

## Appendix - 2

### Depositions of Tantia Tope

at Camp Mushairi, 10th April 1859, in presence of Major Meade, Commanding Field Force.<sup>1</sup>

My name is Tantia topi; my father's name is Pandurang inhabitant of Jola Pargana Patoda Zilla Myeir.<sup>2</sup> I am a resident of Bithur. I am about forty-five years of age, in the service of Nana Sahib, in the grade of companion or *aide-de-camp*.

In the month of May, 1857, the Collector of Cawnpore sent a note to the Nana Sahib at Bithur, asking him to forward his wife and children to England. The Nana consented to do so, and four days later the Collector wrote to him to bring his troops in from Bithur. I went with the Nana and about one hundred sepoy and three hundred matchlockmen and two guns to the Collector's house at Cawnpore. The Collector was then in the entrenchment and not in his house. He sent us word to remain, and we stopped for the night at his house. The collector came in the morning and told the Nana to occupy his own house which was in Cawnpore. We remained there four days, and the gentleman said it was fortunate we had come to his aid, as the sepoy were disobedient and that he would apply to the General on our behalf. The General wrote to Agra, whence word came that arrangements would be made for the pay of our men. Two days afterwards the three regiments of Infantry and the 2nd Light Cavalry surrounded us and imprisoned the Nana and myself in the Treasury, and plundered the Magazine

and Treasury of everything they contained, leaving nothing in either. The sepoys made over two lakhs and eleven thousand rupees to the Nana, keeping their own sentries over it. The Nana was also under charge of these sentries and the sepoys who were with us joined the rebels. After this the whole army marched from that place, and the rebels took the Nana Sahib and myself and all our attendants with them, and said, "Come to Delhi". Having gone six miles from Cawnpore, the Nana Sahib said that as the day was far spent, it was better to halt and march next day, they agreed and halted. In the morning the whole army told the Nana to go with them towards Delhi. He refused, and they then said "Come with us to Cawnpore, and fight there". The Nana objected to this, but they would not listen to him, and so, taking him as a prisoner, they marched towards Cawnpore, and began to fight there. The fighting continued for twenty-four days, and on the twenty-fourth day the General raised the flag of peace, and the fighting ceased. The Nana got a female who had been captured before, to write a note to General Wheeler, that the sepoys would not obey his orders, and that if he wished he would get boats and convey him and those with him in the entrenchment as far as Allahabad. An answer came from the General that he approved of this arrangement, and the same evening the General sent the Nana something over one lakh of rupees, and authorised him to keep the amount. The following day I went and got ready forty boats, and having caused all the gentlemen, ladies, and children to get into the boats, I started them off to Allahabad. In the meantime the whole army, Artillery included, having got ready, arrived at the river Ganges. The sepoys jumped into the water and commenced a massacre of all the men, women, and children, and set the boats on fire. They destroyed thirt-nine boats. One, however, escaped as far as Kala Kankar, but was there caught and brought back to Cawnpore, and all on board of it destroyed. Four days after this the Nana said he was going to Bithur to keep the anniversary of his mother's death; the sepoys allowed him to go, some of them accompanying him. Having kept the anniversary, they brought him back to Cawnpore, and took for their pay and

money they had first made over to the Nana's charge, and made arrangements to fight against Hasan Fatehpur, where they heard some Europeans had arrived from Allahabad, and they told the Nana to accompany them. The Nana refused. The Nana and I remained at Cawnpore, and sent Jawala Persad, the Nana's Agent with them to Fatehpur. Being defeated there, they retreated to Cawnpore and the European force pressed them the whole way to Cawnpore, when there was a battle for about two hours, and the rebel army was again defeated, and ran away from Cawnpore. Under these circumstances the Nana and I fled to Bithur, arriving there at midnight, and the rebel army followed us. Next morning the Nana, taking some money with him, sent to Fatehpur. The rebel army followed and looted the place. The Nana, Bala Sahib, Rao Sahib and I, with all our wives, crossed the Ganges in boats, and arrived at Fatehpur in the Lucknow territory and put up with Choudhri Bhopal Singh. Some days passed, when the 42nd Native Infantry arrived at Sheorajpur, and wrote to the Nana to send three some one to take them to him.

I went and told them that the Nana had sent for them. In the meantime the English army had arrived, and the 42nd went to Bithur and fought there. I accompanied them, and having been defeated we fled, crossed the Ganges, and came to the Nana. Some days later I received orders from the Nana to go to Gwalior, and bring back to fight the English such of the Contingent as were at Morar. I went to Morar, and brought back the Contingent to Kalpi. The Nana had sent his brother, the Bala Sahib, to Kalpi, and according to his order I went with the army to fight against Cawnpore, leaving a small force and Magazine at Kalpi. At Cawnpore there was a battle which lasted eleven days, when the rebel army was defeated, and we all ran away. Next day we fought at Sheorajpur, and, having been defeated, we ran away, taking fifteen guns with us. I and the Bala Sahib and the Rao Sahib, who had been sent by the Nana to Cawnpore crossed the Ganges at Nana Mau-Ki-Ghat. We remained at Khera for the night. I got orders from the Rao Sahib to go and take charge of the small force and Magazine left at Kalpi, in

obedience to which I went there. After my arrival at Kalpi I received orders from the Nana to go and attack Charkhari, and that the Rao Sahib would be sent after me. I accordingly went to Charkhari with 900 sepoy, 200 Cavalry, and 4 guns, and fighting began. Four days afterwards the Rao Sahib came to Kalpi. I fought at Charkhari for eleven days, and took it. I took 24 guns and three lakhs of rupees from the Raja. the Rajas of Banpur and Shahgarh and Divan Deshpat and Daulat Singh, the Kuchwaya Kharwala, and a great gathering of people joined me there at this time. I received a note from the Rani of Jhansi to the effect that she was waging war with the Europeans, and begging me to come to her aid. I reported this to the Rao Sahib at Kalpi. The Rao came to Jaipur and gave me permission to go to the assistance of the Rani. Accordingly I went to Jhansi and halted at Barwa Sagar. There Raja Man Singh came and joined me. The next day about a mile from Jhansi our army had a fight with the English army. At this time we had 22,000 men and 28 guns. In this battle we were defeated. Part of the rebel army with 4 or 5 guns fled to Kalpi, and I went to the same place by way of Bahder and Kunch, with 200 sepoy. The Rani arrived at Kalpi the same evening as myself, and begged the Rao Sahib to give her an army that she might go and fight. The following morning the Rao Sahib ordered a parade of all the troops, and told me to accompany the Rani to battle. Accordingly I accompanied her with an army, and there was a battle at Kunch which lasted until (sic, till) noon. We were again defeated, and I fled to Chirki, which is about four miles from Jalaun, where my people were. The Rao had a battle afterwards at Kalpi, and was defeated and he and his whole army arrived at Gopalpur; we all marched thence towards Gwalior. We had one day's fight with Maharaja Sindhia and defeated him. Three days afterwards all Sindhia's army joined the Rao Sahib, and having procured from the Gwalior Treasury through Amar Chand Batia, the Treasurer, sufficient funds, pay was distributed to the army. Ram Rao Govind was also with us. Some days after the English army arrived at Gwalior from Kalpi, and a force also came from Sirpur. (Sipri or

Sheopur). Fighting again took place and continued for four or five days, during which the Rani of Jhansi was killed. Ram Rao Govind had her corpse burnt and we were all defeated and fled, taking 25 guns with us. We reached Jaora-Alipur, and remained there during the night. Next morning we were attacked, and fought for an hour and half. We fired five shots, the English army fired four shots, and we then ran off, leaving all our guns. We crossed the Chambal and reached Tonk. The Nawab of Tonk fought with us, and we took four guns from him. With these guns we proceeded to Bhilwara by way of Madhopur and Indargarh. We were there attacked by the English force, and I fled during the night, accompanied by my army and guns. At that time I had 8,000 or 9,000 men and 4 guns. We halted a night at Kotra, four miles from Nathdwara. Next morning we marched towards Patan, and, after proceeding about a mile, the English army arrived. We left our guns and fled, reaching Patan as fugitives. The Nawab of Banda, who had come with us from Kalpi, and the Nawab of Kumona, who had joined us at Indurkhi, were both with us. On our arrival at Patan we conquered the Raja, got possession of his guns and magazines, and surrounded the palace. Next day I told the Raja to give me some money to pay the expenses of my army. He said he could give me only five lakhs of rupees. I returned and told the Rao Sahib this. Next day the Rao Sahib sent for the Raja and demanded 25 lakhs. The Raja declared that he could not give more than five lakhs; but after some discussion it was settled that he should pay fifteen. The Raja said he would go to his place and send this sum. He went accordingly, and sent two and quarter lakhs in cash, and promised that the rest should follow. By next day he had paid up five lakhs.

Emam Ali, Woordie Major (Wardi Major), 5th irregular Cavalry, ill-treated the Raja, who fled during the night. We remained there five days, and issued three months' pay to our troops at the monthly rate of thirty five rupees to each sowar and twelve rupees to each foot-soldier. We then marched for Sironj, taking eighteen guns with us. On reaching Rajgarh the English army came up and

attacked us. We left our guns and fled, reaching Sironj by way of Nija Kila. We halted at Sironj eight days, and proceeded thence to Isagarh. On arrival we demanded supplies, but the people would not give them. We, therefore, attacked and plundered the place. We halted the following day, and the Rao Sahib told me to go to Chanderi while he went round by Talbahat. I accordingly went to Chanderi and the Rao Sahib to Lalitpur. On reaching Chanderi, four shots were first fired on us from the fort, which we attacked and fought with Sindhia's Agent. After three days we marched from Chanderi towards Mangraoli, taking eleven guns, seven of which we got from Isagarh and four from Sironj. On our march to Mangraoli we met the English army. Shots were fired for a short time, when we left all our guns and fled.

I reached Jakhlaun, and next day went to Sultanpur, where the Rao Sahib also arrived. After three days the English force arrived, and the Rao Sahib took his army to Jakhlaun, and some firing took place there. I was not present in this fight. The Rao Sahib returned to Lalitpur, and the following day proceeded to Kajuria and halted there. Next day the English army came up just as we were going to march, and an action began which lasted an hour and a half. We then left all our guns and fled, and reached Talbahat. We halted there, and the following day went to Jakhlaun, and then to Etawah (Itawa), 12 miles distant, where we stopped. We there heard that the English army was coming to surround us, and marched at night. The English force came up in the morning, and our army became separated. I accompanied the Rao Sahib, and we proceeded *via* Rajgath, and crossed the *Narbada* and got to Khargon Bustee *via* Kundula. The troops who were with us burned the Government *Thana* (station) and Bungalow at Kundula. The Rao Sahib forbade their doing so, but they would not obey him. This was about four months ago. At Khargon Bustee there were some of Holkar's troops one hundred and forty troopers, a Company of Infantry, and two guns. These we forced to join us and took with us the following day when we marched towards Gujrat, crossing the high road where the telegraph wire ran. The sepoy broke the

wire and plundered seven Hackeries (carts) which were on the road proceeding with Government property towards Gwalior, and seized the *Chaprasis* and *Chaukidars* who were with the Hackeries, and took them with them. Some of the *Chaukidars* were hanged by them. We there left the high road and proceeded westward. Next day we were surprised by the English force, and leaving our two guns we fled and reached the Narbada. An officer with a hundred men was on the opposite bank. Our force began to cross and the officer and troopers ran off. We plundered the village of Chilka, and marched thence at midnight. After proceeding 34 miles we halted at Rajpur. Next day we took 3,900 rupees and three horses from the Raja of that place, and went on to Chota Udepur. The following day the English force surprised us, some of them were killed and some of ours. From Chota udepur we went to Deogarh Bari, and our army became separated. There was jungle at that place, and I halted there two days. Our troops having been assembled again, we went to Banswara. There our men plundered sixteen or seventeen camel loads of cloth belonging to a merchant. We went thence to Salambar, and I called on Kaisar Singh, Agent to the Udeipur Raja, to furnish us with supplies. He sent us some and we started the following day with the intention of going to Udepur. However, on the way we received news of the English force, and retraced our steps to Bhilwara. We remained there two days and then proceeded to Partabgarh where we fought for two hours with a body of English troops from Neemuch. About 8 o'clock in the evening we ran off, and halted six miles east of Mandisore. We then went by three stages to Zirapur. An English force surprised us there, and we were again surprised by another force at Chapra Baraud. We fled thence to Nahargarh, at which place nine shots were fired at us from guns. We moved out of range, and halted for the night, and the Rao Sahib sent Risaldar Nanu Khan to call Raja Man Singh. The Raja came and accompanied us to a place about two miles from Paron, where we halted. We remained there two days and on the third went on to a place about 8 miles beyond Kilwari. Raja Man Singh accompanied us as far as a river which

## 212 ★ Shahzada Firoz Shah A Forgotten Hero of 1857

we crossed on the way, and then left us. We made two stages thence to Indargarh, where Firoz Shah met us with the Bodyguard and 12th Irregulars. Next day we made two stages to Dausa. The English force surprised us there; some men on both sides were killed, and flying thence towards Marwar we reached a village about sixty miles from Marwar, whose name I forget. At 4 o'clock that night we were surprised by the English force, and the 12th Irregular Cavalry separated from the Rao Sahib's army. Next day Thakur Narayan Singh, Ajit Singh, uncle of Raja Man Singh and thakur Ganga Singh joined us. They were coming in this direction. I had been quarrelling with the Rao Sahib all the way from Deogarh Bari, and told him I could flee no longer, and that I should leave him on the first opportunity. The opportunity occurred here, and I left him and accompanied the above-named parties in this direction. When I left the Rao Sahib he had about six thousand men with him. I was accompanied by three men, two to cook my food and one groom, three horses and a pony. The two Pandits were Ram Rao and Narayan. Gobind left me and ran off after coming two stages. We reached the Paron jungle, and met Raja Man Singh. Ajit Singh took leave of Raja Man Singh and sent home. Narayan Singh and I remained with Raja Man Singh. The Raja said, "Why did you leave your force? You have not acted rightly in so doing". I replied that I was tired of running away, and would remain with him whether I had gone right or wrong. I heard after this that the Rao Sahib's army had gone to Patan and thence towards Sironj. I told Raja Man Singh I would send a man to obtain news of them, and he approved of my doing so. I sent accordingly, and got information that the Rao Sahib was not there, but Emam Ali, Woordie Major, Feroz Shah, and Adil Muhammad, Nawab of Ambapani, were there with eight or nine thousand men. Emam Ali, Woordie Major of the 5th Irregular Cavalry wrote to me to come and join them. I had lost my master's (the nana's) seal, and had another made up at Paron.

When I heard as above from the Woordie-Major, I sent a man to Raja Man Singh, who was at Mahudia in Major Meade's Camp,

to inform him that I had received a not of this purport, and to ask him if I should go or remain. Raja Man Singh had consulted me before giving himself up to Major Meade, and had left one of his men with me, saying "Stop wherever this man takes you". Raja Man Singh replied to my message that he would come in three days to see me and we should then decide what to do.

He came accordingly on the night of the third day, and spoke a great deal to me, and told me that he had met Major Meade and that his disposition was good. When I asked him what he advised—whether I should go or remain—he said he would reply in the morning. I then went to sleep, and during the night some of the sepoys of the Government came and seized me and took me to Major Mead's Camp.

(Signed by Tantia Topi)

*Question*—By Major Meade:- Have you made this statement of your own free will and without compulsion? and has any promise been made or hope held out to you to induce you to make it?

*Answer*—I have of my own free will caused this statement to be written, and no one has forced me, or held out hope or promise of any sort to induce me to do so.

*Signed by Tantia Topi, Agent of Nana Sahib, and two witnesses.*

The above deposition or statement was made by the prisoner Tantia Topi in my presence on the 10th of April. 1859, at Camp Mushairi, of his own voluntary act and without compulsion of any sort, or promise made or hope held out to him as inducement to make it.

(Sd). R.J. Meade, Major,  
Commanding Field Force

#### Reference :

1. *Military Department Proceedings- No. 5 of 1859. Consultation 2nd Sept. No. 144. National Archives. New Delhi. FSUP. Vol. III, pp 582-590.*
2. It may have been spelt for *Maihar*.