

Anglo-Sikh War

Presented by

Dr. Phoibi Lalniropui Tuolor

Consolidation of Punjab under the Sikhs:

- Murder of Guru Gobind Singh (by two Aghanis) 1708- Sikhs revolted under Banda Bahadur against Bahadur Shah.
- In 1715, Banda Bahadur was defeated by Farrukhsiyar and put to death in 1716.
- Sikh polity became leaderless and divided into
 - Bandai (Liberal) and Tat Khalsa (Orthodox)
- This rift among the followers ended in 1721 by Bhai Mani Singh
- In 1784, Kapur Singh Faizullapuria united followers under Dal Khalsa
 - Budha Dal and Taruna Dal

Consolidation of Punjab under the Sikhs

- Anarchy of Punjab due to invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali and weakness of Mughals.
- The Sikhs consolidated in misls, which were military brotherhoods with a democratic set-up.
- 1763 to 1773, many misls (alike/ state) ruled the Punjab region under Sikh chieftains.
- 12 important misls:
- Central administration on **Gurumatta Sangh** (a political, social and economic system) served as the misl's central administration.
- Mahan Singh
 - Leader of Sukarchakiya misl
 - Father of Ranjit Singh
 - 12 years old when Mahan singh died.

Sukarchakiya Misl and Ranjit Singh: Rise of Ranjit Singh

- All important misls (except Sukarchakiya)— state of disintegration.
- Afghanistan engulfed in civil war
- Ranjit Singh—ruthless policy of ‘blood and iron’
- He carved out for himself a kingdom in Central Punjab.
- 1799—Appointed as a governor of Lahore by Zaman Shah (afgh ruler)// (political capital)
- 1805—acquired Jammu and Amritsar
 - Religious capital (Amritsar) of Punjab came under the rule of Ranjit Singh
 - Maintained good relations with Dogras(enthno-linguistic group of Jammu and Kashmir, India and neighbouring Pakistan) and Nepalese—enlisted in army.

Ranjit Singh and the English

- In 1807 (Lord Minto) , the alliance of Tilsit—Alexander I of Russia was joined by Napoleon of France.
- The alliance created a condition to invade India through land route.
- The prospects of Franco-Russian invasion of India alarmed the English.
- 1807: Charles Metcalfe offered Ranjit Singh to accept proposal of alliance.
 - English- Neutral in case of a Sikh-Afghan war
 - Ranjit Singh sovereign of Punjab including the Malwa territories.
 - Negotiations failed.
- But, once Napoleonic danger receded, English became more assertive, Ranjit Singh agreed to sign **Treaty of Amritsar**

Tripartite Treaty of 1838

- Ranjit Singh, Lord Auckland and Shah Shuja (Afghanistan) to place the later on the throne of Afghanistan by invasion
- He refused to give passage to British through the territories to attack Dost Mohammad, the Afghan Amir.
- Raja Ranjit Singh's weak position vis-à-vis Company from 1809 to 1839.
- Despite this, he took no step to organize coalition of other Indian princes or maintain balance of power.
- Died in June 1839-decline of his empire began.

Punjab after Ranjit Singh

- Beginning of the Court Factions
- Kharak Singh
 - Ranjit Singh's son/successor
 - Not efficient- court factions became active
 - Sudden death in 1839
 - Accidental death of his son, Prince Nau Nihal Singh 1840
 - Anarchy in Punjab
- Quarrel over succession provided opportunity for decisive action by the English.
- Chand Kaur 1841
 - Wife of Karak Singh and the only female ruler of Sikh Empire.
 - Title Malika Maqaddasa
 - Abdicated in 71 days

- Next Sher Singh (1841-43)
 - (another son of Ranjit Singh) but Murdered in 1843.
- Discontent was growing among the troops as a result of irregularity of payment
- Appointment of unworthy officers led to indiscipline
- Lahore government permitted the British troops to pass through its territory for the Afghan conquest.
- These marches resulted in commotion and economic dislocation in Punjab.

Rani Jindal and Daleep Singh 1843-49

- Daleep Singh, a minor son of Ranjit Singh, proclaimed as Maharaja in 1843
- Rani Jinda- regent
- Hira Singh Dogra-wazir
 - Murdered in 1844
- Jawahar Singh- new wazir
 - Brother of Rani Jindan
 - Killed in 1845 by Army
- Lal Singh- new wazir
 - Lover of Rani Jindan
 - Won over the army
- Teja Singh-appointed commander of Army.

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46)

- Causes:
- Power struggle-court vs army
- Gwalior, Sindh annexation in 1843 and Afghanistan campaign 1842
- Increase in the number of English troops stationed near the border with the Lahore kingdom
- Sikh army crossed the River Sutlej on December 11, 1845
- Justification to English to declare war.

Course of War

- December 1845 with 20,000 to 30,000 British troops and 50,000 Sikh under command of Lal Singh
- Treachery of Lal Singh and Teja Singh caused five successive defeats to the Sikhs
 - Lahore fell to the British forces on February 20, 1846
- Treaty of Lahore (March 8, 1846)
 - War indemnity of 1 crore rupees
 - The Jalandhar Doab (between Beas and Sutlej) was annexed.
 - British resident at Lahore under Henry Lawrence
 - Strength of the Sikh army was reduced
 - Daleep Singh was recognised as the ruler under Rani Jindan as regent and Lal Singh as wazir.
 - Since the Sikh were not able to pay the entire war indemnity Kashmir, including Jammu was sold to Gulab Singh in lieu of 75 lakhs

Treaty of Bhairawal (Dec 1846)

- Sikhs rebelled being not satisfied with the Treaty of Lahore over the issue of Kashmir
- Rani Jindan was removed as regent
- Council of regency for Punjab was set up
- Council consisted of 8 Sikh sardars presided over by Henry Lawrence.

Second anglo-Sikh War (1848-49)

- Defeat in first Anglo-Sikh War
- Treaties of Lahore and Bhairawal- highly humiliating
- Inhuman treatment to Rani Jindan
 - Sent to Benaras as a pensioner
- Mulraj, the governor of Multan on being replaced revolted and murdered two English officers
- Sher Singh was sent by the British to suppress the revolt, but he himself joined Mulraj, leading to a mass uprising in Multan
- Lord Dalhousie, a hardcore expansionist, got the pretext to annex Punjab completely

Course of War

- Lord Dalhousie himself proceeded to Punjab.
- Three important battles fought
- 1) Battle of Ramnagar, led by Sir Hugh Gough, the commander-in-chief of the Company.
- 2) Battle of Chilianwala, Jan 1849
- 3) Battle of Gujrat, Feb 1849- the sikh army surrendered at Rawalpindi
Afghans chased out of India.

Result at the end of the war came:

- Surrender of the Sikh army and Sher Singh in 1849
- Annexation of Punjab
- Dalhousie for his service was given thanks and promotion by British Parliament (Marques title)
- Three member board to govern Punjab with Lawrence brothers (Henry & John) and Charles Mansel
- In 1853, board was nullified and Punjab was placed under a chief commissioner.
- John Lawrence became the first chief commissioner

Significance of the Anglo-Sikh Wars:

- The Anglo-Sikh wars gave the two sided mutual respect for each other's fighting prowess (distinguished bravery).
- The Sikhs were to fight loyally on the British side in the Revolt of 1857
- Accompanied in other campaigns and wars until the Indian independence in 1947.