

A History of

# PASHTUN MIGRATION

1775–2006

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**Cover photograph:** Afghan chiefs and a British Political Officer at Jamrud fort at the mouth of the Khyber Pass, 1878. Photograph by John Burke.





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ROBERT NICHOLS

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## Preface

From the moment Pakistan gained independence in 1947, writers have produced historical interpretations defining the character of a Pakistan nation and the identity of Pakistani citizens. Even before then, Chaudhry Rahmat Ali,<sup>1</sup> Allama Iqbal,<sup>2</sup> and others talked of the need to give political autonomy to historically Muslim majority territories in British India. The Quaid-i Azam, M.A. Jinnah, envisioned a 'two-nation' history of long and permanent division between Muslim and Hindu societies. Islamic heritage and Muslim culture were seen to transcend regional particularities.<sup>3</sup> After 1947, national historians defined Pakistan in difference and opposition to India and as a crucial state in international competition and alliance. Political history dominated.<sup>4</sup> With the loss of East Pakistan in 1971, politicians, academics, and authors explored the nature of historic Middle Eastern and Islamic ties and the role of a religious identity.<sup>5</sup> This mobilization of historical narrative in the service of nation-building was familiar on a global scale within a two century period of modern world history as governments and advocates created national narratives framed by space (homeland territories) and time (from the struggle for independence to the postcolonial effort to fulfil national destinies).

By the 1980s, all nation-states and their histories were increasingly shaped by forces of globalization beyond the control of individual countries and national storylines. Economic linkages, political ideologies, culture, and conflict spread across national boundaries in unpredictable and powerful ways. In Pakistan, for a decade after 1979, nation-building efforts were traumatized by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the arrival of millions of Afghan refugees. In the 1980s, related in part to the political impact of the Afghan war, it was debated whether or not Pakistan was to be a modern nation-state built on a model of

western social and political institutions or an Islamic state defined by religious references, ideals, and laws.

In this context Pakistan national histories continued to be written, but now new historical approaches were also drawn upon to illuminate an increasingly complex society. Regional histories,<sup>6</sup> urban histories, and narratives of those at the bottom of society revealed the great variations and nuances of national narratives contoured by ethnicity, social status, economic standing, and gender. Histories revisiting the 1947 partition of British India<sup>7</sup> and that era's large scale migrations highlighted the fluidity and contingency of the human cost of national origins.<sup>8</sup>

By the 1990s Asian and world historians recognized that histories of contemporary nation-states could not be properly understood without recognizing long term processes of socio-economic activity that often for centuries connected contemporary national regions with far reaching networks of trade, pilgrimage, empire, and migration.<sup>9</sup> The histories of all nations were now being expanded by new perceptions of historically relevant space and time. European and Asian historians now traced centuries of South Asian regional linkages to Central Asia, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Pre-colonial Arab and Muslim traders from the Gulf had long tied the ports of the Indus River and the nearby Makran coast into Indian Ocean wide networks of economic exchange and human circulation.<sup>10</sup>

In the same way, an evolving historiography of Pakistan has been enriched by new perspectives interpreting notions of relevant space and time. Through the nineteenth century, Sindhi traders and finance connected Central Asia to the same Indian Ocean networks.<sup>11</sup> One author has traced national characteristics of territorial unity and political continuity back thousands of years to a heritage defined by the influence of the Indus River.<sup>12</sup> The best national histories were not being replaced or denied as much as being placed in new long-term perspectives. This volume on Pashtun migration continues this same historical effort to offer a new approach to thinking about a familiar theme, the history of the Pashtuns living along today's Pakistan-Afghanistan border.



What follows is a historical narrative of two centuries of Pashtun circulation within the South Asian and Indian Ocean regions. It connects regional and national history to the widest themes of world history. Other successful studies of relevant interregional and Indian Ocean-scale connections and migration are discussed in the Introduction.<sup>13</sup> This volume joins with historians of particular regions of East Africa, the Middle East, and Asia who in a heuristic move to add perspective also have conceptualized the broader Indian Ocean as an arena of scholarship useful for integrating thematic and regional histories into global history.<sup>14</sup>

The basic argument that follows is that the Pashtun populations of today's Pakistan and the Peshawar region have always participated within the greater historical flows of wider interregional and world history. Pashtun mobility, by individuals and communities, has adapted in different eras and circumstances even as Pashtuns across regions have continuously asserted initiative and agency. As Pashtuns were attracted and often buffeted by shifting historical winds, they self-consciously made choices that affected their future. In the modern period, Pashtuns were increasingly subject to the forces and imperatives of globalizing economic forces that often limited choices and structured new forms of regimented society.<sup>15</sup>

This history selects and surveys specific periods and events representing important themes and transitions over generations of migration. These dynamics typically affected not only Pashtuns, but many others struggling to survive in Pakistan and Asia across two centuries. The study is not a formal economic analysis of migration or a sociological argument defining a theory of migration or diaspora. It is a history of rich narrative that draws upon archival and other historical sources to outline two centuries of complex socio-economic mobility and interaction across the sub-continent and western Indian Ocean. This study discusses interdisciplinary scholarship from anthropologists, economists, political scientists, and sociologists to help understand the multiple changes and continuities that have

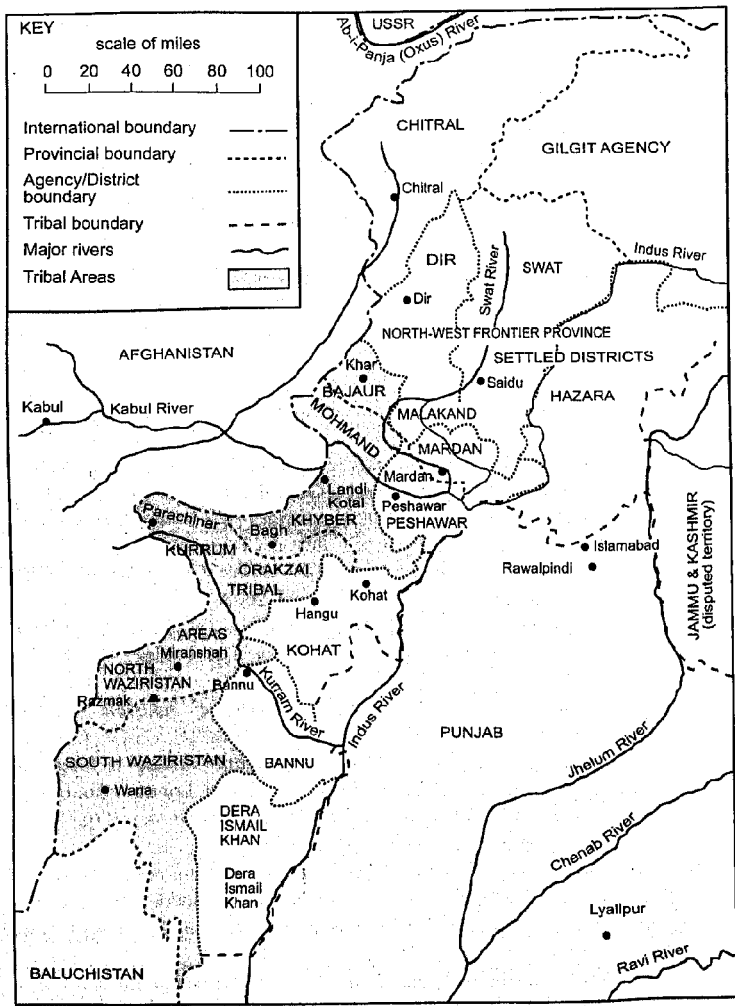
shaped Pashtun society, in homelands and in diaspora, over the generations since the late eighteenth century.

Through the six chapters, arguments are made about the effects of different moments of Pashtun migration on individuals, families, and communities. In the late eighteenth century Pashtun heritage residents of northern India were confronted by a new British Empire expanding outward from Bengal. But even as many were subordinated to the new colonial political regime and assimilated into local societies, many Pashtuns and those of Pashtun descent sought new opportunities in unincorporated Indian princely states, especially in Hyderabad in the south. Through the nineteenth century Pashtun heritage migrants found service from the Gulf to the Caribbean and as far as Australia as they found themselves fully integrated into a global British imperial economy. With the end of the empire in 1947 Pashtuns and other Pakistanis pursued national opportunities, especially in the new urban centres of Pakistan. In the 1970s Pashtuns were quickly recruited by newly wealthy Gulf oil states. But the price of employment was complete subordination at a high psychological cost to an Arab state social hierarchy that denied the importance of Pashtun cultural notions of honourable, egalitarian behaviour. By the early twenty-first century Pashtun workers abroad were fully involved in truly global dynamics of labour recruitment, discipline, and exploitation, but were now also affected by transnational efforts to develop labour solidarity, human rights protections, and worker rights as defined by international trade agreements.

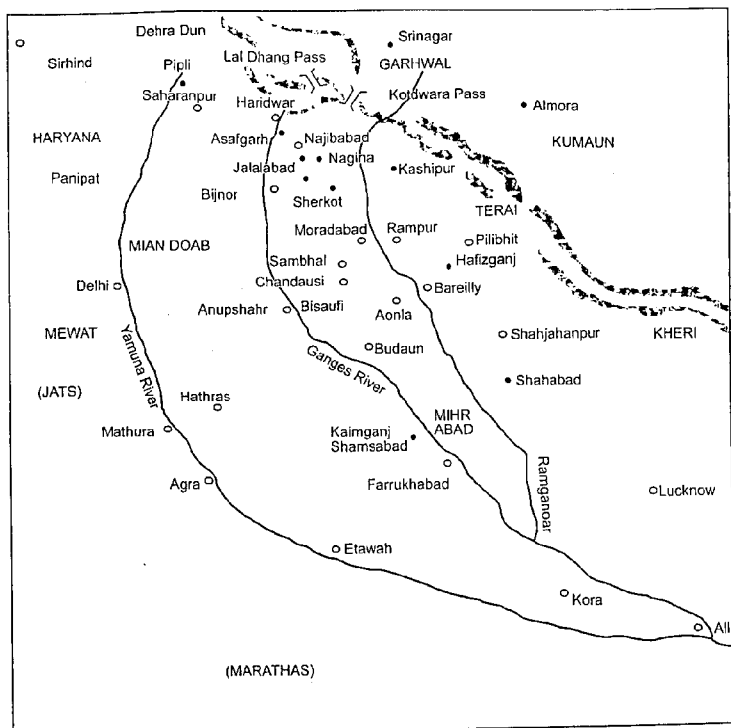
This history of Pashtun migration thus informs colonial, regional, and interregional histories even as it contributes to a fuller understanding of a Pakistani history now imagined as continually influenced by networks of circulation extending across much of the world.

NOTES

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15. See essays in Sugata Bose, ed., *South Asia and World Capitalism*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990.



Map 1 The North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan

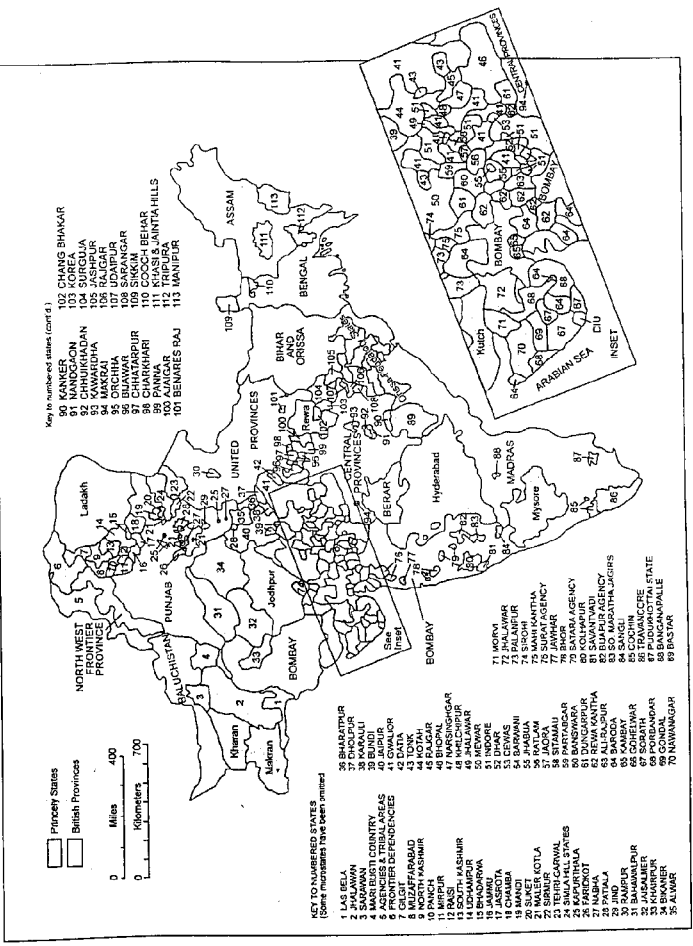


Map 2 Katehr / Rohilkhand

Source: Jos Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, c. 1710-1780*, E. J. Brill, 1995.



Map 3 The North-West Province and Oudh, about 1870

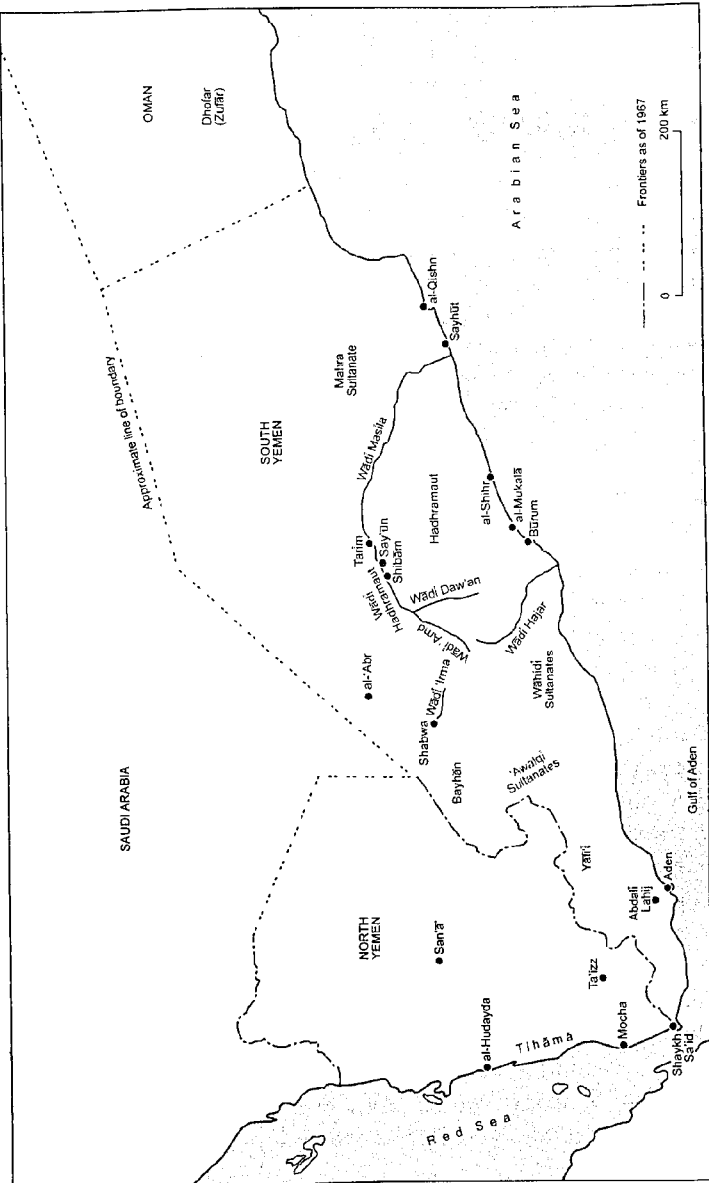


Map 4 Princely India, 1858-1947

Source: Karl Schmidt, *An Atlas and Survey of South Asian History*, M.E. Sharpe, 1995, p. 79.







Map 6 Hadramaut Coast



# 1

## Regional Lives Taking Global Roles

‘...Circulation is different from simple mobility, inasmuch as it implies a double movement of going forth and coming back, which can be repeated indefinitely. In circulating, things, men and notions often transform themselves. Circulation is therefore a value-loaded term which implies an incremental aspect and not the simple reproduction across space of already formed structures and motions....’<sup>1</sup>

Recent South Asian scholarship has recognized that knowledge of processes of migration and circulation has become vital for a full understanding of regional social, economic, and cultural histories, especially in the modern period. Discussing the complex role of migration in South Asian social history, Markovits and his colleagues have posited that the ‘totality of circulations occurring in a given society and their outcomes’ define a kind of ‘circulatory regime’ that varies over time and shapes society, ‘which can be seen as an ensemble of crisscrossing ... flows.’<sup>2</sup> In a similar approach, this study argues that a long history of migration involving Pashtun ethnic communities has enriched and complicated regional societies across South Asia and the Indian Ocean, especially in the modern period, after the mid-eighteenth century, as these regions were influenced and transformed by colonial and postcolonial dynamics.

Arguably, the Pashtun communities of today’s northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan have had their history repeatedly transformed, incrementally and cumulatively, across centuries by migration and constant movement. While specific individuals, times, and places related to Pashtun mobility have

attracted historical notice, this volume outlines and discusses the broad processes involved over the last two hundred years as all Pakistani and South Asian communities have clashed with, resisted, and been transformed by interregional forces that have reshaped the social and economic histories of the Indian subcontinent, and the world. Typically, Pashtun history has been framed and studied by issues of territory, language, culture, and political interaction in specific regions and eras. This volume argues that the history of Pashtun migration has been one of the neglected themes required to fully understand the history of Pashtun communities as well as greater narratives of the Mughal empire, British India, Pakistan, and the postcolonial world.

There has been an accumulating amount of research on social and political change among communities in Pashtun majority settlement territories, including the greater Peshawar valley and neighbouring districts, a diverse region characterized by agrarian village economies, ethnic Pashtun/Pakhtun social dynamics, and a history of close involvement with subcontinental networks of politics, employment, and trade.<sup>3</sup> This chapter introduces this volume's approach to understanding the historic impact of circulation and migration on select Pashtun communities and socio-cultural practices as residents left the Peshawar valley, often for decades or permanently, to pursue outside employment and opportunity. Over generations, the lives of Pashtuns in permanent or temporary diaspora were transformed by the range of possible social and economic forces as they circulated in the greater Indian Ocean region, variously experiencing degrees of assimilation, integration, ethnic self-awareness, and, increasingly, notions of 'national' identity.

For many centuries, Pashtuns travelled within the Indian subcontinent and in the greater Indian Ocean arenas.<sup>4</sup> The following chapters offer one analytic approach to understanding how in the last two centuries this movement became heavily shaped by modern political and economic influences operating on a global basis. After 1775 and throughout the nineteenth century, Pashtuns circulating in northern India, from both urban

and rural settings, began moving increasingly in British imperial spheres. After decolonization in 1947 Pashtuns sought opportunities within the new nation-states left by departing empires and within a rapidly changing Pakistani urban environment. From the early 1970s Pashtun workers pursued livelihoods within a world economy transformed by the demand for Middle East energy resources. By 2006 Pashtun circulation to and from the Gulf city-state of Dubai offered a defining history of how many world communities now experienced modern globalization as a complex dynamic of subordination, exploitation, limited agency, and nascent resistance.

This introduction briefly outlines these historic periods and themes and argues that a study of Pashtun migration, including from particular districts within colonial and postcolonial South Asia, illuminates wider questions about migration and globalization, including theories that have attempted to explain economic, social, and cultural changes and continuities observed in Pakistani villages, and in the world during the late modern period, approximately 1775–2000. This is a preliminary statement contributing to wider interpretations of interregional history and to more difficult discussions of regional Pashtun identities and how they have, inevitably, undergone change over the course of time.<sup>5</sup> The Pashtun history of migration and diaspora represents one specific, but representative, strand of the 'great diversity' of South Asian migrations experienced over centuries by multiple peoples of differing regions, religions, ethnicities, and languages.<sup>6</sup>

Regionally, for centuries, agrarian districts with little irrigation and limited rainfall in eastern Afghanistan, the northern and western colonial Punjab, and the North-West Frontier Province produced surplus workers looking outside the immediate village economy for subsistence and opportunity.<sup>7</sup> Markovits and his colleagues have proposed that ecological differences in Indian regions, ranging between dry, semi-dry, and wet zones, as well as opposing pastoral and agrarian political economies, produced some 'highly routinised productive processes', but also 'provided

scope for a mobile and skilful peasantry and groups of merchants and artisans', including 'in the 'dry zone' of Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia'. Particularly, in north India, and arguably the Pashtun homelands, 'this interaction was manifested through a regular pattern of circulation of manpower, including military manpower, goods, capital, expertise, ideas, techniques, etc., from the 'dry' areas to the 'wet' zones...'<sup>8</sup>

In the eighteenth century, tens of thousands of 'Rohillas' migrated from west of the Indus to settle northeast of New Delhi in the Rohilkhand region. This followed a centuries-old pattern of migration, especially for employment in the north Indian labour market for 'soldier entrepreneurs.'<sup>9</sup> In the early nineteenth century, many migrants sought 'service' in East India Company territories or in areas still under local rulers. After 1849 when the British had occupied much of the north Indian region, a small administrative cadre was recruited for low-level colonial government service. But most of the surplus labour force, including poorly educated villagers of the Peshawar valley<sup>10</sup> and neighbouring districts such as Swat and Kohat, sought unskilled or semi-skilled work in police and military service, in agriculture, or in urbanizing market towns and port cities such as Karachi which had begun to grow rapidly after 1850.

In the mature colonial period, after the imposition of direct rule by the British crown in 1858, Pashtuns from the Peshawar valley also were recruited for positions in colonial plantations and trade networks that linked South Asia, Africa, various Indian Ocean archipelagos, and Southeast Asia. Some Pashtuns pursued trading, which included the selling of livestock across northern India. Others became shopkeepers and small financiers. Under colonial penal codes, Pashtun prisoners were transported 'across the water' to the Straits Settlements and the Andaman Islands.

This study discusses aspects of the Pashtun diaspora within the provinces and princely states of colonial India and continues to follow this human circulation after decolonization within the independent nation-state of Pakistan. It then examines participation in globally integrated overseas labour markets,

especially in the Middle East in the late twentieth century. Throughout this history, evidence suggests that Pashtun ethnic identities in diaspora were not of an unchanging, primordial character. In considering individual and community histories and representations it must be remembered that 'ethnicity is never a given factor in identity formation but is always socially and politically constructed.'<sup>11</sup>

Especially from the early 1970s, development policies of the Pakistan state encouraged external labour flows to the rapidly growing economies of the oil states in the Gulf, Libya, and Iraq. This phase saw dramatic numbers of Pakistanis employed in the Middle East, with resulting complex social consequences.<sup>12</sup> Remittances to home villages transformed local architecture and consumption patterns even as the possessors of new wealth challenged established social hierarchies for degrees of status and leadership. Gender relations were increasingly adjusted or upset as women left behind by migrating husbands often took charge of family affairs and finances. Irregular and illegal migration proliferated, even as old power structures tried to monopolize access to the new opportunities. Forces of globalization, including informal labour and financial networks threatened to undermine the sovereignty of nation-states attempting to set policies and regulate savings and expenditures.<sup>13</sup>

In examining these potentially disruptive influences at the village and family level and placing these findings in the context of the last two centuries of regional history, this study argues that there has been a rough continuity of migration push and pull factors in the modern period and that indeed moments and themes of contemporary migration from Pakistan to the Middle East often have varied little from those of the colonial era. This research also argues, agreeing with Addleton, that patterns from the first decades of post-independence labour migration within Pakistan resonate with the last three decades of migration to the Middle East.<sup>14</sup> By rooting this research in the history of the Peshawar valley, this work contributes to literature noting the effects of historical global processes (migration, capitalism,

industrialization, etc.) at the regional level, where local socio-cultural relations and practices more readily reveal dynamics too easily subsumed within macro studies framed on the nation-state level.

Theoretical approaches to historical processes of migration, diaspora, and globalization, especially in the South Asian and Pakistani context, have been formulated by economists, anthropologists, and others impressed by the impact of British colonial economic policies and by great waves of national and international mobility experienced during colonial and postcolonial periods of urbanization, industrialization, and transnational labour movement.<sup>15</sup> The approach here focuses upon South Asian history and the specific relevance of the Indian Ocean area for migration study, especially when one considers this region, in Sugata Bose's term, a historic 'interregional arena' of cultural, economic, social, and political exchange continuously linking distant cultures and political economies.<sup>16</sup>

Studies of colonial-era South Asian labour migration record the integration of a global system of European colonial capitalist production. The nineteenth century British imperial system developed indentured and contract labour recruitment to operate commercial plantations from the Caribbean to Fiji. This has been studied as a substitute for abolished slave labour and as an ideological system creating permanent, docile worker pools.<sup>17</sup> Post-independence scholarship has analyzed the continued high mobility of Pakistani labour, internally and externally. Scholars have explained processes of urbanization and overseas migration from perspectives framed by both neo-classical and structural theories of economic change driven by benign or rapacious capitalism. Recent social science literature has also attempted to theorize the nature and impact of contemporary global forces of communication, world markets, and cultural exchange.<sup>18</sup>

Especially since the early 1970s, Pakistani government and research centre studies have used classical economic approaches to judge the empirical costs and benefits of labour migration. This work has produced a substantial body of relevant literature.<sup>19</sup> But



different problems faced in this effort have included difficulties in acquiring truly accurate statistical data bases as well as the inability of macro-level national studies to offer insight into village-level change or into less quantifiable regional social and cultural dynamics shaped by ethnic and linguistic differences.

Structural approaches to migration and development theory and the Pakistani experience have narrated change as occurring due to inherent inequalities of power and wealth within and between regions and economies. Scholars have tried to determine the extent to which centres of economic power and capital, including the oil-rich Middle Eastern states, have turned to labour surplus countries to cultivate relations of dependency and labour stratification.<sup>20</sup> Yet both classical market analyses and structural approaches to Pakistan's migration history, especially to the Middle East, have been critiqued for failing to fully characterize either the historical experience of the colonial period or the last fifty years of independence. Classical modelling has suffered from an inadequate, 'fragile database' and an inability to keep up with or explain the diversity and complexity of changes. Additionally, structural world systems arguments critiquing global capitalism as shaping centre-periphery links are weak when it comes to explaining specificities, such as the historic roles of modern Libya and Iraq, 'no client states of capitalism', in recruiting Pakistani labour.<sup>21</sup> Despite varying interpretations, this study recognizes that the wider economic forces involved in this period represent the latest evolutionary stage in a long history of the spread and acceleration of trade and finance capital operating within and across both Asian and world economies.<sup>22</sup>

Socially, anthropologists have attempted to trace the impact of migration and economic globalization at the Pakistani village level,<sup>23</sup> but also have theorized broadly about how localities experience modernity and reflect the influences of migration and globalization. For this volume, a general theoretical statement supporting a focus upon social change at the village and district level, derives from Appadurai's notion that a specific place of research becomes less a case study than 'a site for the examination

of how locality emerges in a globalizing world, of how colonial processes underwrite contemporary politics, of how history and genealogy inflect one another, and of how global facts take local form.<sup>24</sup>

The following discussion introduces important themes developed in subsequent chapters that survey the history of Pashtun circulation and diaspora in the greater Indian Ocean arena. These moments reveal Pashtun agency, but also adaptation as local practices and possibilities reacted to and were modified by interregional and global processes. Throughout this history, state policies and ideologies contributed to the shaping and ordering of personal and community identities. Importantly, this study argues that imperial state notions of inherent social and political hierarchies, often using 'the rule of colonial difference' to subordinate particular ethnic communities, continued to operate in postcolonial nation-states that ranked internal and migrant 'national' identities, often for economic advantages.<sup>25</sup>

### **Assimilation and Transformation: The Rohilla Experience**

Numerous scholars of eighteenth century northern India have produced histories attempting to understand and explain the expansion of British colonial interests northwest from Bengal.<sup>26</sup> One research question has involved gauging the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century influence of the growing British presence on processes of Pashtun or 'Rohilla' migration for agricultural labour, trade, and political influence in the districts of the historic region of Katehr or Rohilkhand, north and east of Delhi.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, centuries-old practices of political, economic, and cultural mobility and exchange across northern South Asian territories were upset, transformed, and subordinated by eighteenth and nineteenth century British colonial political agendas and alliances.

For this study it becomes useful to look past the immediate political history of the era and past the politically convenient

assumption held by some in the late eighteenth century that the 'Rohilla' population simply disappeared in 1774 with the military defeat of the last independent Rohilla chief, Hafiz Rahmat Khan.<sup>28</sup> The more important question for this volume concerns the political and social effects of the conquest and the gradual subordination and assimilation of the region into the British Indian empire. The colonial state 'penetrated society much more deeply than it had before', replacing 'a shared and layered concept of sovereignty' with new unitary demands.<sup>29</sup>

By the late eighteenth century perhaps one hundred thousand 'Afghan' or 'Puthan' migrants had established several generations of political control and economic consolidation within numerous Rohilkhand communities, often predominately non-Muslim in population. These local polities had prospered after 1720, in competition with the formerly dominate Mughal political and economic system centred in Delhi that continued to fragment and decentralize.<sup>30</sup> Though identities were derived from norms of Pashtun or Afghan leadership and heritage, over generations of settlement in north India the 'Rohilla' name reflected less a fixed ethnicity based on kinship or essential culture than a constructed, inclusive, often professional identity that reinvented lineage idioms and norms to integrate a diverse body of individuals and interests.<sup>31</sup>

Chapter 2 of this volume discusses how after 1774 the scattered, autonomous local polities that had developed in previous decades were subsumed within the growing British Indian colonial sphere of influence. Contemporary (eventually discredited) colonial narratives at first argued that the Rohilla communities had been exterminated in 1774 when a British colonial army aided the Nawab of Awadh in the conquest of the Rohilla territories. Some Rohilla military leaders were exiled. Other families left the region. But aside from the losses in battle, relatively few of the Rohillas were killed or went into exile. Most stayed in the region. Many rallied to the new princely state of Rampur, a dependency (*jagir*) set up to diffuse Rohilla resistance and to subordinate the leading lineages to the influence of the Nawab of Awadh and his

allies in the East India Company. What became of the Rohilla population and identity, especially under the changing conditions in the region briefly outlined by Gommans? The evidence suggests that processes of socio-cultural assimilation and adaptation slowly diminished Pashtun legacies of language and culture even as a 'Rohilla' identity continued to evolve and circulate. This illustrated a larger Indian Ocean truth of 'the apparent adaptability of migrant communities and the ease with which their identities have often integrated or otherwise transformed to meet the pressures of different circumstances.'<sup>32</sup>

Chapter 3 of this study examines the nineteenth century as the Rohilkhand districts were absorbed by the British empire and the Afghan and Pashtun descendants of original settlers were assimilated in different ways into local economies and cultural influences. If name forms (Khan) and genealogical lineage remained important, the Pashto language itself slowly disappeared. Late nineteenth century Rohilkhand district censuses continued to list 'Pathan' as one of the four categories of enumerated Muslim populations, yet marriages with non-Pashtun spouses blurred notions of pure descent.

Those individuals whose livelihoods had followed mixed personal economies, representing old patterns of 'mobility of labour' activity, as seasonal farmers, weavers, transporters, and soldiers,<sup>33</sup> were now often reduced to more sedentary existences. Large numbers of Muslim weavers (*julahas*) listed in late nineteenth century Rohilkhand district census reports hint of the possibility that more than one landless descendant of Rohilla migrants found lower status refuge as an artisan in district market (*qasba*) towns and Rampur City.

Initially, in the late eighteenth century, in territories they newly controlled, the British continued to reduce often large armies of indigenously raised cavalry and infantry to smaller, better armed and 'disciplined' infantry regiments. But in the early decades of the nineteenth century, as the East India Company expanded westward around the Delhi area, they also raised new regiments of 'irregular' cavalry from local recruits, once again providing

employment for 'Rohilla' and other recruits. Again, from the 1820s through the 1840s, as colonial administrative control 'settled' much of northern India, many of these recruits would be periodically dismissed. But often now, through strategic retirement and pension policies, many of the dismissed would be granted parcels of farmland on uncultivated, 'waste' lands in strategic locations. As the colonial power pensioned off experienced soldiers to become revenue producing agriculturists, many 'Rohillas' settled permanently outside of the former Rohilkhand districts on critical 'frontier' borders.<sup>34</sup>

Evidence from 1858 suggests the survival of degrees of a Pashtun-derived lineage-based identity in villagers of the old Rohilkhand districts. Yet eighty years after the end of 'Rohilla' sovereignty and pre-colonial Rohilla migrations, such identities were marked as much by signs of assimilation and transformation as any continuity.

As the British army re-conquered north Indian districts after losing control in the revolt of 1857, they closely documented lists of 'rebels' to be arrested for potential punishment. One contingent of villagers from 'Sambhal *parganah*' in 'Moradabad *zillah*' (district) was wanted for having fought in the name of the 'rebel Nawab of Bareilly' Khan Bahadur Khan.<sup>35</sup> The British compiled a detailed report in an effort to apprehend those involved from 'Tureenoo Suraae'<sup>36</sup> village. The report contained personal descriptions of the villagers and reflected both colonial and internal perceptions of significant aspects of individual identity.

The colonial 'ethnographic' personal descriptions of each of the sixty-three men hint at a Rohilla social history more complex than the simple reproduction of normative 'Pashtun' or 'Afghan' families and lineages descended from putative ideal-type tall, thin, fair Pashtun forefathers and 'father's brother's daughter' brides.<sup>37</sup> Personal characteristics, including distinction by skin colour, were noted. If indicating notions of colonial or local 'racial' difference, this diversity might also mark the complex ethnicity of original 'Rohilla' settlers, including descendants of

finally sedentary male migrants who married into local families.

Chapter 4 examines how the Rohilla identity, as an independent military entrepreneur of nominal Afghan or Pashtun heritage, evolved throughout the nineteenth century. As the British assumed control over greater areas of the Indian subcontinent, the name Rohilla became a pejorative label reflecting the colonial bias against any mobile, armed, unsettled Indian population. Regardless, Rohillas, 'Puthans', and 'Pathans' continued to serve across India in regional forces and as the coercive power for revenue collecting regional administrators and local *zamindars*. Through the decades of the nineteenth century, Rohillas were continuously employed, dismissed, and denounced as bandits and criminals, often by the same regimes in different periods.

In the late spring and summer of 1836 the princely state of Hyderabad in southern India was being pressed by East India Company advisers to regularize revenue collections and reduce military expenses. In May 1836 the Nizam's government tried to dismiss all Rohillas from government service and remove them from Hyderabad city and from postings with local *talukdars* and others. For decades in the vast territories of the Nizam of Hyderabad, revenue farmers and local authorities had hired 'Rohilla' cavalry as collection agents.<sup>38</sup> The Hyderabad Rohillas were not to be easily dismissed. The resulting correspondence between East India Company officials and Hyderabad state ministers outlined the survival and adaptation of pre-colonial forms of interregional military recruitment and service, including the presence of thousands of 'Arabs' in Hyderabad.

In August 1836 the Hyderabad minister issued a proclamation ordering all Rohillas to leave Hyderabad. But the utility of the 'service' rendered by such irregular troops meant that they were never completely displaced by local landlords and officials. In 1846 colonial records included the 'Nizam's application for assistance to expel Rohillas from his dominions'. In 1851 a file discussed 'Approval of the proposal of the Resident at Hyderabad to make the prohibition stronger against the employment of

Rohillas in the service of the officers of the Nizam's government.' In 1859 a report listed 'Preventive measures against incursions of Rohillas into the Madras Territories'. In incidents in the 1860s and 1870s, Arabs in service to the Nizam of Hyderabad with family political interests in the Persian Gulf actually sent Rohillas from Hyderabad to the 'Hawdramant' coast of the Arabian peninsula. At least one group of Rohillas departing from Bombay for the Gulf claimed to be pilgrims in transit to Mecca. Political Agents in the Gulf and officials in British India wrote endless notes and summaries untangling relationships and attempting to control such long distance connections and initiatives. Pashtun and Rohilla agency survived on the margins of empire.

By the end of the nineteenth century the word Rohilla finally began to disappear from colonial correspondence. Inside the Rohilkhand districts the Rohilla or Pathan name began to represent little more than a fixed category in colonial census and ethnographic tables. In Rampur state the myth of the martial Pashtun survived in a dynasty descended from Faizullah Khan (ruled 1774–83). The dynasty remained fully loyal to the British during the revolt of 1857–8 and until the empire's end in 1947. Across the rest of India, Rohilla would become a generic term for bandit or mercenary, long disconnected from any Afghan, Peshawar valley, or Rohilkhand history or heritage. Yet, within Rohilkhand, family memories of distant origin often endured. As late as the year 2000, one member of a family who had lived for generations in Rampur, would assert a personal heritage as a 'Yusufzai Pathan', originally from the Peshawar valley.<sup>39</sup>

### **Integration into the Colonial Political Economy**

Archival research has yielded useful material to trace nineteenth century labour flows, military recruitment, and general mobility into and from the Peshawar valley. From 1857 onwards, treated as members of a key 'martial race', Afghan border Pashtuns and Peshawar region Pakhtuns were taken in large numbers into

British Indian armies. Many enlisted at the military cantonment in Mardan town in the eastern Peshawar valley, where a soaring late nineteenth century memorial was dedicated to the many men killed in Kabul in the second Afghan War.

Career and retirement files of local recruits listed the home villages and postings of soldiers, and their post-retirement activities. Such files traced the scale and scope of colonial military and police employment of Peshawar valley residents across the Indian Ocean. Even before direct recruitment from the Peshawar valley, Pashtun emigrants to north India had long served in colonial armies. A well-travelled veteran, Buland Khan, received recognition for his service in 1857-8 helping the British retake districts from 'rebels' in the Rohilkhand region. Born about 1800, listed as of the 'caste' of 'Puthan', Buland Khan had enlisted with the East India Company army in 1814 and fought in numerous colonial campaigns.<sup>40</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, as the British completed new irrigation canals in the Peshawar valley and the Punjab, tens of thousands relocated. Many migrated down from the Afghan highlands as seasonal field labourers while others, including retired military personnel, resettled as higher status landowners.<sup>41</sup> From the 1880s new colonial irrigation works transformed much of the Peshawar valley. New networks of trade and transport developed as commercial agriculture and a new rail system into the valley connected Peshawar residents and cash crops such as sugar and tobacco to subcontinental networks and markets.

The nineteenth century also continued to involve the Peshawar valley in long established pilgrimage and economic networks reaching into Central Asia, Persia, and the Indian Ocean region. The rise of new modern states and empires, including Russian expansion into Central Asia, re-channelled or severed some of these linkages. Pashtuns regularly visited the Muslim holy sites in the Middle East as pilgrims on hajj and undoubtedly as entrepreneurs servicing and facilitating transportation and associated trade.



Local and distant trading and financial networks interacted with, facilitated, and influenced systems of labour migration. As Dale and Markovits have situated histories of South Asian merchant communities within Asian and world contexts, a study of Peshawar valley migration inevitably follows paths of mobility and livelihood across imperial, national, and area studies boundaries.<sup>42</sup> Nineteenth and twentieth century imperial and national documentation placed Pashtuns in diverse colonial locations from South Africa to the Andaman Islands. Specific Pashtun narratives were shaped by the ever changing 'relationship of Asian intermediary capital and migrant labour with the broader structures of colonial and paracolonial capitalism'.<sup>43</sup>

For example, between the years 1873–1916, English ships carried up to 35,000 contract labourers from India to the Dutch colony of Suriname where many worked on large sugar plantations. Steamships typically sailed from Calcutta to Paramaribo with passengers recruited by the Dutch colonial government for five-year renewable contracts. Many were from the districts of northern India, including Muslims from Rohilkhand and the Peshawar valley. They left poverty and lack of employment for uncertain futures in Suriname and other Caribbean colonies, including neighbouring British Guyana. In the Dutch records, hundreds of migrants had the name 'Khan', and were listed by 'kaste' as 'Pattan' or 'Mosulman'. Only a handful travelled with wives or children.<sup>44</sup>

### **Service as Labour in the Interregional Arena**

From the 1920s onwards, nationalist movements and ideologies challenged the British-Indian empire and generated new kinds of mobility. Political exiles seeking refuge and support travelled to Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, Europe, and the United States. Peshawar police files recorded the movement of suspected individuals across the Afghan frontier. In the 1930s, pre-partition political-religious rioting and ethnic cleansing displaced non-

Muslim populations from towns in the NWFP,<sup>45</sup> while from the late 1930s Muslims in districts across the Punjab province were forced to rethink notions of a territorial homeland.

Chapter 5 outlines Pashtun migration as mobility was affected by new post-colonial, national dynamics. After the partition of British India in 1947, Pakistan, especially West Pakistan, was defined by millions of new residents, immigrants and refugees. Within West Pakistan, Pashtun circulation now took the form of urbanization as hundreds of thousands followed new employment opportunities in government service, construction, transport, and services. Migrants transformed Karachi into a major city. Islamabad was created from farm fields as a new national capital. Pashtun citizens of Pakistan rose to high ranks in the armed forces of the increasingly militarized Pakistan state, even as many residents of the NWFP resented perceived losses of autonomy and regional culture. Afghanistan became a temporary refuge for exiled Pashtun nationalists, including the often jailed anti-British Peshawar valley-born nationalist, Abdul Ghaffar Khan who chose to be buried in Jalalabad, Afghanistan at his death in 1988.

Chapter 5 focuses on the nature of post-1970 Pakistani migration abroad and especially the complicated push and pull factors experienced in Pashtun homelands. By the 1970s, national and international economic and political currents pulled Pakistani professionals and blue-collar workers abroad, including to the oil-rich economies of the Middle East. Pashtuns circulated to fill employment niches from Saudi Arabia to Iraq, and in the Gulf princely states such as Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. But Pashtun notions of ethnic and Islamic egalitarian society quickly clashed with socio-economic hierarchies dominated by Arab elites. Ethnic and class differences left Pashtuns subordinated and conflicted.<sup>46</sup>

By the 1980s the futures of Pashtuns in the Indian Ocean arena, and of NWFP communities dependent on remittances, were fully integrated into the ebb and flow of global forces. An early 1980s fall in oil prices ended the first boom in Gulf labour migration. The Iraq-Iran war in the 1980s, then the first Gulf War

in 1991, disrupted the region and forced the shifting and return home of many Pashtun and other expatriate workers. As well, the leading Indian Ocean labour suppliers; Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, now competed with East Asian and Southeast Asian countries eager to export workers.

In the 1990s the nation-state of Pakistan struggled to develop stable internal systems of representation and prosperity. This instability continued to push the underemployed to look outward for opportunities. Pashtuns working abroad in the Gulf region were now firmly constrained by rigid state-supervised employment regulations that limited or ignored worker rights and benefits, and even controlled periods and places of residence. Trading personal sacrifice for income, and despite numerous obstacles, many foreign workers in the Gulf, including Pakistani and Afghan Pashtuns, secured sustainable employment. Pashtuns took leading roles in the construction and transportation industries. By manipulating the contract labour system, low paid but steady work might be continued for decades. Hundreds of thousands of Pashtun expatriate workers produced regular remittance flows that proved vital not only to families and communities, but also to the foreign exchange holdings of the central government.

In addition to income, new cultural, intellectual, and spiritual influences circulated. In the 1980s Saudi Arabia supported Afghans using bases in the NWFP to resist the Soviet army occupying Afghanistan. Saudi funds built religious schools and mosques. Saudi forms of devotional and social practices were carried back to NWFP district villages with varying consequences. A returned worker might occasionally be observed conversing in Arabic with another returned labourer.

This study of contemporary Pashtun circulation includes direct observations from the home districts, especially in the Peshawar valley, that sent labourers abroad. Ethno-historical research illuminated the latest manifestations of age-old patterns of production, trade, and employment. Through the 1990s the

circulation, adaptation, and reinvention of ideas, cultural material, and identities continued unabated.

Chapter 6 of this volume is set in a post-11 September 2001 world and argues that by 2006 labour migration to Dubai represented a new integration of Pashtun experience within a network of globalized economies and international agreements and agendas. After 11 September 2001, Pashtun and Pakistani workers in the Gulf also operated in an environment marked by the American occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, high oil prices, a second Gulf oil boom, and a less obscure ethnic profile. Western popular culture now imagined Gulf workers as potential 'terrorists',<sup>47</sup> even as foreign workers, including Pashtuns, used the Gulf oil boom and labour needs to re-imagine their own subordinated status.

After 2001, Gulf workers increasingly claimed new identities as modern workers with rights detailed by international labour organizations, advocated by human rights groups, and required by world trade agreements. Pashtun concerns now became comparable to and integrated with the struggles of other national worker populations recruited from South Asia to China. By the summer of 2006, Gulf worker mobilization slowly reshaped the Indian Ocean labour hierarchy. Spontaneous and planned sit down strikes, demonstrations, and use of the media now challenged Gulf country labour ministries still able to instantly deport any high profile activists. A 2006 strike by Dubai taxi drivers proved the ability of Pashtun workers to collaborate across national and ethnic divides to secure economic rights.

Even as the most recent details of regional labour circulation were difficult to document, more complicated remained the effort to interpret the consequences of contemporary migration for home families and villages. Remittances funded education, including for girls. Also funded were conservative mosques, political activism, and conspicuous consumption. Psychological impacts empowered and confused individuals and even whole neighbourhoods where many houses were often devoid of working-age men.

Women's lives evolved in this context. Certain women gained from periods of household authority and higher family incomes. If some women assumed new household authority in the absence of men, others were perceived as threatening gendered notions of honour or morality. A last question remained important to any assumption that migration inevitably led to 'modernity' and 'development'.<sup>48</sup> Remittances and the migrant experience may have contributed to the rise of Islamist religious politics in Pakistan in the 1990s, including the MMA coalition that swept provincial elections in the NWFP in late 2002. This study provides evidence for certain conclusions about these issues, though much remains to be learned. As one summary of recent migration-related ethnographies concludes, 'migration emerges as an ambiguous experience with winners and losers, bringing benefits and prospects for mobility for some, but increasing inequality and dependency for others.'<sup>49</sup>

Addleton proposed that 'large scale labour migration to the Middle East became the single most important economic event in Pakistan during the 1970s and 1980s.'<sup>50</sup> Arguably, Pashtun circulation, for labour, service, and trade, has heavily contributed to regional Pashtun societies and economies throughout history. Over the last two hundred years, and especially in the current generation, Pashtun migration has informed the most critical questions of contemporary local and interregional histories. In agreement with Markovits and colleagues, in this volume circulation is indeed 'also meant as a kind of shorthand for the capacity of ...society over the centuries to generate change.'<sup>51</sup>

## NOTES

1. Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Introduction: Circulation and Society under Colonial Rule', in *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia, 1750-1950*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, pp. 2-3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
3. See the bibliography for the well-known anthropological works of Akbar Ahmed, Fredrik Barth, and Charles Lindholm and for the regional

histories of Stephen Rittenberg and Erland Jansson. Especially note more recent works of historian S.W.A. Shah and anthropologist Mukulika Banerjee. Language pronunciation variations mark a divide between 'Pakhtun' populations of the northern and eastern Pashtun settlement areas, including the Peshawar Valley, from the 'Pashtuns' of the southern and western settlement areas, including eastern Afghanistan. The term Pashtun will be used to represent all Pashto and Pakhto speaking communities.

4. Sixteenth century regional literature, including Akhund Darweza's (d.1727) *Tazkirat al-Abrar wa al-Ashrar*, repeats tales of Pakhtuns in service to the armies of Mahmud of Ghazni in the eleventh century.
5. Akbar Ahmed, 'The Arab Connection: Emergent Models of Social Structure Among Pakistani Tribesmen', *Asian Affairs* XII:II (June 1981), pp. 167-72.
6. Judith Brown, *Global South Asians, Introducing the Modern Diaspora*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 4.
7. Mustapha Kamal Pasha, *Colonial Political Economy*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998.
8. Markovits, et al., *Society and Circulation*, p. 10.
9. Dirk Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput, and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
10. In 2005, Pakistan's Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Nowshera, and Swabi districts.
11. Crispin Bates, ed., *Community, Empire and Migration, South Asians in Diaspora*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2003, p. 3.
12. For one early effort to understand this process, see Akbar Ahmed, 'Dubai Chalo: Problems in the Ethnic Encounter between Middle East and South Asian Muslim Societies', *Asian Affairs* XV:III (October 1984), pp. 262-76.
13. Addleton's book title summarizes his argument. Jonathan S. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre: The Gulf Migration and Pakistan*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 17-26.
14. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, p. 39.
15. For discussion of interdisciplinary approaches to diaspora studies, see Brown, *Global South Asians*, 2006, p. 6.
16. See Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006.
17. See Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974; Hugh Tinker, *The Banyan Tree: Overseas Emigrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*, London: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire, Capital, Slavery, and Indian Indentured Labour*

- in the British Caribbean*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998.
18. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large, Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
  19. Ijaz Gilani, M.F. Khan and M. Iqbal, *Labour Migration from Pakistan to the Middle East and its Impact on the Domestic Economy*, 3 vols., PIDE Research Report Series, Nos. 126-8, 1981. The late twentieth century boom in Middle East labour migration, and associated scholarship has been directly linked to the effects of the October 1973 Middle East war and the consequent sharp rise in oil prices and national incomes. Stephen Guisinger, 'The Impact of Temporary Worker Migration on Pakistan' in S.J. Burki and R. Laporte, eds., *Pakistan's Development Priorities*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1984.
  20. Samir Amin, *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976; Fred Halliday, 'Migration and the Labour Force in Oil Producing States of the Middle East', *Development and Change* 8 (1977), pp. 263-91; Fred Halliday, 'Labour Migration in the Arab World: The Ugly Face of the New Economic Order', *Labour, Capital and Society* 15:1 (April 1982), pp. 9-27.
  21. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, pp. 17-26. See Hassan Gardezi's discussion (Gardezi, 1995) of how Pakistan fits into I. Wallerstein's 'World System' theory of global capital accumulation involving centre-periphery hierarchies of investment and labour mobilization.
  22. See the Introduction in David Ludden, ed., *Capitalism in Asia, Readings from the Journal of Asian Studies*, Association for Asian Studies, Ann Arbor, 2004.
  23. Alain Lefebvre, *Kinship, Honour and Money in Rural Pakistan, Subsistence Economy and the Effects of International Migration*, London: Curzon Press, 1999.
  24. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large, Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, p. 18.
  25. Bates, ed., *Community, Empire and Migration*, p. 5. Includes discussion of 'the rule of colonial difference' (Partha Chatterjee, 1997) in which western values and systems were presented as universal, and superior to, 'different' local Asian and African communities and standards.
  26. Including C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the age of British Expansion 1770-1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; P.J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British bridgehead of eastern India 1740-1828*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
  27. Jos Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, c.1710-1780*, E.J. Brill, 1995. In the 1850s, the districts of the 'Rohilkund' division included 'Bijnore', 'Moradabad', 'Budaon', 'Bareilly', and 'Shahjahanpore'. See Charles Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the North Western Provinces*,

- Longman, 1858, Appendix A. The listed 1852-3 district census data counted 15,094 'mouzuhs or townships' and a population of 5,217,507. 'Rohillah' was a word derived from 'roh', foothill or mountain, indicating the highland roots of many of the Pakhtun or Afghan migrants from west of the Indus.
28. For discussion of the politics of the Hastings period and a rejection of the narrative of Rohilla extermination by the British and their ally the Nawab of Oudh, see John Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, Oxford, 1892.
  29. Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, pp. 24-25.
  30. See Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-48*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986; Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia*, Oxford: Routledge, 1998.
  31. Gommans, 1995.
  32. Bates, ed., *Community, Empire and Migration*, p. 11.
  33. Dirk Kolff, 'The Polity and the Peasantry', in J. Gommans and D. Kolff, eds., *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia, 1000-1800*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 218.
  34. Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India 1770-1830*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.
  35. NAI, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, Fort William, 31 December 1858, Letter No. 1747, 'List of Rebels...' from J.C. Wilson, Commissioner on Special Duty, Camp Moradabad.
  36. Perhaps Tarin-i Serai, (caravan) serai—resting place—of the Tarin. Note the Rohilla Serai in Delhi and Tarin Kot, a provincial capital in Afghanistan. Also, the Tarin of Haripur, now in Hazara district, NWFP, Pakistan.
  37. See discussion of Pakhtun norms and stereotypes in Akbar Ahmed, *Pukhtun Economy*, 1980, Chapter 4.
  38. 'During the eighteenth century the state suffered from the inroads of the Marathas; and when order was restored, the revenues of the state were farmed out to bankers and to Arab and Pathan soldiers,...' from 'Hyderabad State' entry in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, vol. XIII, 1908.
  39. Personal history related by a retired Pakistani professor, recorded in Baltimore, MD, 2002.
  40. NAI, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, Fort William, 31 December 1858, Letter No. 1776, 'Descriptive Roll of a Risaldar of the 8th Regiment Irregular Cavalry recommended for admission to the Order of the British Empire for exemplary loyalty and good service rendered to the state'.
  41. See Imran Ali, *The Punjab under Imperialism, 1885-1947*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1989; Robert Nichols, *Settling the Frontier: Land,*



- Law and Society in the Peshawar Valley, 1500–1900*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001, Chapter 9.
42. See Stephen Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade, 1600–1750*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
  43. Bose, *A Hundred Horizons*, p. 26.
  44. See the National Archives of the Netherlands online database for details of Suriname migrants: <http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/suriname>.
  45. In 1901, several districts west of the Indus River of the British Indian Punjab province were divided off as the core of a new NWFP. The new province included the Peshawar valley and most of the Pashtun settlement areas incorporated within the British Indian Empire.
  46. Ahmed, 1984, included an estimate that 20–30,000 men had migrated to the Gulf out of the 300,000 total population of the South Waziristan Agency in Pakistan on the Afghan border. Stress-related effects were called the 'Dubai syndrome'.
  47. See the film, *Syriana*, 2005.
  48. See discussion in the Introduction to Katy Gardner and Filippo Osella, eds., *Migration, Modernity and Social Transformation in South Asia*, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004.
  49. Gardner and Osella, eds., *Migration, Modernity and Social Transformation in South Asia*, p. ix.
  50. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, p. 4.
  51. Markovits, et al., *Society and Circulation*, p. 11.

## 2

# Integration through Subordination to Modern Empire

'Who the Afghans were, and where they lived, in the centuries immediately preceding the expansion of Islam is not very clear.'<sup>1</sup>

As discussed in the introduction, for many centuries Pashtuns settled between the Indus River and the western Afghan highlands travelled within the Indian subcontinent and greater Indian Ocean arenas. Interregional networks connected Central Asia with South Asia and the Middle East. Merchants, pilgrims, scholars, and soldiers of multiple communities and cultures circulated among local and distant markets, religious institutions, courts, and empires. The population of any particular region in any time frame might be studied as participating in one or more aspects of these interregional flows. Afghan patterns of residency and livelihood tied to trade and nomadic circulation ensured a history textured by seasonal migrations and distant travels.<sup>2</sup>

Different literature survives that details Pashtun migration and settlement in north India in specific times and places. Limited ecological conditions and competitive socio-economic expectations and pressures ensured that steady numbers of male Pashtuns continually moved towards zones of perceived opportunity. A series of migrations from the second half of the fifteenth century established newly dominant Pashtun clans in the Peshawar valley, Swat, and smaller valleys along the Indus and Kabul rivers. Before 1600, details of this migration were consolidated in at least one narrative of Pashtun political leadership and conflict, agrarian settlement, and wider

relationships with developing Mughal imperial centres in Delhi and Kabul.<sup>3</sup>

By 1600, a second generation of Peshawar valley descendents wrote new narratives and polemics as they contested different visions of political and religious legitimacy and authority. Texts written to validate or refute interpretations of appropriate religious belief and practice also incorporated earlier histories of Afghan mobility and identity. Handed down as oral narrative and tradition, these stories were retold and reinterpreted to validate contemporary ideological struggles.

Around 1600, the Roshaniyya religious movement stirred the Peshawar region with 'fiercely anti-Mughal and anti-orthodox' mobilizations. The movement's founder, Bayazid Ansari, personified the interregional influences affecting Pashtuns in the early modern period. A non-Pashtun Barki from Waziristan, Bayazid Ansari participated in the horse trade with northern India. His travels exposed him to religious teachers even as he developed a serious critique of Mughal and Afghan power structures. If the Roshaniyya activism was 'in essence an emancipatory movement wrapped up in Pashto garb', it provoked direct opposition from the regional religious establishment.<sup>4</sup>

Akhund Darweza, the 'orthodox' disciple of the leading local saint, Pir Baba Saiyid Ali Tirmizi, and himself the son of a religious figure who had followed Pashtun clans migrating to the Peshawar area, led opposition to the Roshaniyya arguments. In personal debate and written polemic Akhund Darweza drew upon Pashtun historical memory and folklore.<sup>5</sup> He retold and reinterpreted Pashtun genealogical narratives to emphasize and assert Islamic normative beliefs and practices. He also retold familiar narratives that traced Afghan migration to north India as early as the eleventh century. To Akhund Darweza, Afghans who accompanied Mahmud of Ghazni into India during the early eleventh century were good Muslims helping a supplicant sultan and honouring Afghan 'tradition' and 'custom.'<sup>6</sup> The narrative of the Afghan relationship to Mahmud of Ghazni cast migration as

a 'mission' for Islamic justice, as military service, and as a prelude to settlement in India as landed rulers over obedient subjects.

Injustice had occurred when a travelling Muslim had gone to India, had been accused of a minor offence, and had a finger cut off by the judgment of a non-Muslim ruler:

'The Muslim brought this discrimination against Islam and Muslims in India to Sultan Mahmud Ghazi. At that moment the sultan understood this affair as an Islamic obligation. After arranging the army (*lashkar*) and its equipment Hazrat Sultan entered India through the Kabul way. Several times fighting with the kafirs led to victories. But finally the kafirs prevailed and the sultan was defeated. He returned to his country. Seeing that the Afghan people were Muslims, followers of *sunnat* and *jamat*, people of fierceness, a brave tribe (*watan*), and hardness, he took them as companions.

As it is Afghan tradition, whoever in a state of weakness enters into the houses of their maliks and places their cooking pot (*deg*) on their hearth, then all the tribe (*ulus*) will sacrifice their lives and property until they solve that person's difficulty. Sultan (Mahmud) also followed this custom. After that, from the Afghan tribes, 14,000 horsemen (*sowars*) and 14,000 footmen became companions and a few women...that is a tradition (*qaeda*) for the Afghans.<sup>7</sup> On a mission with women, of course, they would rather die than flee and, if the goal is achieved, there they settle. And the people of that place they drive out. Some they kill, some they make slaves, and some they make obedient subjects (*ra'iyat*).

...with God's favour, victory was achieved. After that, (some) Afghans stayed in Hind (and) after that Afghans from Kandahar dispersed. Some stayed in Kandahar, some went to Hind, and some scattered in other directions.<sup>8</sup>

If Pashtun genealogical narratives had long traced ethno-religious origins back to both pre-Islamic patriarchs and the prophet of Islam, Akhund Darweza's short, early seventeenth century narrative of Afghans following Mahmud of Ghazni incorporated several dimensions of motivation and identity associated with centuries of pre-modern movement to the east. The Muslim sultan acted in defence of Islamic notions of justice, in defence

of Muslims in India. Afghans joined in this struggle, but only as equals, only after being asked by a defeated sultan unable to conquer without Afghan help. Afghan hospitality (*melmastia*) was the idiom for Mahmud's request for aid. Taking women hinted at a vision for permanent occupation of territory and settlement. Reducing the populations of conquered regions to subjugation meant that internal Afghan notions of egalitarian social relations would not be applied in India to non-Afghans, any more than they had been applied after the Pashtun conquest in the Peshawar valley where non-Pashtun dependents (*hamsayas*), artisans, and the landless poor (*faqirs*) comprised much of the population.

For centuries after Mahmud's incursions, Afghans, more specifically Pashto speaking Pashtuns, moved from the highlands and valleys west of the Indus towards opportunities in India. Individuals travelled as independent horse traders, moneylenders, soldiers for hire, and potential landlords looking for a main opportunity. Through the Muslim sultanate period, 1206–1526, Afghan political entrepreneurs pursued personal careers in collaboration and competition with diverse sultanate courts and dynasties. 'The Afghans, notorious for their uncouth manners...., took a long time to attain positions of rank in the army and administration.'<sup>9</sup> Still, by the mid-thirteenth century the ruler Balban (r.1266–87) employed Afghans to expand his empire, defend against Mongol incursions, and secure roads, including between Delhi and Bengal. Indian-born Afghans served the Khalji dynasty (1290–1320)<sup>10</sup> and marked one early moment in the complex question of interregional Afghan ethnic identity. For centuries after, 'Afghans' and Pashtuns born west of the Indus continued to enter India. Sometimes they moved within clan chains of migration and settlement linked to relations born in India. Often they encountered unrelated 'Afghans' and 'Rohillas' established in India for generations.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1451–1526 period, the Lodis, an 'Afghan' dynasty, ruled in Delhi. An aristocracy of Afghan descent participated in the empire as governors and courtiers, as military leaders and

revenue gatherers. Immigrant and Indian-born Afghans who settled across north India included the forefathers of Sher Khan. Sher Khan served the dynasty from 1511 as a collector of agrarian revenues in two *parganas* in western Bihar. At least one sixteenth century historian attributed the success of the Lodis to ethnic Afghan mobilization and unity. By the 1530s, after the fall of the Lodis to Babur and the early Mughal dynasty, Sher Khan rose to regional power. He imposed a comparatively rigorous, hierarchical management style of systematic agricultural taxation and regular military service involving physical labour, drill, and regular pay.<sup>12</sup> Around 1580, Abbas Khan Sarwani wrote the history of Sher Khan's rise to power as he defeated the Mughals in 1540 and ruled Delhi as Sher Shah Suri until his death in 1545.

Kolff suggested that Abbas too easily attributed the success of the Lodis and Sher Shah Suri to an ability to mobilize Afghans around an ethnic, national (*quamdardar*) unity. Abbas wrote Sher Shah's history soon after the fall of the Suri dynasty and the restoration of the Mughals in 1555. He contrasted a Lodi inability to transcend 'tribal' egalitarian demands with Sher Shah's hierarchical state-building efforts. Abbas Khan Sarwani emphasized the value of Afghan unity to the point of assuming Sher Shah's soldiers were only Afghans.<sup>13</sup> Yet Kolff's discussion of the complexities of the emerging north Indian military service economy reminded that no ethnic, national, or group identity had fixed impervious boundaries.

Kolff noted that Sher Shah repressed lineage politics and 'emphasized subordination and employment by the centre, not horizontal alliances with aristocratic leaders, pastoral tribes and warlords.'<sup>14</sup> Sher Shah's fiscal strategy relied on systematic agrarian revenues and guaranteed monthly salaries and expenses for troops. His personal history included interaction and coordination with non-Afghans, including Rajputs, through marriage and political alliance. Kolff argued that members of different communities, especially in regards to military service, had long served and married together, blurring the 'purity' of any ethnic identity. 'Perhaps we may go one step beyond this and suggest

that Afghans and Rajputs were not really exclusive or even distinct ethnic groups at all.' '...I suggest that, according to the ways of the North Indian military labour market, in the pre-Mughal period, "Afghan" as well as "Rajput" were soldiers' identities rather than ethnic or genealogical denotations.'<sup>15</sup>

In this world of circulating ambitions and upward mobility a change in name or religion often 'represented an inflection of social status or professional identity'. 'Very often the Rajput to Afghan change—and, one may add, the peasant to Rajput change—was a similar kind of affair, indicating the pervading impact of soldiering traditions on North Indian social history. The military labour market, in other words, was a major generator of socio-religious identities.'<sup>16</sup> After a generation or two in India, who was an Afghan, and who might become an Afghan, a Rohilla, or a Pathan?

In 1526 Babur, the ruler of Kabul, long exiled from his Central Asian homeland, made the most serious of his ongoing campaigns into Hindustan, defeating the Lodi army at Panipat. In previous shorter raids along the Indus, Babur had attacked some Afghans while negotiating alliances with other Afghan Dilazak and Yusufzai lineages. As early as 1519, a Yusufzai leader Malik Shah Mansoor had joined Babur as a tributary. 'To confirm my ties to the Yusufzai, I had asked for his daughter in marriage....Taus Khan Yusufzai, Shah Mansur's younger brother, brought his niece to this camp.'<sup>17</sup> Two decades later, she may have been allowed by Sher Shah Suri to remove Babur's remains from Agra to Kabul.<sup>18</sup>

The original Afghan history that was revised as the *Tarikh-i Hafiz Rahmat Khani* could be dated by references to specific individuals from the Peshawar valley taking service (*khidmat*) under the Mughals. At his court in Kabul, Babur had received Malik Ahmad, an important Yusufzai leader. The *Tarikh-i Hafiz Rahmat Khani* told how jealous enemies had turned Babur against Malik Ahmad, but the Pashtun had bared his chest to Babur's bow, convinced him of his devotion, and received robes of honour (*khillats*) and personal gifts from Babur himself.<sup>19</sup> In

later years, children of Shah Mansoor went to Hindustan to serve Jehangir. Sauda, an honoured, elder malik of the Malikzai lineage served at Jehangir's court, and was alive in 1623.<sup>20</sup>

From the original consolidation of the Mughal polity after the battle of Panipat, Babur (r.1526-30) was confronted by the problem of former Lodi Afghan regional aristocrats who resisted the Mughal claim to political authority. In May 1526,

'When we first came to Agra, a strange antagonism and hatred was felt between our soldiers and the natives....With the sole exception of Delhi and Agra, all the places that had fortresses made them fast and refused obedience. In Sambhal was Qasim of Sambhal; in Bayana was Nizam Khan; in Mewat was Hasan Khan of Mewat himself, that little heretic who was the instigator of all this trouble. In Dholpur was Muhammad Zaytun; in Gwalior was Tatar Khan Sarangkani; in Rapri was Husayn Khan son of Nohani Khan; in Etawah was Qutb Khan; in Kalpi was Alam Khan; Kannauj and that side of the Ganges were full of Afghans in opposition, like Nasir Khan Nohani, Ma'ru'f Farmuli, and many other amirs who had rebelled two or three years before Ibrahim's death [in 1526].<sup>21</sup>

In 1529 Babur campaigned to the east ('the Purab'), striving to impose his authority on regional, often Afghan rulers. Districts transited by Babur included Etawah, Kalpi, Kora, Kara, the Benares region, and Arrah, nearing the borders of Bengal. Babur lamented, 'Sher Khan Sur, whom I had patronized the year before and given large estates and stationed in this area, had joined the Afghans.'<sup>22</sup> Local rulers would serve as Mughal dependents in many of these districts east of Delhi, especially those north of the Ganges protected by branches of the complex regional riverine system. In the eighteenth century many would assert and achieve degrees of independence from Mughal authority.<sup>23</sup>

The consolidation of the Mughal dynasty in north India under Akbar (r.1556-1605), including Akbar's repression of revolt in the late 1550s when regional Afghan leaders played prominent roles in the rebellion. North Indian Afghan dynastic ambitions were marginalized to peripheral, minor provinces and



principalities. Akbar acknowledged the heterogeneous, interregional nature of Indian political power and religious identity by implementing policies of relative tolerance and inclusiveness. In the 1580s, campaigning along the Indus River against Pashtun clans, at one point Akbar received descendants of Bayazid Ansari. In the greater empire he built upon Sher Shah's agrarian revenue administration and road network. By 1580 he had also recruited and formalized a graded, centralized aristocracy of two hundred amirs supported by awards (*mansabs*) of revenue rights in imperial districts. The number of Persian descended (*Irani*) *mansabdars* balanced those of Central Asians (*Turanis*), while there were fewer Rajputs and Indian-born Muslims.

The *mansabdars* provided military contingents and administered agrarian districts in return for associated revenues, salaries, and honours. Akbar incorporated Rajputs into his hierarchy, including through personal marriage alliances. Though Babur had taken a Yusufzai Pashtun wife to build his Kabul area political network, Akbar remained suspicious of regional Afghan political figures, and recruited relatively few as *mansabdars*. Afghans were involved in a major rebellion against Akbar, but many continued to accept service at different levels. Akbar's son Jehangir (r.1605-28) raised Khan-i Jahan Lodi to prominence, only to see him revolt. Jehangir's son, Shah Jehan (r.1628-57), again remained careful of Afghan political competition.

Aurangzeb (r.1658-1707), though emphasizing an Islamic identity, nevertheless in the 1667-75 period became involved in repressing protracted rebellions by Yusufzai Pashtuns and others living in the hill country surrounding the Peshawar valley west of the Indus river.<sup>24</sup> These clans had been pacified only nominally by Babur, Akbar, and Jehangir.<sup>25</sup> Mughal officials responded by mixing force and subsidies. Divide and rule tactics split lineages, families, and even fathers from sons. When the warrior-poet Khushal Khan Khattak went into rebellion against Aurangzeb, Mughal authorities imprisoned at least one of Khushal Khan's sons, while sponsoring another to clan leadership.

Before gaining the throne, the young Aurangzeb had actively commanded in the field, building strategic alliances with Afghans throughout the Mughal provinces. In his final confrontation with his brothers over the succession to Shah Jehan, Aurangzeb had a decisive edge in elite Afghan support. At the battle of Samurgarh, where Aurangzeb had support from one hundred twenty-four *mansabdars* of the highest ranks, twenty-three were Afghans. His brother and opponent Dara Shikoh rallied only eighty-seven high *mansab* holders, with just one an Afghan.<sup>26</sup>

Identities of Mughal *mansabdars* were as much strategic as ethnic or 'national'. They could be differentiated by ancestry, country of birth, and current residence. They often joined together in political factions at the Mughal court. Non-Muslim Indian-born *mansabdars* might be called Marathas, Rajputs, or southern 'Deccanis'. Persian-born *Iranis* were different in manner and status from Indian-born *Iranis*. Aurangzeb's *Turani mansabdars* were variously born in 'Turan', Bokhara, India, Anatolia, Balkh, and Badakhshan. Aurangzeb's 'Afghan' *mansabdars* might be of Indian birth (Jalal Khan and Ranmast Khan Panni held ranks of 5,000, Shamsuddin Khesghi of 3,000, Hameed Kakur of 1,500); have a Lodi past (Muzaffar Lodi had a rank of 3,000); or be connected to the south (Abdur Rauf Miyana, Deccani).<sup>27</sup>

M. Athar Ali, in his study, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, listed all of the Afghan *mansabdars* serving Aurangzeb in the 1679-1707 period as having a 'country of birth' of 'India'. Kabul was Babur's original Afghan imperial centre. In this period the Kabul province (*subah*) was a major Mughal territory. To Babur or later historians, to what extent were 'Afghans' also 'Indians' or of 'Hindustan'? Each name represented shifting spatial or temporal frontiers separating cultures and politics associated with the broad concepts of Khorasan, Turan, Persia, or Hindustan.

By the second half of the seventeenth century less than 10 per cent (perhaps thirty-four) of the Mughal dynasty's 575 *mansabdars* were identified as of Afghan heritage. The numbers

rose and fell as individual Afghan officers joined or left Mughal service. Some took advantage of Aurangzeb's long residence in the Deccan to build increasingly autonomous north Indian power bases and forces.<sup>28</sup> Even as Aurangzeb pushed southward the Mughal sphere of influence by recruiting southern Marathas as *mansabdars*, different Afghans pursued opportunities in the southern Indian kingdoms attempting to maintain independence from the Mughals. In Bijapur a contingent of Afghan officers and troops composed one of the factions that competed over, and finally undermined, the authority of the ruling dynasty. As centralized power in Bijapur disintegrated, an Afghan, Abd al-Karim Buhlul Khan II ruled for two years, 1675-77, as regent to the dynasty's young heir.<sup>29</sup>

South Indian politics in this period illustrated the Indian Ocean-wide appeal of the Indian subcontinent for traders, pilgrims, adventurers, and military entrepreneurs operating across oceans and vast distances. By the 1660s, the leading faction opposed to the Afghans at the Bijapur court were 'Abyssinians', soldiers of African origin or descent who might have arrived in India as slaves or mercenaries, then risen to political influence. In 1677 the African faction in Bijapur displaced Abd al-Karim with their leader, Sidi Mas'ud. In the eighteenth century, as the Mughal empire fragmented after Aurangzeb's death in 1707, Arabs from the Gulf would become prominent as warriors securing an independent dynasty in Hyderabad. Babur himself had discussed how, in Bengal, '... before Nusrat Shah's father, Sultan Alauddin, an Abyssinian killed the king, took the throne, and reigned for a time. The Abyssinian was killed by Sultan Alauddin....'<sup>30</sup>

Two hundred years after Aurangzeb's 1686 conquest of Bijapur, British colonial census takers tried to sort out the ethno-religious legacies of this early modern history of circulation and settlement. In territory now structured as Bijapur district of the Bombay Presidency, the British decided that Muslim residents still belonged to 'Communities of Foreign Origin'. They counted Saiyids as 'Descendants of Middle East Sufis'; Shaikhs, who 'claim

Arab descent'; Mughals, from north India who 'came with Aurangzeb'; and 'Pathans', now constables, soldiers, messengers, and servants, 'who had migrated in 'Adil Shahi period'. All these four groups spoke Urdu. 'Special classes' of 'foreigners' included assimilated Kakars from 'Afghanistan' who now spoke 'Mixed Marathi, Urdu and Malwi'. The 'Labbey' population, 'traders in skins and hides' had origin in 'Arab trading enclaves on coastal India' and spoke Tamil, Arabic, and Urdu.<sup>31</sup> This colonial codification of ethnic identity would recur.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Pashto-speaking Pashtuns continued to circulate throughout the Indian subcontinent. After the 1657 treaty between Bijapur and Aurangzeb, '700 Pathans' left Bijapur for service with the Maratha ruler Shivaji.<sup>32</sup> Those who pursued seasonal or short-term labour, trade, or military service returned to home villages or districts after shorter or longer terms. Others never crossed back westward across the Indus, or returned to intermediary locations, finally settling in distant imperial capitals, provincial or district town centres, grain market towns, or the countryside. Elite sons of prominent lineages and political influence travelled along with horse traders, soldiers, artisans, and farmers. Those finding niches of opportunity often recruited others to follow and participate as partners or dependents. In this process, over generations, the composition of the local landlord or *zamindari* class could be transformed. Irfan Habib documented that in 1662 Diler Khan, one of Aurangzeb's Afghan mansabdars, was given a permanent (*al-tamgha*) *jagir* in pargana Pali. A generation later, in 1689, his son Kamaluddin referred to 'the villages of pargana Pali that are in this person's *zamindari* and *ijara* (revenue farm)'. In 1732 Diler Khan's grandson gifted the rights to a village from the holdings that he said were his 'by purchase and inheritance'.<sup>33</sup>

Newly established Pashtun enclaves in north India developed to the point that a veritable Indo-Afghan state (*riyasat*) began to provide economic and political alternatives to a decentralizing Mughal authority weakened by dynastic fragmentation and

opportunistic Persian, Marathi, and Afghan dynasties, clans, and competitors pressing in from the west and south.<sup>34</sup>

Across the Mughal empire, within a generation of the death of Aurangzeb, a process of political realignment quickly dismantled Mughal political hegemony. It was a process of political decentralization rather than of anarchy or collapse across the entire Indian political or economic landscape.<sup>35</sup> In this generation of political transformation, during 'stages of the breakaway from the centre', regional prosperity and fractious politics at the centre encouraged resistance to various claims from the Mughal system.<sup>36</sup> Mughal governors (*subahdars*) and *mansab* holders (*jagirdars*) resisted, then ignored, efforts by the emperor in Delhi to effect transfers of office holders. In Awadh, by 1722, control of the Mughal office of the eight *sarkar*-level military commanders, *faujdar*s, had shifted from Delhi to provincial control.<sup>37</sup> Administrators of *jagirs* (*amils*) came increasingly under the supervision, if not direct control of provincial authority.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the elite of the old Mughal hierarchy cultivated certain ties to the court in Delhi, using Mughal prestige and factional alliances to cement legitimacy and counter competitors.

Dynasties, including in Awadh and Hyderabad, were established as former Mughal governors engrossed resources and authority once belonging to Delhi. At the local level, intermediary holders of rights to land revenue and power renegotiated with or simply ignored higher successor authorities. As early as the late 1680s independent Jats in the hinterland of Agra threatened the security of official roads and revenue caravans, and even looted Akbar's tomb. As imperial security weakened in the early eighteenth century, a shifting north of the king's road (*shahrah*) to avoid attacks on revenue remittances from Bengal to Delhi simply strengthened the prestige of the increasing independent governor, soon *nawab*, of Awadh.

In 1745 it was Safdar Jang, the governor of Awadh, who emerged as the chief supporter of the emperor. But ironically, Safdar Jang,

virtually as an independent ruler of Awadh, himself represented one of the agencies of disintegration of the imperial structure.<sup>39</sup>

Sikh communities in the Punjab contested power from the village to district level, even as the Punjab governor and officials refused to forward traditionally allocated revenues to maintain the Mughal military contingents in Kabul. Mughal military commands weakened, local *zamindars* revolted, and provincial governors resorted to sub-contracting revenue collecting through local revenue farmers, (*ijaradars*), who diverted as much as possible, as soon as possible. The Mughal throne, as well as administrative forms and structures persisted. But the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the conquest of Delhi by the Persian Nadir Shah in 1739, and a second occupation of Delhi by the Afghan Ahmad Shah in 1748 left a fatally weakened Mughal authority unable to adapt or recover. Finally, '(t)his shift from control of peripheries by the centre in the seventeenth century to control of centre by the provinces' was significant and permanent.<sup>40</sup>

From the beginning of this process of Mughal crisis, numerous Afghan and Pashtun regional personalities and clans distanced themselves from the centre and tied their fortunes to new networks of trade, agrarian production, and political alliance. Linked to Central Asia and Afghanistan by a thriving horse trade, sixteenth century Afghan settlements north and east of Delhi had also invested in land clearance and agricultural development. So-called Rohilla rulers of Afghan and Pashtun descent often combined Mughal military and *mansabdar* service with this 'dual economy' of trade and production to climb to landlord status, though many poorer or more recently arrived Afghans were not above working the fields themselves.<sup>41</sup>

Over generations Afghans had settled in the Rohilkhand districts.<sup>42</sup> The Bangash Rohillas of Farrukhabad created an early dynastic polity east of Agra between the Yamuna and the Ganges rivers, on the southern bank of the Ganges. Mughal officials in Bareilly, Moradabad, and Badaun collected revenues through local landlords and revenue farmers who managed their own

estates and sometimes the *jagirs* of absentee Mughal *amirs*. Soon after the death of Aurangzeb the Afghan Da'ud Khan converted assets from a family network of horse-trading across northern India into the authority of a small Rohilkhand leader (*jamadar*) of horsemen who used force or the threat of force to extract land revenues for various overlords.<sup>43</sup>

Afghan identity was never fixed, being constructed from diverse individuals and leadership. Da'ud Khan (d.1725) 'recruited both Afghans and various Hindustanis, people generally referred to as *mardoman-i hamrahi*, 'fellow travelers', or *quam* or *jama'iyat*, broadly meaning 'people' or 'bans', indicating the heterogeneous and open identity of this group, still different from the equally vague but more ethnic and tribal idiom of *ulus* (kinsfolk) or *khail* (clan).<sup>44</sup> His adopted son Ali Muhammad Khan was a captive, perhaps Jat, child slave converted to Islam. Ali Muhammad Khan rose through occupation, talent, and consensus to the leadership of Da'ud Khan's troop. Ali Muhammad turned Mughal service into personal control of *jagir* holdings in and around Aonla. After 1737, after providing military service to the Mughal *wazir*, Ali Muhammad claimed the high status of *nawab*, and for a decade consolidated a Rohilla polity centred in Aonla.<sup>45</sup>

For decades after, the fragmentation of Mughal authority ensured the growth of Rohilla power. When Nadir Shah occupied Delhi in 1739 Mughal controls collapsed and thousands, if not tens of thousands, of Afghans and Pashtuns, 'most of them Yusufzais from the Peshawar area, began to swell the Rohilla ranks to about 100,000.<sup>46</sup> Yet the same circumstances that empowered the Rohillas also spurred the growth of other alternative regional power holders. Economic resources diverted from the centre enriched regional authorities and armies. The Mughal emperor in Delhi became only one of several competitors disputing the wealth and rule of northern India. The Marathas pushed north into the region from the Bombay area. A former Mughal *subahdar* created a new independent dynasty in Awadh. And from 1757, the British consolidated a new polity around Calcutta and then the entire province of Bengal.

Two centuries of Afghan and Pashtun migration to the agrarian frontier of Rohilkhand generated remarkable prosperity. Formal revenue demand (*jama*) from the northwestern Rohilla districts around Sambhal and Moradabad tripled from Rs. 1,673,536 recorded c.1595 in the *Ain-i Akbari* during Akbar's reign to perhaps Rs5,292,052 by 1750.<sup>47</sup> The districts just to the east and south, around Buduan and Bareilly, increased their *jama* demand five times, from Rs870,427 to perhaps Rs4,310,000 by 1752.<sup>48</sup> Muzaffar Alam counted an over 247 per cent increase in combined Moradabad-Bareilly *jama*, from 101,758,494 *dams* in the *Ain-i Akbari* to 353,507,068 *dams* c.1750.<sup>49</sup>

This period represented the peak of the Rohilla 'dual economy' based on both an interregional horse-breeding trade and decades of local new agricultural development. Agricultural expansion to the northeast meant 'the administrative centres of the area also shifted accordingly: from the old imperial centres of Budaun and Sambhal to Moradabad, Bareilly, Aonla, Shahjahanpur, Pilibhit and Najibabad.'<sup>50</sup> The period also represented a peak, and a limit, to a long history of a fluid military labour market in northern India. Gommans dated his study of the 'Indo-Afghan Empire' as c.1710-80. In 1774 the independent Rohilla states were defeated and absorbed into the territories of the Nawab of Awadh and the sphere of influence of the rising British-Indian empire based in Calcutta. Though a nominally independent princely state of Rampur survived, the defeat symbolized the beginning of a new structuring of Pashtun circulation.

An expanding British-Indian empire, from its 1757 victory at Plassey in Bengal, would spend a century consolidating authority across India, focused heavily on reducing mobile nomads, traders, and warriors to sedentary, revenue producing subjects. But what did this mean for the perhaps 100,000 Rohillas of northern India following the end of Rohilla regional independence? Contemporary and later histories recorded and debated the destruction, and disappearance, of north Indian Rohilla politics.



Yet the post-1774 history of the remnant Rohilla populations also revealed the complex nuances of a decades-long process of political and social negotiation and adaptation as the British confronted and reshaped an established military labour market. The British could not end historic recruitment practices across all of India. They did create a new military labour regime within their directly administered provinces. They did pressure neighbouring princely states, especially those in subsidiary alliance relationships, to end 'irregular', 'informal' established military practices and recruitment and conform to the standards of British colonial advisers and methods. Yet, until the end of the nineteenth century, the British remained unable to fully eliminate flows of military recruits moving between loosely administered border regions and willing employers within various princely states. Even as new forms of labour recruitment incorporated South Asians, including Pashtuns, Afghans, and 'Rohillas', into nineteenth century plantation, industrial, and urban labour networks, freelance individuals and groups continued to circulate in search of martial 'service' on the margins of the colonial settled districts. Importantly, even as British colonial notions of difference and hierarchy erased Afghan and Pashtun political legitimacy, such attitudes created and regularized Rohilla, 'Puthan', and 'Pathan' social roles and identities.

Established patterns of Pashtun migration to areas northeast of Delhi and the Rohilkhand territories had ended in 1774, within a decade of the advance of the East India Company outward from Bengal. In the mid-eighteenth century competition among regional successors to Mughal authority, the East India Company had slowly gained decisive advantage. Rights to collect land revenues, especially in Bengal after 1757, and personal fortunes 'were now used to sustain a system of world trade which stretched to Canton and London.'<sup>51</sup> British Indian enclaves in Bombay and Madras became sub-continental reserves for colonial interests centred in Calcutta and Bengal. The growing power of the East India Company forced changes in north Indian political

relationships and finally in the structuring of military service, especially for Pashtuns.

After a series of military victories in 1763-64 over the armies of the Nawab of Awadh, due to 'superior military technology and discipline', the East India Company forced the Awadh court into accepting the terms of post-war treaties and a subsidiary alliance agreement. The Company needed the legitimacy of the Mughal emperor in Delhi plus the administrative experience of the Mughal system and the Awadh dynasty to maintain political order and flows of revenue.<sup>52</sup> Yet the Company subsidiary alliance demands were inherently destabilizing for Awadh, and soon for neighbouring Rohilla polities.<sup>53</sup>

After being defeated, Shuja ud-Daula retained his position as Nawab of Awadh, but 'a war indemnity of Rs50,00,000 was to be paid in instalments.'<sup>54</sup> Shuja tried to rebuild his own military forces, dismissing his 'highly unreliable' Mughal units,<sup>55</sup> even as the alliance agreement imposed upon Awadh included the stationing of East India Company forces within the province, paid for by a 'large annual tribute of Rs75 lakhs or more.'<sup>56</sup> The British officers leading these battalions, composed of western-drilled Indian infantry, soon appropriated various local trade duties and customs fees, weakening Awadh court income flows. 'More seriously, the pressures of the huge annual demand disrupted the fragile and multi-layered political system.'<sup>57</sup> A revenue system that had incorporated flexible responses to fluctuating seasonal crop yields and the constant negotiating of intermediary revenue collection roles now faced a fixed, continuing annual demand.

In general, 'Indian rulers subject to a British subsidiary alliance all fell rapidly and irremediably into arrears,' generating heavy political pressure and, for many, eventual British annexation.<sup>58</sup> Just so, financial pressures would lead indirectly to the annexation of the Rohilla districts by Awadh in 1774, then the annexation of the same districts by the East India Company in 1801. These Awadh experiences were also an early illustration of the process in which Company politics and military dominance forced the restructuring of the armies of subsidiary alliance partners and

the reordering of the north Indian military labour market. In this process, Pashtun migrants for 'service' were forced either to accept individual incorporation through subordination to an evolving British colonial system or to search for more amenable employment with Afghan, Marathi, or other regional Indian militaries, themselves adapting quickly to 'European' methods.

In the 1760s, the north Indian balance of power had been negotiated and contested between periodic Afghan Durrani incursions, the Mughal emperor in Delhi, Marathi powers to the south, the Rohilla states northeast of Delhi, the Nawab of Awadh, and the English. After 1765, expanding East India Company influence meant that Awadh and Benares 'became virtually British satellites'. Soon after the end of conflict in 1765 the Company pressured the Nawab to reduce the number of troops under his command. A new treaty, concluded in November 1768, limited his army of over 48,000 cavalry and infantry to just 35,000 men. Only 10,000 could be trained and armed in 'European' fashion; 'in the discipline of the English troops', as drilled infantry armed with muskets.<sup>59</sup> The intent was to reduce the Nawab to a dependent status.

'...By the stipulated reduction of the Nabob's forces he is still permitted to retain a number which will ever render him respectable among the powers of Hindostan though in no degree sufficiently formidable to trouble the repose of these Provinces. ...it admits not a doubt that he can now form no projects but what we shall have in our power to control.'<sup>60</sup>

This Company restriction in Awadh was an early imposition of a new British Indian military organization and labour model that would be developed over time. At first it was imposed upon Awadh for only five years, until the Company desired to build up the Nawab's forces before an anticipated offensive against Rohilkhand.

By the early 1770s, under threat from Marathi armies raiding across the Ganges River, the leading Rohilla leader, Hafiz Rahmat Khan, negotiated a defensive treaty relationship with Awadh and

its Company brigades. He agreed to pay Rs. 4,000,000, or forty lakhs, to Awadh's ruler, Shuja ud-Daulah, in return for military protection.<sup>61</sup> But as threats of Marathi incursions into Rohilkhand occurred, ebbing and flowing with seasonal conditions, no aggressive defence was made by the Awadh troops. Pressed for the amount by the Nawab, Hafiz Rahmat Khan claimed defensive services had not been rendered, even as Rohilla allies ignored Hafiz Rahmat Khan's pleas for contributions towards the sum.

Both the Nawab of Awadh and Warren Hastings, Governor-General in Calcutta, used this dispute over treaty payments as reason to invade the Rohilla districts and annex the country to Awadh. The Nawab coveted the region's rich agrarian revenues. The British wished to ensure the Nawab's ability to pay his subsidiary treaty obligations to Calcutta. At the same time the Company saw an opportunity to indirectly dominate and stabilize an important border of their growing sphere of influence.

Warren Hastings lifted restrictions on the size of the Nawab's army for the 1774 campaign. The armies in conflict in Rohilkhand in 1774 reflected the historic diverse, free market aspect of north Indian martial interest, obligation, and service. Before his defeat on 23 April 1774, Hafiz Rahmat Khan had rallied thousands, the 'army being reinforced by large bodies of the Rajpoot zemindars, and also by the Pathans from Mow and Furrukhabad, ...'<sup>62</sup> The Nawab's opposing officer corps had several apparent Rohillas among 'the principal sirdars', including 'Bussunt Ullee Khan', 'Muhboob Ullee Khan', and 'Syyud Ullee Khan'. The interregional nature of military service across the Indian Ocean in the pre-colonial period was exemplified by the leader of troops sent by the Nawab into Rohilkhand after the defeat of Hafiz Rehmat Khan. 'On the 12th of Suffur, a large force under the command of Seedee Busheer, an African, was dispatched towards Pillibheet...'<sup>63</sup> 'Sidi' sailors, soldiers, and leaders of African descent were better known on the west coast of India, particularly in the Bombay region.

After 1774, the Nawab of Awadh controlled Rohilkhand with 'Nawabi' regiments, often led by British officers. By treaty, East

India Company regiments also served within Awadh. 'Rohilla' recruits were taken into the Nawab's service, while others preferred service under the semi-independent Nawab of Rampur. If slowly, '...the British Company would in the 1798 to 1818 period, achieve something approaching a demilitarizing of India,'<sup>64</sup> this process occurred regionally from 1774, by degrees, as thousands of soldiers were dismissed from service in the post-Rohilla war period, including from service with the Nawab of Awadh. British officers assigned to regiments of the Nawab lobbied the East India Company for better firearms for the infantry and for the dismissal of thousands of underemployed, often unpaid and mutinous, cavalry troops.<sup>65</sup> Rohilla cavalymen migrated west and south, looking for service, and for new agrarian or political opportunities.

The Awadh conquest of Rohilkhand has served as one of the minor dramatic historiographic breaks in modern South Asian history. 'Thus in 1774 the Rohilla state came to an abrupt end. The single remaining son of 'Ali Muhammad Khan, Faizullah Khan, was allowed to preserve his personal *jagir* in and around Rampur which continued as a Native State until 1947.'<sup>66</sup> The actual end of Rohilla political leadership in the region meant less to contemporary western observers than that the facts of the 'Rohilla War' could be used in internal British debates over the nature of the evolving British Indian empire and the personal morality and culpability of Warren Hastings.

Edmund Burke, siding with rivals to Hastings based in Calcutta,<sup>67</sup> used the war in his overall assault on Hastings and East India Company policies. Burke saw the war as unnecessary, the Rohillas as victims, indeed, as 'the bravest, the most honourable and generous nation on earth', a people destroyed by Hastings out of greed.<sup>68</sup> James Mill followed in his history of India, furthering the anti-Hastings narrative that a crime had occurred, that Hastings had sold Company troops to the Nawab of Awadh for the conquest, and that this had ensured the 'extermination of Rohillas',<sup>69</sup>

‘...the whole country, without opposition, lay at the mercy of the Vizier; and never probably were the rights of conquest more savagely abused. Not only was the ferocity of Indian depredation let loose upon the wretched inhabitants, but as his intention, according to what he had previously and repeatedly declared to the English government, was to exterminate the Rohillas, every one who bore the name of Rohilla was either butchered or found his safety in flight and exile.’<sup>70</sup>

Mill quoted the English military commander that unrestrained village burning and looting continued for three days and that ‘Above a lack of people have deserted their abodes in consequence of the defeat...’ Mill highlighted the word ‘exterminate’ used in regards to the Rohillas in earlier correspondence between Hastings and the Nawab, and that the Company’s own letters recorded it had burned ‘upwards of a thousand’ villages in a punitive raid against the Nawab in 1764.<sup>71</sup> The point for contemporary politics and early histories was that previous Rohilla politics, and general influence in the region, had been suppressed, reduced to a subservient Rampur prince.

Over a century later, John Strachey wrote his own polemic rehabilitating eighteenth century political decisions leading to the growth of the empire. He critiqued Burke, Mill, and Macauley, ‘mised’ by Mill’s history, to argue that Hastings had been ‘beloved’, bringing security and justice. Strachey called ‘imaginary’ claims that the Rohilla war was a ‘crime’ involving the ‘selling’ of Company troops or the ‘exterminating’ of the Rohillas. Strachey observed from his late nineteenth century service in the region, that, still, ‘an important and numerous section consisted of Rohillas’. But if the Rohillas had not been erased, they were now inconsequential, just as previously they ‘were no nation at all, but a comparatively small body of cruel and rapacious Afghan adventurers who had imposed their foreign rule on an unwilling Hindu population...’<sup>72</sup>

If not extermination, then what happened after 1774, especially to patterns of Pashtun migration in northern India, including for ‘service’, and to Rohilla communities and identities in the districts

north and east of Delhi as they experienced the expanding British Indian empire? The remainder of this chapter discusses, first, the symbolic year of 1776, when the East India Company continued to impose a new military labour market regime on Awadh and on Rohilla and other recruits. Second, it discusses an alternative history of unencapsulated circulation, including military service, that survived for many decades in India outside the directly administered British colonial sphere of influence. For almost a century, until well after the 1850s, border regions and princely states, as small and ephemeral as Tonk and as large and enduring as Hyderabad, provided new locations and occupations for Pashtuns from the northwest and Rohillas from Rohilkhand. Identities suppressed or absorbed into local communities and hierarchies re-emerged, or seemed to re-emerge, in full essence during the violent events of 1857-8. During the period of the so-called Indian 'Mutiny', Muslim 'rebels' from Rohilkhand were closely associated with a martial Pathan or Rohilla past, leading to claims that '...the descendants of Najib ud-Daulah and Hafiz Rahmat Khan provided the leadership, the organization and the momentum of the Rohilla uprising'<sup>73</sup> in 1857.

## 1776

In the early 1770s, colonial officials in Calcutta, speaking of Rohilkhand and regional residents of Afghan descent, referred to '...the Rohillahs and Pattans...';<sup>74</sup> '...the Rhoillahs and Patans...';<sup>75</sup> and '...the Rhoillahs and Affghans...'.<sup>76</sup> After the defeat and death of Hafiz Rahmat Khan in 1774, those of Pashtun heritage born west of the Indus or generations earlier in northern India quickly adjusted to political realities. Three territorial options were available. Thousands of defeated warriors and family fled south across the Ganges to escape the new political regime. Many of these joined Maratha armies. Many others migrated locally to the Rampur jagir, accepting subordination under a Rohilla dynasty rather than under Awadh rule. But perhaps most of the

up to 100,000 Rohillas long settled in the Rohilkhand districts probably remained at the time on the land as headmen and landlords of villages, or as leading figures of district market *qazba* towns and urban areas. Over following decades, livelihoods and loyalties shifted, redefining and reshaping the nature of agrarian, pastoral, military, and trade opportunities. Still, Rohilla descendants remained as permanent legacies of generations of migration.

After 1774 those who remained within the Rohilkhand territories directly administered by the Nawab of Awadh suffered during a long period of economic decline and political weakness. As many Rohilla landlords and artisans moved to Rampur, land fell out of cultivation and trade decreased. Awadh troops that occupied the Rohilla districts were often East India Company regiments led by British officers, some as predatory and 'entrepreneurial' as any Afghan or Mughal *mansabdar*. Individual Rohilla soldiers, especially cavalry men (*sowars*), attempted to maintain previous degrees of independence and flexibility. Many accepted the new reality and enlisted in cavalry units loyal to Awadh. But almost immediately after the conquest of Rohilkhand, in 1775, just as Awadh seemed posed to take regional advantage, the Nawab, Shuja ud-Daula died. He was succeeded by Asaf ud-Daula (d.1797), who immediately came under pressure as the East India Company forced a new military regime upon the client state.

In 1775, after the conquest of Rohilkhand, tens of thousands of cavalry who had been gathered for the war by the Nawab of Awadh remained camped in bases around the Nawab's territories. As in the historic political economy of service across India, many of these troops rode under clan or regional leaders, with specific histories and terms of recruitment, pay, and employment. The Nawabs of Awadh, as other regional leaders, had often ruled only nominally over troop leaders (*risaldars*, *jam'dars*) and bands able to decamp quickly for newer opportunities across political frontiers. At first, the Rohilla conquest produced rich amounts of loot for those able to secure it. But not all received sufficient



shares. A British officer leading Company troops for the Nawab bitterly complained that the Nawab's cavalry had seized prime Rohilla assets, while his foot soldiers were denied, by policy of Warren Hastings, customary rights to 'prize' money. Within months of the conquest of Rohilkhand, the accumulating non-payment of regular dues to troops generated tensions that the British leveraged to their advantage.

Suffering from 'Arrears in pay' was a typical condition for soldiers in service across pre-colonial India. Rulers might withhold pay for months, perhaps out of callousness, perhaps to ensure degrees of dependence, or perhaps because agricultural revenues were late or low. During periods of war, seized treasuries and booty might quickly even up previous periods of neglected salaries. When a windfall fell to a ruler, he might share out just enough to placate his army. The problem for the Nawab of Awadh was that, after 1765, the East India Company would not countenance 'arrears' in payment for their alliance subsidies, particularly amounts due to pay for Company brigades stationed in Awadh.

From late 1775, the British renewed efforts to establish in Awadh a new military political economy, one designed to increase East India Company political dominance and security as well as guarantee payments for Awadh's use of Company brigades. Under the subsidiary alliance agreement, the Company was owed Rs210,000 per month per Company brigade in service under the Nawab.<sup>77</sup> It was these brigades that critics charged had been 'sold' by Hastings to the Nawab as mercenaries for his conquest of the Rohillas.

From late 1775 the British pressured Asaf ud-Daula to cut the number of his underemployed cavalry. Unpaid, rebellious soldiers were described as threats to the Nawab's security, even as they threatened Company influence, and made claims on Awadh land revenues coveted by the Company. Writing in July 1776, the British resident in Lucknow, the Awadh capital, described how, 'Last year we were cantoned here with fifty thousand troops; almost daily disturbances for pay or disputes between the

different parts of the army happened...'<sup>78</sup> The process of rationalizing troop levels, including replacing large numbers of cavalry with smaller numbers of European drilled infantry, directly challenged the previous Nawab's autonomous practice of military recruitment and service, of patrimonial, personalized relationships with leading officers.<sup>79</sup> The Nawab, relying on the reputation and firepower of his Company brigades, began to simply release from service thousands of *sowars* without attempting to negotiate or settle their claims for pay. Within six months, the process culminated in a moment of symbolic violence, marking the transition from a centuries-old set of socio-military relations towards, at first, a 'European model', then towards a British colonial system of disciplined military organization.

East India Company internal correspondence tracked the looming March 1776 crisis of Nawabi authority, its final subordination to colonial policy, and the contingent, violent process required to impose a new military model. One letter from September 1775 recorded, '...the Nabob has dismissed 20,000 of his troops-discontents prevail more than ever amongst them.' By the end of October, a letter mentioned, '...the Nabob's revenues very deficient', '...the troops much disaffected...', and that he 'has dismissed most of the Europeans from his service.' A November letter told of Asaf ud-Daula's efforts at 'quelling the disorders which prevail among his troops.'<sup>80</sup> The reductions continued, despite failures to settle accounts.

The discontent came to a crisis in late February 1776. Under pressure, 'The Nabob ... consented to dismiss 10,000 of his cavalry and nearly the same number of infantry.' Many refused to leave without back pay. On 7 March the army was called out to coerce units of infantry, 'matchlockmen', whose resistance was labelled 'mutiny'. A full battle ensued. March 7 correspondence reported 600 mutineers killed. An 8 March letter described the troops as 'disgusted' with the Nawab's conduct and estimated '2000 instead of 900 killed in the late mutiny.'<sup>81</sup>

In early April the Nawab's colonial advisers continued to 'strongly recommend decrease in military establishment', but now cautioning to 'secure the arrears of all such men as may be discharged.' A mid-April letter noted the Nawab's attempt to secure Rs260,000 from the 'Naib of Rohilcund'.<sup>82</sup> The problem for the British was how to pay off and eliminate expensive, undisciplined cavalry units, yet keep Awadh secure from internal revolt and external encroachments. One answer was to recruit and train new, cheaper infantry units, on the model of Clive's 'Lal Paltan', originally a few hundred uniformed Indian recruits, supplied with muskets, and trained in European drill by British officers.<sup>83</sup>

By early summer, it was noted that 'His Excellency has dismissed the greater part of his Hindostan cavalry'. A solution was proposed that would allow the cash poor Nawab to pay for 5,000 'stand of arms' for infantry units. Elephants would be traded for muskets. On 30 May, the 'Vizier proposes raising six new battalions' of infantry.<sup>84</sup> The Company approved. The unrest among the former Nawabi troops continued, as five companies deserted, 'marching off' and 'joining their Battalion which had before deserted to ... Agra'. Internal turmoil would not be fully repressed until mid-summer when certain Indian officers, held to be 'authors of the mutiny' were finally captured and executed. Some discretion was exercised and troops in Rohilkhand, demanding arrears, were finally paid. The crucial point observed was that, 'The Vizier having reduced his Army so very considerably and further reductions ... to take place during the rains, his principal dependence will rest on the troops commanded by their British officers.'<sup>85</sup>

During the Awadh internal crisis in 1776, British officers commanding Company units in Awadh, the British Resident (Bristow) in Awadh, the Governor-General (Hastings) in Calcutta, and the Supreme Council in Fort William, Calcutta often had separate interests at stake even as they advised and intervened in Awadh politics for general East India Company benefit. The political competition in and around Awadh, based

upon contingent military leadership and loyalties, represented the ad hoc alliances and rivalries that had defined north Indian state-building after the decline of the overarching Mughal system of coercion and legitimacy. Over the next few years, the British would appropriate and co-opt idioms and icons of Mughal legitimacy, even as they restructured coercive processes to new hierarchies of authority.

The process of transition to a final Company hegemony in Awadh began at the ground level of military recruitment and loyalty. As land revenue management fragmented and income to Lucknow declined, Mughal and Awadh officials, *jagirdars*, and rivals found that military entrepreneurs, from high officers to low recruits, were unstable assets demanding payments, and sometimes driving decisions towards conflict to generate income. Through 1776 the British observed the connections between regional power and revenues, and noticed potential opportunities for Company systems offering more regular administration and stable employment. In spring 1776 the Company Resident in Lucknow, Bristow, blamed the Nawab,

'The Nabob's conduct...to the matchlockmen has produced the consequences that might have been expected. I mean the disgusting of all his troops...' '...from present appearances and the declaration of the men, that they would desert him in case of coming into active service. I have the pleasure to say tho' that the ...scpoys in general would willingly put themselves under the command of British officers in hopes of securing their pay. But the native officers now in charge whose consequence would be thereby deposed are ..., and would exert their influence to prevent it. ...many of them are men who have been dismissed from the Company's service for bad behaviour...

I am sorry to say his Excellency and Government is in little better state than his military. It is true he has ordered the Gosaynes to give up their charge and disband their troops and they have promised obedience, but they evade and protract the doing of it.<sup>286</sup>

Gosain soldiers, recruits gathered under a Hindu sectarian identity, had been essential forces in the post-1765 military

restructuring attempted by Shuja ud-daula. Two Gosain brothers, Himmat Bahadur and Umraogiri, were leading officers of Shuja's reformed officer corps.<sup>87</sup> But to the British, they now represented intermediaries interfering with flows of land revenue to the Nawab, and through him to the Company,

'The cause is that the whole country is filled with forts in many of which the Gosaynes have their agents and who will not give them up unless compelled. They report to the Nabob that they have ordered their people to withdraw but when the new Amil...to take possession he is positively refused it.'<sup>88</sup>

In fact, the Gosains were not simply armed, sectarian mercenaries, but entrepreneurs of a familiar pattern, filling a socio-economic role often little different from many of the Pashtun or other groups circulating in northern India,

'Prior to 1800, *gosains* and *bairagis* (Shaiva and Vaishnava monks, respectively) exercised broad political and economic influence as merchants, bankers, and, most importantly, soldiers. Powerful *mahants* (abbots) speculated in real estate and engaged in extensive moneylending activities...'

'Gosains...were able to engage successfully in trade and finance during the eighteenth century because they not only possessed excellent commercial intelligence and political connections but had access to a sufficient degree of independent armed force to back their profit-making ventures.'<sup>89</sup>

Successful Pashtun horse-traders and merchants, settling to investments in land and usury in Rohilkhand, had asserted political influence to create the polities of the eighteenth century 'Indo-Afghan Empire'. Now Gosains, Rohillas, and others who wished to retain degrees of autonomy would have to do so away from Company territories. Just as in January 1773 Hastings had banned from Bengal 'all Biraugies and Sunnasses...who are travellers strangers and passengers in this country',<sup>90</sup> so Rohillas

not subordinated to 'settled' agrarian livelihoods would be slowly pushed to the fringes of British India power.

In spring 1776, Bristow discussed the indiscipline of the Awadh troops and that two battalions had asked for 'release', which was granted.

'I have but one way for his Excellency to remedy these disorders which is to disband the whole and then raise such a number of troops the expenses of which would fall within his revenue and enable him to enforce obedience.'<sup>91</sup>

Unable to finance his own heterogeneous forces, each time the Nawab dismissed such troops he found himself less and less able to claim degrees of independence from the Company. By the end of July, Company military officers in Awadh were raising new battalions, under their direct training, discipline, and arming. A Company military storekeeper noted, '...a supply of five thousand musquets with accoutrements, were dispatched from the magazine...for the service of the Vizier...'<sup>92</sup>

An invoice for these muskets was sent to the Nawab, through Bristow, demanding Rs69,980.7.0 in payment for the arms, plus Rs1,595.5.6 in payment for transport on nine boats. The negotiations for the arms with the cash-poor Asaf ud-Daula included that Awadh court assets would be used to pay for the muskets. The letter to Bristow that accompanied the invoice detailed, 'We have already directed you to receive the elephants belonging to the Nabob, which are attached to the Brigade in part payment of the above...' The elephants were to be appraised and any remaining amount owed was to be settled, 'in elephants, at a moderate and equitable price.' No mention was made of the symbolic displacement involved as the royal elephant, emblematic of centuries of Indian military might and imperial, dynastic legitimacy, was exchanged for an early Company manufactured commodity, crates of old muskets, ones inferior to the latest firearms used by Company forces in Bengal.<sup>93</sup>

In 1776 a young Charles Hamilton, having just finished three years of language study and preparation as a new Company

employee, was posted to a Bengal army 'field station' for duties with 'translation and country correspondence'. He 'procured' from an 'Afgan', a political representative of the Rampur Nawab, 'a Persian manuscript containing a complete relation of the whole Rohilla story...'<sup>94</sup> The manuscript carried fresh impressions of contemporary events, events that remained quite controversial. In 1784 Hastings resigned as Company governor-general of India and in 1787 was 'impeached' by Parliament on charges that included abuse of the Rohillas. He was on trial from 1788-95, before being acquitted of all charges. Hamilton had translated the Rohilla history early, but left his work unpublished until 1787, perhaps anticipating the drama of a looming trial.

Hamilton did not simply publish a translation of the Rohilla history. He weaved his own interpretation of Rohilla circulation, and Company policy, into a final manuscript in which commentary blended with historical narrative,

'In the original draft of the work, it was termed a Translation;...but, as in some parts of it (those, in particular, which treat of such proceedings of the English government as were any way connected with it) he has necessarily had recourse to other sources of information, so he has thought it most suitable to drop that appellation, and to send it forth under the title of what it really is, a History or Historical Relation, where all the incidents are combined in their natural connection with and dependence upon each other.'<sup>95</sup>

Hamilton wrote in defence of, if not Hastings, at least the reputation of the Company. Rohilla factionalism, '...a total defect in mutual alliance and general cooperation', had doomed their defence in 1774.<sup>96</sup> The Rohilla army of '...about twenty-four thousand horse and foot, four thousand rocket men, and sixty pieces of cannon and amuzettes,...' had suffered perhaps two thousand killed and wounded.<sup>97</sup> Even as much of Rohilkhand was abandoned to the looting of Awadhi troops, a strong remaining Rohilla force under Ali Muhammad's surviving son, Faizullah Khan, took refuge at the foot of the high mountains. A standoff

lasted until October before the negotiation of a final settlement consolidating the Rampur principality.

Hamilton addressed the politics of translation that Mill so strongly relied upon decades later. The issue of 'extermination' revolved around the translation from correspondence of the Persian word '*isteesa*'. Did it mean 'extirpate' or, as Hamilton suggested in context, simply 'root out'?

Hamilton also saw the Rohillas as less than legitimate rulers. They were recent migrants of no great antiquity,

'Sher Shah was himself an Afgan or Patan; and it was at this period that numbers of Afgans, expecting in him and his successors to see another Dynasty of the Patans established upon the throne of Delhi, hastened from all parts to enlist under the standard of the new emperor.

As those who fled ...chiefly consisted of such as had served in the great offices of the state, or as collectors of districts and principal landholders under the former government, to some of these new comers he presented grants of the evacuated estates and employments; many he raised to posts of the highest power and distinction, and to all he gave every possible encouragement to settle in that part of Hindostan; and hence...when Humaioon recovered the empire...., the Afgans formed a powerful body in those districts.'<sup>98</sup>

How indeed could Safdar Jang, before his 1743 campaign against the Rohillas accompanied by the Mughal emperor, continue '...in suffering a contemptible tribe of fifteen or twenty thousand lawless adventurers to exercise absolute sway over a territory of such value and extent...'?<sup>99</sup>

Nevertheless, after the 1774 battle, the Rohillas had not been destroyed,

'Such of the Afgans, found in arms, as were not immediately attached to Fyzoola Khan, (amounting to about twenty thousand) together with a very few of their most obnoxious leaders, were, by particular stipulation, ordered to the westward of the Ganges;... These were the only inhabitants of Rohilcund who were expelled from the country in consequence of the war: the other Rohillas were permitted



forthwith to quit their lines and to retire unmolested to their respective places of abode.<sup>100</sup>

The Nawab of Awadh wrote 'circular letters' to the remaining Rohillas 'of any note', promising security if they remained peacefully on the land. According to Hamilton, 'in a few weeks all the country south of Rampore was put entirely into the possession of the Vazier, and every thing was soon reduced to perfect tranquillity.'<sup>101</sup> 'With respect to the bulk of the inhabitants, it is probable that they have been but little affected by the various revolutions their country has experienced.'<sup>102</sup> 'The Hindoo farmers...have since enjoyed their possessions in security and repose,...these provinces have been preserved in the most perfect peace during the past twelve years...'<sup>103</sup>

The 'revolution' of 1774 in the politics of Awadh and Rohilkhand had restructured the Rohilla political economy. Hamilton thought perhaps '40,000 Afgans' had collected in the Rampur territories. For the next century, the many thousands, local and from west of the Indus, who desired service and military employment on Mughal and historical terms of service, were forced to find it at first west of the Ganges, and later always outside the sphere of dominate Company influence.

In 1809, twenty-two years after Hamilton published his volume, another Company official, Mountstuart Elphinstone, visited a key Rohilla ancestral homeland, the Peshawar valley. After several months on a diplomatic mission to the Afghan court, Elphinstone returned to his post in Bombay. He also made travels to 'the fair at Hurdwar (the great rendezvous for natives of the countries north-west of India), and into the Afghaun colony of Rohilcund'. He recognized Pashtun mobility and took advantage of it; 'after our return we continued to examine the numerous natives of those countries that accompanied us, and those whom we could meet with at Dehli and in its neighbourhood'.<sup>104</sup> He recruited Afghan visitors to Bombay and Pune as native informants for his political and ethnographic study published in 1815.<sup>105</sup>

Elphinstone traced Pashtun circulation to Pashtun cultural values and identities based on land control. He recorded his analysis in an extended footnote:

“The number of the Eusofzyes that are to be met with in India, recall my attention to the Afghaun emigrations, which I have omitted in the proper place. The frequency with which they emigrate, seems inconsistent with the love of their country, which I have ascribed to them; but the same thing takes place among the Highlanders, whose local attachments are known to be so strong. The cause is the same in both cases; the absence of trades among the Highlanders, and the disgrace of engaging in them among the Afghauns, render land absolutely necessary to the support of each individual, and whoever is without land, must quit the country.”<sup>106</sup>

By 1815 the first era of British Indian conquest and controversy had passed. Elphinstone was established as a senior Company leader who would one day write his own *History of India*.<sup>107</sup> He knew the arguments between those who excused Hastings as a pragmatist acting within the necessities of Indian politics and those who blamed Hastings for an aggressive brutality beyond the pale of civilized European society. He also recognized a socio-economic basis for regional Afghan dynamics:

“In the west of Afghaunistaun, where marriages are late, and land plenty, emigration is rare; but the east has poured out a continued stream of adventurers, for a period of great duration. These have always taken the direction of India. The greater part of that country was many centuries in the possession of Afghaun dynasties, and, even after their fall, the Mogul armies were always recruited by foreigners in preference to natives. These causes filled India with colonies of the descendants of Afghauns, who are now called Patans, and who are found in all parts of Hindostan and the Deccan, sometimes mixed with the rest of the inhabitants, and sometimes collected under chiefs of their own, like the Nabobs of Furrukabad and Bopaul, Curnoule and Cudduppa. The greatest colony is that founded chiefly by Eusofzyes, at no very remote period. I allude to the settlement of the Rohillas, whose wars with us have rendered their name so well known in England....Their constitution had

nothing of the Afghaun democracy; the chiefs were the lords of the soil, and the other Afghauns their tenants, and generally their soldiers; but there, and every where, the common Afghauns showed an independence, and the chiefs a spirit of conciliation peculiar to themselves.<sup>108</sup>

After a generation of turmoil and political change Elphinstone noticed the continuities that marked an agrarian region and the Rampur princely state. Rampur had survived internal dynastic conflict in 1794 after the death of Faizulla Khan and the 1801 transfer of the surrounding former independent Rohilkhand districts from the Nawab of Awadh to direct Company administration:

‘Even now it is among the richest parts of the British provinces. It consists of vast plains, covered with fields of corn, or orchards of Mangoe trees, and filled with populous towns and flourishing villages. The city of Bareilly is one of the largest and finest in India; and an agreeable little town called Nugeena, where I was encamped for some weeks, contains at least 18,000 inhabitants, although it is in no map, and is scarcely heard of beyond the limits of Rohilkund. The residence of the Nabob is at Rampoor, the manners of which place still resemble those of the Berdooraunees. Pushtoo is the principle language, and one sees in the square before the Nabob’s palace, fair strong, and handsome young men, sitting or lounging on beds, with that air of idleness and independence which distinguishes the Eusofzyes.<sup>109</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the history of India continued as an often told tale of the political, economic, and cultural conquests of British imperialism. By 1849 the Punjab was under direct Company control, an area that included the eastern most regions of the Pashtun homelands. After the great revolt of 1857–8, the Company disappeared and British India formally began. As did other communities in the Indian sub-continent, Pashtuns resisted, fled from, collaborated with, and enlisted under the British; sometimes in sequences replicating the pattern of opposition, negotiation, and subordination experienced by the Rohillas.

Nineteenth century writers fully recorded British invasions of Afghanistan in 1839-42 and 1878-81. They also wrote of the instability of the territories and kingdoms yet to be incorporated either directly or indirectly under British control. What they were often referring to was, in fact, a continued history of pre-colonial circulation and migration, including Pashtun movement for settlement, service, and opportunity. Until the 1870s, when the term finally disappeared from colonial files, 'Rohillas', plus others labelled 'Afghans' and 'Pathans', remained in motion east of the Indus river. These personal and community histories reflected individual and community initiative. They also revealed the efforts of state-builders to understand, define, rank, and exploit old identities for new purposes.

## NOTES

1. Andre Wink, *The Making of the Indo-Islamic World, Volume II, The Slave Kings and the Islamic Conquest 11th-13th Centuries*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 115. See his discussion of Afghan origins and assimilation to Islam, pp. 115-118.
2. Jos Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, c.1710-1780*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
3. Pir Mu'azzam Shah, *Tarikh-i Hafiz Rahmat Khani*, Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 1987, 2nd edition. Writings or narratives of fifteenth and sixteenth century Pashtun and Yusufzai history date, perhaps, to the early sixteenth century just after original Peshawar Valley settlement. See discussion in the introduction by Muhammad Nawaz Tair (original edition 1971), prepared by the Pashto Academy from a British Museum manuscript. At the end of the eighteenth century, Hafiz Rahmat Khan in Rohilkhand had a version prepared from a manuscript by Pir Mu'azzam Shah, finished, from internal evidence, c.1623-4.
4. Quotations from Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, p. 110.
5. Akhund Darweza (1549(?)-1638), whose father was of Turk-Tajik descent from Ningrahar province in Afghanistan, wrote many manuscripts in Persian, including *Tazkirat al-Abrar wa al-Ashrar* (History of the Pious and Evil). He wrote at least one text in Pashto, *Makhzan*, to compete with the Pashto writing of his ideological opponent, Bayazid Ansari (1525-81), author of the Roshaniyya text, *Khair al-Bayan*, Peshawar: Pashto Academy, 1967.

6. Between 1000–25, Mahmud 'conducts seventeen raids on North India', Burton Stein, *A History of India*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, p. 106.
7. Andre Wink notes that the *Khulasat al-ansab*, another Afghan manuscript compiled from earlier texts for Hafiz Rahmat Khan, lists, apparently as exaggeration, 12,000 Afghan horsemen and 12,000 foot soldiers travelling from Ghazna and Kandahar with Mahmud. Andre Wink, *The Making of the Indo-Islamic World, Volume II*, p. 116.
8. Akhund Darweza, *Tazkirat al-Abrar wa al-Ashrar*, p. 86, personal translation.
9. Andre Wink, *Al-Hind, Vol. II*, p. 193.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 193–4.
11. Pre-colonial and British distinctions included 'Afghans' from west of the Indus, highland and typically Indian-born 'Rohillas' (originally from the hill, *roh*, country west of the Indus), and 'Puthans', an early colonial label for Indian-born Pashtuns that would evolve into the familiar 'Pathan' name. Pashtuns from west of the Indus were often known and named by their lineage branch (Yusufzai, Khesgi, Sur, etc.). See discussion in Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, pp. 9–10.
12. Dirk Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy, The ethnohistory of the military labour market in Hindustan, 1450–1850*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 40–41. Abbas Khan Sarwani's sixteenth century history, *Tarikh-i Sher Shahi*, was translated by B.P. Ambashthya, Patna, 1974.
13. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy*, pp. 33–9.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 58–9.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
17. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *The Baburnama*, translated by Wheeler Thackston, New York: Modern Library, 2002, p. 268. She was Bibi Mubarika.
18. Beveridge estimates, from textual evidence, that 'Bibi Mubarika (*Afghani aghacha*)' may well have been the wife who accompanied Babur's remains to Kabul during the period of Sher Shah's rule. See discussion in Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun-nama (The History of Humayun)*, trans. Annette Beveridge, reprint Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1987, pp. 216–17.
19. Pir Mu'azzam Shah, *Tarikh-i Hafiz Rahmat Khani*, pp. 83–9.
20. *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 8.
21. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *The Baburnama*, p. 356.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 438.
23. Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab 1707–1748*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986.
24. John Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 170–1. Also, see Saqi Must'ad Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*,

- trans. Jadunath Sarkar, New Delhi: Oriental Books, 1986, pp. 40, 41, 84, 89-90.
25. Thackston notes Babur mentioning 'the Abdurrahmani, Afridi, Dilazak, Farmuli, Gagiani (also Gugiani), Ghilji (also Ghilzai and Ghaljai), Givi, Isa Khel, Khirilji, Khizr-Khel, Khugiani, Kurani, Lodi, Lohani, Mohmand, Niazi, Orukzai, Shamu Khel, Sur, Tarklani, Waziri, and Yusufzai.' Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *The Baburnama*, p. 481.
  26. M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 20. The 211 *mansabdars* represented at Samugarh held the rank of 1000 *zat* or above.
  27. M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, see lists of *mansabdars*, pp. 175-271. Thackston footnotes Elphinstone (1815) on the Kakar clan of the Pani of Sibi, Seistan, 'It would be curious to ascertain the causes which have sent them to this spot, and which have filled the southern provinces of India with men of the Punnee clan, whose emigration... must have taken place some hundred years ago.' Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *The Baburnama*, p. 504.
  28. M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, p. 21.
  29. Richard Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 188.
  30. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *The Baburnama*, p. 332. Nusrat Shah ruled 1519-32. His father Alauddin (r.1494-1519) had assassinated Habshi Sultan Shamsuddin Muzaffar Shah. The names Abyssinian, Habshi, and Sidi signalled an identity associated with African ancestry.
  31. Richard Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, p. 310; derived from British colonial *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Bijapur District*, Bombay, 1884. The Adil Shahi dynasty ruled in Bijapur 1489-1686.
  32. Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas, 1600-1818*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 66.
  33. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707*, (1963), New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 201.
  34. See Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, Chapters 4 and 5.
  35. See argument in Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, and Political Economy*, Oxford: Routledge, 1998.
  36. Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993, Introduction, especially pp. 9-17.
  37. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
  38. See *Ibid.*, pp. 204-10; Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company, Tradition and Transition in Northern India 1770-1830*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 21-3.
  39. Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, p. 53.
  40. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
  41. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, p. 145.

42. 'Kuttaher' or 'Rohilcund' was described in 1787: 'This territory is situated to the eastward of the Ganges, between the province of Owde, and the first range of northern hills commonly called the Cummou Mountains;...— its mean length, however, is about one hundred and eighty, and its greatest breadth about ninety miles,...', Charles Hamilton, *An Historical Relation of the Origin, Progress, and Final Dissolution of the Government of the Rohilla Afghans in the Northern Provinces of Hindustan*, London: G. Kearsley, London, 1787, p. 31.
43. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, pp. 118–19.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 120–1.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
47. See tables in *ibid.*, p. 147.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
49. Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India*, p. 253.
50. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, p. 146.
51. C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 53.
52. Michael Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures: Awadh, the British, and the Mughals*, Riverdale: Riverdale Company, 1987, p. 38.
53. Richard Barnett, *North India between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals, and the British 1720–1801*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, Chapter 3.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
56. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, p. 91.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
59. Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures: Awadh, the British, and the Mughals*, p. 39. Barnett, *North India between Empires*, p. 76.
60. Select Committee Letter to Court of Directors, 6 January 1769, 'New treaty with Shuja-ud-Daulah'. See NAI, Fort William-India House Correspondence, 1773–6, Vol. VII, p. xxxiv.
61. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, pp. 177–8.
62. Nuwab Moost'ujab Khan Buhadoor, *The Life of Hafiz ool-Moolk, Hafiz Rehmud Khan*, trans. by Charles Elliot, London, 1831, p. 114.
63. Nuwab Moot'ujab Khan Buhadoor, *The Life of Hafiz ool-Mulk*, p. 122.
64. Dirk Kolff, 'The Polity and the Peasantry', in J. Gommans and D. Kolff, eds., *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia, 1000–1800*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 217.
65. See National Archives of India, 1776, Secret Department, Secret Branch correspondence on English pressures on Nawab of Oudh to reduce the size of his army, the March 1776 mutiny of the Nawab's army, and the continuing of British efforts to install British officers in the Nawab's army,

- dismiss cavalry units, and substitute well trained, 'disciplined', less expensive infantry.
66. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, p. 178.
  67. Hastings' decision to aid the Nawab of Awadh against the Rohillas was attacked in October 1774 by a new and hostile majority in the EIC ruling Council appointed to Calcutta under the Regulating Act of 1773.
  68. John Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892, p. vii.
  69. James Mill, *The History of British India*, London, 1817. Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 1892, p. vii.
  70. Mill, *The History of British India*, London, 6 vols., London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1826, Vol. III, Book V, Chapter I.
  71. Mill, *The History of British India*, 1826, Vol. III, Book V, Chapter I. A 'lack' or lakh equalling 100,000.
  72. Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 1892, p. vii.
  73. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, p. 179.
  74. Fort William-India House Correspondence, vol. VI, Public, Select and Secret, 1770-2, Select Committee Letter, 18 January 1771, NAI, p. 266.
  75. Fort William-India House Correspondence, vol. VI, Public, Select and Secret, 1770-2, Select Committee Letter, 26 March 1772, NAI, p. 387.
  76. Fort William-India House Correspondence, vol. VI, Public, Select and Secret, 1770-2, Select Committee Letter, 26 March 1772, NAI, p. 388.
  77. Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures: Awadh, the British, and the Mughals*, p. 40.
  78. Proceedings Combined Index (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1772-6, from 1 July-7 August 1776 correspondence, Letter dated 8 July 1776, from Bristow, Resident at Lucknow.
  79. Barnett, *North India between Empires*, p. 79.
  80. Proceedings Combined Index (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1772-6, Misc. correspondence, Letters dated 18 September, 30 October, 20 November 1775.
  81. Proceedings Combined Index (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1772-6, Misc. correspondence, Letters dated 26 February, 7 March, 8 March 1776.
  82. Proceedings Combined Index (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1772-6, Misc. correspondence, Letters dated 8 April, 15 April 1776.
  83. Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, p. 35. Lal Paltan or Red Platoon.
  84. The Nawab retained his high status position as Wazir in the court of the Mughal ruler in Delhi.
  85. Proceedings Combined Index (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1772-6, Misc. correspondence, Letters dated 29 May, 30 May, 8 July 1776.
  86. Secret Proceedings (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1-8 April 1776, 8 April correspondence, Letter from Bristow to Supreme Council, Ft. William.



87. Barnett, *North India between Empires*, pp. 79–80.
88. Secret Proceedings (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1–8 April 1776, 8 April correspondence, Letter from Bristow to Supreme Council, Ft. William.
89. William Pinch, *Peasants and Monks in British India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, p. 24.
90. Pinch, *Peasants and Monks in British India*, p. 26.
91. Secret Proceedings (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1–8 April 1776, 8 April correspondence, Letter from Bristow to Supreme Council, Ft. William.
92. Secret Proceedings (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1 July–7 August 1776, Letter entered in 5 August 1776 correspondence.
93. Secret Proceedings (Secret Department, Secret Branch), 1 July–7 August 1776, Letter in 5 August 1776 correspondence.
94. Charles Hamilton, *An Historical Relation*, p. vi.
95. *Ibid.*, p. xix.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 231, p. 237.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 28–9.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
100. *Ibid.*, pp. 267–8.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 252.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
104. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, 1815, reprint Karachi: Indus Publications, 1992, vol. 1, p. vi.
105. *Ibid.*, 1992, vol. 1, p. vii.
106. *Ibid.*, 1992, vol. 2, fn. pp. 34–5.
107. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India; the Hindu and Mahometan periods*, London, 1841.
108. Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, vol. 2, fn. pp. 35–6.
109. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, fn. p. 36.

# 3

## Nineteenth Century Assimilation and Resistance

In 1831, an English translation of a Persian biography of Hafiz Rahmat Khan supported the argument that, if the Rohilkhand districts lost their independence after 1774 and their final incorporation into British India in 1801, the Rampur princely state under Faizulla Khan prospered economically. Within a few years, Faizullah Khan increased the area under cultivation to the point 'that the produce was treble, or perhaps quadruple the former amount.' Faizullah was 'prudent', filled his treasury, and was able 'to entertain a large proportion of the Afghans of Bareilly, Pillibheet, Ownlah, & c., all of whom eagerly flocked to his standard...'<sup>1</sup>

Rohillas survived and households sent members out into the Indian subcontinent for 'service' and trade even as others remained within the Rohilkhand districts settling on the land or in towns. This chapter examines three representative dimensions of nineteenth century Rohilla and greater Pashtun circulation and identity. First, the old style of 'service'-based employment continued in princely states south and west of British India. For decades Rohillas and Afghans travelled to southern India to fill familiar roles within the districts of princely Hyderabad. Second, as communities adapted and changed over decades, communal memories retained lingering symbolic power and meaning. In the 1857-8 period the Indian revolt ('Mutiny') provided an extended moment for the resurgence of an internally and externally perceived Rohilla martial identity. This section examines to what extent resistance to the British in this period was based on or

attributed to nationality, religion, ethnicity, economic class, or social status. Third, by the late nineteenth century as north Indian Rohilla identities were assimilated into local societies, the expanding British empire provided Indian Ocean-wide opportunities for Pashtun circulation within new circuits of interregional political economy and personal loyalties. Informal military service caused concern within the British empire as far as the Gulf, even as colonial labour contracts recruited others to commercial plantations from South Africa to the Caribbean.

### Hyderabad: Local Service

After 1775, English administrators and chroniclers viewed the political and social history of the unincorporated territories on the fringe of Bengal as disrupted by post-Mughal anarchy and despotism, and as fertile ground for expanding and consolidating British Indian forms of imperial administration, law, and trade. To date, the primary historical interest in this period has examined state-society interaction, imperial and market influence, and political conflict within the British occupied provinces.<sup>2</sup> In the grand narrative of British conquest, the Marathas were defeated in 1802-4, finally the Sikhs were defeated in the 1840s, and political anarchy in north India was slowly ended. Former Mughal provinces and princely states were annexed. Indigenous dissatisfaction and resistance culminated in the revolt ('Mutiny') of 1857-8, and, finally, the Company gave way to an empire that lasted until 1947.

For a generation after 1775, on the fringe of British Indian territories, and narratives, political entrepreneurs fought over old Mughal districts and revenue flows. In addition to familiar Maratha, Mughal, Afghan, and other 'Indian' actors, some Europeans, especially trained soldiers, competed to turn martial skills into political influence and major landholdings.<sup>3</sup> The British Indian army fought campaigns against Indian states and independent warlords. The last major Maratha forces and

independent *pindari* war bands were defeated in 1817. At this point, Amir Khan, an 'Afghan' descended from a Rohilla lineage, transformed his military service and *pindari* power into political control as the Nawab of Tonk, a small Rajasthani state that lasted until 1947.<sup>4</sup> Over decades, in the territories neighbouring directly administered colonial districts, the British negotiated new treaties. They often imposed oversight through diplomatic Residents, often accompanied by military officers and units.

In the south of India, the princely state of Hyderabad survived as one of the last great independent dynasties.<sup>5</sup> In 1724 Asif Jah, titled *Nizam al Mulk* by the Mughal emperor, split off the Hyderabad province from Mughal control. A dynasty of seven Nizams ruled in Hyderabad city until the state was incorporated into independent India in September 1948. The reign of the fourth Nizam, Mir Farkunda Ali Khan Nasir ud-Daula (r.1829-57), illustrated the competing political and economic interests that allowed an informal 'service' economy, one including Rohillas and Afghans, to prosper well into the nineteenth century. The word 'Rohilla' would not disappear from British colonial files about Hyderabad until the mid-1880s.

In the summer of 1836, fifty years after the fall of the polity in Rohilkhand, British East India Company civil and military advisers in Hyderabad tried and failed to untangle the complex social, political, and economic roles played in Hyderabad city and state by circulating Pashtuns, Rohillas, and Afghans. In treaties signed in 1798 and 1800, Hyderabad had been forced to accept 'subsidiary' political and defence arrangements, including the presence of a British Resident and British military 'subsidiary' officers and units. British-led 'contingent' troops stationed near Hyderabad city were only part of a princely state military establishment that included Hyderabad forces, Arabs, and Rohillas. British officers led some Hyderabad units. Despite success in much of the Indian subcontinent, the Hyderabad narrative reveals the limits to British power in regions not under direct administration.

A crisis occurred in early May 1836. In Hyderabad city, the Wazir, the Nizam's leading minister, had argued with Rohillas in service to the dynasty. On the evening of 4 May over one thousand Rohillas left the city, only to set up camp just outside the city walls. The British Resident sent for subsidiary troops from the nearby military camp to enforce the peace. It is not clear if the Resident had put pressure on the Hyderabad court about the Rohillas. But the split between the Rohillas and the Wazir raised awkward questions of equity, agency, and social role that confused the British Resident.

At first the Wazir advised the Nizam to dismiss the Rohillas from service. The Nizam was cautious and 'advised him not at present to do so, as such a measure might be attended with very serious consequences'. The Resident wrote to Calcutta that the Rohilla leaders, group 'Jemadars', seemed willing to return to 'the districts to which they are attached', but they first, 'have solicited a delay of a few days in order to settle their private affairs in the town.'<sup>6</sup>

The nervous Resident did not want to confront the armed Rohillas any more than did the Nizam. He thought if all the Rohillas 'scattered over the country' joined the city dissidents they might total about 4000 men. He also realized that if he ordered government military units to escort the Rohillas to the borders of Hyderabad state, there 'would also have arisen another difficulty. To what part of India could they have been conveyed?' He did not want them 'let loose in the Company's country', nor within nearby princely states such as Nagpur, Gwalior, and Indore. It seemed 'out of the question' to send them 'to their native country Rohilcund', where they would not 'be at all a desirable acquisition...to that part of the country.'<sup>7</sup>

The crisis continued for several days. The Rohillas refused to 'move away' from the city. They demanded that the Arabs in service to the Nizam be dismissed. They demanded several months of pay in advance. The Resident had two battalions of the subsidiary force shifted to intimidate the Rohilla camp. Finally the Nizam decided to 'discharge the whole of them'. Again, the

Rohillas did not argue with this right of dismissal, they simply asked for 'some time to settle their accounts both with the government and with private individuals in the city.'<sup>8</sup>

By 20 May the crisis had been diffused. The Rohilla leaders had agreed to the discharge and accounts with the government were settled. The Resident found, 'to my surprise that these irregulars are paid up regularly on the 1st of every month, while the regular troops under our control are nearly five months in arrears.' Paid off Rohillas had been drifting away, 'in small parties of four or five'. The Resident thought this seemed best for 'the tranquillity of the country...' The court in Hyderabad had also ordered all provincial 'taolooqdars' 'to pay up and discharge the parties of Rohillas in their districts.' It was assumed they would move towards Central India and the Resident would notify Company Residents in Nagpur, Gwalior, and Indore.<sup>9</sup>

The British Captain who negotiated directly with the Rohilla *jamadars* recorded two useful observations. 'They were very urgent regarding the settlement of their private claims.'<sup>10</sup> These claims were not denied, but the Rohillas were told they must now be pursued through local agents acting as *vakils* and through city authorities. The city Rohillas, perhaps eleven hundred in all, held as individuals or as groups substantial investments in Hyderabad city. These assets required time to liquidate and may have included money-lending debt, shops, trade goods, and other property. Rohillas offered coercive force for hire as well as investment capital for urban merchants and others. These profits could be invested in local property, and, if necessary, could be sold off for continued travels.

It seemed clear that Rohillas out in the districts also fulfilled an important economic role. Whether or not these Rohillas, the majority in the state, were money-lenders and traders, many were in service to local *taluqdars* or landlords and other revenue farmers responsible to the Nizam for revenue collection. Rohillas policed collections. They may have also diverted enough revenues that the Nizam's Minister thought he could use the British to displace, and perhaps replace, the Rohilla forces.

The British officer noted that some of the dismissed Rohillas talked of 'going in search of service' to Nagpur, Bhopal, and Malwa. Others mentioned 'returning to their native country'. He noticed the complex social composition subsumed under the Rohilla name, as

'...nearly all these men came from the westward of the Indus (only one jemedar with a few being from Rohilcund) and they have been called Rohillahs from the circumstances of their being of the same tribe of Afghans, as those who have long settled at Rampoor in Rohilcund. They appear to me anxious to remain in service amongst the native states in Hindoostan.'

The British officer told the Rohillas they would be issued passports to particular places, passports that would be null and void on any 'plundering' or 'excesses'.<sup>11</sup>

Inevitably, the effort to expel the Rohillas met difficulties. Though the Rohillas from the city had been sent off, all through June 1836 other parties of Rohillas dismissed from the country districts arrived in Hyderabad to settle their accounts. A 'very considerable number' of the Rohillas in the northern Hyderabad districts were reported 'removed from the country', but only with 'considerable trouble'. Hyderabad military units, including a whole division, were deployed to force out Rohilla groups. There were 'still considerable numbers' in the southern districts. Even many of those successfully discharged and given passes to go to the Punjab, including 'Loodiana', remained 'lingering on the road', hoping for a change in policy or enforcement.<sup>12</sup>

On 25 June the Hyderabad Wazir issued a formal proclamation ordering all Rohillas to leave the state. Many heard of the notice and 'took their departure'. The British Resident arranged that the arriving *jamadars* would be paid off in a camp near the government military base. Then an English officer would direct them to leave the area.

On 24 July troops clashed with *jamadars* and followers who had been paid, but had not left the area. After the clash and a confrontation, negotiations followed. Men who had fired in the

initial clash were separated and disarmed. One man committed 'suicide' rather than give up his arms. Four government cavalry men wounded in the short fight included Ahmed Khan, Ameer Khan, Mohamed Khan, and Gurreeb Dat Khan; one or more, at least by name, possible Pashtuns. Four government infantry were killed, non-Muslims, and three wounded. There were 'about twenty or more' of the Rohillas killed or wounded.' The formal inventory of arms taken from the Rohilla party included one hundred eleven swords, sixty-six shields, seventy-seven matchlocks, ten 'Blunderbuses', one pistol, twenty-one pouches, thirty-six belts, and two spears.<sup>13</sup>

The paid off Rohillas had taken refuge in a mosque or 'Musjeed' with other troops still considered 'in the service', or who had not been paid off yet.

'...I surrounded the place, and directed the followers of Risaldar Hussain Modeen Khan and those of the Jemedars mentioned..., whose accounts were not settled, to come out and separate themselves from those against whom the troops had come...'

That the British Resident was pressuring the Hyderabad government to reduce their military establishment, for the familiar reasons, seemed to be confirmed by the end of July 1836. The Wazir was forced to respond to an apparent demand from the British to dismiss the Arab recruits kept at the court. The Wazir avoided the Resident entirely and communicated with him only through an intermediary, 'Rajah Seo Purshad'. The Rajah repeated that several 'internal troublesome persons' including 'Moobariz ool Dowlah, Akbar Jah, Soolimaun Jah, Meer Tuffuzzul Ali, and Seeraj ool Dowlah', were always 'entering into intrigues against the government'. The Nizam and Wazir needed dependable troops, but to act 'agreeable to the British government', 'not a single Arab beyond those that are now in the service shall be entertained'. The Wazir explained that as the Arabs came to Hyderabad from Bombay, 'to which place they come in ships', perhaps the British could take some steps to prevent this.<sup>14</sup>



A note from the Wazir to the Resident then addressed the issue directly,

'Your communication through Rajah Seopurshaud regarding the Arabs was fully laid before His Highness who said that these people such as Syud Aoosman Khan, Syud Abdool Rymaun and Seedee Yoonus have been in the service since the time of Nizam Ally Khan, on account of their former services and of the negligence of the people of this country 2000 Arabs are kept in the city for guards at the palace and 2000 are stationed in the talooqs, all above this are reduced. His Highness also directed me to mention the other reasons for retaining these people and reducing the other troops. I beg therefore to state that formerly there were 25,000 horse and 40,000 foot, in these are included 13,000 horse and foot under European officers. On account of the reduction of revenue as already stated 1500 horse, 5000 Sikhs, 4,200 Rohillas have been reduced. By the blessing of God according to treaties there is no apprehension from internal enemies but on account of certain internal troublesome people, it has been found necessary to retain these Arabs who have been long in service.'<sup>15</sup>

The integration of Rohillas and Afghans into the Hyderabad state political economy was deep and often beyond the simple control of the Nizam or Wazir. The importance of hired coercive force to the local revenue collection process was confirmed over the following decades as the process outlined in the summer of 1836 was replicated. The British continued to pressure the Nizam and state ministers to dismiss intermediary troops and revenue agents who remained in service. Even as some were discharged, others arrived. If patrons in Hyderabad city were blocked from direct 'entertainment' of Rohillas, district-level state officials responsible for revenue and security continued to use this irregular coercive force. British ambitions to streamline the revenue process and channel greater sums to the court, and to subsidiary alliance payments, never achieved the simplicity of direct 'ryotwari' land revenue relationships established between village tillers and East India Company collection agents in the neighbouring Madras Presidency.

In the 1845-9 period, colonial correspondence traced the circulation of Rohillas within Hyderabad and between Hyderabad and the rest of the Indian sub-continent. A July 1845 report recorded the entry of Rohillas into Hyderabad. In October 1846 the British considered a request from the Nizam for assistance to expel Rohillas from 'his dominions'. In December 1846 arrangements were made to remove some Rohillas from the area and into 1847 officials monitored the slow progress of a party of Rohillas after their expulsion.<sup>16</sup>

In December 1847 British officials issued instructions on the treatment of Rohillas, then spent June and July 1848 responding to 'outrages' committed by Rohillas with appropriate 'measures'. A debate on where to relocate these undesirables produced an 1848 political dispatch titled, 'Deportation of Rohillas from Hyderabad to Peshawur, prohibited'. January 1849 'excesses' committed in 'one of the Nizam's villages' were followed by spring 'disturbances' by 'Rohillas and Arabs' in Hyderabad districts neighbouring the Sattara princely state. June recorded 'apprehension' of Rohillas in 'the Nizam's country'.<sup>17</sup>

Colonial discourses of criminality and essential community characteristics were deployed against Pashtuns, though officials never reduced them to 'criminal tribe' or 'criminal caste' status. The unpredictability of independent agents who competed with colonial interests in areas of policing and revenue meant that British staff in Hyderabad frequently conferred with officials in Calcutta and Bombay. Into the 1850s the problem continued of how to disentangle Rohillas from Hyderabad district-level factional competition between village headmen, record keepers, local landlords, revenue farmers, and others, all claiming to represent different interests of the Nizam, the Wazir, Arabs, and others in Hyderabad city.

Rohillas remained in demand for service. An 1850 letter discussed 'Prevention of the ingress of Rohillas', while an 1851 note recognized the *taluqdar* role in employment and urged 'prohibiting entertainment of Rohillas by any person' in Hyderabad state. An 1852 lament on the 'inability of the Nizam's

Government to suppress acts of violence committed by Rohillas, previewed concerns that continued through the 1850s.<sup>18</sup>

In 1851 the Hyderabad Resident made an effort to formalize and enforce previous prohibitions. He issued a new proclamation, 'which shall prohibit in stronger and more express terms, outsiders entering Hyderabad, for 'any military service whatever'.<sup>19</sup> The political problem was apparent in comments such as '... wherein I remarked upon the violation of His Highness the Nizam's orders committed by Rohillas and other foreign mercenaries, in entering into the service of the officers of the Nizam's government, ...'<sup>20</sup>

The Hyderabad Resident retained an earlier proclamation issued by the Diwan, Siraj ul-Mulk, and admitted that the announcement was aimed less at the Rohillas than at those who hired them.

'I...enclose also a copy of the Proclamation issued in the year 1847 to the several zumindars, desmooqs, despandras, koolkurnus, &c in His Highness the Nizam's territories, forbidding them to take foreign mercenaries into their service under penalty of severe punishment;...'<sup>21</sup>

He specifically identified as forbidden 'any of the tribe of Rohillas, Afghans, or Sikhs'. He did recognize the diversity of intentions even among men of these communities and exempted those 'in the pursuit of trade, or other occupations of a purely civil nature.'<sup>22</sup>

Earlier in 1851 the British Political Assistant in Nimar district, on the old strategic Burhanpur road that connected north India with the Deccan, discussed from first hand observation the process of Rohilla migration from the north to Hyderabad. About:

'information regarding the parties of Rohillas that so frequently pass down into the Nizam's territories...these parties can be easily stopped,...but if prevented in one direction they will take another

route. They go down for service, which as long as they are pretty sure of obtaining, they will continue by some means or other to seek for?

'Large armed parties of Rohillas travel the Burhanpore road every day, they are invariably well behaved, and when asked whither they are going, the reply always is 'to the Hyderabad territory for service'. If the entertainment of them by Talookdars &c. were prohibited it might tend to reduce their numbers, but it is not fair to confound them with the bands of dacoits who openly infest the Nizam's territories, over whom the local authorities are powerless to suppress...'<sup>23</sup>

The Assistant drew a distinction between these migrants and simple bandits. Pashtuns from higher status families with martial and financial resources had no need for banditry. Still, might individuals dismissed from or unfit for 'service' become lawbreakers? Was revenue collected for the Nizam through coercive abuse of villagers 'legal', while revenue collected and kept by Rohillas or Arabs 'illegal'? By 1908 British Gazetteer writers had simplified the Hyderabad historical narrative.

'During the eighteenth century the State suffered from the inroads of the Marathas; and when order was restored, the revenues of the State were farmed out to bankers and to Arab and Pathan soldiers, who extorted as much money as they could from the cultivators...'<sup>24</sup>

### **1857-8: Rohillas and Resistance**

In May 1857 simmering grievances within the East India Company army 'native' regiments sparked a major revolt in north and north-central India, the so-called 'Mutiny'. Over months many Company military units overthrew their British officers. Many men, as individuals or as groups, marched to Delhi to join an alternative government organized under the nominal leadership of Bahadur Shah II, the weak heir to the Mughal dynasty. Within weeks Disraeli asked 'Does the disturbance in

India indicate a military mutiny, or is it a national revolt?' He blamed the revolt on a decade of aggressive East India Company policies, especially multiple annexations of princely states, including Awadh in 1856. In the summer of 1857 Karl Marx detailed the history of the Company and his interpretation of a 'national revolt' in dispatches to the *New York Daily Tribune*.<sup>25</sup>

Some historians of the British Indian empire traced the roots of revolt to an oppressive colonial land revenue system that had crushed old rural elites with debt and replaced them with a new absentee landlord class of money-lenders and others from market towns and cities.<sup>26</sup> Another historian argued 'that violence and rebellion were often fiercest and most protracted where land transfers were low and the hold of the moneylender weakest'.<sup>27</sup> Caste, class, and community identities were crucial local variables associated with local collaboration or revolt. Well into 1858, large segments of urban and rural society in northern India resisted the return of the British Indian army and colonial hierarchies of police, courts, and tax collection. Within disrupted regions, social communities competed amongst themselves to claim or reclaim village and district political leadership and village lands.

As colonial military and civil control disintegrated, local leaders competed to overthrow and replace Company tax collectors and district officials. Community and religious figures rallied followings around local interests and identities. Some established connections to Delhi, others stayed loyal to the British, and many tried to remain neutral until the success of the revolt could be judged. In the old Rohilkhand districts, colonial authority melted away, except in Rampur where the Nawab refused to join any anti-British activity. In the summer of 1857, Marx discussed the spread of trouble towards the south of India, noting news '...of a mutiny of the Nizam's cavalry having broken out at Aurangabad' in the E.I.C. Bombay Presidency.<sup>28</sup>

The revolt spread little beyond the Bengal Presidency, though for a moment nervous officials thought that Rohillas threatened Hyderabad city. Over many months the British were able to reorganize and rebuild their armies, then slowly recover northern

India and Delhi. It was a violent re-conquest with sharply defined notions of friend and enemy, ally and traitor. British leadership and resources based in Calcutta were supplemented with recruits and experienced units from the Punjab, including many Pashtuns from west of the Indus river who joined the British military after the fall of Delhi in late 1857.

After the fall of Delhi, as the British army advanced into the former Rohilkhand districts northeast of the Ganges, officials attempted to sort out who was culpable for treason and who should be rewarded for protecting Company interests. Many prisoners, including former soldiers or those suspected of taking arms against the British, suffered summary executions. Others were 'transported' to new prison colonies in the Andaman Islands.

But after immediate battles and score settling, who was to be considered liable? Many British across India blamed Muslims for rallying to an Islamic jihad against the Christian English. In the Rohilkhand districts, both preachers of Islamic 'fanaticism' and the Rohilla descendants of the old Pashtun ruling class were condemned as responsible. British magistrates following the troops collected testimony and confessions, building lists of those deemed beyond pardon. More than eighty years after the fall of the Rohilla polities, the revolt in the Rohilkhand districts revived British colonial imagery from a previous generation. Colonial documents hinted at the survival of local community sensibilities, even as they recorded the colonial production of stereotyped ethnic and religious identities.

The absolute scale of the revolt and social conflict in the five Rohilkhand districts could be framed by a sense of the population of the 'Rohilkund' division as measured in 1853.<sup>29</sup> Colonial census takers typed and recorded residents by two categories of religion (Hindu and Muslim), by ties to the land, and by gender. Of the division population of 5,217,507, enumerators counted 613,487 as non-Hindu, mainly Muslim men ('Mahomedans + others'). Of these, 43.25 per cent (265,304) were considered 'Agricultural', with 56.75 per cent (328, 503) 'Non-Agricultural'. There were

1,629,816 'Hindoo' male agriculturalists and 556,512 Hindu male non-agriculturalists.<sup>30</sup> In his 1852-3 survey of Rohilkhand districts, George Christian counted 15,094 villages, 'mouzuhs or townships'.<sup>31</sup>

In 1857-8, depending on region, community, and local history, local Hindu officials and village leaders variously joined the revolt, quietly opposed it, or violently contested the impositions of an exclusive Muslim politics. Some Rajput villagers had rallied to Hafiz Rahmat Khan's call to battle in 1774.<sup>32</sup> In 1857 his grandson, Khan Bahadur Khan, had declared himself Nawab of Bareilly, under the authority of the Mughal ruler in Delhi.

In May 1858 the British retook Bareilly city from those in revolt. The civil authorities accompanying the army immediately re-established the police and revenue administrations. A civil officer then accompanied the military column sent off northeast in the direction of Pilibhit where 'formidable gatherings of Pathan rebels' were reported.<sup>33</sup> Nazir Muhammad Khan, a local *tahsildar* under the anti-British government, and Kabir Shah Khan were captured on 10 May after killing a policeman. They were executed two days later. On 11 May the British reoccupied Shahjahanpur. On 15 May 'an extremely large force' of 'rebels' attacked Shahjahanpur and was driven back. The 'Fyzabad Maulvi' was said to be the leader.<sup>34</sup>

The military column sent to Pilibhit returned the same day, but only after Mr Ricketts, the British civil officer 'established thannahs and tehseels on his way'. New police stations or *thanas*, and sub-district administrative offices or *tahsils*, were set up with 'men of local influence', who could 'keep their ground' with little government help. In this way most of the district was returned to at least nominal British influence by the end of May.<sup>35</sup>

Khan Bahadur Khan had been a major political leader of the revolt in Bareilly. Troops first revolted in Bareilly on 31 May 1857 and in June many men went to Delhi. In July, Khan Bahadur Khan was proclaimed the Nawab Nazim of Rohilkhand. The British 'Mutiny' narrative blamed him and regional Muslims for the local revolution. Also, in June 1857 the Nawab of Najibabad,

'appeared at Bijnor with 200 armed Pathans'.<sup>36</sup> The Nawab was a grandson of Zabita Khan. Zabita had survived the defeats of 1774 as an independent ruler west of the Ganges in the Saharanpur region until being 'annexed' by the Marathas in 1789.

In 1857-8 the British focused heavily on Muslim leadership, including proclamations interpreted as being issued 'to seduce from their allegiance the Hindoos, who form the larger majority of the population of that province, and have hitherto stood faithful to the government whose subjects they are.'<sup>37</sup> This British divide and rule analysis excused suspect but now useful non-Muslim allies, even as the narrative of Muslim and Pashtun treachery easily excused continued summary punishments. The civil officer, Ricketts, was finally removed from office in spring 1859, 'in connection with certain acts committed by him in his capacity of Special Commissioner'.<sup>38</sup>

Even as the British pushed into Rohilkhand, irregular anti-British cavalry contingents from the area roamed west of the Ganges. On 14 May a troop of cavalry riding on the Mainpuri road killed a British deputy assistant auditor general, Major Waterfield. The encounter was only nineteen miles from Agra. Within two weeks, Wilson, another British civil officer in Rohilkhand acting as a 'Commissioner on special duty' had completed an investigation. He issued a list of sixty-three 'rebels' held responsible. He ordered that 'the parties be proclaimed and their personal and real property be confiscated'. He asked that the editor of the *Delhi Gazette* publish the list of names and that 500 English and 2000 'copies in the vernacular' be printed and distributed 'throughout the country'. The related correspondence hinted at how Rohilla communities had both endured and been transformed in the decades after 1774. The commissioner's letters also revealed current colonial perceptions of apparently timeless 'Rohilla' attitudes, political allegiances, and behaviour.

The assistant auditor general had died at the hands of a band under the leadership of Rahim Ali. Rahim Ali was from Kumora in 'Zillah Boolund Shuhur' in the Doab country between the Yamuna and Ganges rivers. Though they were operating in the



area that would become Bulandshahr district of the colonial United Provinces, most of the horsemen were from 'Tureenoo Surae, Pergunnah Sumbhul, Zillah Moradabad'.<sup>39</sup> Sambhal town in the Sambhal tahsil or *pargana* of Moradabad district had a large 'suburb', Tureenoo Serai. This neighbourhood of 10,000 residents was an old Rohilla enclave and birthplace of Amir Khan.<sup>40</sup> The settlement seemed named as the resting place or *serai* of transplanted Tarin Afghans.<sup>41</sup> Amir Khan had earned a reputation as a Rohilla military entrepreneur who operated outside the British sphere, being condemned as a common bandit or *pindari*. He had raided Moradabad and other Rohilkhand districts in 1805,<sup>42</sup> and then, after the last Anglo-Maratha war in 1817, had negotiated a settlement that left him as the Nawab of Tonk. The Tarin Serai horsemen were directly under Ahmadullah and Akbar Khan, residents of Tarin Serai, and both 'in the service of Khan Bahadur Khan the rebel Nuwab of Bareilly'.<sup>43</sup>

If the overall revolt could be understood as the last gasp of displaced former elites, then, to the commissioner in May 1858, the Rohilkhand violence was explainable. Akbar Khan was the son of Mazhar Ali, son of Dundi Khan of Kumora. Family bitterness against the government seemed directly related to the loss of the inheritance of Dundi Khan, 'whose estates in the Boolund Shurur district were confiscated some 50 years ago'.<sup>44</sup> The continuity of Rohilla communal solidarity seemed clear as all but three of the sixty-three 'proclaimed' offenders lived in the Tarin Serai neighbourhood.<sup>45</sup>

An elaborate 'List of Rebels...', compiled in May 1858, accompanied correspondence forwarded by the special commissioner.<sup>46</sup> Sixty-three men were listed in a table organized in simple categories determined to best identify them. The five categories heading five columns included 'Names of the Rebel', 'Father's name', 'Tribe', 'Residence', and 'Description of person'. All were residents of the Sambhal *pargana*, all but three from Tarin Serai. Forty of the men, or their fathers, had the Pashtun ethnic marker 'Khan' in their name. These were recorded as of the 'tribe' of 'Puthan'. The name columns indicated that brothers as well as

fathers and sons rode together. The so-called tribal identities listed for the men included 'Puthan' (forty-one), 'Syud' (five), 'Sheik' (eleven), 'Toork' (two), 'Mogul' (one), 'Kumboh' (two), and 'Carpenter' (one). This listing mixed ethnic (Pashtun, Turk, Mughal, Kumboh), religious (Sayyid, Shaikh),<sup>47</sup> and occupational categories.

In the table the categories appeared to be selected and deployed on a rather informal basis. Did the British or local informants select the 'tribe' designations? Did both imperialists and collaborators perceive these designations as clear and precise identities? Such names and backgrounds in such relative numbers did not seem to be too terribly different from those that might be found in an Afghan village. What made the table an early source of unintended colonial ethnography were individual descriptions of each of the sixty-three horsemen. Men were listed by age, height, weight, skin colour, and facial markings. If late nineteenth century British narratives of North West Frontier Province Pashtuns typically referred to tall, fair, lean, and handsome Afghans, what did it mean when north Indian Pathans (Puthans), descendants of founding Rohilla settlers, were described by local informants as being of every colour (fair, wheaten, dark, black), weight (thin, middle size, neither stout nor thin, stout), height (short, middle stature, tall), description (broad forehead, face small pox marked, grey eyes, wears whiskers, mark of wound on head, lame, one eye blind), and age?<sup>48</sup>

Ages ranged from eighteen to sixty. Akbar Khan, one of the two leaders, was described as 'Wheaten, broad forehead, mark of wound on head, age 35 years.' 'Khubel' Khan, son of Naeem Khan, was described as 'Fair, tall, thin, 50 years.' 'Suddoo' Khan was 'Wheaten, ordinary stature, age 35 years.' Abdul Kadir Khan was 'Dark, middle size, stout, age 40 years.' Three men were listed as 'fair', thirty-six men were listed as 'wheaten', and twenty-two as 'dark'. Akbar Khan, son of 'Futeh oollah' Khan, 'Puthan' of 'Tureenoo Surae' was described as 'Black color, short, neither stout nor thin, age 30 years, was a *sowar* of some irregular cavalry'.<sup>49</sup>

The social categories under the 'tribe' label reflected normative, internal divisions socially constructed within a Pashtun ethnic community. Pashtun khans were political and household leaders and agricultural landowners, entitled to sit in village councils. Religious figures, *saiyids* and *sheikhs*, were affiliated to the community and important, but represented spiritual rather than economic or political leadership. Even the identification of one participant by his trade, *tarkhan* or carpenter, was a normative Pashtun social distinction of a dependent (*hamsaya*) low status artisan. Yet status seemingly fixed by birth remained subject to assertion, revision, and reinvention.

Whatever degrees of lineage or cultural continuity and change occurred over the decades between 1774 and 1858, colonial notions of cultural and ethnic categories had become simplified and normalized. By 1908, colonial censuses and gazetteers had divided north Indian society into discrete categories of Hindus and Muslims. The Muslims in the Rohilkhand districts were seen as 'divided between the four great tribes' and were often counted in the censuses as Shaikhs, Sayyids, Mughals, and Pathans.<sup>50</sup> Other Muslim census categories included 'Musalman Rajputs', Barhais, and Lohars (blacksmiths). These normative administrative categories carried over into the post-colonial period. One modern study of nineteenth century taluqdari land holdings in Awadh recorded the colonially defined Muslim community categories of Rajput, Afghan, Gaur, Pathan, Mughal, Saiyid, Sheikh, and 'other'.<sup>51</sup>

If 'the old Rohilla order' had 'simply reasserted itself',<sup>52</sup> the British concluded that it had happened in close partnership and conspiracy with a fanatical Islamic religious leadership. When the British occupied Bareilly in early May 1858, they searched the home of Khan Bahadur Khan, who had fled to Awadh, and found a series of proclamations issued 'under the seals of Birjees Kudar, walee of Oudh, Khan Buhadoor Khan, the rebel Nuwab of Barielly, and Seyud Leeagut Alee, Iman of Allahabad'.<sup>53</sup> One proclamation by Birjis Kadir announced to all Muslims a religious *fatwa* against the British. A second proclamation by Khan

Bahadur Khan appealed to Hindu-Muslim unity and promised cooperating Hindus that after victory the slaughter of cattle would be abolished in his territories. Sayyid Liaquat Ali issued at least two calls for jihad against the British, especially within Allahabad district.<sup>54</sup>

In the Rohilkhand districts, resistance against the British was fragmented, tentative, and motivated by different causes and objectives. Many tried to stay neutral, not wanting to cut all ties to the British before a decisive result was apparent. Birjis Kadir condemned those who would make friends with non-Muslims while he exhorted the faint hearted. He called for revenge against 'the outrages committed by the English at Shahjahanabad, Jhujjur, Rewaree, and the Doab.' Both Shia and Sunni leaders had issued the 'universal proclamation'.<sup>55</sup>

Khan Bahadur Khan recruited Hindus to the cause against 'the infidel Franks', the 'bitter enemies of the life and religion of all the Hindoos and Musulmans.' He said the few Europeans could be eliminated with Hindu-Muslim unity. But, though the Muslims were struggling, '...the Hindus are careless of this important point.' The proclamation attributed Hindu inactivity to 'the prevalence of the practice of cow killing among the Mahomedans, which is opposed to the tenets of the Hindoo faith.' Hindus were promised the end of cow slaughter by Muslims as a reward 'for their patriotism' in helping to expel the British. They were also threatened that if 'any Hindoos shall shrink from joining in this cause', the survival of cow slaughter would be their responsibility. Any Hindu resistance to the proclamation could meet with six months imprisonment with a fine.<sup>56</sup>

Liaquat Ali, the Imam of Allahabad, proclaimed jihad, in self-defence of community and religion,

'...every Mosalman well knows and it is a notorious fact, that the accursed Christians have been awfully tyrannizing over the whole country of Hindoostan, especially over the district of Allahabad. The Christians have been guilty of the crimes of massacring, plundering and hanging human beings, burning and destroying our houses,

attacking us unawares, killing innocent learned men of our country and burning our sacred scriptures.<sup>57</sup>

The problem for the resistance was that the colonial system had integrated and co-opted a wide range of collaborators, including Muslims. Even many Muslims suspected and dismissed at the start of the revolt remained neutral and were drawn back into colonial service as the limits were discerned to the uprising. In May 1857 at the beginning of the troubles, 'Willayet Hossein Khan' served as the colonial deputy collector and deputy magistrate of Moradabad. He was 'removed from service' from the area, but by April 1858 was being recommended for re-employment 'according to the exigencies of the Public Service.'<sup>58</sup>

In May 1858, 'Mahomed Hussun Khan, Principal Sudder Ameen<sup>59</sup> of Mynporie', was employed by the special commissioner who had found the several proclamations in the office ('Duftar') of Khan Bahadur Khan. In March he had joined the British forces gathering in Kasganj, just before they crossed the Ganges into Budaun on the road to Bareilly. When the British occupied Khan Bahadur Khan's home and seized his papers, it was Muhammad Hassan Khan of Mainpuri who read the Persian and Arabic texts of the documents and provided the translations. The commissioner added to a letter, 'He is also preparing lists of Rohilkund rebels.'<sup>60</sup> He undoubtedly was one of those who interviewed local villagers at length so that officials could compile lists with often fully detailed physical descriptions of wanted individuals.

Even before moving into Rohilkhand, the British army of reoccupation, through its civil commissioners, had formed comprehensive judgments about the Rohilla role in the troubles. At the outbreak of the revolt in May 1857, horsemen from Bhitonah village had ridden into Kasganj town, wounded one merchant, and looted the shop of another. Bhitonah village was to the east, on the road between Kasganj and the Ganges river crossing. The next day horsemen attacked and looted a temple near Bhitonah. The third day a group looted the Kasganj bazaar, carrying off camels, rice, and sugar. In March 1858 on reoccupying

Kasganj, the British seized eleven men from Bhitonnah and charged them with the attacks. Nine were hanged and two were acquitted.<sup>61</sup>

Was the revolt of 1857 about economic disparities, or about political oppression or nostalgia for a lost past? Villagers had looted Hindu shopkeepers or *banias*, who may have been moneylenders holding debts from the villagers. The attacker who wounded the Kasganj merchant ('Bunneeah') earlier had been forced into court over an eleven rupees debt. The shop of the same merchant's son had then been looted. Was the general conflict about religious difference? The looted shopkeepers were Hindus and their Hindu temple had been attacked. The attackers were Muslims. Were all these factors involved by degrees in the local conflict?

After the attack on the Kasganj bazaar, elite Hindus from the area challenged the Bhitonnah villagers over a looted rice supply that had been stored in a particular merchant's ('Bunneeah's') shop. Shots were exchanged and a Hindu was killed. The conflict escalated. The Hindus gathered forces, attacked Bhitonnah village, and 'razed it to the ground'. In December 1857 Muslims, attacked Kasganj, killed the Hindu town *nazim*, and then looted the home of the previously targeted Hindu merchant of Rs25,000.

To the British special commissioner restoring civil order, the local narrative was about Rohilla revolt. He thought that 'at the commencement of the Mutiny, the Puthans of Bhitonnah were the very first to rise and commence plundering.'<sup>62</sup> The British commissioner dismissed the legitimacy of the alternative political system that had been installed in the area when Muhammad Muteen, a 'Puthan of Bithonna' had 'obtained a sunud from the Nuwab Raess of Farrukhabad'. A few prisoners had been taken, but most of the Muslims of Bhitonnah had apparently 'taken service' with Khan Bahadur Khan. The Rohilla village headman ('Lumburdar') formerly responsible for supervising the government revenue collection had been taken prisoner and was one of the accused mutineers. He and the eight other 'Puthan' prisoners were hanged and the 'zummindaree' (zamindari rights

to collect revenue) of Bhitonnah was 'forfeited'. Two non-Pashtun Muslim horsemen or 'sohars' (sowars), were freed. Nominally, they were excused for perhaps having been subjected to coercion. It also seemed a strategy to isolate Rohilla Pashtuns from other Muslims. Yet none of the four proclamations seized from the home of Khan Bahadur Khan had made any specific claim for, or appeal to, any notion of Rohilla, Afghan, or Pashtun identity. To what degree did specific Rohilla or Pashtun identity politics of 1857-8 derive from decades of colonial efforts to subordinate Rohilla circulation and agency?

One voice of 1858, this one anti-British, did claim the 'Puthans' as a unified community of collective identity and agency, though a rather ineffectual one as he now found it west of the Ganges. Imam Nur Khan lived in Mau-Rashidabad, a town twenty-odd miles west of Farrukhabad. Farrukhabad district lay just west of the Ganges, a neighbour to the Budaun and Shahjahanpur Rohilkhand districts across the river. Mau-Rashidabad was in the heart of the new territories first settled by Bangash Afghans during the reign of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707).<sup>63</sup> West of the Ganges, in close proximity to the patronage and coercive power of first the Mughals, then later the British, the region was often led by Rohillas more loyal to Delhi than Rohilkhand. The famous Bangash Nawab lineage of Farrukhabad began with Muhammad Khan, who rose from local 'small mercenary jobber-commander' *jamadar* to an elite Mughal *mansabdar*. He built the city of Farrukhabad and became a nawab.<sup>64</sup>

The Mau-Rashidabad history confirmed the close ties that often existed between religious, imperial, and Rohilla identities. A seventeenth century Mughal *jagirdar* in the area, Nawab Mirza Khan, was grandson of Bayazid Ansari, the Roshaniyya opponent to the Mughals. After the death of Bayazid Ansari west of the Indus, his descendants variously opposed and were co-opted to the Mughal state, with many following leaders transplanted to northern India as Mughal dependents. Generations later, in April 1858, Imam Nur Khan, 'resident of Raepoor Muhullah Mow

Rushudabad, and in revolt against the British, struggled west of the Ganges as British forces slowly reclaimed Farrukhabad district and approached the Ganges river crossings to Rohilkhand.

In two letters issued one after the other, Imam Nur Khan petitioned Khan Bahadur Khan in Rohilkhand to send his army to help west of the Ganges. He passed along intelligence of the location and strength of the British forces, describing the colonial presence in Farrukhabad and Fatehgarh towns as weak, the few troops as panic stricken, confused, and afraid. He exhorted Khan Bahadur Khan to cross the Ganges to fight, even as he lamented that residents were being coerced into supporting the British efforts. A British Deputy Collector installed in Kaimganj in the north of the district 'has issued an order that if the Puthans of Mow Raepoor &c refuse to enter the service of the British government they shall be severely punished.'<sup>65</sup> Because they were threatened, needed food, and were afraid, Imam Nur Khan said many complied.

Imam Nur Khan reported that 'the Puthans of Mow Raepoor' were ordered to return to their homes. Some who 'have lost all their senses, and allow themselves to be beguiled by the fascinating words of the enemy,' were returning from east of the Ganges and reporting for 'service'. Potential supporters of a religious struggle against 'unworldly heretics' and 'infidels' were returning to protect property. The situation drove Imam Nur Khan to invoke an apparently faded and limited Rohilla legacy,

'Sir, this submission is only a subterfuge resorted to by the Puthans for the purpose of saving their lives. You know very well that these Puthans of Mow Raepoor &c are very fine fellows, but since the last 2 or 3 months have become as timid as a wild mouse, taking fright at the rustling of a leaf, but still it must be remembered that they are Puthans, when these Puthans will come in contact with the infidels, and remember the brave deeds of their forefathers, they will, God grant, cut down even giants, much more the unworthy infidels that are mere mortals, and they will never turn their backs...'<sup>66</sup>



The day after this letter, Imam Noor Khan wrote to Khan Bahadur Khan again, describing British orders, including that,

‘in Mow Raipoor &c that they have forgiven all the Puthans-that the Puthans should come and reoccupy their houses, and walk fearlessly in the bazaars, that the Puthans that have gone across the river should also return, that their enemies are the sirdars with whom they have to deal, and that if the Puthans will not return from the other side, their houses will be sold by public auction.’<sup>67</sup>

Imam Nur Khan described how the residents, unparalleled warriors, returned and ‘reluctantly accepted the service of the Kafirs’. He described the restoration of colonial civil government. People were appointed as ‘Mahafiz Duftur in the revenue court’ and ‘Ferry Officer and sent to the Ghaut’. On the one hand, he thought ‘these brave men’ would desert when the army of Khan Bahadur Khan crossed the Ganges. On the other, he thought, ‘...if these Moselmans had been in the time of our Prophet they would not only have fought against him, but turned Yazeed!’ Imam Nur Khan invoked Yazeed, an Arab ruler who had fought the grandsons of the Prophet. He declared that ‘the present war is between the infidel Christians and the faithful Moselmans’, but also said that Hindus in his area were suffering and willing to join against the British.<sup>68</sup>

The British did have to fight Raja Singh of Mainpuri and his ‘Thakoor tribes’. But the army of Khan Bahadur Khan never arrived from Rohilkhand and Imam Nur Khan was never granted his plea to Khan Bahadur Khan to be placed in charge of 500 cavalry. The British commissioner on special duty in Rohilkhand had the Imam’s letters translated, then commented that, ‘if it is conceded that Imam Noor Khan is a fair representative of the Puthans of his neighbourhood...that the matter at issue is considered as being a matter solely between the Christian on the one side and the Moslem on the other’, and surely, ‘any indulgence or leniety shown to the class to which Imam Noor Khan belongs, will be misplaced and thrown away.’<sup>69</sup>

The British commissioner conflated Pashtuns and traditionally non-Pashtun community religious leaders. He hoped to at least be able to hang the religious ideologues. But Imam Nur Khan's polemics could not disguise his own recognition that for most local 'Puthans' the ultimate issues were either, for former elites, mortal conflict over the restoration of former political power or, for common men, the simple acceptance of subordination within the colonial system as the only way to maintain personal property and livelihoods.

The earlier British colonial reliance upon an intermediary class of Hindu revenue accountants and administrators paid unanticipated dividends in 1857-8. Even as English officials fled the Rohilkhand districts, local and district revenue and political bureaucracies either continued operations as long as possible until dismissed or quietly observed events under the new regime. As Hindu merchants fled the revolt and crossed west and south over the Ganges, they carried news and gossip about figures and attitudes. In November 1857, Bihari Lal of the Bijnor city collector's office secretly sent across the Ganges news from Bijnor district.<sup>70</sup> He described the military deployments against the British, but also failing attempts to collect agrarian revenues from villages and Hindu intermediaries, many of whom had fled across the Ganges out of Rohilkhand.

Tensions of social class and political competition emerged in such correspondence. One of the insurgent revenue officials in Bijnor was Manee Khan. Bihari Lal said that '...in consequence of misrule and the tyranny of the insurgents the people and landholders have been broken down,...' Manee Khan in particular was 'a convict of the government, and a notorious bad character. His misdeeds have produced for him the fame of the archfiend. This scoundrel also escaped at the time of the escape of the other convicts. By caste he is a weaver.'<sup>71</sup> Faded Rohilla aristocracy was one enemy, but thousands of poor, landless Muslims in these districts also subsisted as very low status hand-loom weavers. In 1857 some of them embraced a revolutionary opportunity for immediate socio-economic transformation.

One of the less researched aspects of the previous eighty years of social change in the Rohilkhand districts was the extent to which any of the descendants of the higher status Rohilla military entrepreneurs, merchant traders, landlords, and farmers had become impoverished and faded in social status. How many may have lost their ancestral lands, access to patronage and trade, and been reduced to joining the thousands of Muslim artisans and labourers scattered around market towns and cities? The British included Muslim weavers (*Julahas*) in their census categories.

A contrasting aspect was the extent of social mobility achieved by some under colonial patronage. Careers and honours obtained over decades cemented individual loyalties to the colonial system by mid-1857 even as that system disappeared in the anarchy of revolt. When the revolt began, Buland Khan, a Rohilla cavalryman in British service, was on home leave in Thanesar district northwest of Delhi. He rejoined his unit and was sent first to Delhi, then back to Thanesar to recruit new 'sowars'. In July 1857 he was sent to help the British special commissioner who eventually crossed the Ganges in May 1858 to restore civil order to the Rohilkhand districts. From July 1857,

'...to the present he has been engaged with me day and night in scouring the country, preserving the peace, punishing offenders and collecting revenue. The whole of the native population believed at the time that the British supremacy was at an end and very few of the Irregulars who were on leave paid any attention to the orders directing them to appear.'<sup>72</sup>

Buland Khan, age fifty-eight, 'Puthan', had first taken service with the British in October 1814, serving three years in the Nepal War, 1814-16. He served in the Maratha campaign of 1817-18. He was in Afghanistan from 1838-40. He fought in major battles of the Sikh wars of the late 1840s. He was in Burma from 1854-6. He 'aided in the rescue of forty-eight Christians from Rohilcund' in November and December 1857. He fought and 'distinguished himself' in a skirmish in Awadh in April 1858. His promotions

included to 'Duffadar' in 1836, 'Jemadar' in 1842, 'Naib Resaldar' in 1846, 'Resaldar' in 1853.<sup>73</sup>

In May 1858, Buland Khan was recommended for 'admission to the Order of British India for exemplary loyalty and good service rendered to the state'. In June 1858 he was awarded the Order of British India, second class and then in July he was recommended for and promoted to the first class of the Order of British India, with the title of 'Sirdar Bahadour'.

Through the summer and fall of 1858, British special commissioners sorted out prisoners and narratives that sought to explain and excuse ambivalent or militant behaviour. The absolute power to restore the rule of law and a perceived proper political and social order led to punishments beyond the scope authorized in April 1858 by higher colonial authorities sensitive to criticisms of earlier unrestrained executions in northern India. In July 1858 the 'Commissioner of Rohilkhund' was reprimanded for the brutality of some of his special commissioners. Officials had noticed in reports the awarding of 'capital punishment' to those 'against whom the only charge noted is that they held some insignificant office, thandar, jemadar, or burkundaz,<sup>74</sup> under the rebel authorities...'. These were people 'against whom the Governor General has directed that not even criminal proceedings should be taken.' Any special commissioner choosing to ignore or exceed guidelines, 'will do so at his peril.'<sup>75</sup>

In November 1858 one of the Rohilkhand civil commissioners, A. Shakespear, wrote a careful report justifying the execution by hanging of Juhan Khan for rebellion. The magistrate of Moradabad had given him the case to consider. Juhan Khan had been jailed for murder, while his brother was a 'famous dacoit in these parts years ago'. He had escaped prison at the start of the revolt, 'took service' under the Nawab of Najibabad, and fought the British in several skirmishes. Shakespear concurred with the magistrate that Juhan Khan was 'guilty of rebellion' and should be hung, with 'property being confiscated as a persistent and notorious rebel...'

At one level, the narrative was of another rebel punished. But there was also evidence of a complex system of investigation, co-optation, and collaboration that, in this case, targeted a Muslim and his property, and rewarded possible Jat villager informants with material motives for collaboration. The special commissioner had agreed 'to remit the remainder of the chief captors, Nourung's, term of imprisonment'. He ordered the freeing of Nourung, and the paying of a Rs25 reward to Nourung, his sons 'Bhoop Sing' and 'Mookram', and 'Sheo Sing', a village watchman.<sup>76</sup> Juhan Khan had been captured or betrayed in exchange for the release of Nourung. Had Nourang's earlier conviction also been for rebellion?

The limits to prosecution were reached as suspects fled north into the hills, across the Ganges, and to local refuge within the Rampur jagir. Despite the subordination of the Rampur Nawab to colonial patronage, during the worst days of 1857 the Nawab had refused to join the revolt and had protected colonial interests by degrees. After 1858 he was rewarded with the addition of new villages and lands to the jagir. Officials also forbade the Rohilkhand special commissioners to directly approach the Nawab 'for the apprehension of rebels in His Highnesses' Territory'.<sup>77</sup>

By the end of 1858 the colonial government wanted to encourage formerly rebellious soldiers to return peacefully to their villages. The Rohilkhand commissioner on special duty was stopped from using village revenue or *patwari* records or district registers of 'Soldiers Family Remittances' to trace the names and homes of former sepoys.<sup>78</sup> There would be a general amnesty announced on 1 November 1858.

To the southeast, in the princely state of Rewah, two weeks before the amnesty, the British political agent advising the Maharaja discussed the continued need for men to be available for service. But in Rewah, military entrepreneurs not suspected of involvement in the revolt existed in circumstances markedly changed from a generation or two earlier. The political agent thought a certain number of local men could be enlisted for local

military police. But with 'reference to cavalry, I think there is but slight chance of our being able to raise any worth having, for some time if ever. The Rohillas are the only men fit for the service, and they are generally too poor to provide themselves with arms and horses...'<sup>79</sup>

Ironically, even as the events of 1857-8 proved disastrous for militant north Indian Rohillas, they generated a windfall of 'service' for Afghans and Pashtuns living west of the Indus River. When the East India Company had annexed the Sikh kingdom in 1849 it absorbed into a greater Punjab province the Pashtun majority districts in the Peshawar valley and to the south. Though colonial armies stationed in Peshawar and the region originally worked to subject local villages to Company revenue and legal systems, in 1857 after Company 'Hindustani' regiments in the Punjab were disarmed or destroyed, colonial officials in the Punjab recruited 30,000 new local troops to replenish and reinforce Company armies.<sup>80</sup>

Sikhs, Punjabis, and Pashtuns enlisted, including men from the territories of the Afghan amir. Seventeen new infantry regiments with 12,950 men were organized, including five regiments stationed in the Peshawar valley. Up to 7,182 'horse levies' of irregular cavalry were 'entertained' including 1,570 from the Peshawar district. 'Foot levies' totalling 8,548 were enrolled in the various Punjab districts, including thousands from west of the Indus. Peshawar counted enlistments of 1,464 foot levies, Kohat 279, Dera Ismail Khan 1,193, and Dera Ghazi Khan 274.<sup>81</sup>

The success of the colonial military effort in 1857-8, and the comparative failure of the military efforts of the alternative state constructed around the Mughal emperor in Delhi could be explained by specific events, but also by conditions that were quite familiar to observers of the transition in military service experienced in Awadh and Rohilkhand in the 1770s. Sita Ram, a veteran of the Company army said the timely fall of Delhi in September 1857 was the key to Punjabi recruitment. 'If Delhi had not fallen at the time it did, the Sirkar would not have persuaded so many Pathans and other northern men to enter its service. It

is well known that these men hung back, waiting to see which side would be victorious...'<sup>82</sup>

Sita Ram, born about 1797, with forty-eight years of service, had fought in Nepal, Afghanistan, and the Sikh wars. Around 1861 he wrote his memoirs and compared the advantages of Company service over that of traditional rulers. He observed that '...few Princes of Hindoostan ever regularly pay their troops... Princes seldom grant pensions to the families of those killed in their service, and care but little about the soldier when once he is disabled.'<sup>83</sup>

The British prevailed in 1858. The East India Company disappeared and the British government exercised direct rule over India. In north India, the label 'Puthan' became the functional equivalent of a caste category for colonial documents. The veteran Buland Khan was summarized in a 'Descriptive Roll' under column headings of rank and name, age, height, date of enlisting, and dates of promotion. Under the heading 'Caste', he was listed as 'Puthan'. Colonial statistical and land records now might include 'Pathan' as a caste, along with Rajput, Jat, Brahmin, 'Nau-muslim' (new Muslim), Kayastha, and Bania.<sup>84</sup>

After the revolt, officials had to sort out new administrative procedures and methods, including how to re-organize 'the Police and Native Army in the North-Western Provinces'. An experienced colonial Commissioner and judge recognized that European soldiers could not act as local policemen in Rohilkhand, but he argued that divide and rule strategies of community definition and reward should continue. Even now, after two years of trauma, Pashtuns and their descendants were useful.

'Without going into too minute ethnological details, I may just observe that for such a province as Rohilkund, where the Mahomedans have proved treacherous, and for some time to come may prove turbulent, we should use regiments of organized police embodied on the plan of the Punjab Guides, but with a strong dash of Hindoo or quasi Hindoo tribes...'

For the Benares Provinces where there is a dense Hindoo population, there might be a stronger infusion of Afghans,

Beloochees, or Punjab Mahomedans. Such men as form the Puthan element in Coke's Punjab Guides would sympathize as little with the people, and put down an emeute in Benares, as easily as a dragoon from Hounslow or Aldershot, and with much less expense to the State...<sup>85</sup>

'As a rule, each company, or troop, consists of a separate nationality, or of men of one country and native officers of another. Take for example the following analysis of the Punjab Guide Infantry...

- No. 1 Company comprised all sorts of up-country men...
- No. 2 Company Puthans from Peshawur, fierce, savage-looking...
- No. 3 Company Punjabee Mahomedans from Lahore or Sealkote...
- No. 4 Company Khas (pure) Afreedees, speaking Pushtoo...
- No. 5 Goorkas from Nepal...
- No. 6 Sikhs,....

In regiments thus constituted there is a perpetual rivalry...<sup>86</sup>

## Hyderabad Proclamations

### DOCUMENT 1

'Translation of a Proclamation regarding Rohillas, Puthans, and Sikhs'

'As many individuals of the tribe of Rohillas, Puthans, and Sikhs have taken service with Sahoucars and other inhabitants of the city, Hindoo and Musulman, and having taken advantage of this, have by degrees entered into pecuniary transactions with their employers and ended by murdering and imprisoning them; in consequence of this the greatest trouble is experienced in making arrangements for the peace of the city. An order is therefore publicly given that all persons of the tribe of Rohillas, Puthans, and Sikhs, take their discharge within one month from their employers and settle their money transactions, arrears of pay due to them, and transactions connected with jageers and houses which they hold on pledge. In the event of the month having expired and obedience not having been paid to



the pursuit of this order, this government will order the adoption of such measures towards them as it may deem necessary.<sup>87</sup>

## DOCUMENT 2

'Translation of an order about to be promulgated to the several zumeendars, deshmooks, Deshpandyas, koolkurnees, &c, in His Highness the Nizam's territories'

'This hereby notifies that you are forbidden to carry on among yourselves contentions and disputes of any description. If any one of you has any dispute with another in regard to a boundary or a share of the cultivation, or in regard to any Rusooms, you will come immediately to the Circar and state the circumstances connected with your complaint. With a view to obviate disputes and contentions among you, you are forbidden to take into your service Arabs or other foreigners, and in the event of you having had any of these men in your service previous to the promulgation of this order, you will discharge them and within the space of one month you will obey the instructions conveyed in this order and report the same to the circar through the Taloogdars and Ameens. In the event of your not doing so before the expiration of the period above noted, your villages, ..., and rusooms will be confiscated by the Circar independent of yourselves becoming amenable to any punishment which the government may determine to inflict.'<sup>88</sup>

### Appendix 3.1: Rohilkhand and regional districts population, by colonial categories

Bareilly district: 1901 population 1,090,117. Muslims: "Shaikhs" 54,000, "Pathans" 41,000, "Julahas" 41,000. "Rajputs, Pathans, Brahmans, Kayasths, and Banias are the largest landholders." Bareilly city: 1901 population 131,208; Hindu 67,000, Muslim 59,000. On the 1801 British annexation of Rohilkhand from Awadh, the area was divided into Bareilly and Moradabad districts. The Rampur jagir remained separate.<sup>89</sup>

Bijnor district: 1901 population 779,951; Hindu 64%, Muslim 34%. Muhammadans: Shaikhs 59,000, Julahas 57,000, "Telis"

15,000, "Jhojhas" 6,000. No Pathans were listed. Bijnor town: 1901 population 17,583; Muslims 9,429. Separated from Moradabad district in 1817. Telis (oil pressers), Jhojha=Khojah?

Budian district: 1872 population 934,348; Hindu 85.1%, Muslim 14.9%.

Muslims "divided between the four great tribes"; Shaikhs 104,743, Saiyids 3,320, Mughals 1,360, Pathans 30,092.<sup>90</sup> "Bisauli...is also a considerable town, with many fine Pathan buildings, including a handsome mosque." District formed in 1824 from both Moradabad and Bareilly.

Bulandshahr district: 1901 census population 1,138,101; Hindu 79%, Muslim 19%. Muslims: Shaikhs 24,000, Saiyids 6,000, Mughals 3,000, Pathans 17,000, Musalman Rajputs 34,000, Barhais (carpenters) 15,000, Lohars 11,000.<sup>91</sup>

Mainpuri district: 1901 population 829,357; Hindu 93%, Muslim 6%. Muslims: Shaikhs 8,100, Pathans 6,600, Fakirs 5,700, Behnas (cotton carders) 5,200.<sup>92</sup>

Moradabad district: 1901 population 1,191,993; 64% Hindu, 35% Muslim. Muslims: Shaikhs 153,000 (many from converts), Saiyids 16,000. Moradabad city: 1901 population of Hindus 31,141, Muslims 42,472.<sup>93</sup>

Pilibhit district: 1901 population 470,339; Hindu 82%, Muslim 17%. Muslims: Shaikhs 12,000, Pathans 13,000. Location of Khan Bahadur Khan's undivided 'zamindari mahals'. District divided from Bareilly in 1879.<sup>94</sup>

Rampur State: 1901 population 533,212; Hindu 55%, Muslim 45%. "Muhammadans": "Pathans or Rohillas" 49,000, Turks (cultivators) 33,000, Julahas (weavers) 25,000, Shaikhs 24,000. "Rampur was once noted for its trade in horses and elephants, but this has declined." "The most important industry is the weaving of cotton cloth..." Rampur City: 1901 population 78,758; Hindus 17,371, Muslims 58,870. The state employed 1900 infantry. Two of three squadrons of cavalry employed 317.<sup>95</sup>

Shahjahanpur district: 1901 population 921,535; Hindu 85%, Muslim 14%. Muslims: Shaikhs 24,000, Pathans 41,000, Julahas (Muslim weavers) 18,000. Shahjahanpur city: 1901 population

76,458; Hindu 35,636, Muslim 40,017.<sup>96</sup> District separated from Bareilly in 1813-14.

### **Appendix 3.2: List of Rebels....May 1858**

“List of Rebels forming the party of Ahmud oollah + Akbar Khan, residents of Tureeno Suraae Pergunnah Sumbhul, Zillah Moradabad,<sup>97</sup> who were in the service of Khan Buhadoor Khan the rebel Nuwab of Barielly, and who compose the party of Ruheem Alee, the rebel of Kumora and Khybea Zillah Boolund Shuhur who murdered Major Waterfield Deputy Assistant Auditor General on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1858 about 19 miles from Agra, on the Mynpooree Road.”<sup>98</sup>

	Names of ...	Father's name	Tribe	Residence	Description of person
1	Ahmud oolla Khan	Moortuza	Puthan	Tureeno Suraee	of wheat color, short stature, neither stout nor thin, wears whiskers, a few teeth fallen out-age 40 years
2	Akbar Khan	Seyd Khan	Do.	Do.	Wheaten, broad forehead, mark of wound on head, age 35 years
3	Suddoo Khan	Abdooor Rehman Khan	"	"	Wheaten, ordinary stature, age 35 years
4	Mahboollah Khan	Meer Khan	"	"	Wheaten, middling size, stout, 45
5	Shaharrot Khan	Esa Khan	"	"	Dark, tall, stout, face smallpox marked, 30
6	Khubel Khan	Naeem Khan	"	"	Fair, tall, thin, 50 years
7	Nadir Khan	Kalay Khan	Puthan	"	Dark, middling size, thin, 50
8	Fida Hossein	Ruhumooddeen Hossein	Syud	Village of ph Sumbhul	Wheaten, tall, face smallpox marked, a toe cut off, 45
9	Rullan	Fida Hossein	Syud	"	Fair, middle size, ordinary stature, 25
10	Abdool Kadir Khan		Puthan	"	Dark, middle size, stout, 40
11	Gool Khan	Eessay Khan	"	Tureeno Suraee	Dark, middle size, middle stature, 45
12	Qasim Alee Khan	Huseen Alee Khan	"	"	Dark, middle size, 40
13	Mazoollah	Sunoollah	Sheik	"	Fair, short, smallpox marked + round face, 20
14	Chidda	Sunoollah	Sheik	"	Dark, smallpox marked face+ round, 18
15	Ilahu buksh	Munna	"	"	Dark, middle size, stout, round face, 20
16	Alehdad Khan	G. Khan	Puthan	"	Wheaten, tall, grey eyes, 50
17	Hidaetoola Khan	Mhd. Khan	"	"	Dark, short, thin, 26
18	Rumjaneec	Ullee	Toork	"	Dark, bald, short, stout, 22
19	Mozuffar Khan	Ashrut Khan	Puthan	"	Wheaten color, middle stature, stout, age 50 years
20	Meers	Budda	Tooruk	Tureeno Suraee	Dark, middle stature, stout, 25
21	Mohammed Seyed Khan	Akbur Khan	Puthan	"	Dark, short, thin, lame, 30

Names of ...	Father's name	Tribe	Residence	Description of person
22	Kuremooddeen	Sheikh	"	Wheaten, broad forehead, middle stature, 35
23	Ruhmooddeen	"	"	Wheaten, middle stature, 35
24	Gabroo	"	"	Dark, thin, middle stature, 19
25	Nutha	"	"	Dark, smallpox marks, tall, 40
26	Meer Khan	Puthan	"	Wheaten, middle size, 40
27	Nuzur Khan	"	"	Dark, short, middle size, 35
28	Surfraz Khan, alias Syfoo	"	"	Wheaten, middle stature, middle size, 23
29	Muetoolah Khan	"	"	Wheaten, middle stature, 23
30	Ruheen Khan	"	"	Wheaten, short, middle size, 28
31	Sheik Moomtoollah	"	"	Wheaten, smallpox marks, middle stature, 26
32	Juwun Beg	Mogul	"	Wheaten, bald, middle size, middle stature, 29
33	Rehman Khan	Puthan	"	Dark, middle stature, 28
34	Kuman Khan	"	"	Dark, middle stature, a finger burnt, 30
35	Gholam M. Khan	"	"	Wheaten, middle stature, stout, 40
36	Nizamooddeen Khan	"	"	Dark, short, thin, 35
37	Mohiboolah Khan	"	"	Wheaten, tall, one eye blind, 40
38	Mulhoo Khan	"	"	Wheaten, smallpox marks, tall, middle size, <sup>99</sup>
39	Syd ali	Syud	"	Wheaten, tall, 29
40	Dilawur ali	Syud	"	Dark, short, stout, 20
41	Chidda	"	"	Wheaten tall, stout, 40
42	Meaz ali Khan	Puthan	"	Wheaten, tall, 25, of 8 <sup>th</sup> Irregular Cavalry mutinied at Barielly
43	Sheikh Ejazooddeen	Kumboh	"	Wheaten color, middle size and stature, age 40 years
44	Irshadooddeen	"	"	Wheaten, broad forehead, middle size and stature, 25
45	Akbar Khan 2nd	Puthan	"	Black color, neither stout or thin, 30, was a sowar on some irregular cavalry

Names of ...	Father's name	Tribe	Residence	Description of person
46 Hidafoolla Khan 2nd	Sadoollah Khan	"	"	Wheaten color, middle size and stature, 50
47 Mahomed alee	Akhbar Khan	"	"	Wheaten color, short, neither stout or thin, 45
48 Buhadoor ali Khan	Abdool Nubi Khan	"	"	Wheaten, short, neither stout or thin, 25
49 Ayooob Khan	Fazool Khan	"	"	Wheaten color, tall, middle size, 50
50 Ahmud Ali Khan	Hussen Ali Khan	"	"	Dark color tall middle size, age 50
51 Mahomed Khan	Ahmud Ali Khan	"	"	Wheaten color, middle size and stature, 25
52 Chhotay Khan	Ahmud Ali Khan	"	"	Wheaten, middle size and stature, 22
53 Kulloo Khan	Ufra	Puthan	"	Dark complexion, neither stout or thin, 40
54 Meazoolla Khan	Gholam Ali Khan	"	"	Dark, short, middle size, 22
55 Kurreem oollah	Ruheem oollah	Carpenter	"	Wheaten color, short, middle size, 30
56 Julee ooddeen Khan	Khuleel Khan	Puthan	"	Wheaten, short, neither stout or thin, 25
57 Mahomed Khan	Musroollah Khan	Puthan	"	Wheaten color, broad forehead, tall, thin, 30
58 Kurreemoollah	Not known	Sheikh	Formerly lived at Dhubarra	Wheaten color, neither stout or thin, 40
59 Bukohay	Imambukoh	Sheikh	Tureeno Surace	Wheaten color, broad forehead, short, neither stout or thin, 40
60 Rehman Khan	Osman Khan	Puthan	"	Wheaten color, broad forehead, tall, stout, 30
61 Kalay Khan	Buhadoor Khan	"	"	Dark complexion, broad forehead, stout, middle stature, 60
62 Kurreemoollah 2nd	Pura	Sheikh	"	Wheaten color, tall, thin, age 20
63 Balugu	Pura	Sheikh	"	Wheaten color, tall, thin, age 25

NOTES

1. Nuwab Moost'ujab Khan Buhadoor, *The Life of Hafiz Ool-Moolk, Hafiz Rehmut Khan (Goolistan-i Rehmut)*, translated by Charles Elliott, London, 1831. The Rampur jagir or princely state sat between Moradabad to the west, Bareilly to the east, and touched Budaun to the south.
2. C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars, North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion 1770-1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
3. Herbert Compton, *European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, From 1784 to 1803*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892.
4. Busawan Lal, *Memoirs of the Puthan Soldier of Fortune...Amcer Khan*, trans. H.T. Prinsep, Calcutta, 1832.
5. Eurocentric observers, including writers of British Indian gazetteers, measured Hyderabad as larger than England and Scotland combined, or two-and-a-half times the size of Ireland, or one and two-fifths England and Wales.
6. L. No. 106, Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad to Macnaghton, Sec. to Govt. India, Ft. William, 10 May 1836, Foreign Dept/ Political Consultation, 6 June 1836, No. 106-111.
7. L. No. 106, Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad to Macnaghton, Sec. to Govt. India, Ft. William, 10 May 1836.
8. L. No. 107, Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad to Macnaghton, Sec. to Govt. India, Ft. William, 14 May 1836, Foreign Dept/ Political Consultation, 6 June 1836, No. 106-111.
9. L. No. 109, Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad to Macnaghton, Sec. to Govt. India, Ft. William, 20 May 1836, Foreign Dept/ Political Consultation, 6 June 1836, No. 106-111.
10. L. No. 110, Captain Cameron to Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad, 19 May 1836, Foreign Dept/ Political Consultation, 6 June 1836, No. 106-111.
11. L. No. 110, Captain Cameron to Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad, 19 May 1836.
12. L. No. 69, Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad to Macnaghten, Sec. to Govt. India, Ft. William, 30 July 1836, Foreign Dept/ Political Proceedings, 22 August 1836/69-75 P.C.
13. Letters 69, 70, note 'No. 1', Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad to Macnaghten, Sec. to Govt. India, Ft. William, 30 July 1836.
14. L. No. 74, Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad to Macnaghten, Sec. to Govt. India, Ft. William, 1 August 1836, Foreign Dept/ Political Proceedings, 22 August 1836/69-75 P.C.
15. L. No. 75, 'Translation of a note...received 27th July 1836', Stewart, Resident, Hyderabad to Macnaghten, Sec. to Govt. India, Ft. William, 1 August 1836, Foreign Dept/ Political Proceedings, 22 August 1836/69-75 P.C. Nizam Ali Khan (r.1761-1803) shifted the Hyderabad capital to

- Hyderabad city from Aurangabad and signed a mutual protection treaty with the Company.
16. From Correspondence listings under 'Rohillas' entry, 1845-47, Proceedings, Foreign Department Index, 1840-49, vol. K-Z, 1892, pp. 301, 1202.
  17. From Correspondence listings under 'Rohillas' entry, 1847-49, Proceedings, Foreign Department Index, 1840-49, vol. K-Z, 1892.
  18. From Correspondence listings under 'Rohillas' entry, 1850-52, Foreign Department Index, 1850-59, vol. IV, 1892, pp. 2553-4.
  19. See Chapter endnote for texts of old and new Proclamations.
  20. L. 153, File No. 148, from Fraser, Resident, Hyderabad, to Elliot, Sec. to Govt. India, Simla, 29 July 1851, Foreign Department/Political Consultation, 5 September 1851/148-151.
  21. Zamindars, desh mukhs, despandes, and kulkarnies were the local landlords and revenue farmers, agents, and intermediaries. *Hobson-Jobson* (1886), New Delhi: Rupa Publishing 1994, p. 248, noted a Mughal era, c.1590, comparison of regional land revenue official names. 'Coolcurnee', '...in this Soobah (Berar)...a chowdry they call Deysmuck; a Canoongou with them is Deyspandeh; a Mokuddem...they style Putiel; and a Putwaree they name Kulkurnee.' A talukdar was a larger landowner, landlord, or rights holder, in Hyderabad responsible to the Nizam for revenue collection.
  22. L. 153, File No. 148, from Fraser, Resident, Hyderabad, to Elliot, Sec. to Govt. India, Simla, 29 July 1851.
  23. L. No. 97, File 60, from Evans, Pol. Asst., Nimar to Hamilton, Resident, Indore, 11 March 1851, Foreign Department/Political Consultation, 9 May 1851/60-61.
  24. 'Hyderabad State' entry, *Imperial Gazetteer*, vol. XIII, 1908, p. 280.
  25. See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence, 1857-1859*, Moscow: Progressive Publishers, 1978. Disraeli quote, p. 45.
  26. See discussion in Thomas Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj, Northern India in the Nineteenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979, Chapter 6.
  27. See Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj, Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, Introduction, pp. 1-18.
  28. Marx and Frederick Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence*, p. 50.
  29. The districts, all east of the Ganges, were listed as Bijnore, Moradabad, Budaon, Bareilly, and Shahjahanpoor. See Appendices: Chapter 3, Appendix 1 for colonial era regional details.
  30. Charles Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the North Western Provinces*, London: Longman, 1858. See Appendix A, 'From Mr. George Christian's



- Report on the Census of the North-Western Provinces...prepared in 1852-53'. Statistics and table end of chapter from data in Christian's Report tables facing page 180.
31. Bijnor had 3,030, Moradabad 3,484; Budaun 2,232; Bareilly 3,563; and Shahjahanpur 2,785.
  32. 'The sirdars advised him to entrench himself at Kuttra, and to delay an action, as his army was daily increasing by the arrival of the Rajpoot tribes...'. Nuwab Moost'ujab Khan Buhadoor, *The Life of Hafiz ool-Moolk, Hafiz Rehmut Khan (Goolistan-i Rehmut)*, p. 115.
  33. In 1879 Pilibhit District was divided from Bareilly District. By 1908 Pilibhit had three *tahsils* (Pilibhit, Bisalpur, Puranpur) and a population counted as 82 per cent Hindu, 17 per cent Muslim. See *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908, vol. XX, pp. 136ff.
  34. No. 137-138, 'Narrative of events for the week ending the 16th May 1858', Foreign Department/Secret Branch, Consultation 25 June 1858.
  35. No. 139-140, 'Narrative of events in the North Western Provinces for the week ending the 23rd May 1858', Foreign Department/Secret Branch, Consultation 25 June 1858.
  36. 'Bijnor District', *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1908, vol. VIII, p. 195.
  37. No. 6, 6 April 1858, from Governor-General to Court of Directors, Consultation 25 June 1858.
  38. Home Department, Index to Proceedings, 1858-64, vol. 1, 'Punishments', Home Dept., Judicial Branch, 11 March 1859, 12-14.
  39. No. 1747, 'List of Rebels...'; from Wilson, Commissioner on Special duty to Edmonstone, Sec. to Govt. India, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858, No. 1687-2017 (vol. 1443).
  40. No. 1746, Letter No. 181, from Wilson, Commissioner on Special Duty to Edmonstone, Sec. to Govt. India, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858, No. 1687-2017 (vol. 1443).
  41. Tarin Kot was provincial capital of Uruzgan Province in modern Afghanistan.
  42. *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1908, Vol. XVII, 'Moradabad District' entry, p. 424.
  43. No. 1747, 'List of Rebels...', Wilson to Edmonstone, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  44. No. 1746, Letter No. 181, from Wilson to Edmonstone, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  45. Bulandshahr district was west of the Ganges and the core Rohilkhand area. The 1901 census counted the district as 79 per cent Hindu and only 19 per cent Muslim ('Bulandshahr District', *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1908, vol. IX, p. 48ff). But the historic clustering of Pashtun migrants in urban areas was shown in Khurja town in the southern Khurja tahsil of Bulandshahr, where 'The principal inhabitants are Khesghi Pathans and Churvwal Baniyas...' ('Khurja Tahsil', *Imperial Gazetteer*, 1908, vol. XV, p. 296).
  46. See 'List' in Appendices: Chapter 3, Appendix 2.

47. Sayyids claimed descent directly from the Prophet Muhammad. Shaikhs claimed descent from the companions of the Prophet.
48. Ages of the 63 men included under 20 years old (2), 20-29 (24), 30-39 (13), 40-49 (16), 50-60 (7), no age given (1).
49. NAI, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, Fort William, 31 December 1858, Letter No. 1747, 'List of Rebels...'. A sowar was a cavalryman.
50. 'Budaun District, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. II, p. 238ff, see Table II in chapter appendices.
51. Thomas Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj*, p. 403.
52. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, p. 179, f.n. 4.
53. No. 1749, from Wilson to Edmonstone, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
54. The four proclamations mentioned are partially translated in Nos. 1750, 1751, 1752, 1753, from Wilson to Edmonstone, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
55. No. 1750, 'Proclamation issued under the seal of Birjees Kudur, Walee of Oudh, to all the Moosulmans residing in Oudh, Kuthair, Rampoor, Moorabad, etc.', from Wilson to Edmonstone, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
56. No. 1751, 'Translation of a Proclamation issued by Khan Buhadoor Khan...'; from Wilson to Edmonstone, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
57. No. 1752, 'Proclamation of Jihad...issued by the Imam, named Leeaquit Alee of Allahabad to both great and low men of the creed of Islam...'; ('vernacular' text, with Arabic verse), from Wilson to Edmonstone, 27 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
58. No. 1736, April 1858 correspondence, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
59. 'Sudder Ameen, i.e. chief Ameen. This was the designation of the second class of native Judge in the classification...superseded...1868. Under that system the highest rank of native Judge was Principal Sudder Ameen...'; *Hobson-Jobson* (1886), 1994, p. 862.
60. No. 1740, from Wilson to Edmonstone, 7 June 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
61. No. 1741, from Wilson to Edmonstone, 8 April 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
62. *Ibid.*
63. Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, pp. 128-33.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
65. No. 1745, from Wilson to Edmondstone, 25 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858. No. 1745 section, 'Translation of a petition dated 5th Ramzan 1274 Hijree, corresponding

- with Tuesday 20th April 1858, from Imam Noor Khan, resident of Raepoor Muhullah Mow Rushudabad, found in the Duftur of Khan Buhudoor Khan on the 8th May 1858.'
66. No. 1745, from Wilson to Edmondstone, 25 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858. No. 1745 section, 'Translation of a petition dated 5th Ramzan 1274 Hijree.'
  67. No. 1745, from Wilson to Edmondstone, 25 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858. No. 1745 section, 'Translation of a petition dated 6th Ramzan 1274 Hijree.'
  68. No. 1745, from Wilson to Edmondstone, 25 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858. No. 1745 section, 'Translation of a petition dated 6th Ramzan 1274 Hijree.'
  69. No. 1745, from Wilson to Edmondstone, 25 May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  70. No. 32, 'Translation', from Beharee Lal, 30 November 1857, Foreign Department, Secret Branch, Proceedings 29 January 1858, Part I (vol. 824).
  71. No. 32, 'Translation', from Beharee Lal, 30 November 1857, Foreign Department, Secret Branch, Proceedings 29 January 1858, Part I (vol. 824).
  72. No. 1776, Wilson quoted in 'Descriptive Roll of a Risaldar....', from Mackenzie, 8th Regt., Irr. Cavalry to Ft. William, May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  73. No. 1776, 'Descriptive Roll of a Risaldar....', May 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  74. Thanadar, The chief of a police station or thana. 'Burkundauze, An armed retainer; an armed policeman, or other armed unmounted employee' of a civil department,...', *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 130.
  75. No. 1770, from Muir, Sec. to Govt. North Western Provinces, to Commissioner of Rohilkhand, 7 July 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  76. No. 1802, from Wilson, forwarding 'Report of cases tried by the Special Commissioner....' and remarks by special commissioner A. Shakespear, 3 November 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  77. No. 1826, from Edmonstone, Sec. to Govt. of India, Allahabad, to Wilson, Commissioner on Special Duty, 15 October 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  78. No. 1790A, from Wilson, Commissioner on Special Duty to 'Commissioner of Rohilkund, Meeruth, Agrah....', 21 July 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.
  79. No. 1918, from Osborne, Political Agent, Rewah to Edmonstone, Allahabad, 13 October 1858, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858.

80. No. 34, from Paske, Off. Sec. to Chief Comm., Punjab to Edmonstone, Sec. to Govt of India, 23 November 1857, Foreign Department, Secret Proceedings, 29 January 1858, vol. 824.
81. No. 35, 'Abstract', from Paske to Edmonstone, 23 November 1857, Foreign Department, Secret Proceedings, 29 January 1858, vol. 824.
82. Setaram, *From Sepoy to Subadar: being the life and adventures of Subedar Sita Ram, a native officer of the Bengal army, written and related by himself*, translated by Lt. Col. Norgate, Lahore 1873, p. 73.
83. Setaram, *From Sepoy to Subadar*, p. 33.
84. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj*, p. 153.
85. Charles Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the North Western Provinces*, London: Longman, 1858, pp. 126-7.
86. Charles Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the North Western Provinces*, pp. 132-3.
87. File No. 149, 'Translation of a Proclamation...', with correspondence dated 29 July 1851, from Fraser, Resident, Hyderabad, to Elliot, Sec. to Govt. India, Simla, Foreign Department/Political Consultation, 5 September 1851/148-151. Sahukar: a banker, financier, money-lender.
88. 'Rusooms' were customary payments, fees, and dues locally negotiated and paid.
89. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. VII, 'Bareilly District' and 'Bareilly City' entries.
90. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. II, pp. 236ff. Bisauli quotation, p. 240.
91. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. IX, pp. 48ff.
92. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. XVII.
93. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. XVII, p. 424, city p. 429.
94. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. XX, pp. 136ff.
95. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. XXI, pp. 185ff.
96. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. XXII, p. 201.
97. Tarin Serai village, later Sambhal tahsil, Moradabad district. Also, later Bulandshahr district.
98. No. 1747, from J.C. Wilson, Commissioner on Special Duty, 27 May 1858, Camp Moradabad, Foreign Department/Political Proceedings, 31 December 1858 (Vol. 1443), INA, New Delhi.
99. No age given.

# 4

## Colonial Diaspora and Pashtun Adaptation

After 1858, developing colonial policies from prisoner transportation to contract labour exportation, increasingly integrated the society of South Asia into imperial political economies operating on a global scale. Pashtuns found roles in locations across the Indian Ocean and beyond as plantation workers, transporters, policemen, and soldiers. Much of this migration was permanent as distance and expense limited return options. But many did return to homes after labour contracts expired or after sometimes prosperous careers abroad allowed reunions with families and home communities. Some migrants circulated between home and abroad several times over many years, often in pursuit of yet another distant opportunity for subsistence or potential advantage.

The revolt of 1857–8 ended with new colonial disciplinary methods and structures created to separate and punish suspected and convicted 'rebels'. By mid-1858, imperial officials debated and proposed new forms of 'transportation' out of India for prisoners. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, selected criminals had been shipped to prison and confinement in the colonial Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang (Prince of Wales Island), and Malacca. Convicts had been shipped eastward from Madras until 1835, and from Bombay during the 1839–56 period.<sup>1</sup> The revolt in 1857 led to discussions about new prison colonies on a major scale, especially in the Andaman Islands. Punishment of those led astray by rebel elites would be followed by rehabilitation and subordination to modern imperial systems of social control.<sup>2</sup>

In June 1858, the Awadh judicial commissioner estimated that only twenty-eight men had been 'sentenced to transportation' since colonial armies began the re-conquest of Awadh. This low number was attributed to 'want of possession of the country'. With colonial sentiments forbidding either simple pardons or tens of thousands of executions, the question remained of what to do about individuals who had belonged to units or communities implicated in revolt. The Judicial Commissioner hoped that after the full reoccupation of Awadh, 'in the first year 20,000 of the sepoys' could be exiled via transportation.<sup>3</sup> Over time he wished to transport up to fifty thousand men 'from Oude, principally sepoys', but perhaps also 'Goosains, Mewatees, and other incorrigible plunderers'. If all who deserved it were exiled, he thought the Andamans would be unsuitable and that 'some place more fitted to colonization' might be preferred.<sup>4</sup> In the end, the Andamans were developed as a prison colony. The islands received thousands of convicted mutineers and soon other criminal and political prisoners. By 1900, there were up to 12,000 transported men and women in the Andamans.<sup>5</sup>

In December 1858 'Nabob Kadir Ali Khan of Shahjahanpore' surrendered to the British. He was convicted as a major leader of the revolt for having served in May 1857 as local 'Nizam' of Shahjahanpur. He received a sentence of 'transportation for life' to Port Blair in the Andamans. The discussion of his conviction and its review revealed complex motives, social dynamics, and identities behind any façade of simple 'Mutiny'.

On the day that the colonial army regiment revolted in Shahjahanpur, Kadir Ali Khan sent for some of the soldiers and fed them as guests. He then went to the military cantonments and visited the unit 'soobadars'. He convinced them to 'acknowledge' his hereditary right, 'to the Nizamut', based on 'the prestige of his descent from a founder of the city'.<sup>6</sup> But his local claim to authority, derived from Rohilla ancestry, was not enough. When Khan Bahadur Khan declared himself Nawab of Bareilly, he dispatched Ghulam Kadir Khan as his deputy in Shahjahanpur. In mid-June, Kadir Ali Khan was forced to give up the local fort

and control of the local administration. He played little or no role in the remainder of the troubled period.<sup>7</sup>

In 1861 the British wanted to determine whether or not Kadir Ali Khan had received too high a sentence. Appealing his sentence, he claimed he had only ruled under compulsion from 'the mutinous sepoys'. Statements from local Muslims, 'his own country men', perhaps of Rohilla heritage, hinted that he was not a major leader. His manner and appearance suggested to the British that he was not. Though the result of his appeal decision remained unclear, Kadir Ali Khan's moment of return in 1857 again revealed the lingering prestige of Rohilla lineages long in political decline. His displacement within weeks again illustrated that internal factionalism within a narrow Pashtun elite had not disappeared with the 1774 overthrow of Rohilla political authority. The Rohilla identity would ebb and flow through the rest of the nineteenth century even as individuals pursued ever more wide-ranging agendas.

After 1858, contract labour exportation generated the largest volume of late nineteenth century migration from South Asia. With the abolition of slavery in the 1830s in European colonies producing sugar and spices, massive new flows of contracted workers circulated out from British India to the Caribbean, Africa, and the Indian Ocean. Workers were recruited, indentured under five-year contracts, and exploited, even as they searched for opportunity. In 1834 only seventy-five men from India immigrated to Mauritius on multi-year contracts. Before the end of the indenture system in the early twentieth century, Mauritius received an estimated 453,000 Indian labourers. British Guiana (now Guyana) took 238,909, Natal received 152,184, and 60,965 went to Fiji.<sup>8</sup>

British Indian armies increasingly policed the stability of these many imperial and economic interests, often in competition with other European powers. As early as 1801, six thousand sepoys from India were in Cairo and Alexandria with British military units opposing French expansion.<sup>9</sup> East India Company naval expeditions to the Gulf against Company denounced Ras Al

Khaimah and Qasimi 'piracy' included among the British colonial forces, in 1809, '528 natives of India' and, in 1819, 1,424 'sepoys'.<sup>10</sup> Pashtuns in various roles were drawn into many of such colonially driven interregional and global movements.

By the early nineteenth century numerous Indian Ocean and South Asian sailors, indentured servants, transported prisoners, and others were visiting and settling in Australia.<sup>11</sup> 'Zimran Wriam', born in Hyderabad, India, was a 'Third Fleet convict' killed in Tasmania in 1813. In 1813, 'John Hassan', a sailor from the wrecked ship *Endeavour*, worked as a labourer in Port Dalrymple, Tasmania. In 1818, 'Sua Sultan' and 'Mohomet Cossoms', two other Muslim sailors or *lascars* from the *Endeavour*, resided in Tasmania. In 1829, 'Chan Homed' (Khan Muhammad?) and 'Modsam Nochackaner' ('Indian') arrived in Australia as indentured servants. In 1837, 'Hassan Sheikh', born in Bombay, and 'Siedy Maccors Mahomed', born in Bussarah, were convicted of mutiny in Mauritius and in 1838 arrived in Sydney after being sentenced to life transportation to the Australian prison colony. In 1837, a Sydney newspaper mentioned 'Mr. O'Dean Cingalese priest' (an imam from Ceylon?).<sup>12</sup>

From 1860, South Asians, and especially Pashtuns, became increasingly important in the exploration of the interior of Australia, including in the maintenance of long distance communication and transportation in desert and mining districts. In 1860, twenty-four camels and three men were imported from Karachi to Melbourne to transport the famous Burke and Wills expedition from South to North Australia. The expedition ended in tragedy with the deaths of several Europeans. 'Dost Mahomet', a 'Pathan from Peshawar', also died on the expedition. 'K.B. Morad Khan', a Karachi merchant was said to have sent the first camels and drivers to Australia.<sup>13</sup> 'Afghans' are listed as members of the 1872-3 Warburton expedition, the 1873 W.C. Gosse expedition, the 1875-6 Giles expedition, the 1891 Elder Scientific expedition in Western Australia, and the 1896-7 Calvert Expedition in Western Australia.<sup>14</sup>



In the 1880s–90s, Australian and ‘Afghan’ entrepreneurs and operators set up and supplied major transportation companies and way stations. Camel trains carried freight and mail between railhead cities, interior towns and mining camps. At least four major shipments of livestock crossed the Indian Ocean. In 1887, ‘Hadji Ahmed Rahmin’, an ‘Indian importer’, landed a shipload of 353 camels in South Australia. In 1892, one hundred and forty-one camels from Karachi arrived in Fremantle, West Australia. In 1892 ‘Abdul Wade’, an Afghan merchant from Quetta and in Australia since 1879, imported 340 camels and 59 Afghans on a single steamship. He built a mosque in Adelaide, South Australia and in the 1920s retired to Kabul a wealthy man. In 1893, ‘Jummo Khan’, a Sindh merchant, shipped 400 camels and ‘about fifty Afghans’ to Port Augusta in South Australia.

In his biographical study of over 1,000 Afghan and South Asian migrants to Australia in the century 1830–1930, Gabor Korvin accumulated evidence of the rapid confusion of primary identities that occurred as those with a migrant heritage within South Asia left for the wider world and had their lives recorded by foreign officials and record keepers. Australian documents and histories could list a man as ‘Abdul Kadir Shaikh Koreish’, a ‘Pishori Afghan from Karachi, Sind’.<sup>15</sup> In British India would he be a Shaikh in the gazetteer census tables, as well as a resident of Karachi, perhaps self-identified as an Afghan, with family roots in Peshawar? ‘Delawar Pashwarie’ was recorded in Australia in 1898 as ‘Indian’. Perhaps his name had been simply Delawar, and a second name recorded by immigration bureaucrats from his place of origin. Perhaps he was of a Rohilla family, once from Peshawar, but long settled in ‘India’.

Informal processes of migration and record-keeping left sources that confused the ethnic and regional origins of individuals. ‘Abdul Majid’ was born 1855 in Peshawar and listed as ‘Indian’ and a jeweller. He may have been a non-Pashtun, perhaps speaking a language of Peshawar city, Urdu or Hindko. Akbar Khan, called ‘Jack Akbar’ in Australia, was an ‘Afghan from Punjab’ who arrived in Australia in 1894. He could well have been

a Rohilla from east of the Indus. Because the North West Frontier Province was not split from the Punjab districts until 1901, he could also have been a Pashtun from Peshawar. 'Belooch Khan' was listed as a 'Pathan from Peshawar'. How often were camel drivers of diverse South Asian ethnicity named 'Baluch' or 'Afghan' simply out of convenience for white Australians?

Korvin's biographical sketches gleaned identities listed by place of birth, ethnicity, and lineage. Seventy-one were listed as 'Pishori Afghan', apparently Pashtuns from Peshawar. Thirty-five others were listed as born in Peshawar. Were they all Pashtuns from the Peshawar region? There were about 240 others listed as Afghan, while another 110 or so were listed as born in Karachi or Balochistan, or as 'Balooch'. The vast majority of the biographies were of Afghan or Baloch Muslims, though a few others were from the Punjab, Bengal, and other South Asian locations. These included Sikhs, Hindus, and a Parsi or two.

Hundreds of ethnic Pashtun and Baloch cameleers were imported from territories that by 1901 were designated as parts of the state of Afghanistan, the British Indian NWFP or the Sindh region of the British Indian Bombay Presidency. Afghan lineages, birthplaces, and identities recorded in often obscure spellings included Ghilji, Pishori, Durrani, Solaiman Khel, Daftanie, Karkarh, Kharotie, Kohatie, Afridi, Laghmani, Jallabad, Ghuznee, Shinwari, Dera, Kabul, Kandahar, MayKhel Khan, Khurrahan, Dargai, 'Syed Afghan', Swat, Tokhie, Bajori, and 'Sheikh Afghan'. Was a 'Minanie Afghan' meant to indicate a lineage, or perhaps the identity of a Mian, a religious figure?

At least six were listed as Tarin Afghans ('Tareen', 'Tureen'). The most accomplished of these, remembered in records with rare details of a long life, was 'Mohammad Hasan Musakhan'. Born in Karachi in 1863,<sup>16</sup> he attended universities in Karachi and Bombay and taught before arriving in Australia in 1896. In 1904-6 he sold books in Perth. In 1904 he began organizing the Perth mosque that opened in 1906. He spoke English, Pashto, Urdu, Persian, Sindhi, and some Arabic. He was 'Representative of the 'Camel Men' at the Royal Functions in 1896, 1901, 1911,

1927.' In 1911 he returned to India for an extended, three-year visit. He wrote a short history of Islam in Australia, 1863–1932 and represented the small highly educated group in the community.

Most early Pashtun immigrants worked with camels, including carting wool. Over time some became farmers or travelling salesmen. Hawkers often used camels to haul wagons over desert tracks. 'Said Ali', called the 'last wandering Afghan' in western Queensland was a hawker until the 1940s when he became a truck driver.<sup>17</sup> An Afghan shantytown, 'Ghantown', was often segregated away from white residents of towns and rural communities. Other immigrants worked in cities, including as shop assistants.

Over time, Pashtuns followed patterns of migration familiar within their ethnic group and other Indian Ocean migrant communities. Many returned to South Asia after a few years, some after decades upon retirement. Many left families in South Asia, whom they supported, often for decades. Some brought sons to Australia. Many married locally, with different stories detailing marriages to 'white' women, 'aboriginal' women, and women who were the daughters of English fathers and aboriginal mothers. Some Pashtuns became quite secular, adopting western names and clothes. Many contributed to local mosques, including those listed as supporting the Perth mosque dedicated in 1905. At least one murder of a woman was blamed on 'Puchtunwali' revenge.

Veterans of service in British Indian armies, as soldiers and transport workers, migrated to Australia. One migrant, 'Charlie Sadadeen', born in Balochistan, handled camels in 1880 during the British offensive on Kandahar in the Second Afghan War. 'Del Khan', known as 'Old Soldier', was a copper prospector murdered in Queensland in 1928. Migrants with training in colonial service helped develop Australian infrastructure. 'Faiz Jemadar Moaomet', of a prominent Durrani Pashtun family, was probably born in Kandahar in the 1840s.<sup>18</sup> He served the British Indian army in transport units and supervised telegraph and harbour construction.

He moved to Australia and ran major transport stations in South and West Australia. He also helped organize the Perth mosque.

Pashtun migration narratives to Australia were matched by stories collected from South Africa to the Caribbean. South Asian contract labourers worked on sugar plantations in South Africa, while other Indians arrived as merchants or, more rarely, as professionals. In 1906 in South Africa, the migrant lawyer Gandhi mobilized twenty-four men for an Indian Ambulance Corps to support the government in the Natal Zulu uprising. He recruited four Gujaratis, plus 'ex-indentured men from South India', and one 'free Pathan'.<sup>19</sup> Gandhi wrote of the two or three thousand Indians, including 'several Pathans', who peacefully marched across the Transvaal border from Natal during the civil disobedience campaign of 1913.<sup>20</sup>

Until political agitation, including from Gandhi, ended indentured labourer exports from British India in 1917, ships from India transported contract workers to British colonial sugar and commodity plantations in Malaya, Fiji, Sri Lanka, and the Caribbean.<sup>21</sup> From 1873-1916, about 34,300 South Asians were contracted and shipped to Dutch plantations in Suriname in the Caribbean.<sup>22</sup> British ships carried thousands from Calcutta to the Suriname port of Paramaribo. The workers were often poor and landless villagers of all religions and from every Indian region. They included some apparent Rohillas from north India and others from the Peshawar valley.

Dutch records of 'Hindostaanse' labour migration to Suriname listed indentured workers by physical characteristics, including skin colour (*huidskleur*), then by nationality (*nationaliteit*, 'Brits Indie'), district, police post, and village.<sup>23</sup> They were recorded under occupation as being fit for field or factory work, or both, (*veld of fabriekarbeid*). One category noted religion or caste (*godsdienst of kaste*). Details of ships taken and contract dates were listed with occasional personal details. The records included several hundred persons named 'Khan', a common usage among Pashtuns and Indian Muslims.<sup>24</sup> Incomplete records hinted at complex personal, family, and migration histories.

On 4 July 1877 the English ship *Clive* sailed for Suriname from Calcutta. It arrived 29 August. Among the indentured workers landed in Paramaribo were 'Jamin Shaw' (Zamin Shah?), 25, son of Modut Khan, from Shawajgunah in the Peshawar district and Alladin, 25, son of Girwarkhan, from Bareilly district. On 30 August they were assigned to different Dutch plantations. The contracts of both workers ended 30 August 1882. Perhaps indicating failure in the colony, Zamin Shah's record included a final note, 'vertrokken naar' (left to) 'Calcutta...op 30 Oct 1879...' Alladin died within seven months, on 23 March 1878, after being hospitalized for dysentery.

Abdul Malik, 26 years old, son of Gulam Rasul, was from a village near 'Mardain' (Mardan) in 'Pichaur' (Peshawar) district. He sailed 12 May 1913 from Calcutta on the steamer *Mutlah*. The day he arrived, 23 June 1913, he was contracted to a plantation for five years. On the same ship was a 'Pattan' woman listed only as Zizan, 24 years old, daughter of Mazid, from 'Bar' village in Bareilly district. The day she arrived in Paramaribo she was contracted to another 'Planter' for five years. In late October 1914 she delivered a child, but the baby died within two weeks. Zizan returned to Calcutta in spring 1920.<sup>25</sup> Unlike other women, her record did not list a husband.

Others from the Rohilla districts migrated as well. The young and uneducated served as labour, while those with education and leadership skills might advance their prospects. Eighteen year-old 'Habibarrhman' from Rampur State sailed from Calcutta in 1907. Abdul Hafiz Khan, age 22, also from Rampur State, landed in Paramaribo in 1913.<sup>26</sup> Rehman Khan (1874-1972), literate from a religious education, was hired at age 24 as a headman or *saradara* to lead a sugar plantation labour crew. As a community teacher he taught Hindu and Muslim subjects and literature. His numerous written works included an autobiography. Records reduced complex lives to short, often tragic summaries. In April 1894 Nozirun, 30, son of Babookhan, and also from Bareilly arrived in Paramaribo. Listed as a 'Pathan', Nozirun was assigned

to the plantation of Landbouw Maatschappij de Eendracht on the Cottica River. Nozirun drowned in September 1899.

In January 1907 Kalay Khan arrived in Paramaribo from Bareilly. He married Boodhooa in 1914 and had two children, Lalamath and Warisali. He experienced a common form of subtle bureaucratic assimilation. Colonial record keepers reordered personal identities and blurred family histories as they gradually required workers to select official first and last names. In 1957, Kalay Khan chose a family name (*geslachtsnaam*), Kalaykhan, and a first name (*voornam*), Lalmahamad.

The numerous Khans or sons and daughters of Khans listed in the Dutch immigration records included many from the old Rohilkhand region (Budaun, Moradabad, Bulandshahr, Shahjahanpur, Farrukhabad, and other districts). Most were recorded as Muslims, though a quick survey found twenty-eight with a 'godsdienst of kaste' of 'Pathan', 'Pattan', or 'Mosulman (Pathan)'. Individuals noted from Rampur went to Suriname in 1880, 1888, 1893, and 1913. But home listing of Rampur perhaps disguised years of internal migration within British India, leading finally to Calcutta and recruiting agents for the Caribbean. Karamat, a 'Pathan' of Shahjahanpur district and son of Jawan Khan, shipped from Calcutta for Paramaribo in 1894. He was recorded with the nationality of 'Fiji'. He left Calcutta for Suriname at age 35, perhaps having returned from an earlier life or birth on a Fiji sugar plantation.

Individuals and families circulated across a global network of labour demand and added new dimensions to family identities. Yajeerun, 'Pathan', daughter of Hajareekhan, of Trinidad nationality, departed with her family in 1899 from Calcutta for Suriname. Perhaps the father, (Hijri Khan?) had fulfilled one contract in the Caribbean and wished to return to the region. When other workers finished their indentures many accepted local parcels of farm land where offered, in lieu of return fares promised in contracts. Across the migrant labour diaspora, South Asian communities of free subjects developed, and family connections generated new chains of migration. Recruitment of

new workers by returned and retired workers acting as agents was also common. Inevitably senior, experienced migrants acting as agents or foremen, *sardars*, were not above exploiting their contacts and specialized knowledge to extract fees and commissions.

In 1913, Wahid Khan, 24, arrived from Bareilly on the S.S. *Mutlah*. On 12 May, when the S.S. *Mutlah* left Calcutta with Wahid Khan, it also carried Din Mohamed, 17, 'Pattan' of Lucknow; Naziban, 36, daughter of Mabullah Khan and a Muslim woman from Baduan district; Iftekarali Khan, 22, Pattan of Janhora district; Nankoo, 22, a 'Pathan' from Gonda district; Noormohamed, 22, a Pathan from Etah district; Kalo Bibi, 30, daughter of Chandkhan and a Pattan from Dholpur district; Abdul Hafiz Khan, 22, of Muradabad district; and Martazarkhan, 27, Pathan of Lucknow. All eight were recruited in the name of the colonial government for allocation to specific plantations on arrival in Paramaribo.

On arrival on 23 June 1913 Wahid Khan, Din Muhammad, and Naziban were sent to the Alliance plantation. Wahid Khan's file included details as late as 1949 when he registered first and last names. Din Muhammad returned to Calcutta in 1920. Naziban married Mohabir in 1919 and they returned to Calcutta in 1929. Iftikar Ali Khan and Nankoo were sent to different plantations of H.M.D. Robertson. Nankoo's last file notation was from 1954 when he took the first name of Ibrahim. The last four migrants were assigned to M. Welle, agent for the 'Sur. Cult. Mij. Dordrecht en Peperpot'. Nur Muhammad worked on contract until December 1920. His descendants were recorded into the 1970s. Kalo Bibi married Abdul in 1919. They sailed for Calcutta in 1920.

How did the end of British Indian export of indentured labour in 1917 affect these workers? Were informal communications links with families and home regions cut? If overproduction of sugar had caused a 'world slump' in prices as early as the late 1860s,<sup>27</sup> how were more highly connected labour and commodity markets, and workers, affected by the turmoil of the First World War in the 1914-18 period? Did workers finishing contracts after

1917 find themselves in demand as free labourers? More personally, the migration experience shaped and marked individual lives. Banoo, 25, a Pathan woman from Orai district had no relations listed on her migration records. She departed for Paramaribo 27 February 1912. In September 1912 she delivered a son, Mohamad Ali. With no record of a husband, had a newly pregnant, unmarried Banoo fled India for a new life? Or had details of an undistinguished woman's family life simply gone unrecorded, even upon Banoo's return to Calcutta in 1920?

Hanifa, 21, arrived in Paramaribo in November 1907. She travelled with her husband, Dillu Khan, 25, and her daughters, Sulemia, 4, and Kulsom, 1. Hanifa had five children in Suriname before returning in 1920. A son born in 1909 died in 1912. Another born in March 1915 died in September 1916. Was this experience of birth, and tragic child mortality, any different in Suriname than it might have been in British India?

The simplicity and order of the migration records revealed such biographical details amidst routine notices of arrivals and departures. But the records also included one biographical category that recognized the role of the colonial state in enforcing a labour system one step removed from slavery. Each personal record included an entry for *verzetsactiviteiten*, resistance activities. Indentured workers who ran away from assigned plantations (*Gedeserteerd*) or committed crimes against the state were tried and sentenced. Jaseekhan, son of Jasoofkhan (Yusuf Khan) from Saharanpur district completed one term of indenture, 1914-19, on the Alliance plantation, but deserted the Mon Tresor plantation in February 1922, during a second contract. Underpaid, abused, underemployed or unhappy workers fled from contracts to pursue other opportunities. In 1930, after an inquiry, no charges were found pending against Jaseekhan. In 1936, he 'selected' an official first name, Joesoef, and family name, Jasiengkhan.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the overarching power of European direction and intervention in South Asian politics, business, and socio-cultural affairs did not always mean the



extinction of older patterns of interregional connection and agency. For centuries regions of India had fully interacted with networks of circulation operating across the Indian Ocean. Even as British and European capital and power swept aside or subordinated many earlier intermediary collaborators, indigenous interregional competition and networks survived.<sup>28</sup> One illustrative narrative follows below.

In the decades after 1858, the ambitiously hegemonic British Indian state found it had as much trouble asserting a monopoly of coercive power over the politics of the western Indian Ocean as it had earlier trying to eliminate subcontinental traditions of migration for administrative and military service. For twenty years, starting from the 1860s, British officials struggled to understand, interdict, and selectively patronize Arab and Rohilla circulation connecting India and the Gulf, especially between the Hyderabad state in South India and the Hadhrami districts along the Yemeni coast.

The oldest history of Indian Ocean trade included Arab exchange with India.<sup>29</sup> Seasonal monsoon winds and specialized regions of textile, spice, and commodity production drew pre-Islamic, then Muslim merchants from the Gulf and the Arabian Hadhramaut coast to the Malabar coast, or Kerala region, of southwest India. This migration occurred within a larger system of interregional circulation that connected eastward to Southeast Asia and China and westward to the African coast and through Alexandria and Cairo, to the Mediterranean. By the eighth century, Muslim traders had settled as far as China.<sup>30</sup> In the winter of 1342, the traveller-scholar Ibn Battuta counted thirteen Chinese ships in the Malabar port of Calicut.<sup>31</sup>

For centuries, Muslim traders settled in Malabar ports, their communities described by Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century and by Portuguese travellers after 1600. Flows of goods and traders, including Gujaratis from the north-western Indian coast, had always travelled west and established themselves in ports, important towns, and cities.<sup>32</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century Hadhrami religious figures had settled in Malabar ports as social

leaders of Muslim trading communities typically living under regional Hindu dynasties.<sup>33</sup>

These religious figures, authoritative in Islamic scholarship and the Arabic language also diffused across South India during the Mughal period even as South Arabian soldiers and recruits arrived searching for service in regional Indian principalities. With the decentralization of the Mughal empire after 1707, and the rise of regional power centres, typically 'military oligarchies', south Indian rulers began to employ thousands of Arab recruits as politically neutral soldiers. Arab garrisons held important forts and posts for maharajas and rulers in Gujarat, Nagpur, and in regional Maratha principalities.<sup>34</sup>

Though no more than ten thousand Arab recruits were active in India in the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century period, they had a disproportionate political influence derived from martial skills and reputation.<sup>35</sup> Just as the final defeat of the Rohilkhand rulers in 1774 disrupted patterns of Rohilla military service patronage and employment, so the final defeat of leading Maratha states in the Anglo-Maratha war in 1818 drove Arab military entrepreneurs outside the widening British colonial sphere of influence. Some returned to Arabia, but others stayed, including Arab-Indian descendents given refuge by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

In Hyderabad, late eighteenth century treaties with the East India Company had culminated in a 1798 subsidiary alliance agreement that installed a permanent British resident at the court and, as mentioned earlier, a Company armed force led by British officers, the Hyderabad contingent, paid for by the Nizam. A long period of Hyderabad state political instability from 1803 to 1853 meant that by the post-1858 period the basic structures of order and revenue collection were still personalized and contingent. Political power was centred on the court, but relied upon the equivalent of local mansabdars to stabilize the districts. Arab recruits became bodyguards to the Nizam, as well as soldiers in the field. By 1849, the Nizam's army, a separate force from the Company contingent, had perhaps five thousand Arabs.

The court relied heavily on Indian bankers (*sahukars*) and loans for financing. These debts were secured by the allocation of authority to collect the revenue of specific districts. This revenue farming needed coercive agents of collection and Arab agent-soldiers joined Sikhs, Rohillas, and Pashtuns as vital components of state authority. For each of these communities the shift was quickly made from being agents of money-lenders to becoming direct sources of loans for *taluqdars*, townsmen, and villagers. One British Resident in Hyderabad noted Arab loans in the 1840s and 1850s went 'to borrowers of every rank and class,' and that to settle debts estates would be seized and individuals would be imprisoned.<sup>36</sup>

As discussed earlier, all through the nineteenth century British Residents and officials in Calcutta attempted to disarm and dismiss such recruits, especially Rohillas, claiming that the Contingent was enough to defend the Nizam's court. But despite direct orders from more than one Nizam and many *diwans* over decades from the 1830s, such recruits were too useful in the districts to permanently eliminate. Despite proclamations and expulsions, every new harvest motivated revenue farmers, with debts to settle, to hire new agents to coerce villagers for income. Over time many of the leading Arabs were assigned *jagirs* and land grants that moved them firmly into the Hyderabad aristocracy.

Over generations, Arabs, Rohillas and others prospered in Hyderabad state. And just as many Pashtuns from west of the Indus maintained personal ties with home districts, so many Arabs in Hyderabad stayed involved in Hadhrami politics. As early as 1803, Arab soldiers expelled from Baroda after the British conquest of the area returned to Arabia and started a local dynasty based in Shibam in the Hadhramaut.<sup>37</sup> By the 1860s, prominent Arabs in Hyderabad, representing important lineages and factions in Arabia, remitted funds and resources to the Hadhramaut to bolster families and local dynasties competing over villages and territories. Within a few years, Rohillas in service in Hyderabad were being recruited for a reverse flow of

military service, apparently to support factions in local Arab competition. But a more subtle motive also may have been to ensure some indirect colonial control of a region becoming more important to British India after the annexation of Aden in 1839 and as construction of the Suez Canal progressed in the 1860s.

Two Hadhrami lineages struggled for power along the Yemeni coast in the mid-nineteenth century, the Al Qu'ayti al Yafi'i and the Al Abdallah al-Kathiri.<sup>38</sup> In 1818, Umar bin Awad al Qu'ayti was one of the Arabs expelled from the Maratha territories who took refuge in Hyderabad.<sup>39</sup> In 1830, Ghalib bin Muhsin al-Kathiri moved to India where he established a key branch of the Kathiri lineage. A third Arab family in Hyderabad, the Al Awlaqi, also participated in the long distance activism.<sup>40</sup> As Umar and other Arabs in service to the Nizam became crucial to the court's survival, they prospered in Hyderabad city and cultivated connections to home communities. Between 1843 and 1881, these two competing Hadhrami lineages used cash, supplies, and supporters from these Indian ties as they established small Arab sultanates. This nominally minor competition over Arabian coastal ports and inland villages eventually drew the British Indian government, the Hyderabad state, and dozens of Pashtun and Rohilla soldiers into years of post-1858 cross-oceanic politics. The interregional resources transferred over decades were substantial and proved decisive in establishing the Al Qu'ayti as the leading Hadhrami dynasty. As the British negotiated methods of indirect rule, the colonial empire reached the limits of their Indian Ocean influence, and Rohillas from northern India were written into narratives of Arabian coast criminality and piracy.

Especially from the 1850s, British Indian officials tried to stop the flow of perceived armed Arab mercenaries into Hyderabad. In 1852, the Bombay government banned travel by foreign troops through its districts, nominally blocking the use of Bombay port as an entry into India for Hyderabad-bound Arabs. In 1853, a new Hyderabad *diwan* Nawab Salar Jang, pushed by the British Resident, patiently regularized the state administration and trimmed the remaining traditional forms of pre-colonial military,

economic, and administrative service. In 1855, Ghalib bin Muhsin of the Kathiris was expelled from Hyderabad and returned to Arabia. At the same time the Hyderabad districts given as tax farms to the Al Qu'ayti were resumed by the state.

Ghalib bin Muhsin returned to the Hadhramaut to lead the assertive Kathiri sultanate based in Say'un.<sup>41</sup> In 1858, when the Qu'ayti took Shibam from Kathiri control, the stage was set for decades of dynastic rivalry. The key prizes were the port towns of al-Shihr and al Mukalla, controlling supply lines into the interior. In 1865, when the Kathiri expelled the local ruler from al-Shihr port, the exiled chief fled to Aden and, with the threatened ruler of al-Mukalla, appealed to the British Resident in Aden for support.

Abdullah, the Qu'ayti ruler in Shibam, had four brothers 'in the service of the Hyderabad government'. The family strategy to counter the Kathiri claims involved mobilizing resources from India. The brothers approached Salar Jang, the Hyderabad *diwan*, to convince the British that they should help defend the family interests in Arabia. In November 1866, Salar Jang wrote to the British Resident that the family, through one brother, 'Bark Jung', requested arms and even British soldiers in aid. He wrote that another brother, 'Sooltan Nowaz Jung'<sup>42</sup> 'is taking a party of Rohillas with him, some 200 men, and is taking the arms required for them, such as swords, daggers, matchlocks, &c with him and begs that you will grant a pass to be allowed to take them to sea via Bombay and Sholapore...' A few days later, the Resident wrote to Bombay that '...The Rohillas mentioned are proceeding unarmed to Bombay under the usual pass, and I have also given a pass to Sooltan Nowaz Jung, Bark Jung's brother...'<sup>43</sup>

The correspondence noted that the government of India was against any actions not taken strictly in the 'private capacity' of individuals. But the group sailed to Aden under Awadh bin Umar, 'where he was supplied from the Arsenal with a large amount of ammunition both for musketry and ordnance and some tents for his own use.'<sup>44</sup> The force blockaded the coast and landed near

al-Shihr. In April 1867, the recruits defeated the Kathiri in battle outside the city walls to take possession of the port.

The British indirect intervention left the Qu'ayti in control of Shibam and al-Shihr port while the Kathiri dynasty ruled in Tarim and Say'un. A future problem for the British Indian government, and the Hyderabad *diwan*, was that the port of al-Mukalla remained independent under local rule just as the Suez Canal opened in 1869 and, in 1870, the expanding Ottoman empire occupied northern Yemen and claimed sovereignty over the Hadhramaut.<sup>45</sup> Aden, as a coaling station, and the ports of Arabia, for coastal trade, now became even more important within a developing sphere of British Indian Ocean navigation and commerce. Whatever greater strategic thinking now pre-occupied the thinking of the Ottomans and the British, in 1873 the Qu'ayti, after the death of Ghalib bin Muhsin in 1870, pushed to conquer al-Mukalla for themselves.

In the fall of 1873, Awadh bin Umar Quayti, sailed from Bombay and visited the ruler or *Nagib* of al-Mukalla in the port town. The ruler, 'Nukeeb Omar bin Saleh bin Mahomed Abdool Hubeeb' was of the 'Kasadee' (Kasadi) lineage. After a stay of eight days, 'Jemadar' Awadh bin Umar left for al-Shihr. At this time the Nagib of al-Mukalla was fighting over land with 'the Sheikh of Doan'. The al-Shihr ruler sent three Sayyids and an officer to al-Mukalla with a letter to the Nagib stating that he would mediate a resolution to the conflict, and would bring the Sheikh himself to al-Mukalla to settle their differences. Unfortunately for the Nagib of al-Mukalla, it was a ruse. The Jemadar arrived with a party of three hundred men, while another four hundred of his men infiltrated the port in small groups. In the Nagib's own words, 'I had 200 juffa soldiers whose muccadam and others were bribed by the Jemadar. The Jemadar also bribed my chief officers and my writers, Omar Goshen and Suliman Shurfai, and others in an underhand manner, and by ... such tricks he obtained possession of the whole of my town.'<sup>46</sup>

Awadh bin Umar demanded control over half of the port of al-Mukalla. He claimed only this would settle a large debt

supposedly owed by the previous, now deceased, local ruler. The Nagib acquiesced, but wrote an appeal as soon as possible to a leading Gujarati merchant in Aden, asking that he take his agent and his news to the British Resident in Aden to ask for help. Because the al-Mukalla ruler did not trust his own writers and court officials, the note to Aden was dictated by the Nagib and written in the Gujarati language. The Nagib of Mukalla based his plea for help on his having 'in my possession three or four treaties which were made with the English Government, in which it is written that the English Government will render their assistance if at any time any other power invades our territories.'<sup>47</sup> The previous Nagib had negotiated one agreement in Aden. Only six months earlier Bartle Frere had arrived from Zanzibar to negotiate another pact ending the slave trade through the port.

The fully confident Awadh bin Umar of al-Shihr extorted a written agreement from the Nagib. Awadh's brother Abdullah then forwarded a message to the British, 'I inform you that we have taken half of Maculla and half of Broom from Nukeeb Omar and his brother, sons of the late Nukeeb, Saleh bin Mahomed, the Kasadee. Our and their conditions are one according to the Treaty made between us. Whatever service you want from us for your great Government we will do it with pleasure on receiving your hint. Our hope is continually that you will look with favourable eyes on us.'<sup>48</sup>

The British were sceptical of the debt claim, though agreements with the Kasadi rulers did not provide for the claimed territorial defence. The Qu'ayti brothers thought their recent history ensured British support, or at least non-interference. The Nagib regrouped his supporters. On 1 December 1873 the British Resident in Aden received another note from the Nagib, 'in which he informs the Resident that after three days' fighting he had ejected the Jemadar from his city... The Kayatees had twenty men killed, while the Nukeeb ...lost six men. A considerable number are said to have been wounded...'<sup>49</sup>

The local fighting, with relatively minor casualties occurred within a traditional context of personal 'service' even as greater

imperial dynamics shaped future events. At the end of December 1873 the Nagib of al-Mukalla wrote again to the Aden Resident that the Qu'ayti forces in al-Shihr had just 'been reinforced by some forty Rohillas from Hyderabad'. That the British had tried to restrict any Indian intervention in the latest skirmishing seemed apparent as the Aden Resident observed that the Rohillas had left Hyderabad 'under the guise of performing a pilgrimage to Mecca'. The Resident reminded Bombay, 'It is not desirable that the Kayatee family should be assisted in their aggressions against the Nukeeb of Maculla by mercenaries entertained in India...'<sup>50</sup>

Though from the early nineteenth century the Gulf had been pacified as a British Indian sphere of influence, the politics of the Arabian peninsula and the Red Sea region remained uncertain. Ottoman control over the Hijaz and the cities of Islamic pilgrimage meant that Ottoman power and diplomacy had to be considered. In 1873, in the period of new Qu'ayti militancy against al-Mukalla, the Kathiri dynasty recognized Ottoman sovereignty over the interior.<sup>51</sup> The incessant Hadhrami dynastic competition meant that regional British sovereignty over the seas remained incomplete.

The Qu'ayti-Kathiri competition accelerated in late 1873 as each side used agents to purchase steamships in Bombay to carry supplies and blockade opposing ports. The forty Rohillas that arrived in al-Shihr in December 1873 apparently arrived on the ship *Pehlwan*, a 110 foot craft weighing 163 gross tons. When the ship was inspected at al-Shihr in late February 1874 by the British ship *Kwangtung* out of Aden, the *Pehlwan* captain described the passengers he had recently carried as 'mostly, as it appeared to him, armed sepoy'. He estimated there were perhaps thirty deck passengers from Bombay. The official log of the *Pehlwan* listed seventeen crewmen from Mocha, Surat, Goa, Hyderabad, Madras, Calcutta, Singapore, and Penang. The mate was Abdulla bin Muhammad from Mocha. The engineer was a Parsi. Shipmaster, Henry Daniel Stepney, had a second list of mainly different names, again mostly Muslims.<sup>52</sup>



Investigation indicated that the *Pehlwan* had been purchased in Bombay, rumour said by 'Abdool Kurreem Futteh Mahomed, inhabitant of Bombay, for the Kayatee'. Another ship, the *Sultan Basha*, had also been purchased for the Qu'ayti. The Kathiris bought the *Oorun*. When the *Sultan Basha* was searched in May 1874, a list of concealed arms recovered included fifty swords, eleven daggers, two pistols, two guns, four blunderbusses, three shields, forty-five powder horns with pouches, 309 leather bullet pouches, and ninety-two leather pouch belts.<sup>53</sup>

By July 1874, the correspondence that had originated with a complaint from the Nagib of Mukalla to the Aden Resident had worked its way through Bombay, through the office of the viceroy and governor-general in council, and finally to the Resident at Hyderabad. The Resident wrote to chastise the Nizam's minister that local efforts to 'prevent assistance being forwarded from Hyderabad, whether in men or money', had as of yet 'not been fully successful'.<sup>54</sup> The British Indian government pressured the ship captains, nominal owners, and agents that the ships would be stopped, detained, and ultimately seized if they defied a ban on British subjects aiding those in conflict with others who had agreements with the British Indian government.

Events seemed resolved by 15 April 1875 when the *Pehlwan* was 'released on bond Rs25,000 by agent for Jemadar to return directly to Bombay'.<sup>55</sup> Yet two weeks later the Aden Resident was lamenting that complaints were coming in from both the Nagib of Mukalla and the Jemadar of al-Shihr 'that they had closed each others ports'. And local merchants and ship-owners also complained that ships or 'buggalows' that sailed from Indian ports 'bound to Maculla and Aden' were being stopped at sea and looted, miles from any 'port said to have been blockaded'.<sup>56</sup> Others were forced into ports to offload, though the goods had been purchased for delivery elsewhere.

The resident at Aden noted that 'war dhows' were not allowed in the Gulf or along the Somali coast, and that this should be the policy enforced 'between Aden and Muscat'. He also observed that the continued fighting was only sustained by aid from family members in Hyderabad state. And,

'if the Jemadar is likely to become possessor of Maculla, as surmised by Captain Prideaux, by being allowed to carry on strictly warlike operations at sea, supplemented by one or more steamers purchased from European countries, we may expect in time to see a powerful Mahomedan Chief established there allied with the Nizam; a state of things by no means desirable when considered in connection with the ambitious designs of the Khedive on the African Coast outside the Straits of Babel Mandeb.'<sup>57</sup>

Gul Muhammad, captain of a Bombay ship, the 'ganga' *Durya Dowlat*, sailing from the Indian port of Mandavi for al-Mukalla, reported that when coasting thirteen or fourteen *kos*<sup>58</sup> from al-Shihr, four dhows from al-Shihr stopped him, boarded his ship, and forced him to sail into al-Shihr. Despite his English papers and flag, the Jemadar ordered him to land his cargo, though the piece goods, cotton, and bags of 'jowarry' (corn) were consigned to merchants in Aden and al-Mukalla. 'The Jemadar then sent a guard of five soldiers who used to come on board in the evening and leave in the morning; they were Rohillas.'<sup>59</sup> After thirteen days, 511 bags of jowarry were unloaded by force. Two days later, when rough seas kept the guards from coming out in the evening, the crew of the *Durya Dowlat* cut their anchor, and sailed to al-Mukalla, with the captain going on to Aden to file his statement.<sup>60</sup>

Three ships claimed losses of bales of cotton piece goods, grain, and waiting time. The British naval captain based in Aden extracted restitution from the Jemadar, 'for the piratical acts committed by his war dhows', including Rs120 for two anchors lost by the *Durya Dowlat*. The Jemadar restored some bags of grain and settled the rest for \$2,150, equal to Rs4,945.<sup>61</sup> The Jemadar's ship guards, Rohillas from Hyderabad, perhaps not far removed from Bareilly or Peshawar, were quite capable of service, including acts that might be characterized by the British as 'piratical'.

By 1881, the British again tried to end Hadhrami 'instability' by throwing their support behind the Qu'ayti dynasty. In 1882 al-Mukalla fell to the Qu'ayti after extended confrontation and

negotiation. By agreement, Umar bin Saleh of al-Mukalla gave up his port and lands to Abdullah bin Umar of al-Shihr, while the Jemadar of al-Shihr 'paid over to the Political Resident at Aden the sum of \$100,000 or Rs185,000 for the maintenance of the ex-Nakib.<sup>62</sup> It was unclear how much, if any, of the \$100,000 came from Hyderabad money-lending, revenue farming, or service income. In 1888 the Qu'ayti dynasty signed a protectorate treaty with the British.<sup>63</sup>

The death of Abdullah bin Umar bin Awadh al Qu'ayti in November 1888 illustrated the interregional nature of the political relation between Arabia, British India, and the princely state of Hyderabad. He died known as the 'Jemadar of Shihr and Makalla'. Observers remembered that the 1882 treaty with these 'two states and their dependencies' was settled with both Abdullah bin Umar and his brother Awadh bin Umar, who continued to live in Hyderabad as Sultan Nawaz Jang. When Abdullah died, the Aden Resident wrote to Awadh bin Umar in Hyderabad about 'future arrangements' for the Hadhrami ports. Abdullah's son would become 'governor' of the states.

Even as British and European colonial managers found new roles for the poorest Rohillas and Pashtuns as indentured workers on commercial plantations or for others as transport workers in the Australian outback many continued as recruits for military services in Indian princely states and in locations as far as the Yemeni coast. Others were recruited for colonial police forces in Malaya, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other Southeast Asia locations. They helped build the colonial East African railroad from Mombasa to Uganda in the 1890s.<sup>64</sup> Police for overseas posts were enlisted from South Asian 'martial races', especially Sikhs, but also Pashtuns, now called 'Pathans'. But again hard identities broke down over distances. As in the eighteenth century when recruits of various backgrounds often assumed the Rohilla identity associated with military service, so many aspiring police in the Malay states claimed a Pashtun heritage. One observer, discussing the Pashtun company of the police force of the Selangor Malay state, noted that the company was 'composed

chiefly of so-called Pathans, who were really no more Pathans than I am, coming from the southern Peshawar district.'<sup>65</sup>

The term 'Rohilla' faded away at this time in British India, even before the continuing socio-economic role disappeared. In colonial Foreign Department Proceedings Indexes recording British Indian correspondence, the absolute numbers of references to Rohillas declined by the 1870s. A single reference in the 1880-1884 period mentioned restrictions placed in 1884 on the movement of Rohillas in Hyderabad. No index category for 'Rohilla' was included for the 1885-1889 period. Just as the word 'Puthan' became archaic and was abandoned in recordkeeping and correspondence, perhaps after a last Foreign Department Index entry of 31 December 1858, so the word Rohilla ended a long life as an officially accepted term of personal or community identity.<sup>66</sup>

In 1914, with the beginning of the First World War, Pashtun recruits were subsumed within a new era of industrialized warfare. Any previous informal terms and conditions of British Indian service were transformed into regular British Army regimentation and discipline. Seven divisions from India went overseas; two to Egypt, three 'sailed for France', 'a fourth was in Mesopotamia', and another in East Africa.<sup>67</sup> Peshawar valley units were shipped to Basra, leaving behind Pashto verse lamenting their departure.

The first British campaign in Mesopotamia moving up from Basra in an attempt to seize Baghdad was a disaster. Perhaps three thousand British troops and six to seven thousand Indian soldiers surrendered at Kut in late spring 1916. The Indian units included 'trans-border' Afridis, Sikhs, Dogras, Rajputs, and Gurkhas.<sup>68</sup> As the campaign bogged down in the fall of 1915, Muslim troops were increasingly stressed by knowledge and propaganda that British Indian Muslims were being asked to attack the Ottoman Caliphate and threaten cities of great Islamic heritage and symbolism. One observer recorded that 'three trans-Border Pathan companies' were 'disaffected'.<sup>69</sup> One British officer complained about Indian replacement troops. He had '...never

seen such a wretched class of recruits in the whole of my Indian experience...; and described 'troubles' with Muslims unwilling to 'advance against the Holy Place of Salman Pak, the tomb of a devoted servant of the Prophet, at Ctesiphon...' They '...had to send back to Basra one Indian battalion, composed in the bulk of trans-Border men of the North-West of India, owing to numerous cases of desertion to the enemy'.<sup>70</sup>

'Disaffection' with the British Mesopotamian policy was not limited to the Baghdad front. In Australia, on New Years Day, 1915, two camel men from South Asia literally raised a green flag of Islam, took rifles, and attacked a holiday train. They killed and wounded several before being killed themselves. The early twentieth century continued to redefine the Islamic dimension of South Asian ethnic and Pashtun identities, both at home and in diaspora.

The end of the war in 1918 did not end British Indian army involvement in the region. In mandate Iraq in June 1920, the British army of about sixty thousand troops included only seven thousand British soldiers, with the rest from South Asia. 'But there were some sixty thousand other Indian followers at army headquarters in various subordinate positions.' With the summer 1920 revolt, thirty thousand new troops were sent, in a five to one ratio of Indian to British soldiers.<sup>71</sup>

Direct British imperial political involvement in the Gulf region pre-dated the outbreak of war in 1914, including conflict with Qasimi 'pirates' in 1809-19, the 1820 Gulf 'General Treaty of Peace', and the 1853 'Perpetual Treaty of Peace'. In 1903, Curzon, the British Indian viceroy, sailed from Karachi to the Gulf. His proclaimed reason to continue indirect rule in the region, given to an audience of Omani rulers, was that, 'The history of your States and of your families, and the present condition of the Gulf, are the answer.... We found strife and we have created order...'<sup>72</sup>

Orderly trade, rather than anarchy, was a main interest. Before 1902, only four or five steamships called at Dubai annually. In 1902, twenty-one steamers, most of the 'Bombay and Persia Steam Navigation Company', docked at Dubai. In 1904, the

'British India Steam Navigation Company' added Dubai to their 'regular time-table'.<sup>73</sup>

In 1905, business continued to grow in Bahrain, despite another outbreak of the plague in Manama. Over several years the plague killed hundreds and scattered thousands in fear. In 1905, up to sixty-five British steamships visited Bahrain in voyages 'up the Gulf', while thirty-five called in ports on return. 1906 was a 'remarkably prosperous' year in Bahrain, with the British firm of Grey Paul and Co., agents for Standard Oil of New York, importing 'kerosene oil' to drive out Russian kerosene being imported by British Indian subjects. The Gulf pearl market crashed in 1907-8, but seventy-two British steamers going 'up' the Gulf landed in Bahrain, as well as thirty-seven going 'down'. Competition now included eleven ships docking from the Hamburg-American Line. As for decades, at the outbreak of war in 1914, most Bahrain trade 'by far' was with India and 'to a great extent in the hands of Hindu, Mohammedan and Persian merchants'. Of perhaps 110,000 residents of Bahrain, perhaps only 2-300 were non-Muslims, including 'a few score Hindus, chiefly from Sind'.<sup>74</sup>

British Indian bureaucrats administered colonial affairs in the Gulf, either directly through British Residents, as at Aden, or through Arab intermediaries operating as indirect agents. After World War I, international trade competition increased as the pearl trade declined and cheap textiles from Japan and America took market share from British mills. In 1915-16, the value of Kuwaiti imports of US textile 'piece-goods' surpassed the value of English imports.<sup>75</sup> The Bahrain report for 1923 noted only about forty private cars and vehicles for hire, but 'the heavy import of American oil' contributed to increased import values. After the start of the global depression after 1929, British shares of Gulf trade came under increased pressure. The 1932 report noted that even a 'considerable quantity of the textiles shown as imported from India are actually of Japanese origin...'. The report also said that The Bahrain Petroleum Company, a subsidiary of

the Standard Oil Company of California was now prospecting for oil in Bahrain.<sup>76</sup>

With the discovery of oil in Bahrain in 1933, new employment opportunities arose for an (until then) almost non-existent western population as well as manual labourers from British India. In 1934, about seventy 'Europeans' were counted, while 'work in the oil-field is a great attraction for emigrants from India.' The 1936 Bahrain report counted '200 Europeans and Americans' in Bahrain.<sup>77</sup> The 1937 report counted 'about 500 Europeans and Americans', over a million tons of crude oil production, a 25,000 barrel a day refinery 'in full operation', and that Bahrain was now the twelfth largest oil-producer in the world. By 1938-9, the Bahrain Petroleum Company employed about three hundred Europeans and Americans, as well as '820 Asiatic foreigners' and 2,030 Bahrainis.<sup>78</sup>

In the inter-war period, the British ability to influence Gulf oil exploration included the India Office in London acting as an intermediary in negotiations between the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and the Gulf Trucial States. British subjects, including British Indian workers, were given primacy in employment, along with local residents. A draft model agreement for oil concessions included a generic clause on hiring:

'3. The employees of the Company in \_\_\_\_\_ shall at all times be British subjects or subjects of the Sheikh, provided that, with the consent of His Majesty's Government (or the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf in the case of foreign native labour), such persons of other nationality as are required for the efficient carrying on of the undertaking may be employed.'<sup>79</sup>

In 1939, Stephen Longrigg, representing Petroleum Concessions Ltd., London, negotiated oil concession terms with the sheikhdom of Abu Dhabi. The seventy-five year pact, in return for Company payments of Indian Rs300,000 on signing and Rs100,000 (\$25,000) a year until commercial discoveries were made, offered royalties of Rs3 (\$0.75) per ton, with a Rs250,000 minimum over two years guaranteed. The Rs3 per ton rate continued into the

early 1960s, a period when the post-war decline in pearling spurred out-migration from the area to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.<sup>80</sup>

The birth of the modern oil economy, and of modern labour migration, in the United Arab Emirates was marked by discrete political events. Under offers, and pressures, from oil companies to accept increased royalty rates, and thus secure long-term relationships, Gulf rulers were agreeing to replace the Rs3 per ton royalty agreements with so-called 50-50 profit splitting. The Abu Dhabi ruler, Sheikh Shakhbut literally refused to accept increased revenues, nominally to not upset traditional social relations. He yielded on this only in late 1965, but continued to resist other types of change. British financiers and politicians, local and international businessmen, and ruling family members counted the millions that would become available for development projects and state-building, and in 1966 Sheikh Zayed replaced his older brother.<sup>81</sup> The territories that became the UAE in 1971 had an estimated population of 84,000 in 1964.

With the post-war dissolving of global European empires and the rise of third-world nationalism, new stresses created the global oil crisis of the early 1970s, and a resulting Gulf economic and demographic boom. The UAE alone grew from 180,000 in 1968 to 557,000 in 1975<sup>82</sup> and perhaps 4,000,000 in 2003.<sup>83</sup> Globalizing dynamics in the Gulf, including new hierarchies of power, status, and income, recruited millions of Indians, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Bangladeshis, and hundreds of thousands of Pashtuns into new interregional patterns of Indian Ocean migration. By 2003, 15 per cent of global oil consumption, thirteen million barrels a day, sailed out of the Gulf, 'down' through the Strait of Hormuz.<sup>84</sup> In this postcolonial world, much of the 'colonial' framework of power and political economy would be reinvented and reinterpreted, including old forms of worker recruitment, circulation, and exploitation.



## NOTES

1. No. 1/5, Home Department, Judicial Branch, Consultation 8 April 1859. In 1856 one file listed 182 British Indian prisoners in Singapore and 83 in Penang. See No. 4265, 18 December 1856, from Sec. to Govt. Bombay to Off. Undersec. to Govt. of India, Home Dept., Judicial Branch, Consultation 8 April 1859.
2. See Satadru Sen, *Disciplining Punishment, Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Islands*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.
3. Letter 69, 3 June 1858, from Campbell, Judicial Commissioner to Forsyth, Sec. to Chief Comm. Oude, Foreign Department, Political Branch, Consultation 18 June 1858, No. 65/6.
4. Letter 69, 3 June 1858, from Campbell, Judicial Commissioner to Forsyth, Sec. to Chief Comm. Oude, Foreign Department, Political Branch, Consultation 18 June 1858, No. 65/6. The use of the Andamans 'for a Penal Settlement and harbour to British subjects shipwrecked on its coast' was discussed before 1857. See Foreign Proceedings, Foreign Index entries, 4 April 1856/13-15.
5. In 1872, Shere Ali, referred to in sources as a 'Pathan' and NWFP 'highlander' imprisoned for murder, assassinated the visiting Viceroy, Lord Mayo. Sen, *Disciplining Punishment*, pp. 66-9.
6. Letter No. 88, 10 May 1861, from Roberts, Offy. Comm. Rohilcund Division to Bart, Sec. to Govt. North Western Provinces, Home Department, Public Branch, Consultation 6 June 1861, No. 20/22.
7. Letter No. 88, 10 May 1861, from Roberts, Offy. Comm. Rohilcund Division to Bart, Sec. to Govt. North Western Provinces, Home Department, Public Branch, Consultation 6 June 1861, No. 20/22.
8. Marina Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers: Indians in Mauritius, 1834-1874*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 7. See Table 1.3, Annual Indian Migration to Mauritius, p. 28.
9. A.A. Paton, *A History of the Egyptian Revolution*, London: Trubner & Co., 1870, pp. 394-5.
10. J.G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, 1908, Archives Edition, 1986, Vol. I, pp. 645, 665.
11. The following discussion of Australian migration surveys the approximately 1,060 individual biographical entries of migrants to Australia recorded in Gabor Korvin, 'Afghan and South-Asian Pioneers of Australia (1830-1930) (A Biographical Study), Part I', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. LI, No. 1, January-March 2003, pp. 49-90; 'Part II', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. LI, No. 2, April-June 2003, pp. 45-97. Entries are listed by names. Personal and historical details are gleaned from individual entries. Original spellings are retained.

12. In 1906, 'Mohammed Saleh-Cingalase from Columbo' lived in Perth. Modern observers have separated Sri Lankan ethnic identities into Hindu Tamils, Buddhist Sinhalese, and Muslims. Was 'Cingalese' simply a territorial marker in this earlier period?
13. A perhaps misdated 1932 source gives the date of Morad Khan's first shipment as 1863.
14. Gabor Korvin, 'Afghan and South-Asian Pioneers of Australia (1830-1930) (A Biographical Study), Part I', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. LI, No. 1, January-March 2003, pp. 49-90; 'Part II', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. LI, No. 2, April-June 2003, pp. 45-97.
15. Korvin, 'Afghan and South-Asian Pioneers', part I, p. 51.
16. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 53.
17. *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 68.
18. *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 71.
19. Mohandas Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1957, p. 313.
20. Rudrangshu Mukherjee, ed., *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, New York: Penguin, 1993, p. 142. After returning to India, Gandhi complained of intimidation during his 1928 no-tax campaign in Bardoli district, Gujarat, and 'that Pathans are now being posted in villages with instructions to surround the houses...'; M.K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance (Satyagraha)*, New York, Schocken Books, 1951, p. 212.
21. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 400-403.
22. Rosemarijn Hoefte, *A Social History of British Indian and Javanese Laborers in Suriname*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998, counts not only 34,300 indentured workers from British India but also 33,000 imported from Java. Slavery ended in Suriname in 1863.
23. A database on Indian, Javanese, and Chinese contract workers to Suriname has been made available on-line at <http://www.nationaalarchief.nl/suriname/index.html>. The discussion in this section is based on individual file information contained in this database. Names and spellings are from the original records.
24. Workers were listed by name, e.g. Hanifa, a Pathan woman from Gorakpur district, but also by father's name, for Hanifa, Dubar Khan. Individuals travelling with family groups were listed by relationship. This recognized lineage and family as crucial to personal and colonial notions of identity and control.
25. For these three and other sample records, see the websites by Raymond Chickrie, including 'History of My People, The Afghan Muslims of Guyana', [http://www.guyana.org/features/afghanguyanese\\_muslim.html](http://www.guyana.org/features/afghanguyanese_muslim.html), accessed summer 2003.
26. From National Archives of the Netherlands Suriname Migrant database.
27. Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers*, p. 274.

28. See Rajat Kanta Ray, 'Asian Capital in the Age of European Domination: The Rise of the Bazaar, 1800-1914,' *Modern Asian Studies* 29, 3 (1995): 449-554, and discussion in Sugata Bose, 'Space and Time on the Indian Ocean Rim,' in *Modernity and Culture*, edited by Leila Fawaz and C.A. Bayly, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, pp. 365-88.
29. George Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.
30. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, p. 63.
31. Ross Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p. 222.
32. Off the Arabian and Somali coasts, Socotra island evidently derived its name from ancient Indian traders and the Sanskrit name Dvipa Sukhatara, see Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, p. 22.
33. Stephen Dale, 'The Hadhrami Diaspora in South-Western India: The Role of the Sayyids of the Malabar Coast,' in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, edited by Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith, Leiden, Brill, 1997, pp. 175-184.
34. Omar Khalidi, 'The Hadhrami Role in the Politics and Society of Colonial India, 1750s-1950s,' in *Hadhrami Traders*, eds. Freitag and Clarence-Smith, pp. 67-81.
35. Khalidi, 'The Hadhrami Role...,' p. 71.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
37. Freidhelm Hartwig, 'Expansion, State Formation and Reform: The Contest for Power in Hadhramaut in the Nineteenth Century,' in *Hadhrami Traders*, eds. Freitag and Clarence-Smith, p. 43. Three villages in the interior Wadi Hadhramaut valley were objects of dynastic competition-Shibam, Say'un, and Tarim. Three contested seaports on the coast, Burum, al-Mukalla, and al-Shihr, controlled access to the interior. The port of al-Mukalla was about 250 miles east of Aden, with al-Shihr about 20 miles east of al-Mukalla.
38. Hartwig, 'Expansion, State Formation and Reform...,' pp. 35-50.
39. Khalidi, 'The Hadhrami Role...,' p. 72.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
41. In 1847-9, Tarim and Say'un in the Hadhramaut interior were conquered by the Kathiri from Shibam.
42. Sultan Nawaz Jang was an honorific name bestowed by the Hyderabad court upon Awadh bin Umar, one of the five Quayti brothers.
43. No. 58, Minister's letter, from Sir Salar Jung to G. Yule, Resident at Hyderabad, 30 November 1866; Enclosure A, No. 2319, from Yule to C. Gonne, Sec. to Govt. of Bombay, 4 December 1866, Foreign Department, Political A Branch, September 1870, 57-60.
44. K.W. notes, 'Affairs at Maculla, Bunder Broom, and Shurur,' p. 1, Foreign Department, Political A Branch, Consultation February 1876, No. 225-244.
45. Hartwig, 'Expansion, State Formation and Reform...,' p. 40.

46. No. 232, from Nukeeb Omar bin Saleh bin Mahomed Abdool Hubeeb Kasadee, Maculla to Hajee Bhai Laljee, Aden, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation February 1876, No. 225-244.
47. No. 232, from Nukeeb Omar bin Saleh to Hajee Bhai Laljee, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation February 1876.
48. No. 233, from Jemadar Abdoolla Bin Omar, the Kayatee to General Schneider, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation February 1876, No. 225-244.
49. Letter No. 312-1232, from Political Resident, Aden to Sec. to Govt. of Bombay, 31 December 1873, in No. 241, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation February 1876, No. 225-244.
50. Letter No. 289-1134, from Resident, Aden to Sec. to Govt. of Bombay, 1 December 1873, in No. 235, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation February 1876, No. 225-244.
51. Hartwig, 'Expansion, State Formation and Reform...', p. 50.
52. No. 111, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation July 1874, No. 109-127.
53. Letter No. 928, 11 May 1874, Bombay, in No. 122, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation July 1874, No. 109-127.
54. No. 5, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation December 1874, 3-10.
55. Letter No. 63-368, from Schneider, Resident, Aden, to C. Gonne, Sec. to Govt. Bombay, 15 April 1875, in No. 151, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation June 1875, No. 150-158A.
56. No. 153, from Schneider to Gonne, 27 April 1875, Foreign Department/Political A Branch, Consultation June 1875.
57. Ibid.
58. A *kos* was a unit of distance used traditionally, including by the Mughal empire in India. One *kos* was approximately three kilometres or two miles.
59. 'Statement of Goul Mahomed', in No. 153, from Schneider to Gonne, 27 April 1875.
60. Ibid.
61. 'Extract from letter No. 71-422', in No. 153, from Schneider to Gonne, 27 April 1875.
62. 'Disposal of a sum...', Foreign Department/External A Branch, Proceedings April 1885, Nos. 176-179. The agreement was recorded as in 'Secret E, September 1882, Nos. 139-144 (No. 142).
63. Hartwig, 'Expansion, State Formation and Reform...', p. 50.
64. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections*, p. 202.
65. Ibid., p. 110.
66. The actual usage 'Pathan' was rarely used in print until after 1870. One usage in Foreign Department Indexes occurs in the 1840-49 period, though other examples would not surprise. Early colonial era English spellings of Patan, Patane, etc. reveal the age of the term. Still, too often

- English translators, especially colonial era translators of texts, including Pashtun verse, simply translated Pashtun or Pakhtun as 'Pathan'.
67. P.G. Elgood, *Egypt and the Army*, Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 117-8.
  68. Charles Townshend, *My Campaign in Mesopotamia*, London: Thorton Butterworth, 1920, pp. 273-4.
  69. Townshend, *My Campaign in Mesopotamia*, p. 45.
  70. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
  71. Henry Foster Norman, *The Making of Modern Iraq*, Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1935, p. 81. In 1920 of 2,209 low level Indians in the Iraq civil administration, most were 'found in the Posts and Telegraph department, the next in the Port department and the next with the executive staff'.
  72. Sugata Bose, 'Space and Time on the Indian Ocean Rim', in Leila Fawaz and C.A. Bayly, editors, *Modernity and Culture, From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 366.
  73. J.G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, Book 2, Vol. I (Historical), 1908, Archive Editions, 1986.
  74. Miscellaneous details from *The Persian Gulf Trade Reports, 1905-1940, Bahrain, vol. I, 1905-1925*, Archive Editions, 1987. Annual 'Report on the Trade of the Bahrain Islands' sections covered financial years ending 31 March.
  75. 'Trade Report for Koweit, 1906-7', in *The Persian Gulf Trade Reports, 1905-1940, Kuwait, vol. I, 1905-1925*, Archive Editions, 1986.
  76. *The Persian Gulf Trade Reports, 1905-1940, Bahrain, vol. II, 1925-1940*, Archive Editions, 1987.
  77. *Ibid.*
  78. *Ibid.*
  79. *Arabian Gulf Oil Concessions 1911-1953, Trucial States, vol. I*, Archive Editions, 1989, p. 503.
  80. *Arabian Gulf Oil Concessions 1911-1953, Trucial States, vol. II*, Archive Editions, 1989, pp. 538-9; Mana Saeed Al-Otaiba, *Petroleum and the Economy of the United Arab Emirates*, London: Croom Helm, 1977, p. 40. The Indian rupee remained official Gulf currency until as late as June 1959, when it was replaced by the 'Gulf rupee', and, in the 1960s, by national currencies (Bahrain dinar, UAE dirham from 1973). Earlier Gulf currencies also included Maria Theresa silver dollars and British gold sovereigns.
  81. Mana Saeed Al-Otaiba, *Petroleum and the Economy of the United Arab Emirates*, p. 119.
  82. A.O. Taryam, *The Establishment of the United Arab Emirates, 1950-85*, Croom Helm, 1987, p. 259.
  83. *Gulf News*, 19 May 2003, p. 4.
  84. *Gulf Business*, Vol. 7, Issue 12, April 2003, p. 44.

# 5

## National Integration, Transnational Circulation, 1950–2000

'The transnational movement of people, money, goods, and ideas challenges the transparency of the nation as a straightforward category of identity. Recent scholarship questions commonsense assumptions of clearly bounded spaces and sedentary populations, proposing instead a theory of identity based on hybrid loyalties, overlapping cultures, and regular travel...'

This chapter first traces Pashtun migration within Pakistan from independence in 1947 and argues that from the 1950s onward international migration from Pakistan, especially after 1970 to the Gulf oil states, layered new transnational identities upon millions of mobile national citizens. Workers and professionals lived permanently abroad or moved, often for decades, between established Pashtun and Pakistani home relationships and new overseas hierarchies of power and wealth. The chapter next closely examines the effects of this long-term movement of workers upon Pashtun home village communities in the Peshawar Valley and the NWFP. For the Pashtun diaspora, circulation and final return became as important as original foreign migrations.

Despite the scholarly debates over the nature and meaning of labour migration from Pakistan after 1947, it is clear from migration scholarship that colonially derived analyses of the village as a static site of unchanging tradition are, and have never been, useful or valid. Pakistan began its history absorbing the vast migrant populations generated by the partition of British India. In 1951, up to 20 per cent of the national population was of migrant or refugee status. Specific urban areas had even higher

rates, such as Karachi with an estimated 57 per cent refugee population. Peshawar city had about a 10 per cent refugee population.<sup>2</sup> Over the decades that followed, the Pakistan government attempted to understand and regulate aspects of this demographic complexity. By the end of the twentieth century, circulation and mobility, and individual identity, continued to be shaped by the policies and projects of a consolidating nation-state struggling to manage development.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Pakistan's economic situation and development planning contributed to one of the highest rates of internal migration in Asia. For the decade 1959–1969, a study of twenty-three villages recorded a population turnover of 23 per cent as labour migrants, primarily individual men, married or unmarried, left homes or entered from outside in search or employment.<sup>3</sup> Complex colonial patterns of labour recruitment continued to link particular regions to national and even global economies. Mirpur district in Azad Kashmir, just east of the NWFP, became famous for channelling migrants to Britain, to the point that fifty years after independence, one source claimed over half the district's population lived abroad.<sup>4</sup>

As mentioned, NWFP districts with high proportions of limited yield, rain fed (*barani*) farm acreage had long sent 'surplus' sons out of the villages in search of subsistence and opportunity. By the 1970s, the promises of economic development and urbanization had drawn up to 1.5 million residents of the NWFP, mostly Pakhtuns, to migrate to other provinces within Pakistan. The outflow was irreversible and often one way. By the mid-1980s, scholars recorded that the apparent temporary migration of NWFP workers to Karachi was assuming a permanent status as families moved to be with wage earners.<sup>5</sup> Pashtuns from Afghanistan also participated in this urbanization process.

Karachi was massively transformed by successive flows of millions of migrants. At independence and into the 1950s, a large 'Mohajir' population arrived from India.<sup>6</sup> Thousands arrived from Hyderabad, including Bahadur Yar Jung, who was recruited to

the NWFP education system in part because of his 'Pathan' ancestry. From the 1960s to 1980s, Pashtuns and Punjabis came to Karachi, followed by a wave of Sindhis from the 1970s. From the 1980s Karachi attracted Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis, Ethiopians, Sri Lankans, Bangladeshis, Burmese, Thais, Filipinos, and others.<sup>7</sup> By the late 1980s, in a city of perhaps eight million, 1.5 million Pashtuns lived in Karachi's sprawling unplanned townships.<sup>8</sup> There were another 100,000 or more Afghan refugees displaced by the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Pakhtuns 'from the frontier' crowded into Karachi's Landhi neighbourhood. In Karachi's Orangi township of a million people of mixed ethnicities, Pashtuns built homes and communities on township hillsides in patterns familiar from NWFP settlements.<sup>9</sup> The 'Pathans' of the Sher Shah Colony, the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE), and the other townships worked construction jobs and organized transport networks.

Domestic or external migration was rarely the independent act of an autonomous individual striking out on his own. Typically, migration was the strategy of an extended family sending out an individual, bound by family honour and duty, to earn, save, and remit as much as possible to the home. In Karachi, Pashtun clan and kinship networks facilitated chains of migration and offered new residents shelter and services. Similarly, after 1973, over two-thirds of Gulf migrants used networks of family or friends to help them resettle in new destinations.<sup>10</sup> Up to 80 per cent of remittances to home villages went for basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter, with surpluses often supporting education for children.<sup>11</sup>

Across Pakistan, from the 1950s and 1960s, semi-skilled Pashtuns and those with trade skills, some acquired in military service, migrated to areas being developed with public sector funding. Urban construction of housing and government and private office blocks employed many, especially in Karachi and Islamabad. Men with construction skills or working as manual labour also built major earthen dams in the 1960s at Tarbela and Mangla.



An important transition point came at the end of the 1960s when major Pakistani construction projects, often funded by international organizations, were nearing completion. Many of the construction contracts had been awarded to foreign construction firms. As these companies shifted to new projects in the Middle East after the 1973 rise in oil prices, they recruited their experienced Pakistani workmen to follow.<sup>12</sup> In the wake of the 1971 fragmentation of Pakistan and the loss of East Pakistan as independent Bangladesh, the Pakistan government and Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto made a conscious decision to embrace Middle Eastern economic and cultural connections. By 1981, there were up to 1,579,000 Pakistanis and uncounted thousands of Afghans in the Middle East, including hundreds of thousands of Pashtuns from the Peshawar and border areas. By 1984, of a national population of 100 million, perhaps two million Pakistanis were at work outside the country, 'representing at least ten percent of Pakistan's households and more than seven percent of its labour force'.<sup>13</sup>

Within Pakistan, from the 1960s onwards, the successive flows of migrants within major cities generated tremendous competition for resources and influence. Community-based mobilization in Karachi led to the rise of Mohajir nationalism and the recognition of 'Mohajir' as a distinct ethno-political identity. A 1960s political alliance, the 'Mohajir-Punjabi-Pakhtun Muttahida Mohaz', organized itself to assert migrant rights within the Sindh province.<sup>14</sup> By the mid-1980s these passionate political rivalries generated accelerating violence between ethnic communities now increasingly organized in territorially-based ethnic enclaves. Pashtun activists and Pashtun neighbourhoods were fully involved in the conflict which disturbed Karachi into the 1990s.<sup>15</sup>

From the 1970s, the Pashtun population migrating abroad was almost exclusively male, with an average age of thirty-two. Two-thirds of them were married, though almost all families were left in home villages in Pakistan. While 68 per cent of general NWFP workers were agriculturalists, 77 per cent of the labour migrants

had non-agricultural work experience and skills.<sup>16</sup> Levels of education for migrants were somewhat higher than average. Low status artisans with masonry, carpentry, and other construction skills often were in higher demand than the sons of landowners who might only qualify for work as labourers. One occupational study of the 1977-85 period estimated that 457,687 (41.87 per cent) of the total migrants went abroad as labourers, 92,478 (8.46 per cent) as masons, 68,356 (6.25 per cent) as carpenters, and 32,944 (3.01 per cent) as electricians.<sup>17</sup>

At first, wage rates in the Middle East were up to ten times the rate for similar work in Pakistan. By the mid-1980s, migrants were attracted by wages for skilled and unskilled workers that remained six to seven times higher than rates paid at home.<sup>18</sup>

Individuals found work in the Middle East through personal connections, through contracts organized on a government-to-government basis, through private labour recruiting agents, and through informal, unregulated networks. Because private recruiting agents soon became the key mediators between companies and potential employees and because of informal, unregulated financial instruments and systems, such as the *hawala* or *hundi*,<sup>19</sup> the government of Pakistan was unable to closely control the recruitment or flow of workers to the Middle East or the flow of remittances back to Pakistan.

In the Peshawar valley, networks of recruiting and travel agents supplied informal services to potential recruits. By the end of the 1980s, national access to visas and work permits had become an expensive, corrupt process. Alternative, undocumented migration continued as one response to common knowledge that 'a small group of recruiting agents have monopolized the business of manpower export' from Pakistan through official channels.<sup>20</sup> Similar to Chakrabarty's analysis of jute mill labour recruitment, pre-capitalist 'kinship and village connections', commonly provided current information about the labour market for potential migrants.<sup>21</sup>

Pashtun workers in the Middle East, after minor episodes of early community solidarity based on lineage norms of honour

and justice, were quickly subordinated. Incidents of abuse or disrespect could not be challenged as at home. Employers did not hesitate to turn to other Muslim or Asian countries for labour recruits.<sup>22</sup> Unions were illegal. Worker tenures were strictly limited by visa and contract durations, though capable and connected employees might renew contracts and spend decades abroad. Host countries closely monitored migrant labour forces and refused to offer even the distant possibility of permanent naturalization or citizenship. In the Gulf states, land ownership for 'non-nationals' was forbidden. Workers were easily victimized on agreed terms of employment and their wages were often delayed or simply not paid. As a consequence, contract workers served only an average of 2.9 years in Saudi Arabia and 4.9 years in the United Arab Emirates.<sup>23</sup> Yet, workers, often housed and fed under contract terms, could save up to 60–80 per cent of their wages. Pashtuns of the NWFP, as well as Punjabis of the *barani* districts of northern Punjab province, continued to be disproportionately represented in the Gulf expatriate labour force.

Due to established networks and a reputation for hard work, in the boom of the 1970s/80s, Pashtuns were recruited to the Middle East at a rate two to three times their population percentage within Pakistan. A 1981 estimate was that 591,400 residents of the NWFP had gone abroad to work in the previous ten years, 34.6 per cent of the national total.<sup>24</sup> Government of Pakistan statistics placed the Pakhto-dialect Peshawar and Mardan districts within the top ten districts for numbers of labour recruits supplied to the Middle East.<sup>25</sup> Two other heavily Pakhto-speaking Pashtun districts (Swat and Kohat) made the list within the top thirteen districts. Due to a high rate of labour turnover and ease of mobility, one estimate said that over a twenty year period at the peak of Middle East employment the 'number of working males in high migration districts of the NWFP going to the Middle East would have been on the order of one out of every three or four.'<sup>26</sup>

The history of this migration process highlighted global forces as they interacted with the populations of specific localities. Peshawar region residents participated and competed in a global labour market, to the extent that by the late 1980s they suffered as Middle East employers began to replace less skilled and more expensive Pakistanis with often better educated workers from Bangladesh and the Philippines. Pakistan contractors and their labour crews could not win contracts lost to Korean and other non-Pakistani bidders. Pakistan's portion of the Middle East migrant labour population declined from 46 to 23 per cent between 1982 and 1986.<sup>27</sup>

Theories of global capital accumulation and labour exploitation that observed third world national dependency and peripheral incorporation into a world system of economic hierarchy could not explain the full range of social and cultural effects of emigration and return on local villages in Pakistan and the Peshawar valley.<sup>28</sup> Yet, clearly, this period represented a major transition to non-western capital accumulation and control of trade and finance managed within and across historically complex Asian and world economies.<sup>29</sup>

Scholarship drawing upon anecdotal evidence of social change caused by remittances highlighted effects on morality, politics, social competition, and religion, while the psychological pressures and costs of separation and dislocation were just beginning to be recognized.<sup>30</sup> Complicating economic theory was the role of 'traditional' social and cultural ties at the local level of labour supervision and recruitment. Pashtun labour crew leaders, especially in the Middle East, heavily recruited new employees through Pakistani and Peshawar valley family and kinship (*khel, biradari*) ties.

Surveys of the Pakistan to Middle East labour flow indicate that networks of friends and families already overseas were vital to providing needed information about the hiring needs of companies and recruitment agencies. Chains of recruitment and relocation supported individuals moving abroad. By 2003, in the United Arab Emirates, dozens if not hundreds of taxi drivers in

the Abu Dhabi city of Al Ain were Pashtuns from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border districts. Up to fifteen men shared single room accommodations, often in poorer neighbourhoods in nearby Al Buraimi, Oman or on the southern fringe of Al Ain in the Sanaiya industrial district. Many had worked in the Emirates for five, ten, or twenty years. One Pashtun from Bannu district in Pakistan said he typically worked for one year before returning to spend one or more months with his family.<sup>31</sup>

Twenty years earlier in the Sanaiya tract of Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates, these labourers had drawn reflexively upon Pashtun norms of honour and justice to go on strike against perceived exploitation by construction companies and contractors.<sup>32</sup> This early labour militancy had grown in part from the stresses of displacement, social isolation, and culture shock experienced by Pashtuns newly and quickly subordinated to fixed hierarchies of ethnicity, wealth, and nationality.<sup>33</sup>

In 2000, after two decades of experience as wage labourers, including the need to survive competition from other South Asian and Asian blue collar workers, Pashtuns in Al Ain, including the Sanaiya neighbourhood of earlier resistance, had made grudging accommodations to their still difficult conditions. Another popular disturbance in the Sanaiya worker's district had occurred over several days in 1992. But this time it was not over working conditions, but because of the notorious destruction of an Islamic mosque, the Babri mosque, in India. A decade later, Sanaiya district Pashtuns, though superficially quiescent, continued to occupy homes built in the familiar autonomous style of the NWFP on hillside ridges bordering the worker residential area.

After 2000, though unions and strikes remained illegal in the UAE, ongoing problems of non-payment of wages by different employers continued to generate temporary 'work stoppages', including one by sixteen hundred construction workers in late May 2003. Government responses to labour activism were barely moderated by continued International Labour Organization pressure to conform to international labour standards.

Across the Gulf, from Kuwait to Saudi Arabia, successful workers practiced a 'save there, eat here' method of savings,<sup>34</sup> and periodically remitted funds to their homes during the course of their employment term. They also typically returned home with a lump sum savings amount intended to finance resettlement and a new career. In the 1970s, this had led to an unprecedented 'explosion of increased consumption in rural Pakistan.'<sup>35</sup> The cumulative local economic, social, cultural, and political effects of remittances suggested that this had begun to transform certain social dynamics, while contributing to the stability or reinvention of other practices thought of as ethnically unique or 'traditional.'<sup>36</sup> Low status families spending on lavish family or religious ceremonies threatened old village hierarchies, even as the displays asserted and reproduced traditional values of family honour and hospitality. Communities tried to superficially balance egalitarian norms against new stresses caused by personal and family economic differentiation.<sup>37</sup>

In some regions, early remittances were dedicated to raising levels of basic consumption of food, clothing, and shelter. They were then used to finance house building and land purchase. One study noticed that the decade of Middle East labour boom (1975-1985) corresponded with the rapid mechanization of Pakistani agriculture, with an increase from 34,500 to 97,300 tractors and from 5,900 to 32,300 threshers. Returned labourers and workers in trades requiring heavy manual labour often refused to take up such jobs at home. Instead they often invested, with mixed results, in small businesses or transportation services. Communities were transformed as new homes built by social competitors exerted a 'demonstration effect' as non-migrant families built their own fired brick houses to replace old-style shelters.<sup>38</sup> One survey said 'every return migrant's first choice was the construction of a *pukka* house.'<sup>39</sup>

Evidence from areas of the Peshawar valley revealed the broader socio-economic effects of new income levels. Cultural and social investments made in new homes, businesses, and mosques constructed a material record of how and when

repatriated savings were spent. Regional political competition was influenced as newly affluent returnees sought to raise their social status through electoral politics.<sup>40</sup>

Complicating any single 'national' narrative, the international geopolitical context shaped analysis of Pashtun labour migration. Statistics and analysis have yet to fully measure and understand the immense impact of two million or more Afghan refugees, predominantly Pashtun, that transited or settled within the NWFP after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. In the 1980s, as Peshawar valley residents left for overseas employment, Afghan refugees commonly took Peshawar valley work as labourers. Many continued onward through familiar networks to the Gulf. When did refugees, often outside of Afghanistan for decades, become legal or de facto permanent migrants, Pakistanis, or members of a Pashtun diaspora? In 2003, a Pashtun driver from Khost province in Afghanistan described his twenty years of working in the United Arab Emirates. He had become totally alienated from his family and home community, but sadly he could never obtain any official UAE residency or 'national' status.<sup>41</sup>

At the Pakistani village level, questions of social impact and change were relevant. What effects did migration and return have upon lineage dynamics and joint family relations? Evidence suggested a new emphasis on nuclear family concerns. One 1986 survey noted that 70 per cent of migrants were under thirty-five years of age when they left to go abroad. Two-thirds were married, with an average of three children. Yet despite the general sense that families left behind would be cared for by the extended family of the migrant, 'more than a quarter remitted monies to their wives,' bypassing the lineage patriarch.<sup>42</sup> Returned migrants, including those from rural areas, often showed a preference for relocating to urban areas, away from kinship ties.

In judging other effects, did women left behind in villages gain from higher incomes and from periods of asserting new degrees of household authority when husbands were absent? How many women claiming household authority were perceived as threats

to lineage patriarchs and to gendered notions of honour or morality? Higher incomes allowed some families to withdraw women from local manual labour.<sup>43</sup> How often did this contribute to new practices of female seclusion (*parda*)? Anecdotal evidence suggested that remittances supported education for some daughters, especially for higher degrees beyond matriculation.<sup>44</sup> However, some women suffered grievously, as husbands infected with HIV/AIDS returned and spread the disease to spouses and children.

A last question remains important to any assumption that migration inevitably led to progressive change, 'modernity', and 'development'. Arguably, remittances and the migrant experience contributed to the rise of Islamist religious politics in Pakistan, of the kind that succeeded in provincial elections in the Northwest Frontier Province and Balochistan in late 2002. In October 2002, the son of a Peshawar valley worker who had spent fifteen years employed in Iraq, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, was elected to the Provincial Assembly. He represented one of the six parties of the Islamist Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal alliance.<sup>45</sup> Was there a relationship between the careers of father and son?

For centuries religious belief and related politics circulated as easily as trade or labour in the Indian Ocean inter-regional arena. But from the 1990s, new claims about religious identity and reform were being made within Pashtun communities. If, on a more global level, 'international migration has played a role in this heightening of Islamic awareness',<sup>46</sup> also by degrees religious or ideological remittances returned with Pashtun and Pakistani migrants after years of close contact with the specific Islamic culture and politics of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

Addleton proposed that 'large scale labour migration to the Middle East became the single most important economic event in Pakistan during the 1970s and 1980s'.<sup>47</sup> Certainly, through the 1990s, this circulation continued to heavily shape Pashtun home villages and communities. Within two years of 11 September 2001, massive increases in Gulf oil production and income, despite regional war and turmoil, generated a new peak of labour



recruitment to the region. In the latest period, circulation for labour was now framed by structures intended to permanently subordinate foreign workers to inferior incomes, status, and long-term possibilities.

Several patterns of post-1947 Pashtun mobility need further study. These patterns often operated within larger, multi-ethnic Pakistani, Indian Ocean, and global labour migration flows. First, post-colonial migration of Pakistanis to the United Kingdom drew heavily from specific regions, including the mentioned Mirpur district in Azad Kashmir, but also from Faisalabad city and the eastern Peshawar valley. The flows abroad were steady. By 2004, there were perhaps 800,000 people of Pakistani origin in Britain.<sup>48</sup> Between the 1990 and 2000 censuses in the United States, the South Asia heritage population doubled from around 600,000 to around 1,200,000, including many Pashtuns.

Second, as mentioned, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, several million Afghans, including millions of Pashtuns, fled to neighbouring and more distant countries of refuge. Though millions began to return after the fall of the Taliban government in late 2001, millions remained in Iran, the NWFP, and across Pakistan. In Pakistan in 2004, perhaps 500,000 Afghans still lived in Karachi. One estimate of this period listed over one million Afghans still in Pakistani camps recognized by the UNHCR, plus 500,000 to one million 'urban refugees' in Pakistani cities, and another million or so 'in the country for other reasons'.<sup>49</sup>

This section details a third dynamic pattern and discusses the NWFP and Afghan borderland Pashtun migration to the Gulf in the thirty years after the initial oil boom of the mid-1970s. Scholarship has measured that the volume of this migration from Pakistan, and remittances, first peaked in the early 1980s. A second peak of labour demand, and of Pashtun migration, began in 2003-5, this time in a highly competitive international labour market. High oil prices in 2003-2004 produced windfall incomes for the GCC states, high expenditures on development, and high demand for labour. GCC revenues jumped from \$145 billion in

2003 to 'record revenues and exports of more than 180 billion dollars in 2004'. Saudi Arabia oil revenues in 2004 were estimated at \$66 billion, creating an unanticipated budget surplus of nearly \$15 billion.<sup>50</sup>

In the thirty years before the latest boom, outflows of Pashtun labour to the Gulf were characterized by several notable themes. Many Afghans who went to the Gulf first came to Pakistan. There they obtained short-term work, often also new documents, and made the connections needed to proceed further abroad. This pattern predated the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. One Afghan contractor from Khost province had first worked in Pakistan before moving to the United Arab Emirates in 1976. By 2003, the contractor owned two trucks and earned enough income to have his family settled in Al Ain. The contractor's late teen-aged sons, born and raised in the UAE, had first visited Afghanistan only in summer 2002. The sons had no citizenship or residency rights in the UAE and could not attend UAE universities reserved for national citizens. They had no interest in returning to Afghanistan, yet remained highly ambivalent about possible futures in the UAE.<sup>51</sup>

Another important theme was the relative lack of government oversight and management of Pashtun and Pakistani migration, despite decades of official efforts to channel migration through official labour recruiting agencies and to capture remittances through official financial institutions. The Pakistan government Overseas Employment Corporation matched employees with foreign worker requests. But only 121,827 workers were sent abroad directly through the OEC between May 1976 and December 2001, while 3,009,946 were sent by private company 'Overseas Employment Promoters'. The OEC total for October 1999 to December 2001 was only 4,980 while OEP agents officially sent 257,246 people.<sup>52</sup> In 2002 and 2003, there were 1,065 government-sanctioned labour recruitment companies and agents, the Overseas Employment Promoters.<sup>53</sup> But only a minority of workers obtained foreign work permits through simple, transparent, and open procedures. Instead, differences of

class, clan, region, and personal agency created specific networks of Pashtun chain migration with access to scarce employment opportunities. Local and international relationships sent some Pashtuns to the United Kingdom or the United States, some to preferred jobs in the UAE, Kuwait, or Saudi Arabia, and some to the hardest, least attractive work in isolated towns such as Al Ain.

One notable theme of the general migration process was that chain migration historically developed often in very local networks and might be highly organized in some villages or sub-districts, while being hardly active a few miles away in nearby villages. For migrants able to go abroad, it was clear that for the vast majority any sustained benefits would only be accumulated incrementally, often after years of renewed contracts and a decade or more of unceasing labour. Individual talent and initiative did make dramatic differences in outcomes of migration experiences. But for the vast majority, there was only an unrelenting Gulf employment sociological 'habitus' of limited options and subordinated rights. Most aspired to simply save enough before return to fund a new house and alternative work and income sources. The Al Ain Afghan contractor from Khost was building a house in his home village, though his sons might not return. In Pakistan, a low status carpenter (*tarkhan*) from a village near Mardan saved enough over years to fund a new transportation career, pursued during the weeks and months he spend at home between contracts in the Gulf. He had purchased a Chinese-model (*QINGQI*) motorcycle-driven auto-rickshaw and carried passengers from outlying villages to the main Nowshera-Mardan road.<sup>54</sup>

A study of one village in the eastern Peshawar valley, Rawail,<sup>55</sup> illuminated the diverse interests and possibilities of recent Pashtun migration. In Pakistan, in the NWFP, and within specific districts, the migration dynamic was regional, contingent, and heavily dependent on specific personal, family, and clan relationships. The government counted 361,461 workers who went abroad for employment in 2002–2003. Provincial

breakdowns from the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis counted 189,065 workers going abroad from the Punjab and 106,420 from the NWFP, but just 23,789 from Sindh, 20,479 from Azad Kashmir, 17,028 from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, 4,418 from Balochistan, and 212 from the Northern Areas.<sup>56</sup>

The wider village area (Union Council) of Rawail, in the eastern Peshawar valley, had slightly over ten thousand Pakhtu-speaking residents.<sup>57</sup> Several thousand were clustered in a grid of village lanes bounded by the Kalpani stream to the east, an east-west inter-village road on the north, and green fields to the south and west. Hundreds of residents of the village were abroad, or had been abroad, in locations from Bradford (United Kingdom) to the UAE and Saudi Arabia. One chain of connections in the area had begun with one original immigrant to San Francisco. Over the years this settler had drawn forty to fifty relatives' and marriage partners to California. Socially accepted travel contacts and arrangements, arranged by a Pashtun female travel agent, had evolved to the point that young women who had never travelled alone or outside the Peshawar valley were able to fly alone to marriage partners in San Francisco.<sup>58</sup>

Population pressure was a constant incentive to emigration from Rawail. The population of the NWFP had grown from 11,061,328 in 1981 to 17,555,000 in the 1998 census. The FATA regions had grown from 2,722,000 in 1981 to 3,138,000 in 1998.<sup>59</sup> Rawail was in Mardan district. This district alone had grown from 881,465 in 1981 to 1,460,100 in 1998. The district remained heavily agrarian, with 1,164,972 persons listed as 'Rural'.<sup>60</sup> Limited land, the traditional source of Pashtun identity and status, and limited income from even the most productive land, forced many young men to seek outside earnings before they could dream of marriage or land purchases. By early 2003, high numbers pursued options to go to the Gulf.

A new Gulf employment boom had begun in early 2003 with the latest Iraq war. By July 2003 it was clear to analysts that the Saudi Arabia economy, among others, would have its best year

since 1981. Oil producing countries gained market share and benefited from higher prices with the March 2003 interruption of Iraqi crude oil supplies.<sup>61</sup> Saudi Light crude sold for an average of \$27 a barrel at accelerated production rates during the first six months of 2003. By 18 August 2004, speculators had pushed the price of a barrel to \$47, up \$10 a barrel from the end of June 2004. The impact on Gulf labour was reflected in the jump from 147,000 Pakistanis officially going abroad in 2002 to 214,000 going abroad in 2003.<sup>62</sup> In March 2003, 24,186 Pakistanis went abroad for work compared to 9,814 in March 2002.<sup>63</sup> They went to forty-five countries, but over 90 per cent went to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In 2003, the UAE issued 247,797 visit, entry, and residence visas to Pakistanis for tourism and work.<sup>64</sup> Thousands of visas went to residents of the districts in and around the Peshawar valley.

Most Pashtun workers going abroad tried their best to avoid the official recruiting agents and their formal (and informal) fees. Family or friends within companies reported on job openings, arranged visas, paperwork, and plane tickets. Less connected Pakistani workers travelled on speculation to the Gulf without proper papers. A common estimate was that up to ten percent of the UAE labour force in 2003, of a total population of about 3,750,000, was technically of illegal status. Many Pakistanis were smuggled by boat to Oman and walked through the border mountain regions to the UAE. One resident of Dera Ghazi Khan district of the southern Punjab was deported from Dubai in August 2004. He had followed a typical path going overland from Balochistan to Iran, then by boat to Dubai.<sup>65</sup> In August 2004, a ship returned to Karachi with six hundred and seven illegal migrants arrested by Omani authorities. Many had spent months in local jails.<sup>66</sup> In 2003, the UAE deported 27,699 foreigners for visa violations, including 9,898 Pakistanis and 5,737 Afghans.<sup>67</sup>

With or without proper visas and papers, Pashtuns went expecting to find work. Despite repeated proclamations by Gulf governments of the need to offer only short-term contracts and ensure the replacement of foreign workers with underemployed

Saudi or Emirati 'nationals,' many Pashtuns would be able to stay for years. Especially in the United Arab Emirates, the private work force was almost exclusively of foreign origin. Despite an amnesty in 2003 in which an estimated 100,000 illegal workers were helped to repatriate to their home countries, the Emirates economy and population continued to grow rapidly. Experienced workers generating steady earnings for their employers or sponsors (*kafeels*) could hope for easy renewals of nominal two or three year contracts. Pashtuns able to get away from manual labour work, including those in the UAE able to pass strict driver license tests, could often find work niches sustainable over a decade or more.

In Rawail village, particular neighbourhoods and extended families found long-term opportunities not only in the Gulf, but beyond, including in the United Kingdom. Interviews in one section of the main village cluster, here to be called the Suhel neighbourhood (*kandi* or *mohalla*) of Rawail, made clear that working abroad was a standard option within the portfolio of extended family survival strategies. Those able to connect to Bradford or another United Kingdom Pakistani enclave were considered the fortunate ones. One evening in Suhel, sitting outdoors on *khats* (in India, *charpoys*), drinking tea and discussing foreign travel, conversation revealed that several men had been abroad, and that two younger men were planning to go as soon as possible. At one point, the grandfatherly man who joined the group appeared to be at least one resident who maintained a traditional local lifestyle. Instead, he had just landed that day at the Islamabad airport, returning from a visit to his daughter and son-in-law in Bradford.<sup>68</sup>

The experiences of one extended Pashtun family within the Suhel neighbourhood illustrated how the Gulf labour option served individual and family economic, social, and political needs. This family history demonstrated that the allure of Gulf riches was fraught with hard realities. Lives had been marked by international politics, recruitment fraud, numbing and isolating work, and only slow, if steady, improvements in lifestyle and

relative status. Individuals within the family experienced differing levels of sacrifice, success, and frustrated ambition.

Five brothers lived in adjoining houses in the Suhel section of Rawail village. All had shares, with two sisters, in a good-sized holding of productive farmland irrigated by canal water and, if necessary, by diesel pumps drawing from wells. Their father had been killed many years earlier in a conflict over village fields. Their land currently produced rotations of maize, vegetables, sugar cane, and tobacco. Drying sheds cured the tobacco and the cane was either sold to the government mill or, depending on prices, crushed and boiled down to an unrefined brown sugar (*gur*) for local consumption and marketing. The land itself was quite valuable and the prestige of being a Pashtun shareholder was assured. But the income of the fields was insufficient for the extended family, especially after being divided with those who actually tilled the soil on a sharecropping basis.

The family had adapted to new Gulf opportunities while remaining rooted in local idioms of social and political value. Individual interests and capabilities had been accommodated and the sons of the five brothers now were being integrated into the range of family options. An older brother who had never attended school had gone off to the United Arab Emirates in the early 1980s. By 2004 he had worked for over twenty years in the Gulf, and was now a driver in Abu Dhabi. A second older brother who had also done poorly in school had worked in Kuwait until being forced out in 1991 by the turmoil of the first Gulf War. The second brother had returned to Rawail for several years, but at one point found himself in enough trouble that the family had to sell a small piece of land to finance a UAE work permit. He had originally joined his brother in Abu Dhabi, but changed to another position in Dubai, where he continued to work in 2004.

A third older brother had also been in Kuwait in 1991 and told dramatic stories of driving out and back to Pakistan through circuitous routes. The third brother now stayed in Rawail and supervised the farming. He also had a business in town selling

air tickets to travellers, including those making Hajj pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia. By 2004, the Musharraf government had reinstated a quota of funded Hajj journeys for government employees. Perhaps 150,000 Pakistanis a year made the main Hajj, with many overstaying their visit visas and disappearing into the local population to work.

The third brother had learned the hard way about the fraud and deceit connected with Gulf labour recruitment. He once had worked as a sub-agent for a large labour recruitment company and had collected and passed along commissions and funds for work visas. One day the larger agent vanished with the money, leaving no visas behind. With honour at stake, the family had sold a piece of land to pay back local people defrauded in the swindle. A fourth younger brother had been educated and was now a teacher in a local college. He also supervised the family fields and had once travelled to Europe on a visit. The fifth and youngest brother was also well educated, holding an MA degree. He worked in a government position in Peshawar and was also closely involved in the daily operation of the family fields.

The family had secured traditional economic and cultural assets found in landholding and government employment. But they had also moved into the urban service economy as well as the Gulf labour market. The two brothers working in the Gulf represented a common Peshawar Pakhtun advantage possessed over Pashtun residents of the more southern districts of the NWFP, the southern FATA regions, and the Afghan border areas. Anecdotal evidence and personal observation indicated that the lineages and regions of the northern Pakhtu-speaking districts often had an apparent advantage in filling relatively desirable jobs in the wealthier Gulf cities. The Yusufzai and other Pakhtuns of the Peshawar valley would often be found as Dubai or Abu Dhabi cab or truck drivers.

As will be related, driving a taxi in the UAE for one hundred hours a week was very hard, but an air-conditioned cab was sustainable employment compared to highway or building construction labouring in the Gulf, especially in summer. Truck



and cab driving work in more isolated, harder living conditions, such as in Al Ain, were nevertheless jobs often taken by Pashtuns, especially Pashto-speaking Pakistanis from areas such as Bannu or North Waziristan or Afghans from Pashtun border districts such as Khost.

Despite the false starts in Kuwait and the losses of the labour recruitment swindle, the five brothers of the Rawail extended family had persevered. The brothers returned for a month or two every year or two. Their children and wives lived with the families of their brothers. The brother who had spent so many years in the UAE finally arranged a marriage. Over several years funds came back to build a fired brick guesthouse (*hujra*) and rooms that were soon enclosed within the family compound as a new household for the brother.

By 2004, the family was buying an open piece of land in the odd spaces between the two main family homes. They would build another family compound. Already the son of one of the two older brothers in the UAE had received his own work visa and had gone off to Ras al Khaimah, the Emirate just north of Dubai in the UAE. He was taking driving courses required before any licenses were issued for driver positions. In the summer of 2004, one son of the third brother had not done well academically and was practicing his vehicle driving while a visa was being arranged. The third brother already had one son working in Saudi Arabia.

These various choices served the family well. They were minor landlords, though not overtly wealthy, even in a modern Pakistani sense. They had only a single old jeep and a small motorcycle between them. Yet they were residents of a neighbourhood almost entirely rebuilt of fired brick. Only one in ten homes in the several neighbourhood lanes still had the old-style mud or unfired brick walls. A walk through the village lanes in the evening passed many homes of workers now abroad. Here, the family had been gone for years to Saudi Arabia; there the man was in the UAE. From that home, the family had left for the

United Kingdom. Family elders and retainers often kept the quiet homes secured.

One large cement walled house on the edge of the fields, just down the lane from the compound of the five brothers, was empty. The occupants had been in Karachi for over a decade. The home was now the neighbourhood *hujra* for visiting guests, evening gatherings, and special meetings. Across an open spot from the cement *hujra*, just a door or two from one of the brother's homes, lived a neighbour who had spent fifteen years working overseas. The man had first worked in Iraq, then the UAE, and finally Saudi Arabia. He said the most decent people he had worked for were Iraqis in Baghdad. They treated him with respect and friendship. He had worked and returned, but said he would never want a son to work in the Gulf.<sup>69</sup> One of his sons had studied hard in local religious schools (*madrasas*), had been a student leader and activist, and had been elected in October 2002 as a member of the NWFP Provincial Assembly. In the following years, the cement *hujra* became the site of open house meetings for those wishing to talk with the member of the provincial assembly.

In the 1980s and 1990s a dozen or more madrasas and *dar ulooms* had prospered in the eastern Peshawar valley. Structural inequality within Pakistan left many districts with little government investment in education or employment. With the population increase between 1981 and 1998, some districts in the NWFP had actually experienced a decline in number of government schools.<sup>70</sup> Religious institutions, including many directly funded by Saudi Arabian sources, supplied alternative opportunities for subsistence and education. During the late 1990s, regional madrasas tied to the Taliban in Afghanistan periodically ended school years early and sent older students to join Taliban military offences.<sup>71</sup>

After 11 September 2001, in the Malakand Agency, just north of the Mardan district, Sufi Muhammad, a religious leader, mobilized several thousand men to go fight with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Hundreds had died. Hundreds were made prisoner.

In 2004, several hundred were still being detained, with only occasional prisoner releases or exchanges. Did similar alienating factors spur labour migration and international Islamist activism? What did national identity and patriotism mean in the face of unrelenting overpopulation, scarce farmland, and little private sector employment, especially for the educated with aspirations for a life beyond the farm and village?

In the Gulf, steady workers who avoided illness and injury, and who had solid support networks at home and abroad, could save for futures beyond immediate consumption or home building. By 2004, each of the two brothers in the UAE from the Suhel neighbourhood in Rawail village had purchased separate shops, on their own accounts, in Mardan town. Their plans seemed clear for futures and incomes that would continue after a final return from the Gulf.

Local investments, at least in basic consumption, marked other regional locations known for labour migration. Anecdotal stories related degrees of development financed by Gulf remittances. Areas of Khost district in Afghanistan that twenty years earlier had no water supplies, except dirty ponds shared with livestock, now had power, wells, new housing, and consumer goods. One village in the underdeveloped Buner valley just north of Peshawar was known for fully stocked shops, new homes, and for specific chains of migration to Malaysia.

But incremental group change did not hide the cost to many individuals. Hundreds had died abroad of injury or disease. Pashtuns in the Gulf organized and contributed to informal welfare funds that repatriated bodies of the dead to home villages for appropriate burial. Though most survived, not everyone who went abroad to the Gulf prospered or saved enough after all the toil and sacrifice to justify the physical or psychological cost. The Gulf market had token labour protections. The naïve, the unlucky, or those outside protective networks were constantly abused. Slavery in Saudi Arabia had been abolished only in 1962 and the worst Gulf employers treated workers little better than nineteenth-century plantation contract labour. Some modern Gulf workers

were still employed as farm labour and even shepherds. The smuggling of Pakistani boys to ride as illegal jockeys in Gulf camel races was a staple of Gulf and South Asian newspaper feature writers.

Gulf employers often provided substandard housing or work conditions. Many refused to pay wages for months at a time. Owners of factories in Gulf free trade zones regularly abandoned plants and wage and repatriation obligations to workers when contracts were no longer profitable. National sponsors held the passports of their workers and often refused to return passports or transfer or renew work documents when asked, especially if there was any dispute over wages or conditions of employment.<sup>72</sup>

There were no legal labour associations and no employee pension or welfare payments. There were only return tickets for the outspoken, the injured, the weak, or the exhausted. Citizen sponsors often imported labourers simply to collect fees, 'selling' visas with no intention of providing jobs. They might let workers find their own employment, as long as regular payments were paid to the sponsor or *kafeel*. The hard physical work of construction and road building limited the work careers of many. One Rawail villager had gone to the UAE without a contracted job and worked for two years as a mason on smaller residential construction sites. With no long-term prospects or great savings he returned to the village. Every summer the UAE government wrote newspaper articles suggesting, but not requiring (until summer 2005), that companies give their workers several hours off in the heat of the day, routinely up to 40–45 degrees centigrade (up to 50 degrees in Iraq). Workers were treated for heat stroke on a daily basis.

The 1980s idea of a 'Dubai syndrome' was an early attempt to measure the psychological cost of these work conditions. For the vast majority who travelled abroad, work conditions were aggravated by long periods of separation from families. Numerous Peshawar valley stories hinted at the complex emotions and tensions just below the surface of the continuous circulation of

workers. One Rawail villager returning to the Gulf as a labourer made it all the way to the Peshawar airport before realizing he no longer wanted to be away from his family. He simply walked out of the airport and went home. He had bitter memories of his time abroad and condemned the attitudes and conduct of his employers. The economic class dimension was an ever-present factor as Arab Gulf elites remained permanently situated above egalitarian-minded Pashtuns. Another story involved a Rawail-area horse-drawn tonga driver who had watched for years as the families of his brothers working in the Gulf prospered from remittances. Finally he arranged for one of his sons to go to the Gulf. But again, a decisive moment came at the airport when father and son both broke down crying at the imminent separation. The trip was cancelled.<sup>73</sup>

Routinely, workers who had returned from long years working abroad said they did not want their sons to work in the Gulf. Even the United Kingdom could be difficult. One Rawail resident had returned after seven years in a British prison. He had paid thousands for his job permit and expenses and had worked for over a year to earn this back. He had apparently taken shortcuts to increase earnings. His NWFP drug dealer friends feeding transnational flows of illegal commodities had escaped any punishment. The former prisoner related stories to villagers about the high quality of life and personal attention from staff found in the foreign prison. He estimated that thirty workers from the area had made it to Bradford. When their families were resettled there, the local group in Bradford might eventually add up to several hundred people.

Another Pashtun from Rawail village suffered more permanent psychological damage from many years in the United Kingdom. His father had a business there. The son had a wife, home, and family there. But in the summer of 2004 he was back in Rawail arranging a permanent move home. His British accent and global cultural awareness could not hide a sense of personal unhappiness with his British life. At the same time, he discussed the uncertainties of what it would actually mean to return to the

village after so many years abroad. He had headaches and chest pain. He smoked heavily, unlike most villagers, and was going to visit a doctor in Peshawar. He said that there were many persons trying to leave this village who didn't understand his desire to return.<sup>74</sup>

Return was a steady theme, even among those gone for decades. But return was desirable only after success. Failure was shame. Anyone who returned from the Gulf without completing at least six months of a contract might be teased about his short absence by children asking, 'have you forgotten the streets and roads'? A locally famous personality, Amriki Baba, had returned to Rawail after forty-four years in the United States. He had lived a western, secular life for decades. He had 'lost' his religion and much of his Pakhto language. At some point he met a relative in England. Over time he realized he had been 'asleep' and returned to his religion. One day he left his American wife and family and returned to Rawail. When he landed at the airport in Islamabad, so many cars and vans went to greet him that the alarmed police investigated the procession. Amriki Baba was buried in the large village cemetery (*qabristan*) that sprawled on many acres on the north side of the inter-village road across from the main village cluster.<sup>75</sup>

Returning men brought more than appliances and remittances. There were hundreds if not thousands of men returned from the Gulf with HIV/AIDS. Pakistan officially denied an HIV/AIDS health crisis. In 2003, the National AIDS Control Programme estimated there were only 1,942 cases of HIV and 231 cases of AIDS in Pakistan. A more realistic estimate thought that nationwide there might be 70-80,000 cases of HIV/AIDS.<sup>76</sup> Whatever the numbers, yet to be even estimated with accuracy, it was evident that many workers returned and infected wives and new born children before early deaths. The Afghan border provinces and Pakistani tribal areas had the least educated workers, least aware of dangers or prevention. Despite denials, prostitution and drugs were found on the margins of Gulf worker communities. In August 2004, an HIV positive woman from

Parachinar town in the Kurram Agency, a FATA region southwest of Peshawar, was appointed the head of the All Women Advancement and Resource Development Plus group. She pressed for educating the public about HIV/AIDS. The group had eighty-one members living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>77</sup>

The social and personal consequences of HIV/AIDS for village women could be devastating. In 1999, a twenty-five year-old man from the Hangu district of Bangash Pashtuns south of Peshawar had married a fifteen year-old woman. She said, 'My mother was not in favour of my marriage with an already married person, but my father forced me into accepting the marriage proposal.' Her husband then went to Saudi Arabia as a labourer. He returned and died of AIDS in May 2004 after infecting his wife. By June 2004, the sick twenty-year-old widow had two daughters, including a three year-old and one of only four months. The woman was denied treatment at all three teaching hospitals in Peshawar. She told a sympathetic doctor that the hospital staff and physicians refused to examine or even come in contact with her.<sup>78</sup>

The structures of labour exploitation in the Gulf denied any sustained health care or social services to foreign workers. Workers renewing visas in the Gulf were tested for AIDS and, if found HIV-positive, were deported 'without even being allowed to pack their luggage'.<sup>79</sup> No screening was done on return to Pakistan and many workers, avoiding the social stigma, simply did not reveal their status until too late. One doctor estimated that there were about eighty HIV/AIDS patients in Hangu district of the NWFP.<sup>80</sup> Reliable statistics on this were not pursued on a local or national level. No serious national preventive education or treatment plans were discussed or implemented in Pakistan. Even workers with hepatitis might be expelled from the Gulf. One ill Rawail worker, found to have hepatitis C, waited until a trip home to be diagnosed and treated. His family mailed medicine to him in the UAE so that no one there would know of his status.

Just as exploitative Gulf employers used multiple strategies to extract value from workers, so an informal labour-recruiting sector used underground and fraudulent means to profit from potential workers. Blank new Pakistan passports were commonly stolen from government offices and sold on the black market, with perhaps 21,741 stolen since 1999.<sup>81</sup> 'Human smugglers', including illegal activities organized by travel and recruiting agents, often worked with airport and immigration personnel to send people out of the country. For many years Pashtuns from Afghanistan had little difficulty obtaining Pakistani passports and documents. More recent reports said Afghans were even obtaining new supposedly foolproof national identity cards.

By the summer of 2004, Pakistani national identification cards were more and more required, yet many in Pakistan and the Gulf were told there would be a several week delay in issuing new or renewed passports. A temporary shortage of newly printed blank passports was blamed, though it was soon revealed that the problem was difficulty in mobilizing the technology to meet new US requirements for scanner readable passports. For potential migrant workers, obtaining government documents was just the start.

Beyond passports, recruiting agents might demand extra money to arrange a work visa, other documents, or a plane ticket. But worst was the not unusual experience of defrauded recruits arriving at a Gulf airport looking for a company agent or job and finding that no job existed. Worse than paying too much for an illegal and dangerous overland or boat trip was paying for these services, and then finding the smuggler had disappeared half-way. There were stories of boat smugglers pushing illegal migrants into the water just off the beaches of Dubai, almost guaranteeing immediate arrest. With rumours rampant of a new job market for Pakistanis opening in Malaysia, the Pakistani government issued regular warnings against being robbed by fake recruiting agents promising access to work visas for high fees.<sup>82</sup>

To meet ever accelerating informal costs, all Gulf workers, including Bangladeshi, Indian, and Sri Lankan workers often



borrowed at high rates from moneylenders against potential earnings.<sup>83</sup> Many Pashtun villagers denied that their migrant worker neighbours borrowed from moneylenders, saying that instead they relied on extended family pools of capital and remittances from earlier workers. Anecdotal evidence from Afghanistan showed a similar pattern of post-Taliban chains of family and community recruitment and financing of workers going abroad. One Afghan trend included the movement of small merchants and businessmen to cities in India.<sup>84</sup>

### **A System of Gulf Subordination**

‘Temporary and permanent migrants, naturalized citizens, ethnic minorities, refugees, populations in diaspora, and inhabitants of borderlands all have ties to more than one nation, and often both resist and accommodate the norms of their host culture, evolving an ‘adaptive constellation of responses to dwelling-in-displacement’ (Clifford, 1994, 310).’<sup>85</sup>

More than one unlucky recruit from many different countries found himself at an airport in the Gulf with fresh heavy debt back home and no actual job on the ground. Stories were related to journalists and scholars about men having literally to walk out of the airport and sleep in a park until a sympathetic countryman would eventually take in the hapless victim.<sup>86</sup> A lucky man with initiative, including those arriving illegally by land or sea and those who illegally overstayed their expired visit or work visas, worked in the grey area of illegal, but condoned construction, restaurant, or shop labour. Often such workers were intentionally recruited, then left underpaid or unpaid until they quit.

Pashtuns in the Gulf were almost all blue-collar workers. For years, GCC government rhetoric repeated that unskilled labour was to be replaced by skilled and white-collar employees. Yet in 2004, of perhaps 500,000 Pakistanis in the UAE, over 90 per cent remained non-professionals. Four general regions of heavy labour employment could be mapped in the seven emirates of the UAE.

Abu Dhabi produced almost all the oil wealth of the country. Abu Dhabi city on the southern Gulf coast was the UAE capital and a first centre of large numbers of foreign workers. One hundred miles inland on the border of Oman was the second labour centre, Al Ain with a population of 250,000-300,000.

The city had been the home of the late UAE ruler Shaikh Zayed for two decades before he became UAE President in 1966. He had subsequently invested heavily in Al Ain and the city's construction industry had boomed. A modern university and urban area grew around historic date palm gardens. The flaw in this finely planned and developed city was the slum-like one hundred hectare foreign worker housing area in the Sanaiya industrial zone south of the town centre. The barren, dusty, and totally unplanned community housed at its peak up to 15-20,000 residents. Their cinderblock and corrugated metal shacks were labelled 'spontaneous housing' in 1980s city planning documents. Many called Sanaiya the 'Patani village', the village of Pathans. Most were Pashtuns from the southern NWFP districts and Afghans from the eastern Afghan border districts. The rebellious workers from Waziristan that Akbar Ahmed had written about twenty years earlier had lived here. Perhaps a few still remained from that early period.

The third and perhaps main centre of UAE labour employment was Dubai city on the coast of Dubai emirate, just to the north of Abu Dhabi emirate. Dubai produced a few percentage points of the total UAE oil production, but had invested billions in ports, industrial and free trade zones, and in massive retail and residential complexes. The fourth region of general UAE demography and labour could be described as the towns and territories of the smaller emirates to the north and east of Dubai. These often served as residential areas for Dubai city.

Foreign labour in the UAE constituted 80-85 per cent of the population. The post-2001 economic boom had quickly added several hundred thousand to a population that probably hit 4,000,000 in 2004, up from 3,750,000 in 2003. The 'national' population of Emirati citizens might be as low as 450,000.<sup>87</sup> These few citizens controlled 10 per cent of the world's oil reserves.

'National' citizens monopolized highly paid public sector jobs offering lavish benefits and easy hours. Foreign 'expatriates' held about 98 per cent of private sector jobs, though no foreign worker could become a citizen, even after decades. No foreign worker could gain permanent residency (green card) rights. No foreign citizen could own land or own a majority interest in a company outside specific free trade zones, even a company personally financed and operated. By law, a foreign investor could build and operate a million dollar business or hotel, yet technically could still be pushed out by a silent, nominally token Emirati majority partner.

European businessmen, Indian shopkeepers, Sri Lankan housemaids, Filipino female shop help, Bangladeshi construction workers, and Pakistani drivers were all dependent on an Emirati citizen who authorized the person's employment and could manipulate or ignore work conditions at will. Workers who may not have been paid for six or even nine months were told that they had no recourse but to file a complaint with the Labour Ministry. The Ministry would contact the employer. At worst, a company would be blacklisted from receiving further labour permits. The structuring of labour subordination included the securing of several foreign sources for manual labourers, white-collar workers, and professionals. The fleeting moments of Pakistani and Pashtun labour solidarity in the Gulf in the early 1980s had been followed by the recruitment of large numbers of Indians, Bangladeshis, Nepalis, and East Asians.

In 2004, there were over one million Indians in the UAE alone, many in professional and retail positions. The regional networking dynamic was illustrated by the fact that half of the Indian workers were from the single small southern state of Kerala. Immediate deportation was often the fate of any worker disrupting a job site or public order. Still, the continuing demand for manual labour, and a Gulf construction boom in 2004, meant that Pakistani workers remained in high demand. The comparatively limited educational qualifications of Pakistani workers cost them job

opportunities, especially after the 2003 UAE decision to recruit only matriculates (tenth grade graduates) for many jobs.

Within the blue-collar labour category, there were fine grades and distinctions of opportunities and preferences. A Mangal Pashtun from Afghanistan on a road crew in Al Ain had a different quality of life, and prospects, compared to a Pakhtun from Mardan driving a taxi in Au Dhabi or Dubai. A Waziri construction worker with little education and no English might aspire to driving a truck, but might never get into the driver training classes in Dubai that taught proper driving technique and good manners to those who would have direct contact with tourists and business visitors.<sup>88</sup>

By 2004, planned growth in the wider Sanaiya industrial area of Al Ain had developed familiar city grids of modern blocks of shops with upstairs apartments for Indian or other non-Pakistani workers. But the original spontaneous Pashtun settlement, located just behind the strip of mechanic shops and truck depots on the east of the main Sanaiya road, continued to defy plans to demolish the site and relocate residents.<sup>89</sup>

Gulf work options and opportunities remained contingent and unpredictable. In the summer of 2004, two Pakistani contract workers were kidnapped and executed during the fighting in Iraq. That same summer, Indian workers applying through agents to companies advertising for cook jobs in Kuwait were sent to US military bases in Iraq. Most of these Indian workers stayed because of debts and because they were paid \$400 a month, 'double the wages on offer in Gulf states and four times what cooks earn in India.'<sup>90</sup>

The advantage of being steadily employed in the UAE was only comparative. In August 2004, a series of labour disturbances in the textile mills of Faisalabad in the Punjab Province of Pakistan highlighted the poor conditions for workers left behind. Demonstrating textile workers complained they were paid as little as Rs75 (\$1.25) a day for twelve hour days. They had no weekly holiday, no casual leaves for emergencies, and were given no social security or old-age benefit coverage in larger units as required by law.<sup>91</sup>

In July 2003, a Pakhtun from Mardan district in the Peshawar valley had been driving a cab for a Dubai transportation company for one year. In previous years he had worked other jobs in the UAE. He now lived in municipal housing built for workers, one of four men sharing a room. They had no kitchen. He returned to visit his family for one month a year. He guessed a few thousand men from the Peshawar valley worked in Dubai. He noted the unique working conditions for Dubai cab drivers. A few companies held a monopoly on the Dubai taxi business. In Al Ain and Abu Dhabi, taxi drivers were still 'independent', while the lives and incomes of company drivers in Dubai were highly structured.

In Dubai, the cab company paid vehicle expenses and took 70 per cent of monthly earnings. The Mardan driver worked fourteen hours a day. In July 2003, he worked twenty-eight days, plus took one paid 'emergency leave' day. He received in total salary earnings ('30 per cent on Revenue Above Dh 0') Dh 2,740 in gross personal income.<sup>92</sup> After deductions of Dh 378 his net pay was Dh 2,362.<sup>93</sup> This meant a net pay of Dh 81.44 (\$22.13 per day) for twenty-nine days with a single day off every two weeks. If divided across twenty-nine days at fourteen hours a day, the net earnings were the equivalent of \$1.58 per hour. Essentially, this hourly net earnings rate was available for as many hours as the driver cared to work. Was this 'exploitation'? Was this 'fair'? In comparison, this hourly rate was roughly equivalent to the lowest daily wage earnings (Rs75) lamented by protesting Faisalabad textile workers.

Whatever value judgments might be made on post-1973 Gulf labour conditions, it seemed inevitable that there would be continued flows of fresh workers pushed by poverty from Pakistan to the Gulf and world labour markets. With the adoption from January 2005 of new quota regulations favouring Chinese clothing and textile exports to Europe and the United States, it also seemed inevitable that new dynamics of world production and adjusted labour demand would impact upon the interregional circulation of all South Asians, including Pashtuns from Pakistan

and Afghanistan and textile workers from Faisalabad. Once again, localities would participate in and be transformed by a globalizing world. By 2006, especially in Dubai, Pashtun workers would be fully involved as transnational forces took a variety of local forms and Gulf workers struggled to renegotiate decades-old hierarchies of power and wealth.

## NOTES

1. Michele Gamburd, *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle, Transnationalism and Sri Lanka's Migrant Housemaids*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000, p. 31.
2. Jonathan S. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre: The Gulf Migration and Pakistan*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 33.
3. Shahid Javed Burki, 'Migration, Urbanization and Politics in Pakistan' in W.H. Wriggins and J. Guyot, eds., *Population, Politics and the Future of Southern Asia*, New York/London: Columbia University Press, 1973, pp. 147-84. Discussed in Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, pp. 35-36.
4. Roger Ballard, 'Transnational entrepreneurship from Mirpur', in Gardner and Osella, eds., *Migration, modernity and social transformation in South Asia*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004, p. 31.
5. Mehtab Karim and Warren Robinson, 'The Migration Situation in Pakistan: An Analytic Review', in F. Selier and M. Karim eds., *Migration in Pakistan: Theories and Facts*, Lahore: Vanguard Press, 1986.
6. For discussion of the valorising use of the word Mohajir rather than other terms for refugee, see Karen Leonard, 'Hyderabadis in Pakistan: Changing Nations' in Crispin Bates, ed., *Community, Empire and Migration*, p. 227.
7. Mohammad Waseem, 'Mohajirs in Pakistan: Nativization of Migrants' in Crispin Bates, ed., *Community, Empire and Migration*. New Delhi: Orient Longman, p. 251.
8. Emma Duncan, *Breaking the Curfew*, London: Michael Joseph, 1989, pp. 167-8.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 170. The author hopes to complete an in depth study of Pashtun settlement in Karachi in the future as conditions allow research clearances.
10. Ballard noted about Mirpur migrants that 'not only were inter- and intra-biraderi reciprocities the principle vehicle through which the migration process was itself organized..., they also provided the foundation for the processes of strategic adaptation which settlers deployed as they set about

- re-establishing themselves...', Roger Ballard, 'Transnational entrepreneurship from Mirpur', p. 37.
11. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, p. 36.
  12. Shahid Javed Burki, 'What Migration to the Middle East May Mean for Pakistan', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* III: 3 (Spring 1980), pp. 47-66. See Addleton's discussion, *Undermining the Centre*, p. 37.
  13. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, p. 3.
  14. Mohammad Waseem, 'Mohajirs in Pakistan: Nativization of Migrants', p. 252.
  15. See Chapter 7, Emma Duncan, *Breaking the Curfew*. The scope and interpretation of Pashtun migration and involvement in Karachi politics, conflict, and social order requires a major research project in itself and is beyond the range of the current discussion.
  16. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, p. 36.
  17. Rashid Amjad, *To the Gulf and Back*, Geneva/New Delhi: ILO, p. 196. The migrant total for 1977-85 was listed as 1,093,154. This included 64,148 (5.87 per cent) drivers and 44,536 (4.08 per cent) tailors.
  18. Khwaja Sarmad, 'Pakistan Migration to the Middle East Countries', *Studies in Population, Labour Force and Migration Project*, Report No. 9, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad, February, 1985, p. 25, fn. 8.
  19. *Hawala* and *hundi* are terms for an ancient system of long distance trade in bills of exchange organized by bazaar moneychangers. This has allowed travellers and circulating merchants to transfer funds and avoid carrying vulnerable currency or other valuables.
  20. 'Report of the National Manpower Commission', Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 1989, p. 114.
  21. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
  22. See Ahmed, 1984 for anecdotes of Pakhtun social norms in conflict with a social environment dominated by Arab ethnicity and economic class divisions.
  23. G.M. Arif, *Remittances and Investments at the Household Level in Pakistan*, Islamabad: PIDE, 1999, records for Pakistan migrants to the UAE, a 'mean duration of employment' of 4.4 years. See table 2, p. 9.
  24. Khwaja Sarmad, *Pakistani Migration*, p. 8.
  25. See Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, pp. 92-93.
  26. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
  27. 'Report of the National Manpower Commission', Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1989, p. 108.
  28. See Hassan Gardezi's discussion (Gardezi 1995) of how Pakistan fits into I. Wallerstein's 'World System' theory of global capital accumulation

- involving centre-periphery hierarchies of investment and labour mobilization.
29. See the essays in David Ludden, ed., *Capitalism in Asia, Readings from the Journal of Asian Studies*, Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2004.
  30. Ahmed, 1981; Sarmad, 1985, pp. 26-32; Francis Watkins, '“Save there, eat here”: Migrants, households and identity in northern Pakistan', in K. Gardner and F. Osella, eds., *Migration, modernity and social transformation in South Asia*, 2004, p. 31.
  31. Al-Ain interview, summer 2003.
  32. See Ahmed, 1984.
  33. Ahmed, 1984, included an estimate that 20-30,000 men had migrated to the Gulf out of the 300,000 total population of the South Waziristan Agency in Pakistan on the Afghan border. Stress-related effects were called the 'Dubai syndrome'.
  34. See Watkins, '“Save there, Eat here”: Migrants, households and identity in northern Pakistan'.
  35. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, p. 152.
  36. See Ahmed, 1981; Addleton, 1992; Lefebvre, 1999.
  37. See discussion of the 'management of desire' in Watkins, 'Save there, eat here', p. 70.
  38. Lefebvre, 1999.
  39. 'Return Migrants of Pakistan: Problems and Chances of Absorption', Islamabad: Pakistan Manpower Institute report, 1990, p. 13.
  40. Ahmed, 1981.
  41. Al-Ain interview, summer 2003.
  42. G.M. Arif, 'Remittances and Investments at the Household Level in Pakistan', Research Report No. 166, Islamabad: PIDE, 1999, p. 24.
  43. Sarmad, *Pakistani Migration*, p. 27.
  44. Peshawar interview, summer 2004.
  45. Peshawar valley interview, summer 2004.
  46. See discussion in Watkins, 'Migrants, households and identity in northern Pakistan', p. 77.
  47. Addleton, *Undermining the Centre*, p. 4.
  48. Newspaper summary of comments of Tim Handley, British High Commission, media and public affairs section, Islamabad. *Dawn*, 15 July 2004, p. 19.
  49. *Dawn*, 4 July 2004, p. 25.
  50. *News*, 'Surging oil prices promise windfalls for Gulf economies', 7 August 2004, p. 20.
  51. Al Ain interview, summer 2003.
  52. Government of Pakistan website, August 2004, 'Overseas Employment', [www.pakistan.gov.pk/labour-division/information/services/oep.htm](http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/labour-division/information/services/oep.htm).
  53. *Dawn*, 15 July 2004, p. 17.



54. Mardan district, Pakistan interview, summer 2003.
55. Village and personal names have been changed.
56. *Dawn*, '361,461 sent abroad for employment', 15 July 2004, p. 17.
57. 1998 census numbers.
58. Peshawar interview, summer 2004.
59. Data from Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, 1998 Census of Pakistan ([www.pap.org.pk/population/sec2.htm](http://www.pap.org.pk/population/sec2.htm)). The territory of present day Pakistan had grown from 32,500,000 (previous source) to an estimated 159.2 million in 2004, as noted by the Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C., *News*, 'World population 6.4 b, Pakistan's 159.2 m', 19 August 2004, p. 9.
60. *News*, 22 July 2004, p. 12.
61. *Gulf News*, 'Saudi economy heads for a boom', 29 July 2003, p. 27.
62. *The Statesman*, 'Over 361,000 went abroad in two years, says Sh Rashid', 15 July 2004, p. 12.
63. Exactly 22,894 went to Saudi Arabia and the UAE. From government of Pakistan website, August 2004: [www.pakistan.gov.pk](http://www.pakistan.gov.pk), 'Overseas Pakistanis'.
64. *Gulf News*, 'UAE issues 2.6m visas in 2003', 8 August 2003, p. 3.
65. *Daily Times*, 19 August 2004, p. A4.
66. *News*, 9 August 2004, p. 7.
67. *Gulf News*, '27,699 foreigners deported last year for visa violations', 8 August 2004, p. 3.
68. Rawail, Mardan district, Pakistan interviews, summer 2003.
69. Rawail interview, summer 2004.
70. See Bari, Sarwar, 'Illusions of Development', *News*, 19 August 2004, p. 6.
71. In August 1999, the local press listed eleven madrasas in the Mardan area from which 'Afghani Taliban' who had completed their studies were returning to Afghanistan to join summer fighting against the Northern Alliance. 'Taliban from Mardan leave for Afghanistan', *Dawn*, 5 August 1999.
72. For a critique of the Saudi Arabian treatment of male and female workers from India, Sri Lanka, and Saudi Arabia, see the Human Rights Watch, 'Bad Dreams: Exploitation and Abuse of Migrant Workers in Saudi Arabia', London, 15 July 2004. Non-professional Pakistani women were not allowed to go abroad for labour, especially for the housemaid work that led to the abuse of so many Sri Lankan, Indian, or Filipino women. Curiously, in summer 2004, the story was told that at least one foreign expatriate worker in Peshawar had a female Sri Lankan housekeeper (with a Pakistani assistant).
73. Stories from Rawail village, Mardan district, Pakistan, summer 2004.
74. Stories from Rawail village, summer 2004.
75. Rawail village, interview summer 2004.

76. *Dawn Review*, 19 August 2004, p. 23.
77. *The Statesman*, 'HIV positive woman made AWARD Plus chairperson' 11 August 2004, p. 3.
78. *Dawn*, 'AIDS patients denied hospitalization', 22 June 2004, p. 5.
79. *Dawn*, 22 June 2004, p. 5.
80. *Ibid.*
81. *Dawn*, 15 July 2004, p. 15.
82. *News*, 23 July 2004, p. 2.
83. See Gamburd, *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle*, chapter 3.
84. Kabul, Afghanistan interview, summer 2003.
85. Gamburd, *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle*, p. 31.
86. See the variety of problematic migration tales in Al Khobaisi, S., *Keralites in Abu Dhabi: A Study of Unskilled and Semi-Skilled Keralite Migrant Workers in the City of Abu Dhabi*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hull, 1992.
87. Most estimates of the Emirati citizen percentage were 20% of the UAE population or less. The lowest estimates may be derived from older census data. Exact census numbers remain closely held by the government.
88. Al Ain interviews and visits, summer 2003.
89. Interview with Al Ain city planners, summer 2003.
90. *Frontier Post*, 18 August 2004, p. 5.
91. *Dawn*, 'Powerloom workers feel the crunch', 21 August 2004, p. 5. In 2004, \$1=Rs58.
92. Employment details provided for this research in August 2003. The long-standing exchange rate for the UAE dirham was \$1=3.68 dirhams.
93. The Dh 378 deductions included: housing, Dh 230; insurance, Dh 18; medical, Dh 20; training, Dh 60; 'refund deposit', Dh 50.

# 6

## Pashtuns as Global Workers, Dubai 2006

'The Dubai model boils down to a self-consciously corporate approach to government: a can-do attitude that appeals to business, speed in decisions possible under an authoritarian system and achieving results that create momentum.'<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Pashtuns circulating in the Indian Ocean region deployed an evolving portfolio of strategies to ensure success both at home and abroad. Yet for Pashtun workers, especially in the Gulf oil states, individual, community, and national identities and initiatives seemed to provide increasingly inadequate protections against transnational and global forces. This chapter argues that in 2006 the Gulf model of state control based upon global subordinated labour recruitment began to break down as international agendas of trade policy, human rights, and worker solidarity challenged and modified thirty-year-old patterns. Dubai labour relations in 2006, especially those affecting the Pashtun 'circulatory regime' of personal mobility and links to homelands, revealed how Pashtuns retained comparative advantages as workers, but increasingly benefited from identifying with non-Pashtun workers and universal standards to demand better wages, rights, and terms of employment.

Early twenty-first century narratives and analysis of globalization continued to devote much attention to the circulation of capital, technologies, media-enhanced cultural representations, and labour.<sup>2</sup> By 2005, these mobile dynamics were consolidating in the Gulf and the United Arab Emirates as

worldwide economic developments drove a boom in oil revenues and state expenditures. This period marked a high point of a second great era of regional oil-funded development. In 2006, with oil prices in the \$70 a barrel range for much of the year, the six GCC countries, Libya, Iran, and Algeria would earn up to \$500 billion.<sup>3</sup> Investment in regional infrastructure meant that demand for foreign labour increased, though the rhetoric of replacing foreign workers with 'nationals' continued.<sup>4</sup>

During 2005 and 2006, Dubai city, with a population of perhaps 1.5 million, experienced a peak in the planning, building, and selling of commercial and resort real estate projects.<sup>5</sup> A December 2005 census estimated that there were now 4.1 million people in the United Arab Emirates, a 75 per cent increase in ten years. Exactly 20.1 per cent were counted as 'UAE Nationals'.<sup>6</sup> It was a boom-time environment with oil revenues for 2005 increasing over one year from Dh 124 billion to Dh 174 billion and the GDP growing 26.4 per cent.<sup>7</sup> City planners talked of having to build for a population of six million by 2020.<sup>8</sup> Dubai had 30,000 hotel rooms that housed 6.3 million guests in 2005. Planners estimated the need for 80–100,000 rooms to meet a goal of attracting fifteen million visitors by 2010.<sup>9</sup> The Dubai Marina real estate development project alone would provide housing for 80–100,000 expatriate workers.<sup>10</sup>

A local desire to prove the uniqueness of a Dubai model of modernity combined with record oil revenues to spur unique, innovative, and speculative building projects. The planned tallest building in the world rose within the city limits. Resort and second home housing developments, some now available as 'freehold' private property, were built in high rise apartment complexes and on artificial off-shore islands arranged in patterns of palm trees and even a world map. Appadurai's sense of a world shaped by transnational electronic mediascape dynamics<sup>11</sup> took concrete form locally in the Dubai Media City and Dubai Internet City developments. These were free trade media and technology zones with no taxes, customs duties, or limits to investment and profit remittances. More difficult to discern in the prosperity were

traces of social mobilization among workers tentatively negotiating the possibilities of a 'globalization from below'.<sup>12</sup>

Through 2006, the United Arab Emirates and Dubai flourished. The oil boom peaked in the UAE with an average price of oil sold reaching \$65 a barrel in May. Despite the ongoing war in Iraq, tensions with Iran, and uncertainties about terrorism and economic stability, Dubai tourism and investment prospered unabated. The demand remained high for labour to fill service and construction occupations and trades. Workers long subordinated to unyielding corporate control and limited state protections continued to arrive by the plane load in the Emirates. Increased regional airline schedules made travel both more accessible and occasionally affordable.

After four years, Pakistan International Airlines resumed flights from the UAE to Balochistan to serve the Baluch expatriate community of perhaps one hundred thousand people, mainly from the Makran region.<sup>13</sup> They and other countrymen were pushed by poverty at home. One discussion of the Pakistan budget released in June 2006 noted, per the World Bank, that 'three-quarters of the 160 million people live on less than \$2 a day'.<sup>14</sup> There were now perhaps six hundred thousand Pakistanis in the United Arab Emirates,<sup>15</sup> with one unofficial estimate ranging up to 'more than 750,000'.<sup>16</sup>

Foreign workers, including Pashtuns from Pakistan and Afghanistan, found themselves competing within stratified and segmented labour niches defined by nationality, skill levels, and the expediencies of a global labour market. In Dubai, Pashtuns worked as hand-cart labourers in city bazaars, especially in the Deira area of less expensive hotels and stores. Pashtun truck drivers delivered goods from Dubai free trade manufacturing zones to dhows loading in the Deira wharfs along Dubai Creek. One taxi driver thought 80 per cent of the cab drivers in Dubai were Pashtuns. He estimated there were tens of thousands of Pashtun taxi and transport drivers in the city and emirate.<sup>17</sup>

As temperatures rose at the beginning of the summer of 2006 and western economies strained under high oil prices, the GCC

states, the UAE, and Dubai in particular, experienced the unintended and unanticipated effects of changes in the global economy, high regional investment, and speculation. Many discussed local inflationary pressures.<sup>18</sup> The IMF anticipated 10.5 per cent growth for the UAE for the year, but also a second year of 8 per cent inflation. The IMF's mid-year Regional Economic Outlook gently chided the UAE for not giving accurate weight to the true cost of housing and rents in the basket of goods and services used to judge inflation.<sup>19</sup> As the dollar weakened, down 8.5 per cent against the euro since December,<sup>20</sup> Gulf currencies tied to the dollar suffered. GCC stock markets had crashed after a heated run-up. By the end of May 2006, Dubai share prices had fallen 53 per cent and Abu Dhabi stocks 34 per cent since the beginning of the year.<sup>21</sup> In May and June, a sequence of four collapsing 'IT sector' trading companies left behind bad loans and debts of perhaps Dh 200 million. And amid the prosperity and ebbs and flow of surplus capital, there arose a self-conscious and increasingly militant sense of labour solidarity among expatriate workers.

The Dubai Emirate of the UAE, similar to other GCC states, was ruled by an autocratic dynasty that dictated policies and operated in a non-democratic, corporate manner. The public face of the state proclaimed Dubai as a haven of untaxed, free markets. The iconic symbol of the emirate was the modern Chamber of Commerce building on Dubai Creek. The public image projected was one of prosperity, multi-cultural diversity, and consumer-based markets and tourism. But for the hundreds of thousands of blue-collar workers imported to build and operate the resorts, malls, and office complexes, it was an inaccessible mirage, a limited ideal that, in regards to the workers, operated through a dominance of power that had never established a fully collaborative hegemony over worker loyalties or awareness.<sup>22</sup> If many expatriate crew leaders and foremen collaborated in disciplining their fellow countrymen, mainstream workers remained marginalized and alienated.

Multinational construction consortiums recruited large numbers of South Asian workers to Dubai work sites. These workers were fully subordinated to low wages, limited benefits, and impoverished lifestyles marked by austere labour camp housing and pay cheques. Many were unable to repay loans taken to fund home country labour recruitment expenses and family demands. Though an informal labour market existed for workers with expired or non-existent work or visit visas, no social spaces existed for those attempting to survive as individual entrepreneurs without a work visa sponsor. Monthly sweeps organized by the Dubai Municipality regularly listed arrests of 'street vendors, beggars and illegal car washers'. In May 2006, four hundred forty-three street peddlers and 'illegal butchers and fish cleaners' were arrested by the police, in cooperation with the Dubai Naturalisation and Residency Department.<sup>23</sup>

But even as workers on the most prestigious projects received relatively stable and assured wages and working conditions, the severity of the work, the inability to meet expectations of savings, and perceived slights to worker dignity generated general despair and discontent. It was dangerous work, especially for the many inexperienced workers learning on the job in the UAE. Locally published independent research estimated that in 2004 there were up to eight hundred eighty construction-related deaths. Government records counted only thirty-four.<sup>24</sup> A lift accident on a multi-story construction site in Sharjah emirate on 28 May 2006 killed one and injured four workers. On 30 May, another worker fell at a site in Sharjah and was 'fighting for life'. On 6 June, a worker from Kerala died after falling from a crane in the Barsha area of Dubai. On 10 June, Harinath, a worker from India, died from heatstroke suffered on a Knowledge Village construction site in Dubai. One summary claimed that thirty-nine construction workers had died in Dubai city in 2005, twenty-two of them from falls.<sup>25</sup>

Sharp social divisions marked by class, ethnicity, and occupation underlay social relations and tensions across Dubai. Employment ads directly stated preferences for European, Arab,

or Asian employees. They also listed requirements by age, gender, and specific nationality. Shopping malls catering to affluent clients had security policies banning admission to workers wearing industrial gear, especially the blue, red, or yellow coveralls worn by work crews. A cab driver on break complained about discrimination after being kept out of a mall because he was in 'uniform', though all cab drivers wore ties and dressed neatly.<sup>26</sup> The local press carried stories about exclusive clubs denying entry to Asians, with affluent Indians particularly noting apparent racial bias.

Contract workers were locked into fixed terms of employment with little chance of improving their economic or social status. Many wilted under the pressures of climate, hard physical labour, and unrealizable expectations. It was a problem comparative across all Asian countries sending labour abroad. In the first seven weeks of 2006, the UAE Indian consulate recorded fourteen Indian worker suicides, after eighty-four suicides in 2005 and one hundred eighty-five suicides in 2002-2004.<sup>27</sup> To obtain individual work contracts and work visas from Indian agents, workers often sold property, mortgaged land, and spent the equivalent of thousands of dollars, 'sometimes Dh 15,000',<sup>28</sup> on so-called fees. Some workers came on visit visas, aware or unaware of the legal status of their work search or contracts and of the tenuous nature of any promised employment.

In early June 2006, the Indian government implemented new regulations to stop illegal recruiting agents in India from committing recruiting violations. The Indian consulate in Dubai received 'on average about 13 labour-related complaints' per month, while 'the number of group complaints stood at 15 per month'.<sup>29</sup> There were perhaps 4,580 registered Indian recruiting agents. About 2,500 were active in business with one hundred twenty losing their licenses for abuses. The Indian consulate in Dubai had a current 'blacklist' of twenty-seven companies banned from recruiting from India.<sup>30</sup> In general, many Asian workers were now entangled in the equivalent of new forms of debt bondage. For many workers there was perhaps little to distinguish



between current 'voluntary' obligations and Hugh Tinker's sense that a previous generation of contract labour had been little more than the latest form of involuntary servitude. Workers in the UAE recognized and increasingly responded to this vulnerability.

For several years, there had been a growing number of acts of worker solidarity, including temporary work stoppages, demonstrations and marches, and moments of symbolic work-site violence. Pashtun workers, including drivers for the Dubai Municipality taxi corporation, found themselves able to collectively agitate and negotiate against abuses. Other Dubai workers found that construction deadlines and labour shortages enhanced opportunities to push for change. By 2006, successes in redressing grievances were limited, though perceptible, as workers continued to feel the full effects of corporate and state efforts to co-opt and subordinate labour.

Pashtun workers now benefited from non-economic effects of globalization, including the demands of the World Labour Organization and international human rights organizations. Before the World Bank held its September 2003 annual meeting in Dubai, Human Rights Watch publicized the work conditions of ten million foreign workers in the Gulf, including 'some 90 per cent of the 1.7 million workers' in the UAE, and pressured the bank to help end exploitation and abuses.<sup>31</sup> International media, including the internet, now documented and outlined the contradictions and inequities of the Dubai labour market as never before. Pashtun workers, though generally limited to labour market segments as unskilled, blue collar, and service workers, now circulated, acted, and reacted within a context of other labouring individuals and communities, and international voices, communicating and acting with a growing sense of urgency.

Worker rights were limited by the UAE's Labour Law, Federal Law No (8) of 1980.<sup>32</sup> Worker recruitment, work conditions, and dispute resolution were covered by the law.<sup>33</sup> But workers had no right to organize or unionize. A handful of labour inspectors made only token reviews of worksites and housing. When companies failed to live up to terms of employment written into

three year labour contracts, individuals literally had no recourse except to 'submit their complaint or claim in writing to the employer and at the same time send a copy of it to the labour department.'<sup>34</sup> The employer was required to respond in writing within seven days, and, on failure of a resolution, the department 'shall...mediate with a view to reaching an amicable settlement.' On failure at this level, the department could refer the dispute to a 'conciliation board' for more arbitration. This board would hear the dispute, and on failure of resolution, make a settlement binding on both parties. The last recourse was a final appeal to the 'Supreme Arbitration Board'. Only after endless delays in this process might disputed cases finally end up in court.

Individuals in Dubai were sponsored by and worked for a range of employers. These included single sponsors, multi-national corporations, and companies that ranged from serious establishments to ephemeral sub-contractors able to decamp quickly from unprofitable free-trade zone workshops. Similar to the Indian recruits mentioned earlier, many international workers obtained work visas and contracts only after paying intermediary agents fees that could only be repaid over years. When workers arrived, the wages actually paid were often lower than those promised by agents and in contracts. Companies, again illegally, often deducted visa expenses from worker salaries. Employers frequently deferred, or simply refused to pay wages, sometimes for months at a time.<sup>35</sup> Workers who complained were dismissed, often with work visas cancelled and passports withheld for extended periods. Promised end of term payments and return air tickets could be denied. Excessive overtime could be demanded and then not be paid for.

Across the United Arab Emirates, the construction boom meant that new workers had to crowd into already tight accommodations. The Al Musaffah worker housing area in Abu Dhabi held 12,000 or more, who 'often share cramped rooms containing up to 20 beds.'<sup>36</sup> The name of Peshawar Medical Centre at Al Musaffah hinted at the region of origin of many workers. Skin diseases, viruses, and other communicable diseases were

'rife' and blamed on the cramped living quarters.<sup>37</sup> Conditions included the segregation of foreign labour in concrete and cinder block housing on the fringe of urban areas. A local columnist, sympathetic to decent treatment for workers and noting the lack of planning for infrastructure and labour accommodation, said, 'Twenty or so years ago, the idea of a railway was first mooted as being a solution to help in the expansion of the emirates. Railway tracks leading to small townships in the country would assist the rapid development of outer regions, which even today are still not fully exploited.'<sup>38</sup> Government spokesmen said housing was first the responsibility of the companies.

Speaking to the June 2006 session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva, the UAE Minister of Labour, Ali bin Abdullah Al Kaabi, argued that expatriates were a 'temporary workforce' and not 'immigrant' labour, though rights were still to be protected 'in line with the ILO criteria.'<sup>39</sup> He won agreement from the International Organization for Migration that up to two million unskilled workers in the UAE would be considered 'temporary contractual workers' and not 'immigrants'. It was agreed that unskilled and domestic workers would be allowed to stay in the UAE for six years, with original three year contracts being renewable once.

The comparative problem for the expatriate work force was that with no national or emirate rights to union or labour organization and representation, workers with grievances struggled as individuals or work groups against particular employers. Numerous stories existed of abandoned workers living in company housing, with employers missing. In April 2006, 'hundred of Ayoubco construction workers were abandoned by their manager, who fled abroad. Their sponsors refused to take responsibility for the men.'<sup>40</sup> The Labour Ministry denied any responsibility to supply emergency funds, but the men were allowed to work for other companies while the case was in court. Earlier in 2006, Sri Lankan women working in the Al Noor Textiles Factory in Sharjah were abandoned by the company owner and their employment sponsor. The women had to appeal

to the Sri Lankan consulate for funds for food and water as they attempted to pursue a court case for months of back wages worth thousands of dirhams. Bankrupt and unemployed, many 'accepted a Dh 750 pay-off and a ticket home'.<sup>41</sup>

At worst, the labour department could blacklist a company against any future labour recruitment or government contracts. The government would order companies to pay back wages, but no non-administrative enforcement was perceptible. No employers were charged, arrested, tried, or punished for employment abuses. It was literally unlawful for workers to strike, demonstrate, picket a work site, or organize for collective bargaining. Despite these prohibitions, and the threat of imminent deportation for any activists, over several years workers had devised nominally spontaneous collective responses to abuses. If abandoned Bangladeshi workers in a free-trade zone textile factory would undoubtedly lose their back wages and have to fight for a simple return ticket home, other workers for large multi-national contractors, especially for those working on government contracts, had more numbers and collective leverage.

Since the beginning of the post-2001 boom in the UAE, occasional, temporary sit-down strikes had halted work for a day or two on major construction sites, especially in Dubai. An immediate safety issue or perceived lack of respect for individual dignity often triggered labour discontent that already simmered due to harsh conditions. Stressed construction workers, driven by foremen in summer temperatures in the 40-50 degree centigrade range (104-122 F), spent long evenings in company housing discussing fairness and justice. In 2003, unpaid or aggrieved construction workers in Dubai had mobilized for worksite sit-down strikes, often simply arriving at the job site, then refusing to work.

Though police and security forces arrived quickly on the scene of such incidents, usually no police action in the form of arrests or physical coercion was taken. Especially by 2006, under scrutiny by the ILO and sensitive to the UAE image as an immensely

wealthy oil state, Labour Ministry representatives typically asked workers to select representatives to meet with officials to discuss the issues at hand. A typical expedient resolution included that, after a day or two, labourers returned to work and the Labour Department announced that, while worker actions were illegal, a settlement had been reached, grievances would be redressed, and the company had agreed or would be directed to pay back wages or mitigate concerns. Company foot-dragging and little government enforcement often turned tense situations into long-term labour disputes. The UAE Labour Ministry had just eighty inspectors to supervise almost 200,000 businesses sponsoring and employing foreign workers.<sup>42</sup> The head of the Abu Dhabi Labour Ministry Inspection Department, Mohsen Qahal, detailed that he had only twenty inspectors to cover perhaps 70,000 construction and labour housing sites.<sup>43</sup> A Dubai Municipality official said there were 4,800 construction sites in Dubai and fifteen inspectors.<sup>44</sup> One estimate from UAE officials said that in 2005 nearly 20,000 employees filed work related complaints.<sup>45</sup> With only token government supervision and protection, a pattern emerged of specific issues and incidents, including accidents, generating labour reactions intended to attract official attention to grievances beyond complaint processes.

In September 2004, a construction accident at the Dubai airport's new Terminal 3 project sparked a two day strike among workers of the job contractor, Al Naboodah Laing O'Rourke, a typical Dubai construction consortium of international expertise and local business interests. Several hundred tons of incomplete steel structure collapsed, killing five workers and injuring others. Accidents were frequent on Gulf work sites, but the scale of the Terminal 3 accident, the company's rush to return workers to work, and rumours about the numbers and condition of the missing led company workers to strike.

The evening of the accident, two busloads of workers were taken from the Sonapur worker housing camp to help recover victims. One worker, Rehman, estimated three hundred tons of steel had buried workers. The site smelled of the dead, and

rumour said that a trapped Pakistani worker had made a cell phone call, 'crying for help', from under the debris.<sup>46</sup> The company closely held information about the numbers of workers killed and injured and the next day asked workers to return to the greater work site. Company workers in camps across Dubai refused to work on Tuesday and Wednesday. Rumours said there were many workers unaccounted for. Company officials promised up to Dh 50,000 in compensation for victim's families. When a company 'official' asked employees in the Al Quoz worker camp to return to work, they demanded news of their fellow workers. According to one worker, the official verbally berated the workers, showed no sympathy for the casualties, and said men would not be paid if they didn't work. Another worker, 'Mohammad', said, 'He used to verbally abuse us saying that we should be taught how to work better.' The official, perhaps a South Asian foreman or supervisor, was beaten by the workers.<sup>47</sup>

Indian and Pakistani workers had united in the response to the accident. The names of workers interviewed indicated that Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs had combined in their concern and anger over apparent company cold-bloodedness. Casualties included Prem Sagar, 46, from the Punjab who had started work only a few days before the accident. His brother, employed in Abu Dhabi, identified the body and described the four children of the deceased. Another fatality was Muhammad Amjad, 18 years old. Within a week, the company compensation package for the families of the dead and injured was posted on circulars around the Dubai labour camps. Families of the dead, perhaps a half dozen Indian workers, would receive twenty-four months salary,<sup>48</sup> and a return air ticket and all transport expenses for a relative to accompany the body home. Recognizing the workers' obligations, both familial and financial, employment would be offered to a family member. Many of the victims had lived in the Sonapur camp. Fellow workers complained that the final compensation of Dh 17,000 was inadequate.<sup>49</sup>

The issue of violence against company officials was relatively rare, but could be tracked, along with the symbolic vandalizing

and destruction of company work-site property. In March 2004, frustrated workers assaulted an official of a different company after the firm had withheld wage payments for up to eight months. The company CEO, Ali Al Sayegh, said workers rammed a loader into a wall at the job site, beat a hospitalized site engineer, and 'brandished a knife'. Three workers were arrested, even as ninety workers again approached the Labour Ministry about the non-payment issue. 'They have apparently approached the ministry seven times.'<sup>50</sup>

Al Sayegh's company appeared close to bankruptcy. Workers described it as being Dh 45 million in debt, and having had trucks and jeeps seized by a bank. The CEO argued that he had 'implemented 70 per cent of an agreement with the workers brokered by the Labour Ministry last January', even as the company had suffered new losses on a project in Abu Dhabi. He pleaded that 'the company has Dh 8 million as due payments with clients', but would find the money to continue paying back wages. Labour Ministry officials said that the 'company has already been blacklisted' and the employer would be summoned for investigation of the new complaints.<sup>51</sup>

The stress on workers led to both workplace and work camp agitation and violence. One carpenter working for Al Sayegh, suffered from insomnia. He explained that he supported ten family members, had not sent any money home in six months, and was reduced to borrowing money for food.<sup>52</sup> Workers at the limits of endurance and resources noticed that other workers who publicly demonstrated and attracted the attention of government officials could bring enough official pressure on the companies to achieve results. The frequency of workplace strike actions rose as a consequence.

On 19 September 2005 one thousand workers protested up to five months arrears in pay by marching on and blocking one of the major highway routes into Dubai. The event was a 'milestone event' in worker mobilization and awareness that public demonstrations could produce the 'immediate' and 'favourable' redress of grievances. The al Hamed construction company, with

up to 15,000 workers, was given 24 hours by the Labour Ministry to settle up to Dh 5 million in dues. The publicity surrounding the demonstration included local press coverage and internet commentary available internationally. The company was blacklisted by both the Indian government and the UAE Labour Ministry.<sup>53</sup>

By the end of October the consequences of the September strike included the UAE Labour Ministry promising to name companies and owners who failed to meet obligations to workers, including owners who were Emirati citizens. The Ministry also opened a 'hotline' for workers to directly complain about unpaid earnings. An Associated Press writer toured the al-Hamed work camp, 'a hardscrabble jumble of battered trailers, where 7,800 labourers sleep, cook meals, and kneel to pray in an outdoor pavilion of corrugated tin', while earning \$135-400 a month. Company employees worked on the Palm Jumeirah, the Burj Dubai, and other major projects. The journalist interviewed the UAE Labour Undersecretary, Khalid Alkhazraji. The Ministry acknowledged '18 strikes this year, involving more than 10,000 protestors', most in Dubai.<sup>54</sup>

One reason for the 'cracking down' on company abuses, and giving access to the press, was that the UAE was negotiating a free trade agreement with the United States, similar to deals already reached with Bahrain and Oman. Prior to a final agreement, the US was pressuring the UAE to allow unions and collective bargaining.<sup>55</sup> Because all Gulf free trade agreements had to be ratified by the US Congress, the politics of perceived fairness to labour now were major UAE political concerns.

Gulf workers, and Pashtuns in Dubai, also might benefit in the future from perhaps a first ever sense of a tightening labour market. The seemingly unlimited supply of cheap South Asian labour, especially in skilled trades, could no longer be taken for granted. The construction industry was the first to notice that, 'Inexplicably, the migrant site workforce travelling from the subcontinent seems to have grown tired of the Gulf navy lifestyle.' Along with the rising cost of construction materials and



fuel, companies were reaching limits of easy recruitment. A business writer noted, '...as one M&E contractor I spoke to this week said, the days of going over to India and finding 50 plumbers or electricians in one go, are over'. Rising development, construction, and wages in India now offered alternatives to Gulf employment. Potential South Asian workers, especially those with education and skills, were often quite aware of the rising cost of living in the Gulf, and the often harsh working conditions. The prospect of some Gulf workers being able to eventually negotiate and receive increases due to labour shortages was a small, but real long-term possibility, nominally based on 'the same forces of supply and demand that brought them here in the first place',<sup>56</sup> but also based on international efforts pressing for local labour laws that met ILO standards.

By January 2006, events made clear that the labour regulation policies of the UAE government failed to provide due process for worker complaints, did not protect workers from abuses, and were inadequate to supervise a range of companies from local sub-contractors who hired undocumented and 'absconded' employees to multi-national consortiums employing tens of thousands of workers. The failure of the Ministry of Labour to resolve disputes and cases burdened other government agencies and led to an extraordinary critique by Mohamed Saleh Al Madani, the Acting Head of Civil Cases Unit.

Madani faced the judicial consequences of failed labour regulation and mediation policies. He complained that the Labour Ministry did not keep statistics or data on labour disputes. He estimated that each year the five UAE labour departments received two to three hundred cases about disputes over issues such as salaries, end of service dues, tickets, and suspensions without notice. Madani explained court delays in reaching decisions in these disputes as largely the fault of the Labour Ministry. He said it 'has no coordination with the Dubai courts or an action plan to protect labourer's rights. It also lacks information about the companies' status. In most cases the court finds that the companies involved in the dispute have shut down

or have no properties or assets.<sup>57</sup> Because the arbitration method failed so often, thousands of cases had been filed with the courts. Madani thought that the Ministry failed to properly educate workers about their rights and obligations, and that it would be useful to have statistics of cases resolved by the Ministry to compare to those passed on to the courts.

He said that court hearings were delayed because the Ministry often could not produce relevant documents 'such as records on wages and doesn't know whether the labourers are paid by the sponsors'; 'we find many important documents missing, such as labour contracts'. 'If a labourer wants a copy of his labour contract, the ministry will not give it to him unless he furnishes a permission from the court. I don't understand what is the reason for this rule. Also, in some cases, when the court orders the companies to pay, we find that these establishments are either closed down or the expatriate sponsors had fled the country.'<sup>58</sup>

Throughout 2006, workers continued to file complaints with the Labour Ministry. More importantly, employees learned to confront this labour regime with new levels of organization and collective action. Cab drivers for the Dubai Transport Corporation, a heavily Pashtun work force, began the year with a major strike against company policies, including new rules that levied fines against drivers for breaching a list of regulations and claimed offences. The DTC had about 3,200 taxis, while private companies in Dubai operated another 3,000.<sup>59</sup> On 2 January 2006, hundreds of DTC cab drivers refused to leave their 'labour camp' near Al Ghusais, in the informally designated 'Sonapur' area.<sup>60</sup> The strike lasted from 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Protesters blocked the entrances to the large company property adjacent to the housing area so that any drivers willing to work were blocked. The drivers only returned to work when the emirate Labour Ministry negotiating team, the Permanent Committee of Labour Affairs in Dubai (PCLAD), gave a letter promising to investigate and resolve worker complaints within four days.<sup>61</sup>

The morning of the strike, the workers were addressed by Obaid Al Mullah, the DTC Director-General, who asked for

forty-eight hours to resolve the complaints. Around noon, when the drivers refused to return to work, riot police with tear gas guns and water cannon arrived along with 'members of the special forces donned in black and wearing balaclavas'. Within an hour, Labour and Immigration officials arrived on the scene and the police forces left the camp. Soon about one hundred riot police returned 'and contained the protesters'. The men returned to work in the afternoon after a PCLAD official said issues would be resolved by the coming Thursday. Officials from management and the Dubai Labour and Immigration Ministries continued meetings and negotiations into the evening.

The nearly one thousand drivers present at the demonstration specifically complained about their accommodations and said they were stressed and sick because they had no days off or health insurance.<sup>62</sup> The triggering grievance was the new DTC policy of imposing a scale of fines on drivers for various violations. The fining system was punitive to the point that some workers actually owed the company amounts up to thousands of dirhams. The DTC General Manager denied any abuses, saying that drivers were 'really protesting because we gave them too much commission in April by accident and we had to deduct it. They are upset about that.' He said, 'They are fined like that so they can learn good customer service.' He said drivers had to pay for accommodation even if they did not live in DTC housing, 'to encourage them to live there.'<sup>63</sup> He insisted workers had insurance and received treatment at private hospitals, though one driver said he had personally paid to treat his broken leg. The General Manager said he would cancel 70–80 per cent of outstanding fines to resolve the dispute.<sup>64</sup>

The DTC penalty system had literally turned drivers into debtors working to pay off fines. Drivers were fined for accidents and for violations such as refusing to pick up passengers, reckless driving, and unclean cabs. PCLAD officials asked DTC management to suspend the fines while the system was under review. A PCLAD sub-committee would visit the driver labour camp area to inspect their accommodations. Grey area issues

included complaints that drivers not living in company housing still had housing deductions taken from pay. A 'Pakistani driver' said, 'I live in Hor Al Anz in my own accommodation but a housing deduction is carried out from my salary.'<sup>65</sup> The company said this was to compensate for fuel as drivers used cabs for transport to their private residences. The company agreed to hold a weekly meeting with worker representatives to discuss complaints. Another outstanding issue was the company policy of deducting fees for mandatory training sessions.<sup>66</sup>

Dubai Transport cab drivers had to earn a base of Dh 330 a day, receiving a percentage of total daily revenues. New methods of disciplining drivers included the installation of GPS equipment in each taxi. 'For example, I get a message on our GPS that a passenger is to be picked up...At times it so happens we get delayed in reaching the spot and the waiting passenger hires another taxi.' 'We then have to press 'no' on the GPS. For this the company deducts Dh 700.' If a passenger filed a complaint, no explanation was allowed, 'Immediately, Dh 200 is deducted from our salary.'<sup>67</sup>

The egregious level of the fining of drivers in December 2005 apparently exceeded maximum amounts detailed in the Labour law code.<sup>68</sup> One driver had earned Dh 1,349.6, only to be fined Dh 2,141. The driver was required to pay Dh 790.3, well over \$200. Other salary slips showed pay back demands of up to Dh 1,600. Universal monthly deductions for all drivers included for DTC housing (Dh 230), insurance (Dh 35), 'Medicals' (Dh 20), car maintenance (Dh 150-700), and training courses (Dh 50).<sup>69</sup>

By mid-January, the DTC penalty system was under review. Still, the PCLAD Committee Coordinator, Salah Bilal Faraj Al Falasi, said that workers had no right to demonstrate or strike, though a review of the Labour Law No. 8 of 1980 did not mandate any consequent penalties. He said the Labour Ministry always handled such labour actions in a 'civilized' manner, to aid workers in obtaining dues from employers. After the setting up of the Committee and the workers' hotline, he said there could no longer be any excuse for stopping work. 'It is not their right to

think of negatively affecting the welfare of their employer,' he said.<sup>70</sup>

Compared to construction site workers imported wholesale from Bangladesh or India, Pashtun transport drivers had degrees of autonomy and better working conditions. Though a Metro Company taxi driver, 'Khan', recently had been murdered on the job, the work was relatively safe.<sup>71</sup> Air-conditioned taxis were not outdoor construction sites. The Dubai company model of taxi employment was intended to regularize the in-town travel experience for hundreds of thousands of white-collar employees and resort tourists. In theory, Dubai had eliminated the operating of un-metered taxis, with drivers who negotiated fares, a practice still found in the UAE and rampant in Saudi Arabia. Though one Pashtun driver trying to negotiate a fare in Dubai said he drove a 'special' taxi, the practice was illegal in Dubai.

The UAE shift from independently owned taxis to the company model was moving quickly across all seven emirates. The Sharjah emirate began to replace privately owned taxis in 2003. By 2006, 2,700 Sharjah company cabs operated under the regulation of Sharjah Transport, while 1,700 privately owned cabs still existed.<sup>72</sup> Even as the DTC installed GPS devices, Abu Dhabi emirate announced plans to eliminate independently owned taxis for the company model. Perhaps 8,900 cabs in Abu Dhabi city and Al Ain, all owned by Emirati citizens who sponsored expatriate drivers, would lose their taxi licenses. Owners of taxi licenses, UAE nationals, would receive Dh 1,000 a month in perpetuity as compensation. Expatriate drivers would either work for companies or lose their jobs. Drivers who were undocumented or had not quite adjusted their work papers from previous sponsorships faced problems. Others thought they would have to work longer hours for less income. Mohammad Bashir Khan, an Afghan taxi driver in Al Ain for over twenty years said, 'I was planning for the marriage of my daughter but it would be a Herculean task as I am soon going to lose my job.' He thought he might have to return to Afghanistan.<sup>73</sup> Such government plans were often announced years in advance of their final

implementation, and informal and ad hoc accommodations often compromised the letter of new regulations. But the future was apparent for individual Pashtuns who may have worked for decades as cab drivers for individual Emirati citizens who held the taxi licenses and offered formal or informal terms of employment.

In the Dubai emirate, Pashtun drivers drove vehicles for private industries and transport companies, cabs for the government-owned DTC, and taxis for private cab companies. Each private cab company had particular terms and conditions of employment, all requiring long hours and minimum daily earnings goals. All faced heavy traffic conditions that slowed trips and income. An Afridi Pashtun from Dara Adam Khel village in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Area bordering Afghanistan drove in Dubai for the private National Taxi Company. He said he had to earn Dh 400 a day to receive a Dh 120 daily minimum, before he received a percentage of earnings beyond the minimum. He had been five years in Dubai, after being recruited by a family member employed by the company.<sup>74</sup>

National Taxi was described as one of the better cab companies in Dubai by a driver for Metro Taxi. He was an Afridi from Landi Kotal in the Khyber Agency west of Peshawar in the NWFP. He had been in Dubai for eleven years and took a two-month home leave each year. He literally worked every day between leaves. In June 2006, he described finishing six months straight without a day off. He worked from 7 AM to 11 PM or midnight, paying the first Dh 320 to the company, then keeping the rest. He claimed to earn about Dh 1500 a month and thought National drivers cleared up to Dh 3,000 a month. The Afridi from Landi Kotal lived in the Bur Dubai area, sharing two rooms with seven other drivers. The other drivers included Afghans from Khost, other eastern Afghan provinces, and one from Mazar-i Sharif. They were stressed by the inflation rate that threatened to raise their rent to Dh 50-60,000 a year. He complained that Dubai traffic was now heavy for twenty-four hours a day. He said that Afridis

were found in three places in the Gulf: the UAE, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

The Afridi lamented the expenses of working as a driver, including a new identification card that cost Dh 3,000 and was good for only three years.<sup>75</sup> Beyond driver regulation, the UAE was in a multi-year process of implementing a national identification card system to be required for all citizens and expatriate workers. The system was intended to aid demographic and planning studies, and undoubtedly to help control the large numbers of undocumented or informally employed workers.

A Pashtun driver for the Cars Taxi private company was from Miran Shah in North Waziristan, NWFP. In Dubai for three years, he had followed brothers to the UAE. His family had recently moved to Peshawar for two months because of the Pakistani military operations against Islamic militants operating around Miran Shah. He drove his cab for a twelve hour shift, seven days a week and shared private housing in the Rashidiya neighbourhood on the southern edge of Dubai, near the Al Ghusais-Sonapur camp area. In his experience, the required driver courses took only a couple of months of attendance and were not that difficult.<sup>76</sup>

One driver revealed how such a lifestyle could be sustained over many years. A Bannuchi Pashtun driver, Hazrat Ali from Bannu in the NWFP, had been in Dubai since 1982. He drove seven days a week, from 8 AM to 12 midnight. He slept only five or six hours a night. He returned home to Pakistan as family demands and emergencies arose, most recently for fifteen days during his father's illness. He thought there were many thousands of Pashtun cab and transport drivers in Dubai. He lived in private housing.<sup>77</sup>

The 2 January 2006 strike by drivers of the DTC taxi fleet had created a one day boom for other drivers, including operators of the estimated 800 taxis of the Metro taxi company, the 500 cabs of the Al Arabia Company, and the fleets of the handful of other private taxi companies in Dubai. One Metro driver said, 'I managed to meet my target of Dh 235 by the afternoon.'<sup>78</sup>

The January taxi strike was followed on 4 February by another strike and a demonstration by three hundred workers of the Ahmed Bin Dasmal Construction company. They complained that they had not been paid for five months. At 7:30 AM the workers marched from their Sonapur accommodations towards the Al Maktoum Bridge across Dubai Creek.<sup>79</sup> This was during the morning rush hour and along one of the most public, and crowded, locations in the city. Dubai police loaded the workers on to buses, took them to the Bur Dubai police station and to the offices of the Ministry of Labour.

Officially, Major Arif Baqer, Head of the Complaints Section of the Dubai Police Human Rights Department, said, 'The problem is solved and the company has agreed to pay their five months' pending salaries.' The police said they should stop the protests because they could use the Dubai Police hotline (800 5005) if necessary. An 'official from the labour dispute department' of the Labour Ministry said that after a meeting of company and worker representatives, the company had agreed to pay two months' dues by the end of the week, then the remainder a week later. A company official blamed problems with 'other projects' for the unintended delay. 'The official said that nowadays workers protest for any reason,' and that 'they were promised that they would be paid, but they suddenly took to the streets protesting. This is an uncivilized way because we promised to pay them soon.'<sup>80</sup>

For the Ahmad Bin Dasmal employees, this was an old story. They told the press that they had made repeated requests to the company management for the arrears. Records showed that they had filed with the Ministry of Labour three complaints about unpaid wages in 2005 and two complaints in 2004. Ministry records documented one group complaint demanding four months of unpaid wages by four hundred and fifty workers in 2005 and another group complaint by seven hundred workers in 2004 asking for four months wages. The Labour Ministry had already blacklisted the company from further labour recruitment, in part because sixty-eight of the company's nine hundred thirty-



four workers had not had their labour permits renewed, with required fees, and so now were working illegally.<sup>81</sup>

On 17 February 2006, the Permanent Committee for Labour Affairs in Dubai (PCLAD) released the results of an inspection of the Dubai labourer accommodations maintained by thirty-six different companies. They reported that the housing for twenty-seven companies had failed the inspection because of overcrowding, poor kitchen and bath facilities, and safety concerns. The report emphasized that contractors were jamming workers into rented villas in residential areas in order to save money on housing workers in formal labour residential areas. The apparent economics of housing were that official Sonapur and Al Quoz accommodations cost companies rents of 'about Dh 2,200 per room'. Instead, a PCLAD representative said, 'A company will hire a villa for Dh 100,000 a year and cram it with more than 50 workers in a residential area. That's not acceptable.' Even in the Sonapur and Al Quoz housing areas, rooms that by law should only house four workers held between six to ten workers.<sup>82</sup>

Again, the rhetoric of standards and enforcement fell short of the reality of corporate practice. Editorial commentary made clear that little could be done, 'We are aware of the fact that the Permanent Committee for Labour Affairs has no authority or power over the companies violating standards for residential accommodation, but this matter should be firmly dealt with.'<sup>83</sup> The Dubai Municipality offered a hotline number for the public to report workers living in residential areas.

In regards to safety, companies with older Sonapur and Al Quoz housing with roofs made of asbestos were not forced to vacate or replace the structures, though the Municipality had finally banned asbestos use and required false ceilings as barriers. One municipal official said that he did fine owners of older Sonapur worker housing that did not meet new concrete roof standards. He said many companies found it cheaper to pay fines than repair or replace the asbestos roofs.<sup>84</sup>

The event confirming the new sense of Dubai labour agency occurred on 21 March 2006, with a massive, symbolically violent,

protest by thousands of workers. They were employed at the multiple high rise and commercial building jobsites under construction across the hundreds of acres surrounding the Burj Dubai project. There were literally thousands of construction cranes at work in Dubai; a total loosely claimed as second only to the number of cranes in China. There were dozens of cranes at work in and around the Burj Dubai and adjacent Dubai Mall 'New Dubai' construction zone.

The South Korean conglomerate Samsung was building the Burj Dubai for Emaar Properties, a major real estate development company. Several major contractors employed thousands of workers to put in utilities, pour concrete, and raise and finish millions of square feet of residential towers and retail space. The immediate workers involved in the strike were employed by the Dubai consortium, Al Naboodah Laing O'Rourke.

At the end of the work day on 21 March, perhaps 2,500 employees rioted in anger and frustration. The apparent causes were 'mis-treatment by security workers at the sites and regular delays in transporting the workers back to their camp sites'.<sup>85</sup> News services summarized that workers 'chased and beat security officers Tuesday night, smashed computers and files in offices, and destroyed about two dozen cars and construction machines, witnesses said'.<sup>86</sup> Damages were estimated up to \$1 million. If it was indeed a spontaneous worker action, it may well have arisen from cumulative frustration over too few buses being used to return workers to labour camps and related daily verbal skirmishing with security services organizing workers waiting for rides.

Spontaneous or not, the worker outburst led overnight to an organized strike, coordinated across Dubai labour camps and work sites. When workers returned to the Burj Dubai site on Wednesday morning, they refused to work. Instead they presented demands for better wages, overtime pay, better medical care, and better treatment from foremen. The demands for pay increases were a response to the \$4 a day rate (Dh 15) for labourers and \$7.60 a day (less than Dh 30) for skilled carpenters. Also, that

Wednesday morning, acting in sympathy with the Burj Dubai workers, around two thousand Al Naboodah workers refused to work at the Dubai Airport Terminal 3 construction site.

The media coverage of the event noted the recent number of worker strikes in the Gulf. There had been perhaps two dozen in the UAE in 2005<sup>87</sup> and other strikes recently in Qatar and Oman. 'In April, Bangladeshi workers stormed their own embassy in Kuwait City, protesting against working conditions that human rights activists denounced as "slave-like."<sup>88</sup> One estimate said the UAE now had 300,000 South Asian contract construction workers.<sup>89</sup>

Officially, Samsung said work on the Burj Dubai was not affected by the striking workers from neighbouring projects. The Burj Dubai was then up to 36 stories and nominally adding a floor a week. Al Naboodah company officials cited 'misinformation and misunderstanding with some of our workforce', but said that the issues had now been addressed and resolved.<sup>90</sup> Rashid Bakhit Al Jumairi, labour investigator from the Interior Ministry and PCLAD member said, 'They are asking for small things...I promised them I would sit with them until everything is settled.'<sup>91</sup>

The strike continued into Thursday as government and company officials continued to meet with worker representatives. Rashid Bakhit Al Jumairi said, 'They have no right to continue this strike, actually.' And while some demands could be met, the typical response to wage demands was that the workers had agreed to pay conditions when they signed contracts.<sup>92</sup> Again, the police and government officials positioned themselves as mediators between workers and company. No workers were arrested during or immediately after the initial violence. As workers finally returned to work, it might be assumed that a few more buses had been added to the transport fleet, and that the company promised that foremen and security personnel would show more respect to workers.

The workers were both vulnerable and in a position of advantage. As the oil boom continued and Dubai development

planning added more and bigger projects, workers were increasingly victimized by companies and sub-contractors operating on the margins of profitability and legality. An overwhelmed government surveillance structure did little to prevent abuses before the fact. Even the company blacklist designation, forbidding new government contracts or labour licenses, could be removed once outstanding issues were resolved. The fact that major construction projects, including the Burj Dubai and Dubai Mall, were scheduled to be finished in 2008 meant that contractors and foremen could push workers as hard as possible, knowing they would not need or be responsible for them after immediate projects were done. The Dubai emirate could also simply send home any surplus labour that accumulated as projects were completed. Still, the workers did have short-term leverage. Companies and sub-contractors working on deadlines, and under pressure from corporate shareholders and clients who had already purchased or placed down payments for properties, did not want labour-related problems or delays.

The Dubai Chamber of Commerce position emerged in local editorials that smoothed over the strike and said that proper channels were available for grievances. 'It could be the demonstrating workers are unaware of the avenues open to them, or even what their rights are, despite it being clearly laid down in the labour law.' Yet the dispute was ultimately resolved, through the offices of the Permanent Committee for Labour Affairs in Dubai (PCLAD), and the labourers returned to work once promises were made by their employer to address their grievances. 'PCLAD has a process and a 'hot-line' whereby these matters can be lodged and resolved... Perhaps the bigger problem is that workers are unaware of these rights.'<sup>93</sup>

The 21 March unrest at the Burj Dubai construction site overshadowed another demonstration the same day outside the Dubai Labour Ministry building. One hundred workers from the Al Nassour and Khalid Building and Contracting company complained they were owed two months wages and that they had been forced to pay Dh 1,500 deposits to the company.<sup>94</sup> They said

they had complained to the Labour Ministry ten days earlier with no resolution, and that a legal officer failed to tell them their rights. Workers detailed living six or seven to a room, having to pay Dh 75 a month rent, and having no provision of food, water, or medical care. A company manager provided a litany of excuses, denying that workers were made to pay rent or pay for their uniforms. The manager said the workers were upset because he 'tried to fire 10 to 15 of them who were encouraging others to abscond.' The workers said they had paid up to Dh 11,000 to labour agents at home, and that, 'We need to make money.'<sup>95</sup>

The tactics and stakes involved in labour protest had now grown in scale. At the end of the day on 26 April 2006, two thousand construction workers on the 'New Dubai' high rises going up near the Sheraton Hotel staged another violent strike, perceived as similar in style to the March unrest. Al Ahmadiyah Contracting Company workers complained about abusive supervision, no overtime pay, bad food, and arbitrary pay cheque deductions. It was said that, '...the infuriated workers turned violent damaging 8 cars and two buses besides smashing office property at the project site, and destroying official documents. They also threw stones on the offices and beat a site engineer.'<sup>96</sup> Dubai riot police finally dispersed the workers, hitting some with batons and taking a few into custody. One worker said, 'We are getting salaries between Dh 600 to Dh 900 a month. But the management used to cut Dh 50 and Dh 100 each time if the punching is delayed even for two minutes. We work hard all the months.'<sup>97</sup>

Rashid Bakhit of PCLAD blamed a 'labour mafia' for instigating the violence from behind the scenes. He said they had checked with the company and that the allegations were 'baseless'. 'They should not behave this way.' Instead they should inform the Ministry and get help to find a solution. The Director General of the Dubai riot police said, 'Most of them do not know what they are protesting for,' with some complaining about food while others were demanding wage increases.'<sup>98</sup>

The agitating workers, 'most likely' constructing the Jumeirah Beach Residences complex,<sup>99</sup> refused to work the following day as negotiations continued. Company reaction was swift. After the Wednesday unrest, on Thursday and Friday nights up to eighty construction workers, 'mostly...Indian', were pulled out of their rooms, as they were dressed, and deported.<sup>100</sup> Their demands had included protesting pay and poor living conditions, but also food supplies, 'ready-made' meals that were apparently food portions sealed in plastic bags, undoubtedly repugnant to South Asian workers raised on fresh-cooked meals.<sup>101</sup>

If there was a Dubai model of development, descriptions of worker housing camps and meals in plastic bags reminded of an almost apartheid-era South Africa model of labour management and neglect. In Dubai, as in South African mines, labour was recruited from a transient, multi-national labour force. Wages were reduced to a bare subsistence, and segregated work camp conditions included little more than concrete barracks and unfurnished rooms. Many South African mine workers had carried with them underground meals bagged in plastic. They were told they had no citizenship rights and were forced to leave their families in distant homelands. In South Africa, many worker townships were outside urban areas, accessible only by rail. In Dubai, the main Jebel Ali, Al Quoz, and Al Ghusais-Sonapur worker accommodation areas were close enough to city commercial districts that workers could march and demonstrate in highly public locations. The 26 April unrest in Dubai had closed streets around several hotels for hours. In 2005, marchers from Al Quoz had temporarily blocked the main Dubai thoroughfare, Shaikh Zayed road, and labourers had soon after marched from Sonapur towards the Al Maktoum Bridge.

Though the Sonapur labour housing district was nominally contained by adjacent barracks for the Dubai police, future Dubai urban development, including the Dubailand project that was three times the size of Manhattan, would be outside the developed urban areas and beyond the labour accommodation districts. It

might not be too difficult to imagine Dubai planners setting out an urban rail system that in future years would displace workers even farther out into new housing townships yet to be built in the desert.

In mid-May 2006, the issue of labour protest in Dubai attracted notice from India and the Andhra Pradesh Minister of Information and Public Relations and Non-Resident Affairs, Mohammad Ali Shabber. The flood of new workers into Dubai in recent years had included many Pakistanis, but most new workers may have been men from southern India. By 2006, there were now perhaps 1.4 million Indians in the UAE, close to a third of the population, with most from Kerala state and perhaps 450,000 from Andhra Pradesh state. Particular districts in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, including Karim Nagar, sent disproportionate numbers through chain migration links. There had been an 'outflow' of Indian labour to the UAE of 175,262 persons in 2004 and 194,412 in 2005.<sup>102</sup> The Indian Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, Vayalar Ravi, thought that there were now five million Indians working in the Gulf, with perhaps 55 per cent from Kerala and an annual 'flow' of over 500,000.<sup>103</sup>

The question arose as to what extent the rise in south Indian workers could be correlated to a rise in labour activism. One estimate counted thirty-one protests in Dubai and the northern emirates in 2005 and twenty protests in the region so far in 2006. Kerala's history of leftist political parties and ruling coalitions and the radical history of the Telegana region of Andhra Pradesh were familiar history. Migrants from the Indian countryside often now went directly to the Gulf, 'especially from two districts where there has been Naxalite activity'.<sup>104</sup> Had a transnational form of this regional support for leftist and union activism migrated to the Gulf? Had reformist activism, even 'Naxalite' radicalism, begun to infiltrate the Gulf work force?

Mohammed Ali Shabber dismissed the question, saying that some 'former rebels' or surrendered Naxalites may have found employment in the Gulf. But, as far as their being involved in organizing strikes, he said, 'Probably not. Ex-Naxals are not

planners. They are rural people and lack organizational skills.' Still, one Dubai 'senior Labour-official' said that most protests in Dubai involved Andra Pradesh labourers. Rashid Bakhit Al Jumairi of PCLAD said there was 'absolutely no truth' to the idea of Naxalite activism.<sup>105</sup>

Apartheid South Africa had slowly changed as people, including leftist trade unions, claimed democratic political rights for the majority, claims morally grounded in demands for human rights and justice. If in post-apartheid South Africa gold miners still carried underground meals bagged in plastic, they now had advocates in the government. The Dubai citizen-expatriate model assumed there would never be political rights for the non-national majority. And, too often, the comparative advantage of the Dubai context was that the city-state failed to enforce the rule of law upholding contracts, especially on terms and conditions of employment. This allowed dishonest or marginal companies to simply keep large percentages of worker dues. This was less free market exchange than abuse of power and, often, simple theft. Throughout 2006, workers in Dubai and the Gulf made claims for basic contract terms and for basic labour rights and equity.

Through the year, despite official claims that processes were in place to resolve labour grievances, regional workers observed the day-to-day experiences of fellow workers subject to abuses. The system seemed designed to delay and stall, to minimize expenses to companies, to discourage expatriate workers with few resources, and force them to return home. In 2004, a construction company owned by a UAE national dismissed thirty-one labourers from India and Bangladesh. Unpaid wages and undelivered end of service dues and return tickets totalled Dh 465,000. After the failure of any efforts at mediation, a Dubai Civil Court judgment in January 2005 awarded each worker sums from Dh 14,000 to Dh 16,000, plus interest. But the reality of the failure to enforce court judgments meant that as of May 2006 no payments had been made, despite 'warrants' issued to the Emirati citizen. The fact for all workers to see was that twenty-two



months later the aggrieved labourers who continued to remain in the UAE to pursue the case were impoverished to the point of being forced to sleep in local parks.<sup>106</sup>

On 16 May 2006, only two weeks after the deportation of the Al Ahmadiya company workers, thousands of employees for two contractors went on strike in the Jebel Ali labour camp area. Hundreds marched from the housing area to Shaikh Zayed road to protest. Perhaps two hundred labourers of the Al Huda Construction Company also marched to protest up to four months of unpaid wages.<sup>107</sup> The vast majority of protesters came from 8,000–10,000 striking workers of Besix construction, a Belgium corporation. The Besix worker action was another step forward in worker organization, and in awareness of the wider regional context of labour activism and media coverage.

As early as 18 April, Besix workers had faxed the *Gulf News* newspaper that they planned a labour action for 16 May. The *Gulf News* said, 'It was the first time workers threatened to protest to negotiate better working conditions.'<sup>108</sup> The workers had several demands, including a bigger food allowance. They also demanded a Dh 5 per day wage increase. Besix paid Dh 15 a day for unskilled 'helpers' and Dh 20 a day for skilled labourers. All received Dh 8.5 as a daily food allowance. No pay or food allowance was received for the Friday day off. One worker said he made only Dh 390 a month (\$106).

The worker plan included that it would be a five day strike, much longer than earlier work stoppages that rarely lasted beyond a day or two. Work stopped on about seventeen projects, including part of the Burj Dubai.<sup>109</sup> The wage increase demand was intended to bring at least the skilled labour wage closer to the top rate paid to Al Naboodah company skilled workers. The strain on employees to sustain a five day strike included possible threats of termination and the real chance of having to return home with outstanding debts unsettled. The Besix labour force did not remain fully unified over the five days. At one point, fifty men returned to work. The strike-breaking was opposed and when the men returned to the work camp, 'About 200 colleagues

beat up the men. Some were lightly injured. The fifty strike-breakers went into hiding.<sup>110</sup>

Within days, on 21 May, perhaps two hundred fifty workers in Abu Dhabi protested near the Mussafah labour camp 'over minimum wage issues'. The idea of a uniform minimum wage was now one response to differential contracts, increased inflation, and the inability of workers to save funds because of high debts and expenses. Mohammad Ali, Head of the Labour Ministry's Complaint Section said, 'We have heard their demands and we are trying to negotiate with them but they have to understand that some of their demands on salary issues are currently not legal.'<sup>111</sup> The minimum wage issue was raised in the local press<sup>112</sup> and on the internet.<sup>113</sup> A petition to Dubai construction companies and the Dubai government for 'Minimum wage and timely payment of salaries for Dubai workers' was posted and 'created by members of Skyscrapercity.com UAE forum'.<sup>114</sup>

An internet blog devoted to Dubai development issues summarized the housing and wage conditions of many workers in the labour camps. 'Rooms have 10 to 20 men sleeping in bunk beds. The room serves as dining quarters, where newspaper spread out on the floor serves as a table. The only recreation available is the one television per room, which the men chip in and buy. Two or three hundred men will make use of a cooking area with perhaps a dozen or so burners. The same number of men will share a dozen or so sinks, showers and toilet stalls. Laundry is done by hand in the same sinks or showers and strung out in the rooms, hallways or sometimes outside of the complex. There is no provision for privacy or personal space—no desks or tables, no chairs or lounging areas, no cupboards or wardrobes. Men use suitcases or buy or make small lockers kept under beds or attached to the wall of their bunk space for storing personal items. There are no public telephones, computers or other communications facilities available.'<sup>115</sup>

The writer posted a table of Dubai wages 'based on personal observation' of apparently several years in the region. Unskilled labour typically earned in the Dh 500-900 range monthly (\$136-

245), skilled labour Dh 750–1200 (\$204–327), service workers earned Dh 1,000–3,000 monthly (\$272–817), while office workers earned Dh 2,000–7,000 (\$545–1906). Professional salaries were Dh 5,000–15,000 (\$1361–4084), with managers earning Dh 10,000–40,000 monthly (\$2722–10,892).<sup>116</sup> In this framing, Pashtun taxi drivers were in the service category, though many Pakistanis, and Pashtuns, worked as skilled and unskilled labour as well. The use of the press and the internet, as well as more local and personal information sharing in work camps and on job sites meant that there was no longer any exclusive company or governmental control of wage data, or of news of acts of worker solidarity.

As the year progressed, regional labour activism continued. On 4 June 2006, in Doha, Qatar 'nearly 2,000 workers from Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Egypt and India' went on strike at their labour camp. Workers complained about living conditions and that salaries received were lower than those given in their contracts.<sup>117</sup>

On the evening of 6 June, hundreds of workers in Dubai in the worker camp area behind Jebel Ali Village protested living conditions and wage problems. One worker said, 'Power and water supplies have been frequently cut and we have been suffering in the heat for about a week. Some of us have not been paid for three months.' Perhaps 10,000 employees lived in the camp. Protestors, 'smashing cars', also burned a 'portakabin' housing unit, and tore down television antennas. Daily temperatures were peaking at a minimum of 38 C/100 F, while reaching 43 C/109 F on 12 and 13 June. Evenings were intolerable without electricity for air-conditioning or water for bathing. Police stopped the workers before they could march out on to the roads. The power was restored at 10:30 PM and talks with officials continued into the night.<sup>118</sup>

Workers said the camp had been without electricity for a week and had no water. When a company official quickly circled his vehicle through assembled workers, the workers 'pulled the man out of the pickup truck, overturned it and beat the man up'.<sup>119</sup> A

water tanker supplying the camp was also burned. The tenuous nature of life in many worker camps was exemplified by the ad hoc conditions in these Jebel Ali worker accommodations. The Dubai Electricity and Water Authority did not formally serve the 'temporary structures' of the camp. Company camp managers operated generators to supply electricity. When officials attempted to save money and did not supply enough generators, or run those installed, or did not pay for sufficient water truck deliveries, the workers suffered. One camp manager in the area said, 'in his camp, where labourers had also protested last month to demand electricity and water, they only provided electricity in the evening, leaving the men to sweat it out during the day'.<sup>120</sup> The worst conditions historically found in the worker camp in the Sanaiya industrial district of Al Ain seemed not too distant from the worst of the Dubai worker accommodations.

Shortages of water were also felt in buildings and neighbourhoods in residential areas on the margins of the Dubai Municipality. In Sharjah, officials failed to anticipate infrastructure needs or balance the demands for the summer water needs of industrial and residential customers.<sup>121</sup> Into June, short power shortages, even in elite areas, showed how thinly stretched had become the infrastructure in the Dubai metropolitan area.

On 8 June 2006, labour agitation spread to Chinese workers for the Gohchong Company, 'the subcontractors of Al Nakeel's main contractor Simcorb'. More than three hundred nineteen workers at the labour camp went on strike because of unpaid salaries and seized a company manager from Singapore. The manager was released after wages were paid. But on Saturday 10 June, when workers heard that some unruly workers were to be deported, the manager was seized again, along with his deputy. Officials from the government and police, as well as the Chinese ambassador, went to the site.<sup>122</sup>

Workers complained that they had two year contracts and that they had paid \$4,000 each to the Chinese recruiting agent at home. The workers refused to release their hostages and Dubai riot police used tear gas and water cannons against the

demonstrators. The captives were only released at 1:00 AM Sunday. Police arrested eight workers. Officially, a Dubai Human Rights Department officer said the worker's problems were resolved, the hostages freed, and the company would not press criminal charges, but would refer the dispute to PCLAD. The official said the instigators of the trouble would probably be deported.<sup>123</sup> Those in custody faced initial charges of public disorder and refusing to surrender to police orders.<sup>124</sup>

When an Emirati company hired a main contractor who then sub-contracted employee relations, a chain of managers were responsible for the fulfilment of worker contract terms and conditions. Workers increasingly squeezed by debts at home and by examples of other labour activism, pressed for their dues. The Dubai Municipality and local companies, long used to a docile work force that could quickly be intimidated or replaced, was increasingly at the mercy of globalizing dynamics. Educated workers from India carried with them ideas of labour rights and organization. A boom town environment with high numbers of workers associating across multiple work sites and accommodation camps meant that news and rumours spread quickly. The English language press and the internet carried details of labour conditions and activism to an audience across Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, the Gulf, and the greater Asian recruitment area for workers. At the same time, pressures to adhere to international labour standards and free trade guidelines to allow worker associations, if not unions, meant that the government and police were less likely to use coercive power even as strike activity increased.

Denying the need for new legislation to protect workers and the need to enforce the rule of law, contract terms, and court decisions, regional officials avoided reforms and looked elsewhere for remedies. In 2005, between May and September, about four hundred workers suffering from heat exhaustion were admitted to the Hamad Medical Corporation facility in Doha, Qatar.<sup>125</sup> Finally, in July–August 2005, under external pressure, the UAE Labour Minister imposed a mid-day outdoor work break, from

12:30 to 4:30 PM, to save workers from the brutal summer temperatures. That summer over one hundred companies violated the day time work ban. In 2006, at first reversing the policy, the Minister 'did not think' he would order the same break in the summer of 2006. But the issue remained a serious regional problem and eventually a shorter mid-day break from 12:30-3:00 PM was mandated for the UAE for 2006.

The Labour Ministry, tracing worker agitation to external financial pressures and abuses, also considered shutting down the one hundred seventy labour recruiting agencies licensed by the government. They would be replaced by new undefined 'workers' cities', managed by private companies supervised by the government. Too many agencies were seen charging workers for the cost of their visas and encouraging them to take out loans. In April 2006, the Labour Ministry ended all applications for labour agent licenses, with the Undersecretary saying the small agencies had caused labour market 'chaos'.<sup>126</sup> Only one company, DulSCO, was licensed to sponsor and 'rent out' workers to UAE companies, but many other companies and individuals sponsoring workers routinely, and illegally, hired out labourers paid Dh 3 to 6 per hour.<sup>127</sup> In theory, eliminating commissions to agents might lower the cost pressures and related labour agitation confronting companies. But a variety of overseas middlemen were the main culprits. These agents and their extortions were fully integrated into the global labour market and would be hard to take out of the employment chain.

An informal labour sector continued to serve both employers and workers living in an illegal status. Hundreds of thousands of expatriates had arrived illegally, had overstayed visit or work visas, or had 'absconded' from legal employers to take other jobs. One official estimate was that over 250,000 workers lived in the UAE with expired labour permits.<sup>128</sup> This could lead to the worst of worker exploitation, and undermined the possibility of a minimum wage. But this also provided space for potential worker autonomy and movement from an abusive employer to a better position. Casual labourers, including many Pashtuns, gathered

daily in locations such as Sanaiya in Al Ain hoping to be recruited for informal day work. Many casual employees would work for far less than the Dh 1,000 a month mentioned by many in a *Gulf News* survey as a monthly minimum subsistence wage. Day labour conditions were often deplored. The old practice of carrying workers in the back of trucks was illegal, though nine trucks were found doing so during one day of inspections in June 2006 in Ras al Khaimah.<sup>129</sup>

Undocumented workers, often without passports, were still routinely smuggled in from Pakistan, including by boat. A routine monthly statement for March 2004 noted that one hundred twenty-six illegal Pakistani migrants held in detention were deported by Dubai police and through the help of the Pakistan Consulate and Pakistan Association in Dubai. These workers said they had paid smugglers between Dh 1,000 to Dh 7,000 to get to the UAE. Consulate officials said they issued fifteen to twenty outpasses a day to illegal workers needing documentation to leave the country.<sup>130</sup> Pakistan government regulation of agents or worker activities was unable to keep pace with the many formal and informal recruitment practices and abuses.

Workers with talent and skills found that there were many openings for drivers, carpenters, masons, electricians, and service workers. The new Cars Taxi Company advertised for four hundred taxi drivers. Applicants could simply walk in for an interview if they possessed a UAE driver's license, were in the age range of 23-48, and were 'Candidates on visit visa (or) 2 years visa with the minimum validity of 6 months with NOC'.<sup>131</sup> Drivers unhappy with their wages or work conditions could find better jobs. Newspaper ads offered drivers wages in the Dh 1,000+ range, including one notice for a 'Driver, Pakistani, with D/L, required for a 7 ton pick-up. Visa + salary Dhs 1,400/ + benefits'.<sup>132</sup> Employers uniformly held worker passports to discourage quitting, but, with or without their documents, many workers chased opportunities, or at least regular pay and decent living conditions.

Companies posted ads listing names, photos, and document numbers for 'absconding' workers. The Union Taxi Company of Sharjah published a notice picturing seven drivers who had quit the company in February and March 2006. One Indian driver was listed with six Pakistanis. Companies issued disclaimers of risk and responsibility for the actions of such men and formally required them to report to their offices. 'Failing to report to duty will lead to legal action as per the local law,' one notice said.<sup>133</sup>

Living conditions for many suffered because of the colonial labour camp model of employee housing. Dubai blue collar employee housing areas, including within the three main districts of Jebel Ali, Al Quoz, and Al Ghusais-Muhaisnah (Sonapur), had buildings, trailers, and even prefabricated 'portkabins' for labourers. By itself, the Sonapur enclave, in Dubai's Muhaisnah 2 district, held tens of thousands of workers<sup>134</sup> in an area of approximately twenty square kilometres.<sup>135</sup> These facilities were built, owned, and managed variously by the Dubai Municipality and private construction, real estate, and investment companies. Over one hundred commercial property rental listings a day advertised 'Labour Camp' accommodations available from two rooms to several hundred rooms. Rents ranged upwards from Dh 1,800 a month, per room. Many were in the Dh 2,200-2,400 range. Rooms were advertised by size and by number of persons that could be housed per room, plus the number of baths and toilets and kitchens included. A 330 room site in Sonapur advertised 10' by 14' rooms, '6 persons can be accommodated in each room.'<sup>136</sup> Another ad offered new Sonapur rooms, 11' by 18' for 8 to 10 men each.<sup>137</sup> One ad offered '105 rooms +A/C' for rent in Al Quoz, sized '15 x 22 ft.', 'min. 12 persons', for Dh 3,400 a month per room.<sup>138</sup> New multi-story barracks in Sonapur for Al Naboodah workers on the Burj Dubai or Dubai Mall projects were qualitatively different from 'temporary' camps with no direct city water or electrical supplies that might be operated by the most abusive managers or owners.

The accelerating numbers of worker complaints, demonstrations, and even property damaging riots pushed the Dubai government



to respond. In June 2006, Dubai announced the 'first-ever statistical survey on labour issues', a belated acknowledgement that there was little official data on wages and housing. From 10 June, a 'Labour Characteristics Survey' would collect information from 8,000 households and 'almost 200 labour accommodations of about 1,000' possible sites. The survey work was to be completed within a month and would include both nationals and expatriates. A consultant to the Municipality said, 'We want to see if there is discrimination among professionals based on their nationalities and see the levels of wages according to profession and educational background... We will also see to what extent workers' rights are covered and supplied with facilities promised in the contract.'<sup>139</sup> As recommended by the UN and ILO, the survey would be repeated every two years.

One of the issues under study was the 'unemployment rate', suggesting that the survey was as much concerned with the floundering 'emiratisation' employment policy as with care for construction workers. Despite the recent creation of 300,000 jobs a year in the UAE private sector, there remained a current pool of an 'estimated 33,000 unemployed UAE nationals'.<sup>140</sup> Officials complained that only 33 of 911 private commercial companies with over fifty workers had fulfilled the 2 per cent national hire quota requirement. There were only 804 nationals among the 200,000 total employees in these largest private sector companies.<sup>141</sup> Another reference said that of the 158,404 employees of 646 trading companies responding with data, 'only 259 were UAE Nationals'.<sup>142</sup>

The Minister of Economy, Shaikha Lubna Al Qasimi, made periodic speeches that addressed the need for Emirati students to study practical skills and professions and strive for careers in private businesses. These speeches rejected the notion that companies would not hire citizens because they were perceived as demanding too much in pay and benefits or were unwilling to work hard for the company.

The Minister of Economy, in her presentations, documented the reality that UAE citizens preferred high pay, high benefit

public sector careers in ministries and the military. Class and status distinctions meant that citizen unemployment was often voluntary. Public sector 'working days' totalled 180, compared to 275 for private sector employees.<sup>143</sup> Expatriates, currently up to 85 per cent of the UAE population, formed 90.7 per cent of the work force. More than 88 per cent of employed 'UAE nationals' worked for the 'public sector', 'with 56 per cent of Emirati men in either the military or police services'.<sup>144</sup> There would be no wide replacement of foreign workers with a new generation of young citizen workers, though perhaps 320,000 Emiratis, 40 per cent of the 'national population', were under twenty-one<sup>145</sup> and could not all be absorbed into the public sector. Reflecting the limits to any emiratisation policy, even as the government sector expanded 20 per cent between 2004 and 2005 to manage growth, the percentage of UAE nationals in the federal government fell from 39.8 per cent to 35.1 per cent.<sup>146</sup>

Because almost all commercial and industrial activity was in the hands of private, expatriate managers, fewer Emirati nationals had direct involvement with the hiring and employment of foreign labourers. Foreign executives, engineers, and managers, operating on their own short-term contracts and career horizons, often had little incentive to devote time or resources to mitigating the conditions of workers. Yet Pakistani and Pashtun employees in Dubai, recruiting family and friends into relatively secure niches in transport and construction companies, continued to build networks offering the support and stability that allowed individuals to survive grasping agents, demanding employers, and a negligent state government. Islamic identity, Pakistani nationality, and ethnic and family networks all served Pashtuns as they claimed work positions, and then struggled to climb from labour positions to service and management opportunities. Unique Pashtun circumstances and history shaped their labour role in the Gulf and Dubai, even as they shared much in common with the other transnational communities that, along with them, circulated, competed, and survived in a world of multiple interregional migrations.

## Appendix 6.1: UAE Labour Law, Federal Law No (8) of 1980

### Part IX Collective Labour Disputes<sup>147</sup>

#### Article 154

The expression "collective labour dispute" means any dispute between an employer and his workers the subject of which concerns the joint interests of all or certain of the workers working in a specific vocational sector.

#### Article 155

Where a dispute occurs between one or more employers and all or certain of their workers and the parties fail to settle it amicably, they shall observe the following procedures:

- 1 the workers shall submit their complaint or claim in writing to the employer and at the same time send a copy of it to the labour department;
- 2 the employer shall reply in writing to the workers' complaint or claim within seven working days from the date of receipt of the complaint. He shall at the same time send the labour department a copy of his reply;
- 3 where the employer fails to reply within the prescribed time-limit or where his reply does not lead to a settlement of the dispute, the competent labour department shall, either of its own motion or at the request of one of the parties to the dispute, mediate with a view to reaching an amicable settlement.
- 4 Where the complaint is the employer he shall submit his complaint directly to the labour department which shall mediate between the parties to settle the dispute amicably.

### Article 156

Where the mediation of the competent labour department does not lead to a settlement of the dispute within ten days of its learning of the occurrence of the object of the dispute, it shall refer the dispute to the competent conciliation board for decision and shall at the same time inform both parties in writing.

### Article 157

A board, to be called a "conciliation board", shall be set up within each labour department by order of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.

### Article 158

Each party to a dispute shall pursue the dispute before the conciliation board until a settlement is reached; the board shall take its decision by majority vote within two weeks of the dispute being referred to it.

Such decisions shall be binding on both parties if they have agreed in writing before the board to accept it. In the absence of such agreement, either or both of the parties may appeal against the board's decision to the Supreme Arbitration Board within 30 days of the date on which the decision was given. Otherwise the decision shall be deemed to be final and enforceable.

### Article 159

The dismissal or termination of the contracts of employment of workers' representatives who are members of a conciliation board shall not prevent such members from continuing to discharge their functions on the board, unless the workers elect other representatives.

### Article 160

A board to be called the "Supreme Arbitration Board" shall be set up within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to settle collective labour disputes. The Board shall be composed as follows:

- 1 the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs who shall act as chairman. In the event of his absence he shall be replaced by the Under Secretary or the Director-General of the Ministry;
- 2 a judge of the Federal Supreme Court, to be appointed by order of the Minister of Justice on the nomination of the plenum of the Court who shall act as a member;
- 3 a person having knowledge and experience of labour matter, and of unquestioned impartiality, to be appointed by order of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs;

Two alternate members may be appointed from the same categories as the two regular members, to take their place in the event of their absence or inability to serve.

Regular and alternate members shall be appointed for a renewable period of three years. Renewal shall be effected in the same manner as the appointment itself.

### Article 161

The Supreme Arbitration Board shall be competent to settle finally and definitely all collective labour disputes referred to it by the parties concerned. Its decisions shall be taken by majority vote and the reasons shall be stated.

### Article 163

Neither of the parties to a dispute on which a final decision has been given by any of the boards provided for in this part shall raise it again. Such a dispute may only be raised by the agreement of the two parties concerned.

#### Article 164

The boards provided for in this Part shall apply the provisions of this Law, the laws currently in force, the provisions of Islamic Sharia law and any principles of customary law and concepts of equity, natural law and comparative law consistent therewith.

#### Article 165

The decisions of the Supreme Arbitration Board in settlement of collective labour disputes shall be applied in collaboration with the competent authority in each Emirate.

#### **Appendix 6.2: Minimum wage petition, March 2006**

“Minimum wage and timely payment of salaries for Dubai workers”<sup>148</sup>

To: Dubai Construction Companies and Dubai Government  
Thousands of laborers arrive in Dubai every year from South Asia. These poorly paid construction workers enter the construction industry in Dubai, and often step into a nightmare of long hour work days with no day of rest, earning meager wages that may be withheld or unpaid altogether. Standard salary for a full day's of work is in the range of 4 to 6 US dollars. These workers face drastic living conditions which may be considered unfit for human beings in most of the other countries. They are often accommodated in cramped labor-camps, up to twenty to a room, without privacy. They can do little to relieve their misery. Some employers take their passports and “lose” them so workers cannot return home. It is also illegal for workers to strike, which means that workers are often asked to work without pay and without the documents to return home. Some workers say they haven't been home in years and that their salary has been withheld to pay back loans. We the undersigned call on the Government of Dubai to ensure construction companies do not

violate contractual obligations to their workers. We also call on the Government of Dubai to adopt the minimum wage system according to the living expenses in Dubai. We believe these workers have the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and of their families, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services. We are determined to provide this right to the workers of Dubai by ensuring timely payment of their agreed salaries with a set minimum by the Government of Dubai. We encourage all to step up and spread the word. We thank you all for participating and for your support.

Sincerely,

## NOTES

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4. Replacing foreign workers with unemployed or underemployed UAE nationals was referred to as the policy of 'emiratisation' of the workforce.
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7. *Gulf News*, 'UAE's GDP grows at 26 per cent to Dh 485b', 13 June 2006, p. 40. The UAE dirham remained pegged to the dollar, about \$1=Dh 3.67.
8. *Emirates Today*, 30 May 2006, p. 6.
9. *Gulf News*, 5 June 2006, p. 39. Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing statistics. Tourism accounted for perhaps 20 per cent of Dubai's economy, *Gulf News*, 5 June 2006, p. 39.
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15. *Khaleej Times*, 17 June 2006, p. 7.
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17. Dubai interview, June 2006.
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22. See Ranajit Guha, *Dominance without hegemony: history and power in colonial India*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
23. *Khaleej Times*, '443 street vendors, beggars held', 4 June 2006, p. 4.
24. 'UAE: Address Abuse of Migrant Workers', Human Rights Watch, 30 March 2006. <http://hrw.org>, accessed 17 May 2006. 'These numbers', up to 880 deaths, 'were compiled by surveying embassies of countries that have large numbers of workers in the UAE.'
25. See *Gulf News*, 31 May 2006, p. 3; *Gulf News*, 7 June 2006, p. 5; *Gulf News*, 11 June, p. 4; *Gulf News*, 'No extended mid-day break for workers during summer', 22 May 2006.
26. *Khaleej Times*, 7 June 2006, p. 4.
27. *Gulf News*, 18 February 2006, 'Exploitation drives expats to brink'.
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30. *Gulf News*, 5 June 2006, p. 6.
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33. 'A contract of employment may be for an unlimited or for a limited period. If it is for a limited period, this shall not exceed four years and the contract may be renewed by mutual agreement between the parties for a similar or a shorter period on one or more occasions. When a contract is renewed,



- the further period or periods shall be deemed an extension of the original period and shall be added thereto when calculating the worker's total period of service.' *UAE's Labour Law*, Part III: Contracts of Employment, Records and Remuneration, Article 38, p. 114.
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  35. 'Workers engaged on yearly or monthly remuneration shall be paid remuneration at least once a month; all other workers shall be paid at least once every two weeks.' *UAE's Labour Law*, Part III: Contracts of Employment, Records and Remuneration, Chapter IV: Remuneration, Article 56, p. 122.
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148. [www.petitiononline.com/dxblabor/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/dxblabor/petition.html), accessed June 15, 2006. 353 names by June 2006.

## Conclusion: Pashtun Migration in World Historical Context

For centuries, the regions of South Asia have generated particular environmental, cultural, and economic conditions that motivated people to circulate across territories, oceans, and political boundaries. Ethnic identities, grounded in region, language, social relations, and culture supported individuals, families, and affiliates as they travelled in a vast interregional arena that in the twentieth century reached truly global dimensions. Pashtuns tied by lineage and heritage to districts of the current borderlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan were motivated by necessity and opportunity to be among the many active populations that participated in the great population movements that transformed South Asian and Indian Ocean history.

In every century and in many world regions, Pashtuns participated as political entrepreneurs consolidated power to form princely enclaves, empires, and states. Pashtun soldiers for hire, traders, landlords, and farmers moved into eighteenth century north India, continually asserting and negotiating terms of employment, status, identity, and power. In the nineteenth century, confronted by an expanding British Indian empire, Pashtuns made choices to collaborate and resist, accommodate and move onwards, including to new opportunities in Hyderabad state in the south. Colonial managers struggled to oversee and control Pashtun personalities and networks that used collective and ethnic identities to advantage, even as many eventually settled down in new locations and experienced degrees of linguistic, social, and cultural assimilation.

By the twentieth century, new nation-state structures in South Asia and the Indian Ocean world attempted to regulate and channel historic interregional and trans-national flows and processes. Pashtuns found new possibilities and challenges in the cities of independent Pakistan, even as war in Afghanistan forced millions into refugee status. All modern states, colonial and postcolonial, claimed authority even as limited resources and legitimacy meant that state institutions and policies achieved only partial reach and influence. By the late twentieth century, labour migration to the Gulf offered hope to hundreds of thousands, while at the same time radical transnational religious ideologies attracted others with different visions for a rapidly changing world.

Whether in nineteenth century north India or the late twentieth century Gulf, shifting political and economic contexts shaped opportunities, recruitment, and chains of migration from homelands to new centres of prosperity and power. Pashtuns adapted as empires and states consolidated and fragmented. Individuals, families, and lineage members travelled and returned home, building and maintaining economic niches as soldiers, traders, and finally construction workers and transport drivers. In 2005, the oil boom drew to Dubai perhaps 260,000 new residents, 75 per cent of whom were blue-collar workers.<sup>1</sup> These included many thousands of Pashtuns.

By 2006, as for generations earlier, Pashtun social and economic history in Pakistan and Afghanistan could not properly be understood without knowledge of transnational flows of capital, labour, and ideas. Pashtuns in Dubai were subordinated as contract workers, though Pashtun entrepreneurs were also traders, restaurant owners, company owners, and professionals.<sup>2</sup> In Dubai, the law firm of Afridi and Angell handled international issues, including business affairs linking Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. Founding partners of the law firm included Amjad Ali Khan, in Dubai from 1982, with a law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and M.A.K. Afridi, with a law degree from the University of Peshawar.

Haider Afridi of the same firm was a member of the NWFP Bar Council in Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> One long established Pashtun trader in Dubai was said to fly several planeloads of goods a month to Central Asia. Pakistan's trade volume with the UAE totalled \$4.4 billion dollars in 2005-6, more than double the \$2 billion of 2001-2.<sup>4</sup>

In Dubai, in a typical emirate business pattern, the private National Taxi Company was sponsored by a member of the Dubai ruling dynasty and managed by expatriate Arabs, including from Lebanon. Of the 1,500 drivers, perhaps half were Pashtuns.<sup>5</sup> Many might hold these jobs for ten years or more. After decades of Pashtun circulation to and from the Gulf, many had cultivated similar service niches. Such transport workers, though limited in education and training, achieved pay and work conditions quite different from the lives of South and East Asian construction workers bending steel reinforcement bars and pouring concrete in debilitating outdoor conditions. As of 2006, the Dubai labour market remained fluid and competitive. One labour supply company now advertised the availability of workers from Vietnam, yet another alternative source of cheap and docile labour.

Despite the competition, every Pashtun worker in Dubai benefited as global calls for workers' rights challenged exploitative companies and a UAE institutional structure that valued corporate profits at the expense of workers. The January 2006 strike by Dubai Transport drivers, including many Pashtuns, was a moment in which personal identities as workers strategically transcended national, ethnic, and religious distinctions. The taxi strike was followed by ever more sophisticated worker strike activity that continued to accelerate into the summer of 2006.

On 17 June 2006, seven hundred and fifty labourers of the Dubai Contracting Company went on strike, refusing to leave their Sonapur housing for work. It was three months after an earlier work stoppage against the company. Earning Dh 650-800 a month, the workers complained they could not afford the higher cost of food. They demanded a salary increase of Dh 150,



plus fair overtime policies.<sup>6</sup> The next day up to 3,500 company workers, including those in Jebel Ali and Al Quouz labour camps, expanded the strike. Workers said they worked up to twelve hours a day, but were not paid for the overtime. Some had worked for ten years without a pay increase. By the third day forty-eight 'troublemakers' were threatened with deportation.<sup>7</sup> The company and PCLAD said unhappy workers who did not want to adhere to contract terms could return home.<sup>8</sup> The workers stayed out for over a week, returning to work on 24 June. The experience of recent strikes had clearly shaped the issues, form, and length of this worker action. More followed.

Choosing to work or strike, Pashtuns in Dubai lived, as had others for centuries, as mobile individuals with lives shaped by particular historic circumstances and evolving economic and political conditions. Pashtun identity, language, and ethnicity remained central for much of this history of circulation, even as the same interregional forces and influences operated with similar effects on other regional communities across the Indian Ocean world. Pashtun cultural notions of justice and equity (*Pashtunwali*) and of Muslim solidarity had been subordinated in the 1970s to Gulf hierarchies of employers and employees. But by 2006 Pashtun notions of honourable behaviour and group loyalty helped inform new worker identities as members of multi-ethnic labour cohorts engaged in new forms of labour activism and resistance. Such unity in the face of often terrible conditions had an impact.

By mid-summer 2006, labour mobilization and international pressure began to influence at least the rhetoric of the government of the United Arab Emirates. On 27 June, six hundred workers of the Seidco Contracting Company marched out from their Jebel Ali labour camp to block the main Shaikh Zayed Road. They protested about wages and the lack of water and power in their camp. Even Rashid Bakhit of PCLAD admitted, 'A committee delegation visited the labour camp and found that the conditions were very bad...'<sup>9</sup>

National integration into a global trade system required nominal adherence to global labour standards. While thousands of workers continued to strike and demonstrate for the most basic work conditions, including adequate water and power supplies in housing camps in the summer heat,<sup>10</sup> the UAE Labour Ministry now hinted at a significant concession. On 25 June, the Labour Minister announced that new studies were to be done on labour laws and policies. 'A new labour law, granting workers the right to peaceful assembly and form trade unions, may be enacted by the end of this year.'<sup>11</sup> It might take years to write a new labour law code, one that might be heavily ignored in practice for additional years. Such future changes would be minimal solace for the many Dubai Contracting Company workers said to have been taken from their sleeping quarters and deported in their nightclothes by the end of June 2006.<sup>12</sup> Yet from this summer of discontent perhaps the possibility of incremental change and equity was noticeable as one more circulating commodity, a transnational idea that continued to motivate and unify striking workers in Pakistan and the Gulf, including different Pashtuns, as they ranged and earned their way across the modern world economy. Pashtun history remained indispensable to an integrated Pakistani national history, but the history of Pashtun migration would also now provide a critical reference for understanding the histories of Asia and the world, of global capitalism, and of the universal quest for personal security and human fulfilment.

## NOTES

1. *Emirates Today*, 26 June 2006, p. 16.
2. Dubai businesses included Peshawar Furniture, Peshawar Genuine Auto Parts, Peshawar Motors, the Pathan Restaurant, Afghan Royal Traders, Khyber Travel, and Khyber Auto Spare Parts.
3. See [www.afridi-angell.com](http://www.afridi-angell.com), accessed June 2006.
4. *Khaleej Times*, 27 June 2006, p. 37.
5. Dubai interviews, summer 2006.
6. *Gulf News*, '750 labourers demand wage increase', 18 June 2006, p. 4.

7. *Gulf News*, 'Protesting labourers are threatened with deportation', 19 June 2006, p. 6.
8. *Khaleej Times*, 24 June 2006, p. 4.
9. *Khaleej Times*, 28 June 2006, p. 45.
10. 'About 2,000 workers of Al Moosa Pioneering Contracting Company staged a protest ...' *Khaleej Times*, 25 June 2006, p. 37. 'About 1,000 labourers of Al Darwish Engineering company in Ajman gathered outside their camps on Saturday night to protest ...'. One worker said, '...and rooms are not clean and hygienic, as around 20 workers are accommodated in a single room....' *Khaleej Times*, 26 June 2006, p. 4.
11. *Gulf News*, 'Four teams tasked with studying global labour law', 25 June 2006, p. 8.
12. Information received from a Yusufzai Pakhtun transportation worker, Dubai, July 2006.

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