

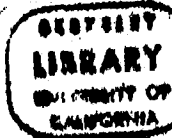
# B E N G A L P A S T A N D P R E S E N T

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Firoz Shah  
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## Shahzada Firuz Shah

ALTHOUGH there exist innumerable biographies, autobiographies and 'reminiscences' concerning the British participants involved in the Indian Mutiny, at all levels in both military and civilian spheres, very little comparable material has been written about the insurgent leaders, whose careers have thus to be traced, with few exceptions, in general histories of the Mutiny and in as yet imperfectly studied source materials. In this paper an attempt has been made to trace the exploits of one of the more interesting "rebel" leaders, Shahzada Firuz Shah, and to analyse the significance of his career in the context of the Mutiny as a whole, and also in the particular localities in which he was most active.

A. The initial problem regarding this "royal adventurer of remarkable ability"<sup>1</sup> is the question of who exactly he was. Considerable discrepancies concerning the Shahzada's origins are evident in both original documents and secondary literature. The various versions can be categorised under three headings—was Firuz Shah a son of Bahadur Shah II, a distant collateral relative or a spurious claimant to Mughal descent? Of the more detailed dynastic genealogies of the Timurid house available, two<sup>2</sup> make no reference to Firuz Shah, while a third puts forward that he was a son of Bahadur Shah II.<sup>3</sup> This latter theory has its origin in popular expression during the mutiny when the British indiscriminately referred to Mughal princes as sons of the King of Delhi,<sup>4</sup> a view reinforced by certain official correspondence,<sup>5</sup> and repeated by various writers since.<sup>6</sup> Also Bahadur Shah II sometimes referred to Mughal collaterals as his sons.<sup>7</sup> There is no mention of any Firuz Shah on the official list of the 12 surviving sons of the King of Delhi in 1856.<sup>8</sup>

The opinion that Firuz Shah was an impostor has been periodically advanced, descriptions such as "pseudo-prince"<sup>9</sup> or "self-styled prince of Delhi"<sup>10</sup> have been used, and the opinion of Showers (political agent in Mewar during the mutiny) that he was "a wandering Hadjee calling himself a Shahzada, prince of the Delhie house"<sup>11</sup> has been repeated in the latest work on the period by Srivastava in 1966.<sup>12</sup> Malleon remained

undecided—his references to Firuz Shah include “pseudo-prince”<sup>13</sup> and also “connected with the imperial family of Delhi”.<sup>14</sup>

This latter view is the one most generally accepted. In 1848 the Mughal dynasty consisted of some 2,104 persons of whom 130 were direct male descendents (sons and grandsons only) of the last five Padishahs.<sup>15</sup> There were eight princes called Firuz Shah,<sup>16, 17</sup> and the one who took an active role in the Mutiny is said to have been the son of Nizam Bakht<sup>18</sup> or Mirza Nazim.<sup>19</sup> The exact position of the Shahzada himself in the dynasty is given differently in various sources, but it is generally agreed that both parents were of Timurid descent.<sup>20</sup>

It is interesting to note that similar queries have been raised concerning Shahzada Muhammad Azim Bahadur,<sup>21</sup> who led the unrest at Hissar, Punjab. As evidence against the Mughal descent of Shahzada Firuz Shah it is important to note that the title of Shahzada was not exclusive to the Mughal dynasty “large Ferazee population residing in Pergunnah Chourasee . . . the son of their old leader Tatoo Meer is styled by them Shahzadah”.<sup>22</sup>

It may seem pedantic to discuss at such length the ancestry of the Shahzada—obviously his importance derives entirely from his actions during, and to a lesser extent after, the Mutiny, rather than from his membership of a family which, with him as the only exception, by this time lacked “even an iota of the indomitable energy and spirit of enterprise that enabled Babur to found a new empire”.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, sufficient prestige still attached to the Mughal dynasty to enable it to act as the titular leadership during the Mutiny, and the natural reaction of the sepoy regiments to march to Delhi finds a smaller parallel in the diverse elements accepting the leadership of the Shahzada in Malwa.

Many Maulavis and faqirs played a significant part in the Mutiny of whom the Maulvi of Faizabad was only the most famous.<sup>24</sup> None took royal titles or claimed Mughal ancestry, and so it is unlikely that Firuz Shah, if he had been merely a faqir claiming the allegiance of Muslim zealots, would have needed to either. It is true that the Maulvi of Faizabad (Ahmadullah Shah) took the title “king of Hindustan” but this was only a few days before his death at Pawayan on the 5 June 1858,<sup>25</sup> and previously he had restricted himself to the religious title of khalifat-ullah.<sup>26</sup> A reference has also been made to his supposed

descent from the Kutb Shahi dynasty of Golkunda<sup>27</sup> but such claims would confer little more than social prestige compared with the universal all-India aspect of the Mughal dynasty. More convincing evidence supporting Firuz Shah's claim to Mughal descent is to be found in the contacts he had with other imperial princes, notable Mirza Kuchuk Sultan<sup>28</sup> and Mirza Bulaki,<sup>29</sup> respectively son and son-in-law of Bahadur Shah II, who were unlikely to tolerate any impostor.

B. MALWA and CENTRAL INDIA May 1857—February 1858.

In 1855 Shahzada Firuz Shah left Delhi in order to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca. He arrived back in India in May 1857, landing at Bombay,<sup>30</sup> and made his way northwards in order to take part in the struggle against the British "hurrying to the front of what he considered was a war for independence" (according to one writer).<sup>31</sup> The exact chronology of his movements is somewhat obscure since it appears he was involved in two parallel campaigns, one to disrupt the British position in Malwa and Eastern Rajputana, the other to reinforce the insurgents further north in the major conflict area by persuading the rebellious elements in Central India to coalesce under his leadership and march northwards.

The Malwa campaign from July to November 1857 was significant not only because of the important strategical considerations, but even more so because of the predominantly Muslim character of the uprising. All accounts stress the part played by the mercenary elements but inadequate attention is given to the fact that the events of 1857-8 made more favourable, rather than created, the conditions in which these elements were able to exercise predominant control. Only a few enclaves of Muslim rule remained (Bhopal, Tonk and Jaura), and the mercenaries (described variously as Pathans, Arabs, Wilayatīs, Afghans, Rohillas and Makranis) although often of supreme importance in political conflicts<sup>32</sup> had to accept a subordinate position to their Maratha and Rajput employers. It is in this context that the jihadi enthusiasm, and the attempt to set up a Muslim state at Mandasur<sup>33</sup> (ephemeral though it was) must be studied, not merely as an expression of revolt against the British. Similarly, a study of the Muslim leaders shows the importance of pre-existing inter-dynastic disputes in determining the choice of revolt or acquiescence to British rule. At Indore the major influence was concen-

trated in the hands of Nawab Waris Muhammad Khan, an unsuccessful claimant to the regency of Bhopal.<sup>34</sup> Other collaterals of the Bhopal line actively leading the insurgents were the Ambapani Nawabs.<sup>35</sup> At Tonk the Nawab proclaimed that a holy war against the English was unjustified,<sup>36</sup> but his uncle had to be arrested for pro-rebel sympathies. Again, the Nawab of Jaura was extremely co-operative with the British,<sup>37</sup> but his relative Abdul Sattar Khan<sup>38</sup> joined Firuz Shah, and remained in the field until February 1859.

The situation in Malwa and the contiguous provinces was certainly favourable for decisive action by any leader possessing sufficient prestige and authority to hold the allegiance of the disaffected. There were concentrations of underemployed mercenaries in most of the small states.<sup>39</sup> The Muslim minorities in the Rajputana towns were "fiercely rebellious but without being able to do much harm".<sup>40</sup> Both the British officered contingent troops in their cantonments throughout the region and the State armies of the princes had already mutinied or were wavering.

On the 4 June the Nimach Sepoys mutinied followed by those at Nasirabad on the 8th<sup>41</sup> and the Gwalior contingent on the 14th.<sup>42</sup> Part of Holkar's army rose at Indore on the 1st July led by Waris Muhammad Khan, Saadat Khan (an unemployed officer) and Maulvi Abdus Samad, a Muslim zealot.<sup>43</sup> The contingent troops at Mhau followed suit under Murad Ali Khan.<sup>44</sup> On the same day the Dhar mercenaries burned the British posts at Bhopawar and Sirdarpur and by the 31st August they controlled the fort at Dhar.<sup>45</sup> The rajas of Amjhera<sup>46</sup> and Jhabua<sup>47</sup> were also largely dependent on their Arab troops who adopted extreme anti-British attitudes, and the former soon followed the example of his troops. Durand (the acting Agent to the Governor General in Central India) himself remarked that Firuz Shah had made a judicious selection of a base for his activities.<sup>48</sup> The activities of fakirs and maulvis among the troops had also led to the formation of small groups of Ghazis<sup>49</sup> throughout the region.

On his arrival Firuz Shah lacked resources and followers, but he did possess considerable religious prestige as a Haji, the more valuable as it was linked with Mughal descent and so "the revolt in this part of India now tended to centre in the hands of Prince Feroz Shah of the Delhi family who showed more force of character than his decadent relatives

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at Delhi itself".<sup>50</sup> The exact nature of the seizure of Mandasur is disputed. Some accounts state that in July the town was captured by rebels from Sindhia's army together with some cavalry from the contingent at Gwalior<sup>51</sup> who were then joined by "all the turbulent Afghans and foreign mercenaries in the surrounding districts"<sup>52</sup> with Firuz Shah at their head. However, if such a rebel attack took place in July it must have had only temporary effect since when the Shahzada appeared in August he had to overcome the opposition of Gwalior State officials with the aid of some "two or three hundred Mewatees out of employ".<sup>53</sup> He initially proclaimed a jihad at Khachrod but was driven away by the Kamasdar (revenue officer) of Mandasur and "took refuge in an obscure temple in the vicinity called Burmajee ka Munder". Here he accumulated a following and marched upon Mandasur where his appearance "was the signal for a general rising of the Mahomedan population of the town and district . . . and of the defection of the Mukranee and Vilaetee mercenary troops of the Soobah".<sup>54</sup>

It has been stated that an "important fact (of the period 1857) was the way in which Muslims and Hindus without doubt or hesitation looked to Delhi and Bahadur Shah"<sup>55</sup> but here at Mandasur was a parallel Mughal state, more emphatically Muslim in outlook—a final attempt to reestablish the political superstructure of immigrant Muslim adventurers. At Delhi the jihadi contingents were regarded as an embarrassment threatening Hindu-Muslim co-operation<sup>56</sup> while at Mandasur an assertion of the Ghazi attributes of the Mughal Padishah can be seen in periodic new proclamations of the jihad<sup>57</sup> and in "The Kotwal, a Brahmin was made a Mussalman of . . . an illustration of . . . the intolerance of the leaders of the movement".<sup>58</sup> An estimate of the rebel strength makes reference to almost exclusively Muslim support,<sup>59</sup> although a Bhil contingent under Bhim Naik did join.<sup>60</sup> A minister was appointed, a descendant of the Muslim family which had until the 1830s held the position of hereditary izaradar (revenue farmer) of the district, one Mirzaji.<sup>61</sup> To consolidate his position the Shahzada addressed letters to the rulers of Partabgarh, Jaura, Sitamau, Ratlam and Salumbar to recognise his rule and to provide money and supplies of munitions.<sup>62</sup> However, the attempt failed just as did the circular addressed by Bahadur Shah II to the rulers of Bikanir, Alwar, Jaipur and Datia.<sup>63</sup> The adoption of a new name on his being

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proclaimed ruler<sup>64</sup> suggests an independent position visavis Delhi, as this change was generally restricted to ruling members of the dynasty.

The establishment at Mandasur as rebel headquarters had serious implications for British strategy in the area. Not only were communications with Bombay threatened,<sup>65</sup> but the inability to start a campaign against the rebels until after the monsoon season gave a temporary stability to the Shahzada's regime, which was enhanced by successes gained by forces subordinate or allied to him at other centres. The resultant prestige attracted numerous followers<sup>66</sup> so that by September an army of about 18,000 was at his disposal. Although it is not true that "there were risings organised by Prince Firuz Shah of Delhi in the Dhar state, at Mahidpur Gorla and other places"<sup>67</sup> he was certainly in contact with the mercenary troops who were involved there and at places such as Kota where Mihrab Khan temporarily held the pro-British Maharao prisoner after the 15 October.<sup>68</sup> It was only the advance of Durand and Stuart that kept the Nawab of Jaura on his shaky throne. The dangers inherent at Haidarabad where on the 12 June the Green flag had been raised, and on the 17 July a premature rising had taken place of Rohilla mercenaries under Turabaz Khan, and religious extremists under Maulvi Ala'ud-din,<sup>69</sup> suggested that prolonged rebel successes at Mandasur would incite more serious insurrectionary attempts in this traditional centre of Muslim zealots. Certainly there were serious disturbances in the Deccan regions early in the following year<sup>70</sup> but British success in quelling the Malwa rising held "the Narbadda line between the blazing North and the smouldering South",<sup>71</sup> and meant they occurred in isolation. Also it became imperative to prevent a link up between the disaffected troops at Indore and the Mandasur regime.

Simultaneously with the advance of the Central India Field Force under Durand and Brigadier Stuart, the insurgents made sustained attempts to expand the area under their control. Jiran was attacked on the 22 October,<sup>72</sup> to secure a munitions convoy thought to be travelling through it. For over one week (22-31 October) Dhar was held by the mercenaries against the British.<sup>73</sup> After evacuating the fort they attacked the Mahidpur contingent under Major Timmins;<sup>74</sup> the native officer, Shaikh Rahmatulla waved a Green flag and his men joined the rebels but were defeated at Rawal by Major Orr on the 13th November.<sup>75</sup> From

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the 8th to the 22nd Nimach was besieged by troops from Mandasur.<sup>76</sup> However, the British advance necessitated their withdrawal,<sup>77</sup> and the decisive battle for supremacy in Malwa was fought at Guraria on the 24th. An extremely stubborn defence enabled the Shahzada to escape from Mandasur on the following day with some 2,000 followers, heading for Nangarh.<sup>78</sup> The collapse of Mandasur meant the end of an independent Muslim initiative in Central India, and together with the fall of Delhi deprived the active representative of the Mughal dynasty of any possibility other than a subordinate role in the remaining period of struggle. Lack of any substantial local basis of support in Malwa, and almost total reliance on non-indigenous military support is evident in "the debris of the Shahzada's forces is scattered in small parties making their way through the jungles avoiding towns and villages for the people have turned on them and destroy them",<sup>79</sup> and also in the extremely determined resistance made by the mercenaries to the British advance, absence of any local replacement reserves made every battle vital.

For a considerable part of the time of the campaigns in Malwa the Shahzada appears to have been attempting to secure the support of various contingents which had mutinied, initially in order to march to Delhi. There are reports of a Mughal prince at Gwalior sometime in August (or as early as the 31 July 1857) competing with agents of Nana Sahib for the loyalty of the Indore and Mhau troops who were there.<sup>80</sup> Also it was reported that about 1,000 Ghazis in Gwalior were the personal followers of the prince. It was stated that the prince had taken over the leadership of the contingent from Saadat Khan, one of the instigators of mutiny at Indore.<sup>81</sup> The hostile attitude of the Rana of Dholpur is supposed to have made the prince return to Malwa. He was certainly at Gwalior again in September, and troops under his command left the town on the 5th October and marched on Agra where they were defeated on the 10th.<sup>82</sup> He is then believed to have returned to Mandasur to direct the closing stages of the Malwa campaign.

This prince is supposed to have come direct from Delhi (but the reference could refer instead to membership of the Delhi royal family)<sup>83</sup> and not to be identical with the Mandasur Shahzada. However, the proclamation issued in the name of Firuz Shah at Bareilly on the 17 or 18 February 1858<sup>84</sup> is conclusive in establishing that only one prince was

involved. "Before the rebellion broke out I had gone to Mecca and on my return . . . when I left Bombay on my way back to this part of India I persuaded the people on the road as far as Gwalior to make a jihad . . . to this effect I took pledges from a great number of chiefs and warriors. A small force accompanied me from Gwalior and I had intended to fight as soon as I had matured my plans but the religious zeal of my troops became so great they paid no attention to discipline. They consequently unadvisedly advanced on Agra" (and were defeated). With the exception of the reference to a 'jihad' there is no mention of the events at Mandasur, and it could be argued that the rising there was the work of 'a wandering Haji' whose exploits became identified with the career of the genuine prince. Certainly there exist various problems of chronology, but to elevate them into a case for two separate 'Shahzadas' would appear to strain the evidence too far.

### C. RATHGARH and JHANSI.

The battle of Guraria marked the end of the first and most important phase of the Shahzada's career during the mutiny, but for another eighteen months until mid 1859 he was still engaged in military operations against the British. From the end of November 1857 to March 1858 there is little evidence regarding his movements, and such as there is, is partially contradictory. There is a report of the arrival of "Firuz Shah another prince of the Delhi line" at Fatehgarh to join Mirza Kuchak Sultan, and both princes remained there "until the 2 January 1858 and then fled with the Nawab of Farrukhabad on the arrival of British troops after the battle of Khudaganj",<sup>85</sup> but this could refer to the Mirza Firuz Shah who was in Delhi during the siege.

He was reported present at the fort of Rathgarh (Rahatgarh), making his escape just before the fort was captured by the Central India Field Force under Sir Hugh Rose on the 29 January 1858. A letter was found there from the Raja of Banpur which addressed Firuz Shah as 'King' and deploras the lack of support forthcoming from native chiefs.<sup>86</sup> The garrison of the fort consisted of some 450 Pathan and Wilayati followers of the Ambapani Nawabs, and one of the latter, Fazl Muhammad Khan was captured and hung.<sup>87</sup> The other, Adil Muhammad Khan seems to

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have escaped with Firuz Shah and accompanied him to Jhansi.<sup>88</sup> How long Firuz Shah remained at Jhansi is doubtful,<sup>89</sup> and his presence there in any case passed largely unnoticed". It is said he came here and he must have been treated hospitably by the Rani. I am not certain."<sup>90</sup>

It was presumably while he was at Jhansi that the proclamation bearing his name was issued at Bareilly on the 17 February. Production of the proclamation and its circulation appears to have been the responsibility of one Wazir Khan, previously a subordinate assistant surgeon at Agra,<sup>91</sup> who was a follower of the Shahzada until early in 1859. The wording effectively exploits the fears of Muslims and Hindus regarding British policy. Also a brief review is given of Firuz Shah's activities in 1857, and constant emphasis is given to the religious concept of the struggle, stressing the need for unity among both sections of Indian society against the "ill-disposed Christians"—"The object in view is purely of a religious nature, therefore it is made known to all Hindus and Muslims that whoever is so fortunate to possess the grace of God he will join us in this religious war" and "It is not my object to wage this war for worldly gain".

The aim of the proclamation appears to have been the establishment of Firuz Shah as a distinctive leader in the Awadh and Rohilkhand sphere. He emphasises the time he has spent in preparation and gathering recruits (an optimistic figure of 150,000 is given) and specifically enjoins the followers of Birjis Kadr (Wali of Lakhnau) and Khan Bahadur Khan (the Rohilla leader) not to desert their leaders in order to join his forces. Much of the sympathy which came to him from the Anglo-Indian Press in 1859,<sup>92</sup> and which has been re-expressed in recent works<sup>93</sup> stems from the passage "The delay that has occurred hitherto in expelling the English has been caused by the will and order of providence, for the army mercilessly murdered women and children in violation of the orders of their Sirdars, and gave themselves up so much to plunder that they turned victory into defeat. They likewise oppressed the people and did not mind the orders of their leaders;" but the passage is even more important as high-lighting the ultimate incompatibility between the sepoy regiments which had acted in haste and out of panic, and the traditional leaders to whom they gave nominal allegiance, who attempted to impose some of the rudiments of strategy and discipline.

## D. AWADH and ROHILKHAND. March to December 1858.

By March 1858 Firuz Shah had joined the disparate elements attempting to hold Awadh and Rohilkhand against the advancing British forces under General Campbell. In the confusion of mutinous sepoy regiments, talukhdars and their retainers, the resurrected Nawabi army, and the Muslim zealots under the Faizabad Maulvi,<sup>94</sup> the contingent under the Shahzada would make little impression, and such leadership as there was already concentrated in the hands of the Maulvi, the Lakhnau court party led by the Begam Hazrat Mahal, the major talukhdars, and in Rohilkhand, the representative of the old dynasty Khan Bahadur Khan. In April a government spy in Bareilly reported "the Shahzada Firuz Shah is stated to be in no way influential—he has 200 Punjaubee Musulman horse and about 200 others with him"<sup>95</sup> but nevertheless he built up a sufficient following<sup>96</sup> to play a significant part in the resistance to the British reoccupation. He was present at the defence of Lakhnau and escaped when the British captured the city on the 18/19 March<sup>97</sup> from there making his way to Bareilly, headquarters of Khan Bahadur Khan.<sup>98</sup> He was accompanied by Mirza Kuchuk Sultan who had also been at Lakhnau.<sup>99</sup> The core of his support came from the 12th Irregular Cavalry (the Irregular Cavalry Regiments were all predominantly Muslim) and he was joined by Rohilla insurgents at Mahmudabad.<sup>100</sup>

His first military operation was an attack on Moradabad on the 22 April. He remained in the vicinity of the town until the 27th,<sup>101</sup> when he retreated towards Bareilly on the advance of Brigadier General Jones. In a token battle on the 22nd he defeated the troops of the Nawab of Rampur<sup>102</sup> (who had taken over the administration of the district on behalf of the British), most of whom joined his force at the instigation of a disgruntled relative of the Nawab.<sup>103</sup> This action was expanded by rumour into "the Shahzada lately marched with a brigade to Rampore and compelled the loyal Nawab to flee to Naini Tal and took possession of his territory in the name of the prophet".<sup>104</sup> The objective of Firuz Shah was plunder, like other rebel leaders he was short of money and supplies but his demands were resisted by the merchants and bankers led by Rai Parduman Kishan<sup>105</sup> and he was "beaten off by the towns folk who

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rejected the communal strife raised up by the Muslim government" in Rohilkhand.<sup>106</sup> On the 25 a second army sent by the Nawab of Rampur defeated the insurgents,<sup>107</sup> and on the 27 "the city was evacuated . . . the Shahzada in command retreating with his troops on Bareilly".<sup>108</sup> His follower Wazir Khan was defeated the same day at Kakrala.

In May the reduction of Rohilkhand was made a priority by the British, and four columns advanced on Bareilly "a great city believed to be the last stronghold of the mutineers to be filled with thousands of men whose only wish was for death in the struggle with the infidel".<sup>109</sup> The part played by Firuz Shah in the defence of Bareilly is not altogether clear. Certainly he made no attempt to resist Brig. Gen. Jones at Mirganj (14 miles from Bareilly) where he was posted on the 4 May,<sup>110</sup> and Ball claims "the prince Firuz Shah had, as usual, left the town before the near approach of real danger".<sup>111</sup> However, conflicting evidence exists that Firuz Shah led the cavalry attack on the 5 May at the Battle of Nakatia bridge<sup>112</sup> (in which battle the Rohilla Ghazis appropriated most of the publicity) and a further report was current that Firuz Shah and Bandi Khan were "at Bareilly prepared to fight and die but that their followers were deserting them".<sup>113</sup> Reports were also current that the Shahzada had been killed in action at Bareilly,<sup>114</sup> but on the 14 May he reinforced the forces of the Faizabad Maulvi and the Begam Hazrat Mahal in their attack on the Shahjahanpur jail<sup>115</sup> in which a small British force was holding out. An extensive area was still controlled by the insurgents in this region,<sup>116</sup> but the advance of Campbell drove them successively from Shahjahanpur on the 18th,<sup>117</sup> and Muhamdi (headquarters of the Maulvi) on the 24th.<sup>118</sup> The death of the Maulvi at Pawayan on the 5th of June, increased the tensions between the various leaders since Khan Bahadur Khan, Ismail Khan and Firuz Shah refused to give up his treasure to the Begam.<sup>119</sup>

On the 10th June Firuz Shah was reported at Bangarmau and raiding the territory as far as Asiwan. He was attempting to form some basis for an administrative system, encouraging the zamindars to support his claims to royalty by promising a three year exemption from revenue payments. Allahdad Khan was appointed tahsildar of Bangarmau, and plans were made to set up Narpat Singh of Roayya at Fatehpur Chaurasi. Firuz Shah had established his headquarters (thana) at Safipur.<sup>120</sup> His

main support came from the Afghan and Mewati zamindars of Sitalganj, and also from various Maulvis such as Lakkar Shah who accompanied him on his raid of Mohan and Malha on the 16th July,<sup>121</sup> and accompanied him back into Central India.

In July Firuz Shah was based at Rasulabad, and a series of letters addressed by him to Mir Mansab Ali, Chaudhri and Chakledar of Rasulabad, give evidence of an attempt to use the existing administrative machinery in the interests of the insurgents, chiefly to raise money "so that I (Firuz Shah) may be relieved of the persistent demands of the army".<sup>122</sup> It is also evident that Firuz Shah, despite his claims to appoint<sup>123</sup> and dismiss<sup>124</sup> officials and landowners, lacked any effective authority to overcome the delays and non-compliance practised by local dignitaries.<sup>125</sup>

A series of skirmishes, notably at Rahimabad on the 29th July,<sup>126</sup> and Sandila on August 11th<sup>127</sup> when, on both occasions Firuz Shah was defeated by Kavanagh, and the consolidation by September of a band of British control right across the middle of Awadh from East to West<sup>128</sup> drove Firuz Shah towards the Nepal border. On the 18th September he was reported with other Mughal princes at Naurangabad,<sup>129</sup> and was in the Sitapur region until October.<sup>130</sup> In the same month Firuz Shah and Khan Bahadur Khan requested the Raja of Mitauli for assistance,<sup>131</sup> and on the 9th November, the Shahzada, in company with Narpat Singh (his ally at Bangarmau) was defeated at Minaoli.<sup>132</sup> On the 18th November he was still in command of a substantial force at Khairabad, some 8,000 troops, and 8 guns, supported by Lakkar Shah, and the rebel Chakledar of Khairabad, Har Prasad.<sup>133</sup> It is significant that with the exception of the latter and Narpat Singh Rohiawala, Firuz was almost exclusively dependent on Muslim support, and it was only in the final stages of the conflict in 1859 that he briefly cooperated with the Maratha leaders.

(To be Continued)

ROLF H. THORPE.

<sup>1</sup> Sen. p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Ferdinand Justi *Iranisches Namenbuch* pp. 472-5 (1895) H.F. Blochmann (trans) *Ain-i-Akbari Appendix to 1873 & 1939* (eds.).

<sup>3</sup> Zambaur, table V & footnote 43 "combats contre les Anglais 1857-8, disparait".

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- <sup>4</sup> e.g. Journal of the Siege of Lucknow by Maria Gennon.
- <sup>5</sup> e.g. "at Bareilly a proclamation by F.S., son of the King of Delhi has attracted much attention" Suppl. Narrative Allahabad 7 April 1858. (U.P. Vol. 5 942).
- <sup>6</sup> (i) Beale (Dict. Of. Biog.) 138 "one of the sons of Bahadur Shah II".  
 (ii) Thompson (Indian Princes) 282 "another son, Ferozshah . . . . escaped".
- <sup>7</sup> 20 Aug. 1857 King's answer to Petition from princes in Lucknow (Trial B.S. II).
- <sup>8</sup> P.G.R. I 453-5 Letter 59, 11 July 1856 & appended list.
- <sup>9</sup> Thornton p. 69.
- <sup>10</sup> Forrest Hist. Ind. Mut. III p. 259.
- <sup>11</sup> Showers p. 89.
- <sup>12</sup> Srivastava p. 142.
- <sup>13</sup> Kaye & Malleson V p. 250.
- <sup>14</sup> Kaye & Malleson V p. 45.
- <sup>15</sup> P.G.R. I p. 431. Letter 15 March 1856. p. 471 letter 81 17 Oct. 1856
- <sup>16</sup> Sen—footnote on page 311.
- <sup>17</sup> at least one of these was in Delhi during the siege. Press-list Mutiny Papers. Bundle 100 No. 130 Sept. 5.
- <sup>18</sup> Sen p. 310-11, U.P. II App. C. p. 655 (F.S. also styled nephew of (B.S. II).
- <sup>19</sup> (i) Joshi/Ashraf pages 97 footnote 55.  
 (ii) Buckland p. 146 (M. Nazim grandson of Shah Alam II).
- <sup>20</sup> (i) Ball Vol. II p. 583 "his mother Abadee Begum was a daughter of Mirza Munjoo, the latter a cousin of Akbar Shah II).  
 (ii) Buckland p. 146. mother "Abadi Begam cousin of Akbar Shah).
- <sup>21</sup> (i) Metcalfe—Diary of Munshi Jivanlal 6 August 1857 "Muhammad Azim, son of Prince Akbar ordered to Hissar to collect revenue".  
 (ii) P.G.R. VIII part 1. p. 435-6 attack on Hissar "led by the Shahzada Mahomud Azeem, whose family were in Hissar at that time".  
 (iii) N.A. Chick p. 719 (quoted in Chaudhuri Civil Reb. p. 237) "Muhammad Azim—customs official self styled Shahzada".
- <sup>22</sup> P.P. Vol XLIV part I Appendix further papers No. 5. Inc. 421 to No. I. u. 181. letter 6 June 1857 Joint Magistrate Barraset to Secretary of Govt. Bengal.
- <sup>23</sup> Sen p. 109.
- <sup>24</sup> Chaudhuri (Theories Ind Mut.) pp. 1, 30-1.
- <sup>25</sup> Majumdar (Sepoy Mut.) p. 168, MacMunn p. 247.
- <sup>26</sup> Sen p. 210.
- <sup>27</sup> Joshi (Ashraf).
- <sup>28</sup> U.P. V p. 434 Bulletin 13 April 1858 "F.S. & M.K.S. . . . reached Bareilly from Lucknow"  
 (ii) pp. 927-8 Narrative of Occurrences (by Lindsay Magistrate of Farrukhabad) "F.S. & M.K.S. remained at Fategarh till the 2 Jan 1858".
- <sup>29</sup> U.P. II p. 600 Letter 170 6 April 1859 (Sec. Chief Comm. Awadh. to Sec. Govt. Ind Foreign Dept). "Mirza Bulaki F.S. etc. were at Lucknow now after the fall of Delhi".
- <sup>30</sup> Sen p. 311 U.P. II p. 655.
- <sup>31</sup> Thompson (The Other Side) p. 103-4.
- <sup>32</sup> notably the 1833-4 and 1843-4 succession disputes in Indore and in the struggle at Dhar between Bhim Rao Bhonsla, uncle of the Raja, and the Diwan Ramchandra Rao Bapuji.
- <sup>33</sup> also spelt Mandasaur, Mandasor, Mandiswar, Mundisore.

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- <sup>34</sup> Dickinson p. 81.
- <sup>35</sup> H.L. Gupta Journal Indian History No. 36. 1958.
- <sup>36</sup> Press List Mutiny Papers p. 3. Bundle 15 No. 12. 7 Sept. 1857.
- <sup>37</sup> Showers Chapt. XI includes a letter from the Nawab of Jaura to Durand dated 14 Sept. "9 beg. to lay for your information that the Mandasor rebels intend attacking Nimach—they will probably march after 5 or 6 days as soon as the roads are a little dry".
- <sup>38</sup> Lowe p. 101 refers to a 'brother of the Nawab of Jaura together with thousands of armed followers' whereas Sen p. 311 and Showers refer to a "scion of the Jaura line" or 'distant relative'.
- <sup>39</sup> Various Arab and Rohilla troops were expelled from Haidarabad in 1853, and others thrown out of work by a reduction in the size of armies under the Subordinate treaty system.
- <sup>40</sup> MacMunn p. 91.
- <sup>41</sup> according to MacMunn (Luard says Nimach sepoy rose 3 July).
- <sup>42</sup> Macpherson p. 310-11.
- <sup>43</sup> Dickinson p. 81.
- <sup>44</sup> Chaudhuri (Civil Rebellion) p. 232.
- <sup>45</sup> Kaye & Malleon V p. 46.
- <sup>46</sup> Chaudhuri (Civil Rebellion) p. 232, Srivastava 141-2.
- <sup>47</sup> Sen p. 317 (Arab troops of Raja of Jhabua demanded death of European fugitives).
- <sup>48</sup> Durand to Sec. Gov. Gen Fort William 1st Sept. 1857.
- <sup>49</sup> Macpherson pp. 315 & 317 (references to a band of Ghazis led by Jhangir Khan, a former Havildar).
- <sup>50</sup> MacMunn p. 224.
- <sup>51</sup> Chaudhuri (Civil Rebellion) p. 232. Majumdar (Hist. Free Move) I p. 166 U.P. III p. 146 Rice Holmes p. 484.
- <sup>52</sup> U.P. III p. 146.
- <sup>53</sup> U.P. III News Report on Mandasur 26 August p. 148.
- <sup>54</sup> Showers p. 89-93. see also Sen p. 310-11, U.P. III p. 146-57.
- <sup>55</sup> Sen—foreword by Azab p. XIX.
- <sup>56</sup> Sen p. 92.
- <sup>57</sup> Chaudhuri (Civil Rebellion) p. 232.
- <sup>58</sup> Showers pp. 89-93.
- <sup>59</sup> U.P. III Durand 28 Sept. 1857. Mhow to Sec. Govt. India. Fort William 5000 Mewatis 500 Afghans 200 Bhils. 400 Markanis 3000 Miscellaneous 1000 Cavalry.
- <sup>60</sup> Chaudhuri p. 232.
- <sup>61</sup> Showers pp. 89-93. Sen p. 311. (Srivastava p. 147 says Mirza (ji) was a son of the subahdar of Mahidpur and appointed rebel leader there by F.S. in September).
- <sup>62</sup> Showers & Sen (as footnote 7): letter to the Nawab of Jaura insisting on attendance & supplies of lead & gunpowder. U.P. III p. 152.
- <sup>63</sup> except from Urdu Akbar in U.P. V p. 975.
- <sup>64</sup> U.P. III p. 157 Letter to Rasul Khan, Jamadar of Wilayatis in Jaura state. "Be it greeting to you that this day (25 Aug 1857) I, Shahzada Humayun Shah have been placed on the Masnad at Mandasur and the standard of the Prophet has been planted."
- <sup>65</sup> MacLeod Innes p. 186. Kaye & Malleon V p. 44-6. Edwardes p. 156-7 Durand I Chapt. VIII passim.

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<sup>66</sup> Showers p. 122 "daily attracting supporters both horse and foot . . . several of the chief towns on receiving the Shahzada's call for allegiance have ejected British authorities and declared for him. Jaurid, Ruttengurh, Singolee all rose in open rebellion".

P.P. XLIV 1857-8 part I p. 223. Further Papers 4. Durand to Gov. Gen. 30 Aug "troops of Nawab of Jourah mutinous & threatening. Mussulmans have commenced plundering in city of Rutlam". U.P. III p. 148. Letter of Ram Chandra Rao Mart and (Indore) to Durand 30 Aug. "insurrection . . . formidable appearance . . . Jaorah, Rutlam rebels . . . Muslims and others . . . will readily gather round nucleus of disorder & devastation. It is said 10,000 rebels have already collected at Mandasor".

<sup>67</sup> Savarkar p. 503.

<sup>68</sup> Sen. pp. 320-1.

<sup>69</sup> Hastings pp 284-300. Majumdar (Sepoy Mut.) p. 92-3 Savarkar p. 504-5.

<sup>70</sup> Majumdar (Sep. Mut.) p. 93. "Feb 71858. Raja of Shorapur in Gulburga attached British with 5/7,000 Rohillas Arabs & Bidaris. Also:—P.P. 1857-8 XLIV part IV Further Papers No. 8. p. 157 "May 1858 District Aurangabad is very disturbed state. Arabs & Rohillas have plundered the Towns of Dullnee Chuckeel and Nundura".

<sup>71</sup> Kaye & Malleon V p. 50.

<sup>72</sup> Showers p. 114.

<sup>73</sup> Edwardes p. 157. Lowe p. 77.

<sup>74</sup> P. P. Vol. 44 part III p. 168-9 Forrest III p. 123.

<sup>75</sup> (Hist. Ind. Mut.)

<sup>76</sup> Sen p. 311 Showers p. 119.

<sup>77</sup> Showers p. 128.

<sup>78</sup> P. P. 1857-8 Vol. 44 Part III p. 178 & Edwardes p. 158. (Sen (page 318) states Prince had left earlier).

<sup>79</sup> Muir. N.W.P. records Vol. I Durand Despatch 28 Nov. pp. 292-4. c.f. also report of supposed capture of Firuz Shah in P. P. 1857-8 XLIV part III p. 193 Narrative of Events Dec. 1857. "Neemuch—the remainder of the Mandasor force with the Shahzadah himself are said to have been hemmed in the Mokundrah pass on the 27 Nov. and all taken prisoner. The Kotah chief's own troops and the Bheels are said to have effected this capture. *The whole country has now turned on the Wilayuttees* but news of the Shahzadah's capture requires confirmation.

<sup>80</sup> Srivastava p. 105.

<sup>81</sup> U. P. III p. 191 Sen p. 314-15.

<sup>82</sup> Thornton p. 43.

<sup>83</sup> Muir Vol. I p. 158-60 (letter from Macpherson in Gwalior) "A Shahzada had come as from Delhi . . . Sindhia said that there were so many forged Delhi princes he could not acknowledge this one".

<sup>84</sup> U. P. V p. 376-380.

<sup>85</sup> U. P. V p. 927-8 Narrative of Occurences by Lindsay, Magistrate Farrukhabad.

<sup>86</sup> Forrest (Mutiny Papers) IV p. 7-8 letter Hugh Rose 7 Feb. 1858 Camp Saugor.

<sup>87</sup> H. L. Gupta Revolt of 1857 in Sagar & Narbada. Journal Indian History 36 1958.

- <sup>88</sup> U. P. III p. 227 Intelligence from Ganeshi Lal at Datia 22 Feb. 1858 "The Bai of Jhansi has kept Nawab Muhammad Adil Khan and Firuz Shah of Mandasur in her service".
- <sup>89</sup> U. P. II Appendix C. p. 655-6 "3rd January to end February".
- <sup>90</sup> U. P. III p. 53 Deposition Lalu Bakhshi. Jhansi 6 April 1858.
- <sup>91</sup> U. P. V p. 381 Agra Correspondents letter.
- <sup>92</sup> cf. Thompson (Other Side) pp. 103-4.
- <sup>93</sup> cf. Sen pp. 380-1.
- The Proclamation appears in full in U.P.V. pp. 376-380 & U. P. I pp. 459-463.
- <sup>94</sup> Mac Munn p. 242.
- <sup>95</sup> Report of 16 April in Bulletin 25 April 1858 E. A. Reade. U. P. V 438.
- <sup>96</sup> U. P. IV p. 764 Narrative Kanpur District week ending 27 June "F. S. has 8,000 (half cavalry) & 12 guns".
- <sup>97</sup> Sen p. 242.
- <sup>98</sup> U. P. V p. 394 Bulletin 12 April 1858.
- <sup>99</sup> U. P. V p. 434. Bulletin 13 April (arrived Bareilly 11 April).
- <sup>100</sup> Deposition of Pir Zahur Ali on surrender 4 March 1859.
- <sup>101</sup> 21-26 April according to Kaye & Malleon IV p. 364.
- <sup>102</sup> Ball II p. 308 Despatch Brig Gen Jones 28 April. U. P. Vol. V p. 408 Telegraphic Message Mirat 24 April.
- <sup>103</sup> U. P. V pp. 480-1 Narrative Events 13 May Letter 1. Magistrate Bareilly to Commissioner Rohilkhand.
- <sup>104</sup> U. P. V pp. 445-6 Hindu Patris (20 May).
- <sup>105</sup> D. G. U. P. Moradabad p. 167.
- <sup>106</sup> Majumdar (Sep. Mut.) p. 129.
- <sup>107</sup> Ball p. 308. Despatch Jones 28 April Moradabad: U. P. V p. 408 27 April 1858 Comm. Kumaun to Nawab of Rampur.
- <sup>108</sup> Friend of India 27 May 1858 p. 481 (U. P. V p. 444).
- <sup>109</sup> Friend of India 27 May 1858 p. 481 (U. P. V p. 447-8).
- <sup>110</sup> Sen p. 354.
- <sup>111</sup> quoted U. P. V p. 460.
- <sup>112</sup> Forbes Mitchell (ed. Edwardes) p. 150.
- <sup>113</sup> U. P. V p. 470 Bulletin Agra 10 May (Soron 7 May).
- <sup>114</sup> U. P. V p. 448 Friend of India May 20, 1858 p. 465 'F. S. who published a jihad is reported to have been killed' Carnatic Telegraph & Madras Exchange Gazette 10 June 1858 p. 2.
- <sup>115</sup> Chaudhuri (Civil Rebellion) p. 113 (Wazir Khan in command of a Ghazi force).
- <sup>116</sup> U. P. V p. 512 Carnatic Telegraph & Madras Exchange Gazette 10 June 1858 p. 2 "15 May—Maulvie, Begum & F. S. combined made a furious attack in masses upon our Troops". There are now green flags flying at Mohumdee, Shah-jainpore & Shahabad".
- <sup>117</sup> U. P. V p. 1474 11 May. Vansittart (Fatehgarh) to Allahabad.
- <sup>118</sup> Kaye & Malleon IV p. 365. U. P. V p. 523 Friend of India 3 June.
- <sup>119</sup> U. P. V p. 553. (Delhi Gazette 14 July).
- <sup>120</sup> U. P. II p. 399-402. Letter 10th June. Intelligence Dept.
- <sup>121</sup> U. P. II p. 456. Letter 753 24th July. Secretary Chief Commissioner Awadh to Gov. Gen. Secretary.
- <sup>122</sup> U. P. II p. 473 letter of F. S. 22nd July.
- <sup>123</sup> U. P. II p. 473 letter of F. S. 18th July "my government have granted Sanad

of freehold exclusive of property rights to Shaikh Ali Hasan Risaldar of Mouza Phikai".

<sup>124</sup> U. P. II p. 473 letter of F. S. 24th July "An order has been given to Wilayat Ahmad for the dismissal of the Tahsildar of Harayya and in case of non-compliance the necessary action will be taken".

<sup>125</sup> U. P. II 473 letter of F. S. 22nd July "When in spite of my presence here there is so much delay in sending the promised amount what reliance can be placed in your promises when I am away". Letter of F. S. 7th August "As you did not come in spite of repeated orders the work of the government was considerably delayed."

<sup>126</sup> U. P. II p. 484 Letter 786 31st July. Sec. Chief Comm. Awadh to Sec. Gov.

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<sup>127</sup> U. P. II p. 487 (Telegraphic Message Allahabad 15th August).

<sup>128</sup> Majumdar Hist. Freedom Move: I p. 209.

<sup>129</sup> U. P. II p. 503 Letter 1088. 18th Sept. 1858 (14 miles South of Muhamdi with 1500 men & 5 guns).

<sup>130</sup> Chaudhuri (Civil Rebellion) p. 125.

<sup>131</sup> U. P. III p. 129 Evidence of Raja Loni Singh of Mitauli. Lucknow 16th

Feb. 1859.

<sup>132</sup> U. P. II p. 542-3 Letter Chhedi Lal to Intelligence 12th Nov. 1858.

<sup>133</sup> U. P. II p. 557. Letter Munna Lal Pandey to Intelligence 18th Nov. 1858.

## Shahzada Firuz Shah

(Continued from previous issue)

### E. FINAL PHASE OF OPERATIONS.

ON the 1st December 1858 the Awadh insurgents were defeated at Biswa 50 miles North-West of Lakhnau, by Brigadier Troup.\* Ismail Khan and his followers surrendered, but to avoid being rushed into Nepal Firuz Shah, together with a small force of cavalry and camp followers which increased to over 2,500 persons by the 11th December, turned back and "was making when last heard of for the Ganges intending to cross near Kanauj and enter Bundelcund and join Tantia Tope":<sup>1</sup> "In the Doab the event of the week has been the escape across it of the Shahzada Firuz Shah and his party from Oude . . . Firuz Shah, supported by Mohsun Ali Khan of Mow Shamsabad, one or two leading resaldars of Irregular cavalry and the two fanatic Moulvies Goolab Shah and Lukkur Shah."<sup>2</sup> As they were crossing the Etawah district Firuz Shah obtained one of his rare 'victories' defeating the Etawah levies and Lieutenant Doyle and Magistrate Hume near Harchandrapur on the 8th December.<sup>3</sup> However, it is more than likely that the credit should go to the 'general' of the force at that time, Alidad Khan, a Mewati dacoit of Etawah.<sup>4</sup> 'The rebel 'army' consisted largely of groups of about 20-50 members from almost every irregular cavalry regiment which had mutinied together with some Afghan mercenaries.'<sup>5</sup> "On the 17th December Sir R. Napier's force beat and pursued with slaughter the rebels under Firuz Shah",<sup>6</sup> and when Firuz Shah finally met Tantia Topi at Indargarh on the 13th January 1859 the combined force only amounted to some 2,000 men. After the defeat at Sikar on the 21st January the leaders again split up, Firuz Shah for some time hiding in the Sironj jungles with Rao Sahib (nephew of Nana Sahib). This period of skirmishes, attempts to negotiate favourable surrender terms, and attempts to evade

the encircling British columns in Central India and Eastern Rajputana is described at some length in most standard works but has little importance beyond the spectacular as far as the insurgents were concerned.<sup>7</sup> The so called 'guerilla tactics' were merely a quest for survival, in a largely apathetic countryside, bearing no strategic relation to the main conflict which had already come to an end, and the involvement of large British forces in the clearing up operation did not materially assist any flicker of rebellion elsewhere. Indeed, it is probable that Firuz Shah went southwards not to engage in such a futile struggle but because of rumours of successes achieved by Taty Topi.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly the collapse of his ambitions and the constant desertion by his followers<sup>9</sup> in no way lessened his pretensions. In January a proclamation appeared at Alwar in his name declaring himself to be the sole heir to the dignities and territories of the House of Timur.<sup>10</sup> His parwana to his erstwhile supporter Wazir Khan respecting conditions to be granted in return for a surrender begins in equally august fashion "from the Lord of the World and mankind, the son of the holy preceptor of the Universe and its inmates, Mirza Muhammad Firuz Shah Bahadur to his confidential servant Maulvi Muhammad Wazir Khan dated 3 Zilkab 1275 (4 June 1859)"<sup>11</sup> a factor annoying the Agent to the Governor-General in Central India. "He adopts all the titles of a prince of the House of Timur Shah . . . he makes many stipulations (Freedom of movement, suitable provision for future maintenance and his personal followers to be allowed to retain their weapons) that are altogether inadmissible."<sup>12</sup>

Certainly there was still considerable anxiety on the part of British officials regarding the problems posed by the rebel concentration in Central India, but it was realised that the situation was now of provincial rather than national importance.<sup>13</sup> The British successes meant that no new potential source of support for the rebels would be forthcoming, and the significance of the latter was to be measured more in terms of local deprivations than of widespread security. The victory of Brigadier Honner at Kushana 10-11 February 1859 effectively dispersed the remaining forces under Firuz Shah and Rao Sahib,<sup>14</sup> and the last recorded action involving Firuz Shah was on August 2nd when Colonel Nott defeated his following of 500 at Putrai (4 miles North-West of Marhut) in the Balabhat jungle of Saugor.<sup>15</sup> Even more than at Delhi, it was

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here in Central India with the defeat of Shahzada Firuz Shah that the Mughal phantom was dissipated.

#### F. EXILE.

By April 1859 sustained military operations between British troops and insurgents had ceased, and on the failure to secure acceptable terms for a surrender Shahzada Firuz Shah contrived to escape from India, reaching Kandahar in 1860, via Sind.<sup>16</sup> The concluding phase of his career has been melodramatically described as "the hounding to death of another scion of the Mughals, the worthy Firuz Shah, for political reasons",<sup>17</sup> but in reality although British intelligence reports continue to mention his activities no attempt was made to interfere with his movements. Many earlier secondary works assumed that he was last heard of in 1866, either as a beggar in Arabia<sup>18</sup> or as a pilgrim at Kerbela in Persia;<sup>19</sup> it was also believed that he lingered in India until 1864, a fugitive in the forests of Sironj.<sup>20</sup> However, from official records it appears he spent several years wandering around Central Asia and Persia.<sup>21</sup> Whether he was merely hoping for some charity from the Muslim rulers or instead attempting to inspire a pan-Islamic invasion of India remains obscure. Certainly it was not an auspicious time for such adventures. The Amir of Bukhara, whom he visited in 1861 and 1863 (and was presumably the reason for his visit to Samarkand some years later) was fully occupied with the Russian advance and succession wars in the neighbouring state of Khokand. The Shahzada was also an inconvenient guest at Kabul in 1868, whose Amir was easily responsive to British displeasure. While he was at Teheran in 1862 an enquiry was made as to whether a ransom would be paid for his arrest, but the British authorities in India decided he was no longer of sufficient importance to be worth annoying the Persian authorities for.<sup>22</sup>

In October 1872 he was reported residing in Constantinople by the British Ambassador. It is evidence of his diminished prestige that he was not linked to the other anti-British Indian Muslims at that time congregating around the Bosphorous. In July a report from Captain Hunter of the Foreign Service stated that Firuz Shah had left for Mecca, and the final chapter was reported by the Acting Consul at Jiddah "Haji Feros bin Sultan Mirza Bakht, well known at Mecca as a member

of the ex-Royal family of Delhi connected with the Mutiny arrived here in June 1875 and died 17th December 1877. It appears that he was in a state of poverty and almost dependent on an allowance made by the High Sheriff of Mecca. He also received assistance from Indian Shaikhs and people. The only relation he has left at Mecca is a wife".<sup>23</sup> Political scheming was probably of little relevance to the Shahzada in the last eighteen months of his life, but in 1878 a bizarre rumour was current in India that Nana Sahib was also in Mecca and had been engaged in plotting with Firuz Shah the previous year.<sup>24</sup>

His widow, Nawab Tukhlakha Sultan Zamani Begam made an attempt to secure a pension from the Indian government in 1878 but was refused.<sup>25</sup> In 1881 the decision was reconsidered and five rupees a month allowed from November 10th.<sup>26</sup> On the 31st March the following Lord Ripon sanctioned a monthly pensoin of 100 rupees ('because the prestige of the Indian government was at stake amongst the inhabitants of Mecca') provided the Begam did not return to Delhi.<sup>27</sup>

The somewhat eulogistic attitude of Sen<sup>28</sup> towards Firuz Shah may appear exaggerated but it provides a welcome corrective to the impression given in many standard works that he was a mere auxiliary in the service of more well-known leaders, first as a cavalry commander subordinate to the Maulvi of Faizabad and the Begam in Awadh, and then junior partner to Tarya Topi in guerilla tactics in Central India. In this paper an attempt has been made to redress the excessive attention paid to the final disintegration of rebel forces in Central India as relating to the career of Firuz Shah, by giving due significance to the Malwa episode May—November 1857 and by stressing the Muslim and Mughal aspects of his career rather than the more general anti-British and military exploits amalgam usually presented about his life, in the hope of qualifying, if only slightly, the statement made by Ashraf "unfortunately only few details are available about this valiant Moghul prince."<sup>29</sup>

#### G. FIRUZ SHAH and THE 'WAHABIS'.

Although it is somewhat extreme to state that the Wahabis in India remained quiescent during the Indian Mutiny because they were in favour of a purely Islamic movement,<sup>30</sup> it is true that the Wahabi community as a whole did not identify itself with the revolt of 1857.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless the

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Wahabi intelligence system and organisation network was used by various rebel leaders notably Bakht Khan in Delhi, and many individual Wahabis engaged in the struggle as part of their continuous anti-British campaign.<sup>32</sup> Certain influential Wahabi maulvis were included among the followers of Firuz Shah,<sup>33</sup> especially during his career in Awadh, but their presence attests more to the prestige and piety connected with the Shahzada than to any committment on his part to the Wahabi movement. The view that in Malwa he was "dependent for support on the Wahabi Pathan contingent who had joined him after being discharged from the service of Maratha princes"<sup>34</sup> is, in the face of evidence regarding the nature of his following, only true if the term Wahabi is used in the loosest sense of Muslim zeal. During his post-mutiny wanderings Firuz Shah again came into contact with the Wahabis when he arrived on the Indian frontier at Swat in 1868. He remained sometime with the Wahabi community at Bajkatta,<sup>35</sup> and also used Wahabi messengers to send some letters via his brother (Mirza Izad Bakhsh) in Delhi in the hope of persuading some "Rajas of the Deccan" to join him by the river Oxus in preparation for an attack on the British.<sup>36</sup> This embryonic conspiracy was brought to light by the 1868 government enquiry into the Wahabi movement<sup>37</sup> and if nothing else illustrates the optimism and persistence of Firuz Shah in his capaign to drive the British out of India.

#### APPENDIX 1.

The career of Shahzada Firuz Shah is given added importance and significance by the general incompetency and lack of initiative displayed by the other scions of the Mughal dynasty. The Azimgarh proclamation of September 1857, issued in the name of Bahadur Shah II, optimistically reported extensive activity by the mirzas "several princes belonging to the Royal family of Delhi have dispersed themselves in the different parts of India, Iran, Turan and Afghanistan . . . . one of the aforesaid princes at the head of an army from Afghanistan has made his appearance in India".<sup>38</sup> Similarly the evidence of Mukund Lal at the trial of the king suggested the existence of a Shiah conspiracy by several princes resident in Lakhnau with a view to obtaining Persian assistance citing a visit by Mirzas Najaf and Bulaki in 1855-6.<sup>39</sup> Hakim Ahsanullah corro-

borated the evidence as to this visit<sup>40</sup> but rejected the idea of any conspiracy,<sup>41</sup> and no valid evidence to prove him wrong has appeared.

In Delhi itself several of the kings, sons and grandsons, and some of the salatin (more distant relatives) received army commands<sup>42</sup> but the records show little more than military incompetence, mismanagement and extortion of funds, and exceptional dedication, to paperwork on the most trivial of matters.<sup>43</sup> Also the princes made various attempts to open negotiations with the British forces<sup>44</sup> but the only one to have any success was Mirza Ilahi Bakhsh,<sup>45</sup> whose belated zeal on behalf of the British (somewhat magnified by later accounts) was manifest in his persuading the king to surrender on the 21st September, and three princes on the following day.<sup>46</sup> It is ironical that this Mirza was the stepfather of Shahzada Firuz Shah,<sup>47</sup> and it is interesting to compare the rewards of co-operation with those of determined opposition.<sup>48</sup>

The other princes were less fortunate. Mirzas Mughal, Khizr Sultan and Abu Bakr<sup>49</sup> (two sons and a grandson of the king)<sup>50</sup> were shot on the 22nd September.<sup>51</sup> Those who were given the dubious benefits of a trial were eliminated equally rapidly.<sup>52</sup> Several of the princes fled to Lakhnau but the only one whose movements are recorded is Mirza Kuchuk Sultan, a younger son of Bahadur Shah II.<sup>53</sup> He accompanied the insurgents under Firuz Shah in Awadh and Rohilkhand,<sup>54</sup> and was last reported in Nepal.<sup>55</sup> The British authorities obviously considered the Mirzas as important instigators and directors of the Mutiny<sup>56</sup> but their largely passive role is emphasised by their eclipse after the fall of Delhi. Only Firuz Shah who had already established his position as an insurgent leader, was able to rival the entrenched regional leaders of revolt. Only one other prince appears as the leader of a district revolt, and this occurred while Delhi was still held by the insurgents, and was in adjacent territory. Hissar was, on the 29th May<sup>57</sup> "suddenly attacked by a large assemblage of Ranghur villagers whose number I estimate at 2,000 with a good many sepoy of the Hurriana light infantry and 400 sowars, for the most part irregular cavalry, all led by the Shahzada Mahomud Azeem, whose family were in Hissar at that time".<sup>58</sup> Already on the 26th May a petition for aid had been received at Delhi from Shahzada Mirza Muhammad Azim Bahadur.<sup>59</sup> In August he was obviously in Delhi since he was ordered on the 6th to go and collect the revenue at

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Hissar,<sup>60</sup> and on the 10th to go to Hansi.<sup>61</sup> On the 23rd there was a report he had been hung after the British capture of Hissar,<sup>62</sup> but on the fall of Delhi to the British, he is reported there still in command of some troops.<sup>63</sup> However, this isolated incident in no way qualifies the fact, that with the exception of Firuz Shah, Mughal leadership was nominal and titular only. The illusion, however, persisted as when in 1944 the Japanese sponsored Indian National Army marched past Bahadur Shah's tomb in Rangoon.

Chronology of events during the "Mutiny" and afterwards connected with career of Shahzada Firuz Shah (referred to as F.S.).

- 1855 leaves Delhi for pilgrimage to Mecca.  
 1857 May—arrives back in India—lands at Bombay.  
 June—arrives at Sitamau.  
 1st July—revolt at Indore.  
 July—rebellious Gwalior troops temporarily occupy Mandasur.  
 17th July—Muslim uprising Haidarabad.  
 August—F.S. at Khachrod, proclaims jihad.  
 25th August—placed on Masnad at Mandasur by Muslim zealots and out of work mercenaries.  
 31st August—Dhar mercenaries seize citadel.  
 26th Sept.—F.S. at Mathura.  
 reported at Gwalior & Dholpur various times from 31st July to October, assumes leadership of Indore rebels from Sa'adat Khan.  
 5th Oct.—leaves Gwalior to attack Agra.  
 10th Oct.—defeated by Greathed near Agra.  
 22nd-31st Oct.—Dhar taken by Durand.  
 22nd-23rd Oct.—Mandasur rebels attack Jiran.  
 8th November—retreating Dhar rebels defeat Major Timmins at Mahidpur but are defeated by Major Orr at Rawal on the 13th.  
 8th-22nd Nov.—Mandasur rebels besiege Nimach. Recalled on 22nd by F.S. because of British advance.  
 23rd-24th Nov.—Durand defeats Mandasur forces at Guraria.  
 24th—F.S. evacuates Mandasur with 2,000 followers & escapes to Nangarh.  
 1858 29th Jan.—F.S. escapes from Rathghar fort as it is captured by Sir Hugh Rose. Reported to be at Jhansi sometime between 3rd January and 22nd February. Also reported at Fatehgarh between end November 1857—2nd January 1858.  
 February—Moves into Awadh.

- 17th Feb.—Proclamation issued in name of F.S. at Bareilly (Rohilkhand).  
 18th March—retreats from Lakhnau.  
 12th April—reported at Bareilly.  
 22nd April—raid on Muradabad.  
 24th April—defeats Rampur troops.  
 27th April—retreats from Muradabad.  
 5th May—retreats from Mirganj (near Bareilly) on advance of Brigadier Jones.  
 5-6th May—Bareilly recaptured by British forces.  
 14th May—Joins Begam Hazrat Mahal and Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah in attack on Shahjahanpur.  
 24th May—Begam, Maulvi and F.S. retreat from Muhamdi on advance of Campbell.  
 10th June—At Bangarmau with Narpat Singh of Ruayya.  
 16th July—F.S. and Lakkar Shah attack Mohan and Malha.  
 29th July—defeated at Rahimabad by Kavanagh.
- 1858 7th August—Second attack on Mohan.  
 11th August—Defeated at Sandila by Kavanagh.  
 18th Sept.—With other Delhi princes at Naurangabad (N.W. Khairabad division).  
 September—October. In Sitapur with other major leaders.  
 9th Nov.—F.S. and Narpat Singh defeated at Minaoli.  
 18th Nov.—F.S. and Lakkar Shah at Khairabad.  
 1st Dec.—Insurgent army defeated at Biswah. F.S. escapes southwards with 1,500 followers.  
 5th Dec.—Crosses Ganges at Akum Ghat.  
 8th Dec.—Defeats Itawah contingent under Collector Hume at Harchandrapur.  
 9th Dec.—Crosses the Jumna.  
 17th Dec.—Defeated by General Napier at Ranod.  
 20th Dec.—Reported at Tehri.  
 22nd Dec.—Defeated at Sarpur by Captain Rice.
- 1859 January—Issues proclamation near Alwar.  
 13th Jan.—F.S. links up with Taty Topi, and Rao Sahib at Indragarh, combined force 2,000.  
 14th Jan.—Insurgents defeated at Daosa (Dewasa) by Brigadier Showers.  
 21st Jan.—Defeated at Sikar (Jaipur state) by Holmes. Rebel forces split up.  
 10-11th Feb.—R.S. and F.S. defeated at Kushana by Brigadier Honner. Escape into Sironj jungles.  
 19th Feb.—Send emissaries to negotiate terms.  
 1st March—F.S. and R.S. at Paron.

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- 5-6th April—Rebel forces dispersed by columns under Colonels de Sails and Rich, and Captain Bolton at Tinsia.
- 2nd June—F.S. back in Sironj jungles.
- 4th June—Sends Parwana to Wazir Khan (supporter who had surrendered in February) concerning terms for surrender.
- 14th June—F.S. at Guna.
- 2nd August—F.S. with 500 followers in Balabihat jungles near Saugor.
- 1860—Reaches Kandahar via Sind.
- November—to 1861 in Bukhara.
- 1862—in Teheran.
- 1863—Reported in Harat and Bukhara.
- 1868—Joins Wahabis at Bajkatta near Swat.
- 1868—Kabul—Badakhshan—Samarkand.
- 1872 October—Reported at Constantinople.
- 1875 June—Arrives in Mecca.
- 1877 17th December—Dies in Mecca.
- 1881 November—Widow given pension by India Government.

TABLE I. TO ILLUSTRATE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRUZ SHAH & MIRZA ILAHI BAKHSH.

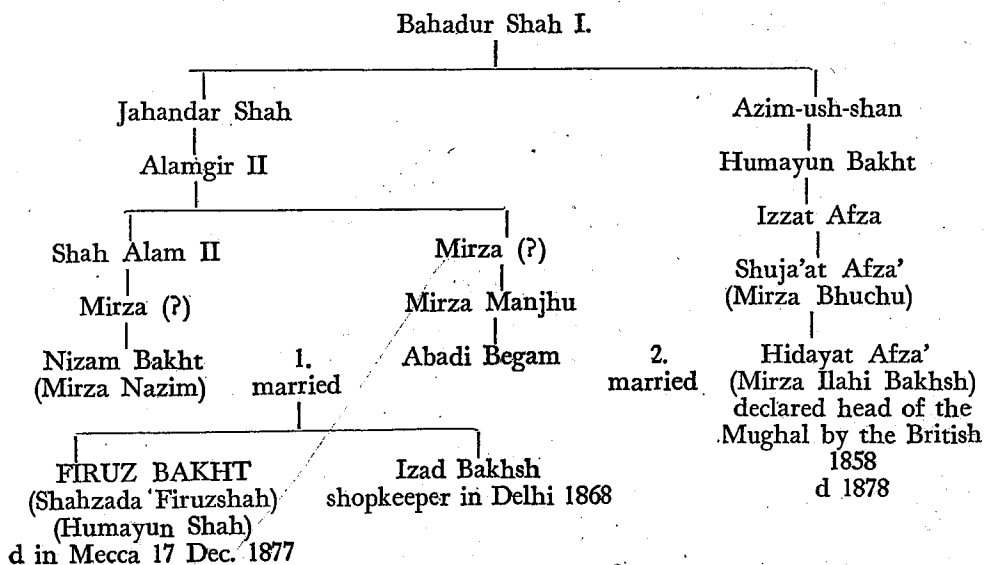


TABLE 2. TO ILLUSTRATE OTHER MUGHAL PARTICIPANTS

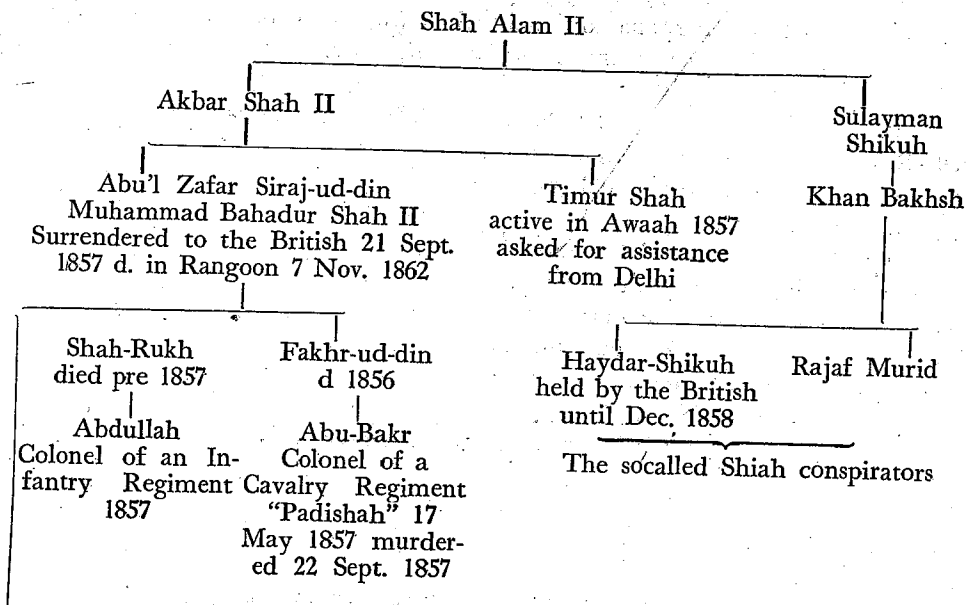


TABLE 3. THE SONS OF BAHADUR SHAH II

Muhammad Zahir-ud-din, Mirza Mughal, Commander-in-Chief, May-July 1857, murdered 22 Sept. 1857

Abu'l Hasan Muhammad, Colonel of the 20th N. I. Regiment

Khizr Sultan, Colonel of an Infantry Regiment murdered 22 Sept. 1857

Bakhtawar Shah, 19th May 1857 Colonel of the 74th Regiment shot 13 Oct. 1857

Kuchuk Sultan, Colonel of an Infantry Regiment in Bareilly Jan-April 1858 in Nepal, by 1860

Shah Abbas, exiled to Rangoon with his father

Gawan Bakht, Wazir May-Sept. 1857 surrendered, died in Rangoon 1884

*In the footnotes all works are referred to by the name of the author, with the exception of the following:*

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*Certain books used for only one reference are given in full in the relevant footnote and not mentioned in this bibliography.*

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ROLF H. THORPE.

\* Ball p. 546-7, U.P. V p. 807-9 (see footnote 2).

<sup>1</sup> U.P. Vol. III p. 663 Letter 5053 6th Dec. 1858. Secretary to Govt. to Deputy Commissioner at Hamirpur.

<sup>2</sup> U.P. Vol. V p. 807-9 Narrative Events Etawah week ending 11th Dec. 1858.

<sup>3</sup> Forrest (Hist. Ind. Mut.) Vol. III p. 324. (& see footnote 2).

<sup>4</sup> U.P. V. p. 820 Letter Magistrate Hume to Sec. Govt. NWP Dec. 12th, 1858.

<sup>5</sup> U.P.  
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<sup>6</sup> U.P.  
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<sup>5</sup> U.P. Vol. V p. 820 in letter Hume (Magistrate Etawah) to Sec. Govt. NWP Dec. 12th, 1858.

<sup>6</sup> U.P. Vol. V p. 835 Telegraphic Message Macpherson (Gwalior) to Reade etc. 18th Dec. 1858.

<sup>7</sup> Kaye & Malleson V pp. 251-263, Sen pp. 373-7, Forrest (Hist. Ind. Mut.) Vol. III pp. 611 f. Edwardes (Passim) etc. Showers p. 140. See also chronology Appendix to this paper.

<sup>8</sup> Kaye & Malleson V p. 250.

<sup>9</sup> In February Pir Zahur Ali, Maulvi Wazir Khan and Abdul Sattar Khan of Jaura (all long term supporters surrendered. The only important early ally left by April 1859 was the Ambapani Nawab. 29th February 300 Muslim cavalry (from Bareilly & Kanpur) in his service surrendered.

Forrest III p. 611 f. U.P. Vol. III p. 666 Showers Meywar Agent. 5 March 1859.

<sup>10</sup> Ball pp. 573-4.

<sup>11</sup> U.P. III p. 669 & Sen p. 377.

<sup>12</sup> U.P. III p. 669 Col. R. Shakespear (Agent Central India) 15th June 1859.

<sup>13</sup> U.P. III p. 525-7 28 Feb. 1859. Plowden, Commissioner Nagpur to Under Secretary Foreign Dept. Govt. India referring to "21 Dec. 1858 probability of a force under Firuz Shah crossing the Nerbudda East of Hoshangabad"—"Undoubtedly this province was most concerned and most threatened by the movement of a force under Tantia Tope and Rao Sahib across the Nerbudda and attempts by forces under Adil Muhammad Khan (the surviving Ambapani Nawab) and afterwards under Firuz Shah to follow it and effect a junction with it".

<sup>14</sup> Forrest (Hist. Ind. Mut.) III p. 612 f.

<sup>15</sup> U.P. III Letter F 568 Punkey Commissioner of Jhansi (Police Report 1859) to Sec. Govt. N.W.P. sent 8th June 1860.

<sup>16</sup> Sen p. 379. U.P. III p. 661 Extracts Notes. Political & Secret. Dept. Ind. Office 24 May 1877.

<sup>17</sup> H. Mukerjee 'India's struggle for freedom' p. 57 (3rd Ed. 1962).

<sup>18</sup> Thompson (Other Side) p. 104. Beale p. 138 (reported in Arabia by Haiderabad Arab merchants).

<sup>19</sup> Buckland p. 146 Kaye & Malleson Vol. V p. 253 ("in Kurbehla").

<sup>20</sup> Thompson & Beale (as footnote 3).

<sup>21</sup> U.P. III pp. 661-671 Sen. p. 379.

<sup>22</sup> above is based Extracts in U.P. III 661-671 & on Sen 378-380.

<sup>23</sup> Letter 7th Sept. 1878 from Beyts (Acting Consul Jiddah) to Political Resident Aden U.P. III p. 670.

<sup>24</sup> P. C. Gupta Nana Sahib & the rising at 'Caunpore' p. 202.

<sup>25</sup> Foreign Political Proceedings B. Jan. 1879 44-6).

<sup>26</sup> Foreign Dept. Proc. Financial B. Nov. 1881 28-30) U.P. III.

<sup>27</sup> Foreign Dept. Proc. Fin. B. April 1882 32-3) p. 671.

<sup>28</sup> espec. Sen p. 380-1.

<sup>29</sup> Joshi/Ashraf p. 97 footnote 55.

<sup>30</sup> Majumdar Freedom Movement I p. 278.

<sup>31</sup> Sen. pp. 245-8.

<sup>32</sup> Ahmad passim. Joshi/Ashraf 82-92.

<sup>33</sup> U.P. V pp. 583-4 Office Memo. Assist. Sec. W. Gov. N.W.P. 27th May 1859. Copies of Trial of Kutub Shah—Wahabi (teacher at Bareilly College) "he did accompany FS's force on its march to Moradabad as deputy".

<sup>34</sup> Joshi/Ashraf pp. 86-7.

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