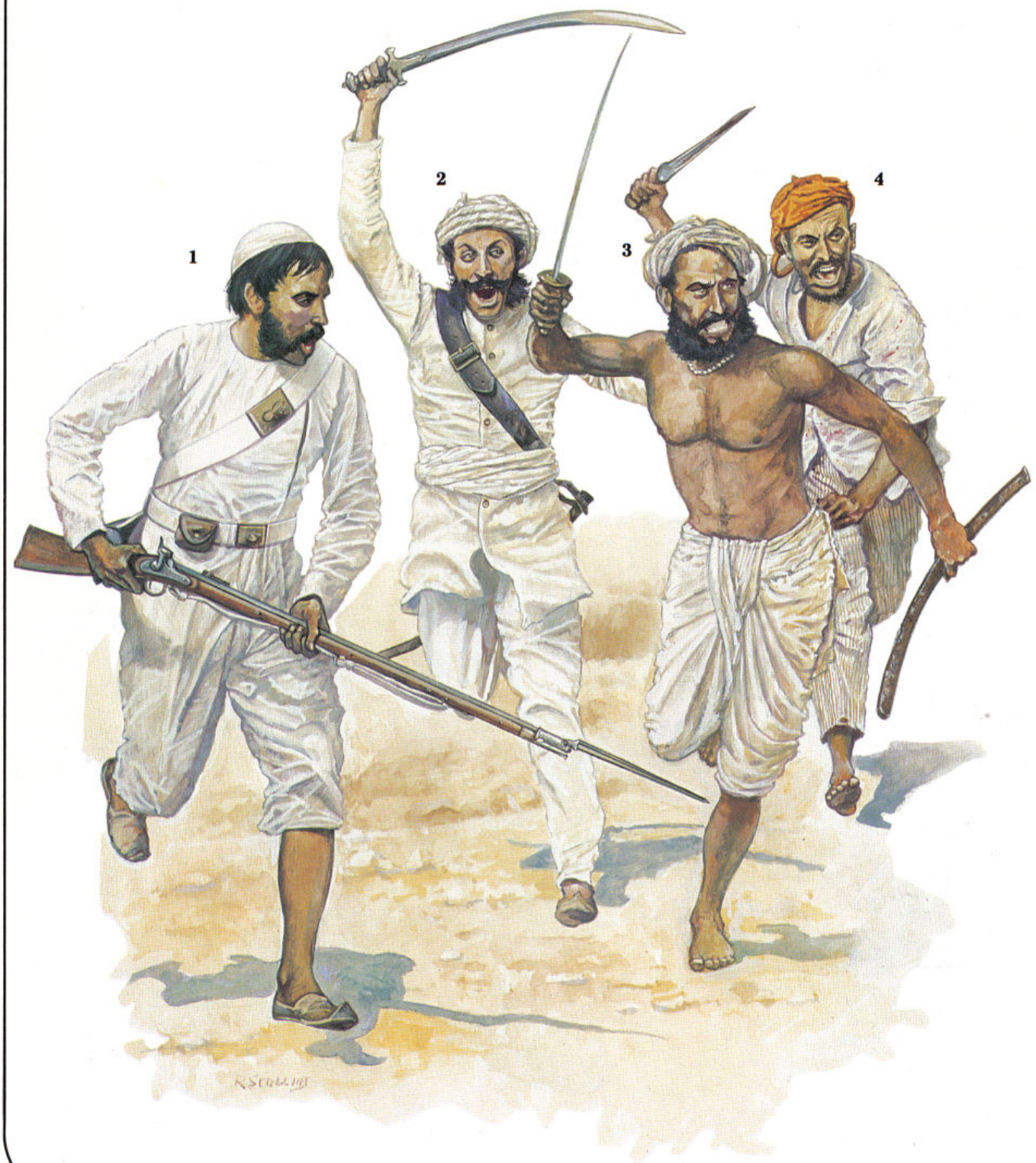
C

1: Sikh regular infantryman, c.1845
2: Sikh regular artilleryman, c.1845
3: Sikh infantryman, summer dress, c.1845

D


1: Sepoy, 20th BNI, 1857
2: Sowar, 3rd BLC, 1857
3: Sepoy, 11th BNI, 1857
1
2
3
III
LC
II
R.Scollins

1: Mutinous sepoy, 1857-59
2: Mutinous sowar, 1857-59
3: Civilian insurgent, 1857-59
4: Muslim urban insurgent, 1857-59



1: Rani of Jhansi, 1858
2: Barkandaze matchlock-man, 1857-59
3: Afghan Ghazi, 1857-59


Afghan regulars, 1878-80:
1: Highland Guard
2: Regular infantryman
3: Regular cavalryman
1
2
3

the offensive, to try to relieve British outposts which were under siege, like Lucknow and Cawnpore, and to smash the rebel concentrations. And yet, concentrating sufficient forces to enable them to do so would be the major strategic problem of the war. The need to regain the initiative forced them to act in haste, yet the lack of reserves and the need to spread them dangerously thin over a wide area meant a perpetual danger of frittering away troops in piecemeal attacks.

For the rebels, too, the initiative was of crucial importance, to drive out the British and establish free zones with an Indian administration. Yet the uprising was essentially a conservative reaction to Company misrule, not a planned, progressive response; and having thrown off the British yoke, there was no military or civil power structure readily available to replace it. By definition, the mutinous regiments had cut themselves adrift from their own command structure. For the most part Indian officers, whilst they might have sympathised with the sepoys' grievances, were too circumspect to take charge of the mutiny, and control passed instead to an emergent group of political activists. Where leaders were identified in the initial outbreaks they were as varied as a *naik*, a common *sowar*, and a regimental barber.

Clearly, if the rebellion was to defend itself, a command structure would have to be reconstituted. For this the mutineers naturally looked towards discontented Indian rulers who might be called upon to take charge, and who were a supposed link with an undefined golden age of Indian independence. Outside the town of Cawnpore (Kanpur) in Oudh, where a British garrison was besieged, lived an heir of the Marathas, largely dispossessed by the Company: Dhondu Pant, known as the Nana Sahib. A deputation of rebels visited him, and were most persuasive: 'Maharajah, a kingdom awaits you if you join our enterprise, but death if you side with our enemies.' Small wonder Nana Sahib replied 'What have I to do with the British?' and accepted command of the siege. Yet the problems he faced were formidable; although the British troops were surrounded in a very exposed position, each of the mutinous units carried out the siege at its own pace, and could not be persuaded to accept an overall authority.

In due course[1] Cawnpore would fall and become the scene of an infamous atrocity, and one of Nana's attendants, Ramchandra Panduranga—who took the title Tantia Tope—would emerge as one of the most talented and daring commanders of the whole war, but those early problems were typical. Elsewhere in the country Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of the state of Jhansi, a widow in her thirties, was championed as a leader despite her efforts to remain loyal to the Company, against which she had some legitimate grievances. But once the rebels had implicated her in their actions, she had little choice but to throw in her lot with them, which she did with such energy that she became a heroine of the revolt.

Another advantage of enlisting the support of legitimate traditional leaders was that it spread the revolt beyond the army and into the civilian population. When Nana Sahib raised his standard he called upon the feudal landlords who owed him allegiance to come to his aid, and they raised a levy of hundreds of *barkandazes*, or matchlock men, who were their customary retainers. Many members of the traditional martial castes, like the Rajputs, especially those from areas like Oudh who had suffered most from the changes in Company policy, and who had direct family links with the disgruntled sepoys, also supported the rebellion. Around Delhi the Gujars, a wandering agricultural caste who were accustomed to augmenting their income with banditry in hard times, were prominent amongst the mobs roaming the countryside from the moment the rising began. Inevitably, the breakdown in law and order meant that bands of *badmashes* — 'bad characters' — attached themselves to the more disciplined rebel forces in the hope of securing plunder.

Yet rural support for the mutiny remained patchy; many *taluqdars*, administrative officials responsible for groups of villages, joined the rebellion, along with *zamindars*, landlords, and even village heads — but other petty nobility strove to remain neutral, whilst others positively supported the attempts to restore *angrezi raj*, British rule. And for the most part, such civilian insurgents were poorly armed and organised, and

[1] For a detailed history of the Mutiny, see MAA 67, *The Indian Mutiny*, text by Christopher Wilkinson-Latham, artwork by G. A. Embleton.

Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British envoy to Kabul, who was killed in 1879, photographed with Afghan chiefs. The man sitting left appears to be an officer in the regular Afghan army. (Bryan Maggs)

posed only minimal threat to the British lines of communication, to the extent that British strategy could ignore its loss of control in country areas, and concentrate instead on attacking the more dangerous sepoy strongholds.

It was Delhi that became the centre of the sepoy revolt. Living the life of a shadow-king inside his sumptuous palace was 82-year-old Bahadur Shah, the last of the Mughal Emperors, a Company pensioner whose grandiose titles masked a complete absence of real power. Yet the last of the Mughals offered a perfect figure-head; and as soon as the first mutineers clattered down the road from Meerut, they acclaimed Bahadur Shah their king, and promised to restore his kingdom. Like Nana Sahib and the Rani of Jhansi, the old man had little choice in the matter; and soon Delhi became the rallying point for the rebellion.

As each regiment in garrisons across the country rose and threw off Company authority, so its sepoys would make for Delhi, to be at the centre of things with like-minded colleagues, and with a prospect of pay and provisions. Natural as it was, such a movement was a severe problem for the rebellion, since it meant that rather than spreading the fire of revolt out to new areas, it was in fact drawing in upon itself, and the influx of disorganised soldiers provided enormous administrative headaches. A Mutineer Court, a revolutionary committee composed of sepoy leaders and members of Bahadur Shah's family, was formed to try to give direction to the uprising and to reimpose some sort of order within the army. Yet when the mutineers faced their first real test in battle, they proved unequal to it.

At the battle of Badli-ki-Serai on 8 June 1857 they failed to stop a numerically inferior British force from marching on Delhi. The reasons for the defeat were telling. The sepoys fought with courage and tenacity but, as one observer of a later battle commented, 'the inferior details of their movements were perfect, but the master mind was wanting'. Lacking a trained and integrated officer corps, the sepoy attacks lacked direction; and they could not stand firm against

determined bayonet charges. Ironically, the Enfield rifle which they had rejected, but which the British carried, told against them at ranges beyond their reach. The next day the British occupied the ridge overlooking the city, and the siege of Delhi began. Elsewhere, as small British columns battled their way towards Cawnpore and Lucknow, it was the same story; no lack of courage or training on the part of the sepoys, just inferior weapons and poor leadership.

The effect of the increasingly severe fighting was to gradually break down the rebel army, from organised regiments into war bands. The old uniform trousers were never popular, and were soon replaced with the *dhoti*, the everyday linen waist-cloth; but at the beginning of the war the sepoys still fought in their regimental coatees and white caps, and retained their regimental organisation. As new units arrived at Delhi, so they were put straight into the line and sent to attack the British positions, and the British could recognise new arrivals by their uniforms and crisp manoeuvring, on at least one occasion with flags flying and drums beating. But if such attacks were intended to capitalise on the troops' freshness, they had the opposite effect, squandering units piecemeal rather than saving them for carefully planned and controlled attacks.

Running fights in the ruins below the ridge became commonplace, and sepoy discipline and organisation began to suffer, made worse by squabbles among the leadership and rows over pay. Gradually more and more sepoys abandoned their coatees, and fought with their accoutrements worn over civilian clothes. Regimental distinctions and command structures became blurred. The logical conclusion of this process came after the fall of Delhi, when those sepoys who remained in the field ceased to be members of organised units, and became instead war-bands inextricably mixed up with the remaining civilian insurgents. An eyewitness account by Capt. G. F. Atkinson describes sepoy costume:

'The costume in which the mutineers fight is

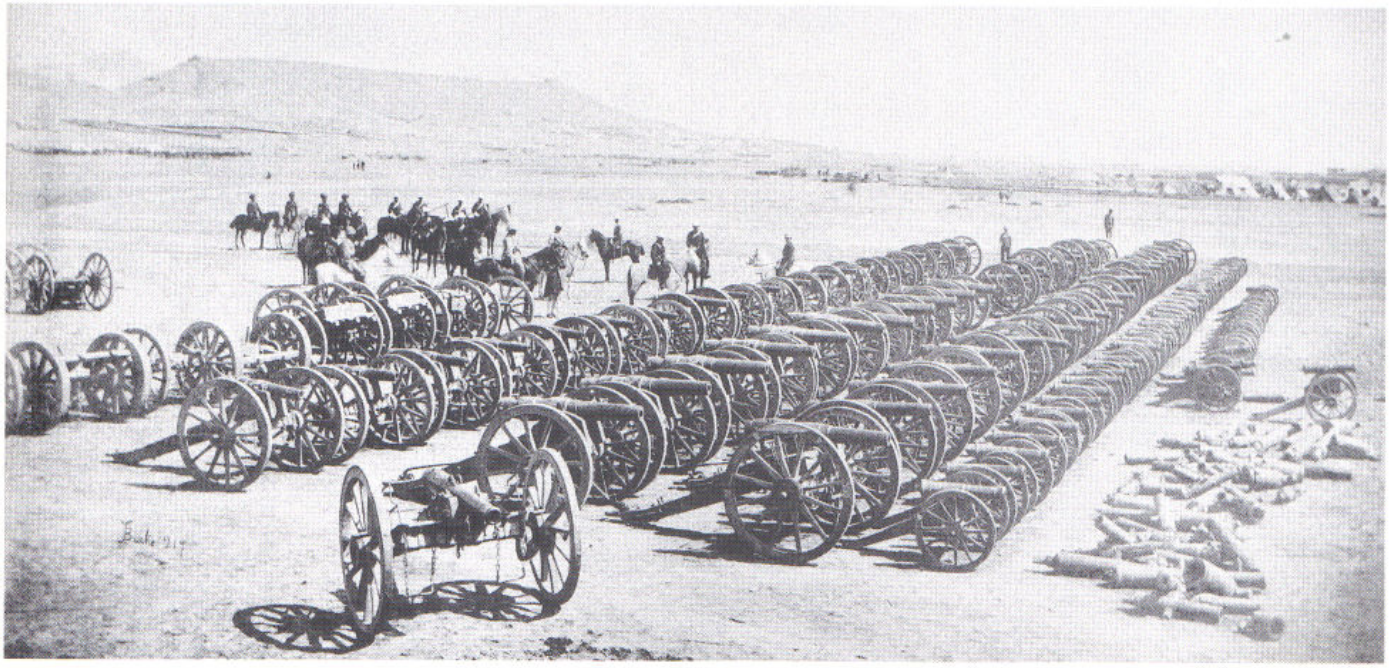
Members of the Amir of Afghanistan's Highland Guard in 1879. The most colourful unit in the Afghan army, they are wearing Highland-style tunics, and chequered 'kilts' over white trousers and leather leggings. The rifles are Sniders. Note the officer with arms folded, right. (Bryan Maggs)

their usual native dress, upon which they buckled the British accoutrements. This dress consists of a closely fitting linen jacket, open at the side of the breast. (Muslims) having the opening on the left, Hindoos on the right. Round the loins a long strip of unbleached cloth, wound tightly round and the ends tucked in—this, the 'dhoti' was always worn by the sepoy beneath his pantaloons, as was the white jacket beneath his regimentals. On his head he wears a common white linen skull cap or occasionally a turban loosely twisted around the temples with one end hanging down his back . . . Frequently, however, the mutineers turned out before Delhi in their red coats, with colours flying and bands playing . . . The sepoys wear necklaces of white beads which on the native officers are gold. The officers' horses are caparisoned after the native fashion, and have the manes and legs stained bright orange.'

Three months passed in a war of attrition outside Delhi, which neither side could afford to sustain, either politically or materially. One solution for the rebels was to mobilise a new source of manpower—the Muslim population of the city and the surrounding districts. For the most part the Muslims were bitterly opposed to the infidel rule of the British, yet Bahadur Shah firmly resisted pressures to raise the green standard of *jihad*, the Muslim Holy War. He was only too aware of the latent hostility between Hindus and Muslims, a hostility which had already flared into minor acts of sectarian violence. Since the mutineer camp was already rife with dissension, the call to *jihad* risked a more serious split along religious lines. None the less, Muslim leaders in the Court did raise large numbers of *Ghazis*, Islamic religious warriors who took up arms in the name of the Faith. Many of these were Indian Muslims, but others were *wilayatis*, Afghan soldiers of fortune who had gathered at Indian princely courts in search of military employment. The *Ghazis* were usually poorly armed—many in any case preferred to fight with the *talwar*—and undisciplined; but though liable to be distracted by the prospect of plunder, in battle they were renowned for their wild courage.

In early September 1857 the British on the ridge were reinforced by a substantial siege train, and on 14 September sappers blew the Kashmir Gate and storming parties entered the city. The street fighting which followed was hard and bloody, but it left the British masters of Delhi. The rebel junta was broken up, Bahadur Shah surrendered, and many of the sepoys fled the city to join armies still active elsewhere in the country. Those who were captured faced a fearful retribution, equal to any of the excesses committed by them during the outbreak of the rebellion.

The capture of Delhi broke the back of the



Something of the variety of Afghan artillery pieces is conveyed by this photo of guns captured at Kabul by Lord Roberts in 1879. (Bryan Maggs)

sepoy revolt. Cawnpore and Lucknow were relieved, and by the end of 1857 there was no prospect of the rebellion succeeding. Yet all its supporters were by no means defeated, and the war entered a new phase. Freed from the need to defend strategic centres, the rebel armies embarked on a war of manoeuvre which suggested something of the potential which had earlier been squandered. Forced out of Jhansi, the Rani joined with Tantia Topi, and in a surprise counter-attack seized the city of Gwalior in central India. By now the rebel armies consisted of nothing more than a nucleus of sepoys, many grouped in bands which were all that remained of the old regiments, supported by *barkandazes* and a hotch-potch of *Ghazis*, armed civilians and *badmashes*. Yet Tantia Topi and the Rani held their own until the battle of Kotah-ki-Serai in June 1858, where their coalition was smashed and the Rani herself killed. All that remained was to pacify the countryside and flush out the remaining rebel fugitives, a time-consuming business which dragged on into 1859. Tantia Topi was finally betrayed to the British and captured in April 1859; he was tried and hanged.

The repercussions of the Mutiny were colossal, and lie far outside a work of this nature. British rule was re-established in India, but power was transferred from the Company direct to the Crown. When the Indian army was rebuilt, the lessons of the rising were reflected in a different organisation, recruitment and a policy of arming the sepoys only with weapons inferior to those carried by their British counterparts. In the end the rising had failed because it could not overcome its military origin; it failed to replace ousted European military and civilian leaders with trained Indian substitutes, and to evolve a cohesive forward policy, before the British could mobilise against it. But there is no doubt it was the most serious challenge faced by the *angrezi raj* between its inception and Independence.

A group of Pathan tribesmen in 1879; their costume has not changed since the First Afghan War. All are still carrying long-barrelled flintlock *jezails*. Note the skull-caps worn by the men in the foreground. (Bryan Maggs)

The North-West Frontier 1849-78

With the annexation of the Punjab in 1849 the Company's borders were pushed right up to the Afghan foothills. This was a wild and turbulent region, long disputed by both Afghans and Sikhs, and the main frontier town, Peshawar, had changed hands several times, though in truth the Pathan tribes who inhabited the region acknowledged little authority from either side. They saw no reason to change their view when the British arrived in the area, and perhaps even relished testing their wits against a new enemy. Long used to raiding down from the hills to prey on villages near Peshawar, or robbing bands of travellers, or simply attacking military patrols for the sport and the chance to steal weapons, the Pathans were an immediate source of trouble to the Company's Frontier administrators. Between 1849 and 1878 there were no less than 25 campaigns along the foothills, and most followed a familiar pattern.

A clan or tribe would prove troublesome, attracting the attention of the authorities. The Company's response was usually to try to restore order by diplomatic means, or, failing that, by isolating and blockading it—an almost impossible task considering the difficult nature of the terrain. If all else failed a punitive expedition would be organised. Usually of locally raised Indian troops, with a stiffening of Queen's regulars, it would face the daunting task of marching through harsh mountain country to attack and destroy a village identified as the cause of the uprising. Such villages were often strategically sited—the result of generations of interclan warfare—and protected by fortified watch-towers. At this time, the Pathans' favourite tactic was to use harassing fire from their *jezails* to screen mass attacks by swordsmen. With their natural strategic flair and their good eye for the country, woe betide any inexperienced British officer who made a mistake in handling his troops. Seizing the high ground was a crucial objective of tactics on the Frontier, since, as the First Afghan War had shown, the tribesmen could wreak havoc if allowed to command the heights unhindered; conversely, the Pathans did not like to be overlooked, or to have their line of retreat threatened. Frontier warfare was a cat-and-mouse game in which both sides came to respect the skill and courage of the other—though the relatively humane treatment usually afforded to wounded tribesmen by the British contrasted grimly with the torture and mutilation which awaited British or Indian troops falling into Afghan hands. Once embarked on a punitive campaign, it was necessary to achieve its objectives at all costs, since neighbouring tribes, not involved in the fighting, would be keenly watching the outcome, and any signs of weakness would be seized upon.

Afghan tribesmen at Jellalabad, c.1879. These men, living along the main route from India to Afghanistan, have already acquired percussion rifles in place of the traditional flintlocks. (National Army Museum)

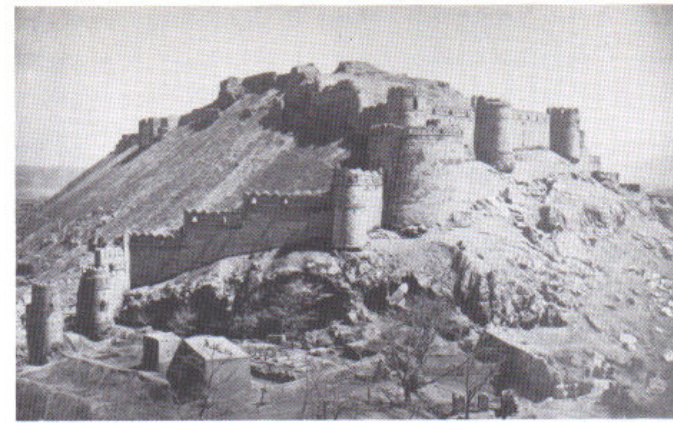
The most serious campaign of this period was the 1863 Ambela expedition. About 30 miles north of Peshawar was based a group of Muslim zealots known to the British as the 'Hindustani fanatics', and to the Pathans by a name with contemporary echoes, the *Mujhaddin*. These 'Warriors of God' waged a perpetual war, prosecuted through banditry, against the infidels around them. During the Mutiny period their ranks were swollen by large numbers of disaffected Bengal sepoys. In 1863 the British felt strong enough to tackle them, and a large force marched out from Peshawar to approach their stronghold via the Ambela Pass. The pass itself was the territory of the Brunerwal tribe, who were thought to be hostile towards the *Mujhaddin*. Unfortunately the Brunerwals were not told of the expedition's ob-

jective until the last moment, and they regarded the British movements with the greatest suspicion. As the column moved through the pass they attacked. What started as a planned three-week campaign in the event lasted for three months, and led to 238 British dead and 670 wounded. The keys to the pass were two narrow rocky crags on either side, small enough to be controlled by a dozen men; and around these the battle raged, the crags being overrun and retaken time after time. As many as 25,000 tribesmen gathered to attack the British, and the nearby ruler of Swat brought his men to join the fray. In the end, however, the British were reinforced and the tribesmen heavily defeated. They finally sued for peace, and allowed a British sortie safe passage to push on and destroy the *Mujhaddin*'s main settlement. The campaign dispersed the *Mujhaddin*, and its lessons had been salutary for both sides.

Afghanistan 1878-81

In the decades after the disaster of the First Afghan War the British were content to abandon a 'forward policy', and to accept Sind and the Punjab as the western boundaries of their dominion. The Russian threat failed to materialise; and, ironically, when Dost Mohammed signed a treaty of friendship in 1855, he proved most true to it, restraining his followers during the Mutiny when the British were at their most vulnerable. During the 1860s, however, the Russians once more began their creeping advance through central Asia, and by the 1870s the prospect of a Russian strike through Afghanistan against British India was once more considered possible. It was a time when Disraeli's new government was prepared to adopt a more aggressive foreign policy across the world, and tension with Russia ran high over the question of Constantinople.

The Second Afghan War, like the contemporary Zulu War, was very much the responsibility of the British official on the spot, in this case the Governor General, Lord Lytton. Lytton was convinced that the Russian threat was real and, ignoring the lessons of 1842, believed that the



The Bala Hissar, the formidable fortress overlooking the Afghan capital of Kabul. (Bryan Maggs)

solution was to install a client regime in Kabul. When the incumbent Amir, Sher Ali, reluctantly received a Russian envoy at Kabul in the spring of 1878, Lytton indignantly demanded similar representation. Sher Ali, resentful of being caught 'like an earthen pipkin between two iron pots', refused. In fact, subsequent negotiations between Britain and Russia in Berlin cooled the diplomatic temperature to the extent that in August 1878 the Russian mission was recalled from Kabul; but Lytton did not change his policy. In September a British party set out for Kabul, but were turned back by the Afghan governor of Ali Musjid, the impressive fortress commanding the Khyber. Lytton demanded an apology from Sher Ali; when none arrived, he invaded Afghanistan.

The resultant campaign had a number of striking parallels with the First Afghan War. The British advanced in three columns, towards Kandahar in the south, up the Kurram valley, and along the Khyber towards Kabul. Ali Musjid in the Khyber and the Peiwar Kotal in the Kurram were taken by masterly use of flanking movements and Sher Ali fled, abandoning his throne to his son, Yakub Khan. Yakub agreed to negotiate, and in May 1879 signed the Treaty of Gandamak, which stipulated that a British envoy should be resident in Kabul. Most of the British troops would withdraw, although Britain would retain the Kurram valley. As a consequence the British resident would be protected only by the handful of troops in his personal bodyguard.

At first the Afghans seemed to accept the agreement, and the British envoy, Sir Louis Cavagnari, took up his post in Kabul. At the beginning of

September 1879, however, a detachment of the Amir's regular troops from Herat in the west, who had not been used against the British advance, were brought to Kabul. There they mutinied over the question of pay and, supported by the Kabul mob, directed their anger against the residency. After a stiff fight Cavagnari and all his men were killed. The immediate result was a fresh British invasion, spearheaded by Lord Roberts' column in the Kurram.

Roberts defeated the Afghans at Charasiah in October and occupied Kabul, destroying the Bala Hissar in retribution and executing the ringleaders of the rising. But once again it proved impossible to suppress the countryside, and in December Roberts found himself fighting off a tremendous gathering of tribesmen, estimated at one point to have numbered 100,000, in a series of battles outside the city.

At Kandahar in the south, Yakub Khan's brother, Ayub Khan, advanced on the British garrison with an army raised at Herat. A column sent out against him was caught off-guard and destroyed at Maiwand in July 1880. Roberts, having consolidated his position at Kabul, marched out to relieve Kandahar, defeating Ayub outside the city on 1 September.

If the military record this time was more successful than before, it was still a diplomatic failure. Pressured by a change of government at home, the unpopularity of the war with the British public, and the prospect of an unending and ruinously expensive pacification campaign, Lytton pulled back from Afghanistan. By March 1881 the British had once more withdrawn within Indian borders, leaving the throne to Abdur Rahman—an able, if ruthless, grandson of Dost Mohammed. It was to be the last time the British army fought on Afghan soil.

An impressive trophy of Afghan weapons and equipment taken by the British in the Second Afghan War. There are a number of *chora* knives, *talwars*, *jezails*, and, centre, a brass regular artillery helmet. The ammunition pouches on the equipment belts are decorated with brass studs. (National ArmyMuseum)

A group of Afridi tribesmen from the Khyber Pass area, c.1880. Most are wearing white *angarkas*, trousers and *lungis*, and have sashes around the shoulders. Their weapons are the *jezail* and *chora*. (Bryan Maggs)

Throughout the war the Afghans had employed their familiar tactics. They were, however, better trained and armed than they had been in 1839-42, since throughout the 1860s Sher Ali had built up a regular army. The exact details of its organisation are unclear, but British intelligence reports in 1878 gave its strength as 51,890 men: 37,200 infantry, 9,500 cavalry, and 5,190 artillery, with between three and four hundred field guns. Both infantry and cavalry seem to have been organised into regiments of 600 men each, garrisoned in the major towns around the country: 14 infantry regiments at Kabul, three at Jellalabad, 17 at Herat, and so on.

In the first phase of the war the British were opposed by regular troops, supported by levies drawn from the tribes, and the inevitable *Ghazis*. At Peiwar Kotal, for example, the Afghan force consisted of eight regular regiments, 18 guns, and an unknown number of tribesmen. In the second phase of the war the regular Afghan army threw off the authority of the Amir, Yakub, and allied itself with elements seeking to end the occupation. It seems to have retained a good deal of its discipline, however, since regular units remained the backbone of the Afghan forces. At Maiwand, for example, Ayub's force consisted of 24 guns—which bested the British in an artillery duel—and five regiments of infantry from Kabul, one from Kandahar, and three from Herat, though these were of varying strengths. Most of the cavalry were irregulars; and tribal elements brought the total up to perhaps 20,000 men.

These regular troops were armed and uniformed along British lines; indeed, there is a suggestion that they may actually have worn old or obsolete British uniforms bought at frontier trading posts. Specific details are scarce, but infantry regiments wore dark brown woollen uniforms with red facings, and were armed with British Enfields or Sniders. One estimate suggested that the Amir had at his disposal 5,000 Sniders, 15,000 Enfields, 1,200 rifled carbines, 1,400 Brunswick carbines, 1,000 Tower muskets, and 1,045 cavalry pistols, all of British make (many of them diplomatic gifts), as well as 16,000 locally produced copies of the Enfields and Sniders. Cavalry regiments apparently wore blue uniforms, with old-fashioned brass helmets, but there are a number of descriptions of Afghan dragoons wearing old British red cloth tunics, dark blue baggy trousers, black felt hats and black leather boots. Their equipment straps were white leather; a carbine was carried on the right side, muzzle down, and a *talwar* on the left. The artillery also dressed in blue and wore brass helmets,

A typical group of Afghan tribesmen; note the *dahl* shield. (National Army Museum)

apparently with a red horsehair plume, and bearing a plate showing three guns and an inscription in Persian.

In general, morale amongst the regular army suffered due to a lack of trained officers, but care was lavished on the artillery, which was the best-paid and trained division. One source suggests that Sher Ali had 16 elephant-drawn guns, 18 bullock-drawn guns, 89 breech-loaders and 56 brass guns drawn by horses, six breech-loaders, 48 muzzle-loaders and 96 brass guns in mountain batteries, and 50 additional small guns. This probably overestimates the number of breech-loaders, but it does suggest something of the variety of Afghan ordnance. The horse-drawn batteries were organised into six guns with 150 men, while the remainder had only 70 men per six guns.

One unusual unit in the Afghan army was the Amir's Highland Guard. Apparently inspired by the uniform of British Highland regiments, these wore red coats, with chequered red and white 'kilts', worn over baggy white trousers, leather leggings and boots. They also wore British-style sun helmets, and carried Snider rifles. Equipment consisted of white leather shoulder and waist-belts with cap and ammunition pouches.

Throughout the war, the Afghan tribesmen wore their traditional costume and carried traditional weapons, which had not altered significantly since the 1840s.

The North-West Frontier 1878-1900

The second British intervention in Afghanistan did not materially improve the situation on the Frontier; in fact, many of the Pathan tribes took advantage of the British advance to rise and threaten their lines of communication, necessitating the usual punitive campaigns, and between 1878 and 1900 there were 21 such operations along the Frontier. The passing of time had little effect on the nature of this warfare, although from about 1890 there was a marked shift in Pathan tactics away from massed rushes in favour of long-range sniping fire. This was a result of improved military technology; on the one hand the magazine rifles now issued to British troops greatly increased their rate of fire, making frontal assaults much more costly, whilst on the other, the Pathans themselves obtained more modern rifles. Remote and impoverished tribes might still have to rely on the *jezail*; but wealthier tribes, such as the Afridis of the Khyber Pass, who were paid a regular subsidy to keep this strategic route open, had both the means and the opportunity to obtain breech-loaders, and their supplies were further augmented by excellent copies made in bazaar workshops.

The dress of the tribesmen remained largely the same, though observers noted certain styles and colours were in fashion in different districts: the Wazirs south of the Kurram river favoured dark red or blue *lungis*, a coarse wool *angarka*, white cotton trousers, and a white *chadar* cloak; the Afridis often wore blue shirts, and loose white trousers gathered at the ankles; the Turis of the Kurram valley wore earrings and white or blue clothes, whilst the Shiranis wore one black blanket around the waist and another around the shoulders.

The 1890s saw two of the most famous campaigns fought on the Frontier. Early in the decade the ruling house of Chitral, a small state in the foothills of the Hindu Kush, was devastated by a bloody succession crisis which led to an attack on the British resident and his escort of 370 Indian troops, who took refuge in Chitral fort, where they

were promptly besieged. The Chitralis were not a Pathan people, but their way of life and fighting was similar, and they mounted persistent attacks on the fort. A relief column of British and Indian troops set out from Peshawar, 160 miles to the south, climbing the Malakand Pass and entering the Swat valley. The Swat tribes promptly rose, and the expedition had to fight its way up the valley, severely hampered by freezing temperatures and snow which made progress difficult. At the same time a smaller column of Indian troops set out from Gilgit to the east of Chitral. This latter column was the first to confront the Chitralis, driving them in a series of stiff fights from their defensive positions along the route. Chitral managed to hold out until help arrived 47 days after the rising. The British established their own candidate—ten-year-old Shuja-ul-Mulk—as ruler of Chitral, and left a sizeable garrison to support him.

Two years later, Malakand was again the centre of a major disturbance when, fired by the preaching of a new group of fervent *immams*, the tribes rose all along the Frontier in a most serious outbreak. The first shots were fired by the Wazirs in the south; then Swat in the north rose, and the British garrison at Malakand was attacked. No sooner was a punitive force dispatched to Swat than the Afridi and Orakzai tribes around the Khyber came out. A garrison of the Khyber Rifles manning the fort of Ali Musjid in the pass abandoned it to the enemy, and for several months the pass was completely in Pathan hands.

The British response was to strike at the Tirah valley, the fertile summer home of the Afridis; an area hardly penetrated by Europeans, it was entered by a pass at Dargai. In a famous action in October 1897, Dargai was stormed, and for several months British and Indian troops ravaged the Tirah. It was a dangerous business, since the Afridis were most reluctant to come to terms, and on a number of occasions the British suffered serious reverses. The 1st Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment, inexperienced in Frontier warfare, became trapped in a *nullah*, or dry watercourse, whilst evacuating its wounded, and was severely mauled, losing every member of a party who stayed to cover its retreat. Bad weather forced the column to withdraw in December 1897,

Pathan tribesmen lay in ambush for a British column—an image which typifies the fighting on the North-West Frontier in the 1890s. (National Army Museum)

and the Afridis harassed it all the way. It was to be several months before systematic pacification finally brought peace to the Frontier.

* * *

When Queen Victoria came to the throne, the British East India Company was poised to make its disastrous excursion into Afghanistan; when she died, sporadic fighting was still taking place on the Frontier—and it was to continue almost until Britain granted India her independence after the Second World War. The sub-continent had proved to be the Empire's biggest overseas military commitment, an all-consuming drain of lives and resources. Jewel in the Crown it may have been; but the cost of keeping it, for all concerned, had been high.

The Plates

A: Afghan tribesmen, 1839–80

A1: A tribesman wearing typical Afghan dress: a loose *angarka* tunic, cotton trousers, a pointed *kullah* cap and *chapplis* (sandals). The *lungi* was worn as a turban, as a sash round the shoulders, and as a kummerbund. He has slung his flintlock *jezail* over his shoulder, and drawn his *talwar* for close combat. Variations on the *dahl* shield were common across the Indian sub-continent.

Ten-year-old Shuja-ul-Mulk, installed by the British as ruler of Chitral in 1895, and some of his followers in the characteristic dress of Chitrali tribesmen. (Bryan Maggs)

A2: Although white was the colour most frequently used for Afghan clothing, reds, blues and greys were sometimes worn. This man wears a turban without a *kullah*, and is armed with a *chora*, the fearsome 'Khyber knife', which was encountered in many sizes but which was characterised by a razor-sharp single-edged blade tapering from hilt to point.

A3: To counter the bitter Afghan winter, tribesmen wore the *poshteen*, a sheepskin coat with hair on the inside. This man also wears a patterned skull-cap—an alternative to the turban—and carries a typically decorated flintlock *jezail*. This remained a popular weapon on the Frontier until the 1870s and 80s, when British percussion rifles, or locally made copies of them, began to replace it. By the 1890s breech-loading weapons were common. The cartouche box decorated with metal studs features in a number of contemporary illustrations. The basic appearance of Afghan costume did not change much during the 19th century.

Included in this scene is Capt. Souter of the 44th, one of the survivors of Gandamak, who owed his life to the fact that he had wrapped the Regimental Colour around his waist, and was thus taken by the Afghans as a man of high rank.

B1: Baluchi tribesman, 1840s
This man is wearing typical Baluchi dress: a white turban, full-skirted white robe, and white trousers. Unlike the Pathans, who generally cropped their hair short, the Baluchis wore theirs long and straight. This man is carrying a comparatively modern flintlock musket, but *jezails*, *talwars* and shields were also common.

B2: Tribal chief, Sind, 1840s
Probably a Baluchi, his costume is basically the same as B1, but his rank is reflected in the better quality of his clothes, his decorated sword-belt, and the number of his weapons.

B3: Indian matchlock man, Gwalior, 1840s
Soldiers such as these were the mainstay of the armies retained by the Indian princes, and would have provided a nucleus of trained men for forces across the sub-continent in the 18th and 19th centuries. He is typical of the Maratha troops in the Gwalior War of 1843, and indeed, of many of the men who fought in the Mutiny. He wears characteristic Indian dress, with a *talwar* hanging from a leather shoulder-belt, and powder and shot suspended from a waist-belt.

C1: Sikh Ghorchurra cavalryman, c.1845
Comprised for the most part of members of the landed gentry, the *Ghorchurras* were a social élite, and their undisciplined ways were in marked contrast to the units of the regular *Fauj-i-Ain*. This man's status is reflected in his sumptuous costume; he is wearing an Indo-Persian *khulah-kud* helmet, with *chahar aina* 'four mirror' body armour, and his weapons are an inlaid *dahl* shield, a lance and a *shamshir* sword.

C2: Akali zealot, Sikh War, c.1845
A member of the band of religious fanatics who provided the wildest element in the *Khalsa*. Many *Akalis* wore few clothes into action but, like this man, carried a veritable armoury of weapons. The *charka* throwing quoits were particularly favoured; note the means of carrying spare quoits around the turban.

C3: Sikh irregular infantryman, c.1845
Such men wore typical civilian dress, and were armed with matchlocks, swords and shields.

D1: Sikh regular infantryman, c.1845
Sikh infantry wore red coatees after the British style; some sources suggest, indeed, that they were old British uniforms. The exact details of facings

are not clear in contemporary illustrations, but certainly reflected regimental distinctions. Turbans were either white or blue, as were trousers, the latter having a broad red stripe down the outer seam. The firearm is either a British Brown Bess musket or a local copy. The leather cross-belts support a cartouche box and *talwar*.

D2: Sikh regular artilleryman, c.1845
Again, his uniform is a rough copy of British patterns, though rather less exact than his infantry counterpart. His headdress is a curious feature; we have interpreted it here as a high turban over a bamboo framework. Contemporary illustrations show both white and blue trousers, and some depict a white shoulder-belt supporting a *talwar*. Sikh artillerymen impressed the British with their skill and dexterity and their reluctance to abandon their guns even in the face of determined attack.

D3: Sikh infantryman, white summer dress, c.1845
His equipment is the same as D1. A contemporary description speaks of Sikh regiments in summer uniform being distinguished by different coloured turbans — red, yellow and green.

E1: Sepoy, 20th Bengal Native Infantry, 1857
On the eve of the Mutiny the British East India Company's soldiers wore a uniform which reflected that of their British counterparts as closely as possible. By the time of the Mutiny the shako was only worn on ceremonial occasions. This man's coatee has shoulder wings, indicating that he is a member of a flank company. Note the beads visible at the throat.

E2: Sowar, 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry, 1857
This is the typical undress or working costume of the Bengal cavalry, and many mutineers would have continued to wear it into action, at least during the early stages of the war.

E3: Sepoy, 11th Bengal Native Infantry, 1857
Another of the regiments which rose at Meerut

Wazir tribesmen in the Pathan revolt of 1897. Note the woollen tunics and coloured *lungis* favoured by this tribe. (National Army Museum)

(Mirath). This man is wearing typical fighting costume: a Kilmarnock cap with white cover bearing the regimental number, his regimental coatee, and a *dhoti*, the ordinary civilian waist-cloth, which was more comfortable and less restrictive than trousers. He is examining the infamous Enfield rifle whose greased cartridges became a focus for sepoy discontent.

F1: Mutinous sepoy, 1857–59

As the war progressed many sepoys abandoned their old Company uniforms, both because of their associations with British rule, and because they were less comfortable than traditional Indian costume. This man is wearing a typical fighting costume, his military accoutrements worn with a civilian tunic, the universal *dhoti*, and a skull-cap. Some reports mention sepoys wearing turbans, or their old Kilmarnock caps with white covers.

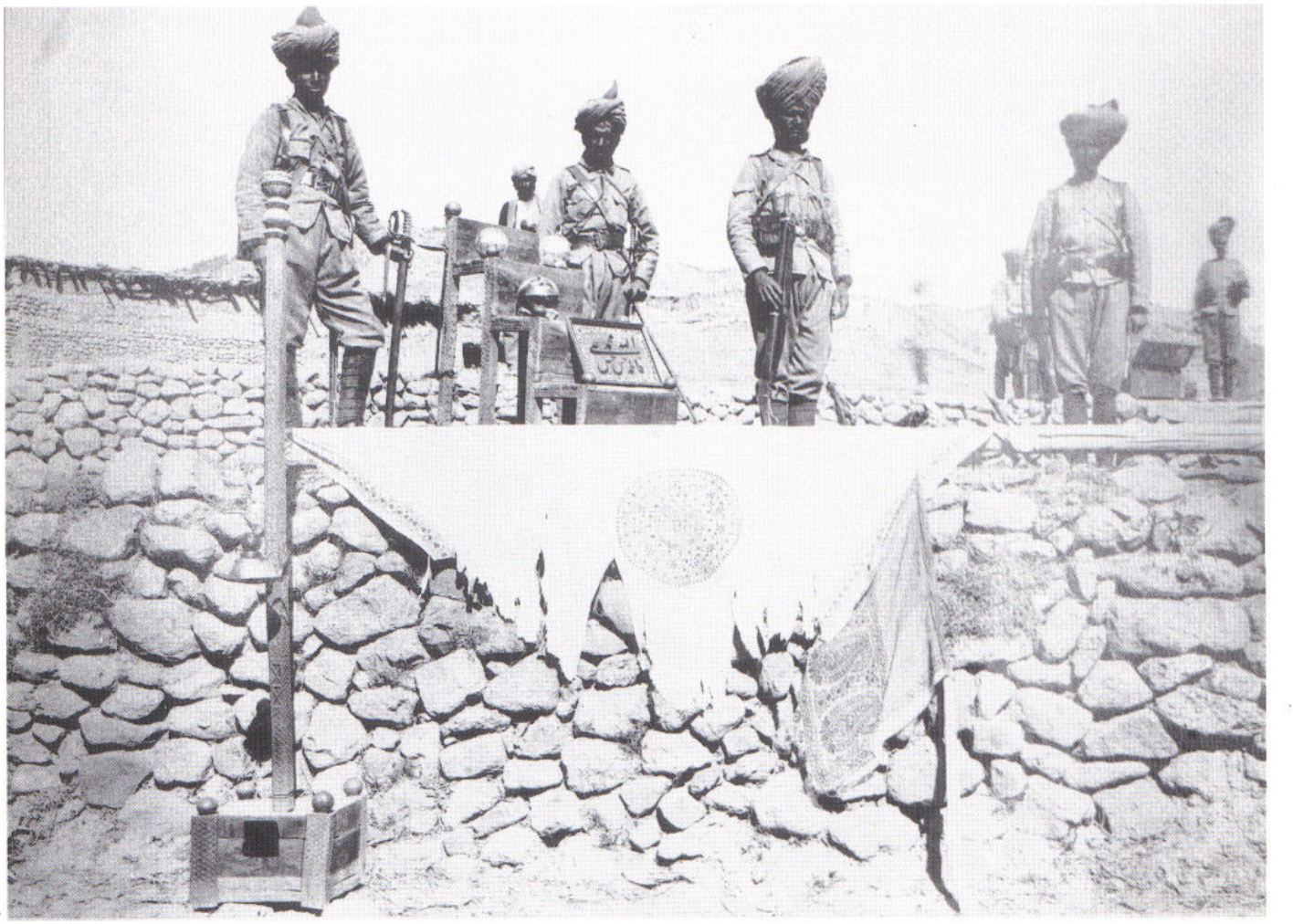
F2: Mutinous sowar, 1857–59

Like their infantry counterparts, rebels from the Company's cavalry regiments gradually reverted to civilian costume, although both this and the undress uniform (see Plate E2) were worn into battle even within the same regiment until well into the war. A long white robe, and loose trousers narrow over the calf, were the traditional dress of the Indian horseman.

F3: Civilian insurgent, Indian Mutiny

The core of the rebel army, the mutinous sepoys, were augmented by large numbers of civilian insurgents from a variety of sources; this man might be a member of the town mob; a *badmash* or 'bad character', who took advantage of the anarchy to plunder and kill indiscriminately; or a rural peasant from one of the communities who supported the uprising. Such men were usually poorly armed, untrained and ill-disciplined. This

Pathan standards and prayer-stools captured during the 1897 uprising. Pathan standards were usually triangular, brightly coloured, and decorated with characteristic Afghan motifs. (Bryan Maggs)



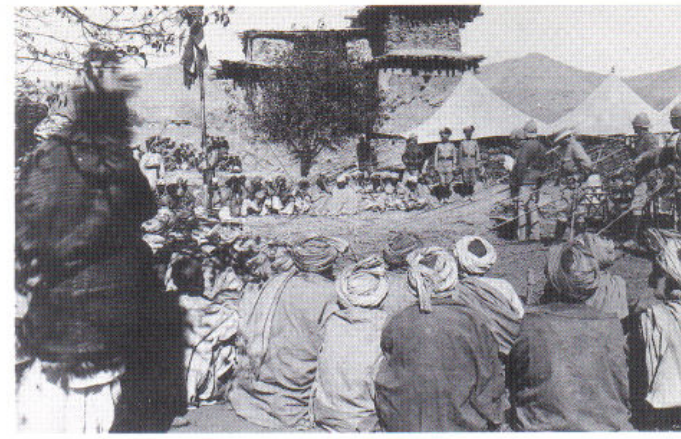
man is wearing the costume of the Indian peasant: a *dhoti* and turban.

F4: Muslim urban insurgent, Indian Mutiny
This figure is based on a contemporary sketch of a Muslim butcher. Such men are mentioned frequently in British reports of urban mob violence, and seem to have been assigned many of the more brutal duties by the mutineers, presumably because of their professional skills. Muslim butchers were employed by the Nana Sahib to murder the women prisoners in the Bibi Ghar at Cawnpore.

G1: The Rani of Jhansi, c.1858
One of the most colourful of the rebel leaders, the Rani achieved considerable notoriety amongst the British before her death in battle at Kotah-ki-Serai in June 1858. She was in her early thirties, and one who met her before the war said she 'must have been very handsome when she was younger, and even now [her face] had many charms . . . The expression was . . . very intelligent . . . and a remarkably fine figure she had'. Most subsequent descriptions were largely based on rumour, but there are a number of reports that she used to dress like a man in battle, and one pictures her as we have shown her here, wearing a red cavalry *kurta* and white turban, with her hair cropped short, and armed with a sword, which we have presumed was of the finest quality.

G2: Indian barkandaze, Mutiny period
This man is typical of the levies raised, both by local landlords who joined the rebellion, and some of the wealthier anti-British princes. He carries a traditional Indian matchlock and *talwar*, and wears civilian dress. See also Plate B3.

G3: Ghazi (Muslim religious warrior), Mutiny period
The *Ghazis* took up arms to defend the Faith against the British infidel, and, as such, were fierce but undisciplined soldiers, and usually poorly armed, often with *talwars* and shields. Many were Indian Muslims, but some—like this man, whose dress suggests the influence of Afghan styles—were *wilayatis*, Afghan soldiers of fortune who had attached themselves to the princely courts of central India, and for whom the rising offered the prospect of potential enrichment in this life as well as the possibility of a martyr's death in battle.



Dictating terms to Orakzai tribal *malik*s during the 1897 Tirah expedition. (National Army Museum)

H: Afghan regulars, 1878–80
H1: Amir of Afghanistan's 'Highland Guard', c.1879
This somewhat unusual uniform was inspired by that of British Highland regiments, and some of the items may well have been old British cast-offs. The shoulder-belt probably supported another ammunition pouch, and the rifle is a Snider. It is not clear whether this uniform was ever worn into action.

H2: Afghan regular infantryman, c.1879
The exact details of infantry dress are not recorded, although there are two references to dark brown uniforms with red facings. The fur hat shown here, worn by some regiments of Afghan cavalry, is speculative, as no details of infantry headgear have survived. The rifle and accoutrements were probably the same as for the 'Highland Guard'.

H3: Afghan regular cavalry trooper, c.1879
Based on a contemporary engraving, this figure shows a member of an Afghan dragoon regiment. The tunic is certainly British in style, and may well have originally been such. British observers were struck by the smartness of the cross-belts and equipment, but less so by the woollen hats 'which did not at all suit their swarthy complexions'. No details of rank distinctions or horse furniture have been found. Other Afghan cavalry units wore blue uniforms with a plumed helmet.

Notes sur les planches en contents

A Le costume n'avait pas changé considérablement pendant un demi-siècle. **A1** Tunique ample (*angarka*), pantalon, casquette pointue (*kullah*) et sandales (*chapplis*); l'écharpe *lungi* pouvait être portée à la ceinture, comme turban ou autour des épaules. Son fusil à pierre *jezail* est à la grenadière, et il a tiré son épée (*talwar*) pour combat corps à corps. Le bouclier *dhal* était courant partout dans le sous-continent. **A2** Blanc ou blanc-cassé étaient les couleurs les plus fréquentes, mais rouge, bleu et gris étaient quelquefois portés. Le *chora* ou 'couteau de Khyber' existait dans plusieurs modèles, toujours avec un seul fil et tranchant comme un rasoir—une arme effrayante dans un combat corps à corps. **A3** Le manteau *poshteen* est tenue d'hiver typique; remarquez la calotte à motifs, une alternative au turban. L'officier blanc est le capitaine Souter du 44ième régiment d'infanterie, qui était épargne dans le massacre de 1842 à Gandamak.

B1 Costume typique des *Baluchi*—remarquez les cheveux longs caracteristiques. **B2** Chef *Baluchi*; son rang est indiqué par la qualité des vêtements et de la ceinture, et le nombre de ses armes. **B3** Le pivot des armées des princes indiens, dans ce cas typique des soldats Maratha dans la campagne Gwalior—et également des armées princières qui se sont battus dans la Grande Révolte, 1857–59.

C1 De l'armure Indo-persane: casque *khula-kud*, blindage 'quatre miroirs' et des armes et des vêtements décorés dénotent un membre du corps sikh de cavalerie irregulier, un corps de haute naisance, flamboyant et peu discipliné. **C2** L'élément le plus sauvage de l'armée sikh *Khalsa*, caracterisée par leurs vêtements simples et le grand nombre d'armes, comme par exemple ces palets affilés, portés dans le turban. **C3** Paysan typique de la plus pauvre classe de soldat, armé avec un fusil à pierre, une épée et un bouclier.

D1 Les soldats sikh de métier portaient des uniformes regimentales dans le style britannique. **D2** Encore une copie approximative de styles britanniques, bien que le couvre-chef singulier soit peut-être grâce aux instructeurs français. **D3** Des uniformes d'été blancs auraient pu être distingués par les turbans de couleurs différentes selon l'unité.

E1 Typique de l'infanteries de la Compagnie des Indes Orientales à l'époque de la Révolte; le shako n'était porté que pour les occasions cérémonielles. Remarquez les 'ailes' sur la tunique et le collier autour du cou. **E2** L'uniforme de travail de toute la cavalerie légère du Bengale, retenu par les mutinés au moins jusqu'aux batailles de début de 1857. **E3** Un autre régiment qui a mutiné à Meerut. Le numéro de son régiment est indiqué sur l'étoffe blanche du calot *Kilmarnock*. Le pantalon était le premier article à être écarté en faveur du *dhoti*.

F1 Plus tard dans la Révolte tout l'uniforme disparaissait souvent, et l'équipement était porté au dessus du costume civil. **F2** Costume typique d'un chevalier civil; ceci était porté, comme les uniformes en E2, par la cavalerie mutinée. **F3** Un membre typique de la paysannerie rurale qui se melait avec les soldats mutinés au meurtre et pillage pendant l'anarchie des années 1857–59. **F4** Un citadin musulman, d'après une esquisse d'un boucher—des hommes pareils étaient souvent utilisés pour des tâches barbares pendant la Révolte.

G1 La reine fameuse qui menait ses soldats au combat contre les Britanniques après avoir été obligée à prendre parti à cause de l'échec de sa diplomatie tortueuse; elle est tombée au combat en juin 1858. **G2** Une levée d'une des armées princières. **G3** Un soldat de fortune afghan en train de se battre pour une des armées princières contre les Britanniques.

H1 Copie bizarre de l'uniforme d'un soldat des *Highlands* écossais; les Afghans ont fini par tenir les troupes des *Highlands* en haute estime après des rencontres divers, et ont essayé de les imiter. **H2** Il existe peu de détails, mais les descriptions survivantes font mention d'uniformes bruns avec parements rouges; ce soldat aussi porte un fusil *Snider*. **H3** Un dragon, encore avec un uniforme qui singe le style britannique. Des autres cavaliers portaient des uniformes bleus avec une casque à plumet.

Farbtafeln

A Im Verlauf eines halben Jahrhunderts veränderte sich das Gewand nicht in erwähnenswerter Weise. **A1** Getragen wurden lose sitzende Tunika (*Angarka*), Hosen, eine spitz zulaufende Mütze (*Kullah*) und Sandalen (*Chapplis*); die *Lungi*-Schärpe wurde entweder um die Hüfte gebunden, als Turban gewickelt oder um die Schulter geschlungen. Umgeschlungen trägt er ein Steinschloßgewehr (*Jezail*). Das *Talwar* Schwert hält er in Kampfstellung. Das *Dhal*-Schild wurde häufig auf dem Subkontinent verwendet. **A2** Weiß oder Weißtöne waren die beliebtesten Farben, aber auch Rot, Blau und Grau wurden manchmal getragen. Das *Chora* oder 'Khyber-Messer' gab es in verschiedenen Größen. Mit einer Kante war es razierklingenscharf. Eine gefürchtete Waffe im Mann gegen Mann Kampf. **A3** Der *Poshteen* Mantel ist die typische Winterbekleidung. Die gemusterte Kopfmütze ist bemerkenswert, welche als Alternative zum Turban getragen wurde. Der weiße Offizier ist Capt. Souter, 44th Foot, der im Gemetzel von Gandamak im Jahre 1842 von den Stämmen verschont blieb.

B1 Ein typisches *Baluchi*-Gewand—bemerkenswert ist das charakteristisch lange Haar. **B2** Die Rangstellung dieses *Baluchi*-Führers spiegelt sich in der besseren Qualität seiner Bekleidung, Gürtels und seiner zahlreichen Waffen wider. **B3** Das Rückgrat der Armeen der indischen Prinzen bilden hier die Maratha Soldaten in der Gwalior Kampagne—ebenso kämpfte eine Armee eines Prinzen im Großen Aufstand von 1857–59.

C1 Indisch-persische Rüstung—*Khula-kud*-Helm, 'Vier-Spiegel'-Platten panzerung—sowie verzierte Waffen und Gewand lassen ihn als hochgeborenen, extravaganten und undisziplinierten Sikh des nicht regulären Kavallerie-Korps erkennen. **C2** Der gefährlichste Aspekt der Sikh *Khalsa* Armee, die durch ihre einfachen Gewänder und zahlreichen Waffen charakterisiert waren, waren die geschärften Wurfringe, die auf dem Turban getregen wurden. **C3** Ein Bauer der ärmsten Soldatenschicht, det mit Lunten schloßmusketen, Schildern und Schwertern ausgerüstet ist.

D1 Ein Sikh-Berufssoldat in Regimentsuniform, die im britischen Stil gehalten ist. **D2** Nochmals eine ungefähre Nachahmung der britischen Uniform, obgleich die eigenartige Kopfbedeckung wohl auf französische Veteranenausbilder zurückzuführen ist. **D3** Weiße Sommeruniformen unterschieden sich wohl durch die Turbanfarbe der Einheit.

E1 Die Infanterie der East India Company während des Aufstands. Der Tschako wurde nur zu zeremoniellen Anlässen getragen. Bemerkenswert sind die 'Flügelabzeichen' auf der Tunika der Elitekompanie. Ketten wurden um den Hals getragen. **E2** Arbeitsuniform der gesamten bengalischen leichten Kavallerie, die von den Aufständischen noch zu Beginn der Kämpfe im Jahre 1857 getragen wurde. **E3** Ein weiteres Regiment, das in Meerut rebellierte. Auf der *Kilmarnock* Mütze mit weißem Schutz ist die Zahl des Regiments abgebildet. Die Hosen wurden als erstes mit der *Dhoti* ausgetauscht.

F1 Im Verlauf des Aufstands verschwanden oftmals die gesamten Uniformen, und die Ausrüstung wurde über Zivilbekleidung getragen. **F2** Die Zivilbekleidung eines Reiters, die auch neben den Uniformen wie in E2 auftauchte und von der aufständischen Kavallerie getragen wurde. **F3** Ein typisches Mitglied des Stadtgesindels oder der Bauernschaft, die sich den aufständischen Soldaten im Gemetzel und der Plünderung während der Gesetzlosigkeit zwischen 1857–59 anschlossen. **F4** Ein muslemischer Stadtbewohner, nach einer Zeichnung von einem Schlachter—diese Männer wurden zu barbarischen Aufgaben während der Rebellion herangezogen.

G1 Die berühmte Königin, die ihre Soldaten in den Kampf gegen die Engländer führte, nachdem sie gezwungen war Zugeständnisse zu machen, da ihre teuflische Diplomatie versagt hatte. Sie starb im Kampf vom Juni 1858. **G2** Ausgehobene Truppen von einer der Armeen der Prinzen. **G3** Afghanische 'Glücksritter', die um eine Armee der Prinzen gegen die Engländer kämpften.

H1 Eine seltsame Kopie einer Uniform der Scottish *Highland* Soldaten. Durch mehrere Zusammenstöße lernten die Afghanen die *Highland* Soldaten zu respektieren und versuchten, Sie nachzuahmen. **H2** Die Einzelheiten sind bruchstückhaft, es wird jedoch berichtet das es eine braune Uniform mit roten Aufschlägen gab. Er ist auch mit einem *Snider* Gewehr ausgerüstet. **H3** Wiederum ein Dragoner in einer nachgeahmten englischen Uniform. Andere Kavalleristen trugen blaue Uniformen und Helme mit Federbusch.

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(113) Armies of Agincourt
(145) Wars of the Roses
(99) Medieval Heraldry

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(191) Henry VIII's Army
(58) The Landsknechts
(101) The Conquistadores
(14) English Civil War Armies
(110) New Model Army 1645–60
(203) Louis XIV's Army
(97) Marlborough's Army
(86) Samurai Armies 1550–1615
(184) Polish Armies 1569–1696 (1)
(188) Polish Armies 1569–1696 (2)

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(118) Jacobite Rebellions
(48) Wolfe's Army
(39) Brit. Army in N. America

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(64) Nap's Cuirassiers & Carabiniers
(55) Nap's Dragoons & Lancers
(68) Nap's Line Chasseurs
(76) Nap's Hussars
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(141) Nap's Line Infantry
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(181) Austrian Army (2): Cavalry
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(149) Prussian Light Infantry
(192) Prussian Reserve & Irregulars
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(172) Prussian Cavalry 1807–15
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(189) Russian Army (2): Cavalry
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(1): Confederate
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(179) (3): Staff, Specialist, Maritime
(190) (4): State Troops
(207) (5): Volunteer Militia
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(186) The Apaches
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(1): 1816–1853
(196) (2): The Crimea, 1854–56
(198) (3): 1854–81
(201) (4): 1882–1902
(-12) Victoria's Enemies
(1): Southern Africa
(215) (2): Northern Africa
(219) (3): India
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(1) 1914–18
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(1): Land Forces
(134) (2): Naval Forces
(135) (3): Air Forces
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(143) Vietnam War Armies (2)
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(217) War in Laos 1960–75
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(1): Rhodesia 1965–80
(202) (2): Angola & Mozambique
(159) Grenada 1983
(178) Russia's War in Afghanistan
(221) Central American Wars

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