

Ranjit controlled
extensive areas from
the jhellum and



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Ranjit Singh was born at Gujranwala on 2nd Nov.

1780 in the house of Mahan Singh, the leader of Sukarchakya misl. His father was died hardly when he was a boy of 12. From 1792 to 1797, a council of Regency consisting of Ranjit's mother, his mother-in-law and Diwan Lakhpati Rai controlled the actual affairs of the state. In 1797 Ranjit Singh overthrew the regency and took over the actual administration in his hands. When Ranjit Singh took over the leadership of the Sukara- chakyas, his authority extended over few districts of the Rachna and Chaj Doab.

The Bhangi misl was the most important and controlled extensive areas from the Jhellum and then down the river apart from actual control of Lahore and Amritsar. The Ahluwalia misl controlled the Jullunder's Doab, and the scattered territories extending from Sutlej to Jamuna. Afgan Chief was ruling over Kasur. Multan, Attoch, Peshawar, Barmi, Kashmir, apart from usurping the authority of Kabul Government. Zaman Shah led a number of invasions to assert his authority.

But the Golden opportunity came to Ranjit Singh when Afghanistan remained busy in internal civil strife for almost three decades. And the most important misls towards the close of eighteenth century headed for disintegration. Ranjit Singh fully utilised the opportunity and by following the policy of Blood and iron, carried out a kingdom in the central Punjab.

The Afghan ruler authorised Ranjit Singh to occupy Lahore and rule it on behalf of the Afghans Suzerain. Ranjit Singh took the possession of Lahore after defeating Bhangi Misl. He assumed the title of Raja after possession of

Lahore. The Chief of other misl and the Nawab of Qasur formed a coalition against Ranjit Singh.

The coalition forces were led by Sardar Gulab Singh Bhangi. But soon Gulab died of excessive drinking. This ended the unity of Sikhs against Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh also snatched Amritsar from Bhangis in 1805. The occupation and control of Lahore and Amritsar put Ranjit Singh fountainhead of political power in Punjab.

Ranjit Singh's great desire was to unify all the Sikh people. To achieve that objective Maharaja organised three expeditions. In 1806, he marched with an army of 20,000 and advanced upto Patiala and conquered Ludhiana, Dhaka, Rajkot, Jagron and Ghungrana.

Next year again Maharaja crossed the Sutlej and successfully arbitrated the dispute between Raja of Patiala and his wife, Rani Auskana. The Maharaja on his return journey exacted tribute from Raja of Kaithal, Kalasia besides conquering Naraingarh, Wadori, Zira, Kot Kapura and other territories. The Sikh chiefs of the Cis-Sutlej decided to seek British protection. Consequently Raja Bhag Singh of Jhind, Bhai Lai Singh of Kaithal and sardar Chen Singh waited on a deputation on Mr. Sector, Mr. Metcalfe who came to Lahore to negotiate a treaty with Ranjit Singh urged upon the ruler of Lahore to give up all the claims on the Cis-Sutlej states. Undaunted, the Maharaja, again crossed the Sutlej in 1808 and captured Faridkot, Malerkotla and Ambala.

By the treaty of Amritsar (1804) however Ranjit Singh accepted the East India Company's greatest right over the Cis-Sutlej territories. Relation with the British: In spite of all these brilliant successes Ranjit Singh remained true
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to his alliance with the British throughout his life. He refused to take advantage of the difficulties of the British, as for example, when they sustained reverses in the early stages of their war in Nepal (1816) and Burma (1827). He refused to help Nepal against the British. The Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur driven from his kingdom during the third Maratha War, appealed to him for help in 1820. The Nepal Government proposed a defensive alliance in 1824, and the ruler of Bharatpur asked for his help in 1824, Ranjit rejected all these in his scrupulous regard for the treaty of friendship with the British. But the British did not show the same regard for him. When the Wahabis declared Jihad or the holy war against the Sikhs in 1820, they organised their campaigns from British territories.

This was done, not only with the full knowledge of the British but even with their permission. The Wahabi leader informed the Lieutenant-Governor of N. W. P. that he “ was preparing for a jehad against the Sikhs and hoped that the British Government had no objection to it. The Lieutenant Governor wrote to him in reply that as long as the peace of their territories was not disturbed they had nothing to say now had they any objection to such preparations.” The British no doubt hoped that the rising of the pathans in the north-west frontier against the Sikhs would embroil Ranjit Singh and weaken his state, and this would be to their advantage. Actually the Wahabi proved a formidable foe.

They carried on the struggle for more than four years and ever captured Peshawar, but the defeat and death of the Wahabi leader Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly, at the battle of Baiakot on May, 1831, ended the trouble. After making himself master of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh tried to extend his power

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to Sindh in the South. But here too he was check mated by the British.

Outwardly, the British showed a great deal of regard and friendship for Ranjit Singh. The king of England sent a friendly letter with a present of five horses and an English coach Burmes, who was charged with the mission of delivering them, proceeded by way of the Sindhu River, with deliberate but secret, object of securing information of political and geographical nature about Sindh.

The Governor-General Lord William Bentinck met Ranjit Singh at Rupar on the Sutlej in October, 1831, and renewed the treaty of alliance with him. But on that very day instructions had been issued to Pottinger to prepare for a mission to Sindh with a view to the negotiation of a treaty with its rulers; and this was kept a secret from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Foiled in his designs against Sindh, Ranjit turned his attention to Shikharpur, a town in Sindh to the west of the Sindhu. He had already conquered territories to the west of the Sindhu such as Peshawar, Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan and other places. The seizure of Shikarpur was not violation of the treaty of 1809 in any way. But the British bluntly told him that he could not extend his power to Shikarpur. This arbitrary act provoked the Sikh and Ranjit Singh was asked by his chiefs not to yield, but to fight the English in defence of his rights. But Ranjit Singh was a foresighted statesman, and knows that he was no match for the British.

So he suddenly gave up the idea of conquering Shikarpur. Another grave offence was given to him by the British in 1835. The sovereignty of Ranjit Singh over Ferozpur was recognised by them, but on death of its ruler

without heir, the city was occupied by the British in 1835 and converted into a military cantonment in 1838. The reason for this is not far to seek.

As Murray so wrote “ The capital of Lahore is distant only 40 miles with a single river to cross, fordable for six months in the year. The fort of Ferozpur from every point of view seems to be of highest importance to the British Government.” Relation with Afghans: The last phase of Ranjit Singh diplomatic relation with the British was connected with the expedition of Shah Shuja to Kabul. Shah Shuja accepted the throne of Kabul in 1800 but was ousted from power by his brother Shah Mohammed. In his effort to recover throne of Kabul, Shah Shuja solicited “ Ranjit Singh’s help and came to Lahore. Here Ranjit Singh took from Shah Shaja the famous Kohinoor diamond. But the latter did not fulfil his part of the contract; Shuja’s men were not given possession of the district assigned to him.

He was treated with indignity and his valuables were plundered with great difficulty the Shah, with his family escaped to Ludhiana and placed himself under British protection in September 1816. In 1831 in another bid to recover the throne of Kabul Shah Shuja sought the Maharaja’s help. Ranjit Singh offered to help Shah Shuja if the latter would send his heir apparent to attend on the Maharaja with an auxiliary force, agree to ban cow slaughter in Afghanistan and deliver to him the gates of the temple of Somnath. Shah Shuja refused to accept these preposterous proposals which would reduce him to the position of the Maharaja’s vassal. The company also did not encourage the plan. In 1835 Shah Shuja, however, agreed to recognise the Maharaja’s claims over the Afghan territories on the right bank of the Indus, fearing Shah Shuja’s motives and British moves Ranjit Singh thought it

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prudent to annex Peshawar in 1834. Dost Mohammad, who had by then occupied the throne of Afghanistan, in a bid to recover Peshawar from the Sikhs, organised a crusade against Ranjit Singh and at the head of a large army of 40, 000 tribesmen besieged Peshawar.

The Sikh proved too strong for him and Hari Singh Nalvva, the Marshal of Sikh forces, defeated the Afghans and captured Jamrud. Thus, the entire territory east of the Khyber Pass passed under the sway of Ranjit Singh, although his control over the tribal tracts was rather tenuous. Administration under Ranjit Singh: The relation between the monarch and his subjects were friendly and the peasantry and the army held the former in great esteem. Doubtless wealth was unequally distributed in society. The chiefs were affluent; they lived in their fastness surrounded by all the comforts which rural abundance could supply. Often they fought among themselves and made the life of the people insecure. The revenue system was crude and primitive. The land was parcelled out among the chiefs who acted as intermediaries between the state and the people.

The share of the state was not uniform. It varied from one half to one fourth or even less according to the fertility of the soil. As a ruler it may be said to have varied from 2/5th to 1/3rd of the year's produce. Besides this share of the produce the state claimed a number of ' abwas' (cesses) which were collected along with the land revenue. The revenue was collected at harvest time by the Kardars who were assisted by Magaddams, Patwaris, and Qanungos.

They were paid salaries but they were permitted to draw commission at the rate of about 5 per cent on the total collection. They looked after several villages (mauzas) and were responsible for the collection of areas. The “Inain” lands were led out on favourable terms and the Sikh Chiefs when they found the peasantry intractable entered into a compact with powerful men in the locality who assisted them in their work. The local officers were largely left to themselves and the Central Government found it difficult owing to lack of means of communication to exercise effective supervision over them. The administration of justice was primitive. There were no written laws and cases were decided according to custom by the panchayats. In the towns justice was administered by the Kardars who in their taluques also decided important cases.

The ministers also had the power to deal with cases reacting to their departments. From the decisions of Kardars, Nazims Adalatis and Ministers the Maharaja himself heard appeals in his darbar at the capital. The punishment of crime was severe. Mutilation was permitted and fines were common. Cases of bribery and corruption were reported to the Maharaja and he dealt strictly with the offenders. He sometimes sent his officers on tour to hear the complaints of the people. The judicial system was no doubt dilatory and expensive and often the poor man avoided the courts of the state. But its simplicity appealed to the peasantry of the Punjab and the absence of technical and complicated procedure made easy the task of the rural population that sought the redress of its wrongs in these courts.

The centre of the system was the Maharaja himself. He was a despot and nothing could be done without his permission or order. He was ambitious but <https://assignbuster.com/ranjit-controlled-extensive-areas-from-the-jhellum-and/>

all his wars were waged and conquests made in the name of the Khalsa and for its glory. Peace and order were maintained and the Argus, eyed Maharaja carefully watched over every activity of the administration. No elaborate governmental machinery could have been worked by a military people like the Sikhs and the military autocracy imposed on them served its purpose at the time. The Maharaja's boundless zeal per conquest naturally limited his administrative reform and though we do not find new changes during his reign or any institutions making for progress and development, yet it must be said that he imported to the government a solidity of strength which, while repressing the evils of despotism, secured the respect of Sikh chieftains and commanded their loyalty and allegiance. The Army: The army was well organised. Indeed, it was the chief glory of the state.

The Fauj-i-am was the regular army which consisted of an (a) infantry, (b) cavalry (c) artillery. The Fauj-i-khas was a special brigade organised by French general's venture and Allared in the service of Ranjit Singh. The Faij-i-khas had as its emblems, the eagle and the tricolour flag, with an inscription of the Martial Guru Govind Singh embroidered upon it. Captain Wade speaks highly of the infantry section of Fauj-i-khas in these words: " They were all dressed, armed and equipped like the Raja's other regular battalions but in a neater and superior style. It was indeed impossible not to admire the high degree of perfection to which M. Ventura had brought his region".

Its training and discipline were the special care of the state and general venture had raised the brigade to high pitch of efficiency. Besides, there was the Facy-i-begawaid or irregular army which was composed of horse men

called Ghorcharchas. They were divided into several sections and were chosen from among the landed gentry.

The Jat Skill element was predominant in this section of the army and was held in high esteem by the Maharaj. Lord Auckland saw greatly valued among the siklis and Jats and, therefore, no difficulty was felt in obtaining soldiers. The troops subsisted by plunder and also held grants of land and this system, though modified in certain respects, continued even under Ranjit Singh. The salaries were fixed but they were not regularly paid and arrears accumulated. The scales were not well defined and the military budget was always uncertain.

But the army was fully under the Maharaja's control and nothing could be done without his approval or sanction. As regards the actual strength of the army different writers have expressed different opinions but it seems fairly certain that the regular army never exceeded 40, 000 and to this was added an equal number of horsemen. All observers are agreed that great attention was paid by the Maharaja to the equipment of the army and Lord Auckland is reported to have written in a letter to Sir John Hob house that in equipment, in steadiness and in precission of manoeuvre they (Sikhs) seem to be in no respect inferior to our own army. This view is amply corroborated by the splendid feats of valour and strategical skill that were witnessed during the first and second Sikh wars. Estimate: That Ranjit Singh did not entertain any sincere feelings of friendship for the British admits of doubts. He was thwarted by them in Cis-Sutlej states, as well as in Sindh, and in the letter case he had every reason to charge the British with bad faith and self

aggrandizement at his cost. His famous saying that the map of India will be red proves it beyond doubt.

Would it not have been wiser therefore, to forestall the designs of British and try conclusions with them before they had time to entrench themselves in India. The greatest achievement of Ranjit Singh was the creation of the army. He took the help of foreign experts like Allard, Ventara and Court, and no less than twenty European and Anglo-Indian Officers served under him. With the help of fine army Ranjit Singh achieved the two outstanding success in life namely unification of the Punjab and the hill states under the banner and the successful check to Afghan aggregation. But after his death the kingdom was dominated by non-Sikhs who could not be expected to develop or even sympathy with sentiments of Sikh nationality. Which alone could provide secure foundation for the building up of a Sikh kingdom? It is difficult to deny that this factor, to a large extent, account for the difference in the history of the Maratha and Sikhs after the death, respectively, of Shivaji, but could not destroy Maratha who rose, Shinx-like, out of the rains, to be great power.

The dominions of Ranjit Singh were destroyed within ten years of his death, never to rise again; only a relic of his famous Sikh solidarity remained as the faithful minions of the British who encompassed their ruin. The Punjab Politics from 1839 to 1845: After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the whole of the superstructure raised by him fell into pieces. The army became all powerful. It made and unmade king's confusion and disorder reigned everywhere. The hostility between the Dogras and the

Sindhianwalas added to the confusion. For six long years, there was
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absolutely no law and order in the country. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was succeeded by his eldest son known as Kharak Singh.

Dhian Singh became his Wazir. He was opposed by Sher Singh, another son of Ranjit Singh, and Nao Nihal Singh, his own son. Chet Singh a favourite of Kharak Singh was murdered. Kharak Singh died in November 1840. His son Nao Nihar Singh also was killed by a fall of a gateway in the Lahore fort.

There arose some difficulty with regard to the succession to the throne and ultimately it was decided that Nai Chand Kaur should become the regent for the expected son of Nao Nihal Singh.

Dhian Singh was to act as Wazir and Sher Singh was to work as viceroy. Sher Singh did not approve of the new arrangement and consequently usurped power in January 1841 and proclaimed himself as Maharaja. It was during the reign of Sher Singh that English troops and convoys were all owed to pass through the Punjab on their way to Kabul to participate in the First Afghan War. In June 1842, Chand Kaur was murdered. In September 1843, Sher Singh was murdered. Then came the turn of Dhian Singh who was disposed of similarly. Dhian Singh's son, Hira Singh, made up his mind to have revenge for the death of his father.

He put Dalip Singh, a minor on the throne and himself became the Wazir. Rani Jindan, mother of Dalip Singh, became regent. Hira Singh was assisted in his work by one Pandit Jalla. Throughout this period, it was suspected that the English had their hand in the anarchy prevailing in the Punjab.

In December 1844, Hira Singh was murdered. After this power fell into the hands of Jawahar Singh and Lai Singh, the brother and paramour of Rani
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Jindan. In September 1845, Jawahar Singh was shot dead and Lai Singh became the Wazir. On 11th December 1845, the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej and on 13th December the war was declared by the British. First Sikh War (1845-46): The most important cause of first Sikh War was the problem of the Khalsa army which was facing Lai Singh and Rani Jindan. The army had become independent of the civil authority and for six long years had acted as king makers.

This very army was responsible for the conquest of the whole of the Punjab in the time of Ranjit Singh, but after his death there was absolutely no one to control it. It is rightly said that fire is a good servant but a bad master.

Likewise, when the Khalsa army could not be controlled by anybody, it began to kill all those who came in its way. The French Generals like Ventura were turned out and the country was helpless before the tyranny of the time.

Various sections managed to win it over by means of presents and fits, but there could be no stability under such circumstances. The main problem facing the Punjab was how to deal with the Khalsa army. No wonder, both Rani Jindan and Lai Singh felt that the only way to deal with the Khalsa army was to make it fight against the British.

If it was successful, it would have the whole of India to conquer and thereby it would be kept busy. If it was defeated by the English, its number and strength would be reduced. It was with that idea that the sikh army was ordered to cross the Sutlej. An effort was made to convince the Khalsa army that the English were bent upon invading the Punjab. It was pointed out to them that after the annexation of Sindh, the turn of the Punjab was sure to come.

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The English were missing their troops on the Sutlej. The military post of Ludhiana had more than 35, 000 troops. A similar number of British troops were stationed at Ferozepur. Likewise, a large number of troops were concentrated at Ainbala. All this military activity alarmed the Khalsa army.

It came to believe that the only motive of the English was to attack the Punjab. The English had built a brigade of boats for crossing the Sutlej. They had also increased their troops in Sindh. The Sikh leaders were also aware of the schemes of men like Burnes, Macanaughter and Napier for the dismemberment of the Punjab. The British collected pontoons near Ferozepore for a bridge of boats for the convenience of the British army to march into the Sikh territory.

They established a ground supply depot at Basian near Rajkot. This was an unmistakable sign of readiness of the British to undertake the threatened operations against the Sikhs at an early date. Broadfoot, the British envoy at Ludhiana, was a man of boundless ambition. Presuming that the Sikhs were not likely to give any cause for offence, he tried to provoke them and with that object in view, he treated the Cis-Sutlej territories of the Punjab as if those were under British jurisdiction. That was a clear violation of the Treaty of Amritsar. He adopted an arrogant and over-bearing attitude towards the officials of the Lahore Durbar, who was crossing the Sutlej on official duty, was made under duress to recross the river and his party was even fired at. This insulting a provocative behaviour of the British annoyed the Lahore Durbar. Raja Suchet Singh, the youngest brother of Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh, had secretly deposited at Ferozepore a large quantity of coins and bullions worth about 15 lakhs of rupees.

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After his death, the Lahore Durbar claimed the treasure. Legally and morally, the treasure belonged to the Lahore Durbar, but the British Government refused to hand over the treasure to the Lahore Durbar. In 1819, a village named Moron in the Nabha territory had been given by Raja Jaswant Singh to Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The latter gave the same to Sardar Dharma Singh. In 1843, Jaswant Singh's son, Raja Devinder Singh, became displeased with Dhahne Singh and resumed the gift. The soldiers of Jagider Singh even plundered the property of Dhanna Singh. That was absolutely illegal and highhanded. The British justified the action of the rulers of Nabha in spite of the protests of Lahore Durbar.

The British also occupied certain island in the river Sutlej. The war was inevitable, under circumstances. A speech of Sir Charles Napier was published in the Delhi Gazette where in he openly threatened that British were going to declare war against the Sikhs. The immediate provocation for the war crossing if the river Sutlej by the Sikh army on December 11, 1845.

However, considering the fact that British army had already left Ambala for the Sutlej on December 5, 1845, it cannot be denied that British wanted an excuse to start the war. The most important battles of the first Sikh War were those of Nudki, Ferozshah, Aliwal and Sabraon. The Sikhs were defeated in the battle of Nudki that was partly due to the treachery of Lai Singh.

The Sikhs also committed the folly of not destroying 7000 British troops. In the battle of Feroz Shah which was fought on 21st December 1845, the treachery of Teja Singh helped the British. He ran away from the battle field

leaving the Sikh armies without a commander. So the Sikhs were defeated in the battle of Aliwal. At this time, Gulab Singh managed to become supreme at Lahore, and started negotiation with the British Government.

It was settled between the parties that the Sikh army should be attacked by the English and when beaten it was to openly disband by its own Government. The passage of the Sutlej was not to be opposed and the road to the capital was to be kept open to the victors. For this service to the British Government, Gulab Singh was to receive Kashmir.

It was under these circumstances that the Battle of Sabraon was fought. It was in this atmosphere of treachery and shameful treason that the Sikh soldiers fought against the British. The battle of Sabraon was been called the bloodiest battle of the war. The whole of the river Sutlej at that place ran red on account of the blood of Sikh soldiers.

After the battle, British armies marched on to Lahore and occupied it on 20th February 1846. In March 1846 the treaty of Lahore was signed. By the terms of the treaty of Lahore, the British acquired the Cis-Sutlej possessions of the Sikhs, as also the Jalandhar and Hazara. The army was reduced to 25 battalions of infantry and 12, 000 cavalry. Secondly, the Maharaja agreed not to employ British on Subjects, any European state without concurrence of the British.

Free passage was given to British troops. Maharaja Dalip Singh was recognised as king and a British force was stationed at Lahore. Sir John Lawrence was appointed as resident. The acquisition of Kashmir and the

handing over to Dogra was a bitter pill for many of the Sikhs. Even Rani
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Jhingan and Lai Singh were opposed to it. A formal court of enquiry found all of them guilty. So a new treaty was made in December 1848 by which the British became the real masters of Bengal. A council of Regency consisting of eight pro- British Sardars was constituted to function under the advice of British resident.

A British force was to be maintained at Lahore for which the Sikhs state was to pay Rs. 22 lakhs. This arrangement was to last till 1854 when Dalip Singh would become a Major Henry Lawrence was appointed resident at Lahore to be succeeded by Sir Frederick Currie in April 1848: The Second Sikh War (1848-49): The settlement of Punjab after the first Sikh War neither fulfilled the imperialistic designs of the English nor satisfied the Sikhs. Therefore, the causes of the second Sikh War erupted very soon.

The English provided certain facilities to the Muslims in Punjab which affected adversely the religious sentiments of the Sikhs. The Soldiers who were turned out of their service felt aggrieved in absence of alternative employment. The Sikhs were convinced, rightly or wrongly that they were defeated only because of the treachery of their officers and, if given another chance, they would certainly defeat the English. Therefore, they thought another opportunity to fight the English. The disrespectful behaviour of the English towards Rani Jindan displeased the Sikhs further. Thus, the Sikhs were feeling restless because of the British control over Punjab.

The British, on their own part, were anxious to occupy Punjab. Dalhousie, the new governor-general, was an imperialist. He simply sought a pretext for the annexation of Punjab. And, it was provided by the revolt of Mulraj. Mulraj

succeeded his father Sawant Mai as Governor of Multan in 1844. Mulraj was asked to pay rupees thirty lakhs to the Maharaj as succession duty.

Mulraj expressed his inability to pay that amount and expressed his willingness to relinquish his office. His resignation was accepted. Khan Singh then was deputed to take the charge of Multan and two English officers were sent along with him. Mulraj handed over the charge of the fort to Khan Singh. But, the same day, both the English officers were murdered. It was the beginning of the revolt.

The English initially took no steps to suppress the revolts of Mulraj. In fact, they wanted the revolt to spread to other parts of Punjab as well, so that they could use this pretext to annex Punjab. The events developed as the English desired. The revolt spread over to other parts of the Sikh kingdom. The one particular reason of it was the deportation of Maharani Jindan outside Punjab. She was charged with instigating the revolt.

The other cause of the revolt was the creation of the English. Chattar Singh, the Subedar of Hazara had settled the marriage of his daughter with Maharaja Dalip Singh. The ceremony could not be performed because the British objected to it.

Yet, Chattar Singh remained loyal to the English. But he felt humiliated by the behaviours of the English and their interference in his desire to revolt, to his son, Sher Singh who was deputed to suppress the revolt of Mulraj. Sher Singh agreed to his proposal and became a party to the revolt. The recoiling Sikhs handed over Peshawar to Afghanistan in return for their support. This resulted in widespread revolt in Punjab. Thus, the English themselves

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provoked the Sikhs to revolt. There is clear evidence to prove that there was no feeling of an organised revolt in Punjab even after the revolt of Mulraj.

While the Lahore Durbar remained loyal to the English till the end of the revolt. Thus there was no justification for Dalhousie to say that, "on warned by precedents, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and on my word, sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance." Dalhousie's plan was to permit the revolt to gain momentum and then to blame the Lahore Durbar for it with a view to annexing the state of Punjab. That is why even when the Lahore Durbar remained loyal to the British and Maharaja Dalip Singh did not involve him in the revolt in any way and was not even in the capacity to do so. He was accepted by Dalhousie as an enemy and Punjab was annexed to the British Empire after the second Sikh War. The first battle between the English and the Sikhs was fought at Ramnagar on November 22, 1848.

But it remained indecisive. The second battle was fought at Chilianwala on 13, 1849. It also remained indecisive but the English succeeded in Multan, Mulraj surrendered on January, 22. However, the decisive battle was fought at Gujrat a town near the Chenab on February 21, 1849.

The Sikhs were badly defeated. In March 1849, Sher Singh, Chattar Singh and the rest of the Sikh commanders surrendered to the English. Dalhousie annexed Punjab on March 29, 1849.

Maharaja Dalip Singh was granted a pension of rupees four to five lacs annually and was along with his mother, Rani Jhinda, deported to England.

The second Sikh war was the last war fought by the English within the
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frontiers of India for the extension of their empire. The annexation of Punjab extended the British territories in India upto the natural frontiers of India towards the north-west.

Besides after the destruction of the Sikh power there remained no native power which could pose a threat to the security of the English in India. Some scholars have expressed the view that the Sikhs themselves provided the chance and pretext to Dalhousie for annexing Punjab by revolting against the English. This view however is not accepted by many others who contend that Dalhousie had no justification to annex Punjab and that he had committed a gross injustice to the sikhs in doing so. Maharaja Dalip Singh was a minor and he could have no hand in the revolt. Therefore, there was no justification in annexing his kingdom. Among the members of the regency council as well, only one had participated in the revolt, the case of another was doubtful and the rest six had remained completely loyal to the English. Thus the government of Punjab legally constituted with the help of the English had no share in the revolt of the Sikhs. On the contrary, nearly twenty thousand soldiers, loyal to the Durbar had helped the English in suppressing the revolt.

Then how could that revolt is regarded as the revolt of the Sikh? Thus, the only cause of the annexation of Punjab was British imperialism.